

The Impact of Website Design: composition, usability, and amount of information, on brand competitiveness and customer satisfaction in China

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Abstract. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly reshaped China's social and economic landscape, accelerating the shift toward e-commerce and prompting traditional retailers to establish online platforms. This transition has intensified competition among online stores, necessitating that merchants enhance customer trust and improve the overall shopping experience. This article examines effective strategies to optimize visual elements—such as web design and layout—to bolster consumer trust and increase purchase intentions. Through document analysis, it identifies prevalent challenges in the online shopping experience, including inaccurate information and poor interface design, assessing their detrimental effects on consumer behavior and overall store performance. The article also offers practical solutions aimed at addressing these issues, such as enhancing logo visibility, refining design and color schemes, ensuring accurate and diverse product information, implementing AI-driven shopping guides, and tailoring web design to specific target demographics. These strategies ultimately aim to enhance the market competitiveness of online retailers in an increasingly crowded marketplace.

1 Introduction

During Covid 19, social and economic activities were restricted. People's daily travel was limited, which means people reduced their consumption outside. In this case, service industries such as restaurants and hotels were forced to close. Supermarkets closed or shortened their business hours. This led to a sharp decline in catering, accommodation, tourism and leisure consumption. Moreover, many factories and enterprises in manufacturing industry have stopped working due to Covid 19. Delay of resuming work and lag of material flow have caused trouble to import and export businesses. This negatively affected the progress of international trade. As a result, the global economy was recessed and stagnated during the period of Covid 19. During this period, in order to meet people's needs, the business has developed more to e-commerce. It both meet people's needs and reduce the risk of spreading the epidemic. Hence, e-commerce becomes the mainstream during Covid 19 [1].

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China's economy was recovered in small scales due to the increased online consumption. After Covid 19, people still prefer e-commerce due to its convenient and safety. Online platforms and web pages are the important medium for e-commerce, and they are the basis of transactions. It provides a path that allow customer to know and order product from business organizations. In this case, many platforms were developed during this time. As more consumption shift to online, online stores become profitable, which led many stores to become platforms to earn profit. Over time, the online market become saturated, and competition become more intense. Remaining competitiveness is a problem for brands in online shopping. Moreover, e-commerce also has problems about customer experience such as feeling unsafe [2]. This article use document analysis to study the relationship between web design, brand competitiveness and customer satisfaction, and provides several strategies to increase brand competitiveness and customer satisfaction.

2 Situation and commercial trend

2.1 Platformization

The convenience of online shopping and the reduction of leisure time cause people become more prefer online shopping, which reduce the chance of offline shopping. Door-to-door delivery services such as take-out and express delivery are popular. In order to survive, stores have developed online services. Some stores even only sell online. E-commerce has become the basic driving force of the market. After Covid 19, people still pursue safety and convenience, so people will start and get used to online shopping. A study shows that by 2025, there may be 300-350 million e-commerce shoppers [2].

2.2 Business model

The model of online shopping is generally a triangular cycle. Customers place orders on website and platform, and the website or platform passes the orders to the business organization. The business organization supplies the products to customers [3]. This shows website is an intermediary platform and it is important part for e-commerce. Usually, the composition of platform page is simple. Merchants are listed from top to bottom on the website, which displays every merchant equally. Only brand logos and products are displayed on the platform. Other brand information is not shown on page. In China, platform media commonly used by people include: Meituan, Taobao, JD.com and Pinduoduo.

2.3 Web page design

Platform treats every brands equally. Every brands' display in platform were equally separated. However, equally separating will not help brand merchants to improve their competitiveness. Moreover, if customers search for products on the intermediary platform, they will get a list of similar products but not brands. This causes customers to more focus on the product but the brand. The quality of information that customer gets also impact their trust on the merchant which affect purchase intention and brand competitiveness [4]. Customers will read the product description to make decision. However, some product descriptions are too professional and complex, and some are too simple and short. Both situations cause customers hard to choose suitable product.

2.4 Online services

Each merchant has its own online customer service on intermediary platform. The functionality of each brand's online customer service is very similar, which affects the purchasing experience. More importantly, customers are lack information, references, and suggestions during online shopping. They cannot try out products or get shopping guides' suggestions. In online shopping, machine customer service can answer some simple questions, such as materials and logistics. Human customer service can answer some complex questions, but it is far from providing the same detailed and personalized services as offline.

3 Deficiencies of online shop

3.1 Decreased competitiveness due to lack of brand language

Customers have no way to understand the brand concept from the web page composition, design and information. The web page composition of the intermediary platform is too simple. The page usually uses single white color, and merchant logo displayed on the page is small. Brands and products are arranged from top to bottom. The appearance of logo is important for brand, since it can attract customers and determine the first impression of the brand. The color of logo can indirectly impact customer's purchase intention. Color can affect the customer's mood and thus affect the customer's purchasing behavior [5]. This web page composition reduces the logo, resulting in the merchant being unable to convey information to customers and attract them through the logo design and color. This reduces the spread of brand awareness and concept. Moreover, the brand cannot immediately attract potential customers and build customer trust. More importantly, the intermediary platform does not provide information about the brand: brand change history, brand vision, brand value, and brand promise. This leads to the brand's reduced competitiveness and unable to highlight its own advantages. Brands can only let customers know the brand's advantages and build customer loyalty after customers have purchased and used the product. After building customer loyalty, customers will repurchase. However, due to the layout of the web page, it is difficult for brands to stand out. This leads to brands being unable to ensure that customers will buy their products, thus losing the opportunity for customers to understand the brand.

3.2 Low online shopping experience

Online shopping reduces customer's shopping experience. Customers cannot get the same detailed and personalized service in online shopping as in offline shopping. In other words, customers are lack information, references, and suggestions when shopping online, which leads to a decline in experience. Customers cannot try out products or get suggestions from shopping guides when shopping online. However, in offline shopping, shopping guides can use their own abilities to recommend products to customers and meet customers' needs. Customers can also try out products to ensure the suitability of products. Therefore, customers can get a satisfactory shopping experience, which increase their purchasing intention. This also helps brands quickly build customer loyalty and increase customer repurchase rates. In this case, service has become a point that allows brands to stand out from the competition. However, in online shopping, the services of each merchant are similar. Machine customer service can answer some simple questions. Human customer service can answer some complex questions, but human customer service cannot provide the efficiency and quality of offline shopping services. The functions of each merchant's online customer service are similar. This makes brands harder to highlight their advantages and remain

competitive. In online shopping, merchants can only build customer loyalty after customers purchase and use the product. This is disadvantageous to merchants because they cannot guarantee that customers will choose to buy their products. Due to the composition of the webpage and similar online services, the competitiveness of brands is reduced. It is difficult for brands to stand out, so the chances of being selected by customers are reduced. This leads to the loss of potential customers and loss of profits.

3.3 Missing or inaccurate information leads to low customer satisfaction

Lack of accurate information on the website will increase uncertainty factors that reduce customer satisfaction or fail to meet customer needs. Online shopping may have problems of actual product not matching the demonstration picture and inaccurate information, such as color, material, and size. Inaccurate information will reduce customer satisfaction because the product is inconsistent with expectations. The trust between merchants and customers will also decrease, which cause brand losing customers.

3.4 Complex interaction design leads to exclusion of special groups

The interaction design of the website excludes some people who cannot interact with the website, such as the elderly, children, and the blind. They usually fail to use these websites and cannot successfully search for the products they need. They often need to accompany by an adult during online shopping to buy the products they want. The complex interaction design of platform reduces potential customers and decrease the convenience of life for these groups.

4 Strategies for solving those problems

4.1 Web page composition and color application

Web design can attract customers in some extend [6]. In order to increase the competitiveness of each merchant, the website composition can enlarge the logo of each merchant. In this way, the logo can attract customers to click into the store. Moreover, the store page can add some colors, interesting designs and posters. Color can convey different emotions to customers, thereby affecting their consumption behavior. Different colors can be associated with different words. For example, red symbolizes energy and enthusiasm, green symbolizes nature and peace, and blue symbolizes trust and stability [5]. Color can make customers subconsciously believe the store and help the store to establish a trusting relationship with customers. Blue is a color that impact people's minds, which increase purchase intention [7]. More importantly, color can represent a brand. When people see a color, they will think of a brand. The use of color can bring competitive advantages to the brand. In addition, merchants can also add a link to the corporate website in the store. In this way, customers can have a path to understand the brand's history, concept, values, vision and promises to customers. After obtaining this information, customers can trust the brand more and increase their willingness to buy and repurchase.

4.2 Adding accurate information and links

Accurate information can increase customers' purchase intentions [8]. Merchants can simplify the description of each product, which can reduce the amount of reading for customers and make it easier for customers to understand. If customers want to see more

detailed information, merchants can put a link that contain accurate information about all products under each simplified product description. The information must include product size, weight, color, material, ingredients, production process. Merchants can also put their own community site in the store. Brands can post advertisements on this website, and also allow customers to post and exchange purchase experiences. Other customers can use other people's posts and published product photos as references. Accurate and diverse information enable customers to more trust the brand and increase their purchase intention. The problem of the presentation picture not matching the actual product can be improved. Customers will not feel too disappointed, so customer satisfaction will increase.

4.3 Personalized service

High quality of service can provide nice customer experience, which increase purchase intention [9]. High quality service build trust between the shop and customers, which can build a long-term relationship with customers [10]. Brands can use AI and data analysis tools to create a better online shopping experience for customers. Brands can use customer information and data to deduce a product that best fit customer needs. This can reduce the problem that customers cannot find suitable products in the store. Stores can let AI simulate offline shopping guides to provide customers with personalized and high-quality services. While recommending products, they also praise customer. In this way, the customer's online shopping experience and satisfaction will be guaranteed. If a brand can launch AI shopping guides online, then this will become an advantage of the brand. Before AI shopping guides are widely popularized, this will be a project that can enhance the brand's competitiveness.

4.4 Set up diversified interaction modes according to age and population

Intermediary platforms can reduce interaction difficulties by setting up different web interfaces for different age groups and populations. Website ease of use can improve user experience and trust, thereby increasing repurchase rates [8]. Web design for the elderly will become simpler and easier to understand. Text, pictures and purchase buttons will be enlarged. Advertisements will be reduced. Recommended products will be more daily or healthy. Improving the online shopping experience of the blind can start with voice control modes, such as voice search, input, reading product information and functions aloud.

5 Conclusion

Factors such as the security of web design will affect customer trust and thus purchase decisions. Improving web design and online service by aspects that mentioned in the article can increase customer e-trust and satisfaction, and also can show each brand's advantage in a large extent. Improvements in information provision, online service, web design and web page decoration not only stimulate consumption, but also integrate online shopping with technology, breaking through the current status of online shopping. This article draws conclusions through literature analysis but lacks detailed data and experiments. Hence, some of the methods provided in the article will have some bias in their effects. In the future, better e-commerce form can bring more convenience to people's lives and stimulate economy. Improving the humanistic care of e-commerce can make life more convenient for disadvantaged groups and help them integrate into society.

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