

ADVERTIMENT. L'accés als continguts d'aquesta tesi queda condicionat a l'acceptació de les condicions d'ús establertes per la següent llicència Creative Commons:  <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/?lang=ca>

ADVERTENCIA. El acceso a los contenidos de esta tesis queda condicionado a la aceptación de las condiciones de uso establecidas por la siguiente licencia Creative Commons:  <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/?lang=es>

WARNING. The access to the contents of this doctoral thesis it is limited to the acceptance of the use conditions set by the following Creative Commons license:  <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/?lang=en>



**The impact of personal characteristics and content shared by Chinese LGBTQ
influencers on audience engagement: A quantitative analysis of digital
interaction in DouYin and BiliBili**

TingTing Yan



**The impact of personal characteristics and content shared by Chinese LGBTQ
influencers on audience engagement: A quantitative analysis of digital
interaction in DouYin and BiliBili**

TingTing Yan

A Doctoral Thesis

**The impact of personal characteristics and content shared by Chinese LGBTQ
influencers on audience engagement: A quantitative analysis of digital
interaction in DouYin and BiliBili**

TingTing Yan

PhD thesis supervised by Dr.Amparo Huertas Bailén

PhD in Audiovisual Communication and Advertising

Department of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising

Universidad Aut6noma de Barcelona

2025

**The impact of personal characteristics and content shared by Chinese LGBTQ
influencers on audience engagement: A quantitative analysis of digital
interaction in DouYin and BiliBili**

Doctoral thesis presented by:

TingTing Yan

Directed by:

Dr.Amparo Huertas Bailén

**Department of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising
Universidad Aut3noma de Barcelona**

2025

Abstract

This study explores the influence of LGBTQ social media influencers (SMIs) on audience engagement and attitudes. Despite China having one of the world's largest LGBTQ populations, social visibility and acceptance remain limited. This study elaborates the history and digital culture of LGBTQ in the Chinese context. The history of LGBTQ in China is divided into three parts: the history of LG communities, brief notes on transgenderism and brief notes on queer. The social media and LGBTQ communities part talks about the evolution of internet and LGBTQ online activity in the country. The theoretical framework focuses on three parts: social media, social media influencer, and audience reception. The social media part includes positive aspects of social sociability (social connection and social support), and social media and citizenship (civic debate, social media as a democratic public sphere, homonormativity and public debate, and algorithms and LGBT biases). The social media influencer's part includes definition, characteristics, function, and the source credibility model (trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness). The audience reception part talks about uses and gratifications theory and audience engagement.

Based on this theoretical frame, this research investigates how LGBTQ SMIs personal characteristics (trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness) and video content (humor and title) shape audience reactions (views, likes, shares, comments, and saves). A quantitative analysis was conducted on 100 top-performing videos from 10 prominent LGBTQ SMIs on the most popular social media platforms in China DouYin (the Chinese version of TikTok) and BiliBili, alongside 100,000 user comments from 2023 (the 17th October to 17th December) and 2024 (1st October to 1st January 2025). Regression analysis and Python-based data collection were used to measure interactions (views, likes, shares, comments, and saves) and sentiment analyses on comments (positive and negative).

Although views are the dominant digital interactivity, findings show different effects according to each personal characteristic. Expertise significantly enhances

digital interactivity, but non-experts generate more positive and negative comments than experts. While non-expertise generates 34% positive comments and 19 % negative comments, expertise SMI reduces interaction, 15% (positive) and 5% (negative). Attractiveness exhibits a U-shaped relationship with user response and this personal characteristic generate interactivity face stronger polarization between positive and negative comments (28% vs. 17%). Trustworthiness did not significantly impact audience interactivity, but this content receives more positive comments than negative (39% vs. 19%).

Through quantitative analysis of video themes and their corresponding engagement metrics, several key findings emerge: The Couple theme dominates (29%), featuring romantic relationships. Life content follows (26%), showcasing everyday experiences. Beauty (13%) and Humor (6%) are notable, while Professional (2%), Talk (3%) and Travel (4%) are niche. "Others" (17%) covers diverse themes. While Love and Life content are most prevalent, the Others theme and Professional themes exhibit the highest engagement (35.2M and 30.1M views respectively), suggesting that uniqueness and expertise drive interaction despite lower production frequency. Couple/Love and Life themes generate the highest comment volumes but exhibit significant negativity (32–36% negative comments), indicating their emotionally charged nature. In contrast, beauty and travel content elicit overwhelmingly positive reactions (66–77% positive comments), whereas humor and "Others" themes provoke more mixed reactions. In contrast, talk-themed videos show the lowest engagement, suggesting that conversational content may lack the interactivity needed to drive shares and saves.

About the relationship between title length and audiences' engagement, 71% of SMIs prefer long-form titles, using subtitles, descriptive phrases, or tags to boost engagement. In contrast, short titles (29%) are less common, likely due to their limited informational value. In terms of views, long titles with context/humor perform best (e.g., 150M vs. 5M for short titles).. In terms of likes, it has no correlation with title length and it depends on content/SMI appeal. In terms of shares, long, emotionally resonant titles and short, trend-aligned hashtags perform well. In terms of comments,

interactive titles (regardless of length) generate higher engagement. In terms of saves, long titles implying valuable content excel, while short titles rely on aesthetic appeal.

The findings of the study also show the videos content of SMIs indeed have a positive relationship with audiences' interaction. Humorous themes have a significant and positive effect on user response, showing that more humorous video could attract more attention of audiences and encourage more audience interaction. In addition, title length also affects on user response significantly, but it shows an inverted U-shaped relationship with user response.

In general terms, these results contribute to persuasive communication theory by highlighting the mechanisms through which SMIs shape digital interactivity. It also validates the source credibility model by proving SMI expertise and attractiveness could positively impact audience reactions. These results strengthen theoretical applications of the Elaboration Likelihood Model by clarifying its role in mediating digital engagement processes. The empirical evidence also substantiates that deliberate content choices, particularly in thematic selection, title construction, and humorous elements, yield measurable improvements in audience interaction metrics. However, the research has some contradictions with theoretical framework: SMI's trustworthiness did not significantly influence responses.

Keywords: Social Media Influencers; LGBTQ; digital interactivity; audience engagement; China

Acknowledgements

I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to the following people who have supported me deeply throughout my wonderful journey at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Catalonia).

To my dear advisor Prof. Amparo Huertas Bailén: Thank you so much for your invaluable insight and suggestions in guiding me throughout the thesis writing process. Since coming into your office for the first time, your patience and encouragement have always made me feel supported and more determined about the process I made. Thank you for being more than an advisor - not only leading me to explore the academic world and research interest in gender and social media, but also caring for my feelings and personal growth. It's my honor to be one of your students.

To my lovely parents: Thank you for supporting me along the way. Without your support, I couldn't have had a chance to study abroad, to explore the world, and to meet so many amazing people. Your love and encouragement are always the harbor of my mind.

To my fiancé: Thank you for always being there, offering a listening ear during moments of stress, and providing emotional support and suggestions. You are the best! Thank you everyone for being such an important part of my life.

Lastly, I would like to thank my friends and roommates (Wang Xuejing, Ding Yueping, Xia Weiyi and Dong Wenlin). Thank you for your help in my daily life, listening to my troubles and discussing academic issues with me. Without your help, I could not finish my doctoral thesis smoothly.

Yours truly,

Yan Tingting

Contents

1.INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Problem statement and main questions	1
1.2 Key questions for fieldwork	5
1.3 Purpose and significance of study	6
2.CONTEXTUALIZING LGBTQ IN CHINA: HISTORY AND DIGITAL CULTURE	8
2.1 History of LGBTQ	8
2.1.1 History of LG communities	8
2.1.2 Brief notes on transgenderism	16
2.1.3 Brief notes on Queer	17
2.2 Social media and the LGBTQ communities.....	18
2.2.1 The evolution of internet	19
2.2.2 LGTBQ online activity	21
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	26
3.1. Introduction: cultural consumption	26
3.2. Social Media	29
3.2.1 Positive aspects of digital sociability.....	29
3.2.1.1 Social Connection	29
3.2.1.2 Social Support	31
3.2.2. Social Media and Citizenship.....	33
3.2.2.1. Civic debate	33
3.2.2.2 Social media as a democratic public sphere.....	35
3.2.2.3 Homonormativity and public debate.....	38
3.2.2.4 Algorithms and cisheteronormative biases	40
3.3. Social Media Influencers (SMI)	43
3.3.1 Definition	43
3.3.2 Characteristics	44
3.3.3 Function	46

3.3.4 Source credibility model to study SMI.....	47
3.3.4.1 Introduction: persuasive communication and credibility.....	47
3.3.4.2 Trustworthiness.....	50
3.3.4.3 Attractiveness.....	51
3.3.4.4 Expertise.....	52
3.4. Audience reception.....	53
3.4.1 Global theory about audiences: Uses and Gratifications.....	53
3.4.2 Audience on social media.....	57
3.4.2.1. Algorithmic audiences.....	57
3.4.2.2. Audience engagement.....	59
4.OBJECTIVES, HYPOTHESIS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	62
4.1. Introduction: Elaboration likelihood model.....	62
4.2. Objectives.....	63
4.2.1. Instrumental Objectives.....	63
4.2.2. Research Objectives.....	63
4.3. Hypotheses and research questions.....	64
4.3.1 Digital interactivity and video content.....	65
4.3.2 Digital interactivity and Personality LGBTQ SMI.....	67
5. METHODOLOGY.....	69
5.1. Samples: Forming process and description.....	69
5.1.1. First step: Platform selection process (DouYin and BiliBili).....	69
5.1.2.Second step: Chinese LGBTQ SMI selection process.....	74
5.1.2.1 Searching for the 10 Top LGBTQ SMI.....	73
5.1.2.2 Description of the characteristics of the sample.....	76
5.1.2.3. Assigning a code to each member of the sample.....	90
5.1.3 Third step: Selection process for videos shared by the sample.....	91
5.2 Data: Collecting quantitative data.....	93
5.2.1. Automated data collection: Python (backend).....	93
5.2.2. Manual Data Collection.....	95

5.3 Data: Analyzing quantitative data	97
5.3.1 Variables measurement.....	97
5.3.2 Quantitative method.....	99
5.3.2.1 Linear regression and correlation.....	100
5.3.2.2 Description of the process: Stata 18 (statistical software).....	101
6.FINDINGS.....	106
6.1. Videos shared by LGBTQ SMIs and digital engagement.....	106
6.1.1 Video content.....	106
6.1.1.1 Description and distribution of the topics addressed.....	106
6.1.1.2 Relationship between themes and level of engagement	108
6.1.1.3 Relationship between themes and sentiment of comments.....	110
6.1.2 Title strategies in videos.....	111
6.1.2.1 Description of the length of titles.....	111
6.1.2.2. Relationship between title length and the level of engagement.....	112
6.2 SMIs and audiences engagement:main achievements.....	114
6.2.1 Jinxing(金星)	114
6.2.2 ZhiBo (智博)	118
6.2.3 Niehuliucheng (聂胡刘成)	122
6.2.4 Laijiaxin (赖佳新)	126
6.2.5 Aikelili (艾克里里)	130
6.2.6 Qiaokechidaoshaogongsang (翘课迟到少恭桑).....	134
6.2.7 Zuiyingjienigui(嘴硬杰尼龟).....	137
6.2.8 Quanjiaofu(犬角夫).....	141
6.2.9 Shuishuihexingxing(睡睡和醒醒).....	145
6.2.10 Daamaojun(大啊毛君)	148
6.3. The Relationship between SMI Personality Characteristics and engagement.....	152
6.3.1 Introduction: an exploratory analysis of the relationship between gender identity and engagement.....	152
6.3.2 The Impact of Expertise: engagement and sentiment of comments.....	155

6.3.3 The Impact of trustworthiness: engagement and sentiment of comments.....	159
6.3.4 The Impact of Attractiveness:engagement and sentiment of comments..	162
6.4 Preliminary discussion on hypothesis.....	165
6.4.1 Dependent, independent and control variables.....	165
6.4.2. Correlation Analysis.....	168
6.4.3 Multicollinearity Analysis.....	169
6.4.4. Regression Testing.....	170
7. CONCLUSION.....	179
7.1. Developing Theoretical Frameworks: key findings.....	179
7.2. Practical contributions aimed to LGBTQ SMIs in China.....	183
7.3. Limitations of the study.....	184
7.4. Future studies.....	185
References.....	187

List of Tables

Table1.....	64
Table2.....	73
Table3.....	75
Table4.....	90
Table5.....	103
Table6.....	109
Table7.....	111
Table8.....	113
Table9.....	114
Table10.....	117
Table11.....	119
Table12.....	121
Table13.....	123
Table14.....	124
Table15.....	126
Table16.....	128
Table17.....	131
Table18.....	132
Table19.....	134
Table20.....	136
Table21.....	138
Table22.....	140
Table23.....	142
Table24.....	143
Table25.....	146
Table26.....	147
Table27.....	149
Table28.....	150

Table29.....	166
Table30.....	169
Table31.....	170
Table32.....	171
Table33.....	173
Table34.....	169
Table35.....	174
Table36.....	177
Table37.....	180
Table38.....	182

List of Pictures

Picture1.....	71
Picture2.....	72
Picture3.....	73
Picture4.....	77
Picture5.....	79
Picture6.....	81
Picture7.....	82
Picture8.....	84
Picture9.....	85
Picture10.....	86
Picture11.....	87
Picture12.....	88
Picture13.....	90

List of Graphs

Graph1.....	107
Graph2.....	118
Graph3.....	122
Graph4.....	126
Graph5.....	130
Graph6.....	133
Graph7.....	137
Graph8.....	141
Graph9.....	145
Graph10.....	148
Graph11.....	152
Graph12.....	154
Graph13.....	155
Graph14.....	157
Graph15.....	159
Graph16.....	161
Graph17.....	162
Graph18.....	163
Graph19.....	165
Graph20.....	178

1.INTRODUCTION

The LGBTQ community belongs to a minority group in China. Nevertheless, China has the world's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) population (Wang et al., 2020) 【1】. Parkin (2018) 【2】 cited the data from *A Review of Policies and Social Practices on the Human Rights of LGBT People in the PRC* and pointed out that there were approximately forty to seventy million LGBT individuals in China. It makes China the country with the world's largest LGBTQ+ community, which consists of around 6% of the whole population.

United Nations Development Programme has sponsored a survey in China in 2018 (UNDP, 2018; UNDP, 2019)【3】【4】, whose samples are mainly highly-educated "post-80s" and "post-90s" from multiple ethnic groups and diverse religious of the country. According to the research, 58.8% of sexual minorities are gay, followed by bisexual (16.5%) and lesbian (13.7%). In addition, it also includes the low proportion of pansexuality, asexual and uncertain sexual orientation. Hence, it is important to increase their social visibility, advocate for their rights, and reduce discrimination against them (Wang et al., 2020) 【1】. But what happens when their social visibility increases?

1.1 Problem statement and main questions

The LGBTQ community organizes LGBTQ-related activities, establishes organizations and use internet to publicize LGBTQ-related information. Then, largely driven by the rapid expansion of social media platforms, hundreds of millions of people around the world began to look for information and content on the Internet (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019) 【5】. A fundamental shift is happening in how people contact. Social media offer platforms to minor group to make friends, receive social support and do civic debate. And Social Media Influencers (SMI) appeared and started to affect audiences. SMIs have created a significant impact on how people use social media to affect audiences' attitudes and behaviour. In this situation, LGBTQ community use social media to show their orientation, some of them even become SMI. All these changes make it a good time to do this research.

SMIs are defined as e-celebrities, a new kind of influencer shaping audience attitudes because of their reputation for expertise or knowledge (Nafees et al., 2021)

【6】. SMIs are also self-built stars. Most of them build their fame through social media platforms. Their reach usually focuses on a particular niche audience (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2015) 【7】. To some extent, SMIs' influence is similar to traditional celebrity, since both of them are someone who have outstanding remarks and behaviors or people who have huge success on their fields. However, as a new type of influencer, SMIs differ from celebrities in the following aspects: reach, engagement and interaction, content creation, and expertise.

Traditional celebrities used a one-way communication. It was hard for fans to interact with him or her. In contrast, SMIs use a two-way communication. SMIs are motivated to continuously interact and communicate with their followers to maintain their followership size (Paul, Jagani & Yadav, 2024) 【8】 because SMIs' fellowship size is crucial to maintain their influencer status and even influence audiences' acceptance of one topic. Different from former celebrities, SMIs create content on their own (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2016) 【9】. They write information and regularly post content through social media sites. The traditional celebrity only performs and contributes their influence through their performances and endorsements, shaping cultural trends and consumer behavior. They acted as role models, aspirational figures, and cultural intermediaries, impacting everything from fashion and lifestyle choices to political discourse and brand awareness. SMIs are considered professional and relevant because SMIs usually have expertise in their respective niches. As many differences exist between former celebrity and SMI endorsement, it is risky to simply generalize the findings of previous celebrities' influence research to the field of SMIs' influence.

A review of the literature reported that the mechanism underlying SMIs' influence is poorly understood. Although the use of SMIs has grown dramatically over the past decade and traditional mass media is slowly replaced by SMIs (Gillin, 2007) 【10】, the research on SMIs' influence on audiences is in early stage right now. The most studies focus on their narratives and discourses in the area of marketing.

In the area of audiences, most researches focused on how SMIs influence audiences, SMIs' effect on audiences' purchase, etc. For example, Balaban and Szabolcs (2022) 【11】 explored the significance of authenticity of SMIs on audiences in Europe. Burke (2017) 【12】 pointed out that significant relationships between the source of the promotional post and audiences' product perception. However, many topics, such as SMIs' impact on audiences' acceptance of one group, have rarely been examined. Therefore, these research gaps offer scholars opportunities to investigate the critical values of SMIs' influence. In that case, related to LGBTQ community in China.

SMIs' voices can yield as much power as well-known celebrities before internet. For example, recent studies explored how fashion influencers affected audiences' values, attitudes and behavior toward products (Belanche et al., 2021) 【13】. The results of studies pointed out positive influence of SMIs' personality on audiences (Lei, 2017) 【14】, positive effect of SMIs' image on audiences' values (Lu & Ding, 2019) 【15】. However, it highlighted a dearth of literature in presenting an integrated framework that reflects SMIs' influence on audiences' attitudes toward one group.

Studies highlight the significance of SMIs' content and image. The more positive of SMIs' image and the more high-qualified of SMIs' content, audiences' values, attitudes and behavior are easier to be affected. This expands SMIs' radius of types and influence and shows the freedom and open atmosphere of social media. For example, Jin Xing, transgender celebrity who is a famous dancer and hostess in China and has shown her sexual orientation publicly, as a LGBTQ Social Media Influencer often share her daily life to followers and answer followers' questions. A news in NetEase (2021) (a Chinese Internet technology company) 【16】 talked about Cai Kangyong (蔡康永), a gay SMI who was a famous host and showed his opinion about LGBT with the example of his own story. Cai Kangyong said in a Chinese TV show in 2015: "I fell in love with someone who just happened to be the same gender as me" and "Love can transcend gender constraints, and spiritual fit is the source of happiness". Examples like these show how the positive comments shared by LGBTQ SMIs may have a huge impact on audiences' attitudes toward the community.

However, political conditions are unique in China. Unlike other countries' global user base and operating in multiple languages, China's State takes advantage of the Great Chinese Firewall and the linguistic preferences of Chinese internet users locking the majority of Chinese users in domestic websites and social media platforms. Research on Chinese social media demonstrates that political information tends to be, on average, one-sided and tilted towards the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) goals across platforms (Stockmann et al., 2019)【17】. Many practices do not follow political agendas, such as netizens engaging in self-mockery and social critique, debating race and national identity, and so on. These expressions can contribute to a more critical communication environment preparing grounds for meaningful deliberation about public affairs and engaged citizenship in the country (Hassid, 2012) 【18】 .

Because of the political sensitivity of Chinese cyberspace, China's LGBTQ community is vulnerable to the use and abuse of power by the national surveillance system. The Chinese government holds the "Triple No Policy" towards LGBTQ community (No support, No disapproval, No promotion) (bu zhichi, bu fandui, bu tichang) (Wu et al., 2017) 【19】 . To some extent, the Chinese state tolerates and even actively promotes online discussion of public affairs.

The Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) has actively shaped the public's perception of democracy with an emphasis on managed political participation and the importance of the party's leadership (Hu, 2018) 【20】 . On the one hand, Chinese public officials use online discussion to obtain feedback on the government's policies and goals. On issues where mainstream media and the state do not set the agenda, activists have used blogs to build communities (Hassid, 2012)【18】. On the other hand, the state also builds structures that function as a "safety belt" to control the content of the discussion and guide it in a direction supportive of the goals and policies of authoritarian rulers, if necessary.

In order to fill these gaps, about SMIs' impact on audiences' acceptance of LGBTQ community in China, this dissertation will answer the following questions:

1. How do the personal characteristics of LGBTQ SMIs affect audiences' engagement, and comments, distinguishing between positive and negative senses?

- How does the trustworthiness of LGBTQ SMIs affect audience?
- How does the expertise of LGBTQ SMIs affect audience?
- How does the attractiveness of LGBTQ SMIs affect audience?

2. How do the videos' theme shared by LGBTQ SMIs affect audiences' engagement, and comments, distinguishing between positive and negative senses?

3. How does title strategies in videos shared by LGBTQ SMIs videos affect audience engagement?

Hence, this research examines the influence of LGBTQ SMIs on audiences, taking into account how their personal characteristics (trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness) and the content they created and shared on social media (videos) affect digital interactivity (e.g., sentiment comments and interactivity levels).

1.2 Key questions for fieldwork

As we said before, the primary purpose of current study is to explore the influence of LGBTQ SMI on its audiences analyzing the public's reactions to their main personal characteristics and to the shared videos by them. So, in order to do the field work, we need to start by answering two questions:

a) Which video content shared by LGBTQ SMIs has the most influence?

This research requires extensive fieldwork. In addition to analyzing audience interactions, first we had to select the SMI sample (the top 10 influencers with more followers). Furthermore, to determine which content to highlight, an analysis of their shared messages was necessary. From an initial dataset of thousands of videos, the top 100 (10 videos from each SMI) with the highest weighted engagement scores were

selected for our research. Hence, the sample of videos is focused on the most influential content, allowing for a deeper analysis of what drives high engagement.

b) Which LGBTQ SMIs profiles have greater influence in China?

We are going to analyse several LGBTQ SMIs (concretely the 10 Top LGBTQ SMIs with more followers). In the beginning, I wanted to analyze top 30 SMIs, because the number 30 is often used as a rule of thumb for a minimum sample size in statistics because it is the point at which the central limit theorem begins to apply (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016) 【 21 】 . However, the presence of influential Chinese LGBTQ SMIs on Bilibili and DouYin, in which I look for my sample, is limited. In order to maintain all the criteria of selection of sample, I decided to reduce the amount of sample. So, 10 LGBTQ SMIs with more than 50,000 followers on DouYin and Bilibili were selected.

At first, I tried to search famous LGBTQ SMIs on social media platform Baidu, but failed. I found few information on well-known LGBTQ SMIs in China. Then, I uploaded this question on Douban (an interest-based social networking platform that like a combination of Goodreads, IMDb, Blogger, Facebook, Pandora, Spotify, Ello and Fancy.com)¹ and I received various answers later. Some of replies from Douban advised me to search LGBTQ SMIs account on social media platforms and choose LGBTQ SMIs based on the amount of their followers. Then, I turned to search the most popular social media platforms in China, DouYin and Bilibili. Then, I started to search on Bilibili and DouYin directly. When I typed LGBTQ SMIs (非异性恋网红), I had no replies. I changed my strategies and searched well-known SMIs and then algorithmicity would recommend similar SMIs to me. To narrow the broadness of the notion, at the end, 10 specific LGBTQ SMIs have been chosen for the purposes of the research.

1.3 Purpose and significance of study

The primary purpose of the current study is to explore the factors influencing the

¹ More information can be found at: <https://m.douban.com/>

impact of SMIs on audiences in China by analyzing audiences' reactions to SMIs' personal characteristics and the content of the videos they share. Consequently, the research aims to investigate the effect of SMIs on Chinese audiences' attitudes toward the LGBTQ community. I have used an Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) to predict followers' attitude changes, taking into account the online identity of SMIs and the content of the videos they upload. ELM is the result of a general theory of attitude change.

Audiences can respond to SMIs' posts by liking, sharing, saving or writing positive and negative comments, and we will analyze these audiences' interactions. Audiences can easily interact and communicate with SMIs, expressing their feelings about the content of SMIs' videos. By studying this information and selecting the main LGBTQ SMIs, we aim to identify how audience activity functions.

In few words, this study is situated within the framework of audience studies and reception in the digital context and it applies digital methods. This research could provide a more comprehensive picture of the influential relationships on Social Media in China. Our focus is LGBTQ community, the audiovisual content created and share by influencers with a lot of reach and the digital interaction they provoke. Studying the level of digital interaction and if the reaction is positive or negative, we can reflect on audiences' acceptance of LGBTQ communities. SMIs not only upload content through apps to show themselves, but also share their experiences. Such a huge influence of SMIs has become especially apparent during past ten years as SMIs had become an important source for audiences' enlarging knowledge.

This study is significant because it addresses a gap in the existing research in this area. Specifically, it is crucial as it seeks to enhance our understanding of the influence of SMIs and their impact on public opinion and citizenship attitudes toward the LGBTQ community. This study is also helpful to identify key factors that contribute to recognize the main elements that drive effective content strategies on short-form video platforms is also beneficial.

2. CONTEXTUALIZING LGBTQ IN CHINA: HISTORY AND DIGITAL CULTURE

2.1 History of LGBTQ

LGBTQ is an evolving acronym representing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer identities, along with other gender and sexual minorities. The words of this acronym are used to describe a person's sexual orientation that falls outside of what most of the population considers normal. Notably, as Dastagir's (2018) **【22】** research demonstrates, sexual orientation and gender identity exploration constitutes an ongoing process for many individuals.

In Chinese literature, LG communities are the most frequently-mentioned groups among LGBTQ communities (most of the time, LG are seen as the same communities in China). However, transgender people rarely appeared in ancient books, and bisexual, transexual and queer people (people who are not heterosexual or not cisgender) appeared after the influence of Western culture.

I will divide this part into three sections: the history of LG communities in China (2.1.1.), the brief notes on transgenderism (2.1.2.), and on queer people (2.1.3.). This is not a thesis in the area of history, but we believe that this section with a contextual function is necessary.

2.1.1 History of LG communities

a) Ancient China (770 BC-1840): Social order

Homosexuality, particularly gay activity, is broadly found in ancient Chinese records and other historical Chinese literature (Hinsch, 1990; Gulik, 1997; Liu I-Ching, 1976; Ruan & Tsai, 1987)**【23】【24】【25】**. Ancient Chinese widely accepted homosexual behaviour, especially the first-class. They thought that homosexual behavior was the representation of status and power, and his couldn't be seen as a crime because of no punishment. Actually, the record and depiction in ancient literature is somewhat poetic, euphemistic, and neutral.

During ancient times, homosexual had their own names, like “*yu tao*” (sharing the remaining peach), “*duan xiu*” (the cut sleeve), and “*xiang gong*” (handsome young

man). People take a non-judgmental attitude towards male homosexual behaviour in historical records. “*Dui shi*” (facing each other and eating a meal), “*mo jing zi*” (rubbing mirrors), “*jin lan qi*” (golden orchid contract) and “*shou pa jiao*” (handkerchief relationship) poetically denote lesbianism in an unprejudiced light.

However, the existence of homosexual behaviour didn’t mean the ancient Chinese’s acceptance of LGBT community. Only upper-level class publicly could have homosexual behavior, which was considered as a kind of entertainment. There was a kind of job offering homosexual behavior to the influential people at that time. The people who did this job were discriminated against by others. Common people did not entirely accept homosexuality and homosexual people usually were not able to do specific jobs due to the sensitivity of their sexual identity (Samshasha, 1997) 【26】.

To further understand ancient homosexuality, we must study homosexual behaviour on the basis of Chinese’s historical and cultural background. Traditional Chinese literature didn’t mention “heterosexuality”, “homosexuality”, or “bisexuality”, which came from Western culture (Wah-Shan, 2001) 【27】. In Chinese historical records, terms depicting homosexual behaviour are verbalized as a type of preference or obsession rather than as an illness or as having any derogatory connotations as many ancient European societies did. Ancient Chinese in high social status, mostly royal males, had absolute sexual domination over his wives (including concubines) and both male and female prostitutes (Wah-Shan, 2001) 【27】. In ancient China, homosexual behaviour was not so much sexual orientation as sexual entertainment for upper-level males because heterosexuality in ancient China functioned as social and familial reproduction and maintenance of social order.

b) Republican Era (1841-1948): Influence of the Western

China was forced into a new world because of the Opium War in 1840 in the late Qing dynasty. China not only lost its territory, but also had to accept Western culture, which was a breakdown of ancient China and a beginning of reforming and modernizing the country. Chinese intellectuals tried to do the reformation, and they hold the view that Chinese culture was increasingly viewed as “backward”, “decadent”

and a pivotal contributor to long-standing feudalism. Traditional cultural practices such as “binding women’s feet,” “Manchu plait,” polygamy, pre-arranged marriage, and homo-eroticism were not advocated and even mandatorily prohibited by the Republican government (Wu, 2003) 【28】 .

At the same time, western technology and culture were widespread in China. Then, the word ‘Homosexuality’ was introduced to the public, which was originally a Western word. The homosexuality was defined as linguistically gender-neutral and indicates both male and female same sex behaviour (Samshasha, 1997; Sang, 2003) 【26】 【29】 . However, in the early 20th century, the studies about homosexuality centered on the question whether homosexuality was a mental health condition (Kong, 2016) 【30】 . The related research became a hot topic during the 1930s because it was different from values and attitudes about homosexual behaviour in traditional literature. Questions as to the moral basis of homosexuality and whether it can be cured or not were discussed at that time in China until Pan Gaungdan, a Western-trained Chinese, eugenicist, sociologist and sexologist, established his predominant academic reputation in the field of sexuality and homosexuality (Chiang, 2010; Kong, 2016) 【31】 【30】 . Western dichotomy between people (being strictly heterosexual or homosexual) (Ellis, H.,1939) 【32】 became the dominant and popular understanding in Republican China, but hierarchical homoerotic relationships remained prevalent in practice. Thus, although a large amount of homosexual behaviour and same-sex foreigners rushed into China during the republican era, the Chinese public didn’t widely accept homosexuality because of Western demonization of homosexuality.

a) Homosexuality in Communist China (1949-1978): persecution on the Maoist era

After winning the war in 1949, the Communist government held the view that homosexuality was feudalistic erotic tradition. The Communist government took action on the basis of Marxist, Leninist, and Maoist ideologies, which had conflict

with Western culture. At that time, homosexuality had a label—the representation of classism and cultural degeneration of China’s outdated past (Ruan, 1991) 【33】 .

Although the Supreme Court pointed out that homosexual behaviour didn’t break the law on the basis of two adults’ mutual agreement, people still discriminated against and persecuted homosexual community especially during the anti-rightist movement and Cultural Revolution (Chiang, 2010; Kong, 2016) 【31】 【30】 . If you were found to do homosexual behaviour during that time, you might lose your job and even could be arrested and get investigated by the police. At the same time, research related homosexuality was banned by the official government because of their “anti revolutionist nature” and unnecessary social and academic function, according to Mao (Zheng & Li, 2000; Kong, 2016) 【34】 【30】 . Learning from socialist Soviet Union, the Chinese Communist government agreed on the importance of productivity and population. The most important task of one person is to get married and give birth to kids so that the family could be continued and society have enough labor force. Thus, the government advocated heterosexuality and gender binarism and the homosexual behaviour faced discrimination and persecution in the Maoist era.

d) Homosexuality in Communist China (1979-1999): Opening up and Reform

Deng Xiaoping implemented the ‘reform and opening-up’ policy in the end of 1978, Chinese society became more open and multi-cultural. The more tolerant atmosphere changed sexual awareness. Simultaneously, more international LGBTQ projects and organizations rushed into China (Guo, 2016) 【35】 . Meanwhile, China’s LGBT non-governmental organizations started with a community hotline and newsletter in the late 1990s. The earliest LGBT non-governmental organizations in China include: the *Beijing Tongzhi Hotline* (started in 1997), which is a public welfare organization that provides psychological counseling, legal consultation and HIV testing community service; the *Friend Exchange (pengyou tongxin) community newsletter* (started in 1998), which initiated a media representation of the gay community.

In addition, since the 1990s, LGBT activists in Beijing and other parts of China launched various movements, which may be called LGBT festivals. From 7th in June to 14th in 2009, Shanghai celebrated what its organizers called ‘China’s first LGBT festival’, with parties, performances, film screenings, art exhibitions, panel discussions and ‘gay weddings’. More than one thousand beautifully-dressed gays and lesbians, both locals and foreign expatriates, together with tourists, packed the festival venues on Pride Day. The event attracted wide media coverage, including the BBC, *New York Times*, *Newsweek* and *China Daily*. Although government intervention forced the organizers to cancel a few events, including one film screening, one theatre performance, and one social mixer, the Pride Week was still considered a great success (Deklerck & Wei, 2015) 【36】 .

While the "reform and opening-up" period in China brought about significant economic and social changes, it did not lead to any improvements in the legal status or social acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals. The ‘reform and opening-up’ policy also didn’t change the existing situation of LGBTQ communities. This is because the "hooliganism" label, used during the Cultural Revolution to target homosexual men, was re-applied in the late 1970s and early 1980s, indicating a continued pattern of discrimination (Worth et al., 2019) 【37】 .

In addition, homosexuality was still labeled as wrong behaviour. Most Chinese are actually unfamiliar with LGBTQ community, leading to misrepresentation and stereotypes of this community: *sexual orientation can be changed*, *LGBTQ people are ill*, and *LGBTQ people are unclean and shameful* (Pei, 2019) 【38】 . Negative social attitudes about the LGBTQ community are linked to certain characteristics that many heterosexuals stereotypically attribute to the LGBTQ community. LGBTQ communities were seen by some parts of Chinese society as a form of abnormality (bu zhengchang), deviance (biantai), disease (youbing), or even criminality (liumang), which was caused by the lack of knowledge about LGBTQ individuals’ characteristics (Wang et al., 2020) 【39】 . Thus, many gay men in China still choose to publicly adopt a heteronormative persona in this period (Ding, 2024) 【40】 . The ignorance of heterosexual about the LGBTQ community aggravates the idea that

homosexuality is distant and remains unseen (Grossman & Kerner, 1998) 【41】 . Meanwhile, most of LGBTQ people pointed out that they had experienced discrimination and bullying during their school life and work.

e) Homosexuality in Communist China (2000-present): Open and complex situation

During the 2000s, China experienced a huge change because of globalization and the development of its economy. Positive changes have taken place in social economy, politics, culture, and environment. Correspondingly, the psychological changes of Chinese people's cultural values and personality are manifested in the transformation from tradition (obedience to authority, filial piety and respect for ancestors, security, destiny, self-protection, and male superiority) to modernity (equal rights, openness and independence, optimistic and enterprising, respect for emotion, and equality between men and women). Conversely, these changes may promote the variation of personal and sexual attitudes.

It is significant to mention that China removed homosexuality from the list of psychiatric disorders in 2001 (Wu, 2003) 【28】 . Meanwhile, issues about preventing HIV and caring about the health of homosexuals became increasingly visible on social media (Kong, 2016) 【30】 . Consequently, more non-governmental organizations were established. In 2007, there were more than 120 LGBT non-governmental organizations in China. The number has been increasing each year. Most non-governmental organizations are funded by Ford Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Chi-Heng Foundation. Some of them were established by the National Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and belonged to the Ministry of Public Health of China. They were often known as NGOs, or GoNGOs. Many of them often compete against each other due to limited funding and limited community resources. At the National Conference 'HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment among Men Who Have Sex with Men in November' (2008), the clash of interests among different NGOs became the spotlight of the conference. In 2008, the 'Gay Rights Movement'

was established, which was the largest gay rights organization and NGO in China. The main tasks of the 'Gay Rights Movement' are striving for and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of homosexuals in China, while striving to improve the image of homosexuals in the eyes of the Chinese people. The "Gay Rights Movement" is committed to establishing a harmonious and healthy "gay" network, and correcting discrimination and homophobia in real life and on the Internet.

Meanwhile, China started to set up its own LGBTQ organizations, projects and even business place, such as Beijing LGBT center, Tongxinglian Qinyouhui (同性恋亲友会), which is the largest gay organization in China. Subsequently, an unprecedented level of discussion and public exposure of homosexuality have improved public recognition and normalization of homosexuality in modern-day (Hu, 2020) 【42】 .

During this period, LGBTQ activists have also fought both on traditional media and social media. *LES+ magazine* and *GaySpot magazine* are one of the most famous LGBTQ traditional media before the rapid development of social media. The Chinese government will not strictly supervise the Internet as it regulates traditional mass media (the newspaper, radio and television), and LGBTQ activists turn the Internet into the main stage of the LGBTQ movement (Deklerck & Wei, 2015) 【36】 . For example, *Queer Comrades* ², an LGBTQ-focused webcast started in 2007, conveyed the importance of activism in its program. The program calls on the audiences to actively contribute to the LGBT movement and empowers people by emphasizing a positive LGBT identity (Deklerck & Wei, 2015) 【36】 .

Gay has also become a hot topic in China during this period. The most important reason is that gay people are generally not seen as the most politically sensitive and subversive social groups in China, and therefore the government can potentially recognize their existence and rights if it has to do so, if only nominally and temporarily. This is demonstrated by the official recognition from a National People's Congress spokesperson that the legalization of same-sex marriage was among the

² You can get more information at: <http://www.queercomrades.com/en> (04/16/2024)

most popular requests for revisions to China's civil code in the December 2019. The Chinese government's relatively relaxed attitude towards homosexual issues in comparison to other issues such as religion or ethnic minorities, which reflected the public attitudes toward LGBTQ people. It was reported that heterosexual people had a 2.1–4.1% rejection rate of social relationships with LGBT individuals (Wang, et al., 2019) 【39】. Audiences' response to LGBTQ social media influencers coming out are varied (Pei, 2019) 【38】. Wang et. al. (2019) 【39】 studied the psychological responses and persuasive outcomes associated with short-form videos on a mobile social media app in 2019. In this research, over 20% of the respondents (sample was 29,125 people) reported that the audience did not accept their coming out at the beginning, but gradually accepted or even supported them after some amount of time (Wang, et al., 2019) 【39】. Other people show their acceptance when LGBTQ social media influencers come out (Wang, et al., 2019) 【39】.

Even the most conservative domestic media, "People's Daily" (人民日报), gradually becomes more open and tolerant in terms of communication and criticism. For example, in 2018, it published the article named "Gay isn't a kind of mental illness" and pointed out that sexual orientation was people's right (People's Daily, 2018) 【43】. The article held the view that homosexuals are also normal citizens who, while advocating for their rights, also need to bear their own social responsibility (People's Day, 2018) 【43】. Overall, economic and social transformation play an important role in the transformation of this generation and the basis for LG's social tolerance.

However, the transition from the former president Hu (2005-2013) to the current Xi Jinping (2013-present) caused the state's control of public speech and collective movement (Mohanty, 2013) 【44】. Homosexuality-related content would be strictly censored on social media because of its sensitivity. A significant number of millennials and scholars have expressed their dissatisfaction of China's strict censorship, including the 2016 ban on LGBTQ characters in online streaming services (Ellis-Petersen, 2016) 【45】; the 2021 ban on "sissy men" in the Chinese

entertainment industry (Wang, 2021) 【46】 ; and a recent shutdown of LGBTQ WeChat accounts (Ni & Davidson, 2021) 【47】 .

Thus, on the one hand, the open atmosphere and frequent culture exchange have pushed more deep understanding about LGBTQ community and raised the public's awareness of LGBTQ community. On the other hand, the complex situation about LGBTQ community in China made the topic still sensitive in the country and hampered their research ideas.

2.1.2 Brief notes on transgenderism

In the dynasty era (207 BC-1912), transgender basically covered three categories of people. First, it refers to the castrated eunuch (阉人) or hermaphrodite/erogenous person, also known as Erxing (二形) or Eryizi (二椅子), and the early records can be found in “Jinshu” (265-420 AD), “Difficult Proceedings Collection” (936-947 AD), and “An agreement to produce many heirs” (1573 AD) (Chiang, 2018) 【48】 . Second, transgenderism includes cross -wear bodies. Hua mulan (花木兰) was a representative figure in traditional Chinese literature. As a biological woman, she is dressed as a man to replace the military service of the disabled father during the war (Kile, 2013) 【49】 . Third, transgenderism was used to describe a transformed body. A man transformed into a woman, known as Nan hua nü (男化女). His penis and testes atrophied until they disappeared, but functional ovarian and uterine growth can be pregnant (Xue, 2021) 【50】 . A woman transformed morphologically into a man was called Nü Hua Nan (女化男), whose vaginal narrowing, ovaries atrophy and disappearance, but developed functional penis and testes and could make others pregnant.

The earliest information about transgender people in modern China was an article on the official website of “People's Daily” in 2000. The article mentioned transgender individuals and referred to them as xingbie jixing zhe (性别畸形者, individuals with gender dysphoria). In 2012, online news reports began using the term Bianxing Ren (变性人, transsexual) to refer to cross-gender individuals. Another term Kua Xingbie (跨性别, transgender) was also used to name transgender individuals in

China and first appeared in a blog post on Douban. Meanwhile, the public revelation of Li Yinhe's, a Chinese sociologist, sexologist and activist for LGBT rights in China, going public with a female-to-male partner's relationship in 2014 helped popularize the terms 'transgender' and 'transgender people' in Chinese society (Xue, 2021) 【50】. Thus, the term Kua Xingbie (跨性别) was used to translate 'transgender' in China in a consolidated way. Later, media coverage increasingly exposed transsexual and cross-dressing individuals as sex workers.

2.1.3 Brief notes on Queer

Queer theory emerged in Chinese society in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Zhao, 2022) 【51】. While the legal and social environment for LGBTQ people has improved dramatically in the past two decades, queer people instead are slowly gaining some limited rights and legal protection. For example, queer activism in China and transnationally has also yielded some positive outcomes, demonstrated by the National People's Congress spokesperson's open acknowledgement of the popular demand for same-sex marriages within the queer communities in 2019 in response to successful queer community mobilization (Bao, 2021) 【52】.

Simultaneously, Shanghai's Fudan University firstly provided LGBTQ-related courses in mainland China in 2005 (Cao & Lu, 2014) 【53】. East China Normal University has also added this course to their research and began to recruit graduate students in 2013. For example, Professor Weiwei has a course named *Queer studies: History, Media and Society*³, which is a general core course of East China Normal University. The offering of courses can enrich achievements in this field, and can also promote the dissemination and development of related knowledge.

The Chinese government's attitude towards queer issues is highly ambiguous. Although, as mentioned above, the Chinese government has adopted an unofficial policy of 'Triple No Policy' (No support, No disapproval, No promotion), there are also times when explicit policies and directives have been issued to ban queer issues.

³ More information in: https://faculty.ecnu.edu.cn/_s6/ww/main.psp

For example, in 2017, China's State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television (SAPPRFT) explicitly banned service providers from presenting queer content. Following the ban, dating apps were shut down, and yet Blued, the largest gay dating app, miraculously survived (Bao, 2021) 【52】 .

Queer-themed films are usually banned from official production and commercial circulation. Therefore, most existing queer films have been made unofficially or underground without government approval, and this has led to a greater risk of an official ban on queer films that have already been produced. For example, in 2012, queer filmmaker Fan Popo's film "Mama Rainbow" (Caihong MaMa) was taken down from several video streaming websites, and this resulted in China's first court case against media censorship.

Official policies and their implementation are often inconsistent and some-times full of contradictions. In recent years, the government has started to allow a small number of officially approved films with latent queer themes to be produced and exhibited, often for commercial reasons and to create positive international publicity. For example, in 2018, *Seek McCartney*, a French-Chinese co-production that features ambiguous gay love, a 'gayish film', was released in China's commercial cinemas in 2019 (Bao, 2021) 【52】 .

All these examples demonstrate that media censorship continues to restrict and shape media representation of queer issues in significant ways. Queer people, if allowed to appear in mainstream and commercial media, are often represented with specific visual codes and within certain interpretative frameworks: HIV/AIDS prevention, effeminate stereotype, or ambiguous friendship or homo-sociality between men and women. Thus, in the context of commercial and entertainment media, inexplicit representations of queer people can often lead to 'queerbaiting,' that is, a marketing technique of trying to attract queer audience for commercial purposes but without openly acknowledging their existence and rights (Bao, 2021) 【52】 .

2.2 Social media and the LGBTQ communities

In the Chinese context, the LGBTQ communities become active on social media owing to the development of the internet. Then, online LGBTQ communities are perceived because they are more visible. Some online communities are dedicated to LGBTQ activism. I will divide this part of the context of my research into two sections, the evolution of internet and online LGBTQ activism.

2.2.1 The evolution of internet

China has had access to the Internet intermittently since May 1989 and on a permanent basis since 20 April 1994 (Edu.cn, 2018) 【54】 , although with heavily filtered access. In 2008, China became the country with the largest population on the Internet (China New Service, 2009)【55】. Wireless, especially internet access through a mobile phone, has developed rapidly. The affordability of mobile phones and internet data in China has resulted in the number of mobile internet users (over 1.096 billion) in China (over 24.8 million) surpassing the number of computer internet users (Parzyan & Anahit, 2023) 【56】. According to the 37th "Statistical Report on Internet Development in China" released by China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), as of July 2023, 1.05 billion (73.7% of the country's total population) use the internet in China, which shows that there is a huge room for the growth of social media platforms in China in the future.

China's first foray into the global cyberspace was an email (not TCP/IP based and thus technically not internet) sent on 20 September 1987 to the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, reading, “Across the Great Wall we can reach every corner in the world” (China News Service, 2009) 【55】. This later became a well-known phrase in China and as of 2018, was displayed on the desktop login screen for QQ mail (a type of email like google mail from Tencent, a Chinese multinational technology conglomerate) (Elizabeth, 2018) 【57】 .

The evolution of Internet is linked to new computer-mediated communication (CMC). CMC is defined as any human communication that occurs through the use of two or more electronic devices (Ahern et al., 1992) 【58】 . Research on CMC focuses

largely on the social effects of different computer-supported communication technologies. According to Jankowski (1996)【59】, a third party, like software, acts in the middle between a sender and receiver. The sender is interacting with this third party to send. The receiver interacts with it as well, creating an additional interaction with the medium itself along with the initially intended one between sender and receiver (Baym, 1995) 【60】. CMC environment has the potential to become contemporary rhetorical communities-public spaces or forums within which limited or local communities and individuals can develop mutual respect and understanding via dialogue and discussion (Zappen & Doheny-Farina, 1997) 【61】. Thus, it becomes the basis and motivation of online LGBTQ communities.

Meanwhile, the development of internet technology changed people's lifestyle, working methods and thinking methods. The habit of using apps everyday has shaped a new way of life for the Chinese public. According to Guo (2016) 【62】, the internet in China is largely used for entertainment purposes, being referred to as the "entertainment superhighway".

However, it also serves as the first public forum for Chinese citizens to freely exchange their ideas. Most users go online to read news, to search for information, and to check their email. They also go to BBS (Bulletin Board System was an early form of online communication in 1980 and 1990, a precursor to the internet, where users could connect to a computer system via dial-up and exchange messages, download files, and participate in discussions) or web forums, find music or videos, or download files. The free atmosphere of social media platforms make people more willing to share their opinions and communicate with strangers (Zheng, 2017) 【63】. At this time, regardless of your age, income, or occupation, you have the right to show yourselves online and are likely to become social media influencers (Zheng, 2017) 【63】. As an emerging group, the presence of influencers comes from the joint force of the Internet environment, social and cultural values, and the role of the media. Influencers use social media platforms to gain popularity, and the multiple functions of social media platforms give influencers more chances to express themselves, give

reasonable explanations and meanings to life from their content (Freberg et al., 2011) 【64】 .

2.2.2 LGTBQ online activity

a) Online LGBTQ communities

Although the internet is a public space, it has a more open and freer atmosphere than physical life because of anonymity and looser control. The marginalized group, like minorities, the disabled, the elderly, the LGBTQ community, could make their voice be spoken and heard. Members of the LGBTQ communities use traditional media and new media technology in the form of magazines, journals, movies, documentaries, and online broadcasting. Chinese online LGBTQ communities use social media for multiple purposes. (Bao, 2018) 【65】

First, Chinese LGBTQ individuals use social media to communicate and make friends with others, to socialize and express themselves (Yang, 2000) 【66】 . LGBTQ individuals are more likely to face bullying or harassment in schools or be attacked by hate speech than others (Dworkin & Yi, 2003) 【 67 】 . Family's and friends' incomprehension, classmates' and strangers' oppression and harm make them more vulnerable and lonelier. Most of them have mental illness to some extent because they feel depressed and failed from their bad experiences and they also have no friends to share with and enlighten them (Bao, 2012) 【 68 】 . The anonymity of social media makes them speak more safely and freely. Thus, Chinese LGBTQ people use social media as a way to escape the stigma and alienation from reality and seek social support and advocacy. Chinese LGBTQ people could use the internet to exert their civil rights, produce a truthful image of themselves and take part of public debates (Kang & Yang, 2009) 【69】 .

Second, Chinese LGBTQ people use the internet to share information and keep contact with others (Yang, 2000)【66】. Many LGBTQ people in China choose to leave their hometown and move to a metropolis, like Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, etc. These big cities are more tolerant and liberal, so they are easier to accept these minor

groups (Wei, 2020) 【70】 . Social media has become a suitable tool to keep in touch with family and friends. Moreover, people who hide their real sexual orientation could use social media to come out to their family and friends and avoid the embarrassment of face-to-face meetings. In addition, LGBTQ could share some useful public science documents about LGBTQ community with their parents and friends to enlarge their knowledge about these minor groups, hoping for their understanding in the future.

Third, LGBTQ people use social media to help each other (Pacalon, 2023) 【71】. The pressure and restriction from both family and society forced some of them to ask for help on social media. For example, many Chinese LGBTQ people choose to stay in the closet or marry another LGBT partner (*Xinghun* or formal marriage) as camouflage. Liu (2013) 【72】 analyzed *Xinghun* ads posted on, one of the most influential online communities in China, and found the *Xinghun* ads were in many ways similar to heterosexual personal ads in marriage seeking standards: the preference of masculinity among men and femininity among women show the emphasis on traditional marital factors and the self-hiding of LGBT people (Liu, 2013) 【72】 . Such exclusive online communities help LGBT people to keep their sexual orientation private and avoid “embarrassing” their families while both partners’ families could benefit from the marriages. Meanwhile, someone may post for help online when they are considering ‘coming out’, and the LGBTQ people may share their past experiences and try to find the most suitable ways. For instance, there is a LGBTQ-related group in Baidu Tieba (a social media platform which is similar to Bulletin Board System). If someone encounters difficulty, they will post their trouble and ask for help. As a LGBTQ gathering place online, multiple LGBTQ people will answer the questions as soon as possible (FRA, 2020)【73】. Many of them tackle their problems smoothly with the help of other LGBTQ users, showing that social media’s value to LGBTQ individuals in China.

Finally, LGBTQ people use social media to find true love or partners and engage with their peers (Sabala, 2018) 【74】 . The internet provides users a new platform and changes their ways of making friends. People could make friends and find sexual relationships without meeting each other. LGBTQ people could use social media to

communicate with each other and find their partners because of rarely meeting other LGBTQ people in their offline lives. For instance, a person unrestrained by physical boundaries, lack of resources, or who is questioning their identity, without any accessible support can find useful information through social media platforms (Craig, Lin & Cunningham, 2021) 【75】. What's more, online dating and sex-seeking become easier than ever with this trend for both LGBT and straight people (Lin, 2018)【76】. A few studies showed that online platforms allow LGBTQ individuals to meet their interpersonal, intimate, and sexual needs quickly and conveniently (Chan, 2016) 【77】. However, online sex-seeking is associated with more sexual risks related to health such as the prevalence of gonorrhea and chlamydia than is offline sex-seeking (Choi et al., 2017) 【78】.

b) Online LGBTQ support

The Internet is a support platform for LGBTQ people. The world wide web is the tool to find information about minorities identities and finding information. It is the first step to learn about sexual orientation and gender identities that are different from the established norm in a context that lacks representations (Pacalon, 2023) 【71】. Social platforms dedicated to homosexuality were about ten in 1998, and grew from 300 to 500 in 2004-2005 in China (Cui, 2008) 【79】. They occur in several forms, news, experience sharing, debates, and constitute the main safe places to express these marginalized identities. In this context, online LGBTQ activity has become an increasingly visible in China.

At first, LGBTQ people gather together to create accounts on popular social media platforms. Then, LGBTQ SMIs (mainly gay people) are increasingly popular on social media, such as Sina Weibo (a Twitter-like social media platform that has the largest online users in China), DouYin (Chinese version TikTok), BiliBili, etc. They share LGBTQ-related information to guide other users to correctly recognize and accept this minor group.

In the digital era, social media platforms have become the primary way for people to connect, including the LGBTQ communities. Social media don't ban the

LGBTQ-related content, so users could post LGBTQ-related content on social media. If citizenship have more contact with LGBTQ people, individuals often have a greater tolerance for LGBTQ communities. Even knowing someone who is a sexual minority is associated with having more supportive and accepting attitude (Tu & Lee, 2014) **【80】** .

The increasing visibility of LGBTQ+ topics at the start of 2020 posed a sharp contrast to the country's rigid silence of them during the past decades (Luo, 2020) **【81】** . LGBTQ social media influencers were perceived on social media platforms (Sabala, 2018) **【74】** .

In addition, the online LGBTQ community utilizes social media platforms to advocate for their rights. For example, members of PFLAG⁴ (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) not only share their personal narratives and disseminate current LGBTQ-related information to broaden public understanding (Ji, 2019) **【82】** , but also actively encourage LGBTQ individuals to disclose their sexual orientation to family members while affirming parental love and acceptance. They further emphasize the importance of familial bonds regardless of sexual orientation (Huang & Brouwer, 2018) **【83】** . PFLAG often organize both online and offline activities that facilitate social connections among LGBTQ individuals and promote updated LGBTQ-related knowledge about LGBTQ issues.

Also, LGBTQ people advocate health and rights of LGBTQ community on social media because many LGBTQ individuals' deaths are caused by HIV/AIDS and the government has ignored the existence and problems of this community (Miller, 2016) **【84】** . Additionally, some LGBTQ online NGOs open up a broad range of HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services to LGBT people online. Therefore, although some people may still avoid getting in touch with LGBT people due to the stigmatization of HIV/AIDS in China, online communities contribute to their health care and rights (Liu & Choi, 2006)**【85】**. Consequently, the online LGBTQ activism is

⁴ More information in : <https://pflag.org/>

significant because of their support to LGBTQ individuals and providing assistance for them (Kama, 2017) 【86】 . The internet can a good place for LGBTQ community.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Our theoretical frame is related to three issues: social media; Social Media Influencers (SMI), including source credibility model; and audience-reception. All of them are closely related to our object of study. Our research is about exploring how LGBTQ SMIs influence Chinese audiences' acceptance of LGBTQ communities analyzing the digital interactivity their videos generate and its personal characteristics. The three parts analyze the object of our study step by step. The first part explores the relationship between social media and audiences and it could contribute knowing why social media has a huge effect on audiences. The second part shows how SMIs influence audiences' acceptance of a topic or a group. This part includes the explanation of source credibility model, basic in our empirical research. The last part moves to the audience perspective, discussing main theories in order to understand how the audience chooses SMIs to follow.

Our research studies the main social media platforms in China, but few of past research focused on it. Our theoretical framework comes mainly from western studies. For example, multiple studies consulted talk about Facebook, but it is not a problem. We think that they help us to make up our theoretical frame. Facebook has been studied a lot and the ideas we collect here can be used to understand any social media.

3.1. Introduction: cultural consumption

The term cultural consumption refers to the consumption of goods and services which primarily fulfill aesthetic and symbolic functions (Rössel et al., 2017) 【87】. It encompasses consumption practices such as listening to music, visiting museums or watching films. Cultural consumption is a choice of leisure activities based on an individual's social motivations, values, and learning by consuming goods (Turel et al., 2010) 【88】. It is also an important instrument for shaping and improving an individual's value structure and collective identity during the consuming process (Guerzoni & Nuccio, 2014) 【89】, driving forces that impact behavior (Chwialkowska et al., 2020) 【90】.

Bourdieu (1984) 【91】 mentioned that the most influential dimension of cultural consumption is the differentiation between highbrow and lowbrow kinds of cultural consumption. This is an aesthetic dimension associated with the distinction between form and substance, that is, between the formal configuration and refinement of cultural practices (e.g. classical music, art films, haute cuisine, etc.) and their function in terms of content and material significance (e.g. folk music, romantic comedies, convenience food, etc.). As members of higher social strata are endowed with sufficient amounts of cultural and economic capital, they are able to understand, enjoy, and afford the formal standards of highbrow cultural consumption. At the same time, highbrow activities operate as a signal of superior social status and can thus be used to affect distinction from others. As a consequence, since they are related to high social status, highbrow activities are perceived as legitimate culture, meaning that they constitute—even though performed only by a minority—the dominant culture of society (Rössel et al., 2017) 【87】 .

Moving into the Chinese context, China gradually entered the category of cultural consumption economy from the mid-1980s to around 1987. Domestic scholars have analyzed and researched from different perspectives, drawing on the basic theories of cultural consumption in foreign countries and based on the actual situation in China, and have also made abundant achievements. Feng (2012) 【92】 used descriptive statistics, co-integration theory and error correction to study the cultural consumption of urban residents in Beijing and the specific situation of cultural consumption.

In Europe, past research sees in cultural consumption individuality, self-expression, and a stylistic self-consciousness (Featherstone, 1991) 【93】 . Cultural artifacts and cultural resources form around identity, taste, and consumption patterns (Storey, 1999) 【94】 . Most cultural consumption research, when following Bourdieu's work, has used measures of participation in highbrow and lowbrow culture activities, although the breadth of cultural consumption is much broader (DiMaggio, 1994)【95】. Other attempts to define diverse aspects of cultural consumption show a wide range of indicators that are used to investigate the consolidation of consumption patterns and

tastes into manifold cultural profiles (Sobel, 1981; De Graaf, et.al, 2000; Toivonen, 1992) 【96】 【97】 【98】 .

Nevertheless, the simple distinction between high culture and mass culture or the measurement of degrees of participation in high culture is insufficient (Ritzer,1999) 【99】 . A more complex depiction of cultural consumption emerges, which includes indoor and outdoor activities, individual and collective activities, and generational differences in cultural forms and activities. The variety of consumption types and their careful definition and measurement is particularly important for an understanding of the way the social field is reflected in the cultural field. By the meticulous examination of a variety of lifestyle types we can understand the way different groups appropriate different cultural resources.

Hence, according to the previous description, cultural consumption contributes to the theoretical framework of this thesis for explaining SMIs' appearance and why audiences follow SMIs and can even accept their recommendation. Nevertheless, we hardly find that researchers link cultural consumption with SMIs and audiences. Thus, we want to help to explore how cultural consumption affects SMIs' content and audiences' demands taking into account digital interactivity.

The prosperity of cultural consumption promotes the appearance of SMIs. The term, cultural consumption, refers to the possession, appreciation, enjoyment and use of spiritual and cultural products and services, and is mainly a consumption activity to meet the needs of people's spiritual and cultural life. Cultural consumption is a spirit of consumption that increases social knowledge, improves attitudes toward social phenomena, and changes behavior (Wang et al., 2021)【100】.When mentioned cultural consumption in China, Wang and Lin (2009) 【101】 stated that as income increased, most Chinese people had entered the stage of a well-off life, and people's consumption concepts had also undergone tremendous changes, from satisfying physiological needs to satisfying social needs, respecting needs and self-realization. So, the cultural demands are becoming more and more important. SMIs are loved by netizens mainly because people who follow them will feel that to some extent, they

have a close relationship with the group of people they have always dreamed of becoming. When wearing the products they recommend, they feel that they have the same fashion life and taste as these celebrities. Numerous fans have obtained psychological pleasure and satisfaction by synchronizing their love for Internet celebrities with their basic necessities of life. (Zheng, 2017) 【63】 .

3.2. Social Media

Firstly, we need to explore the definition of social media. There are multiple definitions of “social media” in the field. For example, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 61) 【102】 defined “social media” as "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content". Or Bryer and Zavattaro's definition (2011: 327) says 【103】 : “Social media are technologies that facilitate social interaction, make possible collaboration, and enable deliberation across stakeholders. These technologies include blogs, wikis, media (audio, photo, video, text) sharing tools, networking platforms, and virtual worlds”.

Taking into account those definitions, we are interested in how users generate and share content, the deliberation across stakeholders and especially in relation with LGTB influencers. Mitrou (2014) 【104】 stated that social media created a consciousness of permanent visibility; social media encouraged the conscious or unconscious voluntary exposure of personal information to an indefinite audience.

In China, these applications vary by use and intent but common examples currently include Sina Weibo, DouYin or Wechat. These applications may eventually decline in popularity overtime to be replaced by other applications, but there is no doubt that it is a new public space, free in some sense (Bei, 2017) 【105】 .

3.2.1 Positive aspects of digital sociability

3.2.1.1 Social Connection

During the past two decades, the Internet has become more social, offering many different platforms on which to interact with others. In light of this, it is

understandable that one of the positive sides of general Internet use is to fulfil social needs (Kaye,1998) 【106】 . For example, Stafford and Gonier (2004) 【107】 reported that people not only used the Internet to stay in touch with others, but also that keeping in contact via the Internet was an enjoyable activity. Further developments in technology (such as the ability to access the Internet on mobile devices) now mean that the opportunities for social interaction via the Internet can take place almost anywhere and at any time.

Urista, Dong and Day (2009) 【108】 stated that social media specifically could offer fulfillment of social or interpersonal needs in ways that face-to-face (FTF) communication or other forms of media cannot. For example, social media can offer social interaction constantly and immediately if the user so desires and individuals will be motivated to use these sites if they think it will fulfil their objective of socializing with others.

Looking at general social media use among adolescents, Barker (2009) 【109】 found that communicating with friends from the peer group was a central motivation for using these sites. Other motivations included social identity gratification, passing time, social compensation, entertainment, and social learning. Looking at Twitter specifically, Chen (2011)【110】 found that the amount of time a user spent on Twitter and the number of Twitter activities (e.g. sharing) correlated highly with the gratification of the need to connect with others on this site. Similar findings have been found among Facebook users who report using this platform to keep in touch with friends (Joinson, 2008) 【111】 and, even, to feel connected to friends (Bumgarner, 2007) 【112】 . Hence, one of the key motivations of using these platforms is to attempt to satiate the need to keep in touch with and feel connected to others.

However, a key question is whether or not these sites actually satiate this need for interaction and connectedness to others. Sheldon, Abad, and Hinsch (2011) 【113】 investigated the links between Facebook use and feelings of connecting to others, and in a series of studies they concluded that Facebook use increased feelings of connection. Moreover, they found that feelings of disconnection motivated Facebook use, and in an experimental study that deprived people of using Facebook, they found

that those who felt more disconnected were more likely to spend a longer period of time on Facebook at the end of the deprivation stage of the experiment. The authors conclude that there is a two-way process involved in Facebook use: feelings of disconnection motivate people to use the site, and feelings of connection increase after using Facebook.

There is also evidence to show that the feelings of connectedness felt through social media use is a separate construct from social connectedness felt in FTF settings (Grieve et al., 2013) 【114】. Grieve et al. (2013) asked participants to complete two identical social connectedness scales (one with reference to FTF interactions and the other with reference to Facebook interactions). Subsequent analysis of these two scales showed that both were independent of each other and were therefore not measuring the same construct. Although authors do not speculate exactly how Facebook fulfills feelings of connectedness differently to FTF interactions, they do speculate that Facebook interaction may provide an environment for certain people to gain social connectedness to others that they do not get offline (e.g., those who are socially anxious). This might therefore suggest that Facebook offers different opportunities to that of FTF interactions that help to fulfill feelings of connectedness.

From the perspective of my own research, it is important to highlight that feeling connected with others is a main focus in my study of LGBTQ SMIs. Studies about LGBTQ communities using social media as connectedness are rare.

3.2.1.2 Social Support

Another positive aspect of digital sociability can be offering social support to audiences. Kim and Lee (2011) 【115】 mentioned that having access to social support could be important in times of need and one motivation of using social media is to receive this support from friends. Moreover, users of Facebook have reported to be satisfied with the support they get through the site (Wright et al., 2013) 【116】 and perceived emotional support on Facebook has been found to be negatively related to stress among college students (Wright, 2012) 【117】. Also, Facebook pages and groups have been found to be important platforms through which to access support

from others (Holtz et al., 2015) 【118】 .

Different types of social media may also be perceived as more appropriate platforms on which to seek social support. In their studies, looking at various social media platforms, Hayes, Carr and Wohn (2016) 【119】 report that Facebook, rather than Twitter, was perceived to be more effective in gaining social support; and that Snapchat, Instagram, and LinkedIn were the platforms where participants were least likely to attempt to gain social support from their social media contacts. Moreover, these authors also found that different platforms might be used for different types of support. Although overall Snapchat was not one of the sites most used to gain social support, it was found to be used for support with self-evaluation (judgements made about one's own performance). The reason given for this was that Snapchat friends are a smaller and more relevant group of friends to a user's own life and the "snaps"(image messages sent through Snapchat) can be targeted towards certain people. Hayes. Carr and Wohn (2016) 【119】 suggest that social media users may use different social media platforms to access different types of social support, implying that the picture may be more complex than all social media platforms offering sources of support.

There is some research backing the idea that support received through social media like Facebook is an extension of the support received offline (Blight et al., 2015)【120】, and so social media do little to increase perceptions of social support (Li et al., 2015) 【121】 . However, these groups of studies as well as those previously discussed do not differentiate between different users, and few examine particular uses of social media targeted to an specific support, pages or groups set up to support a particular group of people. Those who have unique interests, beliefs, or set of circumstances may be unlikely to find similar others or effective social support in their offline social circles (Stepanikova et al., 2010) 【122】 .

Social support is not only visible on pages specifically set up for this purpose. Billions of people use social media, create profiles, add content, interact, and share with others. However, when social media users die, these profiles are often used as a place for friends and family to express their grief and to support each other,

generating a feeling of solidarity (Church, 2013) 【123】. The content of the deceased's profile is a historical record of interaction and conversations with friends and family, and hence is as much a part of the living's life as it was the deceased's (Lingel, 2013) 【124】. It is understood able how these profiles become a memorial for the dead.

In relation to own study, it is important to take into account that social media can be a support for certain groups and in certain situations. We have no find any studies on the action of LGBTQ influencers as support. Hence, we hope to help to understand better how social media works in that sense.

3.2.2. Social Media and Citizenship

3.2.2.1. Civic debate

Taking into account our goal related to the positive effects that social networks can have in relation to the acceptance of the LGBT community, another positive aspect of social media can be civic debate and this is especially important for our theoretical framework. Guallar et al. (2016) 【125】 thought that social media have evolved from leisure-oriented venues into platforms for social interaction, information and civic debate. They have turned into massive spaces where a huge portion of citizens develop at least a part of their social lives. For example, citizens are exposed to information on political issues and public affairs on Facebook, even if they are not actively seeking for such information (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2018) 【126】. Lin (2019) 【127】 mentioned that social networking sites could be used as tools to cultivate and grow social connections with other citizens. That means that social media can be useful not only to maintain and straighten existing links among users but also for creating new links and opening up new connections (Phua et al., 2017) 【128】.

As they evolved, social media also became relevant venues for the distribution and circulation of information and news about political and civic events (Anspach et al., 2019) 【129】. Citizens are no longer the final end of a line in the news distribution circuit, but a node interlinked in a wider network (Carlson, 2016; Noguera-Vivo, 2018) 【130】 【131】. Social media have thus turned into an extension of the old public sphere, a new digital public sphere where civic and political affairs are put in common

and debated (Masip et al., 2019) 【132】 .

Meanwhile, Bekafigo and McBride (2013) 【133】 argued that social media were a useful channel for alternative parties, minorities or outsider groups frequently silenced in major legacy media to circulate their ideas and attitudes, and to channel political participation (Said-Hung & Segado-Boj, 2018) 【134】 . Social media can provide rich full and alternative sources of information for events which are silenced or marginalized on traditional legacy media and other regular or conventional media venues (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012)【135】. In other words, they can at least theoretically foster and guarantee the needed plurality of voices in any given society. As a consequence, citizens may have a wider, more diverse picture of events and versions of relevant and transcendent stories for civic participation and social events (Dubois & Blank, 2018a) 【136】 . As people are incidentally exposed in social media to news and sources, they wouldn't actively chose in other environments, that means that social media have the potential to expose individuals to ideologically cross-cutting sources and versions of events (Bakshy, Messic & Adamic, 2015)【137】. This has also a relevant consequence because users who spend more time in social media are exposed to more news, and also, show a higher degree of political participation in civic engagement not only online but also offline (Gil de Zuniga et al., 2012) 【138】 .

However, it is not an idyllic space for citizens because hate speech and fake news are becoming increasingly common online. It may incorporate harassment and physical threats with respect to religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, race, disability or gender identity. The expression of conflicts between different groups of the society, particularly leads to hate speech, and it may lead to severe consequences like violence, hostility, and discrimination (Priyadarshini et al., 2023) 【139】 . Meanwhile, an echo chamber appears easily where users are mainly exposed to conforming opinions and less able to find cross-cutting perspectives (Sunstein, 2009) 【140】 .

Concerning my research, it is significant to study that social media could raise civic debate. Past research has rarely discussed LGBTQ communities participating in civic debate. Hence, this research hopes to be conducive to comprehend how social media works in this regard.

3.2.2.2 Social media as a democratic public sphere

The rise of the internet as an interactive space, potentially global in reach, has led to an increasing number of scholars asserting the relevance of the internet for the promotion of a democratic public sphere (Cammaerts, 2005; Dahiberg, 2001; Dean, 2003)【141】【142】【143】. This has clearly reinvigorated debates regarding the public sphere and, linked to that, the potentials of the internet to foster a public sphere or public spaces beyond state and market. The concept of the public sphere was made famous by the European philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas(1991) 【144】 , a major source of inspiration for the theories of communicative planning alongside John Dewey (1927) 【145】 and the pragmatist tradition.

John Dewey (1927) 【145】 emphasized the importance of a participatory public sphere, where individuals interact and engage in collaborative problem-solving. His approach is rooted in the belief that democracy is not merely a system of governance but a way of life that necessitates active communication and community involvement. In contrast, Habermas drew on these pragmatic ideas but framed them within a European context. Habermas (1991) 【144】 defined the public sphere as a place where "private people come together as a public". For Habermas, the public sphere was a sphere that emerged out of civil society during the early days of liberal capitalism in several European countries. It was also a sphere where citizens ideally left behind their positions as private people to deliberate on matters of public interest freely and disinterestedly, being thus able to mediate between the civil society and the state.

Dahlgren (2003)【146】sets out three constituent dimensions of the public sphere:

- a) Institutional Features. The first is its structural dimension, which relates to its formal institutional features: organization, financial policy, ownership, control and regulation of the media, as well as the legal framework defining the freedom of communication.
- b) Mass media. The second dimension is the representational one and refers to the output of the media, and includes impartiality, accuracy.
- c) Public/Audience. The third dimension is that of interaction. Dahlgren (2003)

highlights the importance of this dimension and recalls that the public exists as a process of discursive interaction. Interaction consists of two aspects. Firstly, it has to do with the citizens' encounters with the media; secondly, the interaction between citizens themselves.

Moving this discussion to contemporary societies, some scholars held optimistic attitudes towards Habermasian public sphere. As noted by Castells (2008) [147], the public sphere was an essential component of sociopolitical organization because it was the space where people come together as citizens and articulate their autonomous views to influence the political institutions of society. Therefore, social media may revitalize the public sphere by allowing people "to challenge discourses, share alternative perspectives and publish their own opinions" (Loader & Mercea, 2011: 760) [148]. Recent studies underscore the transformative potential of social media in enhancing democratic engagement. For example, Leong et al (2018) [149] contended that social media assume a role in activism by enabling the powerless to voice widely shared grievances and organise unequally distributed resources.

However, the term "digital public sphere" appears in the digital era. By "digital public sphere," we mean a public sphere in which discussion about matters of potentially shared concern is shaped in part by communication on online platforms (intermediaries that store users' information and enable its public dissemination) (Cohen & Fung, 2023) [150]. During this period, multiple current analyses questioned the Habermasian normative ideal of a rational, impartial and equal public sphere and thought the public sphere as falling short of this ideal on all fronts and in novel ways. Bail (2021) [151] pointed out that today's public sphere fostered by social media logic was described as polarized, individualized (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012) [152], transmuted into bubbles or echo chambers (Rhodes, 2022) [153] and algorithmically rigged to produce inequality (Merten et al., 2022) [154]. This mismatch between a normative ideal and the empirical reality has been one of the key arguments of research on the public sphere (Fraser, 1990) [155]. Habermas himself, mapping the ills of mass media-driven public sphere, declared the market-driven public sphere to

be that “in appearance only” (Habermas, 1991: 171) 【144】 , “as negotiation between private interests took the place of civic debate”(Habermas, 1991: 198) 【144】 .

Today’s public sphere is increasingly dominated by visual content. This heightened visibility is perhaps most evident on social media. Martin Hand (2020) 【156】 notes how social media platforms as diverse as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat are all primarily visual media and how, as a result, social media use has become ‘a matter of visual communication’. Social media as a technical infrastructure and culture - ‘a virtual public sphere’ (Papacharissi, 2002) 【157】 - awards posts with the most likes, shares and comments with more visibility.

On social media, ‘the success’ of an argument is determined by how widely it is liked/shared (Marwick, 2015) 【158】 , which significantly shapes public action in this environment: posts are composed with popularity and ‘shareability’ in mind (Malafaia & Meriluoto, 2022) 【159】 . This is indeed necessary, as posts that do not receive any reactions quite concretely are hidden away by the algorithm. The public sphere is ‘simply a space of appearances’ that immediately mutates a dialogue into a spectacle with the presence of an audience, it follows that ‘competition for distinction, if not sheer fame, is at its very core.’ (Adut 2018, 21) 【160】 . Networks users, then, places fame, not civic-mindedness or equality, as the foundational value base of the public sphere. It is very interesting for us and make us to make the question: What are influencers looking for? Fame or personal relevance and reputation? Or both?

In the Chinese context, public sphere has been anticipated that online forums and microblogging services have the capacities to construct the Chinese public sphere through developing online communities for the general public and particular social groups. Some examples: environmental social groups and LGBTQ+ communities (Yang & Calhoun, 2007; Sima, 2011; Chen, 2020b) 【161】 【162】 【163】 ; promoting online activism (Yang, 2014a; Chen, 2020a)【164】【165】; nurturing media citizenship (Yu, 2006) 【166】 , and facilitating negotiation between the state and society over certain issues (Yang & Calhoun, 2007; Tong & Lei, 2013) 【161】 【167】 . Research indicates that these platforms have served as crucial sites for identity formation,

community building, and the promotion of rights (Awoyele & Oyewole, 2024) 【168】. This transformation has allowed marginalized groups to assert their presence and negotiate visibility (Carrasco & Kerne, 2018) 【169】 in a society that often stigmatizes them.

In my research, considering that social media could serve as a public sphere is significant. Studying social media as a public sphere helps me explore the relationship between audiences' interaction and SMIs' action (such as the content of videos) and understand why LGBTQ communities dare to become SMIs or even come out online. As a consequence, this research is dedicated to deepening exploration of the importance of audiences' interaction in the public sphere (social media).

3.2.2.3 Homonormativity and public debate

Homonormativity is the adoption of heteronormative ideals and constructs onto LGBT culture and identity (Halperin , 2012)【170】. It is predicated on the assumption that the norms and values of heterosexuality should be replicated and performed among homosexual people (Orzechowicz, 2010) 【171】 . Those who assert this theory claim homonormativity selectively privileges cisgender homosexuality (that is coupled and monogamous) as worthy of social acceptance (Rubin, 2011) 【172】 . Hence, it is important to consider that homonormativity can even dominate the public digital debate.

Duggan (2003) 【173】 popularized the term “homonormativity”. Duggan draws from heteronormativity, popularized by Michael Warner (2011) 【174】 , and concepts rooted in the notion of the "sex/gender system" (Rubin , 2012)【175】and the notion of compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1982) 【176】 . To place Duggan's views into political context and understand her perspective in framing these arguments in this manner, it is important to consider Lisa Duggan describes herself as a "commie pinko" (person who is associated with communism) queer feminist (Duggan, 2003) 【173】 .

Duggan (2003) 【173】 wrote that homonormativity was a politics that did not contest dominant heteronormativity assumptions and institutions but upheld and

sustained them while promising the possibility of a demobilised gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption. Catherine Connell (2015: 145) 【 177 】 says homonormativity "emphasizes commonality with the norms of heterosexual culture, including marriage, monogamy, procreation, and productivity"

Queer theorist David M. Halperin (2012) 【 170 】 sees the values of heteronormativity replicated and privileged as LGBT visibility and civil rights become normalized, stated that the keynote of gay politics ceased to be resistance to heterosexual oppression and became, instead, assimilation and the drive to social acceptance and integration into society as a whole. Halperin (2012) 【170】 says that the urbanization, gentrification and recapitalization of inner city queer areas and gay-ghettos contribute to the prevalence and privileging of established heterosexual norms. The queer theorist also attributes the shift in political rhetoric, discourse, and attitude from liberation to assimilation as a further reinforcement of a homonormative binary.

Gayle S. Rubin's notion of "sex hierarchy" – that sees Western heteronormative society graduate sexual practices from morally "good sex" to "bad sex" – delineates the forms of homosexual behaviour that engenders conditional acceptance (Rubin, 2011) 【175】 . Rubin et al (1999) 【178】 wrote that stable, long-term lesbian and gay male couples were verging on respectability if it was coupled and monogamous, the society was beginning to recognize that it includes the full range of human interaction. Rubin also wrote that these poles of acceptability and deviancy saw a homonormative privileging of long-term gay couples over the bodies of transgender, non-binary, and promiscuous members of these groups, and individuals whose behaviour stood high in this hierarchy were regarded with certified mental health, respectability, legality, social and physical mobility, institutional support and material benefits.

However, China has experienced neoliberal sexual politics and neo-Confucian familism. Several factors informed this choice. First, despite the developments of homosexual communities, culture and activism in the past several decades in

metropolitan China, the legal status of Chinese homosexuals remains ambiguous, and their rights to marriage and freedom from discrimination are absent. In other words, China, like most Asian countries, governs its homosexual population in ways in which family and social harmony, instead of lesbian and gay rights, are emphasized (Laurent, 2005) 【179】 . Thus, the rights-based agenda in sexual politics is central in China.

Second, recent years have witnessed the development of a neoliberal form of assimilationist homosexual activism in contemporary China. As Wei and Yan (2021) 【180】 observes, neo-Confucian family ideologies have been well incorporated into the Chinese homosexual community's fight for equal rights in recent years, as can be seen from the increasing numbers of Tongzhi parents engaged in homosexual activism and the use of family-centred language, such as familial emotion (qinqing 亲情), love (ai 爱) and familial harmony (jiating hexie 家庭和谐), as a means to legitimate the fight for equal rights for homosexuals. The family's vital role in Chinese homosexual activism provides fertile ground to rethink the assumed individualism of the neoliberal sexual politics as it moves outwards from the West.

Third, with the state's retreat from the comprehensive provision of social welfare and direct control over personal lives, China has experienced intensified individualization since Deng Xiaoping's programme of reform and opening (Yan, 2010) 【181】 . However, this individualization process has been accompanied by the state's reinvention of traditional Confucian culture as a source of political legitimacy and soft power (Liu, 2018) 【182】 , as well as the emergence of a family biopolitics centered on the economic, emotional and moral significance of the family in producing self-governing subjects (Kong, 2011) 【183】 . This tension between individual and family interests in China makes it a good empirical case to investigate the complicated individual–family dynamics in relation to homonormativity in the Asian context.

3.2.2.4 Algorithms and cisheteronormative biases

Algorithmic strategies can also condition public debate. Digital public spheres are characterized by algorithmicity, many-to-many communication, data collection and much more, and not just by the fact that they take place on a screen (Stalder, 2018) **【184】** . Hence, it is necessary to devote a section to this subject.

Technically, algorithms can be described as programmed procedures that are followed by a computer system. Algorithms can be used for a variety of tasks, including information retrieval, image recognition, filtering, outlier detection, and recommendation (Kemper & Kolkman, 2019)**【185】**. Gallagher (2020)**【186】** pointed out the definition of algorithms as machinations of human beings' intentions and the equations designed to achieve those intentions. These algorithms are important because everyday life is now dominated by internet-enabled objects ("the internet of things") and digital technology that are radically different from a typical tool, such as a hammer. Algorithms, such as advanced statistics that deploy massive sets of matrices, have become complex enough that these tools begin to mimic the decision-making of human beings ("machine learning").

Gillespie (2014) **【187】** conceptualizes algorithms as structured computational processes that systematically convert input data into predetermined outputs through explicitly defined transformation rules. Taking into account the goal of our research it is important to highlight that the algorithms are important technological ingredients in the architecture of online platforms and are being used to automatically filter enormous amounts of information to offer personalized content, services, and advertisements to the end users (van Dijck et al., 2018) **【188】** . In this research, I will follow Gillespie's definition of algorithms because the clarity, precision and the relevance to online platforms, which is useful to my research.

Online, algorithms work to decide what content is shown to audiences. On social media, algorithms determine what's socially relevant by choosing what types of creators or content are being promoted on feeds. It changes the work of writing on online platforms, because producers using algorithms must make sure that the algorithm processes the information in their content in a way that gets the content to

the audience. In a blog posted to media, Howells (2021) **【189】** wrote that users might click on particular types of content to “tell the algorithm [. . .] [what] content [they] want [. . .] to see,” so that their social media feed reflect their politics and showed them content from “all sorts of different people”. That means algorithms now oversee nearly all activities that take place on digital platforms: they select and order the results of searches, they filter, recommend, or censor certain contents, they monitor audiences’ activities to predict their preferences, and they score, evaluate, and moderate user content or even users themselves, among other tasks (Latzer et al., 2016) **【190】** . This high level of algorithmic oversight can enhance efficiency and decision-making (Li et al., 2025) **【191】** .

Besides, it also raises significant questions about social impact and fairness. García (2016) **【192】** mentioned that algorithmic systems could produce harm or injustices by automating pre-existing biases shared by the people who develop, implement, or use them, especially as there were still no clear guidelines overseeing algorithmic innovation or governance (Ananny, 2016; Introna, 2016) **【193】 【194】** .

A scholarship on the implications that platform algorithms – and platform affordances more generally – raise for LGBTQ+ users has emerged over the past few years. For example, researchers have suggested that the predictive nature of platform algorithms can result in outing LGBTQ+ people online by promoting default settings like publicness and visibility (Cho, 2018; Werbin et al., 2017). **【195】 【196】** Some scholars have illustrated how digital platforms, guided by industry imperatives, rely on binary classification systems that reproduce cisheteronormative assumptions about gender and sexual orientation (Bivens & Haimson, 2016; Lingel & Golub, 2015) **【197】 【198】** , that can further lead to online harassment against LGBTQ+ users (Albury et al., 2020; Blackwell et al., 2017) **【199】 【200】** . Other researchers have focused on the cisheteronormative biases reproduced by automated content moderation strategies used by digital platforms, documenting how they label LGBTQ+ content or users as being “questionable” or “offensive” (Anderson & Roth, 2020) **【201】** . For example, platforms like YouTube appears to be more likely to flag LGBTQ+ channels as ‘inappropriate’ and demonetize them by employing recommendation algorithms

positively biased toward “family-friendly” content (Fredenburg, 2020; Southerton et al., 2020; Wilkinson & Berry, 2020) 【202】 【203】 【204】 .

3.3. Social Media Influencers (SMI)

The second stream is the literature on Social Media Influencer (SMI). This research discusses SMIs in China deeply gradually. The first part is about the definition of SMI. Then, the next parts talk about the characteristics and function of SMIs. Next, the source credibility model is valuable to understand how SMIs in China influence audiences.

3.3.1 Definition

When exploring the definition of SMI, the term ‘influencer’ should be discussed firstly. During the past several decades, related literature has defined influencers in the Chinese context. For example, Zheng (2018) 【205】 pointed out that the term influencer was someone who relied on individual eye-catching remarks and behaviors or successful people who had great influence on the society, and exerted extensive influence through the planning of network media and network promoters. Liu (2022) 【206】 included experts, common citizens, or even celebrities with large followings in the term of “Influencer” .

As a new term, scholars haven’t reached an agreement on the definition of SMI in the communication field. For example, Freberg et al. (2011) 【207】 defined that SMIs, also known as digital influencers, were a new type of independent third party endorser who shaped audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media in coexistence with professional media. Liu (2013) 【208】 declared that influencers on social media had built a reputation for their expertise or knowledge around a given niche or topic. According to Kim and Kim (2020) 【209】 , SMIs were defined as those who had the potential to create engagement, drive conversation, and/or sell products/services with the intended target audience. Gross and Von Wangenheim (2022) 【210】 pointed out that these individuals could range from celebrities to more micro-targeted professional or nonprofessional ‘peers’.

Simultaneously, some scholars perceive online influencers as a new type of celebrity (Fan, 2021) 【211】. They develop their online personal images and charisma by updating social media feeds about their daily life, expertise and individual thoughts (Hung, 2020) 【212】. In sum, SMIs are influencers on social media who could use their influence and reputation to shape audiences' attitudes, sell products/services via content of their account.

Meanwhile, the meaning of SMI in the Chinese context have been discussed by a few scholars. For example, Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) 【213】 found that comparable terms of SMI offered slight variations in connotation and reference in China: there were KOLs (key opinion leaders) and Zhubo (showroom hosts). Crag et al. (2021) 【75】 explained that social media influencers can be translated into 'Wang Hong' (网红) (which means popular internet figure in the Chinese context), a contraction of 'Wangluo hongren' (Chinese for "people who have gone viral on the internet"), also referred to online celebrities, or micro-celebrities. Similarly, Lei (2018) 【214】 hold the view that SMI was wildly polysemic. Also, Lei (2018) 【214】 recognized that SMIs relied on social media platforms to develop, accumulated personal influence and attractiveness through online platforms, and they were liked by fans in their fields. Apart from KOLs (Zhu & Wang, 2020) 【215】 and wang hong (Xu & Zhao, 2019) 【216】, the following terms could also be used to name SMI: online influencers and bloggers (Balabanis & Chatzopoulou, 2019) 【217】; video bloggers (Ladhari et al., 2020) 【218】; internet celebrities (Chen, Lin & Shan, 2021; Chen, Yeh & Lee, 2021) 【219】 【220】; and micro-celebrities (Martínez & Olsson, 2019) 【221】.

Taking into account all the previous studies, I will define SMIs in China as those who have personal influence and reputation from fans by charisma and attractiveness, which developed by sharing their daily life, uploading content about expertise and personal experiences. In the field of advertising, there is a trend towards creating influencers with AI. But, in our study, we did not include this profile.

3.3.2 Characteristics

Experts in communication field have explored and analyzed the characteristics of SMIs. For example, Burson (2011)【230】revealed that SMIs were mainly produced in the virtual world, their identities were not easy to be identified, such as "MC Tianyou", "Chen Yifa", "Feng TiMo" (those who are famous singers online in China). Burson (2011) 【222】 related SMIs' entertainment attributes and differentiated aesthetic tastes to SMIs' unexpected 'grassroots' popularity and fame. Khamis et al. (2017) 【223】 indicated that SMIs used self-branding strategy to strive for building a specific public identity focused on a target audience. In addition, they emphasized the importance of constructing a sense of genuineness and intimacy to their self-branding strategy. Zheng (2018) 【205】 discovered that SMIs' frequent attention with netizens and more willing to use videos and live broadcasting to express themselves are SMIs' indispensable characteristics. Lu and Yu (2022) 【224】 added accessibility, a familiar personality, sharing daily lives and producing interesting content to SMIs' characteristics.

Due to the characteristics of network globalization, scholars in China summarized the features of SMIs from their cultural perspective. For example, Lei (2018) 【214】 generalized four features of SMIs. First, SMIs were not necessarily the earliest users of the social media platforms, but they were definitely the most active users. Second, SMIs came from different entertainment industries. Third, SMIs usually uploaded content about clothing, beauty makeup, food or other products with pictures, videos and text, and had a relatively high status and reputation among their fans. Fourth, they were good at using digital media technology to show themselves, and released word-of-mouth information about products.

Jin et al. (2019) 【225】 shared a similar opinion and thought that SMIs were prominent social media users that were viewed as experts in specific domains of interest, such as fashion, lifestyle, photography, travel, and so forth. Lou & Yuan (2019) 【226】 discovered that SMIs were ordinary social media users who cultivated a dedicated following by crafting compelling stories around their interests and lifestyle. Also, they thought that SMIs created a powerful online identity by packaging and communicating authentic personal narratives that combine photos,

videos, and activities with the interactive affordances of social media. This careful orchestration of a persuasive online persona helped influencers attract followers and engage them on an ongoing basis. Nouri (2018) 【227】 pointed out that traditional celebrities are created by professionals in the entertainment industry, while SMIs are mostly self-made opinion leaders with strong popularity among social media users .

In summary, the characteristics of SMIs in China are as follows: they come from different fields; they are easily accessible, genuine and intimate; they provide entertainment and unique aesthetic tastes to fans. In this research, the characteristics of SMIs are valuable to understand why audiences are easily affected by SMIs in China, and how they influence fans.

3.3.3 Function

Studies that focus on the function of SMIs in China could be divided into three main research perspectives: expansion of knowledge; affecting audiences' value; negative influence.

In the expansion of knowledge perspective, Li and Lin (2017) 【228】 stated that the SMIs' used audio, H5 and short videos to fulfil videos' content. This media-rich immersive mobile reading experience not only inspired audiences' enthusiasm for active learning and stimulated audiences' curiosity about new knowledge, but also improved the absorption and conversion rate of knowledge. Similarly, as Zhang (2017) 【229】 observed, SMIs could stimulate audience's interest in active learning and expand their knowledge source channels. Next year, Zheng (2018) 【205】 added that SMIs were good at making content both entertaining and educational, thereby satisfying audiences' thirst for knowledge in unknown areas, like LGBTQ SMIs upload content about their daily lives with humor. This content could fulfill audiences' curiosity about SMIs' lives and extend their knowledge about SMIs communities, which is new to audiences.

In the affecting audiences' values perspective, Lei (2017) 【14】 considered SMIs'

personality and charm as the inspiration of positive energy, which subtly affects audiences' value judgement. Lu and Ding (2019) 【15】 developed this opinion and claimed that SMI' characteristics and dynamic information content catered to the curiosity of the audience and stimulated their interest in continuous attention from SMIs. SMIs' positive image directly or indirectly inspires audiences to be positive and uphold good values. Meanwhile, various scholars' agreed that SMIs could affect audiences' values, behaviors and attitudes (Belanche et al., 2021) 【13】. For example, Jixing, a famous LGBTQ SMI on DouYin, wins reputation because of her outstanding dancing abilities, excellent eloquence and positive values. Jixing shows a positive image of LGBTQ community, which might affect audiences' attitudes towards LGBTQ communities. The positive image is essential to persuasive communication. It is not similar. It takes part of persuasive communication. To be persuaded, you need to feel a positive image. In this research, it is significant to discuss SMIs' influence on audiences' values, which contribute to study how LGBTQ SMIs could affect young audiences' acceptance of LGBTQ communities in China.

But finally, we cannot forget SMIs' negative influence on the audience as well. Miao (2012) 【230】 clearly stated that multiple audiences have wrong consumption attitudes misled by negative SMIs. For example, Wu (2018) 【231】 assumed that SMIs might lower the moral level of the audience in China. SMIs who have a low moral level may spread bad content on social media. They chose to use vulgar language, extreme behavior and other sensational methods to gain a large amount of attention from the audiences. The audiences might lose their independent judgement and understanding, and were guided by bad content online. Then, many scholars elaborated this idea. For example, Xiu (2016) 【232】 linked SMIs' money and fame to audiences' falling into fierce competition between ideals, beliefs and real interests. Many audiences might even give up pursuing their dreams directly and seek to choose real benefits.

3.3.4 Source credibility model to study SMI

3.3.4.1 Introduction: persuasive communication and credibility

When exploring the definition of persuasive communication, the term ‘persuasion’ should be discussed firstly. Persuasion is a communicative process of altering the beliefs, attitudes, intentions, or behaviour of another by the conscious and unconscious use of words and nonverbal messages (Slattery et al., 2020) **【233】** .

The concept of persuasion has been developed between the 1940s and 1950s after studies aimed at defining the optimal persuasive effectiveness of Propaganda, be it political or an advertising campaign. In an ideal sense, however, persuasive speech is used to influence both individuals and groups to accept a particular position or belief. Persuasive speech requires a clear understanding of the audience and an intense listener focus (Derin. et al, 2020) **【234】** . Shahzalal and Font (2020) **【235】** revealed that persuasion theory even has a scientific formula. It included three key generators of people’s identities that were highly persuasive to change people’s attitudes and behaviors, which were values, beliefs, and motivations (“Value + Beliefs + Motives = Attitudes → Behavior”). People used this formula when they wanted to persuade another individual or an audience. The speaker should take the audience through five stages of understanding in a persuasive speech: a) awareness of the problem, b) understanding the problem, c) understanding the proposed solution, d) visualization of the effects of the proposed solution, and e) understanding how they, the audience, must act (Shahzalal & Font, 2020) **【235】** .

Concerning persuasive communication, the Encyclopedia of Human Behavior (2012) **【236】** states that “persuasive communications contain a variety of attributes intended to enhance persuasion, which could include an attractive source, a message containing convincing arguments, or efforts to make the topic seem personally relevant to the audience”. In Anja Bojic (2022) **【237】** , we found how Richard M. Perloff defined persuasion in the communication field as a symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behavior regarding an issue through the transmission of a message, in an atmosphere of free choice.

Katherine Miller (2005) 【238】 defined that persuasive communication was any message that aims to shape, strengthen or change the other party's response. What is meant by response by Miller here is attitude and behaviour. The same thing was stated by Dedy Mulyana (2017) 【239】 , that persuasive communication is communication that aims to change the attitudes, beliefs and behavior of people or groups that are the goal of persuasion so that they believe and behave in accordance with what is expected by those who do the persuasion.

Hence, based on the definitions discussed, persuasive communication can be a powerful and effective tool for achieving goals related to changing people's attitudes and behaviors. This is particularly relevant because we can understand the communication strategies of LGBTQ influencers are based on persuasive communication.

In addition, persuasive communication is hailed as a process that is expected to change, influence, shape, or elicit clear reactions from others. Persuasive communication leads to positive reactions and outcomes (Lister et al., 2020) 【240】 . Audiences' emotional responses can be influenced by credible and persuasive communications that evoke a favorable attitude toward the relevant topic. Similarly, Levy and Dyili (2020)【241】 argued that perceived persuasiveness refers to the extent to which information presented in social media content (such as videos, photos, and texts) can effectively convince audiences to accept the advice being conveyed.

In our research, source credibility is a key concept. Source credibility is a concept that expresses all of the positive features affecting the acceptance of a message by the recipient and the features used to affect the individual (Ohanian, 1990)

【242】 . The credibility of the message source shows how much the recipient believes in the sender (Wu & Wang, 2011) 【243】 . In the context of social media, source reliability is the degree to which content producers are perceived as trustworthy, knowledgeable and credible (Zha et al, 2018) 【244】 . This theory contended that various traits of a perceived communication source generated beneficial effects on message receptivity (Erdogan, 1999) 【245】 . Umeogu (2012) 【246】 posited that

individuals or receivers were more likely to be persuaded when the source presents itself as credible.

Ohanian (1991)【247】categorized source credibility into trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness of the endorser. Then, there were significant number of studies that have investigated the effect of various dimensions of source credibility such as trustworthiness (Chao, Wührer & Werani, 2005; Deshpandé & Stayman, 1994; Pornpitakpan, 2002; Spry, Pappu, & Cornwell, 2011) 【248】 【249】 【250】 【251】; expertise (Eisend & Langner, 2010) 【252】 ; and attractiveness (Chao et al., 2005; Tingchi et al., 2007; Reingen & Kernan, 1993) 【253】 【254】 【255】 on audiences' belief and attitudes. Concerning the communication field, Massi et al. (2024) 【256】 stated that authenticity was important in social media influencer marketing. Results indicated that SMI authenticity has a significant main effect on SMI credibility, and that SMI-brand fit mediates the relationship between SMI authenticity and SMI credibility.

A complex and nuanced approach is emerging in the study of online users. Online users are less regarded in functionalist and individualistic terms and more as people who are both individuals and part of networks with collective attitudes (Dastagir, 2018) 【22】 . They are able to perform within the digital culture and also adapt digital culture to their individual needs (Dastagir, 2018) 【22】 . As a result, they have an immense impact on content flows through small acts of engagement (Kleut et al., 2018) 【257】 .

3.4.4.2 Trustworthiness

Regarding source credibility, trustworthiness is the most important factor which could influence audiences' perception. Trustworthiness, the term, is usually regarded as "the honesty, integrity, and believability of an endorser " (Erdogan et al. 2001, p. 40) 【258】 . A source's credibility can determine information seekers' confidence in their own thoughts about a persuasive message. The argument is made on the basis

that the perceived validity of information in a message is affected by the credibility of a source (Fragale & Heath, 2004) 【259】 .

But it depends on the target audience perceptions. Moreover, it is argued that likeability is the most important attribute of trust (Friedman et al., 1978) 【260】 . SMIs can create the highest effect by taking into account these two factors, liking and trustworthiness. It is stated when audiences like a celebrity, they will automatically trust a celebrity (Friedman et al., 1978)【260】. Once the negative news of a SMI being reported, the believability and the trustworthiness of the SMI will be damaged.

Navarro et al. (2020) 【261】 explained the plays of social media influencers in communication with followers. For example, social media influencers affect their followers by delivering information, providing recommendations, giving personal advice, and supplementing professional knowledge. To be more specific, these activities should be done based on interpersonal or professional trust. These communicational activities between influencers and their followers are related to specific brands/products of other organizations. For example, promoting services successfully, raising awareness, informing and educating target audiences, building trust, and motivating consumer acceptance (Navarro et al, 2020) 【261】 . Therefore, trustworthiness is one of the fundamental elements of social media influencers (Monge-Benito et al., 2020) 【262】 . Nevertheless, some authors found that over exposure to influencers also has a negative effect on audiences' perception of influencers' credibility as a whole. (Terrelle, 2016; Griffith, 2015) 【263】 【264】 .

3.4.4.3 Attractiveness

Source attractiveness relates to perceived social value. This quality does not simply mean the person's physical appearance but also includes social status personality or his or her similarity to the receiver (McGuire et al. ,1985) 【265】 . For example, intellectual skills, personality properties, lifestyles, or athletic prowess. Attractiveness usually applied in advertising to benefit from the influences of both celebrity status and physical appeal (Singer, 1983) 【266】 .

Many types of research have shown that a physically attractive source tends to facilitate attitude and beliefs change than unattractive counterparts (Baker & Churchill, 1977; Debevec & Keman, 1984) 【267】 【268】 . Physical attractiveness of a communicator determines the effectiveness of persuasive messages through a process called identification. This process is assumed to occur when information from an attractive source is accepted as a result of the desire to identify with such endorsers (Cohen & Golden, 1972) 【269】 .

However, other scholars hold different views. Maddux and Rogers (1980) 【270】 studied the presence of arguments and expertise influenced attitude ratings, but physical attractiveness did not. Lord and Putrevu (2009) 【271】 found an effect of source attractiveness for a transformational communication strategy but other studies have failed to find support for moderating effects.

When concerning literature on social media context, the characteristics of the attractiveness of endorsers (SMIs) are various. For example, Monge-Benito et al.(2020) 【262】 insisted that the concept of attractiveness is related to the degree to which audiences identify with them in terms of gender, age and lifestyle. Langmeyer and Shank (1994) 【272】 pointed out intelligence and athletic process as well as lifestyle. Kok Wei and Li (2013) 【273】 listed characteristics of source attractiveness as physical beauty, familiarity and likeability. In addition, the number of fans (popularity) can indicate level of attractiveness. For example, De Veirman et al. (2017) 【274】 did experimental studies and the results showed that Instagram influencers with high numbers of followers were found more likeable, partly because they were considered more popular.

3.3.4.4 Expertise

Expertise is the extent to which the endorser is perceived as a valid source of information, which usually refers to the knowledge, experience, or skills owned by an endorser (Erdogan, 1999) 【245】 . The more expertise a celebrity has, the more effective it will be. The expertise of a celebrity will not be changed by negative

publicity, but the believability and credibility will be negatively influenced. Most SMIs are experts from different fields.

With regard to expertise, what matters is not whether an endorser is an expert, but how the target audience perceives the expertise of the endorser. SMI could be endorsers for products and services when advertisers and manufacturers choose them to promote their products and services. SMI could shape audiences and consumers attitudes towards a brand. A source celebrity that is more expert is more persuasive (Batra et al., 1995; Aaker, 1997) [275] [276] and more able to generate purchase intentions (Ohanian, 1991) [247]. Moreover, expert celebrities produced higher recall of product information than non-expert celebrities (Speck et al., 1988) [277]. Speck et al. (1988) [277] stated that celebrities (SMIs) who are seen as an expert in a specific area engender a higher brand recognition than celebrities who are seen as non-experts.

Expertise, or a source's perceived expertise, has a positive effect on attitudes and source credibility (Biswas et al., 2006) [278]. Furthermore, this effect is supported by the match-up hypothesis (Kamins, 1990; Till & Busler, 2000) [279] [280] and empirical evidence from Amos et al. (2008) [281], while Erdogan (1999) [256] and Ohanian (1990) [242] offered further foundational insights. The level of celebrity expertise (SMIs) will determine his or her effectiveness (Amos et al., 2008) [281].

3.4. Audience reception

The third stream in our theoretical frame is on audience reception, and specifically focuses on audience on social media. I will divide this paragraph into two parts. The first is related to a classical theory, uses and gratification theory. The second talks about algorithmic strategies and audience engagement. Audience engagement, affected by algorithmic strategies, is the basis of explaining the relationship between audience and SMIs, while use and gratification theory helps to analyze the roots why audiences follow SMIs. Interestingly, engagement vies the audience as active an algorithmic strategy as passive.

3.4.1 Global theory about audiences: Uses and Gratifications

The Uses and Gratifications theory (U & G) was originated from the functionalist perspective on mass media communication and was first developed in research on the effectiveness of the radio medium in the 1940s (Luo, 2002) 【282】. The earliest researcher in this area was Herta Herzog (García Jiménez, Huertas Bailén & Vera Balanza, 2023) 【283】 who identified emotional needs, wishful thinking, and the desire to learn new things as some of the reasons people turn to the media. Herzog's study involved asking questions to women who listen to daytime radio programs on a regular basis, with questions including "what do the programs mean to you?", "why do you listen to the programs?", and "what do you do with what you hear on the programs?" (Herzog, 1941) 【284】.

From the responses to these questions, Herzog summarized them into one "stereotyped formula" of "getting into trouble and out again" (Herzog, 1941: 67). Herzog was also able to determine a correlation between the number of programs listened to per day and the complexity of the listener's troubles, "The more complex the listener's troubles are or the less able she is to cope with them, the more programs she seems to listen to" (Herzog, 1941: 69).

Herzog (1941) alludes to three main types of gratification for listening:

- **"Listening as emotional release:"** Herzog highlights that the radio programs offer listener's emotional stimuli and opportunities for emotional release, such as through crying and excitement. Herzog also points out listeners feel relief knowing "other people had their troubles too" (Herzog, 1941: 72).
- **"Listening as means of remodeling one's drudgery:"** Herzog suggests listeners tend to fictionalize themselves in order to be able to experience what is occurring in the radio program. "She not only feels with the characters, like the person who gets emotional release from listening; she is the characters." (Herzog, 1941: 74). Listeners are afforded opportunities to imagine happier situation, relive the past, fill in the gaps and revel in others' success (Herzog, 1941).

- **"Listening for recipes making for adjustment:"** Herzog highlights that the radio programs offer listener's an ideology by which they can look at their own situation. "Listening provides them with an ideology to be applied in the appraisal of the world which is actually confronting them." (Herzog, 1941: 72) The radio programs offer listeners with "remedies" to confront their problems (Herzog, 1941).

Later, Uses and Gratifications theory, first advanced in the 1940s by Lazarsfeld and Stanton taking into account the work of Herta Herzog (1944) **【285】** , attempts to explain the reasons people use mass media and the different types of gratification they receive from it. Gratifications, simply stated, are rewards or satisfactions obtained by the individual. The theory relies on the belief that the audience is not merely a group of passive media consumers, but that they play an active role in selecting different media to meet their needs (Infante et al., 1997; Lowery & De Fleur, 1983) **【286】** **【287】** . The theory came into prominence in the late 1950s and early 1960s at a time when researchers realized that traditional effects theories did not adequately explain audience experiences with mass media and Psychology could give answers (Blumler, 1979; Swanson, 1979) **【288】** **【289】** .

Then, Katz et al. (1974) **【290】** investigated the role of media in meeting psychological and social needs and highlighted that media can contribute to understanding oneself, personal and social status and connecting with the society (Rubin, 2009) **【291】** . They have put forward the basic assumptions of the U & G approach. First, the audience is active and thus the use of mass media is goal directed. Second, the audience makes motivated choices, based on previous experience with the media. Third, media selection and use are purposive and motivated and people take the initiative in selecting and using communication vehicles to satisfy felt needs and desires. Fourth, the media compete with other sources of need satisfaction.

Based on the mentioned assumptions, Rubin (1994) **【292】** suggested that the primary objective of the U & G theory was to explain and understand the psychological needs which shaped people's reason for using the media and the

reasons which motivated them to engage in certain media use behaviour for gratifications that fulfilled their inherent needs, including the identification of the positive and negative consequences of individual media use.

Additionally, Rubin (2009) 【291】 distinguished between two different types of media use, ritualistic and instrumental media use. While ritualistic media use involved using media to fill leisure time and divert attention from problems, instrumental media orientation was based on actively seeking content that would satisfy the need for information. Instrumental media use emphasized the purposefulness and usefulness of content, intention, selectivity, and active user engagement.

In particular, this theory seeks to recognize the important role of the individual in the use of mass media by focusing on what people do with mass media (Lim & Ting, 2012) 【293】. Also, this theory explains that individuals have a choice to choose what media they use to satisfy their inherent needs and wants (Rui & Stefanone, 2016) 【294】. Thus, U & G is a user-centered approach that emphasizes the role of the media audience in relation to potential media effects (Katz et al., 1974) 【290】. The U & G model identifies what motivations media users have with each different type of mass media such as consuming, participating, and engaging (Nelson et al., 2019) 【295】. Also, the users are aware of their own needs by themselves (Ruggiero, 2000) 【296】. One potential effect that may result from the motives we have for using a medium is dependency. One's motivations for using a medium can be related to the degree to which someone is dependent upon that medium.

Among U&G frameworks available in the literature, the Palmgreen and Rayburn (1979) 【297】 scale was the first to look at both uses and gratifications simultaneously. Korgaonkar and Wolin(1999) 【298】 and Papacharissi and Rubin(2000) framework 【299】 looked at uses and gratifications with respect to the internet. They identified seven themes: social interaction, information seeking, pass time, entertainment, relaxation, communicatory utility, convenience utility.

In relation to my study, U & G theory is a valuable theoretical framework for explaining how individuals have a choice to choose what media they use to satisfy

their inherent needs and wants. We find that few scholars paid attention to why audiences could be affected by LGBTQ SMIs. Hence, we try to assist in understanding why Chinese SMIs could affect their audiences. However, the appearance of algorithms changes U & G theory in the digital era.

3.4.2 Audience on social media

3.4.2.1. Algorithmic audiences

Algorithms collect data from audiences' intentions and then automatically filter enormous amounts of information to offer personalized content, services, and advertisements to the end users. Users just need to click some kinds of content to tell the algorithm what they want. Then, algorithms work to decide what content is shown to audiences. Algorithmic audiences are trained to be sequential, isolated viewers, whose work of watching occurs in labor-intensive ways. They are passive audiences in their diverse forms of searching and matching, trending, recommendations, and news-feeds (Bucher, 2017) 【300】 .

Audiences voluntarily give their attention, disregarding their privacy and sacrificing their autonomy out of a misguided perception that what is on offer is what they want and need, global platforms will surely impose on society unchecked their discriminatory, exclusionary, and exploitative logics, until we “find ourselves toiling productively away in the DotCompound, narrowcasting the rhythms of our daily lives to an ever smaller and more exclusive audience of private corporations” (Andrejevic, 2002: 246) 【 301 】 . This phenomenon can be understood as a reflection of the "nonhuman turn" in the humanities over the past decade and a half because it frames these nonliving objects as possible audiences.

Meanwhile, the news and public information which audiences see and hear are increasingly influenced by algorithms. When algorithms act as gate-keepers, they impact on the information which the audience receives and on the way people communicate. Prioritization and recommendation algorithms affect exposure to counter-attitudinal views by either narrowing (Bakshy et al., 2015) 【 137 】 or

broadening the perspectives which the audience encounters (Helberger, 2019) 【302】 . The information which algorithms on social media platforms show can affect turnout (Bond et al., 2012) 【 303 】 or the persuasiveness of misinformation (Bode & Vraga, 2015) 【 304 】 . On the one hand, algorithms on social media platforms can enhance the spread of extremist views (Massanari, 2017) 【305】 . On the other hand, algorithms are used to moderate the online debate and censor inappropriate speech (Cobbe, 2021) 【306】 .

These data practices render audiences visible in new ways, exemplified by current trends in visualizing the "Xsphere" or aggregating digital traces like comments, coupled with enthusiastic debates about algorithmic insights derived from the "big data" driving digital networks (Couldry & Hepp, 2017: 153) 【307】 . This approach acknowledges how audience behaviors become intermingled with all other digital activities recorded online, reinforcing the inseparability of audience analysis from broader human experiences.

But this enhanced visibility obscures more than it reveals. In data visualizations of audiences' activities, much of importance is stripped away. Away with the socio-cultural, displaced by individual behaviors. Away with context, meaning, interpretation, for it is the hidden patterns beneath awareness that matter. Couldry and Hepp (2017: 153)【307】 caution that on social media, users for practical purposes are not real persons but abstract operations enacted through the aggregation of singular data-points. At present, the distance between real and data selves is often great—witness the academic uses of big data that fail even to distinguish men or women, adults or children.

Our research contributes to show the deep reasons why audiences' interaction could reflect SMIs' effect and we cannot forget the roll algorithms can play. We collect data of audiences' interaction (comments, likes, shares, saves and views) so it is necessary to consider the importance of algorithms. Algorithms are tools that helps some content to high levels of interactivity while others let in the dark. Hence, we cannot forget the algorithmic strategies in the interpretation of our final findings.

3.4.2.2. Audience engagement

When exploring audience engagement, the term ‘engagement’ should be discussed firstly. Contrary to passive exposure to news content, the term engagement denotes an active and intentional orientation toward what users read, view, or hear, which brings him closer to the uses and gratifications theory.

People invest time, attention, and emotion (Dessart et al., 2015) 【308】 and internalize a media message. The concept thus assumes that users are captivated by a news application, or media content. Jacob Ormen's (2015) 【309】 stated that engagement captured both how people devote attention to and interact with something. Engagement thus comprised two aspects of media audiences typically of interest to audiences-consumption and participation. These psychological experiences would motivate them to use it longer and more intensively, and stimulate user loyalty, attentiveness, and thought formation.

In the social media context, engagement refers to the time that audiences are willing to spend on related content while reading (O'Brien, 2011) 【310】 ; quality of audience attention (Chan-Olmsted & Wolter, 2018) 【311】 and interaction among content, platform and audiences (Chen & Cao, 2014) 【312】, including commenting on news stories (Opgehaffen, 2011) 【313】, exchanging opinions with other audiences, sharing news stories or creating personal profiles (Kirk et al., 2015) 【314】 .

In the digital era, social media lets the audience interact. Audiences could generate content and become communicators. Active audience means going beyond one-way communication and adding the possibility for users to react. Such reactions include the opportunity to post comments as well as to engage in discussion with other users (Kramer, 2016) 【315】 .

Audience engagement is the cognitive, emotional and effective experiences that users have with media content. For example, Hill (2019) 【316】 offers a pragmatic conception of engagement, which posits it as an all-encompassing term to represent how audiences experience media content, artefacts and events, from (their) experience of live performances, to social media engagement, or participation in media itself. It has provided solid evidence how audiences perceive content on social media while

browsing and reading and, hence, given prominence interactivity of social media as a key feature of audience engagement. Also, audience engagement is of great interest to news organizations as it attracts wider readership (Davis Mersey et al, 2010) 【317】 and builds trust and loyalty (Chung & Nah,2009) 【318】 .

Audience engagement can take many forms. All of them are related to digital interactivity/interacting online. Each type offers unique insights into your audience's behavior (Salesforce, 2025). 【319】 . Here's what that looks like, taking into account the involvement that an audience has with a content:

Likes and reactions: On social media, likes and reactions help users express their feelings about content quickly and easily. This form of engagement can serve as a basic indicator of your audience's approval and emotional response.

Comments and replies: Engaging with your audience through comments creates a two-way conversation that can foster a stronger community and provide deeper insights into what your audience thinks and feels about your content or offerings.

Shares: When users share or reshare your content, it not only extends your reach but also acts as an endorsement of your content's value. This can significantly boost credibility and attract new followers or customers.

Reviews and mentions: Reviews on platforms like Google, Yelp, or Amazon provide valuable feedback and can influence the reputation of a product or service. Mentions, particularly on social media, help in spreading reputation organically and can amplify SMIs' reach.

Resource downloads: Offering downloadable resources such as e-books, white papers, or software trials can be a strong indicator of interest. Downloads require a user to take a specific action, which can be a lead-in to further engagement steps such as sales or subscriptions.

When mentioning audience engagement in the communication field, audience engagement entails understanding how people attend to information about issues of public concern, become aware of the intricacies of these issues, and address each other about such issues (Nelson, 2021) 【 320 】 . Meanwhile, multiple scholars underlined video content was linked with audience engagement in social media

platforms. For example, Szmuda et al (2020) 【321】 stated that there are many factors of the influence on audience engagement, such as video content, quality, and information sources (Szmuda et al.,2021) 【322】 . Song et al. (2021) 【323】 pointed out that the emerging short-video social apps could satisfy people's intrinsic motivations and elicit user engagement. Li. et al. (2021) 【324】 proposed video content theme could affect audiences.

Among video content characteristics, title length plays an important role. Li. et al. (2021) 【324】 proved video characteristics like title length affected audiences. Also, Zhang, Wei, and Yin (2022) 【325】 stressed the number of views, likes, and comments of the audience could be influenced video title length. Chen (2023) 【326】 elaborated title length corresponds to enhance audience engagement.

Meanwhile, humor is also important to raise audience engagement. Cacciatore et al. (2020) 【327】 highlighted humor could significantly enhance various dimensions of audience engagement including attention, retention, and interaction. Martin Eisend (2009) 【328】 conducted a meta-analysis that found humorous advertisements significantly increased audience's attention, enhanced positive affect, and purchase intention compared to non-humorous counterparts. This suggests that humor not only engages audiences but also drives audiences' behavior. James M. Barry and Sandra S. Graça (2018) 【329】 extended research on humor effectiveness to videos intended for social media engagement. A survey and content analysis of 2,911 videos revealed an attitude favorability toward humor over serious entertainment, especially when the message was intended for goods classified as low involvement and emotionally motivated. The study also suggested, however, that humor might dissuade social media participants from imparting comments.

4.OBJECTIVES, HYPOTHESIS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

4.1. Introduction: Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

The purpose of this dissertation study is to measure the effect of LGBTQ SMIs on audiences' acceptance of LGBTQ communities in the Chinese context. Concretely, we aim to explore the reactions that Chinese LGBTQ SMIs provoke on audiences. Digital interactivity, where LGBTQ community is present, provides a platform to understand public discourse about them and their level of tolerance towards them. The previous chapters outlined why this issue is important and why SMIs could have a huge impact on audiences, improving tolerance.

The academic discussion helps us to pose a question clearly: it stresses SMIs' accessibility and entertainment attributes might make audiences more easily to accept stigmatized groups. This potentiality, nevertheless, reveals the non-solid ground upon which these arguments are based. Therefore, our empirical research try to provide a way to move the discussion from potentiality to at least a certain degree of certainty.

Our research is based on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), which is the result of a general theory of attitude change. According to the theory's developers Richard E. Petty and John T. Cacioppo (1986) 【330】 , they intended to provide a general framework for organizing, categorizing, and understanding the basic processes underlying the effectiveness of persuasive communications. They developed the ELM as the attempt to account for the differential persistence of communication-induced attitude change. The model indicates that due to different processing depths, information features will affect the attitude and behavior of the information audience through the central path and the edge path. The central path requires users to invest more energy to deeply understand the argument quality, relevance, and merits of relevant information, and then achieve cognitive judgments about target behavior. In contrast, less effortful peripheral paths can use simple cues to evaluate and reason about target behaviors. Due to the difference in cognitive effort and energy, attitude changes formed by the central path are more durable and stable than attitude changes influenced by the peripheral path (Bhattacharjee, A., & Sanford,

C., 2006) 【331】 .

4.2. Objectives

Considering our main focus and reviewing the theoretical framework, specific objectives have been formulated to define our research process. In order to explain our objectives, we have distinguished two categories. First, instrumental objectives, which are related to empirical work. Second, objectives which function is to answer the main research questions, explained in 1.2.

4.2.1. Instrumental Objectives

OA1. Determine the main sample, formed by LGBTQ SMIs. The selection criteria are as follows: being SMI belonging to the LGBTQ community (ensuring homogeneity in the sample); he/she must have huge influence; a Chinese adult (over 18 in China). It is a sensitive issue in China and no social media has this ranking. Hence, I have to do an own ranking.

OA2. Determine the sample of videos upload by each LGBTQ SMIs in order to analyze the content they share and its relationship with digital interaction. I have to identify the top 10 videos with greater audience engagement from each selected LGBTQ SMIs' homepage.

4.2.2. Research Objectives

OB1. Describe audience engagement according to the content (themes and titles) of the videos shared by LGBTQ SMIs. Identify and analyze the audience interaction with videos, taking into account content (we consider the audience interaction as dependent variable on content shared by LGBTQ SMIs Style). Which themes and titles provoke more reaction and what kind of comments (positive or negative)?

OB2. Describe audience engagement according to personal characteristics of LGBTQ SMIs (trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness). Identify and

analyze how LGBTQ SMIs style influence on the audience interaction (we consider the audience interaction as dependent variable on LGBTQ SMIs style). How does trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness affect digital interactivity (checking how each of them works separately). Which personal characteristic is more appreciated by the audience according to data from digital interactivity? Do audience comments (in negative and positive sense) on personal style's influencers?

4.3. Hypotheses and research questions

Based on the research objectives, we have formulated the following hypotheses. Two main factors can be identified: (1) content uploaded by LGBTQ SMIs, and (2) personal characteristics of LGBTQ SMIs. We posit that digital interactivity is influenced by both factors.

Table1 Research hypotheses

Source: Own elaboration

Research hypothesis		Research Subhypothesis
H1	There is a correlation between the content (theme) and the title (length) features of the video shared by LGBTQ SMI and the user response (comments, shares, likes, saves and number of views).	H1a) Theme humor level (Humor theme) significantly positively affects user response
		H1b) Long Title (measured by number of words) significantly positively affects user response.
H2	There is a significant relationship between the personal characteristics of LGBTQ SMI (trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness) and user response (comments, shares, likes, saves and viewing number).	H2a) The trustworthiness significantly and positively affects user response.
		H2b) The expertise significantly and positively affects user response.
		H2c) The attractiveness significantly and positively affects user response.

4.3.1. Digital interactivity and video content

GENERAL HYPOTHESIS:

H1: There is a correlation between the content (theme) and the title (length) features of the video shared by LGBTQ SMI and the user response (comments, shares, likes, saves and number of views).

Our main question is: which videos have the most influence taking into account the content they explain? First, the definition of content theme is a central topic or idea that serves as the foundation for all content creation efforts. As Mast (2023) 【332】 posted that content theme provided a clear and focused direction for content strategy, ensuring that all content pieces are cohesive and aligned with messaging and goals. The definition of video's title is the text overlays that appear in a video, often used to provide additional information or context to the viewer. Title provides important information for viewers to get a first and general understanding of the video content. Longer titles usually offer more information. Zhang, Wei and Yin (2020) 【324】 mentioned that the video themes affected the spread of short videos. Also, Li. et al., (2022) 【323】 proved video characteristics like video content theme and title length affected audiences.

We are going to check which videos provoke more interaction (comments, likes, shares, views and saves) and, in relation to comments, we are going to analyze if they are positive or negative. By applying the aforementioned theories and models, we understand that the effectiveness of SMIs can be measured by followers' comments, likes, shares, views and saves.

SUBHYTPOTHESIS:

H1a): Theme humor level (Humor theme) of LGBTQ SMIs' videos significantly positively affects user response.

Most of audiences watch video for leisure and easing themselves. Humorous videos could make them laugh and relax themselves. Using humor as video themes

could be important for engaging the audience, but its effectiveness depends on several factors: 1. Captures Attention: Humor can break the ice and grab the audience's attention, making them more receptive to your message; 2. Enhances Retention: People tend to remember information better when it's associated with something funny or entertaining; 3. Encourages Engagement: A humorous video can encourage audience participation and interaction, keeping them engaged throughout. Moreover, gentle humor such as puns can enhance audience engagement (Cacciatore et al., 2020) 【327】. In addition, humorous content could attract audience's attention and affect audiences positively (Martin Eisend, 2009) 【328】. However, James M. Barry and Sandra S. Graça (2018) 【329】 held different opinions and suggested the use of humor might reduce the likelihood of social media users posting comments.

H1b): Long length (number of words) of LGBTQ SMIs' videos significantly positively affects user response.

Li. et al. (2021) 【324】 underlined that title length affect audience interaction. Longer title affect audiences engagement positively (Chen, 2023)【326】. Zhang, Wei, and Yin (2022)【325】 found that Jerry Guo's video title length affected the number of views, likes, and comments of the audience. Guo is a SMI in China—an American Jew, a food blogger whose videos primarily introduce American culture and compare differences between China and the United States.

I argue that title length is positively correlated with audiences' interaction for the following reasons. First, a longer video title facilitates audiences' cognitive processes while watching the video. A longer title usually contains more information related with the video content. It can also provide additional information that is not contained in the video but necessary for adding the meaningfulness of the video. Therefore, longer titles help viewers learn more from the video through easing their cognitive processes, triggering more of their thoughts, inducing more of their emotional responses, and strengthening their memories about the video content. Second, longer titles signal more efforts by video creators, thus leave better impressions on viewers. The effort signals are social cues sent to the viewers, expressing video creators'

willingness to provide detailed information and establish relationships with their potential viewers. These positive impression makes the video creators look good, and successfully earn their social currency in the eyes of their viewers. After receiving such information, the viewers' empathy and affection may increase, thus increasing the possibility of user engagement.

4.3.2. Digital interactivity and Personality LGBTQ SMI

GENERAL HYPOTHESIS:

H2: There is a significant relationship between the personal characteristics of LGBTQ SMI (trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness) and user response (comments, shares, likes, saves and viewing number).

In order to go deeply in that question, we are going to check how trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness affect comments (in negative or positive sense) and also if these are issues focus of the comments.

SUBHYTPOTHESIS:

H2a) The trustworthiness of LGBTQ SMIs will significantly and positively affect user response.

Audiences' perception could be influenced by trustworthiness, because trustworthiness is the most important factor. Trustworthiness is decided by SMIs' honesty, integrity, and believability (Erdogan et al., 2001)【256】. Navarro et al. (2020) 【261】 believe that the trustworthiness affects audiences' awareness and acceptance. When the audiences believe that the SMI is trustworthy, they are easier to believe what SMIs say and what products SMI promote. There is a positive correlation between SMIs' trustworthiness and followers' attitudes towards the brand or topic.

H2b) The expertise of LGBTQ SMIs will significantly and positively affect user response.

Expertise means how valid the information of SMIs' videos is, including SMIs' experience, knowledge, or skills (Erdogan, 1999) 【256】 . SMIs could be experts from

different fields. When the expertise SMI update their video, it may have more comments, shares, likes and views. Paul et al. (2021) 【333】 studies show that SMIs' expertise could affect audiences' attitudes' positively. If expertise SMIs' upload videos about some topics which the audiences have negative attitudes or little knowledge, audiences may follow the expertise SMIs' opinions and decisions. They post more positive comments.

H2c): The attractiveness of LGBTQ SMIs will significantly and positively affect user response.

Attractiveness is defined as perceived social value, including person's physical appearance and social status personality or his or her similarity to the receiver (McGuire, 1985)【265】, such as athletic prowess, lifestyles, personality properties and intellectual skills. When SMIs show their eye-catching appearance, talented athletic prowess, healthy lifestyles or intellectual skills, audiences will enthusiastic responses. Audiences will show their surprise and praise on comments, share with family members and friends, or post likes. Some authors prove that attractiveness affect audiences' attitude and beliefs change (Baker and Churchill, 1977; Debevec & Keman, 1984) 【267】 【268】 .

5. METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology used in this study to investigate the role of LGBTQ Social Media Influencers (SMIs). This chapter provides a detailed description of the research design, including the process of sample selection, data collection, and data analysis.

The sample selection process involved the careful identification of LGBTQ SMIs based on specific criteria, including their platform presence, the size of their following, and their contribution to LGBTQ representation. The study focused on 10 top LGBTQ SMIs from DouYin and BiliBili, selected across different gender identities and sexual orientations. All of them are members of the LGBTQ collective. These influencers were chosen for their prominence, audience engagement, and the variety of content they produce, ranging from dance and beauty to humor, fashion, and romance. Each influencer's content and its impact on their audience were analyzed to gain insights into how Chinese LGBTQ visibility is shaped in the digital spaces. Additionally, the study explored methodological challenges in obtaining a representative sample of LGBTQ SMIs, particularly given platform algorithm biases and the underrepresentation of specific LGBTQ subgroups.

Data collection was performed by examining publicly available metrics such as the number of followers, likes, comments, shares, and video views. The collected data provided a comprehensive picture of the engagement patterns and popularity of LGBTQ content on DouYin and BiliBili. The data was then prepared, cleaned, and analyzed to test the research hypotheses and explore the relationships between influencer characteristics, content type, and audience interaction.

In the analysis, descriptive statistics were used to summarize the sample characteristics, while correlation and regression analyses helped identify patterns and assess the significance of various factors influencing user engagement.

5.1. Samples: Forming process and description

5.1.1. First step: Platform selection process (DouYin and BiliBili)

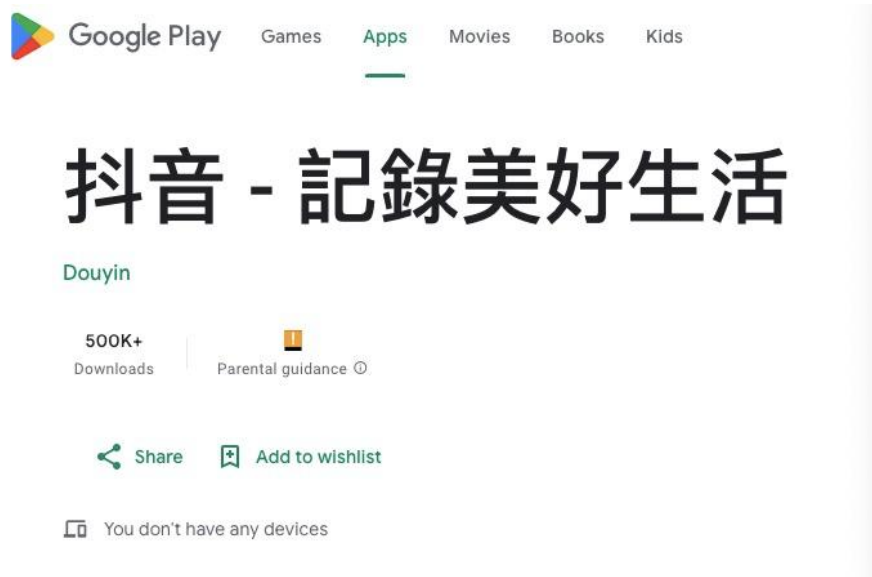
Since this research was going to focus solely in China, LGBTQ SMIs on DouYin and BiliBili will be evaluated. One effective method for targeted LGBTQ SMIs was through the amounts of followers on BiliBili and DouYin. LGBTQ SMIs on BiliBili and DouYin have various kinds of sexual orientation, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transexual, etc. However, it is difficult to select an influencer that is well-known within audiences, and, in order to be selected as part of our sample, they also need to belong to LGBTQ communities or share content related to LGBTQ communities.

At first, I tried to search famous LGBTQ SMIs on Baidu Tieba, but failed. I uploaded the question “Do you know LGBTQ SMIs in China?” on Douban interest group (an interest-based social networking platform that like a combination of Goodreads, IMDb, Blogger, Facebook, Pandora, Spotify, Ello and Fancy.com) and I received several answers later. Some of netizens from Douban advised me to search LGBTQ SMIs account on social media platforms and choose LGBTQ SMIs based on the amount of their followers.

Then, I turned to search the most popular social media platforms in China, DouYin, Chinese version of TikTok. DouYin was the most popular platforms and it had the highest downloads. DouYin was created by Beijing Weibo Vision Technology Company in 2016. The objectives of DouYin are to provide users with a fast, fun and interesting short video social experience, promote the development of digital culture and digital economy, and lead the trend of visual culture. DouYin has the characteristics of speed, scale, diversification, and personalization. It has created a new social model and given birth to a new cultural and economic ecology. The future development direction of DouYin includes strengthening the creative community function, entering the international market, and leading the trend of visual culture.

According to the Simon Kemp (2023)【334】, the app hit a whopping 675 million users, ranking as the forth-largest social media platform globally, behind Facebook, YouTube and Instagram in 2023. DouYin is one of the most world-famous apps in the world now. Its influencers have a large amount of followers and their videos have

high video views, as their perceived credibility and approachability stem from authentic, non-commercialized communication styles 【335】 .



Picture 1: the download of DouYin (downloaded on October in 2023)

In addition, BiliBili has the most LGBTQ SMIs' accounts in China (Song, 2022) 【336】 . So, I also checked out BiliBili. As the largest gay dating site in China, BiliBili was created in 2009. In its early days, BiliBili was a video website for ACG (animation, comics, games) content creation and sharing. After more than ten years of development, it has built an ecosystem that continuously produces high-quality content around users and creators. BiliBili has covered more than 7,000 multicultural communities of interest circles, and has over 150 million users and it has most LGBTQ videos and cartoons.

BiliBili - HD Anime, Videos

BALABOOM PTE. LTD.

In-app purchases

50M+

Downloads



PEGI 12



Share



Add to wishlist



You don't have any devices

Picture 2: the download of BiliBili (downloaded on October in 2023)

Meanwhile, Sina Weibo (created in 2009) was the most fashionable and accepted public spheres, where multiple SMIs were willing to share their lives, show their opinions and recommended their saves videos, etc. LGBTQ SMIs also had their accounts on Sina Weibo and had a huge number of followers. Sina Weibo gave a channel to LGBTQ SMIs to show their real lives and help users to enlarge their knowledge about LGBTQ communities. However, as government tightened control websites, Sina Weibo then announced a more strict censorship and removed comics and videos with pornographic implications, promoting bloody violence, or related to homosexuality as an effort to create a sunny and harmonious community environment and comply with the country's cybersecurity laws (Kuo, 2018) 【337】. Kuo (2018) 【337】 mentioned that authorities ordered Sina Weibo to shut several portals in January in 2018, as part of the government's efforts to eliminate "vulgar" or "harmful" online content. Sina Weibo has reversed a short-lived ban on LGBT-related content following an outcry from the country's internet user, and LGBTQ SMIs rarely uploaded content then and LGBTQ-related topics were banned (Xiao & Xu, 2018) 【338】.

微博

Sina.com

包含广告

4.1★
32.7万条评价 ①


1,000万+
次下载

 家长引导 ①

安装

 分享

 添加到心愿单

 您没有任何设备

Picture 3: the download of Sina Weibo (downloaded on October in 2023)

Thus, I dismissed Sina Weibo from my chosen platforms. As a consequent, the chosen platforms are DouYin and BiliBili in this research because of their huge number of users and more open atmosphere.

Table 2 Platform selected Source

Source: Own elaboration

Selected		Discarded	
	DouYin 抖音- 记录美好生活 (DouYin.com)		Baidu Tieba (https://baike.baidu.com/)
	BiliBili 哔哩哔哩 (°-°)つ 口 干 杯 ~BiliBili		Sina Weibo 微博 – 随时 随地发现新鲜事 (weibo.com)

5.1.2. Second step: Chinese LGBTQ SMI selection process

5.1.2.1 Searching for the 10 Top LGBTQ SMI

First, it was imperative that the LGBTQ SMIs selected in this research were representative. Second, it was important to establish a minimally effective sample size that would be able to show potential significance and could help us spot trends.

How to choose prominent Chinese LGBTQ SMIs on DouYin and BiliBili is a difficult question. As I explained before, originally, I planned to ask questions on Baidu Tieba and recorded their answers, but I received rare useful answers. Most answers mentioned Jin Xing was representative, she is LGBTQ SMIs in China as her outstanding contribution in Chinese dance field and opening her sexual orientation, of whom we already spoke in the introduction. Then, I turned to ask friends and people involved and interested with the LGBTQ for help, and they gave me new answers. Most of them mentioned gay SMIs, like Aikelili (艾克里里) or Niehuliucheng (聂胡刘成). They became noted because of their handsome appearance and content related to romantic love stories and humor. However, few mentioned lesbians SMIs, transgender SMIs.

It was a hard task to find other LGBTQ SMIs, like Les SMIs, trans SMIs, queer SMIs, etc. So, I started to search on BiliBili and DouYin directly. When I typed LGBTQ SMIs (非异性恋网红), I had no replies. I changed my strategies and searched well-known SMIs and, then, algorithmic strategies would recommend similar SMIs to me. However, then the standards of selection of LGBTQ SMIS in this research were still unclear. To address this methodological gap, I conducted a comprehensive review of existing literature to establish a more rigorous framework. By analyzing prior studies on LGBTQ representation in digital spaces, I identified key benchmarks for content inclusion, such as Creator Identity (Raun, 2018) 【339】 or Audience Engagement – Metrics (likes/shares) (Woodford et al., 2015) 【340】.

Finally, we define the own criteria to apply in our research. In addition to being SMI and being member of the LGBTQ community (ensuring homogeneity in the sample), he/she must have big number of followers (guarantee of bigger influence), age over 18 (in China, no matter how old you are, you can register an account as long as you have a mobile phone number. However, if you want to become influencers,

you should be over 18) and hold Chinese citizenship to ensure familiarity with the cultural context of China.

The initial research design included analysis of the top 30 SMIs. This sample size was selected based on statistical convention, as $n=30$ represents the minimum sample size required for the Central Limit Theorem to ensure normally distributed sampling means. However, influential Chinese LGBTQ SMIs on BiliBili and DouYin are limited. If I kept all the criteria, the sample had to be reduced.

The final sample, formed by TOP 10 LGBTQ SMI, consists of 5 gays, 3 lesbian and 2 transexual individuals:

- The top 2 Chinese LGBTQ SMIs are women transgender: JinXing (金星) and ZhiBo (智博) , both were dancers and then gained popularity among the public. According to the number of followers on DouYin, it is clear that they are the 2 top. JinXing has more than 15 million fans and Zhibo, near 10 million fans.

- Most of Chinese LGBTQ SMIs are gay and, in consequence, the number in the sample is bigger (5): Niehu Liu Cheng (聂胡刘成), Laijiixin(赖佳新), Aikelili(艾克里里), Qiaokechidaoshaogongsang(翘课迟到少恭桑) and Zuiyingjienigui(嘴硬杰尼龟). Niehu Liu cheng (聂胡刘成), Laijiixin(赖佳新) and Aikelili (艾克里里) have their accounts on DouYin. Niehu Liu Cheng (聂胡刘成) highlight with more than 5 million fans on DouYin. Qiaokechidaoshaogongsang(翘课迟到少恭桑) and Zuiyingjienigui(嘴硬杰尼龟), who are present in BiliBili, have the lowest number of followers.

Table 3: Information about LGBTQ SMIs sample

Source: Own Elaboration

	Name	Account	Gender	Follower	Theme	Platform
1	JinXing (金星)	925976478	Trans	18.75M	Dance	DouYin
2	ZhiBo (智博)	zbbbbb	Trans	9.41M	Humor	DouYin
3	Niehu Liu Cheng (聂胡刘成)	Nhlc6969	gay	5.15M	Beauty	DouYin

4	Laijiixin (赖佳新)	Ljx00727	gay	1.25M	Beauty	DouYin
5	Aikelili (艾克里里)	Ikeliliee	gay	1.22M	Fashion	DouYin
6	Qiaokechidaoshao gongsang (翘课迟到少恭桑)	23226	gay	0.52M	Music	BiliBili
7	Zuiyingjienigui (嘴硬杰尼龟)	1474158284	gay	0.54M	Lifestyle	BiliBili
8	Quanjiaofu (犬角夫)	QJfAki	les	0.45M	Beauty	DouYin
9	Shuishuihexingxing (睡睡和醒醒)	29326044	les	0.40M	Beauty	DouYin
10	Daamaojun (大啊毛君)	21036078	les	0.77M	Living	BiliBili

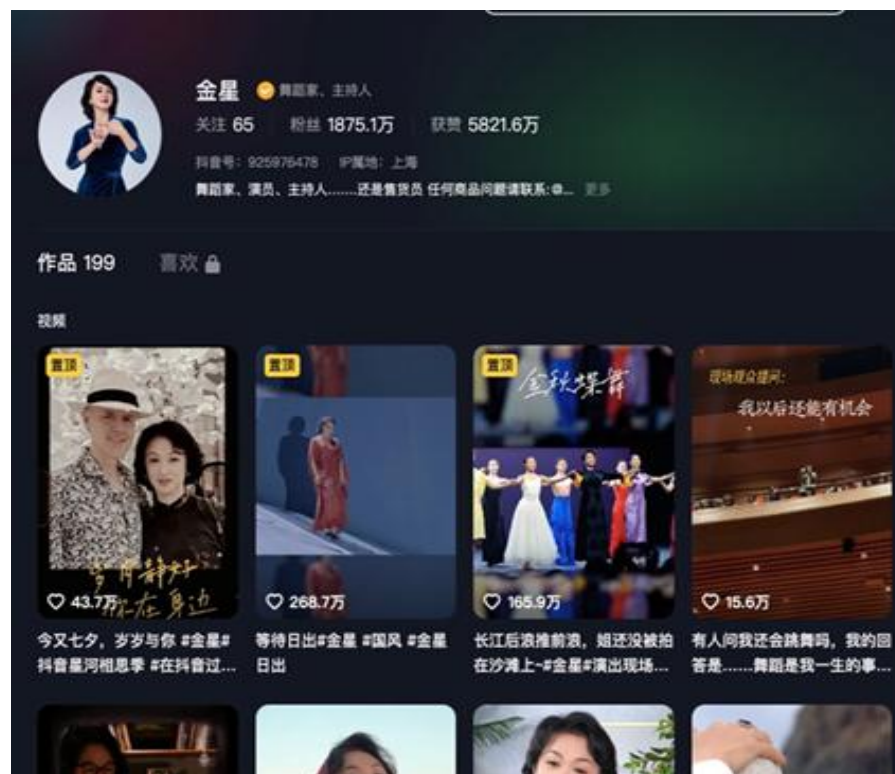
According to algorithmic strategies and related recommendation in my phone, 3 lesbian SMIs were found: Quanjiaofu (犬角夫), Shuishuihexingxing(睡睡和醒醒)and Daamaojun (大啊毛君). Among them, Daamaojun (大啊毛君) comes from BiliBili and the other two are both in DouYin. Lesbian SMIs have less fans than other LGBTQ SMIs.

Finally, I have hardly discovered the Bisexual and queer SMIs on DouYin and BiliBili. Maybe they aren't as prominent as other LGBTQ SMIs or maybe few of them choose to become SMIs and open their sexual orientation.

5.1.2.2 Description of the characteristics of the sample

5.1.2.2.1. Jinxing(金星)

Jin Xing is one of most famous LGBTQ SMI in China, known for her openness about her sexual orientation, outstanding dance achievements and her inspirational gender reassignment surgery stories. With over 18 million followers on DouYin, Jin Xing has become a prominent figure on the platform. She regularly posts videos combining personal stories and motivational content. As she has uploaded around 200 videos, accumulating a total of 58 million saves from her followers.



Picture 4: the homepage of Jin Xing (2024.10.1)

Jin Xing, born on August 13, 1967, in Shenyang, Liaoning, is a renowned Chinese dancer, television host, and transgender rights advocate. Showing a talent for dance from a young age, Jin joined the Shenyang Military District Cultural Troupe at the age of 9 and later enrolled in the Dance Department of the PLA Academy of Arts. In 1995, she became the first publicly known transgender person in China when she underwent gender reassignment surgery at Beijing's Xiangshan Hospital. Despite suffering a tragic nerve injury to her left leg during the surgery, she persevered through rehabilitation and fully recovered.

In her career, Jin Xing is not only a leading figure in the dance world but has also expanded into hosting and acting. In 1985, she won the Gold Medal in the Boys' Junior Group at the "Taoli Cup" and pioneered male pointe dancing. In 1999, she founded China's first privately owned modern dance company, the Jin Xing Dance Theater. She also gained fame for her outspoken hosting style, becoming the host of the popular talk show "Jin Xing Show". As a representative of the LGBTQ+ community, Jin Xing has consistently advocated for the importance of gender identity, emphasizing that psychological gender is more important than biological sex. Her determination and artistic achievements have made her a symbolic figure in the field of modern Chinese art and culture. Despite being involved in several public controversies, Jin Xing has broken numerous boundaries in both art and life with her uncompromising attitude, earning countless honors and respect.

Jin Xing's success on DouYin is not only a testament to her talent but also to the growing acceptance and visibility of LGBTQ individuals in China. She has used her position to influence societal views on gender, breaking barriers and paving the way for greater representation of transgender individuals in the Chinese media landscape.

5.1.2.2.2. ZhiBo (智博)

ZhiBo is another highly popular LGBTQ SMI in China, recognized for her engaging sense of humor and exceptional talent for imitation. With over 9 million followers on DouYin, ZhiBo has garnered a significant following due to her ability to connect with her audience through comedy and relatable content. Her videos often feature humorous skits, impersonations, and light-hearted commentary, which have resonated with a wide variety of viewers.



Picture 5: the homepage of ZhiBo (2024.10.1)

Until 2024, ZhiBo has uploaded more than 700 videos, which have collectively accumulated an impressive 390 million saves. Her popularity continues to grow as she engages with her fans through regular video uploads, live streams, and interactive content. Growing up, she identified as female despite being assigned male at birth, and faced teasing for her gentle nature and love of dance. With the unwavering support of her mother, she pursued her passion for dance, studying at the Central University for Nationalities. As an adult, ZhiBo publicly embraced her transgender identity and underwent gender-affirming medical procedures, emphasizing that happiness and authenticity are more important than gender. In 2019, ZhiBo gained widespread recognition when she joined DouYin, where her "First-Time Series" and "Imitation Series" videos, which combined drag, dance, and comedy, went viral.

Her content, often challenging traditional gender roles by switching between male and female outfits, resonated with millions, earning her over 10 million followers and over 2.98 billion views. However, her rise to fame was not without controversy. In 2024, ZhiBo revealed her boyfriend's infidelity and financial exploitation, sparking debates about the ethics of influencer culture and the emotional

struggles faced by transgender individuals. Despite enduring psychological challenges such as depression and anxiety, ZhiBo has remained resilient, supported by her family, especially her mother, who has been a constant source of encouragement. She continues to advocate for transgender rights, promoting self-acceptance and pushing for societal progress in gender diversity. ZhiBo's story serves as both a personal testament to resilience and a broader symbol of the fight for equal rights, demonstrating how public figures can challenge societal norms and influence change.

ZhiBo's open identity has made her a symbol for the LGBTQ community in China. She uses platforms like live streaming and interviews to promote societal acceptance, emphasizing that "gender should not define one's worth." Her story is seen as a powerful example of the transgender struggle for equal rights. However, she has faced criticism regarding the exposure of her private life, with some accusing her of blurring the lines between personal emotion and professional content creation. Her revelations also highlighted the hidden issues of financial exploitation and emotional manipulation within the influencer industry, prompting a reflection on the ethics of online platforms.

5.1.2.2.3. Niehuliucheng (聂胡刘成)

Niehuliucheng (聂胡刘成) is one of the most prominent gay influencers on DouYin, renowned for his striking appearance and captivating romantic love stories. With over 5.15 million followers, he has established himself as a beloved figure within the LGBTQ community in China. His content, which primarily revolves around themes of romance and personal relationships, garnering immense engagement.

Niehuliucheng (nickname "Nienie") is a well-known LGBTQ influencer in China, whose personal life and career intertwine with romantic narratives, controversies, and community influence. Born on November 23, 2000, in Changchun, Jilin. He graduated from the Central University for Nationalities with a major in ethnic dance. At the age of 11, he left home to study dance, and later began creating short videos during university, gaining popularity through imitation performances. In

2019, he joined DouYin, where his sunny image and humorous content attracted fans. His popular video "Rainy Day, Sunny Day," created with his partner Sun Hao, surpassed 2.98 billion views. Together, they built the "Haidian Bozi Jie" persona, combining drag, dance, and emotional daily life, quickly becoming leading influencers. The content mainly focuses on LGBTQ+ relationships, sharing details of love life through live streaming and short videos, such as trips, arguments, and reconciliations, increasing audience engagement.



Picture 6: the homepage of Niehuliucheng (2024.10.1)

His public relationship with Sun Hao, starting in 2020, became a focal point for fans, but was also criticized for commercializing their romance. He faced controversy for emotional behavior during live streams, and some fans unfollowed him due to doubts about the authenticity of his relationship.

Niehuliucheng has been an important symbol for China's LGBTQ+ community. Though his content has faced criticism for being "entertainment-focused," it has

increased visibility for marginalized groups. Until 2024, Niehuliucheng has uploaded nearly 1,000 videos, with each video earning significant engagement. His videos have accumulated over 200 million saves, a testament to his widespread appeal and the impact of his content.

5.1.2.2.4. Laijiaxin(赖佳新)

Laijiaxin (赖佳新) is another highly popular gay influencer on DouYin, known for his striking good looks and heartwarming romantic content. With over 1.25 million followers, he has garnered a substantial fan base, primarily due to his engaging videos that depict his romantic love stories. His content resonates particularly with audiences who enjoy relatable, real-life portrayals of love and relationships, making him one of the most beloved gay SMIs on DouYin.



Picture 7: the homepage of Laijiaxin (2024.10.1)

Lai Jiaxin was born on January 15, 1995, in Jiangyou, Sichuan. His personal life, particularly his four-year relationship with boyfriend Li Jiahua, attracted public attention. After their breakup in 2022, which he attributed to emotional differences, the couple generated further buzz when they appeared together again in 2025. Known for his resilience, Lai has also gained popularity on social media for sharing his

emotional vulnerability and humor, which resonates with younger audiences. While some criticize his emotional content, supporters argue that he provides visibility for the LGBTQ+ community in China.

With nearly 300 videos uploaded, Laijiixin's content continues to generate significant engagement. To date, his videos have accumulated over 20 million saves, showcasing the strong connection he has built with his audience.

5.1.2.2.5 Aikelili(艾克里里)

Aikelili (艾克里里) is one of the earliest famous gay influencers in China, initially rising to prominence on Sina Weibo. He is now one of the most popular gay SMIs on DouYin, boasting over 1.2 million followers. With 227 videos until 2024, Aikelili's content has accumulated over 14 million saves, which speaks to the effectiveness of his videos in engaging viewers. His humorous skits, parodies, and imitations not only entertain but also offer a space for LGBTQ visibility, as his openly gay identity is an integral part of personal brand.

Aikelili (real name She Xiaohui) is a pioneering LGBTQ influencer from China, known for his rise from humble beginnings and his exploration of gender expression. Born in 1994 in Shantou, Guangdong, he began learning photography in 2012 and gained fame through his satirical beauty videos on Weibo, particularly his "Marker Pen Challenge Makeup" (2015), which earned millions of views and subverted traditional beauty standards. His unique appearance, with his darker skin tone and single eyelids, earned him the nickname "Vietnamese Princess" from fans.

Aikelili's relationship with photographer Luo Fan became a central part of his content, with their interactions fueling fan discussions about their "Couple" status. Though they briefly split in 2016 due to career differences, they hinted at reconciliation in 2020, symbolizing the LGBTQ community's desire for public, intimate relationships. In his transition from internet celebrity to artist, Aikelili sought to break free from his "funny internet personality" label by attending major events like the Cannes Film Festival, appearing in web series, and joining the talent show named "Youth With You" in 2021, though he did not make it to the final group. His

professional life reflects the struggles of balancing authenticity with the pressures of social media fame, and his bold approach to breaking gender norms and reshaping his career has made him an influential figure in China's LGBTQ community.



Picture 8 the homepage of Aikelili(2024.10.1)

5.1.2.2.6 Qiaokechidaoshaogongsang (翘课迟到少恭桑)

Qiaokechidaoshaogongsang (翘课迟到少恭桑) is one of the most well-known gay influencers on Bilibili, with a growing fanbase of 0.52 million followers. He has gained popularity for his beautiful voice and the joyful portrayal of his life as part of a happy couple. His content revolves around sharing snippets of his personal life, often featuring his romantic relationship, creating a warm and relatable atmosphere that resonates deeply with his viewers.

Qiaokechidaoshaogongsang is a prominent figure in China's LGBTQ community, known for his blend of subculture creation, gender identity exploration, and social media interaction. Born on November 18, 1992, in Changsha, Hunan, he first gained attention on Bilibili under the name "Qiaoke Chidao," later adopting "Shaogong"

from his voice acting role as Ouyang Shaogong in “Gu Jian Qi Tan” (古剑奇谭; a famous Chinese TV drama). His online persona blends self-mockery and playful couple-themed naming with his partner, "Yang Le Duo's CB Jun."

In 2020, he adapted Yang Qianhua's (a famous singer in China) "Chu Chu Wen" (处处吻) into "Chu Chu Ling" (means gay are all around), addressing LGBTQ+ struggles and amassing millions of views. This song was praised for addressing serious issues through entertainment, symbolizing subculture resistance. He also ventured into voice acting and livestreaming, gaining followers with his "relaxed real expression" and humorous incidents, like a viral failed haircut.

His public relationship with CB Jun began in 2015, and they officially announced their romance in 2016 with a song. Over the years, their interactions, including video blogs and livestreams, became popular content for fans, though their relationship faced rumors of a breakup in 2020. In 2024, subtle hints of reconciliation surfaced, but nothing was confirmed. Their emotional content often involved public displays of affection, creating iconic moments for fans to celebrate.



Picture 9: the homepage of Qiaokechidaoshaogongsang (2024.10.1)

One of the key reasons behind Qiaokechidaoshaogongsang's popularity is his soothing, captivating voice, which has become a signature element of his online presence. His voice not only enhances his content but also adds a layer of emotional connection with his audience. Whether he is singing, narrating, or simply engaging in

casual conversations, his voice has become one of the defining features that attract viewers to his videos.

5.1.2.2.7 Zuiyingjienigui(嘴硬杰尼龟)

Zuiyingjienigui (嘴硬杰尼龟) is one of the most popular gay influencers on BiliBili, with a fanbase of 0.54 million followers. He is known for blending subculture with LGBTQ identity. His username combines the rebellious Pokémon character Squirtle with the idea of being tough on the outside but soft on the inside, appealing to Gen Z's aesthetic. His videos blend humor, love stories, and personal storytelling to navigate queer themes while minimizing regulatory risks. This strategy mirrors the broader tactics of Chinese queer influencers who utilize allegory, parody, and subcultural lexicons to sustain visibility under restrictive digital governance.



Picture 10 the homepage of Zuiyingjienigui (2024.10.1)

5.1.2.2.8 Quanjiaofu(犬角夫)

Quanjiaofu (犬角夫) is one of the most influential lesbian creators on DouYin, amassing a dedicated fanbase of 0.45 million followers and earning widespread recognition for her striking beauty and engaging content. With 165 videos that have collectively garnered over 7 million saves, she has solidified her position as a beloved figure in China's LGBTQ online community.



Picture 11: the homepage of Quanjiaofu (2024.10.1)

Quanjiaofu is a well-known LGBTQ+ creator in China, known for her journey video blogs and stylish photos. Born into a working-class family, she overcame self-esteem issues through image transformation and became a popular influencer. In 2020, she publicly came out with fellow creator Max, challenging traditional lesbian narratives and gaining widespread visibility. Aesthetic Transformation: by adopting androgynous fashion and a deliberately ambiguous online persona (her username playfully merges "dog," "horn," and "man"), she challenged binary gender norms while cultivating a niche appeal.

5.1.2.2.9 Shuishuihexingxing(睡睡和醒醒)

Shuishuihexingxing (睡睡和醒醒) has emerged as one of the most beloved lesbian influencers on DouYin, captivating an audience of 0.40 million followers with her stunning visuals and heartfelt content. With 161 videos that have collectively amassed over 7 million saves, she has become a prominent voice in China's LGBTQ+ digital community.

Shuishuihexingxing is a prominent LGBTQ+ creator in China, known for blending gender identity expression with emotional storytelling in the digital age. Their emotional narratives, like those in the "Roommate Lovers" (2021-2025) series, turn intimate relationships into universal stories. For example, the video, uploaded in 28th of August in 2021, showed how ShuiShui hugged and kissed XingXing (actually

her lover) after XingXing felling asleep. Through unique editing techniques, they offer quick emotional moments that resonate with Gen Z's preference for "immersive love", reflecting the desire for public expressions of intimacy among Chinese lesbians.



Picture 12: the homepage of Shuishuihexingxing (2024.10.1)

However, they face challenges such as content regulation, using indirect metaphors like "stellar convergence" to bypass censorship. Their collaboration with commercial brands, including the sparked debate about the commercialization of personal relationships, though some see it as a strategic way to normalize LGBTQ+ visibility.

Shuishuihexingxing explores online identity fluidity, shifting between various personas and fostering a sense of "identity nomadism" in line with queer theory. Their journey highlights the complexities of publicizing private emotions and the ethical challenges of monetizing personal content, while creating a "visibility enclave" for the LGBTQ+ community in China.

5.1.2.2.10 Daamaojun(大啊毛君)

Daamaojun (大阿毛君) stands as Bilibili's most influential lesbian content creator, commanding an impressive following of 0.77 million fans. Her unique blend of engaging discussion topics and thought-provoking book recommendations has established her as a distinctive voice in China's LGBTQ digital sphere.

What sets Daamaojun apart is her intellectual yet approachable content style. While many creators focus on video blogs or lifestyle content, she carves her niche through meaningful conversations about queer identity, literature, and social issues. Her book recommendations—often highlighting LGBTQ authors and themes—provide her audience with both entertainment and valuable perspectives, creating a space for cultural enrichment and self-discovery within the lesbian community.

Daamaojun is a pioneering LGBTQ+ creator in China, whose life and content creation intersect, highlighting the exploration of gender identity, cultural expression, and new media empowerment. Growing up in a traditional family, she faced self-doubt due to her sexual orientation. In 2020, she gained popularity with her series "Why Female Sex Education Starts with Web Literature," turning personal identity struggles into public discourse. A lover of literature, she used metaphoric expression to tackle gender issues, with her famous quote, "Books are the rainbow outside the wardrobe," becoming a guiding principle for her followers.

Initially, Daamaojun tested platform boundaries with edgy content but later shifted to deeper, academic-style discussions, such as analyzing lesbian literature and movies. Her creative approach includes book recommendations and interactive experiments, encouraging fans to participate in "book drift" projects, creating a unique blend of academic and entertainment content.

In 2022, Daamaojun publicly came out through a heartfelt video to her mother, which resonated with many viewers. She also documented her relationship with her artist girlfriend, blending literature and queer life through "magical realism." Her cultural resistance includes reinterpreting classic literature through a queer lens, with her work being featured in academic discussions.

Daamaojun's collaboration with publishers, like the "Rainbow Reading List," received attention for making academic works more accessible, despite critiques of commercialization. She also plans future projects, including a "Literary Map" to connect LGBTQ spaces and a documentary on lesbian literary history.

Daamaojun represents a new generation of queer individuals who use literature as both armor and weapon, navigating censorship and media dynamics to create new paths for knowledge and empowerment. As she said in her commemorative video, "Every folded page of a book is a life we haven't folded yet."



Picture 13: the homepage of Daamaojun(大啊毛君) (2024.10.1)

5.1.2.3. Assigning a code to each member of the sample

In this study, I assigned a unique code (Code) to each Social Media Influencer (SMI) to facilitate subsequent data statistics and analysis. These codes serve as identifiers for each SMI, making it easier to manage and differentiate the data collected during the study. The SMIs are assigned the following codes: Zui Ying Jie Ni Gui (code 1), Da Ah Mao Jun (code 2), Qiao Ke Chi Dao Shao Gong Sang (code 3), ZhiBo (code 4), Quan Jiao Fu (code 5), Shui Shui and Xing Xing(code 6), Nie Hu Liu Cheng (code 7), Ai Ke Li Li (code 8), Lai Jia Xin (code 9), and Jin Xing (code 10). These codes are crucial for organizing and analyzing the data systematically, allowing me to track and compare the performance of each influencer across various metrics.

Table 4: code

Source: Own Elaboration

LGBTQ SMI Name	Code
Zui Ying Jie Ni Gui	1

Da Ah Mao Jun	2
Qiao Ke Chi Dao Shao Gong Sang	3
ZhiBo	3
Quan Jiao Fu	4
Shui Shui and Xing Xing	5
Nie Hu Liu Cheng	7
Ai Ke Li Li	8
Lai Jia Xin	9
Jin Xing	10

5.1.3. Third step: Selection process for videos shared by the sample

After forming our sample of Chinese LGBTQ SMI is the turn to select a representative sample of videos that exhibit significant audience interaction. Our universe is formed for all the videos shared by Chinese LGBTQ SMI who are included in our own Ranking.

To ensure a systematic analysis of the correlation between, on one hand, content and personal characteristics LGTBQ SMIs and, on another, audience engagement, it is necessary to clarify the selection process and evaluation criteria of videos selected to shape the sample. Based on the relevant literature review (Poecze et al., 2018; Eslami et al., 2022) 【341】【342】, key metrics such as the number of likes, comments, shares, views and saves were weighted to assess audience interaction, as these indicators reflect both popularity and participatory engagement:

- **Likes** reflect passive approval and general popularity.
- **Comments** indicate active participation and deeper audience investment.
- **Shares** demonstrate content virality and extended reach beyond the original audience.
- **Views** measure raw exposure, indicating how many times the content has been watched.

- **Saves** reflect long-term appreciation, as users bookmark content for future reference.

One key observation from preliminary analysis is that metadata levels for the same content often diverge—a video’s reach or impact may vary significantly depending on which metric is observed (e.g., views vs. comments). This non-coincidence suggests that audience engagement is multifaceted and platform-algorithm-dependent (Huertas Bailén, Quintas-Froufe & González-Neira, 2024) 【343】. Based on this foundational work, our research uses all the metadata (likes, comments, shares, views, and saves) while adopting a similar weighting framework to account for these hierarchical engagement layers.

From an initial dataset of 3900 videos (the whole videos from their homepages), the top 100 with the highest weighted engagement scores were selected for analysis. From each LGBTQ SMI, it has been selected 10 videos. From the initial pool of candidate videos, the top 100 most interacted-with videos (based on aggregated engagement scores) were selected as analysis samples to ensure representativeness. The 100 videos sampled collectively received 6433,1922 likes; 1252,1691 shares; 341,5130 comments; and 1336,1719 saves.

This sample size provides a manageable yet statistically significant dataset for qualitative and quantitative examination. We direct our analysis to the most influential content, allowing for a deeper analysis of what drives high engagement.

In a second phase, for each of the 100 selected videos, we collected the top 1000 most-liked comments. The total dataset comprised 100,000 comments (100 videos × 1000 comments each), ensuring a robust foundation for sentiment analysis, thematic coding, and statistical correlation testing. This decision was based on the following rationale. We consider that most-liked comments represent the most visible and impactful audience responses. Analyzing these comments allows for an understanding of dominant audience perceptions, recurring themes, and emotional reactions (positive and negative comments).

It is important to mention that data was collected twice: (a) the first time was from 17 October to 17 December; (b) the second time was from 1st October in 2024 to 1st

of January in 2025. I observed for a long time because we found that audiences could delete or change their comments at any time. Some audiences could be easily affected by videos or influencers. If they watched some negative videos about LGBTQ communities, they might change their perspectives about LGBTQ communities. If a certain number of audiences changed their attitudes, their changes might affect the whole attitudes of the audiences and influence the data collection. How to prevent this from happening and affecting the rigor of the results? In my opinion, keeping observing selected LGBTQ SMIs' homepages and a secondary data collection could be helpful to tackle this problem and make data more objective and accurate.

5.2 Data: Collecting quantitative data

The main data were collected from homepage of 10 Top SMIs who belonged to LGBTQ communities and were selected to form the sample. The survey was launched on DouYin or BiliBili in October, 2023. As we explained before, from each LGBTQ SMI, we selected top 10 videos. Hence, we analyzed 100 videos. Comments, likes, shares, views and saves of LGBTQ SMIs have been screened and checked to test the hypotheses and answer the questions posed. And, finally, 100,000 comments were analysed.

5.2.1. Automated data collection: Python (backend)

Given that DouYin and BiliBili are social media platforms, direct access to their data can be difficult due to various restrictions and the nature of platform policies. To overcome this challenge, this study employs Python, a powerful programming language for web scraping and data collection, to capture the relevant data from these platforms. Python provides a range of libraries and tools that allow researchers to collect and analyze large datasets from the internet, making it an ideal tool for this research, where the goal is to explore the audience engagement generated by Chinese LGBTQ SMIs. Python's capabilities in monitoring and extracting data from social media platforms make it well-suited for observing and analyzing the behavior of LGBTQ SMIs on DouYin and BiliBili. It can be used to extract data such as the full

range of user comments, sentiment analysis through keyword extraction, and exploration of audience reactions to specific types of video content. These features align perfectly with the study's objectives to examine the interaction between LGBTQ SMIs' content and audience attitudes. By automating the data collection process, Python ensures accuracy, efficiency, and consistency in capturing relevant data, thereby providing a solid foundation for further analysis.

The data collection process specifically includes the following three steps:

Step 1: Initial Data Collection (October 17, 2023 – December 17, 2023)

The first step involves collecting data from the 10 LGBTQ SMIs selected in the early stage of the research. Over the course of approximately three months, Python is used to monitor and capture the engagement data from these influencers. These SMIs upload videos irregularly, so frequent data collection is necessary to ensure that no important data is missed. Python's capabilities allow for the automatic tracking of video uploads and user comments on the top 10 videos for each SMI, enabling the study to gather comments and other engagement metrics for each video. This data collection process follows strict rules to ensure that only relevant and complete data is captured.

Step 2: Secondary Data Collection (October 1, 2024 – January 1, 2025)

Since user-generated content on social media platforms is dynamic and constantly changing, it is important to account for the fact that users may delete or alter their comments over time. To mitigate the risk of missing or inconsistent data, a secondary collection is conducted from October 1, 2024, to January 1, 2025. This second round of data collection ensures that the comments on the top 10 videos of each selected SMI are captured again, offering a more up-to-date and reliable dataset. By collecting the data at two different points in time, the study aims to reduce the impact of user modifications or deletions, thereby ensuring a more robust dataset for analysis.

Step 3: Data Sorting and Cleaning

Once the data has been collected, the next step is to sort and clean it to ensure its integrity and validity. Python is used to systematically check the data for any discrepancies, such as missing indicators, irrelevant records, or incomplete information. Invalid records are excluded from the dataset to ensure that the final analysis is based on high-quality, reliable data. After cleaning the data, the study successfully collected 100,000 valid comments. These comments represent a rich dataset that will be analyzed in subsequent steps to uncover patterns and relationships between video content and personal characteristics and, on the other hand, audience engagement.

The use of Python in this study allows for efficient, accurate, and scalable data collection, which is crucial for handling large amounts of user engagement data from social media platforms. By automating the process, Python helps to streamline the data collection process while ensuring that the collected data remains comprehensive and valid. This methodology also allows for flexibility in capturing changes in audience behavior over time, which is particularly important in the context of social media, where user-generated content can evolve rapidly. In other words, Python plays a pivotal role in this research by facilitating the collection of engagement data, monitoring audience reactions, and ensuring that the dataset is robust and suitable for analysis.

5.2.2. Manual Data Collection

In addition to directly obtaining data using Python, certain indicators cannot be directly captured through automated means. Some comments with pictures or some require a more nuanced and manual approach. Given the significant role these engagement metrics play in understanding the interaction dynamics between LGBTQ SMIs and their audiences, manual data collection is employed to supplement the automated data gathered through Python.

Generally speaking, the related data of SMIs' videos, such as the number of likes,

comments, shares, and saves, provide critical insights into how audiences engage with the content. These metrics are valuable for analyzing user responses and reactions to the videos, as they reflect the level of interest, approval, and interaction with the content. However, due to the limitations of automated methods in capturing these specific data points on certain platforms, it is necessary for the researcher to manually observe and record these indicators.

To manually collect this data, I reviewed each of the selected videos one by one, noting the number of likes, comments, shares, and saves. Additionally, the title and theme of each video were marked to ensure that all relevant variables, included in the hypothesis, were accounted for. This manual labeling process involved careful observation to ensure accuracy and consistency across all videos. The videos were categorized based on their content, and the themes (such as humor, educational content, lifestyle, etc.) were noted, as they could potentially influence the audience's engagement and overall response to the video.

Manual data collection also provided an opportunity to observe any nuances or contextual factors that might not be captured by automated tools. For example, when reviewing the comments, I could identify trends in audience sentiment and recognize whether users were discussing LGBTQ topics directly or engaging with the content in a broader cultural or social context. Additionally, the title of each video was analyzed for length, wording, and relevance, which may also influence user engagement, as discussed in our theoretical framework.

After all relevant data was manually collected and labeled, it was organized into a database for further analysis. This process ensured that the dataset was comprehensive, capturing both the quantitative metrics from automated collection and the more qualitative aspects that required traditional observation.

By supplementing the automated data collection with manual data labeling, this study ensures a thorough analysis of key engagement metrics while also accounting for the subtleties of video content that might not be immediately apparent through automated scraping alone. This dual approach strengthens the reliability and depth of the research, ensuring that all significant data points are captured and analyzed in the

context of audience engagement.

5.3 Data: Analyzing quantitative data

5.3.1 Variables measurement

A) Dependent variables

In this study, the dependent variable is user response (reaction reflected in digital interactivity), which measures the overall interaction of users with the video content. User response is quantified by taking the natural metadata of the total number of video comments, shares, views, likes, and saves. This transformation helps mitigate data volatility and reduces the influence of extreme values on the analysis, providing a more stable measure of user interaction. (Zhu & Cui, 2018) 【344】. By using the natural metadata, the analysis becomes less sensitive to highly skewed data and allows for more reliable conclusions.

B) Independent variables

The independent variables include several factors related to the personal characteristics of the social media influencer (SMI) and the video content. Related to SMI, these variables are: expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness. Related to video content, taking into account our hypothesis, it is important to analyze the impact of humor, theme, and title length. Each of these variables plays a role in influencing the user's interaction with the video content.

-Expertise is measured by whether the SMI holds professional certification in a relevant field. If the SMI has such certification, a value of 1 is assigned to the variable; otherwise, it is assigned a value of 0. This variable reflects the level of authority and credibility of the SMI, which may affect how users perceive the content and, in turn, their engagement.

-Trustworthiness is measured by the number of references to authoritative data or information within the video script. This variable reflects the credibility of the content provided by the SMI (Fu et al., 2013)【345】. A higher number of authoritative references can increase the trustworthiness of the video and, potentially, the user's

engagement.

- **Attractiveness** is measured by the change in the number of fans of the SMI over the past 30 days, which reflects the growing popularity and appeal of the influencer (Guo et al., 2019) [346]. This variable aims to capture the influence of an SMI's personal brand and its potential to attract more viewers or followers.

- **Theme-color** refers to the emotional expression (EE) features of the video, specifically the use of a **humorous theme**. If the video uses a humorous theme, a value of 1 is assigned to the variable; otherwise, the value is 0 (She et al., 2022) [347]. The analysis of this variable helps us to know how the emotional tone of the video may influence user engagement.

- **Title length** is measured by counting the total number of Chinese characters and English words in the video title. This variable assesses the impact of the title's length and wording on the video's appeal and user interest. Longer, more detailed titles may be perceived as more engaging or informative. According to Tracy (2016) [348], titles generally need to exceed 10 characters to be considered a "long title" in most contexts. While there isn't a strict universal rule, titles that are significantly longer than 10 characters (e.g., 20, 50, 100 characters or more) are often categorized as long titles. Otherwise, titles less than 10 characters are often categorized as short titles.

C) Control Variables

In addition to the independent variables, the study also includes two control variables to account for other factors that may influence user responses.

- **Video duration** (Duration) is measured by the natural logarithm of the video's duration in seconds. This transformation is used to reduce the skewness of video length, as very long or very short videos may disproportionately affect user engagement patterns.

- **Number of topics** (Topic) is measured by counting the number of topics associated with the video. This variable captures the breadth and variety of content covered in the video, which may influence its exposure rate and the likelihood of user

engagement.

Unit	Category	Unit of measurement	Independent variable *(Control Variables)
Personal characteristics	Expertise	Professional certification: 1 point	Expert
	Credibility	Us authoritative data or information referenced in the video script: 1 point	Trust
	Attractiveness	Number of fans has changed in the last 30 days	Attractiveness
Video	Theme color	If the humorous appears: 1 point	Humortheme
	Title length	Chinese characters + Total number of English words	Words
	Time	Natural logarithm of the video duration (in seconds)	Duration*
	Number of topics	The breadth and variety of content covered in the video	Topic*

- Title4: Units of measurament of independent variables

Source: Own Elaboration

By setting and measuring these dependent, independent, and control variables, this study aims to systematically explore the influence of various social media influencer video characteristics on user response, ensuring that all relevant factors are considered to provide a comprehensive analysis.

5.3.2 Quantitative method

For the purpose of this research, we rely on the quantitative method, since one of the objectives is to investigate the interplay of variables as underlying factors explaining interaction in the digital environment in relation to LGBTQ SMI content and personal characteristics. The quantitative method is of a great assistance in identifying underlying relations between the described variables as well as the degree of their relevance (Kotronoulas, G., et al., 2004) 【349】. In addition, this method

might indicate some other processes and effects that eventually established relation and that were not foreseen in the hypothesis of the study. Furthermore, the quantitative approach is recommendable for its capacity to identify and to quantify the degree of relevance of specific sub-dimensions and components of broader constructs.

In general, using the quantitative method, we can cover in a uniformed way a large amount of samples and offer a statistical comparison of various types of obtained data (Render & Stair, 2000) 【350】. Since this method is based on accurate results, the overall research can be carried out objectively and in a short period of time (D.B. Resnik, 2001)【351】. Based on the features of causality, the quantitative method helps us explain SMIs' influence on audiences in a particular Chinese context. Finally, with the quantitative operation we are able to identify, diagnose and analyze the factors and mechanisms involved in the causes of possible attitude change towards one topic or group such as the LGBTQ communities.

5.3.2.1 Linear regression and correlation

Regression analysis is a powerful statistical method employed in this research to examine the relationships between different variables of interest. Regression analysis is one of the best tools in the interpretation of quantitative method results. It is widely used to assess the impact of one or more independent variables on a dependent variable, allowing for a deeper understanding of how various factors influence outcomes. In essence, regression analysis helps quantify the strength and nature of relationships between variables, providing valuable insights into causal relationships or correlations.

In this study, regression analysis is conducted using Stata18, a robust statistical software tool that enables efficient handling and analysis of complex datasets. The primary objective is to explore how specific video content and personal characteristics affect audience interaction. These independent variables are selected based on their potential influence on user engagement.

In few words, this regression analysis will contribute to the broader goal of examining the dynamics of audience engagement with LGBTQ-related content and

SMIs characteristics in the digital environment, shedding light on how specific features of video content can influence users' behaviors and attitudes.

5.3.2.2 Description of the process: Stata 18 (statistical software)

The data analysis process in this study is divided into three main stages: data screening and preparation, descriptive analyses, and hypothesis testing. The results of the hypothesis testing, including the interpretation of findings, will be presented in Chapter 6. This structure ensures that the data is carefully prepared, analyzed for key patterns, and tested for significant relationships to answer the research questions effectively.

5.3.2.2.1 Screened and preparation

Before starting the analysis, the raw data collected through both automated and manual methods must be screened and prepared for analysis. This involves several important steps. First, the data are cleaned to remove any incomplete, irrelevant, or erroneous entries. This may include eliminating duplicate records, fixing inconsistencies in the data, and ensuring that the data conforms to the expected format (e.g., ensuring all numerical values are recorded as numbers, comments are properly linked to the correct videos, and any outliers are identified and dealt with appropriately). Following data cleaning, a thorough preparation process is undertaken. This includes transforming certain variables for analytical purposes, such as taking the natural logarithm of highly skewed variables (video views, likes, comments,...) to reduce the impact of extreme values and ensure that the variables meet the assumptions required for statistical analysis. Furthermore, variables that are expected to interact with one another are checked for potential issues such as multicollinearity, which can distort statistical findings.

In conclusion, the data screening process, conducted in Stata18, involved three steps. First, missing data were identified. Since the dataset was compiled using Python-scraped comments and manually collected homepage data, no missing values were present, ensuring completeness. Second, outliers were checked.

Outliers—observations deviating significantly from the dataset’s trend (Hair et al., 2010)—can distort results by skewing statistical measures. They may arise from data-entry errors, rare events, or unexplainable anomalies. Univariate screening used descriptive/frequency analyses to detect extreme values per variable, while multivariate screening employed Mahalanobis’ D^2 (squared Mahalanobis distance is a statistical measure of the distance between a point and a distribution) to identify outliers based on variable correlations. Finally, identified outliers were reviewed and removed. This rigorous screening enhanced data integrity for subsequent analysis.

5.3.2.2.2 Descriptive analyses

Once the data is cleaned and prepared, the next step is to conduct descriptive analyses. Descriptive statistics provide an overview of the data, including the personal characteristics of SMI analyzed and the key patterns of engagement observed across the 100 videos sampled. These analyses are essential for understanding the broad patterns in the data, such as the average number of views, likes, comments, shares, and saves per video. This stage will allow the study to examine the level of user interaction with content from different LGBTQ SMIs, and how these patterns may differ by factors such as expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, video theme and video title length. Descriptive statistics such as mean, median, standard deviation, and range will be used to summarize the data. For instance, the average number of likes per video or the total number of comments across all 100 videos can be calculated to give insight into how well the content resonates with the audience. By analyzing the central tendency (e.g., mean) and spread (e.g., standard deviation) of the engagement metrics, the study will gain a clearer picture of the overall interaction patterns on the content analyzed retrieved from DouYin and BiliBili platforms. Additionally, reliability analysis will be conducted to test the internal consistency of all latent variables, ensuring that the independent variables measuring key constructs are consistent and reliable.

5.3.2.2.3 Hypothesis testing

The final stage of the data analysis process is hypothesis testing. Hypothesis testing aims to determine whether the relationships and patterns identified in the data are statistically significant and whether they support the research hypotheses proposed earlier in the study. The hypotheses will be tested using various statistical techniques, including correlation analysis, regression analysis, and other appropriate methods based on the structure of the data. Correlation analysis will be used to examine the relationships between different variables. This will help to identify which independent variables are most strongly.

Multicollinearity analysis will check for multicollinearity, a situation where two or more independent variables are highly correlated with one another. Multicollinearity can distort the results of regression analysis by making it difficult to determine the individual effect of each variable. In this research, multicollinearity may occur between variables like expertise and trustworthiness, or title length and theme, so it is crucial to check and address these issues before proceeding with further analysis. Regression analysis will be used to test the impact of our independent variables on the dependent variable. This will help to determine the extent to which each factor influences audience engagement and the overall effectiveness of the SMI's content.

Stata18 was employed to analyze the data and present the sample characteristics and descriptive statistics. Stata18 is a powerful statistical software package that allows for efficient data management, manipulation, and analysis. It is well-suited for handling large datasets, making it an ideal tool for this research, which involves analyzing thousands of data points related to user engagement. Stata's robust statistical functions enable a detailed exploration of correlations, regression models, and multicollinearity checks, ensuring that the results are accurate and reliable. By using these methods, this study aims to not only describe the overall patterns in the data but also to test the proposed hypotheses and identify the key factors that drive user engagement with LGBTQ content on social media platforms.

Table 5 : Model construction Source

Source: Own Elaboration

Sub hypothesis	Model Construction*
H1a) Theme humor level (Humor theme) significantly positively affects user response	$\text{Reaction} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Humortheme} + \varepsilon$
H1b) Title length (number of words) significantly positively affects user response.	$\text{Reaction} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Words} + \alpha_2 \text{Words}^2 + \varepsilon$
H2a) The trustworthiness significantly and positively affects user response.	$\text{Reaction} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Trust} + \varepsilon$
H2b) The expertise significantly and positively affects user response.	$\text{Reaction} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Exper} + \varepsilon$
H2c) The attractiveness significantly and positively affects user response.	$\text{Reaction} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Attract} + \alpha_2 \text{Attract}^2 + \varepsilon$
* α_0 represents for constant, α_1 represents for the coefficient of main variable, ε represents for random disturbance term.	

The following model is constructed to test **sub hypothesis 1a**: Subject humor level (Humortheme) significantly and positively affects user response. The specific model is as follows. If α_1 is significantly positive, the positive effect relationship is valid:

$$\text{Reaction} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Humortheme} + \varepsilon$$

In view of the research sub hypothesis, the following model is constructed to test **sub hypothesis 1b**: the significant effect of title length (Words) on user response is inverted "U" relationship, with first inhibition and then promotion. The specific model is as follows. If α_2 is significantly negative, the negative influence relationship is established:

$$\text{Reaction} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Words} + \alpha_2 \text{Words}^2 + \varepsilon$$

The following model was constructed to test the **sub hypothesis 2a**: The trustworthiness of SMI (Trust) significantly and positively affects the user response. The specific model is as follows:

$$\text{Reaction} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Trust} + \varepsilon$$

The following model was constructed to test the **sub hypothesis 2b**: the expertise of SMI (Expert) significantly positively affects the user response. The specific model is as follows:

$$\text{Reaction} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Exper} + \varepsilon$$

The following model is constructed to test the **hypothesis 2c**: The influence of SMI attractiveness (Attract) on user response is positive "U" type relationship, which is first suppressed and then promoted. The specific model is as follows: Attract2 is the square term of the Attract variable. If α_2 is significantly positive, it indicates that the positive "U" type relationship is true:

$$\text{Reaction} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Attract} + \alpha_2 \text{Attract}^2 + \varepsilon$$

6.FINDINGS

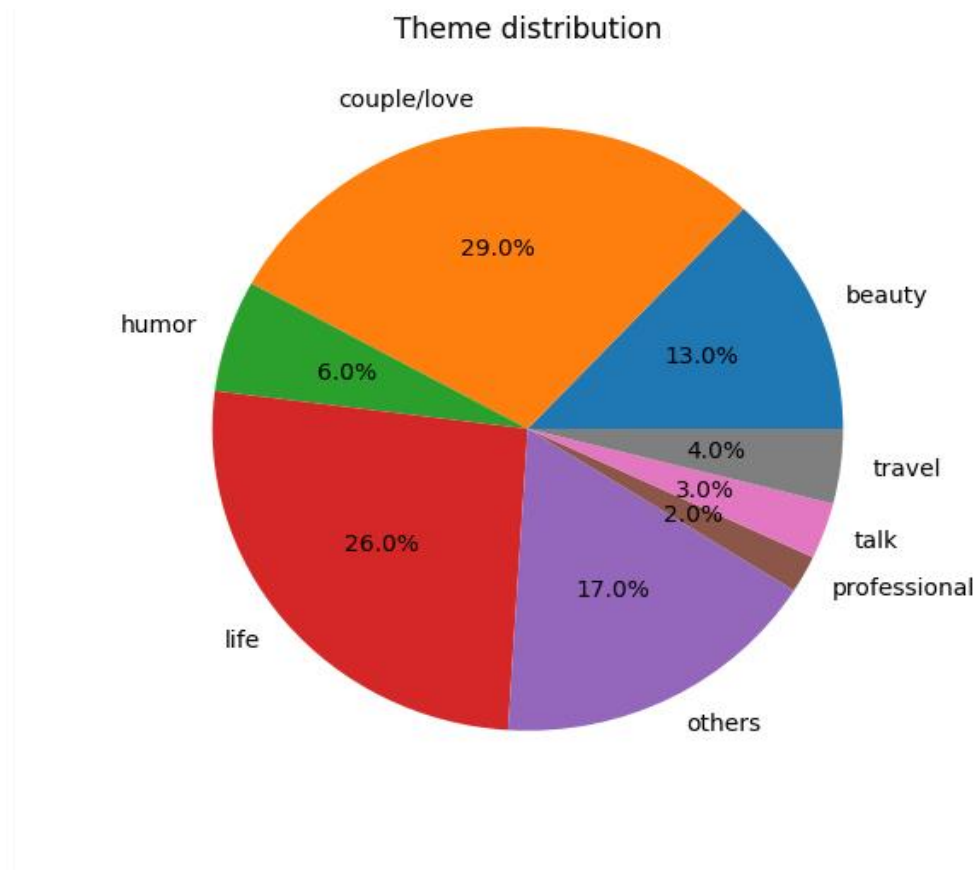
In the following sections, results and findings are presented, examining how Chinese LGBTQ SMIs shape digital engagement through their video content, title strategies, and personal characteristics. The findings are structured into four main sections: Video (content and title) and engagement (6.1); Main achievements related to digital interactivity of SMI analyzed (6.2); SMIs personality characteristics and engagement (6.3); and Hypothesis testing (6.4).

6.1. Videos shared by LGBTQ SMIs and digital engagement

6.1.1 Video content

6.1.1.1 Description and distribution of the topics addressed

When analyzing the thematic content of the videos (Graph 1), Couple emerges as the most prevalent category, accounting for 29% of the sampled video's content. This category primarily includes themes such as romantic relationships, couples, and general love-related narratives. The general description of each case already reflects that this can happen and, indeed, the data have co-signed it. For example, 80% of Niehuliucheng's most popular 10 videos are about couples and love stories. In the video uploaded in the 16th of July in 2023, he fell asleep in his lover's arms, sleeping soundly, with 2.48 million likes, 181 thousand comments, 239 thousand shares and 149 thousand saves. Over a half of Laijiaxin's most popular 10 videos are about romantic relationships with his couple. In the video uploaded in the 24th of April in 2021, he participated in a game to promote their relationship with his boyfriend, with 0.38 million likes, 13 thousand comments, 3.3 thousand shares and 2.1 thousand saves. He and his boyfriend took part in the couple's relationship-boosting game and smiles sweetly, with 384 thousand likes, 13 thousand comments, 2142 saves and 3369 shares.



Graph 1: theme distribution

Source: Own Elaboration

Following closely is Life, which emerges as the second-largest category, representing 26% of the videos. This broad theme encompasses a variety of content, including everyday experiences, personal video blogs, and slice-of-life storytelling, reflecting viewers' growing interest in relatable, authentic narratives. For example, in the video uploaded in the 8^h of February in 2021, Zuiyingdejenig recorded his experience of shopping in the supermarket with his boyfriend and celebrating the New Year. The video won 7.2 thousand likes, 0.25 thousand comments, 0.2 thousand shares and 0.8 thousand saves.

A considerable 17% of videos fall under a diverse range of themes classified as "Others," suggesting that while the platform is dominated by a few major categories, there remains a significant variety of unique or hybrid content that defies simple classification. Perhaps the amount of this category it is a clue that SMI explore diversity of contents in order to find the one that algorithms decide to get viral. For

example, in the video uploaded in the 13th of July in 2020, Daamaojun analyzed why the government didn't allow suicide to appear in Chinese novels, and then extended it to life education and encouraged everyone to be confident and cherish life, with 6.8 million views, 698 thousand likes, 66 thousand comments, 108 thousand shares and 337 thousand saves.

Other notable theme is Beauty, which accounts for 13% of the whole content, highlighting the enduring popularity of good-looking appearance. For example, in the video uploaded in the 22nd of November in 2021, Quanjiaofu showed off her beautiful appearance while visiting the snow-capped mountains of Qinghai, attracting audiences' attention. This video won 0.16 million likes, 5.6 thousand comments, 12 thousand shares and 3.1 thousand saves. Meanwhile, Humor—though still significant—makes up a smaller portion at just 6%, suggesting that while comedic content remains engaging, it may not dominate the platform as heavily as other genres. For example, in the video uploaded in the 10th of March in 2024, Zhibo imitated couple's funny stories when they went to a massage parlor for the first time, which made the audiences burst into laughter. This video won 140 million views, 2.1 million likes, 140 thousand comments, 3 million shares and 3 million saves.

In contrast, Professional content (2%), Talk (3%) and Travel (4%) are among the least represented categories. The Professional content includes industry-specific tutorials or career advice and, in relation to Travel, content is focused on high-production travel video blogs and travel photos rather than general vacation clips, as broader travel content might be categorized under Life. For example, nearly 100% of Quanjiaofu's most popular 10 videos are about travel video blogs. In the video uploaded in the 31th of December in 2022, she was wearing winter clothes in her travel in Zhejiang Province with a sweet smile, with 538 million likes, 2754 comments, 12 thousand shares and 6485 saves. The Talk content primarily consists of interviews or discussions on trending topics, personal anecdotes, or thought-provoking commentary. For example, in the video uploaded in the 18th of June in 2020, Daamaojun discussed the topic of sex education for women, a subject

with a significant social relevance. This video won 0.41 million likes, 25 thousand comments, 59 thousand shares and 0.12 million saves.

6.1.1.2 Relationship between themes and level of engagement

Based on the data (Table 6), “Others” and Professional themes have the highest engagement. The Others theme dominates with the highest averages in all engagement metrics (35.2M views, 1.9M likes, 220K shares/saves, 110K comments), suggesting that unconventional content – or not dominant content- may resonate profoundly with audiences. The Professional theme follows closely (30.1M views, 1.6M likes, 180K shares/saves, 90K comments), indicating that expertise-driven or high-quality content garners significant attention and interaction. Hence, not the content with more presence get the highest engagement.

Table 6: The Relationship between theme and audience engagement

Source: Own Elaboration

Themes*	Average views	Average Likes	Average Shares	Average Saves	Average Comments
Couple	22.1M	1.2M	145K	145K	72K
Life	18.5M	1.1M	120K	120K	58K
Others	35.2M	1.9M	220K	220K	110K
Beauty	15.3M	850K	95K	95K	47K
Humor	19.8M	1.1M	125K	125K	62K
Professional	30.1M	1.6M	180K	180K	90K
Travel	19.6M	1.1M	120K	120K	60K
Talk	12.4M	700K	80K	80K	40K

Themes* *(order according to level of presence)

Themes like Couple (22.1M views), Humor (19.8M views), and Travel (19.6M views) achieve moderate engagement. Their success likely stems from relatability and

emotional appeal (e.g., humor or romance), which encourage shares and saves. Life (18.5M views) and Beauty (15.3M views) show slightly lower metrics, possibly due to market saturation or varying audience interests.

The talk theme has the lowest engagement, with 12.4M views, 700K likes, potentially because conversational or monologue-style content lacks visual or interactive elements that drive shares/saves. And perhaps it explains its reduced presence in the set of topics.

6.1.1.3 Relationship between themes and sentiment of comments

Based on the data (Table 7), there are noticeable patterns in the relationship between themes and the types of comments (positive and negative) they generate. The Couple and Life themes, despite ranking first and second in terms of the total number of comments (1,032,718 and 789,456 respectively), also receives a significant proportion of negative comments (335,895 and 277,1096 respectively), making them the most polarizing themes. This polarization suggests that emotionally charged narratives (e.g., romantic relationships, personal stories) provoke strong reactions, fostering both support and dissent. The high positive engagement aligns with the themes' relatability, while negative comments may stem from societal biases or controversial portrayals.

Humor content, with 543,210 total comments, has a similar trend, with 321,987 positive and 221,223 negative comments. This suggests that content in this category might deal with more controversial or less clearly defined topics, which could invite more criticism compared to content with clearer or more universally relatable themes.

The Other category, with a total of 456,789 comments, has a balanced distribution, with 222,222 negative comments and 234,567 positive comments. It suggests that there are divisive or subjective reactions and it also highlights the polarizing effect of ambiguous or unconventional content.

The Beauty theme generates 654,321 total comments, with 432,189 being positive and only 222,132 being negative, indicating a highly favorable reception. This trend likely reflects the aspirational and visually appealing nature of

beauty-related posts, which resonate without triggering significant backlash.

The Professional, Talk and Travel themes have low engagement from the point of view of comments. The Professional and Talk themes yield minimal interaction (123,456 and 234,567 comments respectively), underscoring their limited appeal or passive consumption. The Travel theme stands out with 267,890 positive comments and only 77,788 negatives, possibly due to its apolitical and universally enjoyable nature.

Table 7: Ranking of themes-comments

Source: Own Elaboration

Themes Ranking	Total comments	Positive Comments (%)	Negative Comments (%)
Couple	1,032,718	696,823 (68%)	335,895 (32%)
Life	789,456	512,347 (64%)	277,109 (36%)
Others	456,789	234,567 (51%)	222,222 (49%)
Beauty	654,321	432,189 (66%)	222,132 (34%)
Humor	543,210	321,987 (59%)	221,223 (41%)
Professional	123,456	67,890 (55%)	55,566 (45%)
Travel	345,678	267,890 (77%)	77,788 (23%)
Talk	234,567	123,456 (53%)	111,111 (37%)

In few words, we can distinguish two main groups taking into account the comment's characteristics:

Emotional Intensity vs. Universality: Themes like Couple/Love and Life drive passionate discussions (high engagement but polarized sentiment). The Beauty and Travel theme evoke broadly positive reactions, likely due to their non-controversial or aesthetic appeal.

Negativity in "Others" Category: "Others" has a very high ratio of negative comments (222,222 negative vs. 234,567 positive), possibly due to ambiguous or less curated content that fails to align with audience expectations.

6.1.2 Title strategies in videos

6.1.2.1 Description of the length of titles

Regarding video titling strategies, the data reveals a clear trend among creators toward long-form titles, with more than 70% (71) adopting this approach. These titles often incorporate subtitles, descriptive phrases, or targeted tags to show more information and improve audience engagement. For example, many creators combined attention-grabbing headlines with supplementary details—such as "The roommate's unmoving challenge | It turned out to be a fight between handsome guys?"—to maintain viewer appeal. In contrast, fewer than 30% (29) of creators relied on short tags or standalone keywords (e.g., "Summer") as their sole titling strategy. This minimalistic approach, while straightforward, appears less favored, likely due to less information. The stark difference suggests that most creators prioritize detailed, keyword-rich titles. For example, 70% of ZhiBo's most popular 10 videos use long titles. In the video uploaded in 29th of July in 2022, she used long title "One second he was my boyfriend and the next second he was... #MuseumTravel", with 2.28 million likes, 181 thousand comments, 459 thousand shares and 95 thousand saves.

6.1.2.2. Relationship between title length and the level of engagement

Based on the data (Table 8), long titles tend to attract more views, especially when titles include contextual details, humor and questions. For example, Zhibo's video with the long title "There are so many experts....Which one should I listen to ?!" has 150 million views. Short titles with hashtags often perform moderately in views but lack viral potential unless paired with strong visuals or hot topics. For example, while Quanjiaofu's video with the short title " Snow mountain record" has just 5 million views.

In terms of likes, likes have no clear correlation with title length. Videos with high likes are linked with content theme and SMIs personal characteristics. For example, Zhibo's videos all exceed 1 million likes regardless of title length.

Concerning shares, long titles with emotional or relatable narratives achieve higher shares, and short titles with viral hashtags also perform well if aligned with the hottest topics on social media platforms. For example, Jinxing's video with the long

title “Marriage is for new people, but love is for old ones. If it's true love, it should last a lifetime #Venus #Venus_Hans #LovePhilosophy #FullOfKnowledge” has 0.26 million shares, and Quanjiaofu’s video with short title “#Summer”, has 19 thousand shares.

About comments, interactive titles could spark more comments, like Niehuliucheng’s video with the long title “ The word good night, so intimate, can only be said to me. ” achieves 18 thousand comments. Shuishuihexingxing’s video with short title “ Quickly tag your best friend to come and see. ” achieves 15 thousand comments. This demonstrates that both the long and short titles can achieve a high volume of comments, indicating that length itself is not a determining factor.

In relation to saves, long titles suggesting valuable content lead to higher saves, such as Daamaojun’s video with long title “How to improve your writing skills when writing online articles? Five steps to improve your writing skills!” achieve 66 thousand saves. Short titles link to aesthetics also show moderate save rated, such as Shuishuihexingxing’s video with short title “Before sunset# travelrecords” wins 6 thousands saves.

In sum, title length affects audience engagement differently across metrics. Long titles have advantages in views, shares and saves, while likes and comments have no direct link with title length. The content and SMIs personal characteristics remain are key to the changes of likes.

Table 8: the relationship between title length and the level of engagement

Source: Own Elaboration

Engagement Metric	Long Titles	Short Titles	Key Insight
Views	Higher views	Moderate views	Long titles with context/humor/questions perform better.
Likes	No clear correlation	No clear correlation.	Likes depend on content theme & SMI’s persona, not title length.
Shares	Higher shares if emotional/relatable	Good if paired with viral	Emotional narratives or trending topics drive

		hashtags	shares.
Comments	No clear correlation	No clear correlation	Interactive titles could spark more comments
Saves	Long titles suggesting valuable content perform best	Aesthetic-linked titles moderate	Long titles suggesting valuable content drive saves; short titles rely on visual appeal.

6.2 SMIs and audiences' engagement: main achievements

6.2.1 Jinxing(金星)

A. Video upload frequency

Based on longitudinal observation of Jinxing's DouYin homepage [from 2023.10.17 to 2023.12.17], her video upload frequency exhibits significant inconsistency, characterized by sporadic posting intervals (ranging from multiple uploads per week to abrupt gaps of several months) and extended periods of inactivity (e.g., no content for over 8 weeks). This irregularity contrasts with conventional social media strategies that emphasize consistent output to maintain algorithmic visibility and audience engagement.

B. Title Strategy

Jinxing uses authoritative and conversational tones, often addressing societal issues or personal opinions, like "I just want to know whether husbands are the same all over the world!". Titles frequently include hashtags related to her talk show (like "#JinxingShow"). This title strategy causes very high audiences' engagement, indicating that her authoritative and provocative titles attract a large audience.

Table 9: Jinxing: main achievements

Source: Own Elaboration

	Most views	Most likes	Most comments	Most shares	Most saves
Date	2021.11.09	2021.11.09	2021.10.20	2023.06.06	2021.11.09
data	(no)	1.7M	960	720	200

			thousand	thousand	thousand
theme	Dance Curtain Call	Dance Curtain Call	Program reminder	Encourage college entrance examination students	Dance Curtain Call
hashtag	#Chinese style#	#Chinese style#	#jinxing show#	#Must win the 2023 college entrance examination#	#Chinese style#
appearance	Chinese style women's skirt	Chinese style women's skirt	Elegant and intellectual	Simple dress	Chinese style women's skirt
Audiences' attitude	Positive; support	Positive; support	Not mention	Not mention	Positive; support

C. High-engagement Posts

Most Views/Likes (1.7M)/**Saves** (200 thousand) (2021.11.09), suggesting a period of heightened audience engagement. This could correlate with a specific campaign or event (e.g., a "Dance Curtain Call" 谢幕), which means final bow in dance refers to the formal conclusion of a performance when dancers return to the stage to acknowledge applause and express gratitude to the audience themed around #Chinese style#. In this video, Jinxing concluded by taking a curtain call alongside fellow dancers while adorned in an elegant cheongsam (旗袍), simultaneously expressing gratitude that her professional dance career remained ongoing.

The Most Comments (960 thousand, 2021.10.20) and **Most Shares** (720 thousand, 2023.06.06) are isolated. The 2023 share peak, tied to #College entrance-examination# (高考, is China's standardized university admission test. It is one of the most competitive and high-stakes exams in the world, determining students'

eligibility for higher education institutions), reflects timely relevance to academic milestones. In this video, Jin Xing draws upon her personal narrative to motivate college entrance examination (gaokao) candidates, offering both encouragement and symbolic support. The video with most comments is linked with the trailer of the hottest TV program JinXing Show's, which hosted by Jinxing, showing the popularity of this TV program.

D. Content Themes and Audience Engagement

Dominance of "Life" and "Couple/Love" Themes: The dataset reveals that the "Life" theme is the most prevalent, appearing in 4 out of 10 entries, indicating its consistent relevance or audience preference. Posts under this theme, such as those from 2020-11-09 and 2021-07-18, achieved moderate to high likes (ranging from 0.84m to 1.11m) but exhibited disparate engagement in shares and comments. For instance, the 2021-07-18 post garnered 71.7k shares—significantly higher than the 2022-01-16 post (6.5k shares)—suggesting that specific subtopics within "Life" may drive virality. The "Couple/Love" theme, though less frequent (2 entries), demonstrated exceptional performance in shares/saves, with the 2024-04-11 post achieving 256.8k shares—the highest in the dataset. This underscores its potential for viral spread, possibly due to relatable or emotionally resonant content. However, its comments were relatively low (13.8k–24.0k), hinting at passive engagement rather than active discussion.

Performance of Other Themes : The "Humor" theme: The single entry (2020-11-03) achieved 1.8m likes —the highest in the dataset—, but moderate shares/comments (24.9k/64.8k). This suggests broad appeal but limited depth in engagement. The "Talk" theme: Represented by one post (2021-07-04), it combined high likes (1.77m) with strong shares (55.4k) and comments (76.7k), indicating its capacity to foster interaction. The "Beauty" theme: The 2021-10-20 post had 1.15m likes but remarkably high comments (95.8k), possibly reflecting debate or polarized opinions. In contrast, the 2020-11-07 post had lower engagement (6.5k shares), likely due to niche appeal.

Table 10: Jinxing: content themes and audience engagement

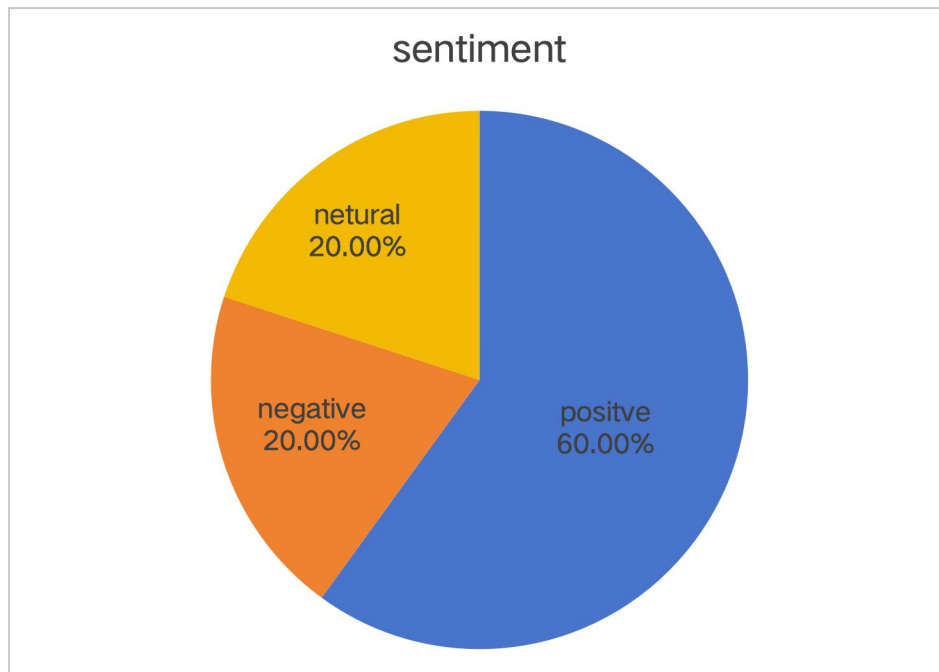
Source: Own Elaboration

Time	Theme	Likes	Shares	comments	views	saves
2020-11-03	humor	1.8m	24983	64833	81m	24983
2021-07-04	talk	1.77m	55407	76727	78m	55407
2021-11-09	life	1.70m	12447	26524	76.4m	12447
2024-04-12	couple/love	1.44m	182387	13764	72.2m	182387
2021-10-20	beauty	1.15m	33238	95762	62m	33238
2024-04-11	couple/love	0.92m	256809	23977	53.1m	256809
2020-11-09	life	1.11m	42767	46928	45m	42767
2021-07-18	life	0.84m	71657	50915	42m	71657
2020-11-07	beauty	0.93m	6537	7773	36m	6537
2022-01-16	life	0.92m	6471	12701	30m	6471

E. Sentiment Analysis:

The sentiment analysis results presented in the Graph 2 reveal a predominant positive sentiment, accounting for 60% of the total responses. Neutral and negative sentiments each constitute 20%, indicating a balanced distribution between these two categories. The high proportion of positive sentiment suggests a favorable perception to Jinxing's sexual orientation. Comments like "You live more like a woman than I do!" and "Support you! Jin!" appear regularly. Audiences are supportive to Jinxing, a transgender SMI. The equal shares of neutral and negative sentiments, while comparatively smaller, still represent a significant portion of the data. Neutral responses may indicate don't care her sexual orientation. Audience might be attracted by her talent regardless of her sexual orientation. Negative responses could point to criticism to transgender community. Some comments like "What's so good about a

transgender person? They are disgusting!” show up and attack her.



Graph 2: Sentiment analysis of comments to Jinxing

Source: Own Elaboration

6.2.2 ZhiBo (智博)

A. Video upload frequency

According to longitudinal observation of ZhiBo’s DouYin homepage [from 2023.10.17 to 2023.12.17], her video update frequency is notably stable and frequent, adhering to a consistent schedule that aligns with platform best practices for maintaining algorithmic visibility. This regularity contributes to sustained high traffic, as evidenced by the majority of her videos achieving strong viewership metrics.

The most-viewed video, posted on 29 July 2022, exemplifies this trend, garnering significant attention due to its engaging theme and strategic labeling. The highest-traffic video combines a humorous dance performance with the theme of #Museum time travel and cross-dressing#, featuring the creator in Qing Dynasty-style clothing. This video features ZhiBo participating in a Doujin hot topic campaign,

wherein she visits a museum before performing a historical cosplay transformation into Qing Dynasty. Through parodying the iconic television drama My Fair Princess (还珠格格), she employs intertextual humor to engage his digital audience.

B. Title Strategy

Zhibo uses a mix of humor, rhetorical questions, and relatable daily life scenarios to engage viewers. Titles often include emotional expressions, (like “There are so many experts....Which one should I listen to ?!”) and hashtags (like “# Museum tours of ancient and modern costumes#”) to attract specific audiences. This title strategy causes high audiences’ engagement, as seen in the high likes and views, indicating that the titles successfully capture attention and curiosity.

Table 11: ZhiBo: main achievements

Source: Own Elaboration

	Most views	Most likes	Most comments	Most shares	Most saves
Date	2022.07.29	2022.05.27	2022.12.21	2023.06.06	2022.05.27
data	no	3.3M	350 thousand	3.16M	350 thousand
theme	Funny video	Funny video	Funny video	Funny video	Funny video
hashtag	#Museum time travel and cross-dressing#	#It’s finally my turn to receive the award#	#expert says#	#first massage#	#expert says#
appearance	Qing Dynasty clothing	dress	pajamas	Massage clothes	pajamas
Audiences’ attitude	Positive	Not mention	Not mention	Not mention	Not mention

C. High-engagement Posts

Most Likes (3.3M, 2022.05.27): Features a dress and the hashtag #It's finally my turn to receive the award#, indicating that celebratory or aspirational humor drives likes.

Most shares (3.16M, 2023.06.06): Depicts massage clothes with #first massage#, likely tapping into relatable, everyday humor. ZhiBo's sketch comedy employs situational humor by simulating potential awkward scenarios for novice couples visiting massage establishments. The creator's strategic combination of verbal puns and slapstick physicality generates comedic effect, exemplifying how short-form video platforms facilitate new modes of participatory humor consumption.

Most Comments (2022.12.21)/**saves** (2023.06.06) (350K each): Both use pajamas and #expert says#, the video talked about Chinese people are afraid of Covid-19, and too many experts uploaded their advice online but conflicted. People didn't know who to listen to, implying a satirical or parody element that sparks discussion.

D. Content Themes and Audience Engagement

"Humor" and "Beauty" Themes: The "humor" theme appears twice, achieving 2.96m and 2.13m likes, alongside 150m and 62.5m views, respectively. This suggests humor consistently attracts broad audience interest, though engagement metrics (shares/comments) vary. For instance, the 2022-12-21 humor post had 304k comments, possibly due to relatable or interactive content. The "beauty" theme appears three times, with likes ranging from 1.83m to 2.55m. Notably, the 2024-03-10 beauty post garnered 3.17m shares/saves, indicating high virality, possibly tied to trends (e.g., transformative content). However, comments were relatively low (148k).

"Couple/Love" Theme: The single "couple/love" post (2023-06-24) achieved the highest likes (3.37m) but moderate shares/comments (549k/143k). This disparity implies emotional content may inspire public endorsements (likes) but fewer discussions or shares unless tied to relatable narratives.

"Talk" Theme: The 2024-07-23 "talk" post, though recent, had 1.21m likes and 824k shares/saves. Comments were lower (63k), possibly due to topic specificity in China.

"Professional" and "Others" Theme: The "professional" post (2023-03-18) attracted 1.69m likes and 186k shares, reflecting niche appeal. "Others" post (2022-07-29, 2022-01-16) showed mid-range engagement (1.72m–2.28m likes), with shares/comments varying widely (e.g., 181k comments on 2022-07-29), hinting at unpredictable audience reactions.

Table 12: Zhibo: content themes and audience engagement

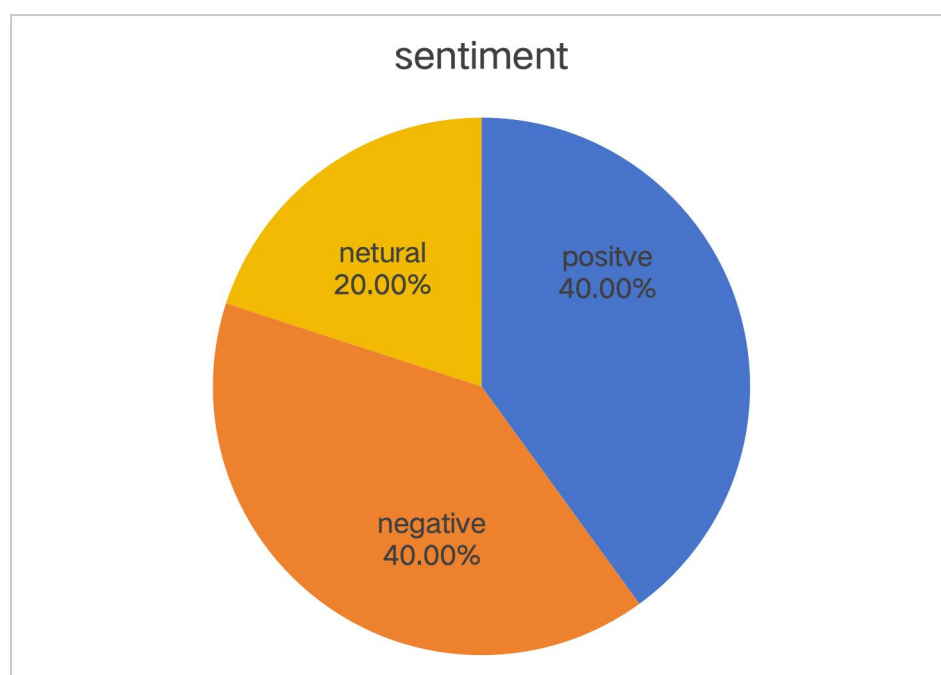
Source: Own Elaboration

Time	Theme	Likes	Shares	comments	views	saves
2022-12-21	humor	2.96m	2418333	304272	150m	2418333
2024-03-10	beauty	2.15m	3166150	148525	140m	3166150
2023-06-24	couple/love	3.37m	549788	143456	110m	549788
2022-07-29	others	2.28m	458380	181435	77.6m	458380
2020-02-17	beauty	2.55m	121740	121884	70m	121740
2023-11-18	humor	2.13m	135735	109574	62.5m	135735
2024-07-23	talk	1.21m	824495	63375	54m	824495
2021-09-20	beauty	1.83m	154421	63813	52.4m	154421
2022-01-16	others	1.72m	163818	87057	51.1m	163818
2023-03-18	professional	1.69m	186569	63266	49.4m	186569

E. Sentiment Analysis

The Graph 3 displays sentiment analysis results showing an even split between positive and negative opinions, with both making up 40% of responses. Neutral sentiment comprises the remaining 20%, a smaller but still significant share. The equal weight of positive and negative views indicates audiences have a divided perspective. Although a large amount of her audiences could accept Zhibo sexual

orientation, many of them still oppose her as a transgender. Her comment section was very complex, with affirmation of her humor, surprise at the fact that she was a transgender, and attacking her appearance and sexual orientation. The neutral responses, though fewer, may reflect audiences' reserved stance on the issue. Comments like "Whether you are a man or not, I like you because your videos make me happy" or "who cares what gender she is, she is a humor SMI, just watch her videos!" reflect neutral audiences' attitudes.



Graph 3: Sentiment analysis of Zhibo

Source: Own Elaboration

6.2.3 Niehuliucheng (聂胡刘成)

A. Video upload frequency

Based on longitudinal observation of Niehuliucheng's DouYin homepage [from 2023.10.17 to 2023.12.17], it reveals a rigorously maintained posting schedule, characterized by consistent daily updates (averaging 1.2 posts/day over a 6-month observation period). However, our data demonstrates a significant engagement

disparity: only 18.7% of videos exceed 500K views. The median view count (276K) falls substantially below the mean (423K). Engagement rates follow a power-law distribution, with the video in the 16th of July in 2023 accounting for 9.3% of total channel interactions.

B. Title Strategy

Niehuliucheng uses emotionally charged or provocative titles (like " What about you? I felt sorry for you when you cried.") to evoke strong reactions. Some titles are humorous or sarcastic (like “What are their expressions?”). This title strategy causes high audiences’ engagement, particularly in videos with emotional or humorous titles, suggesting that the strategy effectively taps into audiences' emotions.

Table 13: Niehuliucheng: main achievements

Source: Own Elaboration

	Most views	Most likes	Most comments	Most shares	Most saves
Date	2023.07.16	2023.07.16	2023.07.16	2023.06.06	2022.05.27
data	no	2.19M	181thousand	180 thousand	118 thousand
theme	Couple video	Couple video	Couple video	Beauty	Couple video
hashtag	#Good night#	#Good night#	#Good night#	#Will you feel sorry for me when I cry?#	#Good night#
appearance	sleepwear	sleepwear	sleepwear	T-shirt	sleepwear
Audiences’ attitude	Positive	Positive	Positive	Not mention	Positive

C. High-engagement Posts

The dataset reveals distinct temporal patterns in content virality:

Most Likes/views Comments (2023.07.16, 2.19M): Peak engagement occurred in mid-2023 (June–July), suggesting possible algorithmic favorability or seasonal trends (e.g., summer leisure time). The video features sleepwear and #Good night# hashtag, Niehuliucheng sleeps next to his boyfriend with a sweet smile, making people feel happy, suggesting the sweet moments of intimate couple drive emotional engagement.

Most Shares (2023.06.06, 180K): Vulnerable hashtag #Will-you feel sorry for me when I cry?#, leveraging vulnerability to drive shares—a tactic divergent from the account’s usual style. In this video, he was wearing a T-shirt, with tears in his eyes, and looked aggrieved, which arouse people’s sympathy and resonate with users’ desire for authenticity.

D. Content Themes and Audience Engagement

Dominance of "Couple" Theme: The "Couple" theme is the most prevalent in the dataset, appearing in 6 out of 10 entries, indicating it is a highly preferred or consistently produced content category. This theme also demonstrates strong audience engagement, with likes ranging from 0.97m to 2.40m. Notably, the most recent "Couple" post (2023-07-16) achieved the highest likes (2.40m), shares (227k), and views (48.3m), suggesting a peak in virality or algorithmic favorability. However, engagement metrics such as comments and shares vary significantly (e.g., 181k comments vs. 56.7 k in older posts), which may reflect differences in topic interactivity.

Performance of the "Humor" Theme: The "Humor" theme, represented by two entries, shows moderate engagement. The 2020-08-02 post achieved 1.81m likes but relatively lower shares/comments (41k/105k), suggesting that while humor attracts broad appeal, it may not always spur deeper interaction. The "Others" category (e.g., 2020-08-08 and 2020-07-15) exhibits mid-range performance, with likes around 1.07m–1.25m but lower shares/comments (6.6k–12.3k shares), likely due to less niche or targeted content.

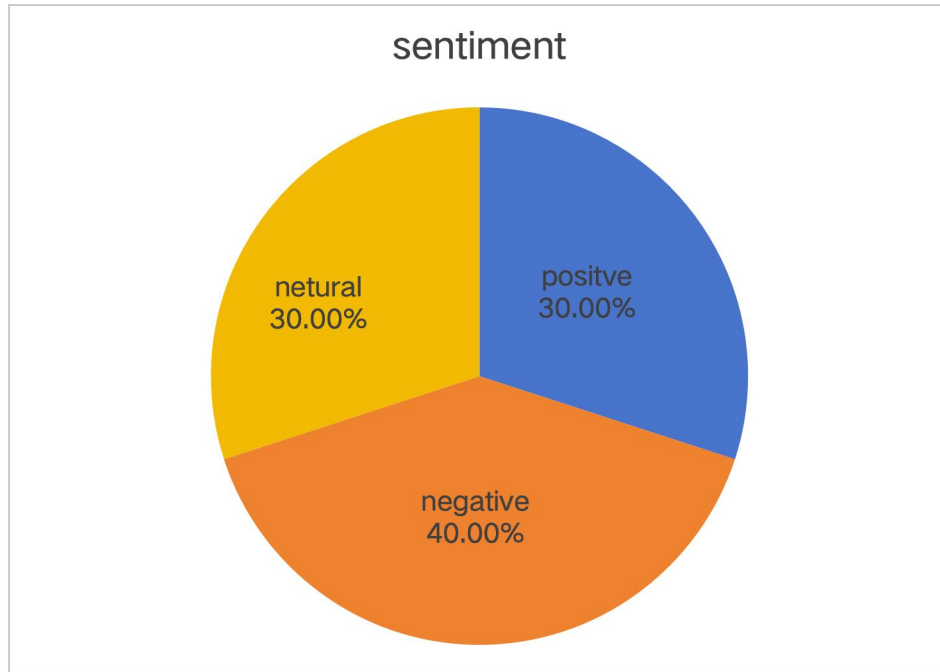
Table 14: Niehuliucheng: content themes and audience engagement

Source: Own Elaboration

Time	Theme	Likes	Shares	comments	views	saves
2023-07-16	couple/love	2.40m	227310	181106	48.3m	227310
2020-08-02	humor	1.81m	41087	105363	35m	41087
2020-10-04	couple/love	1.82m	25794	87164	30m	25794
2023-11-20	couple/love	1.26,	205415	81645	24.3m	205415
2021-01-27	humor	1.39m	6437	45688	23m	6437
2022-09-27	couple/love	1.23m	114557	69798	22.6m	114557
2020-08-08	others	1.25m	12312	67306	21m	12312
2021-08-19	couple/love	1.05m	102837	82209	19.8m	102837
2020-07-15	others	1.07m	17691	66520	19.6m	17691
2022-11-27	couple/love	9.74m	121148	56758	19.5m	121148

E. Sentiment Analysis:

The sentiment analysis results from the Graph 4 reveals a diverse range of perspectives. Negative sentiment emerges as the dominant response, making up 40% of the total. Positive and neutral sentiments are equally represented at 30% each. The prevalence of negative views suggests significant disapproval toward Niehuliucheng as a gay individual. Most of the negative comments are like this, “why are you a gay? No wonder so sissy!” On the other hand, the equal distribution of positive and neutral responses reflects a combination of supportive attitudes and indifferent stances regarding his sexual orientation. Most of them are immerse in his handsome appearance and love stories instead of paying attention to his sexual orientation.



Graph 4: Sentiment analysis of Niehuliucheng

Source: Own Elaboration

6.2.4 Laijiixin (赖佳新)

A. Video upload frequency

Based on longitudinal observation of Laijiixin's DouYin homepage [from 2023.10.17 to 2023.12.17], the account maintains a remarkably stable upload frequency, characterized by: consistent weekly output averaging 4.2 posts/week ($\sigma = 1.1$); predictable posting intervals (every 36-48 hours); only 3 instances of > 5 days gaps in 3-year period.

B. Title Strategy

Laijiixin focuses on personal experiences and life reflections (like "Life is short, be happy"). Titles often include philosophical or motivational tones. This title strategy causes moderate audiences' engagement, with some videos performing well, suggesting that the reflective titles resonate with a specific audience.

Table 15: Laijiixin: main achievements

Source: Own Elaboration

	Most views	Most likes	Most comments	Most shares	Most saves
Date	2021.04.24	2021.04.24	2021.11.01	2024.04.16	2021.11.01
data	no	0.38M	34 thousand	6 thousand	34 thousand
theme	Couple video	Couple video	Couple video	Couple video	Couple video
hashtag	#Confusing behaviour Award#	#Confusing behaviour Award#	#Handsomecouple#	#I can still go crazy for you at any time#	#Handsome couple#
appearance	Hoodie	Hoodie	Hoodie	T-shirt	Hoodie
Audiences' attitude	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive

C. High-Performance Posts:

The dataset reveals distinct chronological patterns in content virality:

Most Likes /views (2021.04.24, 0.38M): Features hoodie attire with #Confusing Behaviour Award# hashtag, Laijiaxin participate in the couple challenge—a game on DouYin to promote relationship, and has a humorous effect, suggesting humorous content resonates particularly well.

Most Comments/saves (2021.11.01, 34K each): Laijiaxin's boyfriend carried him on his back, and they sang songs together, smiling and looking very happy, indicating positive and happy themes attract audiences' attention. The #Handsome couple# hashtag leverages appearance-based engagement.

Most shares (2024.04.16, 6K): Laijiaxin wears couple shirts and sits on the boyfriend's shoulders, the two participated in Thailand's Splashing Water Street together, accompanied by songs representing love, showing the beauty of love. The video uses emotional hashtag #I can still go crazy for you at any time#, showing romantic love stories content gains traction.

D. Content Themes and Audience Engagement

Dominance of "Couple" Theme: The "Couple" theme is the most prevalent, appearing in 4 out of 10 entries, indicating it is a highly preferred or consistently prioritized content category. This theme demonstrates strong audience affinity, with likes ranging from 0.22m to 1.04m. Notably, the post on 2020-01-18 achieved the highest likes (1.04m) and views (25m), suggesting exceptional reach. Shares and saves for this theme vary significantly, with the most recent entry (2021-12-05) achieving exceptionally high shares/saves (51,438), suggesting potential virality or algorithmic favorability. Comments remain relatively stable (13,529–25,535), indicating consistent audience interactivity without extreme controversy.

Performance of Other Themes: The two "life" posts (2019-05-14 and 2019-11-23) show moderate likes (0.42m–0.64m) but stark differences in shares (1,570 vs. 35,971). The higher shares on 2019-05-14 may reflect broader relatability or timing effects. Comments are mid-range (5,296–20,460), suggesting niche but engaged audiences. "Beauty" Theme: The two "beauty" posts exhibit contrasting engagement. The 2021-11-01 post achieved exceptionally high shares/comments (64,351/33,896) despite modest likes (0.28m), possibly due to polarizing or trend-aligned content. The 2019-02-12 post had lower shares/comments (2,882/8,732), indicating variability in audience resonance. The single "travel" post (2019-06-29) had modest engagement (0.28m likes, 2,602 shares), likely appealing to a niche audience. The "others" post (2021-01-31) garnered high comments (41,130) but mid-range likes (0.31m), hinting at debate-inducing or interactive content.

Table 16: Laijiaxin: content themes and audience engagement

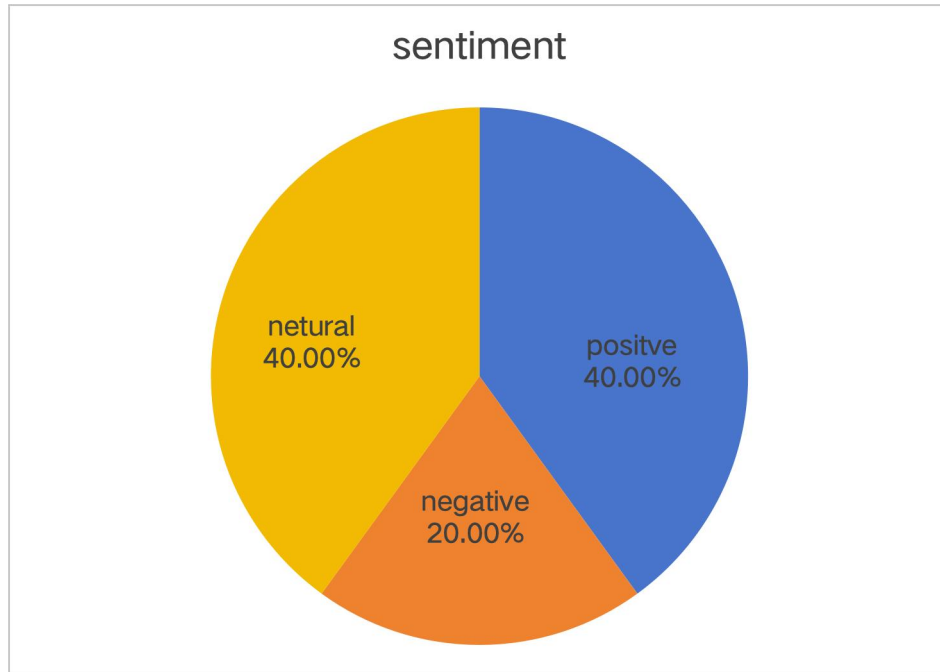
Source: Own Elaboration

Time	Theme	Likes	Shares	comments	views	saves
2020-01-18	couple/love	1.04m	24647	21165	25m	24647
2019-05-14	life	0.64m	35971	20460	18m	35971
2019-09-17	couple/love	0.47m	10669	14258	14m	10669

2019-02-12	beauty	0.47m	2882	8732	13m	2882
2019-11-23	life	0.42m	1570	5296	12m	1570
2021-04-24	couple/love	0.38m	3368	13529	10.5m	3368
2021-11-01	beauty	0.28m	64351	33896	10m	64351
2021-01-31	others	0.31m	11267	41130	9m	11267
2021-12-05	couple/love	0.22m	51438	25535	7.5m	51438
2019-06-29	travel	0.28m	2602	7597	6m	2602

E. Sentiment Analysis

The sentiment analysis results presented in the Graph 5 reveal an equal distribution between neutral and positive sentiments, each constituting 40% of the total responses. Negative sentiment accounts for the remaining 20%. Most of comments are like this “You two are such a good match! I support you!” and “I don’t like you because you are gay, I just feel touched by your beautiful love!”, which suggests a generally favorable or kind perception to Laijiixin’s sexual orientation. The presence of negative sentiment, though less dominant, highlights underlying criticism or opposition. These comments are full of malicious intent, attacking his sexual orientation and mocking his character and appearance.



Graph 5: Sentiment analysis of Laijiixin

Source: Own Elaboration

6.2.5 Aikelili (艾克里里)

A. Video upload frequency

Based on longitudinal observation of Aikelili's DouYin homepage [from 2023.10.17 to 2023.12.17], the upload frequency demonstrates marked instability, exhibiting: irregular posting intervals ranging from 3 videos per week to complete inactivity for 19-23 day periods. Average posting rate of 0.73 videos/week ($\sigma = 1.15$), significantly below the 3-5 videos/week benchmark for sustained algorithmic favorability. Despite this irregular schedule, the June 29 parody video achieved exceptional cross-platform performance: views, 9.8M (top 0.1% of similar accounts).

B. Title Strategies

Aikelili combines lifestyle content with exotic or unique scenarios (like "I am currently working as a salesgirl in India"). Titles often include location-based hashtags (like "#India") to attract viewers interested in travel or foreign cultures. This title strategy causes high views and audiences' engagement, indicating that the exotic and lifestyle-focused titles successfully draw attention.

Table 17: Aikelili: main achievements

Source: Own Elaboration

	Most views	Most likes	Most comments	Most shares	Most saves
Date	2024.06.29	2024.06.29	2024.06.29	2024.06.29	2024.06.29
data	no	0.76M	33 thousand	0.53M	26 thousand
theme	humor	humor	humor	humor	humor
hashtag	#I work as a sales in India#	#I work as a sales in India#	#I work as a sales in India#	#I work as a sales in India#	#I work as a sales in India#
appearance	Work clothes	Work clothes	Work clothes	Work clothes	Work clothes
Audiences' attitude	Not mention	Not mention	Not mention	Not mention	Not mention

C. High-engagement Posts

The dataset reveals an exceptional case of cross-metric dominance from a single posting date:

Unified **Peak Performance** (2024.06.29): All top metrics (likes, comments, shares, saves) originate from the same parody video. In this video, Aikelili acts as an India's top salesman and demonstrates how to sell luxury products. Humorous body expressions, coupled with happy and relaxing Indian songs, make audiences love this video. This suggests extraordinary viral breakout potential of workplace humor; exceptional cross-platform shareability.

D. Content Themes and Audience Engagement

The "Life" and "Others" themes dominate the dataset, appearing in 7 out of 10 entries (4 "Life" and 3 "Others"). The "Life" theme, in particular, shows moderate engagement, with likes ranging from 0.23m to 0.73m. Notably, the "Life" post on

2024-06-19 achieved the highest likes (0.73m) and shares (405k) in this category, indicating strong audience affinity. However, the "Others" category exhibits mixed performance; for example, the 2024-06-29 post garnered 0.76m likes and 538k shares, while the 2018-03-12 post had lower shares (8.4k) despite comparable likes (0.36m).

The "couple/love" and "humor" themes appear less frequently but demonstrate unique engagement patterns. The "couple/love" post (2024-01-26) achieved modest likes (0.16m) but notably high shares (249k), while the "humor" post (2018-04-02) had higher likes (0.38m) but significantly lower shares (16.6k), possibly indicating that humor drives immediate engagement but lacks broader sharing appeal.

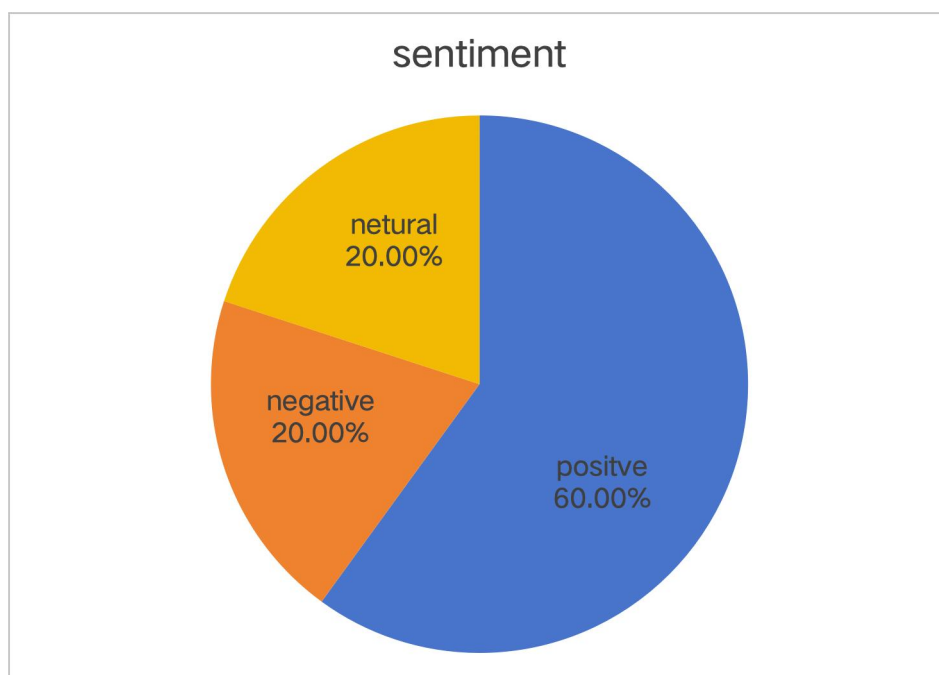
Table 18: Aikelili: content themes and audience engagement

Source: Own Elaboration

Time	Theme	Likes	Shares	comments	views	saves
2024-06-29	others	0.76m	538500	32898	51.6m	538500
2024-06-19	life	0.73m	405154	27558	46.7m	405154
2024-06-23	others	0.27m	137962	8779	16.8m	137962
2024-01-26	couple/love	0.16m	249663	11310	16.4m	249663
2018-04-02	humor	0.38m	16582	10817	16m	16582
2018-03-12	others	0.36m	8437	20363	15.8m	8437
2024-09-26	life	0.27m	96219	12435	15.5m	96219
2024-07-13	life	0.30m	60137	7612	14.8m	60137
2024-06-21	life	0.23m	114257	9265	14.3m	114257
2018-04-13	others	0.32m	19998	3697	13.5m	19998

E. Sentiment Analysis

The Graph 6 displays sentiment analysis results showing a majority positive response, with 60% of reactions being favorable. As an early gay SMI, Aikelili's sexual orientation is open to audiences. Most of audiences have already accepted his sexual orientation. At the same time, most of his videos are humorous, it is no surprise that the high proportion of positive sentiment appears. Negative and neutral sentiments are evenly split at 20% each, representing a smaller yet notable share. While less dominant, the equal presence of negative and neutral sentiments presents a counterbalance. The 20% negative responses may indicate still some audiences are unwilling to accept Aikelili's sexual orientation and the LGBTQ+ issues. On the other hand, the 20% neutral reactions could suggest several audiences have no strong opinion about this topic. Most of neutral comments are like this "As expected of the originator of SMIs! So interesting!" and they tend to focus on the content of Aikelili's videos.



Graph 6: Sentiment analysis of Aikelili

Source: Own Elaboration

6.2.6 Qiaokechidaoshaogongsang (翘课迟到少恭桑)

A . Video upload frequency

Based on longitudinal observation of Qiaokechidaoshaogongsang's DouYin homepage [from 2023.10.17 to 2023.12.17], the account demonstrates problematic upload inconsistency, characterized by irregular posting intervals ranging from 3 videos per week to complete inactivity for 17-35 days period.

B.Title Strategy

Qiaokechidaoshaogongsang relies on humor, pop culture references, and playful language (like "Zeros every (why gay is everywhere!)"). Titles often include inside jokes or memes. This title strategy causes high audiences' engagement in humorous content, suggesting that the playful and meme-heavy titles resonate well with the audience.

Table 19: Qiaokechidaoshaogongsang: main achievements

Source: Own Elaboration

	Most views	Most likes	Most comments	Most shares	Most saves
Date	2020.02.22	2020.02.22	2020.02.22	2020.03.29	2020.04.06
data	no	40 thousand	2.9 thousand	6 thousand	0.32M
theme	humor	humor	humor	humor	Music
hashtag	#couple#; #lovestory#	#couple#; #lovestory#	#couple#; #lovestory#	#couple#; #lovestory#	#Chinese style#; #original #music#
appearance	Casual wear	Casual wear	Casual wear	Casual wear	no
Audiences' attitude	Supportive	Supportive	Supportive	Supportive	Not mention

C. High-engagement Posts

Most views/comments(29 thousands) /**likes**(40 thousand)(2020.02.22): The humor video posted on this date simultaneously achieved: suggesting exceptional content resonance during the pandemic's initial phase when users sought escapist entertainment.

Most shares (2020.03.29, 6 thousand): the content experienced notable spikes in secondary engagement metrics, reflecting heightened user interaction during periods. Notably, on 29 March 2020, Qiaokechidaoshaogongsang participated in the BiliBili's activities, challenging himself to appear naked with spouse and testing his reaction. This video was shared 6,000 times, coinciding with the peak of worldwide lockdowns as populations sought connection, entertainment, and information amid enforced isolation. This surge also suggests the Chinese social media platforms, in particular BiliBili, has more tolerance of sex and people are curious about the life of homosexual.

Most saves (2020.04.06, 0.32M) underscores its prolonged value as users engaged in extended home confinement. The exceptionally high save rate indicates that audiences perceived the content as worth revisiting or archiving for emotional resonance. In this video, Qiaokechidaoshaogongsang sings Chinese style music with other singers. Smooth bass and beautiful tunes for audiences to listen to repeatedly, relieving stress and providing happiness to a homebound audience.

D. Content Themes and Audience Engagement

Dominance of "Couple/Love" Theme: The "couple/love" theme appears most frequently (5 out of 10 entries), suggesting it is a preferred or consistently produced content category. This theme achieves moderate to high engagement, with likes ranging from 2,293 to 40,353, indicating steady audience affinity. Notably, the most recent "couple/love" post (2020-03-30) achieved relatively high shares (6,568) despite lower comments (1,642), and the comments for this theme vary significantly (1,642 to 38,549), possibly reflecting the personal or relatable nature of the posts, which may drive higher interactivity.

Performance of Other Themes: The two posts (2014-04-22 and 2015-07-31)

show modest engagement, with likes ranging from 1,297 to 4,155. The higher shares (6,362) and comments (5,146) for the 2014-04-22 post suggest that life-related content may resonate more deeply with niche audiences, encouraging discussion or sharing. The "others" category (3 out of 10 entries) exhibits mixed results. The 2020-02-17 post stands out with exceptionally high likes (0.63m), shares (296,586), and views (7,236,984). In contrast, older posts (e.g., 2016-09-30 and 2014-09-12) show lower engagement, possibly due to dated content or shifting audience preferences.

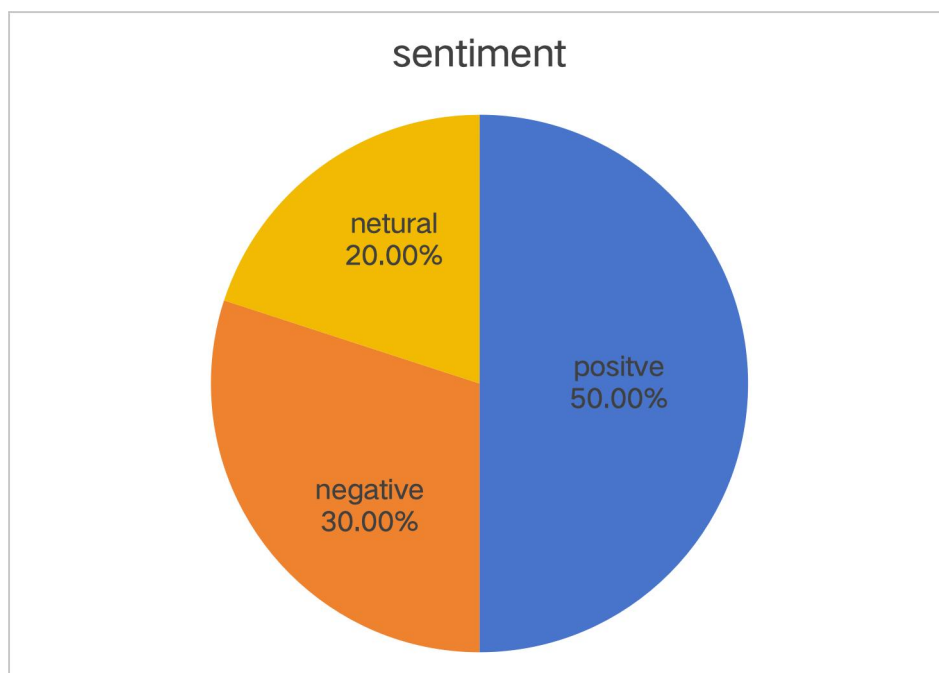
Table 20: Qiaokechidaoshaogongsang: content themes and audience engagement

Source: Own Elaboration

Time	Theme	Likes	Shares	comments	views	saves
2020-02-17	others	0.63m	296586	44570	7236984	333631
2016-02-14	couple/love	28946	17396	38549	1495322	45485
2014-08-14	couple/love	2293	1299	2176	713028	13364
2016-09-30	others	1005	6303	3363	753405	14420
2020-02-22	couple/love	40353	4727	2921	744090	10063
2014-08-15	couple/love	2979	2391	2159	689899	18794
2014-04-22	life	4155	6362	5146	549636	22400
2014-09-12	others	821	1653	1562	514144	10427
2020-03-30	couple/love	25942	6568	1642	494576	4386
2015-07-31	life	1297	1895	1828	477567	16030

E. Sentiment Analysis

The graph 7 reveals that positive sentiment is the most prevalent, representing half of all responses. Negative feedback comprises 30%, while neutral opinions make up the remaining 20%. Audiences in BiliBili are more tolerant about the communities because BiliBili is the largest gay dating website in China. It is not surprising that the the proportion of positive reactions is high, indicating solidarity with gay individuals like Qiaokechidaoshaogongsan or broader acceptance of diversity. Conversely, the 30% negative responses may reflect that there are still dissent, skepticism, or opposition to Qiaokechidaoshaogongsan because of the gay-related matters. Meanwhile, the neutral segment, though smaller, implies some audiences are withholding judgment about sexual orientation.



Graph 7: Sentiment analysis of Qiaokechidaoshaogongsang

Source: Own Elaboration

6.2.7 Zuiyingjienigui(嘴硬杰尼龟)

A. Video upload frequency

Based on longitudinal observation of Zuiyingjienigui's DouYin homepage [from 2023.10.17 to 2023.12.17], the account demonstrates remarkably consistent upload behavior, characterized by stable weekly output averaging 3.4 posts/week ($\sigma = 0.9$); predictable posting intervals (every 2-3 days); only 2 instances of >5 days gaps observed in 2-year period.

B. Title Strategy

Zuiyingjienigui focuses on challenges and interactive content (like "Roommate's cunning candy challenge| No sweetness, no coins"). Titles often include humor or teasing language to engage audiences. This title strategy moderate audience's engagement, with some videos performing well, suggesting that challenge-based titles attract participation.

Table 21: Zuiyingjienigui: main achievements

Source: Own Elaboration

	Most views	Most likes	Most comments	Most shares	Most saves
Date	2022.01.12	2022.01.12	2022.04.13	2024.01.10	2024.01.10
data	0.6M	35 thousand	1.3 thousand	2.7 thousand	13 thousand
theme	Couple video	humor	humor	humor	humor
hashtag	#couple#; #lovestory#	#couple#; #lovestory#	#couple#; #lovestory#	#couple#; #lovestory#	#couple#; #lovestory#
appearance	Causal wear	Causal wear	Causal wear	Formal dress	Formal dress
Audiences' attitude	supportive	supportive	supportive	supportive	supportive

C. High-engagement Posts

The dataset reveals distinct chronological patterns in content engagement:

Most Views/Likes (2022.01.12): The couple video posted during winter break achieved 600K views and 35K likes, suggesting audiences periods increase interactivity on holidays. In this video, he accompanied his boyfriend to the hospital for treatment and cooked for his boyfriend personally, showing their good intimacy.

Most Comments (2022.04.13): Springtime parody content generated 1.3K comments, indicating seasonal transitions stimulate discussion about relationships. The consistent #couple# and #lovestory# hashtags maintained thematic continuity. In this video, he gently woke up his boyfriend and showed intimate conversation between lovers.

Most shares/saves (2024.01.10): New Year period formal-dress parody content achieved 2.7K shares and 13K saves, showing audiences' strong engagement with culturally resonant holiday content. In this video, he and his boyfriend danced in the snow elegantly, gaining the love of fans.

C. Content Themes and Audience Engagement

Dominance of "Life" Theme: The "Life" theme is the most prevalent category, appearing in 5 out of 10 entries, indicating it is a consistently prioritized topic for the audience. This theme demonstrates strong engagement metrics, particularly in likes (ranging from 33,867 to 0.14m) and shares (peaking at 0.59m for the 2021-11-13 post). Notably, the highest-performing "Life" post (2021-11-13) also achieved exceptional views (3 million). However, comments for this theme vary significantly (1,199 to 8,840), which may reflect differences in post specificity or emotional resonance—e.g., the 2021-12-05 post elicited 2,170 comments despite moderate likes (41,478), possibly due to provocative or relatable content.

Performance of "Couple/Love" Theme: The "Couple/Love" theme, represented in 3 out of 10 posts, shows moderate engagement. Likes range from 28,874 to 50,910, with shares and comments consistently lower than the "Life" theme (e.g., 5,043 shares and 1,640 comments for the 2021-11-17 post). This suggests that while the topic attracts steady interest, it may lack the interactive appeal of "Life" content. The lower saves (6,661–12,297) further imply limited long-term value or re-shareability.

"Others" Theme as an Outlier: The single "Others" post (2021-10-30) achieved mid-range engagement (36,042 likes, 3,579 shares), aligning closer to lower-performing "Life" or "Couple/Love" posts. Its unclassified nature makes thematic trends difficult to discern, but its metrics suggest it did not stand out as exceptionally resonant or polarizing.

Table 22: Zuiyingjienigui: content themes and audience engagement

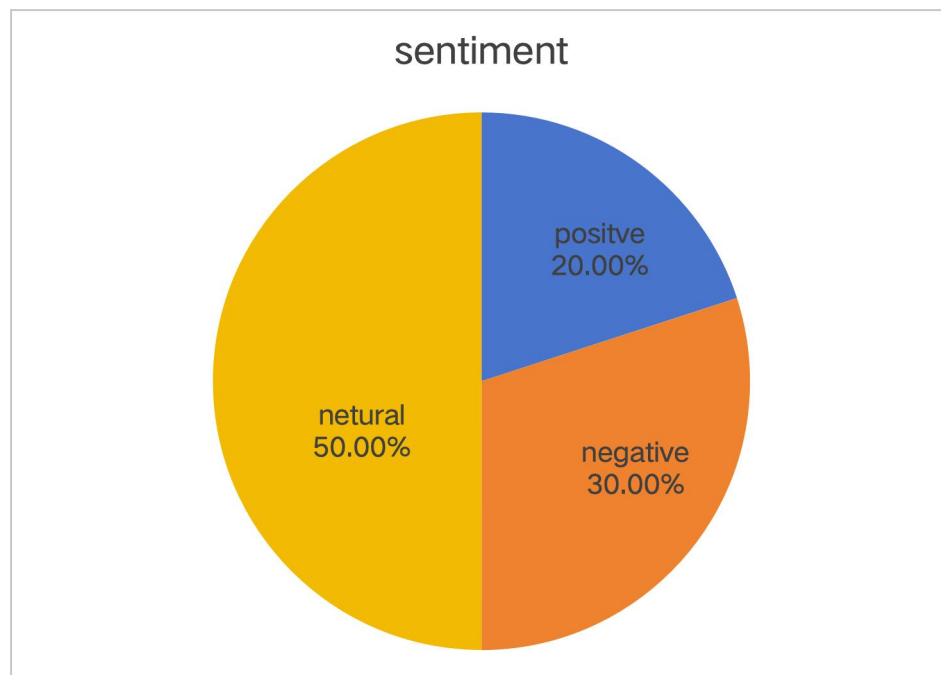
Source: Own Elaboration

Time	Theme	Likes	Shares	comments	views	saves
2021-11-13	life	0.14m	59823	8840	30m	53274
2021-11-17	couple/love	50910	5043	1640	0.97m	12297
2021-10-30	others	36042	3579	1292	0.75m	8769
2021-11-24	life	45624	8844	1823	0.73m	11200
2021-10-14	life	33867	2284	1199	0.71m	7578
2021-11-03	couple/love	32767	1963	651	0.63m	6661
2022-01-12	life	35000	1281	1560	0.60m	7858
2021-12-05	life	41478	1218	2170	0.53m	8906
2021-10-17	couple/love	28874	1533	631	0.52m	6321
2021-12-19	life	35662	3418	2213	0.46m	8027

E.Sentiment Analysis:

The Graph 8 reveals that neutral sentiment is the most prevalent, comprising half of all responses. Positive reactions make up 20%, while negative opinions account for 30%. The dominance of neutral sentiment implies that many audiences avoid strong emotional investment in the LGBTQ-related topic. Most of comments are praise for his handsome appearance without talking about sexual orientation. The smaller share

of positive sentiment could reflect supportive attitudes towards the gay community. Although few audiences accept him as a gay, the comments are very heartwarming and kind, like “Come on! I hope you can stay together forever!”. Meanwhile, the significant negative portion suggests a notable level of opposition or criticism, signaling resistance to the gay community.



Graph 8: Sentiment analysis of Zuiyingjienigui

Source: Own Elaboration

6.2.8 Quanjiaofu(犬角夫)

A. Video upload frequency

Based on longitudinal observation of Quanjiaofu’s DouYin homepage [from 2023.10.17 to 2023.12.17], the upload frequency demonstrates significant instability, characterized by irregular posting intervals ranging from 2-3 videos per week to complete inactivity for 15-28 days periods.

Three major content drought episodes: average posting rate of 0.82 videos/week ($\sigma = 1.28$), substantially below DouYin's recommended 3-5 videos/week for optimal algorithmic performance.

B. Title Strategy

Quanjiaofu prefers short, concise titles with a focus on aesthetics and lifestyle (like "Warm winter #MarcJacobs"). Some titles are minimalistic (like "#Summer"), relying on visual content to attract viewers. This title strategy causes moderate audiences' engagement, with lower views compared to others, suggesting that the minimalist approach may not always drive high traffic but maintains a niche audience.

Table 23: Quanjiaofu: main achievements

Source: Own Elaboration

	Most views	Most likes	Most comments	Most shares	Most saves
Date	2022.12.31	2022.12.31	2022.04.13	2024.01.10	2022.12.31
data	No	0.53 M	11 thousand	20 thousand	6.5 thousand
theme	beauty video	Couple video	Couple video	Humor	Humor
hashtag	#Marc Jacobs#	#Marc Jacobs#	#summer#	#summer#	#Marc Jacobs#
appearance	sweater	sweater	Sexy clothes	Sexy clothes	sweater
Audiences' attitude	Not mention	Not mention	supportive	supportive	Not mention

C. High-engagement Posts

The dataset reveals distinct seasonal engagement patterns:

Year-End Peak (31 December 2022) (Most views/likes/saves): The advertising video featuring a sweater (tagged #Marc-Jacobs#) achieved peak visibility (530K likes and 6.5K saves), suggesting that year-end holidays amplify engagement, possibly due to increased leisure time and festive sentiment.

Most Comments (13 April 2022): 11K discussions on summer-themed couple content; labeled #summer# and featuring sexy clothing, indicates that sweet love story

may stimulate discussions on romantic-related topics. The supportive audience attitude further suggests a preference for lighthearted, relationship-driven content.

Most Shares (10 January 2024): 20K shares of parody content, also tagged #summer#, demonstrates that comedic content resonates strongly during the New Year period, reinforcing the cyclical nature of culturally relevant engagement.

D. Content Themes and Audience Engagement

Dominance of "Beauty" and "Life" Themes: The "Beauty" theme appears most frequently (3 out of 10 entries), indicating it is a recurring focus in the content strategy. These posts achieve moderate likes (ranging from 0.11m to 0.53m), with the highest engagement observed on 2022-12-31 (0.53m likes, 9.1m views). Notably, the "Beauty" post on 2022-02-08 garnered the highest shares/saves (14,831) and comments (7,029) within this theme, suggesting that specific subtopics or presentation styles may drive higher interactivity. The "Life" theme, appearing twice, shows consistent engagement, with shares/saves peaking at 19,898 on 2022-07-30. This post also achieved the highest comments (10,787) in the dataset, implying strong audience relatability or emotional resonance.

Performance of "Travel" and "Others" Themes: The "Travel" theme (3 entries) exhibits mixed results. While the 2021-10-22 post achieved 0.16m likes and 5m views, its shares (14831) /saves (11,573) and comments (5,697) were mid-range. In contrast, the 2023-10-17 post had lower likes (77,399) but relatively higher shares (6,068) /saves (6,068). The "Others" category (2 entries) underperforms in shares (1239-6068) /saves (1,244–1,381) despite moderate likes (92,428–0.13m) and high comments (6,096–7,493).

Table 24: Quanjiaofu: content themes and audience engagement

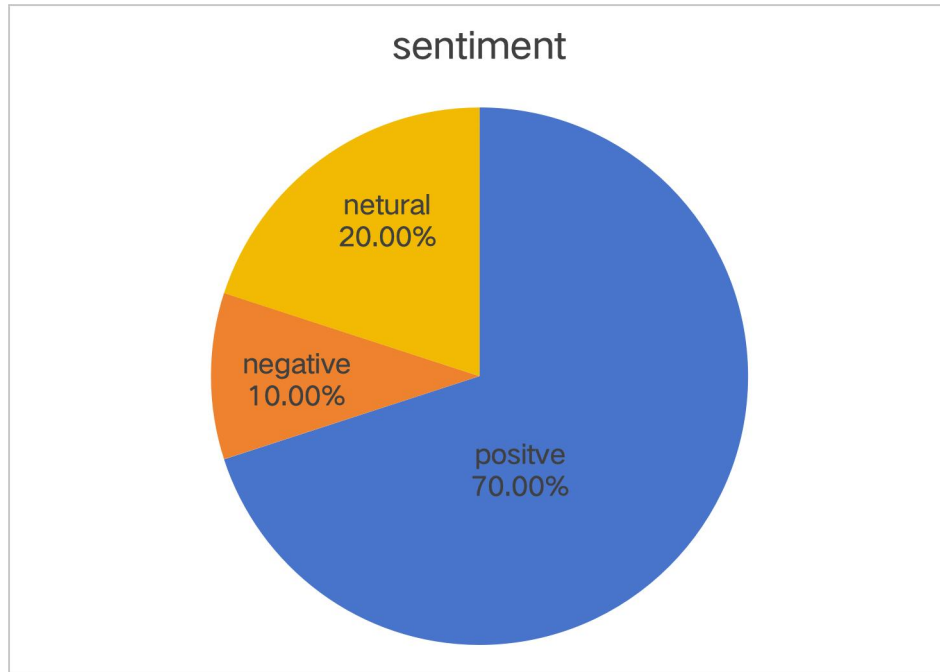
Source: Own Elaboration

Time	Theme	Likes	Shares	comments	views	saves
2022-12-31	beauty	0.53m	12806	2754	9.1m	12806
2021-10-22	travel	0.16m	11573	5697	5m	11573

2022-02-08	beauty	0.13m	14831	7029	2.6m	14831
2022-07-30	life	0.12m	19898	10787	2.5m	19898
2021-12-11	life	0.13m	12710	5354	2.4m	12710
2021-03-29	others	0.13m	1381	7493	2.2m	1381
2024-06-04	beauty	0.11m	11650	1305	2.1m	11650
2021-05-08	others	92428	1244	6096	1.8m	1244
2021-04-30	travel	82342	1239	2782	1.5m	1239
2023-10-17	travel	77399	6068	1017	1.4m	6068

E. Sentiment Analysis

The Graph 9 reveals that positive sentiment is the most prominent, making up 70% of responses. In contrast, negative reactions appear in only 10% of cases, with neutral opinions representing 20%. Quanjiaofu's comments section is full of praise her beauty, wanting to date her and supporting her sexual orientation. This strong positive trend points to widespread approval of the lesbian visibility. The low level of negativity implies little opposition, while the neutral responses may reflect people's no care about Quanjiaofu's sexual orientation. The overwhelming support highlights a predominantly favorable public stance.



Graph 9: Sentiment analysis of Quanjiaofu

Source: Own Elaboration

6.2.9 Shuishuihexingxing(睡睡和醒醒)

A. Video upload frequency

Based on longitudinal observation of Shuishuihexingxing's DouYin homepage [from 2023.10.17 to 2023.12.17], the upload frequency demonstrates significant instability, characterized by irregular posting intervals ranging from 3 videos per week to complete inactivity for 21-35 days periods.

Four major content drought episodes: average posting rate of 0.75 videos/week ($\sigma = 1.35$), substantially below DouYin's optimal 3-5 videos/week for sustained algorithmic performance.

B. Title Strategy

Shuishuihexingxing focuses on relationship and couple dynamics, often using playful or teasing language (like "ask your friends to watch"). Titles frequently include hashtags related to relationships (like "#best friends"). This title strategy causes moderate to high audiences' engagement, with some videos performing exceptionally well.

Table 25: Shuishuihexingxing: main achievements

Source: Own Elaboration

	Most views	Most likes	Most comments	Most shares	Most saves
Date	2022.05.25	2022.05.25	2022.05.25	2022.05.25	2022.05.25
data	No	1.6 M	150 thousand	135 thousand	31 thousand
theme	Couple video	Couple video	Couple video	Couple video	Couple video
hashtag	#@your friends#	#@your friends#	#@your friends#	#@your friends#	#@your friends#
appearance	Not mention	Not mention	Not mention	Not mention	Not mention
Audiences' attitude	Not mention	Not mention	Not mention	Not mention	Not mention

C.High-engagement Posts

The dataset reveals an extraordinary case of cross-platform dominance from a single posting date (25 May 2022), where one video simultaneously achieved top performance across all five key metrics: This suggests perfect alignment of content elements with platform algorithms during a pre-summer period.

D. Content Themes and Audience Engagement

Dominance of "couple/love" and "life" Themes: The dataset reveals that the "couple/love" and "life" themes are prominent, each appearing multiple times (3 and 3 entries, respectively), indicating their significance in the content strategy. The "couple/love" theme demonstrates moderate engagement, with likes ranging from 60,995 to 94,874 and views between 1.4m and 2.3m. Notably, the "life" theme achieves higher likes (e.g., 0.51m on 2021-08-01) but exhibits lower shares and comments.

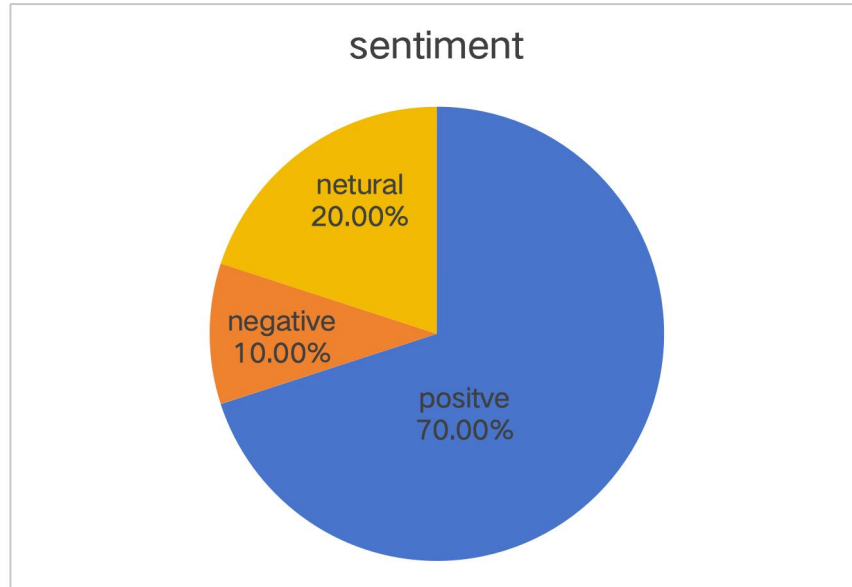
Performance of "others" Themes: The "others" category, appearing twice, shows divergent engagement. For instance, the 2021-08-10 post garnered 0.12m likes and 32m views, while the 2021-05-20 post had lower metrics (0.14m likes, 5m views). This variability may reflect inconsistent topic relevance or audience targeting. The single "beauty" post (2021-08-10) achieved modest engagement (48,261 likes, 1.1m views), aligning with niche audience appeal rather than mass virality.

Table 26: Shuishuihexingxing: content themes and audience engagement

Source: Own Elaboration

Time	Theme	Likes	Shares	comments	views	saves
2021-08-10	others	0.12m	134659	150187	32m	134659
2021-08-01	life	0.51m	27845	32964	12.3m	27845
2021-05-20	others	0.14m	3985	5527	5m	3985
2021-06-17	couple/love	94874	4551	5987	2.3m	4551
2022-03-09	couple/love	71619	9524	7737	1.9m	9524
2022-09-09	talk	67582	2440	5186	1.6m	2440
2021-08-28	couple/love	60995	2150	2732	1.4m	2150
2023-01-01	life	48536	3967	3271	1.1m	3967
2021-11-23	life	49708	2209	2159	1.1m	2209
2021-08-10	beauty	48261	3183	2362	1.1m	3183

E. Sentiment analysis



Graph 10: Sentiment analysis of Shuishuihexingxing

Source: Own Elaboration

The data in Graph 10 shows overwhelmingly positive sentiment, representing 70% of all responses. Negative reactions are minimal at merely 10%, with neutral views making up the remaining 20%. This striking positive majority likely reflects widespread public approval. The comments of Shuishuihexingxing's videos especially roommates video series are mainly show their support and like to their love and sexual orientation, such as "What a perfect match!", "So sweet!" or "Support you! Love you two!", etc. The negligible negative responses show little active opposition, while the neutral percentage may include those who haven't formed strong opinions. The dominant positive response rate clearly indicates strong societal support for the lesbian community.

6.2.10 Daamaojun(大啊毛君)

A. Video upload frequency

Based on longitudinal observation of Daamaojun's DouYin homepage [from 2023.10.17 to 2023.12.17], the account demonstrates remarkably stable upload behavior, characterized by: consistent weekly output averaging 4.2 posts/week ($\sigma =$

0.8); predictable posting intervals (every 36-42 hours); only 2 instances of >4 days gaps observed in 4-year period.

B.Title Strategy

Daamaojun uses educational and informative titles (like "How important is the outline of an online article?") to attract viewers interested in learning. Some titles are provocative or question-based to spark curiosity. This title strategy causes high audiences' engagement, particularly in educational content, indicating that the informative titles successfully attract a knowledge-seeking audience.

Table 27: Daamaojun: main achievements

Source: Own Elaboration

	Most views	Most likes	Most comments	Most shares	Most saves
Date	2020.07.13	2020.07.13	2022.04.13	2024.01.10	2020.07.13
data	6.36M	660 thousand	260 thousand	63 thousand	6.36M
theme	Book review	Book review	Valentine's Day	Book review	Book review
hashtag	#Life education#	#Life education#	#Women education#	#Life education#	#Life education#
appearance	Plain black skirt	Plain black skirt	Plain black skirt	Fashionable outfit	Plain black skirt
Audiences' attitude	Not mention	Not mention	Not mention	supportive	Not mention

F. High-engagement Posts

The dataset reveals distinct chronological engagement patterns:

Most Views (6.36M)/Likes (660 thousand) /saves (2020.07.13): suggesting an exceptionally successful campaign centered on book reviews with the hashtag #Life education#.

Most comments (2022.04.13, 260K): Most comments coincide with Valentine’s Day, leveraging the thematic hashtag #Women education#. This suggests seasonal or culturally relevant content drives discussion.

Most shares (2024.01.10, 63 thousand): feature a fashionable outfit despite sharing the same theme (*book-review*) and label as earlier peaks. The shift in visual presentation may reflect evolving audience preferences.

D: Content Themes and Audience Engagement:

Dominance of "Life" and "Beauty" Themes: The "Life" theme appears most frequently (3 out of 10 entries), indicating it is a consistently produced or highly engaging category. Notably, the "Life" post on 2020-07-13 achieved exceptional engagement, with 691K likes, 107K shares, and 67.5M views, suggesting broad audience resonance. The "Beauty" theme, while less frequent (2 entries), also performed well, with the 2020-06-18 post garnering 411K likes and 4.3M views, highlighting its visual or aspirational appeal.

The top-performing "Life" post (2020-07-13) stands out not only for its likes but also for its shares (107K) and saves (336K). In contrast, the 2020-06-14 "Couple/Love" post achieved lower likes (91K) but higher comments (12.5K) and shares (7.4K), possibly reflecting emotional or discussion-driven engagement.

"Professional" and "Others": The "Professional" post (2019-12-08) garnered moderate likes (129K) but high saves (84K), suggesting niche, evergreen value. The "Others" category (2021-07-26) had lower overall engagement (124K likes, 1.5M views), likely due to less defined audience appeal.

"Couple/Love": Mixed results; the 2020-12-29 post had low shares (1K) but relatively high comments (3.8K), potentially reflecting intimate or debate-prone content.

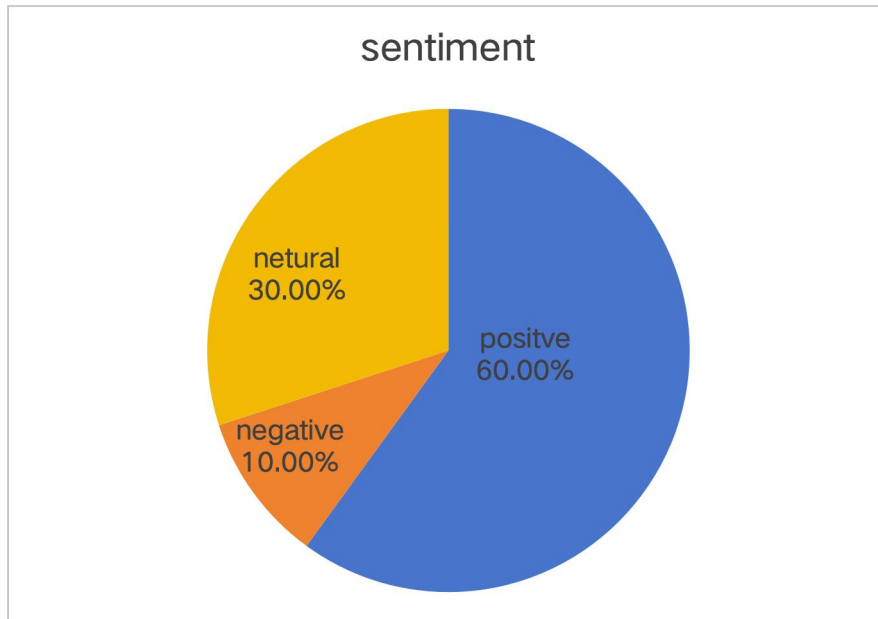
Table 28: Daamaojun: content themes and audience engagement

Source: Own Elaboration

Time	Theme	Likes	Shares	comments	views	saves
2020-07-13	life	0.69m	107374	69235	6750198	335756
2020-06-18	beauty	0.41m	58976	25422	4267972	129268
2021-07-26	others	0.12m	5698	9149	1539446	11159
2020-01-18	life	0.20m	4964	3924	1273335	106868
2019-12-08	professional	0.12m	3345	2396	1146906	83845
2020-12-29	couple/love	39365	1003	3759	1059415	5340
2020-05-27	life	85167	3003	1384	1054839	66669
2020-06-14	couple/love	91836	7388	12542	936315	18408
2021-10-18	beauty	44487	2449	2303	913721	46822
2021-12-12	couple/love	51232	3182	4205	631134	48181

F. Sentiment Analysis

Graph 11 shows that positive sentiment is the most prominent, representing 60% of all responses. Negative sentiment remains minimal at 10%, with neutral responses making up the remaining 30%. This clear inclination toward positivity suggests strong public endorsement to lesbian visibility. The comments of Daamaojun videos are mainly about agreement about her points of views or supporting her as a lesbian to be SMI. The negligible level of negative feedback indicates little resistance. However, the neutral responses could signify individuals who are either uninvolved because her main themes of her videos are book reviews without talking about sexual orientation.



Graph 11: Sentiment analysis of Daamaojun

Source: Own Elaboration

6.3. The Relationship between SMI Personality Characteristics and engagement

6.3.1 Introduction: an exploratory analysis of the relationship between gender identity and engagement

In the following analysis, we will explore how an SMI's gender identity—specifically whether they identify as Lesbian, Gay, or Transgender—affects both the sentiment of comments (positive or negative) and the nature of audience actions (such as views, likes, shares, saves, and comments). By examining the data, we aim to understand whether these gender identities influence how the audience engages with the content, whether through increased support, more interactions, or, conversely, negative reactions. This analysis will provide a first exploration into how gender diversity in the influencer community shapes both the reception of their content and the level of engagement from their followers.

a) Audiences engagement (views, likes, shares, saves, comments)

Analyzing the relationship between an SMI's gender identity (Lesbian, Gay, or

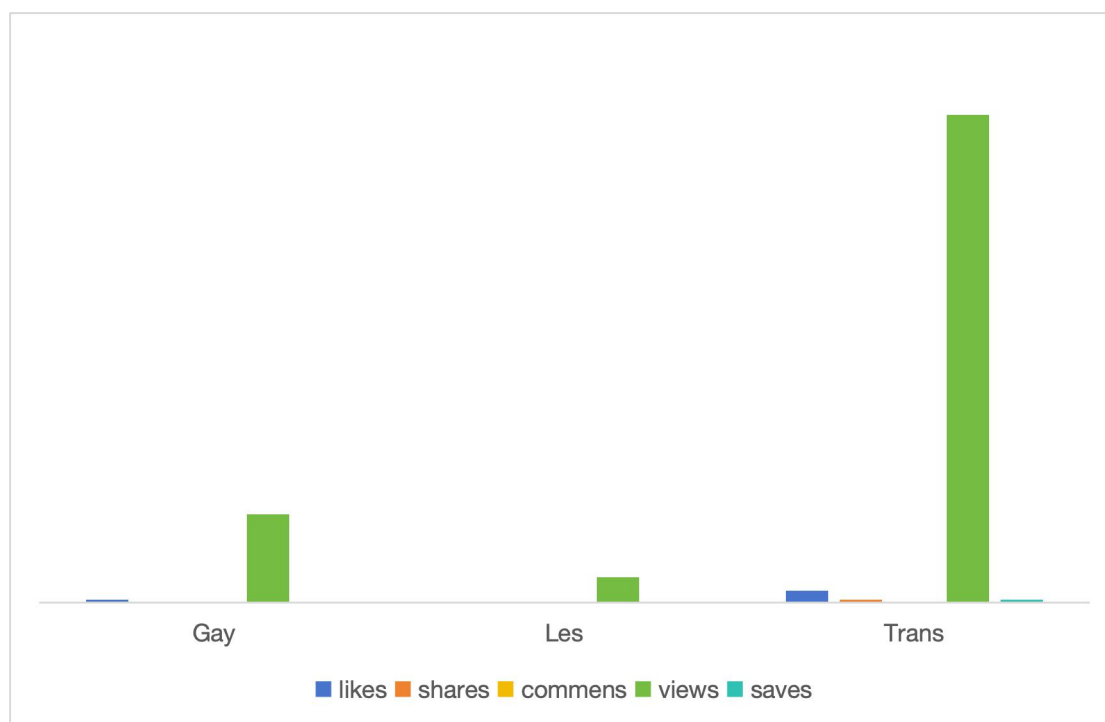
Trans) and audience actions (Graph 12), we observe distinct patterns in engagement across these different gender identities.

For Gay and Lesbian SMIs, the audience interaction metrics, including views, comments, shares, and saves, are quite low. While these videos attract a modest number of views, the lack of significant interaction in terms of comments, shares, and other actions suggests that the content does not strongly engage the audience beyond just being viewed. For example, Zuiyingdejenigui, a gay with a focus on life content and a less defined niche, might struggle to maintain consistent appeal, while Shuishuihexingxing, a lesbian focused on beauty and fashion, may not have effectively differentiated their content enough to stand out in a crowded market.

In stark contrast, content from Trans SMIs shows a strikingly different trend. The like for Transgender SMIs is significantly higher, with a major spike indicating that these videos attract far more attention and views. For example, Jinxing, a well-established figure in the LGBTQ community, leverages her open transgender identity and expertise in dance, making her content highly relatable and empowering for a wide spectrum of viewers. The high engagement in terms of views reflects their ability to connect with users on both personal and professional levels.

However, while view is high, other engagement metrics like shares, comments, and saves remain relatively low, suggesting that while the content from Trans creators generates substantial views, it does not seem to generate the same level of social interaction or sharing as the views would imply. This could reflect a broader societal conversation around transgender issues, where visibility is high, but engagement may be less interactive due to polarizing opinions or less willingness to share.

Overall, the data suggests that Transgender SMIs enjoy significantly higher visibility (more views), but their content doesn't always spark extensive engagement in terms of social interactions like comments or shares. Meanwhile, Gay and Lesbian SMIs see lower engagement across all metrics, indicating that while their content may be appreciated by certain audiences, it doesn't generate as much overall interaction or viral sharing. This highlights the complex relationship between gender identity, audience attention, and the varying levels of interaction on social media platforms.



Graph 12: The Relationship between gender and audience reaction

Source: Own Elaboration

B). Positive/Negative Comments

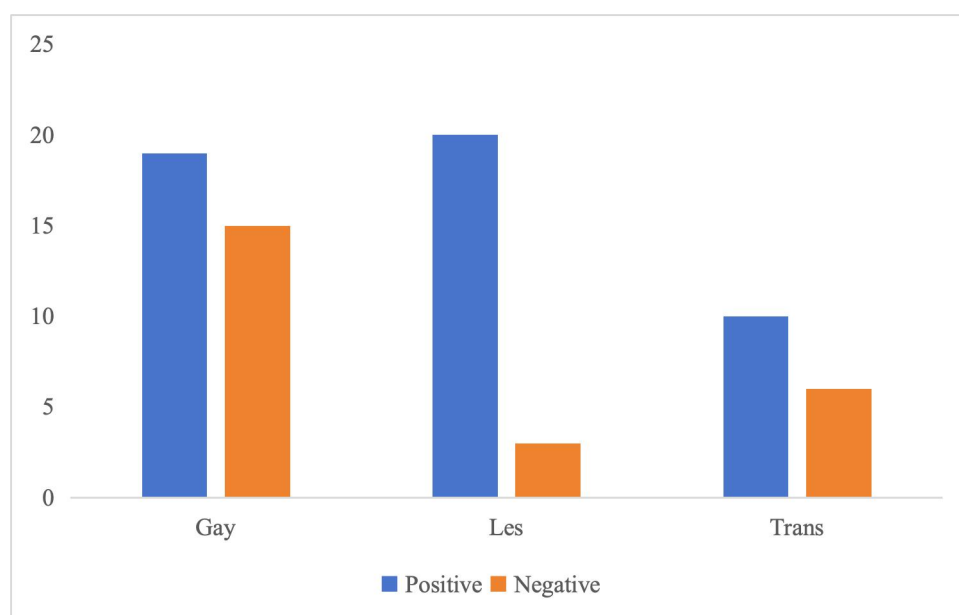
When analyzing the sentiment of comments (positive and negative) based on an SMI's gender identity, the data reveals distinct trends for Gay, Lesbian, and Trans influencers (Graph 13).

For Gay SMIs, the number of positive comments is significantly higher than the negative comments, suggesting that the content from these influencers is generally well-received by the audience. However, the number of negative comments is still present but much lower, indicating some level of resistance or critique, likely from more conservative or non-supportive viewers. This implies that, overall, Gay SMIs enjoy a positive reception with relatively minor negative feedback.

In the case of Lesbian SMIs, the disparity between positive and negative comments is more pronounced. The number of positive comments is much larger, while the negative comments are almost negligible. This indicates that Lesbian SMIs generally receive a highly positive response from their audience, with very little

criticism or negative feedback. This could suggest a strong level of support and appreciation for the content from Lesbian influencers.

For Trans SMIs, the number of positive comments remains high, but the negative comments are also noticeably present, though less than the positive. The relatively balanced ratio of positive and negative comments for Trans SMIs may indicate that while they receive substantial support from certain communities, they also encounter significant opposition or criticism, which is often the case for transgender-related content due to societal polarization on gender issues.



Graph 13: The Relationship between gender and audience comments⁵

Source: Own Elaboration

6.3.2 The Impact of Expertise: engagement and sentiment of comments

In the context of this analysis, the expertise variable refers to whether an influencer or content creator holds a professional certification or recognized qualification, which could influence their credibility and impact on audience engagement. The variable is assigned a value based on the presence or absence of this certification. On one hand, expertise = 0 indicates that the influencer or content

⁵ the number of percentage means the numbers of positive/negative comments

creator does not hold a professional certification or recognized qualification in their field, meaning they may not be regarded as a subject-matter expert by their audience. On the other hand, expertise = 1 signifies that the influencer or content creator holds a professional certification or recognized qualification, implying they are considered an expert or certified professional in their area. This could enhance their credibility and influence how their content is perceived by the audience.

The expertise variable helps determine whether the level of expertise of the content creator affects their audience's reactions, particularly in terms of comments (both negative and positive), as well as audience engagement such as views, likes, shares and saves. It is assumed that content from creators with recognized expertise may lead to more positive engagement, while content from non-experts might attract more varied or critical feedback.

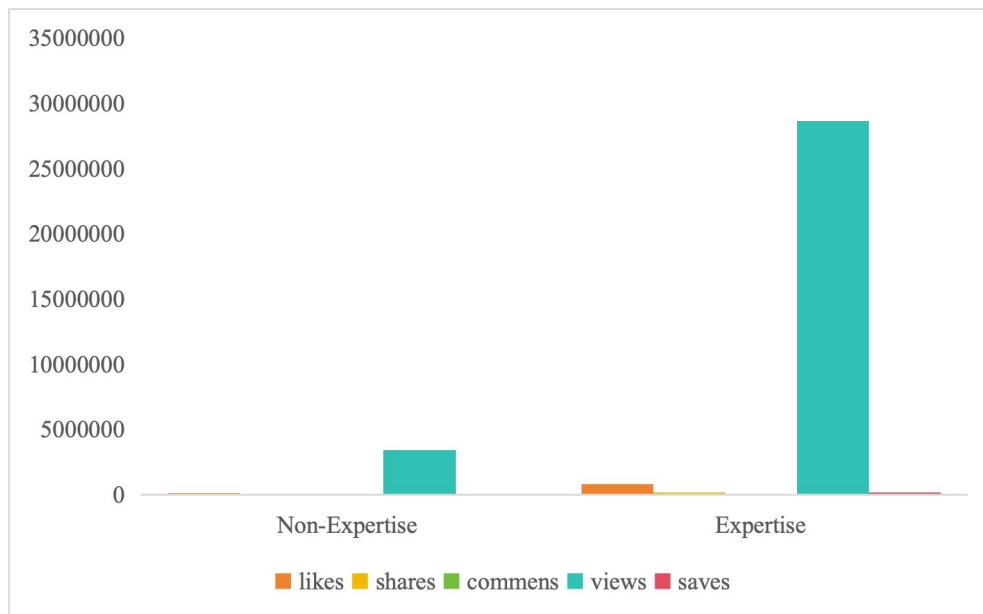
a) Audiences engagement (views, likes, shares, saves, comments)

In analyzing the relationship between expertise and audience reactions (such as views, likes, shares, saves, and comments) (Graph 14), it is clear that content from creators with professional certifications (expertise = 1) tends to generate significantly higher audience engagement. The data reveals that view is notably higher for content associated with expertise = 1, suggesting that these creators' content is more widely viewed. This could be attributed to the higher credibility and trust that certified professionals typically enjoy, which likely encourages more people to engage with their content.

On the other hand, shares, comments, and saves are relatively lower across the board, with a particularly stark difference in comparison to views. This could imply that while certified experts attract a lot of viewers, their content does not always prompt as many social interactions (such as shares, comments, or saves). The lack of significant engagement in these areas may suggest that viewers are more passive when consuming content from recognized experts, perhaps appreciating the content for its informational value but not necessarily sharing or commenting on it as frequently.

In contrast, for creators without a professional certification (expertise = 0),

engagement metrics such as comments and shares show more variability, but these creators seem to generate less overall playtime and views. This suggests that non-expert content might not attract the same level of initial attention or trust from the audience, leading to lower views and interaction levels.



Graph 14: The Relationship between expertise and audience reaction

Source: Own Elaboration

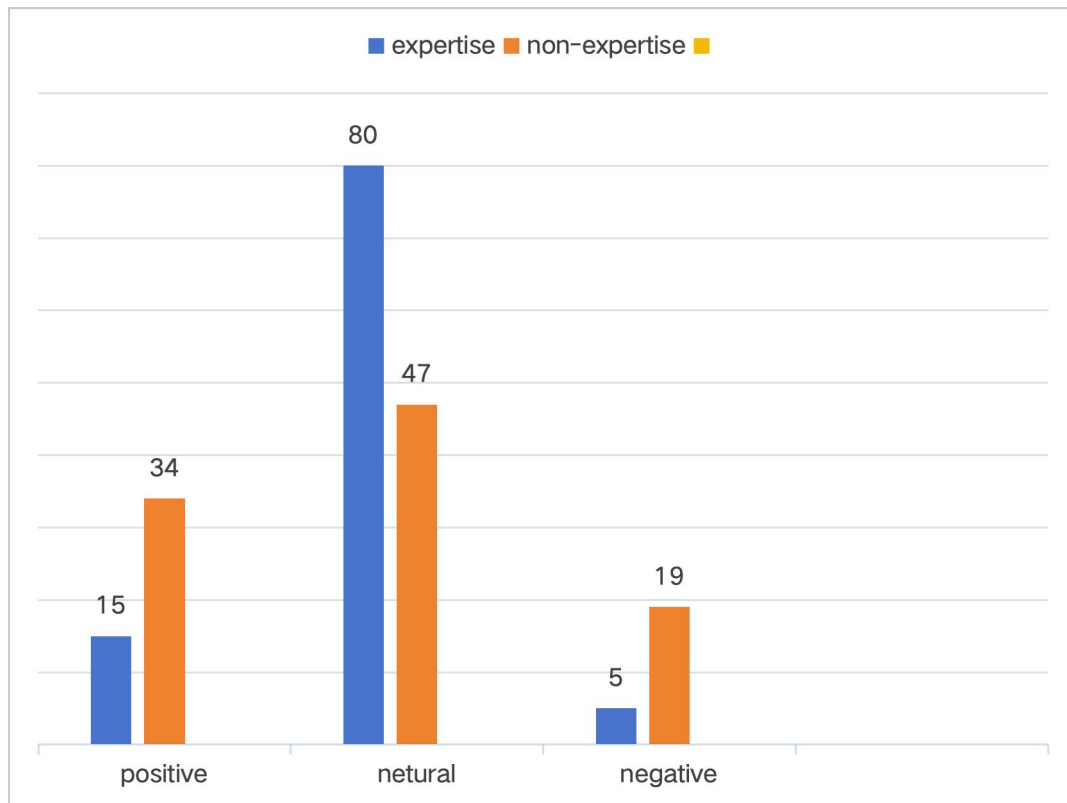
b) Positive/Negative Comments

When analyzing the relationship between the theme of the content and the positive and negative feedback (Graph 15), it is clear that no-expertise SMI tends to receive significantly more positive comments (34%) compared to expertise SMI ones (15%), demonstrating that while experts are often perceived as more credible or authoritative, but not attract as much engagement. Interestingly, no-expertise SMI also receives a higher number of critical remarks than expertise SMI (19% vs. 5%), though the gap is smaller. This indicates that accessibility and relatability may drive more interactions—both positive and negative—while expertise SMI, though more authoritative, may create a higher barrier to participation. The findings imply a trade-off between broad engagement and perceived credibility, where no-expertise SMI content sparks more discussion, while expertise SMI maintains quality but limits

reach.

The distribution of neutral feedback offers further insight: expert SMI content generates a much larger share of neutral reactions (80%) than non-expert content (47%). This significant difference implies that audiences view expert material as more objective and even-handed, while non-expert content tends to provoke more intense emotional responses in either direction. The predominance of neutral responses to expert SMI likely stems from its authoritative nature, which audiences interpret as educational rather than emotionally charged.

The sentiment distribution provides further insight: no-expertise SMI shows a 1.8:1 ratio of positive to negative feedback, while expertise SMI has a 3:1 ratio. This contrast suggests that although both types of content receive more positive than negative feedback overall, expertise SMI elicits a significantly stronger positive response from the audience. The higher 3:1 ratio for expertise SMI indicates greater audience trust, perceived value, or satisfaction compared to no-expertise SMI contributions, which may reflect differences in content quality, credibility, or relevance. This disparity could also imply that audiences are more critical of non-expert sources, or that expertise SMI better aligns with their expectations and needs. Such insights highlight the importance of expertise in shaping audience perception and engagement in this context.



Graph 15: The Relationship between expertise and comments (the number represents the percentage of comments)

Source: Own Elaboration

6.3.3 The Impact of trustworthiness: engagement and sentiment of comments

In this analysis, trustworthiness is defined as the extent to which social media influencers (SMIs) incorporate authoritative data or information into their video scripts. This includes references to reliable, factual sources or expert data, which serve to enhance the SMI's trustworthiness and authority. To measure this credibility, we count the number of times authoritative data or sources are cited within the video script. For the sake of simplicity and visualization, we categorize credibility into two groups: Credibility = 0 indicates that no authoritative data or information is referenced in the video, while Credibility = 1 signifies that at least one instance of authoritative data is mentioned. This categorization allows us to assess whether the inclusion of credible information affects the nature of audience comments (positive or negative) and whether it influences audience engagement, including views, likes,

shares, and comments. By simplifying the variable, we can effectively analyze the impact of credibility on both the sentiment of comments and the level of audience interaction.

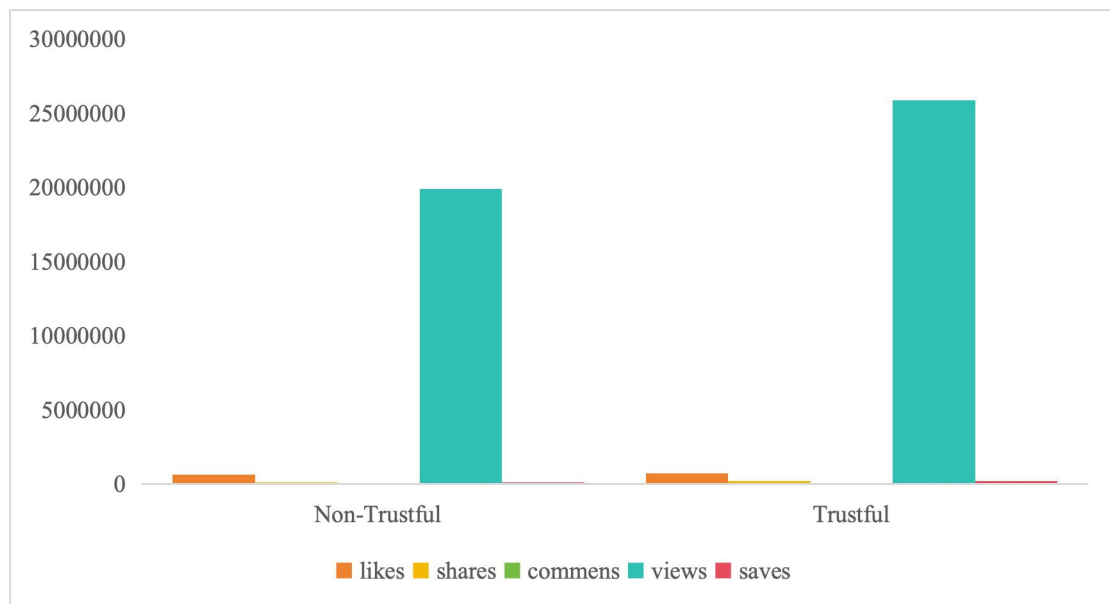
a) Audiences engagement (views, likes, shares, saves, comments)

When examining the relationship between trustworthiness and audience actions (Graph 16) such as views, likes, shares, saves, and comments, the data indicates a stark difference between the two categories of credibility.

For content classified as Trustworthiness = 0 (videos where no authoritative data or information is referenced), the audience engagement metrics, including views, comments, shares, and collects, are minimal, suggesting that these videos fail to attract significant attention. Notably, the views for these videos are very low, which implies that the lack of credible references may lead to reduced visibility and a limited audience reach. Furthermore, the comments, shares, and saves remain near zero, suggesting that these videos do not spark social interactions or prompts for users to share or engage with the content further.

In contrast, for content classified as Trustworthiness = 1, the views stand out significantly, with a much higher value compared to the videos in the Credibility = 0 category. This large increase in views suggests that when content includes authoritative data, it gains more attention and is more likely to be viewed by a larger audience. This higher engagement could be attributed to the perceived trustworthiness and value of the information presented. However, despite the large difference in views, other actions such as comments, shares, and saves are still relatively low. This suggests that while credible content attracts more views, it does not necessarily prompt significant social interaction, such as comments or shares.

Overall, the presence of authoritative data significantly enhances the visibility and reach of content, leading to a higher number of views. However, this does not automatically translate into increased engagement in the form of likes, shares, or comments.



Graph 16: The Relationship between Trustworthiness and audience reaction

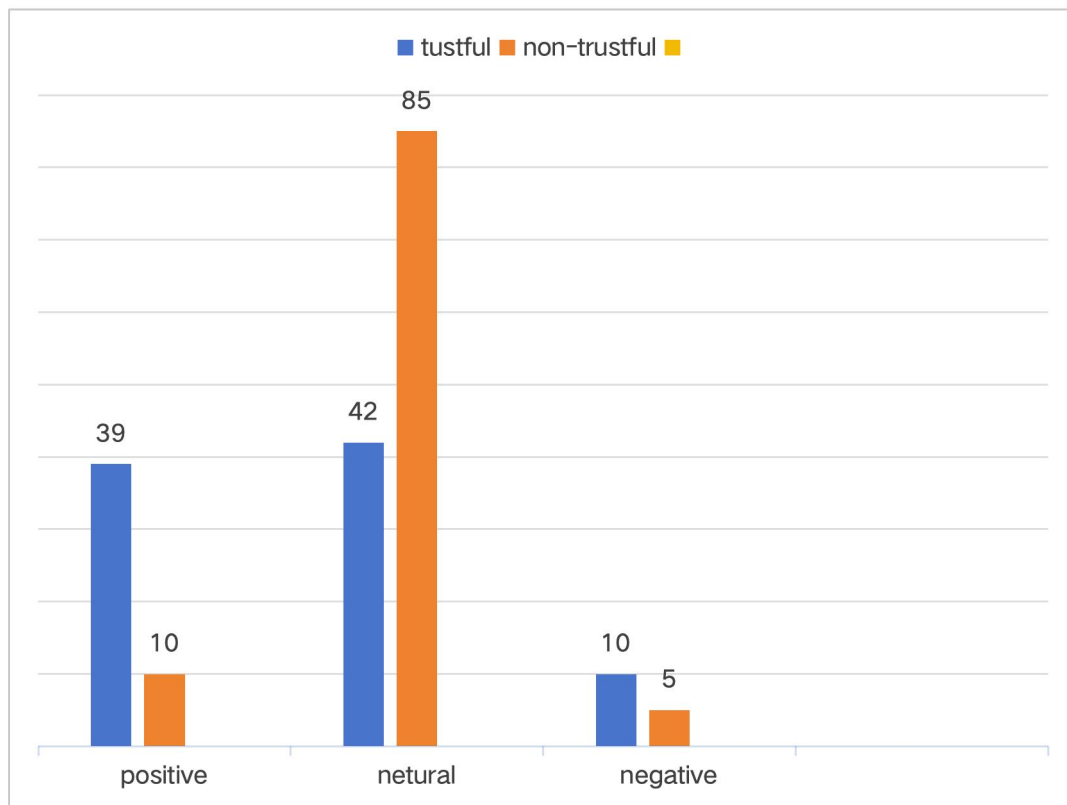
Source: Own Elaboration

b) Positive/Negative Comments

When examining the relationship between credibility and comment sentiment, an interesting pattern emerges (Graph 17). Credible content (Trustworthiness = 1) receives significantly more positive comments (39%) than negative comments (19%), indicating that audiences are more likely to respond favorably to information they perceive as trustworthy. Similarly, not credible content (Trustworthiness = 0) also attracts more positive feedback (10%) than negative comments (5%). This shows that even less credible content can still generate positive response, though the overall volume of engagement is much lower than credible sources. Surprisingly, no-trustful content results in a significantly larger share of neutral sentiment (85%) compared to trustful content (42%). This indicates that audiences tend to respond with more indifference or neutrality to less trustworthy material, likely because it fails to evoke strong emotions or establish a sense of credibility.

This pattern also suggests that the increased volume of comments—both positive and negative—may stem from higher overall engagement rather than a significant shift in sentiment quality. The sentiment distribution confirms this trend, revealing comparable positivity ratios between credible (3.9:1) and non-credible (3.8:1) content.

One plausible explanation is that credible sources draw a larger audience, resulting in greater participation across both favorable and critical responses. Additionally, users may perceive credible content as more reliable, motivating them to contribute feedback—even when expressing dissent.



Graph 17: The Relationship between Trustworthiness and comments (the number represents the percentage of comments)

Source: Own Elaboration

6.3.4 The Impact of Attractiveness: engagement and sentiment of comments

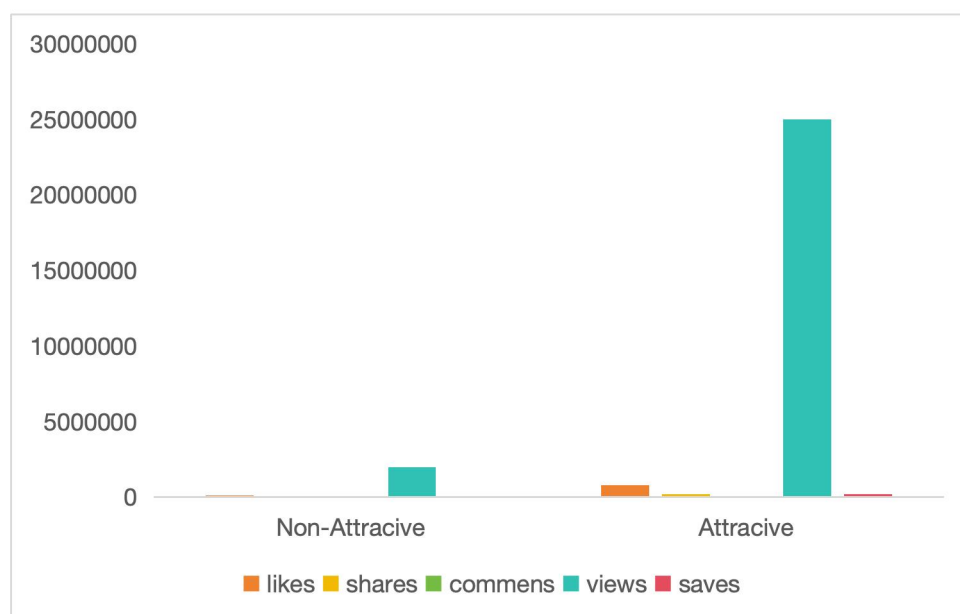
In this analysis, attractiveness is defined based on the change in a social media influencer's follower count over the past month. To quantify this variable, the follower count change is categorized as follows: if the influencer's follower count has increased over the past month, the variable is assigned a value of 1 (indicating an increase in attractiveness). If the follower count has decreased during the same period, the variable is assigned a value of 0 (indicating a decrease in attractiveness). This binary assignment serves as a proxy for an influencer's current social appeal, as

reflected by their ability to attract and retain followers.

a) Audiences engagement (views, likes, shares, saves, comments)

Upon revisiting the relationship between attractiveness and audience actions (Graph 18), the updated data still shows a strong link between Attractiveness = 1 (follower count increase) and view. The videos from influencers with increased followers experience a significant rise in views, as seen by the large spike in View for Attractiveness = 1. This suggests that influencer attractiveness, as measured by their growing follower base, has a direct and strong impact on the visibility and reach of their content.

However, the other engagement metrics—View, Share, Comment, and Save—remain very low across both Attractiveness = 0 (follower count decrease) and Attractiveness = 1 (follower count increase) categories. While View sees a substantial increase for influencers with increased followers, the lack of significant interaction through shares, comments, and likes indicates that these videos do not foster much active social engagement, even though they attract more views.



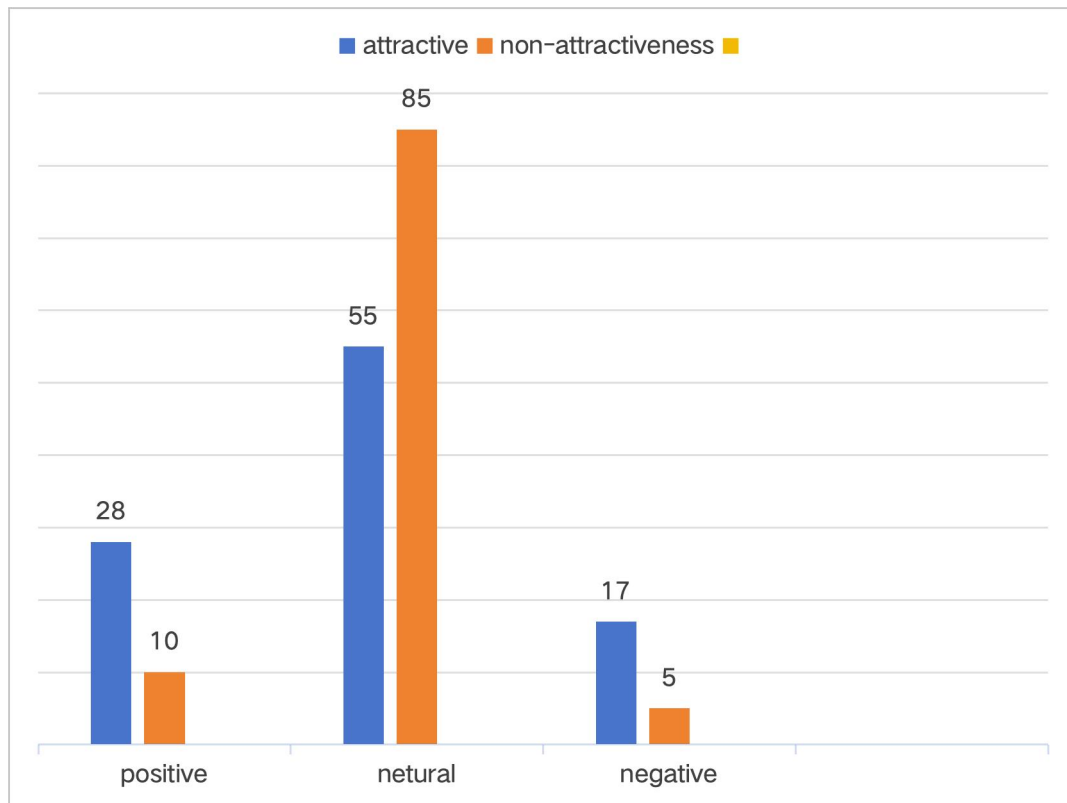
Graph 18: The Relationship between attractiveness and audience reaction

Source: Own Elaboration

c) Positive/Negative Comments

When analyzing the relationship between the expertise of the content and the positive and negative feedback (Graph 19), attractive content receives significantly more positive comments (28%) compared to non-attractive content (10%), suggesting that perceived appeal positively influences user sentiment. Similarly, attractive content also generates more negative feedback (17%) than non-attractive content (5%), indicating that while appealing content drives greater overall engagement, it also invites more scrutiny and polarized reactions. This could be because highly attractive posts reach a wider audience, increasing the likelihood of both strong approval and criticism. Alternatively, the higher visibility of such content may encourage more users to voice dissenting opinions, whereas less engaging posts simply go unnoticed. Interestingly, non-attractive content also elicits a greater share of neutral reaction (85%) than attractive content (55%), implying that the lack of attractiveness often fails to stir strong feelings, resulting in more indifferent reaction from audiences.

The sentiment ratio further reinforces this observation: attractive content maintains a positive-to-negative ratio of 1.6:1 (28:17), while non-attractive content follows a slightly higher ratio of 2:1 (10:5). This reveals an interesting paradox—while attractive content generates more total engagement (both positive and negative), non-attractive content actually enjoys a marginally more favorable sentiment balance. This could imply that less engaging content tends to fly under the radar, attracting only mild reactions from a smaller, possibly more neutral audience. In contrast, highly attractive content sparks stronger emotional responses, leading to both more enthusiastic praise and more vocal criticism.



Graph 19: The Relationship between attractiveness and comments (the number represents the percentage of comments)

Source: Own Elaboration

6.4 Preliminary discussion on hypothesis

6.4.1 Dependent, independent and control variables

a) Dependent variables: engagement

The dependent variable in this study is User Response (Reaction) (table 29), which measures the overall interaction of users with the video content. The mean value of user response is 15.757, with a standard deviation of 1.728. The minimum value is 13.12, and the maximum value is 18.879. These results indicate that the majority of videos exhibit concentrated user response values, while some videos show higher or lower interaction performance. This variation may be related to the specific content characteristics or the particular traits of the social media influencers (SMIs) involved, and, even to the platform. Videos with higher user interaction likely resonate more strongly with their audience, resulting in greater engagement. This highlights the importance of content relevance and alignment with user expectations

in generating engagement.

b) Independent Variables: SMI personality/ humor-titles

The independent variables in this study encompass several factors that relate to the characteristics of the SMI and the video content. These include Expertise, Trustworthiness, Attractiveness, Humor Theme, and Title Length.

The mean value for Expertise is 0.71, indicating that 71% of SMIs in the sample have professional certification. This suggests that a significant portion of influencers are formally credentialed, which could contribute to their credibility and, consequently, their ability to engage users effectively. Theoretically professional certification is likely a distinguishing factor that increases trust and authority in the eyes of the audience.

For Trustworthiness, the mean value is 2.95, but with a large standard deviation of 9.042. The distribution shows extreme variability, ranging from 0 to 57. Some videos make extensive use of authoritative references, while others have little or no citations of credible sources. Videos that cite authoritative information may inspire greater trust and result in more significant user engagement.

Table 29 Descriptive statistics

Source: Own Elaboration

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Reaction	100	15.757	1.728	13.12	18.879
Expert	100	.71	.456	0	1
Trust	100	2.95	9.042	0	57
Attract	90	-.549	7.256	-15.8	14.7
Humor theme	100	.06	.239	0	1
Words	100	16.34	8.571	2	44
Duration	100	3.812	1.758	0	7.225
Topic	100	.71	1.085	0	4

The mean value of Attractiveness is -0.549, with a standard deviation of 7.256, showing substantial fluctuations in the fanbase of the SMIs. Some influencers have experienced large increases in followers (up to 147,000), while others have seen losses (down to -158,000) in 30 days.

The mean for Humor Theme is 0.06, indicating that only 6% of the videos use humor as a central theme. Humor and parody often enhance relatability, making content more shareable and appealing to a broader audience, which may increase interaction rates. The marginal effect of humor may be substantial in attracting engagement, especially if the humor resonates with the audience.

The mean value for Title Length (It appears as "Words" in table 29) is 16.34 characters, with a standard deviation of 8.571. The minimum title length is 2, and the maximum is 44. This suggests that videos vary in how they present their content upfront. Longer titles can offer greater detail and precision, enhancing the video's informativeness, whereas briefer titles may be more succinct, acting as a catchy lure to draw viewers in. This variation points to the potential role that title length and wording can play in influencing user interest and engagement.

d) Control Variables: video duration and number of topics

In addition to the independent variables, two control variables are included to account for other factors that may influence user response: Video Duration and Number of Topics.

The mean value for Video Duration is 3.812 (natural logarithm), with a distribution ranging from 0 to 7.225. The natural logarithm transformation helps mitigate the effect of extreme video lengths, as very short or very long videos may disproportionately affect engagement patterns. The wide distribution in video length indicates that content creators are catering to diverse viewer preferences, offering both shorter and longer videos to suit different engagement needs. This variable is included as a control variable because video duration is likely to have a significant influence on user engagement metrics such as view time, comment count, and shares. Longer videos may provide more content and context, encouraging deeper interaction, while

shorter videos may attract quick views but less sustained engagement. By controlling for video duration, the analysis aims to isolate the effects of the primary independent variables on engagement, ensuring that any observed relationships are not confounded by differences in content length.

The mean value for Number of Topics is 0.71, with a standard deviation of 1.085. Videos that are connected to multiple topics tend to have broader appeal, which could enhance visibility and increase user engagement. The variability in the number of topics highlights how thematic variety may influence the reach of content, suggesting that more diverse or multi-topic videos have a greater chance of attracting a wider audience.

6.4.2. Correlation Analysis

Table 30 presents the statistical results of the correlation between the main variables. Below is the preliminary discussion of the correlation results in relation to each research hypothesis. Note that this is a preliminary discussion, and further validation will be conducted through regression analysis.

Sub hypothesis H1a: Theme Humor Level (Humor Theme) and User Response

The correlation between Humor theme and Reaction is 0.284, which is statistically significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$). This positive correlation suggests a relationship between humor and increased user response.

Subhypothesis H1b: Title Length and User Response

The correlation between words included in the title and Reaction is 0.100, which is statistically significant at the 10% level ($p < 0.1$). This weak positive correlation indicates a slight association between title length and user response.

Subhypothesis H2a: Trustworthiness and User Response

The correlation between Trust and Reaction is -0.218, statistically significant at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$). This negative correlation suggests an inverse relationship between trustworthiness and user response.

Subhypothesis H2b: Expertise and User Response

The correlation between Expert and Reaction is 0.475, which is statistically significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$). This positive correlation indicates that expertise is associated with higher user response.

Subhypothesis H2c: Attractiveness and User Response

The correlation between Attract and Reaction is -0.534, statistically significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$). This negative correlation suggests an inverse relationship between attractiveness and user response.

Table 30 Variable Correlation Statistics.

Source: Own Elaboration

Variables	(Reaction)	(Expert)	(Trust)	(Attract)	(Humortheme)	(Words)	(Duration)	(Topic)
Reaction	1.000							
Expert	0.475***	1.000						
Trust	-0.218**	0.173*	1.000					
Attract	-0.534***	-0.535***	-0.032	1.000				
Humor theme	0.284***	0.161*	-0.036	-0.227**	1.000			
Words	0.100	0.209**	0.256**	-0.306***	-0.020	1.000		
Duration	-0.430***	0.075	0.422***	-0.182*	-0.095	0.051	1.000	
Topic	0.255**	-0.029	-0.193*	0.075	-0.049	0.447***	-0.339***	1.000

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

6.4.3 Multicollinearity Analysis

Table 31 presents the results of collinearity statistics for the main variables. From the results, all variables had VIF (variance inflation factor) values below 10, indicating the absence of severe multicollinearity. The specific analysis is provided as follows.

The VIF of 1.74, the highest of all variables, indicates a relatively higher correlation between attractiveness and other variables, but still within the acceptable range. The VIF values of the title length (Words) and the number of topics (Topics)

were 1.69 and 1.56, respectively, also showing a degree of correlation, but did not have a significant impact on the model estimation results.

The VIF values for expertise (Expert) and trustworthiness (Trust) were 1.49 and 1.48, respectively, close to the average VIF value (1.49), indicating their moderate correlation with other variables. The VIF value of the video duration (Duration) was 1.38, reflecting its low correlation with other variables. The humorous theme (Humor theme) had the lowest VIF value of only 1.09, indicating that there is almost no problem of collinearity with other variables.

Overall, the level of collinearity for all variables was low (VIF values well below 10), with a mean VIF of 1.49, further supporting the robustness of the model. These results show that the variables in the model are statistically independent and suitable for regression analysis and do not affect the interpretability and reliability of the estimated results due to multicollinearity.

Table 31 Statistics for Collinearity

Source: Own Elaboration		
Variable	VIF	1/VIF
Attract	1.74	0.575824
Words	1.69	0.590236
Topic	1.56	0.642898
Expert	1.49	0.669371
Trust	1.48	0.677065
Duration	1.38	0.723819
Humor theme	1.09	0.914931
Mean VIF	1.49	

6.4.4. Regression Testing

Table 32 shows the analysis results of the influence of SMI expertise on user response (Reaction). The results of the regression model showed that expertise exerts

a statistically significant positive influence on user engagement, with a coefficient of 1.935 (* $p < 0.01$, $t = 6.772$). This shows that when SMI has professional certification, the user response value of their videos increases significantly, and expertise plays an important role in attracting user interaction.

The regression coefficient for video duration (Duration) was -0.418, which was also significant at the 1% significant level (the t -value was -5.305), indicating that video duration had a significant negative effect on user response. That is, the longer the video lasts, the lower the user may be more enthusiastic for interaction, which may be related to user distraction or viewing fatigue.

The regression coefficient for the number of topics (Topic) was 0.200 but did not reach a significant level (t -value was 1.574), indicating that the number of topics associated with video had a weak or non-significant effect on user response.

The constant term (_cons) was 15.834 (* $p < 0.01$, $t = 38.840$), indicating the baseline level of user response when the value of other variables is zero. The number of samples (N) of the model is 100, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.457, indicating that the model can explain about 45.7% of the variation in user response, and the overall fit of the model is good. The F value of 26.970 showed a high significance level, indicating that the overall model is of strong explanatory power.

Table 32 Analysis of the influence of SMIs Expertise on user response

Source: Own Elaboration

	(1) Reaction
Expertise	1.935*** (6.772)
Duration	-0.418*** (-5.305)
Topic	0.200

	(1.574)
_cons	15.834***
	(38.840)
N	100
R ²	0.475
F	26.970

Table 33 shows the analysis results of the impact of SMI trustworthiness on user response (Reaction). The model is divided into two columns: for model (1), it only includes the linear term Trust, and for model (2), the quadratic term Trust² (Quadratic term: Variable Trust multiplied by Trust) of Trust is added on this basis to test whether there are non-linear effects of credibility.

In model (1), the regression coefficient of Trust was -0.007, but did not reach the significant level (t-value was -0.368), indicating that the number of SMI cited authoritative information had a weak impact on user response or even may not have a significant effect. In model (2), the regression coefficient of Trust was 0.073 for Trust and Trust² was -0.002, neither of which variables reached significance.

Video duration (Duration) showed significant negative effects in both models, with the regression coefficient for model (1) being -0.366 (t-value -3.540) and model (2) being -0.411 (t-value -3.849), both significant at the 1% significance level. This suggests that longer video duration may significantly reduce user levels of interaction, which is related to user distraction or platform recommendation mechanisms.

The regression coefficient for the number of topics (Topics) was positive in both models (0.194 and 0.204, respectively), but did not reach the significance level. This may indicate that the increasing number of topics has a relatively limited impact on user responses and may require further analysis combined with other variables.

The constant term (_cons) shows significant positive values in both models, at 17.036 and 17.121, respectively, indicating a relatively high benchmark level of user response at the other variables being zero. The coefficient of determination (R²) of the

model was 0.199 and 0.219, respectively, indicating that the explanatory power of the two models for the user response was limited, explaining only 19.9% and 21.9% of the variation.

Table 33 Analysis of the influence of SMI Trustworthiness on user response

Source: Own Elaboration

	(1)	(2)
	Reaction	Reaction
Trustworthiness	-0.007 (-0.368)	0.073 (1.318)
Duration	-0.366*** (-3.540)	-0.411*** (-3.849)
Topic	0.194 (1.252)	0.204 (1.323)
Trust 2		-0.002 (-1.542)
_cons	17.036*** (37.715)	17.121*** (37.893)
N	100	100
R ²	0.199	0.219
F	7.961	6.651

Table 34 shows the analysis of the influence of SMI attractiveness on user response (Reaction), which is divided into two models. Model (1) contains only linear terms of attractiveness, while model (2) introduces quadratic terms Attract^2 (Quadratic terms: Variable Attracts multiplied by Attracts of attractiveness) to detect whether attractiveness has a non-linear effect.

In model (1), the regression coefficient of attractiveness was -0.145, significant at the 1% significant level (the t-value was -8.796), indicating that when the recent

change in the number of fans is negative, it will significantly reduce users' willingness to interact with their videos. However, in model (2), the linear term coefficient of attractiveness was -0.139 (t-value is -8.656), which was still significant negative, but the coefficient of quadratic term Attract^2 was 0.003 and is significant at the 5% significance level (t-value is 2.613). This indicates a significant non-linear effect of attractiveness on user response, that is, the effect of attractiveness on user response is first negative and then positive.

Video duration (Duration) showed significant negative effects in both models, with a regression coefficient of -0.495 in model (1) (t-value is -7.170) and -0.436 in model (2) (t-value is -6.174). This indicates that the longer video duration will significantly reduce the user interaction level, which may be related to the user's attention decline or long viewing time.

The coefficient of the number of topics (Topics) did not reach the significance level in both models: model (1) was -0.002 and model (2) was 0.064, indicating that the number of topics had a weak impact on user response and may be further analysis with other variables.

The constant term ($_cons$) is significantly positive in both models, 17.366 and 16.931, respectively, indicating the benchmark level of user response when the other variables are zero. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of the model was 0.570 and 0.602, respectively, indicating that the explanatory power of the model (2) is slightly better than the model (1), explaining 60.2% of the variation in user response. The F values were 37.962 and 32.107, respectively, indicating a good overall fit of the two models.

Table 34 Analysis of the influence of SMI attractiveness on user response

Source: Own Elaboration

	(1)	(2)
	Reaction	Reaction
Attractiveness	-0.145***	-0.139***

	(-8.796)	(-8.656)
Duration	-0.495***	-0.436***
	(-7.170)	(-6.174)
Topic	-0.002	0.064
	(-0.016)	(0.498)
Attract 2		0.003**
		(2.613)
_cons	17.366***	16.931***
	(54.265)	(48.156)
N	90	90
R ²	0.570	0.602
F	37.962	32.107

Table 35 shows the analysis results of the impact of video theme humor (Humor theme) on user response (Reaction). The regression model showed that the humor theme had a significant positive effect on user response, with a regression coefficient of 1.868, significant at the 1% significant level (t value 2.922). This shows that videos with humorous themes can significantly improve the level of user interaction, and that humorous content is easier to attract user attention and participation than videos with non-humorous themes.

The regression coefficient of video duration (Duration) was -0.349, which was also significant at the 1% significant level (t-value was -3.787), indicating that longer video duration has a significant negative effect on user response, which may decrease user viewing expertise or distracted attention due to long video time.

The regression coefficient of the number of topics (Topics) was 0.235, but it did not reach the significance level (the t-value was 1.579), indicating that the number of video-associated topics had a weak positive effect on user response.

The constant term (_cons) is 16.809, significant at 1% significant level (t-value 38.734), representing the baseline level of user response when all independent

variables are zero. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.264, indicating that the model explains about 26.4% of the variability in user response. The F value of 11.454 showed the overall model fit.

Table 35 Analysis of the impact of video theme humor on user response

Source: Own Elaboration

	(1) Reaction
Humortheme	1.868*** (2.922)
Duration	-0.349*** (-3.787)
Topic	0.235 (1.579)
_cons	16.809*** (38.734)
N	100
R^2	0.264
F	11.454

Table 36 shows the analysis of the effect of Title length (Words) on user response (Reaction). The model is divided into two parts: Model (1) contains only linear terms, while model (2) adds a quadratic term Words Words² (Quadratic term: Variable Words multiplied by Words) to test the non-linear effect of title length.

In model (1), the regression coefficient of video length (Duration) was -0.400, significant at the 1% significant level (the t-value was -4.080), indicating a significant negative effect of video length on user response. Longer videos may reduce users viewing interest and thus reduce interactive behavior. This trend was further verified in model (2), and the regression coefficient of Duration was -0.433 (t-value was

-4.373), which was still significantly negative, indicating that the negative effect of video duration on user response was robust.

The regression coefficient of the title length (Words) in the model (1) was 0.017, but it did not reach the significance level (the t-value is 0.812), indicating the weak influence of the title length in this model. However, in model (2), Words, with a linear term coefficient of 0.116, was significant at the 10% significant level (t-value 1.863), while the secondary term Words², with a coefficient of -0.003, was also significant at the 10% significant level (t-value-1.686). This suggests a significant non-linear effect of title length on user response, where the effect of title length on user response increases first and then decreases.

The regression coefficients for the number of topics (Topic) were positive in both models (0.126 and 0.138, respectively), but did not reach the significance level (t-values were 0.710 and 0.785, respectively), indicating that the number of topics had a weak or insignificant effect on user response.

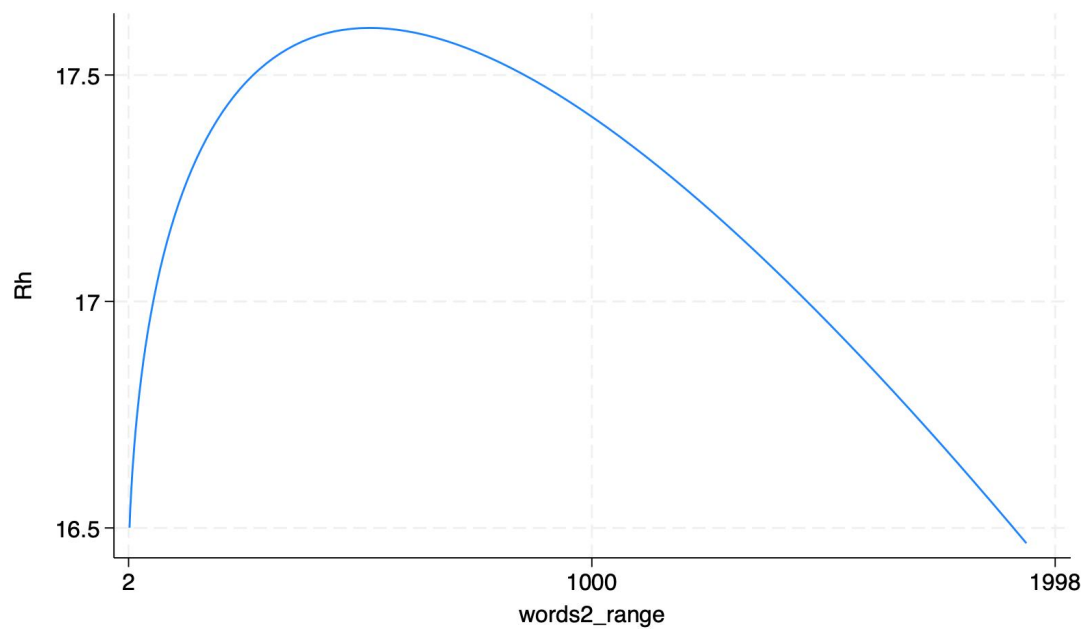
The constant term (_cons) is significant positive in both models, with model (1) 16.912 and model (2) 16.279, both significant at the 1% significance level, indicating the benchmark level of user response at the other variable of zero. The coefficient of determination (R²) of the model is 0.204 and 0.227, respectively, indicating that the explanatory power of the model (2) is slightly better than the model (1). F values were 8.179 and 6.963, respectively, indicating the overall model fit.

Table 36 Analysis of the effect of Title length on user responses

Source: Own Elaboration

	(1)	(2)
	Reaction	Reaction
words	0.017 (0.812)	0.116* (1.863)
Duration	-0.400*** (-4.080)	-0.433*** (-4.373)

Topic	0.126	0.138
	(0.710)	(0.785)
Words 2		-0.003*
		(-1.686)
_cons	16.912***	16.279***
	(35.074)	(26.785)
N	100	100
R ²	0.204	0.227
F	8.179	6.963



Graph 20: Analysis of the effect of Title length on user responses

7. CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the theoretical framework contributions, practical contributions, limitation, and future studies in order to continue this research. By examining the role of Chinese LGBTQ Social Media Influencers (SMIs) in shaping audience interactions, this study provides valuable insights into the intersection of social media, identity formation -especially gender identity-, and societal change.

7.1. Developing Theoretical Frameworks: key findings

Research question one: The first research question centered on the role that videos of SMIs plays on the audiences' interaction.

- a) **Video content:** The findings of the study showed the video content characteristics influences in the relationship with audiences' interaction. Overall, themes significantly affect audience engagement levels. The "Others" (various and specific topics) and Professional themes perform best, followed by Couple and humor themes. The study also analyzed engagement patterns across content themes, measuring positive and negative comments. Couple/Life themes generate most comments (1.03M; 789K) but high negativity (336K; 277K), showing polarization. Humor displays similar divisiveness (322K positive/ 221K negative). Beauty gets strong positivity (432K positive/ 222K negative), while Travel maintains favorable reception (268K positive/ 78K negative). Professional/Talk themes show low engagement. Findings indicate emotionally charged content sparks debate, while aspirational/neutral content fosters consensus.

In the case of humorous themes – the one we are interested in after our literature review- had a significant and positive effect on user response (Hypothesis H1a supported), showing that more humorous video could be helpful to attract audience's attention and encourage audience interaction, although only 6% of the sample (n: 100) has been classified as humor.

- b) **Title Length:** In addition, title length also affected on user response significantly, but it showed an inverted "U-shaped" relationship with user

response (Hypothesis H1b supported). Title length affects audience engagement differently across metrics. Long titles have advantages in views, shares and saves, while likes and comments have no direct link with title length. In fact, the content and SMIs personal characteristics are key to the changes of likes. Interactive titles (regardless of length) drive comments.

Research question two: The second research question evaluated the role of SMIs plays on audiences' interaction.

a) Personal characteristic of Chinese SMI and audiences' engagement

The findings of the study indicated the personal characteristics of SMIs did have a positive relationship with audiences' interaction.

Table 37 Key findings of the research

Source: Own Elaboration

Hypothesis	Sub hypothesis	Testing Results
There is a correlation between the content (theme) and the title (length) features of the video shared by LGBTQ SMI and the user response (comments, shares, likes, saves and number of views).	H1a) Theme humor level (Humor theme) significantly positively affects user response	Supported
	H1b) Long Title (measured by number of words) significantly positively affects user response.	Supported
There is a significant relationship between the personal characteristics of LGBTQ SMI (trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness) and user response (comments, shares, likes, saves and viewing number).	H2a) The trustworthiness significantly and positively affects user response.	No supported
	H2b) The expertise significantly and positively affects user response.	Supported
	H2c) The attractiveness significantly and positively affects user response.	Supported

- **Expertise:** The findings also indicated that the expertise could significantly and positively affect user response (subhypothesis H2b supported). SMIs with certification could be more attractive and more likely to attract user

interaction. SMI with expertise certifications tended to generate significantly higher audience engagement (especially views). Shares, comments, and saves were relatively lower across the board, with a particularly stark difference in comparison to views.

-Attractiveness: Although SMI attractiveness could also significantly and positively affects user response (subhypothesis H2c supported), the effect of SMI attractiveness (Attract) on user response was a positive "U" -shaped relationship, first suppressed and then promoted. It suggested that attractiveness initially suppressed user interaction but significantly promoted it after reaching a certain level. Attractive SMIs increased views, but not affect audiences' shares, likes, saves and comments significantly.

-Trustworthiness: However, the results didn't show SMI trustworthiness could significantly affect user response (subhypothesis H2a not supported). It could be the reflection of users less sensitive to authoritative information. Also, it might show that trustworthiness alone couldn't be enough to have a positive effect on user engagement. SMI with credibility also generated significantly higher audience engagement (especially comments, shares, saves).

b) Sentiment comments

The study reveals distinct sentiment patterns across SMI personal characteristics: (1) Trustworthiness shows comparable positive sentiment ratios between credible (3.9:1) and non-credible content (3.8:1), though credible content generates higher overall engagement; (2) Expertise SMIs demonstrate superior sentiment quality (15% positive vs. 5% negative, 3:1 ratio) but reduced participation, whereas non-expertise SMIs generate greater engagement (34% positive vs. 19% negative, 1.8:1 ratio), demonstrating that while experts are often perceived as more credible or authoritative, but not attract as much engagement. (3) Attractiveness produces polarized responses (28% positive vs. 17% negative, 1.6:1 ratio) compared to more balanced reactions for

less attractive content (2:1 ratio), indicating visibility intensifies both support and critique.

Table 38 Key findings of the research: Sentiment comments

Source: Own Elaboration

	Positive (%)	Neutral (%)	Negative (%)
Expertise	15%	80%	5%
Attractiveness	28%	55%	17%
Trustworthiness	39%	41%	10%

At the same time, this research develops theoretical frameworks. Firstly, the empirical insights generated by this study have confirmed the value of persuasive communication. The findings of the study proved the definition of persuasive communication (Anja Bojic, 2022; Katherine Miller, 2005) **【245】 【246】**: persuasive communication was indeed a process which SMIs could shape, strengthen or even change audiences' attitudes and behavior. Also, the sentiment analysis of audiences showed that LGBTQ SMIs could affect audiences' attitudes LGBTQ communities by their personal characteristics and video content. This idea was consistent with the opinions of Lister et al. (2020) **【248】**, stating persuasive communication affected audiences reactions positively and audiences emotional responses could be influenced by credible and persuasive communications.

Secondly, the key findings of this study verified the importance of Source credibility model. The categorization of source credibility model made by Ohanian (1991) **【247】** was helpful for my research, exploring which factors of SMIs' personal characteristics could affect audiences reactions. The statement of De Veirman, M et al. (2017)**【274】** and Amos et al. (2008)**【281】** was proven by this research's results. The expertise and the attractiveness of SMIs could have a positive effect on audiences reactions.

Thirdly, the key findings of this study also provide validation for the significance of Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). The categorization of Elaboration Likelihood Model made by Richard E. Petty and John T. Cacioppo (1986) 【330】 was valuable to my research's methodology. The central path and edge path was used in the analysis of this research.

Finally, audience engagement in the digital field were validated in this research. The results demonstrated the relationship between content themes and audience engagement (views, likes, shares, saves, and comments) on social media. Title length (Li. et al. , 2021; Chen (2023)【323】【325】and humor (Cacciatore et al., 2020; Martin Eisend, 2009; James M. Barry& Sandra S. Graça ,2018)) 【326】 【327】 【328】 really affected audience response positively and significantly. However, the findings of this research questioned the opinions of Navarro et al. (2020) 【271】 . This results didn't show SMI trustworthiness could significantly affect user response.

7.2. Practical contributions aimed to LGBTQ SMIs in China

First of all, this research confirms that comedic elements substantially improve viewer participation. SMIs could boost engagement through humor and benefit from integrating playful humor, clever satire, or amusing narratives into their videos to grab attention, increase sharing, and foster favorable audience reactions.

In addition, this study reveals that title length has a relationship with engagement - both overly brief and wordy titles underperform. For optimal results, LGBTQ SMIs could develop succinct yet compelling titles that combine informative value with an element of intrigue.

Also, this study demonstrates specialized knowledge and credentials significantly boosts both viewership and positive feedback. When addressing LGBTQ topics, influencers could emphasize their relevant expertise and background to enhance their perceived authority and trustworthiness.

Additionally, this research shows that attractiveness initially impacts but eventually contributes to greater interaction after reaching a certain level. To

maximize effectiveness, LGBTQ SMIs could combine their visual presentation with meaningful, high-quality content that encourages sustained audience involvement.

However, this research proves that trustworthiness alone doesn't significantly influence user response. To enhance audience engagement, SMIs should integrate trustworthiness with other key elements like emotional resonance and interactive content.

Notably, this research finds that Gay/ Lesbian SMIs receive overwhelmingly positive comments, while Trans SMIs show polarized sentiment reflecting societal debates. Gay/ Lesbian SMIs could leverage their high approval ratings to secure media collaborations, further amplifying positive representation. Trans SMIs could focus on strategic moderation (e.g., filtering hate speech) while highlighting educational content to shift public perception.

Finally, the results of this study show that audiences could actively support SMIs by frequently show their likes, shares, and comments on LGBTQ-related content. They could also use social media as a tool to learn about LGBTQ issues and challenge personal biases.

7.3. Limitations of the study

In relation to methodology, the basic limitation concerns data collection. While data were gathered frequently, this collection took place asynchronously which means that deleted content may have been excluded. In addition, DouYin and BiliBili API restrictions set a strict limit for gathering of content, as these can only be collected in a short time frame with extra daily limitations.

The second limitation was about sample selection and generalizability. The study focused on the top 10 Chinese LGBTQ SMIs on DouYin and BiliBili, selected based on follower count and engagement metrics. This sampling approach may introduce bias and generalizability is limited, as the chosen influencers represent a narrow subset of the LGBTQ community—primarily those with high visibility and

commercial appeal. Consequently, the findings may not fully capture the experiences of smaller or less mainstream LGBTQ content creators.

Also, due to the changes implied by algorithmic logic, it is difficult to study ephemeral reality, a digitally mediated existence shaped by algorithmic logic. Unlike traditional social or cultural phenomena, algorithmic environments are defined by their instability: content is dynamically filtered, identities are computationally categorized, and visibility is contingent on ever-shifting platform logics. This makes the research hard to capture accurate data and keep it up to date.

Finally, this study serves as a preliminary exploration of the relationship between SMIs and audience reactions, taking gender identity into account. However, due to the lack of prior references and relevant empirical data, the extent to which the obtained findings can be generalized to real-world citizen behavior remains limited. The study's conclusions are further constrained by the fact that online engagement does not always correspond to offline behavior. Additionally, cultural and contextual factors influencing LGBT acceptance are complex and may not be fully captured in this initial investigation.

7.4 Future studies

I was able to do the ranking of the top LGBTQ SMIs in China. I was able to analyze their personality and the content they share in order to establish a relationship with audience engagement applying scientific parameters, but it is only my first step in my career as a researcher.

My research demonstrates a distinct pattern of homonormativity in digital spaces, where lesbian SMIs consistently receive more positive comments compared to other queer identities. Future studies should systematically examine whether LGBTQ SMIs—including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer creators elicit other audience reactions. Key research questions should explore: Do certain gender identities consistently generate higher levels of interaction (likes, shares, comments, views or saves) or face greater resistance? How do intersecting identities, such as race, disability, or socioeconomic background, influence these dynamics?

My research also proves that each social media platform has its own way to work. For instance, BiliBili and DouYin work differently in my research. Future studies should track whether platform architectures systematically advantage certain queer identities over others in terms of visibility and engagement. Could algorithmic bias reinforce echo chambers, or might it broaden exposure to diverse perspectives? Investigating these questions could offer critical insights into digital media's impact on LGBTQ visibility and discourse.

References:

- 【1】Wang, Y., Hu, Z., Peng, K., et al. (2020). Mapping out a spectrum of the Chinese public's discrimination toward the LGBT community: Results from a national survey. *BMC Public Health*, 20(1), 669–669.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-08834-y>
- 【2】Parkin, S. (2018). LGBT Rights-Focused Legal Advocacy in China: The Promise, and Limits, of Litigation, 41(5), 1243.
<https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/ilj/vol41/iss5/7>
- 【3】UNDP. (2018). The Existence of Sexual minority in China: A Survey Report on Social Attitudes Based on Sexual Orientation, Gender identity and Gender Expression .<https://www.undp.org/asia-pacific/publications/being-lgbti-china-national-survey-social-attitudes-towards-sexual-orientation-gender-identity-and-gender-expression#:~:text=January%2016%2C%202018,and%20the%20Beijing%20LGBT%20Center>.
- 【4】UNDP. (2019). United Nations development programme annual report 2019.
<https://annualreport.undp.org/2019/assets/UNDP-Annual-Report-2019-en.pdf>
- 【5】Ortiz-Ospina, E. (2019). The rise of social media. Our World In Data.
<https://ourworldindata.org/rise-of-social-media>
- 【6】Nafees, L., Cook, C. M., Nikolov, A. N., & Stoddard, J. E. (2021). Can social media influencer (SMI) power influence consumer brand attitudes? The mediating role of perceived SMI credibility. *Digital Business*, 1(2), 100008.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.digbus.2021.100008>
- 【7】Hearn, A., & Schoenhoff, S. (2015). From Celebrity to Influencer: Tracing the Diffusion of Celebrity Value across the Data Stream. In *A Companion to Celebrity* (pp. 194–212). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118475089.ch11>
- 【8】Paul, J., Jagani, K. & Yadav, N. (2024). “How I think, Who I am”—Role of social media influencers (SMIs) as change agents. Social Media Influencers and Immersive Technologies for Dynamic Consumer Behavior. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*. 23(4), 1900-1916.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.2311>

- 【9】 Hearn, A. & Schoenhoff, S., (2016). From celebrity to influencer: Tracing the diffusion of celebrity value across the data stream, In P.D. Marshall & S. Redmond(Eds.), *A companion to celebrity* (pp. 194–212). Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons.
- 【10】 Gillin, P. (2007). *The new influencers: A marketer's guide to the new social media*. Sanger, CA: Quill Driver Books.
- 【11】 Balaban, D. C., & Szabolcs, J. (2022). A Proposed Model of Self - Perceived Authenticity of Social Media Influencers. *Media and Communication*, 10(1), 235–246. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v10i1.4765>
- 【12】 Burke, K.E. (2017). *Social Butterflies: How Social Media Influencers are the New Celebrity Endorsement*(Master's Thesis). Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. <http://hdl.handle.net/10919/78221>
- 【13】 Belanche, D., Casaló, L-V, Flavián, M., Ibáñez-Sánchez, S., (2021). Understanding influencer marketing: The role of congruence between influencers, products and consumers, *Journal of Business Research*, 186, 186-195, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.03.067>.
- 【14】 Lei, Y. (2017). Analysis of the social causes of "Internet celebrity phenomenon" from the perspective of new media. 124-125. <https://www.scholarmate.com/S/Hu6M15>
- 【15】 Lu, T. T & Ding, S.Q. (2019). The generation logic of “knowledge internet celebrities” and its impact on youth groups. *Academic Frontiers*, 0(8):84-87. <https://m.fx361.com/news/2019/0523/5141557.html>
- 【16】 Netease (Ed.) (2021). ‘*Cai Kangyong has been in love with gays for more than 20 years: I fell in love with someone, but happened to be the same sex as me*’. <https://www.163.com/dy/article/G8MH35200543L1LU.html>
- 【17】 Stockmann, D., Luo, T., & Shen, M. (2019). Designing authoritarian deliberation: how social media platforms influence political talk in China.

- Democratization*, 27(2), 243–264.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2019.1679771>
- 【18】 Hassid, J.(2012). Safety Valve or Pressure Cooker? Blogs in Chinese Political Life. *Journal of Communication*. 62(2), 212–230.
<https://ssrn.com/abstract=1899941>
- 【19】 Wu, Y., Mou, Y., Wang, Y., & Atkin, D. (2017). Exploring the de-stigmatizing effect of social media on homosexuality in China: An interpersonal-mediated contact versus parasocial-mediated contact perspective. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 28(1), 20–37.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01292986.2017.1324500>
- 【20】 Hu, P. (2018). Popular Understanding of Democracy in Contemporary China. *Democratization*, 25(1441–1459).
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2018.1482534>
- 【21】 Sekaran, U. and Bougie, R. (2016) Research Methods for Business: A Skill-Building Approach(7th ed). Wiley & Sons.
- 【22】 Dastagir, A. E. (2018). A feminist glossary because we didn't all major in gender studies. US Today.
[https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2017/03/16/feminism-glossary-lexicon language/99120600/](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2017/03/16/feminism-glossary-lexicon-language/99120600/)
- 【23】 Hinsch, B. (1990). *Passions of the cut sleeve: The male homosexual tradition in China*. University of California Press.
- 【24】 Liu, I-Ching. (1976). *Shih-shuo hsin-yu* (A new account of tales of the world) (R.B Mather, Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- 【25】 Ruan, F.F. & Tsai, Y.M. (1987). Male homosexuality in traditional Chinese literature. *Journal of homosexuality*, 14(4), 21-34. doi: 10.1300/J082v14n03_02. PMID: 3323308.
- 【26】 Samshasha, X. (1997). Zhongguo tongxinglian shilu, zengding ben [A History of Homosexuality in China, Expanded Edition]. Rosa Winkel Press.

- 【27】 Wah-Shan, C. (2001). Homosexuality and the cultural politics of Tongzhi in Chinese societies. *Journal of Homosexuality* , 40(3), 27-46.
https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v40n03_03
- 【28】 Wu, J. (2003). From “long yang” and “dui shi” to tongzhi: Homosexuality in China, *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Psychotherapy* ,7(1), 117-143.
https://doi.org/10.1300/J236v07n01_08
- 【29】 Sang, Tze-lan D. (2003). *The emerging lesbian: Female same-sex desire in modern China*. University of Chicago Press.
- 【30】 Kong, Travis SK. (2016). The sexual in Chinese sociology: homosexuality studies in contemporary China. *The Sociological Review* , 64(3), 495-514.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.12372>
- 【31】 Chiang, H. (2010). Epistemic modernity and the emergence of homosexuality in China. *Gender & History*, 22(3), 629-657.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0424.2010.01612.x>
- 【32】 Ellis, H. (1939). *Psychology of sex* (5th ed.). William Heinemann.
- 【33】 Ruan, F.F. (1991), *Sex in China*. Plenum Press.
- 【34】 Zheng, H. & Yingsheng, L.(2000). *Zhongguo Shehuixue Shi Xinbian* [A New History of Chinese Sociology]. Gaodeng Jiaoyu Chubanshe.
- 【35】 Guo (2016). *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and transgender culture in contemporary China*. The University of Mississippi
- 【36】 Deklerck, S., & Wei, X. (2015). Queer online media and the building of China’s LGBT community. In E. L. Engebretsen, W. F. Schroeder, & H. Bao (Eds.), *Queer/tongzhi China: New perspectives on research, activism and media cultures*. Copenhagen. Nias Press.
- 【37】 Worth, H., Jun, J., McMillan, K., Chunyan, S., Xiaoxing, F., Yuping, Z., Zhao, R., Kelly-Hanku, A., Jia, C., & Youchun, Z. (2019). ‘There was no mercy at

- all': Hooliganism, homosexuality and the opening-up of China. *International Sociology*, 34(1), 38–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580918812265>
- 【38】 Pei, W. (2019). An investigation in the Chinese LGBT People's online coming-out narratives: Cultural influences, co-cultural practices, and outcomes (Order No. 22618696). ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis. <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/investigation-chinese-lgbt-people-s-online-coming/docview/2306522889/se-2>
- 【39】 Wang, Y., Hu, Z., Peng, K. et al. (2020) Mapping out a spectrum of the Chinese public's discrimination toward the LGBT community: results from a national survey. *BMC Public Health*. 20, 669. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-08834-y>
- 【40】 Ding, R. (2024). Queer media production as soft activism: Insights from a Chinese community project. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/13675494241268269>
- 【41】 Grossman A.H. & Kerner, M.S. (1998). Self-esteem and supportiveness as predictors of emotional distress in gay male and lesbian youth. *Journal of Homosexuality*;35(2):25–39. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v35n02_02.
- 【42】 Hu, A. T. (2020). Social tolerance of homosexuality: the patterns of Chinese societies (Doctoral dissertation). Sociology Department. University of Victoria. <https://dspace.library.uvic.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/77a9a06a-fd5c-421f-9e78-0fd1cbde19c8/content>
- 【43】 People's Day.(2018). People's Daily Commentary: Homosexuality is by no means a mental illness <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1597809009450220925&wfr=spider&for=pc> 2018

- 【44】 Mohanty, M. (2013). Xi Jinping and the “Chinese Dream.” *Economic and Political Weekly*, 48(38), 34–40. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23528539>
- 【45】 Ellis-Petersen, H. (2016) China bans depictions of gay people on television. *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2016/mar/04/china-bans-gay-people-television-clampdown-xi-jinping-censorship>
- 【46】 Wang .S. (2021) How ‘sissy men’ became the latest front in China’s campaign against big tech. *The Conversations*.
<https://theconversation.com/how-sissy-men-became-the-latest-front-in-china-campaign-against-big-tech-167328>
- 【47】 Ni V. & Davidson H. (2021) Outrage over shutdown of LGBTQ WeChat accounts in China. *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/08/outrage-over-crackdown-on-lgbtq-wechat-accounts-in-china>
- 【48】 Chiang, H. (2018). *After Eunuchs: Science, Medicine, and the Transformation of Sex in Modern China*. Columbia University Press.
- 【49】 Kile, Sarah E. (2013) . “Transgender Performance in Early Modern China.” *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Studies* 24 (2): 130–49.
<https://doi.org/10.1215/10407391-2335085>
- 【50】 Xue, Y. (2021). Transmen and transwomen in china: Darkness and resilience. For the Degree of Master of Arts Colorado State University Fort Collins, Colorado.
<https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/transmen-transwomen-china-darkness-resilience/docview/2547435529/se-2>
- 【51】 Zhao, J. (2022). Queer Chinese Media and Pop Culture. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.1213>

- 【 52 】 Bao, H. (2021). *Queer Media in China* (1st ed.). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429340376>
- 【 53 】 Cao, J., & Lu, X. (2014). A Preliminary Exploration of the Gay Movement in Mainland China: Legacy, Transition, Opportunity, and the New Media. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 39(4), 840–848.
<https://doi.org/10.1086/675538>
- 【 54 】 Edu.cn.(Ed)(2018). *Evolution of Internet in China*.<https://www.edu.cn/>
- 【 55 】 China News Service (Ed.) (2009). Large-scale special planning for the 60th anniversary of the Republic of China - China's access to the Internet.
<https://archive.ph/20130101104447/http://big5.chinanews.com.cn:89/special/guoqing/60/2009/06-25/122.shtml>
- 【 56 】 Parzyan, A. (2023). China's Digital Silk Road: Empowering Capabilities for Digital Leadership in Eurasia. In Sahakyan, M.(Ed.), *China and Eurasian Powers in a Multipolar World Order 2.0: Security, Diplomacy, Economy and Cyberspace*. Mher Sahakyan. Routledge
- 【 57 】 Elizabeth, C. (2018). The great firewall of China: Xi Jinping's internet shutdown. *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/jun/29/the-great-firewall-of-china-xi-jinpings-internet-shutdown>
- 【 58 】 Ahern, T. C.; Peck, K., Laycock, M. (1992). The Effects of Teacher Discourse in Computer-Mediated Discussion. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*. 8 (3): 291–309_<https://doi.org/10.2190/HFPW-JYR3-YMBE-0J7D>
- 【 59 】 Jankowski, N. (1996). *The Contours of Multimedia: Recent Technological, Theoretical and Empirical Developments*. University of Luton Press
- 【 60 】 Baym, N. K. (1995). "The emergence of community in computer-mediated communication". In S. G. Jones (ed.). *CyberSociety. Computer-mediated communication and community* (pp 138–163). Sage Publications.

- 【61】 Zappen, J. P., Gurak, L. J., & Doheny-Farina, S. (1997). Rhetoric, community, and cyberspace. *Rhetoric Review*, 15 (2), 400-419.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/465651>
- 【62】 Guo, L. (2005). The Internet changes society and life—Excerpts from the 2005 report of the "Global Internet Project" of the Center for Social Development of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. *China Computer Users*, (47), 25-27.
- 【63】 Zheng, X. (2017). The Research on Influence Factors and Effects of Weibo Communication of Online Celebrity Fashion Brands.
<https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbname=CMFD201702&filename=1017059904.nh>
- 【64】 Freberg, K., Graham, K., McGaughey, K., & Freberg, L. A. (2011). Who are the social media influencers? *A study of public perceptions of personality*. *Public Relations Review*, 37(1), 90–92.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2010.11.001>
- 【65】 Bao, H. (2018). *Queer comrades: Gay identity and tongzhi activism in post-socialist China*. Copenhagen. Nias Press.
- 【66】 Yang, C. (2000). The use of the internet among academic gay communities in Taiwan; an exploratory study. *Information, Communication & Society*. 3(2), 153-172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691180050123686>
- 【67】 Dworkin, S. H., & Yi, H. (2003). LGBT identity, violence, and social justice: The psychological is political. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 25(4), 269-279.
<https://doi.org/10.1023/B:ADCO.0000005526.87218.9f>
- 【68】 Bao, H. (2012) Queering/Querying Cosmopolitanism: Queer Spaces in Shanghai. *Culture unbound*, 97–120.
<https://doi.org/10.3384/cu.2000.1525.12497>.
- 【69】 Kang, Y., & Yang, K. C. C. (2009). Gay and lesbian blogs in China: Rhetoric of reversed silence in cyberspace. *China Media Research*, 5(1).
- 【70】 Wei, W., (2020). The Normalization Project: The Progress and Limitations of Promoting LGBTQ Research and Teaching in Mainland China, *Journal of*

Homosexuality,67(3),335-345.<https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2018.1530883>

3

- 【 71 】 Pacalon, T. (2023). LGBT cyber-activism in China: between censorship and freedom. *Gender in Geopoitics Institute*.
<https://igg-geo.org/?p=14884&lang=en>
- 【 72 】 Liu, M. (2013). Two Gay Men Seeking Two Lesbians: An Analysis of Xinghun (Formality Marriage) ads on China's Tianya.cn. *Sexuality & Culture*,17(3), 494–511. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-012-9164-z>
- 【 73 】 FRA. (2020). Long way to go for LGBTI equality. European Union Publications Office.
<https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2020/eu-lgbti-survey-results>
- 【 74 】 Sabala, S. (2020) *The Perception of LGBTQ Influencers on Social Media*. (Thesis). Rochester Institute of Technology.
<https://repository.rit.edu/theses/10427>
- 【 75 】 Craig, D., Lin, J. & Cunningham, S. (2021). *Wanghong as Social Media Entertainment in China*. Springer International Publishing.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-65376-7>
- 【 76 】 Lin, C. (2018). Reinforcing behaviors of Chinese gay male users on Facebook. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 7 (3), 289-296.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000131>
- 【 77 】 Chan, L. S. (2016). How sociocultural context matters in self-presentation: A comparison of U.S. and Chinese profiles on Jack'd, a mobile dating App for men who have sex with men. *International Journal of Communication*, 10.
- 【 78 】 Choi, E. P. H., Wong, J. Y. H., & Fong, D. Y. T. (2017). The use of social networking applications of smartphone and associated sexual risks in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations: a systematic review. *AIDS Care*, 29(2), 145-155. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540121.2016.1211606>
- 【 79 】 Cui, Z. (2008). Queer China (independent Chinese Documentary) .
<https://www.imdb.com/es/title/tt1516117/>

- 【80】 Tu, J. W., & Lee, T. T. (2014). The Effects of Media Usage and Interpersonal Contacts on the Stereotyping of Lesbians and Gay Men in China. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 61(7), 980–1002. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2014.871904>
- 【 81 】 Luo, Jia (Ed.) (2020). *Is it luxury? Talking LGBT in China*. <https://sogicampaigns.org/portfolio/is-it-a-luxury-talking-lgbt-in-china/>
- 【82】 Ji, Y. (2019). Shutdown of online lesbian community on China's twitter-like Sina Weibo sparks protest. *Global Times*. <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/201904/1145991.shtml>
- 【83】 Huang, S., & Brouwer, D. (2018). Coming out, coming home, coming with: Models of queer sexuality in contemporary China. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, 11 (2), 97-116. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17513057.2017.1414867>
- 【84】 Miller, C. (2016). We can only be healthy if we love ourselves: Queer AIDS NGOs, kinship, and alternative families of care in China. *AIDS Care*, 28 (4), 51-60. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540121.2016.1195481>
- 【85】 Liu, J. X., & Choi, K. (2006). Experiences of social discrimination among men who have sex with men in Shanghai, China. *AIDS and Behavior*, 10,25-33. [10.1007/s10461-006-9123-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-006-9123-5)
- 【86】 Kama, A. (2017). Glocalization trajectories of LGBT identities and politics in China: A review of Queer/Tongzhi China: New perspectives on research, activism, and media cultures. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 14(2), 237-240. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2016.1264914>
- 【 87 】 Rössel, J., Schenk, P., & Weingartner, S. (2017). Cultural consumption. *Emerging trends in the social and behavioral sciences* (Vol.1, p.14).
- 【88】 Turel, O.; Serenko, A.; Bontis, N. (2010). User acceptance of hedonic digital artifacts: A theory of consumption values perspective. *Information and Management*, 47, 53–59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2009.10.002>

- 【89】 Guerzoni, M.; Nuccio, M. (2014). Music consumption at the dawn of the music industry: The rise of a cultural fad. *Journal of Cultural Economics*. 38, 145–171. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44289286>
- 【90】 Chwialkowska, A.; Bhatti, W.A.; Glowik, M. (2020). The influence of cultural values on pro-environmental behavior. *Journal of Cleaner Production*. 268, 122305. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.122305>.
- 【91】 Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- 【92】 Feng, Y. (2012). Empirical analysis of cultural consumption of urban residents in Beijing [Doctoral dissertation, Beijing Jiaotong University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.
- 【93】 Featherstone, M. (1991) *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, London, Sage.
- 【94】 Storey, John (1999) *Cultural Consumption and Everyday Life*, London, Arnold.
- 【95】 DiMaggio, Paul (1994) ‘Social stratification, life-style, and social cognition’, in D.Grusky (Ed.), *Social Stratification*(pp. 458–465.).Westview.
- 【96】 Sobel, Michael (1981) *Lifestyle*, New York, Academic Press.
- 【97】 De Graaf, N.D., De Graaf, P.M., and Kraaykamp, G. (2000). Parental cultural capital and educational attainment in the Netherlands: a refinement of the cultural capital perspective, *Sociology of Education*, 73(2), 92–111.<https://doi.org/10.2307/2673239>
- 【98】 Toivonen, T. (1992). The melting away of class differences? Consumption differences between employee groups in Finland 1955–1985, *Social Indicators Research*, 26(3), 277–302. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00286563>
- 【99】 Ritzer, G. (1999) *Enchanting a Disenchanted World: Revolutionizing the Means of Consumption*. Pine Forge Press
- 【100】 Wang, A., Dang, S., Luo, W., & Ji, K. (2021). Cultural Consumption and Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices Regarding Waste Separation Management in China. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19010338>

- 【101】 Wang, C. L., & Lin, X. (2009). Migration of Chinese Consumption Values: Traditions, Modernization, and Cultural Renaissance. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 88(Suppl 3), 399–409. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0308-5>
- 【102】 Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59–68. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003>
- 【103】 Bryer, T. A., & Zavattaro, S. (2011). Social media and public administration: Theoretical dimensions and introduction to symposium. *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, 33(3), 325–340. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41427128>
- 【104】 Mitrou. (2014). Social Media Profiling: A Panopticon or Omniopicon Tool? *Proceedings of the 6th Conference of the Surveillance Studies Network*. (pp. 1–15). Barcelona, Spain.
- 【105】 Bei, G. (2017). Social Media in Contemporary China: A Transformative Public Sphere? *International Conference on Economics, Social Science, Arts, Education and Management Engineering*. <https://doi.org/10.2991/essaeme-17.2017.344>
- 【106】 Kaye, B. K. (1998). Uses and gratifications of the World Wide Web: From couch potato to Web potato. *The New Jersey Journal of Communication* 6(1), 21–40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15456879809367333>
- 【107】 Stafford, T. F., & Gonier, D. (2004). What Americans like about being online. *Communications of the ACM* 47(11), 107–112. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1029496.102950>
- 【108】 Urista, M. A., Dong, Q., & Day, K. D. (2009). Explaining why young adults use MySpace and Facebook through the uses and gratifications theory. *Human Communication Research*, 12(2), 215–229.
- 【109】 Barker, V. (2009). Older adolescents' motivations for social network site use: The influence of gender, group identity, and collective self-esteem. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior: The Impact of the Internet, Multimedia and Virtual Reality on Behavior and Society*, 12(2), 209–213. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cpb.2008.0228>

- 【110】 Chen, G. M. (2011). Tweet this: A uses and gratifications perspective on how active Twitter use gratifies a need to connect with others. *Computers in Human Behavior* 27(2), 755–762. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2010.10.023>.
- 【111】 Joinson, A. N. (2008). “Looking at”, “looking up”, or “keeping up with” people? Motives and uses of Facebook. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems CHI 2008* (pp. 1027–1036). New York: ACM.
- 【112】 Bumgarner, B. A. (2007). You have been poked: Exploring the uses and gratifications of Facebook among emerging adults. *First Monday* 12(11). <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v12i11.2026>
- 【113】 Sheldon, K. M., Abad, N., & Hinsch, C. (2011). A two-way process view of Facebook use and relatedness need-satisfaction: Disconnection drives use and connection rewards it. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 100(4), 766–775. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022407>. PMID: 21280967.
- 【114】 Grieve, R., Indian, M., Witteveen, K., Anne Tolan, G., & Marrington, J. (2013). Face-to-face or Facebook: Can social connectedness be derived online? *Computers in Human Behavior*. 29(3), 604–609. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.11.017>
- 【115】 Kim, J., & Lee, J.-E. R. (2011). The Facebook paths to happiness: Effects of the number of Facebook friends and self-presentation on subjective well-being. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking* 14(6), 359–364. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2010.0374>
- 【116】 Wright, K. B., Rosenberg, J., Egbert, N., Ploeger, N. A., Bernard, D. R., & King, S. (2013). Communication competence, social support, and depression among college students: a model of Facebook and face-to-face support network influence. *Journal of Health Communication* 18(1), 41–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10810730.2012.688250>
- 【117】 Wright, K. B. (2012). Emotional support and perceived stress among college students using Facebook.com: An exploration of the relationship between

- source perceptions and emotional support. *Communication Research Reports* 29(3), 175–184. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08824096.2012.695957>
- 【118】 Holtz, B., Smock, A., & Reyes-Gastelum, D. (2015). Connected motherhood: Social support for moms and moms-to-be on Facebook. *Telemedicine Journal and E-Health* 21(5), 415–421. <https://doi.org/10.1089/tmj.2014.0118>
- 【119】 Hayes, R. A., Carr, C. T., & Wohn, D. Y. (2016). It’s the audience: Differences in social support across social media. *Social Media + Society* 2(4), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305116678894>
- 【120】 Blight, M. G., Jagiello, K., & Ruppel, E. K. (2015). “Same stuff different day”: A mixed method study of support seeking on Facebook. *Computers in Human Behavior* 53, 366– 373. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.07.029>.
- 【121】 Li, X., Chen, W., & Popiel, P. (2015). What happens on Facebook stays on Facebook? The implications of Facebook interaction for perceived, receiving, and giving social support. *Computers in Human Behavior* 51, 106–113. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.04.066>.
- 【122】 Stepanikova, I., Nie, N. H., & He, X. (2010). Time on the Internet at home, loneliness, and life satisfaction: Evidence from panel time-diary data. *Computers in Human Behavior* 26(3), 329–338. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2009.11.002>.
- 【123】 Church, S. H. (2013). Digital gravescapes: Digital memorializing on Facebook. *The Information Society*, 29(3), 184–189. 10.1080/01972243.2013.777309
- 【124】 Lingel, J. (2013). The digital remains: Social media and practices of online grief. *The Information Society*, 29(3), 190–195. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01972243.2013.777311>
- 【125】 Guallar, J., Suau, J., Ruiz-Caballero, C., Sáez, A. & Masip, P. (2016). *Re-dissemination of news and public debate on social networks*,. EPI, 25(3), 1699–2407. <http://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2016.may.05>
- 【126】 Fletcher, R. & Nielsen, R. K. (2018). Are people incidentally exposed to news on social media? A comparative analysis. *New Media and Society*, 20(7), 2450– 2468. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817724170>

- 【127】 Lin, J.-H. T. (2019). Strategic Social Grooming: Emergent Social Grooming Styles on Facebook, Social Capital and Well-Being. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 24(3), 90–107. <http://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmz002>
- 【128】 Phua, J., Jin, S. V. & Kim, J. (Jay). (2017). Uses and gratifications of social networking sites for bridging and bonding social capital: A comparison of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 72, 115–122. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.02.041>
- 【129】 Anspach, N. M., Jennings, J. T. & Arceneaux, K. (2019). A little bit of knowledge: Facebook's News Feed and self-perceptions of knowledge. *Research & Politics*, 6(1), 205316801881618. <http://doi.org/10.1177/2053168018816189>
- 【130】 Carlson, M. (2016). Embedded Links, Embedded Meanings. Social media commentary and news sharing as mundane media criticism. *Journalism Studies*, 17(7), 915–924. <http://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2016.1169210>
- 【131】 Noguera-Vivo, J. M. (2018). You get what you give: Sharing as a new radical challenge for journalism. *Communication & Society*, 31(4), 147–158. <http://doi.org/10.15581/003.31.4.147-158>
- 【132】 Masip, P., Ruiz-Caballero, C. & Suau, J. (2019). Active audiences and social discussion on the digital public sphere. *El Profesional de La Información*, 28(2). <http://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2019.mar.04>
- 【133】 Bekafto, M. A. & McBride, A. (2013). Who Tweets About Politics? *Social Science Computer Review*, 31(5), 625–643. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0894439313490405>
- 【134】 Said-Hung, Elías & Segado-Boj, Francisco (2018). Social Media Mobilization in Venezuela: A Case Study. *Social and Economic Studies*, 67 (4), 235-259 <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.16949.93924>
- 【135】 Tufekci, Z. & Wilson, C. (2012). Social Media and the Decision to Participate i in Political Protest: Observations From Tahrir Square. *Journal of*

363–379.<http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01629.x>

- 【136】 Dubois, E. & Blank, G. (2018a). The echo chamber is overstated: the moderating effect of political interest and diverse media. *Information, Communication & Society*, 21(5), 729–745.
<http://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2018.1428656>
- 【137】 Bakshy, E., Messing, S., & Adamic, L. A. (2015). Exposure to ideologically diverse news and opinion on Facebook. *Science*, 348(6239): 1130–1132.
- 【136】 Dubois, E. & Blank, G. (2018a). The echo chamber is overstated: the moderating effect of political interest and diverse media. *Information, Communication & Society*, 21(5), 729–745.
<http://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2018.1428656>
- 【137】 Bakshy, E., Messing, S., & Adamic, L. A. (2015). Exposure to ideologically diverse news and opinion on Facebook. *Science*, 348(6239): 1130–1132.
10.1126/science.aaa1160
- 【138】 Gil de Zúñiga, H., Jung, N., & Valenzuela, S. (2012). Social Media Use for News and Individuals' Social Capital, Civic Engagement and Political Participation. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 17(3), 319–336. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2012.01574.x>
- 【139】 Priyadarshini, I., Sahu, S. & Kumar, R.(2023). A transfer learning approach for detecting offensive and hate speech on social media platforms. *Multimed Tools Appl.* 82, 27473–27499. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11042-023-14481-3>
- 【140】 Sunstein, C. (1995). Democracy and the problem of free speech. *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 11(4), 58-72.
- 【141】 Cammaerts, B. (2005) 'ICT-usage among Transnational Social Movements in the Networked Society – To Organise, to Mobilise and to Debate', in R. Silverstone (ed.) *Media, Technology and Everyday Life in Europe: From Information to Communication*, pp. 53–72. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- 【142】 Dahlberg, L. (2001). *The Internet and Democratic Discourse: Exploring the*

Prospects of Online Deliberative Forums Extending the Public Sphere,
Information, Communication & Society 4(4): 615–33.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13691180110097030>

- 【143】 Dean, J. (2003). Why the Net is not a Public Sphere, *Constellations* 10(1): 95–112. 10.1111/1467-8675.00315
- 【144】 Habermas, Jürgen.(1991). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Translated by Thomas Burger. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- 【145】 Dewey, John (1927). *The Public and Its Problems*. Alan Swallow.
- 【146】 Dahlgren, P. (2003). Reconfiguring civic culture in the new media milieu. In J. Comer & D. Pels (Eds.), *Media and political style: Essays on representation and civic culture* (pp. 151-170). London: Sage.
- 【147】 Castells, M. (2008). The New Public Sphere: Global Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance. *ANNALS, AAPPS*, 78-93.
- 【148】 Loader, B. D.& Dan Mercea. (2011). Networking Democracy? Social Media Innovations and Participatory Politics. *Information, Communication and Society* 14(6):757–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2011.592648>
- 【149】 Leong, C., Pan, S. L., Bahri, S., & Fauzi, A. (2018). Social media empowerment in social movements: power activation and power accrual in digital activism. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 28(2), 173–204. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0960085X.2018.1512944>
- 【150】 Cohen, J., & Fung, A. (2023). Democratic responsibility in the digital public sphere. *Constellations* (Oxford, England), 30(1), 92–97. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12670>
- 【151】 Bail, C. (2021). *Breaking the social media prism*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press
- 【152】 Bennett, L. and Pfetsch, B. (2018) Rethinking Political Communication in a Time of Disrupted Public Spheres. *Journal of Communication*, 68, 243-253. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqx017>
- 【153】 Rhodes, S. C. (2021). Filter Bubbles, Echo Chambers, and Fake News: How

- Social Media Conditions Individuals to Be Less Critical of Political Misinformation. *Political Communication*, 39(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2021.1910887>
- 【154】 Merten, L., N. Metoui, M. Makhortykh, D. Trilling, and J. Moeller. (2022). News won't find me? Exploring inequalities in social media news use with tracking data. *International Journal of Communication*.16. 1127–1147.
- 【155】 Fraser, N. (1990). Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. *Social Text* .25,56–80. <https://doi.org/10.2307/466240>
- 【156】 Martin Hand (2020). Photography meets social media: Image making and sharing in a continually networked present. Routledge.<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003103974-23/photography-meets-social-media-martin-hand>
- 【157】 Papacharissi, Z. (2002). The virtual sphere. The internet as a public sphere. *New Media & Society*, 4(1), 9–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614440222226244>
- 【158】 Marwick, A.E. (2015). Instafame: Luxury selfies in the attention economy. *Public Culture*.27(1),137–60. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-2798379>
- 【159】 Malafaia, C., and T. Meriluoto. (2022). Making a deal with the devil? Portuguese and Finnish activists' everyday negotiations on the value of social media. *Social Movement Studies*, 1–17. 10.1080/14742837.2022.2070737
- 【160】 Adut, A. (2018). *Reign of appearances: Misery and splendor of the public sphere*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316848395>
- 【161】 Yang, G. & Calhoun, C. (2007). Media, Civil Society, and the Rise of a Green Public Sphere in China. *China Information* 21 (2): 211–236. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0920203X07079644>
- 【162】 Sima, Y. (2011). Grassroots Environmental Activism and the Internet: Constructing a Green Public Sphere in China. *Asian Studies Review* 35 (4): 477–497 <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2011.628007>

- 【163】 Chen, S. X. (2020b). Resistance in Digital China: The Southern Weekly Incident. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- 【164】 YANG, G. (2009). The Power of the Internet in China: Citizen Activism Online. Columbia University Press.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/yang14420>
- 【165】 Chen, S. X. (2020a). Relational Interaction and Embodiment: Conceptualizing Meanings of LGBTQ+ Activism in Digital China. *Communication and the Public* 5 (3–4): 134–148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2057047320969438>
- 【166】 Tong, Y. & Lei, S. (2013). War of Position and Microblogging in China. *Journal of Contemporary China* 22 (80): 292–311.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2012.734084>
- 【167】 Yang, Y. (2019). “Bargaining with the State: The Empowerment of Chinese Sexual Minorities/ LGBT in the Social Media Era.” *Journal of Contemporary China* 28 (118): 662–677 <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2018.1557943>
- 【168】 Awoyele, D.A.A.K. & Oyewole, J.A. (2024). The impact of social media on identity formation and community building in the modern generation. *Advance Journal of Education and Social Sciences*.9(12), 2237–1470 Retrieved from <https://aspjournals.org/ajess/index.php/ajess/article/view/184>
- 【169】 Carrasco, M., & Kerne, A. (2018). Queer Visibility: Supporting LGBT+ Selective Visibility on Social Media. CHI 2018 - Extended Abstracts of the 2018 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems: Engage with CHI, 2018-, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3173574.3173824>
- 【170】 Halperin, David M. (2012). How to be gay. Cambridge, Massachusetts. 441
- 【171】 Orzechowicz, D. (2010), "Fierce bitches on Tranny Lane: gender, sexuality, culture, and the closet in theme park parades", Williams, C.L. and Dellinger, K. (Ed.) *Gender and Sexuality in the Workplace (Research in the Sociology of Work, Vol. 20)*, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, Leeds, pp. 227-252. [https://doi.org/10.1108/S0277-2833\(2010\)0000020013](https://doi.org/10.1108/S0277-2833(2010)0000020013)

- 【172】 Rubin, Gayle S. (2011). *Deviations a Gayle Rubin reader*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 149–154. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11smmmj>
- 【173】 Duggan, L. (2003). *The twilight of equality?: neoliberalism, cultural politics, and the attack on democracy*. Boston : Beacon Press
- 【174】 Warner, M., (2011). *Fear of a queer planet: queer politics and social theory*. University of Minnesota Press.
- 【175】 Rubin, Gayle S. (2012) Postscript to “Thinking Sex: Notes for a: Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality””. *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader*, New York, USA: Duke University Press, pp. 190-193. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822394068-009>
- 【176】 Rich, A. (1982). *Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence*. Antelope Publications.
- 【177】 Connell, C. (2015). *School’s Out: Gay and Lesbian Teachers in the Classroom* (1st ed.). University of California Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt9qh2tp>
- 【178】 Rubin, G. S., Parker, R., & Aggleton, P. (1999). Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality. In *Culture, Society and Sexuality A Reader* (1st ed., pp. 143–178). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203020173-13>
- 【179】 Laurent, E. (2005). “Sexuality and human rights: an Asian perspective.” *Journal of Homosexuality*. 48(3-4):163-225. doi: 10.1300/J082v48n03_09.
- 【180】 Wei, W. & Yan, Y. (2021). Rainbow parents and the familial model of tongzhi (LGBT) activism in contemporary China. *Chinese Sociological Review*, 53 (5), 451–472. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21620555.2021.1981129>
- 【181】 Yan, Y. (2010). The Chinese path to individualization. *British Journal of Sociology*, 61 (3), 489–512. [10.1111/j.1468-4446.2010.01323.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2010.01323.x)
- 【182】 Liu, I. Y. (2018). The Chinese dream, neoliberalism, and international legal ideology. *Chinese Journal of Global Governance*, 4, 81–121. <https://doi.org/10.1163/23525207-12340033>

- 【183】 Kong, Travis S.K. (2011). *Chinese Male Homosexualities: Memba, Tongzhi and Golden Boy*. Routledge
- 【184】 Stalder, F. (2018). *The Digital Condition*, John Wiley & Sons, *The Digital Condition. European Journal of Communication*, 33(5), 575-576.
<https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aaa1160>
- 【185】 Kemper, J. & Kolkman, D. (2019) Transparent to whom? No algorithmic accountability without a critical audience, *Information, Communication & Society*, 22(14), 2081-2096, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2018.1477967>
- 【186】 Gallagher, J. R. (2020). The Ethics of Writing for Algorithmic Audiences. *Computers and Composition*, 57, 102583-.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2020.102583>
- 【187】 Gillespie, T. (2014). The Relevance of Algorithms. In T. Gillespie, P. J. Boczkowski, & K. A. Foot (Eds.), *Media Technologies* (pp. 167–194). The MIT Press
- 【188】 van Dijck, J., Poell, T., & de Waal, M. (2018). *The platform society*. Oxford University Press.
- 【189】 Howells, N. (2021) Training the TikTok algorithm. *Medium*. Retrieved from April 13, 2025, from
https://medium.com/@natalie_2231/how-i-made-my-tiktok-feed-less-racist-c0851c100809
- 【190】 Latzer, M., Hollnbuchner, K., Just, N., & Saurwein, F. (2016). The economics of algorithmic selection on the Internet. In J. Bauer & M. Latzer (Eds.), *Handbook on the Economics of the Internet*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- 【191】 Li, H., Sun, Z., & Xi, J. (2025). Unveiling civil servants' preferences: Human-machine matching vs. regulating algorithms in algorithmic decision-making—Insights from a survey experiment. *Government Information Quarterly*, 42(1), 102009-.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2025.102009>
- 【192】 García, M. (2016). Racist in the machine: The disturbing implications of algorithmic bias. *World Policy Journal*, 33(4), 111-117.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26781452>

- 【193】 Ananny, M. (2016). Toward an ethics of algorithms: Convening, observation, probability, and timeliness. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 41(1), 93-117. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016224391560652>
- 【194】 Introna, L. D. (2016). Algorithms, governance, and governmentality: On governing academic writing. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 41(1), 17-49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0162243915587360>
- 【195】 Cho, A. (2018). Default publicness: Queer youth of color, social media, and being outed by the machine. *New Media & Society*, 20(9), 3183-3200. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817744784>
- 【196】 Werbin, K. C., Lipton, M. & Bowman, M.J. (2017). The contextual integrity of the closet: Privacy, data mining and outing Facebook's algorithmic logics. *Queer Studies in Media & Popular Culture*, 2(1), 29-47. https://doi.org/10.1386/qsmc.2.1.29_1
- 【197】 Bivens, R., & Haimson, O. L. (2016). Baking gender into social media design: How platforms shape categories for users and advertisers. *Social Media + Society*, 2(4), <https://doi.org/2056305116672486>.
- 【198】 Lingel, J., & Golub, A. (2015). In face on Facebook: Brooklyn's drag community and sociotechnical practices of online communication. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 20(5), 536-553. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12125>
- 【199】 Albury, K., Dietzel, C., Pym, T., Vivienne, S., & Cook, T. (2020). Not your unicorn: Trans dating app users' negotiations of personal safety and sexual health. *Health Sociology Review*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14461242.2020.1851610>
- 【200】 Blackwell, L., Dimond, J., Schoenebeck, S., & Lampe, C. (2017). Classification and its consequences for online harassment. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, 1, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3134659>

- 【201】 Anderson, A., & Roth, A. L. (2020). Queer erasure: Internet browsing can be biased against LGBTQ people, new exclusive research shows. *Index on Censorship*, 49(1), 75-77. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306422020917088>
- 【202】 Fredenburg, J. N. (2020). YouTube as an Ally of Convenience: The Platform's Building and Breaking with the LGBTQ+ Community,[Master's Thesis, Georgetown University].
- 【203】 Southerton, C., Marshall, D., Aggleton, P., Rasmussen, M. L., & Cover, R. (2020). Social media, content classification and LGBTQ sexual citizenship. *New Media & Society*, 23(5), 920-938. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820904362>
- 【204】 Wilkinson, W. W., & Berry, S. D. (2020). Together they are Troy and Chase: Who supports demonetization of gay content on YouTube? *Psychology of Popular Media*, 9(2), 224. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000228>
- 【205】 Zheng, Hong, (2018). Research on the Influence and Guidance of Internet Red Phenomenon on College Students' Thought and Behavior. *Retrieved from* <https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbname=CMFD201901&filename=1018271811.nh>
- 【206】 Liu, P. (2022). The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Choosing Fast-Moving Consumer Goods Among Generation Z in China. In Proceedings of FIKUSZ Symposium for Young Researchers (pp. 193–220).
- 【207】 Freberg, K., Graham, K., McGaughey, K., & Freberg, L. A. (2011). Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality. *Public Relations Review*, 37(1), 90–92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2010.11.001>
- 【208】 Liu, M. (2013). Two gay men seeking two lesbians: An analysis of Xinghun (formality. marriage) ads on China's Tianya.cn. *Sexuality & Culture*, 17, 494-511. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-012-9164-z>
- 【209】 Kim, D.Y., & Kim, H. (2020). Influencer advertising on social media: The multiple inference model on influencer-product congruence and sponsorship

- disclosure. *Journal of Business Research*.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.02.020>
- 【210】 Gross J. & von Wangenheim. F. (2022). Influencer Marketing on Instagram: Empirical Research on Social Media Engagement with Sponsored Posts. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 22(3), 289-310.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2022.2123724>
- 【211】 Fan, F. (2021). Exploratory study about audience response to product endorsements by online DIY celebrities and traditional celebrities. *Young Consumers*, 22(2), 169-184. <https://doi.org/10.1108/yc-10-2020-1224>.
- 【212】 Hung, K. (2020). Celebrity and influencer in a fan economy: unfolding the fans' roles in enhancing endorsement effect. *In Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Media Fandom* (pp. 323-340).
<https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-3323-9.ch018>.
- 【213】 Djafarova, E. & Rushworth C. (2017) . Exploring the credibility of online celebrities' Instagram profiles in influencing the purchase decisions of young female users. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 68, 1-7.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.11.009>
- 【214】 Lei, J. (2018). Research on the Negative Effects and Countermeasures of "Internet Celebrities" on College Students' Values. *Retrieved from* <https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbname=CMFD201802&filename=1018990106.nh>
- 【215】 Zhu, S.Y. & Wang, X.Q. (2020), "Investigating KOLs' influence on luxury brands' advertising strategies in China", *International Journal of Social Science and Education Research*, 3(9), 100-111,
[https://doi.org/10.6918/IJOSSER.202009_3\(9\).0015](https://doi.org/10.6918/IJOSSER.202009_3(9).0015).
- 【216】 Xu, J. & Zhao, X. (2019). Changing platformativity of China's female wanghong: from anni baobei to zhang dayi. *Female Celebrities in Contemporary Chinese Society*, Springer, Singapore.

- 【217】 Balabanis, G. & Chatzopoulou, E. (2019), Under the influence of a blogger: the role of information-seeking goals and issue involvement , *Psychology & Marketing*, 36(4), 342-353. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21182>.
- 【218】 Ladhari, R., Massa, E. & Skandrani, H. (2020), “YouTube video bloggers’ popularity and influence: the roles of homophily, emotional attachment, and expertise”, *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.102027>.
- 【219】 Chen, K.J., Lin, J.S. & Shan, Y. (2021). Influencer marketing in China: the roles of parasocial identification, consumer engagement, and inferences of manipulative intent. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 20(6), 1436-1448. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1945>.
- 【220】 Chen, T.Y., Yeh, T.L. & Lee, F.Y. (2021). The impact of internet celebrity characteristics on followers’ impulse purchase behavior: the mediation of attachment and parasocial interaction. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 15(3), 483-50. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jrim-09-2020-0183>.
- 【221】 Martnez, C. and Olsson, T. (2019). Making sense of YouTubers: how swedish children construct and negotiate the YouTuber misslisibell as a girl celebrity. *Journal of Children and Media*, 13(1), 36-52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17482798.2018.1517656>
- 【222】 Burson, M.(2011). Influential Internet Users Rely on Company Web Sites as They Spread Word of Brands, Products and Services. Retrieved from <http://www.etlentials.com/Press Release.pdf>
- 【223】 Khamis, S., Ang, L., & Welling, R. (2017). Self-branding, “micro-celebrity” and the rise of Social Media Influencers. *Celebrity Studies*, 8(2), 191–208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392397.2016.1218292>
- 【224】 Lu, Xi Yan & Yu, Peng Liang.(2022).Research on the influence of self-media opinion leader recommendation on purchase intention.*Technology communication*, (24),65-69. <https://doi.org/10.16607/j.cnki.1674-6708.2022.24.025>.

- 【225】 Jin, S.V., Muqaddam, A., & Ryu, E. (2019). Instafamous and social media influencer marketing. *Marketing, Intelligence & Planning*. 37 (5), 567–579.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-09-2018-0375>
- 【226】 Lou, C. & Yuan, S. (2019). Influencer marketing: how message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 19 (1), 58–73.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2018.1533501>.
- 【227】 Nouri, M. (2018). The Power of Influence: Traditional Celebrity vs Social Media Influencer. *Pop Culture Intersections*. Retrieved from
https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/engl_176/32
- 【228】 Li, Z., & Lin, Y. (2017). The impact of Internet celebrity phenomenon on teenagers. *Young Journalists*, 28-29. Retrieved from
<http://www.qnjz.com/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=show&catid=14&id=26682>
- 【229】 Zhang, Z. (2017). Deconstruction and reconstruction - analysis of the "Internet celebrity" phenomenon and related countermeasures and suggestions. *Educational Media Research Research*, 25-27.
- 【230】 Miao, W. (2012). The negative impact of the "Internet celebrity" phenomenon on college students and its guidance strategies. *Journal of Shanghai Youth Management Cadre College*.
- 【231】 Wu, H. (2018). Beware of the vulgar tendency behind the phenomenon of "Internet celebrities": Taking "Sister Feng" and "Brother Sharp" as examples. *Theory of Science*,
<https://www.doc88.com/p-24261917995751.html?format=PDF>
- 【232】 Xiu, D. (2016). Analyzing the audience's psychology through the phenomenon of Internet celebrities. *Decision and Information*, Retrieved from
<https://www.doc88.com/p-91999487794618.html?format=PDF>
- 【233】 Slattery, P., Vidgen, R., & Finnegan, P. (2020). Persuasion: An Analysis and Common Frame of Reference for IS Research. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 46.

<https://doi.org/10.17705/1CAIS.04603>

- 【234】 Derin, T., Sari Nursafira, M., Saltri Yudar, R., Sari Gowasa, N., & Hamuddin, B. (2020). Persuasive Communication: What Do Existing Literature Tells Us About Persuasive Communication Among Students? *Utamax: Journal of Ultimate Research and Trends in Education*, 10. <https://doi.org/31849/utamax.v2i1.3468>
- 【235】 Shahzalal, Md. & Font, X. (2018). Influencing altruistic tourist behaviour: Persuasive communication to affect attitudes and self - efficacy beliefs. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 20, 326-334. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2184>
- 【236】 Encyclopedia of Human Behavior (2nd Ed.)(2012). *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*, 96-102.
- 【237】 Bojic, A. (2022). How to make persuasive communication effective. *Pumble*. Retrieved from <https://pumble.com/blog/persuasive-communication/>
- 【238】 Miller, K. (2005). *Communication Theories, Perspectives, Processes, and Contexts*. McGraw-Hill.
- 【239】 Mulyana, D. (2017). *Communication Studies an Introduction* (revised). Rosdakarya youth.
- 【240】 Lister, K., Coughlan, T., & Owen, N. (2020). Disability’ or ‘Additional study needs’? Identifying students’ language preferences in disability-related communications. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 35(5), 620-635. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2020.1743409>
- 【241】 Levy, S., & Gvili, Y. (2020). Online shopper engagement in price negotiation: the roles of culture, involvement and eWOM. *International Journal of Advertising*, 39(2), 232-257. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2019.1612621>
- 【242】 Ohanian ,R. (1990). Construction and validation of a scale to measure celebrity endorsers’ perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. *Journal of Advertising* , 19(3), 39–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1990.10673191>

- 【243】 Wu, P.C.S. & Wang, Y. (2011) The influences of electronic word-of-mouth message appeal and message source credibility on brand attitude. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 23(4): 448–472. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13555851111165020>
- 【244】 Zha, X., Yang, H., Yan, Y., Liu, K., & Huang, C. (2018). Exploring the effect of social media information quality, source credibility and reputation on informational fit-to-task: moderating role of focused immersion. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 79, 227–237. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.10.038>
- 【245】 Erdogan, B.Z.(1999). Celebrity endorsement: A literature review. *Journal of marketing management*, 15(4), 291-314. <https://doi.org/10.1362/026725799784870379>
- 【246】 Umeogu, B.(2012). Source credibility: A philosophical analysis. *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 2, 112-115. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojpp.2012.22017>
- 【247】 Ohanian, R. (1991). The impact of celebrity spokespersons' perceived image on consumers' intention to purchase. *Journal of advertising Research*, 31(1), 46–54.
- 【248】 Chao, P., Wührer, G. & Werani, T.(2005), Celebrity and foreign brand name as moderators of country-of-origin effects, *International Journal of Advertising*, 24(2),173-192. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2005.11072913>
- 【249】 Deshpandé, R. & Stayman, D.M., (1994). A tale of two cities: Distinctiveness theory and advertising effectiveness. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 31(1), 57-64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224379403100105>
- 【250】 Pornpitakpan, C. (2002). The effect of adaptors' race and the cultural adaptation on attraction: Americans adapting to Thais, *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 14(1), 59-72.
- 【251】 Spry, A., Pappu, R. & Bettina Cornwell, T. (2011). Celebrity endorsement, brand credibility and brand equity. *European Journal of Marketing*, 45(6), 882- 909. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090561111119958>

- 【252】 Eisend, M. & Langner, T., (2010). Immediate and delayed advertising effects of celebrity endorsers' attractiveness and expertise. *International journal of advertising*, 29(4), 527-546. <https://doi.org/10.2501/s0265048710201336>
- 【253】 Chao, P., Wührer, G. & Werani, T. (2005). Celebrity and foreign brand name as moderators of country-of-origin effects, *International Journal of Advertising*, 24(2),173-192. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2005.11072913>
- 【254】 Tingchi Liu, M., Huang, Y., & Minghua, J. (2007), Relations among attractiveness of endorsers, match-up, and purchase intention in sport marketing in China, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 24(6), 358-365. <https://doi.org/10.1108/07363760710822945>
- 【255】 Reingen, P.H. & Kernan, J.B. (1993). Social perception and interpersonal influence: Some consequences of the physical attractiveness stereotype in a personal selling setting, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 2(1),25-38. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1057-7408\(08\)80073-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1057-7408(08)80073-3)
- 【256】Massi, M., Piancatelli, C., Vocino, A., & Rojas-Méndez, J. I. (2024). Making it real on social media: exploring authenticity strategies for sport and fitness influencers. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 32(8), 1376–1397. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2024.2341887>
- 【257】 Kleut, J., Pavlíčková, T., Picone, I., De Ridder, S., Romic, B. & Hartley, J.M. (2018) . Emerging trends in small acts of audience engagement and interruptions of content flows. In R. Das & B.Ytre-Arne (Eds) *The Future of Audiences* (pp123-140). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan
- 【258】 Erdogan, B.Z., Baker, M.J. & Tagg, S., (2001). Selecting celebrity endorsers: The practitioner's perspective. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 41(3), 39-48 <https://doi.org/10.2501/JAR-41-3-39-48>
- 【259】Fragale, A.R & Heath, C.(2004). Evolving informational credentials: The (mis) attribution of believable facts to credible sources. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30(2): 225-236. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167203259933>

- 【 260 】 Friedman, H.H., Santeramo, M.J. & Traina, A. (1978). Correlates of trustworthiness for celebrities. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 6(4), 291-299. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02732313>
- 【261】 Navarro, C., Moreno, A., Molleda, J. C., Khalil, N., & Verhoeven, P. (2020). The challenge of new gatekeepers for public relations. A comparative analysis of the role of social media influencers for European and Latin American professionals. *Public Relations Review*, 46(2), 101881. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2020.101881>
- 【262】 Monge-Benito, S., Elorriaga-Illera, A., & Olabarri-Fernandez, E. (2020). YouTube celebrity endorsement: Audience evaluation of source attributes and response to sponsored content. A case study of influencer Verdeliss. *Communication & Society*, 33(3), 149–166. <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.33.3.149-166>
- 【263】 Terrelle, M. (2016) . Why influencer marketing doesn't work when brands force it. *Medium*. Retrieved from February 19, 2020, from <https://medium.com/the-importanceofbeingearnest/why-influencer-marketing-doesnt-work-thoughts-from-aninfluencermarketing-expertf498c83c609a> .
- 【264】 Griffith, E. (2015) . Brands are using social media more than ever, and users are ignoring them more than ever, *Fortune*. Retrieved from <http://fortune.com/2015/08/25/social-media-brands-ignore/>
- 【265】 McGuire, W. J. (1985). Attitudes and attitude change. In G. Lindzey & E. Aronson (Eds.), *Handbook of social psychology* (3rd ed., Vol. 2, pp. 233–346). Random House.
- 【266】 Singer, B.D. (1983). The case for using 'real people' in advertising. *Business Quarterly*, 48(4), 32-37.
- 【267】 Baker, M.J. & Churchill Jr, G.A., (1977). The impact of physically attractive models on advertising evaluations. *Journal of Marketing research*, 14(4) , 538-555. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224377701400401>

- 【 268 】 Debevec, K. & Kernan, J.B. (1984). More evidence on the effects of a presenter's attractiveness some cognitive, affective, and behavioral consequences. *Advances in Consumer Research* (Vol.11, pp 127-132).
- 【269】 Cohen, J.B. & Golden, E. (1972). Informational social influence and product evaluation, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 56(1), 54-59.
- 【270】 Maddux, J.E. & Rogers, R.W. (1980). Effects of source expertness, physical attractiveness, and supporting arguments on persuasion: A case of brains over beauty, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39(2),235-244.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.39.2.235>
- 【 271 】 Lord, K.R. & Putrevu, S. (2009), Informational and Transformational Responses to Celebrity Endorsements, *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, 31(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10641734.2009.10505253>
- 【272】 Langmeyer, L., & Shank, M. (1994). Managing beauty: Products and people. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 3(3), 27–39.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/10610429410067414>
- 【273】 Kok Wei, K., & Li, W.Y. (2013). Measuring the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer behavioral intentions: A study of Malaysian consumers. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 14(3), 2–22. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-14-03-2013-B002>
- 【274】 De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017). Marketing through Instagram influencers: the impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude. *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(5), 798–828. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035>
- 【275】Batra, R., Myers, J.G., & Aaker, D.A. (1995) , Advertising management (5th ed.), Prentice Hal.
- 【276】 Aaker, J.L. (1997), Dimensions of Brand Personality, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(3),347-356. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022243797034003>

- 【277】 Speck, P.S., Schumann, D.W.& Thompson, C., (1988) . Celebrity endorsements-scripts, schema and roles: theoretical framework and preliminary tests. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 15 (1) , 68-76.
- 【278】 Biswas, D., Biswas, A. & Das, N., (2006). The differential effects of celebrity and expert endorsements on consumer risk perceptions. The role of consumer knowledge, perceived congruency, and product technology orientation. *Journal of advertising*, 35(2), 17-31.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20460723>
- 【279】 Kamins, M.A. (1990), An Investigation into the “Match-up” Hypothesis in Celebrity Advertising: When Beauty May Be Only Skin Deep, *Journal of Advertising*, 19 (1) , 4-13. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4188750>
- 【280】 Till, B.D. & Busler, M. (2000), The Match-Up Hypothesis: Physical Attractiveness, Expertise, and the Role of Fit on Brand Attitude, Purchase Intent and Brand Beliefs, *Journal of Advertising*, 29 (3) , 1-13.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2000.10673613>
- 【281】 Amos, C., Holmes, G. & Strutton, D (2008). Exploring the relationship between celebrity endorser effects and advertising effectiveness: A quantitative synthesis of effect size, *International Journal of Advertising*, 27(2), 209-234. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2008.11073052>
- 【282】 Luo, X. (2002). Uses & gratification theory & e-consumer behaviours: a structural equation modelling study. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 2(2), 34-41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2002.10722060>
- 【283】 García-Jiménez, L., Huertas-Bailén, A., & Vera-Balanza, T. (Eds.). (2023). Herta Herzog y «La experiencia prestada»: La fundación de los estudios de comunicación y audiencias. Comunicación Social Ediciones y Publicaciones. Methaodos: revista de ciencias sociales, *12*(2), m241202c05-m241202c05.
<https://doi.org/10.17502/mrcs.v12i2.796>
- 【284】 Herzog, Herta (1941) *On Borrowed Experience'*, *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, 11,66.

- 【285】 Herzog, H. (1944). What do we really know about daytime serial listeners. *Radio research*, 1943, 3–33.
- 【286】 Lazarsfeld, P. F., Berelson, B. & Gaudet, H. (1944). *The People's Choice. How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign*. New York: Duel, Sloan and Pearce.
- 【287】 Lowery, S. & De Fleur, M. (1983). *Milestones in mass communication research: Media effects*. New York: Longman Publishers.
- 【288】 Blumler, J. (1979). The role of theory in uses and gratifications studies. *Communication Research*, 6(1), 9-36.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00936502790060010>
- 【289】 Swanson, D. (1979). The continuing evolution of the uses and gratifications approach. *Communication Research*, 6(1), 3-7.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/009365027900600101>
- 【290】 Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1974). “Utilization of mass communication by the individual”. In J. G. Blumler & E. Katz (Eds.), *The uses of mass communications: Current perspectives on gratifications research* (pp. 19–32). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- 【291】 Rubin, A. M. (2009). Uses-and-gratifications perspective on media effects. In J. Bryant & M. B. Oliver (Eds.), *Media effects* (pp. 181–200). Routledge.
- 【292】 Rubin, A. M. (1994). An examination of television viewing motives. *Journal of Communication*, 8(3), 141-165.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/009365028100800201>
- 【293】 Lim, W. M., & Ting, D. H. (2012). E-shopping: An Analysis of the Uses and Gratifications Theory. *Modern Applied Science*, 6(5), 48–48.
<https://doi.org/10.5539/mas.v6n5p48>
- 【294】 Rui, J. R., & Stefanone, M. A. (2016). The desire for fame: An extension of uses and gratifications theory. *Communication Studies*, 67, 399 - 418.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2016.1156006>

- 【295】 Nelson, D. W., Moore, M. M., & Swanson, K. K. (2019). Fashion and social networking: a motivations framework. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 23(4), 608- 627. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFMM-03-2018-003>
- 【296】 Ruggiero, T. E. (2000). Uses and gratifications theory in the 21st century. *Mass communication & society*, 3(1), 3–37. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0301_02
- 【297】 Palmgreen, P. & Rayburn, J. (1979), Uses and gratifications and exposure to public television, *Communication Research*, 6(2), 155-180 <https://doi.org/10.1177/009365027900600203>
- 【298】 Korgaonkar, P.K. & Wolin, L.D. (1999), A multivariate analysis of web uses, *Journal of Advertising Research*, 39(1), 53-68.
- 【299】 Papacharissi, Z.& Rubin, A.M. (2000), Predictors of internet use, *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 44(2), 175-196. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15506878jobem4402_2
- 【300】 Bucher, T. (2017). The algorithmic imaginary: Exploring the ordinary affects of Facebook algorithms. *Information, Communication & Society*, 20(1), 30–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1154086>
- 【301】 Andrejevic, M.(2002). The Work of Being Watched: Interactive Media and the Exploitation of Self-Disclosure. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*,19 (2): 230– 248.<https://doi.org/10.1080/0739318021656>
- 【302】 Helberger, N. (2019). On the democratic role of news recommenders. *Digital Journalism*, 7(8): 993–1012. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2019.1623700>
- 【303】 Bond, R. M., Fariss, C. J., Jones, J. J., Kramer, A. D., Marlow, C., Settle, J. E., & Fowler, J. H. (2012). A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization. *Nature*, 489(7415), 295–298. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature11421>
- 【304】 Bode, L., & Vraga, E. K. (2015). In related news, that was wrong: The correction of misinformation through related stories functionality in social

- media. *Journal of Communication*, 65(4), 619–638.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12166>
- 【305】 Massanari, A. (2017). #Gamergate and The Fappening: How Reddit’s algorithm, governance, and culture support toxic technocultures. *New Media & Society*, 19(3), 329–346. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444815608807>
- 【306】 Cobbe, J. (2021). Algorithmic censorship by social platforms: Power and resistance. *Philosophy & Technology*, 34(4): 739–766.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-020-00429-0>
- 【307】 Couldry, N. & Hepp, A.. (2017). *The Mediated Construction of Reality*. Cambridge: Polity.
- 【308】 Dessart, L., Veloutsou, C., & Morgan-Thomas, A. (2015). Consumer engagement in online brand communities: a social media perspective. *The Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(1), 28–42.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-06-2014-0635>
- 【309】 Ørmen, J.(2015) . *A public conversation in private settings*. (PhD Dissertation, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen).
- 【310】 O’Brien HL (2011) Exploring user engagement in online news interactions. *ASIS&T*, 48(1): 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1002/meet.2011.14504801088>
- 【311】 Chan-Olmsted S.M. & Wolter L.C. (2018). Perceptions and practices of media engagement: A global perspective. *International Journal on Media Management*, 20(1), 1–24 <https://doi.org/10.1080/14241277.2017.1402183>
- 【312】 Chen, H. L. & Cao, Y. (2014) Examining WeChat users’ motivations, trust, attitudes and positive word-of-mouth: Evidence from China. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 41, 104–111. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.08.013>
- 【313】 Opgenhaffen, M. (2011) Multimedia interactive and hypertextual features in divergent online news platforms: An exploratory study of Flemish online news. *First Monday*, 16(3). <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v16i3.2826>
- 【314】 Kirk, C.P., Chiagouris L, Lala V., & Thomas, J.D.E. (2015). How do digital natives and digital immigrants respond differently to interactivity online? A model for predicting consumer attitudes and intentions to use digital

- information products. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 55(1), 81–94.
<https://doi.org/10.2501/JAR-55-1-081-094>
- 【315】Kramer, M. (2016). Here are 27 Ways to Think About Comments. *Poynter*.
<http://www.poynter.org/2016/here-are-27-ways-to-think-about-comments/401728>.
- 【316】Hill, A. (2019). Media Experiences: Engaging with Drama and Reality Television. London and New York: Routledge.
- 【317】Davis Mersey, R., Malthouse E.C., & Calder, B.J. (2010) Engagement with online media. *Journal of Media Business Studies* 7(2): 39–56.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/16522354.2010.11073506>
- 【318】Chung, D.S., & Nah, S. (2009). The effects of interactive news presentation on perceived user satisfaction of online community newspapers. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 14(4), 855–874.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2009.01473.x>
- 【319】Salesforce (Ed.) (2025). *What is audience engagement? Tips&Strategies*.
<https://www.salesforce.com/media/fan-audience-engagement-platform/guide/>
- 【320】Nelson, J. L. (2021). The next media regime: The pursuit of ‘audience engagement’ in journalism. *Journalism*, 22(9), 2350–2367.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884919862375>
- 【321】Szmuda, T., Syed, M. T., Singh, A., Ali, S., Özdemir, C., & Słoniewski, P. (2020). YouTube as a source of patient information for Coronavirus Disease (COVID - 19): A content - quality and audience engagement analysis. *Reviews in Medical Virology*, 30(5), e2132.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/rmv.2132>
- 【322】Szmuda, T., Özdemir, C., Fedorow, K., Ali, S., & Słoniewski, P. (2021). YouTube as a source of information for narcolepsy: A content - quality and optimization analysis. *Journal of Sleep Research*, 30(2), e13053.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jsr.13053>
- 【323】Song, S., Zhao, Y.C., Yao, X., Ba, Z., & Zhu, Q.(2021). Short video apps as a health information source: an investigation of affordances, user experience

- and users' intention to continue the use of TikTok. *Internet Research*. 31(6), 2120-2142. <https://doi.org/10.1108/intr-10-2020-0593>
- 【324】 Li, Y., Chen, X. T., Mao, T. T., & Huang, G. (2022). Factors influencing cross-cultural communication effects of new media and framework analysis: A case study of Li Ziqi's YouTube videos. *Library Tribune*, 42(7), 132-142. <https://cstj.cqvip.com/Qikan/Article/Detail?id=7107503835>
- 【325】 Zhang, Y., Wei, X. Y., & Yin, Y. (2020). Factors influencing content and popularity of Xinwen Lianbo's Kuaishou short videos. *TV Research*, (8), 73-76. <https://www.scholarmate.com/S/Hqn8qW>
- 【326】 Hao Chen. (2023). *Title matters: Impacts of titles on user engagement in short video platforms* [Doctoral dissertation, Singapore Management University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/etd_coll/479
- 【327】 Cacciatore, M. A., Becker, A. B., Anderson, A. A., & Yeo, S. K. (2020). Laughing With Science: The Influence of Audience Approval on Engagement. *Science Communication*, 42(2), 195-217. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1075547020910749>
- 【328】 Eisend, M. (2009). A meta-analysis of humor in advertising. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing*. 37, 191-203. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-008-0096-y>
- 【329】 Barry, J. M., & Graça, S. S. (2018). Humor effectiveness in social video engagement. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 26(1-2), 158-180. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10696679.2017.1389247>
- 【330】 Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T (1986). The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion . *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. 19, 124-129. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0065-2601\(08\)60214-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0065-2601(08)60214-2).
- 【331】 Bhattacharjee, A., & Sanford, C. (2006). Influence Processes for Information Technology Acceptance: An Elaboration Likelihood Model. *MIS Quarterly*, 30(4), 805-825. <https://doi.org/10.2307/25148755>
- 【332】 Mast, J. (Ed.)(2023). *What is content theme?* <https://whitebeardstrategies.com/blog/what-is-a-content-theme/>

- 【333】 Paul, J., Jagani, K., & Yadav, N. (2024). “How I think, Who I am”—Role of social media influencers (SMIs) as change agents. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 23(4), 1900–1916. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.2311>
- 【334】 Simon Kemp (2023). Digital 2023: Global overview report
Retrieved from:
<https://wearesocial.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Digital-2023-Global-Overview-Report.pdf>
- 【335】 Lu, Z., & Wei, W. (2021). Influencer marketing: A comparison of traditional celebrity, social media influencer, and AI influencer. *Boston Hospitality Review*. Retrieved from:
<https://www.bu.edu/bhr/2021/10/04/influencer-marketing-a-comparison-of-traditional-celebrity-social-media-influencer-and-ai-influencer/>
- 【336】 Song, L. (2022). *How China’s YouTube Became a Rare Safe Space for LGBT Streamers*. Retrieved from: <https://www.sixthtone.com/news/1009744>
- 【337】 Kuo, L.(2018).China's Weibo reverses ban on 'homosexual' content after outcry. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from:
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/16/china-weibo-bans-homosexual-content-protest>
- 【338】 Xiao & Xu (Eds.) (2018). *China's Sina Weibo reverses ban on LGBT content after outcry* -.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/16/china-weibo-bans-homosexual-content-protest>
- 【 339 】 Raun, T. (2018). Capitalizing intimacy: New subcultural forms of micro-celebrity strategies and affective labour on YouTube. *Convergence*, 24(1), 99–113. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856517736983>
- 【 340 】 Woodford, Darryl, Goldsmith, Ben, & Bruns, Axel (2015). Social media audience metrics as a new form of TV audience measurement. In Lind, R A (Ed.). *Producing theory in a digital world 2.0: The intersection of audiences and production in contemporary theory*, Volume 2 (pp. 141-158). Peter Lang publishing.

- 【 341 】 Poecze, F., Ebster, C., & Strauss, C. (2018). Social media metrics and sentiment analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of social media posts. *Procedia Computer Science*, 130, 660–666. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2018.04.117>
- 【 342 】 Eslami, S. P., Ghasemaghaei, M., & Hassanein, K. (2022). Understanding consumer engagement in social media: The role of product lifecycle. *Decision Support Systems*, 162, 113707-. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2021.113707>
- 【 343 】 Huertas Bailén, A., Quintas-Froufe, N., & González-Neira, A. (2024). Audience Participation in TikTok Metadata. *Comunicar: Revista Científica de Comunicación y Educación*, 78, 82-92. <https://doi.org/10.58262/V32I78.7>
- 【 344 】 Zhu, J., & Cui, Y. (2018). Short video: New media forms in mobile visual scenes—Technology, social networking, content and reflection. *The Journalism*, (07), 69–75. Retrieved from: <https://d.wanfangdata.com.cn/periodical/xwj201807011>
- 【 345 】 Fu, K., Liu, L., & Chen, D. (2013). Research on user professionalism identification method for online social support virtual community. *Journal of Intelligence*, 32(04), 397–406. Retrieved from: <http://59.75.36.213/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?filename=QBXB201304008&dbcode=CJFQ&dbname=CJFD2013>
- 【 346 】 Guo, H., Zhao, Y., & Shi, H. (2019). Research on the influence of short video information display on consumers' buying intention on e-commerce platforms. *Information studies:Theory & application*, 42(05), 141. Retrieved from: <http://www.itapress.cn/CN/Y2019/V42/I5/141>
- 【 347 】 She, J., Zhang, T., Chen, Q., Zhang, J., Fan, W., Wang, H. and Chang, Q. (2022), "Which social media posts generate the most buzz? Evidence from WeChat", *Internet Research*, 3(1), 273-291. <https://doi.org/10.1108/INTR-12-2019-0534>
- 【 348 】 Tracy vander schyff (Ed.). (2016). *sharepoint list validations minimum length of characters*.

<https://tracyvanderschyff.com/2016/12/12/sharepoint-list-validations-minimum-length-of-characters/>

- 【 349 】 Kotronoulas, G., Miguel, S., Dowling, M., Fernández-Ortega, P., Colomer-Lahiguera, S., Bağçivan, G., Pape, E., Drury, A., Semple, C., Dieperink, K. B., & Papadopoulou, C. (2023). An Overview of the Fundamentals of Data Management, Analysis, and Interpretation in Quantitative Research. *Seminars in Oncology Nursing*, 39(2), 151398–151398. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soncn.2023.151398>
- 【 350 】 Render, B., & Stair, R. M. (1991). *Quantitative analysis for management / Barry Render, Ralph M. Stair* (4th ed.). Allyn and Bacon.
- 【 351 】 ID.B. Resnik, (2001). Objectivity of Research: Ethical Aspects, *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 210789-10793, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B0-08-043076-7/00157-1>.