An Analysis of the Characteristics and Influencing Factors of College Students’ Online Shopping

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Abstract. With the continuous development of the internet, online shopping has become a very important part of people’s daily life. The main features of online shopping include free time arrangement, lower shopping costs, flexible shopping space, etc. Online shopping group of college students is a complex of target oriented consumers and experiential consumers. Therefore, online shopping group of college students has its special shopping characteristics and consumption patterns. The analysis on the characteristics and influencing factors of college students’ online shopping is helpful to the network marketing companies to develop marketing strategies.

Introduction

The continuous influx of new media, such as APP, micro business, makes the way of online shopping more extensive and convenient. People become more accustomed to shopping on the internet. College students are the main group of online shopping. How to guide college students to form the correct values under this kind of influence is one of the subjects that educators need to study.

1. The Connotation of Online Shopping

Online shopping is a new way of shopping. It is a process for consumers to use the internet to retrieve commodity information, send a shopping request through an electronic order form, and pay through the network to complete the shopping [1]. Manufacturers only need to send goods by mail or express according to the address on the order. Online shopping can make both sides of the supply and demand to achieve the transaction of goods without meet. Professionally speaking, online shopping is an important part of e-commerce.

2. The General Features of Online Shopping

With the emergence of the internet business, consumer attitudes, consumption patterns and the status of consumers are undergoing significant changes. The development of internet commerce has promoted the improvement of consumer’s sovereignty. The network marketing system has the huge information processing ability, and this has provided the unprecedented choice space for the consumer to choose the commodity, also causes the diversification of consumer behavior.

2.1 Convenience and freedom

In addition to the actual needs of the shopping, online shopping can also give consumers a lot of fun which is not available in traditional shopping. Because of work pressure and high degree of tension, some consumers usually need to choose a convenient way of consumption. Due to the improvement of labor productivity, a part of the consumer’s free time increases. They hope to find the joy of life through consumption. Online shopping can meet these two kinds of consumer psychology.

2.2 Consumer participation

Online shopping has changed the traditional role of consumers, instead they are directly involved
in the whole process of production and circulation. The traditional commercial circulation channel is composed by the producer, the commercial organization and the consumer. The producers can not directly understand the market and the consumers also can not directly express their consumer demand to the producer. So the business organization plays an important role in information transmission. In the network environment, consumers can directly participate in the production and circulation, and direct communication with producers. This greatly reduces the uncertainty of the market.

2.3 The initiative to stimulate consumption

Online shopping stimulates people’s consumption. Online shopping allows consumers to get more and more comprehensive commodity information. It also allows consumers to purchase products to a wider geographical region. This has brought a great driving force to consumption.

2.4 Adaptability to various consumption levels

Individual consumption makes the consumer demand show difference. Consumers with different countries, ethnic groups, beliefs, habits, age, gender, will produce significant differences in demand. Online shopping can well satisfy the various demands.

3. The Characteristics of College Students’ Online Shopping

College students are the vanguard of fashion. Almost all of them participate in online shopping. As a specific online shopping group, the consumption behavior of college students has the following characteristics.

3.1 Personality embodied in consumption

College students are at the age of personality development, self consciousness enhancement and willing to accept new things. They like the pursuit of fashion and dare to innovate. In the face of complex consumer market, they pursue the diversity and independence of consumption patterns and consumption content. They are always willing to consume according to their own interests and needs. They need to reflect the personality characteristics in the process of consumption and tend to put forward higher requirements for individual consumption. What they choose is no longer the practical value of goods, but more and more attention is paid to whether the goods can fully reflect their own characteristics. Network consumption is in line with the characteristics of college students imaginative, eager to change, like innovation and strong curiosity.

3.2 Diversification of consumption

The diversification of College Students’ consumption demand is mainly reflected in the demand for basic living materials, learning needs, cultural and recreational needs, and interpersonal needs. Online shopping platform not only has a variety of physical goods, as well as a variety of special services. Network can provide not only necessities but also luxury, not only books but also online training courses. Not only that, it also covers catering, tourism, booking and other services. These greatly meet the diverse needs of college students.

3.3 Focus on consumption

Although the consumption of college students has a variety of characteristics, but in the online shopping, they still have a significant focus on consumption. A survey shows that the main types of college students online shopping is clothing, books, digital products, cosmetics, test materials and online courses [2]. Among them, the first is the apparel goods, followed by books. From the perspective of online shoppers, girls are more than boys and boys pay more attention to digital products. This fully reflects that college students have a high demand for technology, culture and social interaction. This is related to their age and educational level.
3.4 Conformity of consumption

College students’ consumption is easily influenced by roommates, classmates, friends and fellow villagers. It is also very easy to be influenced by media and star effect. This is due to the small scope of life and similar areas of consumption to college students.

3.5 Sensitivity to price

The main source of income for college students is their parents’ living expenses, so their economic power is limited. Most of the money is used to pay for food and daily necessities and the rest can be used for social and entertainment. So they are more sensitive to commodity prices and tend to be very cautious in their consumption. Price, quality and trend are the main factors to attract their consumption.

4. The Main Influencing Factors of College Students’ Online Shopping

4.1 Factors of college students themselves

4.1.1 Online shopping experience

A variety of negative news about online shopping will leave a deep impression on people’s minds. On the contrary, the success of online shopping experience will also greatly enhance people’s confidence in consumption. Regular online shopping experience can help people to strengthen the understanding of the entire shopping process, clear what links higher risk and learn how to prevent. Through their own experience, college students have gradually deepened the understanding of the network. They are more confident about the security of online shopping environment than other consumer groups. At the same time, they judge the risk of online shopping more rational. They are more likely to use online shopping in the future than the inexperienced consumers. They may also share the success of online shopping experience with friends and recommend friends to online shopping.

4.1.2 Attitude towards risk

There are various risks of online shopping. The first is the quality of goods; second is the issue of business reputation; third is the payment of security. There is information asymmetry between buyers and sellers of online shopping. Consumers can not directly contact the goods, but also do not know the quality of goods. Businesses can not see consumers. They are also very difficult to understand the true purchase intention and purchasing power of consumers. College students’ attitude to the risks and their ability to bear will affect their decision making when choosing online shopping. The more positive attitude towards risk and the stronger the ability to bear the risk, college students are more likely to shopping online.

4.1.3 Consumption capacity

Although the price of the goods provided by the online shopping platform may be lower than the price of the store, the choice of online shopping still requires a certain amount of payment. On the one hand, college students have a strong consumer demand; on the other hand, they have not yet been economically independent, consumption has been greatly restricted. There is contradiction between the consumption concept and consumption. This has a great impact on college students online shopping. Generally speaking, college students with good economic conditions are more likely to choose online shopping.

4.2 Factors of website

A survey shows that college students online shopping is more concentrated in the site of Taobao, Tmall, Jingdong [3]. The main reason for students to choose these sites is a complete range of goods, relatively low prices and good quality. The website which has the visibility and reputation in minds of consumers can attract most people. Website design to a certain extent affect the consumer’s shopping tendency. Color and music have a direct impact on the time consumers stay on the site. Thus indirectly affect the possibility of consumer shopping. Beautiful shopping interface
and easy to use will have an important impact on consumer shopping behavior. College students often put forward higher requirements for the design of the shopping website. They not only hope that the site has a good visual effect, but also hope to fully meet their various requirements, such as browsing speed, product classification, etc.

4.3 Factors of commodity

The price of goods sold in the network is usually lower than that of the traditional market. Low prices are more likely to attract college students. Product quality assurance is also very important. The lack of understanding of the quality of goods and distrust seriously affect the realization of online commodity trading. These concerns will greatly hinder the enthusiasm of people online shopping. From the consumer point of view, the provision of quality goods is a prerequisite for the rapid development of electricity providers. In addition, the difference between the actual and the description of the goods also affect the purchase of consumers. The information provided by the website is useful, true, and convenient to find, that is an important factor to attract customers. Businesses need to describe the details of goods, such as price, size, color, function, etc. Consumers are more interested in a detailed, personalized and interesting website. Consumers prefer websites that are easy to use and easy to navigate. For example, Taobao’s products descriptions are very detailed and are equipped with pictures. Goods in accordance with the style, brand, size and other classified management is very detailed. Consumers find it very easy and time-saving. This can give consumers a great sense of shopping pleasure.

4.4 Factors of customer service

In the online shopping, consumers can only get information from the website and do not have actual contact with the goods. So after the purchase of goods in the online shopping, service is very important. The phenomenon that consumers are not satisfied with the purchase of goods and they demand for return will inevitably occur.

After-sales service is divided into online and offline service. Online after-sales service is the characteristics and key elements of online shopping service. At present, the online service consciousness has become one of the main obstacles of college students online shopping. Improving after-sales service process, optimizing service attitude, improving after-sales service quality are important factors to attract college students consumer groups.

4.5 Factors of logistics

Online shopping is generally delivered by mail or courier delivery. Whether the goods can be quickly, safely and accurately delivered to the buyer is the direct reason for the college students to consider whether to choose online shopping. The evaluation of the efficiency of logistics distribution and the degree of recognition is a major evaluation index of college students’ identity of online shopping.

4.6 Factors of payment

As the online shopping is carried out in the virtual environment, information flow, capital flow, logistics is completed in the separation of time and space. Online shopping has uncertainty and risk, especially for personal information and account security. When college students choose online shopping, the network security will be considered as the primary factor. Only after fully determining the security of the network, they will be assured that the use of the network.

5. Conclusion

5.1 College students online shopping has a broad space for development

There is an inherent connection between the group characteristics of contemporary college students and the online shopping. College students are highly educated and able to accept and use the Internet. They have a strong interest in new things and have a strong ability to accept new things. They also have personality and sense of belonging. College students pursue individual
release. Each of them wants to show their unique side and likes a unique style of products and brands. At the same time, they have a strong sense of belonging and collective. They want to maintain a high degree of consistency with the group and to be recognized by other members of the group. Once the network shopping has been recognized, the spread and development of the general will become inevitable.

Online retailers are aware of the existence of unlimited business opportunities and huge development space. The value of their online marketing is not limited to the actual purchase amount of the current college students due to income constraints. Businesses hope to affect the attitude of college students to the internet, so that they eventually become loyal consumers online shopping. College students have higher comprehensive quality. Many of them will become a high society income groups and will become the future of the dominant network consumption. They can even affect the whole social consumption trend in the future.

5.2 Online shopping provides college students with space for consumption and leisure

College students regard the process of online shopping as an active process. In particular, female college students will replace the original shopping into online shopping. More and more college students take the online shopping as a new way to release the body and mind in the intense work. Schools should encourage and guide college students to conduct online shopping. At the same time, society should create conditions to reduce the dependence of college students on network.

5.3 It is necessary to correctly guide college students’ online shopping behavior

In order to avoid or reduce the impact of online shopping on college students’ learning and life, we should strengthen the time values of college students and guide them to arrange their time properly. After entering the university, college students reduce learning pressure. They have a lot of their own time to dominate. Effective management time is the need for college students to learn. Browse and access to a wealth of online goods, often occupy college students’ spare time. The randomness and uncertainty of college students’ network query result in serious waste of time. College students can not be affected by excessive participation in online shopping. In short, we should encourage college students to use the network correctly and conduct online purchasing behavior.

References

