Research on the Influence of Inconsistency Between Anchor Image and Product Image on Consumers' Purchase Intention

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Abstract: In recent years, the live broadcast industry has been booming, but some anchors have realized that their images are not consistent with the images of recommended products, which will affect consumers' purchasing intentions. This paper takes consumer perception as the theoretical basis to construct a hypothesis model and takes situational experiment as the research method. Finally, the conclusion is drawn that the inconsistency between anchor image and product image will have a negative effect on consumers' purchase intention, and consumers' perception of anchor professionalism and perceived product reliability play a mediating role between the two. The text puts forward a new explanation mechanism in theory, and has some enlightening effect on the selection of anchor team in practice.

Keywords: consumers' purchase intention, network marketing, Customer Perceived Value, image of anchor

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of e-commerce in recent years, major e-commerce platforms have opened live channels one after another. According to a report by iiMedia Consulting, the market size of China's live streaming e-commerce could reach 1.2012 billion yuan in 2021. Correspondingly, the research on consumers' online purchasing behavior has become one of the hot spots of marketing research in recent years. However, in the process of its development, live broadcast also encountered difficulties. Some anchors will find that the performance of live broadcast is largely linked to their images [1]. When they recommend products which are inconsistent with their own image, it will have a negative impact on consumers' purchase intention, or even bring about an unsatisfactory live broadcast effect.

At present, many scholars have affirmed live broadcast marketing, but there is still a lack of previous research on e-commerce live broadcast. In the field of traditional online shopping, some scholars have established a model of consumers' purchase intention based on the theory of perceived risk, and concluded that perceived risk is an important variable that affects consumers' purchase intention [1]. However, the antecedent of whether the image of anchors is consistent with the recommended products is rarely taken into account in the research on the purchasing intention of network broadcast consumers. From the perspective of consumer perception, this paper takes the inconsistency between anchor image and product image as the antecedent variable, and according to

the theory of perceived value, builds a theoretical model with consumer perception of anchor professionalism and consumer perception of product reliability as the mediating variable. Then, situational experiments are set up and questionnaires are conducted for research. To explore the research mechanism of the impact of the inconsistency between the image of the anchor and the image of the recommended product on consumers' purchase intention in the context of live broadcast shopping, in order to provide practical inspiration and suggestions for relevant practitioners.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. The relationship between the inconsistency of anchor image and product image on consumers' purchase intention

Anchor image refers to the self-image accumulated by an anchor using e-commerce platforms and media technologies (such as Taobao Live). Consumers have established a relatively stable consumer group around a specific anchor image, and they have great loyalty to the anchor and have a habit to watch him/her. Adaptation theory explains why this phenomenon occurs: if consumers' impressions of a communication tool (such as a spokesperson) are similar to their impressions of the brand, they will rate the mixed impressions of the two positively [1]. If the anchor image conforms to the characteristics of the target consumer group of the product brand, it can be psychologically affirmed by the consumer.

If the anchor image is inconsistent with the product image, consumers will have different perceptions of the anchor and the product, which will produce contradictions with consumers' cognition, and they will not have purchase intention. The purchase intention is the probability that consumers are willing to take the purchase action.

Hypothesis 1: The inconsistency between anchor image and product image will be negatively related to effect on consumers' purchase intention.

2.2. The formation of consumer perceived value: the role of inconsistency between anchor image and product image

The Customer Perceived Value (CPV) Theory is the extension and deepening of customer value. Zeithaml [2] believes that perceived value is a high-level abstract concept, which is the overall evaluation of the consumers' efforts for products or services and their perceived utility, and represents a trade-off relationship between consumers' efforts and gains. Liu Juanjuan [3] believes that CPV is the comprehensive evaluation of customers' perceived quality, perceived service and perceived brand (image) based on the product (or service) and the price of time, energy and cost in the network economy environment. Long Zhenjie believes that building a communication platform between customers and brands has an important impact on customer trust [4].

Consumers have established a relatively stable consumer group around a specific anchor image, and they will evaluate and recognize the professionalism of the anchor. If consumers think that the anchor image is inconsistent with the product image, they will have doubts about the ability of the anchor, and the original image in their minds may be destroyed. For example, Li Jiaqi, known as "King of Lipsticks", sells lipsticks in his live room, and consumers will think he is professional, but if he starts selling maternal and baby products, consumers will obviously doubt his professionalism.

If consumers find that the anchor image is inconsistent the product image (e.g., an anchor who has been evaluating and recommending electronic products accidentally recommends alcoholic products in one of his live broadcasts), it will be difficult not to make consumers suspicious. So when consumers are looking for reasons, they will suspect that the anchor is irresponsible to consumers. Then they will assume that the anchor may have received a product promotion fee, and

thus doubt on his/her promotion motivation and think that the anchor is likely to recommend unreliable and poor-quality products.

Hypothesis 2a: The inconsistency between anchor image and product image has a negative effect on consumers' perception of anchor professionalism.

Hypothesis 2b: The inconsistency between anchor image and product image has a negative effect on consumers' perception of product reliability.

2.3. The influence of consumer perceived value on consumers' purchase intention

Holbrook points out that the experience that consumers build in consumption is realized through cognition and emotion, and that consumers are no longer simply decision makers of purchases, but are sensible consumers who are even eager to have pleasant experiences in the process of consumption and to have trust in the products, thus resulting in the increase of their loyalty and satisfaction [4].

Based on the perspective of customer perception, Harris et al. [5] believe that customer trust is positively influencing consumers' purchase intention. Fomell believes that perceived value is very important, and that when customers have perceived value to a product, it will not lose customers even if its price increases beyond the expected value [6].

Therefore, if consumers have problems perceiving the professionalism of an anchor, they will feel that the product cannot meet their needs, because the functional requirements of the product may not meet consumers' intention and there is a product risk due to the unprofessional anchor. Similarly, if consumers have problems perceiving the reliability of a product, they will think that the quality of the product itself is not good and therefore their purchase intention will be low.

Hypothesis 3a: Consumers' perception of anchor professionalism is positively related with consumers' purchase intention.

Hypothesis 3b: Consumers' perception of product reliability is positively related with consumers' purchase intention.

2.4. Propose of mediating factor

Based on the above analysis, given Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3, the negative correlation between consumers' perception of anchor professionalism and consumers' perception of product reliability is affected by the inconsistency between anchor image and product image, and consumers' perception of anchor professionalism and consumers' perception of product reliability have a positive impact on consumers' purchase intention. Taken together, these results lead to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4a: Consumers' perception of anchor professionalism plays an intermediary role between the inconsistency between anchor image and product image and consumers' purchase intention.

Hypothesis 4b: Consumers' perception of product reliability plays an intermediary role between the inconsistency between anchor image and product image and consumers' purchase intention.

3. Method

3.1. Participants and Procedure

In this study, a scenario test was conducted, namely, two paragraphs of different materials were prepared in advance and randomly distributed to the interviewees in the form of questionnaires, and then the sample data were acquired electronically through the network. In order to ensure the validity of the experiment, we chose Weiya, a gold anchor on Taobao, as the candidate for the

anchor of the experimental material, and we assumed two scenes for the material, namely, Weiya selling notebooks and skin-care suits. The specific contents are as follows:

Material 1 (2): Interviewee, hello! Please take a moment to read one of the materials and then answer the following questions:

Recently I have to buy a laptop (skin care) set of ideas, which a more appropriate, but I was very hesitant at this point, I opened the phone taobao studio and just entered the studio and anchor eu her when she is recommend some brand notebook computer, help information is responsible for the display notebook (some brand protect skin to taste suit, then she is recommended to help information is responsible for the display to protect skin to taste). All other introductions and demos are done by the host, Via. The anchor explained the model of the notebook and the relevant technical parameters (the composition of the skin care product set and their respective functions and usage). Finally, she said: "I tell you, we must buy it. If we miss the benefits that our team has worked hard for, we will lose it.

3.2. The questionnaire design

Questionnaire measurement items were designed with reference to questions in previous literature. Among them, Shekhar was used to measure the inconsistency between anchor image and product [6]. Mengfei and Liujuanjuan were respectively used to measure anchor professionalism and product reliability [7]. The variable of purchase intention was measured with reference to Dodds [8].

In order to ensure the effect of the questionnaire, a paragraph of material about different products recommended by Taobao anchor Weiya in the broadcast room will be randomly provided in the questionnaire. After reading the material, the interviewees will answer the inconsistent product and image of the anchor according to their real feelings, and perceive the anchor's professionalism, product reliability and measurement items of consumers' purchase intention. The subject of the questionnaire adopts Likert5 scale, from 1-5 denotes "disagree" to "agree". The measurement variables and reference sources in the questionnaire are shown in the table. SPSS 24.0 software was used to test the reliability of the scale. Cronbach's α coefficient method was used to measure the reliability. The results showed that the coefficients of the four variables of image inconsistency, perceived anchor professionalism, product reliability and purchase intention were 0.810, 0.954, 0.973 and 0.942 respectively, all greater than 0.700. It shows that the scale has good reliability.

The online electronic questionnaire is mainly conducted in the form of questionnaire star. The respondents include friends around and those who often watch Taobao anchors on the Internet. A total of 151 questionnaires were received this time, among which 151 were valid. The effective rate of the questionnaires reached 100%.

From the perspective of gender, males accounted for 39.1% of the total, and females accounted for 60.9%, indicating an uneven ratio between males and females. From the perspective of age structure, the age group with the largest population is 18-25 years old, accounting for 43,7% of the total sample. From the analysis of the sample data, the sample age distribution of this study is reasonable. As the main consumption force in the future, this group of post-90s and post-00s can accept the emerging online shopping model and have strong purchasing power and consumption intention.

4. Results

Hypothesis 1 assumes that inconsistency between anchor image and product image will have a negative impact on consumers' purchase intention. According to the independent sample t-test, there were significant differences in the experimental data between the two groups (t=-2.202, P <0.05), so Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypothesis 2a believes that inconsistency between anchor image and product image will have a reverse effect on consumers' perception of anchor professionalism and consumers' perception of product reliability. Data analysis Through independent sample t test, comparing the experimental data of the two groups (notebook and skin care product set), it can be seen that there is a significant difference (consumer perception of professionalism of anchor: t=-4.497, P <0.01; Consumers' perception of product reliability: t=-2.809, P <0.05). Therefore, Hypothesis 2a and Hypothesis 2b are verified.

Hypothesis 3a believes that consumers' perception of the professionalism of anchors will positively influence consumers' buying intentions. The regression analysis showed that there was a significant influence between the two (b=0.788, SE=0.05, P<0.01), so hypothesis 3a was verified. Similarly, Hypothesis 3B believes that consumers' perception of product reliability will positively affect consumers' purchase intention. Through regression analysis, the results show that there is a significant relationship between the two (b=0.881, Se =0.043, P<0.01). Therefore, Hypothesis 3B is verified.

Through the verification of the above hypotheses, consumers' perception of anchor professionalism and consumers' perception of product reliability can not only be influenced by the antecedents, but also affect the consequences. Therefore, these two factors play an intermediary role between the antecedents and the results, and Hypothesis 4a and Hypothesis 4b are true.

Finally, an operational test was conducted, that is, an independent sample t-test was conducted for the inconsistency between the anchor image and the product image. The data results showed that there was a significant difference between the two groups of experimental data (t=2.337, t<0.05), indicating that the experimental operation was effective.

5.   General discussion

Based on the theory of consumer perceived value, this study explores the influence of inconsistency between anchor image and product image on consumers' purchase intention, as well as its mediating factors and internal mechanism through the method of situational experiment.

Data analysis results show that the inconsistency between anchor image and product image has a significant inverse correlation with consumers' purchase intention. In addition, consumers' perception of anchor professionalism and consumers' perception of product reliability play an intermediary role between the inconsistency between anchor image and product image and consumers' purchase intention.

6.   Main Research Significance

This study focuses on whether consumers' purchase intention will be affected by the inconsistency between anchor image and product image. Existing studies have taken into account the theory of consumers' perceived risk, but there are few studies on the image of anchors.

Against the host image, this study proposed a new explanation mechanism, that do not match the host image and product image will be really bad impact on consumers' purchase intention, and consumers' perceptions of product reliability perceived anchor professional and consumer also played a role in the mediation, the former because of the action of a bridge between the theory and the results.

In practice, both the anchor team and the product selectors should pay attention to whether the image of the anchor is consistent with the image of the product selectors. In addition, the anchor team can train the anchors on their professional knowledge during the live broadcast. At the same time, the anchors can no longer be limited to one image, but try to develop diversified images, so that the products they can recommend can be diversified.

7.   Research limitations and future prospects

As for the mediating factors of the hypothesis model, although two mediating factors are obtained based on the theory of consumer perceived value, the mediating factors based on other theories are not excluded, and future research needs to be explored.

In terms of data, due to the limitations of region and research method, this study only selected Weiya, the gold anchor of Taobao Live Broadcast Station. In future research, other well-known anchors or some less famous small anchors can be considered.

In addition, the scenario experiment adopted in this study only selected two relatively representative products (skin care products and notebooks). Future research can consider more suitable product types and more diversified research designs, so as to make the experimental results look more significant.

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