Celebrity, Social Media Influencers and Brand Performance

Exploring New Dynamics and Future Trends in Marketing

Edited by
Saloomeh Tabari · Qing Shan Ding

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This book is dedicated with love to my parents, and my first friends Sarah and Mohsen. Thank you for telling me what I am capable of, for giving me the possibility to dream and for believing in me. To Jolanta and Dariusz for being you, love you so much.
To my best friend, my love, and my greatest support, Dr Daniel Prokop, who always pushes me to be my best version and looks at the moon with me. Thank you for changing our coffee to decaf and listening to all my moaning.
Saloomeh
I would like to dedicate this edited book to my loving family, for all the times we spent together and for cherished memories.
Qing Shan

Preface

This collection is designed with researchers whose expertise is aligned with marketing and consumer behaviour, including research students with a doctorate in these areas who would like to understand the world of celebrities, social media influencers, and brands. The book is structured to discuss not only the changes in consumption behaviour but also broader considerations of the current impact of influencers on marketing strategies and brands. All chapters have been prepared by active researchers in the field and provide a holistic view of current literature and present robust discussion.

The book included ten chapters covering a range of topics within the impact of celebrities and social media influencers on brand performance. The book starts with Chap. 1, introduction. In Chap. 2, Jonathan Wilson, Lika Baghdasaryan, and Laura Arroyo introduce conceptualising influencer, brand, and audience relationships on social media platforms. In Chap. 3, Li Ding explores the effect of social media influencers on customers' perceived brand value, brand-influencer, and purchase intention: a perspective of Gen Z. In Chap. 4, Aafiya Mundakappadath Firose, Wei Chen, and Saloomeh Tabari discuss the impact of social media influencers on choosing a travel destination. In Chap. 5, Eleonora Cattaneo and Yan Sun explore the advantages and disadvantages of using social media influencers for brands. In Chap. 6, Guangjin Su discusses the research on the effect of virtual influencers' endorsement on consumer purchase

intention. In Chap. 7, Ruitong Cui explains the play or attack: exploring identity in the virtual world. In Chap. 8, Saloomeh Tabari and Qing Shin Dang introduce the virtual world, fear of missing out, and its impact on impulsive buying. In Chap. 9, Yan Sun and Chen Yang explore virtual influencers, the future of marketing and branding. The book ends with Chap. 10, Qing Shan Ding and Saloomeh Tabari discuss influencers, materialism, mental health, and sustainability.

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Acknowledgements

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Notes on Contributors

Laura Arroyo is a Digital Marketing Strategist with a career and study that has led her to Puerto Rico, the USA, and the UK. She has worked in several marketing roles, specialising in analytics, social media engagement, influencer brand activation, content creation, fashion, and fitness—in addition to being a micro-influencer in her own right. She received her Bachelor's degree in Public Relations, Advertising and Applied Communication from James Madison University, Virginia, USA, and MSc in Digital Marketing from Loughborough University London, UK. She is also an avid kite surfer and surfer.

Lika Baghdasaryan is Assistant Professor of Marketing and Brand Management. She holds a BSc (Hons) in Linguistics and Philology and an MA in International Business and Management, and her doctorate explores iconography, symbolic power, visual culture, and consumption in advertising. Lika regularly chairs industry brand forums and consults businesses on social media, image, and identity strategies.

Eleonora Cattaneo is Professor of Marketing and Director of the MSc and Executive Master's in Luxury Brand Management at the Glion Institute of Higher Education in Switzerland. Her research interests are focused on brand revival, brand collaborations, and sustainable luxury. Her areas of luxury research are rebranding, heritage branding, and sustainable buying behaviour. Her work has been published in *Journal of*

Brand Management, *Long Range Planning*, and *Strategic Change*, among others. She is a senior fellow of the UK Chartered Management Institute and fellow of the Swiss Center for Luxury Research.

Wei Chen is Senior Lecturer in Strategic Management at Sheffield Hallam University. He has wide experience in cross-culture management in the hospitality and tourism industry. His book *International Hospitality Management* with Professor Alan Clarke has been published in English, French, and Portuguese, and he has translated books such as *Trade Show and Event Marketing* into different languages. He is the chief overseas editor for *Finance and Economy*, a business magazine in China. Wei Chen is also a senior business advisor of a renowned sports company in England.

Esther Ruitong Cui is a postgraduate researcher who is pursuing studies in the field of Fashion Business and Technology at the Department of Materials, University of Manchester. As a graduating teaching assistant at the University of Manchester and a fellow of Advance Higher Education, Ruitong combines academic curiosity with a drive to guide others on their scholarly journeys. Her research pursuits centre on the compelling interplay between fashion and technology, as well as mapping domains within the ever-evolving landscape of management and marketing. In her PhD research, Ruitong utilises qualitative research methodologies to examine two distinct and growing domains: fashion rental and block-chain technology. Underpinning her work is a profound interest in exploring the potential of emerging technologies to facilitate notable advancements in social change within the context of fashion businesses and consumer interactions. Her academic prowess and passion for work have earned her recognition at prestigious conferences and workshops. She was awarded the Best Innovation Research Award at the Global Fashion Conference 2022. She has also been nominated for Best Graduating Teaching Assistant at the University of Manchester for her commitment to teaching and mentorship. Ruitong displays a keen interest in pursuing and cultivating international partnerships with commercial enterprises and scholarly organisations.

Li Ding is an assistant professor at Institut Paul Bocuse, France. She graduated from Oklahoma State University in 2018 with a doctoral

degree in Hospitality Management. Her research concentrates on hospitality strategic management and financial management. She has published research papers in the *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *International Hospitality Review*, *International Journal of Tourism Sciences*, and *Global Business and Financial Review* and presented research papers at over twenty international academic conferences. She serves as the editorial advisory board member of *Leisure Studies* and review board member of the *International Journal of Business Events and Legacies*.

Qing Shan Ding is Senior Lecturer in Marketing at Huddersfield Business School, University of Huddersfield. His primary research interest is consumer behaviour, exploring how various cultural and identity factors influence brand preferences and purchase intentions. He is interested in strategic marketing, examined how FMCG firms adjust their tactics during a crisis such as COVID and investigated how typographic design and transparency information could be utilised to enhance brand authenticity. His research has been published in a few leading international journals and presented in prestigious international conferences. He taught digital and social media marketing in the past and is an active user of social media platforms, including Twitter and LinkedIn, as well as a few influential Chinese social media apps.

Aafiya Mundakappadath Firose has completed her Master's degree in Hospitality Management at Sheffield Hallam University.

Guangjin Su obtained her PhD in Marketing from Northumbria University, UK, in 2022 and participated in several high-profile conferences. Her doctoral work explores the factors that affect the mobile payments' continuance use in China under different constructs, both habit-related and product-related factors.

Yan Sun is Senior Lecturer in Marketing at Oxford Brookes Business School, UK. She is leading specialist modules for MSc International Luxury Marketing at Oxford Brookes University. Yan Sun has published with ABS 3*, 2* and 1* journals, including *Information Technology & People*; *International Journal of Hospitality Management*; *Strategic Change*;

Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management; and *Information Management and Computer Security*. Her research interests are luxury marketing, ageing society, digitalisation, and sustainable consumption. She also contributed teaching cases on luxury retailing and international tourists to Bloomsbury Fashion Central.

Saloomeh Tabari is Lecturer in Marketing and Strategy at Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University. Her research centres on customer experience in particular intercultural communication and sensitivity in service and marketing. She has a special interest in issues relating to 'cultural differences', 'cross-cultural', and 'cultural centrism' and the provision of service and marketing to different customers to enhance their experiences and perceptions by adopting strategies based upon changes in consumer behaviour. She published my research in various leading international academic journals and books and presented at international conferences. She has co-edited the *Global Strategic Management in the Service Industry: A Perspective of the New Era* book. She is on the editorial board of international journals and associate editor of the *Journal of Islamic Marketing*.

Jonathan A. J. Wilson has two doctorates and specialises in what he calls the ABCDs of business: advertising, branding, communications, and digital. He started his career in the late 1990s, working in advertising management roles in London, alongside being a professional musician, with international performances and recording credits. His chair is in Brand Strategy and Culture, with over 200 published pieces of work, 100 listed conference talks across the globe, and travel to 40 countries. He consults brands, governments, and influencers on branding, marketing communications, and consumer behaviour. He has been listed in LinkedIn's annual Top Voices awards for several years.

Chen Yang is Lecturer in Digital Marketing at Greenwich University, UK. She holds a PhD in Media Studies (2022) from the University of Westminster. Her research interests include influencer culture, attention economy, self-branding, and online representation. Chen is also the founder of a TikTok-partnered agency in the UK and the top-ranked lifestyle and fitness creator on TikTok UK with more than 250,000 followers.

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Introduction

Saloomeh Tabari and Qing Shan Ding

The celebrity endorsement technique has been employed by many brands as their main technique of advertising (Wei & Lu, 2013). By choosing the appropriate endorser, the marketer may enhance attitudes and reinforce behavioural intentions (Knoll & Matthes, 2017) and shape brand perceptions (Erdogan et al., 2001). Companies devoted a lot to celebrity endorsement to exploit emotional bonds between consumers and brands to accomplish higher brand image, brand awareness, differentiation, and brand loyalty (Thomson, 2006). Recent studies have indicated that celebrity endorsement contributes to the perceived quality of the brand, but the direct and indirect effects of celebrity attachment on brand attachment and brand loyalty have not been fully investigated (Um &

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Jang, 2020; Özer et al., 2022). The number of celebrity endorsement strategies has increased over the past few years by brands. While in Western countries the contribution of celebrity endorsement is around 15% (Schimmelpfennig & Hunt, 2020), this has reached 60% in some Asian countries (Chung & Cho, 2017). Jain and Roy (2016) stated that the celebrity endorsement process not only transfers the meanings from celebrities to the endorsed brand as well as emotions. In addition, celebrities can foster brand-related attitudes such as self-concept and brand quality as well as behavioural intention in a celebrity endorsement process. Consumers set personal goals based on reference points of their celebrities (Choi & Rifon, 2012). Studies by Erdogan (1999) and Spry et al. (2011) suggested that celebrities enhance the success of the celebrity endorsement strategy because consumers trust their favourite celebrity and the recommendation made by them. Brands endorsed by a favourite celebrity become more credible and trustworthy.

Considering the growing popularity of social media advertising using celebrities and influencers to endorse the brand is more than ever gaining attention from marketers and brands. The popularity of social media personalities provided opportunities for social media influencers (SMI), who help to shape consumer attitudes towards a brand (Freberg et al., 2011). Studies have shown that collaborating with a YouTube influencer can give a brand four times more lift in brand familiarity than collaborating with a celebrity (Newberry, 2018).

Schouten et al. (2020) stated that influencers have a more constructive and positive impact because consumers find it easier to trust and identify with the brand. Therefore, SMIs have the power to influence a wider audience's purchase decisions, by developing deeper and more meaningful relationships and also being seen as more trustworthy with their followers (Belanche et al., 2021; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Influencers are frequently linked with millennials in different areas like fashion, luxury travel, and cosmetics, but recently they have appeared across a broad range of age groups and products (Campbell & Farrell, 2020). SMIs try to create a connection, engagement, and trust with their followers through self-disclosure, whereas the audience engages with them through their comments, likes, or sharing (Gómez, 2019).

Furthermore, followers of SMIs have shown impulsive purchases of fashion and cosmetic products (Prihana Gunawan & Permadi Iskandar, 2020). The trust gained by SMIs has a significant role in enhancing the urge-to-buy (UTB) impulsively on social networking sites (Shamim & Islam, 2022). On the other hand, SMIs are considered role models with a high impact on their follower's behaviour, and who also are responsible for any ethical and unethical behaviour they exhibit on their platform. For instance, some SMIs end up using fake authenticity campaigns or unsustainable consumption which leads to fast fashion.

Comparisons between traditional celebrities and influencers are specific interests of the brands. The research on influencer marketing for advertising practice is still growing days, and the pandemic has not only increased social media usage among all generations (Insider Intelligence, 2020) but also suggested the need for a better understanding of influencer marketing as a key advertising tool (Hudders et al., 2021; Taylor, 2020). However, the rise of SMIs implements social pressures on all generations specifically on the young generation for urge-to-buy (UTB) and impulsive consumption to feel part of the group due to Fear of Missing Out (FoMO). Furthermore, the increased usage of AI and the three-dimensional virtual world (metaverse) has provided many opportunities for brands to leverage virtual influences. The metaverse offers experiences around play, work, connection with groups, and consumption. Virtual influencers extend higher engagement and gain attention among young consumers especially Gen Z's compared to human influencers. However, still social media's dark side, the negative effects of self-evaluation, body image, unrealistic expectations, fear of missing out and unsustainable consumption need to be explore and discuss further, along with the topic of, how brands employ celebrities, and SMIs as key opinion leaders or virtual influencers (metaverse) for endorsement.

This edited book addresses the need to examine the new era of marketing by focusing on the impact of employing celebrities, SMIs, and virtual influencers to endorse the brand as a key advertising tactic for companies. The contributors focus on the rise of social media usage and the change in advertising strategies in the digital era. Below we have highlighted each chapter's significance and how it adds to our understanding of the changing nature of brand marketing via social media and influencers. To begin

with, Chap. 2, by Jonathan Wilson, Lika Baghdasaryan, and Laura Arroyo, opens up the discussion on the effect of influencers on emotion, lifestyle choices, and purchase intention.

In Chap. 3, Li Ding investigates the social media influencer's trustworthiness in Gen Z's buying intention, by looking at 312 Gen Z restaurant-goers in the United States and their impact on the decision-making process of them. Chapter 4, by Aafiya Mundakappadath Firose, Wei Chen, and Saloomeh Tabari, turns to the decision-making process of millennials on travel destinations through the social media influencer's comments. The study demonstrates the importance of transparency and authenticity of influencers and the impact of their recommendations on destination branding.

In Chap. 5, Eleanora Cattaneo and Yan Sun focus on the advantages and disadvantages of using social media influencers by brands by interviewing two social media influencers. In Chap. 6, Guangjin Su draws on the effect of using virtual influencers by brand on purchase intention, the importance of influencers' characteristics, and how their interactivity and popularity can increase the purchase intention of customers. In Chap. 7, Ruitong Cui investigates the use of the concept of the virtual influencer within the marketing and use of avatars and the negative impact on individuals' self-esteem and overall well-being. In Chap. 8, Saloomeh Tabari and Qing Shan Ding address the fear of missing out on an urge to buy within the virtual world by providing a conceptual framework to show these relationships. Chapter 9, by Chen Yang and Yan Sun, on the future of brand marketing and using virtual influencers, looks at different case studies from Chinese virtual influencers. In Chap. 10, Qing Shan Ding discusses the mental health and sustainability of influencer and looking at the materialism issues and negative aspects of it on influencers and their followers.

The Origins of This Book

This book is the result of a series of truly collaborative endeavours that in many ways has resulted in the emergence of social media influences and brand performance with an interest in the book's subject matter. Most of

the contributors to the volume are established researchers in this area, and as editors, we are grateful for all the fresh and novel chapters they have provided. Taken as a whole, they result in a wealth of new insights on the increased use of influencers and virtual influencers on brand performance while looking at both the negative and positive sides of these concepts on both customer influencers and brands. We hope that this book will give readers a lot to consider when considering how social media influencers affect brand performance.

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