

Research on the Dissemination Phenomenon of Pop Mart Co-branded IP Products on Social Media

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Abstract:

Against the backdrop of the vigorous development of social media and the booming market of trendy toys, the collaboration IP products of Pop Mart have become a highly anticipated cultural consumption phenomenon. This article conducts an in-depth study on the dissemination phenomenon of Pop Mart's co-branded IP products on social media. By applying relevant theories from communication studies, sociology, and consumer psychology, it analyzes its dissemination characteristics, influencing factors, and dissemination effects. Its dissemination characteristics are reflected in the diversity of dissemination subjects, covering officials, Kols, and ordinary consumers. The dissemination content is rich, including product introductions, unboxing sharing, etc. The dissemination channels are extensive, involving multiple platforms such as Weibo and Douyin. The influencing factors include the fan base and compatibility of the co-branded IP, the characteristics of the platform and user behavior, consumer psychological needs, and marketing interaction strategies. The communication effect is manifested as enhancing brand awareness and sales, strengthening user emotional identification, and achieving circle diffusion through UGC content. The research results show that Pop Mart has achieved remarkable communication effects on social media by leveraging its rich co-branded product lines, precise target group positioning, and effective social media communication strategies, providing valuable references for marketing, brand building, and social media content operation in the trendy toy industry.

Keywords: Pop Mart; co-branded IP products; social media; communication phenomenon.

1. Introduction

In today's digital age, social media has become an important platform for people to obtain information, communicate and interact, and make consumption decisions. Meanwhile, the market for trendy toys has also exhibited an explosive growth trend, emerging as a new hot spot in the field of cultural consumption. As a leading enterprise in the trendy toy industry, Pop Mart has launched a series of unique and charming co-branded IP products through collaborations with well-known animation IPs such as Disney and Universal, which have sparked widespread attention and heated discussions on social media.

Studying the dissemination phenomenon of Pop Mart's co-branded IP products on social media holds significant theoretical and practical significance. From a theoretical perspective, this research helps enrich the theoretical systems of related disciplines such as communication studies, sociology, and consumer psychology, providing a reference for subsequent research. From a practical perspective, the research findings can provide highly targeted practical guidance for the formulation of marketing strategies, brand building, and content operation on social media platforms in the collectible toy industry. This helps enterprises better utilize social media to enhance product influence and promote sales growth, while also providing a basis for optimizing content dissemination on social media platforms.

At present, scholars at home and abroad have achieved certain results in their research on trendy toys and social media dissemination. In the research of trendy toys, scholars mainly focus on aspects such as market demand, consumer behavior and cultural connotations of trendy toys. For instance, research indicates that trendy toys, as a new type of cultural consumption product, meet consumers' demands for personalization, emotionalization and socialization [1]. In the field of social media communication research, scholars have explored issues such as the characteristics of social media, its communication mechanisms, and its impact on user behavior. However, there are relatively few studies that combine trendy toy co-branded IP products with social media promotion, especially the research on the specific case of Pop Mart is not in-depth enough.

This study employs a variety of research methods, including literature review, questionnaire survey and case analysis. By consulting relevant literature, understand the current research status and development trends of trendy toys and social media dissemination; Design a questionnaire to survey consumers of the IP products co-branded with Pop Mart and collect relevant data. Select typical cases of Pop Mart's co-branded IP products for in-depth analysis, and

summarize their communication characteristics and successful experiences.

The innovation of this research lies in: First, it focuses on the dissemination phenomenon of Pop Mart's co-branded IP products on social media, filling the gap in this field of research; Second, it comprehensively applies theories from multiple disciplines such as communication studies, sociology, and consumer psychology to conduct in-depth analysis of communication phenomena. Thirdly, by combining questionnaire surveys with case analyses, rich empirical data is obtained to provide strong support for the research conclusions.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Theories Related to Communication Studies

The agenda-setting theory holds that although mass media cannot determine people's specific views on a certain event or opinion, they can effectively influence what facts and opinions people pay attention to and the order in which they discuss them by providing information and arranging relevant topics. In the age of social media, Pop Mart publishes relevant information about co-branded IP products on Micro-blog, Tiktok, The Little Red Book and other platforms, sets up related topics, and guides users' attention and discussion, thereby increasing the popularity and influence of the product. In this process, the algorithm recommendation of social media platforms also played a boosting role, which can push the topics set by Pop Mart to potential users more accurately and expand the scope of the impact of the topics [2].

The Uses and Gratifications theory emphasizes the audience's initiative, suggesting that audiences access and use media based on specific needs and motivations, and derive satisfaction from it. Consumers of Pop Mart's collaborative IP products share their purchasing experiences, collection displays, and other content on social media. One aspect is to satisfy one's social needs by communicating and interacting with others, while the other is to achieve emotional fulfillment, such as by owning unique collaboration products to demonstrate one's personality and taste. This sharing behavior is particularly evident within Pop Mart's virtual brand community, where users, through continuous interaction, further reinforce the experience of obtaining satisfaction through the use of media [3].

2.2 Sociology-Related Theories

Consumer society theory suggests, in contemporary society, consumption is not only for fulfilling basic survival needs but also serves as an expression of social culture

and a means of identity recognition. Pop Mart's collaborative IP products serve as a type of cultural consumer goods, consumers purchase these products not only to obtain their use value but also to showcase their cultural taste and socioeconomic status through consumption, thereby achieving self-identity and group identity. Pop Mart's IP (Intellectual Property) plus blind box marketing model enhances the uniqueness and collectible value of its products, further satisfying consumers' needs to express their identity through consumption in a consumerist society [1].

Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals gain self-worth and a sense of belonging through their connections and identification with specific groups. Consumers of Pop Mart's collaborative IP products often form a specific group who share common interests and consumption habits. On social media, this group strengthens their mutual group identity through sharing, communication, and interaction, thereby further promoting the spread and consumption of products. This aligns with the characteristics of the blind box enthusiast community, as they constantly reinforce the boundaries of the group and strengthen group cohesion through interaction [4].

2.3 Consumer Psychology Related Theories

Emotional marketing theory emphasizes the importance of appealing to consumers' emotions to promote sales. Pop Mart's co-branded IP products often collaborate with well-known anime IP, which carry consumers' emotional memories and resonate with them emotionally. When consumers see these collaborative products, they are aroused to deep-seated emotions, leading to a desire to purchase. In the process of brand image building, Pop Mart also pays attention to integrating emotional elements, which helps to evoke emotional resonance among consumers for its collaborative IP products [5].

The Scarcity Principle suggests that when something is scarce, people tend to perceive it as more valuable. Pop Mart frequently releases limited-edition collaborative IP products, and this scarcity stimulates consumer purchasing desire, prompting them to buy quickly to avoid missing out on the opportunity. In the context of blind boxes, the combination of scarcity and uncertainty further stimulates consumers' purchase intention [6].

3. Characteristics of Pop Mart's Collaborative IP Products on Social Media

3.1 Diversification of Communication Entities

In the social media dissemination of Pop Mart's collabor-

ative IP products, the dissemination entities exhibit a diverse range of characteristics. Besides the official POP MART account, a large number of KOL, Internet celebrity bloggers, regular consumers, and others also participate in this event. Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) and Internet celebrity bloggers leverage their large follower base and strong influence to quickly spread product information to more users. Ordinary consumers, on the other hand, enhance the authenticity and credibility of product dissemination by sharing their purchase experiences and collection displays. The diverse communication entity structure is closely related to the broad consumer base attracted by the IP plus blind box marketing model of Pop Mart, with different types of entities playing their unique roles in the communication process [1].

3.2 Rich and Diverse Content Dissemination

The dissemination content covers product introduction, unboxing videos, collection display, topic discussions, and multiple other aspects. Product introduction content allows users to understand the features and advantages of the product; Unboxing videos provide a visual and detailed look at the product's appearance and features, which sparks the viewers' desire to purchase; Collection display content meets the social needs of users, allowing them to showcase their collection achievements; Topic discussions provide users with a platform for interaction and communication, fostering both the dissemination of products and the accumulation of word-of-mouth.

3.3 Extensive Communication Channels

Pop Mart's co-branded IP products are mainly disseminated on social media platforms such as Micro-blog, Tiktok, The Little Red Book, and Bilibili. Different platforms have distinct user groups and unique characteristics. Pop Mart has developed corresponding communication strategies based on the characteristics of each platform. For instance, on Micro-blog, attract user attention and participation by launching topics and interactive activities; on Tiktok, showcase the product's charm by creating short videos; on Little Red Book, foster word-of-mouth promotion through user-generated content and recommendations. The expansion from apps to mini-programs and other social e-commerce platforms has also provided more channels for the dissemination of Pop Mart's co-branded IP products, meeting users' needs for switching between different platforms [7].

3.4 Significant Dissemination Impact

Through the extensive dissemination via social media, Pop Mart's co-branded IP products achieved significant

dissemination effects. The buzz and attention around the product are constantly increasing, and the brand's awareness and influence have been further enhanced. Meanwhile, social media dissemination has facilitated the growth of product sales. Many users generated purchasing desires and eventually made purchases after seeing related information on social media. This remarkable dissemination effect is the result of Pop Mart's constant optimization of its marketing strategies over the years and reflects the strong consumer preference for its collaborative IP products [8].

4. The Influencing Factors of The Dissemination of Pop Mart's Co-branded IP Products on Social Media

4.1 The Selection and Compatibility of Co-branded IPs

The selection of a co-branded IP is crucial to the communication effect of the product. Since its establishment, Pop Mart has been actively collaborating with well-known domestic and international animation IPs. In the early days, Pop Mart collaborated with some niche domestic animation IPs to launch a series of distinctive co-branded products, gradually accumulating experience in co-branded cooperation. With the continuous expansion of its brand influence, Pop Mart has begun to collaborate with internationally renowned animation IPs such as Disney and Universal, launching a series of highly anticipated co-branded IP products. These co-branded products not only integrate the distinctive elements of both sides in design, but also make full use of social media platforms in marketing and promotion, achieving a favorable market response. Pop Mart has chosen to collaborate with well-known animation IPs such as Disney and Universal. These IPs enjoy wide popularity and a strong fan base, which can bring a large amount of attention and traffic to the products. At the same time, the compatibility between the co-branded IP and the brand image of Pop Mart will also affect the communication effect. If the co-branded IP is in line with the brand image and product style of Pop Mart, it can better attract target consumers and enhance the market acceptance of the products. In this process, the intrinsic mechanism of brand-IP collaboration plays a crucial role. A highly compatible collaboration can achieve the superposition of values for both parties [9].

4.2 The Characteristics of Social Media Platforms and User Behavior

Different social media platforms have distinct character-

istics and user behaviors. Weibo, with its fast information dissemination speed and strong topic relevance, is suitable for topic marketing and interactive activities. Douyin, which mainly features short videos, is entertaining and interesting, making it effective in attracting young users. Xiaohongshu, characterized by user sharing and recommendations, creates a favorable environment for word-of-mouth promotion. Pop Mart has developed corresponding communication strategies based on each platform's characteristics and user behavior, thereby enhancing the communication effect. Additionally, consumers' attitudes toward social media algorithm-based product recommendations affect the dissemination of Pop Mart's co-branded IP products across different platforms; a positive attitude facilitates the precise delivery of product information [2].

4.3 Consumer Psychology and Demand

Consumers' psychology and demands are important factors influencing product dissemination. Pop Mart's co-branded IP products primarily target young consumers aged 18 to 22, who pursue personalized expression, value emotional consumption, and have a high acceptance of new things. By launching co-branded products with unique designs and emotional connotations, Pop Mart meets these consumers' psychological and demand needs, stimulating their purchasing desire and willingness to share. Research on the consumption behavior of Chinese-style blind box collectibles also indicates that young consumers have a strong demand for products with cultural connotations and personalization, which aligns with the characteristics of Pop Mart's co-branded IP product consumers [10].

4.4 Marketing Activities and Interaction Planning

On social media, Pop Mart has attracted extensive user attention and participation by releasing product promotion videos and holding interactive activities. The celebrity effect drives hot topics – for example, the globally popular “Labubu” has been promoted implicitly by many celebrities during live streams and events, as they carry the dolls, attracting fans and casual viewers' attention and discussion, which further boosts product spread and sales. Pop Mart has also launched a series of diverse marketing activities and interactive strategies on social media, such as new product preheating events, raffles, and topic discussions. These activities have attracted widespread user participation and attention, enhancing user stickiness and activity. Meanwhile, through user interaction, Pop Mart can promptly understand their needs and feedback, continuously optimizing its products and services to further

improve the communication effect.

5. Effectiveness Evaluation of Pop Mart's Collaborative IP Products on Social Media

By analyzing metrics such as topic view count, discussion volume, and share count on social media platforms, we can assess the spread scope and influence of the POP MART co-branded IP products. For example, the “LABUBU” collaborative products achieved hundreds of millions of topic views on Microblog, with significant discussion and share volumes, indicating that the product has a wide reach and strong influence on social media.

The enhancement effect of Pop Mart co-branded IP products on brand image and brand awareness can be assessed through methods such as questionnaire surveys and user reviews. Survey results show that many consumers' awareness and favorable impression level of the Pop Mart brand have significantly increased after learning about its co-branded IP products through social media, further shaping and enhancing its brand image [5].

By comparing the sales data before and after the launch of co-branded products, we can evaluate the contribution of Pop Mart's co-branded IP products to sales performance and market share growth. For example, after the launch of the “LABUBU” joint products, the sales performance of related products of Pop Mart has shown significant growth, and the market share has also expanded, indicating that the dissemination of this product has played a positive role in promoting the growth of sales performance and market share.

By collecting user feedback and evaluations, the impact of Pop Mart co-branded IP products on user satisfaction and loyalty can be evaluated. Users are generally satisfied with the design, quality, and creativity of the Pop Mart co-branded IP products, and are willing to continue purchasing other products of the brand. This indicates that the dissemination of Pop Mart's co-branded IP products not only improves user satisfaction, but also enhances user loyalty.

6. Problems and Challenges in the Dissemination of Pop Mart's Co-branded IP Products on Social Media

As Pop Mart's co-branded IP products gain wider dissemination on social media, the issue of homogenized content has gradually emerged. Many KOLs and internet celebrities post content that is similar in both form and substance, lacking innovation and individuality. This can easily lead

to users' aesthetic fatigue and reduce the effectiveness of dissemination. Despite Pop Mart's continuous exploration in marketing strategies, it still faces challenges in content innovation [8].

On social media, any negative information can spread rapidly and be magnified, seriously impacting the brand image. Pop Mart's co-branded IP products may also face negative public opinion during dissemination—such as issues related to product quality and poor after-sales service. How to respond to negative public opinions in a timely and effective manner and manage crises is a critical issue that Pop Mart needs to address. This requires establishing a sound public opinion monitoring and response mechanism to maintain the brand image [5].

The trendy toy market is highly competitive, with new brands and products emerging constantly. Meanwhile, social media platforms are evolving rapidly, and user demands and preferences are changing continuously. Pop Mart needs to constantly innovate and optimize its communication strategies to cope with competitive pressures and market changes, thereby maintaining its leading position in the market. The rise of emerging categories such as Chinese-style blind boxes and trendy toys has also exerted certain competitive pressure on Pop Mart [10].

In the process of social media dissemination, Pop Mart must comply with relevant laws and regulations, such as the Advertising Law and Intellectual Property Law. Violations of these laws and regulations may result in legal risks and penalties. Therefore, Pop Mart needs to strengthen compliance management to ensure the legality and compliance of its disseminated content.

7. Strategy Suggestions for Optimizing the Spread of Pop Mart Joint IP Products on Social Media

In order to solve the problem of homogenization in communication content, Pop Mart can encourage KOL and internet celebrity bloggers to innovate communication content and forms, and launch more creative and personalized content. For example, some interesting short videos and interactive games can be made to attract users' attention and participation. At the same time, Pop Mart can also strengthen content creation and launch more high-quality publicity content.

Pop Mart should establish and improve the monitoring mechanism of negative public opinion, timely understand the negative information on social media, and take corresponding measures to deal with it. When a crisis occurs, we should respond quickly, issue a statement in time, explain the situation, and take effective measures to solve

the problem and reduce the negative impact. At the same time, we should strengthen communication and interaction with users, actively respond to users' concerns and demands, and establish a good brand image. This is crucial for maintaining the long-term image of the brand [5].

Pop Mart should closely monitor market trends and changes in user demand, and adjust its communication and product strategies in a timely manner. Through market research, user feedback and other means, we can understand users' preferences and needs, and launch products and communication content that are more in line with market demand. At the same time, we should constantly innovate and optimize products to improve their competitiveness of products. For example, pay attention to market trends such as Guofeng blind box and tide play, and learn from relevant research results on consumer behavior [10]. Pop Mart should strengthen the compliance training of employees, improve the compliance awareness, and ensure the legitimacy and compliance of the communication content. In the process of communication, we should strictly abide by relevant laws and regulations to avoid violations. At the same time, we should establish and improve the risk management system, predict and prevent the possible risks in advance, reduce the compliance risk, and strengthen the control of the compliance link in the internal mechanism in the process of brand IP co-branding [9].

8. Conclusion

This paper conducts an in-depth analysis of the dissemination phenomenon of Pop Mart's co-branded IP products on social media, revealing their dissemination characteristics, influencing factors and dissemination effects. Research has found that Pop Mart's co-branded IP products exhibit the characteristics of diversified communication subjects, rich and diverse communication content, wide-ranging communication channels, and significant communication effects on social media. The selection and compatibility of co-branded IPs, the characteristics of social media platforms, user behavior, consumer psychology and demands, as well as marketing activities and interaction strategies, all have a significant impact on the products' communication effects. Meanwhile, the dissemination of the co-branded IP products of Pop Mart on social media has achieved excellent results, enhancing the brand image and popularity, promoting the growth of sales performance and market share, and improving user satisfaction and loyalty.

From the perspective of theoretical application, the agenda-setting theory and usage and gratification theory in communication studies, the consumer society theory and

group identity theory in sociology, and the emotional marketing theory and scarcity principle in consumer psychology are all reflected in the social media dissemination of Pop Mart's co-branded IP products. However, based on the data and analysis in the current research, there are still certain limitations. For instance, the research samples mainly focus on the domestic market, and understanding of the dissemination situation in the international market is insufficient. The research methods mainly rely on questionnaire surveys and case analyses, lacking more in-depth empirical studies. Future research can further expand the scope of research samples and deepen the study of the international market. At the same time, more research methods can be combined, such as experimental research and big data analysis, to deeply explore the dissemination mechanism and effect of Pop Mart's co-branded IP products on social media.

This paper holds certain implications for the collectible toy industry and social media platforms. For the trendy toy industry, it can draw on Pop Mart's successful experience, strengthen co-branding cooperation with well-known IPs, formulate effective social media communication strategies, and enhance brand influence and market competitiveness. For social media platforms, they can further optimize their platform functions to provide better services for the dissemination of cultural consumption content and promote the prosperous development of the cultural consumption market.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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