

A Study on the Construction of Brand Storytelling and the Emotional Connection of Generation Z

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Abstract:

This study explores the characteristics and effects of Chow Tai Fook's (CTF) brand storytelling, as well as the current situation and trend of Generation Z's (Gen Z) emotional connection to the brand. The results show that CTF's brand storytelling is unique and able to attract the attention of Gen Z. Gen Z has high awareness and emotional connection to CTF, and most of them highly recognize the importance of the background of the brand story. In terms of willingness to buy, a significant proportion of respondents believe that brand storytelling is one of the reasons why they buy jewelry and precious metal products, and that brand storytelling and creation are more appealing to consumers than simple sales pitches. Emotional resonance, uniqueness, quality assurance and social responsibility, and lifestyle leadership were all seen as important factors in terms of brand cultural characteristics. As for story construction, compelling plot construction and authentic and believable content presentation are the most significant attractions for Gen Z consumers, while all other aspects have significant impacts as well.

Keywords: Emotional connection, brand storytelling, consumer psychology and behaviour

1. Introduction

In today's competitive market environment, brand storytelling has become an important means for companies to create a unique brand image and establish a deep emotional connection with consumers. As Gen Z is gradually becoming the dominant force in the consumer market, a deep understanding of their consumption characteristics and the need for emotional connection with brands is of vital significance to the marketing strategies of enterprises. Brand storytelling can give a brand a soul and personality, making it easier for consumers to recognise and remember the brand in a crowd of similar products. It conveys the brand's values, history, culture, and vision, and triggers emotional resonance among consumers, thus enhancing their sense of identity and loyalty to the brand. Gen Z has unique consumption concepts and behavioural patterns. They pursue personalised, diversified and experiential consumption, and pay attention to the values conveyed by brands and their compatibility with themselves. For Gen Z, the brand is not only the logo of the product but also a way to express themselves and show their individuality. They are eager to establish a deep emotional

connection with brands and hope that brands can understand their inner world and lifestyles. As a jewelry brand with a long history and outstanding reputation, CTF has a wide influence in the industry. Since its inception, CTF has consistently grown with its philosophy of high quality, innovative design, and service excellence [1]. CTF has made multifaceted efforts in brand storytelling. By telling the story of the brand's history, culture, innovation, cooperation, and social contribution, CTF has successfully shaped the brand's unique image and brand value and enhanced consumers' awareness and recognition of the brand. CTF's history not only witnesses the changes in the jewelry industry but also reflects the evolution of consumer needs and market trends and its efforts to connect with consumers emotionally. This study aims to explore how CTF builds emotional connections with Gen Z through brand storytelling. Specifically, this paper will analyse the content, communication methods, and interaction patterns of CTF's brand stories with Gen Z consumers to reveal its internal mechanism of building emotional connections. Through this study, one hopes to provide useful insights for CTF and other brands to better understand the needs of Gen Z consumers, optimise brand storytelling strategies,

and enhance the emotional connection between brands and consumers. At the same time, this study will also enrich the theoretical research in the field of brand marketing and provide theoretical support to promote the development of the industry further.

2. Conceptual and Emotional Connections of Generation Z

2.1 Consumer Psychology and Behavioral Characteristics of Gen Z

Gen Z, also known as the “Network Generation”, “Internet Generation”, “Two-dimension Generation” or “Digital Media Indigenous”, mainly refers to the generation born from 1995 to 2009. They have been seamlessly connected to the network information age since they were born, and are greatly affected by digital information technology, instant messaging equipment, smart phone products, etc. [2]. Gen Z pursues consumption differences and does not want to be restricted by traditional frameworks. They want to show their individuality and uniqueness through consumption and have a stronger interest in brands and products that can fulfill this need. Therefore, many brands tend to be personalized and build emotional connections with consumers, allowing brands to carry unique meanings and characteristics, affecting the connection between consumers and brands [3]. Gen Z consumers are relatively less loyal to brands, they pay more attention to shopping for products that match their own cultural identity to show their personal values and aesthetic pursuits, and if the brand fails to meet their needs or their values change, they will easily turn to other brands. So a brand’s products and services, as well as their cultural heritage, need to be recognized, understood, and accepted by consumers. The brand needs to build meaning and mutual recognition with consumers, so that consumers can complete their purchases [4]. Gen Z consumers have a strong interest in the stories and culture behind brands, and they believe that brand stories can reflect the uniqueness and values of a brand. They are more likely to choose brands that have unique stories and cultural underpinnings that resonate and connect with them emotionally.

2.2 The Concept and Importance of Emotional Connection

Brand personality and emotional connection. The emo-

tional connection between the brand and the consumer is reflected in the impression and characteristics formed by the brand in the consumer’s mind, and the consumer’s recognition of the brand’s personality and emotional connection is one of the important factors in the purchase decision. The product design of a brand should be unified with its personality, and combining product design with the construction of brand cultural stories can enhance consumers’ sense of identification and emotional connection with the brand [5].

Brand Storytelling. Brand storytelling is an important tool for creating emotional connection and resonance between brands and consumers. A brand story that strikes a chord engages Gen Z consumers through emotional resonance, authenticity, plot development and tension, and the delivery of core brand values. The brand story not only tells the origin, goals, values, and mission of the brand but also touches the emotions of consumers through unique narrative methods, enhancing their sense of identification and loyalty to the brand.

Emotional resonance. Emotional resonance is the key to establishing an emotional connection between brands and Gen Z consumers, who emphasize personal experience and emotional expression and are more likely to choose brands that match their emotions and values. Therefore, brands need to have a deep understanding of the needs and preferences of Gen Z consumers, touch their emotions through creativity and unique ways, and establish deep emotional connections.

Two-way emotional connection. The emotional connection between brands and Generation Z consumers is two-way. Brands not only need to deliver positive messages and emotions to consumers, but also need to listen to their voices and needs and respond to their feedback and expectations in a timely manner. This two-way emotional connection helps to enhance consumer trust and loyalty towards the brand, promoting the long-term development of the brand.

2.3 Emotional Connection Model

The relationship between CTF’s brand storytelling and Gen Z’s emotional connection can be illustrated through a “three-stage emotional connection model”. The model consists of three stages: emotional resonance, brand identification, and long-term loyalty (Fig.1).

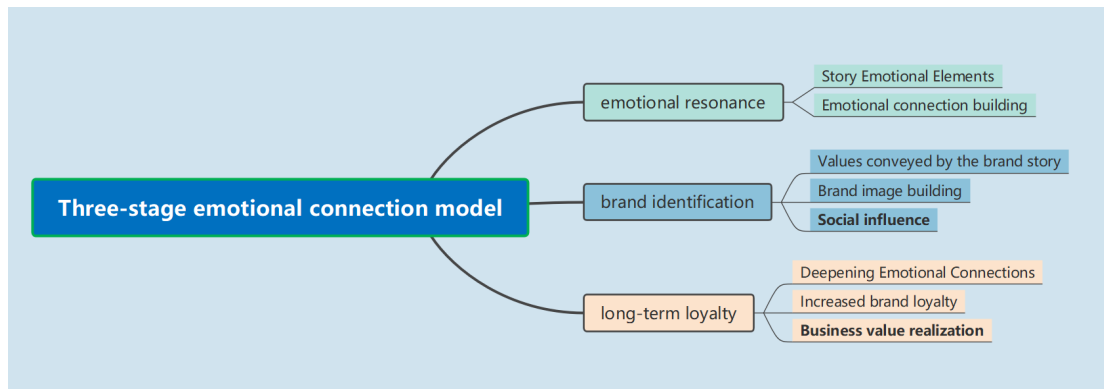


Fig. 1 Three-stage emotional connection model.

3. Narrative Analysis of Chow Tai Fook Brand

3.1 Brand Origin and Inheritance

In 1929, Zhou Zhiyuan, founder of CTF Jewelry, established the first gold shop in Hongde Road, Guangzhou, China, which mainly engaged in traditional gold jewelry and was named Chow Tai Fook. Zhou borrowed the name from the traditional greeting saying “five blessings, great wealth, and great honor so that customers can directly associate wealth, status, and good luck.

As the disruptive technological revolution begins to sweep through the jewelry industry, a culture of innovation is crucial to driving progress and change. At the same time, CTF has a long history and rich experience in craftsmanship, shouldering the responsibility of inheritance, so that traditional craftsmanship can be passed down from generation to generation [1].

3.2 Brand Values and Brand Stories Innovation

CTF has developed steadily in the market of different customer groups using a differentiation strategy and provides a personalized consumer experience. By providing diversified products, services, and sales channels, it meets their needs at different stages of life. The Group’s differentiated brand strategy is centered on CTF’s flagship brands, which are successive launched with targeted retail experiences, each of which carries life attitude and personality of different customer segments.

CTF embodies the core spirit of „diligence, sincerity, and justice“ which serves as the basis for formulating corporate vision and values, leading the way for the brand, and guiding the brand to become a pioneer in the jewelry industry.

The Jewelry Creative Center and Master Studio of Chow Tai Fook Group are the cradles of design talents and craftsmen, They develop innovative jewelry designs with

professional attainments and create products with soul from the perspective of customers. Such as re: form project, and innovative product structure. Breaking through the image and framework of traditional jewelry design, it allows customers to play their imagination space, freely combine and match, cooperate and deduce in different fields, to extend the product life cycle, so that customers can reduce the purchase of reused products.

4. Chow Tai Fook Brand Storytelling Strategy

4.1 Narrative Angle and Way

CTF’s brand story focuses on the heritage of history, showing the brand’s long history of development and traditional craftsmanship. Emphasizing the historical origins and traditional craftsmanship of the brand increases consumers’ trust and recognition of the brand. By deeply understanding the needs, purchasing behaviors, and consumer psychology of the target market, CTF is able to provide products and services more in line with the expectations of the target consumers. At the same time, through precise market positioning, CTF has successfully built a brand image of high quality, unique design, and excellent service [6]. Secondly, it also highlights the spirit of innovation and breakthrough, showing the brand’s innovation and breakthrough in design, technology, and marketing strategy. This strategy allows consumers to feel that the brand is advancing with The Times and constantly improving. In addition, by reflecting the brand’s commitment to social responsibility, CTF can win the goodwill of consumers and enhance the brand image and recognition, such as supporting charitable causes and environmental protection advocacy [7].

4.2 Emotional Appeal and Resonance

CTF integrates traditional Chinese culture into it and evokes consumers’ emotional identification and respect for traditional culture through the inheritance of history,

the display of traditions, and intangible cultural relics. This kind of cultural emotion can make consumers feel a sense of cultural belonging and pride when buying CTF products; At the same time, this method can also greatly stimulate the attention of traditional culture lovers and non-genetic inheritors to the brand [8]. Precious metal jewelry often represents the precious and eternal emotional design sense, by triggering consumers' yearning and desire for precious and beautiful, stimulating consumers and the brand to achieve emotional resonance. Consumers often buy CTF products with a desire to endow precious emotions such as love, friendship, or family remembrance.

5. The Construction of Emotional Connection between Chow Tai Fook and Generation Z

5.1 Gen Z's Cognition and Attitude towards CTF's Brand Story

This paper adopts the questionnaire as the research method. According to the results of the questionnaire survey, among the 66 valid questionnaires collected, the male-female ratio is listed as 14:52. Of the respondents under the age of 30 (that's just the Gen Z group), about 98.48%, more than half of them have the experience of buying

jewelry and precious metals, more than 80% have some knowledge of CTF, and think it is important to set the story background of various products of CTF.

Knowing that people are willing to buy jewelry and precious metals products, 18.18% of respondents think that brand stories are attractive and can trigger empathy as the reason for their willingness to buy such products (Fig.2). Meanwhile, 74.24% of respondents think that brand storytelling and creation attract consumers' attention more than simple marketing. In terms of brand cultural characteristics, more than half of the respondents believe that the emotional resonance, uniqueness, quality assurance, and social responsibility of the brand are important, while about 48% of the respondents believe that the characteristics of the brand in lifestyle leadership have strong appeal (Fig.3). In terms of brand story construction, based on the characteristics of story construction, it is understood that for current Gen Z consumers, whether it is the construction of fascinating plots, the presentation of authentic and trustworthy content, the triggering of emotional resonance, the transmission of brand culture and values, the organic combination of stories and products, and innovative and diverse expression methods, they all have strong appeal to consumers. Among them, the top two most influential are the construction of fascinating plots and the presentation of authentic and trustworthy content (Fig.4).

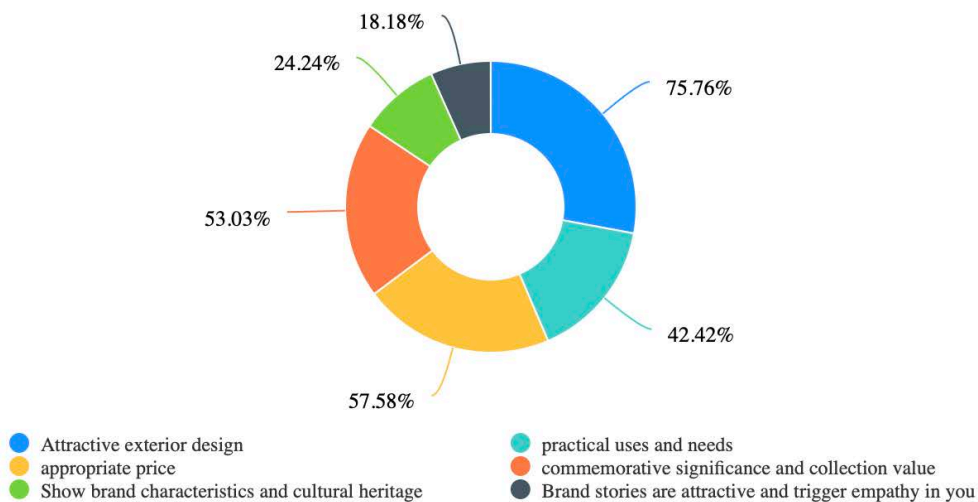


Fig. 2 Reasons to buy products.

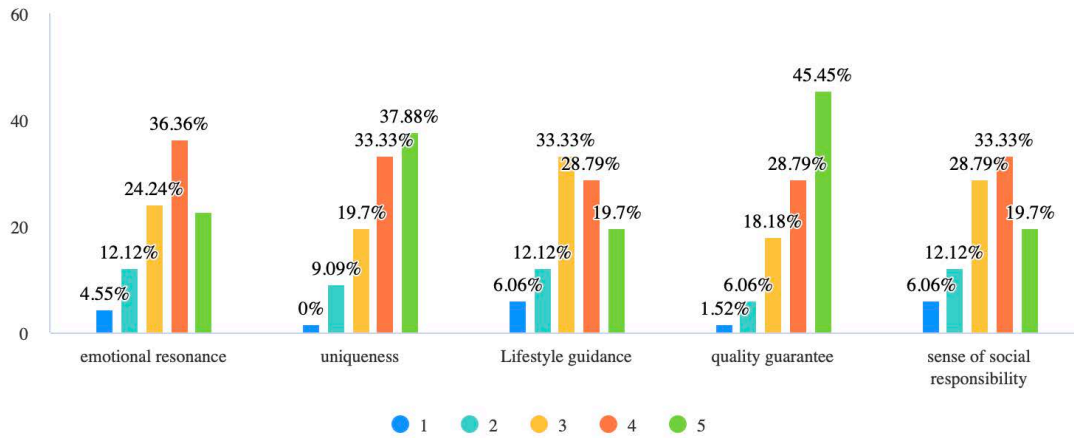


Fig. 3 The appeal of brand cultural characteristics.

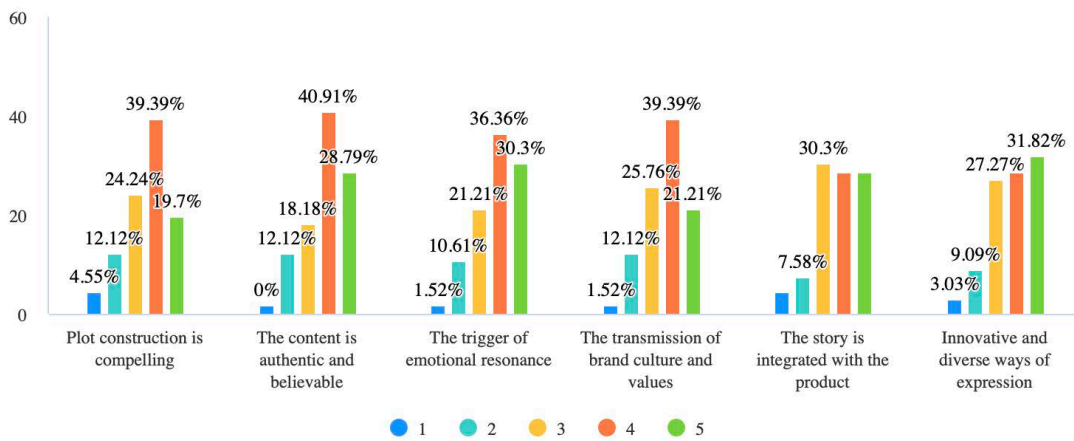


Fig. 4 The most influential content.

5.2 The Impact of Brand Storytelling on Gen Z's Emotional Connection

By telling the story of a brand's origins, purpose, values, and mission, it can touch the emotions of Gen Z and build a deep connection with them [8]. A compelling brand story helps to raise awareness of the brand. When Gen Z is attracted to a brand story, they are more likely to share and spread that story, expanding the brand's reach and exposure. For CTF, by telling stories of its century long development and inheritance, such as inheriting history, showcasing traditions, and intangible cultural heritage craftsmanship, this emotional connection can enhance Gen Z's sense of identity and loyalty to the brand, making them more likely to choose products or services from the brand. At the same time, it not only allows consumers to feel a sense of cultural belonging and pride when purchasing CTF products; but This method also greatly stimulates the attention of traditional culture enthusiasts and inheri-

tors of intangible cultural heritage to the brand [9]. A brand story is an important means of communicating a brand's values and mission. By telling the story of the brand's origins and the motivation behind it, the brand can show Gen Z the values and social responsibility it promotes, enabling them to empathize with the brand and form a long-term brand identity. At the same time, CTF connects precious metal jewelry with daily emotions such as love, friendship, etc., giving ordinary jewelry different meanings, thereby triggering consumers' yearning and longing for preciousness and beauty, and stimulating emotional resonance between consumers and brands. When Gen Z can relate to the brand story, they are more likely to be long-term supporters of the brand, continue to buy the brand's products or services, and recommend them to others. In a competitive market, a brand story can help a brand stand out from its competitors. By telling unique brand stories and showcasing innovation and breakthroughs in

design, craftsmanship, and marketing strategies, CTF can create a unique image and personality that sets it apart from its competitors, thereby establishing a unique position in the hearts of Gen Z [10]. This emotional connection can enhance Gen Z's sense of identity and loyalty to the brand, making them more likely to choose the brand's products or services. Brand stories not only help build brand awareness and loyalty but also bring business value to the brand. By telling an attractive brand story, the brand can attract more Gen Z consumers, increase sales and market share, and thus increase the value and competitiveness of the brand.

6. Conclusion

This study delves into the characteristics and effects of CTF's brand storytelling as well as the current situation and trend of Gen Z's emotional connection to its brand. The study found that CTF's brand storytelling is unique and attracts the attention of Gen Z. Gen Z has a high level of awareness and emotional connection to CTF, with most recognising the importance of the brand story context. In terms of purchase intention, a significant proportion of respondents believe that brand stories are attractive and can trigger empathy as one of the reasons for purchasing jewelry and precious metal products, and that brand story narratives and creations are more appealing to consumers than simple sales pitches. In terms of brand culture, emotional resonance, uniqueness, quality assurance, and social responsibility, as well as lifestyle leadership, are all seen as important factors. In terms of storytelling, compelling plot construction and authentic and believable content presentation are the most appealing to Gen Z consumers, while all other aspects also have a significant impact. For the optimisation of CTF's brand storytelling, attention should be paid to the elaborate design of the plot to make it more attractive and interesting. At the same time, ensure that the story content is authentic and credible to enhance consumers' trust. In terms of enhancing the emotional connection with Gen Z, it is important to dig deep into the brand's emotional resonance points, highlight the brand's uniqueness, and continue to strengthen quality assurance and social responsibility. Deliver positive values through stories and lead the lifestyle of Gen Z. More innovative and diverse storytelling expressions that are closely integrated with the product can be launched to meet the diverse needs of Gen Z. There are some limitations in this study, as the sample size is relatively small, which may affect the generalisability of the conclusions. Future research could further expand the sample to cover a wider range of regions and people. Differences in brand story and emotional connection to CTF among different

age groups, genders and other groups can be explored in depth. Other competing brands can also be studied and comparative analyses conducted to provide CTF with more comprehensive strategic recommendations. In addition, with the changes in the market and consumers, it is also an important direction to continuously track and study the dynamic changes in the emotional connection of Gen Z, in order to help CTF better adapt to the market development. In conclusion, the analysis of CTF's brand story and Gen Z's emotional connection in this study provides valuable references for the development of CTF's brand, which helps it to continuously improve its brand influence and competitiveness in the market competition.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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