New Media and Consumers' Behavior: Impacts and Mechanism

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Abstract. In the Internet era, traditional media's one-way information transmission technique is becoming unable to suit people's diverse needs, so a new media marketing method that can deliver information in both directions came into being. The rapid development of new media has had an impact on our information environment, people's consumption habits altered, and new business models and economic operating modes emerged. New media can be viewed as both a challenge to old consumption theory and an innovation and development of classical theory. The evolution of new media has increased the communication channels of individual and group emotions, resulting in changes in consumer behavior. Given the circumstances, this paper analyzes the behavior of consumers in this event through the case analysis method of the positive donation behavior of Hongxingerke Company for disaster areas, which triggered netizens to buy brand crazes. The study found that under the influence of a group environment, consumers are vulnerable to emotional influence, resulting in blind conformity behavior and wild consumption behavior after impulse. It demonstrates that, as a result of the new media environment's effect, consumption will be influenced by the network environment in order to produce a sales atmosphere and modify its original consuming behavior. This study has a reminder and reflection relevance for consumers' behavior in real life as a result of the effect of new media environments.

Keywords: New Media, Conformity, Wild Consumption, Consumer Behavior.

1. Introduction

The introduction of new media has altered the status quo of one-way information distribution in conventional media, allowing consumers to receive commodities information more quickly and conveniently via the network. More and more shopping platforms are developing their own third-party payment platforms, promoting the long-term development of China's e-commerce business and increasing consumer demand. Many firms employ numerous ways of marketing to attract customers, and other businesses may also undertake marketing in a more direct manner, such as live streaming. Consumer behavior will be influenced by the sales environment of goods and service contact.

In order to explore the impact of new media on consumer behavior, this paper takes the Hongxingerke incident as a case study. In July 2021, Henan province was hit by a catastrophic flood calamity, and people from all walks of life came together to help. Despite its own losses, Hongxingerke made significant attempts to give money via microblogs, which garnered widespread notice. Many netizens participated in the discussion on this issue, resulting in the emotion of brand identification. The previously unconnected groups also amassed emotional energy, which aided in the creation of an online interaction ceremony. Many netizens were influenced by this interactive sentiment and purchased Hongxingerke's items one after the other to show their support for the company. There are many impulsive consumers who are affected by the public buying craze and want to follow the crowd to make impulsive consumption. When participating in the discussion, the members of the group were full of emotional venting when buying, and also gathered the strength of internal unity of consumers with the help of the network, so that the interactive ritual chain of wild consumption also came into being.

The rest of this paper is divided into 4 parts. The first is to cite studies on the advent of new media, the distinction between new and conventional media, and the influence of new media on consumers. The second is to use Hongxingerke as an example to investigate the impact of new media on

consumers. Then, expand the discussion to encompass the influence of changes in consumer behavior. And the final section of this paper is the conclusion.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Emergence of New Media

Because traditional media cannot address people's diverse requirements in the Internet era through one-way information conveyance, new media of two-way information transmission emerged as a result. The emergence of new media is subverting the culture and knowledge we know and greatly impacting our lives [1]. New media refers to a new form of information transmission that uses emerging technologies to create information that can be obtained through the network. Because of the immediacy and interactivity of new media, people can communicate and share information with partners in other locations at any time and from any location [2]. Because of the Internet's convenience, interactivity, anonymity, and somewhat personalized characteristics, an increasing number of people are publishing their own ideas on the Internet, sharing information, or obtaining resources through online platforms. The rise of the net generation written by Tapscott is the first classic book in the world that completely depicts the network generation stimulated by digital technology [3]. Many developing businesses, such as online consumption platforms, have evolved with the help of new media, and enterprise business strategies have shifted to accommodate the trend. [4].

2.2. Comparative Analysis of Traditional Media and New Media

Traditional media is a single mass-oriented communication mode. It is a media that regularly releases information to the public through some fixed ways, such as newspapers, outdoors, communications, radio, television, web media, and other traditional media networks. Traditional media, such as voice and image, television, and radio, are limited in time and space. It lacks interactive components [5]. Under the traditional consumption mode, consumers' information sources are mostly media advertising and friends' communication. To compare the quality, price, and other factors of goods, it requires a lot of costs to go to multiple stores and shopping malls. With the rapid growth of the times, traditional media modes of information transmission cannot match people's needs to swiftly get information from many sources. It is an excellent model for the media in terms of providing a handy avenue for public debate. The combination of sound, pictures, and animation in online media has eased the time and space constraints to a certain extent and expanded the frontiers of information and communication production, reception, and dissemination around the world [6]. The Internet allows every ordinary person to obtain the freedom of information, and every ordinary person can now be closely connected with the rest of the world [7]. The rapid development of network media has significantly impacted our information environment. The introduction of new media has enriched the way information is transmitted, changing the way people consume, and people have experienced a new engagement mode via the network. [8].

2.3. The Impact of New Media on Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is dynamic, involving the interaction between perception, cognition, behavior, and environmental factors as well as the transaction process [9]. Online media has brought consumers more real, flexible, and convenient enterprise marketing. The situational factors influencing consumer consumption behavior in the online celebrity economy system mainly include the sales atmosphere of goods and service interaction. The live delivery mode of new media makes the online shopping scene oriented so that consumers can exchange information in real-time and get the experience of accompanying shopping, thus effectively opening the transaction loop from cognition to purchase [10]. The anchorman in the new media platform often has a deep understanding of the market demand, which can help enterprises establish the connection between products and audiences, and use their own personality characteristics to endow the brand with new connotations, so as to enhance the brand value and the purchase intention of the audience, and guide and change the consumption behavior of

others [11,12]. Online shopping saves a lot of time for consumers to choose, from and can also effectively pass away the fragmented time of consumers. Consumers are more likely to enjoy the shopping experience when interacting with the anchor. In this case, they are very likely to have the desire to buy.

3. Methodology

The Hongxingerke event has received widespread notice in the last two years and is an example of the impact of new media on consumers. This paper examines the pertinent influence on consumer behavior in the network environment of new media through the analysis of this scenario.

After July 20, 2021, Henan will have continuous, severe rain, which will affect the weather and cause calamity in many areas, leaving many people dead and missing. This event immediately drew the attention of people from all around the country, and many businesses and individuals donated money. On July 21, Hongxingerke reported on its microblog that it had donated 50 million yuan in materials to Henan, which was stunning.

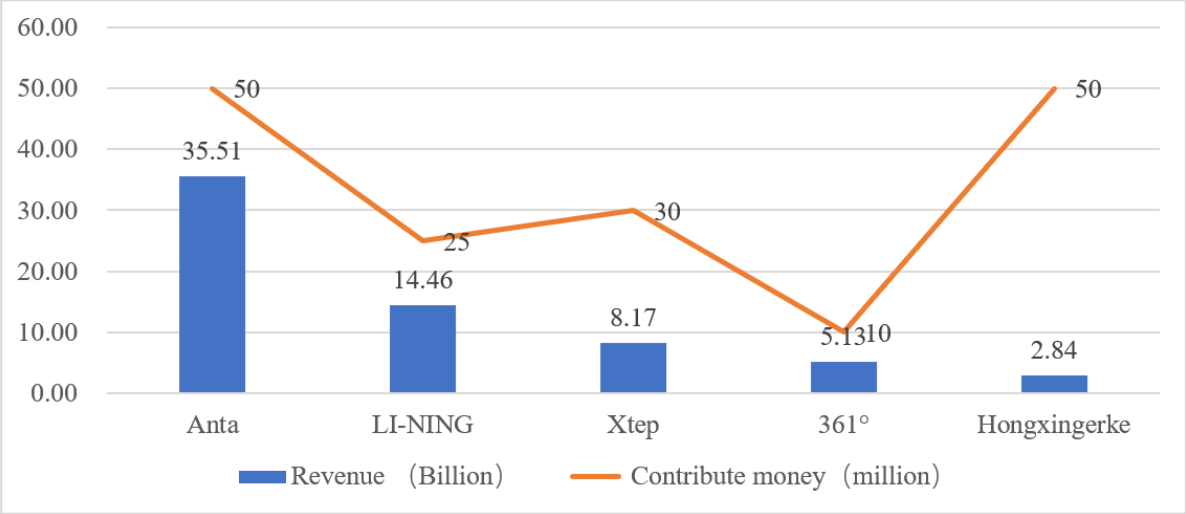


Figure 1. Marketing Income and Contributions of Chinese Sports Brands Comparative

In Figure 1, in terms of operational revenue, Hongxingerke ranked last among Chinese sports brands in 2020, with Anta's operating revenue reaching 35.51 billion yuan, while Hongxingerke's operating revenue was only 2.84 billion yuan, even lower than the brand's in 2008. Although there is a large disparity between the operating income and Anta, its contribution amount ranks first among Chinese sports brands, with a donation of 50 million yuan.

Hongxingerke's actions exhibited his sense of social duty and soon drew the attention of the Internet's masses. It exemplifies Hongxingerke's bravery and sense of social responsibility while also swiftly igniting online public opinion. Because the corporation did not publicize or market after the donation, such an incredibly low-key charity greatly struck netizens' feelings of home and country, eliciting broad resonance and sympathy. Hongxing Erke conducted a hot search on various platforms on July 24, including Tiktok, Toutiao, Baidu, Zhihu, Station B, Xiaohongshu, and others. When positive emotional transmission propels netizens to the top, speech support on the new media platform is impossible to meet, and netizens begin to take action to vent their emotions.

Table 1. Live broadcast data of Hongxingerke Children's Wear Flagship Store

Date	7.20	7.21	7.22	7.24	7.23
Peak popularity	191.00	118	6038	38000	62000
Sales volume	39.00	122	6488	69000	44000
Sales amount	3151.70	10000	544000	6576000	3986000

According to the table 1, the total sales of the Tiktok studio of Hongxingerke children's clothes flagship shop in 2 days on July 20 and 21 were only 13151.7 yuan, and the peak number of watchers was fewer than 200. The overall number of viewers and cumulative sales exceeded 100,000 in the three days after the contribution event.

Following consumer purchases, Hongxingerke products were out of stock on numerous e-commerce platforms, and overall sales of the four live broadcast booths increased 52 times year on year to 206 million yuan.

4. Discussion

4.1. Basic Analysis

In the new media environment, consumers will lose the ability to dominate their own behavior due to the influence of the herd mentality when they are in the environment where businesses play the role of crowding. Under the influence of herd mentality, consumers' behavior will blindly follow the public. The herd mentality will make consumers lose their experience and judgment in the past through the infection mechanism of suggestion, and they will believe in the values of their own group incomparably, and some impulsive consumption will occur. Conformity is a common phenomenon in social psychology. The "game illusion" experiment conducted by social psychologist Sharif in 1935 is the earliest study on conformity. Since then, many social psychologists have studied the phenomenon of conformity from different perspectives, and have come to the conclusion that the essence of conformity is a tendency to change behavior under group pressure [13], that is, individuals are affected by the behavior of external groups, and their own judgments and understanding show behavior that conforms to public opinion or the majority. When people live in a certain social circle, there is a tendency that they hope to keep pace with the social circle to which they belong. The consumers dominated by this kind of psychology constitute a considerable customer group. When shopping online, especially in the live broadcast room, the constantly updated comments stimulate consumers' conformity. Later consumers will unconsciously decide whether to buy this product based on the number of consumers, the number of comments, the degree of praise, and the information discussed by netizens, even if the product they buy is not a necessity for themselves. Such consumer behavior is typically dominated by herd mentality and blindly impulsive consumption.

In addition to the influence of herd mentality, impulsive consumption is also a kind of wild consumption behavior. The original meaning of wild consumption refers to irrational and impulsive consumption dominated by emotions, which is characterized by irrationality and carnival. The process from the initiation of hot events to the completion of "wild consumption" will inevitably experience online carnival. From the overall occurrence process of "wild consumption", we need to first have a specific hot event as the fuse, and then pass on information through the microblog social media platform, so as to attract the attention of a wide range of Internet users. Then, groups with emotional resonance flock into the live broadcast room to participate in interaction, and complete "wild consumption" with impulse payment under passion. With this behavior, we can express our enthusiasm and support the story behind the event. For example, after the occurrence of Hongxingerke's fanatical purchase event, "Hongxingerke still donated 50 million yuan to Henan when the company's capital chain was in trouble", people attached special patriotic significance to the purchase of Hongxingerke's goods. Under the influence of fanatical support for positive forces, wild consumption swept the network for a while.

4.2. Extended Analysis

In recent years, due to the impact of the epidemic, people's pent-up emotions have no place to release. Online consumption provides a place for people to release their emotions. Randall Collins believes in the interactive ritual chain that the interactive ritual includes four elements, and emotional energy is the core of the interactive ritual [14]. Although the epidemic has restricted people's physical presence, people can realize virtual presence through social media, and the synchronization,

interactivity, and other characteristics of live broadcasts can further enhance people's feelings and experience of presence. From the perspective of the object of the carnival, not everyone can revel in the live broadcast room, and only those who know about hot events have the right to conduct a ritual carnival. After becoming an insider of wild consumer groups, some netizens will choose to share their personal emotional experience in the online field to seek emotional resonance. Netizens with similar experiences and perceptions will interact with them to achieve emotional exchange. The players can gather emotional energy to create a positive atmosphere and obtain long-term and stable emotional energy. When carnival groups enter the arena and focus on "wild consumption", people who have completed "wild consumption" or have yet to complete have an emotional exchange. This kind of wild consumption requires positive emotions to keep the interaction going for a long time. When positive emotions can no longer drive the emotions of consumer groups and deliver value to them, consumers will be difficult to conduct wild consumption rituals. Therefore, businesses also need to consider whether such an interaction ceremony can be sustained and how to maintain the status quo when the interaction stops.

5. Conclusion

With the continuous improvement of new media platform shopping, the traditional offline sales model has been impacted. Online shopping attracts more and more consumers because of its unique rapidity and convenience. Although more and more consumers can get the business they want more quickly through the Internet, it saves a lot of time and energy than traditional shopping. However, in the process of consumption, there are impulsive consumption phenomena, the following mentality of blind consumption by comparing with others, and the problem that consumers tend to lose themselves and lead consumption when affected by the group environment. The new media network environment will affect consumption intention, and consumers will have a series of irrational consumption behaviors driven by the unique consumption psychology and external environment.

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