

A study of marketing strategies of Chinese new-consumer brands on Korean social media platforms—taking Pop Mart and MINISO as examples

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Abstract. Nowadays, China's new consumer brands are expanding to overseas markets at an unprecedented speed. New consumer brands represented by Pop Mart and MINISO continue to expand in the Asian and European markets with their unique product design and flexible social media operation capabilities. This report analyses the marketing strategy of China's new consumer brands on Korean social media, with Pop Mart and MINISO as the core cases. This paper found that IP branding, KOL marketing and UGC content are the core social communication tools of the two major brands in the Korean market. In addition, these brands need to grasp the difference between retaining their original brand characters and carrying out local cultural adjustments, avoid potential culture conflicts, and win the heartfelt recognition of local consumers. Social media marketing strategies adapted to local trend culture can help new consumer brands open up overseas markets, and their operating experience can provide a reference for the overseas new media promotion of Chinese new consumer brands.

Keywords: social media content marketing, IP marketing, brand recognition, willingness to purchase

1. Introduction

New consumer brands rely on the rise of the internet and social media in recent years and capture the personalized and emotional value needs of a new generation of consumers to create products and brands with new models and concepts. As an important source of trend culture in Asia and even the world, Korea is a key market for the internationalization of China's new consumer brands. Korean consumers have strong trend sensitivity and social media activity. Instagram, TikTok (Korean version) and other platforms constitute their main brand information acquisition channels, which provide a rich space for China's social media marketing.

However, the academic community's research on the social media marketing strategy of Chinese brands in the Korean market is still in its infancy. This paper focuses on the following two core research questions: First, what specific social media marketing strategies did China's new consumer brands adopt in the process of entering the Korean market; Second, Intellectual Property (IP) Branding, Key Opinion Leader (KOL) marketing and User-Generated Content (UGC) strategies in the Korean market situation. This paper adopts the

case analysis method to sort out and analyze the social media operations of Pop Mart and MINISO in the Korean market, aiming to provide a reference for the overseas new media operation strategies of China's new consumer brands.

2. Analysis of the social media marketing strategy of Chinese new consumer brands in Korea

2.1. The theoretical basis of social media marketing

Social media marketing has become one of the core channels for contemporary brands to connect with consumers. It allows brands to break geographical boundaries and communicate directly with the target audience without relying too much on traditional advertising. Compared with traditional one-way promotion, social media marketing supports two-way communication. Consumers can express their opinions, leave comments and share their personal experiences. Such interactive features help brands gain a deeper understanding of local user preferences, so that they can adjust their marketing strategies more specifically when entering overseas markets. An empirical study on consumers in the top ten cities in China shows that the five dimensions of functional value, entertainment information value, social interaction, brand interaction and self-concept of social media marketing (SNS) all have a positive effect on brand identity, which in turn improves consumers' willingness to buy [1]. This research is also of reference value in cross-cultural marketing scenarios. The multi-level value brought by social media content can be regarded as a set of general underlying logic for brands to expand globally and reach overseas consumers.

In the field of KOL and social media Internet celebrity marketing, A review of 68 peer-reviewed literature, built an integrated framework, and revealed the core path of social media Internet celebrities to influence consumer attitudes and behaviors through credibility, content relevance and audience interaction [2]. The study points out that Internet celebrity marketing is highly efficient in building brand awareness for emerging brands, especially for new brands entering unfamiliar markets.

2.2. Chinese brand cross-cultural marketing and localization strategy

Focusing on the cross-cultural marketing strategy of Chinese brands, and analyzing the overseas marketing model of Pop Mart and MINISO from the perspective of global consumer psychology, this article proposes that the brand relies on the three-dimensional framework of "IP content narrative, platform matching, local operation" to complete cross-cultural brand penetration [3]. Jiang and Tang's research also specifically mentioned that having a sense of community identity and group belonging to Korea is the core reason for driving consumers to actively participate in brand interaction.

What Chinese brands sell in Korea is never the product itself, but the feeling that consumers are willing to spend for this brand. IP is responsible for attracting consumers, the platforms are responsible for spreading the content, and the community operation is responsible for retaining these consumers. This also reminds Chinese brands that later went abroad that whether they can build a sticky fan community locally often determines whether the brand can take root locally.

Wang and other's research on POPMART applet users further confirmed that Gamification Marketing can effectively improve consumers' immersion and willingness to repeat purchases. The study also pointed out that the consumption habits of Korean online game users and the random experience of blind box products have a high psychological basis for the expansion of blind box brands in the Korean market [4].

3. Case analysis of the marketing strategy of Chinese new consumer brands on Korean social media

3.1. Pop Mart's social media marketing strategy in Korea

3.1.1. *IP co-branded strategy*

Pop Mart's ability to enter the Korean market is largely due to its IP operation system. It first uses LABUBU, MOLLY and other IPs, which have accumulated a large number of fans around the world, to promote, and then uses Instagram and TikTok to spread quickly and gain popularity in Korea. At the same time, the brand also takes the initiative to link with the local cultural symbols of Korea, so as to bring the distance with local consumers closer and reduce cultural barriers.

This kind of localized linkage content will appear on social platforms in the form of short videos, illustrations, limited peripherals and so on, and many Korean consumers are willing to take the initiative to browse, like and even forward relevant content. The brand uses this to combine the overseas IP image with the local life scene, making it easier for the strange doll image to enter the daily vision of ordinary users; this has also slowly shaped the image of brand affinity, so that the local audience is willing to further understand the IP story behind Pop Mart. However, this localization attempt is not completely unimpeded. In the process of adapting to local aesthetics, the brand will inevitably encounter different voices from the market.

Pop Mart faces challenges in the Japanese and Korean markets, and the design of some IPs is regarded by local consumers as imitating Japanese and Korean trends. This perception will weaken consumers' recognition of the brand's originality to a certain extent. This also shows that brands need to have a good sense of proportion and find a balance between IP local culture and original stories .

3.1.2. *Korea's local KOL and star cooperation model: the linkage effect of LISA and other K-pop stars*

There is a very successful case in the international marketing campaigns of Pop Mart: the linkage with BLACKPINK member LISA and other stars. As a star with strong social media influence around the world, LISA's content linked to Pop Mart has triggered a large-scale boom on social media platforms, directly driving Pop Mart's soaring sales in the global market. The study sets this phenomenon as the "UGC snowball effect driven by the idol effect". After the stars take the lead in demonstrating, the psychological threshold for fans to follow the trend will be greatly reduced, and many consumers will take the initiative to place orders, share their unboxing feelings, and the IP life will be greatly extended [3]. In the Korean market, this method naturally adapts to the local environment. After all, K-pop culture has a deep influence on the various behaviors of Korean netizens on social platforms.

3.1.3. *The linkage between offline flash stores and social media in Korea*

In Korea, Pop Mart set up flash stores through Hongda, Mingdong and other famous Seoul core business circles, and carried out online and offline punching at the same time, forming a closed-loop marketing system that communicates and strengthens each other. These offline stores not only provide consumers with real product experience scenarios, but also create a punching environment suitable for users to shoot and share, which greatly stimulates the desire of ordinary consumers to share and prompts a large number of users to take the initiative to produce social platform content. The scarcity of limited-time flash stores has created more relevant topics, and consumers' punching content has further expanded the brand's exposure on social media in Korea.

Pop Mart's blind box product mechanism is highly coupled with the logic of social media content creation. In TikTok and Instagram Reels, a large number of user unboxing videos have accumulated. The study of crowd cues and Community Desire Mechanism shows that this random acquisition format systematically

transforms the consumption experience into repeatable and shareable social media content units, making the blind box essence it has become a distribution interface of continuous output platform-friendly content [5]. For the Korean market, the high broadcast rate and strong interaction attributes of unboxing videos are highly compatible with the content consumption habits of Korean TikTok users, which constitutes a continuous source of natural traffic of brand social media.

3.2. The social media marketing strategy of MINISO in Korea

3.2.1. *Social media integrated marketing for the opening of the flagship store in Seoul*

MINISO officially opened a flagship store in Seoul in June 2025, which is not only a simple new store opening, but also a series of social media integration activities. The brand's official announcement said that the Korean market is an important test site for its "Interest-driven Consumption" strategy in Asia. In addition to broadening channels, the flagship store is also used to explore consumer preferences and needs to provide data for local operations. In terms of social media communication, the opening publicity was carried out around "global IP and Seoul limitation". Stitch blind box was first launched in Korea, and through Instagram, it soon gained a lot of social voice.

3.2.2. *IP co-branded content marketing under the interest consumption strategy*

The core of MINISO's social media marketing strategy is to maintain popularity with high-frequency news. Continue to export rich and diverse product content to Korean consumers, so as to constantly attract users' attention and discussion. Huang's research pointed out that MINISO has effectively reduced the problem of cultural unfamiliarity that may be faced in the Korean market through co-branding cooperation with Disney, Marvel and other globally recognized IPs. Consumers' feelings for IP exceed the unfamiliarity of the brand, helping brands spread widely on social media [6].

In addition, the limited-time release of these co-branded series has further amplified the attractiveness of MINISO products to young Koreans. Affected by limited inventory and a short sales cycle, these co-branded series create a strong sense of scarcity, prompting local consumers to buy as soon as possible. After buying this kind of special product, many young Korean users will share unboxing videos, real-life photos and personal evaluations on social platforms. This kind of user-generated content reflects the real consumption feeling, which is more convincing than the brand's official advertisement. MINISO's IP co-branding strategy is also highly consistent with the interests of young consumers in Korea, making it easier for products to be actively forwarded and planted on social platforms.

3.2.3. *Accurate access to the localization of Kakao Talk channel*

Unlike Pop Mart, which focuses more on the marketing strategy of entertainment software, MINISO also focuses on the layout of Kakao Talk Channel, a local instant messaging platform in Korea, in the Korean market. Kaokao Talk Channel has a monthly active user coverage rate of more than 90% in Korea. Like WeChat, it can directly push new products, preferential information and other activity news to users, which has advantages that Instagram cannot replace. The brand participation study conducted on KakaoTalk Plus shows that SNS marketing can positively improve brand participation from the two dimensions of functional value and emotional value, and brand participation can significantly predict users' word-of-mouth communication behaviour [7]. This conclusion provides a theoretical basis for MINISO to build a brand fan community and spread word of mouth with the help of this software.

3.2.4. *UGC incentive mechanism and brand topic label operation*

At the UGC level, MINISO relies on Korean social media to lower the threshold of user creation and guide consumers to produce and disseminate brand-related content by building brand-exclusive topic tags and

launching an IP-limited product posting challenge. UGC community marketing research based on the Sympathize-Identify-Participation-Share (SIPS) model points out that when the platform fully activates the complete link of user empathy, identity, participation in action and content sharing, UGC community can form a self-driven growth flywheel [8]. The essence of MINISO's UGC in Korea is to first arouse everyone's emotional resonance with IP co-branded products with a strong visual sense, then rely on topics to drive users to participate, and finally aggregate a large amount of UGC content to slowly build the topic ecology of its own products.

3.3. Comparison of the two major brand strategies

Through the collation of the sales strategies of the two major brands, this paper finds that Pop Mart pays more attention to IP character narrative, spontaneous consumer publicity, and has a higher level of communication on Instagram and TikTok, while MINISO pays more attention to the attraction of IP co-branding and localized platform operations for consumers. The different focuses of the two strategies reflect the two forms of overseas marketing of China's new consumer brands; "IP global circulation" and "local penetration", each with its own applicability and limitations.

4. Conclusion

This paper mainly discusses the marketing strategies used by Chinese new consumer brands on Korean social media platforms, with Pop Mart and MINISO as the core cases. The study found that the operational strategies of IP co-branding, UGC communication, star-driven marketing and local marketing methods together constitute the core strategy of Chinese new consumer brands to realize social media marketing in the Korean market.

There is still room for improvement in this research. The research materials are mainly public literature and information released by the brand. Questionnaires and in-depth interviews are not carried out for Korean consumers, and there is a lack of first-hand research data. Follow-up research can design questionnaires to further test the actual communication effect of marketing strategies and identify differences in consumer feelings. At the same time, with the entry of catering brands such as CHAGEE and Haidilao into the Korean market, more brand cases can be included in the future; the research system in this field can be continuously improved, and the overseas relevant research picture of Chinese brands can be enriched.

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