

Research on Marketing Strategy of Chinese Domestic Cosmetics Based on Female College Students' Consumption Characteristics

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ABSTRACT

With the development of China's economy and the improvement of individual's living standards, female college students are playing an increasingly important role in the cosmetics consumption market. They are the main purchasers of domestic cosmetics in China. By using literature research method and case study method, this paper firstly analyses the characteristics of female college students' consumption behaviour. Their consumption behaviour is reflected in the fact that they tend to consume cosmetics out of pursuit of fashion and multitude-followed mentality. They are used to referring to some trial experiences before purchasing cosmetics. In addition, female college students are vulnerable to the marketing campaign, and often lack of rationality in consumption. With the development of e-commerce, they prefer the convenient and fast way of shopping and gradually develop the habit of online shopping. In terms of marketing strategies of China's domestic cosmetic brands, this paper takes two domestic cosmetic brands, Pechoin and Florasis, as examples to analyze and discover the problems existing in their marketing strategies, so as to put forward corresponding measures to improve the marketing of China's domestic cosmetics. First of all, domestic cosmetic brands should pay more attention to product quality, improve the design of product, attach importance to brand innovation and accelerate product updates. Secondly, domestic cosmetic brands should increase opportunities of trial experience for female college students, strengthen communication with consumers and make use of word-of-mouth marketing. In addition, they can also use e-commerce marketing and optimize the layout of online sales channels. Through the crossover study of female college students' consumption behaviour and Chinese domestic cosmetics brands' marketing strategies, this paper provides corresponding reference information for the marketing of Chinese cosmetics industry.

Keywords: Female college students, Domestic cosmetics, Brand, Consumption characteristics, Marketing strategy.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the raise of people's income and living standard, health and beauty are more and more pursued by them. The cosmetics industry is known as the "beauty economy", which has grown rapidly in recent years against the backdrop of the "age of face" and the "face value economy". According to the data of the National Bureau of Statistics of China, as of November 2020, the retail value of cosmetics in 2020 reached 307.58 billion yuan, with a year-on-year growth of 9.5%. With the development of Internet technology and the rapid growth of cosmetics sales both online and offline, China's cosmetics industry will continue to maintain a steady growth trend in the next few years. There will be consistent growth in the market size of China's cosmetics

industry. It is expected to reach 372.37 billion yuan in 2024, with a compound annual growth rate of 11.8%. Due to the consumption upgrade brought about by the increase of national income level, the concept of cosmetics consumption has been strengthened. People's demand for cosmetics is steadily increasing as well. China's cosmetics market has a promising future, which is mainly driven by two factors. On the one hand, "appearance level", "Internet celebrity" and other related topics continues to heat up, which has also aroused people's attention to the cosmetics industry. On the other hand, the improvement of consumers' aesthetic level and the popularization of the concept of skin care make people use cosmetics more frequently. Therefore, people have formed the habit of cosmetics consumption.

Cosmetics in this paper are mainly defined as chemical industrial products or fine chemical products people used to maintain good condition [1]. Cosmetics-related literature research in the academic circles has attracted more and more attention, especially for China's cosmetics industry or cosmetics consumption behaviour. Chen pointed out that in recent years, China has vigorously developed information infrastructure construction, and the development of online sales channel is getting more and more rapid [2]. The domestic brands meet the opportunity to enter the market of core urban. One of the strategic approaches of China's cosmetics industry is to develop local characteristic brands and improve brand marketing capabilities [2]. Zhang put forward that the development of domestic cosmetics is very difficult in recent years. Domestic cosmetics brands should make efforts in product research and development, channel layout and consumer research. Among them, product development is related to the problem of "customer's repeated purchase", which should be solved by the improvement of product quality and efficacy [3]. Tan et al. pointed out that college students will be the main force of future consumption and the leader of consumption trend to some extent. The factors that influence college students' consumption behaviour mainly include consumption capacity, consumption motivation, product quality, brand promotion and purchase approach [4]. Qiu et al. found that most of Chinese college students are cosmetics consumers, but their consumption capacity is limited. In the cosmetics consumption group of college students, the male and female ratio is about 1:8. Female college students are the dominant group of college students' cosmetics market. In addition, with college students' brand awareness and global awareness growing, cosmetic brand has a certain impact on college students' cosmetic consumption [5].

As shown above, there are many researches on the market status and marketing strategies of domestic cosmetics in China. Research on the cosmetics consumption behaviour of college students has also attracted many scholars' attention. However, it is a blank area to study the marketing strategy of Chinese domestic cosmetics based on the characteristics of female college students' consumption behaviour. According to the Kantar Consumer Index, young women in their 20s, including female college students, are the main buyers of personal care products. Young women account for only 14.3 percent of China's population but they contribute 38 percent of the sales of cosmetics products.

In this context, this paper aims at the characteristics of female students' consumption behaviour and the marketing strategies of cosmetics sales platforms, through literature research and survey methods, to study the extent to which the two can correspond, and further provide some corresponding marketing approaches to

promote the development of the domestic cosmetics brands.

2. METHODOLOGY

This paper mainly uses the following two research methods. In order to lay the theoretical and practical foundation to contrapuntally enhance China's domestic cosmetic marketing capabilities and market competitiveness, this paper will conduct an in-depth analysis from the perspective of female college students' consumption behaviour characteristics and marketing strategies of Chinese domestic cosmetics.

Literature research method is a method to obtain data by collecting and investigating literature. This leads to a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to mastering the issues to be studied. This paper inquires and collects data with keywords such as domestic cosmetics brand and college students' consumption behaviour to learn about the research status and research findings. To obtain the relevant background information and research ideas, the research literature includes books, periodicals, papers, research reports and news reports. The limitation of this method lies in the fact that the literature is secondary data, lacking authenticity and effectiveness to solve existing problems to a certain extent.

Case study method takes one or more cases as the object, systematically collecting data, and then conducts in-depth research. Case study can provide researchers with a more specific and systematic perspective. This paper presents a case study of specific domestic cosmetic brands such as Pechoin and Florasis in relation to the characteristics of the consumer behaviour of female university students. In the process, it will explore the problem of matching the current marketing strategies of domestic cosmetic brands with the consumption behaviour of female students from a practical perspective. The limitations of case analysis method mainly include the following points. Firstly, the generalization of certain cases of domestic cosmetic brands is not statistical but analytical, which makes the generalization somewhat arbitrary and subjective and thus makes it difficult to generalize the relevant findings. Secondly, case studies have technical limitations, that is, there is no standardized approach to data analysis. As a result, the presentation of evidence and the interpretation of data are optional.

3. RESULT

3.1. Characteristics of Female College Students' Cosmetic Consumption Characteristics

3.1.1. Consumption Depends on Trial Experience

As access to commodities information, personal and experiential sources are more popular for female students than commercial and public sources of information. At the same time, the emergence of social platforms has

changed the way of information dissemination mode. The vast majority of female college students are loyal users of the Internet, and they are accustomed to picking up information of cosmetic products and others trial experience as a reference for whether or not to purchase the cosmetic product.

From the perspective of female college students, most of them do not start to contact cosmetics until they enter the university. They are at the stage of cognition and learning make-up, without a certain brand loyalty. In a collective environment, their choice of cosmetics is easily influenced by word-of-mouth spread among the people around them. After trying the products of a certain cosmetics brand, female college students tend to form loyalty to the brand which gives them a satisfying experience. Likewise, they are willing to carry out word-of-mouth about cosmetics brand.

3.1.2. Consumption Has the Psychology of Pursuing Fashion Trend and Following the Crowds

Female college students are the main groups that pursue the fashion trend and form the trend. In the context of "Internet celebrity economy", "Internet celebrity" is a representative of the trend, female college students are easy to accept, appreciate, even worship and imitate their behaviour. Following the trend and purchasing the same products of Internet celebrities have gradually become the consumption norm for female college students. The pursuit of fashion is not only the reason why female college students have a great implicit demand for cosmetics, but also a preference of female college students' cosmetics consumption.

3.1.3. Consumption Highly Influenced by the Internet Shopping Platform, with the Majority of Online Consumption

Due to the location of the university campus is generally in the remote suburbs, college students' living environment is relatively closed. Therefore, female college students pay more attention to the convenience of shopping. With the rapid development of e-commerce, online shopping breaks through the limitations of time and space, with the advantages of rich cosmetics categories and high selectivity. Online payment and product distribution are also very convenient, so that online shopping platform has gradually become an essential shopping venue for female college students. In addition, female college students spend a lot of time on social media every day due to their strong demand for interpersonal contact. As online shopping platforms steadily infiltrate social media, marketing in the form of KOL, short video, influencer marketing meets the entertainment needs of female college students, and also influence them in an imperceptible way.

3.1.4. Consumption Lacks a Certain Rationality

As female college students' cognition, emotion and personality growth are immature, they do not have a deep awareness of cosmetics, so they are vulnerable to marketing tactics when purchasing cosmetics. This also leads to a lack of rationality in cosmetics consumption among female students, who are prone to emotional and impulsive consumption. E-commerce has become the main marketing means, such as Li Jiaqi and other well-known anchors' live broadcasting room, Little Red book notes of recommend, product placement of network programs, etc. These marketing resonate with female college students through the introduction and presentation of the effectiveness of cosmetics products, thus stimulating their consumption desire.

Secondly, female college students are also deeply influenced by various carnival promotion activities on shopping platforms such as Tmall and Jingdong. They usually have the psychology of "taking advantage", buying up and hoarding cosmetics during the activities in order to get discounts, preferential offers or gifts.

Thirdly, due to their poor discrimination ability, female college students are easily affected by the celebrity effect. They may blindly buy the products endorsed by some idols, and even be addicted to continuously purchase those products.

3.2. Problems in Marketing Strategies of Chinese Domestic Cosmetics -- Take Pechoin and Florasis as Examples

Female college students have a great implicit demand and consumption potential for cosmetics. However, the marketing strategies of Chinese domestic cosmetic brands are not aligned with female college students and their consumption behaviour characteristics.

3.2.1. Problems Existing in the Marketing Strategy of Pechoin

As a Chinese time-honored cosmetic brand with a history of 90 years, Pechoin has profound experience in herbal skin caring with a good reputation for quality. Pechoin has entered the rejuvenation stage in 2020. However, their marketing strategy targeted at female college students lacks innovativeness.

First of all, female college students are very perceptive to fashionable and personalized cosmetic brands. Nevertheless, whether its product design or publicity, Pechoin did not change its inherent image identity in female college students' mind. It was once considered as "skincare products on mum's dressing table", that hindered Pechoin's pace to open up the college market. Secondly, Pechoin lacks innovation elements, and it does not yet open up the makeup market.

To those who has begun to make up, Pechoin is short of appealing [6]. Thirdly, the publicity of Pechoin is far from satisfactory, so that the marketing effect has not been achieved. Recent years, the company has launched a series of new products, “Sansheng Hua”, but it has not formed a unique recognition due to the unclear differentiation of products publicity. Besides, female college students pay more attention to quality and efficacy of the cosmetics. Pechoin just lists ingredients without clearly identifying of its efficacy advantages, which in reality misleads female college students. Finally, the marketing of Pechoin is relatively traditional. Pechoin fails to make good use of the social e-commerce platform and the approach of influencer marketing that female college students prefer. As a consequence, the product information cannot be effectively conveyed to female college students.

3.2.2. Problems Existing in the Marketing Strategy of Florasis

Florasis is a makeup brand founded in 2017. It has become a representative of the new generation of domestic cosmetics brands with widespread popularity in just three years. As an emerging cosmetics brand, Florasis is close to female college students in terms of marketing, but it also has problems in aspect of positioning, channel layout, cost performance and public praise.

First of all, the Chinese style and classical elements integrated into the products, services and marketing strategies of Florasis. The marketing focal point is not on the product quality or efficacy, which is a common concern among female students. It couldn't attract those who are not familiar with the classical elements. Secondly, the sales channel layout of Florasis is inadequate, owing to its over-dependence on Li Jiaqi's live booth [7]. Female college students prefer easy and fast shopping to less time-sensitive live streaming. In addition, Florasis has been accompanied by many marketing campaigns since its establishment. In fact, its reputation has been affected by the frequent evaluation of “excessive marketing campaigns”, “poor quality”, “low-cost performance”. However, cost performance and public praise play a crucial role in the choice of cosmetics brands for female students.

4. DISCUSSION: MARKETING STRATEGIES OF DOMESTIC COSMETICS

4.1. Improve the Quality of Cosmetics Product

As cosmetics come into direct contact with human skin, product quality and safety are the primary considerations for female students. Therefore, domestic cosmetics can use more natural, green and herbal ingredients in product development, without excessive

addition of irritating chemical ingredients [8]. In marketing cosmetics, domestic cosmetics brands should emphasize the product quality and highlight the efficacy of the product, for female college students' concern about the effectiveness of cosmetic products. To enhance the attractiveness of female college students, domestic cosmetics brands can also introduce cosmetic ingredients and efficacy through Weibo, WeChat and other media platforms.

4.2. Pay Attention to Brand Innovation, Make Products Well-Designed, and Accelerate Product Updates

Innovation-driven growth needs to be taken seriously in the cosmetics industry. China's domestic cosmetic brands lack competitiveness in innovation, mainly in terms of technology patent and product replacement. For female college students who keep up with trends and new things, domestic cosmetics should enhance the sense of innovation and add creative points in products designs. For example, Florasis cleverly applied the carving technology to the design of lipstick. It has won the favor of many female college students. In addition, cosmetics with a well-designed appearance and advanced package can trigger the emotional response of female college students by conforming to the psychology of their pursuit of fashion. In terms of product updates, domestic cosmetics can learn from international brands to enhance brand vitality by introducing limited series, holiday gift boxes and brand alliances.

4.3. Increase Their Trial Experience and Conduct Word-Of-Mouth Marketing

Due to the common perception of female college students, they pay attention to the word of mouth and are willing to spread word-of-mouth. Increasing their trial experience on cosmetics products is conducive to the word-of-mouth marketing effect of the brand. In order to enhance public praise and brand recognition, domestic cosmetic brands can not only continuously improve product quality, but also distribute product samples, offer free gifts or discount to the group [9]. The brand side can narrow the distance with female college students through campus talk. Carrying out professional product introduction and beauty science popularization can also win the trust of female college students and increase the brand awareness. Besides, it is an effective way to improve brand attention to sponsor campus activities and putting makeup products into campus activities as prizes and welfare.

4.4. Strengthen Communication and Brand Co-Creation with the Group

Female college students are an active and creative group. They are in the process of recognizing cosmetics,

so they will have many novel ideas and imagination. Domestic cosmetic brands can develop their products through the feedback and opinions of the group. On the one hand, cosmetics brands should attach importance to after-sales service and service professionalism. On the other hand, there is a need to improve communication with female students throughout the consumption process. For example, an official account should be created on Weibo, Little Red Book and other social media platforms commonly used to release product information and respond to relevant feedbacks in time. It is also possible to strengthen the participation of female college students through some brand campaigns, so as to user-centric co-creation of products, content and brands.

4.5. Utilize E-Commerce and Optimize the Layout of Online Sales Channels

Online shopping is popular with female students for the convenience of shopping, the variety of choices and the personalization of services. Domestic cosmetics should also ride the tailwind of e-commerce and increase investment in online sales channels. Firstly, domestic cosmetics enterprises can cooperate with well-known anchors to promote sales in the form of live broadcast. Secondly, it can use social e-commerce platform to cooperate with "online celebrity" with a large number of fans and good reputation, carrying out influencer marketing. Thirdly, search engine channels can be laid out to accurately convey cosmetics information to female college students as much as possible.

5. CONCLUSION

Female college students, as the main cosmetics consumers at present and for a long time in the future, are the main sales target of domestic cosmetics. Due to the psychology of chasing fashion trend and following the crowd in cosmetics consumption, they are prone to consume impulsively without rationality. This group are dependent on personal and experience sources to obtain cosmetics information, and prefer purchasing cosmetics through online shopping platforms. However, the marketing strategies of Chinese domestic cosmetics targeting female college students are not consistent with their consumption behaviour characteristics. Therefore, it should be based on the characteristics of enterprises, develop cosmetics that suitable for the preferences of female college students. Domestic cosmetic enterprise should constantly innovate to enhance the brand vitality. According to the consumption characteristics of female college students, marketing mix of influencer marketing, e-commerce marketing and word-of-mouth marketing

should be taken to enhance the competitiveness and market share in the female college students' market.

Given that the paper mainly conducts case study through secondary sources, it plays a guidance role to the improvement of China's domestic cosmetics marketing strategies to a certain extent. Nevertheless, it does not conduct field research and any interviews, so further research should explore the consumption group of female college students in depth in order to improve the pertinence of the research findings.

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