

Research on Marketing Strategy of Consumer Psychology and Behavior

— A Case Study of Disney

Luyi Ding^{1,a,*}

¹Institute of Problem Solving, South West Weiyu Middle School, Nandan Road, Xuhui District, Shanghai, China

a. 2016123751@jou.edu.cn

**corresponding author*

Abstract: In this contemporary society, many brands rise and eliminate under this cruel social background. It is certainly challenging for a brand to make a sustain development in this kind of condition. In general, the fate of a brand is mainly determined by its consumers. Therefore, how to use certain marketing strategies to dominate consumers' psychology is undeniably a crucial problem. Disney, as being a brand that has witnessed the growth of generations, but still successfully stands in people's vision, provides a rare sample for the study of the relationship between consumer behavior and consumer psychology. This text will introduce Disney's success through the analysis of three progressive aspects, and finally to the psychological factors behind the market. By listing various consumer behaviors, this passage will find out several marketing strategies uses by this brand, in order to further discuss the corresponding consumer psychology behind certain brand strategy. Finally, the goal of certifying the necessary relationship between brand marketing strategy and consumer psychology will be achieved.

Keywords: decision making process, Identity, principles of persuasion

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

With the increasingly fierce competition in the society nowadays. Disney, as being a company that has seen generations of companies' rise and fall, must use some unique marketing strategies to help them achieve the lasting success.

Walt Disney, born on December 5th, 1901, in Chicago. Before the birth of one of the famous characters -- the Mickey Mouse. Walt was in a tough situation of having only 40 dollars in his pocket. The loss of rights to the first animated character he created -- Oswald the Lucky Rabbit, gave him another blow. However, he was not giving up on it. In 1923, 'The Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio' started to produce a series of comedies until January in 1926, they moved to a new studio and change its name into 'Walt Disney Studio'. They kept making different movies till December 16th, 1929, the brothers' enterprise were taken place by the Walt Disney Productions, Walt Disney Enterprises, Liled

Realty and Investment Company, and the Disney Film Recording Company. After the further development, Disneyland was officially open. Till the 15th of December, 1966, Walt Disney died, and not long after that Roy O. Disney died. Although those founders were gradually drifting away from us, the company was still developing rapidly. More and more Disney worlds were open all over the world, also laid the foundation of the Disney company in the future.

Experts had studied on four aspects in order to have a deeper understanding by comparing different applications, such as cultural, product experience and marketing methods in both domestic and foreign countries. Some professional people predicted that there would be more male-dominated images than female-dominated images in the future development of Disney, and among these, gender disparity values would be highest for images of animals and lowest for images of guests. Moreover, a research specialist has listed several marketing strategies used by Disney, like Product Diversification Strategy, which emphasized the reason why the Disneyland in Shanghai is better run than the Disneyland in Hongkong. Last, study experts introduced the basic information about the annual passes of Disney. He also talked about its uses, and how it eliminated the concerns people had about the Disney Resort.

1.2. Research Content and Significance

Through analyzing the case of Disney company, our study finds that: First, Disney has used certain strategies in all channels that can lead people to know about this brand, such as: the online advertising, where creative activities are held, brand integrity that will let people further propagate in their social groups, and movies and products. Second, Disney has considered so many aspects of tourists' identities, such as the design of characters with different genders, or the invention of annual passholder, in order to solve the time problem between people. Third, the scarcity causes the products in Disney to seem more valuable, and the social validation are encouraging people to purchase those products. The following structure is arranged as follows, the second section is going to talk about advertising, the third section is about identities, the fourth section introduces the effects of scarcity and social validation, and the last section is for the research conclusion and enlightenment.

2. Advertising Strategy in the Decision Making Process

First of all, a questionnaire facing the general public is designed and disseminated on social media. The survey contains seven questions, both the questions and the answers after the statistics are shown in the table 1.

After summarizing the results, we can clearly see that there are 42.31% of male and 57.69% of female who participate in this survey. And among them, 34.62% are under 18; 30.77% are at the age range between 18-30; 15.38% people are 31 to 45 years old; 11.54% of them are over 60; and only 7.69% are 46 to 60-year-old people. Also, for answering the question of the frequency visiting the Disneyland, 46.15% of them say they will go there every year; 23.08% show that they go there monthly; 19.23% clarify that they have never been to Disney before, and last 11.54% state that they go there almost every week. After that, almost a half of the interviewees, that is 50%, say they get access to this brand through the online advertising; around 30.77% of those people learn about this brand by watching its movies or buying its products; finally 19.23% of them know this brand by being introduced by their friends. Moreover, 61.54% of the following samples say that they own a annual passholder of Disney, while the other 38.46% say that they do not own one. The answers of the two additional questions vary from person to person. Due to the complexity, the results are shown, but are not going to be concluded and analyzed.

Through all of the samples above, two samples will be randomly listed and specifically researched on. They are a girl who is under 18 says she will visit Disney yearly. She learns about this brand

through the online advertising. Her favourite character inside Disney is the rabbit called Judy Hopps in the movie 'Zootopia'; the other is an 46 to 60 years old man who has a five years old daughter says he will go to the Disneyland almost every month. He also knows this brand through its online advertising. His favourite character is Darth Vader inside the film 'Star Wars'.

It can be seen that both of them come to know this brand through this brand, and the survey's data can also prove the online advertising as a main way for people to learn about this brand through the decision making process. Disney has always been a dominating force across various social medias since 2010, with more than 1000 accounts on those platforms such as Facebook, which is the biggest presence that contains more than 267 pages of its products; Youtube, posting videos on it more for the entertaining value instead of selling the products; and also Weibo, which is one of the most popular social networks in China. In this kind of situation, celebrities' copywritings may attract a lot of audiences' attention. Despite of the daily posts, the official accounts also ask the followers to engage in those posts, such as allowing them to comment under every post, designing fun activities, 'screenshot to find your Mickey Mood', or posting on special holidays [1]. After those people have the tendency to share their personal feelings and experiences across those social medias, the popularity of the movies extend, and encourage more and more people to watch it. The phenomenon above is called the AISAS Model [2]. Moreover, the company's movies and products are also an effective way of spreading its fame in a further range. For the movies made by Disney, although Disney has created more than 2000 Disney characters in the world today, they all own different personalities. Take the sloth Lightning in the movie 'Zootopia' as an example. Almost everyone who has seen the film remembered this character, since it is known for its extremely slow motion and the prolonged laughter [3]. So, with the existence of such character, the popularity of the film is being expanded, proves that it plays a necessary role in promoting the animated film [4].

Moreover, the releases of the theme songs and transmedia music are also effective [5]. Instead of providing a fleeting pleasure by watching the movies, songs can awaken audience's memory of the characters and also build bridge of maintaining a long-term relationship between the character and the audience. Like the song sung in the film 'Frozen', 'Let It Go' has been translated into 25 languages worldwide, fueling people's interests in watching the animated movie. Eventually, the strategy of launching the products in the market by the company also works. Disney uses different pricing strategy while facing with various target consumers [6]. The price range spreads separately, it both provides products which are on discounts, and some quite expensive ones. The changing price range can satisfy almost every requirements of customers. Last but not least, co-branding with other brands can also further extending its influence and attraction, like working with Pixar to create series of animations, help teaching children important lessons of life [7].

Table 1: Personal Information Questionnaire about Disney

1.What's your gender?	2.What's your age?	3.How often do you visit Disneyland?	4.How did you learn about Disney?	5.What your favourite character inside Disney?	6.Do you have the annual passholder of Disney?	7.Have you got any daughter or son?
Female	under 18	Every year	Online Advertising	Judy	No	(Skip)
Male	18-30	Every year	Online Advertising	Donald	No	no
Female	18-30	Every month	Online Advertising	donald	No	no
Female	18-30	Every year	Online Advertising	Daisy	Yes	no

Table 1: (continued)

Female	under 18	Every month	Movies or products	Elsa	Yes	(Skip)
Female	31-45	Every year	Movies or products	Dale	No	no
Female	31-45	Never	Movies or products	Daisy	No	no
Male	over 60	Never	Through friends	No	No	yes
Male	under 18	Every year	Online Advertising	donald	No	(Skip)
Female	under 18	Every year	Online Advertising	Winnie	Yes	(Skip)
Male	31-45	Every week	Movies or products	stitch	No	yes
Female	18-30	Every year	Through friends	no	No	(Skip)
Female	18-30	Every week	Online Advertising	daisy	Yes	no
Female	under 18	Every year	Online Advertising	minnie	Yes	(Skip)
Female	over 60	Never	Through friends	No	No	yes
Female	under 18	Every month	Movies or products	ariel	No	(Skip)
Female	18-30	Every year	Through friends	daisy	No	yes a four years old son
Male	46-60	Every month	Online Advertising	darth vader	Yes	a five years old daughter
Female	under 18	Every year	Online Advertising	piglet	No	(Skip)
Male	18-30	Every month	Online Advertising	stitch	Yes	no
Female	under 18	Every year	Movies or products	elsa	No	(Skip)
Male	31-45	Never	Movies or products	no	No	yes
Male	over 60	Never	Through friends	no	No	yes
Male	18-30	Every year	Online Advertising	donald	Yes	no
Male	under 18	Every month	Online Advertising	Winnie	Yes	(Skip)
Male	46-60	Every week	Movies or products	I don't have any	Yes	Yes, a 3 years old son

3. Brand Personalized Customization According to Identities

Returning to the questionnaire, when asks about people's favourite character in Disney, the answers vary a lot. But after the analysis of those answers, there are 6 people who don't have any favourite character; 16 people's favourite characters' genders match with their own genders, according to the calculation, it is about 61.54%; the other 4 people's genders don't match with the genders of their favourite characters [8].

However, the percentage of those results are adequate for us to conclude that Disney does consider people's gender identity while designing the characters, and characters may be more attractive to people of the same gender [9]. Also, considering another aspect: For those people who have their own children, or those who have relatively more spare time, they will visit Disney more often. By checking the experimental data, among the three people who visit Disney every week, 2 of them hold the annual passholder, which accounts for around 66.67% of the total; and the other one does not have. In the 6-people-group who go to Disney monthly, 4 of them own the annual passholder, which is also 66.67%, and the rest of them do not have.

The Disney in Florida has designed four different types of annual passholder, they are Disney Pixie Dust Pass, Disney Pirate Pass, Disney Sorcerer Pass, and Disney Incredi-Pass. Those four kinds of annual passholder are applicable for different periods of time, and of course, their prices differ from each other. For the Disney Pixie Dust Pass costs people for 399 dollars, people can make the reservation-based admission most days, except for the peak and holiday periods; Disney Pirate Pass allows tourists to appoint for the reservation-based admission most weekdays, except for the peak and holiday, and it costs tourists for 749 dollars; Disney Sorcerer Pass worth 969 dollars. It states that except for the peak and holiday, people can use reservation-base admission for most days; and finally the Disney Incredi-Pass, that is the most expensive one, it costs 1399 dollars. When holding this card, people can use reservation-based admission without any block-out dates apply. More dates the annual passholder can be used for, the more expensive it is. The type of card will vary by region, people can choose the option that suits them according to their various living arrangements. In addition to the waiving the price of the ticket, visitors can also enjoy some other benefits, such as up to 20% off select dining and merchandise and etc.

In conclusion, invention of the annual passholder service is based on people's different identities, such as the background of the number of tourists' family members, or the leisure time [10].

4. Marketing Strategies based of the principles of persuasion

The attitude and persuasion section includes three main parts.

First, scarcity represents a situation in which something is not easy to find or get. In the common perception of human beings, items are seen as more valuable as they become less available. As the data shows, there are only 6 Disney theme park resorts worldwide, including the combination of 12 theme parks. So far, there's only 1 Disney theme park resort in China which is located in Shanghai [11]. So when tourists come to visit Shanghai, Disneyland is certainly a must-see spot.

The park offers different themes in four seasons. In summer, it provides the activities related to water, like the 'Summer Blast' Castle Show. While in winter, it provides something related to snow. These kinds of activities are not just limited to seasons, Disney will also take the corresponding actions during the important holidays throughout the year. Such as Halloween, Christmas Day, Spring Festival and etc. The decorations in the park are changed into something that can reflect the feature of those particular holidays, and characters change their clothes into festival costumes, people enjoy the special holiday-firework at night [12]. It is much easier to persuade tourists to enjoy a unique experience with the help of the word 'limit'.

Moreover, Disney also launches a few limited commodities. Those products are often sold during a specific time period or for a limited amount. For the term of ‘the limited time period’: The design of the 12 zodiac dolls is one of the examples, as being a combination of Disney and the Chinese tradition, Zodiac changes as the year passes, meaning that the periods of purchase of each limited products are only restricted within one year. It is this kind of psychology that people are no longer able to own this particular doll anymore in the future attracts so many people to buy this product [13].

Next, from the perspective of ‘the limited amount’, the period when Disney has just launched ‘Lena Belle’ in China is a suitable example. Since the dolls are so popular, Disney promotes a regulation of drawing lots in order to decide whether the consumers have the right to buy it or not in the first step. However, as more people become eager to own it, the supply of the doll will relatively decrease against the increasing demand. The bleak availability has given the doll a higher value. As a result, the set of limit can always motivate people to make more purchase.

Second, the definition of social validation is to observe others’ behavior to determine the appropriate way to act. Returning to the case of Lena Belle. Lena Belle is a pink fox being put on sale by Shanghai Disney Resort on September 29th, 2021. As the information shows, there are thousands of people lining up in the Disney store overnight a few days before the New Year’s Eve, just to get a simple doll like this. According to my personal way of thinking, few people among this group are genuinely attracted to the doll itself. As more and more people own the doll, some of them will either post it online or recommending it to the friends around him or her. These kind of behavior not only makes the person who had just bought the product feel better after receiving many likes or comments, but also leads more and more people believe that this product is credible, which means it is worth the money.

Therefore, the purchase of those dolls have gradually become a trend, but people don’t truly like it. That’s the social phenomenon of social validation, having the tendency to shift people’s actions in order to match the people around them more closely. To sum up, most people who choose to buy something are very likely due to the influence of somebody else, so it is an effective way of increasing the purchasing rate.

Moreover, emotional connections is also a tool Disney uses to retain its customers. Instead of just selling those tangible products, food, or rides, Disney also spends much effort in creating an unforgettable experience for all the tourists [14]. The target audience for Disney brand is not only limited to those children, but they’re also facing adults, or people stay in all age ranges. Having a good consumer experience can help keep consumers loyal to this brand. Many people feel a sense of loss after leaving the park, including me [15]. That’s where Disney’s marketing success comes in. The park’s dreamlike decorations, which is an ideal world completely different from our realistic one. The barriers between different sections of parks are well-divided, for example, the style of Tomorrowland, which seems technological and scientific, differs a lot from the Toy Story Land, which is more childish and the appearance of it looks more colorful. More sections of the parks, such as the Adventure Island, the ornament inside it obviously seems older and more primitive. All the details are carefully designed, sometimes combined with music, or even smell, to form a visual and aural harmony that can delight visitors. Moreover, when it happens to meet some special occasions, such as people’s birthday, wedding, and etc. Disney is able to treat each customer in a unique way by making use of the individuality between tourists to invent some personalized customization [16].

5. Conclusion

Surviving in such a fierce and brutal market is bound to be an unprecedented challenge as companies change continuously from generation to generation. Consumer psychology affects the fate of the company. Consumer psychology is a significant concept, it is not only directly related to the reasons

behind the consumer behaviors, but also can reveal the ideas behind some specific marketing strategies of the company.

The case study of this paper is Disney, who uses three marketing strategies principles, they are: the access of information during the decision making process, the apply of people's different identities, and the theory of scarcity and social validation.

From the aspect of decision making process, it can be seen that Disney has spent a lot of efforts in advertising itself, no matter through the social media online, or through the products or movies it releases. Second, as for different personal identities, Disney has taken people's family background information or people's personal information such as their daily schedule into its consideration of the way how it designs the personalized service. And last, scarcity and social validation make people thinking the products more valuable and thus have the desire in purchasing its products.

The conclusion above shows that the mastery of consumer psychology lays a solid foundation for the strategies used by the company, and the cause of the consumer behavior. For the enterprises, they need to continue work more further and carefully on the consumer psychology. However, for the consumers, they need to beware of those marketing strategies that companies devise to elicit consumer psychology.

Moreover, due to the lack of recorded data and the amount of available information. Many aspects of this topic were still not included.

References

- [1] Dan (2023). *How Does Disney Use Digital Marketing Strategies Successfully?* Retrieved from <https://digitalagencynetwork.com/how-disney-uses-digital-marketing-strategy-successfully/>
- [2] Samuel Stroud (2023). *disney social media: how does disney use social to promote itself?* Retrieved from <https://www.giraffesocialmedia.co.uk/social-media-case-study-how-does-disney-use-it/>
- [3] Belkhyr, S. (2013). *Disney animation: Global diffusion and local appropriation of culture. Études caribéennes*, (22). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.4000/etudescaribeennes.5863>
- [4] Dholakia, N., & Schroeder, J. (2001). *Disney: delights and doubts. Journal of Research for the Consumer*, vol. 1, no. 2. Retrieved from http://jrconsumers.com/Academic_Articles/issue_2/DholakiaSchroeder.pdf
- [5] Arantxa Vizcaino-Verdú 1* , Ignacio Aguaded 1 and Paloma Contreras-Pulido 2 (2021). *Understanding Transmedia Music on YouTube through Disney Storytelling. Social Networks and Citizenship: Towards a Cyber-Connected and Empowered World*, volume 13(issue7), 17. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13073667>
- [6] Archana Karthikeyan, Apoorva Bajj (2023) *Marketing Strategies of Walt Disney: Creating Magic, Crafting Success.* Retrieved from <https://startuptalky.com/marketing-strategies-of-walt-disney/>
- [7] Paul Tranter , Scott Sharpe (2012). *Disney-Pixar to the rescue: harnessing positive affect for enhancing children's active mobility. Journal of Transport Geography, Volume 20(Issue 1), 34-40.* Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2011.04.006>
- [8] Carol J. Austerl and Margaret A. Michaudl (2013). *The Internet Marketing of Disney Theme Parks: An Analysis of Gender and Race. SAGE Open*, 3(1), 16. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013476052>
- [9] Al-Yasin, N., & Rabab'ah, G. (2021). *Female Disney characters' linguistic features in the 1990's. Jordan Journal of Modern Languages and Literatures*, 13(1), 121-142.
- [10] Keliiholokai, Sean B. *The Effects of annual pass holders on the Disneyland Resort infrastructure . UNLV Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers, and Capstones*, volume 540, 27. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.34917/1701583>
- [11] Zhu, L., & Xu, D. (2010). *Marketing Strategic Change in Expansion of Disneyland: Cases Study of Disneyland's Overseas Expansion in Shanghai.* p. 76. Retrieved from <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A369516&dsid=3768>
- [12] Johnson, R. (1991). *A Strategy for Service—Disney Style. Journal of Business Strategy*, Vol. 12 No. 5, pp. 38-43. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1108/eb039442>
- [13] Junzhe Shen1, Mei Xu2, SangShi Yang3, (2021). *Disney Marketing Strategy Review Role of Marketing in a Global Strategy. Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research*, volume 203, 7. Retrieved from 10.2991/assehr.k.211209.125

- [14] Haipeng Li (2023). *Proceedings of the 2022 4th International Conference on Literature, Art and Human Development (ICLAHD 2022)*. ICLAHD 2022, ASSEHR 726, pp. 301–313, 13. Retrieved from 10.2991/978-2-494069-97-8_38
- [15] Yao, J. (2017, October). *Research on marketing strategy: case study of Disneyland*. In *Second International Conference On Economic and Business Management (FEBM 2017)*, pp. 473-481. Retrieved from 10.2991/febm-17.2017.63
- [16] Anne Reyers MA & Jonathan Matusitz PhD (2012). *Emotional Regulation at Walt Disney World: An Impression Management View*. *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health*, 27:3, 139-159. Retrieved from 10.1080/15555240.2012.701167