

The Strategy of Empowering City Brand Building with Cultural Creativity from the Perspective of Fan Economy: A Case Study of Seoul

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Abstract. This study takes the role of fan economy in shaping the urban cultural and creative industry and urban brand building as its core, and focuses on the practical experience of Seoul. Combining the business model of fan economy with the cultural and creative industry, this paper explores its role and influence in enhancing the brand image of Seoul City. By focusing on the case analysis of the idol fan meeting in Seoul, the aim is to reveal the potential and innovative means of the fan economy in promoting the cultural soft power of the city. Secondly, analyze the marketing model that combines pop-up stores with celebrity IPs. Through the positioning of different customer groups, the methods to achieve profitability should be analyzed. Meanwhile, it explored the positive empowerment and development assistance that the fan communities of celebrities as city brand ambassadors can bring to the city. Overall, the research findings and conclusions of the study provide theoretical support and practical reference for optimizing the development strategies of urban cultural industries and shaping the unique brand image of cities. Analyzing the methods and steps involved has certain innovative significance and can also offer references for the brand building of other cultural cities.

Keywords: Fan economy, cultural creativity, city brand, Seoul

1. Introduction

As the competition among global cities in all aspects and from multiple perspectives becomes increasingly fierce, city brand has become an important manifestation of a city's soft power. In recent years, fan economy, as an emerging consumption and promotion model, has provided new ideas for the dissemination of urban culture and the shaping of its image, and has demonstrated excellent results. It has gradually become an important driving force in the global cultural market. The research topic of this study is how to leverage the enthusiasm and stickiness of fans to enhance the influence of urban culture and promote the shaping of urban brands, which has become a question worthy of consideration and research. Take Seoul as an example. As a leader of Asian cultural trends and a model of promoting city brands through fan economy, it is facing rare opportunities in building city brands by leveraging fan economy. The research method is to explore how to empower through cultural creativity, taking the fan economy as the starting point, and the

city brand strategy of Seoul as the research object, with the goal of summarizing experiences for use by other cities [1].

2. Overview of the current situation

The K-POP culture of Seoul has an extremely high influence worldwide, especially in Asia. The fan economy is extremely popular here. Many enterprises and institutions are innovating their business models to meet the diverse needs of fans while making profits. The successful experiences of star entertainment companies and IP companies such as SM, YG, and Line Friends demonstrate the possibility of the success of new business models. Therefore, these practical experiences and innovative models provide the foundation for research and a wealth of cases. Seoul has thus successfully shaped a distinctive urban cultural image. The core role among them is fan culture. Fans actively participate in various cultural consumption, interaction and dissemination, which greatly enhances the international influence of the city brand. However, in the rapidly changing cultural market environment, how to continuously utilize the driving force of the fan economy to optimize the integration and dissemination of urban cultural resources still requires further exploration and innovation. With the above as the purpose and direction of the research, this article will conduct a study on these typical activities.

2.1. Fan meeting

Firstly, for fan meetings, which attract fans to consume through marketing scarcity, it is very likely to cause fans to invest a large amount of money, and at the same time, it is accompanied by an emotional investment that is positively correlated with it [2]. This emotion often generalizes to the city where the idol is located: fans extend their love for their personal idol to the city where the idol is located, thereby stimulating the fans' love for the city. This kind of passion is extremely important for urban promotion, as it is followed by a large number of fans (tourists) identifying with the city's culture. In the long term, this emotional investment can be transformed into continuous travel and consumption behaviors, such as repeated visits and purchases around the city. Products, participation in local activities. Therefore, events such as fan meetings not only enhance the stickiness between local fans and tourists, but also contribute to the development of the city's economy and brand [3].

Secondly, also because fan meetings usually adopt a scarcity strategy to enhance uniqueness and appeal. This scarcity has sparked extensive attention from fans, thus making the event a hot topic within the fan community. At the same time, due to fans' enthusiasm for their idols and their mindset of sharing wonderful moments with the common community, they will actively share their interactive experiences and personal feelings on social media, thus creating a viral spread [4]. Such dissemination has an "amplification effect", allowing fans who were unable to attend to simultaneously experience the enthusiastic scene of the fan meeting, thereby stimulating their broader attention and yearning for it. Unlike traditional advertising, fans usually have a higher trust in spontaneous dissemination on social media, enabling the city brand to achieve wide exposure through the spontaneous dissemination of fans at the fan meeting. This unbalanced allocation of resources - limited on-site resources and unlimited online communication space - provides rich content and extensive influence for city promotion and image building, thus having a more profound impact on the city's image.

In addition, while the fan meeting was held, a series of peripheral products were sold along with it. These products are usually directly associated with idols to attract fans' consumption. Brands aim to enhance the influence of their idols' personal brands and the sense of belonging among fans by

selling related souvenirs, derivatives or peripheral products, such as clothing, stationery or special souvenirs [5]. Meanwhile, the sale of peripheral products can extend the theme of the event. For instance, idol collaboration coffee shops can be opened at famous scenic spots in the city. It can not only satisfy consumers' psychology of "since they have already arrived", but also achieve direct profits through fans while promoting the growth of local tourism revenue, thus realizing a win-win situation.

In recent years, fan meetings are no longer merely simple interactions between celebrities and their fans. It has gradually become an important way for cities to shape their brands and develop tourism. By making fans more emotionally engaged, taking advantage of scarce opportunities to make the event more attractive, and also generating more profits through the event. At the same time, using different platforms for promotion can also make the influence wider. These methods help cities continuously enhance their image, shape their brands, and at the same time drive the development of tourism. With the increasingly strong atmosphere of fan culture economy and the development of digital technology, fan meetings have played a more important role in urban tourism and culture.

2.2. Pop-up store

In today's era, pop-up stores are also a popular form. This kind of small-scale retail store has a temporary feature and is usually opened at a specific location within a short period of time (a few days to a few weeks). This kind of store aims to create a novel, fast and unique experience, and at the same time attract customers' attention through marketing "time-limited and limited-time" to achieve the effect of creating topics and brand exposure. It is precisely because of the significance of its advantages that entertainment companies often take it as the key form of IP profit.

Firstly, pop-up stores ingeniously leverage the images and distinct labels of celebrities, fully utilizing the wide popularity and influence they possess as a powerful means of attraction, successfully drawing in a large number of customer traffic. Meanwhile, in the design of the products being sold, a large number of personal characteristic elements of the stars have been carefully integrated. Whether in terms of appearance design, product functions or detail handling, efforts are made to highlight the unique style and individual charm of the stars. This makes these products not only have practical value, but also possess collection and commemorative significance, thus demonstrating a distinctive appeal in the market. Fans have a very high acceptance of paying for their idols. It is precisely by combining this with the flexible location selection of pop-up stores that brands can fully leverage the strong purchasing power of fans in various regions.

Meanwhile, pop-up stores frequently appear in major shopping malls and can attract many passers-by to stop by. The key lies in their sudden and temporary nature. Because pop-up stores usually lack long-term build-up and preview, they suddenly appear in a short period of time, giving people a sense of novelty and surprise. It has a remarkable effect in arousing the curiosity of passers-by, prompting them to enter the store to find out. People are inherently interested in and eager to explore "unknown" things, and the brief appearance of pop-up stores precisely meets this psychological need to pursue "novelty". At the same time, this temporary nature means that the store is not bound by long-term planning, is more flexible and creative, has greater design freedom, and can continuously generate topics to attract the attention of passers-by. Pop-up designers often take advantage of this characteristic, attempting to use design to catch the attention of passers-by, gain higher traffic, and thereby achieve the goal of making profits [6]. Moreover, the scarcity and limited duration of pop-up stores have intensified the sense of urgency, causing passers-by to be reluctant to miss this unique experience and purchase opportunity. It is precisely because of this "sudden

appearance and brief existence" characteristic that pop-up stores can attract widespread attention and curiosity in a short period of time, thereby driving a large number of people and potential consumer demands, and have become an effective marketing model.

The path described above is essentially a direct and clear market strategy. The core of this strategy lies in precisely targeting the specific needs and preferences of various consumer groups and conducting targeted positioning marketing. Meanwhile, in order to ensure that the value brought by pop-up stores is not merely the direct profits generated from selling products at present, entertainment companies often incorporate the characteristic elements of the city into their products, thereby indirectly promoting the local economy of Seoul, the birthplace of KPOP. The interesting point is that the pop-up store does not adopt a straightforward and rigid approach to forcibly embed Seoul culture into the products. Instead, it uses a subtle and gradual method to evoke people's resonance unconsciously.

On the one hand, for those fans who are passionate about K-POP culture, being able to be there in person and immerse themselves in such a pop-up store is undoubtedly an experience closely combined with their interests. This direct contact with foreign cultures not only greatly aroused their favorable impression and deep emotional bond towards the city of Seoul, but also imperceptibly narrowed the psychological distance between them and this city. This intense emotional resonance evoked by idols often inspires them to immediately develop an urgent desire to travel to Seoul in person [7]. Looking to the future, it is obvious that it will bring tourism revenue to the city of Seoul. Especially with the growing popularity of kpop culture and the expansion of its fan base, such income is also increasing day by day, enabling Seoul to attract a considerable number of tourists while building its own city brand. This approach is essentially a combination with the fan economy.

On the other hand, for ordinary consumers who are not so enthusiastic about K-POP or Seoul culture, the cultural integration and unique atmosphere creation presented by pop-up stores can also bring refreshing feelings. They do not think that these stores exist merely to showcase Seoul's culture. Instead, they are attracted by the unique products that these stores might sell, whether of high quality or with distinctive designs, all of which are positive business cards of Seoul. In such an environment, they will involuntarily generalize the outstanding feelings that pop-up stores bring to them to the image of all stores in Seoul. Their curiosity and desire to explore will thus be aroused. Pop-up stores, through the meticulous creation of a unique and indescribable experience, make people unconsciously feel a distinctive cultural atmosphere and thus be attracted.

Pop-up stores, as an innovative form of cultural dissemination, have, in a short period of time, subtly enhanced citizens' understanding and interest in Seoul's culture through their flexible spatial layout. This strategy takes advantage of the "immediacy and limitation" brought by spatial experience, potentially stimulating the willingness of a considerable number of pop-up tourists to travel in the future and, in an imperceptible way, strengthening Seoul's status as a cultural symbol. It not only satisfies the sense of belonging of K-POP fans, but also attracts groups who are curious about Seoul culture but have not yet delved deeply into it, thereby promoting the wide dissemination of the city's culture and the construction of a sense of identity.

2.3. Celebrity endorsement

Celebrities serving as city image spokespersons also have many significant advantages, which can effectively enhance the overall popularity and wide exposure of the city to a large extent. It is also a common cooperation between many entertainment companies and city authorities. This kind of cooperation not only helps to shape a positive and modern urban brand image, but also attracts more tourists and investors, promoting the development of the city's economy.

Specifically, celebrities, relying on their extensive influence and consistently high popularity accumulated in the entertainment industry, can quickly and efficiently bring the cities they endorse into the public eye both at home and abroad. It mainly takes advantage of the stickiness and consumption desire of fans to drive the economic development of the cities promoted by celebrities. Especially in some small cities, the star label is more likely to make small cities "go viral". This kind of promotion is not limited to the domestic market but can also cross national boundaries, enabling the city to gain more attention and recognition on the international stage, thereby enhancing the city's popularity and influence on a global scale [8]. This not only helps to shape the city's positive image and brand value, but also reflects the city's modernization, vitality and charm, attracting more tourists and investors. Through the endorsement of celebrities, urban culture and values can be better conveyed, enhancing the public's cultural identity and sense of belonging.

In addition, the star effect can also trigger heated discussions in the media and on social media, creating a good reputation for publicity and creating favorable conditions for the brand promotion of the city. Specifically, for the majority of influential stars, the organization and operation of fan groups play a crucial role in the promotion of contemporary star influence. Many influential stars have efficient and professional fan support organizations behind them. These organizations have dedicated personnel responsible for the operation and marketing strategies of the stars, with the aim of continuing and expanding the public influence of the stars. Therefore, when celebrities act as city spokespersons, these fan organizations usually make use of the resources they have at hand, combining Internet hotspots, elements of popular culture, as well as humorous and innovative content for promotion. Publishing content related to celebrities through online platforms not only enhances interaction among fans but also further boosts the popularity of the celebrities and the city. The core value of this approach lies in leveraging the professional operation of fan organizations, combined with the diverse dissemination channels of the Internet, to achieve precise and effective city promotion goals. This strategy that combines fan culture with new media communication technology not only enhances the effect of celebrity endorsements but also provides new ideas and paths for building city brands.

These methods have brought visible success to the city: Seoul's entertainment industry has thus become particularly developed. With the government's active policy support and the improvement of industrial infrastructure, Korean Wave culture (K-pop, Korean dramas, etc.) has formed a strong international influence and market demand through global dissemination, promoting the rapid expansion of the industry [9]. In addition, the star effect and the mature operation of the fan economy have also brought a huge impetus to the industry, forming a virtuous cycle of the industrial chain. In conclusion, the combined effect of government support, cultural innovation, international market expansion and the star economy has enabled the entertainment industry in Seoul to continue to thrive and become one of the important centers of the global cultural industry. Meanwhile, the city of Seoul itself has thus attracted a group of highly loyal fans, bringing a guaranteed development potential to its tourism industry [10].

3. Conclusion

In recent years, with the increasingly expanding influence of kpop culture, such extensive influence and traffic appeal have first achieved high profits through more channels, fully utilized the fan economy, and gradually developed into a complete model: An operation mechanism with high commercial value effectively converts the enthusiasm and loyalty of fans into economic benefits, bringing continuous commercial benefits to related enterprises, artists and brands. Meanwhile, such methods and means have also been innovatively applied to the promotion and shaping of city

brands. By leveraging the influence of celebrities and their fan base, cities can more effectively enhance their own popularity and influence. Through multi-channel and multi-platform interactions, the city's characteristics and cultural values can be disseminated to a wider public. This strategy not only enhances the youthfulness and internationalization of the city's image, but also boosts its appeal and competitiveness, achieving differentiated positioning and sustainable development of the city's brand.

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