Analysis of the promotion of consumer psychological analysis and marketing to sports propaganda

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Abstract

In recent years, the number of sports enthusiasts in China has increased. Other domestic and international sporting goods manufacturers have also cited running gear as a primary development focus. The geographical environment and its environment heavily influence the marketing approach for the running brand Decay in a particular region. This study used the PEST analysis tool to investigate the region's political, economic, social, cultural, technological development, and other environmental factors. The SWOT analysis tool evaluated Decathlon's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This study studied Decathlon's marketing strategies from the 4P and 4C perspectives, described and assessed the emerging marketing strategies, including the tactics to encourage and inhibit its development, and offered some improvement approaches. In 2021, the Decathlon sports brand will see a growth rate of 65.69%, while in 2022, the growth rate will drastically drop to 15.69%. Even though the company's revenue growth rate has slowed, the overall profit margin has not altered substantially and has maintained at roughly 29%, demonstrating that the marketing strategy is highly significant. A sports brand's marketing plan offers more advantages than its price and channel strategies.

Keywords: Consumer psychology; marketing management; athletic sports

1. Introduction

Marketing is evolving with the times to accommodate consumers' psychology and consumption habits. The growth of production technology began with the industrial revolution, and marketing dominated by technology is referred to as marketing version 1.0. Information technology and the Internet are evolving, and the marketing developed from this is known as 2.0 marketing. The growing use of mobile clients and social apps has brought about significant changes in our lives, and the accompanying marketing model has reached a new level, becoming the primary force behind marketing 3.0. Future expansion of the marketing model will be unrestricted, and it will undoubtedly usher in enormous business prospects. The current marketing reform has evolved from "product-centered" marketing to "consumercentered" marketing to "value-driven" marketing. In this new marketing model controlled by value channels, sports marketing seizes new opportunities; businesses are creating new business prospects everywhere and wish to capitalize on sports marketing's highest value in the new era (Liu, Yin, & Zhang, 2022).

With the rapid development of network technology and the real-time update of sports information, the marriage of the Internet and sports has become an increasingly important form of consumption among sports fans in China. In conjunction with the Internet, sports events and the sports industry have developed new marketing methods to accommodate the changing times. Under the 3.0 model, sports marketing can more efficiently produce sports products and services to facilitate their distribution to sports customers. With consumer contact in the new media environment, the sports brand image will be infused with sportsmanship.

In recent years, the number of sports fans has increased, there are no particular time or location requirements for running, and running has grown increasingly popular and generated more and more business prospects. Behind the nationwide running craze are runners and runners themselves, supplies and equipment, sponsors, businesses, public relations professionals, the media, and even individuals. With the "recession" of the sports industry in recent years, the industrialization path and commercial value of running have become increasingly clear, the enormous market demand has led many domestic sports goods brands to list running sports products as one of their essential development contents, and sports goods enterprises at home and abroad have increased their research and development of running products as well as their marketing efforts for running products. Every famous brand hopes to partake in it (Barovic, Vujacic, & Spalevic, 2021).

Under the influence of the continuous and rapid development of the current social economy, the competitiveness of the market is increasing; if enterprises want to occupy a favorable competitive position in the

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market, they must "attract" consumers, consider the needs of consumers from the consumers' perspective, and maximize the satisfaction of a series of personalized needs of consumers; consumers' psychology is a factor that can directly influence consumers' consumption (Bi, Gu, & Liu, 2021). Consequently, in the process of enterprises' marketing activities, we can use the characteristics of consumers' psychology and behavior to analyze them, discover the general laws of consumers, and use consumers' consumption laws to formulate marketing activities that meet consumers' consumption intentions. This can stimulate consumers' consumption desire and promote the actualization of consumers' consumption behavior while minimizing the negative impact on the

environment. As the appeal objective of sports advertising is to increase product sales, it is vital to consider customers as the appeal target and investigate the purchasing characteristics of consumers. Consumer purchasing behavior involves three dynamic processes: Because of the focus on things, the characteristics of consumers' buying behavior, cognition of goods, emotional response, and deliberate decision-making are all psychological activity processes. Following a certain comprehension and comprehension of the commodities, compare them to similar commodities to develop a dependency on the favored commodities, solidify the notion of purchasing, and finally achieve the purchase behavior (Peng, 2022). Figure 1 depicts the shopping mentality of consumers.

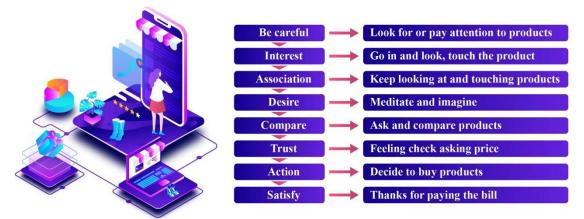


Figure 1. Customer's psychological process of shopping

This research uses Decathlon's running brand, a sports goods company, as the research object and conducts a market analysis on the development of this brand, with a focus on summarizing and analyzing its marketing performance and marketing strategies in a particular region, as well as highlighting its advantages and disadvantages.

2. Review of Literature

The distinction between international and domestic study is that many foreign researchers have researched the marketing strategy of their athletic goods since the research on 4P and 4C theory has been created abroad for a long time and has been translated to other marketing approaches. American sporting events can significantly impact fans (Yuksel, Smith, & Milne, 2021). As a result, numerous sports brands are beginning to sponsor sporting events, and one of the methods to support sporting events is to win the field championship. Liao, Widowati, and Yang (2021) highlighted Nike and Adidas' sponsorship tactics for sporting events: Adidas often utilizes a sponsorship team structure, while Nike adopts an

individual sponsorship structure; During the London Olympic Games, Adidas sponsored 11 national teams with \$100 million, and its current quarter sales generated a return of \$4.423 billion. Conversely, Nike sponsored 1000 athletes in 87 national delegations with \$890 million, and its current quarter sales generated a return of \$6.669 billion. Sports brands frequently employ celebrity endorsement and advertising as marketing methods. Several sports businesses package players with superior technology and charisma as stars, and their positive images attract many sports brands. Svoboda and Štěrba (2021) noted that celebrity endorsement could provide enormous benefits to sports businesses and boost the growth of the sports industry. This is a process that benefits both parties. Mengis et al. (2022) analyzed the impact of Nike's commercials for different target objects of its products on the company's income and brand identification, concluding that its advertisements have played a significant role for most consumers, as has its advertising slogan, "Just do it." Evans (2021) said that there are numerous types of Li Ning brand products, encompassing various athletic fields and that the product hand area is also quite expansive. However, none of the Li Ning brand

products are core products, and consumers have not acknowledged the professionalism of its products. This product approach not only diminishes Li Ning's brand's competitiveness but is also not beneficial to its business growth. Rouziès et al. (2005) provided concrete instances of the brand's promotion, such as fine-tuning the pricing of some models with poor sales conditions and discounting them regularly, and ensuring that the price of this product is consistent throughout various sales channels; Sponsoring sporting events is also an effective marketing strategy for the Li Ning brand; using celebrity spokespeople and producing celebrity advertising are also employed. Yet, these are promotional efforts for the Li Ning brand compared to other brands. But, the Li Ning brand did not do well with this technique, and the result was merely average, failing to set it apart from the market competitors. This is another issue that numerous sports brands face. According to Jaas (2022), Decathlon Sports Supermarket centralizes all sports products, although more than 90% are free. The company manages the entire industrial supply chain, including design, production, transport, and retail. Each sport's equipment is gradually upgraded from basic to professional, accommodating the desires of all sportsmen. Saberi et al. (2020) compared Nike, Adidas, and Li Ning and noted that at the beginning of Nike's establishment, there was only one pair of nonprofessional running shoes in its product line, which led to the market's profound recognition of the professionalism of its products. As the market for its professional running shoes stabilized, it began to develop additional sports items; Adidas also has the technology to ensure the professionalism of its sports products, whereas Li Ning's products are incomparable to those of Adidas and Nike in terms of professionalism (Wang & Huang, 2021).

The literature shows that the marketing strategy of sports products begins with the most fundamental characteristics and continues to build marketing approaches and strategies distinct from those of other brands.

3. Methodology

The subject of this study is Decathlon's marketing approach in a specific region. The regional context and its surroundings heavily influence the marketing strategy of Decathlon in an area. Thus, the author has comprehensively analyzed these two environmental factors. In this study, the researcher has repeatedly consulted relevant literature in the library of a sports college and CNKI, downloaded and sorted out more than 150 pieces of various materials searched by the keywords

of marketing strategy, sports brand, Decathlon, etc., the researcher has also consulted more than 20 books related to marketing, and collected relevant data and Decathlon's most recent strategic system through Decathlon's internal publications and Decathlon's official website.

In addition, this study compares the marketing strategies of Decathlon's running brand Kuangling Path to those of other sports goods companies and evaluates the benefits and drawbacks of Decathlon's sports goods marketing strategy. Even while the foundation of this study is the marketing strategy of Decathlon's running brand in a specific location, the research on the entire running market in China is also helpful in comprehending the growth of a single brand in this region. The purpose of this study was to summarize the development of the entire running market, the development of running in a particular region, the marketing environment in a specific region, and the setting of Decathlon's running brand. The researcher interviewed the store manager of Decathlon A, the operation manager of Decathlon B, the department manager of Decathlon C, and the part-time sales staff and acquired a great deal of material that was very helpful in writing this study.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Physical distribution of sports brands

In recent years, well-known domestic and international sports brands have flourished in a particular region, with the most evident performance being the expansion of each brand's shop count in the area. This study examined the development of stores of numerous representative brands in China and abroad over the past three years by visiting a few firms' internal management and reviewing several brands' official websites (Wintle, 2022). Li Ning is the only indigenous brand, while Nike, Adidas, Arthur, New Bailun, Mizuno, and Andema are among the six global sports brands. Based on data from the official websites of the seven brands listed above, the number of new stores opening in a specific area each year from 2020 to 2022 can be determined (including direct stores and shopping malls). Nike has 10, 10, and 12 stores, for a total of 32; Adidas has 11, 12, and 10 stores, for a total of 33; Li Ning has 5, 6, and 7 stores, for a total of 18; New Bailun has 4, 5, and 3 stores, for a total of 15; Mizuno will settle in 2021, and will open 3 and 4 stores, for a total of 7; Andrma and Arthur both settled in 2022, with 1 and 5 stores, respectively. Nike, Adidas, and New Bailun have a considerably longer development history in China than Arthur, Mizuno, and Andrma. Hence, China has comparatively developed client groups. As the leader of domestic sports brands, Li Ning has an entirely consistent consumer base. In recent years, Arthur, Mizuno, and Andrma began to develop in China (Sun & Li, 2021). As a second-tier city, it appears relatively late for these companies to penetrate a neighborhood. There will be seven Mizuno stores in 2021 and 2022, significantly more than the six Arthur and Andrma outlets. Andrma will enter a specific market officially in 2022, and five stores will open within one year; Arthur will open his first store in the second part of 2021. Before opening the exclusive boutiques, Decathlon's stores acted as agents and sold sure of Arthur's running shoes.

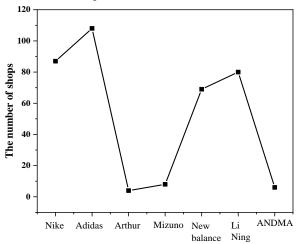


Figure 2. Number of stores of each brand in a region

Figure 2 depicts the quantity of the seven brands mentioned above in a particular area (these stores are located in a specific urban area and do not include children's exclusive stores). Compared to other brands, the number of Adidas stores has surpassed 100; Nike and Li Ning have more than 80 stores but not more than 100; and New Bailun has a high number of stores in a specific area, approximately 70. Yet, a comparison with past data reveals that the number of brands with many stores is not necessarily high. Arthur is the preferred brand of running shoes among consumers, despite having only one exclusive store and three agents; despite Andrma's short time on the market, it has also amassed a specific customer base; one of the reasons for this difference is the different marketing strategies of the various brands. Thus, the study of sports public relations should examine marketing techniques.

4.2 The marketing growth rate of Decathlon

Since entering the Chinese market in 2003, Decathlon's growth has been extremely quick, and the number of outlets is constantly increasing. The Kuangling Trail brand was launched in 2004. Therefore Decathlon entered China without a running brand (Yaqoob & Aldewachi, 2021). In 2008, running sports companies officially entered China. Figure 3 depicts how the author will utilize the revenue

growth rate of Decathlon in a region from 2018 to 2022 to examine the development state of the brand in China.

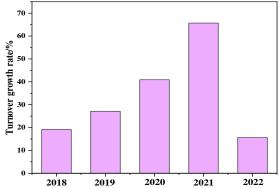


Figure 3. The turnover growth rate of the Decathlon Fast Track brand in a particular region of China Note: Data from internal publications

The broken line in Figure 3 indicates that from 2018 to 2021, the growth rate of the Kuailingjing brand in a particular region of China is relatively low, at 19.17% and 27.15 %, respectively. However, in 2020 and 2021, the growth rate will be relatively high, reaching a peak of 65.69% 2021. This indicates that between 2018 and 2021, the Decathlon Fast Track brand will experience strong growth in the region. In 2022, however, the growth rate will drastically decline to 15.63 percent. Although its revenue growth rate has decreased, its overall profit margin has remained relatively unchanged at roughly 29%. The drop in growth rate cannot be attributed only to inadequate development, but it does indicate that progress is not as rapid as it once was. This occurs for various reasons, among which marketing strategy is crucial.

4.3 Economic performance of sports product marketing strategy

The evolution of the Decathlon Fast Antelope Trail brand in a particular region can be determined based on data from the store's long operation history. As indicated in Table 1, the table focuses on four aspects: the growth rate of the store's Kuangling Path turnover, the growth rate of the number of sales, the profit growth rate, and the profit margin over the past five years. According to the data in the table, 2021 and 2020 are the stages of the rapid expansion of the Kuailingjing brand, particularly in 2021, when the growth rate of its revenue has reached 72.04 percent, and the growth in sales and profit is more than six times that of 2021; however, growth in 2018 and 2019 is relatively moderate, which is a period of slow growth for the brand; even in 2020, the growth rate of its revenue is only approximately 28%, the growth rate of sales is 39.45%, and the profit growth rate is 28.50%. Nonetheless, its profit margin is falling annually. In 2018, the profit margin was 31.03%. In 2019, 2020, and 2021,

the profit margin will remain above 29%, but it will drop to 27.8% in 2022. The data for 2022 indicates that the expansion of the fast track has slowed significantly, and the profit growth rate is negative. There may be two causes for its rapid growth deceleration: Supply and demand are saturated, and the company's marketing

strategy is flawed. As stated in the initial study, the market for running sports items is exceptionally competitive; nonetheless, even if supply and demand are saturated, appropriate marketing methods can still attract buyers. Furthermore, this also indicates that Decathlon's marketing strategy must be modified.

Table 1Economic Performance of Kuangling Path in a Store from 2018 to 2022

particular year	Turnover growth rate	Piece growth rate	Profit growth rate	profit margin
2022	3.63%	20.20%	-2.40%	27.80%
2021	72.04%	624.06%	653.50%	29.58%
2020	50.24%	189.01%	121.54%	29.81%
2019	28.05%	39.45%	28.50%	29.91%
2018	17.05%	20.72%	27.45%	31.03%

As demonstrated in Table 2, the pricing strategy of the Kuanglingjing brand is favorable when compared to several foreign and domestic brands that are more popular among the runners stated previously. The lowest price of Arthur running shoes is 255 yuan, which is 176 yuan higher than the lowest price of fast scarves, which is 79 yuan; The lowest price of Nike and Adidas is higher than the highest price of Fast Antelope Path; Among domestic brands, the lowest price of Li Ning and Anta is 269 yuan, which is nearly 200 yuan more elevated than that of Kuangling Path.

 Table 2

 List of the highest and lowest prices of brand men's running shoes

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Brand name	Highest price (yuan)	Lowest price (yuan)
Arthur	1690	255
Nike	1599	629
Adidas	1499	599
Li Ning	599	269
Anta	549	269

Note: The data in the chart is from the official website and does not include discount products

Li Ning is 100 yuan more expensive than Kuangling Way, whereas Anta is 50 yuan more expensive. The most costly Arthur, Nike, and Adidas items cost over three times as much as Kuailingjing. Consequently, its price is the most favorable marketing technique for the Kuailingjing brand. The pricing approach of Decathlon is advantageous for three reasons. First, its complete industrial chain; second, its efficient retail system; and third, its low labor cost. Its high-speed retail system primarily entails no warehouse in its retail outlets. All products automatically generate orders in its computer system based on sales data and are restocked based on sales volume. The reason for the cheap labor costs is that part-time workers make up most of the working force.

The price advantage is the most obvious, and the channel approach is the third. Decathlon has solely direct stores and no other routes of distribution. It has numerous benefits for both the organization and its clients. During the operation of Decathlon Sports Supermarket, the Kuailingjing brand enters the regional warehouse corresponding to its manufacturer. Each warehouse has its scope of supply, and shop sales will be reflected in the company's internal system; the warehouse will distribute products to various stores based on system data. Before May 2022, a regional store's distribution warehouse will be in Beijing. It will take 3 to 5 days to get to a store from Beijing (beginning the day after the warehouse receives the distribution demand order). Starting in May 2022, the Wuhan warehouse will become the new distribution warehouse for each regional store. The distribution time from Wuhan to a region will be reduced to 2 days (Wu, 2021).

In 2021, Decathlon will establish a statewide e-commerce strategy combining online and offline purchasing. This technique allows clients to purchase things online and have them shipped to any mall, where they can be picked up. This does not incur any additional fees for customers. A region will execute this strategy in 2022. The store on Jiefang Road that opened in May 2022 will be the first to apply this method as a trial store in a specific region; following August, further stores will implement this technique across the board. Decathlon's warehouse has been enhanced to some degree for the efficient implementation of this step.

Moreover, if there is a problem with the things purchased online, the consumer must return or exchange them online or in the local physical stores (Murad, Ali, & Akhtar, 2022). Owing to regional variances, retailers in different locations select distinct commodity series. This allows customers to complete their shopping if they need to get unavailable items in local physical stores. The geographical market

environment and the enterprise and brand characteristics of the target market influence marketing aims and strategies. Last is the marketing strategy. The season change stage, the product update stage, and the particular activity stage are the three phases in which discounting occurs most frequently for the Kuangling Path brand (Badenes-Rocha, Bigne, & Ruiz, 2022).

5. Conclusion

In recent years, the number of sports fans and the national level of living has risen, so the sports products market has ample space for expansion. The enormous market demand for sports goods has not only attracted the attention of numerous foreign sports brands. Still, it has also led to sports brands, intensifying competitiveness in the sports goods market. This research focuses on the marketing strategy of Decay's running brand. It employs the methods of literature, interview, comparison, and induction to provide specific references and assistance for the growth of Decay's running brand and other sports brands in a particular location. The study first applies marketing theory to examine the market for Decathlon's running brand and then analyzes and studies the marketing plan in depth, drawing the following results. Sports entrepreneurs should examine consumer motivation and other elements from the consumer's standpoint to boost marketing. Businesses should develop a systematic marketing strategy; precision marketing is the process of refining and specializing market consumers. Total marketing is a marketing strategy that blends online and offline marketing to give consumers convenience. Enhance the network platform's interactive marketing to promote the building of a positive brand reputation in sports. We must closely consider integrating sports enterprise culture and brand transmission when conducting sports marketing. Under the marketing 3.0 period mode, the core content of sports marketing is to stress the deep integration of corporate values and the spirit of sports transmission through sports marketing to achieve the highest level of consumer awareness of enterprise values.

Following an analysis of the existing fundamental situation, the following recommendations are made: (1) Use the advantages of the enterprise's entire industrial supply chain, maintain products with a high cost-to-

performance ratio, and continue to adopt scientific marketing methods. (2) The R&D and manufacturing divisions enhance the technological nature of products to make them more professional to improve the proportion of athletes.

6. Theoretical Implications, Practical Implications, and Future Directions

Theoretically, this study has contributed to the advancement of the field by supplying marketing-related consumer psychology data. Indeed, consumer psychology is discussed in the corpus of literature from various perspectives but not from the consumer's point of view. Customers must improve their behavior logically. Different marketing methods have a considerable impact on the psyche of consumers, which can be positively impacted, according to the study. Marketing tactics affect customers, and sports marketing with music can reliably improve consumers' knowledge. Theoretically, this research enhances the body of knowledge.

This study demonstrated that the consuming period could be shifted from qualitative satisfaction to perceptual satisfaction, such as sensory delight, emotional experience, spiritual pleasure, and personality promotion, with the formation of the consumer-centered market concept. Moreover, the emotional expression must establish a situational environment; in sports marketing strategy, emotional advertising has a platform to rely on; and marketing should be founded on this occurrence. According to this study, sports advertising should offer the following emotional experiences: a healthy view of life, a good outlook, and the spirit of competition. Sports advertising cannot be separated from the fundamental sports spirit.

Future research must acquire data directly from customers using a Likert scale questionnaire. The obtained data should be longitudinal to produce empirical results. In addition, the studies must demonstrate critical thinking by establishing a model of sports consumers' values and emotional commitment to brands. This would result in developing a complete study that contributes to the body of knowledge. The validity of this research's findings would be improved by confirming using a different population sample for data analysis. Nonetheless, this approach would help future research significantly expand knowledge.

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