

The Impact of Influencer Streamer Characteristics on Corporate Brand Image: The Mediating Role of Consumer Brand Perception

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Abstract: The rapid development of live-streaming e-commerce has made it an important arena for brand communication, in which influencer streamers play a central role in shaping corporate brand image. Based on the SERVQUAL service quality model, this study decomposes influencer streamer characteristics into four dimensions: professionalism, empathy, responsiveness, and assurance. By introducing consumer brand perception as a mediating variable, a conceptual model describing the pathway of “influencer streamer characteristics-brand perception-brand image” is constructed and empirically tested using the audience of the Chinese domestic cosmetics brand Perfect Diary as the research sample. The results indicate that all four dimensions significantly enhance corporate brand image, while consumer brand perception plays a partial mediating role in these relationships. Among them, the assurance dimension of the streamer exerts the strongest direct effect on brand image, whereas responsiveness most effectively stimulates consumers’ brand perception. The findings not only extend brand management theory within the context of live-streaming marketing but also provide practical guidance for enterprises in selecting high-quality influencers and formulating precise marketing strategies.

Keywords: Live-Streaming Marketing; Influencer Streamer Characteristics; Consumer Brand Perception; Brand Image; Mediating Effect

1. Introduction

In recent years, with the deep penetration of the digital economy, live-streaming e-commerce has evolved from a simple sales channel into a crucial hub for brand marketing. Within this ecosystem, influencer streamers—leveraging their professional capabilities, accumulated

follower bases, and high-frequency interaction with audiences—have become the primary interface connecting brands and consumers. In many cases, the words and behaviors of streamers directly shape consumers’ subjective attitudes, thereby exerting a profound influence on the formation of brand image. However, as the industry gradually moves beyond an extensive traffic-driven growth stage toward quality-based competition, various irregularities have emerged, including inappropriate streamer behavior, misalignment with brand positioning, and exaggerated or false promises. These issues not only dampen consumers’ purchasing enthusiasm but may also generate negative repercussions for the brand image that companies have carefully cultivated over time. Therefore, clarifying which specific characteristics of influencer streamers affect brand image, and understanding the underlying mechanisms through which such influence operates, has become an urgent task for enterprises seeking to mitigate marketing risks and optimize their live-streaming strategies.

A review of existing literature shows that many studies adopt the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework or the ABC attitude model to examine how streamers’ professionalism or interactivity stimulates audiences’ impulse consumption and purchase intention [1,2]. Although a few scholars have begun to explore the issue of congruence between streamers and brand positioning [3], overall research on the dimensional classification of “streamer characteristics” remains relatively fragmented and lacks systematic theoretical grounding. Meanwhile, the role of consumer brand perception—formed during the process of watching live streams—as a transmission mechanism in this relationship has not yet been sufficiently clarified.

In light of this gap, this study introduces the classic SERVQUAL model, which is widely used to evaluate service experience. Live-

streaming commerce can essentially be regarded as a form of high-intensity service delivery, and the SERVQUAL dimensions—professionalism, assurance, empathy, and responsiveness—closely correspond to the core competencies required of influencer streamers [4]. Taking these dimensions as the analytical entry point and incorporating the live-streaming practices of Perfect Diary this study aims to depict a comprehensive framework of “influencer streamer characteristics—consumer brand perception—corporate brand image.” Such an approach not only enriches existing theories of live-streaming marketing but also provides practical insights for brands on how to effectively select and collaborate with appropriate streamers in marketing practice.

2 Research Hypotheses

2.1 Influencer Streamer Characteristics and Corporate Brand Image

The professional competence of streamers ensures the accurate delivery of product information, helping consumers establish trust and thereby enhancing brand image [5]. Empathy is reflected in the streamer’s ability to understand consumers’ perspectives and provide emotional support, which significantly narrows the psychological distance between the brand and its audience [6]. Responsiveness represents communication efficiency; the prompt resolution of consumer inquiries can effectively improve the audience’s live-streaming experience and foster a positive service image [7]. Assurance is manifested in concrete actions, such as fulfilling promotional commitments and properly handling after-sales issues, which provide consumers with a sense of security and highlight the brand’s responsibility [8]. Based on this reasoning, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Influencer streamer characteristics have a significant positive impact on the shaping of corporate brand image.

H1a: The professionalism of influencer streamers has a significant positive impact on corporate brand image.

H1b: The empathy of influencer streamers has a significant positive impact on corporate brand image.

H1c: The responsiveness of influencer streamers has a significant positive impact on corporate brand image.

H1d: The assurance of influencer streamers has a significant positive impact on corporate brand image.

2.2 Influencer Streamer Characteristics and Consumer Brand Perception

As opinion leaders in brand communication, influencer streamers directly influence consumers’ perception of brands through their behavioral characteristics. This influence manifests in the formation of positive brand associations and consumption motivations during the decision-making process [9]. Professional product explanations by streamers help consumers gain a deeper understanding of brand product attributes, reduce perceived risk, and enhance brand cognition perception [10]. Empathetic emotional expression can create emotional resonance with consumers, strengthening their favorability and identification with the brand and thereby enhancing brand affective perception [11]. Real-time interaction characterized by responsiveness increases consumers’ sense of brand participation, breaks down communication barriers between brands and consumers, and reinforces behavioral brand perception [12]. The fulfillment of commitments associated with assurance strengthens consumer trust in the brand, reduces purchase concerns, and enhances trust perception toward the brand [13]. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2: Influencer streamer characteristics have a significant positive impact on consumer brand perception.

H2a: The professionalism of influencer streamers has a significant positive impact on consumer brand perception.

H2b: The empathy of influencer streamers has a significant positive impact on consumer brand perception.

H2c: The responsiveness of influencer streamers has a significant positive impact on consumer brand perception.

H2d: The assurance of influencer streamers has a significant positive impact on consumer brand perception.

2.3 Consumer Brand Perception and Corporate Brand Image

Brand perception refers to the comprehensive cognitive and emotional experience that consumers form regarding a brand’s value and

attributes when exposed to brand-related information. It constitutes the core psychological foundation for the formation of corporate brand image. When consumers develop positive perceptions in terms of cognition, emotion, and behavioral tendencies toward a brand, they are more likely to form favorable evaluations and identification with the brand, thereby promoting the positive construction of corporate brand image. Conversely, negative brand perception may lower consumers' evaluations of the brand and damage its image [14]. Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Consumer brand perception has a significant positive impact on the shaping of corporate brand image.

2.4 The Mediating Role of Consumer Brand Perception

The characteristics of influencer streamers cannot directly and completely determine corporate brand image. Instead, their influence operates indirectly through the intermediate mechanism of consumer brand perception, which subsequently affects consumers' evaluations of corporate brand image [15]. Specifically, the professionalism, empathy, responsiveness, and assurance demonstrated by streamers enhance consumers' perceptual experiences related to brand cognition, emotion, and trust. These enhanced perceptions lead consumers to form favorable impressions of the brand, which in turn contribute to the development of a positive corporate brand image. Therefore, consumer brand perception plays a crucial bridging role between influencer streamer characteristics and corporate brand image. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4: Consumer brand perception plays a mediating role between influencer streamer characteristics and corporate brand image.

H4a: Consumer brand perception mediates the relationship between influencer streamer professionalism and corporate brand image.

H4b: Consumer brand perception mediates the relationship between influencer streamer empathy and corporate brand image.

H4c: Consumer brand perception mediates the relationship between influencer streamer responsiveness and corporate brand image.

H4d: Consumer brand perception mediates the relationship between influencer streamer assurance and corporate brand image.

3. Research Design and Data Collection

This study selected Perfect Diary, a representative domestic Chinese cosmetics brand that has deeply engaged in live-streaming commerce, as the research object. Its well-established influencer network and highly aligned core audience ensure the relevance and representativeness of the sample. The questionnaire adopted a five-point Likert scale and was adapted to the live-streaming context based on established measurement scales (e.g., SERVQUAL). Specifically, the measurement of streamer characteristics consisted of 10 items, drawing on the professional scales developed by R. Bruce Money et al. (1998) [16] and Parasuraman et al. [4]. Consumer brand perception was measured using three items adapted from the research of David Aaker (2010) [17]. Corporate brand image was measured using four items focusing on credibility and distinctiveness [18].

The survey was conducted in mid-December 2025. After excluding invalid questionnaires characterized by patterned responses or respondents without live-streaming viewing experience, a total of 178 valid responses were retained, yielding an effective response rate of 75.1%. The sample profile shows that more than 90% of respondents were female, and the majority were concentrated in the 18–35 age group, mainly consisting of students and white-collar workers. This demographic structure closely aligns with the actual core audience of beauty-related live-streaming commerce. In addition, 34.83% of respondents indicated that the primary content of the live streams they watched focused on product introductions, indirectly confirming the central role of streamer professionalism in the communication process. Additional sample statistics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics Summary

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	17	9.55	9.55
	Female	161	90.45	100

Age	Under 18	15	8.43	8.43
	18–25	97	54.49	62.92
	25–35	55	30.90	93.82
	36–45	5	2.81	96.63
	46–55	4	2.25	98.88
	55 and above	2	1.12	100
Occupation	Student	88	49.44	49.44
	Freelancer/Self-employed/Private business owner	26	14.61	64.05
	White-collar / General employee	52	29.21	93.26
	Civil servant / Public institution employee	11	6.18	99.44
	Other	1	0.56	100
Monthly Income	≤ 2000 RMB	86	48.31	48.31
	2001–4000 RMB	17	9.55	57.86
	4001–6000 RMB	30	16.85	74.71
	6001–8000 RMB	27	15.17	89.88
	≥ 8000 RMB	18	10.11	100
	Total	178	100	100

4. Research Results and Analysis

This study employed the statistical analysis tool SPSSAU to systematically process the collected data. The analysis proceeded through several stages, including descriptive statistics, reliability and validity analysis, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and mediation effect testing. These procedures were conducted to verify the proposed research hypotheses and to reveal the underlying relationships among the variables.

4.1 Reliability and Validity Analysis

4.1.1 Reliability analysis

Cronbach's α coefficient was used to examine the internal consistency of the measurement scales. The results indicate that the α coefficients for professionalism (0.838), empathy (0.830), responsiveness (0.810), assurance (0.842), consumer brand perception (0.855), and corporate brand image (0.771) all exceed the threshold value of 0.7, meeting the standard requirements for reliability testing. This suggests that the scales designed in this study exhibit satisfactory internal consistency and reliability, and the questionnaire data are suitable for subsequent empirical analysis (Table 2).

4.1.2 Validity analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to test the structural validity of the scale. The results show that the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value is 0.944 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating that the data are suitable for factor analysis. Based on the factor loadings of the measurement items and their theoretical alignment, two items (QP1 and QP3) with factor loadings below 0.5 were removed. Ultimately, six common factors were extracted, with a cumulative variance explanation exceeding 70%. The factor loadings of all remaining items are greater than 0.5, and the communalities exceed 0.7, indicating that the scale demonstrates good structural validity and that the measurement items effectively capture the core dimensions of the corresponding variables (Table 3).

Table 2. Summary of Reliability Test

Research Dimension	Number of Items	Cronbach's α
Professionalism	3	0.838
Empathy	2	0.830
Responsiveness	2	0.810
Assurance	3	0.842
Corporate Brand Image	2	0.771
Consumer Brand Perception	3	0.855

Table 3. Summary of Validity Test

Research Dimension	Item	Factor Loading	Communality	Decision
Professionalism	ZY1	0.691	0.749	Retained
	ZY2	0.626	0.710	Retained
	ZY3	0.810	0.840	Retained
Empathy	YQ1	0.877	0.919	Retained
	YQ2	0.685	0.810	Retained

Responsiveness	XY1	0.547	0.783	Retained
	XY2	0.767	0.865	Retained
Assurance	BZ1	0.657	0.831	Retained
	BZ2	0.737	0.871	Retained
	BZ3	0.713	0.790	Retained
Consumer Brand Perception	PG1	0.718	0.839	Retained
	PG2	0.597	0.832	Retained
	PG3	0.685	0.772	Retained
Corporate Brand Image	QP2	0.502	0.778	Retained
	QP4	0.645	0.811	Retained

4.2 Correlation Analysis and Regression Analysis

4.2.1 Correlation analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the variables. The results show that the four dimensions of influencer streamer characteristics—professionalism, empathy, responsiveness, and assurance—are all significantly positively correlated with consumer brand perception ($p < 0.01$), with correlation coefficients of 0.768,

0.699, 0.822, and 0.826, respectively. Each of these dimensions is also significantly positively correlated with corporate brand image ($p < 0.01$), with correlation coefficients of 0.777, 0.708, 0.839, and 0.888, respectively. In addition, consumer brand perception is significantly positively correlated with corporate brand image ($p < 0.01$), with a correlation coefficient of 0.891. On this basis, subsequent regression analysis and mediation analysis were conducted (Table 4).

Table 4. Summary of Correlation Analysis

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Correlation Coefficient	p
Streamer Professionalism	Brand Image	0.777	< 0.01
Streamer Empathy	Brand Image	0.708	< 0.01
Streamer Responsiveness	Brand Image	0.839	< 0.01
Streamer Assurance	Brand Image	0.888	< 0.01
Streamer Professionalism	Consumer Brand Perception	0.768	< 0.01
Streamer Empathy	Consumer Brand Perception	0.699	< 0.01
Streamer Responsiveness	Consumer Brand Perception	0.822	< 0.01
Streamer Assurance	Consumer Brand Perception	0.826	< 0.01
Consumer Brand Perception	Brand Image	0.891	< 0.01

4.2.2 Regression analysis

4.2.2.1 Regression analysis of influencer streamer characteristics on corporate brand image

Corporate brand image was used as the dependent variable, while the four dimensions of influencer streamer characteristics were entered as independent variables in the regression model. The model demonstrated a

good fit ($R^2=0.828$, $F=207.957$, $p<0.001$). The results indicate that professionalism ($\beta=0.157$, $p<0.01$), empathy ($\beta=0.135$, $p<0.01$), responsiveness ($\beta=0.200$, $p<0.001$), and assurance ($\beta=0.528$, $p<0.001$) all exert significant positive effects on corporate brand image. Therefore, hypotheses H1, H1a, H1b, H1c, and H1d are supported, with assurance demonstrating the strongest effect (Table 5).

Table 5. Regression Results: Streamer Characteristics and Brand Image

	Unstandardized Coefficient (Beta)	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient (Beta)	t	p	VIF	Tolerance
Constant	0.225	0.132	–	1.701	0.091	–	–
ZY	0.156	0.052	0.157	2.986	0.003**	2.789	0.359
YQ	0.118	0.039	0.135	3.019	0.003**	1.997	0.501
XY	0.182	0.049	0.200	3.694	0.000**	2.953	0.339
BZ	0.499	0.047	0.528	10.600	0.000**	2.492	0.401

$R^2 = 0.828$

Adjusted $R^2 = 0.824$

$F = F(4,173) = 207.957$, $p = 0.000$

D-W value = 1.734

Note: Dependent variable = QP

p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01

4.2.2.2 Regression analysis of influencer streamer characteristics on consumer brand perception

Consumer brand perception was used as the dependent variable, with the four dimensions of influencer streamer characteristics as independent variables. The model demonstrated a good fit ($R^2=0.674$, $F=89.373$, $p < 0.001$). The

results indicate that professionalism ($\beta=0.236$, $p < 0.01$), empathy ($\beta=0.188$, $p < 0.01$), responsiveness ($\beta=0.283$, $p < 0.001$), and assurance ($\beta=0.230$, $p < 0.01$) all have significant positive effects on consumer brand perception. Thus, hypotheses H2, H2a, H2b, H2c, and H2d are supported, with responsiveness exerting the strongest influence (Table 6).

Table 6. Regression Results: Streamer Characteristics and Brand Perception

	Unstandardized Coefficient (Beta)	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient (Beta)	t	p	VIF	Tolerance
Constant	0.224	0.194	–	1.154	0.250	–	–
ZY	0.250	0.077	0.236	3.255	0.001**	2.789	0.359
YQ	0.176	0.057	0.188	3.063	0.003**	1.997	0.501
XY	0.275	0.072	0.283	3.794	0.000**	2.953	0.339
BZ	0.231	0.069	0.230	3.349	0.001**	2.492	0.401

$R^2 = 0.674$

Adjusted $R^2 = 0.666$

$F = F(4,173) = 89.373$, $p = 0.000$

D-W value = 1.793

Note: Dependent variable = PG

p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01

4.2.2.3 Regression analysis of consumer brand perception on corporate brand image

Corporate brand image was used as the dependent variable, while consumer brand perception was used as the independent variable. The model demonstrated a good fit ($R^2 = 0.656$,

$F = 335.692$, $p < 0.001$). The results show that consumer brand perception has a significant positive impact on corporate brand image ($\beta = 0.810$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, hypothesis H3 is supported (Table 7).

Table 7. Regression Results: Brand Perception and Brand Image

	Unstandardized Coefficient (Beta)	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient (Beta)	t	p	VIF	Tolerance
Constant	0.982	0.161	–	6.094	0.000**	–	–
PG	0.760	0.041	0.810	18.322	0.000**	1.000	1.000

$R^2 = 0.656$

Adjusted $R^2 = 0.654$

$F = F(1,176) = 335.692$, $p = 0.000$

D-W value = 1.972

Note: Dependent variable = QP

p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01

4.2.2.4 Summary of results

As shown in Table 8, all path relationships in this study reach statistical significance. The results indicate that the professionalism, empathy, responsiveness, and assurance of influencer streamers can enhance corporate

brand image by strengthening consumers' brand perception. This finding further supports the structural model proposed in this study: "streamer characteristics → brand perception → brand image."

Table 8. Summary of Regression Coefficients

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Regression Coefficient	Significant
ZY	QP	0.156	Yes
YQ	QP	0.118	Yes
XY	QP	0.182	Yes
BZ	QP	0.499	Yes
ZY	PG	0.250	Yes

YQ	PG	0.176	Yes
XY	PG	0.275	Yes
BZ	PG	0.231	Yes
PG	QP	0.760	Yes

4.3 Mediation Effect Test

This study employed the three-step regression method proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), combined with Bootstrap testing (95% confidence interval), to examine the mediating effect of consumer brand perception. The results indicate that the direct effects of the four dimensions of influencer streamer characteristics on corporate brand image are all significant ($p < 0.01$), and the indirect effects through consumer brand perception are also significant (Bootstrap confidence intervals do not include zero). This demonstrates that consumer brand perception plays a partial mediating role between influencer streamer characteristics and corporate brand image.

Therefore, hypotheses H4, H4a, H4b, H4c, and H4d are all supported.

The proportion of mediation effects varies considerably across the four dimensions. The mediation effect accounts for 35.897% for professionalism, 33.354% for empathy, 33.764% for responsiveness, and 10.385% for assurance. Among these, assurance has the lowest proportion of mediation effect, indicating that its influence on corporate brand image is primarily manifested through a direct effect. In contrast, professionalism, empathy, and responsiveness mainly exert indirect effects on corporate brand image through their influence on consumer brand perception (Table 9).

Table 9. Summary of Mediation Effect Test Results

Path	Test Conclusion	Total Effect (c)	Indirect Effect (a*b)	Direct Effect (c')	Effect Proportion	Bootstrap CI
ZY → PG → QP	Partial mediation	0.156	0.056	0.100	35.897%	Significant (CI does not include 0)
YQ → PG → QP	Partial mediation	0.118	0.039	0.079	33.354%	Significant (CI does not include 0)
XY → PG → QP	Partial mediation	0.182	0.062	0.121	33.764%	Significant (CI does not include 0)
BZ → PG → QP	Partial mediation	0.499	0.052	0.447	10.385%	Significant (CI does not include 0)

5. Conclusion

5.1 Research Conclusions

This study empirically tested the theoretical model of “influencer streamer characteristics—brand perception—brand image” within the context of beauty-related live-streaming commerce. The following conclusions are drawn:

1) The professionalism, empathy, responsiveness, and assurance of influencer streamers all exert significant positive effects on corporate brand image. Among these dimensions, assurance demonstrates a substantially stronger influence than the others. This finding indicates that in the live-streaming e-commerce context of the beauty industry, behaviors related to the fulfillment of consumer commitments—such as honoring promotional promises and effectively resolving after-sales

issues—serve as the most critical factors in building consumer trust and shaping corporate brand image.

2) The four dimensions of influencer streamer characteristics significantly and positively influence consumer brand perception. Among them, responsiveness exerts the strongest effect, suggesting that the two-way interactive nature of live-streaming environments plays a crucial role in enhancing consumer brand perception. Timely responses to consumer inquiries and efficient interaction management by streamers can significantly strengthen consumers’ sense of brand participation and emotional experience.

3) Consumer brand perception has a significant positive impact on corporate brand image and constitutes an essential psychological foundation for brand image formation. Positive brand perception encourages consumers to develop favorable evaluations and cognitive recognition of a brand, thereby contributing to

the formation of a strong corporate brand image. 4) Consumer brand perception plays a partial mediating role between influencer streamer characteristics and corporate brand image, validating the pathway of “streamer characteristics → brand perception → brand image.” Among the four dimensions, assurance primarily influences brand image through direct effects, whereas professionalism, empathy, and responsiveness mainly influence brand image indirectly through consumer brand perception.

Overall, assurance-related behaviors—such as honoring commitments and ensuring reliable after-sales service—represent the most crucial drivers of brand trust accumulation, with a substantially stronger impact than other characteristics. Meanwhile, dynamic two-way interaction and responsive engagement within live-streaming sessions serve as the most effective catalysts for stimulating consumer brand perception. The cognitive and emotional experiences accumulated by consumers during live-streaming interactions ultimately function as a critical psychological bridge for constructing a favorable corporate brand image.

5.2 Practical Implications

1) Prioritize fulfillment capability in influencer selection. When selecting influencer partners, enterprises should not rely solely on traffic metrics but should treat after-sales responsibility and fulfillment capability as essential criteria. At the same time, the influencer’s professional competence and affinity with the brand’s positioning should also be evaluated.

2) Strengthen training to address streamer capability gaps. Companies should establish regular training mechanisms to systematically improve streamers’ practical skills in product explanation, emotional engagement with audiences, and interactive communication.

3) Emphasize the creation of an engaging live-streaming atmosphere. Brands should enhance the experiential quality of live-streaming sessions through visual demonstrations, interactive promotional activities, and immersive presentation techniques, transforming products from static commodities into engaging brand experiences and reinforcing positive consumer perceptions.

4) Establish institutional safeguards to mitigate reputational risks. Brands should not adopt a passive approach to influencer management.

Instead, streamer commitments should be integrated with the company’s after-sales service system, and formal contractual mechanisms should be implemented to regulate influencer behavior and prevent individual misconduct from damaging brand reputation.

5.3 Research Limitations and Future Directions

This study is subject to certain limitations. The sample is limited to a single cosmetics brand, and the use of cross-sectional data restricts the ability to capture the dynamic and long-term effects of streamer characteristics on brand image. Future research could broaden the scope to include other product categories such as home appliances and apparel. Additionally, variables such as streamer follower size, brand awareness, and emerging elements such as AI virtual streamers could be incorporated to further enrich and refine the theoretical framework of live-streaming marketing.

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