

Empowering Macao's Local Brand LemonCello Gelato through Short Videos

-- An analysis of marketing strategies and consumer engagement

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Abstract: Amid the booming short video marketing and the intensifying competition in the ice cream market, this study focuses on Macao's local ice cream brand, LemonCello Gelato. Through a questionnaire survey, this paper analyzes the brand and identifies its core consumer group as female students aged 18 to 25. The primary consumption scenarios are during hot weather and for travel check-ins. Consumers emphasize influencer marketing, visual design, and content depth in online marketing. Based on these findings, this paper proposes marketing strategies empowered by short videos, including video production and operation, to enhance the brand's competitiveness and provide practical guidance for its brand marketing.

Keywords: Macao, LemonCello Gelato, Brand Marketing, Short Video Marketing, Online Promotion.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

In the current mobile communication era, short videos have become an important tool and method for media innovation and reporting, representing a significant direction in the development of information dissemination. According to the 54th Statistical Report on the Development of Internet in China, as of June 2024, the number of online video users in China reached 1.068 billion, an increase of 1.25 million compared to December 2023, accounting for 97.1% of the total internet users. Among them, the number of short video users reached 1.05 billion, accounting for 95.5% of the total internet users[1]. Due to their convenience in dissemination, low production thresholds, flexible formats, and rich content, short videos have garnered massive attention and traffic. Over recent years, short videos have also given rise to numerous commercial activities related to this medium[2].

The global market for artisanal ice cream reached \$76.11 billion in 2023 and is expected to continue growing. Among the regions, the Asian market has experienced particularly notable growth shown in **Figure 1**.

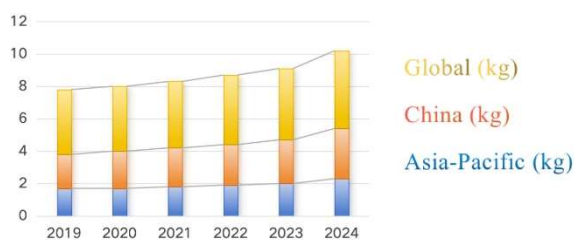


Figure 1. Global, Asia-Pacific and China per capita Ice Cream Consumption (2019-2024)

The ice cream market in China is booming, with projections indicating that it will exceed 200 billion RMB by 2027. Consumer preferences have shifted from simple indulgence to a pursuit of high-end, culturally relevant, and innovative products[3]. In Macao, a world-renowned tourist

destination, there exists a close interdependence between the ice cream market and the tourism industry. Each year, a large number of international and mainland Chinese tourists flock to the region, constituting the main consumer base for ice cream products. In this unique tourism context, local ice cream brands often cleverly incorporate local cultural elements, resulting in distinctive product styles. Compared to the vast market size of mainland China, Macao's ice cream market is relatively small and exhibits significant seasonal characteristics, with strong consumer demand concentrated during peak tourist seasons. At present, the competitive landscape of Macao's ice cream market has already taken shape, with numerous competing brands employing various strategies. For instance, Mo Yi Ji attracts consumers with its unique durian-flavored ice cream, Li Ji maintains market share with traditional milk-flavored ice cream, and Kika differentiates itself by offering Japanese-style handcrafted ice cream. These brands each possess distinctive features. Given Macao's unique position as an international tourist city with a diverse clientele from different countries and cultural backgrounds, there are notable differences in consumer preferences for ice cream products. This necessitates that brands gain deep insights and accurately adapt to the varied demands of consumers from different regions. In this context, LemonCello Gelato faces intense market competition. To ensure sustainable development in such a competitive market environment, upgrading its brand marketing strategy has become an inevitable choice.

LemonCello Gelato is a local ice cream brand originating from Macao, founded by Nikita Fu in 2007. It was the first store in Macao to focus on making and selling Italian hand-pulled gelato. The brand's core philosophy is to offer ice cream tailored to Eastern palates, with a particular emphasis on reducing sweetness and incorporating a wide variety of fresh fruit flavors. To date, LemonCello Gelato has developed over 100 different flavors, with fruit-based options as its primary feature. Currently, the brand faces several challenges, including intense market competition, seasonal fluctuations, and limited marketing channels. Therefore, an upgrade in brand marketing is urgently needed to address these issues.

1.2. Research Objective

In today's new media environment, brand development is flourishing in a variety of ways. This study aims to comprehensively analyze the current situation and challenges of the LemonCello Gelato brand. By examining the impact of short video platforms on its brand image construction, the study seeks to explore effective ways to enhance the brand's competitiveness and influence. The objective is to precisely identify the issues and root causes in market perception, communication strategies, and other aspects of the brand. Additionally, it analyzes the alignment (or misalignment) between the brand's short video content style and audience preferences. Based on these insights, this research will propose a strategic framework to optimize consumer engagement processes, enhance brand experience, and build loyalty in the context of integrated online and offline activities. The findings will provide both theoretical and practical guidance for the brand's marketing efforts.

1.3. Research Questions

Short videos have permeated various industries, and short video platforms have become the battlefield for marketing competition across different product categories. The forms of short video marketing are diverse, ranging from creating personal branding to promote products, to marketing institutions and brands, and even developing creative content videos to attract live-stream traffic, ultimately converting it into revenue[4]. For example, after attracting a large number of followers on its official new media account, MIXUE faces the dual task of interacting with online followers and engaging with offline store customers. Shifting online traffic to offline locations helps maintain the brand's visibility and reputation in the public eye, facilitating a positive cycle in the relationship between MIXUE and its consumers, and enhancing its sustainable development and competitiveness[5].

2. Literature Review

2.1. Development of Short Videos

With the rapid development of mobile internet and 5G technology, short videos continue to lead the mobile internet sector, attracting substantial attention from scholars for research. Some researchers define short videos as a type of short film with a low technological threshold, while others describe them as videos that are short in length and filmed and disseminated through mobile smart devices. Although there is no universally agreed-upon definition of short videos, their core attributes typically include being "short" and using "mobile devices." Short videos are particularly effective at filling users' fragmented time, thanks to their most prominent characteristic—short duration. The most common length for short videos is under 15 seconds. If the duration extends up to one minute, the video must contain substantial information and have a certain number of followers. Videos longer than one minute generally require more in-depth content. Typically, short videos are kept under 30 seconds, ensuring they are not too lengthy but still provide a certain amount of information[6]. Given the short duration, short videos cannot develop stories or build atmosphere like movies or TV shows, where there is ample time for plot development. The concept of "second-level response" refers to capturing users' interest within 3 to 5 seconds. Compared to longer videos, short videos need to focus on this metric to maintain users' attention

and encourage them to continue watching[7].

2.2. The Theory of Short Video Marketing

New media marketing refers to marketing activities conducted through digital technologies and internet-based media forms. Compared to traditional marketing, new media marketing is more interactive, has a wider reach, and is relatively cost-effective[5]. As an important manifestation of new media, short video marketing plays an indispensable role. Short video marketing can be divided into three main forms: the first is user-generated content (UGC), where users independently create videos related to a brand. The second is brand collaborations with influencers or internet celebrities to create short videos with product placements. The third is when the brand itself produces and pushes videos to showcase products, promote brand culture, and so on.

In their study, Shan Wen-sheng and Li Lei identified three main advantages of short video marketing. First, short videos possess unique social attributes, which help amplify the brand's dissemination effect. Second, the different structures of short video content can trigger associations in users' minds about the brand. Third, user interactions with the brand within short videos, such as giving gifts or commenting, can enhance user loyalty and engagement[13]. Many brands are currently focused on how to leverage short videos to increase their brand's exposure, improve their overall image, and drive high traffic conversion rates. As a result, short video marketing strategies hold significant importance and influence in brand communication. Building on these three advantages, Tian Ruiyan further examined the attributes of short video marketing, concluding that it features low barriers to entry, scene-based experiences, and native advertising content[8].

2.3. Brand Marketing

McCarthy proposed the famous 4P framework: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. The product strategy forms the foundation of the entire marketing mix; price is a sensitive yet difficult-to-control factor in the marketing mix; distribution channels refer to the set of interdependent organizations that facilitate the smooth exchange of products and services between the market and consumers (users); promotion refers to activities through which companies convey various product-related information to consumers via advertising, public relations, sales promotions, and personal selling. Personal selling, in particular, is a two-way communication method that stimulates consumer desire and promotes purchasing behavior[12].

Consumer behavior theory suggests that the purchasing process is one of gathering information and making comparisons. Given a clear need, consumers actively retrieve stored information and collect new information to compare the advantages and disadvantages of products within a certain range, eventually making a selection. Outstanding brands often become the first choice for consumers. Through effective brand marketing strategies, companies can influence consumer decisions to a certain extent[14]. Yang Min proposed using packaging design to reshape a brand, showing that packaging design has evolved from a simple aesthetic expression to a stage of marketing design. Through the transformation of packaging design, companies can shape a brand's image as green and healthy, which is an effective branding tool[9]. Zeng Guojun and Sun Shuzhi, through research on the theory of cross-regional food culture production, promote brand reshaping and foster international

dialogue in the field of food geography. Their study shows that reshaping a brand is not only an economic phenomenon but also a social and cultural phenomenon with spatiotemporal attributes, representing a unique cultural production process[10]. Yu Jiayi and others have attempted to drive brand marketing upgrades using a new media matrix, with targeted online advertising, offline store renovations, and other actions[11].

In summary, short videos have secured an important position in the field of new media marketing due to their unique advantages. Their high interactivity and strong dissemination power provide significant support for brand marketing and image building. Therefore, this study will build on these theoretical foundations and practical experiences to explore the brand marketing strategies of LemonCello Gelato in the context of short videos. The research will analyze how the brand can leverage short videos to overcome current market challenges, expand revenue, and solidify its market position, offering insights and methods for other local Macao brands and similar businesses in the new media era.

3. Research Method

3.1. Survey Method

The survey method is one of the most fundamental and commonly used methods in research, widely applied across various studies. The basic concept of the survey method involves the researcher breaking down the research topic into detailed subtopics, drafting simple and understandable questions, and compiling them into a standardized questionnaire. The collected data from the completed questionnaires is then statistically processed to draw conclusions[15]. The survey method was first developed in the UK, where questions were printed on paper and sent out for participants to complete and return. With the development of electronic computing technology, the distribution and collection of surveys have become more scientific and convenient.

This study utilized the professional online survey platform "Wenjuanxing" to collect questionnaire data, targeting tourists visiting Macao and university students studying in Macao. Based on real-time feedback, the questions were adjusted for clarity, ambiguity, and comprehension issues, resulting in the final version of the questionnaire.

3.2. Data Collection

The data were collected through the online survey platform "Wenjuanxing" (<https://www.wjx.cn/>), by distributing the survey link via social media and QR codes. The survey was officially distributed from October 5 to October 8, 2024. A total of 69 responses were collected, of which 2 were invalid and were excluded. This resulted in 67 valid responses, yielding an effective response rate of 97%. Descriptive statistics of the sample group are shown in Table 1. Based on the survey responses, it can be preliminary concluded that the primary consumer group for ice cream is women aged 18 to 25, primarily students. The main consumption scenarios are hot weather or travel-related occasions. Most consumers choose stores based on recommendations from social media, and the key focus for online marketing is influencer marketing and visual design.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of survey samples

Sample	Option	Sample size	Percentage
Gender	Male	18	26%
	Female	49	74%
Age	Under 18 years old	1	1%
	18-25	48	71%
	26-45	12	19%
	Over 46 years old	6	9%
Occupation	Student	49	75%
	Office worker	11	16%
	Free worker	5	7%
	Retirement	2	2%
	Others	0	0%
Identity	Tourists visiting Macao	18	26%
	University students in Australia	46	69%
	Macanese	3	5%
	Others	0	0%
Purchase scenario	Hot Weather	30	44%
	Dessert	12	17%
	Travel Clock	25	37%
	Others	0	0%
Will go on social media Recommended online celebrity store	Yes	45	66%
	No	32	34%
For Online Marketing What do you value most?	Story of Brand	12	18%
	Influencer	20	30%
	Corporate Culture	15	22%
	Visual Design	20	30%

4. Research Results and Discussion

4.1. Questionnaire and Interview Results

Through in-depth analysis of the completed questionnaires, it can be preliminarily concluded that the core consumer group for ice cream is women aged 18 to 25, primarily students. Their consumption scenarios mainly focus on hot weather when they seek to cool down and during travel when they engage in social media check-ins.

When selecting a store, most consumers tend to make decisions based on recommendations from social media. Among the various forms of online marketing, they are particularly focused on influencer marketing, which leads trends, and the visual design in product promotions. These factors significantly influence their purchasing decisions.

4.2. Discussion

Based on the findings above, the online brand marketing strategy for the Macao local brand LemonCello Gelato, empowered by short videos, should focus on the following two aspects:

4.2.1. Short Video Content Creation Directions

1) Strengthening Brand Story and Culture Create a series of short videos that showcase the brand's origin, development, production process, and relentless pursuit of quality. The videos can detail the strict selection process of ice cream ingredients, telling stories of sourcing high-quality fruits and pure milk from around the world. This will highlight the brand's commitment to quality, its pursuit of health-conscious,

low-fat products, and its effort to build a deep brand culture, effectively enhancing consumer recognition and connection with the brand.

2) Creating a Diverse Range of Narrative Short Video

Develop fun and engaging short story videos centered around ice cream. These videos can feature scenarios that attract young consumers, such as students desperately seeking ways to cool off on a scorching summer day. This background could lead to an entertaining and unexpected story, where the brand's ice cream is cleverly integrated into the narrative. By adopting this approach, the brand moves away from boring product-only displays, infusing the videos with vitality and appeal, significantly enhancing their entertainment value.

3) Highlighting Product Features and Benefits

Emphasize the ice cream's unique flavors, using close-up shots to showcase its smooth texture, rich layers, and fresh ingredients. Combining these visuals with engaging captions and music can better stimulate viewers' desire to purchase. At the same time, highlight the health-conscious, low-fat attributes of the product by inviting a professional nutritionist to explain its nutritional content. By comparing it with regular ice cream, this approach can showcase the brand's commitment to offering both delicious and health-conscious products, attracting health-conscious consumers.

4) Optimizing Visual Presentation and Filming Techniques

Reference the visual styles of popular high-traffic short videos, incorporating flexible camera angle transitions and frequent scene changes to avoid viewer fatigue. Additionally, ensure that the composition strictly adheres to visual principles, maintaining both the professionalism and aesthetic appeal of the shots.

4.2.2. Short Video Operations and Promotion Directions

1) Create and Optimize the Brand's Official Account

The first step is to set up a dedicated short video account for the brand, ensuring that the brand profile clearly presents its values and philosophy, with a prominent logo to enhance recognition. The contact information should also be included to appear professional. A content plan should be devised, aiming to release 3-4 high-quality short videos per week. The content should be carefully crafted at every stage and be flexible in terms of timing and themes, adjusting to peak tourist seasons, holidays, and trending topics to maximize exposure. Actively engage with followers by responding to comments and direct messages, regularly addressing questions, and occasionally hosting giveaways to increase interaction. This will enhance feelings of participation, belonging, and loyalty, thereby improving fan engagement.

2) Influencer Partnerships and Key Opinion Leader (KOL) Marketing

Invite influencers from the food and tourism industries to review the brand's ice cream and create short videos recommending it. Leveraging their influence can help the brand expand its reach and attract a larger pool of potential customers.

5. Conclusion

This study focuses on the Macao local brand LemonCello Gelato, analyzing its current situation and challenges within the context of short videos, and proposes targeted marketing strategies to enhance its brand promotion and shape its brand image.

Through methods such as surveys, in-depth interviews, and content analysis, this study identifies that the core consumer

group is women aged 18-25, with consumption scenarios primarily centered around hot weather and travel check-ins. Consumers rely heavily on recommendations from social media and place particular emphasis on influencer marketing and visual design. At the same time, the study finds that the brand faces deficiencies in areas such as brand awareness channels, online promotion effectiveness, and content. The brand has limited online visibility, its promotion lacks depth and creativity, it has not established an official account, and there are issues with video production, such as monotonous content and fixed formats.

Based on the problems identified, this study proposes two key aspects for short video-powered brand marketing. In content creation, the brand needs to strengthen its brand story and culture, create short videos with rich storylines and conflicts, highlight product features, and optimize visual presentation through shooting angles and composition. In terms of operations and promotion, the brand should establish and optimize an official account, strengthen collaboration with influencers, key opinion leaders (KOLs), and MCN agencies, and actively engage with followers on the official account to enhance user stickiness.

These strategies will help enhance the LemonCello Gelato brand's image and competitiveness, providing new developmental ideas for the brand in a highly competitive market. They also offer valuable insights for Macao local brands and similar companies in brand building in the new media era. However, the study has limitations, such as the limited sample coverage and lack of in-depth analysis of competitors. Future research could expand the sample size, strengthen competitive comparisons, and further explore brand-consumer interactions and long-term brand building.

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