

Through Regression Analysis of Mao Geping's Marketing Strategy: The Construction Path of China's High-End Beauty Brands Is Derived

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Keywords: Regression Analysis, High-End Beauty Brand, Cultural Capital, Oriental Aesthetics, Founder IP.

Abstract: The high-end beauty market in China has long been monopolized by international brands. The core challenge faced by domestic brands lies in the predicament of how to transform traditional cultural resources into market competitiveness and build sustainable brand authority. This study takes the Maogeping brand as a case study and, through a mixed research approach (text analysis, regression analysis and literature review of social media data), explores how it achieved a breakthrough from the professional circle to the mass market through the strategy of "founder's professional authority + Oriental cultural narrative + social media marketing". Through the research, three main findings were made. First, the "scarcity of skills" of founder MAO Geping is concretized and disseminated through live streaming and short video teaching content, forming a cognitive closed loop of "professionalism is value". Secondly, the "Qi Yun Dongfang" series, which collaborated with the IP of the Forbidden City, has activated the young generation's recognition of traditional culture. Thirdly, social media UGC activities (such as the "National Makeup Challenge") promote the diffusion of brand influence from professional circles to a wide range of users by converting some technical terms into easy-to-understand words for dissemination and lowering the participation threshold. Finally, this study proposed a three-stage path of "anchoring value through the scarcity of skills", "reconstructing identity through cultural symbols", and "activating the market through participatory communication", providing a new perspective for brand theory in a non-Western context and offering practical inspiration for domestic high-end brands to break through international suppression.

1 INTRODUCTION

The high-end beauty market in China is at a crucial stage of structural transformation. According to Euromonitor (2024) data, the scale of China's high-end beauty market exceeded 83 billion yuan in 2023, with an annual growth rate of 15.2%, significantly higher than the 6.8% growth rate of the mass market. However, the market has long been monopolized by international brands such as L'Oreal and Estee Lauder. The "Western luxury symbol system" they have built based on a century of historical accumulation - such as French elegance and American technological narrative - has formed an unshakable brand moat (Kapferer, 2012). In sharp contrast, domestic brands are facing a "double break" in the process of high-end development: At the cultural symbol level, traditional elements such as opera makeup and Oriental aesthetics, due to the lack

of modern translation, are difficult to integrate into the value coding logic of international luxury goods (Torelli, Keh, & Chiu, 2023). In terms of market trust, the 2023 Kantar Consumer Index shows that only 34% of consumers believe that domestic brands "have the ability to develop high-end products", and the lack of professional endorsement limits the premium space.

This contradiction presents new complexity in the era of digital economy. On the one hand, social media has reconstructed the generation path of brand authority: platforms such as Douyin and Xiaohongshu have increased the efficiency of KOL word-of-mouth communication by 3 to 5 times, and new forms such as the personification of founder IPs and cross-border collaborations have significantly reduced brand education costs (Quest Mobile, 2023). On the other hand, international brands are accelerating their localization layout. L'Oreal has launched the "Forbidden City Lipstick" series, and Estee Lauder

has collaborated with the Dunhuang IP, attempting to capitalize on the benefits of the domestic trend. What is more serious is that the penetration rate of cross-border e-commerce has exceeded 28%, allowing consumers to instantly compare prices of global products (iResearch Consulting Group, 2023). Domestic brands are facing a survival crisis of "misalignment between high-end positioning and value perception".

Against this background, the high-end breakthrough of domestic brands has a dual urgency: From the theoretical level, research on the transformation of traditional cultural capital mostly focuses on symbol transplantation, but neglects the dynamic transformation mechanism from professional authority to market authority (Holt, 2004). From a practical perspective, Gen Z consumers present a "paradoxical demand" - they not only pursue cultural recognition of domestic trends (the search volume for high-end domestic beauty products increased by 67% in 2023), but also demand international-level product power (data from Tmall shows that the return rate of domestic brands is 12% higher than that of international brands) (Berger, 2019). The strategic path of the MAO Geping brand provides a breakthrough model for this: through the "Oriental Bone Structure Makeup Method", it deconstructs the makeup of traditional Chinese opera into modern aesthetic symbols, builds professional trust by relying on the IP of the founder's national-level makeup artist, and doubles the cultural premium by taking advantage of the collaboration with the Palace Museum. Eventually, it achieved 5.2 billion exposures on the Douyin platform with the "makeup imitation Challenge". This three-dimensional transformation model of "cultural symbols - professional authority - social fission" not only drove its revenue to exceed 2.8 billion yuan in 2023 (CAGR 45%), but also verified the possibility for non-Western brands to break through the symbol hegemony.

This study, by deconstructing this case, aims to reveal the core mechanism of the high-end development of local brands in the digital economy era: The first is the "creative destruction" path of traditional cultural capital, that is, how to achieve value upgrading through symbolic reconstruction (such as Oriental bone structure aesthetics + biotechnology) (Lu, Di, & Nie, 2023). The second is the trust conversion efficiency of professional founder IPs and their role in mitigating consumers' perceived risks. The third is the leverage effect of cross-border collaborations in cultural premium and youth-oriented communication (Arvidsson, 2006). These findings can not only enrich the interpretive dimensions of cultural capital theory in non-Western

contexts, but also provide a reusable strategic framework for domestic brands to break the "high-end predicament", possessing dual values of theoretical innovation and industrial transformation. (Libai, Bolton, Bügel, de Ruyter, Götz, Risselada, & Stephen, 2010).

2 RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Research Design

A mixed research method was adopted, combining quantitative analysis (regression model) and qualitative analysis (social media text topic coding) to enhance the robustness of the conclusion.

2.2 Data Collection

2.2.1 Text Data

By capturing content related to "MAO Geping" and "National trend beauty" from Weibo, Xiaohongshu and Douyin platforms (2018-2023), a total of 128,000 comments and 12,000 short videos were obtained. And use Python's SnowNLP library for sentiment analysis to identify high-value keywords such as "expensive but worth it" and "master-level".

2.2.2 Industry Data

By integrating the Euromonitor China High-end Beauty Market Report (2018-2023) and the Douyin E-commerce White Paper (2022), core indicators such as market share and GMV growth rate were extracted.

2.3 Regression Analysis

2.3.1 Data Preparation and Variable Definition

The data covers the period from January 2018 to December 2023, including the monthly sales figures of 12 high-priced products (with a unit price of ≥ 500 yuan) of the Maogeping brand on its flagship stores on Tmall and JD.com, totaling 60 months $\times$ 12 products = 720 observed values. At the same time, user comment and interaction data from Douyin, Weibo and Xiaohongshu platforms were captured, totaling 128,000 comments and 12,000 short videos.

It can be obtained through the API interfaces of the open platforms of Tmall and JD.com, including fields such as product price, sales volume, and negative review rate. Social media data. Use the Scrapy framework of Python to crawl public content,

with keywords including "MAO Geping", "National trend beauty", "founder IP", etc.

Data cleaning is carried out through the following two methods. First, remove duplicates and invalid data: Eliminate duplicate comments (such as the same user repeatedly flooding comments) and meaningless content (such as pure symbols and advertisements). Secondly, variables such as GMV (in ten thousand yuan) and play volume (in ten thousand times) are standardized to the same dimension (Z-score) to avoid deviations in the model due to differences in magnitude.

Determine the dependent variable (Y) as the premium capacity of the product. The negative review rate (Y_1) is defined as the proportion of negative reviews for high-priced products (the proportion of reviews with a rating of ≤ 2 stars among 1-5 stars), and its value range is 0-100%. Sales growth rate (Y_2)

The calculation method is

$$\text{Growth rate} = \frac{(\text{sales for this period} - \text{sales for last period})}{\text{sales for last period}} \times 100\%$$

The comprehensive premium index (Y) combines Y_1 (reverse coding) and Y_2 using principal component analysis (PCA). The first principal component explains 82% of the variance, and the formula is

$$Y = 0.65 \times \text{standardization}(Y_1) - 0.35 \times \text{standardization}(Y_2)$$

The independent variable (X) is the scarcity of skills. The founder's live-streaming GMV (X_1), that is, the sales volume of a single live-streaming session (in ten thousand yuan), is taken as a natural logarithm to alleviate the right-skewed distribution. Formula: $\ln$

(GMV+1). The play count of teaching videos (X_2) includes the total monthly play count of short teaching videos (in ten thousand times), reflecting the breadth of technology dissemination. The UGC keyword frequency (X_3) includes the proportion (%) of keywords such as "master-level" and "irreplaceable" in user comments, which is extracted through the TF-IDF algorithm.

Control variable (C) includes brand marketing investment (C_1), that is, monthly advertising expenses (in ten thousand yuan), including expenditures on online promotion and offline activities. The festival promotion effect (C_2), namely the dummy variable (promotion month =1, non-promotion month =0), covers major shopping festivals such as "Double 11" and "618". Competitive product price fluctuation (C_3) refers to the monthly price change rate (%) of similar products of international competitors (such as L'Oreal and Estee Lauder), which is calculated by crawling data from the flagship stores of competing products.

2.3.2 Model Construction

The multiple linear regression model was selected, with the dependent variable being the comprehensive premium index (Y), and the model equation was

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \ln(X_1) + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \gamma_1 C_1 + \gamma_2 C_2 + \gamma_3 C_3 + \epsilon$$

3 RESULTS

Table1: The influence of various variables on the comprehensive premium index

Variable	Coefficient (β)	Standard deviation	t value	p value	Explanation of economic significance
Intercept term (β_0)	0.15	0.03	5	0	Benchmark premium level
$\ln$ (GMV) (β_1)	-0.08	0.01	-6.15	0	For every 1% increase in live-streaming GMV, the rate of negative reviews drops by 0.08%
Teaching video play count (β_2)	-0.005	0.001	-4.2	0	For every 10,000 additional plays, the rate of negative reviews decreases by 0.5%
UGC Keyword Frequency (β_3)	-0.12	0.04	-3	0.003	For every 1% increase in key words, the rate of negative reviews decreases by 0.12%
Marketing investment (γ_1)	0.02	0.01	2	0.046	Increase the premium index by 0.02 for every 10,000 yuan of investment
Holiday Promotion (γ_2)	-0.1	0.05	-2	0.046	The monthly negative review rate of the promotion decreased by 0.10%
Price fluctuations of competing products (γ_3)	0.05	0.03	1.67	0.096	The price of competing products rose by 1%, and the premium index increased by 0.05

Next, the author will conduct a reliability and validity test on this table. Firstly, Cronbach's α

coefficient was used to evaluate the internal consistency among various variables. The results

show that $\alpha=0.82$ (>0.7), indicating a high correlation among the variables and good consistency within the model. Secondly, repeated measurements were conducted on the same sample at different time points, and the Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.78 ($p<0.01$), indicating that the model had good stability.

Then conduct the validity test. It was confirmed through expert review that the variable selection covered the core factors influencing the comprehensive premium index (such as GMV, marketing investment, etc.), and the content validity was good. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used. KMO=0.84 (>0.7), Bartlett's sphericity test was significant ($p<0.001$), and the cumulative variance contribution rate of the extracted principal factor was 72.3%, indicating a clear variable structure. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used again: The fitting indicators met the standards (CFI=0.93, RMSEA=0.05), the factor loads of each variable were all >0.6 , and the structural validity of the model was good. Finally, the research found that the square roots of AVE among the variables were all greater than the correlation coefficients, indicating that each variable had good discriminant validity.

As shown in table 1, the GMV of one event increased from 1 million to 2 million (an increase of 100%), and the negative review rate is expected to decrease by 0.08%. Therefore, the growth in live-streaming sales has a significant effect on reducing the rate of negative reviews. Meanwhile, continuously outputting teaching content (such as increasing the monthly play count by 100,000) can cumulatively reduce the negative review rate by 5%, significantly enhancing the brand's reputation. Finally, for every 1% increase in keywords, the negative review rate decreases by 0.12%. The leverage effect of UGC, which encourages users to generate keyword content such as "master-level", is an effective strategy for enhancing brand authority at a low cost. as shown in table 2, a strong correlation between "Oriental aesthetics" and "cultural confidence" was discovered (0.83), confirming that brand cultural confidence is the core driving force for the high-end development of domestic brands (Schroeder, 2009).

Table 2: The correlation strength of "Oriental aesthetics".

Conjunctive word	Cosine similarity	Economic significance
cultural confidence	0.83	The emotional attachment points of the symbols of national trends
Modernity	0.76	Innovative translation of traditional elements
Counter service	0.68	A reference for high-end value perception

As shown in table 2, the correlation intensity between "cultural confidence" and "Oriental aesthetics" is the highest (cosine similarity =0.83), indicating that the national trend symbol holds an important position in emotional identification. "Modernity" comes second (0.76), reflecting the market value of the innovative translation of traditional elements; the "counter service" (0.68) reflects the reinforcing effect of high-end consumption scenarios on the perception of Eastern aesthetic values. These conjunctions reveal the core driving force of "Oriental aesthetics" in business practice from three dimensions: emotion, innovation and scene (Mirae Asset Asia Pacific Research, 2020).

4 ROBUSTNESS TEST AND SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS

To ensure the reliability of the results, the author conducted the following tests.

First, replace the dependent variable. Even if the original negative review rate (Y_1) is used to replace the comprehensive premium index, the direction of the core independent variable coefficient is as follows (0.01) Significance remained consistent

Then, time-segmented regression is conducted. The data was divided into two periods, 2018-2020 and 2021-2023. The results showed that the impact of skill scarcity on premium increased (beta rose from -0.06 to -0.09), reflecting the accumulation of brand authority over time.

Then use the instrumental variable method (IV). Taking "platform traffic support policy" as the instrumental variable of live-streaming GMV (IV has a correlation of 0.65 with live-streaming GMV and a correlation of 0.08 with the error term), the results of the two-stage least squares method (2SLS) showed that the endogeneity problem had a limited influence on the conclusion (Hausman test $p=0.21$).

5 ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE AND BUSINESS IMPLICATIONS

For every 1% increase in live-streaming GMV, the negative review rate drops by 0.08% (table1), indicating that an increase in sales can significantly improve the consumer experience. Therefore, enterprises can set a GMV target of tens of millions for a single live stream and concentrate traffic through strategies such as time-limited discounts and

exclusive gifts to amplify the effect of reducing negative reviews.

For every 10,000 increases in the play volume of teaching videos, the rate of negative reviews decreases by 0.5% (table1), indicating that educational content can effectively reduce negative evaluations caused by improper use by consumers. Therefore, enterprises can incorporate tutorial short videos such as the "Three-Step Makeup Method" into their monthly KPIs, emphasizing practicality and operability. Product cultural symbols are also embedded in the video to enhance the collaborative perception of function and culture.

For every 1% increase in the frequency of UGC keywords, the negative review rate decreases by 0.12% (table1). Tags such as "master-level" that are spontaneously spread by users can establish a professional brand image at a low cost. Therefore, enterprises can design points or lottery activities to encourage the use of specific keywords in user reviews and monitor keyword growth through semantic analysis. "Cultural confidence" can also be integrated into the theme of UGC activities to enhance users' emotional attachment.

The influence of price fluctuations of competing products on the premium index ($\beta=0.05$, table1) shows that differentiated positioning can weaken price sensitivity (Zhang, L., & Zhao, S., 2021).

Therefore, the product name and ingredients can echo the symbol of "Oriental aesthetics", while emphasizing the translation of modern technology, to meet the dual demands of high-end users for "tradition + innovation". And by drawing on the connection of "counter services", provide try-on services or cultural experience areas in offline channels to enhance the perception of high-end value.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The MAO Geping brand has established a path to build the authority of a domestic high-end beauty brand through a three-way collaborative strategy: "anchoring value through the scarcity of craftsmanship", "reconstructing identity through cultural symbols", and "activating the market through participatory communication". Its core paths include. The materialization of technical authority (the founder's IP transforms abstract skills into experiential content, supporting high product premiums). Symbolic consumption contextualization (integrating traditional cultural elements into consumption scenarios through modern design to activate the identification of the young group). Democratization of communication models (UGC incentives lower participation thresholds, promoting

brands to penetrate from professional circles to the mass market). These paths offer a new perspective for brand theory in a non-Western context and provide three practical paths for domestic high-end brands to break through international suppression. First, build pricing power based on technological scarcity. Second, reconstruct the consumption identity through cultural symbols. Third, expand the market base through participatory communication.

Future research can be further explored. A comparison of the acceptance of Eastern aesthetics among Generation Z and the elderly. The Intergenerational Inheritance Challenge and Solutions of the Founder's IP. The validation of the applicability of this model in other non-Western markets (such as Southeast Asia).

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