

The Impact of the Rise of Social Media on Anime Peripheral Product Sales

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Abstract:

The advent of highly developed internet technologies in today's society has provided a conducive environment for live streaming sales of anime peripheral products via self-media platforms. This paper employs a comparative analysis approach to explore how to achieve profit maximization by examining the advantages and disadvantages of online live streaming sales versus offline physical store sales. By analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of these sales models, the paper summarizes the varying consumer psychology and demands in different contexts, with a particular focus on the impact of the blind bag format in online live streaming on anime peripheral products enthusiasts. The paper ultimately proposes that enterprises, agents, and retailers fully leverage the advantages of self-media through a three-tiered linkage strategy to maximize benefits. This study aims to provide new insights for the development of the anime industry, encouraging leaders to emphasize the close connection between industry upstream and downstream, promptly capture consumer demands, and fully utilize tools of the internet era.

Keywords: Anime peripheral product, Live streaming sales, Blind bag.

1. Introduction

Anime is the combination of animation and manga, and anime peripheral products are derivatives of the anime industry. Peripheral products refer to goods made with characters or animal shapes from animation and comics under license.

Nowadays, with the high internet penetration rate [1], many anime peripheral products adopt a dual sales model of online and offline sales. Due to the rapid development of social media, online live-streaming sales have become increasingly popular [2]. For most products, the advantage of "online shopping" is often lower prices compared to offline stores, while "live streaming" places a greater emphasis on "discounts". Compared to physical stores, the sales costs of online shops are significantly lower. Setting up an online shop has a low barrier to entry and requires less expense, as there is no need to pay high rent or renovation costs, and most online shops do not need to hire sales staff [3].

However, some anime peripheral products sold through live streaming have prices higher than those in offline stores. Taking the example of the "Jujutsu Kaisen" series badges from the "Ka you" brand, the official offline store sells them for 15 yuan per pack, but in on of the Tik Tok

live stream called "Feng Deng Chai Ka", they are priced at 18 yuan per pack. Moreover, as of May 18, 2024, the sales volume of this product link has exceeded 86,000 bags. This abnormal phenomenon of "online price premium" has led the author to contemplate the sales model of anime peripheral products. This article aims to analyze the different sales models of anime peripheral products and propose improved models to maximize profits in the Internet era.

The following sections of this paper are organized as follows: Section 2 introduces several official sales models for anime peripheral products and analyzes the target audience for these products ; Section 3 and 4 respectively analyze the sales models of online and offline stores, including basic introductions, the different consumer needs they satisfy, and the relationship between product pricing and consumer psychology ;Section 5 summarizes the article and offers suggestions on how to maximize benefits.

2. Basic Analysis of Anime Peripheral Products

2.1 Introduction to Official Sales Forms of Anime Peripheral Products

The main types of official anime peripheral products for

sale include badges, pendants, stickers, acrylic stands, etc. Official sales are primarily divided into two forms based on the designs on the products: single-item sales, which can be purchased individually, and boxed sets that combine multiple styles. Single-item products are packaged in transparent packaging, while boxed sets have both outer and inner packaging in opaque form, with all styles depicted on the outer box but each item inside being indistinguishable, known as “blind bags.” Sales formats vary based on time and quantity, with limited-time, limited-quantity sales, limited-time, unlimited-quantity pre-sales, and unlimited-time, unlimited-quantity permanent sales. Limited-time, limited-quantity sales are exclusively available for a specified period and in restricted quantities. Limited-time, unlimited-quantity pre-sales are open for purchase within a designated timeframe, with quantities determined by consumer orders. Unlimited-time, unlimited-quantity permanent sales allow consumers to purchase at any time and in any quantity they desire. Currently, limited-time, unlimited-quantity pre-sales are mainstream.

2.2 The Audience for Anime Peripheral Products

The main consumer groups of anime peripheral products include teenagers and some financially capable adults, who have a strong interest and emotional investment in anime, willing to spend time and money on related products. In terms of geographic location, consumers in large cities have a higher demand for anime peripheral products due to their fast-paced lifestyle and abundant information access, while the number of anime enthusiasts in second and third-tier cities is also gradually increasing [4].

In recent years, the expansion of the anime industry has effectively driven the development of various related industries [5]. For example, in cultural tourism, many scenes from anime works have become tourist attractions, drawing large numbers of fans to visit. Similarly, in the gaming industry, many anime works are adapted into video games or collaborate with existing games, further expanding the audience and increasing interactivity and entertainment. Additionally, outstanding anime works often lead to the development of live-action movie adaptations, TV dramas, and related music albums and concerts.

The consumer demand for anime peripheral products primarily includes emotional identification and expression, collecting and displaying, meeting aesthetic needs, social interaction and sense of belonging, as well as pursuit of limited and rare items. Consumers express their emotional identification with beloved anime works or characters through purchasing anime peripheral products. They also seek aesthetically pleasing and high-quality products

to satisfy their aesthetic preferences. Purchasing anime peripheral products is also a form of social behavior, as consumers aim to engage with like-minded individuals, establish common interest circles, and gain a sense of belonging and social satisfaction. Additionally, some consumers pursue limited edition or rare products to possess unique collectibles and showcase their individuality.

3. Online Live Sales Model

3.1 Introduction to Online Live Sales Model

The “Direct Sales” model refers to selling peripheral products with clearly defined styles, items that can be purchased individually on the official website.

The “Blind Bag Direct Shipment” sales model refers to taking out the official box-set products and selling them in blind bags by individual units, which are then directly shipped to consumers without opening the blind bags.

The “Blind Bag Proxy Opening” sales model refers to taking out the official box-set products and selling them in blind bags by individual units, with the items being opened by a live streamer to reveal the exact style of the product. During the proxy opening process, the live streamer will introduce the product, discussing aspects such as its design, craftsmanship, and aesthetic appeal to encourage consumers to make a purchase. The live streamer usually has a transaction bell and will ask consumers about their preferred styles in advance. When a preferred or rare and popular style is revealed, the live streamer will ring the bell to celebrate, highlighting the consumer’s good fortune.

3.2 The Different Consumer Needs Satisfied by Three Sales Models

Direct Sales Model: Some consumers, despite missing the official pre-sale period, still want to obtain individual products. The direct sales model addresses this demand.

Blind Bag Direct Shipment Sales Model: Some consumers do not want to purchase an entire box but prefer specific items within the box and enjoy the process of unwrapping blind bags themselves. The blind draw direct shipment sales model caters to this preference.

Blind Bag Proxy Opening Sales Model: Some consumers do not want to purchase an entire box but prefer specific items within the box. They are not focused on unwrapping the blind bags themselves but rather enjoy the experience of the live streamer’s celebratory bell ringing and the envy of the live audience when a particular item is revealed. Additionally, live proxy openings allow consumers to quickly find out if they received their desired item, enabling them to decide whether to purchase more without

the repeated cycle of buying, unwrapping by themselves, and waiting for shipments. Since the item is identified on the spot, the live streamer can track the contents of each box to some extent, helping consumers understand the probability of obtaining their desired item and reducing unnecessary losses. Furthermore, the live streamer can facilitate exchanges between different consumers in the same live stream, provided both parties agree, saving time and shipping costs for both.

3.3 Online live streaming pricing and consumer psychology

Live streaming aims for profitability, focusing on a limited range of IPs that closely match consumers' purchasing intentions. Due to consumers' limited ability to capture information, they often struggle to keep up with updates on various anime IP products and the prices at offline stores. When live streams provide a convenient, aggregated platform, even if prices are higher than offline stores, the likelihood of successful transactions significantly increases. For example, blind bags from the "Jujutsu Kaisen" series achieved 86,000 orders in a live stream.

Live streamers boost consumer enthusiasm and the overall atmosphere of the live stream by sharing clips of consumers obtaining rare items and celebrating with bell ringing. This strengthens the impression that rare items can be obtained in the live stream. According to the availability heuristic [6], people tend to judge the probability of an event based on how easily examples come to mind. Even if viewers rationally understand the low probability of obtaining rare items, they can be swayed by the frequent bell ringing and highlight clips, exaggerating the likelihood of rare events and overlooking objective facts [6].

During the process of drawing blind bags, due to the uncertainty of styles and varying values, consumers often fall victim to the gambler's fallacy [7]. Consumers who draw their desired or rare styles may believe their luck will continue and make further purchases. Conversely, those who do not get their desired styles may spend more money to compensate for their losses [7].

In high-traffic live streams, many consumers are influenced by herd mentality [8], leading to impulse purchases when they see high sales volumes and the live streamer continuously opening bags.

Given the prevalence of big data targeting, online platforms can better capture interested consumers. Platforms directly push relevant live streams and products to consumers, making this approach more direct and convenient than offline store advertisements, big data precision targeting captures consumers and guides their purchasing behavior by providing personalized recommendations based

on their browsing history, purchase records, and search behavior, accurately predicting their interests and needs. Additionally, big data systems can analyze and respond to consumer behavior in real-time, pushing relevant product information promptly to attract their attention at the most likely moments of purchase [9].

4. Offline physical store sales

4.1 Introduction to offline physical store sales model

The "Direct Sales" model refers to the sale of peripheral products with clearly defined styles, generally divided into two categories. The first category includes items that can be purchased individually from the official website. The second category consists of previously opened blind bag products that have been identified and are sold at different prices based on their specific styles.

The "Blind Bag Sales" model refers to breaking down official box-set products and selling them in blind bags by individual units. After purchasing, consumers can decide whether to open the blind bags and when and where to do so.

4.2 The Different Consumer Needs Satisfied by Three Sales Models

Direct Sales Model: This model meets the needs of consumers who missed the official unified pre-sale period but still want to obtain individual products. Additionally, since different styles have varying levels of popularity, blind bags that have been opened and identified are sold at different prices, allowing consumers to choose whether to purchase based on their preferences and price acceptance.

Blind Bag Sales Model: This model caters to consumers who do not want to purchase an entire box but prefer specific items within the box. The offline blind bag sales model not only satisfies consumers' desire to personally open the blind bags but also provides opportunities to trade with other on-site consumers to obtain their desired items.

4.3 Offline physical store pricing and consumer psychology

Physical stores aim for profitability, focusing on a limited range of IPs that closely align with consumer purchasing preferences. Due to consumers' limited ability to capture information, they often struggle to stay updated on the latest products from various anime IPs. Physical stores provide a consolidated shopping space for consumers, providing convenience for consumers to choose products. Additionally, the opportunity for consumers to personally select and open blind bags enhances their shopping experience.

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Store operators often open some products as samples and post the images on social media for promotion. They also encourage consumers who obtain rare items to share pictures on social media, sparking interest in certain styles and strengthening the availability heuristic effect [6], thereby attracting other consumers to purchase.

Physical stores also benefit from the gambler's fallacy [7] and herd mentality [8]. Consumers often shop in groups, making the herd mentality effect more pronounced [8]. Furthermore, the tangible nature of in-store shopping, where consumers can directly observe each other's results, with on-site interaction and the immediacy of physical displays providing instant feedback and enhancing the sense of reality. Seeing other consumers draw rare or desired styles can trigger a competitive mindset [10], making consumers want to obtain the same items. When other consumers display a greater collection of different styles, it can further prompt consumers to continue purchasing blind bags to achieve a sense of accomplishment [10].

5. Conclusion

When comparing the advantages and disadvantages of online and offline sales, given that online live streaming sales are not restricted by time and location, and such sales have gradually become mainstream, the author believes that online live streaming sales are more capable of meeting consumer demands. However, offline brick-and-mortar stores also possess irreplaceable qualities. For consumers, it is necessary to approach anime peripheral products rationally. When making purchases, it is best to plan a budget in advance to ensure a healthy life while satisfying personal interests and hobbies. Before buying, consumers can compare prices in advance to choose the most cost-effective and suitable products. Consumers should support authentic products and be wary of counterfeit and inferior items to avoid being deceived. Engaging with other enthusiasts to share information and experiences can help consumers make informed decisions.

In recent years, the expansion of the anime industry has effectively driven the development of various related industries. In the context of the rising trend of self-media in the internet era, the author proposes using self-media tools as a bridge to facilitate the three-tier cooperation among enterprises, agents, and retailers. Through the efficient utilization of self-media, enterprises can effectively conduct brand promotion, enhance brand awareness, and communicate corporate culture, brand concepts, and product information. Agents can utilize self-media for targeted

regional promotion to enhance market penetration, while retailers can leverage self-media platforms for precise marketing and expanding sales coverage through online channels. Additionally, all three parties can use self-media to gather consumer feedback and market dynamics, adjust and improve timely, provide personalized services and effective after-sales support, and enhance customer stickiness. This collaborative approach aims to maximize profits through information sharing, resource complementarity, and coordinated development among enterprises, agents, and retailers.

The innovation of this article lies in proposing a three-tier interaction among enterprises, agents, and retailers through social media tools to maximize profits. Its shortcoming is the lack of specific analysis on the impact of variables generated by the use of social media tools on the anime industry. Future research can focus on how to operate social media, adjust specific variables, and create a more comprehensive sales chain for anime products.

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