

Research on Brand Image Building and Communication Under the Multi-Endorser Strategy: A Case Study of Louis Vuitton's Differentiated Advertising Practices with Chinese Endorsers

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of intensifying competition in the Chinese luxury goods market, the multi-endorser strategy has become a core approach for luxury brands to achieve differentiated competition and build a multi-dimensional brand image. Taking Louis Vuitton (LV)'s differentiated advertising practices with Chinese endorsers Chris Lee and Eileen Gu as research objects, this paper combines brand image theory, cross-cultural communication theory and relevant studies on the multi-endorser strategy, using case study and mixed research methods to analyze the implementation path of LV's multi-endorser strategy, explore the mechanism of differentiated advertising practices on brand image building and communication, and examine the synergies and potential challenges of this strategy. The study finds that through precise positioning of different types of endorsers and differentiated design of advertising content and communication channels, LV has achieved complementary coverage of consumer groups and shaped an inclusive, innovative and high-end multi-dimensional brand image. However, it also faces risks such as cultural misinterpretation and negative incidents involving endorsers. This study provides practical references for luxury brands implementing multi-endorser strategies in China, and fills the gaps in existing research on the synergies of multi-endorser strategies and cultural adaptability in the Chinese market.

Keywords: Multi-Endorser Strategy; Brand Image Building; Luxury Brand; Differentiated Celebrity Endorsement

1. Research Background

1.1 Research Background

In recent years, China's luxury consumption market has grown rapidly, becoming the core driving force for the global luxury industry. Meanwhile, brand competition in the industry has become increasingly fierce. To break the limitations of single endorser strategies and precisely reach consumer groups in different circles, the multi-endorser strategy has gradually become an important means for luxury brands to achieve differentiated competition. As a benchmark of global luxury brands, Louis Vuitton has precisely selected Chris Lee, an icon with an androgynous style, and Eileen Gu, a sports elite and academic achiever, as its Chinese endorsers to build a differentiated endorsement matrix. Its advertising practices have become a typical case of implementing multi-endorser strategies in the luxury industry. Existing relevant studies mostly focus on the communication effects of single endorser types such as internet celebrities and international superstars, lacking systematic discussion on the synergies and cultural adaptability of multi-endorser strategies. Meanwhile, there is a lack of empirical analysis based on the Chinese market, failing to fully integrate the dynamic characteristics of consumer behavior in the social media era, making it difficult to provide effective theoretical support for the multi-endorser practices of luxury brands. Against this background, it is of great practical research value to explore the internal logic of brand image building and communication by taking LV's multi-endorser practices as a case.

1.2 Research Purpose

Taking LV's differentiated advertising practices with Chris Lee and Eileen Gu as empirical samples, this study deeply explores the mechanism of the multi-endorser strategy on brand image building and communication for

luxury brands, and analyzes the implementation path, market effects and potential risks of LV's multi-endorser strategy. It can provide practical references for luxury brands to formulate and implement multi-endorser strategies in China, help brands precisely match endorser types with consumer group needs, improve the implementation effect of multi-endorser strategies, and better adapt to the cultural characteristics and consumer demands of the Chinese market.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Relevant Theories

McCracken (1989) classified brand endorsers into celebrities, KOLs, virtual idols and other types, providing a theoretical basis for the selection and positioning of endorsers. Kapferer (2012) clarified the core connotation of the multi-endorser strategy, that is, brands strengthen inclusiveness and innovation and achieve multi-dimensional extension of brand image through differentiated endorser combinations to cover diverse consumer groups. Aaker (1996) proposed a three-dimensional model of brand image, arguing that brand image consists of three dimensions: functional (product quality and practical value), emotional (brand personality and emotional connection), and symbolic (social status and identity symbol), which is the core theoretical framework for brand image building. Keller (2013) explained the transmission path of endorsers to brand image, that is, effective transmission and strengthening of brand image are realized through three levels: symbolization (visual transmission of visual symbols), narration (emotional communication of brand stories), and interaction (user participation in social media). Hofstede (1980) put forward the concept of cultural adaptability, that is, the matching degree between the cultural background and image characteristics of endorsers and the values and aesthetic preferences of the target market directly affects the communication effect of endorsement strategies. Lu (2018) conducted research on the cultural characteristics of the Chinese market, pointing out that the Chinese market has both collectivist tendencies and dual demands for "authority" and "individuality", which has become an important cultural basis for luxury brands to implement endorsement strategies in China.

2.2 Research Questions

- (1) How does Louis Vuitton implement the multi-endorser strategy and achieve brand image building and communication through differentiated advertising practices?
- (2) How do consumers' perceptions and feedback on two different types of endorsers, Chris Lee and Eileen Gu, affect LV's brand communication effect?

3. Research Methods

3.1 Research Methods

- (1) Case study method: Taking LV's advertising cooperation cases with Chris Lee and Eileen Gu as the core research objects, deeply analyze the specific practical paths of the brand in endorser selection, differentiated positioning, advertising content design, communication channel selection and other aspects, and explore the implementation logic of LV's multi-endorser strategy and the internal thinking of brand image building.
- (2) Mixed research method: Combine quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis to achieve objectivity and comprehensiveness of research results. At the quantitative level, collect data such as LV's sales in China from 2016 to 2022 and the interaction volume (likes, comments, reposts) of advertising content related to the two endorsers on platforms such as Weibo, Douyin and Xiaohongshu to quantitatively analyze the market effect of the multi-endorser strategy. At the qualitative level, analyze consumers' image perceptions of the two endorsers and the matching degree between endorser image and LV brand cognition through consumer questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews.

3.2 Research Feasibility

LV's public financial reports and third-party luxury industry research reports can provide market data such as sales; public data and API interfaces of social media platforms such as Weibo, Douyin and Xiaohongshu can obtain social interaction data of advertising content; the development of consumer questionnaires and interviews is practically operable, and effective qualitative research data can be obtained through a combination of online and offline methods.

4. Differentiated Analysis of LV's

Multi-Endorser Strategy

4.1 Endorser Selection and Differentiated Image Positioning

As a representative icon of androgynous style, Chris Lee's core image is independent, individual and anti-traditional, which precisely fits the value demand of Gen Z young consumers for self-expression and breaking aesthetic boundaries, becoming an important link for LV to connect with young consumer groups. In 2016, LV cooperated with Chris Lee on the "Series 4" series of advertisements, deeply integrating Chris Lee's androgynous style with the product's neutral design and futuristic style. Through the transmission of visual symbols, it bound the brand connotation of "breaking boundaries" with the endorser's image, strengthening the brand's innovative characteristics.

Eileen Gu has both the identity of an Olympic champion sports elite and an academic background. Her image represents health, vitality and internationalization, which fits the value pursuit of middle-class families and elite groups for a high-quality, international and positive lifestyle, helping LV reach the high-end elite consumer market. During the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, LV cooperated with Eileen Gu on the "Twist" handbag advertisement. Taking advantage of the traffic dividend of the Winter Olympics, it emphasized the integration of sports and fashion, combining Eileen Gu's image of "achievement and elegance" with the brand's international and high-end positioning, enriching the image dimensions of the brand.

4.2 Consumer Feedback and Market Analysis

From the perspective of market performance, LV's sales in China achieved steady growth from 2016 to 2022, and the implementation of the multi-endorser strategy effectively promoted the brand's performance improvement in the Chinese market. From the perspective of social communication, advertising content related to Chris Lee and Eileen Gu has outstanding performance in likes, comments, reposts and other interactions on platforms such as Weibo, Douyin and Xiaohongshu. Among them, content related to Chris Lee has high participation of young users, and content related to Eileen Gu has prominent interactions of middle-class users, proving that the multi-endorser strategy has effectively improved the brand's social

communication popularity and achieved precise reach of different consumer groups. Overall, the images of the two endorsers have a good matching degree with LV's brand cognition, effectively promoting the multi-dimensional shaping of the brand image.

5. Synergies and Potential Challenges of LV's Multi-Endorser Strategy

5.1 Synergies of the Multi-Endorser Strategy

With her androgynous style and individual characteristics, Chris Lee precisely attracts Gen Z young consumers pursuing self-expression and breaking traditions, filling LV's gap in reaching the young consumer market. With her image as a sports elite and internationalization, Eileen Gu effectively covers middle-class families and elite groups focusing on quality and pursuing a high-end lifestyle, consolidating LV's position in the high-end elite consumer market. The two endorsers have achieved complementary coverage of groups of different ages, classes and consumption needs, greatly broadening LV's consumer group boundaries in the Chinese market.

Chris Lee's androgynous style injected the brand connotations of "innovation", "individuality" and "inclusiveness" into LV, breaking the inherent traditional aesthetic boundaries of luxury brands and strengthening the brand's innovative characteristics. Eileen Gu's sports vitality and international image enriched the brand's image dimensions of "health", "diversity" and "internationalization", changing the single high-end image cognition of luxury brands. The integration of their images has enabled LV to shape a multi-dimensional brand image of "inclusive, innovative, high-end and diverse", improving the brand's market recognition and cultural inclusiveness.

5.2 Potential Challenges of the Multi-Endorser Strategy

Chris Lee's androgynous image is somewhat different from traditional Chinese aesthetic concepts, which may trigger resistance from some traditional consumers and cause cultural misinterpretation of the brand's connotation of "breaking boundaries". Eileen Gu's "elite" label is easy to create a sense of distance from the mass consumer market, which may lead the brand to alienate ordinary consumers and affect the brand's public awareness. Both may cause

consumers' misinterpretation of the brand image due to cultural adaptability issues, weakening the communication effect of the endorsement strategy.

The personal image of endorsers is deeply bound to the brand image, and their personal negative incidents will directly transmit to the brand and affect brand reputation. For example, negative incidents such as Eileen Gu's nationality controversy and personal life controversy have triggered extensive public discussion. If not handled properly, they will arouse consumers' negative emotions and further affect LV's brand image. Controversies in Chris Lee's personal image will also affect young consumers' cognition of the brand and weaken the emotional connection between the brand and young consumer groups.

Chris Lee and Eileen Gu have significantly different image styles. If LV fails to refine and integrate the core brand connotation in advertising practices and brand communication, and cannot effectively integrate the image characteristics of the two endorsers into a unified brand image system, it may lead to consumers' confusion in brand image cognition, unable to form a clear and unified brand cognition, thereby weakening the synergy of the multi-endorser strategy and affecting the overall shaping of the brand image.

6. Research Conclusions and Implications

6.1 Research Conclusions

Taking Louis Vuitton's differentiated advertising practices with Chris Lee and Eileen Gu as a case, combining brand image theory and cross-cultural communication theory, and using case study and mixed research methods, this study explores the internal logic of luxury brand image building and communication under the multi-endorser strategy, and draws the following core conclusions:

(1) Under the multi-endorser strategy, luxury brands can achieve multi-dimensional shaping and effective communication of brand image through differentiated positioning of endorsers, personalized design of advertising content, and precise matching of communication channels. The deep binding between endorser image and brand connotation is the core premise of brand image transmission; the fit between advertising content and endorser image, and the matching between communication channels and target

consumer groups are the keys to improving brand communication effect.

(2) Consumers' perceptions and feedback on different types of endorsers directly affect the communication effect of luxury brands. The higher the matching degree between endorser image and the value demand and aesthetic preference of target consumer groups, the more it can stimulate consumers' emotional resonance, improve consumers' brand awareness and recognition, and further promote the improvement of brand communication effect.

(3) The implementation of multi-endorser strategies by luxury brands in China has significant synergies, which can achieve complementary coverage of consumer groups and multi-dimensional strengthening of brand image, broaden the market boundaries of brands, and enrich the connotation expression of brands. However, at the same time, this strategy also faces potential challenges such as cultural misinterpretation, negative incidents of endorsers, and image coordination and integration. Cultural adaptability and the ability to integrate core brand connotations directly affect the implementation effect of multi-endorser strategies.

(4) The cultural characteristics of the Chinese market, such as collectivist tendencies and dual demands for "authority" and "individuality", are important bases for luxury brands to implement multi-endorser strategies in China. When selecting endorsers and designing advertising content, brands should fully consider the cultural characteristics of the Chinese market, balance brand personality expression and traditional aesthetic needs, and improve cultural adaptability.

6.2 Research Limitations and Prospects

Although this study systematically analyzes LV's multi-endorser strategy advertising practices and effects, there are still some research limitations: first, in terms of research data, only basic quantitative data such as sales and social media interaction volume are selected, without more detailed quantitative analysis of purchase behavior and brand loyalty of different consumer groups; second, in terms of research cases, it only focuses on one brand, LV, and the universality of the research conclusions needs to be further verified; third, in terms of research perspective, it does not deeply explore the impact of new communication forms such as

live-streaming e-commerce and private domain traffic on the multi-endorser strategy in the digital era.

Future research can be further carried out from the following aspects: first, expand the research sample, select multiple luxury brands implementing multi-endorser strategies as cases for cross-brand comparative analysis to improve the universality of research conclusions; second, enrich the dimension of research data, combine data such as consumer purchase behavior, brand loyalty and brand awareness to more deeply explore the impact of multi-endorser strategies on brand market performance; third, combine the communication characteristics of the digital era to explore the innovative empowerment of new communication forms such as live-streaming e-commerce, private domain traffic and AI marketing on luxury brands' multi-endorser strategies, and provide more time-featured practical references for brands.

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