

Study on How 4I Marketing Affects Consumer Buying Motives in Jewelry Brands

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Abstract: With consumers seeking better experiences, jewelry brands are incentivized to shift from broad advertising to targeted strategies that spark specific buying motives. This study uses the 4I marketing framework—Interest, Incentives, Interaction, and Individualization—to explore how these strategies influence jewel buying motives through a survey. Results show that Interest and Incentives have the strongest impact (affecting over 68% of people positively). The motive of “personal-emotional fulfillment” relies heavily on both Interest (78.3% positive impact) and Incentives (78.3% positive impact), while the “prayer for blessings” motive is more influenced by Individualization (82.5% positive impact). The study suggests a “motive-driven, tailored approach” marketing strategy for jewelry brands, recommending using Interest and Incentives to spark buying decisions and individualization based services to turn motives into sales, especially in self-fulfillment and blessing-focused markets.

Keywords: 4I Marketing; Jewelry Brands; Buying Motives.

1. Introduction

As e-commerce, social media, and technology develop consumers purchase decision patterns are changing. Jewelry brands are moving from a “product-focused” to a “consumer-focused” approach. The 4I marketing model—Interest, Incentives, Interaction, and Individualization—became a strategic marketing tool for companies with it centralizing around customers. Many jewelry brands are using 4I marketing to influence what drives buying decisions. In 2021, Pandora utilized consumer insights to design products and offer personalized experiences, achieving great results with this approach. In China, Chow Tai Fook boosted online sales using AR try-on technology and live-stream shopping. This study examines how these strategies affect jewel buying motives based on the 4I model and surveyed data. Findings includes Interest and Incentives strongly encourage buying. Specifically for a “prayer for blessings” motive, Individualization, Interest, and Incentives all shows significant influence. The study offers practical marketing tips for jewelry brands based on such findings.

2. Literature Review

2.1. 4I Marketing Theory

In the 1990s, Northwestern University marketing professor Don Schultz introduced the 4I principles—Individualization, Interest, Interaction, and Incentives. These principles emphasized on customer driven approaches:

Individualization: Tailoring experiences to each consumer’s unique preferences.

Interest: Making products or campaigns entertaining for increased engagement and loyalty.

Interaction: Two-way communication between brands and consumers for real-time feedback.

Incentives: Offering benefits, like discounts or emotional value, to meet consumer needs.

The internet has made these strategies easier to apply, helping brands connect with consumers more effectively.

2.2. Chinese Consumers’ Jewelry Buying Motives

Research by Li Yanan identifies 11 motives for Chinese jewelry buyers: showing off, status, uniqueness, following trends, socializing, quality, self-pleasure, self-gifting, self-expression, prayers for blessings, and investment. The “prayer for blessings” motive stands out from the rest due to Chinese cultural traditions. 2024 report of JD.com noted an extreme 1000% surge in sales of 18-bead prayer bracelets, driven by their emotional value tied to blessings.

3. Analysis of 4I Marketing in Jewelry Brands

3.1. Individualization Marketing

Individualization means understanding consumers’ unique needs to make marketing more personal. For instance, Pandora combines online and offline platforms to offer tailored services. Its website allows customers to design custom bracelets by choosing chains, charms, and accessories. The algorithm also suggests items based on purchase and browsing history. Customers can design online and try the products in-store, creating a seamless experience that boosts engagement and increases purchase desire. Chinese brand Jie Sheng Ji combines traditional knotting techniques with modern designs to reflect Eastern aesthetics, with each piece carrying individualized meanings on blessings or commemorations. Whether through technology or cultural storytelling, personalized marketing builds stronger connections with consumers, increasing sales and loyalty.

3.2. Interest Marketing

Interest marketing draws consumers in by making campaigns entertaining and engaging. Chow Tai Fook, for example, hosts offline exhibitions, collaborates with brands, and creates approachable social media content to increase customers’ understanding and interest of the brand. In 2023, its “GOLD IS CHIC” art exhibition in Shanghai blended traditional craftsmanship with modern designs, offering

interactive photo booths and light displays for visitors to commemorate their experiences online through photos. Chow Tai Fook also partnered with NetEase for a Valentine’s Day gift set, tying emotional meanings to its designs. On Rednote, the brand account posted amusing videos showcasing product designs and styling tips, appealing to younger audiences. Similarly, Cartier’s 2024 “Blossoming Elegance” exhibition in Shanghai displayed 300+ artworks, combining traditional Chinese culture with its jewelry designs, creating an immersive artistic experience for customers. These creative, culturally rich events attracted more high-end buyers for Cartier, improving its status in the jewel market.

3.3. Interaction Marketing

Interaction marketing uses social media and events to connect directly with consumers, encouraging communication and feedback in real time. This marketing strategy is one of the key method for jewelry brands to increase customer loyalty for brand. Via different forms of interactions, customers are not just receiving information passively, rather actively participating in brand events, increasing their interest and purchase desires for brand products. For example, Chow Tai Fook ran a Rednote campaign where customers shared photos of their jewelry for prizes. The campaign boosted customers engagement and helped Chow Tai Fook understand market preferences. In addition, sales staff also share jewel styling tips via WeChat Moments, incentivizing purchase through the sharable nature of social media. Pop-up stores carries a similar purpose of increasing interaction. Cartier’s themed pop-up stores in Shanghai allowed customers to try new products, play games, and customize items. These pop-up shops encompass a light-

hearted pleasurable atmosphere, building positive impressions for the brand, while interactions make consumers feel involved, increasing brand exposure and buying motives.

3.4. Incentives Marketing

Incentives provide tangible or emotional benefits that encourages purchases. Through Chow Tai Fook partners with JD.com for discounts such as “40 off every 300” during Valentine’s Day, with additional free gifts to encourage higher spending. Similarly, Pandora’s loyalty program allows customers to exchange points for redeemable gifts. It’s birthday coupons and new customer discounts serves a similar incentive. Jie Sheng Ji provides free red-cord renewal services, building trust between customers and brand through extending product life. These benefits make consumers feel valued, and may drive impulsive purchases.

4. How 4I Marketing Affects Consumer Behavior

4.1. Research Method

(1) Purpose: Buying behavior is shaped by motives, which are influenced by marketing and external incentives like culture or technology. This study proposes two hypothesis regarding the relationship between 4I strategies and purchase behaviors:

H1: Interest and Incentives positively affect purchase motives.

H2: Specifically for the “prayer for blessings” motive, Individualization, Interest, and Incentives provides strong positive incentives.

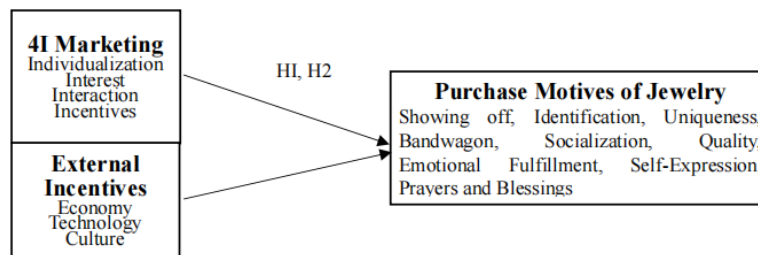


Figure 1. The figure shows how 4I marketing and external incentives connects to motives like emotional fulfillment, blessings, and showing off status

(2) Methodology

Data collection for study is conducted through an online survey shared via WeChat groups and Moments.

The survey consists of three parts: The first part examines basic demographic information such as gender, age, education,

region and purchase history of participants. The second part investigates their purpose of purchase. The third researches on how motives impact purchase behaviors. Partial metrics of the second parts are based on pre-existing studies.

Table 1. Examples of some questions in the survey questionnaire

	Measuring Metrics Examples	Question Examples
Motive of Purchase Choose according to your experiences and beliefs (Between 1 to 5, 1 as Completely Disagree, 5 as Completely Agree)	Emotional Fulfillment	I purchase jewelries for my own fulfillments, rather than leaving an impression on others I purchase jewelries for myself rather than attracting attention of others I purchase jewels for my happiness, regardless of the happiness of others
	Prayers and Blessings	I believe some jewelries can bring luck to me I tend to choose my birthstone when purchasing jewelries Jewelries signifying luck or happiness are more attractive to me I believe some jewelries can protect me against harms
	Economic Values	I purchase jewelries because their values rise in the future. I purchase jewelries for collection purposes.
Marketing Incentives Choose accordingly how these marketing strategies affect your motives. (Between 1 to 5, 1 as No effect, 5 as Significant effect)	Individualization	How does creating a unique brand experience through personalized design and service affect your purchase motive? Unique storytelling of the jewelry brand will inspire me to learn about the brand The unique craftsmanship of the jewelry brand's products would entice me to learn about the products The storytelling of the jewelry brand's products can inspire me to make a purchase Personalized service, such as adding specific patterns, words or unique design elements to the jewelry according to consumer demand The products of the jewelry brand are in line with my preferences The sales and after-sales service of the jewelry brand meets my habits and preferences. I can learn about relevant information of the jewelry brand through suitable channels
	Interest	Does entertaining or interactive content of the brand affects your purchase motive? Delivering brand message through lighthearted posts through social media platforms like Wechat, Rednote, and TikTok Organizing themed events to attract consumers to participate online and offline Cooperating with other brands (e.g. cultural and creative IPs) to launch collab products, inciting interest and surprises Creating brand exhibitions to deepen consumer's awareness and recognition of the brand

4.2. Analysis

4.2.1. Demographic Analysis

There are 59.26% more female participants than male participants in this study. Participant are most commonly found in the 20–39 age range, taking 70.37% of total participants. Regional information stated over 59.2% of participants are located in Shanghai. Purchase history indicated over 75.9% of survey responders bought middle or high-end brands such as Pandora or Chow Tai Fook, while 11% bought economically affordable brands such as Jie Sheng Ji.

4.2.2. Impact of 4I Marketing

Survey questions measured how each 4I principle affected buying motives. For each of the four metrics of the 4I principle, Individualization has 7 questions, Interest has 4 questions, Interaction has 5 questions, and Incentives has 4 questions. For each category, the study averages out the responded score. Each question is rated out of five. Average

scores of 3.5 or higher indicated a positive impact. Results showed:

Interest: 68.5% of participants are positively influenced by interest marketing.

Incentives: 68.5% of participants are positively influenced by incentive marketing.

Individualization: 63.0% of participants are positively influenced by Individualization marketing.

Interactive: 55.6% of participants are positively influenced by interactive marketing.

The statistics provide support to our hypothesis of Interest and Incentives are positively driving buying motives.

4.2.3. Impact on Specific Motives

The survey identified 11 motives, each comprising 2-5 questions. When participants chose “Agree” or “Extremely Agree” for any of the questions, the study treated they as motivated by this metric. The distribution of the 11 motives is as below:

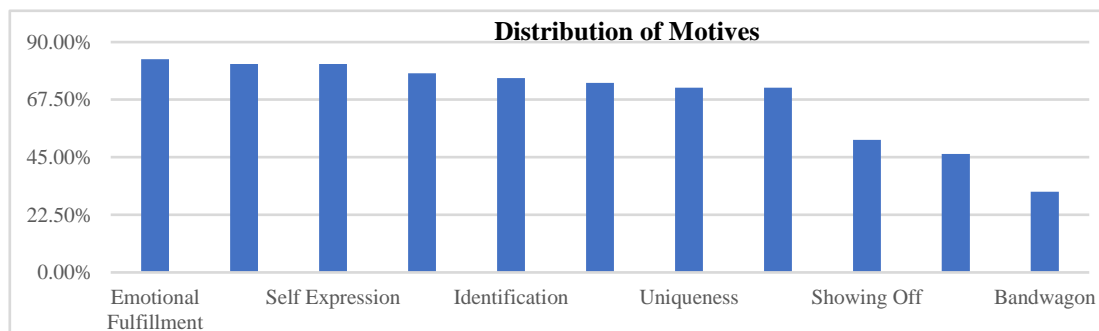


Figure 2. Proportion of 11 consumer motive groups

The top three motives are emotional fulfillment, self-gifting, and self-expression—all tied to personal fulfillment centering around self. None of the three motives align with traditional jewelry motives around socialization norms or financial appreciation, instead representing individual needs.

For participants that aligned with these three motives, the population positively effect of 4I principals is as below:

Interest: 78.26% positive impact.

Incentives: 78.26% positive impact.

Individualization: 71.74% positive impact.

Interaction: 63.04% positive impact

The study suggests for motives tied with self-fulfillment, Interest and Incentives marketing strategies showcased the highest positive impact, followed by Individualization marketing.

74% of respondents expressed motives in searching for blessings and prayers. The proportion of people affected by 4I principles is as below:

Individualization: 82.5% positive impact.

Interests: 80% positive impact.

Incentives: 80% positive impact.

Interaction: 60% positive impact.

Statistics shows a higher positive impact on Individualization, Interest and Incentives specifically for prayers and blessings based motives. Interaction's impact is significantly smaller compared to the other three factors.

5. Marketing Insight

5.1. Interest and Incentives as Core Drivers

With Interest and Incentive being the two most impactful marketing strategies, brands can utilize them as their foundational strategies. Approaches of Interest marketing can strengthen the entertaining content and campaigns both online and offline, initiating the emotional bond between purchasers and brand products. Taking insight from APM Monaco's "Jewelry Styling Challenge" social media campaign, users are incentivized to share their stylization of brand jewelry, increasing brand exposure.

Incentives can take advantage of prices lower than expectation and emotional values from products, influencing final decisions. Chow Tai Fook's "trade-in old jewelry" campaign, allows customers to exchange old jewelry for new ones, downgrading economical barriers of purchases and creating emotional value at the same time, increasing the purchase rate of new products.

5.2. Individualization for Standout Appeal

Personalized marketing builds emotional bonds, increasing the impact purchase motives have on customers. Pandora's bracelet service allows customers customizable charms based

on their stories, interests and key moments of life. Such individualized experience strengthened the emotional connection customers had with the product, fostering a loyal relationship between customer and brand.

5.3. Tailored Strategies for Different Motives

Jewel brands should connect 4I strategies to specific motives. For emotional fulfillment, focus on Interest and Incentives; for jewels of prayer blessings, emphasize Individualization of service. This targeted approach ensures marketing that hits the right audience.

6. Conclusion

The success of Chow Tai Fook and Pandora provides valuable insight on brand marketing strategies for jewel brands. This study examines the 4I principal's impact on buying motives using surveys and case studies, with supporting evidence on Interest and Incentives are foundational, Individualization sets brands apart, and tailored strategies maximize impact. These insights can guide other jewelry brands. Future research could refine these strategies to keep up with changing consumer trends.

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