

The Research on the Impact of Chinese Social Media Platform RED upon Chinese Female Consumers' Consuming Willingness on Gucci Bags

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Abstract: With the development of technology, the influence of social media on consumers cannot be underestimated. Especially during the epidemic, when most parts of the world were in a state of lockdown, online social platforms became almost the best hope for many luxury and fashion brands. This also provides a new opportunity for luxury goods marketing. How to use social media to increase consumers' willingness to buy has become a new hot topic that brands are increasingly concerned about. This paper uses the questionnaire to investigate whether female is influenced by RED to have willingness to buy Gucci bags, how often they are influenced, and what kinds of content influence and what kinds of content influence their willingness to purchase to 200 female customers in RED. While the economic situation, environment, and practicality are all issues that consumers consider, the majority of people will initially build their brand image and purchase because of the social media content. It suggests that RED will develop future potential customers for Gucci. In theory, this paper analyzes the types of content and atmosphere on social platforms that lead to consumer purchases, filling the research gap where most previous studies have analyzed the reasons why social media users share luxury goods on social platforms while ignoring luxury purchases under the influence of social media.

Keywords: social media, female consumption, luxury consumption, Gucci

1. Introduction

As technology continues to evolve and everyone has their own electronic device, socializing on social media on electronic devices has become a part of daily life for many people around the world. Approximately 4.3 billion people (53%) worldwide use social media. The influence of social media on people has become inevitable. With the rapid development of social media, luxury brands are also using social media to enhance brand awareness in multiple dimensions and promote consumer purchase intention [1]. As of December 3031, the number of internet users in China reached 1.033 billion, an increase of 43.96 million compared to the previous year, and the internet penetration rate reached 73.0%. The updating and iteration of network technology is changing the interpersonal communication relationship in the traditional media era, and this technology empowerment is mainly reflected in using media platforms to drive word-of-mouth communication [2].

In this regard, luxury brands have also received significant returns and social media has contributed immensely. The luxury market has been burgeoning in the last 5 years. In 2023, the global luxury market grew by 17% year-on-year, and the Chinese luxury brand market sales in 2023 were 956-billion-yuan, accounting for 38% of the global luxury market sales [3]. Earlier studies have focused on how social media affects consumption of individuals [3]; and the reasons for sharing luxury goods on social platforms [4]. It is relatively rare to study how social media promotes luxury consumption from the perspective of consumers.

Based on previous studies, this paper attempts to explore the driving force of social media on luxury consumption. This article will narrow the target to GUCCI bags on Chinese social media RED and Chinese female consumers. It mainly focuses on what kind of content and atmosphere on RED lead to Chinese female consumer behavior. By solving this problem, luxury brands can grasp the psychology of consumers, try to put more advertisements which are cater to their preference on social platforms, increase targeted publicity and encourage more consumer to purchase. For consumers, it can restrain impulse consumption to a certain extent and reduce unnecessary money loss, which is especially significant to the young consumer. In theory, this paper points out the connection between luxury consumption and social platform users from the perspective of consumers, filling the gap in previous research in social media and luxury consumption.

2. Literature Review

The luxury market has been on an upward trend in recent years. The role of social media cannot be ignored. Until now, both the research on the psychology of luxury consumption and the research on the influence of social media have fully studied.

Denish Shah presents the concept of SMCC (social media-centric consumption) and analyzes the causes, behaviors, and final results of SMCC. The SMCC population's quest for social values, identity signaling, and attention drives them to share on social platforms, and the literature provides detailed statistics on the age of SMCC [5], and the data in it are useful for future research. In addition, the results of SMCC elaborated in the literature has enlightening effect to the relationship between people and social media. SMCC population is also one of the people who consume luxury goods under the influence of social media. Moreover, many SMCC individuals purchase luxury goods more frequently and in larger amounts under this influence. Therefore, SMCC is also a key research sample in this article. Knowing the psychology of the SMCC population can help identify the true psychology of consumers who are influenced by social media to consume luxury, vanity or just a temporary impulse.

According to Sharing luxury possessions in the age of digital experience economy: Consumption type and psychological entitlement, Joya A. Kempe analyzes three perspectives with luxury sharing as the center. These three perspectives are the social media characteristics, the behavior of luxury brands and Psychological entitlement [6]. The initial purpose of the psychologically entitled people's conspicuous consumption is explained in detail. It is related to the pursuit of power and status, as well as their inflated self-view stemming from an innate feeling of being special and superior [6]. This paper does not elaborate on the role of social media, but the analysis of Psychological entitlement is the key to studying the psychology of consuming luxury after being influenced by social platform content. Psychological entitlement and this kind of luxury consumers are related and similar.

Jesse Tuominen, the brighter side of materialism: Managing impressions on social media for higher social capital mentions that the source of managing impressions on social media is materialism [4]. It is easier to control that on social media than in reality [7], which can also be considered as a kind of impression management from Erving Goffman 's theory on human behavior "dramaturgy", so that they buy luxuries to show a better image on social media platforms. The literature mentions that materialism occurs more often with young people, just as the statistics in Consuming for content?

Understanding social media-centric consumption also show that regardless of the social media platform, users between 18 and 30 years old are more likely to materialism [5], which drives them to spend more on luxury. Buying luxury and sharing on the social platform are closely related to materialism and luxury consumption psychology, but this is only the intrinsic reason for consumers. Therefore, this article will combine the features of social media to study the external causes of this behavior.

In general, most of the previous researches focus more on researching the psychological conditions and external reasons of social media users to purchase luxury and sharing on the social media, and do not really analyze. They tend to analyze more the reasons for sharing, and the reasons for consuming need to be further expanded by later studies. Therefore, this article will further study the type of content and atmosphere on social platform lead to these consumption based on this research gap.

3. Research Objectives and Methodology

The main objective is to investigate people's consumption of luxury goods influenced by social media, possible psychological changes and features of social media promote consumer consumption. The theory 'SMCC' (Social Media-Centric Consumption) is the basis of this paper's research, which investigates social media-centered consumption [5]. Both have similar goals, but this article prefers luxury consumption. So inspired by SMCC, this paper also uses Questionnaire to conduct the study. But SMCC does not take into account the promotion services of social media (e.g., social media users unboxing new products, consumer videos played on social platforms). Since this paper requires an in-depth study of features of social media promoting consumer consumption, the promotion services in social media are an important aspect, this paper will also take the promotion services of social media into consideration.

RED was firstly chosen as a source of big data for the following reasons: firstly, since 2013, RED as a "National Grass Planting Machine" Combining "community" and "e-commerce" channels, Driving the development of the consumer market. The term 'planting grass' was originally mainly popular in beauty online forums and communities, referring to the phenomenon of stimulating others to use or purchase something by sharing their experience of using it with others [8]. In addition to the initial beauty category, "grass planting" content continues to expand to clothing, food, and various desirable lifestyles, attracting a large number of users to settle in [8]. As the same time, RED has attracted a large number of luxury brands to use it as an integrated marketing communication channel.

Female consumers was firstly chosen as a sample of big data for the following reasons: with the development and progress of society, female economic and social status is constantly improving, and their consumption ability and autonomy in consumption choices are also becoming stronger and stronger [9]. In the clothing consumption category, female consumption frequency is higher. The Gucci bag in this study belongs to the category of clothing consumer goods.

The questionnaire of female users were conducted to determine whether they are influenced by RED to have willingness to buy Gucci bags, how often they are influenced, and what kinds of content influence their willingness to buy. To make the data more accurate, a likert scale (1-5) was used (1=completely disagree, 5=completely agree) in some questions. There are 12 related questions in the questionnaire. The authors selected 200 Chinese female users on the Red to fill in the questionnaire, and the questionnaire distribution cycle is one week. Due to various reasons (such as users do not want to fill out the questionnaire, not convenient to do the questionnaire, etc.), the actual number of questionnaires collected up to 110, excluding some of the questionnaires filled out too fast or too slow, too single options. Finally, according to statistics, the actual number of valid questionnaires is 85. Therefore, according to the results of 85 questionnaires, analysis and research were conducted. After the questionnaire survey, the prominent people with consumption characteristics (e.g., highest

frequency, highest consumption, at a specific time, etc.) and their preference contents about Gucci on RED were selected and interviewed in detail.

4. Results

This paper attempts to explore the driving force of social media on luxury consumption, target to GUCCI bags on Chinese social media RED and Chinese female consumers. It mainly focuses on what kind of content and atmosphere on RED lead to Chinese female consumer to purchase.

After a questionnaire survey, it was found that 75% of the knowledge about Gucci comes from social media such as TikTok, Friends, and RED. Although the influence of social media is huge, 51% of people think that the official Gucci ads released today are not very attractive. According to likert five measurement table statistics, although RED is enough to push Gucci, but 22% of users will not be influenced by RED to buy Gucci bags, 42% of the users generally will not consider to purchase by RED. 33% of users think that the influence of RED will consider buying. High-end, mature and elegant has become the main synonym for users to describe Gucci. There are also 37% of people who think Gucci is a brand that belongs to young and fashion. Nearly 51% of users believe that the sharing of common people on RED has increased their willingness to buy Gucci bags, while only 25% believe that celebrity endorsers increase consumers' willingness to buy (the scope of this paper is limited; there is no shortage of fans with strong purchasing power in China, but this paper is only a questionnaire survey for general female consumers, and the purchasing power of fans is not taken into account). influencers and bloggers' unboxing reviews also accounted for nearly 30%. 83% did not have the experience of buying Gucci luggage influenced by RED for the following reasons: 18% preferred to spend their money on other brands such as Celine, Iv other higher-level brands or designer brands with more unique designs. Half of them did not buy Gucci bags for financial reasons, but 85% of them said through the content of RED that they aspire to buy Gucci bags in the future when financial conditions allow.

5. Discussion

The fact that 75% of all knowledge of Gucci comes from social media is an indication that the influence of social media on Gucci cannot be underestimated. Now that Gucci's official ads are appealing to female users in general, Gucci may change its advertising strategy. It is worth noting that nearly 51% of users believe that common people on RED sharing has increased their willingness to buy Gucci bags, and nearly 30% believe that unboxing reviews by influencers and bloggers are also very likely to increase consumers' willingness to buy. Perhaps the populace and approachable advertising route is a new route that Gucci could consider. But the existing brand image of high-end, sophisticated and elegant and taking a approachable route may be contradictory. How to achieve a balance between the two is an issue worth studying. Celebrity endorsement may better reflect the brand aesthetics, brand style, and is more conducive to establishing a high-end brand image. Due to the higher popularity of celebrities, Chinese celebrities have a huge fan base and stronger purchasing power of fans, which will also bring higher economic benefits to Gucci (e.g., Chinese celebrity Xiao Zhan to Gucci). But celebrities may make the brand too noble, which is contradictory to the current consumer's tendency to be approachable. If the background check of the celebrity endorser is not qualified, it may also lead to damage to the brand image. (For example, the issue of Zheng Shuang in Prada, China). Nowadays, influencers also have a positive impact on Gucci, as they tend to be more approachable and more acceptable to consumers than celebrities. However, influencers may lower the brand style, and there is no shortage of people who believe that influencers endorsements will make the brand "low" (e.g., Chinese influencer WanWan in Rolls Royce, Yi Mengling in Roger Vivier), which may reduce some consumers' willingness to spend.

In addition, the author analyzes that probably due to the epidemic and economic depression in China in recent years, consumers have become more pragmatic and they may have increased their concern for the practicality of Gucci bags. Whether it is durable, whether it is versatile has become one of the issues that people consider whether to buy. Gucci's official advertising could perhaps also be more pragmatic, as the brand's image today is both mature and elegant, and young and fashionable, which is partly due to the fact that RED has helped Gucci build a brand image with a wide age audience. The 18% of people who prefer to spend their money on other brands indicate that Gucci's style and design does not fit their aesthetic. Whether and how to cater to this segment to strengthen their willingness to buy is one of the issues Gucci will need to consider in the future.

All in all, RED does not have a direct impact on the purchase of Gucci bags, because there are many processes between social media and the real purchase. Consumers will consider various aspects based on economics, environment, practicality, etc., and may also be involved in the availability of the brand's stores and other factors that affect their actual purchase behavior. However, most people will have an initial impression of the brand and a willingness to buy because of the social media content, which means that RED will develop future potential customers for Gucci.

The current study has its limitations that hint at future research directions. First, the current study focuses on RED as a communication medium for luxury brands' social media campaigns. Although RED, along with Facebook and Instagram, is the most commonly used social media marketing tool by luxury brands, luxury consumers use different social media for different reasons [10]. For example, consumers find RED useful for learning about or commenting on live events in real time, while Facebook is mostly informative about promotions. On the other hand, online communities, blogs, and forums allow luxury consumers to exchange reviews about products and share in-store experiences [11]. Therefore, the research sample in this paper is limited and does not investigate consumers on other platforms in depth. It is highly possible that there are new results in other social platforms. Secondly, this paper conducts a study on social media. Because men are less likely to post content on social media, women were chosen for the majority of the sample selection. Whether most men are influenced by social media to make irrational luxury consumption, or what kind of luxury content and atmosphere on social platform are more attractive to men to make consumption behavior is a topic worth digging deeper.

6. Conclusion

This paper uses questionnaires to investigate Chinese social media platform RED's impact on Chinese female consumers' willingness to spend on Gucci bags. 75% of the knowledge about Gucci comes from social media, 64% of the consumers think that RED does not make consumers really produce purchasing behavior, and conclude that the content of social media has the initial construction of brand image and generates willingness to purchase, it is conducive to social media development of future potential customers. This article offers some ideas on how luxury brands can develop its brand image, grasp the psychology of consumers, put more advertisements which are cater to their preference on social platforms. It has a leading effect on luxury brands increasing targeted publicity and encouraging more consumer to purchase. This article can also help young consumers curb impulse consumption to a certain extent and reduce unnecessary money loss. This paper analyzes the type of content and atmosphere on social platforms lead to consumer purchase, filling the research gap which most of the previous studies analyzed the reason of social media users sharing luxury goods on social platforms and ignoring the purchase of luxury goods influenced by social media.

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