

The Influence of Influencer's Appearance Type on Consumer's Attitude

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Abstract. In the era of modern technology development, traditional marketing is losing its popularity and efficiency. The development of various mobile platforms and social networks has led to the emergence of SMM marketing. This type of influence marketing is increasingly popular. The influencer has a complete audience who believes in his suggestions and opinions. So why the penetration of advertising is more stable and effective? In influence marketing, compared with traditional marketing, consumers have a more positive attitude towards advertising and products. The purpose of this study to analyse the impact of influencer appearance in advertising on consumer attitude. The paper has been conducted with a literature review of relevant theories, including trustworthiness, product consumer fit, perceived similarity, product endorser fit, purchase willingness, and consumer attitude. Based on perceived similarity and trustworthiness theory, this paper constructs the model of impact model appearance on consumer attitude. The model mainly studies the influence of the European appearance model and the Asian appearance model in advertising influence on purchase willingness and consumer attitude to this advertising and to a product.

Keywords: Influencer marketing; model type appearance; consumer attitude; consumer purchase intention

1. Introduction

According to the data in 2022, the number of bloggers is increasing every year, and the budget for advertising and blog cooperation from 2020 to 2022 have increased from 7 172 446 rub to 13 011 900 rub. Moreover, revenue from integration have increased from 18 587 280 rub to 59 169 214 rub [1]. According to Chinese data. On August 27, the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) released the 48th Statistical Report on the Development of the Internet in China in Beijing [2]. By June 2021, the number of online users in China had reached 760 million, an increase of 17.12 million compared with December 2020, accounting for 75.2% of the total number of Internet users. Soon as the number of Internet users was increasing and the number of influencers was also increasing, it has led to the emergence of new social platforms. China's most popular social media platform: the first WeChat had nearly 1.29 billion users in the first quarter of

Inna Mun

2022 [3]. The second TikTok has 809 million [4], and the third is QQ platform has 5.74 million users [5]. In Russia, the most popular social media platform: the first Vkontakte has 73.4 million users [6], the second Instagram has 63 million users [7], and the third is Telegram 7 million users [8]. Most platforms now have similar functions. For example, with the development of TikTok, the format of short videos has become very popular and has become the name card of the platform. This variety has also been launched on other social platforms. In addition, there are new varieties: stories, live streams, etc.

In order to maintain competitiveness and user interest, improve the platform's functions and upgrade the platform's system. For example, nowadays, the platform has introduced Reels and Stories functions. Because this function is relatively new, the platform actively promotes this format, allowing a large number of users to watch short videos. For the influencer, this is an opportunity to organically grow the audience and develop accounts, and for marketing for personnel, this means paying more attention to products, so now video is the main tool of marketing.

2. Review of relevant research

2.1. Research on social media marketing

With the rise of the Internet and the rapid development of technology, a new marketing, Social Media marketing has emerged. The definition of traditional marketing was given by Philip Kotler, who define marketing as an independent discipline [9]. However, SMM was defined as a new way in which end users use the World Wide Web, a place where content is continuously altered by all operators in a sharing and collaborative way [10].

Social media marketing includes elements of traditional marketing, such as the definition and role of customer products. However, SMM extends the functions of traditional marketing, simplifies the way to influence consumers/promote products, and obtains quick feedback from consumers [11]. Recent studies have focused on factors that effect on consumers, such as psychological factors and various types of advertising, factors influencing customer engagement and etc. [12].

Social Media Platforms as Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, Vkontakte have millions of users. Through these platforms, marketers can study consumers and their needs [13]. Most consumers make purchase decisions under the influence of social media. For example, customer could read posts, watch a video, or receive recommendations from friends via social media platforms. So SMM is an ideal weapon for company to influence on consumer and increase sales [14].

2.2. Research on influencer marketing

The emergence of social platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook led to the emergence of blogs and bloggers etc. The emergence of social platforms has not only brought many bloggers, but also brought many consumers information. Therefore, users cannot view and remember all information. Consumers and ordinary Internet users have become more selective in terms of information and waste of time. So why, marketing personnel began to win the attention of consumers. Although each brand now has its own account on different social networks, influencing marketing is still the most used tool. Brands work with influencers to promote brands products and establish a closer relationship with consumers [15]. Research shows that consumers are willing to follow

The Influence of Influencer's Appearance Type on Consumer's Attitude

the advice of influencers and make purchase decisions based on influencer opinions or recommendation [16].

Research on influence marketing has only recently begun. Influencer marketing is defined as “the act of an external person who influences the consumers buying choices. Influencer marketing focuses on influencers who command a mass following on digital media to reach the intended target audience to promote a brand’s message” [17].

New knowledge, news killing, and new methods are required by current and future market participants, not only to understand the marketing opportunities brought by change and technology, but also to establish contact and communication with new customers [18]. With the development of social media platforms, influencer marketing has become one of the most important forms of digital marketing in recent years.

Therefore, the company's cooperation with influencers makes advertising more effective. Now there are more and more influencers, and each influencer has its own theme, so in order to be a good partner, it is very important to find the right influencers for them. Most marketers understand the importance of using influencers to establish real relationships with consumers.

In April 2018, a report released by the National Association of Advertisers (ANA) said that in 2017, about 58% of brands were associated with about 25 influencers, indicating that marketers wanted to establish deeper links between influencers and consumers [17].

The Influencer Marketing Benchmark Report 2023 said that in 2022 influence marketing was estimated of \$16.4 billion and in 2023 it is expected to increase at 29% to \$21.1 billion [19]. It says that about 23% companies spend about 40 % of their marketing budget for influencer marketing. Moreover, a lot of brands use the influencers to promote company goods. 72% of online marketers describe content creation as their most effective SEO tactic [20].

2.3. Research related to the types of influencers

Now many countries have mixed populations. The annual migration also increases the diversity of the population and culture of the country. This in turn enables marketers to study population and ethnic minorities in more details. The behavior of minority consumers depends on their cultural environment and cultural background, so why marketers need to study ethnic minorities consumer more carefully [21]. For example, Australia and the United States and Canada, have ethnic Chinese is a large minority group. A lot of studies showed that the factors that may impact on mainstream population, but ethnic consumers have different Influencing factors of the purchase decision and etc. [22].

Forehand and Deshpande found in their research in 2001 that consumers have a positive attitude towards advertising and spokesmen if they belong to the same ethnic group [23]. Previous research found that the attitude of consumers depends on whether the model is similar or not. And whether the product is targeted at this consumer [24].

In the study of Barba in 1969 and Glazer in 1964, there is a theory that the use of white models in American advertisements can help other people integrate into society and adapt to American culture [25].

Inna Mun

The next theory put forward in 1971 is the use of split advertising, which means that only African-American models are used in advertising to promote products that are only aimed at African-Americans [26].

Later, in 1974, a third method appeared, which was based on the integration of advertising. Someone suggested using white and African-American models in the same advertisement [27].

In 2020, the development history of ethnic illustrations in advertising was studied and analyzed. It is found that in the 21st century, the concept of advertising has greatly improved the advertising image of the nation and acknowledged the diversity of culture. The advertising industry still faces representativeness problems at home and abroad in the United States, which sometimes has a negative impact on the company's reputation.

In addition, Bonnie Chiu provided the following statistics in her article in 2019. 38% of American consumers and 26% of British consumers said that if there were more models in advertisements, they were more likely to trust the advertising brand, while 40% of women were more likely to trust the attitude of advertising. In 2019, Nuur Rasyid took Indonesia as an example to explore the impact of influencer faces in advertisements on consumers [28]. He concluded that in different ethnic environments, the existence of ethnic minorities may promote people belonging to the ethnic minorities to be more receptive to the use of ethnic minority advertising models for self-regulation of advertising. When the advertising model from ethnic minorities performs most products, advertisers can expect to gain more audiences.

2.4. Research on consumer attitudes

Consumer attitude is the most important part in consumer purchase behavior. Consumer behavior is determined as encompasses mental and physical activities that consumers engage in when searching for, evaluating, purchasing, and using products and services [29]. Nowadays there are a lot of studies devoted to the study of purchase behavior. According to the research results, marketers have developed different strategies to influence consumers. This study will examine three types of consumer attitude, attitude toward advertising, attitude toward product, and consumers' willingness to buy.

2.4.1. Attitude toward advertising

Research on advertising and its role in society has always been one of the most studied issues in marketing. In addition, consumers' attitudes towards advertising have been studied in different sciences, such as psychology, marketing and etc. Attitude toward advertising is defined as “ a learned predisposition in the consistently favourable or unfavourable manner to advertising in general” [30]. Research until 1960 measured advertising as “favourability and unfavorability” factor. In 1968 some research said that advertising had social and economic effect, so advertising can influence on these areas [31]. In 1989 MacKenzie and Lutz suggested that the impact and the effect of advertising depends on some variable (ad creditability, ad perceptions and etc.) [32]. Some studies show that attitudes towards advertising vary by region or country [33]. In 1971 research shows that the more developed the country is, the less consumers like advertising [34]. In China 1990 was researched that compared with western consumers, Chinese consumers had more positive attitude toward advertising. In addition, Chinese buyers believe that advertising had a positive impact on China's economic environment [35].

The Influence of Influencer's Appearance Type on Consumer's Attitude

2.4.2. Attitude toward product

Attitude in marketing defined as “as a composite of a consumer's beliefs, feelings, and behavioral intentions toward some object within the context of marketing” [36]. Some researcher said that attitudes are formed through learning [37] or through negative or positive experiences [38].

Beliefs and attitude are not the same. In the marketing literature beliefs is determined as “consumer beliefs as to the extent to which attribute *i* is offered by brand *j*” [39]. Moreover, Duncan and Olshavsky said that consumer beliefs also may express associations between different objects (buyers, products) and product price, quality and etc. [40]. So beliefs can influence on consumer attitude.

Consumer attitude to product is formed by viewing the product, product price, packaging, and other product attributes. According to the research consumers' attitudes toward products is formed through the evaluation of the overall value of product. For example, when consumer estimate product, usually one product quality can replace another [37].

2.4.3. Consumers' purchase intention

Purchase intention refers to a consumer's likeliness to purchase certain products. In addition, a key aspect of measuring consumer behavior [41]. In 1995 Engel et al. described three types of purchase intention: unintended purchase, partially intended purchase and fully intended purchase [42]. Different factors such as personal impulse, brand power, individuals' feelings etc. can influence on all three types of purchase intention [9].

There are many studies on the factors that influence on consumers purchase intention. With the development of new social platforms and the emergence of new platform functions, such as livestreaming, stories, short video, etc. So, researchers began to study the purchase intention and consumer behavior through these functions. The most famous platforms are Vkontakte, YouTube, Instagram, Tik Tok, etc. Previous research on INSTAGRAM platform mainly focused on consumer behavior on INSTAGRAM, and how this behavior led to purchase. It was mentioned that some products focus on identifying and constructing the factors that affect the business and purchase intention on the mobile application version of Instagram [43]. Jasmine, Cheung and Thadani suggested that factors from the store itself, such as perceived kindness, integrity and ability, external factors, namely key opinion leadership and peer recognition, and trust tendency [44]. Ibriel, Alotaibi and Altmann studied how familiarity with Instagram's own functions and the displayed price affect Instagram's trust [45]. Recently, researchers began to integrate online purchase. The emergence of the Internet and social networks has produced online consumer and online purchase. Obviously, online consumers have different characteristics, which are different from traditional consumers. Researchers were using geographic technology, population, and other factors to analyse online consumers. For example age, education, income, etc. Research shows that young people are more eager to buy online than older people. In addition, there is a strong link between income and online shopping. The higher the income, the greater the online shopping volume. From the perspective of online consumers, trust perception and innovative technology play a key role in their purchase desire.

3. Propositions

According to statistics, in China more than 92% of population is the Han nationality, the rest are ethnic minorities and foreigners [46]. So for Chinese consumer Asian type model in advertising has to lead higher perceived similarity and higher trustworthiness.

Research shows that people are attracted by the relationship of people they think have similar relationship and sense of belonging with them. Also, they might reduce cognitive inconsistency or uncertainty in processing information—potentially positive outcomes from an advertiser's standpoint [47][48][49]. Sources perceived as similar in dress and appearance tended to be more inter-personally attractive than dissimilar sources [48][50]. Therefore, Chinese consumers will feel similar to Asian models when watching these advertisements, which in turn will affect their credibility and consumer behavior.

Proposition 1: For Chinese consumers, Asian faces (vs. European faces) lead to higher perceived similarity

High PS with the model lead to higher trust to model, in 2022 research was examined that people tended to rate individuals with faces that were similar to themselves as more trustworthy, this was not the case when the faces were evaluated by someone of the opposite sex [51]. Literature states that the more individuals in a team think they are similar, the more likely that trust will develop [52]. In a cross-cultural study, perceived similarity influenced toward supervisor and peer relationship. The study summarized that trust was higher in the relationships where perceived similarity was highest [53]

Proposition 2: For Chinese consumers, Asian faces (vs. European faces) lead to higher trust

Different researches in the areas [52] of interpersonal and inter-group relations has found that PS tends to result in more positive attitude to others. According to Rokeach [54] people's feeling about others will be a function of the perceived discrepancy between the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the individual and those of the relevant other. The more similar to a perceiver an individual or a group is perceived as being the more positive will be the perceiver's view of the target. Brown proposed that the inconsistency between social identity theory and belief congruence theory could be partially resolved by understanding the role that threat plays in inter-group relations. Moreover, PS will generally lead to positive impression of an out group. Research of [55], [56] shows that because of Perceived Identity of consumers and models in advertising, it leads to a positive impact on consumers' attitudes and purchase intention. An experimental study conducted that the classification of consumers in and out the group depends on the race similarity between the advertising model and consumers. Research shows that if the model in the advertisement and the consumer belong to the same race, the consumer's attitude towards the advertisement and product advertisement will be more positive. Advertisement is more effective. According to Perceived Similarity research, consumers and advertising spokesmen have a positive impact on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Based on this, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

Proposition 3. For Chinese consumers, the perceived similarity is positively correlated with consumer attitudes.

The Influence of Influencer's Appearance Type on Consumer's Attitude

Proposition 3.1. For Chinese consumers, the perceived similarity is positively correlated with purchase intention.

Proposition 3.2. For Chinese consumers, the perceived similarity is positively related to product attitude.

Proposition 3.3. For Chinese consumers, the perceived similarity is positively related to advertising attitude

The appearance of the model alone is not enough to transfer information from the influencer to the consumer. While trust is a very important factor. Without this factor, no advertising can be successful because the consumer will not trust the model and the advertising itself. The results of Mc Ginnies and Ward study showed that an expert whom the consumer trusts can change the opinion and views of the consumer [57]. In addition, many researchers have included reliability in the model of information sources. Trust means fairness integrity and acceptability of information exchange sources [58]. Consumers tend to consider celebrities and influencers a reliable source of information [59]. This is a universal principle, the person we trust is the source of what we do not see or cannot feel (for example, Internet products) in addition, this person is more acceptable than anyone else in society. In addition, if a celebrity or an influencer is an expert in their field, this principle is more effective. If the recipient (consumer) believes that the source of information can provide honest and effective information, then it also works according to this principle [60]. In the atmosphere of celebrity endorsement, we can find the value of trust, that is, the integrity, sincerity of celebrities and the degree of acceptance by buyers. This arouses the buyer's confidence and acceptance of the goods, as well as the communication and delivery of the endorser. This will help to cultivate buyers' positions, attitudes, opinions and buying behaviors [58]. Trustworthiness is included in the trust source framework, and the degree of consent of the framework to the message is a function of the credibility of the message initiator. Celebrities with overwhelming expertise in marketing activities are more reliable and easier to accept [61]. Based on this, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

Proposition 4. For Chinese consumers, trust is positively related to consumer attitudes.

Proposition 4.1. For Chinese consumers, trust is positively correlated with purchase intention.

Proposition 4.2. For Chinese consumers, trust is positively related to product attitude.

Proposition 4.3. For Chinese consumers, trust is positively related to advertising attitude

According to Perceived Theory for Chinese Consumer perceived similarity plays an intermediary role between Asian faces (vs. European faces) and consumer attitudes.

Proposition 5. For Chinese consumers, perceived similarity plays an intermediary role between Asian faces (vs. European faces) and consumer attitudes.

Inna Mun

Proposition 5.1. For Chinese consumers, perceived similarity plays an intermediary role between Asian faces (vs. European faces) and purchase intention.

Proposition 5.2. For Chinese consumers, perceived similarity plays an intermediary role between Asian faces (vs. European faces) and product attitudes.

Proposition 5.3. For Chinese consumers, perceived similarity plays an intermediary role in Asian faces (vs. European faces) and advertising attitudes.

Erdogan [62] believes that the credibility of celebrity spokesmen does not come directly from personal sources, but from various sources with good understanding and results of purchase intention. The credibility of celebrities can also reduce the impact of rumors or negative news. The brand equity model is regarded as a basic feature of evaluating brand influence, that is, the credibility of products. Shimp [63] pointed out that the first common characteristic of credibility is the tendency to trust or trust someone. When a celebrity is regarded as credible, the behavior of the target market seems to be consistent with a process called internalization. This process occurs when the buyer accepts the views of celebrities on a certain issue. The two basic characteristics of celebrity credibility are trustworthiness and professional knowledge. Credibility only means being regarded as acceptable, reliable, and trustworthy. The spokesmen win trust through their achievements in the advocacy field, and the credibility of celebrities places the views of the target audience on the motives of the spokesmen. Source credibility can be measured by credibility, honesty, reliability, and credibility [64]. Atkins and Bullock asserted that spokesmen were regarded as more skilled and reliable. Compared with similar activities without reliable spokesmen, advertisements showing trusted celebrities are more popular. The degree of trustworthiness is closely related to the openness and honesty of consumers to information sources. Friends are more trustworthy than strangers. Celebrities who do not spend money to promote tea brands are more trustworthy than those who have paid to endorse products. Based on this, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

Proposition 6. For Chinese consumers, trust plays an intermediary role between Asian faces (vs. European faces) and consumer attitudes

Proposition 6.1. For Chinese consumers, trust plays an intermediary role between Asian faces (vs. European faces) and purchase intention.

Proposition 6.2. For Chinese consumers, trust plays an intermediary role between Asian faces (vs. European faces) and product attitudes.

Proposition 6.3. For Chinese consumers, trust plays an intermediary role in Asian faces (vs. European faces) and advertising attitudes.

According to the same logic, Russian consumers have similar psychological reactions to European face models. For Russian consumers, PS theory and

The Influence of Influencer's Appearance Type on Consumer's Attitude

Trustworthiness will influence the same way as for Chinese consumers. Based on this, the following research hypotheses are proposed (P7-P12):

Proposition 7. For Russian consumers, European faces (vs. Asian faces) lead to higher perceived similarity.

Proposition 8. For Russian consumers, European faces (vs. Asian faces) lead to higher trust.

Proposition 9. For Russian consumers, perceived similarity is positively correlated with consumer attitudes.

Proposition 9.1. For Russian consumers, perceived similarity is positively correlated with purchase intention.

Proposition 9.2. For Russian consumers, perceived similarity is positively related to product attitude.

Proposition 9.3. For Russian consumers, perceived similarity is positively related to advertising attitude.

Proposition 10. For Russian consumers, trust is positively related to consumer attitudes.

Proposition 10.1. For Russian consumers, trust is positively correlated with purchase intention.

Proposition 10.2. For Russian consumers, trust is positively related to product attitude.

Proposition 10.3. For Russian consumers, trust is positively related to advertising attitude.

Proposition 11. For Russian consumers, perceived similarity plays an intermediary role between European faces (vs. Asian faces) and consumer attitudes.

Proposition 11.1. For Russian consumers, perceived similarity plays an intermediary role between European faces (vs. Asian faces) and purchase intention.

Proposition 11.2. For Russian consumers, perceived similarity plays an intermediary role between European faces (vs. Asian faces) and product attitudes.

Proposition 11.3. For Russian consumers, perceived similarity plays an intermediary role in European faces (vs. Asian faces) and advertising attitudes.

Proposition 12. For Russian consumers, trust plays an intermediary role between European faces (vs. Asian faces) and consumer attitudes.

Inna Mun

Proposition 12.1. For Russian consumers, trust plays an intermediary role between European faces (vs. Asian faces) and purchase intention.

Proposition 12.2. For Russian consumers, trust plays an intermediary role between European faces (vs. Asian faces) and product attitudes.

Proposition 12.3. For Russian consumers, trust plays an intermediary role between European faces (vs. Asian faces) and advertising attitudes.

According different cross-bordering advertising research [65-67] every culture has its own characteristics. This has affected consumers' attitude toward advertising. For example, China and South Korea attach great importance to collectivism culture and family, harmony. American advertising uses more personal qualities, such as personal success and career. In collectivist culture, celebrity faces are used more often to give a face to the brand in a world of brands with similar product attributes. According to the PS theory, if consumers watch advertisements of local brands and with local models, this will impact on consumer behavior. Previous research shows that consumers are affected not only by race of model, but also by different cultural attribute. Therefore, the influence of local model/foreigner model in international brands and local brands may be different. Based on this, the following research hypotheses are proposed

Proposition 13. Among international brands, domestic brands and foreign brands, the matching effect between model faces and consumer types (P1, P2, P7, P8) is different.

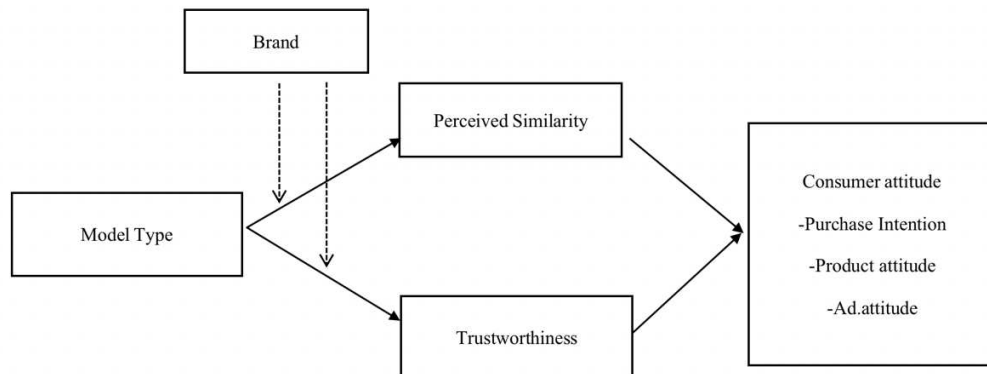


Figure 1: The theoretical framework

4. Conclusion

This paper summarizes the impact of European and Asian appearance types on consumer behavior. Establish a conceptual model consisting of four variables, such as: Model type, Perceived Similarity, Trustworthiness and Consumer attitude. Perceived Similarity and Trustworthiness play an intermediary role between model type appearance and consumer

The Influence of Influencer's Appearance Type on Consumer's Attitude

attitude. All the hypotheses in this paper are put forward through scientific research. The research results provide some assumptions and improvements for marketing in Russia and China.

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The Influence of Influencer's Appearance Type on Consumer's Attitude

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