

# Research on Current Development and Social Media Marketing Strategies of MIXUE Ice Cream&Tea's

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**Abstract.** As one of the hottest milk tea stores, MIXUE frequently appears on social media. This paper analyzes the current state of MIXUE's social media marketing and identifies problems in MIXUE's social media marketing decisions. MIXUE does not appropriately market its products; all its efforts are directed at promoting the MIXUE brand itself. In addition, MIXUE's short video content was not impressive and did not leave a good impression of the brand. On top of that, MIXUE did not choose to hire a KOC or KOL to be the brand spokesperson. And the store planning was not reasonable, which led to stores of the same brand competing with each other. In order to solve these problems, MIXUE should improve the content of its products in the promotion and try to improve the quality of short videos. In addition, MIXUE should hire the right KOC or KOF to promote their products and brands and reasonably plan the stores to reduce the competition. This article can provide new ideas and information for milk tea companies when exploring social media marketing strategies.

**Keywords:** Current Development; Social Media Marketing Strategies; MIXUE Ice Cream&Tea's

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research background

With the continuous development of China in recent years and the improvement of the living standard per capita, more and more service and catering industries have further developed. Especially in the milk tea industry, according to statistics as of 2019, the annual sales of milk tea stores in China have exceeded 140.5 billion RMB, and the number of milk tea stores has reached a staggering 500,000. MIXUE has become one of the most mainstream milk tea stores today with its excellent and unique marketing strategy, and its store size reached 21,510 in 2021 [1].

MIXUE was not named Hanliu Baobing when it was founded in 1997, and its CEO, Hongchao Zhang, started the business to make money to support himself. In 2010, MIXUE opened up its franchise channel for the first time and entered into a partnership with Baodao Trading Co. In 2018, MIXUE chose Vietnam as its first stop to open a store and continued its low-price strategy, pricing its products at around RMB 7 yuan, or about \$1. And due to the success of this decision, MIXUE took the opportunity to open an overseas warehouse to lay the foundation for subsequent overseas expansion. In 2019, MIXUE continued to expand its milk tea stores and decided to grow down-market. By 2020, the number of MIXUE franchises had reached 8,000. MIXUE entered the public eye and generated public buzz in early June 2021 when MIXUE released a theme song on Bilibili, TikTok, Weibo, and other social media outlets. The song generated a lot of online buzz and discussion, allowing MIXUE to increase its brand awareness and sales. MIXUE's theme song has had an impressive 20+ million views, 917,000 likes, 229,000 favorites, and 371,000 retweets on Bilibili. In addition, the theme song has attracted many netizens to make secondary compositions and share thousands of rewritten songs on Bilibili.

The unique social media marketing strategy helped MIXUE achieve great social media success, and it not only gained a larger customer base and enhanced the brand image. The purpose of this paper is to examine the current state of MIXUE's social media marketing strategy and the

optimization of the strategy to discover what makes MIXUE unique in its marketing strategy and to suggest some ideas that can help MIXUE improve.

## 1.2 Literature review

With the development of new media technologies such as the Internet and social software, consumer preferences and spending habits are constantly changing, and businesses must adapt their marketing methods to match them. Social media marketing has become an important part of online marketing strategies for small businesses because it is cost-effective and can quickly reach target audiences and generate more leads and sales. As a result, many scholars have researched and provided in-depth interpretations of this marketing approach.

In a study titled “New Media Marketing Strategies for Businesses Based on Marketing 3.0 Perspective,” the author uses the example of a milk tea store called Chayan Yuese, which uses differentiation and regional hunger marketing in its new media marketing to help the company succeed. Stimulated a large portion of visitors’ desire to buy on social media. Chayan Yuese was not influenced by other milk tea brands to introduce many new products but differentiated its products with a very slow introduction rate. In addition, Chayan Yuese carefully maintains its social media accounts and maintains timely interaction with consumers to eliminate the distance between them and attract more consumers [2].

Li Mengqi analyzed the social media marketing efforts of Heytea, which has built brand credibility and awareness through the promotion of soft articles on social media, which has made many consumers aware of the brand without even realizing it. In addition, Heytea also used a lot of social media to interact with its customers. This helped Heytea better understand its customers’ needs and maintain its fan base [3].

Yogesh K. Dwivedi et al. analyzed the companies to develop their marketing strategies. They studied the characteristics of social media users and found that Snapchat is one of the most secure and private platforms users consider offering. In addition, companies can increase consumer engagement by incorporating humor and emotion. It can also enhance a company’s competitive advantage and increase brand equity. Social media messaging characteristics are also important for user satisfaction, and consumers generally prefer a more authentic approach to messages. An analysis of consumers’ search and subscription intentions shows that a live-stream-oriented strategy is more authentic in the eyes of consumers than a pre-recorded video [4].

## 1.3 Research gap

First, most of the paper research the milk tea industry’s marketing strategies or analyzes the social media’s role and impacts on society or the development of social media separately, without combining the milk tea industry and social media with studying the relationship between the two fields. For most papers about the milk tea industry, authors almost always focus on analyzing the brand’s position, whether the brand is the high-end route or the opposite side, the product’s price, or other aspects. Besides, for those scholars who analyze social media marketing, few will take a single brand to do a case study and work on analyzing how the brand uses a specific social media marketing approach to realize a successful brand promotion.

In contrast, this paper will take the milk tea industry trend and the role of social media into account. To do an all-around study about how a specific milk tea brand takes advantage of the power and platform provided by social media to achieve better performance in the highly competitive and more complicated milk tea industry.

## 1.4 Research framework

Firstly, this paper describes the role of social media in people’s daily lives and its significant social impacts. Secondly, MIXUE’s current social media marketing strategies are analyzed from two aspects, “persona” marketing and short video marketing. In this step, the literature review and comparative analysis methods are implied. The literature review further explains the two marketing methods while

comparing Disney's successful "persona" marketing strategy. A standard was offered for a more systematic analysis of MIXUE's "persona" marketing. Lastly, this paper identifies the current problem that MIXUE Ice cream & Tea has and proposes corresponding advice for optimization.

## **2. Methods**

### **2.1 Literature research**

A literature review summarizes research on a topic made from previous academic articles, books, and other literature sources. The literature review will include a listing, description, summary, objective evaluation, and clarification [5]. Using a literature review, this paper draws on the explanations and example analysis of "persona" marketing provided by other researchers to clearly analyze MIXUE's "persona" marketing. This paper also integrates literature related to short video marketing to understand the forms and characteristics of short video marketing. It combines that information to analyze MIXUE's current short video marketing strategies to investigate further how brands use short video marketing to achieve brand promotion successfully.

### **2.2 Comparative analysis**

Comparative analysis is comparing two or more things to discover new ideas about them, differences, or similarities through comparison. In addition, it requires a deeper analysis to understand each element of several comparative data [6]. This paper compares Disney's persona with MIXUE's persona. Taking Disney's successful "persona" marketing as an example, this paper uses the characteristics of Disney's persona as the criteria for a successful virtual persona. Then brings, this set of criteria to analyze the brand's persona. This paper further analyzes whether MIXUE's persona can create value, help with brand promotion, and whether the Persona marketing strategy is successful.

## **3. Result**

### **3.1 Brand background information**

Before going to the analyzing step, it is better first to know more about this brand. MIXUE Ice cream & Tea is a popular milk tea brand specializing in creating fresh ice cream and new Chinese types of tea beverages. Its brand position is quite different from other famous milk tea brands. As Siyuan Du concluded, many new brands are flowing into the Chinese milk tea industry yearly. To stand still in such fierce competition, considering customer demand when developing marketing operations is necessary [7]. And MIXUE Ice cream & Tea does great catering to customers' demands. The brand's adherence to making high-quality, affordable, delicious food perfectly meets people's demand for lower-priced milk tea. This price setting brings the brand advantage in the whole industry and makes the brand become one of the most favorable milk tea brands in China. The last thing to mention about this brand is its target audience. Compared with other brands like Heytea, MIXUE Ice cream & Tea has a larger range of targeting audiences, from rich people to people with lower purchasing power.

### **3.2 "Persona" marketing**

"Persona" marketing refers to a company creating a persona and assigning a position to the persona. The persona will play his or her role to audiences in public [8]. MIXUE's virtual persona is a snowman with a crown and a red cape, holding a wand made of ice cream. It also has a lovely name, Snow king. The Snow King is a memorable persona, combining many brand elements in its appearances, such as the snowman himself and the ice cream scepter. Besides, the Snow King always appears together with MIXUE. For example, its image is used as MIXUE's trademark and printed in every drink package and menu. It also shows up in almost every MIXUE's official video and post. All these things make the Snow King closely linked with the brand. When people see the snow king,

they will automatically associate with the brand, inadvertently advertising for the brand. Furthermore, the lovely snow king makes customers feel the brand is close to them. This intimacy causes more people to fall in love with the brands. After analyzing the persona's external appearance, something inside of the persona is also very significant. The persona's personality brings the persona to "life". Taking Disney's snow white as an example, the personality within this character is kindness and beauty, and people who admire beauty and kindness will be drawn to the character and become fans. After that, the character will be more than just a virtual persona. It starts to have meaning and generate value by having its fans [9]. Snow King also has a cute, sweet, and happy personality. These also bring the Snow King its fans. Following that, the fans will likely purchase the mike tea or other derivative products associated with the snow king, realizing the goal of brand promotion and generating extra revenue.

### 3.3 Short video marketing

MIXUE Ice cream & Tea has official accounts on all major social media platforms, including Tiktok, the Red, and so on. MIXUE's short video marketing can be divided into three major forms. The first form is the brand producing and releasing short videos on its official account. The second form is the video made by users with brand-related videos. The third form is that the brand collaborates with some appropriate influencers to produce a brand implantation video [10]. Further analyzing the contents of the video, three characteristics can be concluded. Firstly, the video that the brand posts can always generate buzz. Secondly, the video is spreadable. The content is interesting enough to make people want to retweet. Lastly, the video can incentivize viewers to make a secondary creation. Taking MIXUE's theme song as an example, it quickly became a trending topic on major social media platforms after it was posted on social media. It created a trend of UGC (User-generated content). With these characteristics, MIXUE Ice cream & Tea gained lots of traffic on social media platforms and made the brand well-known, which can be described as a very successful social media strategy.

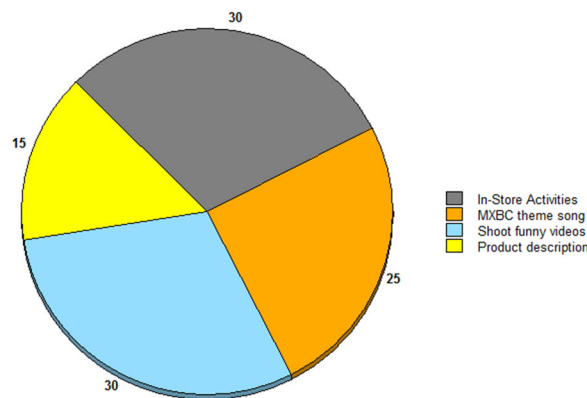


Fig. 1 MIXUE social media content distribution. (Photo credit: Original)

### 3.4 Problem

#### 3.4.1 Marketing focus

This paper argues that MIXUE has serious problems with its marketing focus. Through investigation and research, it is found that most of the promotional content shared by MIXUE on social media (such as Red, Tiktok, Kuaishou, and So on) has nothing to do with MIXUE products themselves. More included is the introduction of the MIXUE brand. When customers are curious about MIXUE and want to search for more products on social media, they will be confronted with in-store promotional activities, funny videos, and MIXUE theme songs [11]. Although it has played a great role in the publicity, more people know about MIXUE. But for customers who want to know

more about the brand, the user experience drops dramatically. Because what they want to know is a milk tea shop, not a funny short video that needs to make them happy. Also, therefore, they lost a part of the customer group because some customers in the entertainment of the food store will be about the food safety of the food store and will have some doubts. As it happens, MIXUE often reports negative news, such as customers getting bugs in their drinks [12]. This has created a big problem for a milk tea shop.

### **3.4.2 Video content quality problem**

This paper argues that MIXUE also has a big problem with social media content quality. Short video content is relatively low, just some ordinary netizens, non-KOL groups, and funny video shots. What the user group leaves in their memory while watching the video is only dull thoughts without any nutritional content. It does not give users a good brand image. Over time, it will only make customers think MIXUE is a low-end brand, and they will bury such an idea deeply. When people discuss MIXUE recently, the most mentioned word is “low-end”. The video content without connotation leads to the brand leaving such a stereotype in customers’ minds.

### **3.4.3 Inadequate publicity staff**

MIXUE also hasn’t hired KOLs or KOCs to endorse its brand. It is a pity that the company did not seize the opportunity of KOL/KOC’s popularity and influence on the Internet and continued to increase its efforts and scope of branding, causing its dull promotional content and lacking quality. The loss of some real people will greatly increase the revenue generated by KOL/KOC’s fan base, and their inclusion will make the video content more fresh and interesting.

### **3.4.4 Store distribution problem**

MIXUE also has a problem with store distribution. Without reasonable planning, there are often many MIXUE stores in the same street, and the distribution is chaotic and random, forcing the same store to compete with each other. The customer group is dispersed, which leads to low sales in a single store. Having too many shops in the same place will also make customers feel cheap, rather than making them feel convenient to drink anytime and anywhere, which will only backfire; after all, scarcity is expensive

## **4. Discussion**

### **4.1 Change the marketing direction and improve the publicity of the product itself**

For MIXUE, at present, the focus of marketing has a big deviation. The main marketing strategy is to shoot some funny videos to increase brand publicity while ignoring the products of the MIXUE brand itself. As a result, many customers have no way to understand MIXUE products through social platforms better. Then this paper suggests that MIXUE can better improve this problem from these aspects. First, reduce the number of funny short videos. Too much low-quality video content will only leave MIXUE as a brand with low quality and no nutrition. Reduce this kind of meaningless propaganda output as far as possible to change the brand’s overall image in customers’ hearts. Second, increase the content of the product itself. For example, you can send some product introduction posts on a large scale, in the post more detailed introduction of the taste of drinks, highlights, what food and fruit are in it, production background, and related information. In this way, customers can better understand the products made by the brand. When customers need to learn about the products through social media, they can quickly conduct brand searches and get the answers they want. This can help MIXUE to promote its brand and help customers make product selection easier. We can also make many posters and put them in places people often pass, such as street intersections, so that more people can receive the brand product information quickly. Thirdly, several detailed food preparation processes can be filmed to make customers trust the brand. Because the public has been questioning the food hygiene of the MIXUE brand, there are often some news reports about insects or dirt found in MIXUE drinks. In this way, the whole food procurement, processing, and production process can

be filmed because every step of production can be seen very clearly. Through this detailed introduction, customers can better understand the whole work process, and customers who have been concerned about the health and safety aspects of MIXUE can be more assured about the brand MIXUE. This attracts a new set of customers. And This paper suggests that you can make several such videos and send them to every social media of MIXUE. In addition, these videos are broadcasted in front of every store and some places with advertising videos in major shopping malls so that everyone passing by can see how delicious and safe MIXUE's products are. Expand marketing and attract more potential customers. Fourthly, the MIXUE theme song, IP Snowking, and some products can be combined to carry out some echoes and coordination. This song can be used as a video soundtrack so that customers can understand the product while loving the music. People can keep repeating this catchy melody in their minds through this brainwashing method. The cute Snowking interacts with drinks on posters and videos, implanting a cute image into customers' hearts. This series lets the customer leave a deep impression and understand the new product content.

#### **4.2 Hire some KOL/KOC to promote the brand**

In contemporary society, the publicity influence of KOC and KOL is great. People usually like to listen to some authoritative and famous public figures' recommendations and then follow their choices to buy some products or what they like to eat and use. Many brands will hire a famous KOL/KOC to promote their brand, and this KOL/KOC fan base will be attracted to buy a lot of products. However, MIXUE did not make good use of these resources and did not hire KOL/KOC to represent its brand better, and lost a large part of the popularity and influence generated by KOL/KOC. First, This paper argues that MIXUE could hire some KOL/KOC to make some "star clones". Their fans will buy and try the same drink as their idol after seeing it. If it tastes good, it can also improve the brand's reputation in terms of taste. Because of this activity, this part of fans like MIXUE's drinks to ensure the durability of the products. Second, MIXUE can also have KOL/KOC shoot short promotional videos instead of boring and pointless ones. For example, we can shoot the status and thoughts of KOL/KOC drinking MIXUE at work, the status and thoughts of drinking MIXUE in life, and so on. They like to hold MIXUE drinks anytime and anywhere on different occasions, and so on. This can make fans more obsessed with getting the same game and get more people to watch the video to get publicity. It also allows KOL/KOC to sing the MIXUE theme song, which is more appealing to the fans and the curiosity of passers-by based on the original catchy. In this way, the brand will get more influence.

#### **4.3 Reasonable distribution of stores**

Many customers feedback that the distribution of MIXUE stores has a big problem. There are often many adjacent MIXUE on the same street or random MIXUE stores in a chaotic way, which compete with each other and have low unit sales. If that happened, This Paper thought it would be a good idea to open a MIXUE at the beginning of the street and one at the end. The two MIXUEs are surrounded by customers, which can give people the retinal effect, feeling that they can see MIXUEs all the time and also help people buy a drink at least after seeing them. And it's far enough apart that there's not too much internal competition. This allows people to see MIXUE at any moment and ensures that sales are not fragmented.

### **5. Conclusion**

#### **5.1 Findings**

This paper studies MIXUE's current development and successful social media marketing strategies. Two of MIXUE's social media marketing strategies are analyzed in deep. The first one is "persona" marketing strategies. MIXUE meticulously designed virtual persona creates an intimate image for the brand and is a very effective tool for advertising. The virtual persona also provides extra value for the brand by increasing derivative products' sales. Another social media marketing strategy

is the short video marketing strategy. MIXUE's short video generates lots of buzz and discussion, allowing the brand to increase its awareness in public. This paper finds the secret for MIXUE's successful brand promotion by studying these two social media marketing strategies.

This paper also presents four problems and proposes corresponding solutions to MIXUE's marketing. Firstly, MIXUE's marketing focus lays too much on brand promotion. Most of its promotional content on social media is unrelated to the drinks. More drinks and ice cream-related content should be added to improve. The brand should focus more on the drink's quality and advertising. Secondly, MIXUE's video contents are low in quality. Though these videos contribute to MIXUE's publicity, in the long term, they won't bring any benefits to the brand. Even worse, people will stereotype this brand by linking those vulgar and in-nutritious videos with the brand. To prevent this from happening, the brand should improve the quality of the content to make the video content more nutritious. Thirdly, MIXUE doesn't employ any KOLs or KOCs to endorse. Aiming this issue, this paper suggests that MIXUE to further enlarges its efforts and scope in branding, and KOL or KOC can be a very good candidate. Their professionalism and fan base can better serve to brand. Lastly, MIXUE'S store distribution is chaotic, forcing branch stores to compete, which harms the company's interest. The brand should plan the distribution of stores to make the distribution of stores reasonable and helpful to sales.

This paper can help the brand clarify its merits. After knowing which strategy suits the brand, MIXUE can maintain it and revise it for better effect. Moreover, this paper also finds out potential problems with MIXUE's strategies. The brand can adopt the suggestions given in the paper to improve marketing, optimize brand image, expand promotion, and increase sales.

## 5.2 Limitations

However, the paper also has some limitations. There are only two social media strategies analyzed. Without mentioned in this paper, other social media strategies may also play a role in MIXUE's successful brand promotion. In addition, only secondary data are applied for the potential problem analysis and suggestion. These secondary data may be outdated, and the solutions mentioned in this paper may not keep up with the rapid change in marketing in the following years. Future studies can do some questionnaire investigation or experiments to find more pertinent solutions to help the brand adapt to the market.

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