

Exploring the Impact of the “Destination Blind Box” Strategy on Consumer Purchase Intention

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Abstract: This study aims to explore the impact of the “destination blind box” (DBB) strategy on consumers’ purchase intention. This study aims to fill the gaps in existing research, explore the relationship between the launch of DBB products and consumers’ purchase intentions, and specifically find out the core audience distribution and purchase intention factors. This study adopts a mixed methods research design, combining literature review research and questionnaire survey analysis to draw comprehensive conclusions. The literature review shows that DBB products take advantage of consumers’ novelty hunting psychology, herd psychology and gambling tendency, leading to an increase in blind box consumption and enhanced travel motivation. Research shows that 86% of young people aged 18-35 have high curiosity and purchase intentions for DBB products. In addition, female respondents showed a stronger willingness to purchase compared to male respondents. However, participants aged 40-50 showed minimal curiosity and lower purchase intention due to unfamiliarity with the booking process and time and destination constraints. The implications of the study highlight the effectiveness of the DBB strategy in attracting younger consumers and satisfying their need for novelty and experience. Marketing managers of airlines and online travel agencies should focus on younger consumer groups and consider launching DBB products that cater to women’s preferred destinations. Overall, this study contributes to the understanding of consumer behavior in the context of DBB strategies and provides practical implications for the aviation and tourism industries.

Keywords: Destination Blind Box (DBB), purchase intention, consumer behavior, curiosity, young customer purchase psychology

1. Introduction

With the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown and inflation on the global tourism industry, cash flow vacancies and reduced competitiveness have prompted airlines and various OTA platforms to launch blind box sales tickets for unsold or niche destinations.

This product called “Destination Blind Box (DBB)” first appeared in the Chinese market. Consumers only need to pay a certain amount and randomly set dates and destinations to promote consumption desires of low- and middle-income groups. This method can help airlines attract price-sensitive consumers to the greatest extent, and improve their seat utilization to reduce costs and energy consumption.

As a product that emerged under the background of the times, DBB product has not been deeply cultivated in the research field. Therefore, this report will further explore the connection between the launch of DBB products and consumers' purchase intentions to fill the gaps in the research field, and aims to find out the distribution summary of the core audience and purchase intention factors of DBB products.

This study will use mixed methods research, aiming to use the results of literature review research and questionnaire survey analysis to draw comprehensive valid conclusions.

2. Literature Review

In order to further explore the relationship between consumer purchase intention and DBB products, this research focuses on the market research of "blind box" products in various fields except air tickets.

First of all, from the research content of the same industry field, Zhang's research shows that DBB products take advantage of consumers' novelty hunting psychology, herd psychology, and gambling psychology, increase blind box consumption, and actively create demand and travel motivation [1]. This is essentially a marketing method that uses consumer psychology. The consumption ritual of blind box products endows them with value and meaning. On the one hand, uncertainty increases people's desire to buy [2]. On the other hand, unknown products are used as carriers to reversely guide consumers' needs. In addition, DBB products have a zero-risk mechanism of low-cost investment and zero-cost exit, which can well improve the acceptance of target consumer group. However, there is also a negative side. Although consumers will buy DBB products at the first time because of curiosity and interest, after calming down and considering comprehensively, most consumers will give up the purchased tickets and choose to refund, because only a few consumers can buy air tickets that meet their expectations in terms of time and destination.

Secondly, from the perspective of the entire field of blind box products, the results of most studies also show a positive trend. According to the research of Zhao and Xu, the uncertainty of blind box product adoption and the stimulation of hunger marketing strategy have established a highly addictive mechanism, making consumers continue to pay for their emotions, which has also become the personality of young people. The symbol has important social significance [3]. The popularity of blind boxes lies in the word "blind", which means uncertainty [4]. The research of Fay and Xie shows that perceived value plays a complete mediating role in the influence of uncertainty on purchase intention. Regardless of the purpose of consumers buying blind boxes, uncertainty can bring emotional value and social experience [5]. Uncertainty has a significant negative impact on functional value, and a significant positive impact on affective value and social value. Among them, uncertainty has the greatest impact on sentimental value. In blind box consumption, the uncertainty play mainly increases the emotional value of consumers after the uncertainty is resolved in the process of picking boxes, that is, curiosity, expectation and satisfaction, thus affecting consumers' willingness to buy [6]. Uncertainty increases not only reliance on emotional input but also emotional experience, which means that the effects of uncertainty are twofold.

Most importantly, Yang et al. studied the blind box of food by combining the perception model of consumer surplus food blind box purchase intention, and showed that creating value is the core of consumer perception and motivation, and most people are interested in purchasing surplus food [7]. The food blind box has a positive attitude. In addition, its research also found that consumers' choices or preferences for blind box products are influenced by other people's experience or brand reputation.

3. Methodology

3.1. Study Design

This study will use a questionnaire survey method to investigate the relationship between the curiosity of the audience (especially the hypothetical young group) and the purchase intention of “destination blind box” (DBB) products. In the content of the questionnaire, closed and open questions will be selected to collect quantitative and qualitative data to obtain more comprehensive information.

3.2. Sample Selection and Data Collection

The sample of this study consists of 600 participants aged 18-50, mainly for products who have known and been exposed to blind box products and DBB strategies. Data collection was carried out through questionnaires administered to selected participants. The questionnaire included closed questions to collect information on participants' age, level of interest in DBB, and willingness to purchase (on a scale of 1-10). Also, open-ended questions are included to understand the reasons behind participants' intentions.

3.3. Variables and Measurements

The variables that this study focuses on are respondents' curiosity and purchase intentions regarding DBB strategies. The questionnaire will use a Likert scale to allow respondents to evaluate their own curiosity index, ranging from 1 to 10, with higher scores indicating higher levels of curiosity. Purchase intentions are also measured on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 10, with higher scores indicating stronger purchase intentions.

3.4. Control Variables

In order to ensure the accuracy of the data, external factors (such as advertisements, brand awareness and holidays, etc.) were excluded and controlled in the content of the questionnaire.

3.5. Data Analysis Technology

This study employed descriptive statistics to analyze participants' demographic characteristics, curiosity levels, and purchase intentions, and correlation analysis to detect the relationship between curiosity and purchase intentions. In addition, this study also uses qualitative analysis of open-ended questions to identify the motivation behind the purchase intention of the respondents.

4. Results and Findings

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

A total of 486 valid samples were finally included, including 245 males and 241 females. The results of descriptive statistics show that among the respondents aged 18-35 (defined as young people in this study), 86% of the respondents showed a high degree of curiosity about DBB products (8 out of 10) and a high desire to buy (7 out of 10). This data shows that the marketing strategy of DBB products has a positive impact on young people. From the perspective of gender, young women show a stronger willingness to buy DBB products. However, only 14% of participants aged 40-50 expressed some curiosity about DBB products (3 out of 10) and demonstrated very low purchase intentions (1 out of 10).

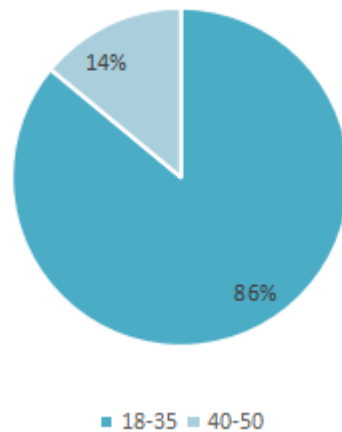


Figure 1: Survey results for different age groups.

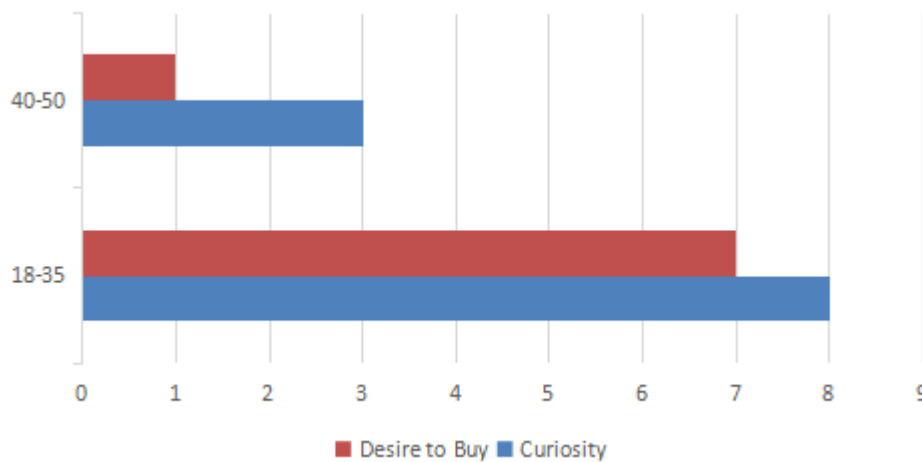


Figure 2: Score result.

4.2. The Relationship Between Curiosity, Purchase Intention, and Demographic Factors

The results show that there is a positive correlation between the curiosity and purchase intention of young people (18-35 years old). In addition, this study also found that women showed higher desire to buy DBB products.

5. Discussion

5.1. Interpretation of Results

Specifically, DBB products have a considerable impact on young people, because they can meet their needs for novel products and experience. However, middle-aged and older consumers have very low purchase intentions for DBB products, indicating that the core audience of DBB product strategy should focus on younger consumer groups.

5.2. Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically speaking, this study will help the aviation industry and related OTA platforms to further understand the logic of consumer behavior behind blind box products, clarify the role of curiosity in

promoting purchase intentions, and optimize their own marketing methods and means. Of course, the “gambling” nature of DBB products also became the key to attracting the target audience. In addition, it was also found that women tend to have a higher willingness to buy low-priced, high-value products.

From a practical point of view, airlines and OTA platforms that implement DBB product strategies need to focus on young audiences under the age of 18-35, and can launch DBB products that meet the destination tickets that women prefer. However, with the promotion of DBB products at the same time, consumers’ enthusiasm for the marketing of repeated DBB products will undoubtedly fade. Therefore, airlines and OTA platforms need to further understand the needs and pain points of target customer groups, and balance risk perception and curiosity, so as to further improve customer loyalty and brand awareness, so as to realize the purchase conversion of their other products.

Tourists who buy air tickets can be roughly divided into three categories: 1. Tourists have a clear destination. 2. Tourists have only vague destinations, such as seaside vacations, parent-child travel, natural scenery, skiing, etc. 3. A predetermined destination, such as wanting to travel, destination is not that important anymore for those tourists. The above three types of customer sources can all be guided and suggested by DBB product marketing. However, since they are all self-paid customers, they are naturally sensitive to air ticket prices. In the DBB scenario, the user sacrifices the right to choose some parameters in exchange for a relatively low travel price, and it can be refunded at any time without loss if it is not accepted. The airline company is equivalent to using “marginal seats” in exchange for the “marginal needs” of users, and the goals of both parties are met. At the same time, air tickets are used as the entry point of tourism derivative products to guide, stimulate and promote destination tourism consumption.

6. Limitations and Conclusion

Although this study provides valuable insights around the impact of DBB products on consumers’ purchase intentions, there are certain limitations of this study:

1. This study only focuses on DBB products at fixed prices. Other product forms of this strategy are not included, and the research scope is relatively narrow.

2. This study adopts a cross-sectional research method, which cannot capture the changes in consumers’ purchase intentions over time due to changes in the marketing environment, social trends, and external changes.

3. The research results of this study mainly rely on the data obtained from the questionnaire survey, and there may be many complex situations such as respondent deviations or filling errors.

4. This study does not pay further attention to the respondents’ purchase experience and behavior of DBB products, but only pays attention to the purchase intention, which may have weak practical significance.

In order to solve the above limitations, future research can further consider comparative research, longitudinal research, and research on the psychological mechanism and consumption behavior of consumers buying DBB products, so as to supplement the research needs of this research field in the tourism industry.

To sum up, this study aims to explore the impact of “destination blind box” (DBB) on consumers’ purchase intention, and the findings show that curiosity about DBB strategies has a positive impact on the purchase intention of the target group, especially Young people aged 18-35. This study mainly emphasizes the importance of customer groups, balancing risk perception and curiosity, and enhancing brand awareness to effectively implement the DBB strategy, and provides effective ideas for the further development and optimization of the aviation industry and tourism industry.

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