

From Digital Advertising to Live Streaming for E-Commerce: The Impact of Content Marketing Transformation on Consumers' Purchase Pathways

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Abstract: With the rapid development of e-commerce, marketing methods have gradually shifted from traditional digital advertising to live-streaming e-commerce sales. This has had a significant impact on consumers' purchase paths. This study takes Huaxizi as a case and adopts the case analysis method to explore the influence mechanism and collaborative value of digital advertising and live-streaming e-commerce sales on consumers' purchase decisions. The research results show that Huaxizi has constructed a marketing ecosystem of synergy between product and effect by integrating digital advertising and live-streaming e-commerce sales, and verified the complementary value of the two models in brand building and sales conversion. Live-streaming e-commerce sales focus on real-time interaction and immersive experience, and through detailed explanations by the host and embedded purchase links, it shortens the decision-making path of consumers and quickly achieves product explosion. Digital advertising strength-ens brand culture recognition through Eastern aesthetic narrative and precise placement, and ac-cumulates long-term cognitive assets.

1 INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of e-commerce, the marketing methods for products are constantly evolving. Digital advertising, as a classic marketing tool, has dominated consumers' brand awareness and purchase decisions over the past few decades. However, in recent years, live-streaming shopping, as an emerging digital marketing method, has risen rapidly and changed consumers' shopping habits by virtue of its immediate interaction, strong immersion, and social dissemination effects. Digital advertising is no longer confined to the Internet but is disseminated through various media. This fluidity is reflected in the fact that advertisements can appear on multiple channels such as TV, mobile phones, and smart devices, and even be encountered unconsciously (Hou, 2022). The diversity and personalization of online platforms require innovative and personalized advertising content to differentiate from other advertisements. Brands and advertisers utilize big data technology to analyze user data, precisely construct user profiles, and achieve personalized advertising content delivery (An, 2024).

Live-streaming-based e-commerce can provide consumers with an immersive experience, featuring stronger interactivity and authenticity. Through real-time exchanges between the hosts and consumers, brand trust and purchase impulsiveness are enhanced, influencing consumers' purchasing decisions. In the marketing model of live-streaming-based e-commerce, hosts attract audiences through real-time interaction and emotional expression. This immersive experience has a significant impact on consumers' purchasing decisions. For instance, consumers may be more influenced by the emotional communication of celebrity hosts, while the communication of private consumer goods may be more effective (Shi, Huang, Lv, Hu, 2024). Purchase intention is the final behavioral response formed by consumers during live-streaming-based e-commerce. Through real-time video streams and interactive segments, live-streaming-based e-commerce creates a virtual shopping environment for consumers, enabling them to experience a shopping experience similar to that in physical stores. This immersive experience can enhance consumers' identification with the group

identity of the live-streaming room and their compliance with the rules and moral standards of the live-streaming room, thereby positively influencing consumers' purchase intentions (Liu & Zhang, 2024). However, at the same time, live-streaming-based e-commerce also faces issues such as false promotion, low-quality products, and impulsive consumption by consumers, which contrasts sharply with the brand image marketing model established by digital advertising over the long term. Therefore, how different marketing methods affect consumer behavior, as well as the underlying psychological mechanisms and economic effects, still warrant in-depth research.

This research aims to explore the influence mechanisms of digital advertising and live-streaming e-commerce on consumer behavior. Taking Huaxizi as an example, this study adopts the case analysis method to investigate the impact of the transformation of content marketing on consumers' purchase paths. The case of Huaxizi is innovative, typical and dynamic, which can comprehensively reflect the full-chain influence of content marketing from dissemination to conversion. The interactive relationship between its strategic adjustments in the new media environment and the changes in consumer behavior provides a multi-dimensional analytical perspective for the research.

2 BRAND INTRODUCTION OF HUAXIZI (FLEUR DE SI)

Hua Xizi is a domestic cosmetics brand centered on Eastern aesthetics. HuaXiZi adheres to the concept of "Eastern makeup, nourished by flowers", and is committed to integrating Eastern culture with modern cosmetics technology. The brand name is derived from the line "If you want to compare West Lake to Xi Zi, the light makeup and heavy makeup are always in harmony", aiming to inherit and promote the beauty of Eastern culture (Chen, 2024).

HuaXiZi's products are mainly characterized by natural ingredients, with floral essence and Chinese herbal ingredients as the core. They are suitable for the skin types and makeup needs of Eastern women. The product design of HuaXiZi integrates elements of traditional Chinese culture and intangible cultural heritage, such as floral elements (peony, water lily, etc.), architectural elements (windows, concentric locks, bridges, screens, etc.) and craft elements (relief carving, silver-making techniques, etc.). The use of

these elements not only demonstrates the brand's respect and inheritance of traditional Chinese culture but also enhances the cultural connotation and artistic value of the products (Zhu, 2024). Products like the concentric lock lipstick, Jade Nourishing Loose Powder, and the Hundred Birds Paying Homage to the Phoenix Eye Shadow Palette not only perform well in terms of functionality but also showcase the profound depth of Eastern culture through exquisite designs.

HuaXiZi achieved market breakthrough during its brand's early stage with "Airy Powder" as its strategic product. Its success stems from the synergy of precise differentiation positioning and innovative marketing strategies. In terms of product design, the brand constructed a visual barrier through the design based on Eastern aesthetics - the powder packaging incorporated the relief patterns of the West Lake umbrella and the celadon glaze color, and was complemented by the powder box lid engraved with silver craftsmanship. This transformed traditional cultural symbols into highly recognizable consumer symbols. Meanwhile, relying on the micron-level powder particle grinding technology of international supply chain giants such as Kao of Japan, the brand achieved an industry breakthrough with a powder quality as fine as 5.5 microns, breaking consumers' stereotypical impression of domestic cosmetics with "premium quality and domestic price". In marketing, HuaXiZi pioneered the transformation of top-tier live-streamers into product experience officers. LiJiaqi conducted visual evaluations such as "powder cloud floating experiment" and "24-hour makeup retention challenge", replacing traditional one-way advertising output with "empirical marketing", and boosting the repurchase rate of this product to 38% in 2019 alone. This deep binding not only led to an explosive growth of 120 million yuan in sales in the first year but also completed the transformation from traffic dividends to brand assets through 3-4 times of high-frequency exposure per month.

The purchasers who bought through the live-streaming rooms are mainly from first-tier and new first-tier cities. These regions have high internet penetration rates and strong consumption capabilities. Consumers in these areas have a high acceptance of Chinese cultural trends and are more inclined to shop through emerging channels such as live-streaming. The characteristics of small weight and high unit price make the consumers of this product need to have certain economic capabilities. The purchasers are mostly from the upper-middle income group and can

accept domestic products at the "light luxury" price range. The purchase behavior of consumers of Huaxizi is often emotionally bound with "supporting domestic products". The brand strengthens cultural identity through concepts such as "Oriental aesthetics" and "Chinese cultural trends", attracting young people who resonate with traditional culture. The live-streaming rooms' limited-time discounts and the talkativeness of the hosts make consumers place orders quickly by taking advantage of the scarcity effect and the psychology of immediate satisfaction. In addition, consumers are easily influenced by the recommendations of the hosts and the atmosphere of the live-streaming rooms, and exhibit herd behavior.

3 ANALYSIS OF HUAXIZI'S DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY

3.1 Digital Advertising

Under the digital advertising marketing model, consumers are more likely to be in a passive receiving state, and the matching degree between the advertising content and users' demands is relatively low. Taking Huaxizi as an example, in digital advertising marketing, it mainly conducts brand promotion and product promotion through social media, short-video platforms, etc. For instance, the official account of Huaxizi on Douyin attracts users' attention and interaction by posting contents such as product introductions, usage tutorials, and brand stories. However, due to the passivity of digital advertising, consumers may not be interested in these advertising contents, resulting in poor advertising effects.

Secondly, consumers need to go through multiple steps from seeing an advertisement to completing a purchase, such as "clicking on the advertisement - jumping to the page - browsing details - adding to cart and making payment", which leads to a relatively high average churn rate. After seeing an advertisement on social media or short-video platforms, if consumers are interested in the product, they need to click on the purchase link, jump to the e-commerce platform page, browse the product details, and finally make the purchase. During this process, consumers may give up purchasing due to slow page loading speed, unclear product information, or complex payment procedures. Even if they are interested, they cannot get immediate answers to questions about product efficacy, applicable scenarios, etc., resulting in a decision

interruption. In contrast, the live-streaming e-commerce model, through real-time interaction and scenario-based display, can better address these issues and increase the purchase conversion rate of consumers.

3.2 Live-Streaming for Product Promotion

Under the marketing model of live-streaming e-commerce, the cooperation between Huaxizi and Li Jiaqi has further enhanced the brand's popularity and influence. Based on consumers' interest in Chinese-style makeup, they actively choose to follow Huaxizi's live-streaming room. During the live-streaming process, Huaxizi uses scene-based construction to shift consumers' attention from product functions to usage experience and emotional value. For instance, Huaxizi showcases the product's usage effects in various scenarios during the live-streaming, such as daily makeup and ancient-style imitation makeup, enabling consumers to more intuitively feel the charm of the product.

The embedded purchase links in Li Jiaqi's live streaming rooms have significantly shortened the conversion path, making it more convenient for consumers to purchase products. During the live streaming process, consumers can directly click on the links to purchase the products they are interested in. This seamless shopping experience has greatly increased the purchase conversion rate. In addition, Li Jiaqi uses the real-time chat box interaction mechanism to provide personalized answers promptly, effectively eliminating consumers' doubts. In the live streaming, he elaborates on the features and usage methods of the products and provides real-time answers to consumers' questions, enhancing consumers' trust and purchase intention.

The collaboration between Li Jiaqi and HuaXiZi not only manifests in sales but also extends to the design, research and development, and marketing promotion stages of the products. For instance, LiJiaqi helped the brand improve its products by sharing live-streaming data with it, thereby enhancing the brand's connection with consumers. This in-depth cooperation enabled HuaXiZi to better meet consumers' demands and further enhance the brand's market competitiveness.

3.3 Content Marketing

HuaXiZi has integrated its products into stories through creating advertisements with cultural

connotations, quietly seizing users' minds. For instance, its advertisement "Zhang Chong's Eyebrow Painting" incorporates the lipstick "Tongxin Lock" and the eyebrow pencil "Luo Da Shenghua" into the story, endowing the products with profound cultural atmosphere. In terms of brand asset marketing, HuaXiZi launched a virtual image of the brand with the same name to showcase "Oriental Beauty", which is helpful for reaching users in the secondary circle. Besides, the brand also tied up with intangible cultural heritage and traditional art, launched documentaries such as "Impression High-end Design", enhancing the brand's cultural connotation. It also collaborated with creators like Fang Wenshan and Zhou Shen to create the brand theme song "HuaXiZi", further enhancing the brand's cultural connotation. HuaXiZi also used brand stories and cultural connotations for advertising promotion. For example, through the short film "Not Ordinary Intangible Cultural Heritage", it showcased the combination of the brand and traditional culture, and launched theme advertisements and micro films such as "Again, the Color of National Beauty", conveying the brand's concepts and cultural values through storytelling. In terms of cross-border collaborations, HuaXiZi cooperated with Hanfu brand Sanzexiong Meng to launch pink-toned Hanfu with a national style, collaborated with "Honor of Kings" to launch makeup products with a national style, and collaborated with "Hua Mulan" to launch ancient-style makeup imitation. Through these cross-border collaborations, HuaXiZi continuously expanded its brand influence and realized the innovative inheritance of traditional culture. HuaXiZi's content marketing, through various strategies such as brand stories and cultural connotations, successfully enhanced brand awareness and user stickiness, and also achieved the inheritance and innovation of Chinese traditional culture.

4 THE INFLUENCE OF HUXIZI'S DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES ON CONSUMERS' PURCHASING DECISIONS

Huaxizi's digital marketing strategy influences consumers' purchasing decisions in an all-round way through various means such as influencer promotion, user recommendations, multi-channel promotion, channel strategies, data-driven approaches, content marketing, promotional activities, brand value

transmission, social media interaction and e-commerce live streaming.

The influence of influencer's product promotion and user reviews on consumers' purchase decisions is significant, accounting for 24.93% and 20.29% respectively. The digital marketing methods through which influencers and users recommend products have a notable impact on consumers' purchase intentions (He, 2024). 59.42% of the respondents indicated that they would recommend Huaxizi to others, suggesting that digital marketing strategies have played a positive role in forming positive reviews (He, 2024).

The extensive promotion of Huaxizi on new media channels such as Tiktok and Rednote has increased the brand's visibility and the purchasing opportunities for consumers. The willingness to participate in offline activities is relatively high, with 53.98% of the respondents willing to attend Huaxizi's offline activities (Wu, 2023). This indicates that offline activities can provide a more direct brand experience, deepen consumers' understanding and affection for the brand, and thereby influence their purchasing decisions. The official online flagship store is the mainstream choice for consumers to purchase Huaxizi products, accounting for 48.59% (Wu, 2023). This shows that in digital marketing strategies, the construction and optimization of online channels have an important impact on consumers' purchasing decisions.

Huaxizi uses data to explain the ingredients, functions and features of its products. For instance, it uses a skin moisture tester to demonstrate the moisturizing effect of the products and provides specific data such as the retention time of makeup (Xie, 2022). This data-driven marketing approach can directly show the advantages of the products to consumers, enhance their trust in the products, and thereby influence their purchasing decisions. Additionally, Huaxizi attracts potential customers by posting high-quality content related to the products on social media, such as product usage tutorials and user reviews, helping them make more informed purchasing decisions.

Huaxizi stimulates consumers' desire to purchase by conducting promotional activities on social media, such as time-limited discounts and coupon distribution. These promotional activities can attract consumers' attention and participation, thereby influencing their purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, Huaxizi conveys brand stories and values through social media to establish emotional connections with

consumers and enhance their brand recognition, which in turn affects their purchasing decisions.

Huaxizi has achieved brand exposure and attracted consumers' attention through cross-border collaborations with brands in other fields, such as Lushaojiu, Sanzhe Meng, Yanglu, and Geaya Legend. These collaborations have an impact on consumers' purchasing decisions (Zhang, 2022). Cross-border co-branded products often possess uniqueness and innovation, which can stimulate consumers' curiosity and purchasing desires. Moreover, Huaxizi adheres to the principle of user co-creation in research and development, involving consumers in the product design and feedback process to enhance the market adaptability of the products and strengthen consumers' identification with the brand, thereby influencing their purchasing decisions.

Huaxizi actively interacts with consumers on social media platforms such as Weibo. By posting content related to consumers' lives, such as festival greetings and sharing of seasonal makeup looks, it has shortened the distance between the brand and consumers and enhanced consumers' trust and loyalty towards the brand. This interactive marketing strategy helps consumers obtain more product information and convert communication and interaction into actual purchasing power. In addition, Huaxizi collaborates with well-known e-commerce anchors like Li Jiaqi for product promotion and sales during live broadcasts. The interactivity and immediacy of live broadcasts can quickly attract consumers' attention and influence their purchasing decisions through the recommendations and demonstrations of the anchors.

5 THE DIGITAL MARKETING OF HUAXIZI HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE BRAND BUILDING

Digital advertising can be widely exposed. Brands can use digital advertising to attract traffic to live broadcasts and preheat the audience, thus achieving a closed-loop of "advertising exposure - live broadcast conversion". High-quality advertising content can remain on social media for a long time and continuously influence users' minds. By re-distributing live broadcast content, it is possible to convert live broadcast clips into digital advertisements, extending the content's lifecycle and

creating a snowball effect of "live broadcast e-commerce - advertising seeding".

The user groups and content styles on different platforms vary. Brands need to choose the appropriate platforms based on their own positioning and target audience. Taking Xiaohongshu as an example, the user group of this platform is mainly composed of young women, who have a strong interest in beauty, fashion and lifestyle content. Beauty brands can place digital advertisements on Xiaohongshu and adopt forms such as influencer posts and videos to shape their brand image and attract the attention of the target audience. When conducting live streaming for product sales, they can leverage the influence of platform influencers. Invite them to conduct product trial live streaming. By leveraging the fan base of the influencers and the traffic advantages of the platform, they can achieve short-term sales conversion.

Live-streaming for e-commerce can effectively attract consumers to make purchases and provide them with purchase channels for products that are popular among the public, have low unit prices and short decision-making time, such as cosmetics, clothing and food. However, for high-priced goods like cars and real estate, live-streaming for e-commerce cannot directly and effectively increase sales. Such goods require more detailed understanding and more decision-making time. But through the live-streaming platform, the hosts can provide consumers with clear introductions, and combined with digital advertising, consumers can have a preliminary understanding of them.

In the field of live-streaming e-commerce, public welfare activities and environmental protection concepts are gradually becoming important leverage points for brand image building. In terms of public welfare, brands can donate part of their sales revenue to public welfare undertakings, or collaborate with public welfare organizations to jointly carry out public welfare activities. By leveraging the dissemination power of digital advertising, they can widely publicize these public welfare measures and enhance the brand's public welfare image and sense of social responsibility. In terms of environmental protection, the entire process from product design to production and sales should adhere to the environmental protection concept, such as using environmentally friendly materials, reducing packaging waste, and minimizing the negative impact on the environment. At the same time, actively promoting environmental protection concepts during live-streaming can guide consumers to pay attention

to environmental issues and shape the brand's positive image in the field of environmental protection.

6 CONCLUSION

This study, through a case analysis of Huaxizi, demonstrates that it has constructed a marketing ecosystem that integrates digital advertising and live-streaming e-commerce, achieving synergy between product and effectiveness. This has verified the complementary value of the two models in brand building and sales conversion. Live-streaming e-commerce focuses on real-time interaction and immersive experience, relying on the trust endorsement of top host Li Jiaqi, and shortening the consumer decision-making path through the Pink Cloud experiment, quickly achieving sales explosion - the first-year sales of Air Powder exceeded 120 million yuan, especially suitable for high-experience product categories. Digital advertising strengthens brand cultural identity through Eastern aesthetic narrative and precise targeting. The synergy of the two models is manifested in content linkage and technology empowerment. At the content level, the advertisement pre-emptively promotes and attracts consumers, and the live-streaming clips are re-distributed for secondary dissemination to form grass-roots promotion materials; at the technical level, data interoperability optimizes the placement strategy, ultimately building a growth loop of grass-roots promotion - conversion - repeat purchase. This model retains the brand penetration power of digital advertising while fully leveraging the immediate conversion advantage of live-streaming e-commerce, becoming a typical paradigm for new consumption brands to break through.

Based on this research, suggestions are proposed for enterprises' marketing strategies. Enterprises can choose appropriate marketing methods based on the target audience and product characteristics. For high decision-making cost products, it is recommended to build brand potential mainly through digital advertising, and convey craftsmanship value through documentary-style content, such as the documentary "Non-ordinary Intangible Cultural Heritage" of Huaxizi, showcasing the brand's inheritance and innovation of traditional craftsmanship and shaping a high-end image. At the same time, it is suggested to use limited edition live streaming to convert core users and leverage the interactivity and scarcity of live streaming to stimulate purchasing desires. For fast-moving consumer goods and experiential

products, it is recommended to prioritize live streaming for product promotion. By leveraging the evaluations of live-streaming hosts and time-limited promotions, sales can be ignited, such as the "Pink Cloud Experiment" and "24-hour Makeup Wearing Challenge" of Li Jiaqi's live streaming room. Through professional recommendations and time-limited discounts from live-streaming hosts, product sales can be rapidly increased. At the same time, through short-video advertisements, product memory points can be strengthened, such as the tutorials and user reviews of Huaxizi on platforms like TikTok and Rednote, helping consumers quickly understand product features and enhancing brand recognition.

The core of future research will focus on technology empowerment and refined audience operation. On one hand, enterprises integrate AI and VR technologies to create immersive marketing scenarios, breaking through the experience boundaries of traditional media. On the other hand, enterprises need to deeply analyze the generational behavioral differences of consumers and then design marketing strategies that are adapted to them. This will help solve the growth bottleneck and achieve a qualitative upgrade in marketing efficiency.

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