

Research on the Operation Modes of Beauty and Fashion KOL on Social Media Platform

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Abstract: The update of mobile Internet technology has driven the development of social network platforms and we media. As the main audience in the field of beauty and fashion, women are more and more inclined to obtain fashion information through social networks and we media platforms, especially more and more young people sense and release the latest fashion information through new media. Xiaohongshu is a fashion communication platform widely welcomed by Chinese young women in recent years. Taking xiaohongshu as an example, this paper analyzes the data collected by relevant platforms by observing a series of activities displayed on social media platforms, and quotes actual cases to try to summarize two operation modes of beauty fashion KOL, namely content-centered operation mode and IP construction operation mode. This paper believes that clarifying these two operation modes has a certain guiding and enlightening effect on expanding KOL's own fan base. At the same time, this paper is also beneficial to add cases of opinion leaders in the new media era.

Keywords: Operation Mode; Beauty; KOL; Social Media.

1. Introduction

User Generated Content (UGC), arisen with the promotion of the concept of personalization, means the content of originality is produced by diverse users. In today's era, consumers are no longer passive receivers of information, but become consumers who take the initiative to obtain information and become the producers, processors and disseminators of messages under the UGC model [1].

Xiaohongshu is a typical UGC content sharing community. miscellaneous types of notes posted by the users enrich the sources of this platform as well as update its contents every day, and Xiaohongshu has initiatives to motivate users to do UGC either. Since its establishment in 2013, Xiaohongshu has attracted the attention of a large number of young people with its community sharing in beauty and personal care. As the community sharing continued to expand, information sharing about sports, travel, home, hotels and restaurants appeared on Xiaohongshu gradually. Xiaohongshu has become one of the foremost and fastest growing social e-commerce applications in china [2]. Xiaohongshu has built a user growth system, with generally 10 levels to go through so as to become the users of top quality with persuasiveness, and the upgrade conditions include the requirements as to content production. At the same time, in order to prompt users to produce original content of diversity, Xiaohongshu has also released relevant content production guidance instructions. In addition, Xiaohongshu also attracts users to click the corresponding topics and actuates them to generate content of certain realm by making topic recommendations in the search box, popular search and other targeted advertising. It can be said that producing content through users is the underlying logic of Xiaohongshu's operation.

Key opinion leader (KOL) is a marketing concept, usually defined as a person who has more and more accurate information about certain products, receives wide acceptance or trust from the relevant groups and has a strong influence on that group's purchasing behavior. During online interactions, opinion leaders convey information about the products, brands and their own experience to consumers, making consumers more aware of the products on brands, thus generating purchase intention or purchase behavior [3]. The KOLs on the Xiaohongshu platform can sell out the same products instantaneously with a single recommendation, surpassing the promotion ability of KOLs on other platforms like Weibo and WeChat.

This paper will discuss the operation modes of KOL on social media platform and divide KOL operation into two modes, namely content-focused operation mode and IP constructing operation mode. The research will illustrate the operation strategy of beauty and fashion KOLs in Xiaohongshu platform based on network observation of Xiaohongshu's subsidiary data platform and analysis of update frequency, content features, video playback amount, and interaction amount, etc. It will also be supplemented by cross-platform information from Weibo and Tik Tok, and the increase of followers will be perceived as the quantification of operation effectiveness.

2. Literature Review

In recent years, scholars have accumulated a lot of research results around the Internet economy and social media. Zhenzhen Yuan introduced the construction of the subject of communication, and researched the production of short video content in terms of video theme, language and professional team as to content planning [4]. Qiao Wang reviewed the current situation of the development of beauty industry in the background of social media, and proposed users to follow the audience and hot spots, adopting multiple forms to innovate one's content as well as enhance their influence. Besides, she underlined the importance of promoting the transformation and upgrading of content based on the schemes of content operation. At the same time, account operation through multiple channels and creating a community to follow up users were also needed to be stressed [5].

Based on the analysis of the operation strategy of "Logic Show", a Chinese knowledge talk show, Lu Zhou proposed the idea that "Internet thinking is the core of self-media operation" and summarized several strategies of self-media operation under this circumstance to provide references for the running of media accounts nowadays [6]. She also discussed the triumphant operation of "Logic Show" from three respects: creating a charming personality, creating a community and innovation of profit model. In the end, she deemed that the success came from the use of Internet thinking. Under the guidance of this pivotal view, she suggested four aspects of the operation of self-publishing, that was, generating qualified content and individualized hosts, ensuring a good user experience in the community, taking advantage of multi-platform interactions, and designing innovative and diverse profit models [6].

Bingjie Wu analyzed the business model of content-based Internet celebrity economy with respect to four aspects: subject of communication, content production, social asset accumulation and monetization, combined with specific cases. She also emphasized that strengthening community relations through offline activities and enhancing adhesiveness of users are also of essence [7].

In accordance to Chuxin Huang and Zhiwen Zheng, the thriving fan economy had received common attention in manifold domains recently, and the business logic of fan economy, which focused on fans, satisfied fans' emotional needs and then led to fans' consumption, profoundly influencing the short video industry as well as affecting short video content production straightforward. Under the background of fan economy, generation of the content as to short video was more vertically segmented. With upgraded user participation and interaction, a new breakthrough in the monetization mode would be innovated. They also believed that no matter which fan economy model, its key was the consumption behavior driven by fans' emotion. Therefore, how to establish emotional connection with fans, maintain emotional correlation and actuate emotional consumption had become a key issue in fan economy [8].

Rui Xu and Qing Zhang elucidated that the future of removable media would expand and leap in three directions: content media, relationship media and service media. They also illustrated that content operation should optimize user's experience and focus on service products. In their research, service products were defined as tangible or intangible services that meet or exceed users' expectations on the basis of their aesthetics and emotions. As for the behavioral data formed by users' consumption as to the services, they would be utilized as the ground of the analysis of users' preferences, thus helping to further optimize the service products [9].

The previous researches mainly focused on the marketing level when elucidating Xiaohongshu and its KOL. In the realm of operation strategy, the researches demonstrated the details primarily from the production-oriented angle, including the aspects of professional team, community creation, service products, et cetera [10]. With respect to content planning, the exposition was too general, and only superficially mentioned the planning from theme level, and lacked sufficient consideration for other features. Few studies mentioned the content as to IP operation, and even if there were, they merely discussed the commercial value of IP operation, which was too unilateral. Therefore, this paper will further dig into the characteristics of popular videos, elaborate the ideas of content operation, and study IP operation collaborating with existing data and cases.

3. Methods

This study mainly adopts the method of case analysis. Based on the ranking of fan growth in half a year, 15 KOLs of beauty and fashion on Xiaohongshu were selected, and then their personal characteristics and the particularly rapid growth of fans were studied to further analyze the possible causes and influencing factors.

After the sifting process which had done in accordance with the professional statistic platform, the study engrossed in the in-depth observation corresponding to those selected online influencers as to their account activity, features of the most prevalent contents and performances in other social media platform or conventional media channels to dig into the tactics as well as reasons in terms of follower growth.

The in-depth data in regard to the sifted KOL were processed and assessed to propose the influencing factors that induce the growth of followers. The increase of followers within half year and the sharp increase in a short period were highly concerned.

4. Results and discussion

Having collected the information from the subsidiary data platform of Xiaohongshu, this study selected 15 prominent beauty and fashion key opinion leaders mainly depended on the rate of growth of followers and the way they became prevalent instantaneously. Then this study found that the ratio of average reading to number of followers was generally higher among those who adopted IP constructing operation mode, while that of average collection to average reading was commonly higher among the influencers who applied content-focused operation mode.

4.1 IP construction operation mode

4.1.1. Gaining popularity via recognition in conventional media channels

A majority of opinion leaders on Xiaohongshu platform receive a widespread recognition from the audience in social media platforms especially television. "Luo La rolasfood" and "Shisan" are two prominent fashion and beauty online influencers who become prevailing within a short period thanks to the broadcast of variety shows in which they are invited as guests of the ordinary people. "Luo La rolasfood" and "Shisan" eminently receive growth as to fan base within half a year, and witnessed a sharp increase particularly during the time of the variety shows.

La Luo is a beauty opinion leader on Xiaohongshu platform, and "Luo La rolasfood" is the name of her account. The influencer herself became prevalent and well-known owing to a variety show broadcast in television, the traditional media channel. She was a cordial, considerate, and genuine person with outgoing personality as well as endearing looking, which fascinated a flock of audience, drawing them to follow her account on social media platform naturally.

Her Xiaohongshu account "Luo La rolasfood" started to see the growing fan base since around Jan.5th, 2021, which accorded with the time of the initial broadcast of the variety show "Ban Shu Lian Ren". In the last six months, the number of Luo La's followers skyrocketed from 16,300 to 465,300 during Jan. 5th and Feb. 28th, 2021, coinciding with the time of the show.

Conforming to the same pattern basically, Shan Lv, as a guest in another variety show named "THE SECRET X" presented publicly through television, also gained masses of followers in her Xiaohongshu account named "Shisan" from around 13,000 to 35,000, which nearly tripled its initial number during the time of broadcast in terms of the variety show.

4.1.2. Setting up personalized symbols to enhance recognition

There are many beauty and fashion opinion leaders mainly operate other social media platforms or even deem their operation online as a career and have already transformed its own charm into a unique and impressive IP. Therefore, in the operation of Xiaohongshu, because the public has a wide comprehension of the specific language, action or appearance depicted by particular network celebrity, followers can be attracted widely on the Xiaohongshu platform and the account will see the well-reasoned surge of fans.

Jiaqi Li, the top live-streaming celebrities in China, is known to every household for his pet phrases in amusing tone like "Oh my god!", "That's brilliant!", "Buy it!" and miscellaneous intriguing body movements. Li is a boy in 90s, which enables him to form an obvious contrast to the general female-oriented beauty blogger. Besides, in his more than 300 lipstick videos, Li tries all the colors of lipstick, and then pulls into the camera to depict, in order to let users see the effect clearly. Classic lines and bewitching style help him to generate brainwashing personal features. According to Yuanyuan Zhao, who is in charge of taobao's online live broadcast, once said that when she saw Li, she thought he had symbols on his body that could be used as a brand's similar strategy for packaging [4].

The new media matrix will mutually attract the fan traffic of different accounts which under the same brand through the matrix account through the chain communication among diversified accounts to establish the corresponding. After creating his account "Li Jiaqi Austin" on Xiaohongshu platform, Li also succeeded in terms of operation by magnifying his high visibility and his distinctive characteristics. Jiaqi Li, compared to the early time he followed the Xiaohongshu platform's faddish trend to produce video content, now he cultivates his own IP characteristics, for instance some editing live-streaming studio essence paragraphs, and videos output according to their own professional features or occupations. These videos mainly focus on exhibiting the knowledge corresponding to beauty and fashion, skincare, and cultivating aesthetic values, or putting an emphasis on Li's zealous personal qualities, convivial words and delightful movements. Thus, under the condition of the follower base is currently considerable, it can still win followers steadily.

Within the recent half year, Li's Xiaohongshu account received an evident surge of 600,800 followers and outstanding data on average reading (496,400), average likes (12,956) and average collection (3413).

4.1.3. Operating IP fulfilling the environment of Xiaohongshu

Opinion leaders themselves understand the attributes of Xiaohongshu platform and clearly know that personal characteristics are imperative to attract followers, therefore they obtain a mass of fans by manifesting their glamorous appearances or interesting personalities. Since the users on Xiaohongshu platform show strong preferences to beauties and handsome guys, many beauty and fashion Xiaohongshu influencers often draw others' attention via showing their stunning figures and faces, and constantly producing videos with advanced aesthetic sense to depict their own features, so as to further promote the growth of followers.

Setting key opinion leader Mengling Yi as an instance, she is a well-known beauty and fashion influencer in Xiaohongshu platform who has sensational impact on its users and is especially prevailing for her sweet smile, curly hair, hot figure and glimmering eyes. Her account uses videos most to manifest her beauty by zooming in and slowing down to reveal Yi's elegant demeanor and gracious temperament to fascinate followers as well as assisting to exhibit faddish brands. As for the figure for Yi's Xiaohongshu account in the latest six months, its followers increased by 1,136,000, accounting for approximately one thirds of the total number of followers. Besides, each of her content

gained widespread influence on the platform with average reading at 1,295,500, average likes at 38050.42, and average collection at 1863.48.

4.2 Content-centered operation mode

In the era of mobile Internet, content of high quality is a powerful tool for opinion leaders to leap up. In today's fragmented age of information transmission, content is not what audiences lack, but significant and substantial content is very scarce. Therefore, good content can serve as the core of "we media" and play the function of gathering popularity. Content creators need to be aware of social issues and pursue new and interesting topics. In addition, it is imperative to comprehend the user's preference, take the user's experience into account, strengthen originality and interactivity in the content, and create hot topics from the audience's interest points in order to arouse heated discussion in the online community. Accordingly, many Xiaohongshu fashion and beauty opinion leaders choose content-focused operation mode, constantly producing rich and intriguing video content to arouse users' curiosity as well as obsession.

4.2.1. Understanding followers' portraits and customizing follower-friendly content

According to the analyses shown in Xiaohongshu's subsidiary data platform, most fashion and beauty have a three-to-seven male fan base in which female millennials account for the major proportion.

Having grasped the features of the female youngsters' features and preferences to those delicate, adorable and novel things as well as their interests in other realms like food, outfit style, music tastes, etc, the content creators strive to combine those prevailing and faddish items together to catch users' eyes.

For example, Xintong Xie's short videos she always uses food to name certain type of make-up. The pinkish make-up with glimmering lip gloss is always described with mature peach, strawberries to create a vigorous and adorable sense, while make-up in earth tone with slight orange is commonly linked with autumn fruits or nuts to manifest mellow temperament. These descriptions significantly engage young girls' multiple sense organs simultaneously and add certain aroma to this make-up by these vivid words.

Despite taking into designated followers' tastes into consideration, the beauty and fashion influencers also produce their video content in accordance with users' physical features. Shian Cheng and Wangyu Luo are two prominent Xiaohongshu influencers in the realm of beauty and fashion, having over 6,000,000 and 4,000,000 followers respectively. Cheng designs the makeup techniques that suits Asian females specifically and proposals fitting for Asian people's facial skeleton as well as features in her makeup tutorials. She also recommends cosmetic products that conform to designated users' skin condition and aesthetic preference. Because of the precise grasp and adaptiveness of her content, she can constantly generate videos with hundreds of thousands of likes and can receive over 40,000 new followers simply with the help of single video.

Wangyu Luo mainly concentrates on giving advice as to skincare. Despite his pioneering ideas as to skincare and long-term vision, he considerably takes account of the denominators about Chinese females' skin condition and furnishing substantial and effective remedies to those users who are plagued with pimples, fine lines and flaccid skin. Therefore, he has been gradually become a token of reliance, enabling new followers to trust his evaluations and buy those skincare products based on their own needs and helping him gain 975,400 followers merely within half year.

4.2.2. Tracing fashion and social hits when outputting content

Sensitivity in terms of the faddish trends and heated topics is required by those eminent fashion and beauty influencers. They are proposed to focus on timeliness in topic selection and cling to hot spots. The first category is the regular hotspot, such as the Spring Festival Qiqiao Festival, Valentine's Day and other festivals; Fashion weeks; Fashion events like annual events hosted by fashion magazines.

A Xiaohongshu account named "Yiyizhishiheimao" is a beauty and fashion account being adept at analyzing the makeup features of stars and celebrities, and summarizing which so as to create a universal makeup for average people. Her tutorials are so practical and instructive that over 380,000 users follow her within half year and even some famous celebrities learn some makeup techniques from her videos.

Caini Chen, particularly good at commenting on stars' daily outfits and red carpet fashion looks owing to his occupation as a fashion designer. He often catches up with the latest looks appeared in some fashion events and gives professional and fundamental evaluations. Besides, a lot of his followers even comment under his videos to suggest him selecting certain celebrities' looks as the subject of next video of this series, which instrumentally adds interactivity to Chen's account operation and guides him to produce prevalent content.

4.2.3. Extending creativity into the presentation of content

Since the benefits and allure of being a fashion and beauty opinion leader is so enchanting that there are flocks of people trying to operate their own account in this field, making this realm extremely congested and inducing people's questions as to how to be eminent under fierce such competition. Accordingly, the presentation of content has become more and more momentous, since it can not only form a vague but bewitching sense of feeling to let the audience immerse in but also it can help to visualize and substantialize the cosmetics, clothes or perfumes, making it much easier to be felt and comprehended.

Lady Melody is an account with comparatively small fan base at first, however it magnified its strength in photograph and film-making techniques, shooting its videos with elements of movie-making and choosing special filters to generate miscellaneous temperament, which are widely welcomed by a majority of Xiaohongshu users.

Users can see the characteristics of classic movies such as "the Great Gatsby", "the Beautiful Legend of Sicily" and "Tailor" in the videos made by this account, so as to form association with the products presented in the video and shape a multi-dimensional perception. Therefore, even the commercial or advertising videos have become as intriguing and slightly as those videos of good qualities and attracted 700,000 followers within half year as a result of high aesthetic values.

5. Conclusions

This paper generalized two tactics that fashion and beauty KOLs were using to extend their fan base by observing the online data platform, doing basic calculations, and setting cases to enunciate these two strategies. The two strategies for gaining followers during beauty and fashion account operation relate to IP constructing and content-focused methods. To conclude more explicitly, using the influence of conventional media to manifest personal qualities setting up unique individual symbols and designing IP in accordance with the preference of Xiaohongshu platform are top three means to construct IP. In addition, for those who intend to keep producing significant content to gain followers, understanding followers' portraits, yielding to fashion and social hits and innovating form of presentation are of essence. Although beauty and fashion influencers have already exerted great impact on people's choices as to cosmetics and helped users to enhance their skills in putting on make-up, at the same time, there are few in-depth studies on this subject, and most of the existing talks are too general. This paper will provide references for those who want to be KOLs or those who have intention to generate innovative and prevailing content on Xiaohongshu.

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