Promoting Cultural and Creative Products on Social Media:

Extending the Uses and Gratification Theory to the research of city marketing

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Introduction

Under the theoretical framework of Use and Gratification Theory (U&G), Urban Communication Theory (UC), and Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs), we explore Chinese customers' **content, process, and social gratifications** and their relationships with social engagement and online purchase intentions.

Overarching Question: How to increase social media engagement and attract people to buy cultural and creative products through social commerce, and promote city image in this process?

Theories

Uses & Gratifications

- The audiences consume media to fulfill their own motivations and gratifications.
- Three categories of gratification: content, process, and social gratification.
- Linked closely to social media engagement and online purchase intention → We applied it to our research in social commerce

Urban Communication & City Image

- The audience communicates with each other in and/or about the cities.
- City image plays a role in affecting people's communication attitudes and behaviors on social media.

Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs)

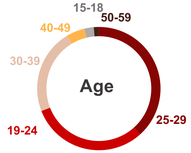
- We applied SEMs to find what strategies can promote products on social media.
- SEMs include:

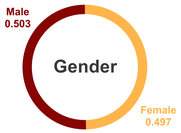
sense (sense experiences) feel (affective experiences)
act (physical experiences) relate (social identity experiences)
think (creative cognitive experiences)

Method

Questionnaire survey + experiment

- Distributed for a week, collected a total of **1,217** valid responses
- Participants (from different regions in China):





Survey

- A survey consists of **31** questions
- Assess participants motivations towards social media engagement and purchase intention of cultural and creative products

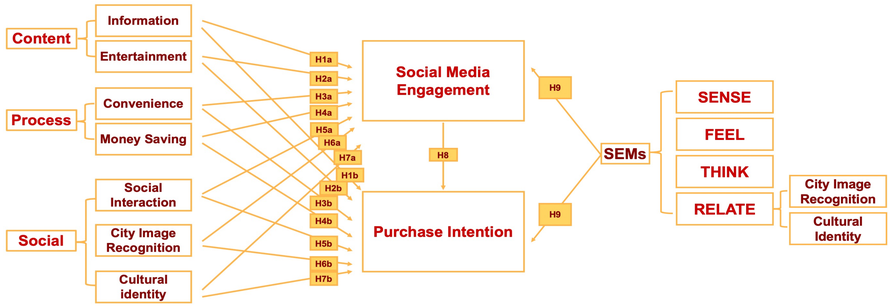
Experiment

- A **between-subjects experiment** was conducted, in which 1,217 subjects were randomly assigned to view one of **six** versions of culture and creative product **posts** with a different experiential marketing strategy:
  Control (n=214), **Sense** (n=204), **Feel** (n=182), **Think** (n=220), **City image recognition (Relate)** (n=187), **Culture identity (Relate)** (n=210)
- **Collected data are analyzed using:**
  Significant tests One-way ANOVA
  Multiple hierarchical regression

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this study are based on the following questions:

- What would motivate individuals to **engage with the products on social media** and ultimately **purchase the products**?
  - 7 gratifications
- What are some **marketing strategies** in **SEMs** that can influence consumers' **social media engagement** and **purchase intention**?
  - 5 strategies



Results

Survey

- **6** out of **7** gratification variables have a **significant relationship** with **social media engagement** respectively.

Information *(β=.085, p<.01)*	**Entertainment** *(β=.145, p<.001)*	**Convenience** *(β=.071, p<.05)*
Social interaction *(β=.175, p<.001)*	**City image recognition** *(β=.341, p<.001)*	**Cultural identity** *(β =.114, p<.001)*

- **5** out of **7** gratification variables have a **significant relationship** with **purchase intention** respectively.

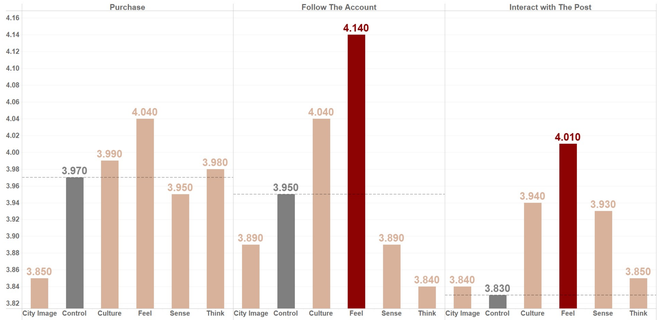
Information *(β=.085, p<.01)*	**Monetary** *(β=.145, p<.001)*	**Cultural identity** *(β=.127, p<.01)*
Social interaction *(β=.175, p<.05)*	**City image recognition** *(β=.190, p<.001)*	

Experiment

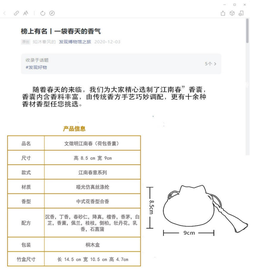
A significant difference was found between the **feel** condition and control condition. For **following the account**: FEEL condition (M=4.14) > control condition (M=3.95). For **interacting with the post** :FEEL condition (M=4.01) > control condition (M=3.83).

In this study, the case **"Feel"** in the experiment refers to the **emotional value** conveyed by a specific cultural and creative product which has been posted on on a social media platform in a relevant article.

Means of Different Experiential Strategies on Online Engagement & Purchase Intention



Samples for the experiment stimuli



Control condition

Feel condition

Sense condition

Discussion

The study combined three theories: U&G, UC, and SEMs. It also added cultural identity and city image recognition to the U&G's framework for social commerce. This study filled the theoretical gap between people's social media use and the promotion of city image and cultural influence.

Takeaways

- **City image recognition** and **cultural identity** are among the most important gratifications for encouraging people to **engage with the products on social media** and ultimately **purchase the products**.
  Recommendation
  - Strengthen historical resources, background stories, and cultural elements in product design
- **Social interaction** is also an important gratification for cultural and creative products.
  Recommendation
  - Establish a virtual community for fans
  - Apply the different types of interactive web pages
- Consumers tend to be more willing to follow and interact with the official account when triggered by a **particular emotion** (FEEL condition).
  Recommendation
  - Evoke people's emotional resonance with social media posts

Limitations

1) The sample is not representative

- Not enough elderly respondents and those from lower educational levels
- The collected samples tend to be middle-class; Need more lower- or higher-income samples
- Uneven distribution in terms of geolocation

2) The design of experiment stimuli can be improved

References

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