Analysis on Luxury Jewelry Brands Based on Chinese Consumer Behavior: A Comparative Analysis on Tiffany and Cartier

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Abstract. Luxury goods sales are expected to cool down in the Chinese market in 2024. The performance of jewelry is also poor. This is related to the changing consumer attitudes of Chinese consumers. The main consumer group for luxury goods in China is high net worth individuals. The consumption concept of this group has undergone significant changes in the past few years. Tiffany and Cartier, as the most popular jewelry brands among high-net-worth individuals in China, have made a series of adjustments from 2024 to early 2025 in response to changes in the Chinese market. This article takes these two brands as examples, based on the preferences and concepts of high-net-worth individuals in China, and compares and analyzes them from the perspectives of design concepts and market strategies. It explores the successes and failures of the two brands in the past and provides recommendations. Research has found that there are significant differences in the design concepts of the two brands, but many strategic aspects are the same. Cartier's brand design philosophy is more in line with current Chinese cultural trends and started earlier than Tiffany in some strategies. Through this study, it is suggested that both brands can pay more attention to incorporating health-related concepts into their brand design in the future, and place greater emphasis on design aesthetics in store design and services.

Keywords: Luxury Jewelry, Comparative Analysis, Tiffany, Cartier.

1 Introduction

In 2024, China's high-end consumption market decreased by 2% year-on-year, reaching 1.63 trillion yuan [1]. The traditional luxury market saw a decline of over 8%, primarily due to the sluggish performance of the high-end jewelry, watches, and leather goods sectors [1]. According to the analysis, the primary reason for the decline in luxury goods sales is the poor performance in the high-end watch and jewelry sectors. Both categories experienced double-digit declines, with high-end watches falling by 22% and high-end jewelry dropping by 10% [1].

Additionally, a report from Richemont, the parent company of Cartier, revealed that in the fiscal third quarter of 2024, Richemont Group's sales in the Chinese market decreased by 18% [2]. While the report attributes the underperformance in China to the

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economic downturn caused by the Covid-19 epidemic, the global economy is also facing similar challenges [2]. Contrary to this, Richemont's global sales increased by 10% during the same quarter [2]. This indicates that the economic downturn alone cannot fully explain the recent decline in luxury brand sales in the Chinese market.

Furthermore, according to reports from The Business Times and Pinpaishudu, two of the world's most influential luxury brands, Tiffany and Cartier, made certain adjustments to their stores in the Chinese market in 2024 [3,4]. This demonstrates that changes in China's luxury market have drawn the attention of these core luxury jewelry brands.

More research into the performance of luxury goods in the Chinese market suggests that fluctuations in luxury sales are more likely linked to changes in consumer behavior and psychology, rather than solely economic factors. According to Gao (2025), whether it is the VIC of the brands or the younger generation, people’s consumption habits of luxury goods are changing. The symbol of identity and status represented by luxury goods is no longer the primary element that consumers care about. Compared to the past, people's consumption is gradually becoming more rational [5].

At present, the luxury goods market is being divided into two core consumer groups: ultra-high net worth individuals and nouveau riche consumers [6]. In 2023, the group with net assets of over 10 million RMB in China will contribute 83% to luxury consumption, with an average annual luxury consumption of over 191000 RMB per person [7]. These high-net-worth individuals are undoubtedly the main force in China's luxury consumer market. Different reports have reflected the attention of high-net-worth consumers to experiential consumption and health and wellness consumption [1,6]. Which brand can cater to the consumption psychology and behavior of this group of people, and which brand can gain their favor and win in the fierce market competition.

Tiffany, founded by Charles Louis Tiffany in New York City in 1837, USA and was acquired by LVMH Group in 2021, It is one of the most influential luxury jewelry brands Cartier, found by Louis Francois Cartier in Paris, France in 1847 is another popular luxury jewelry brand in China These two brands have the similar history in length.

This article will take Tiffany and Cartier as case studies, starting from the perspectives of design concepts and market strategies, and based on the consumption behavior of high-net-worth individuals in China, compare and explore the efforts made by the two brands in attracting consumers, as well as what strategies can be adopted in the future to enhance their position in the Chinese fashion luxury industry.

2 Analysis on Tiffany

2.1 Design Concept

Tiffany's design philosophy is to develop innovative design elements that resonate with classics and eternity, creating romantic and beloved designs. Tiffany has brought many classic designs, such as the well-known Tiffany Blue, six claw diamond ring, smiley face necklace, double T bracelet, etc., all of which have become popular classic styles of Tiffany. Tiffany's overall design style tends to be gentle, with fewer sharp edges and corners. Even the classic Hardwear series has rounded edges and lines, without the sharp corners of Cartier's nail series. The overall design is more feminine, making Tiffany more popular among younger women in China. But relatively speaking, this group has fewer assets and is less likely to become consumers of luxury jewelry compared to higher age groups.

According to Hurun report, among the 750 high net worth individuals involved in this survey, only 29% were aged 30 and below [1]. The overall gender ratio in this survey is evenly divided [1]. If the proportion is evenly distributed across all age groups, it means that women aged 30 and under only account for less than 15% in this survey. From this, it can be seen that Tiffany's design attracts a relatively narrow consumer group in China. This also explains to some extent why Tiffany, although also listed as the most popular jewelry brand among high-net-worth individuals in China in Hurun's survey, only ranked fourth, behind Bulgari, Cartier, and Chanel.

2.2Market Strategies

According to news reports, Tiffany's recent market strategy highlights four actions: reducing the area of some stores to reduce rental expenses; Expand stores in some cities; Open an online store; Hire Chinese celebrities as spokespersons. At the same time, in order to better cope with the increasingly changing Chinese market, Tiffany and its subsidiary LVMH Group have also made adjustments to their senior management.

In September 2024, Tiffany reduced the size of its flagship store in Shanghai [3]. According to another report in 2025, Tiffany renovated its stores in Chengdu and Wuhan, and plans to open more stores in Beijing and Shanghai [8]. This reflects Tiffany's shift in sales strategy in the Chinese market that it will focus more on first tier cities in China rather than concentrating on a single store or city.

In addition to offline stores, Tiffany also attaches great importance to the establishment of online stores. On January 19, 2024, Tiffany opened its official flagship store on Tmall, one of China's largest online shopping platforms [9].

In addition to the strategy of expanding stores and opening up online stores. Like many other brands, Tiffany also experienced a change in senior management in the first half of 2024. In March 2024, Tiffany's LVMH Group welcomed its first Chinese director, Sun Wei. According to the Chairman and CEO of LVMH Group, the board of directors chose Ms. Sun Wei to join mainly based on her understanding of the Chinese market [10]. Starting from January 2025, Tiffany's current executive vice president of product will be transferred to other brands under LVMH. Tiffany's new EVP has no information yet [11]. This measure represents that the group may have a new strategic deployment for the brand.

Moreover, in early 2025, Tiffany appointed the well-known Chinese actress, Tang Yan, to be their spokesperson in China. Currently, appointing celebrities, especially those with a large fan base, as spokespersons to increase product sales is already a common practice in the Chinese market. Tiffany has also adopted the same strategy, indicating its determination to increase sales.

3 Analysis on Cartier

3.1 Design Concept

Cartier's products combine innovation and trend, showcasing the brand's unique quality Cartier has its own unique craftsmanship and has created many classic design collections Their craftsmen are all quite experienced and have superb skills. Nowadays, Cartier has become one of the most popular luxury jewelry brands in the world with multiple classic collections. Compared to Tiffany, Cartier's design is more neutral and powerful, representing the independence and empowerment of modern women, conveying a positive new era of female spirit. This is reflected in Cartier's classic series, Juste un Clou series, and Panthère de Cartier series. Even the gentler Love series. Take this series of bracelets and rings as an example. The side facade does not have a round transition like Tiffany's, but a vertical cut. This kind of edge reduces the curvature representing femininity, enhances sexiness, and conveys a spirit of uncompromising. From a design perspective, Cartier's design audience is broader and more popular among female executives.

In today's era, with the rise of feminism, modern women strive to break free from traditional female images and constraints. This can also be seen from the decrease in marriage and fertility rates in China in recent years. Women are more actively breaking free from the constraints imposed on them by traditional thinking, pursuing their own growth and success, and shining in various fields. Just as the Cartier nail collection conveys the meaning of 'I am a nail'. Modern Chinese women are willing to break through the traditional nail. This symbolism and design concept also mean that Cartier can gain a wider market in China.

3.2 Market Strategies

At the same time, as Tiffany's old competitor, Cartier has also made corresponding adjustments in the Chinese market. Cartier's strategy is similar to Tiffany's, mainly in terms of opening stores. At the same time, Cartier also made adjustments in terms of senior management.

In 2024, Cartier will operate in multiple cities in China, including Nanchang, Xi'an, Nanjing and so on, all have opened new stores [4]. This also reflects that Cartier's attention to the Chinese market is no longer focused on mega cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, but has also begun to pay attention to other cities with development potential under the promotion of Chinese government policies.

Like Tiffany, Cartier also values the construction of online stores. On January 9, 2020, Cartier opened its official flagship store on one of China's largest shopping platforms, Tmall [12], four years earlier than Tiffany.

In the first half of 2024, Cartier's parent company, Richemont Group, also made personnel changes. Louis Ferla, the CEO of Vacheron Constantin, has been appointed as the CEO of Cartier [10]. From his resume, Louis Ferla has served as the CEO of Cartier China and has a deep understanding of the Chinese market [10]. This personnel transfer demonstrates Cartier's emphasis on the Chinese market.

In terms of the ambassador in China, Cartier has cooperated with a couple Chinese celebrities including top actress Gong Li, Song Jia and many young actresses and actors with a large number of fans as well as Olympic champions. Cartier has always been at the forefront of marketing in this area.

4 Comparison of Tiffany and Cartier

4.1 Design Concept

From the perspective of brand design philosophy, Cartier has a wider potential consumer group and is more in line with modern Chinese women's concepts. In contrast, many of Tiffany's product designs emphasize love and emotional connections between people, such as the Knot series and classic diamond rings. In today's China, due to the decline in marriage rates and the rise of singlehood, such concepts and products are gradually losing their appeal. According to Hurun report, only around 7% of high-net-worth individuals find family activities to be the best form of entertainment [1]. Thus, it can be seen that if Tiffany wants to increase sales in the Chinese market, a brand-new design and product concept should be a foundation.

Additionally, according to Hurun report, the high-net-worth individuals attach importance to health [1]. This is also reflected in their favorite entertainment activities, namely, tourism, food, and hot springs and spa [1]. The common feature of these activities is that they can bring joy to the body and mind, and are beneficial to health. At present, neither of these two brands has a product series related to health. It is suggested that these two consider the design concept in the area of health or spiritual healing, which is now every popular in China or even around the world. At the same time, it is possible to consider incorporating crystals that are often considered to have therapeutic effects into product design.

4.2 Market Strategies

According to Hurun Report, high net worth individuals in China work approximately 44 hours per week and have an average of 7 business trips per month [1]. On average, more than 6 hours are spent on work every day. As a result, high-net-worth individuals in China have less time available for individual consumption and may be more inclined towards faster and more convenient shopping methods. However, considering the high-net-worth individuals' emphasis on experiential shopping, they may be more inclined to personally experience the shopping process rather than directly finding someone to purchase on their behalf. There are several common ways to provide consumers with a fast and convenient shopping experience, including: 1. door-to-door service; 2. Online shopping; 3. Open stores in areas where high net worth individuals are frequently active. Two brands have successively opened Tmall flagship stores, reflecting their emphasis on online shopping. Similarly, a quantitative study of 233 Generation Y luxury goods buyers in India revealed that the convenience of online shopping is a key factor in stimulating consumer purchases [13]. Meanwhile, the quality of online stores also plays an important role in stimulating consumers' shopping intention. Therefore, the page and function settings of the online store are crucial. Meanwhile, consumers can only see pictures and videos when shopping online. How to give consumers the same impression when shopping online as when shopping offline is also a factor that brands should consider. For example, with the help of VR technology, which has been used in online rental and home buying apps in China, consumers can experience product design from more dimensions, and even feel the appearance of jewelry and jewelry under different lighting conditions, bringing consumers a more immersive experience, satisfying convenience while also providing a better sense of experience.

At the same time, the location of newly opened stores also reflects the need to cater to the preferences of high-net-worth individuals in China. According to Hurun's survey report, 45% of the 750 Chinese high net worth individuals surveyed come from first tier cities, 41% come from new first tier cities, and 14% come from second tier cities [1]. Among them, China's first tier cities include Beijing and Shanghai, where both brands have stores and even plans to open new stores. New first tier cities include Chengdu, Wuhan, where Tiffany has renovated its stores, and Nanjing and Xi'an, where Cartier plans to open stores. And Nanchang, which Cartier also plans to open new stores in, is a second-tier city in China. At the same time, under the encouragement of China's future development plans and policies, new first tier and second tier cities may attract more industries and high net worth individuals, and give birth to more high net worth individuals. From this perspective, both brands have made advance layouts for the development of China's future consumer market and regional changes.

In terms of collaborating with celebrities, Cartier took action earlier than Tiffany. And by collaborating with celebrities of different genders, fields, and ages, Cartier has accumulated experience. Although Tiffany started late, they can also learn and absorb Cartier's experience to quickly find suitable endorsement strategies and candidates.

5 Conclusion

Through comparison, it was found that the two brands have significant differences in design concepts. Cartier may better cater to the current cultural trends in China and be loved by a wider range of women. In various aspects of market strategy, the actions of the two brands are similar, such as actively expanding into new first tier cities, as well as second tier cities with better development prospects with the support of the Chinese government, and both opening online stores and collaborating with Chinese celebrities. At the same time, both brands have undergone senior management changes internally to better adapt to the Chinese market. However, Cartier started earlier and has gained more experience in opening online stores and collaborating with Chinese celebrities. Afterwards, both brands can consider incorporating health-related concepts into their new product designs, and placing greater emphasis on customer experience in both offline and online stores as well as services, in order to better cater to the preferences of high-net-worth individuals.

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