

LOVING: Miss Chia Min Chen holding a child. She says it is just a coincidence that the photos show her holding on to things.
PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM/MINCHEN333



Hit on Instagram, date-less on V Day

M'sian spa owner with 213,000 followers on social media joins dating app in hopes of landing boyfriend

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The latest social media phenomenon in Asia is known as "the girl who holds things".

With about 213,000 followers on Instagram, Miss Chia Min Chen's pictures sometimes receive more than 19,000 likes each.

Local blogger Xiaxue, who has about 558,000 followers on Instagram, received from 4,600 to 30,000 likes for her most recent pictures.

And what exactly does Miss Chia hold in the photos uploaded onto Instagram?

The most random things, apparently.

From a corn on the cob to a person's hand and a crying toddler, this Malaysian beauty's hold on fame is indeed a peculiar one.

The 25-year-old owner of a spa business told The New Paper she began getting popular on Instagram towards the end of 2014, even though she started her account in 2013.

According to her, it was just a "coincidence" that many of her pictures, usually taken by friends and family members, have her holding something.

Miss Chia said she never expected such an "overwhelming response" but is "thankful" for it.

"It took me by surprise to see that I have attracted so many fans. Most of my pictures are spontaneous.

"I have a lot of followers telling me

they like my smile, so most of my pictures are of me smiling, holding something or engaged in activities I like to do.

"What is important is that I have to be natural in all my photos and that my posts give off a positive vibe," she told TNP in Mandarin over the phone from Johor Baru, where she lives.

Miss Chia has attracted attention from followers in Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Many of her fans are male, who lavish her with compliments on her Instagram account saying "so cute!" and "great smile".

But the one thing she hasn't been able to, well, hold on to is a man.

SUITORS

One would expect the attractive young woman to have a string of suitors knocking at her door.

But while Miss Chia admitted that "some rather good-looking males" have approached her at her spa to recommend their treatments, she has yet to be asked out by any of them.

She even started using social networking and dating app Paktor a week ago.

The soft-spoken Miss Chia said: "One of my friends from Singapore recommended me this app, knowing that I have very few friends.

"I'm always very busy at work and I don't really have time to socialise. Most of my customers are older women. I actually don't get to interact with



POPULAR: Photos of Miss Chia Min Chen holding things, like a person's hand (above) and a bottle (left) have received many likes on Instagram. She says many of her followers have asked her how she maintains her abs.

PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM/MINCHEN333

many guys."

But she hasn't had luck so far finding love on Paktor, which reportedly experienced a 20 per cent increase in users in the days leading up to Valentine's Day.

Miss Chia, who has been in two relationships in the past and is currently single, remains dateless as Feb 14 looms.

"I remember spending Valentine's Day with my mother last year. If I'm able to find a date (this year), I hope to go for a nice dinner and eat good food," she said with a laugh.

"My last relationship failed because we had different priorities. I'm a very family-oriented person and I put my family first, while my ex-boyfriend had different values so that led to some problems."

Even though she's exploring Paktor, she said she's "sceptical" about online dating "because you never know the true intentions of guys online".

If she manages to find someone she likes online, she will likely bring a close friend or family member along, or meet him in a public place.

CELEB CRUSH

When it comes to looking for a boyfriend, Miss Chia - whose celebrity crush is Taiwanese pop star Jay Chou - said she doesn't look out for any particular trait.

"I think a lot of us girls always say we want someone tall or handsome," she said.

"But in the end when feelings develop, it becomes irrelevant because you end up liking the person for who he is... I don't really need a guy who will buy me flowers all the time, just someone with a positive outlook on life.

"And also, someone who shares the same interest in food as I do! He doesn't have to cook because I can cook, but he has to appreciate eating."

When asked if she plans to enter showbiz like her sister, Brandy Chia, a 27-year-old actress-model, she said: "We are actually on very different paths in our careers. I'll see how it goes.

"If someone offers me a photo shoot or a project that requires me to reveal a lot of my body, I think I'll probably reject it. I'm more interested in doing something related to fitness or healthy living.

"A lot of my followers have been asking me how I train and maintain my abs so I was thinking of doing something related to fitness."

Easier now to be a celeb

In the world of social media, where Kim Kardashian has more Instagram followers than Barack Obama, it seems becoming a celebrity isn't as hard as before.

Dr Michael Netzley, academic director of executive development at Singapore Management University said: "The new rules are very different. In the past, celebrities who were just personalities

had a harder time (attracting fans and followers). Gatekeepers existed, and editors or producers would weed out people who were selling only a personality.

"To get through the gatekeepers, people had to do something noteworthy and generally be able to give an acceptable media interview."

According to Lars Voedisch, managing

director of PR consultancy PRecious Communications, social media has made it easier to express an opinion by hitting the 'like', 'favourite' or 'follow' button.

He added that becoming a celebrity these days essentially involves some initial trigger like looking attractive, different, or doing something interesting, dangerous or unexpected.