

Analysis of iPhone Promotion Strategies during Taobao's "Double Eleven": A Study on Digital Media Marketing and Consumer Behavior

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Abstract: Digital media has fundamentally reshaped societal structures and reconfigured consumption paradigms. As China's predominant e-commerce platform, Taobao commands substantial market dominance through strategic implementation of digital marketing mechanisms. During the "Double Eleven" promotional period, Taobao employs multifaceted operational strategies to enhance iPhone sales performance. While scarcity-driven marketing tactics effectively generate consumer urgency and stimulate purchase intentions, they concurrently induce market competition imbalances and erode consumer brand loyalty. The streamlined checkout mechanism demonstrates particular efficacy for iPhone transactions through cost-efficiency optimization and temporal economy, yet simultaneously escalates impulsive consumption tendencies and post-purchase return probabilities. The platform's choice architecture, characterized by default configurations and algorithmic recommendations, streamlines purchasing processes but introduces systemic bias that constrains consumer autonomy and disadvantages smaller merchants. Although Taobao's "Double Eleven" serves as a critical commercial infrastructure for iPhone distribution, its optimization strategies present dual effects: enhancing transactional efficiency while potentially distorting consumer decision-making accuracy and destabilizing merchant revenue streams.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Digital Media, "Double Eleven" Campaign, Hunger Marketing, iPhone, One-click Purchase, Taobao.

1. Introduction

With the development of digital technology, digital media has created a diverse world. Digital media covers the public space of society and it brings together the different elements of social society (Bimber, 2012, p.117). At the same time, digital media technology uses its power to reach the lives of hundreds of millions of citizens (Stephen, 2016, p.17). Lupton, (2014, p.175) believes that nowadays, the use of digital media technology has given people a better sense of the diversity of society. Its impact on society is manifested in many ways, including cultural, social and scientific (Acerbi, 2016, p.636). In addition, digital media has allowed people to change the way they consume. Citizens are becoming accustomed to using media platforms to purchase different products, which has led to an increasing number of businesses using digital media platforms to market their products (Stephen, 2016, p.17). Kwahk and Kim (2017, p.803) point out that the disclosure of product information in digital media can directly influence consumers' willingness to buy. Merchants use digital media platforms to advertise their products and run promotions as a marketing strategy to attract consumers to spend money (Yasmin, et al, 2015, p.69). The growing number of online shopping platforms in China. Taobao, a large digital media shopping platform in China, displays hundreds of millions of product advertisements to consumers 24 hours a day (Zhu, et al., 2017, p.2191). Fang and Su (2021, p.43) point out that the use of Taobao's digital approach to product promotion and excellent service has led to a dramatic increase in the number of people using the platform to purchase products. Online shopping has become the trend for people to shop today.

The iPhone is a multifunctional smart phone developed by

Apple Inc (Schultz et al., 2011, p.106). Also, the iPhone, one of the most popular products, attracts a large number of consumers to make purchases whenever the product is released (Laugesen and Yuan, 2010, p.91). Lu and Liu (2015, p.100) note that according to statistics, more than 9,500 merchants sold iPhones on Taobao's digital shopping platform in early 2014. Taobao provides a way for people to buy iPhone online. At the same time, Xu et al. (2020, 0.2790) point out that Taobao's "Double Eleven" shopping carnival has become the most anticipated online shopping event for consumers each year. "Double Eleven" is the largest shopping carnival in China's digital shopping platforms is also an effective digital marketing strategy (Wang et al., 2018, p.839). iPhone as a hot product in Taobao "Double Eleven" promotion activities in a large degree to influence people's consumption behavior. The purpose of this essay is to analyze how Taobao was used as a digital media platform to promote and advertise the iPhone. The impact of iPhone on consumers during the "Double Eleven" promotion is discussed. First, this article will outline the performance of the "Double Eleven" marketing campaign, followed by a critical analysis of the different marketing strategies for the iPhone during the Taobao "Double Eleven" campaign. Finally, the strengths and weaknesses of the campaign will be critically discussed to analyze the impact of the campaign.

2. Taobao's "Double Eleven" campaign performance

Taobao was founded by Alibaba Group in May 2003 and is a popular digital shopping platform for Chinese users (Kwahk and Kim, 2017, p.815). As a new type of retail outlet, Taobao has a unique business system that brings people multiple services (Yin et al., 2019, p.1126). Taobao's wide range of

features and services make it a versatile digital commerce platform. This was echoed by Xue and Holsapple(2020, p.3) who claim that the Taobao platform allows people to conduct group purchases, auctions and other business models while offering Alipay payment methods to reduce the risk of settlement. As a result, Taobao has captured the main market of e-commerce in a very short period of time since its creation. Specifically, In 2010, Taobao captured two-thirds of China's e-commerce market, earning nearly RMB 30 billion through promotions and advertising of different products (Greeven et al., 2012, p.3). Among the multiple activities on Taobao's platform the "Double Eleven" shopping spree is one of the platform's biggest promotions. The "Double Eleven" campaign, which used different marketing strategies to drive consumers to their desired products, generated RMB170 billion in revenue for the platform in 2017 (Wang et al., 2018, p.839). According to Wang (2016, p.412), China Internet Network Information Center indicates that the "Double Eleven" promotion saw the number of users using online shopping platforms in China surge to 3.8 billion in June 2015. The scale of the "Double Eleven" shopping carnival is much larger than the "Black Friday" and it played an important role in opening up the Chinese e-commerce landscape (Quan, 2021, p.226). At the same time, the 2015 "Double Eleven" saw an increase of nearly RMB 39 billion in transaction volume over the previous year, which effectively increased the economic benefits of e-commerce in China (Yang et al., 2018, p.1801).

iPhone sales boosted by "Double Eleven" shopping carnival promotion. According to statistics, the iPhone generated nearly RMB 200 million in sales during the "Double Eleven" shopping spree in 2020 (Quan, 2021, p.229). Specifically, according to Liu (2014, p.784), since the first "Double Eleven" promotion was held in 2009, the promotion has offered lower prices than half of the original price for food, clothing, digital products and many other products to sell at a lower price. This allows the iPhone to be sold at a lower price than the official price. Also, Wang et al. (2018, p.842) point out that Taobao offers multiple merchants for iPhone promotions to give consumers more choices to buy. As a consequence, the "Double Eleven" sale is a great way for consumers to get the lowest price for their iPhone. Secondly, Taobao's "Double Eleven" pre-sale of iPhones for a limited time, by charging a lower deposit in advance to attract users to order (Quan, 2021, p.228). Yang et al. (2018, P.1801) argue that the pre-sale model creates a psychological change by getting people into the buying state early, increasing the motivation to spend. Indisputably, the pre-order method greatly reduces the psychological burden on consumers and also enhances the promotion of the iPhone before the official sale. Furthermore, Wang et al. (2018, p.840) state that Taobao posted images of the iPhone promotion on the platform's homepage to guide consumers through the promotion. Zhao (2012, p.4) believes that beautiful product images and information on online shopping platforms can easily influence customers' willingness to buy and increase people's desire to buy. It is clear that this method is effective in deepening consumers' perceptions of iPhone products to boost sales of the iPhone. Therefore, Taobao's "Double Eleven" shopping festival marketing campaign provided an important platform for the sale of iPhone. The combination of multiple marketing models for iPhone in the "Double Eleven" promotion enhanced sales and met the needs of consumers to buy products at preferential prices.

3. "Double Eleven" on the iPhone's hunger marketing strategy

Taobao used hunger marketing tactics to promote iPhones on "Double Eleven". For example, in 2017, the "Double Eleven" promotion used hunger marketing to attract billions of users, more than two-thirds of whom bought smart phones, with the iPhone taking first place in sales (Wang, 2018, p.839). Chen et al. (2014, p.1950) indicated that hunger marketing refers to the strategy that the provider of goods intentionally lowers the quantity of the product and creates the illusion that demand exceeds supply. According to consumer psychology analysis, when the quantity of a good changes it affects the consumer's behavioral decisions (Kumar 2000, Kumar & Krishnan 2004, as cited in Loken, 2006, p.462). "Double Eleven" creates tension by limiting time and showing low inventory, prompting consumers to snap up product (Peng and Liang, 2013, p.56). Clearly, hunger marketing is a marketing technique that stimulates the desire to buy, with the aim of increasing traffic from platform users and ensuring that merchants make high profits from their products (Gao and Zhao, 2016, p.652). Meanwhile, Fang (2015, p.59) argue that merchants try to adjust their inventory with the aim of also grabbing market space on the platform and further enhancing the competitiveness of their products. In the Taobao "Double Eleven" platform will mark the promotional activities of the special merchants, and display the iPhone goods out of stock and limited to one or two units per person information. Consumers need to grab the iPhone within the specified time frame. Undoubtedly, the hunger strategy has successfully shaped the product's hot selling phenomenon. It also makes the customer and the product to create emotional and psychological resonance, thus further promoting the consumer's purchase behavior (Chen et al., 2014, p.1953). In addition, In addition, the "Double Eleven" campaign attracted a large number of consumers to the iPhone's hunger marketing, which to a certain extent strengthened the iPhone's brand appeal and helped to improve the brand's image.

However, the "Double Eleven" hunger marketing strategy for iPhone sales also has drawbacks that cannot be ignored. On the one hand, for Taobao merchants, hunger marketing has led to an imbalance in competitiveness among merchants, and supply restrictions have led to a shortage of products affecting the platform's revenue. (Feng et al., 2020, p.1). This makes iPhone sales on Taobao lead to insufficient competition between merchants, reducing the persuasiveness of some merchants' products. Furthermore, Peng and Liang (2013, p.56) state that some merchants have taken on additional promotional costs for their products in order to maintain promotional efforts, which has caused greater pressure on themselves. In order to ensure the competitive balance of each merchant in the "Double Eleven" campaign, the Taobao platform should ensure the promotional efforts and publicity of each merchant's iPhone, which will increase the chances that each merchant's potential consumers will directly contribute to the purchase behavior. On the other hand, for consumers the hunger marketing approach will greatly deplete consumers' brand loyalty (Chen et al., 2014, p.1955). In other words, hunger marketing has led to a shortage of iPhone, which has resulted in consumers struggling to buy the products, and has led to negative consumer sentiment towards the brand. At the same time, Peng and Liang (2013, p.57) claim that the limited time and number of products available in the hunger marketing model can put pressure on consumers,

which can directly lead to an inability to guarantee the quality and accuracy of decisions. Therefore, the use of hunger marketing strategies in the "Double Eleven" should take into account the balance of sales between merchants and the pressure of consumers on the promotion time, so that the marketing strategy is more suitable for the "Double Eleven" campaign.

4. Promotions Using Digital Technology

Digital media shopping platforms often prefer to design one-click purchases to sell and promote products (Jacobsson, 2017, p.1). According to Mann and Siebneicher (2008, p.991), one-click purchasing refers to a digital technology that allows users to simplify the shopping process by completing the purchase of an item with just one click. Taobao's "Double Eleven" campaign uses a one-click purchase strategy for consumers to choose to buy an iPhone. Specifically, on the Taobao platform, users are allowed to select the iPhone from the "Double Eleven" promotion with one click on the home page, and the system will automatically select the coupon to complete the order directly (Du, 2019, p.2). Jacobsson (2017, p.5) shows that the advantage of one-click purchasing is that consumers can shop for efficiency in the shortest possible time, while the simplification of payment steps for the platform saves "frictional costs". Meanwhile, one-click shopping technology is a persuasive tool to convince consumers to change their shopping behavior through the principle of reduced choice (Kallehave et al., 2010, p.27). According to data visualization analysis, as many as 86% of consumers chose to make one-click purchases during the 2015 "Double Eleven" promotion (Shuai et al., 2019, p.27). Therefore, The "Double Eleven" strategy of one-click selection of iPhones saved time and effort for users, and the efficient operation successfully convinced a large number of consumers to buy iPhone. In addition, simplifying the shopping process also improved the speed of the system, allowing the Taobao platform to increase the purchase rate of products during the promotion.

The "Double Eleven" one-click purchase strategy is applicable to iPhone promotions because the product is not a luxury attribute and people do not need to consider the product price factor too much. For ordinary products or cheap products the general attitude of consumers can make a decision in a very short period of time (Notani, 1997, p.217). When a consumer purchases a luxury product, there are usually multiple steps to confirm the accuracy of the product information to complete the purchase. For example, the luxury sports car Ferrari requires a lot of steps and time for the consumer to purchase due to the low production of the goods and the high price of millions (Chen et al., 2014, p.1950). In contrast, in the one-click purchase strategy iPhone when the price is easier for users in the psychological acceptance. Therefore, "Double Eleven" often uses a one-click purchase strategy for products that most consumers can afford. However, there are obvious drawbacks to the iPhone using the one-click purchase strategy. Since one-click purchase completes payment for a product in a short time, this way people may overlook product details and important information leading to impulsive spending (Jacobsson, 2017, p.8). Consumers' impulsive spending on iPhone can expose merchants to greater risk of returns. Taobao needs to make the right promotional decisions when conducting promotions so

that merchants get higher sales to ensure the quality of promotional activities (Shuai et al., 2019, p.25).

5. Good Choice of Architecture for "Double Eleven"

Taobao's "Double Eleven" campaign used good choice architecture to promote the iPhone and convince consumers to buy the product. First, Taobao's "Double Eleven" campaign used default options and default recommendations as its persuasive strategy to sell iPhone to guide people to buy (Ding, 2013, p.18). According to Thaler and Sunstein (2008, p.8), default refers to a situation where the system automatically drives people to make a choice. For example, when people buy an iPhone and search in a search engine, the system will default to the best store for the consumer to transact (Ding, 2013, p.18). Secondly, when users select the product model, the system will default to select the standard configuration of the product recommended to consumers (Zhang et al., 2020, p.8). This means that when users visit Taobao to buy iPhones on the "Double Eleven" shopping day, the system will default to recommend the most suitable iPhone configuration to consumers with the biggest discount in the promotion. Adaji and Vassileva (2016, p.109) believe that digital systems make it easier to convince people to make choices by simplifying operation. Similarly, Thaler and Sunstein (2008, p.8) also point out that the default options allow users to effectively avoid the risk of choice and help people make correct choices. Consumers usually prefer to save unnecessary hassle when making choices. Therefore, the default option strategy will make it easier and faster for people to buy an iPhone. It is an effective strategy to convince users to buy an iPhone to help people make decisions directly.

Taobao's "Double Eleven" campaign favors the use of default selection framework for iPhone marketing (Zhong, 2016, p.34). There are several explanations as to why the default option is used for promotions. First of all, according to Anesbury et al. (2016, p.261), consumers' shopping habits are usually based on prioritizing the first product that is retrieved by default on a web page. At the same time, Thaler and Sunstein (2008, p.19) noted that when the default mode is present, users' brains will react instinctively in the mode of automatic thinking systems. It buys iPhone effortlessly without control of people's thinking system. The "Double Eleven" strategy of default iPhone recommendations largely captures the subconscious mindset of users. Another explanation as to why the default option is an effective strategy for the "Double Eleven" campaign is that it saves consumers time while the platform sells more products. In other words, minimising time is usually one of the key behaviours consumers prefer when shopping, and the default mode saves time by reducing unnecessary product information browsing (Anesbury et al., 2016, p.264). Also, the default selection controls the selection time to increase the efficiency of the incoming product selection and thus the growth trend of the product sales (Friedman et al., 2017, p.159).

However, there are limitations to using the default strategy for iPhone promotions on "Double Eleven". On the one hand, the default mode is biased and can lead to restricted consumer behaviour (Mari and Algesheimer, 2021, p.4074). Since the default mode automatically determines the product selection, people are likely to overlook more valid information and details about some products. As a result, consumers miss out

on products or combinations of products that are actually more suitable for them. On the other hand, the default strategy will reduce the chances of some lower rated merchants on Taobao being considered by consumers (Ding, 2013, p.27). This makes it difficult for some merchants to survive with very low purchase volumes. The default strategy is likely to polarize merchants on the Taobao platform, harming the interests of some merchants and reducing the stickiness of users and some merchants. Therefore, when using the default strategy to promote iPhone on "Double Eleven", consumers should be wary of the default selection, which can be a tool to help people choose products, but also a stumbling block that prevents consumers from choosing products that are more suitable for them.

6. Conclusion

This essay uses the iPhone as a case study to analyse how the iPhone was promoted in the Taobao "Double Eleven" campaign. It examines how different marketing strategies were used to promote the iPhone during the "Double Eleven" campaign and analyses the impact of promotional strategies between consumers and merchants. The essay also illustrates the possible limitations of the iPhone promotion strategy for the "Double Eleven" campaign.

In summary, this article argues that Taobao's "Double Eleven" shopping carnival campaign provides an important platform for iPhone promotions, and it is effective through different promotional strategies and a good campaign framework. The "Double Eleven" campaign had a clear understanding of consumer behavior and psychology, and used several strategies to achieve further growth in iPhone sales (Zhao, 2012, p.5). Firstly, the advantage of the "Double Eleven" strategy of hunger marketing is that it attracts the attention of a large number of consumers and triggers a rush to buy, which allows businesses to greatly increase the profitability of their products. (Chen, et al., 2014, p.1950) Secondly, the benefits of the "Double Eleven" campaign, which utilised the digital technology of one-click purchasing and the default option model framework, were that it simultaneously increased the efficiency of the campaign's purchases. There is no denying that the savings in time and product costs have also increased revenue for merchants. However, they also have a common disadvantage that cannot be ignored; hunger marketing, one-click selection and default selection can all lead to biases in the accuracy of consumer decisions (Jacobsson, 2017, p.9). Consumers who make the wrong decision when buying an iPhone can lead to instability in business revenue. Therefore, the "Double Eleven" promotion strategy for iPhone does not guarantee an absolutely perfect promotion. The availability of the strategy needs to be reviewed repeatedly to reduce the probability of possible problems when selecting promotional methods (Van, 2000, p.21).

When using different marketing strategies to promote products on digital media shopping platforms, it is necessary to consider whether the marketing strategy is truly appropriate for the promotion of the product. It is important to ensure that the quality of the promotion is appropriate in order to promote the product more effectively, thus making it mutually beneficial for both consumers and merchants. However, this paper still has some limitations as it only analyses the impact of the Taobao "Double Eleven" promotion on the iPhone and limited marketing strategies. To make this study more in-depth, it was necessary to compare other promotions for

iPhones on the Taobao platform with the "Double Eleven" shopping spree. Further correlations were found to see if there was a link between them. It is important to further evaluate the sales performance of the iPhone under different campaigns. At the same time, the advantages and improvements of the different marketing tools are explored to better justify the study.

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