

Trendy Toy Market Strategy Analysis Based on Company Strategic Management

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Abstract: As a collection that integrates art design and trendy culture, the core value of trendy toys lies in emotional resonance and social attributes, mainly for adult consumer groups. Although China's trendy toy market is currently expanding rapidly, it still faces development bottlenecks such as empty IP content, over-reliance on blind box models and market speculation in the analysis of the current situation of the industry. Based on the theoretical framework of the addiction model, this paper takes college students as the research object and explores the internal mechanism of their consumption behavior through questionnaire survey. This study analyzes the four stages of triggering, action, and variable rewards and investments, revealing the key roles of emotional demand and social impact in the trigger stage, the driving mechanism of motivation and convenience on purchasing behavior, the synergistic effect of uncertainty reward and IP innovation, and the solidifying effect of multi-dimensional user investment on brand loyalty. On this basis, this paper puts forward corporate strategic suggestions from the aspects of emotional reach, decision-making path optimization, content ecological construction and technology empowerment, aiming to provide theoretical reference and practical path for trendy toy companies to shape sustainable competitive advantages.

Keywords: Trendy Toys; Corporate Strategic Management; Addiction Model; Marketing Strategy; Consumer Behavior

1. Introduction

Trendy toys, also known as art toys or designer toys, refer to toys and collectibles made by artists or designers with certain creative concepts combined with sculpture carriers, and incorporate trendy cultural elements. It is different from traditional children's toys, and its core value lies in artistic expression, emotional resonance and collection attributes, and the main audience is adult consumers. At present, popular blind box dolls, figures, resin toys, etc. all belong to the category of trendy toys^[1].

Compared with traditional toys, trendy toys have their significant competitive advantages. First, trendy toys emphasize the value of art design and IP, and establish a deep emotional connection with consumers through unique visual images and subcultural symbols behind them to meet their aesthetic and spiritual needs^[2]. Second, the innovation of the trendy toy marketing model, especially the "blind box" sales form, uses the unknownness of probabilistic products and the "hidden model" mechanism to greatly stimulate consumers' curiosity, collection and gambling psychology, and promote repeat purchase behavior^[3]. Third, trendy toys have strong social attributes, and consumers share, exchange and display collections through online and offline communities, making trendy toys a kind of "social currency" and strengthening users' sense of belonging and circle recognition^[4].

At present, China's trendy toy market shows great development potential and vitality. According to industry reports, the size of China's trendy toy market has expanded rapidly in the past few years and is expected to maintain a strong growth trend in the future^[1]. As an industry leader, Bubble Mart has successfully occupied an important share of the market by building a whole industry chain platform covering IP incubation, operation, retail and cultural exchanges, with a total revenue of 1.683 billion yuan and a net profit of 451 million yuan in 2019, which fully confirms the profitability of this business model^[5]. However, behind the booming market, the trendy toy industry is also facing a series of severe challenges. First of all, the empty IP content and lack of rich story background and value support are the core problems restricting the long-term development of brands, resulting in insufficient user stickiness and short IP life cycles. Secondly, over-reliance on the "blind box" sales model has compliance risks such as false publicity and opaque probability, and once consumer freshness fades or regulatory policies are

tightened, it will directly affect the stability of corporate revenue^[2]. Thirdly, there are serious speculative "speculation" behaviors in the market, which disrupt the normal market order and harm the interests and experience of ordinary consumers. In addition, the industry also has problems such as the difficulty of breaking the circle of niche design style, insufficient penetration in third- and fourth-tier cities, and weak overseas market expansion^[6].

At the academic research level, the existing literature on trendy toys mostly focuses on the micro level such as marketing model, consumer psychology and customer experience. For example, Wang Taiyou et al. (2021) conducted an in-depth analysis of IP strategy and consumer psychology in blind box marketing^[5]; Jiang Junzhe (2022) revealed the mechanism of blind box consumption habits based on the "addiction model"^[11]; Yan Xing et al. (2021) empirically tested the influence of customer experience on repeat purchase intention through the mediating variable of "customer happiness"^[7]. However, from the macro perspective of corporate strategic management, there is still insufficient research on how to systematically analyze how enterprises integrate internal and external resources, formulate market strategies that match the implementation to meet the above challenges, and build sustainable competitive advantages in the fierce competition.

Therefore, this study aims to systematically sort out the competitive landscape and development bottlenecks of the trendy toy market based on the height of corporate strategic management, and deeply analyze the strategic practices of representative enterprises. The significance and innovation of the research lies in the following: on the one hand, it can make up for the lack of systematic analysis at the strategic level of existing research, and provide a theoretical reference for trendy toy enterprises to optimize their strategic layout and achieve high-quality development; On the other hand, by integrating the classic "addiction model" and other behavioral theories into strategic analysis and strategic suggestions, it provides new ideas and practical paths for enterprises in improving user stickiness and shaping long-term brand value.

2. Questionnaire survey

2.1 Investigation subject

As the core group of Generation Z, contemporary college students' consumption behavior presents distinctive characteristics. According to the "Generation Z Consumer Attitude Insight Report" released by CBNDData, this group pays great attention to the social attributes and emotional value of products in consumption decisions, and tends to build personal identity and integrate into the interest community through consumption behavior. Trendy toys meet this demand with their unique design aesthetics, IP cultural connotations and community interaction characteristics. At the same time, Gen Z consumers have become the main driving force driving the growth of China's trendy toy market, and their consumption behavior patterns are of great significance to the development trend of the industry. Based on this, this study selects college students from Chinese universities as the research object to deeply explore the key factors affecting the consumption decision of trendy toys in this group, in order to provide an empirical basis for enterprises to formulate accurate marketing strategies.

2.2 Questionnaire design and collection

In the questionnaire design process, the questionnaire design of this study is based on the addiction theory model proposed by Nir Eyal and Ryan Hoover in the book "Addiction - Four Product Logics for Users to Develop Usage Habits" as the core framework, and the measurement items are set around four stages: trigger, action, variable reward and investment. At the same time, the five-point Likert scale was used to investigate consumers' perception of multi-dimensional factors such as price sensitivity, social influence, and product innovation, and behavioral items such as purchase frequency and channel preference were set up to systematically explore the key factors and internal mechanisms affecting the consumption decisions of college students.

A total of 700 questionnaires were collected in this survey, of which 650 were valid questionnaires, and the effective recovery rate of the questionnaires reached 92.86%. Subsequently, the reliability and validity test of the questionnaire data was carried out, and the test results showed that the questionnaire data obtained was scientific and reliable, and was suitable for further analysis and research.

3. Company strategy analysis

Based on the systematic analysis of the questionnaire data of trendy toy consumption, this study understands the significant laws of college students' consumption behavior: consumers' purchasing decisions are not only affected by explicit factors such as product appearance and IP characteristics, but also follow the internal behavioral logic from emotional triggering to habit formation. The data show that consumers show obvious emotion-driven characteristics, preference for uncertain rewards, and tendency to continue to invest in the purchase process, which are highly consistent with habit formation theory.

The addiction model proposed by Neil Eyal and Ryan Hoover in "Addiction - Four Product Logics for Users to Develop Usage Habits" provides a perfect theoretical framework for interpreting this consumption phenomenon. The model divides users' dependence on the product into four progressive stages: (1) The trigger stage attracts user attention through internal emotional needs and external environmental prompts; (2) The action stage follows the core elements of Fogg's behavior model, i.e., $\text{behavior} = \text{motivation} \times \text{ability} \times \text{trigger}$ ($B=MAT$); (3) The variable reward stage strengthens users' expectations through uncertain reward mechanisms; (4) In the investment stage, the stickiness of use is enhanced through the sunk cost accumulated by users. This continuous cycle model can systematically explain the whole process of trendy toy consumers from the first contact to the formation of stable consumption habits, so this study chooses this theoretical framework as the basis for analysis, and aims to provide theoretical basis and practical guidance for enterprises to optimize user maintenance strategies and build continuous consumption relationships, so as to enhance the long-term competitive advantage of enterprises.

3.1 Trigger phase

The trigger stage of trendy toy consumption is the starting point for users to generate purchase intention, which is affected by both internal emotional needs and external environmental factors. Data analysis shows that consumers' internal trigger scores are comparable to external trigger scores at this stage, indicating that the two trigger mechanisms are of equal importance. This finding breaks the traditional perception that external marketing stimuli are dominant, and reveals the central position of emotional demand in consumption decisions.

3.1.1 Emotional needs driven

As shown in the Figure 1, consumers will have obvious impulses to buy in emotional states such as boredom and stress, and this internal trigger mechanism is highly compatible with the emotional comfort function of trendy toys. From the perspective of gender differences, female consumers have more prominent emotional triggers, and their internal trigger scores are significantly higher than those of men, which reflects that female consumers are more inclined to regulate their emotional state through consumption behavior.

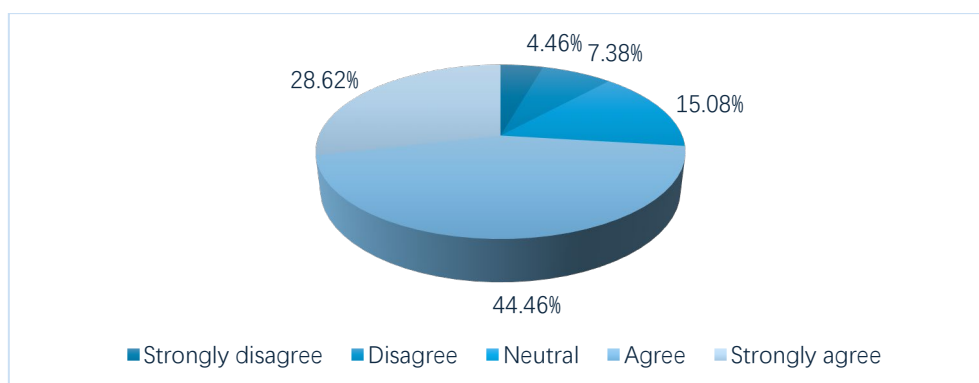


Figure 1 Distribution map of consumer emotional trigger mechanisms

3.1.2 Social environment influence

Among external triggers, social influence showed a strong driving force and scored high. About 75% of consumers say they are influenced by social media content and recommendations from friends to generate purchase intentions. It is worth noting that there are obvious differences in the sensitivity of consumers at different city levels in terms of social influence, and the scores of consumers in first-tier cities are significantly higher than those in low-tier cities, reflecting the characteristics of social density

and cultural atmosphere in different regions. It can be seen that social influence is a key purchase trigger, and its effectiveness varies significantly by region.

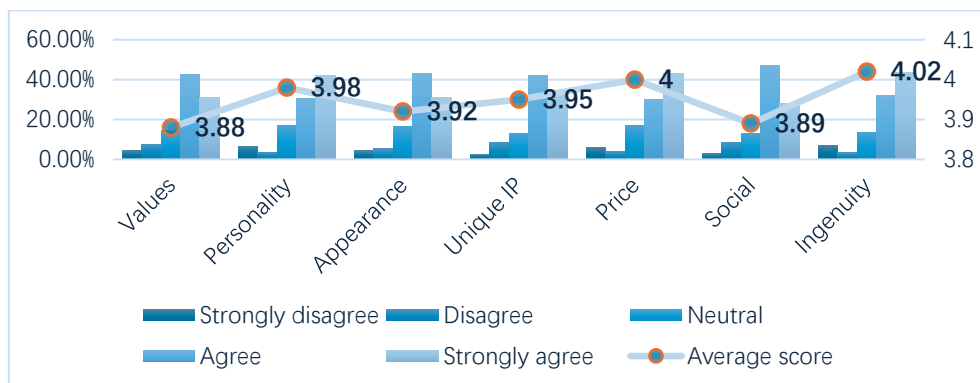


Figure 2 Distribution chart of evaluation scores of influencing factors of trendy toy consumption

3.1.3 Channel reach efficiency

Vending machines have become the most effective reach channel with a selection rate of 65.97%, and their immediacy and convenience perfectly match consumers' impulsive purchasing needs. This finding reveals the important value of scenario-based reach, and consumers are prone to instant purchase impulses when they encounter beautifully displayed trendy toys in leisure places. physical stores and online platforms ranked second with 55.48% and 52.1% selection rates respectively, forming a multi-channel collaborative reach network.

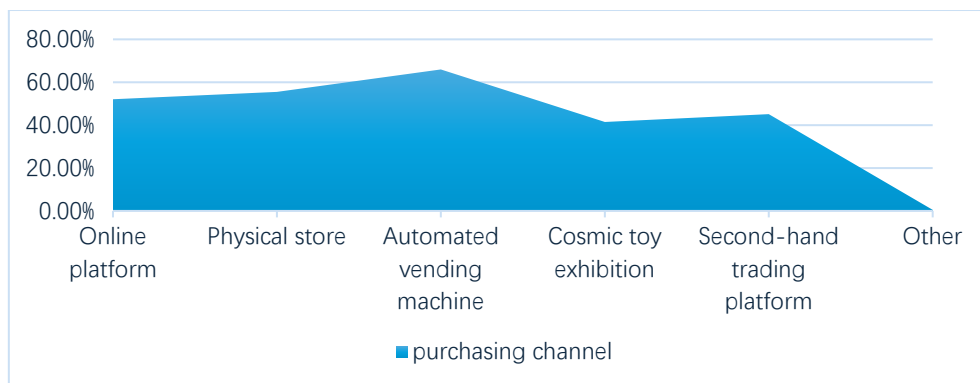


Figure 3 Distribution area map of consumer purchase channel preferences

The analysis of the comprehensive trigger stage shows that the generation of consumers' purchase intention is the result of the combined action of internal and external factors, in which emotional demand constitutes the basic driving force, social influence provides external boost, and multiple channels ensure the efficiency of reach. This finding provides an important basis for enterprises to accurately grasp user needs and optimize marketing reach strategies.

3.2 Action stage

The action stage is a key link in consumers' conversion of purchase intention into actual behavior, and the effect of this stage directly affects the smooth operation of the addiction model. Data analysis shows that consumers' motivation perception and ability perception are at a high level at this stage, indicating that the current market environment can effectively promote the realization of purchasing behavior.

3.2.1 The hedonic motivation is prominent

As can be seen from Figure 4 below, the core driving force for consumers to buy trendy toys comes from emotional satisfaction and instant happiness, with nearly 74% of consumers agreeing that purchasing behavior can bring happiness and satisfaction. This hedonistic consumption characteristic shows that trendy toys mainly play the role of emotional comfort and entertainment among college students, rather than simply collecting or investing in them. From the perspective of consumption frequency, high-frequency consumers scored significantly higher than low-frequency consumers in

hedonic motivation, showing the important role of emotional satisfaction in maintaining consumption habits.

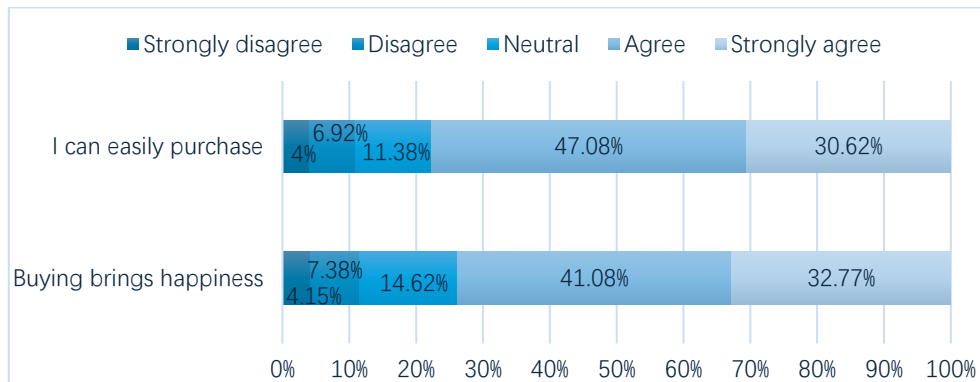


Figure 4 Distribution bar chart of consumer motivation intensity

3.2.2 High ease of purchase

It can be seen from Figure 3 that, diversified purchase channels have significantly lowered the threshold for consumers to obtain, among which the high penetration rate of vending machines is particularly noteworthy. This convenience of instant purchase channels effectively complements consumers' great emphasis on design, enabling consumers to quickly complete transactions when they have the urge to buy. The improvement of online channels also provides sufficient product information and a convenient purchasing process, further removing barriers to action.

3.2.3 Consumption power constraints

Despite the strong willingness to buy, consumers' actual purchasing behavior is still moderated by disposable income. According to the Figures 5 and 6, about 60% of consumers spend no more than 10% of their living expenses on trendy toys every month, combined with the data that about 68% of consumers spend less than 3,000 yuan per month, indicating that most consumers maintain a rational consumption ratio. The extremely high price sensitivity score further confirms the restrictive effect of consumption power on purchasing behavior.

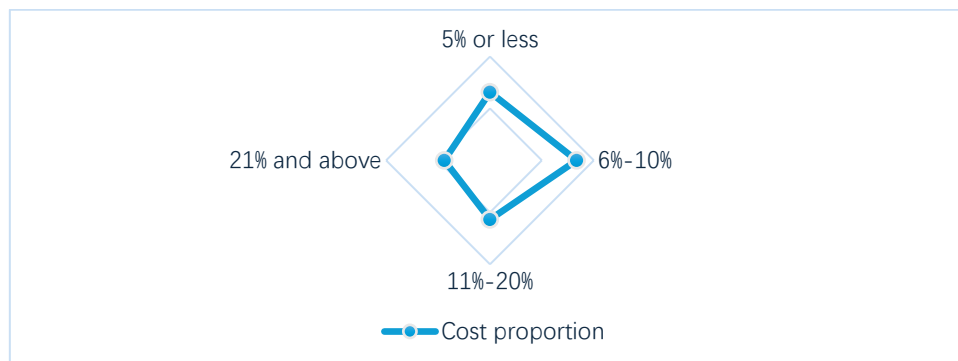


Figure 5 Distribution chart of the proportion of monthly consumption budget allocation

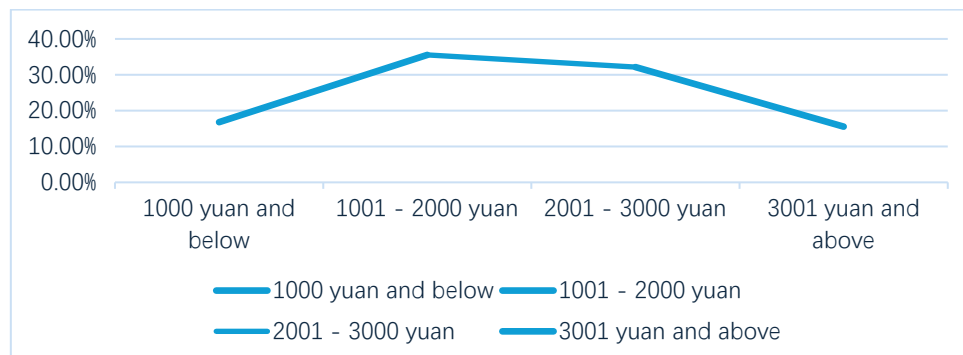


Figure 6 Distribution map of monthly disposable living expenses of respondents

The analysis of the action stage shows that consumers can successfully complete the transformation from purchase intention to actual behavior under the combined effect of strong intrinsic motivation and convenient external conditions. However, objective limitations on spending power require companies to make targeted considerations in product pricing and marketing strategies.

3.3 Variable Reward stage

The variable reward stage strengthens consumers' expectations through uncertainty mechanisms, which is the core link in cultivating users' consumption habits. This study finds that the hidden payment mechanism and random experience have a continuous attraction to consumers, and the innovation factor and IP originality have a significant synergistic effect at this stage, which together constitutes a diversified reward system.

3.3.1 The core driver of uncertainty

Hidden items and random experiences form the basic drivers of the reward phase. Figure 7 shows that more than 76% of consumers say that the existence of hidden models will stimulate the desire to make repeat purchases, and about 67% agree with the sense of surprise brought by randomness. From the analysis of consumption frequency, high-frequency consumers' expectations for hidden models are significantly higher than those of low-frequency consumers, showing the key role of uncertainty rewards in cultivating consumption habits. This mechanism effectively utilizes consumers' desire to collect and curiosity, creating a continuous motivation to buy.

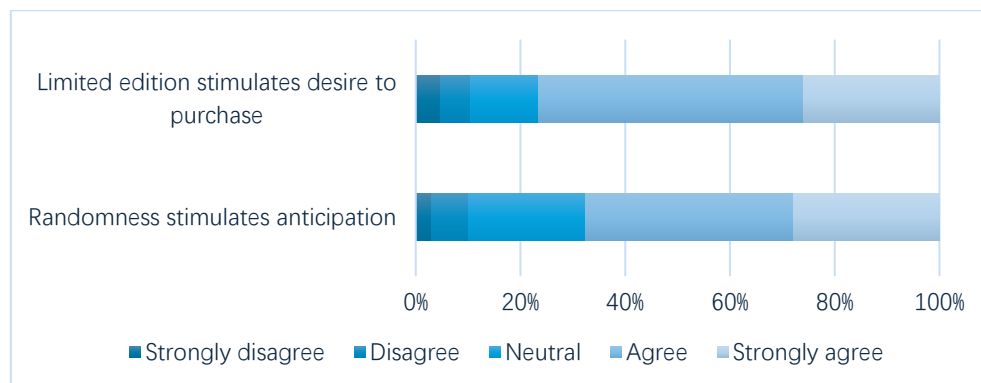


Figure 7 Comparison chart of the attractiveness of uncertainty reward mechanism

3.3.2 The synergistic value of innovation and IP

As can be seen from Figure 2, the innovation factor has become the most influential reward factor with a score of 4.02, forming a significant synergy effect with IP originality. Consumers show the highest level of purchase intent for products that have both a unique IP background and innovative design elements. This synergy is particularly critical in the transition from low-frequency to high-frequency consumers, where unique IP settings provide the foundation for emotional connection, while innovative design continues to provide freshness and jointly promote the development of consumption habits. The synergy between innovation and IP originality together constitutes the core driving force for strengthening user reward experience and promoting the development of consumption habits.

3.3.3 The multiplier effect of emotional rewards

In addition to physical rewards, consumers receive multi-level emotional rewards during the purchase process. The anticipation when opening the blind box, the surprise when drawing the hidden model, and the sense of accomplishment when collecting the series, these positive emotional experiences form a virtuous circle with consumers' internal triggers. It is worth noting that when innovative design is combined with random mechanisms, it will produce a multiplier effect of emotional reward, significantly improving consumer satisfaction and repeat purchase intentions, thereby effectively improving user stickiness.

The dynamic reward mechanism creates sustained appeal through uncertainty, and the synergy between innovation and IP originality further reinforces the effectiveness of this mechanism. This diversified reward system not only improves the completion rate of a single transaction, but more importantly, creates a differentiated consumer experience, providing multi-dimensional power support for the continuous operation of the addiction model.

3.4 Investment stage

The investment stage is a closed-loop link of the addiction model, and users form sunk costs through continuous investment, thereby enhancing stickiness and brand loyalty. This study finds that consumers show a high degree of money and time investment, and IP identity and innovation pursuit play a key role in solidifying at this stage.

3.4.1 A multi-dimensional investment system has been formed

It can be clearly seen from Figure 8 that consumers' investment in trendy toys shows significant multi-dimensional characteristics. In terms of economic investment, more than 72% of consumers expressed their willingness to continue to invest money in collections; In terms of time investment, about 70% of consumers spend time browsing information and participating in social media. These two inputs promote each other and jointly increase the user's conversion cost. It is worth noting that the degree of investment is positively correlated with usage habits, and high-frequency consumers are significantly higher than low-frequency consumers in various input indicators.

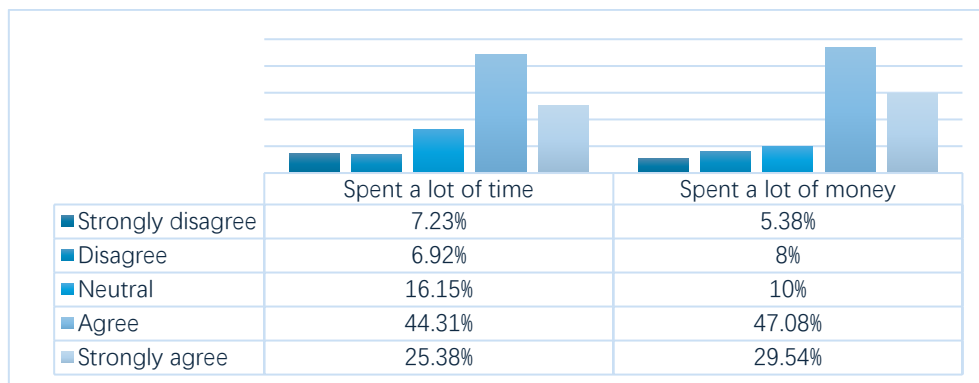


Figure 8 Comparative analysis chart of consumer input dimensions

3.4.2 Deepening investment in IP and innovation

According to the data in Figure 2, the data is obtained, and IP factors and innovation factors show a deepening influence in the investment stage. The high score for character storytelling and IP originality shows that rich story backgrounds and unique IP designs can effectively enhance users' emotional investment. At the same time, innovative factors continue to motivate consumers' investment behavior, forming a virtuous circle of "innovative experience, emotional investment, and continuous consumption". This deep investment is not only reflected in purchasing behavior, but also extends to users' community participation and content creation.

3.4.3 Differentiated characteristics of the input level

Different consumer groups show obvious hierarchical differentiation in investment models. Deeply invested in users pay more attention to IP value recognition and innovative experience pursuit, forming stable consumption habits and brand loyalty; while shallow investment users are more likely to be attracted by a single innovative design, showing the characteristics of opportunistic investment. This hierarchical feature provides an important basis for enterprises to formulate differentiated user retention strategies, and requires precise operational measures for users at different investment levels.

The analysis of the investment stage shows that consumers form a significant sunk cost and emotional connection through continuous multi-dimensional investment, and the deep integration of IP and innovation factors further strengthens this connection. These factors collectively promote the solidification of usage habits and the improvement of brand loyalty, which not only affects users' current consumption decisions, but also lays a solid foundation for building long-term user value.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the theoretical framework of the addiction model, this study deeply reveals the internal mechanism and law of consumers' stable consumption habits from initial contact through the systematic analysis of trendy toy consumption behavior.

In the trigger stage, internal emotional needs and external social environments form dual drivers,

among which the regional differences in social influence are particularly significant, showing the differentiated response patterns of consumers to social stimuli in different market environments. **In the action stage**, the organic combination of consumption motivation and channel convenience constitutes the key to behavior transformation, which shows that emotional drive alone is not enough to complete the closed loop of consumption, and must be supported by corresponding channels. The research **in the reward stage** further reveals the compound value of content innovation and emotional experience. The synergy between innovative design and IP uniqueness transcends a single product function and forms a multi-level value perception. The combination of uncertainty mechanism and emotional reward creates a consumption experience that transcends the material level. **In the investment stage**, consumers form a deep sunk cost through the dual investment of economy and time, and this multi-dimensional investment model not only strengthens usage habits, but also builds a solid foundation for brand loyalty, showing a positive strengthening relationship between investment and user stickiness.

The comprehensive study of the four stages found that the essence of trendy toy consumption behavior is a dynamic process from emotional triggering to habit formation, in which the elements of each stage promote each other and are interlocked. Therefore, enterprises need to understand consumer behavior from a holistic perspective, rather than viewing individual marketing links in isolation, which also points to the necessary direction for the shift from one-way marketing to systematic user operations.

Based on the above research conclusions, combined with the current consumption trends and industry hotspots, this study will further put forward targeted and operable market strategy suggestions from the perspective of corporate strategic management and around the whole process of consumption habit development.

4.1 Strengthen emotional reach and three-dimensional IP construction

Enterprises should build a global reach network, optimize the layout of vending machines and themed physical stores offline, and stimulate user resonance through emotional content online. With the current rise of the metaverse concept, innovative forms such as AR interaction can be explored, deeply integrating offline scenes with online experiences. In terms of IP shaping, it is necessary to break through the limitations of the current industry of "focusing on image and light content", and strive to build characters with three-dimensional personality and rich story background. Like a successful anime character, a truly moving IP needs to have distinct values, unique personality traits and growth arcs, so that it transcends mere product attributes and becomes the emotional sustenance of users. This three-dimensional shaping not only enhances the initial appeal, but also lays a solid foundation for subsequent story development and cross-border cooperation.

4.2 Optimize decision-making paths and innovate reward mechanisms

To lower the threshold for user action, companies need to adopt flexible pricing strategies and launch differentiated product lines for different levels of market. At the same time, multiple purchase channels should be consolidated to ensure that consumers can easily complete purchases in various scenarios within reach. In terms of reward mechanism design, in addition to maintaining the scarcity of hidden models, we should also innovate the form of rewards. Drawing on gamified thinking, the purchase process is designed as an exploration journey, giving consumers a continuous sense of freshness and accomplishment through a series of collection tasks, growth systems, and social interactions. At present, the combination of digital collections and physical trendy toys is becoming a new trend in the industry, giving specific products a unique digital identity through blockchain technology, upgrading a single purchase reward to a multi-dimensional experience with both collection value and social capital.

4.3 Deepen the co-creation of content ecology and user value

Enterprises should strive to build an open user co-creation ecosystem that transforms consumers from passive buyers to active participants. By establishing an exclusive community platform, users are encouraged to participate in character design, story creation, and product optimization, forming a virtuous circle of mutual growth between brands and users. Offline, themed exhibitions, creative workshops and fan carnivals are regularly held to strengthen community cohesion. This deep participation not only enhances user stickiness and loyalty, but also continuously injects new vitality into IP. Especially in the current era of focusing on personalized expression, giving users sufficient creative space and display platform can stimulate huge creative enthusiasm and communication momentum, forming a unique brand moat.

4.4 Build a technology empowerment and sustainable development system

With the deepening of AI technology and the concept of sustainable development, trendy toy companies should forward-looking layout of technological innovation and green development. By introducing AI interaction technology, traditional static dolls are given dialogue and emotional responsiveness, upgrading them from collectibles to intelligent companions that provide emotional value. In terms of material selection and production processes, we actively use environmentally friendly materials and green manufacturing processes to respond to the growing environmental awareness of young consumers. At the same time, the establishment of a full life cycle management system for products, including recycling, replacement and upgrade services, not only extends the product value cycle, but also builds a responsible social image of the brand. This strategy of technology empowerment and sustainable development will win companies a competitive advantage in the future.

The above suggestions constitute a complete strategic system from reach, action, reward to investment, establish connections through emotional reach, promote action through convenient experience, strengthen rewards through innovative mechanisms, and finally achieve deep investment through ecological co-construction. This system not only considers the internal logic of consumer behavior, but also integrates into the development trend of the industry, providing a feasible implementation path for enterprises to build a sustainable competitive advantage. In the increasingly competitive trendy toy market, only by combining short-term sales with long-term brand value building can we stay ahead of the curve in a rapidly changing environment.

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