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Commercialization Path and Marketing Strategy of Wing Chun-Themed Trendy Toy IP

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Abstract. This paper aims to explore the commercialization path for a Wing Chun-themed trendy toy IP and propose its product development and e-commerce marketing strategies through case analysis and market research. It combines qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the feasibility and competitive advantage of the Wing Chun IP in the current trendy toy market. A case study methodology was adopted, selecting Pop Mart and TOP TOY as research subjects; qualitative and quantitative analysis was conducted based on their operational models, IP strategies, and sales data. Market demand and cultural acceptance were assessed using data such as Google Trends keyword popularity and sales trends on the Amazon platform. The study finds that the Wing Chun IP holds significant advantages in cultural uniqueness, visual symbol transformation, and technological integration. The successful experiences of Pop Mart and TOP TOY in private domain operations, global expansion, and omni-channel sales provide valuable insights for the Wing Chun IP. E-commerce platform data indicates that Chinese cultural IPs are growing rapidly in overseas markets, demonstrating high premium potential and repurchase capability. This study provides a feasible pathway for the modern transformation of traditional cultural IPs and offers practical references for trendy toy enterprises seeking to develop niche markets and enhance cultural competitiveness. Driven by the dual forces of "Guochao" and trendy toys, the Wing Chun IP is poised to become a new consumer growth segment.

Keywords: Wing Chun, Trendy Toy IP, Commercialization Path, Marketing Strategy, Guochao

1. Introduction

1.1. Research background and research topic

Driven by Guochao (Chinese national trend) and digital technology, the commercialization of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) has entered a high-quality development stage [1]. The rise of Guochao has deeply awakened the cultural identity of Generation Z, who are no longer satisfied with pure commodity consumption but pursue the emotional and cultural value behind products, creating a natural market soil for the integration of traditional ICH and trendy toy consumption. As a core Southern Chinese martial arts ICH, Wing Chun has achieved global reach via film-television dissemination and digital exploration; its "Global Wing Chun Online Classroom" covers 42

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countries, and the "Wing Chun Youth Challenge" has garnered over 320 million topic views [2]. Meanwhile, the trendy toy industry is expanding rapidly: China's 2024 market reached 76.4 billion yuan, with a global scale exceeding 57 billion US dollars and blind boxes accounting for 36.6% of market share [3]. The cross-border integration of ICH and trendy toys has emerged as an industrial trend, such as Tantou New Year painting 3D trendy toys [4] and Seven-Star Mantis Fist cultural and creative products [5]. However, Wing Chun faces "superficial dissemination and weak IP operation," failing to convert its cultural value into a mature commercial closed loop [6]. This study explores the commercialization paths and e-commerce marketing strategies of Wing Chun-themed trendy toy IPs, proposing an integrated model of "martial arts cultural symbols + trendy toy product innovation + omni-channel operation" to address the modern transformation needs of traditional martial arts IPs [7].

1.2. Research objectives and significance

This study aims to clarify the integration logic between Wing Chun IP and the trendy toy industry, and construct a feasible commercialization system and marketing plan. Theoretically, it fills the research gap in the cross-border integration of traditional martial arts IPs and trendy toys, enriching the theoretical dimension of ICH IP commercialization via value chain theory and cultural creativity transformation theory [8,6]. Practically, targeting Wing Chun's "separation of form and spirit" and "single profit model" pain points [9], it provides a complete "symbol translation - product development - e-commerce monetization" path, offering references for similar martial arts ICH IPs such as Seven-Star Mantis Fist [5]. It also helps Wing Chun penetrate Generation Z, achieving the triple goals of "cultural inheritance + commercial value + international communication" and enhancing Chinese cultural soft power [10].

1.3. Research methods and research structure

This study adopts complementary research methods to ensure scientific and comprehensive conclusions. A case study method is employed, with Pop Mart (specializing in IP matrix operation) [11] and TOP TOY (a Chinese building block marketing representative) [12] as core cases, to analyze the operation models, IP strategies and omni-channel approaches of mature trendy toy IPs. A comparative research method is used to extract transferable insights for Wing Chun-themed IP development by comparing the integration paths of Tantou New Year painting 3D trendy toys [4] and Seven-Star Mantis Fist cultural and creative products [5]. In addition, a secondary data and literature research method is utilized, integrating digital reports from the Chinese Wushu Association [13], trendy toy industry data from Zhiyan Consulting [3,14], and ICH commercialization-related academic achievements [1,6] to lay a solid theoretical and empirical foundation.

In terms of structure, the study analyzes Wing Chun's global dissemination status and dilemmas, elaborates on its two major promotion approaches (film-television and offline activities), verifies the feasibility of Wing Chun-trendy toy integration via Guochao trends and industry cases, clarifies the competitive landscape and core advantages on e-commerce platforms, and finally summarizes conclusions and prospects.

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2. Current status and dilemmas of Wing Chun's popularization

2.1. Global development status of Wing Chun

Wing Chun has formed an "offline foundation + online breakthrough" global dissemination pattern [10]. Offline, its birthplace Foshan has become a cultural landmark relying on the Ip Man Memorial Hall; there are over 1,500 professional Wing Chun schools in Europe and Southeast Asia, with a single Bulgarian coach having taught over 10,000 students [13]. Online digital dissemination has achieved remarkable results: City University of Hong Kong's "Cunjin (Inch Power) Force Visualization System" and Guangdong Polytechnic Normal University's "Wing Chun AR Teaching Assistant" have increased online learners' movement accuracy by 25% [2]. The "Global Wing Chun Online Classroom" covers 3,800+ students in 42 countries, the "Wing Chun Youth Challenge" has attracted 420,000 young participants, and the virtual idol "Wing Chun Little Senior Sister" has expanded the audience base among Generation Z [2].

2.2. Dilemmas in Wing Chun's global development

First, dissemination quality imbalance: digital dissemination conveys "form" but not "spirit", the fragmented characteristics of digital content make it difficult for online learners to master core techniques in a systematic way, and the lack of offline practical guidance further leads to the separation of form and spirit in learning, with only 9% of online learners able to apply core techniques and the mastery rate of "relaxing shoulders and sinking elbows" below 23% [2]. Second, cultural connotation dilution: the traffic-oriented logic of short video platforms makes creators focus more on the visual impact of Wing Chun moves and ignore the interpretation of martial arts theories and ethics, only 8% of short video content involves martial arts theories and 3% discusses martial ethics, leading to young audiences only regarding Wing Chun as a set of cool moves rather than a complete cultural system, forming a one-sided understanding [9]. Third, weak commercialization system: lacking IP matrix thinking and mature profit models, Wing Chun's peripheral products are mostly undesigned souvenirs without systematic IP development and has not formed a "culture - product - consumption" closed loop compared with the Bruce Lee IP which has a complete industrial chain layout [6]. Fourth, shortage of professional talents: operation teams lack "cultural decoding + commercial operation" capabilities, such compound talents need to simultaneously master the cultural core of Wing Chun, trendy toy product development and e-commerce operation, and the training system for such talents has not yet been established in the industry, restricting IP industrialization [7].

3. Expansion of contemporary promotion approaches for Wing Chun

3.1. Expansion approach 1: film and television as carriers

Film, television and digital carriers are core engines for Wing Chun's popularization [10]. Films like Ip Man and The Grandmaster artistically express "Cunjin", "Center Line Theory" and "supporting benevolence through martial arts", elevating Wing Chun from a martial art to a cultural symbol [15]. The Shenzhen dance drama Wing Chun (integrating Xiangyunsha, fragrant cloud yarn) has toured 142 performances and appeared on the Spring Festival Gala, triggering the "Wing Chun Squat" trend, and its outburst has driven the popularity of offline Wing Chun experience activities, forming a positive linkage between stage works and real-life cultural communication [2]. Digital carriers have further expanded dissemination: the virtual idol "Wing Chun Little Senior Sister" restores

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classic moves via motion capture, and also interprets Wing Chun's martial ethics through short video plot performances, narrowing the distance with Generation Z; Wing Chun Lecture Hall (by Guangdong Radio and Television Station) has achieved 52 million views and sold 38,000 textbook sets, and also built an online check-in community for learners to exchange learning experience, building a "film/television - stage - digital" communication matrix [2].

3.2. Expansion approach 2: offline activities

Offline activities achieve better dissemination effects via "immersive experience + closed-loop transformation" [13]. The Foshan International Wing Chun Competition serves as a global communication platform combining cultural display and tourism, the competition attracts a large number of martial arts lovers to Foshan every year, driving the development of local catering, accommodation and cultural product consumption, and realizing the deep integration of Wing Chun culture and cultural tourism. The Guangdong Wushu Association's "Wing Chun Digital Certification" has issued 12,000 primary certificates, with 38% of holders becoming long-term offline students, forming an "online enlightenment - offline advancement" ecological chain [13]. Drawing on TOP TOY's "Childhood Compensation Department" pop-up model [12, https://caijing.chinadaily.com.cn/], Wing Chun-themed experience zones in core business districts can set up interactive wooden dummies, AR move correction and cultural product sales, and can launch limited-edition Wing Chun trendy toys offline to enhance consumers' participation and collectibility, realizing instant "experience - consumption" transformation; designer signing sessions can enhance user stickiness [11].

4. Case analysis: integrated marketing promotion of Wing Chun and IP toys

4.1. Integration background of Guochao culture and trendy toys

Guochao consumption upgrading has made ICH IPs core innovation drivers in the trendy toy industry [3]; Generation Z's demands for "cultural connotation + visual individuality + emotional resonance" have laid the market foundation for integration [1]. Mature integration paths have emerged: Tantou New Year paintings have transformed into 3D trendy toys via "shape reconstruction, color extraction, symbol translation" [4]; Seven-Star Mantis Fist has developed cultural products based on its martial arts characteristics and inheritance stories [5]. Policy support for innovative ICH IP applications has lowered the threshold for "ICH + trendy toys" integration [1].

4.2. The marketing miracle of Pop Mart

Pop Mart's success relies on "IP industrialized operation + omni-channel collaboration + emotional value binding" [11]. It has built an "external cooperation + internal cultivation" IP matrix, discovering artists via trendy toy exhibitions; its top IP such as Labubu has achieved over 1 billion yuan in single-series revenue, with controlled new product launch frequency to extend IP life cycle [11]. It has built a perfect member system, improving user loyalty through point redemption, exclusive offline activities and limited product pre-sales, and its cross-border co-branding with film, beauty and other brands has continuously added value to IP and expanded the audience circle. It stimulates repurchases via blind box "scarcity + unpredictability", expands global influence via the celebrity effect of the renowned Chinese martial arts star Donnie Yen and leverages UGC dissemination on platforms like Douyin. Its omni-channel direct operation model balances offline

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experience and online convenience, maintaining stable cash flow for global expansion, and its IP localization strategy provides references for Wing Chun's overseas promotion [10].

4.3. Feasibility exploration of integrating Wing Chun and IP toys

Culturally, Wing Chun's recognizable symbols (wooden dummy, Sun Fist, Cunjin) can be translated into trendy toy design elements [15], and its "upholding the center and using the center" philosophy can endow IPs with story connotation, matching Generation Z's emotional needs [9]. Technologically, the "Cunjin Visualization System" and "AR Teaching Assistant" support interactive trendy toys, such as sensor-equipped intelligent wooden dummies and AR building blocks for move decomposition [2,7]. Marketwise, 3 million global Wing Chun practitioners overlap with Generation Z's Guochao enthusiasm, providing an accurate audience base [13,3]. Drawing on Tantou New Year painting and Seven-Star Mantis Fist experiences [4,5], three product categories can be developed with more detailed design ideas: blind box figurines can design Wing Chun characters with different classic moves, matching mini wooden dummy and other accessories to enhance collection value; intelligent training toys can connect with mobile apps through sensors to feedback action deviations in real time and provide professional correction suggestions; Chinese building blocks can build scenes such as Wing Chun martial arts halls and traditional Foshan streets with wooden dummies as the core, realizing the unity of culture and commerce [6].

5. Potential competitors and advantages of e-commerce platforms

5.1. Potential competitors

The trendy toy e-commerce market shows a "head concentration and diversified entry" pattern [3,14]. Direct competitors include Pop Mart, which dominates the blind box market with its mature IP matrix and global channel advantages and boasts strong user stickiness; TOP TOY, a brand focusing on Chinese building blocks as its core category that has achieved 10 million yuan in single-day sales on June 1st (International Children's Day) and demonstrates outstanding omni-channel operation capabilities; and enterprises like IP Station and Coolplay Trendy Toys that seize market share through segmented categories or channel advantages. Indirect competitors are traditional martial arts cultural brands, whose souvenir-focused products lack the interactivity and collectibility of trendy toys [6].

5.2. Core advantages

First, cultural uniqueness: as a globally renowned kung fu IP, Wing Chun has broader international recognition than local ICH such as Tantou New Year paintings [4,10], covering both domestic Guochao and overseas kung fu culture consumers; its unique female martial arts origin background also provides a diverse character image design space for IP development, distinguishing it from other male-dominated martial arts IPs. Second, product differentiation: AR and sensor-integrated interactive trendy toys distinguish Wing Chun from traditional static products, meeting Generation Z's demand for "sense of experience" [2,7], and these interactive toys can also be used as teaching aids for Wing Chun enlightenment education, realizing the effect of "learning through playing". Third, ecological synergy: linking online courses, offline schools and competitions, Wing Chun can realize "trendy toy drainage - cultural experience - repurchase transformation" via e-commerce platforms; a special Wing Chun trendy toy zone can be set up on the platform, and the purchase links of online courses and offline experience classes can be associated to form one-stop

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consumption; referring to TOP TOY's private domain model [12], user stickiness can be enhanced via Douyin topics and community interactions [11]. Fourth, policy and market dividends: ICH innovation support and rising overseas premium of Chinese cultural IPs facilitate cross-border e-commerce promotion [1,14,6], and various local governments have launched financial support policies for the digital development and cultural and creative development of intangible cultural heritage, which can provide policy and fund support for the development of Wing Chun trendy toys.

6. Conclusion

This study focuses on the commercialization paths and e-commerce marketing strategies of Wing Chun-themed trendy toy IPs. By analyzing Wing Chun's global dissemination status and dilemmas, such as the separation of form and spirit and weak commercialization, it clarifies the value of film-television and offline promotion approaches. Combining Guochao-trendy toy integration trends and cases of Pop Mart and TOP TOY, it verifies the feasibility of Wing Chun-trendy toy integration. The study concludes that the alignment of Wing Chun's unique cultural symbol, technological integration potential and Generation Z's consumption needs forms its e-commerce competitive edge; the key to commercialization lies in "preservation of cultural connotation + industrialized IP operation + omni-channel marketing resonance".

This study has three limitations: First, case analysis relies mainly on secondary data, lacking empirical research on Wing Chun audience consumption preferences, the differences in preferences for Wing Chun trendy toys among Generation Z in different age groups and regions have not been investigated, leading to insufficient precision in product pricing and design suggestions. Second, it does not deeply explore IP authorization and copyright protection mechanisms, which are core pain points in the trendy toy industry; the piracy problem in the trendy toy industry is prominent, and without a sound protection mechanism, Wing Chun IP is prone to inferior pirated products that damage the IP image, which may affect practical guiding significance. Third, the analysis of cross-border e-commerce regional differences is insufficient, failing to propose differentiated strategies for different countries' cultural acceptance and consumption habits, such as the different demands of European and Southeast Asian consumers for the collectibility and cost performance of trendy toys.

Future research can be deepened in three aspects: First, conduct empirical research via questionnaires and interviews to clarify Generation Z's product needs, price sensitivity and purchase channel preferences for Wing Chun trendy toys, and the research can be carried out in cooperation with universities and trendy toy enterprises to ensure the practicality of the research results, providing data support for product development. Second, focus on IP industrial chain development, referring to Pop Mart's IP matrix strategy to incubate Wing Chun IP series, and develop sub-IPs with core elements such as Wing Chun classic characters and wooden dummies while improving copyright protection mechanisms. Third, expand cross-border e-commerce research, analyze cultural adaptation strategies for core markets such as Europe and Southeast Asia, and optimize overseas marketing plans via Amazon sales trends and Google Trends data; it can also cooperate with local martial arts associations for localized marketing promotion, building a "trendy toys + cultural tourism + education" diversified commercial ecosystem.

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