Image Construction and Communication Mechanism of Internet Celebrity Products from the Perspective of Media Pilgrimage

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Abstract: In the digital media environment, internet celebrity products attract widespread consumer attention through captivating designs, unique functionalities, and distinctive brand images. Exploring their image construction and communication mechanisms from the perspective of media pilgrimage, this paper identifies several key factors. Firstly, exterior design, unique functionalities, and brand tone are crucial elements in shaping the image of internet celebrity products, leaving a lasting impression on consumers. Secondly, emerging online marketing channels and the promotion by internet opinion leaders facilitate the rapid dissemination of internet celebrity product images. Thirdly, the level of consumer acceptance of internet celebrity product images influences their popularity. The theory of media pilgrimage explains the role of media in shaping consumer behavior. Lastly, challenges in this field include the deepening integration of manufacturing and media, as well as the inseparability of physical products from their images. In the future, it is imperative to delve deeper into consumer demands, and evolving brand shaping strategies are essential.

Keywords: Media Pilgrimage, Internet Celebrity Products, Communication Mechanism

1. Introduction

With the vigorous development of digital media, the emergence of "internet celebrities" has quietly risen, rapidly becoming a prominent feature of contemporary youth culture. In this era that advocates individuality and self-expression, internet celebrities often attract a large number of fans with their personal charm, generating a powerful "internet celebrity effect" [1]. Many brands have also realized the commercial value of internet celebrities and have collaborated with them to launch co-branded products. These internet celebrity products, relying on the unique features and appearance of the products themselves, as well as the brand effect of the internet celebrities, often quickly occupy the market and become objects of admiration and pursuit by consumers. In this context, the image construction and communication mechanism of internet celebrity products have become a topic worthy of discussion. The key to the successful commercialization of internet celebrity products lies in the strategies and methods that can effectively shape the product image, captivating the target consumer group. In the digital society, the perspective of media pilgrimage provides a new perspective for us to understand this phenomenon. It reveals the significant influence of media environment and individual internet celebrities on consumer cognition, attitudes, and even purchase

decisions [2]. Based on the perspective of media pilgrimage, this paper intends to explore the changes in consumer behavior in the digital age and the social and cultural factors behind the success of internet celebrity products through an investigation of the image construction and communication mechanism of internet celebrity products. It is hoped that this study can provide some valuable insights for brand decision-makers, marketers, and consumers alike.

2.   Key Elements of Internet Celebrity Product Image Construction

2.1.   Appearance Design: Core Attraction of Internet Celebrity Products

In the digital society, the appearance design of internet celebrity products is increasingly becoming an important visual communication strategy to directly attract audience visual attention [3]. From psychological and communication perspectives, many internet celebrity products' appearance designs fully utilize certain underlying features of human visual perception, such as color prominence and novelty in shape, to gain cognitive processing priority. Taking the current trend of "Dopamine Dressing" as an example, its appearance design successfully captures consumers' visual cognitive advantages. Specifically, Dopamine products widely adopt highly saturated warm color tones, such as orange-red and fluorescent pink. These warm color tones, as highly prominent visual cues, immediately attract the attention of visual recipients and generate positive emotional expectations. According to research on visual perception, brightness and saturation of colors are primary factors affecting color perceptual prominence. Therefore, Dopamine products gain cognitive advantages by scientifically applying color perception characteristics. Additionally, Dopamine extensively employs layered and exaggerated mixed dressing styles, which serve as prominent visual stimuli, easily gaining priority status in consumers' selective attention. According to communication models regarding selective attention, such novel designs successfully enter the audience's early filtering and selection stages through perceptual gateways, establishing themselves as objects with priority access to cognitive resources. This further increases the likelihood of Dopamine products being noticed in subsequent cognitive processes by the audience, aiding in gaining significant cognitive advantages.

2.2.   Unique Functionality: Competitive Advantage Driven by Innovation

In the digital age, internet celebrity products must continuously innovate in functionality to gain advantages in cognitive communication. According to functionalist communication theory, media must constantly satisfy audience functional needs to maintain audience dependence [4]. Taking KONO shampoo as an example, it provides innovative media solutions for scalp issues, meeting the audience's functional tendencies and successfully gaining cognitive attention. Specifically, KONO shampoo utilizes advanced microcapsule technology to repair the scalp barrier, forming the core competitive strength of the product. According to the Uses and Gratifications theory, such unique functional content better stimulates and satisfies users' cognitive needs, resulting in high engagement. Additionally, actively repairing the scalp provides a sense of ritual, meeting the cultural demand for improving lifestyle quality in postmodern society, conveying symbolic significance of a positive lifestyle. Overall, functional innovation enables KONO to establish a unique competitive advantage, fully demonstrating that functionality is key to gaining cognitive preferences. The brand discovered through surveys that controlling oil and scalp repair are the scalp issues of greatest concern to modern women. Therefore, the product's functional design closely aligns with this targeted demand. This also indirectly validates the view of functionalist communication theory that communication content must be customized according to audience needs. Furthermore, KONO's diverse interactive communication reinforces the conveyance of product functional value. By sharing a large number of internet celebrity trial experiences, it successfully enhances users' awareness of the product's functionality. According to language interaction theory, this secondary dissemination is particularly

effective. Thus, through a combination of functional innovation and communication strategies, KONO shampoo achieves significant cognitive communication effects.

2.3. Brand Image: Constructing Identity for Internet Celebrity Products

From a marketing perspective, brand image plays a significant role in attracting consumers and establishing a stable user base. Brand image is not only a description of product functionality but also, more importantly, through emotional and storytelling marketing, it creates emotional resonance with consumers. A good brand story, such as describing the founder's entrepreneurial journey or elucidating the brand's core values, often fosters consumer identification with the brand. In addition to telling a good brand story, brands also need to integrate their products into consumers' lifestyles through content marketing. It is evident that many successful internet celebrity product brands are adept at outputting interesting and informative content on social media, attracting continuous user attention. Through this approach, products are subtly integrated into users' daily lives, garnering more identification. Brands also need to build a sense of community culture, allowing consumers to genuinely feel a sense of belonging from the brand and other users. Both online and offline community activities undoubtedly contribute to this, allowing users to feel closely connected to the brand and other users, thereby strengthening their identification with the brand. Finally, brand image can also satisfy consumers' self-actualization needs at a psychological level. Purchasing often stems from emotional drive, and a good brand image can endow products with unique emotional connotations, making consumers feel that owning them showcases their personality and uniqueness. This desire for self-actualization, to a certain extent, propels the popularity of internet celebrity products.

3. Internet Celebrity Product Communication Mechanisms and Marketing Strategies

3.1. The Importance of Marketing Strategies: From Product to Brand

In the era of the internet and social media, marketing strategies play a decisive role in the success of internet celebrity products. Traditional product marketing no longer satisfies consumers' demands for personalization, emotional engagement, and social interaction; thus, brand building has become a key factor for internet celebrity products to stand out.

Product homogeneity and the ineffectiveness of traditional marketing compel businesses to turn to brand marketing. In the past, product marketing often focused on the functional characteristics and performance advantages of the product itself. However, as market competition intensifies and consumer perspectives shift, product homogenization has become more apparent, and traditional product marketing no longer holds a competitive edge. This has prompted businesses to turn towards brand building to stand out in fierce market competition. Brand building is not just about the external image and logo of the product; it encompasses brand stories, brand values, brand culture, and more. By constructing unique and attractive brands, businesses can establish emotional connections with consumers, eliciting their identification and loyalty to the brand. Brand building transforms consumers from mere product buyers into brand advocates, fostering brand identity, thus enhancing the product's market share and sales.

Achieving brand identification helps construct consumer identity. Brand identification refers to consumers' sense of identity with the brand, viewing the brand as a symbol of their group or community. Brand identification can be achieved through emotional resonance, social identification, and self-expression. When consumers identify with a brand, they are more likely to incorporate it into their identity, using the brand as a manifestation of their self-identity and values. Identity and brand identification are interconnected. Consumers express their identity through brand identification,

seeing the brand as a way to display their personality and values. The brand becomes part of the consumer's self-identity, forming the core of identity recognition for internet celebrity products.

The implementation of socialized marketing meets consumers' social identification needs. Socialized marketing refers to integrating the brand and product into users' social lives through platforms like social media [7]. Through socialized marketing, brands can build a community culture, making consumers feel a sense of belonging and connect with others who share similar interests and values. Social identification refers to consumers wanting to be recognized and praised in their social circles when purchasing and using internet celebrity products. Through socialized marketing, brands can make their products symbols of social identification, encouraging people to associate their identities with the brand and product and actively share and promote on social platforms.

3.2. Choice and Impact of Communication Means: The Rise of Social Media

Social media plays a key role in constructing the identity of internet celebrity products. Platforms create spaces for consumer interaction, making media pilgrimage behaviors more convenient and widespread. On social media, consumers can connect with brands and like-minded people, forming communities. When an internet celebrity product is hotly discussed and shared on social media, it becomes a symbol of identity, motivating more people to join the media pilgrimage, thus forming a self-reinforcing cycle of dissemination. It is evident that social media is crucial in building identity for internet celebrity products.

Indeed, social media platforms have become vital for information dissemination and communication in modern society, significantly impacting people's cognition, attitudes, and behaviors, and their power to shape identity cannot be overlooked. First, social media gives everyone the chance to express themselves, allowing everyone to become producers and disseminators of information [8]. The decentralized information flow model allows individual voices to be widely broadcasted, fostering the formation of public identification. Secondly, based on big data algorithms, social media can accurately push information that fits with users' identities. This personalized experience not only meets information needs but also subtly reinforces users' sense of identification. Lastly, virtual social media communities gather people with similar interests, viewpoints, and values. They form a common identification through interactive sharing, with the community becoming a significant source of identification.

3.3. Internet Celebrity Collaboration and Influencer Marketing: Expanding the Boundaries of Communication

In the era of self-media and the proliferation of internet celebrities, marketing methods have undergone revolutionary changes. Traditional marketing strategies relying on "hard advertising" have been scorned by the public, leading to a significant decrease in dissemination effectiveness. In the new era, marketing primarily revolves around "content + context," with internet celebrity collaboration and influencer marketing serving as powerful tools that not only expand the boundaries of communication but also profoundly shape brand image and consumer identity. Among these, creative content and internet celebrity collaboration undoubtedly play a crucial role. Brands leverage the creativity and personality of internet celebrities to weave more attractive stories for their products. This collaborative content creation not only captures users' attention but also evokes emotional resonance. Once resonance is established, users naturally share and spread the content. Influencer marketing relies heavily on the appeal of internet celebrities. As idols to their fans, internet celebrities' emotional attitudes have a significant impact on their followers. Brands capitalize on internet celebrities to resonate with consumers, establish emotional bonds, and enhance brand identity. It is worth mentioning that internet celebrity marketing often involves cross-industry collaborations,

expanding brand influence into new domains. Cross-industry collaborations not only inject new creativity into brands but also introduce them to new contexts, attracting diverse audiences with multifaceted images. In this era of "content + context" marketing, cross-industry collaborations become crucial means for brand diversification and contextualization. In summary, new media marketing focuses on internet celebrity collaborations and content creation, establishing brand identity in consumers' minds through emotional resonance and cross-industry marketing to meet diverse needs. This model is not only crucial for the success of internet celebrity products but also brings new perspectives to brand communication.

4. Consumer Participation and the Influence of Media Pilgrimage

4.1. Consumer Acceptance and Shaping of Internet Celebrity Product Image

In the dissemination process of internet celebrity products, consumer participation plays a crucial role. Consumers are no longer passive recipients of product information but actively participate in shaping and influencing the image of internet celebrity products through interaction and engagement. According to social construction theory, consumers discuss internet celebrity products through comments and discussions, gradually reaching a consensus and forming a product image that meets the expectations of the masses [9]. For example, several internet celebrities may construct an image of a certain beauty product as "cost-effective," which influences more consumers' purchasing decisions. Consumers integrate their emotions, attitudes, and values into discussions and dissemination of internet celebrity products. According to social identity theory, many consumers participate in discussions of internet celebrity products to satisfy the spiritual needs of identifying with certain group values and brand images. They express their identification with the product through behaviors such as commenting, sharing, and liking on social media. These participatory behaviors of consumers influence the opinions of other consumers, thereby affecting the shaping of the image of internet celebrity products. Therefore, from a sociological perspective, consumer participation plays an important role in shaping the image of internet celebrity products.

4.2. Consumer Behavior and Attitude Shaping Effect of Media Pilgrimage

Media pilgrimage, as a consumer behavior, not only serves as a carrier of information transmission but also reflects attitudes and values towards the image of internet celebrity products. From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, when consumers share internet celebrity products on social media, it is a symbolic interaction, conveying their identification with the product through symbols such as text and images. Consumer sharing behavior demonstrates their identification with the brand, satisfying spiritual needs. This interaction constructs the meaning of internet celebrity products and influences others' perceptions. Through the audience effect, others will also actively participate in the interaction. From the perspective of social capital theory, common consumer interests and brand identification connect individuals, accumulate social capital, and form communities. This positive interaction of media pilgrimage inspires more consumers to actively participate and disseminate, collectively shaping the cultural significance of the product. It can be said that media pilgrimage helps enhance consumers' identification with brands and communities, serving as an important social interaction method for consumer groups to collectively construct the meaning of internet celebrity products.

4.3. Challenges in Shaping and Disseminating the Image of Internet Celebrity Products

In the process of consumer participation in media pilgrimage, although there are positive values, there are also some challenges. On the one hand, the autonomy of consumer participation may lead to the

loss of brand image control. Consumer comments and sharing may not be under the control of the brand, resulting in the blurring or distortion of the brand image. During media pilgrimage, there may be false advertising and information dissemination. Due to the characteristics of social media, untrue information may spread rapidly in a short period, damaging the reputation and image of the brand. On the other hand, consumers may be misled by false information, affecting their cognition and attitude towards the product. Media pilgrimage may also cause problems of excessive sharing and participation by consumers. Some consumers may excessively pursue exposure and identification on social media, leading to over-sharing and over-participation, and even falsely portraying their relationship with the product.

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