

Shaping Social Proof: A Fission Marketing Model Based on the Herd Mentality

--Take Pinduoduo, for an Example

Zhoujia Wen^{1,a}, Liting Yu^{2,b,*}

¹*Academy of Film and Television Arts, Hebei University of Communication, Shijiazhuang City, Hebei Province, 50071, China*

²*Broadcasting and Television Directing Department, Shanghai Lida University, 201608, China
a. 3031167876@qq.com, b. 2220550518@st.usst.edu.cn*

**corresponding author*

Abstract: This study takes Pinduoduo as an example to explore the influence of herd psychology on consumer decision-making in fission marketing. Fission marketing uses consumer social networks to realize the rapid dissemination of information, in which the herd psychology plays an important role. Through the questionnaire survey, this study analyzes the motivation and effect of Pinduoduo users participating in the fission marketing activities such as "Kanyidao". In that context, "Kanyidao" means helping others bargain. The results show that the majority of respondents participated in activities motivated to save money or make money, and tend to learn about activity information through friends or software channels. User-sharing activity links promote social fission and achieve a rapid growth in the number of users. The research conclusion points out that the herd psychology plays a significant role in the fission marketing, and the fission marketing can effectively expand the market share by stimulating the consumers' enthusiasm for participation.

Keywords: Fission marketing, Herd psychology, Social proof theory, Pinduoduo e-commerce platform

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

In marketing, fission marketing has attracted wide attention with its unique communication mode and high efficiency [1,2]. The core of fission marketing is to use consumers' social network and interpersonal relationship, through word of mouth communication, sharing and other ways, so that information can spread quickly like a virus, so as to achieve the purpose of rapidly expanding market share [3]. In this process, the consumer's psychology plays a vital role, especially the herd psychology. Conformity mentality is a common psychological phenomenon in human society, which refers to the individual tends to refer to or imitate the behavior or opinions of the majority when faced with choices or decisions [4]. In fission marketing, the herd psychology has exerted a profound influence on consumers' decision-making and behavior.

Pinduoduo platform has successfully developed and deeply cultivated the sinking market in third- and fourth-tier cities and below, and tapped huge consumption potential. Pinduoduo platform has also created unique social gameplay such as group buying and order, which greatly promotes user participation and consumption enthusiasm. In a relatively short period of time to achieve rapid development, and become an emerging force in the e-commerce industry. At the same time, Pinduoduo platform has broken the original e-commerce competition pattern, and formed a strong competition with Taobao, Jingdong, etc. Pinduoduo uses various marketing activities and business expansion, the brand awareness and influence continue to improve.

Pinduoduo attracts users with its unique group mode, and uses social networks to spread quickly and reduce the cost of customer acquisition. Pinduoduo platform also carries out precise positioning, excavates the huge group ignored by traditional e-commerce, and meets their demand for cost-effective goods. In addition, Pinduoduo platform provides a large number of products and a wide variety of goods, covering various fields, to meet the needs of different consumers. In addition, Pinduoduo platform improves user participation and brand awareness through various creative marketing activities, such as tens of billions of subsidies.

1.2. Research Questions

In fission marketing, the psychology of conformity is particularly obvious. When facing a new product or service, consumers are often influenced by the people around them. When they see that people around them are using or recommending a product, it is easy for consumers to follow the trend and think that the product must be good, so as to make the purchase decision. This herd psychology not only promotes the dissemination of products, but also increases the purchase intention and trust of consumers.

In fission marketing, the "crowd" of the herd psychology is not limited to the direct social circle layer, but also includes a wider range of social groups. These groups may include opinion leaders on online platforms, fans on social media, or potential consumers through advertising. The opinions and behaviors of these groups have an important influence on consumer decision-making. Consumers will often judge the merits of a product or service according to the feedback and evaluation of these groups, so as to make the decision of whether to buy it. In the form of questionnaire survey, the changes of consumer psychology are observed in the form of questionnaire. While in-depth investigation of Pinduoduo fission marketing strategy, the social proof theory is used to analyze the changes of user herd psychology in Pinduoduo fission marketing.

In the current social media and digital marketing environment, fission marketing strategies are widely adopted to rapidly expand brand reach and attract new users. However, the psychological mechanism behind this strategy, especially how herd psychology influences consumer decision-making and behavior, is still a question worth further discussion. Therefore, the research question of this paper is: "In the fission marketing strategy, how does the herd psychology influence consumers' purchasing decisions and behaviors? In which contexts is this effect more pronounced?"

First, the present study will review the academic literature related to fission marketing, herd psychology, and consumer behavior to understand the current status and limitations of existing research. This will provide theoretical support for constructing the research framework and hypothesis. Based on the literature review, the present study will propose a series of hypotheses to explore the specific mechanisms of conformity psychology in fission marketing strategies. For example, the present study might assume that their buying intentions will increase significantly when consumers perceive that a large number of other people (such as friends using or opinion leaders on social media) are using or recommending a product or service. To test these hypotheses, the present study will employ a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative studies will include designing questionnaires and collecting data on a large number of consumers to

analyze the relationship between herd psychology and purchasing decisions. Qualitative research, in turn, may include in-depth interviews or focus group discussions to gain a deeper understanding of consumer psychological processes and motivation. After the data collection, the present study will perform the data analysis using the appropriate statistical software. This may include descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, etc., to reveal the specific relationship between conformity psychology and purchasing decisions. Finally, the present study will interpret and discuss the study findings based on the results of the data analysis. The present study discusses how these findings can support or challenge existing theories and suggest possible explanations and future directions for research.

Through the above research ideas, the present study hopes to have a deep understanding of the role mechanism of herd psychology in fission marketing strategy, and provide valuable insights and suggestions for enterprises and marketing personnel.

2. Case Description

In order to further carry out the influence of herd psychology on consumers in fission marketing, the survey found that there are many fission marketing strategies in Pinduoduo's marketing strategy, among which the common fission marketing means of Pinduoduo include:

1. Group: it belongs to user fission. By encouraging users to invite friends to participate in the group, the number of users can grow rapidly.
2. Help bargaining: it is also a form of user fission. Users invite others to help bargain to get a lower price.
3. Share red envelopes: induce users to share activity links, receive red envelopes or coupons, and then attract new users.
4. Invite friends to reward: a typical user fission, invite new users to register and use Pinduoduo, the invitation can be rewarded.

The common purpose of these means is to use users' social relationship network to achieve rapid dissemination and user growth [5]. Pinduoduo platform stimulates users to participate through rewards and discounts, so as to drive more new users to join. Marketers can use social media platforms and users' social circles to invite friends to become members of the community. That is the idea behind fission social marketing. Through the influence of a person to mobilize people from all walks of life to participate, so as to achieve the fission effect of 1 transmission 10, 10 transmission 100 [6]. Therefore, the present study decided to conduct a questionnaire survey and analysis study on this case.

3. Case Analysis

3.1. Method

3.1.1. Samples

The survey data mainly comes from Pinduoduo users, social media users and users of other e-commerce platforms. By means of questionnaire survey, through stratified random sampling, 120 questionnaires were randomly distributed to 4 universities in Shanghai and Hebei provinces, 104 valid questionnaires were collected, relevant data were collected and statistical analysis was conducted.

3.1.2. Scale

Social fission marketing relies on the transmission mode of social fission, and fission transmission is also called "viral transmission". Similar to the "chain reaction" of "nuclear fission", social fission marketing is a process model of "active propagation-voluntary accept-active re-propagation". Process

of social fission refers to the use of people's social attributes and specific psychological (make money, save money, show off, attention, etc.), promote people spontaneous product transmission, product transmission, four exponential growth.

This research sets up "Have you ever used Pinduoduo software?", "Have you ever participated in Pinduoduo 'cut' or other similar bargaining activities?", "Have you participated in the above activities of cash withdrawal or bargaining success?", "Have you helped others cut?", "What is the reason for 'cutting off others'?", "How do you know about the 'slash' campaign?", "If you know about the activity through a friend, what is the specific form?", "If you know about the event through social platforms, what is the specific form?", "If you know the activity through Pinduoduo software, how often do you use it?", "What is the reason for participating in the 'slash' campaign?"

And other questions to measure the following concepts:

User engagement: By asking users whether they have used Pinduoduo and participated in the "slash" activity, user engagement and interest in specific activities can be measured.

Success rate of the activity: By asking users whether they have withdrawn or negotiated after participating in the "Kanyidao" activity, the present study can understand the actual effect of the activity and user satisfaction.

Social influence: By asking users whether they help others "Kanyidao" and why, the present study can measure the influence of social factors in Pinduoduo fission marketing, as well as users' attitude and motivation for social mutual assistance.

Information communication channel: ask users how to know the content of the activity, aiming to understand the communication channel and efficiency of the activity information, including social network, advertising push, friends' direct notification, etc., so as to analyze the communication effect of different channels.

3.1.3. Analysis

According to the results of the questionnaire survey of the people, more than ninety-five percent of people used spell of software, respondents a total of 104 people, 100 people used spell software, which participated in the "Kanyidao" free withdrawal activities or other bargaining activities of consumers about eighty people, more than eighty percent, and withdrawal to account of consumers have 26 people, only accounted for about thirty percent, withdrawal or bargaining activity successful efficiency is low, many consumers are not willing to participate in the activities again.

Participated in "Kanyidao" free withdrawal or other bargain activities of consumers are mostly through friends and spelling of software channel content, ninety percent of respondents chose through the channels of friends that content, sixty-two percent of the respondents chose to obtain information about the campaign through Pinduoduo software, only 11 people from weibo, little red book social media platform or other channels. Among them, 74 people learned the activity in the form of the activity link forwarded by their friends, and a few of them, the friends directly informed the activity news or saw their friends participating. Fission transmission in the form of sharing links, when sharing links, users become "distributors" for transmission, and use the consumer social circle to expand user [4]. In the spell of "cut a knife" activities, played a good communication effect, in the respondents, almost all respondents have to help others "cut a knife" (i. e., open others withdrawal links to help them get a red envelope or bargain behavior) experience, mostly embarrassed refused to lift a finger, in order to help friends or operation is relatively simple, with help point mentality and help friends, use the spread of consumer social contact activities.

Consumers who know about the activity through social platforms such as Weibo and Xiaohongshu know about the content of the activity from the activity links forwarded by bloggers of the social platform, and a few people know about the activity through the recommendation of articles on social platforms such as Weibo and Xiaohongshu and the advertising push on social platforms.

Sixty percent of the respondents learned about the activity through Pinduoduo software. The frequency distribution of some consumers using Pinduoduo software is uneven, and most of them only use it when they have shopping needs. Take the initiative to launch a "Kanyidao" cash withdrawal activities or other similar bargaining activities in the Pinduoduo software, in addition to the internal reasons to make money or save money and interesting activities, friends recommend, friends are participating, and they also want to try and other external reasons have also greatly affected the consumer's psychology. The behavior of the friends will greatly affect the consumers' view of the activity, thus influencing their choice.

In the group shopping mode, most of the respondents choose the group mode out of the consumer psychology that can save money. Among the respondents, more than 50 percent of the users were not invited to use the group shopping mode, and the fission transmission effect of this mode was not as strong as expected. Most of them are used for friends, and the influence of friends is an important element of fission transmission.

3.2. Famous Person Social Networking Proof in Pinduoduo Fission Marketing Campaign

Consumers who know about the activity through social platforms such as Weibo and Xiaohongshu know about the content of the activity from the activity links forwarded by bloggers of the social platform, and a few people know about the activity through the recommendation of articles on social platforms such as Weibo and Xiaohongshu and the advertising push on social platforms. In spelling of fission marketing communication, KOL influence in fission spread is not expected in this problem set, the present study tries to KOL influence to investigate in the spelling of fission marketing celebrity social proof, by put forward the user for what reason for "knife" and similar activities, by "bloggers on social media are involved in, oneself also want to participate in it. "To investigate the impact of KOL on users. The survey found that in the fission marketing strategy similar to Pinduoduo to save money or make money, most users will not blindly follow the propaganda of opinion leaders.

3.3. Social Proof of Friends in Pinduoduo Fission Marketing Activities

In the group shopping mode, most of the respondents choose the group mode out of the consumption psychology to save money. Among the respondents, more than 50 percent of the users have not been invited to use the group shopping mode, and the fission propagation effect of this mode is not as strong as expected. Most of the users have used it for the reasons of friends, and the influence of friends is an important element of fission transmission. Friends social proof is a very important part of social proof theory, the specific content shown by people tend to imitate the friends or acquaintances they trust and respect or choose [4,7]. In the results of the questionnaire, consumers also showed the behavior of imitating friends to a large extent. For example, the psychology of "friends are participating, they want to try", which made more than half of the respondents take the initiative to participate in such activities.

3.4. Social Proof of the Number of People in Pinduoduo Fission Marketing Activities

In addition, the present study also studied the impact of social proof in Pinduoduo fission marketing. The social proof here refers to the fact that a large number of people participate or accept a product, service or opinion, such as the statement that "more than one million people use it", which can create group pressure and encourage more people to join. According to the survey results, in the "slash" activity, about 18 percent of users choose "a large number of users, they want to try", while in the group shopping mode, about 8 percent of users chose "a large number of users, they also want to try". The group effect caused by the use of a large number of people has a certain impact on the implied

users in fission marketing, but the effect is not strong only a small number of users are driven by the pressure of the number of people, producing the idea of "following the crowd".

4. Refining and Analyzing the Marketing Model

After investigation and research, the social interaction of friends proves that, that is, people tend to imitate the choice of their friends they trust, affecting users' choice to a large extent. In the fission marketing of Pinduoduo, the "crowd" that users follow are more the friends they trust, and most of the potential consumers make choices to participate in activities or use the group mode through their trusted friends. It seems that when it comes to money, potential consumers are more likely to choose people they believe rather than KOL or other strangers [4,8]. Therefore, in the strategy selection of fission marketing, Pinduoduo should pay more attention to the further communication of old users in the social circle, strengthen the preferential efforts to stimulate the return of users, and use the social contact between users to induce fission communication again. In addition, in terms of KOL or celebrity communication, more attention should be paid to the construction of trust between KOL and users. After the establishment of enough trust relationship, the recommendation and publicity of KOL will have a great communication effect. More potential users will choose to believe in their choice on the basis of the trust relationship.

According to the questionnaire, there are still some disadvantages of users who are bored after accepting the need of forwarding and sharing for a long time, and gradually lose interest in the fission communication activities of Pinduoduo. In addition, similar to the "knife" in the form of material reward mechanism of success probability is too low, makes consumers lose trust in the activity and software, think the activity is not substantial feedback, and the user is regarded as a "tool", which is a part of the transmission, the use of mentality, so gradually reduce the user viscosity, and the means of fission marketing also gradually lost the effectiveness.

As another feature of Pinduoduo marketing, low-price marketing has also attracted many consumers. Pinduoduo takes the lower price compared with other shopping platforms as a unique selling point, which attracts many consumers to come. However, at the same time, the low price also causes the problem of product quality. The mentality of "cheap but not good" is prevalent among some potential consumers, which prevents some potential consumers from using for Pinduoduo shopping platform [5]. Later, Pinduoduo put forward the slogan of "Buy together, cheaper", which reduced the price of products on Pinduoduo platform due to the increase of the number of buyers, making it easier for more consumers to receive low-priced products. In essence, the group mode and the "Kanyidao" activity combine fission and low price to achieve the purpose of "saving" for users. By spreading the "low price", the two marketing modes complement each other and support each other to achieve the success of the previous marketing strategy of Pinduoduo platform.

5. Conclusion

In a word, in the social fission marketing of Pinduoduo, it seems that the social connection of users plays a key role in the fission transmission of users' social circle. The social proof of friends greatly affects users' psychology, and people seem to be more susceptible to people they trust. Some opinion leaders do not have enough trust relationship with users to influence their decisions. Although the pressure of the number of people also has an impact on the potential users, the behavior of strangers does not have a big impact on the potential users.

The research results find that social e-commerce platforms such as Pinduoduo should pay more attention to the further communication of old users in the social circle, and can promote the communication effect of old users in the social circle by strengthening preferential treatment and increasing user stickiness. At the same time, Pinduoduo and other social e-commerce platforms

should pay attention to the construction of trust between KOL and users. By cooperating with KOL and increasing user sense of participation, enough trust relationship can be established to improve the communication effect of KOL recommendation and publicity. At the same time, social e-commerce platforms such as Pinduoduo should increase the interaction between users. By holding social activities and increasing the interaction opportunities between users, they can promote the communication and contact between users, so as to enhance the cohesion of the social circle.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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