

# Social Media Management Strategies and User Engagement Behavior of Japanese Beauty Brands

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**Abstract.** Facebook is currently the fastest-growing social networking website with the largest user base. In addition to being a communication tool, it is a source of information for users. Facebook's large user base attracts many enterprises seeking to understand and connect with their target customers. They set up Facebook accounts to promote their products and engage in direct communication with users through posts, comments, and messages. Facebook introduced the "Like" button in 2009, which allows users to express their approval and appreciation instantly. Such convenient interactive features of social media websites allows enterprises to collect feedback from users to formulate future marketing strategies. This study uses a quantitative method to explore the key factors that influence social media users' feedback on posts. Social media posts of three Japanese beauty brands were categorized based on six key factors, while the ratios of likes given by users was examined as feedback, so as to measure the impact of the key factors on the brand's attractiveness to customers. The findings of this study will help beauty brands create more effective social media marketing strategies.

## 1 Introduction

According to a survey of digital usage in Taiwan conducted by "Digital 2022: TAIWAN", there are 21.35 million active social media users, who spend an average of 2 hours and 4 minutes a day browsing social media. This statistic indicates the high frequency of use and high dependence on social media. The large number of user groups implies unlimited business opportunities. A survey found that 27% of users use social media to search for brand information, and 44.2% make judgments based on community content before placing a purchase order for commodities (Chou, 2022). Therefore, regardless of whether an enterprise sells its products through online or physical channels, adequate investment should be allocated to social media marketing to enhance brand visibility and disseminate product information.

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## 2 Development status of beauty products

According to the definition by Taiwan’s Ministry of Health and Welfare, cosmetics means “products applied externally to the human body, teeth, or oral cavity mucous membranes, and used to moisturize hair and skin, stimulate the sense of smell, improve body odors, change appearance, or cleanse the body.” Referring to this definition, in this study, beauty products are divided into five categories: facial care, facial makeup, body care, hairdressing, and fragrance.

According to a 2020 survey on the global cosmetics market by Forward the Economist, the market size increased from US\$415.1 billion in 2010 to US\$535 billion in 2020, and is estimated to reach US\$729.7 billion in 2025. According to a 2022 study on Taiwan’s beauty industry by Cosmetic Marketing Research Institute, 50.74% of consumers attached the most importance to “face care,” compared to other product categories. Face care was followed by “facial makeup” (22.97%). Despite the COVID-19 lockdowns and prevention measures, consumers still maintained a certain degree of demand for makeup. “Body care” ranked third at 9.624% while “hairdressing products” ranked fourth at 8.934%. Although these two types of products are applied to different parts of the body, they receive similar levels of attention. “Perfume and fragrance” ranked fifth at 5.21%, which shows that in addition to visual beautification, invisible “feel-good” beautification is also a concern of consumers. This report revealed that consumers pay far more attention to facial care than other items. Among these five categories, facial care, facial makeup, and hairdressing products are all aimed at improving and beautifying the head area, showing that most consumers tend to focus more on the face than other parts of the body.

In the past, cosmetics were mainly sold in makeup counters and beauty salons, but with the development of new markets, increasingly diversified sale channels such as drugstores and online shopping have appeared. Regardless of the channel or environment of purchase, consumers now tend to search for product or brand reviews on social media before purchasing anything. Consequently, the cosmetics and beauty industry relies heavily on social media marketing (Watanabe, 2021). At the moment, when the impact of COVID-19 is lessening, companies are trying to formulate innovative strategies for marketing and developing diversified products to capture the attention of a new generation of consumers (Momperousse, 2022). Social media platforms, with a relatively low construction cost, no geographical restrictions, and an enormous number of users, have become one of the most valued marketing channels to run marketing campaigns.

This study investigates the marketing of facial care, facial makeup, and hairdressing products. Based on the cosmetics regulations of Taiwan’s Ministry of Health and Welfare (2019), the definitions and classification of beauty products were summarized as follows in order to define the scope of the social media posts collected in this study.

**Table 1.** Classification of facial care, facial makeup, and hairdressing products

Category	Scope of items
Facial care	1. Toner, cosmetic oil 2. Lotion, cream, gel and oil for skincare 3. Shaving lotion, shaving cream, shaving foam 4. Aftershave toner, aftershave facial cream 5. Tanning lotion, tanning cream, tanning gel, tanning oil 6. Sunscreen lotion, sunscreen cream, sunscreen gel, sunscreen oil 7. Facial mask paste (clay mask) 8. Facial mask 9. Cleansing lotion, cleansing cream, cleansing gel, cleansing foam, cleansing powder 10. Cleansing oil, makeup remover lotion, liquid makeup remover 11. Teeth Whitener 12. Teeth whitening toothpaste 13. Non-medicated toothpaste 14. Non-medicated mouthwash
Facial makeup	1. Lipstick 2. Lip gloss, lip oil 3. Lip mask Liquid foundation, foundation

	cream 5. Powder paste, powder cake 6. Loose powder 7. Facial cosmetics 8. Setting powder and agent 9. Eye cream, eye gel 10. Eye shadow 11. Eyeliner 12. Eye makeup remover oil, eye makeup remover lotion 13. Eye mask 14. Mascara 15. Eyebrow pencil, eyebrow powder, eyebrow cream, eyebrow gel
Hairdressing products	1. Hair nourishing liquid, hair treatment lotion, hair treatment cream, hair treatment gel, hair treatment oil 2. Styling spray, styling cream, hair gel, hair wax, hair styling oil 3. Hair conditioner 4. Hair colorant 5. Hair dye 6. Hair bleach Perm agent 8. Shampoo, hair washing lotion, hair washing cream, hair washing gel, shampoo powder

### 3 Social media marketing

If the social interaction function is removed, the existence of social media will be meaningless (Eckstein, 2021). The key feature of social media is that it is “interactive.” Not only can users communicate with each other, but they can also collaborate to create content. Compared with traditional media, the circulation of information on social media is faster and wider, generating a greater influence (Ting, 2021). Owing to its direct and global reach, social media has transformed market roles. From the perspective of marketing, enterprises have turned from producers into content creators, and consumers have become the dominant party, who can choose personalized services according to their own needs through social platforms. On social media, users disseminate as well as receive information. Through social media, enterprises can access specific information pertaining to different demographic groups, that is, their needs and demands, and design products to target those specific groups (Wu & Zhou, 2022).

Social media marketing is an emerging marketing model that has appeared with the rapid development of the Internet. Because social media enables communication and sharing, enterprises can create content to promote their brands, educate users, attract potential customers, interact and connect with users, increase user engagement, and cultivate a loyal fan base to achieve the purpose of marketing (Chou, 2022; Han, 2021). Content is not only the main component of a post but also a means of marketing. Philip Kotler, the father of marketing, divided content marketing into two categories: 1) promotional – creating popular topics to improve sales performance; 2) non-promotional – enhancing brand awareness or generating interactive discussions. Content marketing should contain information about the brand or the product, because rich information can also affect customers' attitude toward the product. Functional and useful content is one of the elements that strengthens a customer's decision to purchase (Rotzoll & Haefner & Sandage, 1986; Barwise & Strong, 2002). Bridges proposed the concept of shaping brand formation. After receiving information about a brand, customers develop an impression of the brand, and the memory of the brand image will promote the formation of brand association. A good brand image is a big advantage in marketing because customers rely on it to estimate product quality and make purchase decisions (Park, Jaworski, & MacInnis, 1986; Roth, 1995).

A brand ambassador is a person who serves a specific brand and makes official statements (Li Jianping, 2012). The brand ambassador can improve the marketing effect if he/she suits the characteristics and needs of the product. Celebrity endorsement increases customers' favorability toward the product, which in turn increases its attractiveness, thereby strengthening purchase intention. The customers' impression of the brand ambassador as a celebrity will also be projected onto the product (Kahle & Homer, 1985). In addition to celebrities, any public figure can also become a brand ambassador. The main purpose is to help strengthen the impression of brands and products through their popularity and influencing power (Friedman & Friedman, 1979). As social media flourishes, roles such as

influencers and key opinion leaders have appeared, and endorsement by Internet celebrities has emerged as an extension of film and sports celebrity endorsement (Hackley & Hackley, 2015).

Based on the research on marketing content by various researchers, social media content posted by brands can be categorized into promotional and non-promotional. Non-promotional posts can be further divided into product promotion, brand image, celebrity endorsement, and amateur micro-influencer endorsement. In this study, this classification of posts was used to categorize the content in the marketing posts of three brands.

## **4 Customer engagement**

Customer engagement refers to the actual degree of participation generated when customers develop curiosity, interest, or fondness for a brand, and seek products or services through active engagement. Customers no longer just passively receive information from the brand, but actively explore and verify information such as manufacturing practices, ethical stand, and so on, and this is often done through interaction with fellow customers. In addition to actively receiving a one-way flow of information on social media, customers can also connect with other people or the brand.

There are countless posts on social media, but there is a significant correlation between content and customer engagement. If customers have a good experience through the online contact, they will continue to engage with the brand in the future. The most important task for the brand is to establish and sustain a close relationship with customers through social media interaction to maintain continued customer engagement and loyalty (Baird & Parasnis, 2011). Thus, creating and maintaining a social media account enables brands to convey the brand mission and product information directly to their target customers and nurture a direct two-way communication channel through comments and messages. An increase in customer engagement naturally translates into better sales performance and a competitive advantage over other brands (Chiang et al., 2022). Facebook's "Like" feature allows users to express how they feel, and most studies generally believe that such interactions are positive (Han, 2022). Companies can also use the analysis tools provided by social media websites to swiftly and precisely understand the customer base, so as to determine their market positioning and avoid squandering marketing budget on misinformed strategies (Buffer, 2021).

## **5 Case analysis**

Seven Japanese brands placed among the top 20 facial care brands sold in Taiwan in 2019 (in terms of growth rate of PV ratio). The specific brands were Hada Labo, Senka, Biore, Shiseido Tokyo, Shiseido Global, Kanebo, and ORBIS. Three Japanese brands, namely, Shu Uemura, Integrate, and KATE, placed among the top 20 facial makeup brands. Seven Japanese brands, namely, LUCIDO-L, Tsubaki, Liese, Ma Cherie, Aquair, Kose Cosmeport, and Timotel, placed among the top 20 brands for hair products (TING, 2022). The researchers noted the number of followers and analyzed activity in terms of posts on the brands' Facebook fan pages. In terms of facial care, facial makeup, and hair products, respectively, Shiseido Tokyo, KATE, and Liese performed better than other brands. Therefore, these three brands were chosen as the research objects in this study to analyze social media marketing strategies.

## 5.1 Shiseido Tokyo

The Brand image:

The brand logo was created in 1915 by Shinzo Fukuhara, the then chairperson of Shiseido. Red camellias (Hanatsubaki) and a deep red color were used for the brand's image. This image is the basis upon which the brand strives to provide every consumer with a symbol of the new value of beauty. Later, the brand hired Serge Lutens, a French image stylist, to design an international brand logo in 1979 for global appeal.

Product positioning and target customers:

Shiseido Tokyo's facial care products are priced at 1100~2700 NTD an item. In the past, the target customers comprised people with the financial ability to buy products over the counter. However, with the development of the concept of starting skincare at a younger age, new products aimed at younger groups have also been introduced to target groups of different consumption levels.

Marketing strategy:

The brand built a customer computing center called iCONNECT, which collects customer information from platforms such as Google, Facebook, and Line, based on which personalized marketing plans are formulated. The brand uses Line as its primary marketing tool and has developed an online pre-order system. Thus, it analyzes customers' consumption information to formulate personalized marketing plans while also providing customized services. To increase their retention rate and attract new customers, Shiseido Tokyo divides their customers into 5 categories: new customers who only buy once, sleeping customers, customers with growth potential, new customers attracted through brand media or KOL marketing, and users of their official Line account. The brand has designed five different sets of shopping lists and coupons, and it accurately suggests customers' preferred products and uses a 1-to-1 customer service system to increase purchase rate.

## 5.2 KATE

Brand image:

"No More Rules" is the brand slogan chosen by Souichi Yamaguchi, brand manager at KATE. Since it was launched, the brand has maintained its "cool and sharp" brand image, adopting self-liberation, free expression, and breaking out of the cage as its core concepts. The brand believes that makeup is a way of shaping one's own life, so it is preferred by the new generation of consumers with rising self-awareness. In terms of visual marketing, KATE's brand color is black, which represents unique urban trends and a chic sense of fashion. Thus, the feeling it arouses among its consumers at first sight is different from that of other cosmetic brands.

Product positioning and target customers:

KATE's facial makeup products are priced at 200~1000 NTD an item. Its target customers mainly include those who prefer to buy drugstore cosmetics. The brand's eye shadow, one of its signature products, aims at adding depth and dimension to the relatively flat faces of Asians. Unlike eye makeup products from Europe and the United States, which add colors to the face, KATE's eye shadow products are used to add shadows to the eyes while highlighting colors, so it is popular among Asian consumers.

Marketing strategy:

KATE's marketing strategy can be analyzed through its choice of brand ambassadors. For example, Rina Fukushi, who has an edgy personality and charm, is famous for her mixed-race identity and multi-faceted performance. Her slogan is "myself is more important than my identity as a model," and people remember her as a person who lives her life as she likes without being limited by her identity. Another brand ambassador, Amity, who belongs to the

third gender, participates in various activities to deepen the public's understanding of gender diversity. The slogan “the person who believes that oneself is cool after makeup is the most powerful” is presented by Amity with a confident image.

### 5.3 Liese

Brand image:

In accordance with its background as a Japanese brand, Liese devotes considerable effort to depicting and conveying popular Japanese beauty concepts to shape its brand image, thus creating the ideal beauty pursued by customers who are sensitive to the latest trends.

Product positioning and target customers:

Liese hair products are priced at 250~350 NTD an item. Its principal products are permanent DIY dyes of the latest popular colors in Japan. The introduction of foam hair dyes has reduced the difficulty associated with using DIY hair dye, and numerous colors are available. This ensures that customers who pursue trendy Japanese beauty concepts can quickly and effectively dye their hair themselves.

Marketing strategy:

Although the brand's star products are its hair dyes, hair color is not the only focus of its marketing campaigns. The overall image of the models, including their makeup, hairstyle, and clothing, is conscientiously designed to fit the images of fashionable women that customers see in popular Japanese magazines. Thus, the brand successfully attracts consumers. In terms of publicity and marketing, amateur models are generally hired to depict different scenarios, narrate different stories, and thus present different imaginary favorable situations that a person can experience after coloring his or her hair. This increases customers' sense of engagement with the brand.

## 6 Research and analysis on social media marketing

By comparing the growth rates of the PV ratios of facial care, facial makeup, and hair product brands, 20 top beauty brands were identified. The Japanese brands were then selected, and the researchers examined the number of followers and activity on the brands' Facebook fan pages for the Taiwan region. The results showed that Shiseido Tokyo, KATE, and Liese outperformed the other brands. Therefore, these three brands were chosen as the research objects, and fan page posts from 9/1/2022 to 2/28/2022 were collected for analysis.

In the discussion presented above, marketing content is divided into promotion and non-promotion, and non-promotion content is further subdivided into product promotion, brand image, celebrity endorsement, and amateur micro-influencer endorsement. These six categories were determined as the key elements that affect the posts. They were used to analyze the social media marketing strategies of the three beauty brands and to identify which key element(s) induces the most feedback from fans. Thus, we attempted to explore how beauty brands can optimize their marketing strategies.

### 6.1 Shiseido Tokyo

**Table 2.** Number and effectiveness of key factors used by Shiseido Tokyo

Key factors	Number of posts	Number of likes	Average number of likes
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Promotional	57	2998	52.59
Non-promotional	65	3972	318.96
Product promotion	46	2851	61.97
Brand image	10	454	45.4
Celebrity endorsement	0	0	0
Amateur micro-influencer endorsement	5	203	40.6

### Data analysis

Non-promotional posts (highest to lowest): 1. Product promotion 2. Brand image 3. Amateur micro-influencer endorsement 4. Celebrity endorsement

The average number of likes for non-promotional posts (highest to lowest): 1. Product promotion 2. Brand image 3. Amateur micro-influencer endorsement 4. Celebrity endorsement

Although non-promotional posts outnumbered promotional posts by only eight, the average number of likes for non-promotional posts was 318.96, showing that although there was a considerable number of promotional posts, they were ineffective at attracting likes from fans. The number of product promotion posts was the largest, and these posts garnered the highest average number of likes, 61.97. Although Shiseido Tokyo invites celebrities to appear in brand advertisements, there were no posts from celebrity brand ambassadors on the fan pages. Instead, Shiseido Tokyo invited amateur micro-influencers as its ambassadors.

## 6.2 KATE Taiwan

**Table 3.** Number and effectiveness of key factors used by KATE Taiwan

Key factors	Number of posts	Number of likes	Average number of likes
Promotional	5	1279	255.8
Non-promotional	50	15747	1766.99
Product promotion	40	7583	189.57
Brand image	0	0	0
Celebrity endorsement	3	227	75.66

Amateur micro-influencer endorsement	6	149	24.83
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**Data analysis**

Non-promotional posts (highest to lowest): 1. Product promotion 2. Amateur micro-influencer endorsement 3. Celebrity endorsement 4. Brand image

The average number of likes for non-promotional posts (highest to lowest): 1. Product promotion 2. Celebrity endorsement 3. Amateur micro-influencer endorsement 4. Brand image

The number of non-promotional posts was significantly greater than that of promotional posts. Instead of directly sending promotional offers to users, KATE Taiwan prefers to attract users with information about its products. The average number of likes for its non-promotional posts was 1766.99, the highest among the three brands. However, the brand did not post anything involving brand image. KATE chose brand ambassadors with strong personal characteristics, which were also advertised on its fan page. Amateur micro-influencers were also invited to show the results of applying its products.

**6.3 Liese Taiwan**

**Table 4.** Number and effectiveness of key factors used by Liese Taiwan

Key factors	Number of posts	Number of likes	Average number of likes
Promotional	11	190	17.27
Non-promotional	59	6541	608.28
Product promotion	43	1926	44.79
Brand image	0	0	0
Celebrity endorsement	0	0	0
Amateur micro-influencer endorsement	7	277	39.57

**Data analysis**

Non-promotional posts (highest to lowest): 1. Product promotion 2. Amateur micro-influencer endorsement 3. Celebrity endorsement and Brand image

The average number of likes for non-promotional posts (highest to lowest): 1. Product promotion 2. Amateur micro-influencer endorsement 3. Celebrity endorsement and Brand image

Although the fan page had some promotional posts, non-promotional posts were still the primary marketing strategy used. The data on the promotional posts also showed that these posts were not very attractive to users. The non-promotional posts comprised content regarding only product promotion and amateur micro-influencer endorsement; there was no



content on brand image or celebrity endorsement. Although there was a significant difference in the number of posts between product promotion and amateur micro-influencer endorsement, their average number of likes did not differ much.

## 7 Discussion

The evaluation and comparison of promotional and non-promotional posts showed that none of the three brands performed well in terms of the number of likes for promotional posts. KATE Taiwan and Liese Taiwan placed less emphasis on promotional posts compared with Shiseido Tokyo, but the number of likes for its promotional posts was much lower than those for its non-promotional posts, suggesting their inefficiency. Even when Shiseido Tokyo implemented a strategy of posting promotional posts more frequently, they did not attract many likes. Moreover, users may also have felt bored with the huge number of promotional posts. Rather than directly displaying discounted prices to users, promotional methods that are based on the fundamental characteristics of "products" can be considered.

Among the posts on all three fan pages, non-promotional posts regarding product promotion were posted most frequently, indicating that companies expect users to obtain information about their products from their fan pages. Moreover, owing to the two-way interactive nature of Facebook, if users have any questions about the products, they can comment on the fan pages and wait for the companies to reply. The second most frequently posted content was brand image posts for Shiseido Tokyo, and amateur micro-influencer endorsement for KATE Taiwan and Liese Taiwan. The researchers inferred that the reason for the difference between the two is that Shiseido Tokyo has been in Taiwan for more than 66 years, while KATE and Liese have entered Taiwan within the past decade. Shiseido Tokyo has already established an image of high quality, while KATE and Liese are still building their brand values. Therefore, Shiseido Tokyo preferred to promote its valuable brand image over the other categories of content. The third most frequently posted content was amateur micro-influencer endorsement for Shiseido Tokyo, while it was celebrity endorsement for KATE Taiwan. The brand uses celebrities to show the effects of the product, enabling users to imagine the results after use.

Regarding the number of likes for non-promotional posts, product promotion posts performed the best on all three fan pages, showing that users are happy to obtain product information from the fan pages and provide positive feedback on the product by liking the posts. For Shiseido Tokyo, the category that garnered the second highest number of likes was brand image; it was celebrity endorsement for KATE Taiwan and amateur micro-influencer endorsement for Liese Taiwan. Users who browse Shiseido Tokyo's fan page recognize the image of the brand and accept and maintain a favorable impression of the brand. KATE promotes brand ambassadors with strong personal characteristics, which not only highlights the uniqueness of the brand image, but also garners support from a certain group of users. Liese Taiwan invites amateur micro-influencers to serve as brand ambassadors to create a friendly atmosphere and shows the product's effects after use for promotion so that users can identify and understand the product's effects. For both Shiseido Tokyo and KATE Taiwan, the category that garnered the third highest number of likes was amateur micro-influencer endorsement. Unlike celebrities that have perfect images, amateur micro-influencers can usually create an atmosphere of intimacy and trust and reduce the gap between the brand and users. However, the celebrity endorsement of Liese Taiwan conveys a message to the users that after using the product, they can also enjoy the perfect atmosphere, like that surrounding a celebrity.

The above analysis indicates that when implementing social media marketing strategies on fan pages, beauty companies emphasize the promotion of products, as they believe that customers will only buy products if they understand them. Users also reacted highly

positively to the product promotion content, indicating that they obtain product information by browsing the brands' fan pages. This verifies the main purpose of users browsing social media, which was mentioned in the literature discussion. Based on the number of years over which a brand has built up its image, companies will also judge the value of its brand image. If a sufficiently positive impression has been established, it would be more suitable to continue promoting the value of the brand as perceived by the users. On the contrary, newer brands can borrow the influence of third-party celebrities or amateur Internet influencers to establish a positive impression about the product among its users and improve their brand image as perceived by them. Users do not just wish to understand the information about beauty products, they also wish to see their effects. Companies must also evaluate and use promotion strategies that involve celebrities and amateur Internet influencers to achieve the goal of improving their brand image as perceived by the users. The promotional posts did not attract a satisfactory number of likes for any of the three brands. Therefore, when formulating marketing plans for other beauty products in the future, new presentation methods should be designed for the dissemination of promotional content, and effective means of promotion and publicity that can attract a number of likes similar to that attracted by non-promotional posts should be sought.

**Table 5.** Number and effectiveness of key factors in promotional posts

	Number of posts	Number of likes	Average number of likes
Shiseido Tokyo	57	2998	52.59
KATE Taiwan	5	1279	255.8
Liese Taiwan	11	190	17.27

**Table 6.** Number and effectiveness of key factors in non-promotional posts

	Number of posts	Number of likes	Average number of likes
Shiseido Tokyo	65	3972	318.96
KATE Taiwan	50	15747	1766.99
Liese Taiwan	59	6541	608.28

**Table 7.** Number and effectiveness of key factors in product promotion posts

	Number of posts	Number of likes	Average number of likes
Shiseido Tokyo	46	2851	61.97
KATE Taiwan	40	7583	189.57
Liese Taiwan	43	1926	44.79

**Table 8.** Number and effectiveness of key factors in brand image posts

	Number of posts	Number of likes	Average number of likes
Shiseido Tokyo	10	454	45.4
KATE Taiwan	0	0	0
Liese Taiwan	0	0	0

**Table 9.** Number and effectiveness of key factors in celebrity endorsement posts

	Number of posts	Number of likes	Average number of likes
Shiseido Tokyo	0	0	0
KATE Taiwan	3	227	75.66
Liese Taiwan	0	0	0

**Table 10.** Number and effectiveness of key factors in amateur micro-influencer endorsement posts

	Number of posts	Number of likes	Average number of likes
Shiseido Tokyo	5	203	40.6
KATE Taiwan	6	149	24.83
Liese Taiwan	7	277	39.57

## 8 Conclusion

According to the 2018 global digital report issued by We Are Social, Facebook is currently the social media platform with the largest number of active users in Taiwan, and its users account for 80% of the total population of Taiwan. Therefore, this study chose to investigate the Facebook platform, with its huge number of users. As there are numerous beauty product companies worldwide, three beauty brands from Japan were chosen for consistency to examine the differences in their marketing strategies. Constrained by the limited research time, marketing posts from 9/1/2022 to 2/28/2022 were collected for analysis.

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