**Research on the path and strategy of Internet celebrity economy to help Internet café gods get rich**

**Introduction**

This literature review investigates the transformation of individuals, specifically a “net café god,” into an online celebrity through the mechanisms of the influencer economy, focusing on the example of Ah Mao. (Li Y.2020)Ah Mao’s journey from a struggling young worker in his teens to a successful live-streamer and business owner exemplifies how the influencer economy offers unique opportunities to marginalized groups.The purpose of this review is to understand how influencer platforms such as Douyin (TikTok) and Kuaishou create new avenues for individuals who are otherwise disadvantaged to alter their lives. By focusing on Ah Mao’s specific case, (Geng R ,Wang S ,Chen X.2020)this study aims to highlight the intersection between personal struggle, social media platforms, audience engagement, and economic transformation.The structure of the review will first outline the general principles of the influencer economy, followed by a detailed analysis of Ah Mao’s personal history, his entry into the live-streaming world, and his eventual success. (Lili Z ,Ja S K ,Hee J L.2019)Through this, we will draw conclusions about the relationship between the individual and the influencer economy, emphasizing common and unique factors that lead to success. The review will also reflect on the broader implications of this phenomenon for marginalized groups.

Exclusion criteria for this review include anecdotal accounts, non-peer-reviewed sources, and literature in languages other than Chinese or English, as these may lack the depth of academic rigor needed to assess the phenomenon accurately. The review will be based on primary sources,(SoGal LA.2018) including interviews with influencers, quantitative data from platforms, and relevant academic articles.

**Main Section**

The concept of the “influencer economy” refers to the economic system built around content creators who leverage social media platforms for financial success. The primary mechanisms for generating income include advertisement revenue, sponsorships, fan donations, and product endorsements. (李 牧汀. 2017) In the case of live-streaming platforms like Douyin, Kuaishou, and Twitch, influencers can build large audiences through both real-time interaction and viral content, which facilitates their financial gains.

Platforms such as Douyin have changed the way people consume content,(Jiawei P.2021) moving from traditional media consumption to interactive, personalized, and real-time content delivery. (Wanshan H,.2022) Influencers, particularly in niche areas like gaming, music, and lifestyle vlogs, attract followers by offering content that resonates with their audience’s desires, such as entertainment, escapism, or social interaction.Ah Mao’s case exemplifies how a formerly “invisible” individual in the traditional job market can capitalize on these opportunities. Before his entry into the influencer economy, Ah Mao lived in obscurity, working low-paying jobs without any significant support system,(Tianhao X.2022) a situation that many marginalized groups find themselves in. His early life was characterized by struggle and uncertainty, living day-to-day with limited resources and no clear career trajectory. However, when Ah Mao discovered live-streaming, he saw a path forward that leveraged his gaming skills and relatable persona.

Ah Mao’s success as an influencer is rooted in both timing and audience appeal. One of the key characteristics of his success is that he entered the live-streaming scene at a time when the market was still emerging. By becoming a live-streamer in the early days of platforms like Kuaishou, Ah Mao gained the first-mover advantage . (Xiaoge D ,Lihong D ,Teng Z.2022)The early adopters of these platforms often benefit from reduced competition and the ability to build loyal fan bases from scratch.A significant aspect of Ah Mao’s appeal to viewers was his relatability. As a young man who had lived a difficult and uncertain life, his followers were drawn to his “underdog” persona. His struggles, depicted through both his content and his interactions with fans, created an emotional connection with the audience. This emotional bond is critical in the influencer economy, where fans are not just passive viewers but active participants in the influencer’s success (Jikun L.2022). The “poverty to success” narrative in Ah Mao’s content resonated with many viewers who saw themselves in his shoes, and as a result, they supported him by sending virtual gifts, subscribing to his channel, and sharing his content.The financial success of influencers like Ah Mao is largely driven by fan engagement and the gift economy that dominates platforms like Douyin and Kuaishou. (Xin L ,Kexin Z.2022)Fans interact with their favorite influencers through gifts, donations, and purchases, creating a direct financial link between content creators and their audience. Ah Mao’s success was largely due to his ability to connect with his followers, maintain their interest through consistent content, and cultivate a loyal fan base.

In Ah Mao’s case, the “gift economy” allowed him to generate revenue through direct fan donations during live-streaming sessions. However, Ah Mao also benefited from sponsorships and partnerships with commercial brands. His growing popularity caught the attention of major players in the entertainment and food industries, culminating in his partnership with a major donor, the “boss brother” (榜一大哥), who not only contributed financially but also helped Ah Mao open a restaurant. This partnership highlights the intersection of influencer culture and entrepreneurial opportunities.One of the most significant findings from Ah Mao’s case is the intersection of social media platforms and economic mobility. Social media platforms offer a democratized space for economic success. Traditional industries often require a large initial investment, educational background, or networks that marginalized individuals may not have. In contrast, platforms like Douyin have provided opportunities for individuals without these advantages to create their own careers.The process of personal branding—in which Ah Mao has excelled—allows individuals to present a curated, marketable image of themselves that attracts both followers and advertisers . (Ovidiu O,.2024)Ah Mao’s ability to adapt his persona and cater to the needs of his audience through humor, gaming content, and relatable struggles was key to his success. This process of self-presentation is a crucial element for influencers in building a profitable career, but it also highlights the importance of social media literacy and the ability to market oneself effectively in an online world.While Ah Mao’s story is compelling, it also illustrates patterns that are common among other successful influencers. Many influencers, especially those from marginalized backgrounds, leverage their personal stories and struggles to build a unique and engaging persona. However, Ah Mao’s unique appeal lies in his early entry into the market and his ability to turn perceived weakness (his impoverished background) into a form of strength.

In comparison to other influencers, Ah Mao stands out for his ability to stay authentic while leveraging his past struggles for content creation. His authenticity resonates with viewers who appreciate content creators that are perceived as “real” and “genuine”.(Zhao J ,Li Q.2024) However, Ah Mao’s reliance on his early involvement and the niche appeal of gaming content may limit his broader relevance compared to influencers who can diversify their content offerings..

**Conclusion**

Ah Mao’s journey from a net café god to a successful entrepreneur through the influencer economy underscores the transformative potential of digital platforms in providing economic opportunities for marginalized individuals. Through his case, we can see the significance of timing, audience engagement, (Ren Z ,Du W ,Zhao Z.2024)and brand building in the influencer economy.The current literature on influencer economies largely focuses on the business models and platform mechanics but lacks detailed exploration of individual success stories, especially those of marginalized individuals like Ah Mao. This gap in the literature is significant because it highlights the potential of social media platforms to provide new pathways to success for individuals without traditional resources.(Lai X.2024)Future research could delve deeper into the long-term sustainability of these career paths and the psychological effects of maintaining an influencer persona. Additionally, examining how social media platforms can be leveraged for social mobility by other underrepresented groups could expand our understanding of the relationship between digital media and economic opportunity.

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