

Analysis of Value Choices Among Young Consumers: A Case Study of Instant Lottery

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Abstract: In recent years, instant lotteries have become a popular pursuit among young consumers, largely due to their convenience and perceived entertainment value. This phenomenon is closely related to the rapid development of society and the transformation of consumer psychology. In light of the acceleration of the pace of life and the concomitant increase in competitive pressure, young people are increasingly inclined to seek consumption methods that can swiftly provide gratification. Instant lotteries are a means of satisfying this demand. This paper employs a literature review and case study to investigate the value judgments and choices embedded in young people's lottery purchasing behaviors from their perspectives and social contexts. This study makes a contribution to the understanding of the psychological motivations of young consumers. The study revealed that young consumers demonstrate a distinct proclivity to pursue immediate emotional gratification through their instant lottery purchases. Furthermore, many youth are able to cultivate stronger social bonds and share in the anticipation and excitement when purchasing lottery tickets with friends and peers. Concurrently, purchasing lottery tickets has become a means for youth to cope with the stresses of life. Collectively, these factors contribute to the active presence of youth consumers in the instant lottery market, elucidating their distinctive life attitudes and consumption psychology.

Keywords: Consumer Psychology, Perceived Value, Social Context, Value Orientation.

1. Introduction

The 2022 Sports Lottery Customer Research Report indicates that over 72% of lottery participants purchase tickets not solely for the purpose of winning, but also for the sake of entertainment and relaxation. Lotteries have become an integral part of the everyday lives of younger demographics, functioning as a form of consumer entertainment. Furthermore, the report indicates that individuals belonging to Generation Z (aged 18-27) constituted 38.1% of all lottery purchasers. These figures demonstrate that young people are assuming an increasingly significant role in lottery purchases, particularly with regard to the consumption of scratch cards [1]. Furthermore, the data released by the Ministry of Finance indicates that in the period between January and June 2023, a total of 273.899 billion yuan worth of lottery tickets were sold across the country, representing an increase of 91.836 billion yuan, or a 50% growth. This represents a 40% increase on the previous year. In June, sales of lotto digital lottery tickets reached 14.558 billion yuan, representing an 11.7% increase compared to the previous year. Similarly, sales of guess lottery tickets increased by 83.90% year-on-year, reaching

19.219 billion yuan. In the same period, sales of instant lottery tickets reached 10.81 billion yuan, representing a 99.40% increase year-on-year. Keno lottery tickets also demonstrated notable growth, with sales reaching 4.140 billion yuan, an increase of 34.70% compared to the previous year. In terms of growth rate, the instant lottery ranked first among all types of lotteries, with cumulative sales of 51.20 billion yuan in the first half of the year, representing an increase of 17.349 billion yuan year-on-year, or 51.50% [2]. This indicates a notable increase in sales of instant lotteries.

The incorporation of this background is of paramount importance for the study of the consumption behaviour of young consumers purchasing lottery tickets. Currently, the consumption behaviour of young people is undergoing a diversified development trend, exhibiting the primary characteristics of emotional consumption, a prevalent inclination towards social consumption, and the emergence of reverse consumption [3].

This paper employs a literature review and case study analysis to investigate the value judgments and choices embedded in the lottery purchasing behavior of young people from their perspectives and social backgrounds. It begins by examining a diverse range of consumer groups and then delves deeply into the subject matter. This kind of research not only facilitates an understanding of the psychological motivations of young consumers, but also provides an important reference point for relevant enterprises seeking to formulate effective marketing strategies.

2. Consumer Psychology

Customer Perceived Value (CPV) can be defined as the overall evaluation of the utility of a product or service, whereby the customer weighs the benefits that they can perceive against the costs that they pay when acquiring the product or service. This evaluation includes a comparison and trade-off between the customer's perceived gains and perceived losses [4].

2.1. Psychological Effect of Low Expectation Value

2.1.1. Psychological Expectations and Actual Experience

In accordance with the expectancy theory of psychology, individuals tend to underestimate the probability of success when confronted with uncertainty. Consequently, when confronted with a low probability event such as winning the lottery, individuals will form a reduced psychological expectation of winning the lottery. Concurrently, sociologist Jean Baudrillard posited that in a consumer society, the object of consumption is not the tangible item itself, but rather the meanings and symbols it embodies and represents [5]. In the context of purchasing lottery tickets, young people are not merely acquiring the ticket itself, but also the vested emotional value that can be perceived prior to the draw. This emotional value represents a discernible expectation that is generated by a cost that can be controlled.

2.1.2. Generation of satisfaction

In comparison with the economic vision of loss and return, young people tend to ascribe meaning and construct emotion with a pronounced sense of subjectivity on top of the transactional behaviour. Consequently, the tolerable and manageable expense of remuneration is aligned with the elevated perception of gain and robust public welfare. This leads to a more nuanced and profound understanding of profit among individuals, while their comprehension of profit and loss becomes more flexible and self-consistent. Furthermore, when consumers do indeed win the lottery, the low expected value and the result form a strong contrast. Even if the winning amount is not considerable, it can still elicit positive emotional feedback from consumers. Therefore, the act of purchasing a

lottery ticket is experienced as satisfying by the consumer, irrespective of whether or not the prize is ultimately claimed.

2.2. The psychological mechanism of high sense of achievement

2.2.1. Virtual benefits and psychological satisfaction

The lottery draw mechanism enables consumers to obtain virtual benefits in addition to winning the lottery, thereby providing them with the corresponding psychological satisfaction. The distinction between instant lotteries and traditional lotteries lies in the fact that instant lotteries require consumers to ascertain whether they have won or not by scratching the ticket on the spot, independently and instantaneously. The process of scratching the ticket is characterised by anticipation and excitement, which heightens the consumer's sense of experience and participation. Furthermore, the mechanism of instant winners is designed to provide consumers with 'instant gratification'.

2.2.2. Social identity and sharing psychology

Following the acquisition of a prize, consumers may disseminate information regarding their experience to their social networks, which may subsequently enhance their sense of self-worth and social identity. Such social interaction serves to further enhance the sense of acquisition, despite the actual amount of the winnings being smaller. Concurrently, this propensity for sharing also serves to stimulate consumers' inclination to purchase lottery tickets.

3. Factors that influence consumer behavior

3.1. The impact of daily consumption behavior

When the perceived benefits exceed the perceived losses, young people develop a positive willingness to purchase lottery tickets. However, there is a limit to how much an individual's behaviour can influence social norms. In order to transform the purchase of lottery tickets from a personal pastime to a central aspect of social activity, the social context, which is often characterised by routine and ritual, is of paramount importance.

3.1.1. Habit and convenience

Instant lotteries tend to be more socially prevalent, thereby fostering a more general willingness to purchase and even becoming a habit that influences consumers' purchasing decisions. The price range of lottery tickets is generally between 5 and 30 RMB, which aligns with the consumption patterns of contemporary young people. These individuals frequently engage in the daily consumption of coffee and milk tea, as well as other treats such as fruit cakes. Additionally, the establishment of scratch-off lottery stations in prominent shopping malls and other locations frequented by young people provides convenient access to lottery tickets. In their daily lives, consumers are more inclined to choose familiar and convenient consumer goods. The habitual and convenient nature of instant lottery tickets reduces the psychological burden of purchase.

3.1.2. Consumption frequency and psychological dependence

The purchase of instant lottery tickets can become a kind of daily ritual, with consumers continuing to purchase lottery tickets as a means of seeking small doses of excitement and enjoyment. This frequent consumption may contribute to the development of psychological dependence and addiction.

3.2. The role of ritual in consumption

3.2.1. The definition and significance of ritual

Ritualism can be defined as the behaviour of individuals in their daily lives which serves to express the importance and praise of a particular event or occasion through a series of forms and mannerisms. The incorporation of ceremony into the purchasing experience not only enhances the consumer's perception of the transaction, but also enables them to ascribe greater emotional significance to their consumption behaviours within specific contexts. The purchase of instant lottery tickets can be integrated with specific occasions (e.g. parties, festivals, etc.) to form a distinctive consumption ritual. The incorporation of surprise rituals into everyday life reflects the diverse and engaging pursuit of interpersonal interactions among young people.

3.2.2. Social interaction and emotional connection

The social attributes of instant lotteries satisfy young people's psychological need for emotional connection, and they have become a social currency with group consensus. In the contemporary era, young people have developed a novel mode of interpersonal communication: purchasing lottery tickets in pairs. This naturally gives rise to discussions among peers on the subject of metaphysical scratching methods and lottery experiences. This mode of interaction, which combines a sense of proportion with enjoyment, is rapidly gaining popularity among young people. The distribution of instant lottery tickets or the sharing of lottery experiences at ceremonial occasions can facilitate social relationships and enhance a sense of belonging to a group. Such social interactions, enhanced by a sense of ritual, can further influence consumers' purchasing intentions and behaviours.

4. Purchasing behavior of young people

4.1. Lifestyle and consumption values

4.1.1. Consumption and identity

The decision to purchase lottery tickets is informed by the behavioural logic and value choices of youth groups. The appeal of instant lotteries aligns with the lifestyle and values embraced by contemporary youth, reflecting their pursuit of excitement, entertainment and serendipity.

4.1.2. Combining rationality and sensibility

The trade-off between perceived value on scratch-offs is reflective of the individual's need for emotional support and desire for emotional detachment. Although consumers are aware of the statistical probability of winning when purchasing lottery tickets, their actual consumption behaviour is often driven by emotional factors such as anticipation and social interaction. In discussing their motivation for purchasing lottery tickets, young people frequently cite the terms "solace," "entertainment," "psychological support," and "relaxation." This illustrates the influence of "emotional consumption" on the decision to purchase lottery tickets. While speculation may be a factor in some cases, the majority of lottery ticket purchases are driven by a desire for entertainment, relaxation, and immediate emotional feedback.

4.2. Social environment and consumption decisions

4.2.1. Peer influence

Young people are subject to greater social pressure and are driven by a strong desire to establish a sense of belonging and identity. The advent of instant lottery tickets has led to a phenomenon whereby the purchase of such tickets has become a trend among young people. This is due to the influence of peers and friends, who encourage participation in this activity. This is not merely a personal choice, but also a behavioural norm within the social circle.

4.2.2. The impact of social environment

In the context of modern society, young people are confronted with a multitude of challenges, including academic competition, career planning and interpersonal relationships. These pressures frequently give rise to a strong need for immediate solace. The low cost and potential for large financial gains associated with lottery tickets have made them an ideal outlet for emotional release and hope. In purchasing lottery tickets, young people seek not only material gains but also spiritual comfort and emotional release. The series of emotional experiences associated with purchasing lottery tickets allows them to obtain simple joy and happiness in an accelerated society and satisfy their pursuit of emotions.

4.2.3. Internet Culture and Information Acquisition

In the contemporary context, where social media and online culture have become pervasive, the prevailing trends on the internet exert a profound influence on the thoughts and decisions of young people. The views and purchasing decisions of young people are influenced by the experiences of opinion leaders, such as those sharing their experiences of purchasing lottery tickets or offering advice on social media. Furthermore, a considerable number of bloggers on the Internet create brief videos, such as 'exchanging lottery tickets for goods', which significantly amplifies the visibility of the instant lottery in the public domain. Young people constitute a relatively large proportion of social media users, and as the emerging generation, they are also the most amenable to novel concepts and trends. Consequently, they are more susceptible to the influence of the Internet and more likely to engage in the purchase of instant lottery tickets.

5. Conclusion

The purchasing of instant lottery tickets by young consumers provides insight into their attitudes towards instant emotional gratification, the strengthening of social connections and the coping with of life's stresses. In addition to deriving immediate gratification at a controlled cost from purchasing lottery tickets, young consumers integrate this activity into their daily social lives as a means of enhancing friendship and expressing emotions. This behavioural pattern reflects the diversified consumption patterns of the younger demographic and also demonstrates their positive coping strategies in response to the pressures of modern society. It is therefore of great significance to the formulation of marketing strategies and meeting the needs of young consumers to understand and respect these consumer psychology and social behaviours.

This paper analyses the reasons for the popularity of instant lotteries among young people from a consumer perspective and discusses the value orientation of young consumers. However, the analysis does not take into account the overall trend and impact of lottery issuance and design. Furthermore, changes in marketing strategies for instant lotteries may also affect changes in consumer groups and popularity.

The instant lottery will serve as a case study for examining strategies to enhance consumer perceptions of access and satisfaction in product purchase and experience.

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