



The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Psychology in the Popularisation of Fashion Brands

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Abstract. This paper examines the background and historical evolution of the fashion industry, focusing on the popularisation of fashion brands and related consumer behaviour research, which has become a key topic in the digital economy era. Existing studies have explored social media's impact on fashion marketing, yet lack systematic analysis of fashion brand popularisation strategies and their mechanisms on consumer psychology and purchase decisions. Based on the rapid development of the digital economy and social media, this study adopts a literature research method to analyse fashion popularisation, Key Opinion Leader (KOL) marketing, and User-Generated Content (UGC) communication strategies, as well as their effects on consumer cognition and behaviour. Findings indicate that fashion popularisation has become a mainstream trend featured by lower consumption thresholds, diversified product structures, and decentralised communication. KOL marketing and UGC reshape consumer decision-making, with trust, cost-effectiveness, and emotional value as key drivers. This paper proposes product-price matching, refined KOL operation, and UGC co-creation, verifying fashion popularisation as an integrated marketing system that provides practical references for brand marketing and industry development.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Fashion Brand Popularisation, Consumer Psychology

1 Introduction

In the environment of the rapid development of digital economy and social media, the communication strategy of fashion brands is undergoing profound and systematic changes. The traditional model, which relied primarily on magazines, advertisements and offline stores for promotion, has gradually given way to a new paradigm centred on social media, content marketing and user interaction. In the process of such transformation, fashion popularisation has become a very important development trend. In essence, brands can lower the consumption threshold, expand product categories, and optimise communication channels, enabling a broader consumer base to access and participate in fashion consumption. At the same time, with the rise of various Internet platforms, Key Opinion Leader (KOL) marketing and User-Generated Content (UGC), that is, user's original content, have slowly become the most commonly used and

important way of brand promotion. This kind of publicity method is not only conducive to the expansion of brand influence, but also can strengthen the interaction between brands and consumers from a deep dimension, and build a systematic brand communication closed loop according to the three core dimensions of content production, community interaction and transformation path, thus forming a systematic and multi-level brand communication structure. These means of communication not only help to expand brand influence, but also promote in-depth interaction between brands and consumers, and finally build a multi-dimensional communication system covering content production, community operation and user conversion.

The widespread popularity of social media has fundamentally changed the whole process of fashion information from production and distribution to being received by consumers. In the past, the authority to shape fashion discourse rested primarily with magazines, fashion weeks and brand official channels, but now, this right of speech has been dispersed in the hands of ordinary users, content bloggers and professionals in various fields. The publicity of fashion popularisation is to promote the popularisation of fashion culture with the advantages of low threshold, wide coverage and strong interactivity of social platforms, with popular content, simple and easy-to-understand expressions, and experience scenes close to daily life, enabling a wider audience to understand and engage with fashion, while simultaneously helping brands expand their reach and market presence. Under the general trend of continuous integration of content and e-commerce, the brand's publicity mode is no longer just to unilaterally output information to consumers, but to turn to an open model that allows users to participate, create and share together, which also makes the popularisation publicity method stronger vitality and better communication effect. As content and e-commerce became increasingly integrated, brand communication moved beyond the constraints of traditional one-way information dissemination, gradually evolving into an open interactive ecosystem characterised by user participation, collaborative creation and global sharing.

2 Fashion Brand Popularisation in the Digital Era: Social Media, KOLs and UGC

2.1 The Popularisation Marketing Trend of Fashion Brands

Under the influence of the adjustment of the global economic pattern and the increasingly rational domestic consumption, the fashion industry is undergoing an important transformation from luxury and high-end to affordable and affordable. In the past, fashion was regarded by people as a niche circle, scarce and precious, and the label that distinguishes identity and status. Now fashion popularisation emphasises that it is easy to buy at a good price and affordable, and everyone can participate. It constantly breaks down the barriers that the price is too high and too few channels, and it is too difficult to understand, so that fashion can only be enjoyed by a few people. What was once an exclusive privilege has become a lifestyle accessible to the majority of consumers. This transformation is not simply a strategic adjustment for brands to

respond to market competition, but also the inevitable result of the iteration of socio-economic structure and the evolution of communication technology innovation, and the joint drive of multiple factors such as the upgrading of rational consumption cognition and the prominence of personalised consumption preferences of the young consumer group with Generation Z as the core. With the changes in the global economic environment and the change in consumption concept, consumers become more rational when spending money, and pay more attention to the price and cost performance of products. Against this background, the fashion industry is slowly developing a trend of popularisation. Fashion popularisation refers to the process by which luxury fashion products and high-threshold brands adjust their pricing strategies and expand their product categories through innovative marketing approaches, making them accessible to a wider consumer base, more ordinary consumers can access and afford to buy products, so as to expand the market scope and consumers [1].

Judging from the overall market environment, the popularisation of fashion is not a simple price decline, but the expansion and expansion of the market realised by the brand through multiple strategies. For example, some luxury brands have begun to launch relatively low-priced product lines, such as perfumes, cosmetics or accessories, so that consumers can access brand culture and brand image at a lower cost. For example, luxury brands such as Dior and Chanel have launched relatively affordable perfume, cosmetics and accessories product lines, allowing consumers to access and experience brand culture and brand image within a lower economic threshold. Compared with the previous high-consumption ready-made clothing, bags and other products, this strategy has greatly reduced the purchase threshold of consumers, and also brought new growth space to the brand. Research shows that by building a product hierarchy system from entry-level to flagship level, brands can attract groups with different consumption abilities while maintaining high-end brand image, so as to effectively expand the target market and improve overall competitiveness [2].

Furthermore, fashion popularisation marketing is closely tied to the brand's communication channels. In the past, fashion brands mainly relied on professional fashion media for communication. For example, fashion magazines and fashion shows. But now the Internet is developing rapidly, and the way of information dissemination has changed dramatically. The rise of social media platforms enables brands to communicate directly with consumers and convey brand information to a wider range of groups through content marketing of products and interaction with users on users' favourite social platforms. With the help of the algorithm recommendation system and precise distribution mechanism of social media, fashion brands can reduce communication costs and reach generalised potential consumer groups, thus helping the popular penetration and rapid spread of fashion trends.

In terms of communication strategy, it is difficult to meet the interaction needs of modern consumers by relying on traditional advertising alone. Brands urgently need to improve the depth and stickiness of consumers' participation through diversified content forms. For example, consumers no longer passively receive information, but actively become disseminators of fashion content through online interaction, content sharing and user participation activities. This two-way interactive communication

method can effectively improve the exposure of the brand and make consumers recognise the brand more [3].

On the whole, the core purpose of fashion popularisation marketing is to expand the influence and consumer group of the brand. By lowering the consumption threshold, enriching the product variety, and using diversified communication channels, brands can attract more consumers to participate in fashion consumption, thus maintaining stable and long-term development in a fiercely competitive market.

2.2 Social Media and KOL Marketing Strategy

With the continuous development of social media platforms, the brand communication mode has gradually changed from brand-centred one-way information output to user-centred multi-directional interactive communication. Against this background, Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) with high activity and fan influence on specific social platforms are gradually integrated into the brand marketing system and become an important communication node connecting brands and consumers. KOLs typically wield considerable influence and command a loyal fan base within a specific domain, which can influence fans' consumption attitude and purchasing behaviour. Therefore, many fashion brands have begun to promote products through cooperation with KOL to improve brand awareness and consumer trust.

Compared with the traditional advertising model, KOL marketing relies on real personal experience as the core, and builds a deep emotional connection with users with more reliable content expression, thus effectively dispelling consumers' psychological resistance to commercial promotion behaviour. KOL integrates brand information into daily content through personal experience, product evaluation and lifestyle sharing, so that consumers can naturally accept product information in the process of watching content. KOL marketing can enhance communication effectiveness while reducing consumers' resistance to overt commercial persuasion [4].

In social media communication, KOL marketing is often combined with social interaction. Consumers can not only watch the content released by KOL, but also participate in the interaction through comments, likes or forwarding. This interaction model can further enhance the connection between consumers and brands and make brand communication more life-oriented. Research points out that consumers and KOL often form a "quasi-social relationship" similar to friendship, which makes them trust the content recommended by KOL significantly higher than traditional advertising [4].

In actual cases, Perfect Diary, a Chinese beauty brand, has formed a wide range of content dissemination networks on social media platforms through cooperation with a large number of KOLs. By inviting different types of bloggers to publish product experience content, the brand enables consumers to understand product characteristics from multiple angles, so as to enhance purchasing confidence. This strategy not only improves brand exposure, but also helps the brand quickly establish market awareness.

2.3 User-generated content (UGC) mode

In addition, social media marketing is also closely related to user-generated content (UGC). UGC refers to content created and shared by everyday users, such as product

reviews, usage experiences and personal recommendations. Compared with the information officially released by the brand, UGC is often more authentic and credible, so it can have a greater impact on consumers. By encouraging users to share experiences, brands can form a large amount of natural communication content, thus expanding the scope of communication [5].

In the digital marketing ecosystem, the synergistic empowerment effect of KOL and UGC is increasingly prominent: KOL relies on its professional literacy to produce high-quality content to attract users' attention and build brand trust barriers; ordinary users further broaden the reach boundaries and dissemination of brand information through real experience sharing. Together, they form a multi-layered communication network characterised by complementary roles and synergistic effects, which effectively improves the efficiency of brand communication, significantly reduces the cost of brand customer acquisition and communication, and provides efficient path support for brand value transfer. This mechanism of word-of-mouth dissemination and viral diffusion can not only improve the market exposure of the brand, but also help to form continuous brand recognition among consumer groups, which in turn has a positive impact on brand loyalty [6].

In general, social media communication and KOL marketing have become an important way for fashion brand communication. By cooperating with opinion leaders and encouraging users to participate in content creation, brands can establish a more open and interactive communication system, so as to gain an advantage in the fierce market competition.

3 Consumer Psychology and Decision-Making in Social Media Context

Communication strategy not only determines the efficiency and scope of brand information, but also has a profound effect on consumers' psychological cognition mechanism and purchasing decision-making path. This dimension is the core topic focussed on in this section. In the general environment of social media, the way people obtain information has changed significantly. Compared with traditional shopping methods, today's consumers rely more and more on content recommendations on social platforms and real comments from other users. In this process, social media-driven product recommendations, the pursuit of cost-effectiveness, and the emotional value embedded in products have gradually emerged as key factors shaping the purchasing decisions of contemporary consumers.

3.1 Social media and Consumer Psychology

In the traditional marketing model, consumers usually search and compare products after generating clear needs, and then make purchases. However, in the social media environment, consumers' shopping path has changed. In the process of browsing the content of social platforms, many consumers will be influenced by the recommendation of bloggers or user sharing to stimulate the potential purchase intention. Even if there

is no relevant demand in advance, they may form purchasing behaviour under the stimulation of the content. The Chinese internet term "planting grass" (种草, zhòng cǎo) describes the practice of stimulating consumers' purchase intentions through content dissemination, gradually cultivating buying desire even in the absence of an initial, clearly defined need.

KOL plays a very crucial role in the whole communication process. By sharing their true feelings of using the product, showing the actual effect of the product, or telling personal experiences related to the product, they can combine the daily life scenes of the product with consumers to make the content more attractive. When consumers read these contents, it is easy for them to have emotional resonance and gradually have a good impression of the product. As consumers gradually develop trust in KOLs and their recommended products, both purchase intention and conversion rates tend to increase significantly.

In addition, the interactive function of social media platforms has further enhanced the effect of planting grass. When users see positive comments from other consumers in the comment section, they will be more confident that this product is reliable. This form of everyone's interactive communication will make consumers feel that everyone is buying such a product, that is, a good product. This reflects the well-established psychological tendency of social conformity, whereby individuals are more inclined to trust and emulate the choices of the majority, thereby increasing their own willingness to purchase.

Little Red Book is the most typical example of this communication model. Since its founding in 2014, Xiaohongshu has built a substantial user base by leveraging organic UGC content. The proportion of female users on the platform is high, and it is mainly young consumers. In the ecology of the Xiaohongshu platform, users take graphic notes as the core carrier to record the product experience and consumption feelings, and systematically connect the fragmented content through the precise association of topic tags and keywords to build a three-dimensional content communication network covering multi-categories, multi-scene and multi-circle layers; at the same time, the brand can Relying on the content layout strategy of the platform search entrance, accurately match the demand scenarios of consumers' active search, achieve efficient reach in the key search stage of their consumption decision-making, and then complete the brand information transmission and purchasing behaviour guidance, and realise the link closed loop of "content exposure - demand matching - conversion guidance". . Such a content environment allows consumers to quickly find a large amount of product information and complete purchasing decisions in the process of communicating with each other.

It can be seen that under the continuous influence of the social media environment, consumers' shopping motivation has shown a trend of changing from functional demand-driven to desire-driven consumption. With the help of content marketing and KOL cooperation, brands can influence consumers' consumption ideas in advance before their needs are clear, so as to make market communication more effective.

3.2 Cost-effective Products And Consumer Psychology

As young consumers gradually become the main force in the fashion market, brands also pay more attention to cost-effectiveness in product strategies. Many young consumers want to avoid excessive consumption costs while maintaining a sense of fashion and quality. Therefore, cost-effectiveness has become an important factor in attracting young consumers.

Under this trend, some brands meet consumer needs by launching affordable products. For example, Perfect Diary positions products as affordable alternatives for international brands, attracting young consumers through lower prices and fashionable designs. The brand emphasises the combination of high quality and reasonable price in product promotion, so that consumers can get a consumption experience similar to high-end brands at a lower cost [7].

This strategy can effectively cater to the low-cost consumption psychology of young consumers. Many consumers want to express their personal style and show their taste through fashion products, but they are unwilling to bear too much economic pressure. Therefore, products with good design and reasonable prices are more likely to be recognised by the market. The study points out that in the current consumption environment, consumers' value judgement has expanded from a single product quality evaluation to a comprehensive trade-off of functional value, emotional value and social value.

In addition, social media platforms also play a very important role in this process. Through KOL recommendations and authentic peer sharing, cost-effective products can rapidly gain widespread visibility and broad dissemination across social platforms. When consumers see a large number of positive comments and feedback on the platform, they will further improve their purchasing confidence and ultimately promote the growth of product sales.

On the whole, the cost-effective strategy can not only better meet the actual needs of consumers, but also help brands occupy an advantageous position in the fiercely competitive market. Through reasonable price positioning and effective communication methods, brands can attract a larger cohort of young consumers and cultivate enduring brand relationships grounded in perceived value and trust [8].

3.3 The Emotional Value Provided by the Brand to Consumers

In addition to price and functional factors, emotional value has gradually become an important factor affecting consumers' decision-making. In modern consumer culture, consumers not only buy the product itself, but also the lifestyle and emotional experience represented by the brand. Therefore, brands need to establish emotional connections through content communication and interactive marketing, so as to improve consumers' sense of brand identity.

The transmission of emotional value often relies on diversified realisation paths such as brand narrative, cultural identity and immersive interactive experience. Among them, by constructing a coherent and compelling brand narrative, companies can effectively stimulate consumers' emotional identification and value resonance, and promote the product to upgrade from the commodity form of material attributes to a

symbol that carries emotional connection. When consumers recognise brand values, they are more likely to develop into loyal customers of the brand.

In addition, social media platforms can also strengthen this emotional connection through community interaction. When consumers share their experiences on the platform and interact with other users, a shared consumer culture tends to emerge. This culture not only enhances the connection between users, but also further enhances the influence of the brand [9].

In the fashion industry, emotional value is often closely related to consumers' personalisation and identity. In choosing a particular brand, consumers are not merely selecting a product, but also communicating their personal values, lifestyle orientation and aesthetic preferences. Therefore, by establishing emotional connections, brands can establish a distinctive and emotionally resonant image in consumers' perception, thereby strengthening their competitive position in the market.

In summary, the communication strategy has an important impact on consumer psychology. Through social media communication, KOL recommendations and UGC content interaction, brands can change consumers' shopping paths and stimulate their desire to buy. At the same time, through cost-effective product strategies and emotional value dissemination, brands can further enhance consumers' sense of identity and loyalty, so as to achieve long-term market development [10].

4 Suggestions

First of all, continue to promote the matching design of product lines and prices, so that more consumers can easily access the brand. High-end fashion brands can continue to expand entry-level product lines such as cosmetics, perfumes and accessories. Through clear product hierarchy design, while maintaining the core high-end image, they can provide ordinary consumers with a low-threshold entrance to contact the brand. Popular fashion brands can further strengthen the positioning of cost-effectiveness. Under the premise of building a solid foundation of product quality and design, through the coordinated adaptation of aesthetic expression and pricing strategy, consumers' perception of product value is strengthened, and the perception of cheapness is dissolved, so as to efficiently reach young consumer groups with both practical needs and aesthetic preferences. At the same time, brands should also avoid relying on low prices to compete, but optimise the product line and adjust the corresponding product price, so that the brand image and market scale can develop stably.

Secondly, further optimise the way of KOL marketing to make the content more real and interactive, so that it is easier to gain the trust of consumers. When selecting cooperative KOLs, brands should match opinion leaders at different levels according to their own tone, such as head KOLs with extensive influence, waist KOLs with high trust in the vertical field, and amateur creators with rich real use scenarios, and build a gradient and accurate talent cooperation matrix. In terms of content creation, priority should be given to authentic product usage experiences, everyday scenario presentation and lifestyle sharing, while minimising overtly scripted or promotional language, which will reduce consumers' resistance to advertising, and thereby increasing the likelihood

that deeply engaging content will translate into actual purchasing behaviour among consumers.

Finally, improve the mechanism of UGC user co-creation, so that users can truly become a part of brand communication. Brands can encourage users to take the initiative to produce real evaluation and experience sharing by launching topic challenges or content collection activities related to product usage scenarios, combined with incentive mechanisms such as points rewards, high-quality content display and community interaction. This not only helps to accumulate a large number of real and credible user-generated content, but also gradually builds a user-centred content co-creation ecology, forming a positive communication cycle of "sharing-interaction-recreating". When more and more ordinary users share their real experiences, they will further improve the credibility and scope of communication of the brand, so that consumers can slowly become the disseminators and spokespersons of the brand.

5 Conclusion

Against the background of today's digital and social media development, this article conducts research on UGC, communication strategies such as fashion civilian marketing, KOL cooperation and user co-creation, and systematically analyses the connotation, implementation path, and impact of these strategies on consumer psychology and purchasing behaviour. The research results show that the popularisation of fashion has become a dominant trend in the development of the current fashion industry, which is mainly reflected in the core dimensions such as the downward movement of the consumption threshold, the diversified development of product structure and the decentralisation of the communication mode. In addition, KOL seed grass and UGC user content have changed the way people make consumption decisions, and trust, cost-effectiveness and emotional value have emerged as key determinants of consumers' purchasing decisions.

On the basis of these conclusions, specific and feasible suggestions are also put forward, including optimising product line and pricing structures, refining KOL collaboration strategies, and encouraging user participation in UGC co-creation, attaching importance to emotional value transmission and integrating communication channels. Fashion popularisation is not a simple price reduction strategy, but takes user experience as the core, integrates product design, price strategy, content communication and user interaction, and builds a systematic marketing system that focusses on emotional value, sense of participation and long-term relationship maintenance.

This paper offers theoretical insights and practical references for fashion brands seeking to implement popularisation marketing strategies in the social media era, with the aim of enhancing communication effectiveness and strengthening consumer brand recognition. It also has certain theoretical value and practical guidance significance for promoting the whole fashion industry towards a more inclusive and healthier development.

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