

Research on the communication mechanism of male beauty short video from the perspective of consumerism culture

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Abstract: With the advent of the new media era, short video has become the main channel for information dissemination in various fields of society. In the field of beauty, a professional, vertical and unique video type - male beauty short video has emerged. With its professional and entertaining characteristics, male beauty short videos have attracted tens of millions of fans from 2018 to 2023, and the amount of consumption transformed by watching such videos has exceeded 100 million yuan, becoming one of the most important information dissemination and marketing methods in the field of beauty makeup in China. However, in the process of this kind of video communication, consumerism has become a cultural phenomenon that cannot be underestimated in the process of male beauty short video communication. In the process of development, different degrees of problems and drawbacks have been revealed to the audience, the industry and the society. Based on the theory of consumerism and taking male beauty short video as the research object, this paper explores the consumerist communication mechanism of male beauty short video, and then reflects on the consumerist characteristics of male beauty short video, in order to bring some enlightenment for the positive long-term development of male beauty short video communication in the future.

Keywords: Male Beauty Short Video; Consumerism Culture Spread; Communication Mechanism

Introduction

Male beauty short video emerged in the middle of 2018, is a new type of short video UGC (user-produced content) produced under the popularity of new media, and has now become another emerging opinion leader in the field of beauty short video, besides female beauty bloggers. At present, the well-known male beauty short video blogs on the Internet mainly include “lipstick brother” Li Jiaqi, and the first beauty blogger of B station Benny Dong Zichu; There are youtube youtuber Thomas Halber, Instagram celebrity Jeffrey Star, European and American makeup brand HudaBeauty founder Huda Kattan, only 18 years old James Charles and so on.

1. Definition of male beauty short videos and consumerism culture

1.1 Male beauty short video

Male beauty short video refers to a vertical short video with male beauty bloggers as the main body of communication and with the help of mobile network platforms, disseminating beauty professional knowledge and recommending beauty products to the audience to achieve the purpose of attention and traffic. The length of the video is generally about 30 seconds to 10 minutes. This kind of short video is favored by many users, especially female users. In the process of its dissemination and development, it not only shows its strength in the marketing and consumption transformation of beauty products, but also becomes a new communication landscape in the field of short video in the past six years.

1.2 Consumerism culture

The concept of Consumerism originates from western developed countries after the 20th century. It refers to the value concept and cultural form of unrestrained consumption of various goods and services to satisfy non-basic needs such as hedonic pleasure and extravagance, so that people are addicted to the “want to buy”. The core of consumerism is the symbolic meaning of consumer goods, and the emergence of consumer society promotes the formation of consumerism. They will reflect their lifestyle and attitudes through the consumption and possession of things. Consumerism culture is an important branch of consumer culture. As a cultural trend of thought and way of life, it is a cultural

phenomenon with negative and critical colors. In the process of social development, people will use “consumption” to advertise their status and attitude, and the society becomes a space full of material desires and false needs.

1.3 Characteristics of consumerist culture

1.3.1 Excessive consumption

In the culture of consumerism, businesses use various media channels to promote the sales and circulation of goods, and create many false demands, resulting in an unprecedented rise in consumer desire, such as excessive consumption beyond the consumption level, increase in consumption frequency, excessive consumption and so on. In addition, there will be material means that can achieve early consumption support, such as “flower”, credit cards, Ant Financial, etc., so that the audience can consume without thinking before consumption, and the rationality is weakened, and they can consume freely, resulting in consumption carnival.

1.3.2 Symbolic consumption

The word “symbol” comes from the field of semiotics. Saussure defines “symbol” as the associative combination of concept (signified) and sound image (signifier), and a certain associative image is needed to link between symbol and conceptual things. Therefore, it carries the information to be transmitted by both sides of the meaning exchange, with a certain signification, which can be used as a sign of something can be called a symbol. The core of consumerism is the consumption of symbols, which conveys the meaning attached to symbols, rather than the “usefulness” of commodities themselves. Symbols are used to endow the characteristics and tastes of goods with common meaning space and unique symbolic connotation, and consumers express their identification of the meaning of symbols through consumption of goods.

1.3.3 Luxury consumption

Luxury consumption is one of the most obvious characteristics of the consumer society, which is mixed with “conspicuous consumption, comparison consumption” and other psychological factors. These luxury consumer goods used to symbolize high-end quality life, such as big-name beauty products, bags, luxury cars, high-end houses, luxury travel and other consumables, are constantly reappearing through the communication of the media. Ordinary consumers, such as those who do not have the original consumption ability of luxury products, will have luxurious consumption behaviors before they are rich in the accumulated “acculturation” of the media. It has promoted the popularity of luxury consumption.

2. Male beauty short video content dissemination mode

2.1 Content characteristics of male beauty short video communication

As a short video in the professional field, male beauty short video has a more accurate and vertical choice of its communication content, with professional content and unique communication forms, and its content features mainly include the following:

2.1.1 Diverse topics

By sorting and summarizing the content types of topics selected in the personal accounts of authoritative bloggers of male beauty short videos (see Table 1), the author finds that the topics are rich and full of creativity.

Table 1 Summary of topic types of male beauty short video

Topic type	Subdivision type
Information communication	Specific product introduction, specific product evaluation, product screening suggestions, circulating misinformation correction, experimental confirmation of rumors
Product type class	1. Skin care products, beauty products, body care products, beauty tools and instruments. 2. Domestic products, foreign products, luxury products, high-end products, alternative products, affordable products, bloggers own brand product recommendation.
Brand information	Popularize brand information, tell brand story, product introduction of specific brand, ingredient introduction, selling point introduction.

Product-related class	Blogger self-use product evaluation and feedback, price information introduction, purchase method recommendation, unbox experience record, use method tutorial, similar product comparison, product placement commercial promotion.
Star effect class	The same model of a star, a star endorsement, a star recommendation, a star similar model.

Among them, the main topics include information communication, product types, brand information, product-related, and star effect, which cover a variety of content of the product itself and its related information. These types of topics are the focus that the audience wants to understand and receive.

2.1.2 Complete topics

By summarizing the content of topics in male beauty short videos (see Table 2), the author finds that these topics are generally divided by specific product types, among which the product types involved are extremely detailed and complete, and the main product types include: makeup, skin care, body care, beauty makeup instruments, etc.

The division of these product types is very much in line with the audience's information acceptance needs, and the subdivided topic content of each type is also extremely complete, which will directly hit the audience's focus, and the general attention is high, so the publication of these contents will also obtain a high amount of viewing and interaction.

Table 2 Summary of recommended product types for male beauty short video

Product type	Content of topic selection
makeup	Liquid Foundation, Cushion BB, Primer Primer, concealer, lipstick, eyeshadow, Eyebrow pencil, blush, highlight, contouring
Skin care type	Makeup remover, cleanser, spray, serum, lotion, cream, eye cream, lip care, paper paste mask
Body care	Shower gel, body lotion, hand cream, perfume, fragrance spray, shampoo and conditioner
Beauty tools and instruments	Hair instruments, care tools, face wash instrument, skin care instrument, face wrinkle removal instrument, face cleaning instrument

2.2 Forms and characteristics of male beauty short video communication

In addition to the uniqueness and advantages of the topic type and content of the male beauty short video, the communication subject - the blogger who appears in the video, the form used in planning and shooting its video will also help the transmission of its video.

2.2.1 Gender characteristics of male bloggers

The dissemination subject of male beauty short videos is male, but the audience is mainly female beauty fans, and men tell about female products, which is originally a kind of novelty seeking behavior. In the process of telling the video content, they usually use beauty products on the face and body with themselves as models. And in a very dramatic way to explain the product content for the female audience, which formed a strong contrast, which is very in line with the current popular "male consumption" communication trend.

2.2.2 Role characteristics of male bloggers

These male beauty bloggers are not popular traffic stars, but ordinary individuals with professional beauty professional identity living in different cities, or opinion leaders in related fields. Their life-oriented shooting style and formal characteristics are more likely to arouse the resonance and self-identification of female audiences, and they are usually in an equal discourse position with their audiences. Know the consumption power and consumer psychology of the general beauty audience, and have a strong persuasive power.

Bloggers generally have a strong personal style, and the usual narrative methods mainly include chatting with friends, direct introduction, and story, etc., which can reduce the strangeness and sense of distance between the audience in front of the camera, and are usually called "sisters, baby cute" and other intimate names to narrow the distance.

2.2.3 Features of video production

Video content production relies on video recording, editing and post-special effects, the length of time, the focus is prominent, so the

attention efficiency is high. The distribution of video content relies on the mobile Internet, and the same video can be uploaded on multiple platforms at the same time. Each video has a uniform style of cover design, and in large font marked the main body of the video, the focus is prominent, can attract attention before the video is opened, they often because of a highly clicked video overnight red and attract more audience attention.

2.3 Dissemination mode of male beauty short video

2.3.1 Multi-platform upload, the content is more authoritative

Male beauty short video communication platforms mainly include professional video websites based on B station (bilibili) and social media platforms based on Douyin, Weibo and Xiaohongshu. According to Karth data, more than 20% of male beauty bloggers on the three platforms of Douyin, Kuaishou and B station. Among them, as a professional video production platform in China, Station B has a high degree of professionalism and a high degree of video completion. 80% of bloggers will set up multiple platform accounts of Station B, Douyin and Weibo at the same time and upload each content on multiple platforms. Video accounts for content dissemination on this platform are often more professional and authoritative.

2.3 Sharing and recommendation increase the number of implicit implants

After consuming products through short video recommendation content, the audience with good feedback effect will make use of social platforms for secondary forwarding and sharing, and male bloggers will thus increase more attention and gain more exposure, so that more audiences will consume according to the video content for reference. Under this idea, merchants will cooperate with bloggers to implant product advertisements in videos. When the audience watches the video for consumption transformation, it forms the mode and process of the commercial content production of beauty products, and the video blogger is also endowed with high commercial value.

3. Consumerism construction mechanism of male beauty short videos

3.1 Meet the audience's curiosity consumer psychology

Lip makeup, facial mask, and base makeup are the hot spots of male beauty short videos, as well as the focus of female audiences. There are a variety of novel makeup brands and beauty products with different appearance shapes in the videos. In addition, the video narrator has become a good-looking male blogger wearing lipstick, powder foundation, and eyeshadow than the female blogger wearing heavy makeup. Audiences will involuntarily watch videos to satisfy their curiosity.

3.2 Meet the audience's self-identification needs

Male bloggers use scene communication, life communication language and other means, and use marketing strategies of brand association and product advantage positioning to shape these beauty products into special possessions of minority groups, re-divide the rank or class privilege in the virtual beauty world, and affirm the personalized characteristics of this high-end exquisite lifestyle and aesthetic taste by means of hunger marketing. Create a lot of false demand, ignoring the real needs of the audience. The audience will then identify with such symbolic connotation of self-promotion and affirmation of social class status, and want to transfer such connotation to themselves, resulting in psychological needs for self-identification and social identification. By purchasing the products recommended in the video, these symbols representing the needs of happiness and self-expression will be accumulated, and the ultimate value of self-identification will be obtained.

3.3 The symbolization of things leads to consumption behavior

In The Consumer Society, Baudrillard points out that today we are surrounded by an astonishing phenomenon of consumption and abundance made up of ever-increasing goods, services and material wealth. People are surrounded by things, and the goods with excess quantity need to be screened by symbolic meaning, and the symbolic value of things becomes the decisive factor of consumption behavior.

The beauty products recommended by men's beauty videos have gone beyond the basic functional significance of the products, such as moisturizing, whitening and lightening spots, and anti-aging skin care effects; Modify the facial features, concealer repair, improve the beautifying effect of complexion, etc. In addition, such as hyaluronic acid, niacinamide, A alcohol, retinol, fruit acid, pitera and other product ingredients, belong to the biological and chemical professional terms, the understanding and memory of the general public is quite difficult, so choose to use easy-to-understand nicknames instead of ingredients and effects, such as "small white bottle, small black bottle, ampneed, fairy water, large powder bottle" and so on. Some high-end brands such as La Mer (La Mer), Yves Saint Laurent (Saint Laurent), SHISEIDO (Shiseido) have also created local nicknames of "Lamei", "Yang forest" and "Xu Sanduo", praising product efficacy and brand characteristics as symbolic content and symbolizing things.

4. Negative effects of short videos on male beauty

From the perspective of consumerism culture, the dissemination process of male beauty short video is analyzed. The problems such as consumption alienation, excessive entertainment, distortion of values and other problems and drawbacks can not be ignored. How to analyze the drawbacks of these problems and deal with them with a rational attitude is the most practical significance for the efficient and reasonable dissemination of male beauty short videos in the future.

4.1 Loss of consumption rationality and alienation of consumption behavior

The alienation of consumption behavior means that the consumption behavior violates the original intention of consumption, which is manifested as consumption beyond its own conditions, excessive consumption, unrestrained consumption, arbitrary consumption, etc. However, such characteristics are also highlighted in the communication process of male beauty short videos today. In this communication mode of viewing and consumption, the audience is easily rendered by the high emotions of bloggers and makes irrational consumption. The audience's original viewing purpose just for rest and entertainment has become complicated, and at the same time, they have consumer behavior. In each viewing, the consumer desire will be stimulated, and they will be immersed in the consumption of beauty symbols. Buying cosmetics and high-end skin care products seems to become the behavioral motivation to meet the psychological and spiritual needs, and become the ultimate goal of work and life.

4.2 Entertainment psychology first, indulge in consumption carnival

18-25 years old is the main audience of male beauty short video, this age group belongs to the post-90s consumer group, this group of people pursue individuality and fashion, love entertainment, they are under the great pressure of study, work and social life, Short videos of male beauty with a high degree of entertainment are the best choice for them to relax, while male bloggers have exaggerated body language and relaxed and funny speaking style in the videos, which is more suitable for them to watch at rest to release physical and mental pressure. While absorbing attention through entertainment means, the audience will also be addicted to consumer anesthesia, and they will choose to enjoy the process of online shopping to make up for their physical and mental exhaustion, which may produce a large amount of consumption unconsciously.

4.3 Unidirectional values, lack of discrimination

In the current era of male beauty and makeup short videos being consumed like fast food culture, the cultural industry is more prominent. A large number of template and homogenized video content result in the audience's aesthetic orientation and consumption preferences of beauty and makeup products tend to be the same, and they only recognize the delicate and beautiful lipstick color and the white and flawless face. From a distance, everyone's makeup looks like an industrial product that has been reproduced like a template, and the diversity of aesthetics has been wiped out in the process, and the over-copied cultural content has turned the audience into a spiritually one-dimensional person.

In this process, users will be confined to the dilemma of passive content acceptance and value acceptance, resulting in blind consump-

tion behavior and inability to control themselves, and losing the critical ability to follow the trend and follow the crowd. It is for this reason that Internet expressions such as “chopping hands” are generated, which are used to express the audience’s penitence but uncontrollable complex psychology after consumption.

Peroration

As an emerging cultural phenomenon of consumerism in this media era, male beauty short video has indeed brought a new scene to the development of China’s consumer culture. However, as a viewer of male beauty short videos, when expressing their love and support for bloggers with actions, they should also pay attention to reasonable consumption and rational choices. When accepting the symbolic identity given by the video communication, we should also determine our real needs and actual needs to avoid impulse consumption and follow the trend of consumption, so as to prevent ourselves from losing our critical ability and objective analysis ability in the long-term consumption of male beauty and makeup short video. Only in this way can the consumer culture in the beauty and makeup industry have positive consumption potential and development ability.

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