

Individuals' Purchase Intention on Influencers' Collaborated Sports Items

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Abstract: With the rapid development of social media, social media influencers have emerged intensively, and consumer behavior has undergone significant changes, particularly in the sports industry. In this context, there are potential opportunities for collaboration between influencers and brands to promote sports related products. However, current research on how such collaborations affect consumers' willingness to purchase sports equipment is relatively limited. This study focuses on this blank field and explores in depth the key factors that influence consumers' willingness to purchase sports equipment through collaborations with online celebrities. This article will comprehensively analyze consumer purchase intention, the core role of online celebrity marketing, the unique characteristics of the sports goods market, and the potential impact of cooperation between the two parties on purchase intention. These investigations will not only add new insights to the literature on influencer marketing, but also reveal potential opportunities and underlying mechanisms for influencer collaboration to drive consumer behavior in the sports industry.

Keywords: Influencers, Consumer behavior, FOMO, Materialism, Health value.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the rapid development of social media platforms has to some extent changed the way brands interact with consumers. Internet celebrity marketing, as a rising commercial tool in recent years, has enormous potential and space. According to Statista, the global influencer marketing market has grown from \$6.5 billion in 2019 to \$21.1 billion in 2023, and is expected to reach \$52.9 billion by 2027 [1]. The compound annual growth rate among them reached 29%. More specific examples include Adidas' collaboration with athletes and fashion influencers such as Kanye West and Pharrell Williams, which increased social media sales by 40% [2]. But how an organization translates its strategies into actual cash flows is a part that needs to be studied. This is also the main focus of this article's research on individuals' purchase intention on influencers' collaborative sports items. We need to explore this issue through different parts. Firstly, we need to investigate consumers' purchasing intentions. Secondly, we need to determine the role of internet celebrity marketing. In addition, we also need to determine the characteristics of the sports equipment market. Finally, we need to clarify the impact of collaborations between internet celebrities and brands on the intention to purchase sports equipment. We will collect powerful data for analysis and comparison, then expand and expand our ideas, and ultimately interpret the conclusions and provide potential effective suggestions.

2. Literature review

2.1. Theoretical basis of consumer's purchase intention

This section mainly clarifies what consumer's purchase intention is, as well as what factors can change purchase intention and how to keep it alive. Purchase intention typically expresses consumers' willingness or plan to consume a specific product or service during a certain period of time [3]. This willingness will be influenced by both subjective and objective factors. A typical influencing factor is the 'fear of missing out', which is also known as the FOMO theory [4]. This theory explains that social media amplifies an individual's sense of unease, as it provides them with more exposure and opportunities for comparison. At the same time, internet celebrities also create the 'trendiness' and 'scarcity' of products through their influence and credibility, which exacerbates people's fear of missing out and increases consumers' purchase intention in the present. However, purchase intention sometimes decreases over time as people engage in rational analysis and make appropriate choices. How to reduce this uncertainty is also a key factor that needs to be considered. Lu and Chen mentioned that providing rich information and interactive opportunities is key to reducing this uncertainty [5]. That is to say, the timeliness of interaction, the credibility of influencers themselves, and the transparency of transactions can all be used to reduce this uncertainty and maintain a relatively high purchase intention.

2.2. The role of internet celebrity marketing

Internet celebrity marketing refers to the market ecosystem that takes Internet celebrities as the core and conducts business activities through their influence and fans. This market covers multiple aspects such as content creation, brand cooperation, advertising promotion, and product sales for internet celebrities, and is an important component of digital marketing and e-commerce. Consumers' motivation to pay attention to influencers usually explains how Internet celebrities use their abilities to increase the number of products sold. Authenticity, materialism, creative inspiration, and envy are important factors that stimulate consumer attention and consumption [6].

2.3. Trends of the sports goods market

In recent years, the sports product market has shown two interesting trends. The first trend is that consumers' emphasis on sustainable development is on the rise. The second trend is that consumers' attention to health is on the rise. People with influence on the Internet may have a more effective impact on these two trends.

From the perspective of sustainable development, social responsibility and social impact are the directions that brand owners need to focus on. How to promote the brand through effective social responsibility related activities is a problem. Traditional advertising methods lack innovation and authenticity. However, posting works on self-media platforms through internet celebrities can provide consumers with a closer understanding of a brand's actual activities. Collaborating with internet celebrities has potential benefits.

From a health perspective, many items in the sports product market, such as collision helmets for cycling, have the effect of improving personal health. Health economics states that everyone will pursue their maximum health-related utility. Making a rational decision will significantly increase an individual's utility. However, this decision depends on comparing the present value and future value. If the present value is greater than the future value, individuals are more likely to make decisions to improve their health index in the present, that is, to make reasonable consumption of sports equipment.

The following text provides a more specific explanation (Based on the theory of Interest):

We assume that each sports equipment can be converted into a value relative to health, such as a crash helmet with a health value of \$100 and purchase price of \$1000.

$$\text{Present value} = 100 \div (1 + r) + 100 \div (1 + r)^2 + 100 \div (1 + r)^3 + \dots + 1000 \div (1 + r)^n$$

r = discount rate, n = number of periods in time horizon

Purchasing sports products can increase health value (if people do not purchase the helmet, the health value is 0) and thus enhance present value. Applying the principle of how internet celebrities can directly or indirectly increase product sales mentioned earlier, we can assume that internet celebrities can positively influence the trend of health within sport goods market.

3. Case studies

3.1. Case 1: value creation through athlete-fan interaction — FC Barcelona x Spotify

In 2022, FC Barcelona signed a pioneering sponsorship deal with Spotify that went beyond conventional brand partnerships. The union strategically fused music and sports with fandom through the inclusion of globally acclaimed artists Drake, Rosalia, and Shakira in the digital and visual identity of the club. FC Barcelona's huge global fan base was accessed by Spotify through this effort, with the football club widening its digital reach and cultural salience.

The partnership was in line with wider sports network objectives. It helped create more in-depth athlete-fan relationships through music-based social campaigns and distinctive jerseys with famous artist logos. The partnership also offered fans individualized experiences in the form of playlist-driven content based on the club and players on Spotify, as well as interactive AR campaigns that involved fans in a multi-channel digital interface [7].

This association proved to be particularly influential. FC Barcelona saw its sales of jerseys rise by 30% during the campaign months [8]. Spotify also saw its platform engagement improve, especially among those Gen Z users who were fans of football and reacted well to the marriage of music and sport. More generally, the partnership set a new business model in place that dissolved the boundaries between sports and entertainment and was valuable to both the club and sponsor as well as to the wider world of fans.

3.2. Case 2: influencer integration in sportswear — Puma x Mamelodi Sundowns x Thembi Kgatlana

Puma's association with South African national and local club side Mamelodi Sundowns and national team sensation Thembi Kgatlana was a strategic initiative to combine athlete influence with sportswear sales across the African marketplace. The signing placed Kgatlana, an acclaimed forward and social influencer on social media, in both professional player and lifestyle influencer capacities to market Puma's women's football range.

This campaign was strategically in line with the ambitions of creating an integrated sports ecosystem. It was linking local affinity with the global brand status of Puma with Kgatlana's individual brand and visibility off the pitch as well. The campaign actively engages people and communities through local fitness activities and online challenges that create direct contact between players, clubs, and fans [9].

The campaign proved to be impressive. Bolstered by Kgatlana's influential online presence, Puma experienced significant sales growth in Southern Africa. Her social content engaged an audience with a rate greater than 12%, which demonstrated the high degree of fandom involvement and engagement. Moreover, the partnership created a solid and scalable approach to using athlete influencers in emerging markets to demonstrate that localized storytelling and athlete-led marketing can create business and community value.

3.3. Case study 3: collaboration among internet celebrities in the value of health — Wang Baobao x Ouyang Nana

The collaboration between Wang Baobao and well-known internet celebrity Ouyang Nana is a novel collaboration in the fiercely competitive food market. Ouyang Nana is a highly popular figure with a huge fan base, especially among the younger generation. She is employed to promote Wang baobao's grain products [10].

Wang Baobao mainly produces healthy dietary fiber oats. This cooperation aims to leverage Ouyang Nana's celebrity influence and establish connections with target consumers. When the customer group sees Ouyang Nana's figure, they will be attracted by her healthy physique, and coupled with Ouyang Nana's perfect temperament, customers will actively generate the health value of oat products. When this value arises, it will emphasize how Wang baobao's grain products can become both fashionable and healthy choices in people's daily diets.

If compared with the health value of products before endorsement, the health value generated by cooperation is obviously higher, because Ouyang Nana's energetic image will become a bonus point to a certain extent. In previous articles, we provided formula for health value and present value, and we found that an increase in health value directly increases present value. A higher present value will encourage consumers to consume in the existing market and achieve higher cash flow.

The impact of this collaboration is enormous. The brand's sales have significantly increased, especially among young people who closely follow Ouyang Nana. Her posts and endorsements have increased brand awareness and prompted more people to try the product. In addition, the brand can consolidate its position as the preferred choice for health conscious consumers seeking delicious and convenient breakfast alternatives. The success of this partnership sets an example for food brands on how to effectively utilize influencer marketing to drive growth and connect with their target audience.

4. Discussion

This paper's findings and case studies identify the increasing contribution of online influencers in driving purchasing intentions of customers, particularly in the sport industry. This has been assisted by the emergence of social media, which has revolutionized the way brands engage with prospective customers and transformed conventional models of marketing. By brand-influencer partnerships, brands can create more emotive connected channels of communication, leveraging influencers' influence, credibility and idealized status to stimulate customers' interest in purchasing.

Psychological factors like FOMO (fear of missing out), materialism and perceived health value are found to be influential. According to Dinh and Lee and Lu and Chen, these factors strongly boost the purchasing intent of consumers if online influencers promote products [4,5]. Particularly with young people, the perception of urgency and scarcity induced by online celebrities well enhances the market response velocity.

Three cases reinforce this perspective. FC Barcelona's alliance with Spotify indicates that cross-industry integration has the potential to create substantial business value through lifestyle and cultural trends. Puma's association with Thembi Kgatlana indicates the effectiveness of localized influence-based marketing to stimulate brand engagement and sales performance in emerging markets. Wang's cooperation with Ouyang Nana exemplifies that in health-focused products, applying influential public figures has the power to enhance the perceived value and market attractiveness of the product. But influencer marketing has its constraints. Although it can create a high purchasing intent in the initial stages, long-term brand loyalty and customer retention are achieved through continuous engagement and genuineness. When it is overly commercialized or if there is an inconsistency between the celebrity and brand positioning, it can make people question and undermine the marketing effect.

5. Conclusion

On a general basis, online celebrity cooperation has emerged as a significant driver in consumer behavioural influence, particularly in the sport equipment industry. Based on empirical analysis in this paper, it concludes that Internet celebrities can contribute greatly to increasing consumers' purchasing intentions by means of psychological and affective mechanisms such as FOMO, authenticity and health value. Amidst the increasing digitalization process, companies can develop their marketing strategy through the incorporation of influencers into their marketing system.

Empirical evidence comes through case studies in which it is evident that if cooperation is in synch with causes like health patterns and corporate social responsibility, it can not only promote increased brand visibility but also contribute to an enhanced perceived value of the brand. With influencer marketing on the rise, brands will need to emphasize authentic and meaningful partnerships to maintain consumer long-term interest and stimulate business development.

Future studies should examine in greater depth the long-term consequences of influencer influence, differences in adapting to different cultural environments, and short-term sales returns versus long-term brand equity. Such in-depth studies will enable brands to fine-tune their strategies to be competitive in the digital world.

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