

The Influence of Virtual Goods Purchase on Teenagers' Online Consumption——Genshin Impact Marketing Strategy as a Case

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Abstract. Mihoyo's open world mobile game Genshin Impact, launched in September 2020, set the record for the highest grossing mobile game worldwide for the month with \$245 million, and was the highest grossing mobile game in China for six consecutive months. Behind this impressive performance, there have also been negative voices about inducing overspending in games. For a game aimed at teenagers, it sets very high purchase prices for virtual goods and lotteries and lacks guidance and efforts to protect teenagers. Teenagers are one of the biggest consumers of online games. With the rapid development and popularity of mobile Internet and smart devices in China, it is more convenient for Chinese teenagers to access online games, and the era of touch games shows a younger trend. This paper uses two practical cases to focus on the impact of the highly developed mobile game consumer market on consumers and enterprises. It analyzes and discusses from two perspectives, involving the analysis of marketing concepts, schemes, consumer psychology and other elements. In the end, it deduces the social and moral issues that enterprises need to pay attention to in their own operations and improves a cleaner consumer market together with consumer groups.

Keyword: Teenagers, mobile game, virtual consumption.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, online shopping is no longer a strange word, and consumers can enjoy their favorite products on various e-commerce platforms without leaving home. There is a special kind of goods, unlike the physical products that are usually purchased from the Internet. They do not need to be packaged and sent through logistics. These products are called virtual goods or digital goods [1]. Merchandise can take the form of a video, a string of digital accounts, in-game items that increase your character's value, or skins that change your appearance.

For this type of product, what follows is the in-game item purchase system. Like other products in other industries, the purchase of online games is also a kind of consumption. The mode of profit in the current online game, the players can buy only service, resources, rather than buy the game because the resources in the traditional sense of the game are to get, by way of playing a game so if can be directly obtained by real money to buy, it will cause other players didn't use real money to buy resources. So, the first need to understand online games as a commodity platform, not just virtual games. From this level to be able to clarify through the network game consumption behavior of the establishment of rules [1].

Consumers have two parts of rights and interests in such online games. The first part is the use right of players, which is the right that game companies give consumers to use the account, which can be manifested as the use of the account to play games and create a paid account for online games. The other part is the right to use game resources, which refers to all resources in the form of data in the virtual game under operation, including game characters, props (such as the game currency), account data and game content itself.

Consumers, therefore, consumption of common explanation, namely all explanation power belong to operation and development company, but because the network game consumer in the current received by real monetary pay for only the right to the use of network game and participation, and the rest of the network game of all resources for free, some consumers view it as a part of the personal property. In fact, under the current framework, the resources acquired by the consumer are not

recognized as his personal private property, he only has the right to control these resources in the form of data, but not the ownership [2].

In the current system of in-game purchases, consumers are in an unequal position, which leads to the consumption and ethical issues that arise from this type of interaction. The dependence on the Internet, the convenience of consumption activities and the current symbolic virtual goods can give teenagers immersed in virtual consumption sensory stimulation or enjoyment of visual and auditory effects. No matter where they are, they can have strong psychological resonance and great satisfaction with their partners in the same market.

2. Case Analysis

2.1 Case 1: Lack of Correct Consumption Guidance and Cognition to Teenagers

Genshin Impact, an open-world mobile game launched by Mihoyo in September 2020, has set a record of being the highest grossing mobile game in the world that month with \$245 million, and has been the top grossing mobile game in China for six consecutive months. According to the 2021 Shanghai Top 100 Companies, Mihoyo's operating revenue reached 10.128 billion yuan in 2020-[3]. Behind this impressive performance, negative voices have been raised about inducing excessive spending in the game [4]. As a game for teenagers, it sets a very high purchase price for virtual goods and lottery and lacks efforts to guide and protect teenagers.

In this year, a news about teenagers and the in-game purchase system has aroused social attention. Several media outlets have received complaints from consumers that their children, without their parents' knowledge, used their parents' mobile phones to top up their purchases in games owned by Shanghai Mihoyo Film Iron Technology Co., LTD. (hereinafter referred to as "Mihoyo"). The recharge process is suspected not to have passed any identification, and the amount involves hundreds of yuan to thousands of yuan. However, when these consumers ask for a refund from the game company, they will often encounter a series of difficulties such as in finding customer service, deniability from customer service, difficulty in providing proof, long time waiting in getting a refund. In a report about a teenager charging 2,000 yuan in two minutes and parents questioning the game-induced consumption, the child's mother checked her consumption bill and found that she had spent more than 4,000 yuan in Shanghai Mihoyo between January and February this year for no reason. Of this amount, 2,000 yuan was spent between 17:25 and 17:26 on February 12 alone.

During the course of the investigation, the victim recalled that the child borrowed a mobile phone from his mother for study purposes and used the mobile phone to pay for skins and items in the game Genshin Impact. The mother expressed anger and said she gave the phone her child as a study tool but never gave him the payment password. It turned out that thousands of yuan had been recharged to the game several times. There was no payment record on Wechat, but the result was discovered by tracking bank statements.

2.2 Case 1: Malformed Consumption

It is worth reflecting in fact that teenagers are being led to buy a large number of virtual goods without physical content without restriction or insignificance, which is inseparable from the virtual goods sales strategy of game manufacturers.

The primary goal of a manufacturer is to attract a large number of users to the product or service, and to do that, they must increase the appeal of their product itself. For the game, Genshin impacts through in-game purchase system to improve the user's enjoyment and immersive, right to the use of the performance for the role of the high degree of rare access to, or use rise more convenient tool products, we can see as to promote the perceived ease of use of the product, in the game, you show the higher value of virtual items (arms and weapon) [5].

From the perspective of consumers, the purchase attitude towards virtual goods will also affect their purchase behavior. For teenagers, it can be shown that it is worthwhile to buy virtual goods, and the difficulty of the game is reduced, or they can get virtual items or characters they want [6]. It is

also possible that they are motivated by vanity to obtain recognition from others. These two factors greatly increase the possibility of their consumption of virtual goods. If teenagers realize that there is no point in increasing the value of a game character, or that such a purchase would be ridiculed by their peers, then the willingness to buy virtual goods will be greatly reduced. Unfortunately, neither manufacturers nor parents make an effort pushing this point of view.

2.3 Case 2: Immature Detection Mechanism

Another report mentioned the negative effects of the game's draw card system. During the 2022 Spring Festival holiday, a child of a family used his parents' mobile phone to spend more than 10 times on gold cards in a game, spending nearly 8,000 yuan. Parents interviewed mentioned that the child is 16 years old, usually like to play some games. And the game Genshin Impact inside a 648 yuan card recharge package. The two parents did not pay attention, and set up a no-secret payment, the child in the report used the parents' mobile phone to smoke about 12 times in a row (648 packages), and by the time he found out, he had spent nearly 8,000 yuan.

2.4 Case 2: A Mechanism for Identifying Exploited Defects

As for the manufacturers, they themselves bear a considerable part of the responsibility. In early November 2021, they released the Mihoyo children's personal information and privacy policy ", children (age is not more than a teenager under the age of 14) when using Mihoyo service will collect id authentication information and name, manufacturer and may entrust a third party to collect information about the child's face recognition for further identification [7].

Unfortunately, the in-game real-name authentication system is not 100 percent effective against teenagers using their parents' ID cards to bypass the teenagers' protection system. In a test run, the investigators found that adult accounts were not impeded in any way within the game, with no facial recognition prompts, including no "double check" setting triggered at the time of purchase, which is apt to overconsumption among teenagers.

3. Discussion

3.1 Teenagers -- the Main Force of Game Consumption Market

Teenagers are one of the largest consumers groups of online games. With the rapid development and popularity of mobile Internet and smart devices in China, it is more convenient for Chinese teenagers to access online games, and the age of touch games shows a trend of younger age [8]. Research shows recent Internet facility usage among those years in Fig. 1 named Internet access equipment owned by teenagers [9]. With the improvement of equipment running speed and display technology, the online game experience is getting better and better, and the types of online games are also becoming richer and richer, which is increasingly attractive to game players. Moderate online games can relieve pressure and entertain daily life, but the social experience of young people is insufficient, and the network literacy and habit is in the formation stage. How to treat online games correctly and arrange online game behaviors reasonably still needs active guidance from all sides.

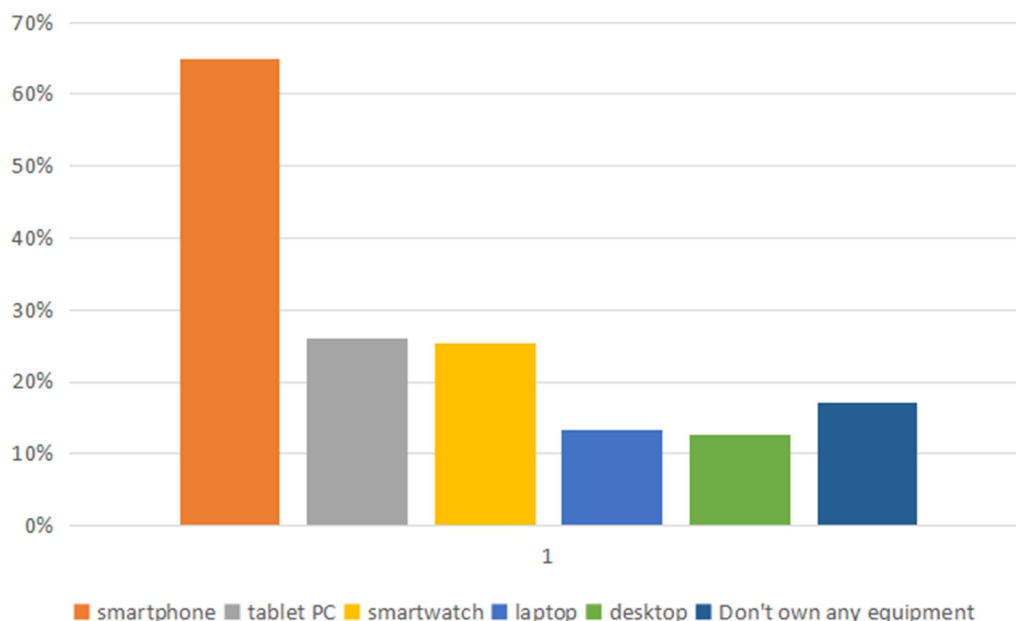


Fig.1 Internet access equipment owned by teenagers [9]

The usage rate of online games among young people is higher than that of the overall Internet users, showing a trend of younger age and mobility. The ownership rate of self-owned devices is high. Young people are more dependent on their parents' devices, and family is the most important scene for young people to play online games. While they play online games mainly for recreation and to relieve pressure, the average single game time is 1~2 hours; The payment channels for teenagers' online games are generally online, and the payment amount is relatively controllable, about 80% of which are within 100 yuan per month. The payment behavior is relatively rational, and most of the funds come from teenagers' self-controlled funds such as pocket money [9]. Nowadays, there is a bad phenomenon of excessive symbolization in the consumption of virtual goods represented by teenagers, which will have a bad impact on the development of network culture industry, physical and mental growth and even social civilization and progress [10].

3.2 Game Industries Needs to Establish a More Responsible Image

For Mihoyo's current market performance, there are also reasons why existing laws do not protect teenagers. Although it is not a civil legal act for teenagers to charge large amount of money in the game which is appropriate for their age and intelligence, parents have the right to ask the game operator for a refund. However, it is difficult for consumers to protect their rights in reality [4]. For parents, they need to prove that the charging behavior is issued by children rather than adults, and they need to collect quite sufficient evidence, most of which is difficult to define in the scope of the law.

As a responsible corporate image, game companies should shoulder their social and legal responsibilities and, most importantly, pick up their morals. There should be clear hints and certifications for large amounts of recharge, rather than encouraging and inducing users, especially teenagers, to consume in order to gain more benefits.

A mobile game with the core mechanism of obtaining props through the card drawing mechanism, players are generally attracted to participate in the card drawing activity with a low probability of limited-edition equipment. A single card drawing does not cost money, but there are still many players who continue to recharge and spend money to try their luck, hoping to draw their favorite equipment and role. For adults, they have certain economic capacity and can afford certain consumption. In the absence of stable economic income and immature psychological development, teenagers do not have considerable self-control for gambling-style card drawing, which will lead them to take risks and go on an unhealthy road of physical and mental development.

The social experience of young people is insufficient, and the network literacy and habit is in the formation stage. How to treat the network game correctly and arrange the network game behavior reasonably still needs active guidance from all sides.

4. Conclusion

In the context of the booming development of the rich entertainment and audio and video industry, accompanied by the future generation of physical and mental health growth problems, the current teenagers are truly digital natives. Under the influence of information ocean and digital application, their cognitive patterns and behavioral characteristics have obvious network characteristics. Therefore, as a responsible enterprise, it is not only need to see unprecedented market profit prospects, they have the obligation to use their own resources and technological capabilities to create a more benign consumer market environment, to protect the potential consumer groups such as teenagers.

For teenagers face recognition mechanism is not yet perfect, at the same time of constantly updated ability to recognize more to improve the protection of teenagers' privacy information, as well as the prevent teenagers improper consumption an important mechanism at the same time, also as a network addiction prevention mechanism, reasonable guide teenagers to become qualified players and consumers. Teenagers network behavior and the differences between adult Internet users, content standard is also different, so the manufacturer should be screened, the more data collected and summarized, the current market all the leisure entertainment is not widely applied operating mechanism of addiction, and as a responsible enterprise can to lead the industry to establish a unified and effective standard, the implementation of this measure is undoubtedly of great help to the enterprise itself to establish a better image or enhance its influence in the market.

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