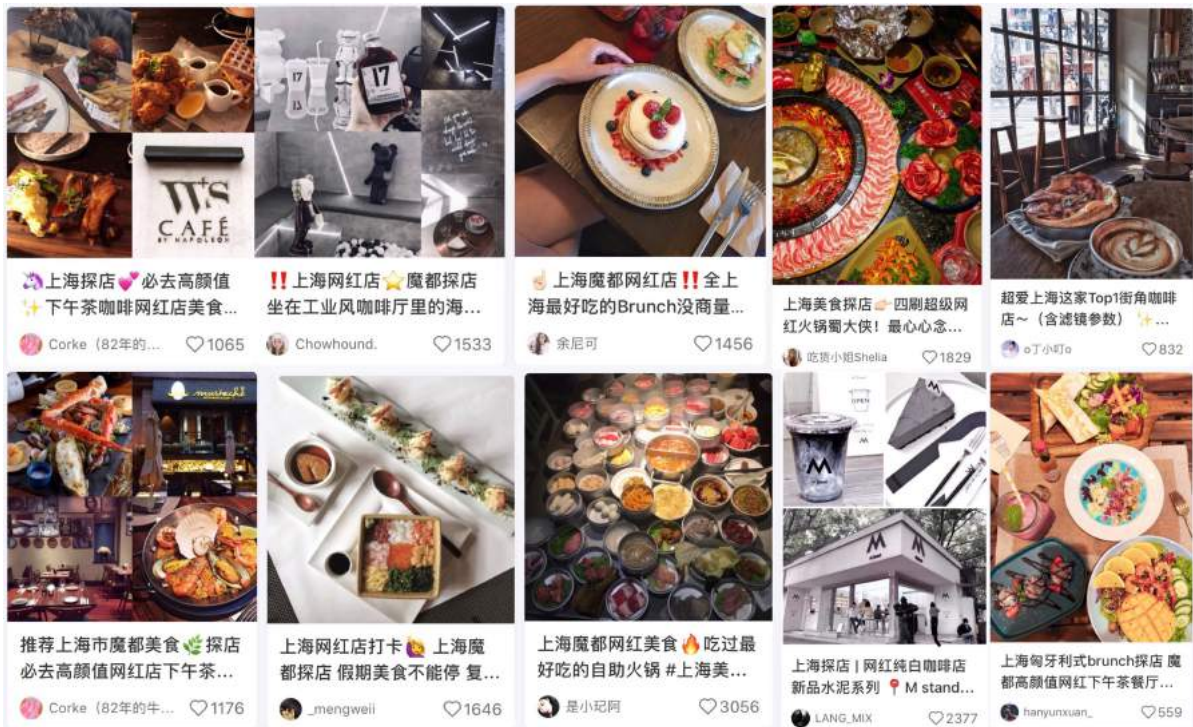


# The Game Of Fame:

How Market Dominated  
by Internet Celebrities influenced Young Netizens



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## A Special Economy

Countless flash-news and market surveys have shown that the younger generation would prefer to purchase commodities on the Internet or on social media platforms. This phenomenon drives the rise of online marketing strategies which deeply influenced our daily life and decisions. Evidence has shown that young consumers prefer to purchase merchandise which is popular based on the recommendation of Internet celebrity. Even if the popular products promoted by internet celebrities are not in high quality, prices rise due to Internet fame. Younger people are more willing to spend hours experiencing the shops with high-profile despite their limited income. This economy is more about “brand effect”, not about consumers’ basic needs. And the popularity on the internet and/or social media serves as the product’s “brand”. Any product promoted by Internet celebrities scores a substantial increase in sales along with high click rate. Even though these products are often mediocre, sometimes even impractical or extremely overpriced, consumers are still willing to give them a try.



Customers waited for buying the Shake Shack

Recently, Shake Shack, a famous burger restaurant from the United States, opened in Shanghai. People can spend up to 1 hour waiting to buy their burger, which probably had similar taste but a higher price than its competitors. Was it brand effect or consumers’ bias caused by Internet marketing strategies? In this project, we examined how people are influenced by internet celebrities as well as their mindset, thoughts and feelings. We have carried out a market survey as well as case studies, which include both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

## A Case Analysis

Lady M is famous for exquisite crepe cakes across New York City. The founder of Lady M was inspired by French pastry and Japanese confection and created this quality cake brand in the upmarket.

Lady M launched its business in Shanghai International Finance Center in September 2017 and set all of China on fire. Loads of customers came and eagerly spent more than two hours for just one piece of crepe cake, and this so-called “dainty” was marked up to the price as high as 200 RMB by scalpers. It could be possible that the ingredients or craftsmanship making these delicacies were not



the same as the originals in New York. This famous dessert lost its unique texture and flavor, making Lady M having no difference from other high-end dessert shops in Shanghai. But with vigorous promotions of influencers on social media, Lady M managed to keep the enthusiasm for the crowd high, and their popularity continues.

Due to the dramatic shift in technology and access to the mobile internet, more and more people are encouraged to all

these novelties approved by celebrities on social media. More importantly, it is this fashion of pursuing brands that set the China region of Lady M in motion.

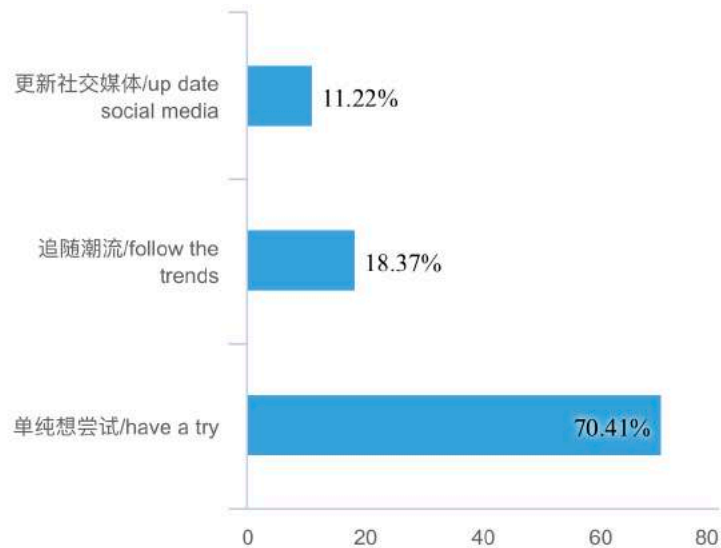
In China, Lady M is not the only case. As previously mentioned, the marketing strategies of shops like Shake Shack, Hey Tea or Starbucks also work like this. Internet celebrity economy has already left a tremendous impact on restaurants.

## The impact of Internet celebrity Economy on Consumer Psychology

There was a time when I went to Armani Beauty to buy a lip stick that my friend recommended to me. The sales lady asked me which Internet celebrity recommended this color recently, for the number of customers coming to buy this color soared in the past few days. I was impressed by the

impact an Internet celebrity could make on the market, by just saying a few words and posting photos online.

Compared to professional sales persons, the consumers tend to trust Internet celebrities more. The consumers usually hold a belief that Internet celebrities have a more objective opinion on which



product is better because they will compare several products at a time. And unlike sales persons, they don't seem to have a working relationship with the brands.

According to our data analysis, the driving force encouraging costumers to listen to Internet celebrities is that they simply want to give the product a try, not just follow the trend or update their social media. It is human nature to be interested in the new things, and entrepreneurs are taking advantage of this and they frequently launch new products to attract consumers. To illustrate, Hey Tea chooses fresh fruits of the season to make special seasonal fruit beverages, or Lady M creates a new mille crepe every quarter. Customers following Internet celebrities' recommendation is not limited to novelty items. Products labeled with "limited edition" or "special packing" can gain the approval of most consumers. The Limited Edition products released by makeup brands with the promotion of influencers, they will be guaranteed to have a skyrocketed popularity. For example, the Limited Edition Chanel PREMIERES FLEURS, an amazing brush palette, was released last spring. With the recommendation of makeup bloggers throughout China, even with its retro color palette and high price, customers are went crazy for it.



CHANEL PREMIERES FLEURS PALETTE

## The Interview

To gain a more comprehensive understanding in Internet celebrity economy, we had an interview with an influencer blogger, BaiXue Pan, who just received the Weibo Superstar Award in August 2019. She has been working as a full time Internet celebrity since July, 2018, and has been engaged



in promoting makeup, skincare and clothing. Here are her insights on how this economy works:

**Q-1:** “Have you ever recommended any product that you personally dislike or consider not functional?”

**A-1:** “No. I would try every products I received. Then I would share the ones I feel useful or special with my fans and return the ones with poor qualities to PR. This is the base line I’d always follow.”

**Q-2:** “What is the secret of your successful marketing strategies? Have you met limitations in this industry?”

**A-2:** “The trust of my fans. This is the key part. I will not sacrifice my fans’ trust for a money. I also

have my own data analysis on the products that I have promoted, from which I will be able to see which products is mostly accepted by my fans. There are limitations that the type of product we can sell is very limited.”

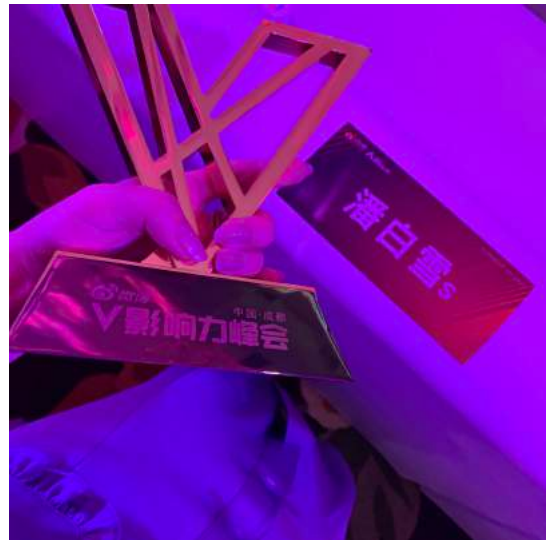
**Q-3:** “Do you think internet celebrity economy is a bubble economy?”

**A-3:** “No I don’t. With or without us, the consumers will spend their money on certain products. But now it is a daily routine for people to use social media. And compared to sales persons, our promotion is more detailed, often comes with comparison to many other products. So the consumers tend to think our promotion is based on real usage feedbacks”

**Q-4:** “Are there any marketing strategies that consumers can’t tell?”

**A-4:** “Yes. There was a time when I posted a set of photos in a café with high quality dessert and elegant atmosphere, my fans followed me to the café, but couldn’t order the cake in my photos. Some fans asked me why they couldn’t order, then I told them the cake was a special edition which was only available on certain days. In fact, it was the café that required me to do so, to create hunger marketing.”

Clearly, Internet celebrities are professional, well-trained salespersons. They need exactly what their fans are expecting from them, such as a beautiful look, a stronger body, a special experience or just the feeling of being superior to others by using a certain product. They also know it is important to keep fans trusting them, so sometimes they will deliberately use words to emphasize that their experience of using the products are true and objective.



The award she got

### **The Conclusion of Questionnaires**

In the future, marketing may become more dependent on Internet promotion strategies. As young people are having more money to spend, they could not resist the temptation to buy things recommended by Internet celebrities to keep themselves in the trend. It will be wise for young netizens to see through these deceiving marketing strategies to save them from buying unnecessary things. But that will not be easy, because the Internet celebrities can always come up with new ideas to sell things. Yet, the Internet will also spread notoriety other than fame. Flashy products will not survive. Sincerity will speak for the product itself, which makes a sustaining brand.