

MBA Research Proposal

**An Investigation into How Social Media Marketing is used
within the Beauty Industry to remain competitive in a global
market: A case study of Xie Fuchun**

Student Name: Yixuan Wang

Student Number: 2304815

Research Topic:

A case study of Xie Fuchun: strategies for traditional cosmetic brands transitioning to social media marketing, analyzing reasons for transition and current media marketing strategies, addressing pressures in the digital environment to enhance brand competitiveness.

Introduction:

This study aims to explore the marketing dilemma of Xie Fuchun, a domestic cosmetic brand in Yangzhou, China, and its solutions in the digital era. Firstly, the article introduces the historical origin and cultural heritage of the Xie Fu Chun brand, as well as an overview of the current cosmetic market and changes in consumer demand. The article then outlines the purpose and objective of the study, namely to identify the key factors influencing the effectiveness of Xie Fu Chun brand's digital marketing through questionnaire survey and empirical research, and to propose corresponding digital marketing strategies on this basis. It goes on to elaborate on the research problem statement, including how to improve consumer satisfaction, maximise brand revenue and enhance brand competitiveness through digital marketing (Pan, 2024). Finally, the article highlights that the development and innovation of digital marketing has injected new vitality into the concept of online marketing, presenting an important opportunity and challenge for Chinese domestic cosmetic brands. Therefore, the significance of this study is to provide an effective digital marketing strategy for Xie Fuchun brand to achieve sustainable and stable development, as well as to provide useful reference and inspiration for other domestic cosmetic brands to formulate digital marketing strategies.

Research Background:

The rapid development of China's economy has led to a significant improvement in people's income levels and living standards. Concurrently, their mindset towards consumption has undergone a transformation.

The concept of consumption has also undergone a transformation. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, once physiological and safety needs have been met, individuals begin to pursue social needs, respect and self-actualisation. Consequently, in the contemporary era, people are increasingly engaging in enjoyment-based consumption, desiring to enhance their sense of happiness and placing greater emphasis on the pursuit of self-realisation and personalisation (Pan, 2024). This shift is particularly evident in the purchasing of cosmetics. The data indicate that China's cosmetics market is substantial and has been experiencing a gradual increase in recent years. Despite a decline in market size in 2020 due to the impact of the epidemic marketing, the market is rapidly recuperating as the epidemic

is brought under control (Tang, 2023). According to market forecasts, by 2023, China's cosmetics market will reach 500 billion. With the development and popularity of the Internet, an increasing number of people are choosing to purchase cosmetics online. The market share of online purchases of cosmetics in China is growing year by year, and the amount of consumption is also increasing. The rise of the online shopping market not only expands product sales channels for cosmetic brands and brings high revenue, but also provides consumers with more convenient and faster shopping methods and price concessions. An increasing number of cosmetic brands are recognising the significant profit potential of this market and are utilising big data analysis technology to capitalise on it. This involves the use of digital media and Internet technology, coupled with the application of advanced data analysis and mining techniques to gain insights into consumer behaviours, preferences and other information. This enables a more nuanced understanding of the target audience, which in turn facilitates the improvement of marketing effectiveness and business value. Consequently, the transition from traditional online marketing to digital marketing is becoming a reality.

Literature Review:

1. Theoretical Significance

In recent years, with the continuous development of the national economy, there has been a noticeable improvement in people's living standards on a daily basis. Concurrently, there has been a corresponding increase in the demand for a higher quality of life. Furthermore, the population's expectations of quality of life are rising, with an increasing number of individuals listing cosmetics and other luxury goods as necessities and paying close attention to them (Bakri, 2023).

Consequently, the potential for growth in China's cosmetic industry is considerable. This paper presents a new research programme for China's digital marketing strategy for cosmetics. Its objective is to address the current challenges facing the Chinese cosmetics industry, provide feasible solutions to overcome these challenges, and assist enterprises in identifying their strengths and modifying their digital marketing strategies (Bakri, 2023).

In order to achieve a steady growth of their own profits, with a view to ensuring the healthy and sustainable development of China's domestic cosmetic brands, and to enable them to enter the stage of high-quality development.

2. The Current State of Traditional Marketing Research

The traditional marketing mode is the marketing mode chosen by the majority of enterprises, and it is also the most common one. However, the advent of digital

marketing has inevitably affected the traditional marketing business model, necessitating targeted adjustments and upgrades in accordance with market demand. In the 4.0 era, for the first time, the combination of Industry 4.0 and traditional marketing was studied, and a set of multi-criteria decision-making methodology, namely the BWM, was employed to determine the criteria of influence. BWM is used to assess and determine the importance of each identified dimension. The results of the study indicate that product, process, and physical evidence are the most affected elements of the marketing mix (Kingsnorth, 2022).

The study found that the profitability of fruit and vegetable retailers under traditional marketing has been reduced due to a 18% decline in sales volume and an increase in cost. A total of 114 consumers were surveyed over the period 2019-2020. The results indicated that the profitability of fruit and vegetable retailers engaged in traditional marketing had declined due to a 18% reduction in sales volume and an increase in costs. Additionally, domestic scholars have provided insights into traditional marketing strategies. Many people analysed and studied China's existing marketing theoretical framework based on the 4P and STP frameworks of enterprise marketing. They identified existing problems and elucidated that marketing encompasses enterprise marketing at the micro level, city marketing at the meso level, and national marketing at the macro level (Fu, 2021).

These include strengthening the quality of channel management, strengthening the construction of corporate culture, constructing an information sharing system, formulating a systematic marketing strategy and promoting the organic combination of modern marketing and traditional marketing. Many brands proposes a strategy to overcome the limitations of traditional marketing, advocating the use of sentiment marketing (Tang, 2023). This approach is applied to both established and emerging brands in the liquor industry, with the objective of establishing a closed-loop system for product marketing and sales.

3. The Current State of Digital Marketing Research

The growth of social media networks has led to an expansion of the customer base and a greater focus on brand promotion and marketing activities on social networks. Given the importance of branding and marketing activities on social networks, it is only logical that companies should also adapt to quickly adapt to the changing market demands and grow in today's emerging internet era. Bhosale (2019) analysed the top foreign social networking sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, LinkedIn and other social networking sites by comparing their The number of customers, ratings and comments on different platforms were analysed in terms of their impact on traditional marketing. The dependence and importance of both digital and traditional marketing were also considered.

A large number of scholars have conducted bibliometric analyses of digital marketing

literature from 2014 to 2020. The authors concluded that in the coming decades, the marketing community will define more targeted strategies based on deeper knowledge of consumer behaviour (Schwertner, 2017). Furthermore, they predicted that future digital marketing strategies will be guided and determined by machine learning and big data-driven artificial intelligence.

To identify and classify traditional marketing capabilities and DMCs, the RBV theoretical perspective on the parsimonious approach was used. A thematic analysis of 57 relevant journals was conducted using qualitative and grounded theory approaches. A framework for DMCs is proposed, and future research directions are outlined. The findings suggest that future research could focus on investigating the business capabilities of more organisations that are already engaged in digital marketing activities in order to extract more a priori insights into DMCs (Schwertner, 2017).

4. An Examination of the Current Status of Cosmetics Digital Marketing Research

As living standards improve, cosmetics become increasingly essential, creating a vast potential market for the cosmetic industry. Companies must develop practical marketing strategies to boost their own revenues while promoting the sustainability of the cosmetic market. The researcher employed the three-element view of cognitive, emotional, and institutional case studies to analyse this phenomenon. A study of Japanese cosmetic companies marketing abroad revealed that consumer trust in brands has a significant impact on brand marketing. Consequently, cosmetic companies should focus on interaction with customers. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has a certain influence on brand marketing behaviours. They further suggested that brands' digital marketing behaviours should be consumer-centric and establish a set of digital marketing systems around consumers (Parris and Guzman, 2023).

5. An Examination of the Current State of Research on the Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Cosmetic Digital Marketing

In recent years, the rapid development of the cosmetics industry has attracted the attention of numerous scholars, who have conducted a multitude of studies to analyse the factors influencing its marketing effectiveness. Cosmetics have a relatively short lifespan but high added value, which makes the company's revenue elasticity high. Furthermore, they argue that the majority of consumers consult with salespeople before making a purchase (Zaoui and Souissi, 2020).

For consultation purposes, it is therefore essential to establish a positive and productive relationship between the salesperson and the consumer. In this regard, the research have proposed that persuasive communication can influence and modify consumer behaviour towards a specific product or service, with the objective of satisfying their needs. Marketing campaigns are designed with the consumer in mind. Consumer trust is a crucial factor in digital marketing. Each cosmetic company

analyses and investigates the needs of different consumers to target differentiated marketing activities.

6. Research Content

This paper takes Yangzhou cosmetics brand Xie Fuchun as a case study, based on the actual marketing situation and digital marketing influencing factors from the user's perspective, combining qualitative and quantitative analysis, it puts forward the way of domestic cosmetics brand Xie Fuchun's digital marketing, which mainly includes the following five points:

Part 1: Introduction, which elaborates the research background, purpose and significance, content, methodology, technical route and innovation points, and reviews the current status of domestic and international research.

Part 2: Relevant concepts and theoretical foundations, which defines the concepts of cosmetics, traditional marketing and digital marketing mentioned in the text, and provides specific explanations of the user profile theory, the 4V theory of digital marketing and the SICAS theory of consumer behaviour.

Part 3: Brand situation and marketing status quo. This section employs field research to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Xie Fuchun brand and the current marketing environment. The research focuses on brand characteristics and consumer motivation, brand sales channels and skills, brand target value and cultural value, brand diversification and interactive features, and other relevant aspects (Jeon and Park, 2021). The objective is to identify and analyse the challenges the brand faces in the marketing process.

Part 4: Empirical Analysis of Influencing Factors of Xie Fu Chun's Digital Marketing Effectiveness Based on User Perspective. The questionnaire was designed from the perspective of user experience, and the questionnaires were distributed and collected. The questionnaire was designed from the perspective of user experience, and the data were distributed and recovered using SPSS25 software for correlation and regression analyses. This was done in order to analyse the influencing factors of marketing from the user perspective. From the multi-dimensional perspective of user behaviour and consumption trajectory, we investigate the degree of perception and satisfaction of Xie Fu Chun brand users on its marketing strategy. By collating, describing, analysing and interpreting the obtained data, we reveal the regularity and trend behind the data, make conclusions and inferences. Conclusions and inferences are drawn based on the four aspects of the differentiation strategy, the functional elasticity strategy, the added-value strategy, and the resonance strategy (Yusiana, 2023). A complete set of digital marketing strategies is put forward, based on the enterprise's current situation.

The Relevant Concepts and Theoretical Foundations:

Relevant Concepts:

1. Marketing: The essence of marketing is the process of satisfying consumers' needs and prompting them to buy products. In contrast, traditional marketing mainly focuses on the production and sale of products. The traditional marketing model focuses on the manufacture and sale of products, and enhances brand awareness and influence through advertising and celebrity endorsement, so as to attract consumers to buy. However, with the continuous evolution of the market and the diversification of consumer needs, the traditional model is gradually showing some shortcomings (Choi, 2022). As a case study of traditional marketing, the Xie Fuchun brand has achieved a certain degree of success by relying on its superior shop location, raw material processing technology and fascinating brand story. However, the rising cost of traditional manufacturing has become a constraint to the brand's development. In the face of this challenge, brands need to change their strategies, adapt to market changes and seek new development paths with the help of innovations such as digital marketing.

2. Digital Marketing: The development of marketing disciplines and the rise of marketing theories have led to new challenges and revolutions in traditional marketing theories. Media convergence has become a key factor in the survival of digital marketing as a practice that uses digital communication channels to communicate with consumers in an immediate, relevant, customised and cost-saving manner. The essential feature of digital marketing is interaction, where user engagement is key and incentives for engagement are the core mechanism. The digital marketing model shifts the focus of marketing from the product and market to the consumer, engaging with the consumer, influencing their perception of the brand and exploring personalised needs (Bakri, 2023). While the Xie Fu Chun brand has gradually strengthened its presence on online shopping platforms in recent years, there is still room for improvement in product personalisation and after-sales service. Additionally, there is potential for greater utilisation of social sharing platforms, which could enhance brand recognition. This indicates that Xie Fu Chun must continue to invest in digital marketing in order to enhance its competitiveness in the market.

Theoretical Foundations:

1. 4V Theory: The development of marketing disciplines and the rise of marketing theories have led to new challenges and revolutions in traditional marketing theories. Media convergence has become a key factor in the survival of digital marketing as a practice that uses digital communication channels to communicate with consumers in an immediate, relevant, customised and cost-saving manner. The essential feature of digital marketing is interaction, where user engagement is key and incentives for engagement are the core mechanism (Tuten, 2023). The digital marketing model shifts the focus of marketing from the product and market to the consumer, engaging with the consumer, influencing their perception of the brand and exploring personalised needs. While the Xie Fu Chun brand has gradually strengthened its presence on online

shopping platforms in recent years, there is still room for improvement in product personalisation and after-sales service. Additionally, there is potential for greater utilisation of social sharing platforms, which could enhance brand recognition. This indicates that Xie Fu Chun must continue to invest in digital marketing in order to enhance its competitiveness in the market.

2.SICAS Theory: The SICAS Consumer Behaviour Theory provides a more comprehensive and detailed model of consumer behaviour in the Smart Internet era. It emphasises the importance of network connectivity and experience sharing in consumer decision making and divides the consumer behaviour process into five stages: Sense, Interest & Interactive, Connect & Communicate, Act and Diffuse. (diffusion and sharing) five stages. The model evaluates the effectiveness of marketing decisions and guides the direction of brand marketing by creating a complete user experience model that effectively communicates the brand message and guides consumer behaviour, thereby taking a proactive position in the market. The outstanding feature of the SICAS model is that it breaks the traditional unidirectional consumption mode, makes the user the source of information acquisition and release, and strengthens the interaction and connection between consumers and brands (Huang, 2019).

PEST Analysis

Political: 1.The government is tightening its control of the cosmetic industry, so Xie Fuchun must comply with more regulations. 2.Local Chinese cosmetic brands can develop more thanks to national policies like Made in China 2025	Economic: 1.China's economy is growing fast, which means the cosmetics market is also growing. 2.People are spending more money on cosmetics. 3.The economy is unstable, which may affect consumer spending.
Social: 1.People are buying more cosmetics, especially young people who want more personalisation and quality. 2.Brands are paying more attention to the quality and safety of their products because of concerns about the environment. 3.Social media lets cosmetic brands promote their products more.	Technological: 1.The internet and digital marketing have made it easier for cosmetic brands to sell their products. 2.Big data and AI help cosmetic brands understand consumer needs and behaviour (Zuo, 2023). 3.New technologies like AR/VR can help cosmetic brands innovate and compete.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths: 1.Xie Fu Chun is the first Chinese cosmetic brand with a long history. 2.Xie Fu Chun has a full range of products, including skincare, colour cosmetics and more. 3.Xie Fu Chun has a share of the domestic market and a loyal fan base.	Weaknesses: 1.Xie Fu Chun is not as well-known as other international cosmetic brands. 2.Xie Fu Chun's products are cheap, which makes the brand look less expensive. 3.Fuchun's e-commerce sales are weak and it lags behind some new platforms.
Opportunities: 1.As China's economy grows, people want more cosmetic products, and the market is big. 2.The internet and digital marketing offer more ways for Xie Fu Chun to sell its products. 3.National brands give local Chinese cosmetic brands more room to grow.	Threats: 1.The cosmetics market is competitive. Fuchun faces more competition from international brands. 2.New e-commerce platforms could make it harder for Xie Fu Chun to sell its products. 3.Cosmetics industry regulations are getting tighter, so Xie Fu Chun must comply with more rules (Lai, 2021).

Research Question:

1. Why is Xie Fuchun moving from traditional to digital marketing?
2. What digital marketing strategies does Xie Fuchun employ? What are the characteristics and advantages of these strategies?
3. How can digital marketing be used to improve consumer satisfaction, maximise brand revenue and enhance brand competitiveness?

Research Objectives:

- To analyze the effectiveness of Xie Fuchun's digital marketing strategies: This objective aims to evaluate the various digital marketing strategies implemented by Xie Fuchun and assess their effectiveness in reaching the target audience, increasing brand awareness, and driving sales.
- To examine consumer perceptions and attitudes towards Xie Fuchun's digital marketing efforts: This objective seeks to understand how consumers perceive Xie Fuchun's digital marketing campaigns, including their preferences, engagement levels, and overall satisfaction with the brand's online presence.
- To identify factors influencing consumer engagement with Xie Fuchun's digital marketing content: This objective aims to explore the factors that contribute to consumer engagement with Xie Fuchun's digital marketing content, such as content relevance, creativity, and authenticity, as well as the role of influencers

and user-generated content (Hua and Chiu, 2022).

- To assess the impact of digital marketing on consumer purchase behavior: This objective focuses on examining the relationship between Xie Fuchun's digital marketing efforts and consumer purchase behavior, including the influence of online reviews, social media endorsements, and promotional offers on purchase decisions.

Research Methodology:

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative research is employed to gain in-depth insights into consumers' attitudes and behaviors towards Xie Fuchun's brand digital marketing efforts, while quantitative research is utilized to quantify consumer satisfaction levels and examine their relationship with personal demographics. The following are specific analyses:

(1) Literature research method: A variety of methods were employed to review a substantial corpus of domestic and foreign literature on traditional marketing, digital marketing, and cosmetic marketing. In-depth research and summary analysis were conducted to gain a comprehensive understanding of the domestic and foreign research results on cosmetic marketing and related theories (Li and Peng, 2021). This served to lay a solid foundation for the subsequent content.

(2) Questionnaire survey method: This paper employs an empirical study of the Yangzhou domestic cosmetic brand Xie Fuchun, with a focus on the user experience and the factors influencing digital marketing. The study employs a combination of online and offline survey methods to collect data on the brand's digital marketing effectiveness and the factors influencing this (Vial, 2021). The data is analysed to identify customer satisfaction with the brand's digital marketing and the brand's digital marketing influencing factors.

(3) Statistical analysis method: This paper employs the statistical software package SPSS 25 to analyse the data recovered from the questionnaires. A variety of analytical methods are used to explore the influence factors of the domestic cosmetic brand Xie Fuchun's digital marketing, with the objective of proposing optimisation of digital marketing measures.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Research Methods:

Advantages:

1. Comprehensive analysis: A mixed-method approach is able to combine qualitative and quantitative data to provide a more comprehensive research perspective. Qualitative research can provide insights into consumer attitudes and behaviours

towards digital marketing, while quantitative research can quantify these perspectives and provide statistical validation, resulting in more comprehensive and reliable research conclusions.

2. Data Validation: The statistical analysis of quantitative data can validate the findings of qualitative research and enhance the credibility and persuasiveness of the findings. Quantitative analysis can quantify the degree of consumer satisfaction with brand digital marketing and its relationship with basic personal information, providing more specific data support.

3. Depth and Breadth of Research: A mixed-method approach can achieve a balance between depth and breadth of research. Qualitative research can provide in-depth understanding and detailed descriptions, while quantitative research allows for extensive data collection and analysis, making the findings more representative and generalisable.

Disadvantages:

1. Complexity: Mixed methods may increase the complexity of the study, necessitating the researcher to possess multiple research skills and methods, as well as investing more time and resources in data collection, analysis and interpretation. This may consequently result in an increased cost and workload for the study.

2. Consistency issues: There may be inconsistencies between qualitative and quantitative data, which could result in contradictions between research findings. In-depth analyses and interpretations of these contradictions are necessary for the researcher to ensure the consistency and credibility of the findings.

3. Integration of qualitative and quantitative data: Integration of qualitative and quantitative data may present challenges due to the differing methodologies and theoretical frameworks employed. Researchers must invest additional time and effort to ensure effective integration and analysis of the data.

4. Problems of subjectivity: Qualitative research may be affected by the researcher's subjective awareness and personal bias, which may result in biased results. Therefore, it is necessary to employ rigorous methods and analyses in order to reduce the impact of subjectivity.

In conclusion, the integration of qualitative and quantitative research methods through the use of mixed methods can fully utilise the strengths of both approaches to provide more comprehensive and reliable research results. However, this approach also requires the attention of researchers to deal with the issues of complexity and consistency and to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the research results.

Methods for Data Collection:

The study obtained its data by developing a questionnaire and distributing it to a certain number of XieFuchun consumers. The questionnaire was designed by the researchers in accordance with the research objectives and research questions of this study. It included basic information about the users of Xie Fuchun, including gender, age, and education. The study sought to ascertain users' experiences of the digital marketing of the Xie Fu Chun brand. This was based on five dimensions: perception intensity, interest intensity, communication intensity, generation formation, experience and sharing, and data collection. The study employed Likert's five-level scale method for data collection(Sinha, 2018).

The study also sought to ascertain users' overall and categorical satisfaction with product quality and marketing. Questionnaire questions included single choice, multiple choice, and scale questions. Subsequently, questionnaires were sent to consumers both online and offline. Subsequently, the returned questionnaires are analysed using statistical software (e.g., SPSS) to perform descriptive and inferential statistics on the data. This involves calculating mean, standard deviation, correlation coefficients, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and so on. Ultimately, key influencing factors of digital marketing can be identified, and corresponding marketing development suggestions can be formulated.

Significance of the Study:

The continuous development of internet technology and digital media has led to the emergence of digital marketing as an indispensable tool for enterprises in the competitive landscape of the market. This is particularly evident in the cosmetics industry, where the application and development of digital marketing have become crucial due to the evolving nature of its products and consumer needs (Visser, 2016). However, the complexity and diversity of digital marketing have led to confusion and bottlenecks among companies, resulting in a lack of effective solutions and support.

This study employs a variety of research methods to explore the application and development of digital marketing in the Chinese cosmetics market. In general, the significance of this study can be observed in the following aspects:

1. The study provides research results on the application and development of digital marketing in China's cosmetic market, which serves as an important reference for enterprises seeking to understand market dynamics and formulate strategies.
2. Analyses the problems and challenges of the Xie Fuchun brand in digital marketing, and provides ideas and methods for enterprises to solve practical problems.
3. The study also sought to elucidate the core concepts and theoretical framework of digital marketing, thereby furnishing the requisite fundamental knowledge and skills

for enterprises to comprehend and implement digital marketing.

4. A substantial quantity of data and feedback regarding digital marketing was gathered through questionnaires, furnishing practical suggestions and guidance for enterprises to optimise digital marketing strategies and enhance marketing effectiveness.

In conclusion, this study provides comprehensive, systematic, and practical digital marketing research results for enterprises, which assist them in better coping with market competition and improving marketing effectiveness. Furthermore, it provides valuable experiences and cases for academic research in the field of digital marketing.

Ethical Considerations:

Firstly, it is of the utmost importance that participants are fully aware of the purpose, methodology and risks of the study during the questionnaire and data collection process. Furthermore, it is essential that they provide clear and informed voluntary consent to participate in the study. This is to protect the privacy and sensitive information of research participants and ensure that their identities are not compromised. This may require measures such as anonymisation or de-identification. Finally, for research data collected, strict confidentiality should be maintained to prevent data leakage or unauthorised access (Trivedi and Sama, 2020). Furthermore, it is of paramount importance to adhere to the principle of integrity in research reports by reporting results in an accurate and truthful manner, and refraining from any exaggeration or distortion of research findings.

Limitations:

(1) The principal focus of this study is on a single Chinese cosmetic brand, which may not fully reflect the characteristics of the entire national product market. Consequently, the proposed development strategy may not be universally applicable.

(2) The duration of this study is relatively brief, and the challenge of acquiring real-time data and analysing the entire case volume is significant, which precludes the formulation of the most timely and comprehensive recommendations.

Time Plan:

- April: Literature review and research design
- April and May: Data collection
- June and July: Data analysis and interpretation
- July and August: Report writing and dissemination of findings

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