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Guochao Context: Omni-Channel Integrated Marketing Strategies and Commercial Value Analysis of Domestic Brands—A Case Study of Mixue Bingcheng

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Abstract. China's economic growth and rising incomes have reshaped consumption patterns. Consumers now prioritize cultural meaning, emotional resonance, and social value in products—fueling the "Guochao" (China-chic) trend, a core driver of domestic brand growth. Guochao reflects cultural confidence translated into consumer behavior, pushing brands to fuse traditional Chinese elements with modern design and lifestyles. Meanwhile, internet technologies and mobile social media have overhauled brand-consumer communication, replacing outdated one-way marketing with user-centric, omnichannel strategies spanning online and offline spaces. This paper analyzes Mixue Bingcheng as a typical Guochao case, using STP and 4P frameworks to examine its omnichannel strategy across three dimensions: online-offline integration, social media content, and Guochao IP development ("Xue Wang"/Snow King). Results show that centering its entire value chain on this IP enabled Mixue to build a differentiated image of "affordable + cultural resonance," achieving leapfrog growth in brand awareness and store network expansion. Yet challenges remain: shallow cultural integration, repetitive content, and an underdeveloped IP cultural narrative. In response, this paper proposes optimization recommendations including deepening cultural connotation exploration, refining content stratification strategies, and building integrated experiential frameworks. This study may serve as a practical reference for Chinese catering brands engaging in Guochao marketing and enrich relevant theoretical research.

Keywords: Guochao, Domestic Brands, Omni-Channel Integrated Marketing, Mixue Bingcheng, Commercial Value

1. Introduction

In recent years, China's consumer market has exhibited a distinct "Guochao" phenomenon. An increasing number of domestic brands have won the favor of young consumers through the creative transformation and innovative development of traditional Chinese culture. Over 70% of young consumers express a preference for domestic brands, believing that they embody cultural identity and aesthetic individuality. Domestic brands are facing unprecedented opportunities for

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development while simultaneously encountering intense homogeneous competition. How to stand out among numerous brands and establish a unique brand image and emotional connection has become a strategic imperative that every domestic brand must address.

Omni-channel integrated marketing offers an effective solution for brands to meet these challenges. It emphasizes that brands should maintain a consistent brand image and coordinated communication rhythm across all consumer touchpoints—whether online social media or offline stores. It requires brands to possess robust content production capabilities and online-offline linkage capabilities. Consumers' purchase decision paths have shifted from the traditional "Attention-Interest-Desire-Memory-Action" model to "Interest-Search-Word-of-Mouth-Action-Share," and brands must stimulate consumers' active participation at every stage.

With its unique brand positioning and marketing strategies, Mixue Bingcheng has become a paradigm of omni-channel integrated marketing under the Guochao trend. Founded in 1997, Mixue Bingcheng has grown into a beverage giant with over 25,000 stores worldwide. Its success is not only attributable to its extremely cost-effective product strategy but also to its continuous innovation in brand IPization, social media operations, and online-offline integration. However, has its Guochao marketing truly achieved deep excavation of cultural connotations? As the brand expands, has its marketing content become homogenized? Existing research provides limited systematic analysis on this front. This paper takes Mixue Bingcheng as the research subject, sorts out its Guochao-oriented omni-channel integrated marketing strategies, evaluates their effectiveness, identifies challenges, and proposes optimization recommendations.

2. Theoretical foundations of Guochao and omni-channel integrated marketing

2.1. Definition of core concepts

Guochao is a consumer trend rooted in cultural identity, combining traditional Chinese cultural elements with modern fashion design and contemporary lifestyles. It reflects the younger generation's rediscovery and confident expression of their own cultural heritage. For domestic brands, embracing Guochao means entering the realm of cultural value competition. Omni-channel integrated marketing represents the latest development of integrated marketing in the digital age, requiring the dismantling of barriers between online and offline, public and private domains, to achieve seamless coverage across all consumer touchpoints. Its core asset is brand IP, its core driver is quality content, and its core pathway is social viral dissemination.

2.2. Industry development trends under the Guochao consumption context

Currently, Guochao consumption has extended from apparel and cosmetics to diverse fields such as catering and cultural tourism. According to iiMedia Research data, China's new-style tea beverage market reached RMB 333.38 billion in 2023 and is expected to exceed RMB 400 billion by 2025. Driven by Guochao, tea beverage brands are actively exploring traditional cultural elements, such as product naming (e.g., "Misty Rain Oolong" and "Osmanthus Blossom"), packaging design (ink wash painting and calligraphy), and spatial experiences (garden-style stores), giving rise to the "new-style Chinese tea" segment. Meanwhile, social media has become the primary battleground for brand competition, with "check-in" and "seeding" behaviors on platforms like Douyin and Xiaohongshu directly influencing consumer decisions. Industry trends indicate that brand competition has shifted from product taste and price to cultural connotations and emotional value, with digital full-link marketing capabilities becoming the key to success.

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2.3. Theoretical framework

This paper adopts STP theory and the 4P marketing theory as its core analytical framework. STP theory includes market segmentation, target market selection, and market positioning, emphasizing that enterprises should divide markets based on consumer demand differences, select the most attractive segments, and establish unique brand positioning. The 4P theory encompasses Product, Price, Place, and Promotion, representing a classic marketing mix tool. Applied to Mixue Bingcheng: its market segmentation targets price-sensitive and fashion-conscious young students and entry-level professionals, its target market selection focuses on third- and fourth-tier cities as well as lower-tier segments within first- and second-tier cities, its market positioning establishes an "affordable and approachable" image. Around this positioning, its products are primarily high-value fruit teas and milk teas with prices mostly ranging from RMB 4 to 10, its channels build an extensive "dense stores + mini-program + delivery platforms" network, its promotional activities leverage the "Xue Wang" IP combined with Guochao festival-themed limited campaigns to achieve brand rejuvenation. As scholars have noted, "Brand rejuvenation does not merely refer to innovative communication measures in response to consumer youthfulness but rather seeks to find ways to actively engage with target audiences" [1]. Currently, the tea beverage industry exhibits trends of brand competition shifting toward cultural connotation transformation, with social media emerging as the main battlefield.

3. Mixue Bingcheng's Guochao-oriented omni-channel integrated marketing practices

3.1. Brand development overview and motivations for Guochao transformation

Mixue Bingcheng started as a "Hanliu Shaved Ice" stall and entered the market with its "RMB 1 Ice Cream," rapidly expanding through franchising. It had long been labeled by consumers as "cheap." With intensifying competition, Mixue Bingcheng had to seek new points of differentiation. The rise of Guochao came at an opportune time: its core customer base (young people aged 18–35) constitutes the primary Guochao consumer group—CBNData data shows that 67% of this group is willing to pay a premium for Guochao products, and tea beverages are among the categories with the highest Guochao penetration rates, with "fruit tea consumption also highly concentrated in this age group" [2]. This transformation was rooted in a profound insight into its own DNA and the market environment.

3.2. Mixue Bingcheng's omni-channel integrated marketing practices

3.2.1. Online-offline channel integration

Mixue Bingcheng has built an online-offline integrated network of "10,000+ stores + mini-program + delivery platforms." Offline, it has launched Guochao-themed stores, such as the Postal Service collaborative green-themed store and the Luoyang Hanfu-themed store, incorporating traditional architectural elements and offering Chinese-style cultural creative merchandise, transforming consumption spaces into check-in attractions and enhancing consumers' experiential engagement with traditional Chinese culture. Online, it promotes Guochao promotional activities through its mini-program and delivery platforms, directing traffic to offline locations.

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3.2.2. Social media content dissemination

Mixue Bingcheng has established a communication matrix centered on Douyin, Weibo, Bilibili, and Xiaohongshu, characterized by a distinct "personification" approach, engaging in frequent interaction and meme-sharing with users. Its content strategy is driven by "emotionalization" and "participatory engagement," encouraging user-generated content (UGC) [3]. In Guochao marketing, Mixue Bingcheng launches festival-themed limited content, such as the "Jade Rabbit Xue Wang" sticker series for the Mid-Autumn Festival, the "Xue Wang Dragon Boat Racing" short video for the Dragon Boat Festival, and the "Guofeng Cosplay Challenge" encouraging users to decorate Hanfu photos with Xue Wang stickers. This content retains the brand's entertainment DNA while subtly incorporating traditional festival elements, bridging the cultural distance between the brand and its users.

3.2.3. Xue Wang IP operations and cultural shaping

The core pillar of Mixue Bingcheng is the "Xue Wang" super IP. In 2018, in collaboration with Hua & Hua, the new image was designed as a snowman wearing a crown and a red cape and holding an ice cream scepter. "As a key strategy in the new consumption era, brand IPization aims to shape brand images using IP thinking, endowing brands with personality" [4]. Xue Wang has been given a complete persona, around which animated shorts, theme song MVs, and sticker sets have been created. "Under the lens of meme theory, netizens, driven by their own emotional expression, continuously integrate and remix memes with Xue Wang content to generate new cultural meanings," and user co-creation has continuously iteratively evolved the Xue Wang IP [5]. In terms of Guochao association, Mixue Bingcheng has dressed Xue Wang in Hanfu, transformed it into "General Xue Wang" for participation in Guofeng markets, and collaborated with IPs such as the Palace Museum Cultural Heritage. Users have also spontaneously created derivative works such as "Xue Wang Time Travel," adding cultural symbolic meaning to the Xue Wang IP atop its entertainment foundation, achieving continuous IP iteration.

4. Effectiveness and problem analysis of Mixue Bingcheng's omni-channel integrated marketing

4.1. Brand communication effectiveness and market value growth

Mixue Bingcheng's omni-channel integrated marketing has achieved remarkable results. Brand awareness has significantly increased, with the "Xue Wang" IP and theme song becoming deeply ingrained cultural symbols. Wu Yaqing noted that brand entertainment communication in the new media environment can achieve brand image rejuvenation by strengthening brand memory points and enhancing consumer participation, Mixue Bingcheng, through its IP image, theme song, and social media interactions, has shifted brand communication from one-way information delivery to consumer participatory communication, thereby reinforcing brand cultural identity [6]. Compared with premium brands, Mixue Bingcheng has successfully established a differentiated image of "affordable but not cheap, approachable and humorous." In terms of market value, as of September 2024, its global store count exceeded 45,000, with 2023 revenue surpassing RMB 20 billion and net profit growing over 30% year-on-year. Its total social media followers exceed 100 million, the Douyin hashtag "Mixue Bingcheng" has garnered over 10 billion views, and the brand ranks among

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the top in Guochao-related keyword searches, demonstrating that full-link marketing effectively drives commercial growth.

4.2. Existing problems and challenges

First, there is insufficient depth in Guochao cultural integration. Marketing remains largely at the level of borrowing visual symbols, lacking deep exploration of cultural connotations. "Marketing strategies for internet-famous tea beverages must ensure the authenticity of promotional information and avoid over-marketing" [7].

Second, social media content has become homogenized. The early "meme-play" style rapidly attracted followers, but as numerous brands imitated this approach, users' aesthetic thresholds have risen, and content has shown signs of formulaic patterning. "Current social media marketing by new-style tea beverage brands suffers from shallow brand memory points and insufficient consumer stickiness" [8].

Third, the brand IP image is disconnected from cultural construction. Xue Wang has strong entertainment attributes but weak cultural connotation carrying capacity. "Brands need to truly understand the connotations of traditional culture" [9]. Additionally, under the franchise model, food safety incidents occasionally occur, posing threats to the brand image.

5. Optimization recommendations for Mixue Bingcheng's omni-channel integrated marketing

Deepen the Exploration of Guochao Cultural Connotations: From "Symbol Borrowing" to "Meaning Co-Creation." Incorporate culturally storied elements into product R&D, such as 24-solar-term limited-edition teas, collaborate with intangible cultural heritage inheritors to integrate traditional craftsmanship elements into packaging and narrate their stories, produce documentaries telling stories about raw material origins, endowing the Xue Wang IP with deeper social significance. "Chayan Yuese adopts a direct-operation-only, no-franchise strategy, geographically limiting store presence to preserve its unique characteristics"—Mixue Bingcheng can learn from its approach of deeply cultivating local culture [10].

Optimize Social Media Content Strategies: Implement a "Layered Content" Approach. Retain high-frequency, entertaining "fast content" while adding lower-frequency, high-quality "slow content," such as Xue Wang IP animated series and user co-creation projects like "Xue Wang's Travelogue." Improve negative word-of-mouth management online by promptly responding to consumer complaints.

Build an Integrated Online-Offline Experience: Use mini-programs to record user preferences and provide personalized recommendations through offline store check-in identification. Set up "Xue Wang Check-in Points" to encourage photo sharing. Open themed flagship stores as experience centers. Optimize queuing experiences by using pre-order systems to reduce waiting anxiety.

6. Conclusion

This paper examines Mixue Bingcheng's Guochao-driven omnichannel marketing, analyzing its strategies, effectiveness, challenges, and optimization pathways. Key conclusions are as:

First, Mixue proves omnichannel integration works for mass-market domestic brands. By Centering its ecosystem on the "Xue Wang" (Snow King) IP, it connects online-offline and public-private channels, boosting brand momentum and user stickiness. Second, Mixue offers an accessible, humorous take on Guochao—contrasting with Chayan Yuese's refined cultural aesthetics.

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It blends traditional motifs with everyday levity and stress-relief themes, carving out a ditsinct "afforable + relatable" identity. Yet overemphasizing entertainment risks diluting Guochao's core: authentic cultural confidence. Third, its challenges—superficial cultural engagement, repetitive content, and underdeveloped—are widespread among fast-growing domestic brands. This reflects a "marketing-first, culture-lag" imbalance. Lasting success, not just virality, depends on aligning marketing innovation with sustained cultural value creation.

This paper proposes three actionable recommendations: (1) shift from symbolic borrowing to co-creating cultural meaning, (2) adopt a "fast+slow" content strategy, timely social posts paired with deep, platform-specific narratives, and (3) design seamless online-offline experiences to strengthen channel synergy. Limitations include reliance on public data and limited generalizability to premium or non-foodservice brands. Future research should incorporate internal metrics and cross-brand comparisons.

In summary, Mixue shows mass-market brands can build enduring equity through IP-led, content-powered, social-first omnichannel strategies. Its experience underscores a vital truth: Guochao is not a trend—it is a commitment. Only brands that embed genuine appreciation for Chinese culture into their DNA will endure.

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