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An Empirical Investigation of Video Game Control Users: Examining the influence of Social Media Advertising, Social Media Promotion, E-WOM, and Brand Image on Purchase Intention in China

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Abstract

With the rapid development of technology in gaming, more and more consumers have accepted electronic games, and major manufacturers are continually launching their new game consoles. Playing games has gradually become the leading entertainment activities for people all over the world. This research aims to study the influence of social media advertising content, social media promotion content, E-WOM, and brand image on Chinese consumers' purchase intention towards game console. In this research, the researchers collected the data from 300 Chinese customers who use the game consoles through online platform. Simultaneously, this study uses non-probability sampling including judgement and convenient sampling techniques, to collect the data. The researchers also applied 5-point Likert scale for research instruments. Descriptive and inferential analysis are used to analyze the data of demographics and linear regression is also applied to test the hypotheses. The researchers found that social media advertising content, social media promotion content, E-WOM, and brand image were positively influence purchase intentions. Especially the brand image, it has the most significant influence on purchase intention.

Keywords: Social media advertising, Social media promotion, E-WOM, Brand image, Purchase intentions

Introduction

Gaming becomes a major entertainment all over the world, and consumers' pursuit of gaming is continually changing. Statistics showed that there are more than 2.5 billion gamers worldwide, and

their spending on games in 2019 totaled 152.1 billion US dollars (Tom, 2019). According to forecasts, the global video game market will continue to thrive. Data showed that spending on games will grow to US\$196 billion. The upcoming next-generation consoles of Microsoft Xbox, Sony PlayStation and Nintendo's new Switch models

will contribute to the healthy growth of the market (Tom, 2019). In recent years, with the overall improvement of the living standards Chinese society has become more tolerant to games, leading the video game players to pay more attention to the high-quality gaming experience, high family expectations, and increased spending power. It caused many families to buy game consoles. According to a report from China's Xinhua net (2017), the sales revenue of China's home game consoles in 2017 was approximately 3.88 billion yuan. The annual sales of home game consoles were about 890,000 units. This showed that Chinese people's interests for gaming experience, and demand for gaming consoles increase tremendously, and the Chinese gaming console market becomes a highly potential market. Statistics also showed that 3 million Nintendo Switch products are sold in China, including parallel imports and officially sold products (Iggy, 2020). In December 2019, Nintendo and Tencent's cooperated and the officially release the Chinese version of Switch game consoles. This helps consumers to purchase the console more conveniently. Therefore, in this study the researchers collected the data from Chinese consumers of Switch game console to find the influence of social media advertising content, social media promotions content, E-WOM, and brand image on purchase intentions of consumers. Due to rapid development of e-commerce, social media advertising becomes more mainstream than traditional advertising; it can provide consumers with suggestions, sharing experiences, and quick, simple, and convenient information searches (Patino, Pitta, & Quinones, 2012). Social platforms become an essential key for brands to convey

different marketing communications to consumers (Rohm, Kaltcheva, & Milne, 2013). Moreover, social media promotion containing unique content, can affect and stimulate the behavior and intentions of consumers (Hilman, Hanaysha, & Ghani, 2017). At the same time, most researchers believed that word-of-mouth communication has an essential influence to develop consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions (Chatterjee, 2001; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Herr, Kardes, & Kim, 1991; Kiecker & Cowles, 2001; Sen & Lerman, 2007; Smith & Vogt, 1995; Weinberger & Dillon, 1980; Xia & Bechwati, 2008). A good brand image can help increase the frequency of consumers' purchases (Mohammad & Neda, 2012). Therefore, in this study the dependent variable is purchase intentions, and the independent variables are social media advertising content, social media promotion content, e-WOM, and brand image.

Research Objectives

1. To study the influence of social media advertising content on brand image.
2. To analysis the influence of social media promotion content on brand image.
3. To study the influence of E-WOM on brand image.
4. To analysis the effect of social media advertising on purchase intention.
5. To study the impact of social media promotion content on purchase intention.
6. To study the influence of E-WOM on purchase intention.
7. To analysis the effect of brand image on purchase intention.

Literature Review

Social media advertising

Social media advertising is defined as all forms of advertising provided through social networks, whether explicit or implicit (Taylor, Lewin, & Strutton, 2011). More relevantly (Johannes, 2015) social media advertising content refers to persuasive and planned content, such as pictures and videos, published by advertising planners or brand owners on websites and social media. Social media advertising is a constantly evolving field. Social media advertising is more interesting than regular ads; it can provide consumers with suggestions, sharing experiences, and quick, simple, and convenient information searches (Patino, Pitta, & Quinones, 2012). Consumers will deliberately look for advertising because it is a kind of media that can provide personal or product information (Dao, Le, Cheng, & Chen, 2014)

Social media promotion

Research showed that social media promotion becomes a more common and more effective marketing communication method in social media platforms (Straker, Wrigley, & Roseman, 2015a; 2015b). Social media promotion is the information about promotions posted on social media that can help to build brand image and to generate sales (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013). Social media promotion is used every day on social media (Straker, Wrigley, & Roseman, 2015a; 2015b). The social media promotional messages including unique content, has a strong persuasive, attractive, and positive impact on the brand image (Hilman, Hanaysha, & Ghani, 2017). Generally, social media promotion adopts the incentivizing

purchase model, and the content includes conducting transactions on social media to stimulate consumers to purchase (Keller, 2009).

E-WOM

Henning-Thurau et al. (2004). defined E-WOM as positive or negative descriptions of various types of customers including the active customers, potential customers, actual customers, etc. about a company or product, and it is shared with more people through the internet. Chevalier, Mayzlin and Mohammad (2006) found that e-WOM is a crucial way for consumers to acquire product information and service information. E-WOM can create a space for brands that consumers can easily access and interact with (Lovett & Staelin, 2016; Stephen & Galak, 2012). Base on the e-WOM information online reviews can help consumers reduce their cognitive burden, and consumers can easily do decision-making and increase product sales (Ye, Law , Gu, & Chen, 2011). Therefore, E-WOM in social network marketing becomes an essential part of the brand communication strategy (Chu & Kim, 2011).

Brand image

Dobni and Zinkhan (1990) defined the brand image as consumers' impression of a product or service. Padgett and Allen (1997) pointed out that the brand image contains specific products and services' symbolic meaning. Low and Lamb (2000) defined brand image as a particular brand product preferred by consumers with perceived value. Mohammad and Neda (2012) found that brand image can increase consumers' purchase frequency; the strong brand can increase

consumers' trust with their products or services they buy and better help consumers understand and form a brand image. The brand image will also affect the company's future profits, consumer purchase intentions, merger and acquisition decisions, stock prices, and sustainable competitive advantage and marketing success (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Therefore, brand image can distinguish the company's quotation from its competitors, making it unique (Webster & Keller, 2004). When the brand image conforms to the consumer's self-concept, consumers like it more (Martineau, 1957).

Purchase intention

Monroe (2003) pointed out that purchase intention is people's willingness to buy something that adds value to themselves. At the same time, purchase intention is also the possibility of consumers purchase or willing to buy a specific brand in the future (Huang, Wu, Wang, & Boulanger, 2011). Purchase intentions can also become consumers' recommendations for the next product repurchase (Tariq, Nawaz, Nawaz, & Butt, 2013). At the same time, purchase intention is the best explanations for consumers' expected behavior. (Cobb-Walgren, Ruble, & Donthu, 1995; Buil, Martínez, & De, 2013a; 2013b). High consumers' purchase intention indicates that brand owners perform well in brand image and brand communication, and successfully elicited good consumer responses (Alford & Biswas, 2002), which will prompt consumers to evaluate the brand.

Related Review Literature

Social media advertising content and brand image

Mehmet et al. (2018) researched the effect of social media guerrilla marketing advertising on the brand image; the researchers found that guerrilla marketing allows advertising to reach more consumers through the internet. Guerrilla marketing advertising has a positive impact on symbolic and functional brand images. A study of Facebook ads on brand image by Ismail, Mehmet, and Fulya (2018) confirmed that Facebook advertising plays an essential role in brand image.

Social media promotion content and brand image

Ridwan, Sabrina, and Sobhi (2019) studied the mediating effect of brand image; the results showed a significant influence of social media promotion content on brand image. Yusuf (2018) studied the effect of social media marketing on brand image; through analysis, it is found that social media promotion is a part of marketing activities which has a practical impact on brand image.

E-WOM and brand image

Md, Shamim, Abu, Ahmad, and Rosli (2018) researched the impact of E-WOM on the brand image; the data analysis showed that e-word of mouth has a positive effect on brand image and purchase intention. The study by Muslih, Ujang, and Netty (2019) about the impact of e-WOM and brand image; the results showed that e-word of mouth has a positive effect on brand image.

Social media advertising content and purchase intentions

Rodney (2015) researched on Facebook advertising's influence on intention-to-purchase

and the result confirmed that social media advertising positively impacts purchase intention and purchase behavior. Shu-Chuan, Sara, and Yoojung (2013) studied on consumers' reactions to social media advertisements leading to purchase intentions for luxury goods. The researchers found that users' responses to social media advertisements promote consumer purchase intentions. Ridwan, Sabrina, and Sobhi's (2019) studied social media advertising and behavior intention and the result showed a significant positive relationship between social media advertising and purchase intention.

Social media promotion content and purchase intentions

Ridwan, Sabrina, and Sobhi (2019) researched social media promotion and behavior intention and found that social media promotion positively influences purchase intention. According to the study of Muhammad, Pamadya, and Afif (2018), social media is based on promotion and purchase intention. They found social media-based promotion also has a significant impact on purchase intention.

E-WOM and purchase intentions

Muhammad, Pamadya, and Afif (2018) studied the social media influence on promotion and purchase intention; and found a significant relationship between e-WOM and purchase intention. There is a linear relationship between e-WOM and purchase intention. And the study of Evmorfia (2012) about the influence of e-WOM shows Chinese customers' consumption is more susceptible to e-WOM comments. Mohammad and Neda (2012) researched the effect of electronic

word of mouth and purchase intention and the result showed that e-WOM is the most influential factor affecting purchase intention. Chetna and Amresh (2017) studied the effect of Social eWOM on purchase intention; they found that the eWOM published by users on social networking sites has a significant impact on the purchase intention of electronic product consumption.

Brand image and purchase intentions

A study of Jihyun and Yuri (2018) about the effect of corporate and brand image on purchase intention; the investigation showed that brand image has a significant positive impact on purchase intention. Ya-Hui, and Cing-Fen (2014) researched the relationship between brand image and purchase intention; the study used the structural equation model to conduct research. The research results showed a positive and direct influence of brand image, perceived quality, perceived value, on purchase intention. And the study by Chih-Ching, Pei-Jou, and Chun -Shou (2013) about the influence of country of origin, brand image, and self-consistency on consumers' purchase intention. Found that country of origin consistency, self-consistency, and brand image all positively impact consumer's purchase intention.

Hypothesis

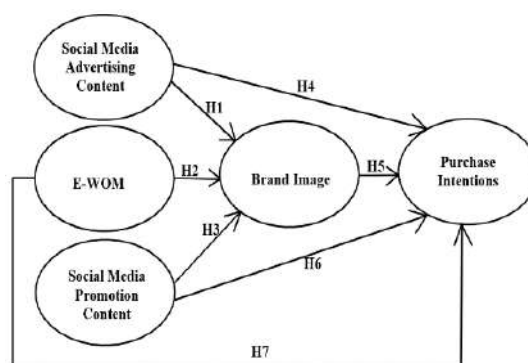


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Ridwan, Sabrina, Sobhi (2019) studied the influence of brand image on social media advertising, promotion, and behavioral intentions. Moreover, Mohammad, Neda (2012) studied on E-WOM's impact on brand image and purchase intention. Those previous research models and research frameworks have provided researchers to develop their conceptual framework. The framework intends to find the relationship between social media advertising content, social media promotion content, E-WOM, and brand image. Secondly, it finds the relationship between social media advertising, social media promotion, E-WOM, brand image, and purchase intentions.

H1₀: There is no significant influence of social media advertising content on brand image.

H1_a: There is a significant influence of social media advertising content on brand image.

H2₀: There is no significant influence of E-WOM on brand image.

H2_a: There is a significant influence of E-WOM on brand image.

H3₀: There is no significant influence of social media promotion content on brand image.

H3_a: There is a significant influence of social media promotion content on brand image.

H4₀: There is no significant influence of social media advertising content on purchase intention.

H4_a: There is a significant influence of social media advertising content on purchase intention.

H5₀: There is no significant influence of brand image on purchase intention.

H5_a: There is a significant influence of brand image on purchase intention.

H6₀: There is no significant influence of social media promotion content on purchase intention.

H6_a: There is a significant influence of social media promotion content on purchase intention.

H7₀: There is no significant influence of E-WOM on purchase intention.

H7_a: There is a significant influence of E-WOM on purchase intention.

Methodology

Research Method

Sekaran and Bougie (2013) defined the research as the search for specific problems and the search for precise solutions. Based on the sharing of user experience of "Switch" and the strengthening of official publicity on social media, the acceptance of the brand and products has been raised to a new level. In order to study the purchasing intentions of Chinese customers towards "Switch" game console, this study uses descriptive analysis to analyze the demographic characteristics. Zikmund et al. (2013) believed that descriptive research will answer "how", "who", "what", and "where", "When" and other issues, while describing the characteristics of purpose, people, groups, organizations, and the environment. The researchers distributed the questionnaire surveys to collect the data from the respondents. This study uses self-administered questionnaires. Zikmund et al. (2010) defined self-administered questionnaire as a questionnaire survey method that respondents are responsible for reading and answering. This surveys method helps the researchers to collect accurate data from the respondents. The questionnaire design base on the conceptual framework, and is divided into four parts.

The first part is to screen the question to ensure that the questionnaire respondents are all consumers who have experience using Switch game consoles.

Next is the analysis of independent variables. Use the 5-point Likert scale as the evaluation standard, the influence of independent variables such as social media advertising content, social media promotional content, E-WOM, brand image on purchase intention will be analyzed. The third part is the analysis of purchase intention, which will be the dependent variable for Switch game console consumers. The last part is used for demographic surveys, a total of 4 questions, including gender, age, monthly income, and education level.

Simultaneously, previous researchers suggested that the sample size should be at least 300 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Moreover, the research by Chetna and Amresh (2017) studied the influence of social eWOM on purchase intention by using 300 to be the sample size. Therefore, this study focuses consumers from China as the respondents, and distribute 300 questionnaires and collect the data through the Internet platforms such as WeChat, QQ Weibo, and LOFTE. In this study, the researchers apply non-probability sampling methods, which are used in situations where it is difficult to define the population. Among non-probability sampling methods purposive sampling can represent the entire population (Paul, 2008), convenience sampling can take samples from the most accessible and accessible parts of the population (Michael, 2011). Thus, the researchers use purposive sampling and convenience sampling techniques to collect the data.

Data Collection

In this study, the primary data collected from data collection. The primary data is defined as the information collected by researchers or data derived from sources (Zikmund G. W., 2003). So,

the primary data collection comes from the target population. Due to the sample representing a portion of the target group, a part must be carefully selected to define the target group (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Therefore, the researchers chose Nintendo's Switch game console consumers in China as the target group which include users of all models of Switch consoles. According to statistics from the statistical website <https://www.gamesindustry.biz>, Switch users include different gender and age groups (Valentine, 2019), which shows that consumers have a strong interest in game consoles. Therefore, the researchers used the online questionnaire on September, 2020, to collected from 300 respondents including both male and female Switch users in China to investigate their purchase intentions.

Research Findings

The researchers distributed 300 questionnaires, and 278 valid questionnaires have returned. Based on the descriptive analysis, the respondents are 40.6% (113) female and 59.4% (165) male. The highest percentage of age group is between 18 to 25 years, with 45.7% (127). The majority of level of income is 4100-5000 yuan per month, with the percentage of 28.1% (78). For the respondent's education level, the majority is undergraduate, with 49.3% (137).

Table 1: The Findings of Descriptive Analysis



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General Information	Main Group	Percentage and Number
Gender	Male	59.4% (165)
Age	18-25	45.7% (127)
Income	4100-5000	28.1% (78)
Education	undergraduate	49.3% (137)

Hypotheses Testing

This research aims to find out the factors that influence the purchase intention of Chinese Switch consumers. The researchers analyzed four independent variables: social media advertising content, social media promotional content, E-WOM, and brand image. Therefore, seven hypotheses are explored by statistical analysis software. For hypotheses testing, the researchers applied Simple Linear Regression. The condition to reject or failed to reject null hypotheses (H_0), the researchers set the significant value at .05 on the confidence interval 95%

Table 2: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Statistical treatment	Significant Value	Beta Coefficient Values	Results
H1 ₀ : There is no significant influence between Social media advertising content and brand image.	Simple Linear Regression	.000	.568	Rejected H1 ₀
H2 ₀ : There is no significant influence between E-WOM and brand image.	Simple Linear Regression	.000	.673	Rejected H2 ₀
H3 ₀ : There is no significant influence between Social media promotion content and brand image.	Simple Linear Regression	.000	.599	Rejected H3 ₀
H4 ₀ : There is no significant influence between Social media advertising content and purchase intention.	Simple Linear Regression	.000	.540	Rejected H4 ₀
H5 ₀ : There is no significant influence between brand image and purchase intention.	Simple Linear Regression	.000	.807	Rejected H5 ₀
H6 ₀ : There is no significant influence between Social media promotion content and purchase intention.	Simple Linear Regression	.000	.561	Rejected H6 ₀
H7 ₀ : There is no significant influence between E-WOM and purchase intention.	Simple Linear Regression	.000	.578	Rejected H7 ₀

Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to study the influence of four independent variables including social media advertising, social media promotion, E-WOM, and brand image on Chinese Switch consumers' purchasing behavior. Therefore, the researchers use scientific methods for data collection. First of all, the researchers selected the study's target population in China who use Switch game consoles. Secondly, according to the recommendations of previous researchers, this study chose a sample size of 300. And applied non-probability sampling methods including purposive sampling and convenience sampling to collect the data.

Regarding data collection, research uses primary data from 278 valid questionnaires collected from distributing 300 questionnaires. This questionnaire

can be divided into five parts: social media advertising, social media promotion, E-WOM, brand image, and purchase intention. And 5 points Likert scale is applied as a research instrument. From the findings of hypotheses testing, four independent variables; social media advertising, social media promotion, E-WOM, and brand image, significantly influence the dependent variable purchase intention.

Recommendation

Hypothesis analysis showed that social media advertising content, social media promotional content, and E-WOM have a positive influence on brand image. In other words, if increase in social media advertising content, social media promotion content, and E-WOM content brand image is expected to increase by 56.8%, 59.9%, and 67.3%, respectively. This result showed the importance of posting advertising content on social media, providing discounts, gift information, and encouraging consumers to leave product reviews and product experience in social forums, social media brand communities, and official forums.

The research results showed that social media advertising content, social media promotional content, E-WOM, and brand image positively impact purchase intention. Among them, brand image has the most significant impact on purchase intention. The increase in brand image content leads to 80.7% increase in purchase intention. Simultaneously, brand image plays an intermediary role in social media advertising content, social media promotional content, and E-WOM. The researchers believe that enhancing the brand image is the most important way to encourage consumer consumption. Based on

Nintendo's famous IP (Intellectual Property), Pokémon (1996), Mario (1981), and Zelda (2017) have the highest commercial value and represent brand images. These IPs represent good memories for consumers, which means that consumers will respond positively to these IPs through emotion. As a game console that can support consumers to play a series of exclusive IP games, the "Switch" game console is undoubtedly an ideal purchase for consumers. Therefore, the researchers suggest that brand managers can focus on using these valuable IP (such as Pokémon, Mario, Zelda) to enhance their brand image. Using relevant IP elements, organizing anniversaries, character birthday events, and related movie screening events are suitable methods. Brand managers should use social media to promote relevant advertising and promotional content actively. Simultaneously, appropriate forums are organized to provide consumers with space for communication of related content, which will help the formation of new consumers and the continuous development of old consumers.

Recommendation of Further Study

This research focuses on understanding the factors that influence the purchase intention of Nintendo game console Switch consumers in China. So, the researchers would like to give some suggestions for future research. First, the researchers would like to provide recommendations for the research framework. This research considers four independent variables, social media advertising, social media promotion, E-WOM, and brand image. However, the researchers suggest that future studies, should consider other factors that may have effect on purchase intention, such as trust, satisfaction, and other variables. In addition,

this research is based on consumers in China, and further research should be conducted to collect data from different geographic areas.

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