

Analysis of the Current Situation of Male Endorsing Cosmetics Brands

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Abstract: In the current climate, advertising, and endorsements have become important with the rise of beauty products and more and more customers valuing brands such as fame and quality. In the previous endorsement of beauty products, female celebrities were the only endorsers, but with the development of people's ideas, social progress, and changes in the market, more and more male celebrities are joining the team of endorsing beauty products. In this environment, male celebrities endorsing cosmetics products becomes a very explorable issue. By discussing the fact of male celebrities' endorsement of cosmetics, this study concludes the reasons male celebrities endorse cosmetics products; the social phenomenon embodied in it; and the problems that arise. The reasons include male celebrities' factors, the principle of attraction of opposites, and the form of fun and novelty. The social phenomenon embodied in it includes female celebrities' elevation of their status, changes in the concept of consumption, and people's conceptual change.

Keywords: male celebrity, endorsement, cosmetics

1. Introduction

As people become more open-minded and have a higher demand for beauty, beauty products are becoming increasingly relied upon. In people's lives, cosmetics, skin care products, perfumes, and other products occupy a large portion. However, the beauty market wasn't so prevalent in the beginning. It also started as unacceptable and slowly being recognized and loved by people. The development of the cosmetics market has gone through the following stages. Before the 19th century, there was little pursuit of beauty or concepts about makeup, skincare, and so on [1]. People lived a relatively simple life in this regard. After the 19th century, there was a bit of a conceptual advancement in beauty products. With the development of industry and the pollution of cities, people began to pay attention to using sunscreen and skin care [1]. This was a bit of a quest for beauty, and people slowly began to realize that the skin needed to be protected. In the early 20th century, Hollywood movies opened up a deeper understanding of beauty [1]. The advent of Hollywood movies triggered a new fashion trend, people began to pay attention to makeup techniques [1]. At that time, for example, people knew about the existence of eyeliner and eyeshadow and knew that an essential step in makeup was the shaping of the eyes. The next turning point came after World War II. After World War II, with the economic recovery and the advancement of women, the pursuit of beauty became further open [1]. Makeup has become an indispensable part of women's lives. From now on,

Beauty products are no longer just a privilege used by women, all people have the right to be beautiful, including men. Males are free to use beauty products as well.

Today, it is increasingly common for men to endorse cosmetics products. Male endorsers act as brand images and bring cosmetics products to the public eye through advertising, social media, and other promotional means. Other researchers have done a lot of research on celebrity endorsements. For example, celebrity endorsement can increase brand recognition and popularity and increase product sales and market share [2]. For analyzing the segment of beauty products endorsed by male celebrities, there is a lack of research, they always talked about the female endorsement of cosmetics but ignored the male endorsement. Therefore, this paper will specifically analyze the current situation of male endorsement of beauty products and its causes, the social problems reflected by this phenomenon.

2. Case Description

The beauty market hasn't always been booming after becoming popular. The market as a whole has had some bottlenecks in its development. The first reason is due to the economy. According to statistics, brands are driving up prices, with the beauty price per unit shooting up 17% this past year [3]. As a result, people will not buy the product anymore, and it is hard for the cosmetics industry. It affects people's lives, according to the statistics, with 84% of Americans planning to cut back on their spending due to inflation [3]. Even 90-year-old giant Revlon struggled to cope with supplier payments, inflation, and labor shortages, eventually forcing it into bankruptcy [3]. Therefore, the brand needs to take effective measures to recover from this situation.

Among the different ways of advertising, celebrity endorsement is one of the most effective ways, and the right spokesperson will make this advertisement icing on the cake and gain more attention. The earliest celebrity endorsements can be traced back to the 19th century. As far back as 1882, one London socialite and West End stage actress became the poster girl for a soap brand, which made her the first celebrity to endorse a commercial product [4]. This initiative instantly made the brand famous and successful, and many other brands began to follow suit. Time to the 1980s, a new concept of "co-branded" existed. It means that after co-branding an existing product with a celebrity, companies started making new products, especially for a given celebrity [4]. At that time, the "product placement" had been coming out. The company put products inside of movies and TV shows, to let audiences watch the advertisement when they are watching dramas [4]. This initiative to release co-branded models after collaborating with celebrities further exemplifies the imitation and pursuit of celebrity counterparts that celebrities bring and demonstrates that a company's use of celebrity endorsements can increase brand awareness and boost sales. Then, in the 1990s, celebrity endorsements in the '90s became so big that they became news in and of themselves, which companies doing press conferences to announce the relationship and crafting rollouts of products, advertising, and publicity together in seamless campaigns [4]. This falls into the category of having a qualitative leap, celebrities became the "face" of the brand, with celebrity endorsements coming more and more into people's lives.

The current trend in the cosmetics industry is that a growing number of cosmetics brands are using male spokespeople or ambassadors to promote and advertise their products. This phenomenon signals the growing acceptance and demand for men in the beauty space. Male spokespersons are usually celebrities, entertainers, athletes, and other influential and well-known figures in society. Their presence brings more exposure to the brand as they are in the public eye and can attract more attention and discussion. The image and personal charisma of these celebrity endorsers also help to convey the brand's values, which resonates with consumers and prompts them to be more willing to buy and use the brand's products. However, nowadays, because of the speed of the news cycle and the growth of the internet, celebrity spokespersons have paradoxically been easier than ever to reach and sign deals with [4]. Therefore, companies also need to be more careful in their choices.

3. Reason Analysis of Male Endorsing Cosmetic Brands

Before 1990, men endorsing cosmetics products was a complete non-event. It wasn't until 1996 that a Japanese cosmetic brand invited a popular Japanese male celebrity to be the face of the brand. This was the first case of a male endorsing a cosmetic product, and it was amazingly effective. After that, the road to male endorsement of cosmetics products was opened. There are mainly two reasons for the male endorsement.

3.1. The Personal Image and Influence of Male Celebrities

The first main reason is the male celebrity himself. The male celebrities chosen by the cosmetics brand are some of the more popular artists at the moment. Male celebrities themselves have an innate, natural charisma. Male actors or male idols have a high level of fame and a certain amount of clout, and these are things that help companies to earn more money and they are commercially viable. As is well-known, the level of a celebrity's popularity can be directly linked to their influence, and the more popular an artist is, the more fans there are who can pay for them. It is a fact that popular male idols always receive a fervent following from their fans, and when the following is large enough, it can even stir up the buzz from other netizens besides their fans. This not only increases the exposure of the celebrities themselves but also makes the products they endorse active in front of consumers' eyes. This is a win-win situation for both the celebrity and the brand. Besides, male celebrities have beautiful faces and perfect features, and for cosmetics products, these flawless faces are the best proof of how effective this product is. When the consumers see that the product works well, they will be willing to spend more money on it.

In addition to a good image of the endorser himself, if the male artist's image matches that of the brand itself, then such an endorsement can add to the brand's image. For example, a Korean cosmetics brand, in June 2020, officially announced one male lead actor of a major hit Korean drama as its brand spokesperson. The reason for choosing this actor is that his clean and healthy image helps to enhance their corporate brand image, which is the same as what this brand conveys to the public. This illustrates that if a male celebrity has some character traits that are compatible with a cosmetics brand and can better interpret its products, then there is nothing wrong with a cosmetic brand choosing a male celebrity.

3.2. Opposites Sexes Attract

The second reason male celebrities do the endorsement is that the principle of opposite sexes attracts. For cosmetics products, the mainstream consumer group at this stage is still women. According to statistics, the groupies are usually predominantly female, and the proportion of female fans of female celebrities usually does not exceed 70%, while the proportion of female fans of male celebrities is usually more than 80%, and those with high popularity will even exceed 90% [5]. Also, as women, men will still relatively capture their attention, just like the proverb says: "Like charges repel each other, unlike charges attract". Especially facing those high levels of facial attractiveness, no one can withstand their charm [6]. As a result, it is natural that people will fall in love with that kind of person and spend some money on this. At this present stage, women are the main consumers in the entertainment economy, and women's spending power is huge, so the market potential for a male spokesperson with a larger female following cannot be ignored, and this group of consumers determines the main purchasing power. Therefore, using male celebrities to do the endorsement of cosmetics products is a wise choice.

3.3. Fresh and Interesting Form

Another reason for choosing male celebrities to endorse is that male endorsing cosmetic products is a novel form in the market. The reason is that generally speaking, products for women are more convincing when they are endorsed and explained by a woman, which is also more relevant to the impression of the brand for public use. Men as spokespersons is undoubtedly a new mode of marketing. In this way, consumers may think that the male spokesperson is fresh and eye-catching. It can expand the attention of other online netizens and stimulate their discussion, to increase the popularity of the product and gain profit. It is a kind of “reverse endorsement” compared to the other companies’ way of getting publicity. It reverses the traditional way and uses clout to monetize. It is also an easier way to leave a deep impression on the public, avoid aesthetic fatigue from several cosmetics brands using female endorsement, and then, increase the awareness of the brand. For example, in 1996, a 24-year-old popular Japanese actor shot a lipstick commercial for a Japanese cosmetics brand. This first lipstick commercial for women endorsed by a male celebrity caused quite a stir at the time, and that lipstick, amazingly, sold 3 million units within two months [7]. This statistic shocked both businessmen and customers.

At the same time, in a competitive relationship, different brands in the same industry have a certain type of product, and because one of them chooses a male celebrity spokesperson, the product’s sales or topic of conversation is higher than the other brand. For example, a veteran French beauty and luxury brand has been on a roll lately with its new releases. The product was tepid until the brand appointed an American rapper as its ambassador. The 23-year-old rapper, who wears the French brand’s iconic “The Bold” lipstick and mascara, became the fashion influencer of these products and made the products popular again. More surprisingly, the official post was liked by more than 600,000 people. Another example is a top Chinese actor, after endorsing the beauty section of a French luxury brand, officially announced that in just a few hours, the sales exceeded ten million dollars. According to statistics, this actor’s contribution ratio is more than 80% [8]. Thus, it can be seen that using male celebrities to endorse cosmetics products was undoubtedly the right decision and has since opened the way for male celebrities to endorse cosmetics products.

4. Reflected Social Concepts

With more and more cosmetics companies choosing male artists for endorsements, the situation reflects some social issues in this step forward.

4.1. The Advancement of Women’s Status

The first social status quo is the advancement of women’s status. With the increasing openness of social mores, gender roles of men and women have undergone a fundamental shift [9]. The traditional perception of gender as distinct in terms of responsibilities and hopes has become mixed and blurred in the present day [9]. The status of women is also gradually improving. From a time when women were not allowed to go out on the streets or to go to school, to a time when men and women are as equal as possible, society is changing step by step. In contemporary society, it is perceived that women are not subordinate to men and that women can make their purchases and do not need to look men in the eye or be dependent on them. According to the shift in perception, businessmen tried to be more attuned to the needs of women, they are trying to find what attracts them pay attention to their needs, and then make a move. They are gradually realizing that the better way to get more sales and more profits is to get a good grasp of what female customers want.

4.2. The Shift of Consumption Concept and Mode

The second social status quo is about the consumption patterns that people use in modern society. With the progress of the times, the development of the economy, and the improvement of living standards, people's concept of consumption has also changed. Before, people worked to earn money just to solve the problem of food and clothing, but now, people have begun to gradually pursue their quality of life and have begun to spare for their consumption. With the arrival of the market economy, people begin to feel the joy and satisfaction of consumption, which makes people invest more in beauty, food, life, and other aspects, such as people are willing to spend more money on purchasing brand-name cosmetics, perfumes, etc. Apart from that, the rapid development of the Internet and the popularity of online shopping have made shopping more and more convenient. Including celebrity endorsements also get the benefit of the bonus of the Internet. When people surf the web, it is essential to be pushed with advertisements from time to time. Then when people see an advertisement of interest or a product or celebrity of interest, they can just tap into the link and consume. This includes the fact that social media has a deep impact on how people shop, especially in the cosmetics category. When people see beauty gurus recommending or trying out certain products on YouTube or TikTok, and they find the products to be great and exciting, that's when people are more likely to make impulse purchases. So, the changing social reality is also a great part of it.

4.3. The Changes in People's Mind

Last but not least, male endorsement of cosmetics also signifies a change in this society. In modern society, the definition of male beauty has been reconstructed. There's no shame in male skincare, makeup, and styling, cosmetics are not a product of gender as well. It is human nature to love beauty, and both men and women are entitled to pursue their selves. Besides, following the explosion of the definition of "Appearance is power" and "face-judger", an increased number of males focused on their appearance, and they realized that beauty and sophistication are no longer the prerogatives of girls. As time goes by, men are gradually participating in "The Economics of Beauty". The Economics of Beauty is a kind of consumer industry built around face value [10]. According to "The Economics of Beauty", more and more men no longer only use skincare products, they accept the idea of male make-up and take action. Statistics show that China's male grooming market in 2019 is growing twice as fast as the global average growth rate (13.5% vs. 5.8%), China's male grooming market increased to 15.89 billion yuan in 2019 and reached about 17 billion yuan in 2020 [11]. According to statistics, in 2020, the growth rate of the generation born in the 00s boys' purchase of color cosmetics has exceeded that of the generation born in the 00s girls, and the growth rate of those boys' purchase of foundation is twice as fast as that of girls', except for eyeliner [11]. Thus, it can be seen that the increase in the number of men endorsing cosmetics products also signals a shift in societal attitudes.

5. Conclusion

This essay argues the reasons cosmetics brands choose male celebrities for endorsement and the social issues that they reflect. The company chose male celebrities to endorse cosmetics products for three reasons: first, the characteristics of male celebrities themselves and the clout they bring with them, so people are more willing to purchase the product just for the celebrity; second, for the vast majority of consumers of cosmetics products, are female, according to the opposites sexes attracts, as females, male celebrities are more attractive; and third, this new model of male celebrities endorsing beauty products will be refreshing to the public, so it uses the novel way to attract consumers. This phenomenon of male celebrity endorsement also reflects some social issues. For example, the gradual improvement of the status of women, so the brand pays more attention to women's demand and puts

in effort. Or people for the rise in consumption levels and changes in consumption patterns, so people are more willing to spend more money on improving their quality. As well as people for the boys doing makeup this change in thinking, boys can also use cosmetics products to improve their facial attractiveness.

However, this paper also has some limitations in terms of research and some elements have not been considered as well. For example, although this paper focuses on the influence of male endorsers, there are some research gaps on how individual consumers perceive and interpret the influence of male celebrities endorsing cosmetics products, and how this influences their purchasing decisions. As for future research, people can continue to study in this direction in the future research.

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