The Effects Of Consumer Perceived Value On Purchase Intention In E-Commerce Platform: A Time-Limited Promotion Perspective

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THE EFFECTS OF CONSUMER PERCEIVED VALUE ON PURCHASE INTENTION IN E-COMMERCE PLATFORM: A TIME-LIMITED PROMOTION PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

In order to stimulate consumption, most e-commerce giants of China conduct sales promotions centered on “price war”, thus impeding the healthy development of e-commercial enterprises to some degree. Under this condition, it’s every e-commercial enterprise’s top priority to understand the perceived dimension of the central value of the customers’ purchase intention and thus reposition their marketing direction. Therefore, centered on the customers’ purchase intention, this paper structures a four-dimension (i.e., price, functional, emotional and social) model of the perceived value; and, in the meantime, considering the time-limit characteristic of the promotion, as a moderator variable, time pressure is used in the model to conduct the empirical analysis. According to the study, among the dimensions of the perceived value, only the price value and emotional value have a significantly positive influence on the customers’ purchase intention, and the influence by emotional value is bigger than the other. In different time pressure, the influence on purchase intention by perceived value makes significant difference. When there is difference in product category, the time pressure adjustment makes big difference too.

Keywords: E-commerce platform, price promotion, time pressure, perceived value, purchase intention.

INTRODUCTION

Rapid development of China’s e-commerce sector has been playing an increasingly important role in the country’s economic and social life and, thus, becoming a new engine to drive the Chinese economy. According to the report, by the end of 2012, China’s population of online shoppers was 242 million; the ratio of online shopping netizens has increased to 42.9% [1]; while the total value of the e-commerce market’s transactions in 2012 reached 7850 billion RMB which was 30.83% more than in 2011 [2]. However, since macro economy in 2012 grew slowly and capital market cooled down, e-commerce businesses held various sales promotions centered on “price wars” in order to simulate consumption, attract more users and increase market shares. As a result, Taobao became the biggest winner creating the sales record of 19.1 billion RMB per day. Though price promotions have made the sales surge, e-commerce businesses suffer constantly increasing costs in sales promotions in order to maintain low prices. Fierce market competition has caused pain to the whole industry.

The main purpose of this paper is to discuss the influence of the consumers’ perceived values in terms of all dimensions related to the purchase intention under the context when e-commerce businesses hold frequent price promotions. With an increasingly intensive market competition, centering sales promotions on the prices has become an important way of attracting customers. As a matter of fact, the expenditure on promotion has exceeded advertising expenses taking the largest part of the enterprise marketing expenditures with price discount promotions comprising 60-70% of the overall promotion budget [3]. Price promotions are deemed as an important approach to increase sales. For the sales persons, nothing is more effective than manipulating the price. Since the customers’ shopping behaviors are often intra-personal comparative behaviors, purchase intentions often depend on the customers’ perceived values [4]. Price promotions do not only stimulate consumption, but also temporarily change consumers’ perceived value of certain goods, thus, directly affecting their purchase intentions. In fact, customers’ perception has concerned scholars in the marketing field for a long time already [5]. The perceived value, as a good explanation of customers’ preferences and purchase behaviors in certain contexts, is an important factor that predicts the consumers’ purchase behaviors [6]. In addition, it is a better factor to explain customers’ preferences and purchase behaviors. Meanwhile, Chinese scholars [8] have also explained the critical influence of the perceived value on customers’ behavior. Similarly, the study about the consumer perceived value and purchase intention on the e-commerce platform also plays an important part in the marketing area [9]. It means that the perceived value still exerts a noticeable influence on the online consumers’ purchase intention [10]. With regard to the real-world enterprise operations, the perceived value also attracts major attention from the entrepreneurs. Creating and providing a good perceived value for the consumer has brought the enterprises a new means to enhance competitive advantage and increase profit [11]. Therefore, under the context where e-commerce businesses carry out sales promotions, it is theoretically and practically meaningful to study the influence of the customers’ perceived value on their purchase intention.

Previous researches hold the view that price promotion can be used to motivate consumers’ to purchase commodities, thus, stimulating their purchase behaviors and leading them to purchase more and faster. This method is especially effective in product trials. Previous studies concerning price promotions principally have focused on the following issues: the various ways (e.g. price discount, discount coupon and buy-one-get-one-free) price promotions influence the consumers’ purchase behavior and perception [12], the influence of different types of price reduction descriptionon the customers [13], the influence of the discounts and price reductions on the consumers’ perception [14], etc. In addition, some studies have also pointed out that excessive and frequent price promotions might bring negative effects for the customer [15]. As for the studies...
researching the customer perceived value, they often have focused on the classification of the perceived value dimensions [5][16][17][18] and the relation between the perceived value and purchase intention [8][19], etc. Therefore, with regard to the price promotion influence on the perception, previous studies have mainly placed emphasis on how the enterprises change the manifestation of its products’ objective attributes to influence the customers’ perception. The purpose of the period studies were to design marketing schemes by manipulating the customers’ objectives, rather than carrying out customer-oriented research to get insights into the customers’ perceptions and hierarchy of needs. Thus, there is a research gap in the promotion context regarding the degree of influence of the customers’ perception dimensions in on their purchase intention. Furthermore, it is important to inspect and clear up the central value perception of the consumers’ purchase intention. This way, the managers could achieve better understanding of the consumers’ demands and accordingly formulate more appropriate marketing strategies.

Fundamentally, at the same time, promotions are temporary, which means they are conducted for a certain limited time; however, few of the previous studies have taken this into account. Furthermore, flash sales have recently become a necessary marketing method emerging along with the price promotions of the e-commerce business. This marketing method makes customers feel time pressure during the purchasing process what in turn significantly degrades the quality of decision-making [20]. Therefore, it’s quite necessary to take the time pressure into the account of the study under the context of price promotion. This study is aimed at deeply discussing the consumers’ angle the influence of all dimensions of the consumer perceived value on purchase intention. Meanwhile combining the time-limit characteristic of price promotion, by taking time pressure into the model as a moderator variable. In order to reveal the consumers’ purchasing psychology during the price promotion and thus provide reference and assistance to China’s e-commercial enterprises which have to undertake price wars presently.

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

Perceived value
Perceived value was firstly introduced by Monroe and Krishnan who have proposed that whether consumers make a purchase or not would depend on the correlation between the gains they get from the product they want to buy and the cost they pay for it. The more perceived gains exceed the perceived cost, the higher consumers’ perceived value. The researches focusing on the perceived value were mainly conducted from two different perspectives – rationality and sensibility. The majority of the studies on the rational side have concerned perceived value as a balance between the gains and the cost [5]. But the sensual side have argued that consumers are moving from the practical rational consumption to the emotional consumption which means pursuing mental satisfaction. It is relatively narrow to define perceived value in terms of price or functions only. This way, the phenomenon that products are used to meet the consumers’ emotional needs cannot be explained. Besides the consumers’ rational thinking which refers to the perception of products, there is also an emotional factor that means satisfaction of the emotional needs. It is insufficient for the companies to define the perceived value as a balance between the price and quality if they seek to gain competitive advantage. In addition to price and functions, businesses should also consider the effect of emotional and social factors. Previous studies that have researched perceived value dimensions are shown in Table 1.

This paper mainly focuses on the consumer perception within the specific context. In order to cover both rational and perceptual aspects, it mainly sees the perceived value as a multidimensional concept referring to the perceived value dimensions of Sweeney & Soutar [16] who based their classification on the consumer value orientation. Specifically, perceived value can be divided into price value, functional value, emotional value, and social value. The four dimensions can be described as follows. First, price value is the utility derived from the product due to the reduction of its perceived short term and longer term costs. Second, functional value is the utility derived from the perceived quality and expected performance of the product. Third, emotional value is the utility derived from the feelings or affective states that the process of buying a product generates. Finally, social value is the utility derived from the product’s ability to enhance social self-concept.

Table 1. Perceived value dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Perceived value dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zeithaml (1988)</td>
<td>Benefit, Payoff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha &amp; Jang (2010)</td>
<td>Hedonic, Utilitarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweeney &amp; Soutar (2001)</td>
<td>Functional (Price/Quality), Emotional, Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrick (2002)</td>
<td>Quality, Monetary price, Behavioral price, Emotional, Reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanchez et al. (2006)</td>
<td>Functional (installations, professionalism, quality and price), Emotional, Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weiping Chen (2013)</td>
<td>Emotional, Social, Quality, Health, Epistemic, Educational</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time Pressure
As a deadline to complete the task is approaching, the decision maker starts feeling anxious. That is how Svenson & Edland [24] defined time pressure. On the other hand, Svenson & Maule [20] considered time pressure as a constraint of needed resources when decision maker needs to make a judgment or a decision. The first definition places emphasis on subjective feeling by recognizing time pressure as an anxiety level, while the second one emphasizes an objective phenomenon and considers time pressure to be a limiting condition. Meanwhile, time limit by itself cannot affect consumers’ buying behavior, unless the individual has perception of the time limit and that produces emotional reactions. The reason why we hesitate in making decisions is that we are fear of inaccurate results by quick decision and loss of opportunity by slow decision. Therefore,
we believe that the time limit of promotion forms time pressure by affecting the customer’s perception. Then as a moderator variable, it affects purchase intention through the perceived value.

**RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES**

At present, China's major e-commerce platforms use "price wars" as a marketing tool to attract consumers. This kind of promotion has two characteristics: material incentives and limited time [25]. Material incentives refer to the price reduction, while limited time means that the duration of promotion is not long and has a deadline. Previous studies have showed that price promotion influences consumer’s perception of the price. However, as quality of life has improved and researches have become broader and deeper, perspective on consumer behavior is not limited to "economic" point of view only. Rather, it also contains the "emotional" point of view in consumers' purchase decision theory. When a consumer makes a substantially emotional purchase decision, he or she will pay less attention to pre-purchase information. On the contrary, the decision has to do more with the current state of mind and feeling. Therefore, we believe that in the context of price promotions the impact of changing consumers’ perception on purchasing decision should be investigated by including both the rational and emotional aspects and the four above-mentioned perceived value dimensions (price, functional, emotional, and social). Furthermore, time constraints are a prominent feature of promotion. Under the conditions of time limit and material incentives, people tend to make intuitive decisions and search for information based on experience. This leads to the so-called intuitive decision-making bias [25]. Therefore, we introduces time pressure as a moderator variable, researching the different influence making by perceived value on purchase intention. In summary, we propose the following research model (Fig.1).

![Figure 1: Proposed research model](image)

**Price value and purchase intention**

The price of a product or service carries the information of their value and is the main factor influencing consumers’ decision-making. Price reductions encourage consumers to try new products and make the decisions regarding the purchasing faster. For those consumers who have a higher perception of price, the amount of money they have to pay is the key factor in decision-making process. Reducing their expenses means increasing their perceived value, i.e. price value [8]. It is easy for consumers to realize that the price will rise if they miss the promotion. Meanwhile, low price of the product may make consumers feel that the product is very affordable. Thus, price promotions may result in raising the perceived value of the product or service and having an effect on consumers’ purchase intention. Therefore, we propose that:

H1: Price value is positively related to purchase intention.

**Functional value and purchase intention**

Of all the product value dimensions, functional value meets consumers’ requirements for the product’s quality and functions. It helps consumers to satisfy their desires. Decision-making is based on the consumers’ functional value demands. The higher is perception of product’s functional value, the stronger is consumer’s purchase intention. Hence, we propose that:

H2: Functional value is positively related to purchase intention.

**Emotional value and purchase intention**

After viewing the consumers from the economic perspective, marketing specialists turned their attention to the emotional side of consumers’ decision-making. Consumers who were promoters of practical rational consumption are leaning now towards perceptual consumption to satisfy their psychological needs. Similarly, pleasant emotions play an important role in online shopping. As a result, considering the situational factor in addition to the consumer and product characteristics may improve the interpretation of consumer behavior. Consumers’ emotional responses play an important role in the purchase decisions being a cause of impulse buying as well [26]. Emotional information theory points out that emotions play a role of information sources. Compared to a careful information collection and evaluation, emotional judgment is quicker and more predictive. In some cases, consumers will form the overall evaluation of a product or service based on the emotional clues of stimulation. The more positive is the evaluation, the more likely that purchase intention will originate [26]. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H3: Emotional value is positively related to purchase intention.

**Social value and purchase intention**

Social value stems from the utility produced by consumers’ perception of the product’s ability to reinforce consumers’ social
life. In specific scenarios, consumers tend to have herd mentality. They buy a product to be accepted by a certain social group or by conforming to social norms. Researchers regarding current fashion network herd behavior also have been done. It is easy to follow or to conform to behavior online where flock effect, group identity and reference value significantly affect consumers’ purchase decisions. Considering the Oriental traditional culture – namely, paying more attention to social self and emphasizing the relationship with others – consumers in the East are even more easily influenced by other people. It means that consumers can achieve self-improvement and access to social value through the reference groups they aspire to be a part of and specific consumption behavior. In other words, consumers can identify themselves with the reference group through similar consumption behavior and to establish contact with the community or make an impression to that group. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H4: Social value is positively related to purchase intention.

The moderating effects of time pressure

With the time limited, consumer will balance the speed and the accuracy of decision-making. Otherwise, Time pressure has a complex effect on the cognitive process of consumer [27] and reduces the quality of decision-making. In addition, making decision in a limited time will lead to emotion and experience that influence the quality of decisions[20] and the choice of buying strategies[28]. The more obvious the time pressure is, the more easily a consumer will adopt to impulsive purchasing behavior.

In the context of price promotion, the reason behind people’s quick decision-making process lies in the temptation produced by material benefits (discounts) of such promotion. In this case, time limit of promotional activities would transfer into pressure for decision-making through consumer’s perceptions of time, hence a fundamental impact on the decision-making process. Some researchers regard the stimulation of money as the incentive for implicit time pressure and have investigated the further impact of time pressure on information searching. The result has shown that the process of decision-making is faster with money stimulation than without it, however, the quality of decision-making is the other way round [15]. In other words, consumers will come up with the idea of “missed opportunity”, which makes the sales volume seems to immense increase while the deadline is approaching. This means when under time pressure, in consumers opinion, if they don’t buy the product now, they should pay a higher price after the promotion. Therefore, the effect of perceived value on decision-making behavior varies. On the other hand, there are also studies indicating that the greater the time limit for individual decision-making, the greater the limit on decision-making time, the more inclined the consumers will be to postpone decisions. Hence, we propose that:

H5: When time pressure differs, the impact of perceived value on purchase intention differs significantly.

Moreover, due to the difference of product categories, the level of consumer’s impulse buying under time pressure varies. Therefore, in order to conduct a more in-depth study of whether or not the impact of product categories will produce differences on the moderating effect of time pressure, in this paper, the concept of product involvement is introduced to categories products. Zaichkowsky defined product involvement as the degree of correlation among personal inherent needs, value and perceived interests underlying a particular product, reflecting consumer's degree of attention to it [29]. He believes that different product involvement could affect consumer’s information processing mode. Previous studies have found that product involvement for different product categories would make a significant difference in consumer’s buying behavior. Thus, it is believed that consumer tends to be more serious with regard to high product involvement items. Even under huge time pressure of promotion, consumers do not readily purchase for the sake of prudence. Hence, we propose that:

H6: With regard to different product categories, the regulating effect of time pressure is different.

RESEARCH METHOD

This paper employs the method of experimental scenarios and group experiment. In experimental scenario setting, time pressure is divided into three days, one day and one hour before promotion date ends, which is based on the current China’s large shopping sites popular promotional period and pilot work. Product categories are based on past studies, selecting laptop as high degree product involvement items and books as low involvement products. In addition, considering the low price promotion features, prices are set in accordance with real promotional discounts on “Double Eleven” Day holiday promotion on most sites, which is a 50% discount. Experimental scenario describes in detail the end of promotion time, product price and product features.

Table 2 Construct measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price Value</td>
<td>PV1</td>
<td>Would be economical</td>
<td>[16]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PV2</td>
<td>Offers value for money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PV3</td>
<td>Is reasonably priced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Value</td>
<td>FV1</td>
<td>Has consistent quality</td>
<td>[16][23]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FV2</td>
<td>Is what I really need</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FV3</td>
<td>Would perform consistently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Value</td>
<td>EV1</td>
<td>Would be a fashionable behavior</td>
<td>[16][18]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EV2</td>
<td>Would make me want to buy it</td>
<td>[23]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EV3</td>
<td>Would make me feel good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants are randomly divided into six equal groups (time pressure *product category), 65 people in each group for different scenario experiments. Subjects were asked to stimulate real shopping mental experiences, and fill out the questionnaires afterwards. The graduate students from Xiamen University are invited to participate in the survey. Three hundred and fifty-five valid questionnaires are returned.

We extensively review the literature to list the candidate constructs and measures that are used in prior research. A questionnaire is developed (Table 2). Each item is measured in a five-point Likert scale.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

**General statistics**

The demographic data of the sample is reported in Table 3. The respondents were mainly 19-24 years old and most of them had either one to three or three to five years of the Internet using experience. Thus, the respondents were relatively young and quite experienced. Overall, our sample matched the characteristics of online customers reported in iResearch [30].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>female</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>≤18</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19-24</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>≥31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>≤1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>≥7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet experience</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>≥7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Instrument reliability and validity**

In the first phase, we examine the reliability of the questionnaire by SPSS18.0. We identify the Corrected item-total correlation of EV1 is only 0.394 and if the item is removed, the Cronbach’s alpha of Emotional value will be improved. So, we decided to delete EV1. All Cronbach's alpha are above 0.7 (Table 4). Thus the paper agrees the instrument is reliable.

Second, we test the convergent validity using confirmatory factor analysis by Amos 17.0. The criteria of good convergent validity are: factor loading > 0.7, the average variance extracted (AVE) > 0.5 and the combination validity (CR) > 0.6[31]. We adjust the model through deleting the item which factor loading is less than 0.7 one by one. Table 4 shows the finally convergent validity result. All factor loadings are greater than 0.7 and all of the AVE and CR are meet the standards and which don’t meet condition are very close to standards recommended. So the paper approximately considers the instrument has acceptable validity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor loading</th>
<th>AVE</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>Cronbach's alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price Value</td>
<td>PV1</td>
<td>0.839</td>
<td>0.661</td>
<td>0.796</td>
<td>0.789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PV2</td>
<td>0.786</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Value</td>
<td>FV1</td>
<td>0.720</td>
<td>0.504</td>
<td>0.753</td>
<td>0.749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FV2</td>
<td>0.701</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FV3</td>
<td>0.709</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Value</td>
<td>EV2</td>
<td>0.684</td>
<td>0.614</td>
<td>0.825</td>
<td>0.817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EV3</td>
<td>0.825</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EV4</td>
<td>0.832</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Value</td>
<td>SV1</td>
<td>0.827</td>
<td>0.543</td>
<td>0.779</td>
<td>0.796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SV2</td>
<td>0.687</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SV3</td>
<td>0.687</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4 Results of convergent reliability testing**

**Table 3. General statistics**

**Table 4. Results of convergent reliability testing**
Model fitness

Using structural equation modeling, we tested the hypotheses in Amos17.0. Firstly, we need to examine overall fitness of the model. All of the indices used to estimate the model fit were higher than the standards recommended by the literature (p=0.00, CMIN/DF=2.055, RMSEA=0.055, GFI=0.948, NFI=0.937, IFI=0.967, TLI=0.954, CFI=0.966)[31]. Considering the sample size, our model is reasonably acceptable to assess the results.

Hypotheses testing

Hypotheses 1 to 4 are tested by the structural equation model (Fig. 1). Price value and emotional value have significant effects on the consumers’ purchase intention (Fig. 2). Besides, emotional value had a significantly greater coefficient than price value. We test H5 and H6 with Multiple-Group Analysis using Amos17. First, all samples are divided into 3 groups according to the time limit for the test of the moderating effect of time pressures. Second, all samples are divided according to the products’ category to test the moderating effect of time pressures. All of the RMSEA of these models are less than 0.05 which mean each model fit the data well (Table 6). The P values of the measurement weights model are higher than 0.05 in all of these 3 analysis, indicating that with different kind of time pressure there are no significant difference in the measurement model coefficients (Table 7)[31]. There are no significant differences at the impact of the questions for measuring the four dimensions of perceived value to their latent variables, at the significant level of 0.05.

Assuming model measurement weights to be correct and without consideration of the product category, we test the structural weights model. The p value of the structural weights model is 0.031(<0.05), which means with different time pressure there are significant differences at the coefficients[31]. H5 is supported. In comparison, we find that the emotional value only has an effect on the consumers’ purchase intention in the ‘one-day group’ and the ‘one-hour group’. And the coefficient of one-day group (0.509) is higher than that in one-hour group (0.328).

When taking the product category in consideration, the p value of the structural weights model of high-involvement product (laptop) is 0.230. And the one of low-involvement product (book) is 0.045. The moderating effect of time pressures is not significant in high-involvement product, while it is significant in low-involvement product. H6 was supported. In the group of high-involvement product, emotional value had no impact on the consumers’ purchase intention no matter what kind of the time pressure is. In the group of low-involvement product, only when the promotion is one-day left there was a significant impact of emotional value on the consumers’ purchase intention.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on the marketing technique which is widely used in the Chinese e-commerce platform, this paper explores the effect that various perceived value dimensions have on consumers’ purchase intention. We take the time pressure as a moderator variable in the model and tested it with experimental simulation combined with questionnaires. After completing data analysis and testing the hypotheses, we draw the following conclusions.

The first conclusion of the study suggests that though both price value and emotional value have significant positive influence on purchase intention, the effect of emotional value exceeds that of the price value. This means that while low price can promote consumption, the satisfaction of emotional value has a bigger power in stimulating purchase. What’s more, an excessive low price can do harm to the interest of business, but a good emotional atmosphere will only bring about more purchase. This provides a new perspective and direction for our current e-commerce platform which means that we should not only treat consumers from an economic or passive point of view but also understand consumers from an emotional perspective and that we pay more attention to consumers’ emotional appeal.

Marketers still tend to treat consumers from an economic view thinking that their consumption is based on economic rationality, selfish motives or marketers’ efforts on sales promotions. However, consumers are willing to connect their feelings and emotions with specific purchases or possession. These feelings and emotions are highly involved. For example, previous researchers have found the initiative motive of consumers’ bargaining is to gain better price, but it is believed that the motives are relevant with the need of achievement, dependence, and controlling now. This is similar to the price wars fought by the current players in the e-commerce platform. Companies view consumers from economical perspective believing that only low price can attract customers. However, we correct this misunderstanding by finding out that it is the inner emotional appeal that drives consumers’ purchase decision more. The needs of the Chinese online consumers shifted towards the emotional aspect. Sales promotions based on the price cut only are failing to meet consumers’ needs. This is the reason why “shopping without money” promoted by Suning and Jingdong failed to compete with Taobao’s claim that one could be good to oneself through shopping on Singles’ Day, when all three companies conducted sales promotions. Taobao created emotional resonance and hit the target.

Consequently, it is critical for online marketers to take advantage of marketing communication strategies to arouse consumers’ emotional needs, which means the communication tools will be employed to recall consumer’s needs. In other words, price promotions should be based on emotional communication. Furthermore, this change could help the Chinese e-commerce platform to get rid of the rate war dilemma and maintain a sustainable development. In the marketing communication context, consumer behavior indicates that consumer’s evaluations of events, behavior or characteristics is subjective and rely on their sentimental value. They could be fabled but they should be paid attention by consumers. Furthermore, marketing theories point out that value cannot be judged as right or wrong as this value judgment can be changed. Therefore, based on the situation that Chinese online customers pay much attention to sentimental value, e-commerce platform should feel free to attract consumers by changing the product’s objective attributes. In other words, marketing strategies should be carefully designed by redescribing events and circumstances in order to make products congruent with the consumers’ sentimental value judgment. It would be much easier to boost the consumers’ purchase intentions in this way rather than trying to change their perceived value.

The second conclusion of the study suggests that time pressure has a significant regulating effect. According to the additive theory of impulsive purchase, when a consumer’s goal matches his or her way of pursuing, he or she will have a stronger intention, resulting from the additive effect. Therefore, time restriction becomes a critical factor which cannot be ignored during the course of sales promotion. Especially how to make a “flash sale” impression on consumers to give full play to the policy-promotional regulating effect of time pressure. However, what we should note is that a tighter limitation of time doesn’t necessarily boost purchase intention. Group experiments show that emotional value has a bigger impact on purchase intention during the last day than the last hour of sales promotion. That’s because the more limited consumers feel in making a decision, the more likely they are to delay a decision. This is probably one important reason for the sales surpass of Taobao in one day to Jingdong in three days.

The third conclusion shows time pressure has strikingly different regulating effects on different product categories. For high-involved product categories, the regulating effect of time pressure is indistinctive. Besides, the emotional value has not obvious influence on purchase intention regardless of time pressure. However, for low-involved products, the reverse is true, possibly because high-involved products can better meet consumer’s internal needs Consumers would be more concerned if failure of purchase leads to bigger risk. Therefore, the possibility of impulse purchasing is smaller. That is to say, even if non-purchasing means missing a low price, consumers wouldn't make decisions within short time. At the same time, since the cost of purchasing high-involved products are relatively high, consumers tend to be more rational, which explains why emotional value has little impact on purchase intention. The cost of purchasing low-involved products is low. Perception value raised by circumstances can well stimulate purchase intention, thereby enhancing the regulating effect of time pressure. What’s more, the marked impact of emotional value on purchase intention takes place one day before the end of sales promotion also fully proves that the time limit of sales promotion should not be too short. At the same time, since the cost of purchasing high-involved products are relatively high, consumers tend to be more rational, which explains why emotional value has little impact on purchase intention. The cost of purchasing low-involved products is low. Perception value raised by circumstances can well stimulate purchase intention, thereby enhancing the regulating effect of time pressure. What’s more, the marked impact of emotional value on purchase intention takes place one day before the end of sales promotion also fully proves that the time limit of sales promotion should not be too short. To conclude, different marketing strategies should be applied to different product category. Shopping websites which mainly sell high-involvement products should stop trying to boost sale by exaggerating low price or time-limited promotion. For excessive low price will arouse doubt in consumers the quality of products and time- limited promotion leaks the possibility of unreliable after-sale service. Shopping websites which mainly sell

low-involvement products should give close attention to the selection of promotion time limit and the cultivation of emotional atmosphere. They should elevate consumer’s emotional value by cultivating marketing environment and give full play to the regulating effect of time pressure. In this way, they can avoid harming business’s interests brought about by low price and thus increase the overall efficiency.

**LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

This paper focused on the effect that four dimensions of perceived value have on consumers’ purchase intention, and taking the time pressure as a moderator variable in the model. The model proved to be scientific and had a good fit. Due to objective conditions, the study has the following limitations:

1. Consumers' purchase intention is investigated using the four dimensions of perceived value what grasped the core problem, however, is not fully comprehensive. In further researches, other relevant aspects need to considered.

2. In the selection of moderator variable, we only select time pressure in the context of a limited time promotion ignoring other factors such as frequency and form of the promotion. They should be considered in the future researches.

3. In the study, students are selected as the survey sample. Although students constitute the majority of online shoppers, it is not comprehensive. In the future, it is important to expand the sample to be able to come up with more generalizable conclusions.

**REFERENCES**


