

The Rise of “Her Economy” in the New Media Era: An Innovative Study of Women's Consumption Power and Marketing Strategies

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Abstract: With the advent of the new media era, the rise of “her economy” has become a phenomenon that cannot be ignored, and the economic influence of women in the consumer market is also increasing. Starting from the perspective of consumer culture and based on domestic and international research results, this paper explores the behaviours and preferences of female consumers in the digital realm, derives the study of the alienation of female aesthetics and consumption in the consumer society, and grasps the behavioural characteristics of female consumption in general by linking theory to practice, as well as analyzing the effects of marketing strategies on social media platforms to reveal the evolution of the relationship between women, new media and the consumer market. The results of this study demonstrate the key role of new media in shaping women's consumption behaviour and highlight the importance of flexible marketing strategies in effectively engaging the female consumer base. Finally, the article reflects on the negative impact of the media's focus on women's issues in an era of proximity to the female psyche. The study provides practical insights for a deeper understanding of the “she-economy” phenomenon and for companies wishing to capitalise on the growing power of the female consumer in the digital age. In turn, it promotes socially virtuous consumption and the realisation of a truly equal, respectful and caring consumer market.

Keywords: Female consumers, New Media, “she-economy”, Consumer culture, Gender.

1. Introduction

The rapid development of a consumer society has made consumption a central driver of society. Women are not only the main "consumers" who drive purchases and create benefits but they are also kidnapped in consumerism and become the objects of "consumption" and "attention" in the media [1]. In their consumption activities, women seek to construct their own identities[2]. Still, at the same time they become symbolised as commodities in the consumer society, a phenomenon that is inseparable from the virtual world of commodities constructed by the Internet media. In the new media era, the rapid development of information technology has injected new vitality into consumer society. The rapid rise of the "she economy" phenomenon not only reflects the strengthening of women's consumption power, but also the enhancement of social awareness of gender equality. At present, research on women's consumption has made some progress, including the exploration of

women's consumption psychology, consumption behaviour characteristics and consumption trends. However, there is still a lack of research on the specific manifestations of women's consumption power, its motivation, and innovative marketing strategies in the new media environment. This study helps to enrich and expand the theoretical system of women's consumption and marketing strategy innovation, providing new perspectives and ideas for research in related fields[3]. At the same time, it can also provide a scientific basis and practical guidance for enterprises to formulate marketing strategies targeting female consumers to enhance their market competitiveness and economic benefits.

2. Characteristics Of Women's Consumer Behaviour in the New Media Era

The influence of new media on modern women is becoming increasingly obvious. According to the latest report released by China Internet Network Information Centre (CNNIC), as of the current time, the scale of China's online shopping users has reached 750 million, of which female consumers accounted for more than 60%, which shows women's dominant position in online shopping[4]. New media has had a profound impact on modern women's consumption behaviour, making them display diversified, personalized and social characteristics in the shopping process.

2.1. Diversity of Commodity Choices

With the development of new media, female consumers have access to a wider variety of goods and services. For example, according to the “Insight into the Power of “She”: Chinese Women's Online Consumption Trend Report 2023”, women are still the main consumer group in the “value economy”, and when purchasing commodities, in addition to the quality and function of commodities, they also pay great attention to the value and appearance design of commodities[5]. In addition to quality and functionality, they also pay close attention to the value and design of products. Meanwhile, among the subcategories of women's online purchases, the online penetration rate of clothing and footwear, beauty and personal care products, leisure snacks, alcoholic beverages and leisure and entertainment products is higher, showing the breadth of women's consumption.

2.2. Individualisation of Consumption Behaviour

They tend to make consumption choices according to their interests, tastes and needs, pursue distinctive products and services, and express personalised lifestyles and values. Generally speaking, when female consumers see the products for the first time, they pay more attention to whether the visual experience presented by the external packaging of the products is in line with their inner aesthetic needs, such as the pleasantness of the colour matching, the sense of the times of the packaging design, and the sense of playfulness reflected in the advertisement slogans, etc., and then they consider whether the products are consistent with their usual temperament and personal image, and whether they can reflect their tastes through the products they choose[6].

2.3. Socialisation of Consumption Behaviour

Women show a very high degree of loyalty and active verbal communication characteristics in the consumption process. After purchasing goods, female consumers will share their shopping experience and insights through social media and other channels, and these shares can often influence the purchase decisions of other consumers[7]. Meanwhile, word-of-mouth communication on social media has also become an important way for female consumers to learn about products and choose purchase channels.

3. The Impact of the New Media Era on the “She Economy”

3.1. Media-Induced Brand Consumption

In Chinese society, consumption is no longer limited to the fulfilment of basic needs, but is deeply related to the expression of an individual's social status, the construction of self-identity, and a strong culture of “FACE”. Especially since the reform and opening up, along with the rapid economic growth and deep transformation of the social structure, consumption has evolved into a key way for the newly emerged affluent groups to show their wealth and identity. In this process, the role of the media is indispensable[2]. By strategically designing advertising and promotional campaigns, the media has succeeded in imbuing products with multiple symbolic meanings that significantly stimulate consumers' willingness to buy. Advertisements cleverly create an attractive symbolic system that leads people to believe that acquiring a particular product will directly enhance their social status and bring them a desirable quality of life. Commenting on the phenomenon of Shanghai's celebrity clusters, the New Beijing Book Review Weekly pointed out that the public's ridicule and disdain for the phenomenon of group celebrities stems from the fact that those celebrities in disguise attempt to attach and symbolise the value of their social and economic status through the act of consumption[8]. This consumption pattern transcends the limitations of their daily life situations, social hierarchies, and resource allocation, and contains potential opportunities to enhance personal quality of life and social class mobility. Such class labelling does not originate from the nature of society, but is a socially constructed phenomenon driven by consumerism and media communication. By creating the illusion of excessive luxury and exaggeratedly portraying luxury goods with the help of well-designed copywriting, commercial advertisements cleverly use artistic techniques to invade and touch women's emotional world. For Queen's Day 2021, major brands have launched eye-catching slogans: Dior's theme is "Growing in Style, Blossoming in Beauty", while Estée Lauder emphasises "One Look, One Drop, One Touch". These attractive rhetorical techniques give the products a symbolism of dignity, luxury and romance, as well as a sense of social identity, thus stimulating consumers' desire to buy, and indirectly conveying the message that consumption of brands can narrow the social distance between people. In the context of visual presentation, the brand value and the implied sense of consumer belonging are deeply rooted in the viewers' minds. The categorisation and hierarchy of goods constructed by the brand is not simply a division of goods, but essentially shapes the consumer's self-definition. Each consumer's purchasing behaviour invariably consolidates the logical rationality of identity and stratification based on consumer construction. Limited by fixed thinking patterns and subjective biases.

3.2. New Media Create a Culture Of Ritual Consumption

Daniel Bell states, “The real problem of modernism is the problem of faith, which, in unfashionable language, is a spiritual crisis, because this newborn consciousness is itself full of empty illusions, and the old beliefs have ceased to exist, in such a way that the situation takes us back to nothingness[9]. With neither past nor future, this paper are facing a void.” In modern society, people need rituals and desire to use rituals to form identity and thus gain inner satisfaction, so integrating the view of rituals with consumption activities and using symbols to create online consumption festivals has become an important means of constructing rituals in the media[10]. Network consumption festival refers to a new form of festival derived from the interaction between media, folklore and traditional festivals in the era of network communication. The media manipulate real life through symbols, implanting the intention of consumer culture into festivals through daily information dissemination, and promoting the change of the meaning and connotation of traditional festivals. Under the joint leadership of consumerism and media culture, festivals have been turned into ritualised consumer marketing

activities. Starting from Tmall's "festival-making movement" in 2009, which transformed the festival into the "Double Eleven Shopping" carnival, e-commerce companies have developed over the past ten years, and have become skilled in combining ceremonial communication with marketing activities and a festive atmosphere.

In the biggest shopping carnival of the year, a variety of new media platforms such as Weibo, Zhihu, Xiaohongshu, Shake tone, etc. through the headlines, lucky draws, tips, etc., together to create a lively shopping atmosphere, the audience will be guided to consumers. Online holiday marketing cleverly uses various symbols to create a shopping scene full of rituals, increasing consumer participation and shopping fun. In this process, e-commerce provides a variety of online and offline docking operations for ceremonial marketing, and successfully creates a collective participation consumption mode through the construction of meaning, atmosphere and connotation. Online consumption rituals fully reflect the influence of consumerism and promote people's enthusiasm for holiday consumption.

The rapid development of e-commerce festivals has allowed enterprises to find a window to open up consumer demand, increasing interaction and rituals has become an important marketing tool to increase consumer enthusiasm, and e-commerce live broadcasting has therefore become a standard way of brand promotion after online shopping carnivals. E-commerce live broadcast has intuitive content expression, interactivity and audience participation, comprehensive product introduction, so it is highly favoured by users, forming a huge traffic entrance. E-commerce live is the result of the continuous development of the "live +" model, which is a combination of network e-commerce and reproduction of live broadcasts.

4. Strategic Optimization of Marketing to Female Consumers in the Context of New Media

4.1. Improving the Female User Experience

Establish a perfect "her data" database. China's Internet user data is discrete, so it is impossible to effectively achieve precision marketing, this paper need to establish a perfect "her data" library, for the characteristics of the female group, combined with the existing database, to provide specialised needs, to establish the basis for precision marketing. Under the premise of reasonableness and lawfulness, according to the browsing records and purchasing behaviour data of female customers, this paper can analyse the consumption characteristics and individual differences of women, and classify and add "her data" to provide targeted products and services and preferential information for female customers[11]. The shopping needs of female consumers in the current market are quite different, which is due to the differences in their age, occupation and personal preferences. Therefore, enterprises should carry out scientific classification of the huge female consumer groups, to segment the large market of female consumption, to carry out the development and marketing of products and services in a targeted manner.

Generally speaking, the higher income level of the group's consumption level and shopping willingness is relatively high, therefore, the enterprise can first target customers located in the higher education level and more stable income of women[10]. Because this kind of target consumer group has a certain personal economic strength and is willing to try new things, the accurate grasp of the crowd has a very high commercial value. On this basis, the business operator collects and acquires information about customers extensively, analyses the most significant demand characteristics of various consumer groups using big data algorithms, and then pushes the marketing information to the corresponding audience groups using APP, WeChat and other new types of media, to achieve the effect of comprehensive promotion of mobile clients and precise placement of advertisements.

4.2. Ensure High Quality of Marketing Communication Content

E-commerce platforms also need to ensure the high quality of marketing communication content in the “she economy”. In modern society, women's consumption level has increased, and their aesthetic and spiritual pursuits have changed greatly, which puts forward more requirements on the quality of e-commerce marketing communication content[12]. If in the marketing process, the advertisement link causes audience discomfort, or the advertisement is too commercialised and the sense of art is not strong, it will affect the enthusiasm of women's consumption, which is not conducive to the publicity work of the e-commerce platform. Therefore, in the process of advertising, this paper should also combine the individual needs of female consumers, and design high-quality marketing advertisements for female consumers from the aspects of “creativity”, “emotion” and “novelty”. Marketing advertisements should be designed for female consumers from various aspects such as “creativity”, “emotion”, “novelty”, etc., to avoid female consumers associating the quality of advertisements with the quality of products in the process of consumption, which will affect their initiative to consume on e-commerce platform[13]. In addition, the e-commerce platform in the marketing period, the content of its advertising should also be targeted at the consumption patterns of female consumers in various regions, targeted to provide product services, put the corresponding product advertisements, to stimulate women's desire to buy, to protect the e-commerce platform of the product marketing effect.

5. Rethinking Marketing to Female Consumers in the Context of New Media

The female consumer in a consumer society is manipulated by the media by subtle means. Under the constant guidance of culture and values, the audience is brought into the abundant material world by the symbols and images that the media and advertisements are flooded with. Branding is an important logic for consumers to identify goods, and the so-called freedom of consumption is dissipated as the limited attention of consumers is deliberately guided by the media to be attracted by the promotion of more capitalised brands. In a fully manipulated symbolic code, women with high spending power are an important target for advertisements to capture[14]. In the socially constructed gender segregation, beauty is naturally associated with women. In modern aesthetic culture, “white, thin, and young” are the standard beauty pursued by society, and this image of beauty is constantly conveyed through advertisements. In the process of spreading beauty culture, mass-produced symbols become the tools of social discipline, constantly updating the false consumer demand, and prompting women to look at themselves with the aesthetic standard of consumerism. By purchasing commodities, women can complete the transformation of beauty, obtaining white skin, a beautiful body, and more attention. The messages conveyed by the media not only influence women's consumption behaviour and choices, but also solidify women's social image and deepen the link between women and consumption, thus creating stereotypes of women.

The technological revolution has brought about an overall increase in social productivity, which has led to economic prosperity and unprecedented material abundance, and stimulated consumption as an important means of promoting the re-accumulation of capital. In order to gain more profits, companies and brands have joined forces with the unprecedentedly developed visual media to produce a multitude of attractive advertisements through technological means, flooding people's living space with consumption. Audiences wrapped in adverts gradually lose the distinction between “needs” and “wants”, creating non-essential consumer needs. Consumption has become an activity of acquiring value to satisfy desires rather than a means of maintaining daily life. People's increasingly strong pursuit of symbolic value has made identity and consumption closely related, and consumer culture has become the most important part of the social and cultural structure. The media's entertainment orientation, the value guidance of film and television works, and the creation of

luxurious moods in advertisements are all targeting consumerism among women. Consumerism has been implanted in women's self-identity and value construction through the slogan "All girls must have one". The ubiquitous media and China's advanced online shopping have gradually made "her" consumers lose their rationality, indulging in hedonism and luxury in the pursuit of beauty, fashion and independence through consumption[15]. The so-called emancipation of women through self-expression and the pursuit of subjectivity through consumption is a migration on the wrong path, and only a few women have been truly emancipated in this way. More often than not, alienated consumption brings about false material prosperity and spiritual emptiness, and they are used by businessmen as profit-making machines, unknowingly losing their true freedom of choice and becoming one-dimensional human beings.

6. Conclusion

To sum up, new media play a key role in shaping women's consumption behaviour, and flexible marketing strategies are particularly important in effectively attracting female consumers. The popularity of new media not only provides female consumers with more convenient and diversified shopping channels, but also strengthens information exchange and interaction among female consumers through social media, short videos and other platforms, further promoting the development of "her economy". However, the media's excessive focus on women's issues has had some negative impacts. In some cases, the media may overemphasise women's appearance, age, marriage and other topics, leading to the deepening of social stereotypes and prejudices against women. Therefore, the media needs to be more prudent and responsible in disseminating women's issues to avoid unnecessary pressure and harm to women.

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