The marketing strategy of ZoneThree --- a clothing brand selling nonsexual and eco-friendly clothes

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Abstract:

This paper mainly discusses the marketing strategy of the brand designed by myself that sells eco-friendly and nonsexual clothes, in which I use three methodologies: segmentation, positioning, and conjoint analysis. As far as I am concerned, this paper can become a reference for those who also want to start up a nonsexual and eco-friendly clothing brand, providing them with some insights about how to design the marketing strategy for the brand. Also, this paper and the brand can help to spread the concept of environmental protection and convince more people that there are genders besides male and female.

Keywords:--- eco-friendly, nonsexual, affordable, conjoint analysis, positioning segmentation

1. Introduction

Nowadays, due to the intensification of environmental issues, individuals all around the world, especially youngsters, are placing increasing emphasis on environmental protection in order to counteract the global warming trend. Under this circumstance, environmentally friendly clothes are becoming more and more popular among customers, which inspires me to start up a brand selling these clothes. What's more, a large number of individuals now begin to support the view that there are more genders than men and women, making me come up with the idea to design nonsexual clothes suitable for anyone. Besides, now increasing numbers of citizens in China have started to live a frugal life because of the economic recession in China, so the brand will also sell clothes at a low price to boost sales. Therefore, I plan to design clothes that are environmentally friendly, nonsexual, and affordable for anyone. In this way, I started up

the brand called ZoneThree.

2. Literature Review

The boundaries between masculine and feminine brands are blurring with time, and unisex is becoming a new brand fad. Based on the phenomena listed above, the article Consumer Response to Brand Gender Bending: An Intergrated Review and Future Research Agenda studies the reactions of men and women to this transformation from multiple scientific perspectives such as sociology, psychology and anthropology, and gives more constructive suggestions. American psychologist Bem divides human gender into two dimensions: biological sex and social sex. The latter is constructed, developed, and perfected through social exchanges. Once we form a gender identity, we will communicate or display in a variety of ways, including the use of props. This principle leads to persistent gender consumption. However,

lately, gendered brands have stalled, so marketers are constantly raising the gender spectrum, bringing women and men into each other's brand space. We can say that most of the products are gender-bending.

The article mainly describes two decisive factors that determine consumers' attitudes towards brand gender-bending: the first type is related to consumers. The second category relates to marketers.

From the consumer's point of view, the consumer's biological sex and gender cognition determine their decision-making from a large angle. Research has shown that the sex of consumers greatly influences their attitudes. In general, women are more comfortable with brands being gender-bent than men. Because most societies are male-centric, when feminine characteristics dilute the characteristics of a masculine brand, they may feel offended and abandon the brand. While female brands present masculine characteristics, many women will see it as a form of gender empowerment and gender liberation that helps women close the social gap, so they are not particularly repelled.

For the side of marketers can create a new meaning for the brand to keep the original customer, that is, add creativity on the basis of practicality. Or, if the gender distinction itself is not a characteristic of the brand, perhaps people will not care too much about gendered products. Therefore, I want to establish a brand that breaks sexual boundaries and sells nonsexual clothes as the latter.

All the clothes made by my brand are going to be produced in an environmentally friendly way. To investigate how the eco-friendly attribute of the clothes influences consumers' behaviors, I use the paper Green clothes: A survey of people's willingness to pay for environmentally friendly clothes for reference.

Elsa Levinson (2010) has done a survey containing a contingent valuation, showing that 89 percent of the respondents said that they will pay extra money to make sure the clothes they buy are eco-friendly since they feel obligated not to cause harm to the environment, and the median amount they are willing to pay more is 65 SEK. What's more, consumers' awareness that not purchasing eco-friendly clothes may indirectly harm themselves and the environment can raise their probability of buying eco-friendly clothes. As also in the paper Consumer Purchase Behavior of Eco-Fashion Clothes As a Trend to Reduce Clothing Waste, Jalil, Marzie Hatef, and Siti Shukhaila Shaharuddin (2019) point out that consumer attitude towards environmental protection plays a pivotal role in consumer purchase intention of eco-friendly clothes. which will affect purchase behavior logically. Additionally, it indicates that consumers choose clothes made of eco-friendly materials by touching the quality, price, and design, initially, which aligns seamlessly with my brand's core ethos.

From these two papers, I can ascertain that if I produce environmentally friendly clothes, I will be able to either boost sales or raise the price of the clothes. For marketing strategy, I should emphasize the utilization of natural materials and the focus on sustainable development while advertising. I should also disseminate environmental protection knowledge and the cultural connotation of neutral clothing to consumers through various channels in order to heighten their awareness and expand the sales.

In all, I will establish a brand selling nonsexual and eco-friendly clothes while focusing on advertising the eco-friendly aspect of the brand.

3. Methodology

3.1 . Segmentation

For the segmentation part, I divide our consumers into three groups: environmentalists, value seekers, and LGBT groups.

Environmentalist: The brand designs clothes with environmentally friendly materials, such as biodegradable fibers, to improve the resources and call on everyone to protect the environment. This segment includes 64% of the total population, which is a very high extent, so I can say that environmentalists are one of my major consumers. (data source: chinanews.com.)

Value Seekers: Since the clothes of this brand are all at good quality but are at a pretty low price, it targets individuals who put the cost performance of the product in the first place while considering whether to purchase it. This type of people contributes to 59.04% from China. Among them, 65.6% were born in the 1990s. Therefore, in other words, this segment mainly includes individuals who are in their twenties. However, since people will have lots of choices if they just care about the cost performance of the clothes, this group is not one of the brand's main consumer groups. (data source: sohu.com)

LGBT: The clothes are neutral style, which can fit men, women, and LGBT groups. The design has no strong gender orientation, which means it will fit and look good on everyone. Referring to the data in 2024, 5% of Chinese are in LGBT group. Although this amount is quite small, 53% of Chinese support these people and may have a reaction like buying related products. In this way, this segment is another main group of my consumers besides the environmentalists. (data source: 163.com & qm120.com)

And here is the table 1 I made for the segmentation

Table 1. Consumer segmentation

Attributes	environmentalists	LGBT groups and their supporters	Value seekers
Cares about	eco-friendly clothes	nonsexual style	cost performance
%share of the whole population	64%	53%	59.04%
Whether is my main consumer groups	yes	yes	no

3.2 . Positioning

The brand is characterized by low price, neutral style, and environmental protection. Affordable but good quality clothes can often attract a lot of customers who are concerned about cost performance. Unisex-style clothes are suitable for everyone; men can wear them, and women can wear them. Environmental protection is a big feature of the brand, as I utilize environmentally friendly and recyclable materials to produce clothes, which will attract environmentalists and help the environment. And here is the perceptual map of the brand (Figure 1):
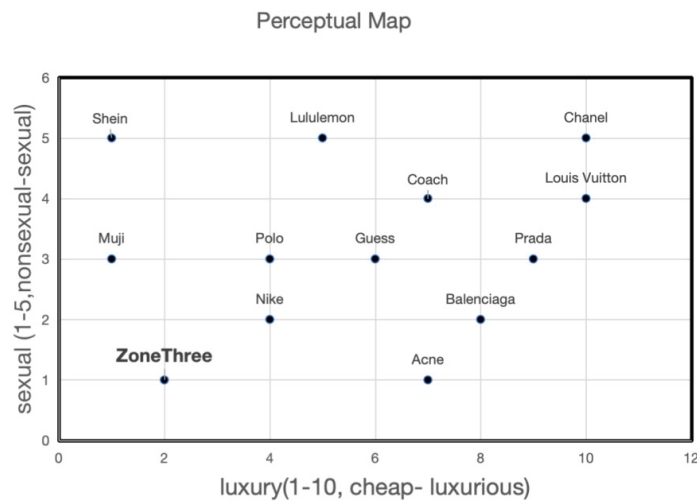

Figure 1. The perceptual map of the brand

I mainly take the cost-effective route so that I can have a broader consumer group. Compared with Chanel, a luxury brand with a long history and focusing on women's wear, my brand will be more affordable and have a less obvious gender style. For instance, almost all the coats made by Chanel will be sold at a price between 7000-12000 dollars. In comparison, my brand will just sell the coat at a price between 40-70 dollars, which is much more affordable. Brands like Balenciaga and Coach will be a little cheaper than Chanel, but it is still a price that most citizens cannot afford. For the brands from price 4-6, the consumer group will be wider. However, compared to my brand, their clothes are more gender orientated and will then lose part of the consumers who like nonsexual clothes. For example, all the clothes in Nike will be categorized into male and female styles. Besides, take Nike and Polo for example. Although their market sizes are much larger than our brand, Nike's market size will be $142.39 billion by April 2024, and the polo shirt market size will be $ 6.5 billion by 2023. However, their stock price is decreasing in recent years, which means it is a good opportunity for me to start up the brand. Here is the stock price of Nike and polo (Figure 2). (data source: investing.com & verifiedmarket-report.com)

(data source: google.com & investing.com)

Nike's stock price

Polo's stock price

Figure 2. Stock prices of Nike and Polo

In all, my brand has a lower price so that almost everyone who wants to buy new clothes can afford and our neutral style can also fit everyone.

3.3 . Conjoint Analysis for A Certain Coat

As the perceptual map stated before, Nike and MUJI are the 2 brands closest to my brand, so I can say that they are my major competitors. Then I conducted a competitive comparison of MUJI and Nike coats with one of mines through conjoint analysis. I mainly chose three dimensions: price, length, and style. I selected a total of 15 prices, three styles, and three lengths, conducted 10 questionnaires, and obtained about 1350 pieces of data. I chose

two specific products for comparison. Their attributes are fixed in the questionnaire. My pricing is positioned between MUJI and Nike, so the price of this coat fluctuates between our choice of Nike products and MUJI products from 300 to 1000. The length is divided into long, medium, and short, quantified as 3, 2, and 1, respectively. The style is formal, casual, and sporty, which are quantified as 3, 2, and 1, respectively. Additionally, I rate the purchase of my product as a 1 and the purchase of other products as a 0. Besides, I also label the data which I think is suspicious as 1. Here is a part of the data I got (the first three columns represent the clothes of my brand, the last three columns represent the clothes of Nike, and the middle three columns represent the clothes of MUJI) (Table 2):

Table 2. The database of the conjoint analysis

style	length	Price	style	length	Price	style	length	Price	choice	suspicious	buy
3	3	650	2	2	298	1	3	1169	3	0	0
3	3	700	2	2	298	1	3	1169	3	0	0
3	3	750	2	2	298	1	3	1169	2	0	0
3	3	800	2	2	298	1	3	1169	3	0	0
3	3	850	2	2	298	1	3	1169	2	0	0
3	3	900	2	2	298	1	3	1169	3	0	0
3	3	950	2	2	298	1	3	1169	1	0	1
3	3	1000	2	2	298	1	3	1169	1	0	1
2	3	300	2	2	298	1	3	1169	2	0	0
2	3	350	2	2	298	1	3	1169	3	0	0
2	3	400	2	2	298	1	3	1169	3	0	0
2	3	450	2	2	298	1	3	1169	2	0	0
2	3	500	2	2	298	1	3	1169	3	0	0
2	3	550	2	2	298	1	3	1169	3	0	0
2	3	600	2	2	298	1	3	1169	1	0	1
2	3	650	2	2	298	1	3	1169	1	0	1
2	3	700	2	2	298	1	3	1169	1	0	1
2	3	750	2	2	298	1	3	1169	3	0	0
2	3	800	2	2	298	1	3	1169	3	0	0

2	3	850	2	2	298	1	3	1169	3	0	0
2	3	900	2	2	298	1	3	1169	3	0	0
2	3	950	2	2	298	1	3	1169	3	0	0
2	3	1000	2	2	298	1	3	1169	3	0	0
1	3	300	2	2	298	1	3	1169	2	0	0
1	3	350	2	2	298	1	3	1169	3	0	0
1	3	400	2	2	298	1	3	1169	1	0	1
1	3	450	2	2	298	1	3	1169	1	0	1
1	3	500	2	2	298	1	3	1169	1	0	1
1	3	550	2	2	298	1	3	1169	1	0	1
1	3	600	2	2	298	1	3	1169	1	0	1

Using Python to analyze the data I collected, I got the correlation coefficient between the variable 'purchase' with different variables 'price,' 'length,' and 'style,' as Table 3 shows below.

Table 3. The correlation coefficient between the purchase variable with other different variables

	purchase	
style	0.060959	(p-value:0.025983)
	purchase	
length	-0.068556	(p-value:0.012261)
	purchase	
price	-0.194587	(p-value: 7.552482e-13)

By reading the correlation coefficient, I can know that 'purchase' is positively related to 'style', negatively related to 'length', and negatively related to 'price'. Therefore, I conclude that if I want to expand my sales, I should produce formal and short coats at a relatively low price. What's more, I also get the regression line of these variables in the table below. Through this table, I know that all the p-values I get are smaller than 0.05, meaning that the conclusions I draw from these data are quite reliable. Furthermore, I can also get the equation of the purchase variable (Table 4): purchase=0.6207-0.0374*length-0.0004*price+0.0322*style (the larger the purchase variable is, the more possible that the consumers will buy my products).

Table 4. liner regression of the purchase variable and other variables

	coef	std err	t	P>|t|	[0.025	0.975]
const	0.6207	0.060	10.294	0.000	0.502	0.739
length	-0.0374	0.016	-2.384	0.017	-0.068	-0.007
Price	-0.0004	0.0000586	-7.214	0.000	-0.001	0.000
style	0.0322	0.015	2.108	0.035	0.002	0.062

Looking specifically into the regression line of the purchase variable and the price variable below, I can roughly calculate the optimal price of my coats in order to maximize the profit (Table 5):

Table 5. liner regression of the purchase variable and the price variable

	coef	std err	t	P>|t|	[0.025	0.975]
const	0.6108	0.041	15.072	0.000	0.531	0.690
Price	-0.0004	5.88e-5	-7.240	0.000	-0.001	0.000

Thus, I can get another equation of purchase variable: purchase=0.6108-0.0004*price. The total revenue equation is: total individuals being exposed to my products*purchase variable*price (since the purchase variable can represent the probability that an individual will buy my products). In this case, I will let constant C to represent the total individuals being exposed to my products. Then, I can get the formula of the total revenue: total revenue=C*(0.6108-0.0004*price)*price. In order to find out the maximum revenue, I calculate the maximum value of the formula, which is 233.3865C while the price is 763.5 yuan. Therefore, I find out the optimal price for this coat: 763.5 yuan.

While the conjoint analysis yielded a reasonable result, it is still not rational; the majority of my survey subjects are my classmates, and I am unaware of the preferences of other age groups; in all, I will modify my survey in the future to increase the validity and trustworthiness of my data and the outcome.

4. Conclusion

For conclusion, I have designed a clothing brand that sells eco-friendly and nonsexual clothes at a very low price. In this paper I conduct the segmentation, positioning, and conjoint analysis for my brand.

For the segmentation part, I put my consumers into 3 segments: environmentalists, LGBT groups, and value seekers, depending on their consumption habits. Besides, I also determine which segments are my main consumer groups, which are LGBT groups and environmentalists. Then, I use positioning to ensure my brand is unique. In this part, I have drawn a perceptual map whose x-axis is the luxurious level of the brand and the y-axis is the sexual level in order to help me do the positioning. What's more, I also analyze the brands near mine by looking into their stocks to determine whether it is a good opportunity for me to open my brand and enter the market. Finally, I used the conjoint analysis to design one of my clothes, compared with the clothes in MUJI and Nike. For the data analysis, depending on the regression line, I first form a formula about the purchase variable of my brand to figure out how different aspects of the clothes can influence consumers' possibilities to conduct the purchase. Then, I also draw a regression line of the price and the purchase

variable in order to find the optimal price of the clothes. However, there are still some limitations in the marketing strategy of my brand. The survey I conducted had limited survey subjects, which may cause the result of the conjoint analysis to be unreliable. What's more, I now am not able to take the production line of the clothes into consideration, which may influence the profit I predict. In all, despite the limitations, this paper can still be useful for someone who wants to start up a new clothing brand selling eco-friendly and nonsexual clothes.

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