Evaluate the effectiveness of online marketing strategies through benefits and drawbacks: Case Study and Interviews of luxury brands

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Abstract. Nowadays, the importance of social media is increasing in the fashion industry, especially for luxury brands. To implement the marketing strategies for luxury brands used on social media effectively, this study aims to critically analyze the benefits and drawbacks of luxury goods through their marketing strategies on social media in China, to figure out the strategies that should continue to be used and should be avoided. With the help of marketing strategies online, luxury brands can successfully enhance their brand image and loyalty which have huge influence on consumer demand for luxury goods. Our hypotheses focused on the effectiveness of social media using in luxury brands' marketing strategies. The research used a combination of case study and interview methodologies. The case studies examined the different impacts on brands caused by two luxury brand endorsers. The interviews with consumer and sale agents of luxury brands assessed the effectiveness of the marketing strategies from the responses of the interviewees. The research findings suggest that luxury brands in China can improve brand image and loyalty by employing marketing strategies such as increasing customer engagement, effective crisis management, precise audience targeting, and celebrity endorsements on social media. The research indicates that luxury brands should continue to utilize and optimize these strategies for long-run success.

Keywords: luxury brands, social media, brand image, brand loyalty.

1   Introduction

In the contemporary digital age, social media has burgeoned into an indispensable facet of our lives. In 2023, according to the 51st report published by the China Inter-

net Network Information Center, the total number of Internet users in China has reached 1.067 billion.

Due to the widespread use of social media, Western luxury brands, such as Burberry, have begun to advertise on these platforms [1,2]. Social media has revolutionized the ways in which we communicate, influences our social circles, and is in the process of transforming our culture. The luxury goods sector is no exception to this trend. As the global affluent population grows, especially among the younger demographic, there has been a notable shift toward accessing luxury brands online. Consequently, social media usage has emerged as a salient tool in the marketing strategy of luxury goods [3].

Although the studies mentioned above have consistently found that marketing strategies on social media can have numerous advantages, they also present certain drawbacks of social media using by luxury brands in the Chinese market. For example, social media can help luxury brands build brand awareness but may also cheapen the brand.

The following section will commence by reviewing the relevant literature. Subsequently, we will outline our research question, followed exploring the influence of social media on luxury brands in China through a qualitative methodology. We analyze two case studies on how different brand ambassadors impact the luxury brands on social media as well as interview with luxury brand sales staff and customers. The research findings delineate the advantages and disadvantages of social media for luxury brands, the precision in choosing brand ambassadors, the effective management and adjustment of social media feedback, and the enhancement of online consumer engagement. These marketing strategies are crucial for increasing consumer loyalty and establishing a brand image. This study offers managerial insights for a deeper understanding of how luxury brands can effectively harness social media.

2   Literature Review

2.1   Branding

Branding is defined as the process of shaping brand image, values and personality through a series of strategies and actions that appeal to target consumers and create an emotional connection with them [4]. It includes brand positioning, brand identity design, brand communication and brand experience. Branding aims to increase brand awareness, recognition and loyalty, thereby increasing the commercial value and market share of the brand. Through effective branding, organizations can stand out in a competitive marketplace, build deep emotional connections with consumers and achieve long-term business success [4]. Branding is one of a company's most important assets. A strong brand can help differentiate a company from many of its competitors and reduce the likelihood of a company's competitors adopting the same brand name or color scheme, for example, branding creates an identity that helps to differentiate you from your competitors, thus enhancing your company's credibility [5].

2.2   Social Media and Branding

One way of building brands is through social media. Social media plays a vital role in the daily lives of individuals and organizations. As an internet-based application platform, social media allows users to generate and share content and engage in various forms of online interaction, including text, images, videos, and real-time conversations [6]. Through these platforms, individuals and organizations can establish and maintain social relationships, disseminate information, and engage in various forms of communication and cooperation.

Brands can effectively use social media to promote their products. Due to its wide user coverage and targeted audience, social media can help brands enhance their visibility and market influence [6]. It also provides an interactive platform, allowing brands to directly communicate with consumers, collect feedback, and build brand loyalty. Through social media advertising, luxury brands can directly target their desired customers through strategic use of social media advertising campaigns. This approach serves to heighten brand awareness while simultaneously increasing market influence [7].

Social media enhances interaction and trust between brands and their customers, fostering brand loyalty. Luxury brands are high-involvement products whose purchases often stem from brand loyalty, so communicating with consumers is crucial [8]. It enables customers to openly share their experiences and feedback, which in turn influences the brand reputation and brand image. At the same time, brands can use social media to analyze customer needs and behaviors and optimize marketing strategies and product offerings.

2.3   Luxury brands

Luxury brands are a unique type of brand that may require different marketing approaches. For example, there is some disagreement about whether social media helps or hinders luxury branding. The English word "luxury" comes from the Latin root Lux, which means "light" at first, and later has extended meanings such as "extremely strong breeding power" and "wasteful, unrestrained". Later on, it has more meanings such as "extremely fertile" and "wasteful, unrestrained". As for the term "luxury", with the semantic change of objects, there are various interpretations in different historical stages and research perspectives [7].

There are two different views on the meaning of luxury brand in contemporary luxury academia. One view is that a luxury brand is a generalized concept designed to bring consumers a certain type of lifestyle and to show that the owner of the branded goods has a noble taste and pays attention to the quality of life [9]. The other view is that luxury brands are symbols of elegance, and that most luxury brands have a deep cultural heritage that can infect the owner of the goods [10]. In essence, both views emphasize that luxury brands have influence on the products owner, however, the former pointed out the implied effect of luxury on consumer identity, while the latter focuses on consumer active identification with the culture behind luxury [7].

American economist Lancaster has put forward the famous "Elastic Demand Theory", which indicates that normal commodities with elastic demand greater than 1 are luxuries, while those less than 1 are necessities[11]. Chinese scholars Zhou and Zhu have put forward the "Expected Value Theory", which also mentioned that luxuries have a higher elastic demand than 1, and those with a lower elastic demand than 1 are necessities[12]. They also carried out that the consumers of luxury goods have specific psychological expectation on the value of the goods they consume, and the pleasure brought by this psychological expectation to the consumers will be far more than the use value of the goods [12].

Bastien and Kapferer analyze the connotation of luxury goods, from which we can extract the following characteristics: superior quality, high price, symbolic connotation, scarcity, and the owner can get a good spiritual experience from it [9]. This is also the difference between luxury goods and high-class goods (whether they have brand culture connotation and limited edition) and fashion goods (whether they are durable). Therefore, the public usually thinks that luxury goods refer to the non-necessities of life beyond the scope of people's survival and development, and have the characteristics of scarcity and preciousness. That is to say, the practical value of luxury goods is not the focus of consumption, and what people pursue in consuming luxury goods is a kind of spiritual value in the symbolic sense. It is also because of this characteristic that luxury brands create more possibilities in the process of communication [7]. These characteristics of luxury brands suggest that social media strategies designed for things like consumer products and commodities may not be as suitable. We now turn to a discussion of social media and luxury brands.

2.4   Social Media and Luxury Brands

In China's luxury brand market, social media plays a crucial role as an indispensable tool for brand building. Social networks facilitate interactivity, word-of-mouth propagation, customization, and entertainment, thereby significantly influencing brand image and loyalty [13]. Platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, Douyin, and Xiaohongshu enable luxury brands to effectively enhance their market presence and engage users by delivering high-quality content, showcasing brand culture and values, and fostering emotional connections with affluent Chinese consumers. For instance, Weibo, boasting over 500 million monthly active users, provides luxury brands with a vast audience base. Brands can leverage this platform to publish compelling content, showcase new products, fashion shows, and brand activities, thereby increasing attractiveness and visibility. Moreover, celebrities and Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) on Weibo enhance brand exposure and awareness through their substantial follower bases. For example, collaborations between LV and renowned Chinese singer and actress Qian Song have significantly boosted brand exposure and user interaction on Weibo.

Social media platforms enrich and diversify content through user-generated content (UGC), enhancing user interaction and participation, thus increasing platform authenticity [6]. Luxury brands can encourage users to share brand-related content, thereby boosting user engagement and brand credibility. Furthermore, features such as live

streaming, discussions, and polls enable brands to effectively enhance user interaction, fostering loyalty and brand influence.

Many social media platforms have already used UGC in their applications. Xiaohongshu integrates user-generated content and social e-commerce functionalities, making it an ideal platform for luxury brand marketing. Its user base pursues a high-quality lifestyle, closely aligning with the target audience of luxury brands, thereby enhancing conversion efficiency. For example, LV's collaborations with KOLs on Xiaohongshu's live-streaming feature have significantly boosted consumer enthusiasm, driving both brand exposure and sales.

Additionally, platforms like WeChat and Douyin also play critical roles in the luxury brand market. WeChat's privacy features and precise targeting capabilities help luxury brands meet personalized consumer needs effectively. Douyin, with its dynamic and visual content format, revolutionizes luxury brand marketing by creating immersive brand experiences and strengthening emotional connections with consumers.

In summary, these social media platforms not only shape brand image and increase visibility in the luxury brand market but also serve as key channels for promoting brand-consumer interaction and enhancing user engagement. Brands can expand their audience reach, establish profound emotional connections, and achieve sustained growth in the competitive luxury brand market through diverse content and real-time feedback [7].

2.5   Benefits of Social Media for Luxury Brands

Among the studies related to marketing strategies employed by luxury brands on social media, several have elucidated the benefits of various marketing approaches.

First of all, luxury brand image can be enhanced by online comments, particularly those from customers who have already purchased the products, also known as electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). In his literature review, Budiman emphasized that e-WOM significantly and positively impacts luxury brand image by leveraging online customer feedback [14]. Notably, Bataineh found that the credibility, quality, and quantity of e-WOM significantly and positively influenced brand image [14]. Moreover, research by Saleem and Ellahi indicated that due to the trust between individuals, e-WOM functions more like recommendations from friends, thereby increasing consumer demand for luxury goods [14]. Consequently, managing online comments as a marketing strategy can enhance brand image and boost consumer demand for luxury products.

Secondly, advertising on social media also contributes to strengthening luxury brand image, which in turn bolsters brand loyalty. According to Budiman, numerous studies suggest that online advertising positively influences luxury brand loyalty [14]. Erdogmus and Cicek highlighted that online advertising, as an independent variable, positively affects luxury brand loyalty more than content relevance and luxury brand popularity [14]. Targeting specific markets with online advertising can elevate luxury brand image within those markets [14]. Therefore, it is evident that online advertising,

including social media advertising, is essential for luxury brands aiming to increase luxury brand loyalty and enhance their image.

Last but not least, luxury brands can use social media platforms to showcase their unique brand stories and images, which resonate with consumers' interests and emotions, thereby establishing the brand's distinctiveness and values [15]. Some luxury brands utilize advertisements to convey the meaning and inspiration behind their products, creating a unique brand image. For instance, Louis Vuitton's artist collaboration collections feature the artist's name and style in the advertisements, attracting customers by emphasizing the collaboration's artistic influence.

In summary, various marketing strategies on social media significantly enhance luxury brands' image and loyalty. These approaches foster consumer engagement and trust, ultimately increasing demand for luxury goods. Thus, a strategic and thoughtful use of social media can profoundly impact the success and perception of luxury brand.

Hypothesis 1: When done effectively, social media can help build image and loyalty of a brand.

2.6   Drawbacks of Social Media for Luxury Brands

While there are positive impacts of social media on luxury brands, several studies highlight ineffective strategies in their usage. This analysis delves into the inherent shortcomings in the marketing strategies of luxury brands under the influence of social media.

Firstly, luxury brands must closely monitor and swiftly address misunderstandings or misinformation arising from social media use. Social platforms enable easy sharing of thoughts and discussions among users [15]. For instance, discussions on platforms like Weibo can intensify brand engagement but also pose risks of uncontrollable public opinion and potential crises [6]. In the digital realm, past actions are hard to erase, making timely management of public discourse critical to mitigating potential losses post-campaign [16]. Information transmission on social media can significantly influence individuals' perceptions and behaviors, underscoring the need for proactive brand management [16].

In addition, celebrity endorsement is a common strategy that luxury brands use for branding on social media. However, the over-reliance on local celebrities as brand ambassadors may obscure luxury brands' identity and prestige among Chinese consumers. Local celebrities, while enhancing social media engagement [15], may not embody the essential European heritage associated with luxury brands. Balancing localization and international standards in celebrity endorsements is crucial to maintaining brand identity and appeal [15].

Finally, using social media too much can make luxury brands seem less special and high-quality because it makes them feel too familiar [17]. Unlike regular brands, luxury brands need to keep value like a dream, which too much exposure can ruin [9]. Thus, for luxury brands, how luxurious they seem is a key measure of how well they are doing on social media.

To sum up, the marketing strategies of luxury brands face challenges in managing information dissemination, navigating celebrity endorsements, and preserving their unique appeal in the digital age. These disadvantages will have negative and significant impact on brand image and reputation. In other words, we need to think deeply about what effective social media use is.

Hypothesis 2: When done ineffectively, social media can lead to poor image and potential brand crisis.

3   Methodology

Multiple methods have been used in this research. We combined case study and interview together, and qualitative data is collected and analyzed in the research. A case study is a qualitative research method involving in-depth analysis of representative examples to uncover research patterns and provide detailed background and context. This approach is adaptable and suitable for exploring new areas, generating rich data, capturing complex interpersonal and situational factors, and offering comprehensive, specific, and compelling insights. However, there are limitations to the qualitative case study method. For instance, the sample size is restricted, making it challenging to generalize results and rendering conclusions subjective, potentially impacting the objectivity of data analysis and conclusions. Additionally, data analysis is intricate and time-consuming, hindering quantification and comparison of results. Moreover, research often demands significant time and resources leading to increased research costs. Given the wealth of empirical cases in the industry, we aim to employ critical thinking in selecting representative cases for research analysis including both successful cases as well as those that have failed. By using case study, we may have a holistic view on both managerial perspective and perspective of consumer.

An interview is a conversation between two people, one asking questions and the other providing answers. It can be categorized into three: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured. Our interviews will combine structured and semi-structured interviews together. For marketing, understanding market needs plays an important role, interviews are a great way for luxury brands to understand the market and customer needs, in order to build a better brand image and increase brand loyalty. However, interviews also have many disadvantages. The people interviewed are a small portion of the luxury consumer population, so the conclusions drawn from the responses of this small group may not be representative of the conclusions of the general population. Nevertheless, making interview is still valid for marketing research because of its help with understanding market and customer needs. Although there are some shortcomings in the methods we used, we can collect data more comprehensively, and conclusions we get will also be more accurate.

3.1   Case Study 1

Case Study 1 is used to test hypothesis 1. It is committed to explore whether Boucheron's decision that inviting Zhan Xiao (hereinafter referred to as Xiao) to be their

brand spokesperson has indeed enhanced its brand image and fostered greater brand loyalty among consumers. We collected data which shows Xiao's huge influence on social media platforms, including 24-hour search volume after announcing Xiao as their ambassador on November 7th, 2023. In addition, for testing the validity of hypothesis 1, we will also compare Xiao's contribution to Boucheron's popularity with the industry average performance. The comments from Boucheron's Global CEO regarding Xiao's endorsement will also be discussed in this case study.

3.2   Case Study 2

Case Study 2 is used to test hypothesis 2. It aims to explore the impact on luxury brands when a spokesperson withdraws from social media due to a scandal. Using Xukun Cai (hereinafter referred to as Cai), a famous celebrity in China, as a case study, it analyzed his public relations handling strategies and their effect on the brand. In this case study, we collected data from Sohu official website on 2024 and integrated relevant data from news about brand ambassadors. Using qualitative methods, we analyzed the impact of the termination of partnerships between Prada and local brand ambassadors.

3.3   Interviews

For the interview section, we interviewed two groups of people: customers and employees at LVMH, particularly sales staff working in the offline store. We interviewed four employees and eight customers to examine the impact of luxury branding on social media among the younger generation. Below is a detailed introduction to our interview process.

The interview with LVMH's offline sales is structured and divided into three parts. The first part of the interview focuses on the strategies used by sales on social media and the effectiveness of these strategies. The second part highlights the impact of social media on whether consumers buy luxury goods and the relationship between them. The final part is related to case studies, which explores the impact of celebrity endorsements from the perspective of LVMH employees.

The customer interview is semi-structured and divided into four parts. The first part involves questioning customers about their frequency of encountering LVMH advertisements on social media and their impressions. The second part examines the influence of online comments, specifically whether these comments affect their luxury goods purchases. The third part explores the impact of celebrity endorsements on their purchasing decisions. The fourth part addresses their preferences for online marketing strategies, such as which methods attract them the most. However, only six of the eight customer responses were usable, so the analysis will be mainly based on these six responses.   Since the interviews with both sales and consumers have been divided into several sections, we will analyze them separately in order. Although the subjects of the two interviews were different, the answers from the interviews will be analyzed similarly. The benefits and drawbacks identified will be discussed based on the responses to each question and will be presented in the following section.

4 Findings

4.1 Case Study 1

Zhan Xiao, a famous Chinese actor, has an impressive digital footprint on social media platforms. As of 2022, his Weibo account has surpassed 30 million followers and his Weibo mentions that the brand has had a total of 254 million interactions, earning him the title of top influencer on Weibo for 2021. He also has a large and active fan base that frequently engages in philanthropic activities, showcasing his significant social impact. On November 7, 2023, Boucheron, a premier French luxury jewelry brand, announced the invitation of Xiao as its global brand spokesperson.

Hélène Poulit-Duquesne, the gobal CEO of Boucheron said that Xiao embodies the spirit of freedom and values that in line with Boucheron. He further expressed the aspiration to demonstrate, through this collaboration, Boucheron's enduring influence in China which a pivotal element in the brand's global strategy.

The data shows how Xiao greatly improved Boucheron's brand image in China through social media. Following the official announcement of Xiao as the spokesperson, the topic "Zhan.Xiao as Boucheron's Global Brand Ambassador" amassed a readership of 880 million within 24 hours, with discussions reaching 3.904 million and interactions soaring to 16.548 million according to Weibo statistics. Boucheron's official Weibo account witnessed an increase of over 400,000 followers in the subsequent two days, significantly enhancing the brand's influence. Furthermore, the Boucheron advertisement featuring Xiao achieved over 89 million views on the day of its release. Boucheron reported a commendable profit in the third quarter of 2023 financial statements under the Kering Group, a period that Xiao became its global spokesperson (see Figure 1).
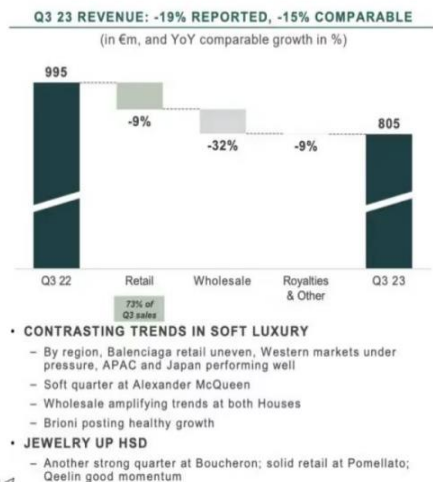

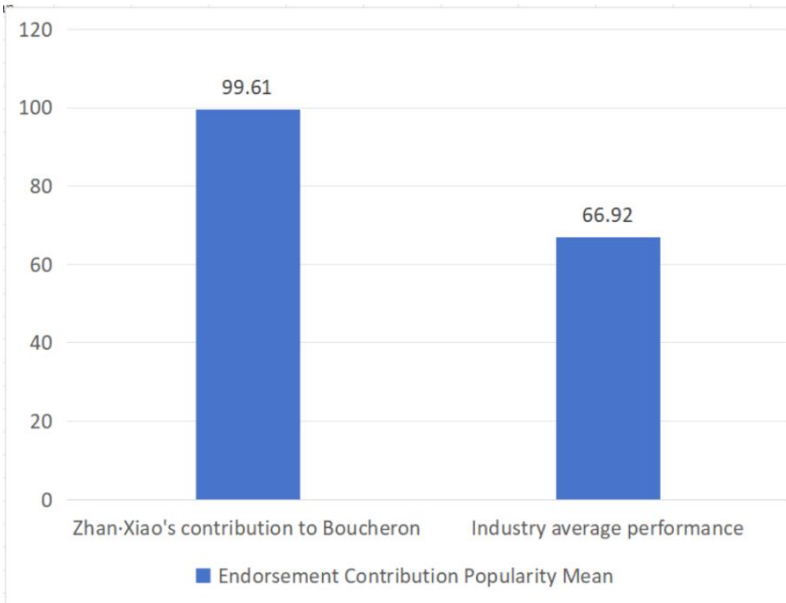**Fig. 1.** Data from Kering Group Annual Report 2023.

Fig. 2. Data from Weibo.

Even before Xiao became its global spokesperson, Boucheron already had a certain level of recognition, with a stable base of social media followers and fans. However, it lacked explosive growth. Following Xiao's endorsement, Boucheron's popularity and public appeal soared dramatically, with the Xiao's contribution to Boucheron index reaching 99.61, vastly exceeding the average of 66.92 (see Figure 2). And 98.48% of this popularity could be attributed to Xiao, showcasing his immense influence on the luxury brand. Xiao's followers demonstrated high levels of engagement and purchasing power during the endorsement activity. Although Boucheron did not publish sales figures, incomplete statistics gathered by Xiao's followers indicated that sales reached approximately six hundred million CNY online and offline after the announcement of his endorsement. In this case, Boucheron chose a successful ambassador Xiao. It is because of his high alignment with the brand values and his extensive influence on Chinese social media that enhancing Boucheron's brand image in the Chinese market and in attracting a loyal fanbase to the brand. Through this study, it is not difficult to ascertain that in the Chinese market, selecting an appropriate spokesperson to expand market influence, establish brand image, and build brand loyalty is important. In conclusion, this case study provides support for hypothesis 1, which is when done effectively, social media can help build image and loyalty of a brand.

4.2   Case Study 2

Since Cai became Prada's global ambassador in 2019, his personal image has been closely aligned with the Prada brand image, significantly enhancing its market exposure and commercial value.
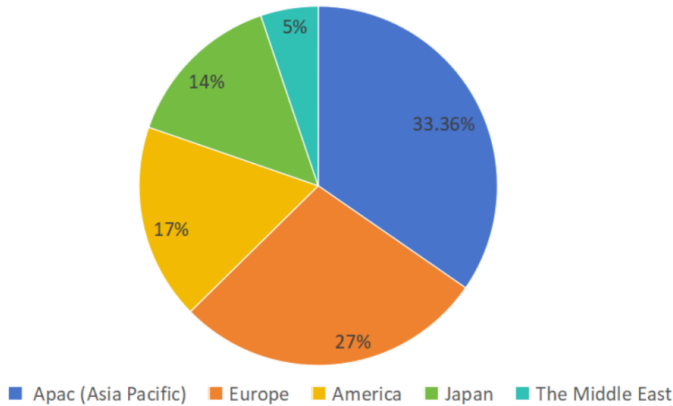

Fig. 3. Data from Sohu official website.

The Figure 3 suggests that, as the largest revenue source for the Prada Group, the behavior of spokespeople in the Chinese market may affect consumers' perceptions of the brand image. As a result, celebrity scandals do have a significant impact on a luxury brand's reputation and consumer trust.

However, in 2023, Cai's chaotic private life was exposed by the media, which negatively impacted Prada's brand image while simultaneously increasing its exposure. As Prada's brand ambassador, Cai's celebrity scandal involving his personal life issue has negatively impacted the brand's reputation, which leading to a decline in consumer trust.

Prada did not do their social media marketing effectively. They relied too much on a celebrity and exposed themselves to risks. This suggests, in accordance with H2, that when social media marketing is not done effectively, it can also damage the brand. Of course, these events were also largely outside the control of Prada, who might not have been able to predict the misbehavior of the endorser. But still, it points to the risks brands expose themselves to when working with third parties.

In response to this crisis, Prada swiftly replaced its spokesperson and chose to collaborate with the Chinese women's national football team. This move helps Prada reshape its brand image, and the shift in brand perception has been notably reflected in public opinion.

In this case, Prada was faced with the impact on its own brand image brought about by a tarnished image of its endorser. It can be easily seen from the case that when selecting a spokesperson, luxury brands must consider not only their commercial

value but also their character and personality, as a spokesperson's image significantly impacts the brand reputation, brand image, and long-term development. In summary, this case study fully justifies hypothesis 2, which is social media can lead to poor image and cause potential brand crisis when it is not done efficiently.

4.3   Interviews

4.3.1. Interview for Employees in LVMH.

The interview for sales is structured and can be divided into three parts. First of all, the interviewees were asked about what strategies they use on social media and which is the most efficient strategy. Most of the sales use same strategy on social media, such as sending product contents on Wechat moments, and sending products that you think are suitable for a particular customer. One of the sales provided a successful example of using the strategy of sending advertisements to targeted customers directly. She mentioned that LV recently came out with a bag that you can participate in customizing. She thought younger customers would like this product, so she sent it out individually to a lot of customers around 18-25 years old Some of the customers learned more about this product by this advertisement and they decided to buy the bag at last. It can be seen from the example that social media can help us target our customers, provide us with a platform to connect directly with them and increase the total number of purchases of goods.

The second part of the interview asked the interviewees about their thoughts of the effects of social media to purchase of luxury goods and the relationship between them. All of the sales think social media has significant positive influences on customers' purchase of luxury goods. They mentioned that many customers will see adverts for products on social media and become interested in them. Some customers will also use WeChat mini programs to view products. In summary, Social media can have a positive impact on whether or not a consumer buys a luxury product, by using this method the customer can see more of the product in less time. It greatly increases the efficiency of the consumer in understanding the product.

Moreover, as our case study is related to celebrity endorsement, we also asked them about the percentage of products they purchased because of celebrity endorsements. Three of the answers pointed out that celebrity endorsements do have effects on purchasing luxury goods. For example, one of the answers mentioned that some people come to buy things because their favourite celebrity endorses the product, others because the celebrity wears LV clothes and they want to get the same model. However, since the audience of LV is a large population of people, they also told us that celebrity endorsement decisions to purchase products occur more frequently among young people and less frequently among older age groups. Conclusively, celebrity endorsements do have an impact on the purchase of luxury goods, but not on all LV consumers.

4.3.2 Interview for Customers.

As we mentioned previously, we separate the interview for the customers into four parts. For the first part, our questions include "Have you seen the advertisements of LVMH on social media? How do you feel when you see these advertisements? Are there any advertisements that impressed you most?". Most of the answers mentioned that they did not see direct advertisements of LVMH, but they did see the advertisements shared by the sales in the store on moments, which is a platform for people to share everything with their friends. Besides, about half of the interviewees pointed out that the limited version attract them most. One of the answers said that the most impressive products of Louis Vuitton is the limited version of Beijing, while the other answer is the limited version of Chinese Valentine's Day. Another answer that deserves to be highlighted is the DIY bag. It can be seen from the answers that people are more likely to focus on the limited version. People also like products that they can design themselves.

Secondly, as we try to figure out the relationship between the online comments and consumer demand for luxury products, we asked the interviewees that if their purchase for luxury goods will be influenced by the comments on social media. Among the eight answers, seven of the answers mentioned that the online comments have significant effects on their purchase of luxury goods, especially the comments made by real customers. So, we think online comments play an important role for customers to determine that if they will purchase the products.

The following part is the influence of celebrities. Almost of the luxury brands will invite celebrity to be their brand ambassador, and many of the luxury brands become successful through the marketing strategy of celebrity endorsement. However, the answers we get are polarizing. For many of our interviewees, they do not have their favorite celebrity, which means that celebrity endorsements have no effect on whether they buy luxury goods. Nevertheless, for the interviewees who have favorite celebrities, celebrities endorsements have huge influences on their decision-making of purchasing luxuries. For example, one of the interviewees likes Jimin Park, a member of Korean artist group BTS. Then she paid more attention to the brands that invite Park to be the spokesman, like Dior and Tiffany.

The last part of the interview asked the interviewees about their desire of marketing strategies for LVMH to use on social media. The answers are really different from each other. Two of the answers said that they want to see the advertisements of the brand ambassador. Another three interviewees thought that videos which is less than 30 seconds and focusing on the products themselves would be attractive to them. The remaining answer mentioned that she is more attracted by pop-up store. As a result, if she sees the advertisements of pop-up luxury store online, she will be willing to go to the store offline and purchase luxury goods.

One thing we want to emphasize from the interviews is that all of the interviewees prefer to purchase luxury goods offline instead of online. For our interviewees, online advertising is just a cursory understanding of the product, but they do not buy luxury goods online. All of our interviewees prefer to buy luxury goods in offline stores. Both the staff interviews and customers interviews provide further support for our

hypotheses, pointing to the potential benefits of social media marketing for luxury brands.

5   Discussion

From the results gathered from the research, we can identify several marketing strategies which help luxury brands build brand image and brand loyalty. Besides, these insights allow us to determine which marketing strategies should be maintained and which should be discontinued.

Firstly, brand loyalty can be enhanced by increasing the sense of online customer engagement. Social media, by nature, is an interactive platform that enables luxury brands to connect with consumers more directly and enhance their sense of participation. By posting interactive content, organizing online activities, and responding to consumer comments, brands can collect valuable market feedback, establish an emotional bond with consumers, and enhance brand loyalty. Consequently, luxury brands should continue to employ marketing strategies that enhance online consumer engagement.

Secondly, the strategy of controlling online comments should remains crucial for luxury brands,   since it can help with building brand image. Information on social media spreads rapidly, and any negative information or crisis can quickly damage a brand's image. Therefore, brands need to invest resources in monitoring public opinion dynamics on social media and take timely measures for crisis management and brand image repair. Although this highly stressful state of maintenance puts considerable pressure on brands, controlling online reviews directly impacts both brand image and consumer willingness to purchase.

When the two strategies listed in the previous discussion part are done efficiently, the effective social media shows its characteristic of interactive engagement. Luxury brands can value its audience by responding to comments, messages, mentions, etc. Luxury brands can build up their brand image and brand loyalty through the interaction with customers.

Additionally, online audience targeting, which can help luxury brands with increasing brand loyalty, should also be maintained. Social media, with its wide reach and highly active user base, provides unprecedented exposure opportunities for luxury brands. Through precise positioning and target audience analysis, luxury brands can rapidly expand their market reach and increase brand awareness.

Furthermore, social media offers luxury brands a wealth of marketing tools and room for innovation. Luxury brands can utilize the data analysis tools on these platforms to gain a deeper understanding of consumer needs and preferences,in order to launch more personalized products and services. In this way, luxury brands can move their focus from offering the same service to everyone to a more targeted service, which will increase the perceived attention of consumers to the luxury brand and ultimately lead to increased brand loyalty. The effectiveness of this marketing strategy reflects that effective social media has a characteristic of targeted audience. By understanding and targeting the specific audience, which involving segmenting the au-

dience based on their interests and behaviors, luxury brands can ensure that their contents publishing on social media resonates with the right people.

Moreover, the marketing strategy of using celebrity endorsements to raise brand awareness and brand image should also continue to be used. Many luxury brands have actively explored innovation and cross-border cooperation on social media, collaborating with numerous celebrities and artists from different sectors. According to our previous case studies, partnering with celebrities can inject new energy into a brand and attract the attention of younger consumers. However, negative incidents of the brand spokesman will lead to poor brand image as well, but the risks can be reduced by monitoring social media and adjusting their marketing strategies in a timely manner, such as by releasing public relations documents and replacing the spokesperson, in order to rebuild brand image. If this marketing strategy is utilizing effectively, it can be seen that effective social media has a characteristic of influencer collaborations, which can help attract new audiences and add authenticity to the promotion.

6   Conclusion

6.1   Theoretical Contribution

The research indicates social media can help luxury brands with building up their brand image and brand loyalty if online marketing strategies are done efficiently. Luxury brands can use different online marketing strategies, including enhancing consumer engagement, controlling online comments, targeting audiences precisely, and utilizing celebrity endorsements, to enhance their brand image and brand loyalty on social media. However, social media can lead to poor image and potential brand crisis as well, particularly in using the strategy of celebrity endorsement. The image of celebrity do have effects on luxury brand image. As a result, it is important for luxury brands to consider both the commercial value and personal image when choosing their brand spokesperson.

6.2   Managerial Insights

Nowadays, social media is an efficient platform which reveals the changing of consumer demand. Luxury brands may implement the marketing strategies, like online comments control and target group orientation, to get more involvement on social media platforms. Nevertheless, when the brand crisis happens, luxury brands need to adapt their online marketing strategies accordingly. For example, when the image of the spokesperson affects the brand image, the luxury brand can make the adjustment of changing the spokesperson. Our paper has significant implications for managers of luxury brands, by pointing to strategies they can use to boost the performance of their brands on social media.

In selecting brand ambassadors within the Chinese market, it is imperative to consider their local popularity, influence, personal image, and values, ensuring these points align with the luxury brand's value. Through observing various Chinese social media platforms, to evaluate the performance of candidates concerns their media exposure

and activities on social platforms. The exposures on social media platforms and activities are served as the essential benchmarks for determining the commercial value of celebrities. Also, their commercial worth is crucial in determining the significant value they can contribute to the luxury brand. Additionally, A spokesperson's character and personality are crucial for brand reputation. Before appointing a celebrity as their brand ambassador, companies should meticulously investigate their background. While respecting their privacy, it is essential to inquiry oneself with their personal lives and conduct, ensuring they do not damage the brand's reputation through any improper behavior. Concurrently, before choosing a spokesperson, it is important to check for legal risks and make a clear contract to protect both sides and prevent damage to the brand image.

6.3   Limitation and Future Research Opportunity

Due to sample constraints and data source bias, we may have some limitations on quantity perspective. As we used the data online, the data may be different from different sources. Besides, the sample used for our interviews may not have been large enough to allow for more accurate conclusions. For the future researches, quantitative data from more reliable supporters can be collected and analyzed. Also we limited our analysis to two cases. Future research may focus on more cases to improve the generalizations that can be made from the study.Social media has become an integral part of people's lives with the advancement of technology, which has led to the inevitability of luxury brands marketing on social media. Our study offers a balanced view of luxury brands' social media marketing strategies in China, revealing both their advantages and disadvantages. Through a combination of case study and interviews, the study further expands our current understanding of online marketing strategies and provides valuable insights for luxury brands in China. It enriches both our theoretical and managerial understanding of this key marketing topic, by offering guidance for developing effective social media strategies and promote the healthy development of the luxury industry.

Acknowledgement

Appendix

Interview Results for Sales
1.What are some of the marketing strategies you use on social media? Which marketing strategy do you think is more effective? Have you ever sold a product as a result of using this marketing strategy?

A1:My common marketing strategies on social media include posting product content in my WeChat moments, and I also send products that I feel are suitable for a particular customer to that customer individually. I think it's more effective to target the product to the customer, LV recently came out with a bag that you can customise yourself. I thought that younger customers would like this product, so I sent it to a lot of customers around 18-25 years old. Several of these customers learned about the product when they saw me send it to them and ended up purchasing it.

A2: My common marketing strategies on social media are posting Xiaohongshu notes, sharing outfits, and sometimes posting to my WeChat moments. I think the marketing strategy of sharing outfits in Xiaohongshu is very effective because I often get private messages from my fans on how to buy these clothing accessories. I remember I posted a note about the LV speedy nano bag, with special emphasis on the star Liu Yifei's model, and then I got a lot of private messages from fans saying they wanted to order the bag, and then they even purchased the bag directly after I made sure it was in stock.

A3: My common marketing strategies on social media include posting on my WeChat moments and sending private messages to customers who have purchased products in LV shops, inviting them to attend offline events. I think it's very effective to invite customers to offline events through private messages. Whenever I invite my customers to an event, I take the opportunity to recommend new products and products they are interested in, and customers find products they are interested in and order them directly.

A4: My common marketing strategies on social media include posting on Douyin and posting on my business WeChat to my friends, etc. I think posting on Douyin is a good marketing strategy. I think posting on Douyin is very effective because Douyin will always target me to the customers who are interested in LV products through big data. I remember that I released a video content of a model wearing LV new products in our shops, at that time, many customers asked me how to buy the same model, after understanding, there are many customers who directly approach me to place orders.

2.Do you think social media has any positive or negative impact on buying luxury goods? Is there any relationship between social media and buying luxury goods?

A1:I think social media has a big influence on whether consumers buy luxury goods. Many customers will see adverts for our products on social media and become interested in them. There are also customers who will use WeChat apps to view the products. Both of these are ways that customers can see more products in less time. Whilst perhaps this doesn't really allow the consumer to decide whether or not to buy, it greatly improves the efficiency of the consumer's understanding of the product. I think social media has a positive impact on whether consumers buy luxury goods or not.

A2: I think social media has a positive impact on buying luxury goods. We have a lot of customers sharing their shopping experience on social media, which creates a word-of-mouth effect. Some positive comments and testimonials about our branded products have attracted a lot of customers to us and boosted our performance. Social media provides marketing opportunities for luxury brands and shopping references for consumers who want to buy luxury goods.

A3: I think social media has a positive impact on the purchase of luxury goods. Without social media and the ability to buy online, consumers would not be able to buy a product when they only want to buy something small or when there are no boutiques around them. I think there is a relationship between social media and consumers buying luxury goods, but this may need to be discussed on a case by case basis. If it's a smaller product, such as a scarf or a hairbrush, many consumers will choose to buy it directly online. However, for more expensive products, such as bags and ready-to-wear clothes, consumers will choose to go to offline shops to try them on and decide whether to buy them or not.

A4: I think social media has a negative impact on buying luxury goods. I think social media is too free for consumers to post their own opinions and comments. If there is a negative incident or bad word of mouth about a brand, it may spread quickly on social media, so that we can't react in time and it will affect our brand image. I think there is a relationship between social media and consumers buying luxury goods, luxury brands that have a good brand image on social media will have many consumers willing to pay for our brand.

3. Do you think a large percentage of people buy products because of celebrity endorsements or celebrity models?

A1:I think the percentage is actually quite big for young people. There are a lot of girls who come here to buy things and tell me it's because of the LV spokesperson. Others come here because their favourite celebrities wear LV clothes or use LV bags, so they come to buy the same model. But because LV's audience is not only young people, there are also some middle-aged people. So I can only say that for young people, the proportion of people who buy products because of celebrity endorsement is larger. For all LV customers, the proportion of products purchased because of celebrity endorsement is not so big.

A2:I think this proportion is quite considerable. Celebrities, as public figures, often set fashion trends in the way they dress and the products they use. Our brand also takes this into account and often attracts the attention of fans and consumers by inviting celebrities to endorse or letting them wear our brand's products in public. This marketing strategy is very effective because many fans will buy the same product because they like a certain celebrity. So, in a way, celebrity endorsement and celebrity homage do drive the sales of our luxury products to a great extent.

A3: This is an interesting question, I think the impact of celebrity endorsement and celebrity homage on luxury sales is two-way. On the one hand, they can really attract the attention of some consumers, as many people will regard celebrities as the benchmark of fashion and taste, and are willing to imitate their dressing style. On the other hand, as consumers become more rational in their consumption, more and more of them are beginning to pay more attention to the actual value of the products and their own needs, rather than blindly following the trend. Therefore, I think the size of this ratio depends on many factors.

A4:I think the proportion of people who buy products because of celebrity endorsements or celebrity models is still very large. Every time we post something about celebrity models on our social media, it will trigger a lot of positive discussions among

our fans, and a large proportion of our fans will directly buy for their favourite celebrities, so I think this proportion is still very considerable in my opinion.

Interview Results for Customers

Interview result 1

Me: Have you seen any LV advertisements on social media lately, and are any of them more impressive, such as on Douyin or WeChat?

Interviewee 1: I don't feel like I've seen any ads for LV itself, all I've seen are the ones sent to me by sales... is that considered advertising?

Me: I think it is. Is it considered an advertisement, that is, you can't brush the advertisements of luxury goods even if you usually look at Xiaohongshu and so on?

Interviewee 1: I can see other luxury ads, but I don't think I've looked carefully to see if there are any LV ads.

Me: Do you usually go to buy LV stuff after seeing what you wear and the comments on the internet? Or do you prefer to go to an offline store to try it on?

Interviewee 1: After I see it, then I will go to the offline store to try it before I buy it. But this offline store shopping is only limited to the fact that there is that store near me, if not I will just buy online.

Me: And then do you have any, for example, your favorite celebrity endorses this brand, and then you go to pay special attention to what's in this brand

Interviewee 1: Yes, I just look at their raw pictures. That is, if the star is endorsing the brand and he is going to wear that brand of clothes, then I will look at the raw pictures of the star and then go to buy them.

Me: And then some of his clothes, products and so on, there will be those reviews on the Internet, do you think those reviews have a big influence on whether you buy or not?

Interviewee 1: Yes, it definitely affects me, but if I go online and try it on and it looks good, I will still buy it. It's just that I think that the reviews on that Xiaohongshu should only have an effect on when I can only shop online.

Me: And then there's one last question, which is what kind of marketing do you think he has on social media that would be more appealing to you? Like what type of ads would you prefer his ads to be skewed towards or what kind of a marketing strategy would you prefer it to be?

Interviewee 1: Short videos, not so much the ones with a story, but the ones that are edited for about 20 seconds I think are very appealing to me. But if you want to go over 40 seconds, I don't think he can count me as an advertisement, because he doesn't have the patience to let me finish it. Because with these brands, if I'm looking at a single item or a detail of his clothing, there's no way I'm going to be able to turn it on twice as fast. Or I think it's good to use blogger marketing, that's the kind of blogger that carries goods, that's the kind that carries goods unintentionally, that's the kind that plants plants unintentionally, and I think that's a good way to do it, and it would be very appealing to me.

Interview Result 2

Me: Have you seen any LV ads on social media platforms like Douyin or Weibo, or Xiaohongshu, WeChat lately? Or some luxury ads, especially LV ones?

Interviewee 2: I have seen them, but not many LV ones

Me: Then can you tell us what you think when you see these luxury ads? Do you stop and look at the content of these ads? Or do you get a little bit bored with these advertisements after you have swiped them many times?

Interviewee 2: I just look at what the ads are about, if it's something I want to buy at the moment I'll click on it, if I'm not interested in it I'll just swipe through it, but I won't get bored!

Me: Have you ever bought a product before because you saw it on WeChat or Xiaohongshu?

Interviewee 2: Yes, I have, often, and I also read those Amway posts.

Me: Do you think these posts have a big influence on whether you buy these products or not? For example, do you think the comments of other people on this product will have a great influence on whether you want to buy this product or not?

Interviewee 2: Yes, very much so, if many people's comments are not good, it will kill my heart to buy!

Me: Do you still have any celebrities endorsing this product, so you buy it, or pay more attention to this brand?

Interviewee 2: Of course I do! For example, Dior is endorsed by Wang Junkai, the power of love beans will be greater

Me: The last question is what kind of advertisements or what kind of content or online services do you want LV to have on social media in the future that would be more appealing to you and make you want to buy their stuff more?

Interviewee 2: Social media I feel like spokespersons I guess.

Interview Result 3

Me: The first thing is have you seen any LV advertisements on social media lately, and then are there any that are more impressive?

Interviewee 3: In the social media like those software, such as the small red book then, is actually brush less. Then the ads are actually more in the WeChat moment sent by sales, or some official ads.

Interviewee 3: I don't remember when I was more impressed, but they came out with that big doll, and I was more impressed when I swiped it.

Me: Whenever you saw this advertisement, would you skim over it or would you look at the content of the advertisement? Would you get bored if you swiped it many times?

Interviewee 3: It depends, like when he sends out different kinds of clothes or dolls, I feel different, like I am a girl and I am not interested in the men's clothes he sends out, but if he sends out that kind of bag, or box, or that kind of doll I just mentioned, I am more willing to look at it more closely.

Interviewee 3: If you send it too many times, it will definitely be more annoying, but I think you have to control the frequency, that is, like those who brush the screen of the WeChat moments will definitely feel annoyed, but like that kind of brush to one or two a day, I think it will not have this kind of feeling at all!

Me: Have you ever bought anything from LV before, for example, after you saw sales posting those things, because you saw the advertisement of this product on these social media?

Interviewee 3: I think like these sales posting words can be considered a seeding point I guess, before a year or two ago there was just a bag that I had seen but he was blue at the time I remember him posting the ad at the time. Then I was actually quite like, but I think the blue is not too real match, I went to ask the sales have black or other colors, and then no, so I did not go to buy. In fact, because of the WeChat moments to see and go to buy the situation is quite small, more likely to be walk in, is to go shopping and happen to see what is suitable, or is itself what want to buy, such as feeling that they lack a pair of shoes ah, and then in order to a pair of shoes to go to buy, rather than in the WeChat moments to see what feel good to go to buy.

Me: Do you look at Xiaohongshu or any platforms, do you look at what they say about these things? Do you care more about what other people say about these things, or look at what other people are wearing, and then it's just this kind of comments on the internet about these items that influence you to buy or not to buy?

Interviewee 3: Well, I think like the sales comments, in fact, is not too much influence, but I will care about is that other consumers on the evaluation of these goods, because I think my aesthetic is still relatively popular, but may be some time more entangled in the time to read everyone's comments, it will be more helpful to help me to decide whether to buy this commodity.

Me: Have you ever had any celebrities endorsing a brand, so you would pay special attention to the products of those brands?

Interviewee 3: I think this definitely has an impact, is like not like the celebrity endorsement, I certainly will not go to choose these brands ah, because I think that I bought this brand, I will give him money, I'm not comfortable. I think this is quite an important part for those who follow the entertainment industry or follow the stars.

Me: The last question is how do you think LV should be more appealing to you on top of social media, like what kind of, what type of ads would be more appealing to you? Or do you have any hope that he will have some kind of, just more specific way, which will attract you to buy his products.

Interviewee 3: I actually quite like this form of flash mob, that is, I'm already engaged in a kind of shopping mall that kind of semi-open space, then, actually then. Well, like those long gold and white good-looking ah, you are more suitable for card words, then I would actually be more willing to go in, well, to stroll, and then in that kind of shopping process will certainly be interested in some products, and then I think that this may be for me to speak will be more desire to consume it.

Interviewee 3: But if on social media, I'm actually more happy to see the consumer evaluation is that you this product is really good, so that other people feel good after buying, this is what will make me feel more grass it, like those you official or sales sent, in fact, you just want to make money ah, I think he is not very objective, I am more concerned about the consumer's view.

Me: So it's if you're on the internet, like it's publicized that he's got this kind of flash mob, so you'll go and see it is that right?

Interviewee 3: I would be willing to go to a flash mob if it was advertised.

Interview Result 4

Me: Have you seen LV ads on social media platforms lately?

Interviewee 4: I have seen it

Me: And is there anything that impresses you a lot?

Interviewee 4: Yes, LV came out with a DIY bag where you can choose your own accessories and hang them on the bag.

Me: Do you see many of these advertisements?

Interviewee 4: Not much, not a lot of luxury items

Me: Do you buy a product because you see it advertised on social media? Or do you prefer to buy from offline stores?

Interviewee 4: No, I prefer to buy from offline stores because I'm afraid it won't fit.

Me: Do you read other people's comments on the products in Xiaohongshu or something?

Interviewee 4: I go back to Xiaohongshu to look at the outfits to judge whether to buy or not.

Me: Do these outfits have much influence on whether you buy or not?

Interviewee 4: Not much, but my friends' advice has a big impact on me, especially when they are studying fashion design.

Interview Result 5

Me: Have you seen LV ads on any social media platforms lately?

Interviewee 5: Yes

Me: Do you have any advertisements that are more memorable?

Interviewee 5: I remember that he has a new product that has a limited edition for Valentine's Day, and then I was very impressed.

Me: Would you go and buy something from LV because you're seeing them on social media or would you be more inclined to try them in an offline store?

Interviewee 5: Yes, it would be, like for example I saw it on Xiaohongshu and then just I went to the offline store two days ago to see it, but it's really not available.

Me: Okay, so for example when you look at Xiaohongshu when you see that thing, do you care more about what other people say about them? Or do you just go and look at what they're wearing or whatever, and then do you think that just those comments or what they're wearing or whatever is important for you to buy or not to buy that thing? Does it affect whether you buy it or not?

Interviewee 5: I think it's important, it's like when I'm interested in something, I'll go and look up what it's wearing, and then if someone in the comments says that there's something bad about it or that it doesn't go with clothes or something like that, then I probably won't buy it. Or for example, if I've recently swiped a certain outfit on social media, and I think it looks good or it's fashionable, I might just go and get a set or buy it specifically because of that. And then go and see if it suits me.

Me: For example, if certain brands have endorsers, do you think that if you like a celebrity who endorses the brand, you will pay more attention to the brand?

Interviewee 5: Not really, because I don't have that kind of celebrity that I particularly like or follow, but maybe for example, some brands have spokespersons for commercials, like Ni Ni's Gucci commercials, and then I would think that he is the

main handbag, and I would think that it's very pretty, and then I would want to go and look at it, or try it on, and then I would want to see it.

Me: So which is the model of the ad that you think will appeal to you more? What kind of content would you like LV to have on social media in the future that would be more appealing to you?

Interviewee 5: Actually I think I really like the traditional kind, the kind of promos that are made, the kind that have some kind of storyline, and I would think that it's just very much that kind of fashion feeling, and it appeals to me. And then apart from that, I would think that the social media nowadays, like Xiaohongshu or Douyin, I guess, Douyin is less, I would think that this kind of more practical advertisement on it would be very appealing to me.

Interview Result 6

Me: Which or which social media platforms do you follow LV more often these days? Or other luxury brands, like Douyin, Xiaohongshu and so on.

Interviewee 6: LV is just Shake Yum recently, I think, the others are Xiaohongshu and WeChat, like WeChat public number and some sales

Me: Have you ever seen LV's ads on Douyin before or anything like that, that is, would you you just be attracted by the content of the ads? Or you just see more, is if more brush to a few times then it is. I'm not sure if it's a good idea, but I'm sure it's a good idea for me. Or would you just want to see what the advertisement is about?

Interviewee 6: I saw the Beijing limited, I swiped it and took a look at it, and I didn't get tired of it or interested in it.

Me: So would you buy LV stuff because, for example, you saw these ads on WeChat or swiped them on Douyin?

Interviewee 6: No, I usually go offline to see if there are any I like, basically the ones I swiped online won't make me like them enough to go buy them.

Me: Do you read the reviews on Xiaohongshu or something like that?

Interviewee 6: No, I just look at the products.

Me: Then would you go and look at that luxury item in particular because of what, like which of your favorite celebrities endorsed that luxury item? Would that be the case?

Interviewee 6: For example, because Park Ji Min endorses Dior and Tiffany, I will pay more attention to them and see if there is anything that attracts me and I can afford.

Me: The last question is what kind of content would you like to see from LV on social media in the future? What would appeal to you?

Interviewee 6: Something related to BTS would be more appealing to me!

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