Analysis of Domestic Sporting goods Marketing Mode under the Background of Network Marketing Environment

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Abstract: This is an era of rapid change, with the development of network technology, online shopping has become one of the main ways of shopping. The popularization of the concept of national fitness has provided an opportunity to open the domestic sporting goods market. While the traditional sporting goods marketing model does not keep up with the development of the existing economic market, therefore, improving the new sporting goods marketing model has become the primary strategy to expand the market. This paper will study consumers’ purchasing decision-making behavior under the network marketing environment, conduct an in-depth study of the domestic sporting goods market, and give some appropriate strategies to solve the existing problems.

Keywords: Network marketing; Consumers purchase decision; Domestic sporting goods market

1. Introduction

Since the 1990s, the global Internet has been rapidly expanding in the commercial field and has become an important information infrastructure to promote economic development and social progress in the world. According to the 45th China Internet development statistics, by March 2020, the number of Chinese netizens had increased to 904 million, and the number of Mobile users in China was 897 million. The details are shown in Figure 1:

![Diagram of Internet users scale and Internet penetration rate](image)

*Figure 1 Trend chart of the number of Internet users*

According to the report, Chinese Internet users spend an average of 27.9 hours online, mainly in six categories: short videos, instant messaging, social networking, online shopping, online news and online food delivery. The online shopping users in China reached 710 million, 100 million more than in 2018, accounting for 78.6 percent of the total number of Internet users.

The 21st century is an era of highly developed Internet industry, which also brings a new marketing
way -- network marketing. In such an environment, the domestic sporting goods market also needs to make corresponding changes. On the evening of August 30, 2019, Chairman Xi Jingping said when meeting with FIBA president Murato "Over the past 70 years since the founding of the People's Republic of China, great achievements have been made in sports. Sports are not only essential for a strong and prosperous country, but also an important part of people's healthy and happy life.” Since the reform and opening up, with the economic development, social progress, the improvement of people's living standards, people began to pay attention to their life quality, improve their own physical quality is also listed as one of the important things in life. Therefore, physical exercise plays an increasingly important role in people's life.

Therefore, under the background of the era of the network environment, the traditional sales model has been unable to adapt to the development of domestic sporting goods market, we need to analyze the network consumer's buying behavior as a starting point, combining with the domestic sporting goods market present situation, propose the corresponding, feasible, and new strategy that can keep up with the trend of The Times to open up a new era of network domestic sporting goods!

2. Characteristics of sporting goods consumer groups and shopping platforms under the network marketing environment

From the perspective of the whole social and economic development, the improvement of personal disposable income, the rapid development of market economy, the increasingly perfect social security system, and the emergence of a large number of new consumer groups have all become the huge influential factors to determine the decision of consumers' purchasing behavior.

Moreover, the impact of network security and reliability has been emphasized by many scholars in various journals. Xintao Huang (2019), Ying Zhao and Yue Zhang (2004) have emphasized this point, and they also point out that the convenience and feasibility of website entry, the types and characteristics of products sold, and the corporate image all play different roles in consumers' purchasing behaviors.

In addition to studying consumers' purchasing behaviors from the perspectives of overall social economic development and network environment, Guosheng Hu and Guohong Zhang (2006) analyzed consumers' purchasing behaviors from the perspectives of environmental factors, netizens' composition and suppliers' control factors.

2.1. Characteristics of sporting goods consumer groups under the network marketing environment

Consumers of different ages may have different concerns when buying sporting goods online. Consumer groups of sporting goods and the main influencing factors are as follows:

1) Student consumer

Due to the rapid development of national economy and technology, the concept of "spending money on physical exercise and spending money on health" has been gradually derived. In many sport goods consumer groups, the student consumer group occupies a large proportion, and their sports consumption concept has great reference value. Most students like to buy sporting goods, watch sports games and do physical exercises together. At the same time, when buying sporting goods online, they are likely to pursue the products with excellent performance, fashionable style, famous brand. However, it should also be noted that students do not have enough purchasing power, so more of them will pursue affordable famous brand products.

2) Young people

Compared with students, young white-collar consumers are likely to have similar products in terms of variety and performance. But because these consumers have a broader vision and a more mature mentality, they may choose relatively mature styles of products. Moreover, the biggest difference from students is that they do not care too much about the price of well-known products. Most young people are willing to pay for products with excellent quality.

3) Middle-aged and elderly consumer groups

With the development of national economy, people not only pay attention to material wealth, but also emphasize the physical health. Among the consumers of sporting goods, not only young students, some middle-aged and elderly people have become loyal followers of sporting goods. However, the factors affecting the purchase of sporting goods by middle-aged and elderly consumers are quite different from
young student consumer groups. They focus on the cost performance and quality of products.

2.2. **Analysis of sporting goods shopping platform in network marketing environment**

The third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee promoted the rapid development of China's sports industry. Many sporting goods enterprises began to emerge in China. Guangdong Pearl River Delta and Fujian gradually became an important industrial base for sporting goods processing. In such an era of rapid economic development, China Sporting goods Federation was established and issued a number of regulations conducive to the development of sporting goods industry. With such a good policy atmosphere and background, the domestic sporting goods industry is also going further and further on the way to maturity.

Through the data collection of sporting goods consumers' purchasing behaviors on various major data platforms, the current market status of online sporting goods is roughly as follows:

In the United States and other developed countries, the development of sporting goods network marketing industry is highly emphasized. In China, sporting goods marketing model began to penetrate e-commerce strategy in recent years. At present, the online trading of sporting goods is still only a part of the comprehensive online shopping transaction, and the professional sporting goods online shopping platform has not yet appeared. Taobao, Jingdong, Suning and other platforms have all carried out online trading of sporting goods, mainly in the form of C2C. Sporting goods specialty stores or agents are usually in the form of bricks-and-mortar stores.

At present, sporting goods consumers prefer Jingdong and Taobao among many shopping platforms. The main reason is that their products are of good quality, suitable price, novel types, diverse styles, and merchants have a good service attitude and the consumers have high satisfaction with after-sales service. Therefore, more and more online sporting goods consumers are willing to buy products on these two platforms.

3. **Marketing difficulties domestic sporting goods encountered based on the network marketing environment**

The Internet is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, its rapid development has provided favorable conditions and great advantages for the marketing of sporting goods, and promoted the marketing of domestic sporting goods enterprises. On the other hand, the background of the network environment also poses a major challenge to the marketing of domestic sporting goods.

Although sporting goods enterprises have great potential for development, many serious problems have arisen in the domestic sporting goods market in the process of their rapid development. Therefore, these problems must be solved before the rational development of sporting goods network marketing market. For example, Haifang Zhang (2015) said in the investigation and analysis of the current situation of China's sporting goods market and sales that there are two problems in China's sporting goods market: on the one hand, the market positioning is low, and the products are difficult to enter the high-end market; On the other hand, domestic sporting goods lack added value and customers are reluctant to buy them.

3.1. **The small size of the market makes consumers have less choice**

With the development of The Times, people's concept of exercising and pursuing health is increasingly strengthened. Therefore, sporting goods for the consumer range is very wide. People in their 70s and 80s, as well as teenagers, are fond of physical exercise. However, in the process of product selection by consumer groups, they often encounter the following problems:

First of all, there is no pertinence in the publicity of online products: in the previous survey, we learned that the characteristics of products that attract young students and middle-aged and elderly groups are very different to a large extent. Many sporting goods enterprises will pursue the style, performance and other aspects of products too much, but do not design different products for different consumers, and lose part of the consumer group.

Secondly, the transaction process is too complicated: it's not just young people who are taking part in physical fitness these days, but many older people too. Of course, the convenience of online shopping also attracts the attention of the elderly, but the complicated process of the transaction also discourages
them from buying.

Thirdly, the website's transaction security is low: not only the elderly consumer groups, but also some young consumer groups are extremely concerned about transaction security. This is also the most important problem, because many consumers have been cheated in online shopping, so they do not want to try online shopping.

3.2. Low market positioning makes it difficult for domestic sporting products to enter the high-end market and meet consumers' purchasing needs

If a product wants to get the recognition of the majority of consumers, the most critical factor is in the product itself. Domestic sporting goods brands have long struggled to enter the high-end market and have always been defined by consumers as affordable "domestic" brands. Through reviewing some product experience evaluation of flagship stores of domestic brands such as Li Ning, Anta and Double Star, as well as online questionnaire survey results, it can be seen that the following problems mainly occur in domestic sporting goods products:

1) Product style plagiarism phenomenon is rampant: nowadays, most domestic sporting goods consumers are more willing to imitate foreign fashion brands which are more original and attractive. No matter how expensive they are, there is always a large number of the consumer group who are willing to pay for it, and these consumers are even more contemptuous of domestic copycat products.

2) Poor product quality: according to the online survey, many consumers reflect that the quality of domestic sporting goods is not worthy of the price. Well-known Chinese brands such as Double Star and Anta have also had similar problems with shoe soles coming unglued, giving consumers a sense of inferior quality.

3) There are few representative high-end products: The national sports brands are mainly li Ning, Anta and other brands, and they are using the athlete image like Li Ning in their publicity to arouse the patriotic feelings of consumers so as to get them support domestic brands. However, if these brands want to enter the international market as high-end products, it is far from enough.

4) Product market positioning is not clear: Domestic sporting goods brands have not been clearly positioned in terms of brand characteristics and targeted consumers. For example, Li Ning, a well-known sports brand in China, mainly targets young people in the domestic market, but most of its overseas customers are 30-40 years old.

5) Domestic brands lack star products: nowadays, foreign sports brands such as Nike, Adidas and Converse are widely popular because of the associated impression of their products. Whenever these brands are mentioned, consumers will think of NBA games or players or soccer. The reason why foreign sporting goods brands are widely loved by domestic consumers is largely due to the star effect and the comparison effect. However, the product line of domestic sporting goods is too wide and the core main products are not prominent, which is the main reason why it is difficult to enter the international high-end market.

3.3. Consumers' purchasing behavior patterns change, and the transmission of product information is not accurate

In 2011, Zhibin Xiong and Quan Liu made a more accurate summary of the characteristics of domestic sporting goods marketing under the condition of e-commerce in the article Analysis of Domestic Sporting goods Marketing Strategy: the way of communication of sporting goods business information has changed significantly. This means that under the new mode of communication, the factors affecting consumers' purchasing behavior have also changed greatly.

As a result, consumers will have to make drastic changes in their purchasing behavior patterns. The resulting problems in conveying product information will have a great impact on attracting consumers to buy:

1) Website construction and publicity: the information released by the website established by sporting goods enterprises is inconsistent with the focus of marketing publicity. Due to the lack of website construction related technical support, planning, design investment and other reasons, a lot of product information cannot be updated in time[10]. Moreover, sporting goods are generally very classic styles and types, and all the company's products are almost the same. Many companies’ product photos aren't novel enough to appeal to consumers due to the lack of artistic aesthetics[11].
2) Interactivity of websites: because online marketing is all about online sales, the contact between consumers and stores or enterprises can usually only be through online customer service. However, most customer service cannot guarantee 24 hours of business, so it will not be able to immediately communicate with consumers to solve their problems, which leads to the failure to meet the needs of consumers[12].

4. Market optimization strategies of domestic sporting goods under the background of network marketing

Through the analysis and summary of sporting goods consumers' purchasing behavior under the background of network marketing, some feasible and practical strategies are put forward from the perspectives of product strategy, promotion strategy, channel strategy.

4.1. The product strategy of domestic sporting goods (the key factor to attract consumers to buy)

If a brand wants to develop rapidly and steadily and attract the attention of most consumers, the value of the product itself is the key factor. Therefore, in order to better develop in the network marketing environment, the first thing that needs to be optimized is the domestic sporting product itself[13].

1) Go abroad and follow the international trend

In the context of the rapid development of national economy, people's living standards have gradually improved, their health awareness has been constantly enhanced, and their tendency towards high-end sporting goods consumption market has become more and more obvious. Therefore, China's sporting goods market should not be limited to the low-end market, but should follow the trend of market development, go out of the country and go into the high-end market[14].

At present, the consumer groups of sporting goods market in China are mainly divided into professional sports consumer groups and daily leisure consumer groups, and the proportion of daily leisure consumer groups is expanding day by day. From this point of view, the comfort and leisure performance of sporting goods is one of the elements that enterprises need to pay attention to. In these consumer groups, the post-80s and post-90s are the main consumers. Therefore, enterprises should pay more attention to the design of product styles to meet the needs of most consumer groups in this respect. When designing styles, enterprises should not blindly copy foreign fashion brands. Domestic sporting goods enterprises should add China's own characteristics, such as embroidery, dragon patterns and other logos belonging to China. According to an online survey, many foreign consumers appreciate Chinese traditional crafts and are willing to buy products with Chinese characteristics. Therefore, the Infiltration of Chinese characteristics into domestic sporting goods is also a good choice to go abroad[15].

2) Innovate products and increase investment in scientific research

As far as the products concerned, what needs to be emphasized is not only the style of products, but also the important elements of product performance characteristics. Product performance is one of the demands of consumers, especially professional sports players.

With the popularity of the Olympic spirit throughout the country, people are more keen on sports[16]. In the past, golf, triathlon and other niche sports have begun to become one of people's daily leisure sports, and consumer demand for professional sporting goods in these sports is also rising. Therefore, domestic sporting goods enterprises should adopt different strategies according to different types of consumers and provide corresponding product series for consumers to choose. Then the domestic sporting goods enterprise should increase the investment in scientific research and improve product performance. All the time, the foreign brand Nike is famous for the classic products of cushion technology series; AVIA is loved by consumer for its Cantilever suspension system; Clomobia sneakers, known for their outdoor functions, cater to the needs of more outdoor consumers[17]. The reason why these sports brands are loved by consumers is that the performance of their products is outstanding, which can hit the demand psychology of consumers, catch the attention of consumers and successfully occupy the market. However, our domestic sporting goods brands is difficult to compete with similar products due to insufficient investment in scientific research. According to the survey, in 2018, science and technology research and development investment of Nike brand is more than 3.5 billion Dollars, accounting for more than 10% of the total revenue of the brand. In contrast, the investment of scientific research of domestic sporting goods brands is generally lower than 7%, so there is a big gap with the
brands in foreign countries. Therefore, if domestic sporting goods want to go abroad and win more high-end consumers' love, it is necessary to increase investment in scientific research, and improve brand competitiveness[18].

3) Clarify the product market positioning, expand the market

At present, the domestic sporting goods brand market positioning is not clear, its target consumers are mainly low-end groups. Therefore, if the domestic sporting goods market wants to develop better, they need to clarify the product market positioning, absorb more consumers and expand the market.

Domestic sporting goods brands have been trying to enter economically advanced countries such as the U.S. and European countries, but the results have backfired. Therefore, they need to reposition the market and shape the image of domestic sporting goods brands in the world.

In view of the current situation, if the southeast Asian countries, the Middle East countries and other regions as the first choice of domestic sporting goods brands to expand the foreign market, it will have great development advantages. Compared with well-known international brands, such as Nike and Adidas, the price of their products is usually 1-2 times higher than that of domestic sports goods. However, the overall quality of China's sporting goods has also been recognized by consumers, so in terms of cost performance, it can better meet the needs of consumers in these regions, and make up for the gap in the sporting goods brand market in these regions[19].

4.2. The promotion strategy of domestic sporting goods

Sales promotion, not only refers to sales, but also includes publicity, promotion, marketing and a series of operations. Considering the current situation of sporting goods in China, the concept of sporting goods promotion may be changed. At present, most young consumers of domestic sporting goods like foreign sporting goods, and the publicity and promotion of foreign products have effectively caught the attention of consumers. Therefore, it is very important to change the promotion strategy of domestic sporting goods and attract consumers' attention with greater efforts.

For example, when thinking of NBA stars, consumers will think of foreign popular brand Nike, its AIR Force, AIR Maxd and other classic products are widely sought after and loved by sports fans. If the product image of a sporting goods enterprise wants to go deep into the minds of consumers, it must have its own star products. During this period, Huili Sports brand suddenly became the synonym of "domestic fashion" and became popular in China. The reason is also attributed to a famous show called Partners in Fashion, which has turned fashion stars like Kris Wu and Angelababy into spokesmen for Huili brand. Because of the flow of stars, vigorously promotion by fans, the image of domestic fashion brand of Huili, it successfully entered the minds of consumers, and in nearly half a year was popular in domestic market. Moreover, it has not only attracted domestic consumer groups, but also gained a large number of loyal fans abroad[20].

Therefore, in the aspect of brand promotion, we can select some celebrities with large flow at the front of the trend. Their clothes will cause a large wave of fans to follow, bring a series of star effect, deepen the product image, and make consumers have associative reaction.

4.3. Channel strategy of domestic sporting goods

In the context of the Network era, domestic sporting goods enterprises should make full use of the "Internet +" mode to expand the market share of products and improve product sales. The purchasing behavior pattern of sporting goods consumers has changed greatly, from clicking and browsing on product websites to various advertising promotion, which will produce a variety of influencing factors. Therefore, from the perspective of consumers' online shopping behavior pattern, the domestic sporting goods channel strategy can start from the following aspects:

1) Creating official company website

Creating an official company website is the most advantageous way to promote company's products. The company can choose to launch featured posters and links on the main products, establish a platform for customers to buy, regularly carry out festival activities, shape the image of the company, and make the relationship between the company and consumers more intimate. In addition, it can also cultivate a group of loyal customers and get their feedback and suggestions in time, which is conducive to improving the product.
2) Publicity and promotion of Tip Tok

In 2018, the TipTok platform became popular and became one of the must-see apps for most people in their spare time. According to an online survey, 250 million people use Tip Tok every day, with 650 million monthly active users. Nearly half of China's 1.4 billion people use this app. Therefore, domestic sporting goods enterprises should seize the opportunity of Tip Tok platform for product sales and advertising. Domestic sporting goods enterprises can publish their sponsored sports events or Olympic Games information through news media on Tip Tok platform. Similar news appears repeatedly, which can leave a deep impression to consumer. Therefore, when they need to buy sports products in the future, these brand names will be easy to come to mind.

3) Create the marketing model of Micro Blog and Wechat

In this era of “Internet +”, Wechat has become a communication software for almost everyone, and Micro Blog has become one of the main media for people to contact news and information every day. If domestic sporting goods want to make consumers familiar with their products, they can choose to release product information repeatedly on Micro Blog and Wechat, so that consumers can always inadvertently see them.

Sporting goods companies can also cooperate with Weibo to create some instant hot topics to let their brands more impressive. For example, the NBA game, which has always been concerned by fans, always hits the hot headlines on Weibo. Meanwhile, the Nike brand image closely related to NBA will also be inserted into the eyes of consumers.

As for Wechat, in order to seize the opportunity of the network era, more and more Wechat business began to appear on this platform. Some low-end sporting goods can make reasonable use of Wechat business channels to absorb more consumers. Of course, Wechat business usually faces some customers aged between 18 and 40 years old. Therefore, more discounts can be given to Wechat business, and some low-cost, fashionable and suitable shoes, clothes and fitness equipment can be sold out through Wechat business channels. And, according to observation, different kinds of advertisements often appear on Wechat moments, to attract consumer attention.

All marketing strategies, whether product strategy, promotion strategy or channel strategy, are ultimately designed to make consumers more satisfied and meet their needs. Therefore, what we need to do is to ensure that we can meet the needs of consumers to the maximum extent and win the trust and love of consumers under the condition that enterprises can make profits. At the same time, domestic sporting goods companies should combine the shopping mode of the Internet era, and start from the different factors that affect consumers' purchasing behavior and decision-making, improve the interest of online customer service and guarantee after-sales service, so as to enhance the effectiveness of marketing.

5. Conclusion

Nowadays, online shopping has become a global trend and one of the mainstream ways for everyone to shop. At the same time, due to the improvement of living standards, inspired by the Olympic spirit, more and more people began to pursue the improvement of physical fitness, the domestic sporting goods market demand will be increasingly expanded.

From the above analysis, it can be seen that the networking of domestic sporting goods enterprises will become the main development direction in the future. Through the survey of consumers, there are many factors that affect consumers to buy sporting goods online. Only by combining these factors, seizing the opportunities of the current network marketing market, and integrating and improving the sporting goods on the whole according to the characteristics and resources of each enterprise, can enterprises promote the sales of sporting goods under the background of network marketing, popularize the sporting goods online marketing in China, and even go abroad. For the domestic sporting goods market operators, if they want to meet the needs of consumers, they must have a keen ability to observe the network economy, adopt their own publicity strategies according to the characteristics of network marketing, and position their own products properly. In this way, the final harvest of the domestic sporting goods network market is not only a short-term achievement, but also will lay a solid foundation for its future sustainable development.

Although the domestic sporting goods market is gradually networked, but it cannot keep up with the speed of network development. The network of sporting goods market is still in the exploratory stage,
and there are problems such as network security, poor experience and insufficient added value. China's sporting goods enterprises can no longer rely on the traditional marketing model, they must be closely combined with the Internet, increase scientific research efforts, enhance the sense of competition, broaden marketing channels, clear product positioning, and strive to have a place in the domestic and foreign sporting goods market!

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