

# Research on Chinese Beauty Brands' Marketing Strategies based on the Comparison of International Beauty Brands and Chinese Beauty Brands

Yifan Dong\*

University of Washington, Seattle, 98105, US

\*Corresponding author: yifand02@uw.edu

**Abstract.** Unlike other industries, the beauty brands market is a strong industry even after the pandemic because everyone has the desire to pursue beauty. According to the findings, there are no Chinese beauty brands in the top 10 beauty brands in the world. How could Chinese beauty brands go international is the question the brands need to consider. So the research uses content analysis and comparative analysis to compare the differences or disadvantages of Chinese beauty brands. After discovering these problems, the research provides some marketing strategies as solutions. Based on different consumers, brands need to come up with different products. For example, more male consumers enter the market, so the brand needs to release more products with functions that men would want. Of course, Chinese beauty brands should not do the same things. Instead, combining the domestic situation and the trend would be more practical for Chinese brands to improve. However, keeping up with the products' solid quality and ensuring the consumer has a good time shopping in the company are always strengths in the market.

**Keywords:** Chinese beauty brands, International beauty brands, Marketing strategies, Comparison analysis.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research background

The cosmetics industry is becoming increasingly popular because everyone wants to show their uniqueness and pursue beauty. Another tool that helps the beauty market get popular is social media. Social media plays an important role in promoting the development of the cosmetics industry. People spend more time on the internet, like TikTok and Instagram. Along with interest increasing on the internet, there are more influencers. Since the internet is all over the world, people in different countries can get the chance to see different eyes for beauty. Many influencers' video content is testing all kinds of beauty products. Once the videos go viral, the demand for beauty products will also increase. Moreover, companies are doing more live streamings to sell their products online. Even though the cosmetics industry is already strong, it will only get stronger. According to the statistics from 2022 Beauty Industry Trends&Cosmetics Marketing, the beauty industry increased from \$483B in 2020 to \$511B in 2021 [1]. And the number is still going up. Still, from the same article, it introduced the top 10 beauty brands worldwide. Some of the top 10 brands are from European countries, and some are from the US. But there is not a brand from China. There are some differences between international beauty brands and Chinese beauty brands. In China, the beauty market always exists. However, beauty brands from China are just getting out of the country and showing some improvements in recent years. Studying this topic will analyze and compare the specific differences and help Chinese beauty brands to make their brands march into the international market.

### 1.2 Literature review

Tan analyzed why Chinese beauty brands are rising and why some brands deserve to be broadcasted, such as Florasis, Hedone, and Zeesea [2]. First of all, compared to the brands from Korea and Japan, Chinese beauty brands are slightly cheaper with high quality. Also, Chinese beauty brands focus on looking for celebrities who are suitable for the brands. For example, a makeup influencer,

Jiaqi Li, went viral on Douyin (the Chinese version of TikTok). People knew him through his video commenting on different brands' lipsticks, including international brands like Chanel and YSL and Chinese brands like Florasis and Perfect Diary. People found him reliable and funny. Regarding the relationship between social media and the beauty market, Cosmetic China explains why social media hugely influences Chinese beauty brands [3]. The data shows that there are 634 million netizens who spend an average of 8 hours per week watching videos, which is a considerable population.

Whitwam proposed that what Chinese beauty brands need when they go global is what the brand is delivering, matching with what the consumers expected—so knowing the consumers' demand becomes essential [4].

Most articles analyze different Chinese beauty brands' advantages and disadvantages and what place the Chinese beauty brands are in right now. These articles are good at letting the readers know about the beauty market. In contrast, fewer articles focus on what strategies or aspects Chinese beauty brands could learn from the international beauty brands and the relationships between Chinese beauty brands and foreign beauty brands. After knowing the basic information about the beauty market, studying the marketing strategies and comparing both Chinese and foreign brands can help Chinese brands progress.

### **1.3 Research framework**

This research will first elaborate on what market strategies Chinese brands are using. Then study what market strategies international brands are using. Comparing these will show what the differences are. Plus, there will be a study about how social media and the pandemic impact the beauty industry domestically and globally.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 Content analysis**

Content analysis analyzes the content and features of selected texts, pictures, videos, or audio. This method is a low-cost collection but can be time-consuming somehow. One of the Chinese beauty brands representing the Chinese beauty market is Zeesea, which was established in 2011 with the topic of pursuing uniqueness.

One of the best sellers of Zeesea is the British Museum Egypt Collection eyeshadow palette. According to Amazon, for this series of palettes, there are over 370 reviews [5]. Within these reviews, 76% gave a 5-star, 14% gave a 4-star, and the rest gave below 3-star. The 5-star customers credit the creative packaging, ease of blending, and uniqueness of the color. On the other hand, some customers are saying that the quality of the packaging is not strong because when they receive the product, some color has fallen off and broken. Secondly, some are saying that the product smells like chemistry. Few customers said that the colors didn't fit darker skin.

The representation of foreign beauty brand is Huda Beauty, which is within the top 10 beauty brands and is famous for its eye shadows. According to Amazon, there are around 127 reviews on The New Nude Eyeshadow Palette [6]. 83% gave a 5-star for long-lasting and beautiful colors. Among the reviews that are below 3-star, most people are holding against the high price. A customer named D on Amazon said, "You are buying for the label, not the product."

### **2.2 Comparative analysis**

The comparative analysis method is an analysis method that compares two or more things or objects to find out the similarities and differences between them. This paper will compare feedback for Zeesea's eyeshadow and Huda Beauty's eyeshadow. One of the similarities is that even though the eyeshadows' styles are different, the customers greatly praise the colors. The two obvious differences between Zeesea and Huda Beauty are the price and the quality. Zeesea, a Chinese beauty brand, is cheaper than the price of Huda Beauty. However, among the reviews, fewer reviews comment on the low quality of the packaging of Huda Beauty.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Current development of the Chinese Beauty market

As the research mentioned in the introduction, the beauty market is a strong industry. However, the situation and the target consumers are always changing, specifically due to the pandemic and the trends. First of all, after the pandemic, eCommerce has been the most popular way to sell and buy products. People are more used to shopping online or through live streamings than going to the malls and stores. The rising of social media helps the beauty industry during the pandemic. Because of Covid19, people had to stay at home for safety, which gave people more time to spend on the internet. Watching more videos about makeup tutorials increased the demand for makeup, skincare, or haircare products. Secondly, speaking of trends, there is a noticeable change in target consumers. More males are now interested in beauty products, and pursuing beauty is not only for women anymore. Many beauty brands produce more skincare for men, such as L'Oréal Paris. The main functions are focused on oil control, acne treatment, and deep cleaning. Another thing that is worth mentioning is the target consumers are getting younger because kids and teenagers have access to the internet more often and at a younger age and are keeping up with the trends tightly.

Specifically for Chinese beauty brands, most consumers are born as generation Z, which means the younger people are influenced by the internet and social media a lot. So Chinese beauty brands have very sensitive feelings about how they will manage their selling and marketing strategies. Take Perfect Diary, for example; the brand was founded around 2017. Perfect Diary uses the rise of social media and Chinese styles as advantages. This brand not only combines makeup products with cartoon characters but also with video games and with the British Museum (the series of Discovery). By doing all these kinds of joint names, the reputation and popularity of Perfect Diary increased dramatically. Another example that uses many Chinese styles would be Florasis, a Chinese beauty brand founded in 2017. Florasis is famous for its Chinese elements like engraved lipsticks and the packaging of products. The other marketing strategy is that Chinese beauty brands always find young and influential celebrities as brand ambassadors. In other words, the brands use the power of the fans of these celebrities to draw more attention to the brands. Moreover, the brands always send out PR products to many social media influencers. Once people open apps like Weibo, Douyin, and Little Red Book, many posts about trying these new products exist. So flooding the screen is an effective way to make more people see and remember their brands.

#### 3.2 Problem identified by Chinese Beauty brands

Quality is a serious problem for Chinese beauty brands. Even though these brands have creative ways to advertise their products and to make more products efficiently, their quality has some doubts. In this case, many influencers are buying and trying the products, and some posted videos about how the quality of the products is not as high as before. For instance, some eyeshadows' powder is easy to fly, but they are supposed to stay on people's eyelids. And some lipsticks feel dry once people put them on their lips. Some brands' products have found the ingredients are not safe and healthy to use on people's faces. Now, if the brands have lower quality but slightly higher prices, people would not consider buying them. As more and more beauty brands show up in the market, people have many choices in picking different prices and functions of beauty products. If the brand makes a mistake, the consumer will move on to look for another brand. So the brands need to be creative about their marketing strategies and focus on how to maintain high-quality products at the same time.

According to Grey's article, if Chinese beauty brands want to go global, they do not have to copy everything the international brands did along the way. However, they have to learn two things: one is brand differentiation and R&D capabilities [7-8]. Finding famous brand ambassadors and sending more PR packages are important but not enough to make the brand unique. Still, take Perfect Diary as an example. If this brand creates a son brand or buys another Chinese beauty brand, the target consumers would not be a huge difference. The brands need to observe the market and make conclusions about what the market needs right now. Whether the market needs a parity beauty brand

for most college students or the market needs advanced beauty brands like La Mer. In other words, if there is already a parity brand, founding an opposite brand might make the brand outstanding. Then, the brand will have its position in the market.

## **4. Discussion**

### **4.1 Pay attention to quality and enhance the consumer experience**

Keeping up the brand with high quality is the actual strength in the market. The word high-quality is not only for the products but also for the experience the consumer would have with the brand, including glancing over the stores or the websites, buying process, and after-sale process. All these processes are opportunities to build connections between the brands and the consumers, which means communication is essential. The XMer's article has three perspectives on managing and improving a brand: the consumer's perspective, the products' perspective, and the marketing perspective. Although the article talks about skincare brands, it can imply that most beauty brands in the market. First, from the consumer's perspective, since eCommerce is mainstream selling, people love to browse videos and listen to the influencers about their true feeling about the products. So the brands could cooperate with influencers to spread their brand culture and value. Secondly, from the products' perspectives, the brands can post certain feedback surveys regularly to let the consumers fill them out so that the brands can know what aspects they are doing well and what aspects they need to improve. The feedback surveys could cover many things such as the packaging, the functions of the products, and even the smells of the products. Lastly, eCommerce is popular nowadays, as the research mentioned earlier, from the market's perspective. Hence, brands must ensure every product is available on their websites, and the online buying process should be easy for consumers.

### **4.2 Adjust strategies from time to time**

The rise of Chinese beauty brands brings a saturated market. The more brands show up in the market, the more competition the market will have. So quality is one factor, and another important factor is the price. If the brands set the price very high, other brands might produce similar products at a lower price. Then the consumers would see the brands with lower prices as affordable substitutes. One of the solutions could be for the brands to adjust the price along with some important or popular holidays. During the holidays, the price will decrease a little, or activities like saving \$10 on every \$100 and free shipping over \$100. On the other hand, the brands also need to adjust strategies from time to time and observe the changes in the market. After the pandemic, people start to look for more "expensive substitutes" instead of affordable substitutes [9-10]. This condition is not surprising because consumers no longer hesitate about the price. Whether the products are worthy is the key point when consumers are shopping. Due to the products will apply to people's bodies and faces, people want to ensure they are safe to use even though the price is a little higher. All in all, setting the price low is not always a good strategy. The decision should be made after observing the market and knowing what the consumers most value.

Follow up on holidays, based on different holidays, and the companies can also release some new arrivals. For instance, on Valentine's Day, the new arrivals might look different on the packaging. The packaging should focus on people's relationships. The colors of the eyeshadow specifically could be warmer with more sparkling glitters. Using the holiday gimmick, people will find this product a perfect gift for their friends or partners to make more sales for the brands. Researching and developing new arrivals are based on the company's R&D technology. With a high R&D technology, the brand will always bring something creative and fresh attention to the consumers, and the consumers will not be tired of this brand. Using new arrivals to both consolidate regular consumers and attract new target consumers at the same time.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1 Findings

This research mainly focuses on the differences and similarities between international and Chinese beauty brands. From the differences, there are some problems in Chinese beauty brands, such as the quality and the price, and some solutions. Plus, two other effects influence the market. One is the pandemic, and the other is social media, which could change the consumers' purchasing opinions and behaviors. Based on the timing, after the pandemic and the rise of social media, ways of selling changed from stores to live streams, and the target consumers are also changing. So this research also mentioned how to adjust marketing strategies through eCommerce. Even though the ways of selling have changed to online shopping, communicating with consumers is always important. Knowing consumers' preferences and letting consumers know the brand culture the company wants to spread will keep both the brand and the consumer on the same page. However, the market will not stick with eCommerce all the time. Embracing the changes and keeping open-minded will help the brand in the long term. Based on different consumers, brands need to come up with different products. For example, more male consumers enter the market, so the brand needs to release more products with functions that men would want.

### 5.2 Limitations

There are some limitations as well. This research is focused on the whole Chinese beauty brand, which means the topic is a little general to study. Due to different brands having different kinds of problems, it is hard to unify all the problems. Then, consumer reviews play an important role in studying marketing, so primary resources from surveys or interviews are strongly needed. Focusing on one or two specific brands with more primary resources might be more convincing and reliable in future studies.

## References

- [1] Reilly Roberts, 2022 Beauty Industry Trends & Cosmetics Marketing: Statistics and Strategies for Your Ecommerce Growth, Common Thread, 2022, <https://commonthreadco.com/blogs/coachs-corner/beauty-industry-cosmetics-marketing-ecommerce>
- [2] Why social media are necessary for cosmetics brands in China? Cosmetics China, <https://cosmeticschinaagency.com/why-social-media-are-necessary-for-cosmetics-brands-in-china/>
- [3] Iris Tan, Florasis To Judydoll: 13 Makeup Brands From China That Are Worth The Hype, Shopee Blog, 2022, <https://shopee.sg/blog/best-makeup-brands-china/>
- [4] Bryce Whitwam, What Chinese beauty brands need when going global: smart data tools and desirability, Campaign, 2022, <https://www.campaignasia.com/article/what-chinese-beauty-brands-need-when-going-global-smart-data-tools-and-desirabil/477655>
- [5] Amazon, Customer reviews and Product reviews. [https://www.amazon.com/ZEESEA-Eyeshadow-Palette-British-Shimmer/dp/B082V44SSC/ref=cm\\_cr\\_arp\\_d\\_product\\_top?ie=UTF8](https://www.amazon.com/ZEESEA-Eyeshadow-Palette-British-Shimmer/dp/B082V44SSC/ref=cm_cr_arp_d_product_top?ie=UTF8)
- [6] Amazon, Customer reviews and Product reviews. [https://www.amazon.com/Huda-Beauty-Nude-Eyeshadow-Palette/product-reviews/B07K5FRY91/ref=cm\\_cr\\_unknown?reviewerType=all\\_reviews&filterByStar=five\\_star&pageNumber=1](https://www.amazon.com/Huda-Beauty-Nude-Eyeshadow-Palette/product-reviews/B07K5FRY91/ref=cm_cr_unknown?reviewerType=all_reviews&filterByStar=five_star&pageNumber=1)
- [7] Grey, "Generation Z" domestic beauty makeup: success is marketing, failure is marketing, CBNDData, 2020, <http://www.cbndata.com/information/110780>
- [8] Big beauty brands foreignized, how to rise for domestic beauty brands, Sohu, 2021, [https://www.sohu.com/a/501051549\\_120325](https://www.sohu.com/a/501051549_120325)
- [9] XMer, How does the beauty industry master the Z-Era customer experience? Haoke, 2022, <https://howxm.com/institute/article-10/>

- [10] Ren Yin, Increased investment, local beauty brands compete in the high-end market, CBNDData, 2022, <https://www.cbndata.com/information/239237>