

Under the paradigm of use and satisfaction, the creation of user requirement and the construction of the ecology semiotic: take the beauty product toning cream as an illustration

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Abstract: With the continuous development of mobile Internet technology, social media platform has become one of the important channels of enterprise marketing. Each platform and manufacturers pay more and more attention to meet the needs of users, and through certain marketing means, make users produce satisfaction of consumption. As a social e-commerce APP, “Little Red Book” has shown unique advantages and highlights in shaping user scenes and cultivating consumer needs. From the perspective of the theory of “Under the paradigm of use and satisfaction”, this paper takes the marketing promotion of XiaoHongshu in the related brand of “makeup cream” as the starting point, to explore how such a new concept is promoted, how to build scenes and symbols, and what marketing effects are obtained.

Key words: Under the paradigm of use and satisfaction; Symbol construction; Use scenario; Beauty marketing

1. Research the background

With the continuous innovation of media forms, the pace of the Internet is gradually accelerating, and the orientation of the consumer market is gradually changing imperceptibly. With the gradual saturation of the original market, keen manufacturers are changing from meeting the inherent demand of consumers to creating demand for consumers. They think in the competition of the red Sea of consumption and open up a new blue sea with foresight. In this process, accompanied by a certain product form of innovation and the spread of consumption concepts, in the promotion of clever marketing means, consumers gradually have a sense of identity for the product, and from “general consumers” to “product fans” and then to “hardcore fans” gradually transformed².

Previous studies have found that women’s consumption tendency is more susceptible to the influence of publicity effects when shopping on Internet platforms, and they make different consumption choices in different consumption environments. However, among the current consumption platforms and opinion collection platforms favored by female consumers, XiaoHongshu users have higher user stickiness and choice dependence³. Therefore, it has significant reference and universal research value.

Take “toningcream” as an example, the product first appeared in the South Korean market in 2015, and entered the vision of Chinese consumers around 2016. In the past few years, because its function is similar to the function of “sunscreen”, “isolation cream”, “foundation liquid” and other products, And the use effect is far less than the latter can effectively target specific situations, so the user acceptance of the product has been lukewarm. After 2022, the acceptance of related product concepts has been significantly improved, through the statistics of the search term retrieval frequency of “makeup cream”, it can be found that compared with 2021, the overall search popularity increased by 848% in 2022, which attracted the attention of the author.

Therefore, from the perspective of the theory of “Under the paradigm of use and satisfaction”, this paper intends to sort out how the concept of “makeup cream” is marketed and promoted through the concept feedback and emotion collection of users in Xiaohongshu, and specifically analyze the following two issues:

1. When entering the market at the initial stage, compared with other beauty products, which are less competitive, how does the makeup cream create users’ use scenarios and meet their needs?
2. the construction of these use scenarios, what symbols behind the establishment and composition, and how to produce a related impact on the consumer psychology of users?

2. Literature review

1. Under the paradigm of use and satisfaction theory

In the early studies of communication, the audience of media communication is often regarded as the object or target of “losing subjective initiative”

The “Under the paradigm of use and satisfaction” theory proposes that the audience (consumers) has a certain subjective initiative and can make choices through thinking. Such choices will psychologically meet the corresponding consumption needs of consumers, and such choices can be used and guided. For example, Wang Shaojun makes an analysis⁴ based on the “cultural consumption” generated by Generation Z and the corresponding “emotional and spiritual satisfaction”. From a macro perspective, such cultural consumption habits are more formed by ideological guidance. Therefore, in the analysis of consumers’ psychological motivation of “Under the paradigm of use and satisfaction”, as an observer, the identity of the observed should be based on “limited subjective initiative”, that is, “having one’s own preferences”, which can be influenced by the environment, or even constructed by the environment, produced out of thin air and cultivated.

On the other hand, the user’s satisfaction is more of an expression of the subjective will. Even if the user is driven by a certain interest

purpose/ideology and is forced to accept the value output⁵ (accepted in the potential consciousness), the final decision is still in the hands of the consumer. Under the guidance of traditional Chinese consumer psychology, such satisfaction is derived from the expression⁶ of archaic concepts such as “comparison” and “good quality and low price”. Consumers’ satisfaction will be combined with different actual situations, so it also has a certain randomness and cannot be completely covered by universal values.

2. The construction and deconstruction of symbols

As a unique concept or reference filled with the construction of human life and production activities, symbols actively construct our society. Professor Zhao Yiheng of Sichuan University defines it as: symbol is the perception⁷ that is believed to carry meaning. Each specific symbol is regarded as a point with quality (meaning), and the interweaving of symbols becomes a dynamic organic whole. The organic combination or messy pile between symbols will dissociate between different effects, and finally form a subtle, indefinable but always defined as “existence is reasonable” confusing concept. And when researchers want to pull the cocoon of a certain phenomenon, they can also resort to symbols to deconstruct the seemingly whole event, analyze the value and significance of each component symbol, and explore the more far-reaching meaning behind it.

For the deconstruction of the consumption scene, this paper will analyze how under the “delicate” packaging of goods, the conceptual expression of consumerism can express new meanings and create new demands through the mutual outline of symbols.

3. Comparative Research and discourse analysis

1. Data comparison

The author collected 18,601 entries related to “no makeup cream” on XiaoHongshu Platform from 2021 to 2022, and classified the data according to environmental scenes and emotional orientation. Through washing, 15,632 valid entries were finally collected.

According to our survey, we found that the data content of 2021 and 2022, January-February and September-December are relatively similar, and the transmission effect is relatively close. Therefore, only the data from March to August are selected as a comparison.

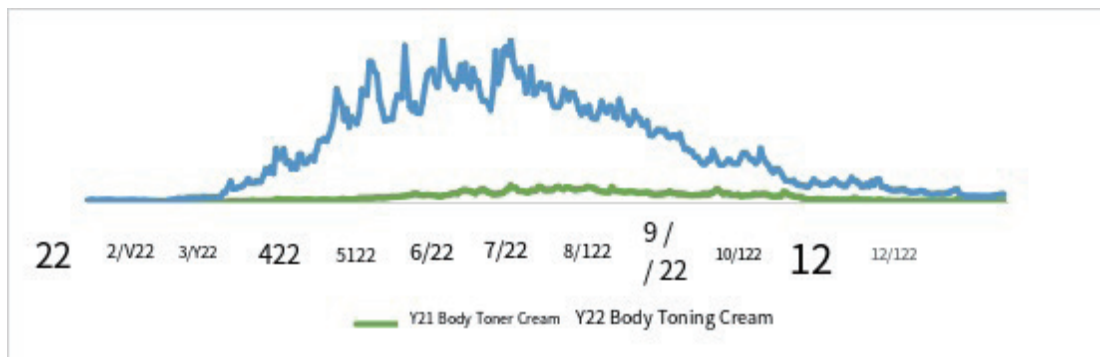


Figure 1 Compared with 2021 and 2022, the search popularity of body lightening cream increased by 848% year on year

At the same time, the text associated with the cream during this period of time is gathered, and the following conclusions are found:

(1). Through text analysis, in 2021, 15.2% of users will show positive emotional expression when referring to “makeup cream”, 71.7% of users will show neutral attitude and 13.1% of users will show negative emotional expression. In 2022, 74.2% of users present positive emotional expression when referring to “makeup cream”, among which 65.8% are related to “summer”, “outing”, “wedding”, “dating” and other scenes, 21.1% show a neutral attitude, and 4.7% show negative emotional expression.

(2). In 2022, the use scenarios involving “summer” (2,651 frequency), “travel” (2,276 frequency), “wedding” (1,898 frequency) and “dating” (1,516 frequency) were the main ones.

2. Discourse analysis

Through discourse analysis, by comparing the text content related to 2021 and 2022 skincare cream, the product manufacturers in the process of product promotion, different from the early direct delivery of “skincare” and “whitening” concept form, turn to the construction of “wedding”, “travel” and other scenes, through these more “undetectable” environment, to create a mimicry of demand.

These mimicry needs are attached to dominant symbols such as “wedding dress”, “beach” and “camera”, conveying the concepts of “wedding/travel photos should present the most flawless me” and “using makeup cream can make my state more perfect”, obtaining positive feedback among consumers, and accompanied by secondary transmission, making the symbols produce an “upgrade” type interaction⁸. And in a new round of communication, the original audience becomes the communicator, giving it a more “localized” and “symbolic” expression.

4. The symbol construction of the use scene of makeup cream

Through research, it is found that in social communication, the concept of no-makeup cream is often strongly bound to the scene, and accompanied by the feature symbols in the scene. These symbols have certain consumption attributes, but they are not presented to consumers in the face of direct consumption, but as a kind of symbol perception hidden in the needs of consumers, and conveyed⁹ by the concept of representation. These hidden concepts are often associated with beautiful scene expression, and through positive emotional

empowerment, deepen consumers' impression of product use in the corresponding scene.

However, in the original product design, the design of these scenes is often not a "necessity", but as an extension and extension, the framework is between two different attributes (inherent attributes and extended attributes), just as De Beers in 1947 to promote the diamond, hit a "diamond forever, a diamond forever" advertisement. Combining the inherent properties of the diamond with the blessing properties that can be represented in the wedding scene, so that the diamond can obtain more opportunities for use and higher commodity value in the "non-essential consumption" scene.

Therefore, in the process of commodity promotion with a certain purpose (improve user identity, commodity value, etc.), the construction of the scene can make the audience more intuitive and clear perception of the existence of a series of commodity symbols that are given meaning. In the interweaving of symbols, some codes that are easy to be dismantled will directly reach the consumer psychology of users. And become the factors and indicators of their satisfaction. And other symbols with deeper meanings are not completely useless, but become a kind of potential values that are gradually recurred and understood in the process of diffusion, which enriches the hierarchy of the scene and also provides the possibility for more multi-dimensional diffusion of commodities.

With the combination of such a more "obscure" symbol, the oriented user group is also "divided" according to its own decoding level.

5. The fine division of users and special symbol expression

For the deep cultivation of user groups, it is an effective choice to quickly occupy the blue ocean of the market. The second decoding of symbols in the scene and the decoding method matching with special groups are such a deep cultivation maintenance. Just as readers have different attributes, their understanding of Hamlet is also different. Only in the early stage of promotion, if the scene is built rich enough, can it be possible to accurately reach the target users and generate commodity "iron fans".

Therefore, the special symbolic expression has become the most complex and easily overlooked part of the scene construction. This not only requires the coder to have far-sighted thinking when designing symbols, but also tests the decoding ability of the audience. Once this way of encoding and decoding is formed at both sides of the designer and the audience, the self-evident tacit understanding will deepen the cognition of the commodity, and make the symbol become the symbol itself more naturally, and have a certain range of universality.

In order to achieve such an effect, only the configuration of the scene is far from enough, the coder also needs to deliver the "instruction manual" and the related use methods together, and in this process, whether the audience is "subjective active" or "passive acceptance" will make the results very different. In order to draw valuable conclusions, it still needs further research and induction.

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