

Research on the Communication Strategies of China-chic brands in Social Media from the Perspective of Symbolic Interactionism

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Abstract: In recent years, an increasing number of China-chic brands have been disseminating their brand culture and philosophy to consumers by using social media platforms. However, this process has given rise to numerous challenges, such as commercialization and information overload. This paper, from the perspective of symbolic interactionism, delves into these issues and proposes strategies for China-chic brands to enhance their cultural communication effectiveness. Specifically, brands can achieve this by deepening the connotation of cultural symbols, implementing precise content positioning, adopting storytelling marketing, and encouraging cultural co-creation. This study provides theoretical backing for China-chic brands' social media-based communication mechanisms, thus being of great practical and theoretical significance for advancing China-chic brands' development.

Keywords: Symbolic Interactionism; China-chic brands; Social Media; Cultural Communication; Identity Construction

1. Introduction

With China's rapid economic growth and rising international status, China-chic brands have caught the attention of consumers both domestically and internationally. Against this political backdrop, the development of China-chic brands not only concerns economic interests but also serves as an important means to showcase national soft power and cultural heritage. The government, attaching great importance to the cultural industry, has introduced a series of supportive policies, such as "Some Opinions on Deepening the Reform of the Cultural System and Accelerating the Development of the Cultural Industry," which have created a favorable policy environment

for the growth of China-chic brands.

At the theoretical level, this paper offers a new perspective for studying the brand communication of China-chic brands on social media by drawing on the symbolic interactionism perspective. In practice, social media platforms have become a crucial battleground for the dissemination and marketing of China-chic brands. This situation compels operators to delve into issues related to the effectiveness of cultural communication and consumer recognition of China-chic brands, while also providing abundant research materials [1]. Overall, an in-depth analysis of the cultural communication phenomena of China-chic brands on social media from the symbolic interactionism perspective helps to uncover the underlying mechanisms of brand identity construction, thereby enabling brands with national characteristics to achieve better communication results.

2. Analysis of the Communication Phenomenon of China-chic brands in Social Media from the Perspective of Symbolic Interactionism

2.1 Theory of Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a sociological theory that emphasizes the interactive relationship between individual behavior and social symbols [2]. It posits that people construct social reality by exchanging and understanding meanings through symbols (such as language, gestures, expressions, etc.) in social interactions [3]. Overall, symbolic interaction theory highlights the core role of symbol use, interactivity, and meaning co-creation in understanding social behavior. It indicates that human behavior is formed through the interpretation of symbols and the assignment of meaning in social interactions [4]. From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, individuals are not passive

recipients of social influence but active interpreters and creators of social meaning; symbols are not merely carriers of information but also tools for conveying emotions and meaning.

2.2 Communication Phenomenon of China-chic brands in Social Media

Symbolic interactionism provides researchers with a way to delve into cultural communication, helping to better understand how cultural products spread on platforms like social media. When analyzing the social media communication phenomenon of China-chic brands, we can start from the three key concepts of symbolic interactionism mentioned above:

2.2.1 Use of symbols

On social media, brands convey their values and image through various symbols, including brand logos, slogans, product designs, video content, images, and emojis. Many China-chic brands excel at enhancing visual communication, using high-quality visual content to showcase their cultural characteristics. For example, Huaxizi, a brand known for its "Oriental Cosmetics" positioning, combines traditional Chinese aesthetics with modern cosmetics. Its products, such as those with "Oriental Micro-Carving Craft," attract many domestic and international bloggers for product reviews due to their exquisite design. These visually aesthetic symbolic messages not only enhance brand appeal but also convey the brand's unique cultural connotation through visual symbols, forming a unique visual identity.

2.2.2 Interactivity

Social media is inherently an interactive platform where users engage with brands through likes, comments, shares, etc., aligning with the interactive process emphasized by symbolic interactionism [5]. Brand accounts on social media enhance interactivity and serviceability through diverse and personalized content to boost communication effectiveness. The interactive nature of social media is more advantageous for China-chic brands than traditional mass media. Brands design marketing activities on social media to encourage consumer likes, comments, shares, forwards, and even the creation of new content [6]. This user-generated content (UGC) significantly increases brand exposure and

communication effectiveness. CHAGEE, a Chinese-style tea-drink brand with distinctive Chinese characteristics and aesthetics, has a Weibo account that attracts consumer attention. Its "Brand Moment" interaction on Weibo allows users to earn "Heart Points" by completing daily tasks, which can be redeemed for gifts or coupons. Other activities like "Retweet to Win" and "Join Topic Discussions" continuously incentivize user interaction. Through various interactive marketing methods, brands establish two-way communication channels with consumers, enhancing brand-consumer affinity and user engagement.

2.2.3 Co-creation of meaning

For brand recognition, it is crucial for brands to collaborate with consumers in constructing symbolic meanings. On social media platforms, consumers interact and share to jointly create and disseminate brand meanings and values. User reviews, shares, and recommendations influence other consumers' brand perceptions [7]. This co-creation process not only strengthens consumer participation but also enriches the brand image. For instance, Starbucks encourages users to share their coffee experiences and creative drinks on Instagram, increasing brand exposure and enriching the brand image through user feedback and creativity [8].

By understanding the use of symbols and interactive processes, brands can communicate more effectively, enhance consumer recognition, and boost loyalty and market competitiveness. Brands should leverage the interactivity and symbol diversity of social media, co-create with consumers, and build a more diverse and appealing brand image.

3. Problems Faced by China-chic brands in Social Media Communication

3.1 Commercialization of Cultural Symbols and Loss of Cultural Value

With the growth of national confidence, consumers are increasingly interested in brands and products with Chinese cultural characteristics. However, in pursuing market effects, some China-chic brands over-emphasize commercial value and neglect in-depth cultural value exploration. Whether through slogans like "Made in China" to evoke national pride or using intuitive Chinese

aesthetic elements to represent brand culture, brands can gain social media traffic. But this has led to some superficial and formal brand-culture integration, such as simply copying traditional patterns without fully explaining their cultural background. These patterns are not truly incorporated into the brand's tone or product design, weakening the brand's cultural uniqueness and causing consumer perceptions to remain superficial.

3.2 Information Overload in Social Media

Information overload on social media weakens the close connection between consumers and brand culture. This overload stems from multiple factors: the system characteristics of social media, the nature of the information itself, and user psychological states, behavior patterns, and social interactions [9]. It reduces consumer attention to brand culture and dilutes its depth. Users feel fatigued in the sea of information, leading to emotional exhaustion and dissatisfaction. These accumulated negative emotions further diminish the influence of brand culture and hinder its deep and sustained dissemination.

3.3 Coexistence of Homogeneous Competition and Cultural Misinterpretation

As China-chic brands proliferate, market competition intensifies, and homogeneous competition becomes severe. This is evident not only in product design and marketing strategies but also in the visual presentation of brand culture. Mainstream China-chic brands often use similar traditional cultural visual elements, making it hard for consumers to distinguish between brands without in-depth understanding. To address this, some brands incorporate more detailed, local-specific traditional cultures into their design language. However, when these highly localized brands go national or international, cultural misinterpretation occurs due to cultural differences. Cultural misinterpretation refers to deviations in understanding and interpretation caused by cultural differences [10]. To avoid this, China-chic brands need to focus on cross-cultural communication and understanding in cultural dissemination, researching target-audience cultural backgrounds and values to develop appropriate strategies.

3.4 Insufficient Audience Engagement

Audience engagement is vital for measuring brand-culture communication effectiveness. China-chic brands currently face insufficient engagement, mainly due to inadequate brand-audience interaction and unattractive content. This results in subpar communication effectiveness and hinders widespread cultural identity. The lack of engagement also indicates the absence of effective interaction and incentive mechanisms. To enhance engagement, China-chic brands should innovate their communication methods, such as conducting more interactive activities on social media and inviting consumers to participate in product design.

4. Social Media Communication Strategies for China-chic brands Centered on Culture

4.1 In-Depth Exploration of Cultural Symbols to Convey Brand Value

To address the commercialization of cultural symbols, brands must first accurately identify their cultural core and the cultural concepts they wish to convey. Then, they should thoroughly research the corresponding traditional-cultural-symbol fields and extract elements that closely align with their brand philosophy. During cultural communication, brands should avoid over-formalization of symbols, respect the original appearance and connotation of traditional culture, and avoid simply copying and abusing cultural elements. Instead, they should skillfully integrate cultural elements into product design, advertising promotion, and other aspects. This allows the audience to naturally perceive the charm of culture when engaging with the brand. By doing so, brands can better align chosen traditional cultural elements to their image, creating more infectious and creative content.

4.2 Precise Content Positioning to Enhance Audience Appeal

In the new media era where content is king, to tackle information overload on social media, China-chic brands need targeted content strategies to capture consumer attention. Through vivid storytelling and strong emotional resonance, brands can construct distinctive cultural symbols. Brands should

conduct consumer research and analysis upfront, using big-data technology to create detailed consumer profiles. Only by thoroughly understanding the cultural background, interests, and preferences of target audiences can brands truly anticipate consumer needs and expectations. Based on this, brands can create culturally-relevant content such as stories, videos, and images. After content release, brands should fully utilize social media platform data analysis tools to monitor audience feedback in real-time and adjust content strategies promptly to improve communication effectiveness. By continuously refining content quality and promotion strategies, brands can accurately convey their in-depth and unique cultural content to target audiences and meet the challenge of information overload.

4.3 Highlighting Brand Uniqueness and Storytelling

To avoid homogeneous competition and cultural misinterpretation, China-chic brands should, based on in-depth understanding of target-audience cultural backgrounds and values, identify unique elements that resonate with their cultural philosophy. Brands can showcase their distinctiveness through innovative design, marketing, and communication strategies. They can also collaborate with designers and artists to develop products and content with unique styles and cultural depth, broadening brand-culture horizons.

Moreover, brands should employ storytelling marketing, focusing on authentic and touching brand stories and presenting them in engaging ways. This allows consumers to deeply understand the brand's development and cultural concepts, fostering a loyal fan base. Through fan interaction and community building, brands can cultivate consumers with deep recognition and loyalty, turning them into important forces for secondary brand story dissemination.

4.4 Encouraging Cultural Co-Creation to Strengthen Consumer Recognition

China-chic brands should actively engage consumers in brand-culture co-creation via online Q&A, topic discussions, membership salons, etc., which can spark consumer interest

and infuse new vitality into brand culture. Also, brands can utilize the social nature of social media to encourage consumers to share their stories and experiences, thus creating a word-of-mouth effect. Moreover, supported by corporate funds and strategy, brands may offer personalized customization services based on social media consumer feedback to enhance loyalty and retention. Most importantly, for sustainable brand-culture development and long-term communication mechanisms, brands must make continuous investment and commitment to cultural value delivery. They should regularly update and maintain cultural content on social media and combine it with diverse offline brand-culture activities. Through ongoing innovation and communication, brand culture can become a strong bond connecting consumers and the brand.

5. Conclusion

This study examines the communication status of China-chic brands in the social media age from the perspective of symbolic interactionism. China-chic brands face challenges such as cultural-symbol commercialization, information overload, and cultural misinterpretation, which affect the depth and breadth of their cultural communication. To address these, China-chic brands should: explore cultural symbols in-depth to convey value, position content precisely to enhance appeal, highlight uniqueness through storytelling and encourage cultural co-creation to strengthen recognition. These strategies can help China-chic brands better communicate their charm on social media, build deeper brand recognition, and boost market competitiveness.

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