

Research Articles

Influencer Marketing: United States Versus China

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This research investigates the differences of advertising techniques of influencers on Chinese and American social media. Posts on Xiaohongshu(RED) and Instagram were used to represent the marketing behaviors of each country. Content analysis and interviews were used to draw conclusions. Several tests were used to analyze the collected Likert scale data. It was concluded that Chinese influencers were more informative, containing several products in each post. Chinese influencers also fit more traditional beauty standards while American influencers promoted body-positivity. In addition across both platforms certain factors like “attractiveness”, “number of products”, and “luxury” led to larger follower counts.

Introduction

In this information filled era with social media, influencers (KOLs) of individuals play a decisive role due to their natures of being close to the public. Netizens as well as consumers are more willing to listen to the voices of their “online friends” instead of the commercial advertisements. However, what makes one a good influencer and how to make the recommendations of the influencers more appealing to the audiences require more research. In this paper, we investigate different effects of various traits of influencers on consumers between China and the U.S.

Influencers are a big part of consumer culture, which has been rapidly increasing in recent years. Although it is one of the most prominent parts in marketing it has not been adequately researched. Therefore, there is little to no substantial information surrounding the topic. This project is exploratory and is dedicated to creating and building off of existing information.

Literary Review

Influencers in China

In the digital world, the internet allows for information to spread rapidly, opening doors for capable and trustworthy individuals to expand and cultivate their influence. Influencer marketing has grown bigger and trendier in the past few years. And this growth is not over yet: data shows that over 79% of brands will increase their social media marketing budget in 2019, including spending more on influencer marketing (Shi, n.d.). In China, increased incomes are fostering an affluent middle class who are educated and sophisticated consumers. Purchases are no longer influenced only by price - shopping choices are now heavily influenced by social media. Chinese consumers are more likely to consider buying a product if they see it discussed positively on platforms like Xiaohongshu.

Although China’s economy has cooled in recent years, there has been no slowing of the beauty sector, with data showing total retail sales of skincare products and make-up products in China reaching 169.1 billion yuan (US\$ 25 billion) and 28.3 billion yuan (US\$ 4.04 billion) respectively in 2016, year-on-year growth of 5 percent and 12 percent respectively (Euromonitor). New research shows that “influencers” are changing the face of the beauty industry in China, attracting cult-like followings on social media (Hales, 2017). In the competition for the consumer’s attention, influencers are winning with pretty packages of photos and videos, as consumers increasingly reject more traditional forms of marketing like TV commercials and magazine ads—even those with smiling celebrities pitching beauty products—as less credible and less trustworthy.

RED (Xiaohongshu)’s user-generated content plays a big role in helping Chinese consumers shape brand perception and build brand loyalty (Gerdeman, 2019). It encourages users to share their personal experiences with products, gives tips, and provides discounted information. This app is turning into the social commerce hub for beauty beginners and professionals alike.

The Need for Influencers in America

Consumer marketing is how companies promote and encourage the promotion of their products to buyers. Marketing is a very crucial step in a company’s process for selling products. Every company, depending on what market they are in, has a specific type of marketing style they lean towards. In previous years consumers looking to purchase makeup products would “watch celebrities on the red carpet talking about what they were wearing, or they would flip through magazines and look at celebrities in makeup ads” (Gerdeman, 2019). In recent years this style of marketing has become outdated, and many consumers are now flocking to their phones and social media instead of picking up magazines or watching cable TV. Now companies must find

a new way to appeal and gain attention on these new platforms.

Influencers are the newest and most effective form of marketing in the beauty community. “An influencer is an online personality who impacts their followers’ purchasing decisions based on their reputation” (Indeed, 2020). A good influencer has a sizable social media following and is able to connect with their supporters. Consumers listen to what influencers have to say because of that very connection. Many consumers view traditional ads as misleading because they know companies only show their products’ best qualities leaving out any negatives. When listening to influencers they feel as though they are getting advice from a trustworthy friend rather than a random person or company they know nothing about.

In order for the relationship between an influencer and a brand to be truly successful it cannot be random – both parties must do some research. The influencer must make sure they are partnering with a brand that they like and trust. They must be able to promote the product without feeling the need to lie or have a guilty conscience. The beauty industry is a very big market, even when solely looking at makeup, considering it has several niches. Brands must make sure they are choosing influencers with followers in the correct niche. For example, it wouldn’t be beneficial if a brand that sells special effects makeup partnered with an influencer that only does natural everyday makeup looks because followers would question how the influencer was able to make a good judgment of a product they rarely use. In this case, it would be better for the company to partner with someone who does makeup for horror movies. Influencers act as the bridge between companies and consumers.

Marketing in the US vs. China

The U.S and China have very different marketing techniques due to major differences between the consumer cultures and the audience in both countries.

Chinese marketing focuses on a brand name more than the product itself. This is due to many reasons, the first being Chinese consumers tend to be more brand-oriented, and use brands to project their socio-economic status. Another reason for emphasizing the brand rather than emphasizing the importance of the product is because Chinese consumers have a bad relationship with product manufacturers in the past. Often, Chinese products are low-quality, therefore consumers do not trust just any brand and rely on high-quality brands, “a big brand name that is well-known demonstrates the endorsement of a quality product. And,” consumers “are always looking for that brand credibility.” (Michelini, 2017). More specifically to the beauty market, Chinese brands market specific products made especially for Asian skin, or products that are used for traditional Chinese medicine. The Chinese cosmetic market has also branched out to men since Chinese male consumers have recently been influenced by Korean pop culture. Young, wealthy men have taken interest in skin care products and are following cosmetic products more closely.

American marketers focus more on the functionality of a product with less focus on the brand, due to the American consumers’ focus on the reliability and usefulness of a prod-

uct. Unlike Chinese consumers, American consumers trust their products to be of high quality, so there’s no reliance on just luxury brands. It is “normal” to see influencers and celebrities wearing affordable clothes and to be seen in public wearing something the average person might wear. Especially lately, there seems to have been a de-emphasis on luxury brands. The marketing strategy of beauty products is simply just proving the product is functional in everyday life.

Interestingly, the Chinese beauty industry has recently broken through to men, growing their consumer audience. Advertisements including men on the front cover are not rare to come across, whereas American advertisements rarely have men advertising beauty products.

The men that do advertise for beauty products are not your typical, everyday, American man. American men shown in advertisements are men very interested in makeup and visibly wearing makeup products in public, whereas Chinese marketing targets the average male.

The consumer culture in both the United States and China aren’t entirely different. Currently, the US is facing economic issues due to the bad spending habits of American consumers. According to Hofstede, the United States scores a 62 on its masculinity rating, meaning that the United States is driven by success and competition. Wanting to be the best is the main source of motivation, and being the best includes having the best things, “Typically, Americans ‘live to work’ so that they can obtain monetary rewards...” (Hofstede, n.d.). The United States consumer culture is Americans working unhealthy hours to obtain money to waste on unnecessarily expensive objects (Etzioni, 2017). Similarly, China has a masculinity score of 66, but their desire for success has many Chinese citizens sacrificing family and leisure time for their job (Hofstede, n.d.). Unlike Americans, Chinese consumers have attempted to adjust their spending habits and stray from spending money without thinking about any repercussions (Ho et al., 2019).

U.S and Chinese consumers are spending a lot of money. Americans are especially increasing their virtual shopping (Durkin, 2019), but China takes the cake after their 24 hour online shopping day called Singles Day had consumers outspending U.S, German, Canadian, and UK’s cyber Mondays (Durkin, 2019). Both countries also have a relatively similar Consumer Confidence Index, so both countries spend a lot of money.

Hypotheses

H1. The United States and China are vastly different countries that require different marketing techniques. In order for companies to be successful they have to tailor their marketing strategies towards different groups. They cannot use the same form of advertisement from the US in China because the people of each country think and react to things differently. It is assumed that in order for companies to be successful in China they must focus more on brand names unlike in the US where ads are focused more on the product. This is because in the US consumers are more concerned about the individual product but Chinese consumers will only trust a product that is backed by a big brand be-

cause, traditionally, Chinese products are considered low-quality.

H2. As a reflection of their advertisements, it is more socially acceptable for men to wear makeup in China than it is in the US. Men and the beauty industry have historically not gone hand-in-hand, but there have been recent changes in the concept of makeup being solely for women. Makeup for men in China targets the average male, whereas makeup for men in the US targets a very select group of men. American men “are now comfortable when it comes to buying skincare,” but “makeup still comes with a strong stigma.” (Elliot, 2019). There are more Chinese advertisements targeting males with makeup, but advertising beauty products to men in the US advertently avoid something looking too “feminine.”

H3. As putting on cosmetics is more prevailing in the U.S. and knowledge of cosmetics is less known in China, the Chinese influencers who want to have more followers tend to introduce more knowledge and skills on cosmetics, as expressed through their posts. The followers read those posts only when they think they can learn more about the cosmetics, so influencers will blend their advertisements and recommendations in one. However, influencers in the U.S. favor showing the effects of the cosmetics, directly. Also, Chinese audiences may follow a bunch of influencers, unlike Americans who trust just a few, creating competition amongst Chinese influencers. The influencers who can provide more information on their products without being redundant gain more trust and more followers.

Method

To test our hypotheses and get more insight on influencers in the cosmetics field, we utilized content analysis and an interview to investigate. One method is from the quantitative side and the other is from the qualitative side of analyzation.

We first analyzed the contents from Instagram and Xiaohongshu (RED), which are platforms from the U.S. and China, respectively, for KOLs to share their experiences and advertise. Americans use Instagram to talk and share various experiences through pictures and videos. To keep the same conditions, we tried to find an equivalent platform from China that shares the same functions with Instagram. Finally, the researchers identified Xiaohongshu (RED) as equivalent because the formats of sharing are also pictures and videos and these two platforms have a young population of users. In addition, Xiaohongshu (RED) specializes in customers sharing their shopping and life.

According to Xiaohongshu's report, there are more than 100 million active users on the platform, with 56% of the users following cosmetics related content (RED, 2020). According to Instagram, there are more than 1 billion active users with more than 80% of them using it at least once a week (OneSight, 2020). Under this condition, the beauty industry has been the third largest industry that cooperates with influencers to advertise. In fact, 83% of companies in the beauty industry are carrying out this practice.

To do the content analysis, we selected 20 advertisements or shared experiences with similar advertisements from each platform to represent each country. When the ex-

amples were selected, efforts were made to eliminate the possibility of not explicitly indicating the cosmetic products used. We then drafted a questionnaire (Appendix) and asked two researchers from China and the U.S. to go through the 40 advertisements separately. The researchers were asked to what extent they think these advertisements emphasized those traits. After two researchers filled out the questionnaire, the third researcher handled the data by averaging the Likert scale or decided which response to use when there were conflicts. After getting the data, we used SPSS to run T-tests to compare if the mean of the U.S. and China on specific traits have a significant difference to testify to a hypothesis and discover more facts about the differences of advertisements in two countries. We also used linear regression to investigate what traits of posts make a good advertisement and a good influencer. In this research, we use the number of followers to indicate whether they are good influencers or not.

Research Instrument

In the questionnaire, we used Likert scale to measure the extent of each trait of the advertisement (interval data). The scales used ranged from 1 to 5, where 5 indicated a high level, and 1 indicated a low level for each of the traits evaluated (interval data). We used nominal data to represent names of the countries and gender; for number-measurable data, like video length, we directly filled in the numbers. In question designing, attempts were made to investigate various traits of advertisements of cosmetics products. Common questions of online advertising were asked, like: age, gender, attractiveness, and number of followers. Specific traits of advertisements were also questioned, like: informativeness, sensuality, luxury, expertise, and organization. In addition, we asked the different ways the products were presented, like: the number of products shown, number of brands shown, and whether or not there was a video. Besides these, questions that target the cosmetics field are also asked, like the style of the makeup. Lastly, because the majority of both Instagram and Xiaohongshu (RED)'s users are young, questions to test the fun aspects, like humor level and creativity level, are included.

Results

In H1, we hypothesized that in China there would be a higher focus on brands, while in the United States there would be a higher focus on the products. Although the analysis was consistent with the hypothesis, it did not prove it to be true. China's brand orientation mean is .075 higher (Table 1). However, this value does not hold any significance with a value of .828 being extremely close to 1 (Table 1). When comparing how product oriented the advertisement was for each country a similar situation occurred; although the hypothesis was consistent to the analysis it did not hold any significance because the p value was .199 (Table 2).

In H2, we hypothesized that in China there would be more advertisements with males in order to target the male demographic. Although the analysis was consistent with our hypothesis, it was unable to confirm it. When looking at our data in a frequency chart for gender there are 35 women and 5 men (Table 3). Analyzing it further in a cross-tabula-

Table 1.

Group Statistics						
	Country	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error Mean	
Brand Oriented	China	20	2.925	1.1271	0.252	
	U.S.	20	2.85	1.04	0.2325	
Independent Sample Test						
Levene's Test for Equality of Variance				t-test for Equality		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)
Brand Oriented	Equal Variances assumed	0.149	0.701	0.219	38	0.828
	Equal Variances not assumed			0.219	37.757	0.828
						Mean Difference

Table 2.

Group Statistics						
	Country	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error Mean	
Product Oriented	China	20	3.1	0.8675	0.194	
	U.S.	20	3.425	0.6935	0.1551	
Independent Sample Test						
Levene's Test for Equality of Variance				t-test for Equality		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)
Product Oriented	Equal Variances assumed	0.528	0.472	-1.309	38	0.199
	Equal Variances not assumed			-1.309	36.242	0.199
						Mean Difference
						-0.325
						-0.325

Table 3. Gender

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Female	35	87.5
	Male	5	12.5
	Total	40	100

Table 4. Country*Gender Crosstabulation

		Female	Male	Total
Country	China	16	4	20
	U.S.	19	1	20
Total		35	5	40

tion chart 4 out of 5 of the men are from the Chinese advertisements (Table 4). The value 2.057 shows that there is a correlation between gender and country but because the p value is .151 it is not considered significant (Table 5).

In H3, we hypothesized that Chinese influencers' advertisements are more informative than the U.S. ones. The result exactly confirms our hypothesis. The analysis reveals that the Chinese influencers' advertisements ($X=3.25$) are more informative than the U.S. influencers' advertisements

($X=2.4$), and the difference is highly significant ($p=0.011$, see Table 6 and 7).

Additional Findings

The analysis reveals that Chinese makeup influencers ($X=2.575$) are more attractive than the U.S. influencers (3.605), and the difference is highly significant ($p=0.002$, see Table 8 and 9). The analysis reveals that the U.S. influencers ($X=3.3$) are more expert than Chinese influencers ($X=1.675$), and the difference is highly significant ($p<0.001$, see Table 10 and 11).

The analysis also reveals that the total number of products shown in a post in China ($X=7.05$) are more in numbers than in the U.S. ($X=12.95$), and the difference is significant ($p=0.047$, please see Table 12 and 13).

We also find that U.S. makeup influencers tend to choose more "glamorous" styles and "special effects" styles, while Chinese influencers mainly use "natural" style (Table 14). In Chinese sociopsychology, a standard beautiful woman doesn't put on too much makeup, so Chinese influencers share styles that may improve their attractiveness, but not make the use of cosmetics so obvious. Overall, American makeup is a little more heavily worn, while Chinese makeup is more natural. American-style makeup incorporates lots of sharp lines and edges, while Chinese makeup is softer

Table 5. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2 sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.057	1	0.151		
Continuity Correlation	0.914	1	0.339		
Likelihood Ratio	2.185	1	0.139		
Fisher's Exact Test				0.342	0.171
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.006	1	0.157		
N of Valid Cases	40				

Table 6. Group Statistics

	Country	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error Mean
Informativeness	U.S.	20	2.4	1.0834	0.2422
	China	20	3.25	0.9248	0.2068

Table 7. Independent Sample Test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variance				t-test for Equality					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95%Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Product Oriented	Equal Variances assumed	0.296	0.59	-2.669	38	0.011	-0.85	-1.4948	-0.2052
	Equal Variances not assumed			-2.669	37.087	0.011	-0.85	-1.4953	-0.2047

Table 8. Group Statistics

	Country	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error Mean
Attractiveness	U.S.	20	2.575	0.9635	0.2154
	China	19	3.605	0.9941	0.2281

Table 9. Independent Sample Test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variance							t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95%Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Product Oriented	Equal Variances assumed	0.53	0.819	-3.287	37	0.002	-1.0303	0.3135	-1.6654	-0.3951
	Equal Variances not assumed			-3.287	36.741	0.002	-1.0303	0.3137	-1.6661	-0.3944

Table 10. Group Statistics

	Country	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error Mean
Expertise	U.S.	20	3.3	0.9787	0.2188
	China	20	1.675	1.0036	0.2244

Table 11. Independent Sample Test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variance							t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95%Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Expertise	Equal Variances assumed	0.104	0.749	5.184	38	<0.001	-1.625	0.3135	0.9904	-2.2596
	Equal Variances not assumed			5.184	37.976	<0.001	-1.625	0.3135	0.9904	-2.2596

Table 12. Group Statistics

	Country	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.Error Mean
# of product shown	U.S.	20	7.05	5.586	1.249
	China	20	12.95	11.592	2.592

Table 13. Independent Sample Test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variance				t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95%Confidence Interval of the Difference
# of products shown	Equal Variances assumed	8.787	0.005	-2.051	38	0.047	-5.9	2.877	-11.725 -0.075
	Equal Variances not assumed			-2.051	27.374	0.05	-5.9	2.877	-11.8 0

Table 14. Country*Style of Makeup Crosstabulation

Country		Style of Makeup				Total
		glamorous	special effect	bridal	natural	
	U.S.	12	7	1	0	20
	China	0	0	2	13	15
	Total	12	7	3	13	35

and more blended. Chinese women aim for a “cutesy” look and aren’t afraid to make themselves look young and sweet, while Americans go for a more cool, confident, and sexy look. The pattern can be clearly seen when we take a close look at the difference of habits of Chinese and American makeup users. In terms of foundation, Americans love the bronzy, tanned look, popularized by Coco Chanel in the 1920s, but Chinese people prefer pale skin. Chinese people like to use blush—pink cheeks, which can make the face look fresh and natural. Americans use blush as well, but a bit more sparingly - very pink cheeks aren’t as popular. In terms of eyebrows, Americans tend to like a more defined brow, and they often use a lighter colored concealer to outline the brow. Chinese people tend to go for a more natural look. In addition, Americans excessively use eyeshadow. Lots of tutorials are on various Western social media platforms, and every color of the rainbow (and then some) is fair game when it comes to eyeshadow. While the average American doesn’t go mad with crazy colors on a daily basis, it’s not unusual to see a brightly colored look. However, Chinese people tend to stick with warm colors or more natural colors, such as pinks and oranges. Americans also like a little glitter in their eyeshadow, and they don’t shy away from dark, smokey eyeshadow styles. On the other hand, Chinese people tend to keep their colors lighter. As for eyeliner in America, long, pointed winged eyeliner is very in-style. It helps to open and elongate the eye. Americans generally use a black eyeliner to create a sharp, defined line. Liquid liners can help with that sharp line. However, in China, it’s not as popular. While we still see winged eyeliner, usually the wing is much smaller, and the line thinner. A softer, smudged eyeliner can be seen in a more natural color, like brown. Sometimes the eyeliner is left out altogether. Finally, Americans like big lips! Sometimes people like to draw over their natural lip line to make their lips appear fuller, and, similar to eyeshadow, lip colors come in all shades. Liquid lipsticks are popular, and they create a very clean, crisp line. Americans are wearing dark, light, and unnatural shades of lipstick in comparison to the Chinese, who aren’t as big on having a crisp line. A soft, smudged look is more popular, and again, natural colors are in (Li, 2020).

General Findings

In terms of linear regression, because of our lack of data, we are only able to find one set of data with significant correlation ($0.4 < r < 0.7$). However, utilizing the data on hand, we are able to identify additional factors that also contribute the most to better performance.

The analysis indicates that “brand-oriented” has the strongest correlation with the number of followers

Table 15. Correlation of follower count and brand oriented

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.448	0.2	0.179	0.9704

Table 16. Correlation of follower count and attractiveness

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.247	0.061	0.036	1.0776

Table 17. Correlation of number of product and follower count

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.249	0.062	0.037	9.286

Table 18. Correlation of luxury and follower count

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.237	0.056	0.031	0.823

($r=0.448$). The more brand-oriented the advertisements are, the more followers the influencers have. Other traits of ads, like attractiveness ($r=0.247$), number of products ($r=0.249$), and luxury ($r=0.237$) are factors that have stronger correlation with the number of followers. (See Table 15-18)

Qualitative Study

The person interviewed is a young lady who currently attends the University of Richmond. She is 18 years old. She started using makeup at the age of 9 and has continued experimenting. This gives her about 10 years of experience in the world of makeup. She downloaded Instagram 8 years ago and frequently uses the app to gain inspiration. She follows 9 makeup influencers, all from the United States. She currently follows @gabxxrielle, @jamescharles (a highly recognized name in the makeup community), @donni.davy (the lead makeup artist for several prominent projects), and @cutcreaser (a content creator and student that is based in New York) - just to name a few. She is a good candidate to interview because she has been doing makeup for a long

time, she has purchased multiple products recommended by influencers, and she follows several influencers.

When choosing which influencers she supports and follows, she does not have strict guidelines as she goes mainly off of what catches her eye. She prefers to see the end result rather than the process of getting said look, and she pays attention to the creativity of the influencer. It is important for her to see the creativity of the makeup look rather than the influencer trying to create a fancy video. This is why most of the people she follows post photos of the completed look, and not videos showing the process of how the makeup look is created. Although she appreciates creativity, she does not like special effects makeup and she prefers glam makeup and things that are “bright” and fun. She does not like repetitive, basic looks. She believes the use of brighter colors make a makeup look “cooler” and more interesting. “It’s easy to look at Instagram and feel as though people are just copying and pasting from one person to the next,” so she likes new things that stand out from other looks. She looks for people who do not just do basic glam. Her favorite creator is [@gabxxrielle](#) because she does really creative looks that are beautiful and scary and fun.

Although she cannot remember all of the products she has purchased, there are a few notable purchases. She purchased James Charles’s collaboration palette with Morphe after seeing several of the influencers she follows using the palette and multiple good reviews. She has also purchased the extremely popular benefit cosmetics Born This Way concealer after seeing it heavily endorsed by Jackie Aina. She purchased the concealer because Jackie is a trusted name in the community and she could see good results in the influencer’s photos after use.

Discussion and Conclusion

Through our research we were able to discover various interesting points in the world of makeup influencers in China and the United States. When observing how influencers in both countries orient their advertisements, we noticed a few things. Both countries had a mean that rounded to 3, when discussing both brand and product orientation on a scale of 1 to 5 (Table 1 and 2). This brings us to the conclusion that in both countries although the advertisements focused on brands, it was not heavily promoted. However, we did keep in mind, without rounding, product orientation was higher in both countries than brand orientation. This means that in both China and the United States they promote the product more, instead of the brand.

It is easy to recognize that the United States does not truly cater towards cis-gendered straight males. Instead of creating makeup lines designated for the average male, the United States categorizes makeup as inclusive for everyone. However, their marketing does not reflect this because ads are mostly composed of females and males who present themselves as more feminine or are a part of the LGBTQ+ community. However, in China and most Asian countries, although all makeup is allowed for everyone to use, there are designated products for the average male. Several companies are “launching new ranges to exploit signs of rising demand for cosmetics among men, especially in Asia, betting the tide is finally turning in a segment that has long

underwhelmed” (Choi et al., 2018). In the United States, when men have skin care routines it is often seen as weird and feminine. However, in Asia it is becoming normalized, unisex and male oriented beauty products that are more heavily advertised in Asia. The views of men in makeup have transferred directly over to the marketing techniques of each country. In Asia, you are more likely to find men on a beauty advertisement and as influencers and it will be seen as a normal everyday occurrence. In the United States, and most western countries, the influencer community is dominated by females. “Popular youtubers like [Jef-free Star](#), [Manny Mua](#), and [Patrick Starr](#) [all male American makeup artists] have all been victims of hate for their popular makeup channels,” with most hateful comments being directed towards that fact that they are male and including homophobic language (Brown, 2016). Also, when males are seen in western beauty advertisements it is a shock to most people. Oftentimes companies will receive praise for being “thoughtful and inclusive” when it should not make any difference and the practice be normalized.

In terms of other findings through analyzing the data, we find that they make sense. We think that one reason for the phenomenon that Chinese influencers are more physically attractive is that Chinese influencers are more confident to share their experiences and show their faces when they are attractive, and because of their attractiveness, they are more likely to become influencers. We also find that a lot of influencers in the U.S. are experts, or makeup brand owners, which makes them more expert than Chinese influencers. In contrast, Chinese influencers are just common people sharing their own shopping experiences and they are believable to consumers because of their accessibility. Through data, we find that the number of products shown in Chinese influencer posts are twice as much as the number of products shown in U.S. ads. Chinese people are sharing their shopping experiences, so more products in one collection makes it more useful for reference. In contrast, US influencers are showing makeup on their own faces, so they cannot put too many kinds of makeup at the same time. We also find that U.S. makeup influencers tend to use “glamorous” style and “special effects” style, while Chinese influencers mainly use “natural” style. In Chinese sociopsychology, a standard beautiful woman does not put on too much makeup, so Chinese influencers share styles that may improve their attractiveness, but not make the use of cosmetics so obvious. In the U.S., there is not such a single standard for beauty.

Based on the research conducted it is clear that, although in the world of makeup and influencers there are a lot of similarities, between China and the United States there are certain things that are able to differentiate them.

This research is important as the world is changing towards a focus on technology, especially during times of COVID-19. Consumers are switching to online shopping more and more, and influencers are playing a more crucial role in consumer culture as relayers of information. Based on the research, it is evident that the more brand-oriented advertisements are, the more followers that influencer has. We have also found that the more knowledgeable an influencer is on what they are advertising, the more followers they have as well. As a marketer, this is important because

it affects the influencers picked to advertise their products, and it affects *how* they should do it. With this research, it could be concluded that pulling in a consumer with the brand name, yet being knowledgeable about the products, is an influencers best strategy in selling a product.

Our research contained many limitations deterring us from finalizing many results. Though much could be supported by our data, our hypotheses could not all be confirmed due to our lack of data and a language barrier creating more difficulty in understanding Chinese advertisements. For future research, having more than two people answer the questionnaire is important, especially people well versed in makeup. It may have also been bene-

ficial to interview an influencer themselves, as they have first-hand experience with these advertisements and how they work. Some questions for these influencers could be: What have they noticed working well in their advertisements? Do they *only* advertise for brands they are familiar with, or do they advertise for just anyone? Overall, much more content should be examined as their needs to be a greater variety in gender and advertising techniques.

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Appendix: Questionnaire

1. number
2. Country
 - Usa (1) vs China (2)
3. 1.gender of the influencer (Nominal)
 - 1 male 2 female 3 both 4 other
4. age of the influencer
5. Informativeness (Ordinal)
 - Informative 5 4 3 2 1 simplistic
6. level of attractiveness of influencer (Ordinal)
 - High level 5 4 3 2 1 Low level
7. number of followers (ratio)
 - #
8. Usage of video (Nominal)
 - Use 1 Not Use 2
9. Humor degree (Ordinal)
 - High 5 4 3 2 1 Low
10. How luxurious the video/product is
 - No luxury 1 2 3 4 5 luxury
11. Sexaulaity
 - Sexual 5 4 3 2 1 not sexual
12. Expertise
 - Not expert 1 2 3 4 5 expert
13. Enthusiasm
 - Reserved 1 2 3 4 5 enthusiastic
14. Organization
 - Organized 5 4 3 2 1 not organized
15. What style of makeup they do (Nominal)
16. How many people are in the advertisement
17. How many products are in the advertisement
18. How long the video is
19. How many different brands are showcased
20. Are the brands tagged
21. Focused on product
 - Not on Product 1 2 3 4 5 Product
22. Focused on Brand
 - Not brand 1 2 3 4 5 brand