Research on Media Marketing Strategy of Disney China Market

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Abstract. The theme “Research on Media Marketing Strategies for Disney’s China Market” is crucial. As one of the major powers, China provides Disney with a large consumer base, which can help Disney expand its power effectively worldwide. Disney’s marketing strategy is a very good example for people to learn. Studying this theme can also help Disney Group better understand China and provide better services in the future paper, including the Case study of “The Little Mermaid”. The result of Theory and development status. Possible problems. The Discussion of “Solution for cultural difference”, “Solution for Local brand competition”, “Solution of copyright” and “Solution for influence on social media”. The value of this article is that it can serve as a reference for Disney staff and amateur readers interested in Disney’s marketing strategies to share and research, especially the person who works in the marketing field can take examples from this article.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research background

Disney is a well-known international entertainment company for its unique characters, theme parks, movies, and merchandise. Disney’s media marketing strategy in China has many business and social values and is also the key that Disney can success in development.

Firstly, Disney can generate significant revenue while helping brand expansion. China has the biggest population in the world, with a rapidly growing middle class and a large consumer group. Effective marketing of movies, theme parks, and products can quickly enhance brand awareness and loyalty, allowing China to occupy an important market share.

For instance, the popular Disney movie “Animal City”, topped the box office chart in America with a first-day box office of 19.469 million US dollars and a total box office of 73.7 million US dollars over the first weekend. However, “Crazy Animal City” achieved a box office of 22.39 million RMB on its first day in China, with a box office of 155 million RMB in the first three days of its week [1].

Secondly, it can promote cultural exchange. By showcasing its iconic characters, storylines, and creative content, Disney introduced Western culture and values to Chinese audiences, promoting cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

Finally, Disney can help with education. Disney’s media content typically carries positive information, moral education, and inspiring stories. Providing such content to Chinese audiences can contribute to educating Chinese children and families.

1.2. Literature review

Chen Yang and Xu proposed the success of the new marketing model on Disney IP. The author roughly divides the article into four parts, the image of IP in movie animations, the emphasis on product appearance, the new exceeds demand consumption pattern, and the fantasy created by the advertising.

Disney expands its IPs through movies, animations, and co-branded products. Appearance is in first place over usability in capitalism. Original IP characters gain popularity, driving demand and high prices. Cultural heritage and film support are not key to a successful IP image. Disney launches products fast to meet consumer demands, targeting Generation Z with personalized experiences. Limited goods create scarcity and drive consumer frenzy through linking up and raising prices. Limited goods with park tickets stimulate consumption but financially burden consumers. Disney invests in IP goods, image promotion, and localization in China, capitalizing on its large fan base. The evolving consumption landscape presents both opportunities and challenges [2].

Yan and Wang found out about the brand alliance effect. The author roughly divides the article into five parts, brand collaboration, Disney’s co-branding advantages, the Chinese market, and last Summary of the pros and cons.

Co-branding involves collaboration between brands for advertising, sales, and public relations. Examples include Coca-Cola, Bohemian Waxwing, Supreme, and Louis Vuitton. Disney is a globally recognized brand known for its iconic characters, which are popular among Chinese teenagers. Disney targets young people and plans to open clothing stores for them. China’s global influence is rising, attracting international brands. Disney has two amusement parks in China.
Year of the Rat offers co-branding opportunities. GUCCI, MLB, C&A, and Li Ning collaborated with Disney, blending Chinese and Western elements. Disney focuses on quality and diversity in collaborations and products [3].

BBC Report Analyzed Winning back the Chinese market with the movie Mulan. Disney announced a preview of the live version of “Mulan,” which they want to win over the Chinese audience. China is an important film market, and Disney invested $300 million in this movie. The movie includes Chinese American actress Liu Yifei, Jet Li, and Gong Li. The film draws inspiration from ancient Chinese legends and features a female director. While some fans lamented the absence of familiar elements, the movie received positive reactions from Chinese audiences. The movie’s release is scheduled for March next year [4].

Qi Ji proposed the current situation and trends of children’s IP books and used Disney as an example. The author divided the article into four parts, the characteristics of IP book publishing, the market situation faced by children’s IP books, the innovative trends of IP publishing, and the conclusion.

IP publishing in the children’s field mainly focuses on anime, animated movies, and anime games, extending to industries such as publishing clothing and food. The success of animated films has a significant impact on book sales. IP with high exposure and Click-through rate is highly sought after. Intellectual property books utilize existing content but undergo secondary creation to incorporate innovative elements. The IP book market is fiercely competitive, with multiple publishers obtaining authorization from the same IP. The success of IP books depends not only on the content value of the IP itself. The market needs to integrate publishing and innovation. Learning products that cater to children’s interests are becoming popular. It is worthwhile to combine IP with local culture and environment. The integration of media and emerging technologies has increased the value and sales of books. Publishers should leverage their IP advantages, explore multimedia possibilities, and create children’s books with IP competitiveness [5].

Yang Jinhong mainly wrote research on the localization marketing strategy of Shanghai Disney. The article is divided into four parts: local positioning, integration of Chinese elements into product experience, infiltration of local sentiment in marketing communication, and reflection on Shanghai Disney’s localized marketing.

Shanghai Disneyland implemented a comprehensive localization strategy by incorporating Chinese elements into various aspects of the park, including design, storytelling, performances, catering, and marketing. This approach aims to cater to Chinese consumers’ desire for Disney’s magic and a representation of their own culture, enhancing the park’s appeal in the Chinese market [6].

1.3. Research gap

Most scholars have studied Disney’s promotion methods in China, including advertising and promotional activities. They also studied Disney’s brand image in the Chinese market, exploring how to establish Disney’s brand awareness, image, and values in China. In addition, scholars have also conducted research on Disney’s film marketing in the Chinese market. They focus on Disney’s promotional strategy, market positioning, and box office performance of movies in China. They also analyzed Disney’s relationship with Chinese partners, including Chinese film companies, Chinese media, and celebrities, as well as its influence on the Chinese market.

A few people are more worried about the cultural factors of Disney’s media marketing in the Chinese market. They study Disney’s understanding of Chinese culture and values, exploring how Disney adds Chinese cultural elements into movies and promotional activities to gain emotional resonance with Chinese audiences. They also studied how Disney responds to the preferences of Chinese audiences for film and how to spread images that align with local cultural backgrounds in the Chinese market.

1.4. Research framework

This article will describe the media marketing strategy adopted by Disney Group in the Chinese market. At the beginning of the article, the author will point out the main theme, why they chose this topic, and the importance of this topic, including its value to society, and provide data support. Next, the article will summarize three references that have assisted in the article. Going forward, the essay will write about what’s currently being studied in the Chinese market for Disney and what important information has been missed or is currently being studied by a small group. Secondly, readers will see a guide to the article, which introduces the main logical structure of the article, making it easier to understand. Going further down is the case section, where the article will provide a case study, analyze it, and propose solutions. In addition, the article will analyze a current issue in Disney’s media marketing in the Chinese market, identify common points, and analyze the possible reasons for the problem. The next article will provide the most reasonable solutions to the problem. Going further down, the article will summarize the key information and conclusion mentioned above. Finally, it assists this article and references cited by the author.

2. Case Study

Disney’s live-action movie of “The Little Mermaid” had a successful opening weekend in the United States, ranking fifth in local box office history for that period. The film shows 68% of ticket buyers were women. The main character is black actress Harry Bailey; it attracted a diverse audience, including 35% black viewers, surpassing the 33% white audience. However, the film faced controversy on social media due to the black Ariel. Dissatisfaction could impact its performance in international markets. The film earned $185 million, with $68.3 million from overseas. It performed poorly
in China, earning only $2.5 million on the first weekend. People felt the film did not present good visual effects, lacked originality, and had awkward performances. It also faced challenges in Europe and Asia, with low box office results and being criticized. Strong protests against the character affected the film’s box office in Asia. Overall, audience opinions were divided, reflecting the controversy over Disney’s remakes of classic fairy tales [7].

Explain publicly and communicate with the audience. Disney should actively respond to the argument, explain to the public why black actors were chosen to play the role, and emphasize that their purpose is to promote diversity and inclusiveness. Communicate the motivations and values behind their decisions to the audience through interviews, statements, or social media platforms. To strengthen cultural sensitivity, targeting different international markets, Disney needs to pay more attention to local cultural sensitivity and values to ensure the acceptance of movies in different regions. Adjust marketing strategies, advertising materials, and some content to meet local audiences’ needs and cultural backgrounds.

3. Analysis of Problems

3.1. Theory and development status

Disney, one of the world’s most well-known entertainment brands, has been actively developing its media marketing strategy in the Chinese market. Using various theories and strategies, Disney has succeeded well and expanded its brand influence in China. This article will discuss the theories and development status of Disney’s media marketing in the Chinese market and analyze issues and what might be the possible causes that Disney may encounter.

Firstly, Disney uses the localization theory in its media marketing in the Chinese market. They deeply studied Chinese culture, values, and consumer habits and made their marketing strategies accordingly. Disney adapts local stories with Chinese elements and collaborates with local brands to cater to Chinese audiences. For example, the movie “Mulan” was adapted from a traditional Chinese story and successfully captured the attention of Chinese viewers. This localization strategy allows Disney’s products to interact more with Chinese audiences and enhance their sense of identification and emotional connection.

Secondly, Disney paid lots of attention to the use of social media in its media marketing in China. China is one of the world’s largest social media markets, and Disney fully utilizes platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, and Douyin (TikTok) to interact and communicate with audiences. They send interesting and useful content to attract the attention and engagement of the audience. Through interactive and shared content on social media, Disney actively establishes a connection between the brand and the audience, increasing brand awareness and loyalty to fans.

The company has achieved significant success in terms of the current development of Disney’s media marketing in the Chinese market. They have successfully started several film productions, gaining great box office success in China. For instance, the movie “Zootopia” achieved huge success in the Chinese market, not only in box office performance but also in terms of positive comments from audiences. Moreover, Disney has also collaborated with Chinese media and entertainment companies. To expand its influence in the Chinese market through joining film productions and marketing activities.

3.2. Possible problems

However, Disney’s media marketing in the Chinese market also faces challenges and potential issues. Firstly, cultural differences pose a significant challenge. Despite Disney’s efforts in localization, cultural nuances and sensitivities may not be fully understood or effectively addressed. This can result in misinterpretations or misunderstandings, leading to a disconnect between the brand and the Chinese audience. Cultural sensitivity and deep understanding of the local market are crucial in order to overcome this challenge.

Another issue Disney faces in China is competition from local entertainment industry players. Chinese audiences deeply attach to domestic franchising rights, roles, and storytelling traditions. Local companies better understand market dynamics and audience preferences than foreign competitors. The high loyalty to local brands makes it difficult for Disney to establish a foothold and compete effectively. To overcome this obstacle, Disney needs to constantly innovate and provide unique experiences to stand out from local competitors.

Intellectual property protection is also a problem of Disney China’s marketing. China has a history of copyright infringement, which causes a significant threat to Disney’s profitability and brand integrity. Using and distributing Disney’s content, characters, and products without permission will cause economic problems and damage Disney’s image as a high-quality brand. To solve this issue, Disney must actively enforce its intellectual property rights, collaborate with local authorities, and educate consumers on the importance of respecting copyright.

Localization is another potential block for Disney in the Chinese market. Although the company has made efforts to adapt its content to Chinese audiences, achieving an appropriate balance between Western and Chinese cultural elements may be challenging. Disney must avoid the trap of over-localization or Cultural appropriation, which may lead to a lack of authenticity and alienate the target audience. The seamless integration of Disney stories and subtle differences in Chinese culture requires careful research, consultation, and collaboration with local partners.

Finally, the influence of the online public and social media cannot be ignored. Negative comments and conversations on social media platforms may negatively impact Disney’s image and sales. Therefore, Disney needs to actively monitor social media platforms,
actively respond to and manage public opinion, and maintain brand image and audience relationships.

4 Suggestions

4.1 Solution for cultural difference

One of the best solutions to address the challenge of cultural differences and effectively market Media in the Chinese market is to cooperate with local companies or cultural experts. By collaborating with organizations or individuals who deeply understand Chinese culture, Disney can gain valuable insights and guidance on how to localize its content and marketing strategies effectively. These partnerships can ensure accurate reflection and resolution of cultural differences and sensitivities, thereby helping Disney brands get closer distance from Chinese audiences. This method will help Disney establish a stronger connection with the local market and improve its overall marketing effectiveness. For example, the movie “The Secret of Baohulu” released in July 2007, jointly launched by Disney and China Film Group, is the first local film launched by Disney since it entered the Chinese Mainland. The story still revolves around Disney’s exceptional children’s and family entertainment themes, promoting values such as courage, resilience, unity, and mutual assistance. After being released in 300 cinemas in China, it achieved good box office results [8].

4.2 Solution for Local brand competition

One of the best solutions to solve the challenges of local entertainment competition in China is to focus on innovation and providing a unique experience that sets them apart from their competitors. By continuously exploring new narrative techniques and providing immersive interactive experiences, the attention and interest of Chinese audiences can be captured. This can be achieved by developing innovative theme parks and using digital platforms to interact with fans. Disney can strongly establish itself in the Chinese market by providing unique and charming products and effectively competing with local brands—for example, Disney’s unique IP. According to Disney’s 2015 financial report, nearly 60% of the overall revenue of the Disney industry chain is driven by IP, including theme parks (30.8%), film and television entertainment (14%), goods (8.6%), and interactive media (2.2%). Although the box office revenue generated by IP only accounts for 14%, combined with a series of industries built around IP content resources such as theme parks, consumer products, and interactive media, it gets over half of Disney’s revenue [9].

4.3 Solution of copyright

One of the best solutions to Disney’s property protection issues in China is to take action to protect its intellectual property. This can be achieved through cooperating with copyright agencies and other companies, actively identifying copyright infringers, and taking legal steps.

Disney should also raise public awareness to educate consumers on the importance of respecting others’ property and the negative consequences of copyright infringement. By raising awareness and promoting cultural respect for copyright, Disney can prevent the unauthorized use and distribution of its content, characters, and products. In addition, Disney should consider using strong Digital rights management technologies and strategies to protect its online intellectual property rights and prevent unauthorized sharing and piracy. By demonstrating a commitment to protect its intellectual property rights, Disney can maintain its profitability and brand integrity in the Chinese market [10].

4.4 Solution for influence on social media

Disney should implement a comprehensive solution to effectively address the influence of the online public and social media. This involves actively monitoring social media platforms to stay informed about conversations and sentiments related to the brand. They should promptly respond to customer queries and negative comments, demonstrating their commitment to customer satisfaction. By actively managing public opinion and maintaining a positive brand image, Disney can mitigate any potential negative impact on its sales. Fostering strong audience relationships through engaging content and collaborations with influencers and online communities will further enhance Disney’s reputation and ensure a positive online presence.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Summary

Disney has successfully developed its media marketing strategy in China by leveraging localization and social media engagement. Adapting to Chinese culture and collaborating with local brands has strengthened its connection with Chinese audiences, increasing brand awareness and loyalty. Despite their success, Disney faces challenges such as cultural differences, competition from local players, intellectual property protection, and striking the right balance of localization. To address these challenges, Disney should cooperate with local companies or cultural experts to navigate cultural nuances, innovate and offer unique experiences to differentiate from competitors, protect intellectual property through legal measures and public awareness, and actively manage social media to maintain a positive brand image. Implementing these strategies will help Disney establish a strong presence in the Chinese market, ensuring sustained success and audience relationships.

5.2 Business value

The study examines Disney’s localization approach and social media engagement to connect with Chinese audiences and expand its brand influence. It also investigates the challenges faced by Disney in cultural
adaptation, competition from local players, intellectual property protection, and managing social media influence. Furthermore, the research provides recommendations on how Disney can overcome these challenges and strengthen its position in the Chinese market, benefiting both the industry and the company’s growth prospects.

5.3. Limitations

The limitations and shortcomings of this article mainly lie in the insufficient or even limited support for first-hand and digital data. In future research, it is possible to add more convincing and sufficiently supportive real and reliable data to support the article, and it is necessary to ensure the authenticity of the data and content.

References

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