

The Research on Chanel's Strategy of Using Celebrity Images to Enrich the Brand Narrative

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Abstract: While numerous studies have shown that choosing an image that matches a brand as an ambassador is good for telling a brand story, there hasn't been much in-depth research and analysis on how brands can tell a good brand story through its ambassador. This research will take the Chanel brand as an example to explore the role of its ambassador in its brand narrative, and summarize the rules to contribute to enriching the theories related to brand narrative. The results of the study prove the importance of the matching degree of the ambassador's visual image and the celebrity's personality image with the brand narrative and their charm to the brand narrative effect. It also shows that Chanel becomes a symbol of a desirable lifestyle through celebrity endorsements by giving the product value in addition to the function of use. Key implications of brand ambassador are discussed along with recommendations for future research about brand narrative.

Keywords: brand ambassador, brand narrative, Chanel brand

1. Introduction

Chanel brand is a fashion brand founded by Coco Chanel in France in 1910, and now it ranks second in the global luxury value list, with three categories: fashion boutique and accessories, perfume, makeup and skin care products, watches and fine jewelry. Chanel brand created a young, energetic, confident female image, and Chanel Style also became a symbol of the elegant and fashionable taste of women in the social field.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the simple and comfortable design of Chanel was unique among a lot of complicated and fancy women's clothes. Coco Chanel wanted to design truly simple, comfortable and elegant clothes. She even tried to use the fabrics and lines of men's wear and learn from their advantages into hers, attempting to break through the traditional fashion concept, saving women from the complicated clothes, and changed the relationship between women and their bodies. And Chanel brand quickly achieved success, and laid the foundation for her later classic design. Tricot sailor dress, little black dress and so on are all famous representative works of Coco Chanel, and they are mostly made of tartan grid or Nordic geometric printing, tweed and other cloth which is comfortable and simple.

In addition to the innovation in clothing style, Chanel brand provides a new modern concept for women, namely clothing is to show themselves, conform to the individual experience of female comfort and concise style is the essential sense of "luxury", as Coco Chanel claimed that "luxury must

be comfortable, otherwise it is not luxury" [1]. For a long time, "Chanel" has become a "phenomenon" in the fashion industry, not only its products have first-class market control, Chanel brand seems to inherit the intangible characteristics, as always to convey the noble and elegant but not bound by any external freedom. Chanel's style is highly respected by many women, and she has also become a symbol of "new women", which is not only the presentation of the brand connotation, but also a part of the brand narrative.

With positioned the main buyers as the Elegant, fashionable woman with spending power, Chanel brand is always choosing the female image full of freedom, independence and charm to become the brand image ambassador. From Nicole Kidman, Gisele Bündchen to Jennie Kim, all image ambassador selection of this brand are aim to pass on the brand concept to enrich the brand narrative.

2. Literature Review

Aaker, Keller and Kotler all have raised that the existence of brands is to help people distinguish the differences between products and services sold by different manufacturers [2]. Brand narrative can be seen as an effective means for brands to strengthen their brand characteristics through narrative means making consumer distinguish them from other competing products and desire to consume for this brand. David MacKenzie Ogilvy, a famous American advertising expert, said in the 1950s that brand is a complex representation and symbol, which is an intangible combination of brand attributes, name, packaging, price, history, reputation and advertising style.

Brand narrative, and the root of narrative is narrated, which is the process of the narrator telling the story with existing views [3]. At present, "narrative" and story " are often used alternately in the category of narrative theory research [2]. Story is not only a mode of reasoning, but also a mode of expression, people can understand the world through narrative, but can also tell the world through narrative [4]. The story can be told in a variety of ways, different ways will produce completely different effects [5].

Brand narrative refers to the brand as the target audience about the brand cultural background, product appeal, dominant value, brand concept content of the text, but under the era of digital media can extend to refer to the brand reflects the brand connotation, it is the brand cultural background, product appeal, dominant value, the vivid expression of brand concept [6]. Brand narrative is the core element of the brand and the link between the brand and consumers [6]. When marketers tell a story in line with the consumer's world view according to the brand spirit, it can trigger the behavior of consumers to substitute themselves into their world view, and then call up the consumption desire of the brand and persuade themselves to buy [3]. That is, brands can better convey their symbolic meaning through stories, and consumers tend to experience brands through stories, because these stories show their lifestyle and create the added value of their purchases [7].

Meanwhile consumers are often influenced by famous media figures in their consumption, and this attention and following is more prominent in fashion brands. Celebrities are human brand [8], who perform on and off the stage, create brand identity, association, image, characteristics, personality [9,10]. Benjamin proposed the phenomenon of visual consumption in the 19th century: the mall display window is a place of visual intoxication and a place to stimulate consumer desire [11]. That is, shopping is not only the possession of real goods, but also the visual pleasure and psychological satisfaction in the shopping process. Celebrity advertising largely relies on building scenes to meet visual needs and stimulate consumers' desire to consume.

In addition, Kahle and Homer's experiments proved that the charm factor plays a dominant role in advertising effectiveness, and participants showed a more obvious preference for products endorsed by high-glamour celebrities [12]. This result is largely consistent with Joseph's research, which examined the impact of an ambassador's appearance on changes in opinion, product evaluation,

and other communication effects, and concluded that charismatic people had a more positive impact on the spread of the products they endorse than less attractive spokespeople [12].

Fashion brands communicate their brands in a narrative way, and their narrative characters are the epitome of brand personalization, and nowadays, when celebrity endorsements become the most commonly used marketing method, ambassadors are the epitome of brand personalization. Through reading the literature, this study found that: on the one hand, the fashion consumer group has religious characteristics. Just as a series of legends about Jobs circulated among "iPhone" fans, fans of the somewhat "sacred" "iPhone" brand, developed a sense of awe for it and formed a buying belief [13]. They have a strong cult complex for the personality of the star, and they actively mimic the way of idols in this way, bringing themselves as close as possible to their "ideal self" [11]. It means that some people think that people can realize their progress towards an ideal lifestyle by purchasing products that represent the characteristics of idols.

Previous research has also shown that consistency between celebrity and brand image can strengthen consumer attitudes towards the brand, and there is also extensive literature suggesting that similarities between consumers' perceived self-image and celebrity ambassadors can further influence consumer attitudes, and Kwon, Saluja et al. suggested in 2015 that ambassadors whose target audience and celebrities align with the brand's cultural values are more effective than other ambassadors [14]. While conveying product information, the lifestyle and attitude represented by celebrity ambassadors are combined with Chanel products to give them specific connotations of their products, which is conducive to stimulating the audience's desire to consume their brands. Therefore, the marketing communication of the brand can be strengthened by matching the celebrity image with the product attributes. Conversely, improper matching between celebrities and brands can negatively affect brands, and the authenticity of marketing can be questioned, affecting brand reputation and image [15].

The above research and theory provide the background information and theoretical basis for this study. However, there are still some research gaps in related fields. Although research shows that choosing an image that matches the brand as an ambassador is conducive to the telling of the brand story, most of the issues of "how the ambassador image enrich the brand narrative" are slightly mentioned in macro principles, without too much in-depth research and analysis, and lack of specific effect combining. This research will take the Chanel brand as an example to explore the role of its ambassador in its brand narrative through observation, and summarize the rules to contribute to enriching the theories related to brand narrative.

3. Methodology

The main purpose of this paper is to analyze the image characteristics of Chanel brand ambassadors and explore their role in brand narrative. The research method of this paper is mainly case studies and observation, a comprehensive and in-depth investigation and analysis of some typical characteristics of the research object.

First, this paper uses Chanel brand as a case study. As a famous luxury fashion brand, in addition to the classic and legendary nature of its own products, Chanel style has become a symbol of women's elegance and fashion in the social field, and there is reference significance in its brand narrative. Therefore, this study learn about Chanel's brand history, brand positioning, brand marketing and advertising performance, and selects five main representative female images including the brand founders in different generations and periods. This paper collects their image information, public evaluation, relevant interviews and advertising images and videos for systematic analysis, and try to analyze their characteristics to explore the link between shared traits of Chanel ambassadors and brand narrative. Moreover, the theoretical structure is mainly supported by celebrity marketing and brand narrative. Additionally summarizes the role of the ambassador in its brand narrative through

theoretical research, case demonstration, brand interpretation and comprehensive research to enrich the relevant theories of brand narrative, and provides theoretical reference for fashion brand marketing.

4. Results

4.1. The Visual Identity of the Celebrity Conveys Consistency with the Brand Philosophy

Through the understanding of relevant literature, information materials and Chanel's ambassador pictures, endorsement product advertisements and brand promotional videos at different times, this study finds that Chanel attaches importance to the presentation of different ambassador images in advertising in the advertising shooting of ambassadors, and amplifies some of their unique external image characteristics. It means that emphasizing different visual effects, so as to convey different aspects of brand concepts and jointly complete the brand narrative. For example, with a three-dimensional skeleton silhouette and delicate facial features, noble and heroic Nicole Kidman, because of her noble, stunning image, so in the 2005 commercial for Chanel No. 5 perfume, she played an actress, with blonde hair, wearing a pink dress appeared, beautiful appearance and gorgeous costume together to create an impactful scene. This scene has also become a classic advertising scene, still talked about today. In this advertisement, a slow-motion close-up of her facial features and her eyes was specially given, highlighting her beauty and elegance even more. Later, Nicole Kidman appeared on the steps of the resplendent Oscar Awards Hall in a black velvet long dress, highlighting her own noble and elegant temperament and also highlighting the nobility and romance of the Chanel brand.

In contrast, international supermodel Gisele Bündchen's 2014 advertisement for Chanel No. 5 perfume did not have gorgeous scenes, but accompanied by boundless sea and brisk music, the advertisement amplified her unique firm and slender body and the natural beauty of clear water out of hibiscus, showing a free and attractive image, focusing on highlighting the free and wanton part of Chanel's brand concept; In the 2017 advertisement, Chanel chose Kristen Stewart as a ambassador, she appeared with a nearly naked body, short blonde hair, thick and sharp eyebrows, resolute eyes, and no accessories on her body, only the winding of cloth. The commercials focused on the action of her running and breaking free from the cloth on the one hand, and the firm expression of her face on the other. In the 2023 advertisement, Jennie kim became the protagonist of the advertisement, compared to the European women Chanel used to choose, Jennie kim as an Asian, her facial features are not so three-dimensional, her eyes are large and round, and her facial features are soft and petite. Always showing people with a sexy and lively image, she maintains herself in the advertisement. No mechanically copying the previous advertising style, she show the eccentric and playful style, and also reflects Chanel's new breakthrough in style. It can be seen that Chanel's ambassador choices have their own unique charm, all have different styles, but they can clearly reflect the brand concept and characteristics of a certain aspect of Chanel through the visual image, thus forming part of the brand narrative and enriching the telling of the brand story.

4.2. The Matching of the Celebrity's Personality Image with the Brand Narrative

In addition to the external visual characteristics, the personality image of the ambassador chosen by Chanel also matches the brand. Take Chanel No. 5 perfume as an example, the founder of the brand, Coco Chanel, is the first ambassador to appear. In 1937, she shot her first print advertisement in her suite at the Ritz in Paris, which appeared in Harper's Bazaar magazine at the time. The advertisement shows her standing in a luxurious suite at the Ritz Hotel in a black Chanel dress, depicting her own prosperous life, as if she had never blended into the lost world affected by World War I and the Depression economy. The presence of Coco Chanel is a model of the brand, she represents all the

tenets promoted by the Chanel brand, so her appearance means the existence of the life posture under the Chanel brand.

And Nicole Kidman plays a female star who escapes surrounded by spotlights and reporters in the film, and falls in love at first sight with a handsome man by chance on the way, and the two spend a beautiful and short time. Combining "Roman Holiday" and her own starring role in "Moulin Rouge", she is very suitable for the characters in the commercial, and the commercial also conveys a clear message, which is if anyone wants to be a star of the era who dares to pursue yourself, Chanel No. 5 will be the best choice.

Gisele Bündchen shows a modern woman who strives to balance time, balance self, family, career and love, and freely make choices, which is also her interpretation: a legendary model, a well-known ambassador, a good mother and a qualified heartthrob, showing the idea that she has such a free and dashing life with Chanel No. 5.

Kristen Stewart's image in the advertisement is also closely related to her own image, once chose to leave an inch, paint smoky makeup. She has a rebellious temperament, but always exudes the atmosphere of literature and art, so she breaks free from the shackles of cloth in the advertisement, breaks the barrier, ushered in the morning light of freedom, conveys the meaning of breaking free from bondage, liberating oneself, and ushering in a new life, telling the audience that Chanel No. 5 means the courage to break free and liberate yourself. And Jennie Kim showed accepting different sides of herself and appreciating her unique beauty by playing two roles in the advertisement, conveying the confidence and self-confidence of the Chanel brand.

In addition, when it comes to Chanel, Marilyn Monroe is also a person who needs to be introduced. Although she is not Chanel's official ambassador, she once said that "only wear a few drops of Chanel to sleep at night", which caused great heat, and this sentence has been passed down to this day, which is the best endorsement of Chanel.

To sum up, the interpretation of Chanel ambassadors in advertising is more important than conveying the product characteristics of Chanel No. 5 perfume, but more importantly, combining their glamorous lives and the stories behind their lives with Chanel products, proving that these celebrities have such a life when they own the product, giving Chanel products specific ideology and connotation, and prompting the audience to pursue the consumer goods themselves and the symbolic meaning implied in them.

4.3. Charismatic Celebrities Lead Consumers

Charismatic celebrity endorsements often have a positive effect on consumers' consumption, and consumers can achieve self-consistency by consuming brands with an image and personality that are consistent with their actual or ideal self. Data show that Chanel's advertising occupies a very high position in the field of promotion and marketing of fashion brands, consumers have a high evaluation of Coco Chanel and "Lafayette" Karl Lagerfeld, including Marilyn Monroe, Nicole Kidman and other advertisements have often been mentioned and used as a template for learning. This shows that Chanel's brand marketing is very successful. The literature mentions that the evaluation of Chanel mostly revolves around Chanel's brand image and ambassador image, such as "Chanel is synonymous with beauty", "Chanel is a very attractive and attractive brand", "Chanel has so much charm and attractiveness" "Chanel advertisements always use charismatic celebrities to convey their message, those who are in the spotlight like Natalie Portman after the success of Thor 2" "I am really associated with Chanel. To me, it seems far removed from everyday life" [16].

From this, this paper shows that Chanel's celebrity advertising endorsement fully expresses Chanel's brand concept, accurately conveys Chanel's brand narrative, makes the brand story constructed by Chanel become an attitude and way of life that people want to follow, and makes the Chanel brand itself a symbol of style and beauty.

5. Discussion

The visual identity of the celebrity conveys consistency with the brand philosophy shows that the visuals displayed by brand ambassadors are consistent with the brand philosophy. The reason can be traced back to visual consumption, in order to cater to the consumer's gaze, Chanel through the operation of mass media, constitutes the relationship between the consumer and the image of goods or services. In the advertising video, the unique attributes of the product in addition to the function of the product are conveyed through visual elements to stimulate the consumer's desire to buy. For example, Nicole Kidman's film is characterized by a noble and stunning image, so she plays an elegant and dazzling actress in the commercial; Supermodel Gisele Bündchen has a unique natural beauty and free temperament, and the advertisement amplifies her unique firm and slender body and natural beauty, showing a free and attractive image; Kristen Stewart's short blonde hair and sword eyebrows, in the advertising film, she shows a determined temperament that bravely breaks the shackles; Jennie Kim is sexy and lively, so she maintains herself in the commercial, presenting a quirky and playful style.

In addition to shopping for the use of product functions has demand, visual pleasure and psychological satisfaction are equally important, and the importance of the visual image of the ambassador is here, that is, visually impact consumers, meet visual and psychological pleasure, stimulate their desire to buy, and the consistency of the visual image of the ambassador and the brand concept is conducive to the ambassador accurately conveying the brand concept, thereby accurately creating a directional association, and providing a certain hidden meaning to the audience of this visual consumption. That is, to have the Chanel Japanese perfume means to have such a gesture. Ambassadors show their glamorous lives in front of the public together with their products, which further enhances persuasion and better urges consumers' desire to buy. Therefore, when choosing ambassadors, brands need to pay attention to the presentation of different ambassador images in advertising, amplify some of their unique external image characteristics, that is, emphasize different visual effects, so as to convey different aspects of brand concepts, create directional associations, and jointly complete the brand narrative.

The matching of the celebrity's personality image with the brand narrative shows that the persona of the ambassador itself is consistent with the brand narrative. Take Chanel No. 5 perfume advertising film as an example, in its film, the product function occupies a very small space, mostly using the image of the ambassador itself, through the interpretation of the ambassador to build a close, and infectious story, everyone's story and their true image is a one-to-one correspondence, Nicole Kidman conveyed: If you want to become a star of the era who boldly pursues herself, want to become noble and elegant, Or if you have a pursuit of these qualities, then buy Chanel; Marilyn Monroe's sexy glamour and display of her magnificent lifestyle became an accessory to Chanel 5, and a simple bottle of perfume took on an admirable nature. That is, specific objects are visualized by consumer idols, and become a sign of a desirable lifestyle. Fashion brands communicate their brands in a narrative way, and their narrative characters are the epitome of brand personalization, so consistency between celebrities and brand images can strengthen consumers' attitudes towards the brand, and the target audience and celebrity ambassadors who are consistent with the brand's cultural values are more effective than other ambassadors.

When consumers watch celebrity advertisements, they often have a more intuitive feeling about whether the celebrity matches their endorsement products, which affects the authenticity of the endorsement. People with a high degree of matching to promote the product will make it easy to associate the ambassador with the product, and have a positive mood on the concept it shows, on the contrary, but the improper matching between the celebrity and the brand will have a negative impact on the brand, the authenticity of marketing will be questioned, and the effect of brand promotion will

be weakened, so the celebrity image and product attributes are matched to strengthen the brand's marketing communication. It is conducive to shaping the brand image and completing the brand narrative.

Charismatic celebrities leading consumers shows that charismatic celebrities lead consumers, and consumers often have a strong admiration complex for the personalities of some stellar and charismatic stars, and they actively imitate idols in this way to bring themselves as close as possible to their "ideal self". Therefore, choosing a unique charm and amplify its charm through media and other means so that it can be perfectly combined with the brand concept and imagination, convey an attractive brand story, and attract consumers to buy the product.

6. Conclusion

Brand narrative is the core element of a brand and an effective means for brands to strengthen their brand characteristics through narrative. It has its roots in narrative, which is the process by which the narrator tells a story with an existing point of view. Triggering consumer behavior, integrating themselves into their own worldview, which in turn stimulates the brand's desire to consume, consumers tend to experience the brand through stories because these stories show their lifestyle and create added value for their purchases. Celebrity endorsements have a great impact on consumer consumption. Celebrity advertising mainly relies on building scenes to meet visual needs and amplify the celebrity charm factor. Celebrity endorsements that align with brand image can optimize the effectiveness of brand narrative. An ambassador is the epitome of brand personalization. While conveying product information, combining the lifestyle and attitude represented by the celebrity ambassador with products, giving it a specific connotation of the product, it is conducive to stimulating the audience's desire for the brand. Therefore, by matching celebrity images with product attributes, brand marketing communications can be strengthened. Using Chanel as an example, this study focuses on exploring the characteristics of its brand ambassadors and their connection to the brand narrative, and analyzes how Chanel enriches the brand narrative through its ambassador by explaining the advertising picture and plot. Through the above results, it shows that the visual image and personality image of Chanel brand ambassador are consistent with the brand concept and image. Bringing consumers an intuitive and real feeling helps brand to build the connection between the ambassador and the brand better. The image presented by the ambassador extends to its charming lifestyle itself, arousing consumers' desire to pursue their ideal self or ideal life, so as to resonate with brand products and generate a desire to buy, that is, Chanel tells a good brand story through celebrity endorsements. Specific items are visualized by consumer idols, so that a simple bottle of perfume or a dress, a hat or a bag and so on has an admirable nature, thus giving the product value in addition to the function of use, and becoming a symbol of a desirable lifestyle.

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