

To Solve the Problem that Tampons are Difficult to Develop in the Chinese Market Based on Consumer Psychology

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Abstract: Tampons as safe, convenient, hygienic, and can give women the greatest degree of menstrual freedom of health products have tried to enter the Chinese market in several decades, but repeatedly failed. In contrast, in the European and American markets, tampons have long been widely used by women as hygiene products, occupying most of the market share of the same category of goods. Its product characteristics and use methods are well publicized and deeply rooted in the hearts of the people. This phenomenon not only reflects that there are many ideological and cognitive concepts in contemporary Chinese society that need to be updated, but also reflects that women's physical and mental health needs greater attention. At the same time, tampons themselves are also facing problems such as product innovation, inadequate publicity, and no price advantage. Various limitations make the development of tampons difficult. The promotion of tampons has great significance for women's health and social progress. Based on the research literature, this paper expounds on the characteristics and incomparable advantages of tampons, analyzes the reasons for the obstruction of the promotion of tampons in China, and puts forward practical suggestions for the promotion and sale of tampons in different links based on consumer behavior.

Keywords: tampon, women's health, Chinese market, menstrual shame, consumer psychology

1. Introduction

Tampons, also known as sanitary plugs, are cotton cylinders, mainly made of cotton, artificial fiber or a mixture of these two materials, with a diameter of 1 cm to 1.9 cm, and a pull rope at the end. It can be placed into the vagina to absorb menstrual blood when menses.

The origin of tampons can be traced back to 1929 by Dr. Earl Cleveland Haas, an American doctor. Inspired by the idea of sucking blood from cotton or gauze during surgery, Dr. Haas invented the prototype tampon. In 1933, the invention was patented, and Dr. Haas named it Tampax, which has since become a well-known brand name for tampons. Since the beginning of the last century, the brand has tried to enter the Chinese market, but all ended in failure.

Tampax first tried to enter the Chinese market in 1989 and has its own production line in China. However, in 1989, China was still in the early stage of reform and opening up, and its mind was not very open. It is not common to discuss women's periods and sexual knowledge in public. In addition, although the mass media at that time had various forms, such as newspapers, television,

radio, etc., the communication content was relatively fixed, and the advertising time was little, which could not directly, concretely and comprehensively explain the functions, advantages and methods of use of the product to the public. Coupled with the fact that the market was gradually being occupied by the emerging sanitary napkins that were more easily accepted by the public, the production of Tampax far exceeded the sales and eventually withdrew from the Chinese market.

In 1997, after being bought by Procter & Gamble, Tampax tried again to enter the Chinese market. In 1999, Procter & Gamble quietly launched tampons in the Nanjing market, but at that time, there was still a lack of means to disseminate health knowledge and promote tampons to the public, and most people still had psychological barriers to the product or did not know its existence. In addition, sanitary napkin products have basically occupied the Chinese market at that time, the introduction of tampon manufacturers need to spend additional resources to educate the market, and the investment risk is larger, may not be successful, even if come through, there will be different products with the brand maybe have a mutual game, so many brands do not want to open up the tampon market in China. Alone Tampax finally withdrew from the Chinese market again in 2000.

In 2017, Procter & Gamble announced that it would launch its Tampax brand in the Chinese market. This is Tampax's third foray into the Chinese market. While the boom in social media in China, improved sex education and the awakening of women's minds have provided a favorable environment for Tampax to survive, it will take time to see how its future develops in the face of a saturated Chinese market and deep-rooted backward thinking [1].

This paper aims to analyze the reasons for the challenges faced by tampons entering the Chinese market through the characteristics of tampons by literature analysis method and propose feasible solutions combined with consumer behavior.

2. The Current Situation of Tampons in China and Their Advantages

Tampons are sanitary products placed in the vagina, which are divided into finger-type tampons and duct-type tampons, the length is about 4 ~ 5 cm, which can be absorbed before menstrual blood flow, effectively avoiding problems such as hot and uncomfortable menstruation and easy to produce odor, which is drier and more sanitary than sanitary napkins. Its raw materials are high-density cotton compressed products, which do not contain harmful chemicals to the body. Tampons are made of cotton and rayon, or a combination of these materials. Asbestos is not approved for use in making tampons, and factories that manufacture tampons are subject to inspection to ensure that required manufacturing standards are being met [2]. Tampons, meanwhile, offer consumers a variety of models to choose from. It aims to help give them great protection on their heaviest days and comfort on their lightest. Women can also choose long catheter type, short catheter type and finger push type tampons according to their own habits, which gives women a more comfortable experience while ensuring green safety. They do not have to be careful because of leakage anymore, and can freely move. Compared with sanitary napkins, tampons have weak foreign body sense, small probability of leakage, not stuffy, and are more suitable for high temperature weather and outdoor sports and other scenes. Tampons can be worn for almost any activity or with any outfit, since they're worn internally. It is all about what's most comfortable for female [3]. However, despite the many incomparable advantages of tampons, its current market share in China is still very low. According to statistics, about 42% of women in the United States use tampons, and in Europe, the proportion of women who use tampons is as high as 70%. While the tampon is a popular female hygiene product that is used in most western countries, within the China market, around 98 percent of women use sanitary napkins and only 1.9 percent use tampons [4]. The top of the list of women's menstrual hygiene products in China is still sanitary napkins, followed by liquid sanitary napkins, peace of mind pants and other products. This shows that even though the category has made many efforts over the years, the outlet of tampons in the Chinese

market has not yet opened, its market share is still depressed, the development is difficult, and there are many problems to be solved.

3. Analysis for the Limited Development of Tampons in China

There are many reasons for the limited development of tampons in China, the main factors are that Chinese consumers are not compatible with their use habits and lack of category awareness. Female consumers find it difficult to accept built-in products, and there is a fear of impurity and bacterial infection. In other words, consumer psychology is an important factor affecting their consumption decisions.

On the other hand, tampons themselves have some limitations. It is not like a sanitary napkin placed outside the body, which can be freely changed in any position and any environment. When tampons are put into the body, the operator's manipulation and body posture have certain requirements, improper operation may cause pain, and the use of tampons in public toilets with too small space has also caused inconvenience to a certain extent. In addition, a tampon should not be used for more than eight hours in the body, and should not be used in a long-term sleep state.

Moreover, tampons lack the opportunity to explain their properties to the public. Many people have misunderstandings about tampons, for example, in 2013, it was reported that a 14-year-old British girl used tampons for the first time, because the adsorption force of the tampon was too strong, making the vagina too dry, resulting in mucosal rupture and infection bacteria, eventually killed by Toxic Shock Syndrome. Coincidentally, at the beginning of 2016 New York Fashion Week in the United States, a one-legged blonde model attracted attention, she is Lau-ren Wasser. Also because of a humble tampon, she was amputated on her right lower limb and left toe, again the culprit is TSS. These news triggers the public misunderstanding that tampons can cause diseases such as TSS. In fact, there is no direct evidence that tampons are the direct culprit of TSS, but the built-in time of tampons can increase the bacterial infection rate [5]. According to a clinical study conducted by Beijing Friendship Hospital affiliated to Capital Medical University and Shanghai Family Planning Research Institute, in the survey of 300 subjects, tampons did not increase the incidence of vaginal infection and cervical inflammation, and did not aggravate the degree of cervical inflammation, and did not produce special mechanical stimulation of the vagina and cervical mucosa [6]. Frequently changing tampons, and choosing a tampon that is suitable for your own flow rate rather than a large capacity can effectively reduce the risk of bacterial infection [5].

For another example, under the background that China's feudal monarchy lasted for more than 2,000 years and is still a developing country, most people still have the perspective of "whether she is a virgin or not" on women. Under the education and pressure of the social environment, women themselves also have the virgin complex that cannot be abandoned. And most people just exist "virgins cannot use tampons" and "tampons will break the hymen" misunderstanding. In addition, China has always been implicit and restrained cultural style, few people or platforms to disseminate correct sexual knowledge to the public, and the public's misunderstanding of tampons cannot be eliminated for a long time. The extreme lack of hygiene knowledge and sex education in the social environment makes the development of tampons worse than the lack of a market.

In addition, the price of tampons is also an important factor affecting its market share, because its market and audience are far less extensive than sanitary napkins, the manufacturers of it are relatively few and the scale is relatively small. Therefore, the price of tampons is often 2 to 3 times higher than that of sanitary napkins. Beyond that, the use of tampons is significantly more than that of sanitary napkins, and many consumers are unwilling to pay a high price for this. In contrast, sanitary napkins are more affordable, less use, and more cost-effective. Needless to say, consumers who are more concerned about the price factor are turning to sanitary pads as an alternative to tampons.

4. Suggestions

In view of the dilemma faced by tampons in the Chinese market, this paper puts forward the following opinions based on consumer psychology.

Tampon manufacturers should publicize from two dimensions of thought and behavior, so that consumers' attitude will change from not knowing the existence of the product to understanding the tampon, no longer having psychological resistance to it, willing to try and finally willing to buy and re-buy.

First of all, consumers' self-concept is influenced by external and internal influences, including culture, emotions and other factors. Therefore, people's misunderstanding of tampons should be eliminated from the source, and open minds should be spread. Encourage women's self-liberation. In the 21st century, China's we-media industry is developing vigorously, and people have diversified channels to obtain information. Tampon manufacturers can use we-media for network publicity, spread correct gender knowledge, gradually liberate the mind, and eliminate people's misunderstanding of the existence of tampons. At the same time, we cooperated with influential female bloggers to let them speak out and tell the majority of women their true feelings about using tampons. American actress and singer Hilary Duff has teamed up with Naturalena Brands to become chief brand officer for its Happy Little Camper and Veeda brands. The Veeda brand is a feminine care product produced with plant-based raw materials, including natural tampons, pads, pads, etc [7]. Celebrity endorsements can allow consumers to be emotionally inspired when making decisions.

In addition, when sold in physical stores, manufacturers can briefly describe their characteristics on the outer packaging of sanitary napkins. Marked with eye-catching words, tell consumers that tampons are comfortable, safe and virgin, eliminating the concerns of customers in the selection and purchase of products so that their choice is more rational and cognitive. At the same time, manufacturers can negotiate with supermarkets and other subjects to place tampons on more prominent shelves to attract consumers' attention in the first time.

Thirdly, based on the current situation that the Chinese market is basically occupied by sanitary napkins, the manufacturer can launch a trial package of tampons, that is, to give the purchasers of sanitary napkins a gift of independently packaged tampons, and attach its use instructions, so that consumers can first experience and then buy. The process of fully giving its sensation, allowing the consumer to select, organize and interpret its physical sensation before making a decision.

Finally, in response to the problem that the physical market is occupied by a large number of sanitary napkins, tampons can turn their main goal to improve the share of online shopping platforms. From the perspective of consumer characteristics, in the network environment, consumers have more distinctive personalities. In fact, many online consumers themselves have a wide range of interests and hobbies and are full of curiosity for new things [8]. From the perspective of sales channels, with the continuous expansion of consumers' online shopping scale, the proportion of online sales channels increased year by year from 2015 to 2021, from 10% in 2015 to 27% in 2021. Supermarkets are still an important sales channel in the sanitary napkin industry, but the proportion is decreasing year by year [9]. Similarly, the "2017 Online Female Menstrual Products Related Consumption Series Research" shows that in 2017, the sales of online female menstrual hygiene products (including sanitary napkins, pads, tampons and private lotion) in China showed an overall upward trend, with a sales growth rate of 49% [10]. Tampon brands can open official flagship stores in major shopping software, design pages with product descriptions, advantages and usage methods, and actively participate in various e-commerce festivals and full reduction, providing consumers with more cost-effective choices. Some online consumers have higher requirements for marketing services themselves, saving time and cost in a limited time. Due

to the diversification and convenience of shopping channels, they are willing to invest more money in the quality of goods, and firmly believe that one price one goods, hoping to enjoy efficient and convenient shopping at the same time

By higher quality service. Therefore, the tampon brand in the consumer after consumption, including questions and answers, including after-sales service, so that consumers enjoy a good shopping experience is also an important step in its development.

5. Conclusion

In general, as a sanitary product that pays more attention to the female experience, tampons have incomparable physical advantages and emotional identification. However, due to the constraints of price and ideological and cultural factors, its past development in China was not smooth.

Unlike in previous decades, with the development of the economy and the liberation of the mind, contemporary consumers are more self-centered, focusing on better product quality and personal experience. A more enlightened social atmosphere and a social environment that no longer "talks about sex" have also given female consumers the courage to try new products. The fading of menstrual shame and the recognition of women's value has greatly improved the living environment of organic and comfortable tampons in China.

Manufacturers can keep up with the trend of women's ideological awakening, grasp the psychology and needs of consumers, and make efforts in every link of consumers' consumption decisions. Using the booming Internet industry to spread advanced ideas, in order that more people understand the relevant common sense, while constantly improving the comfort of products, solve technical problems, break the price barrier so that tampons in the Chinese market gain a firm foothold.

The development of tampons is closely related to the progress of social economy and culture, and it can reflect the tolerance and advanced degree of a society to a certain extent. Its development path is long and cannot be achieved overnight, and it needs the joint efforts of the government, producers, consumers and even the whole society. The basic physiological knowledge should widely and continuously spread in society, encourage women to pay attention to personal experience, eliminate the public's colored glasses of "she is not a virgin" and the ethical code of binding women's liberation, which is the way to the long-term survival of tampons in the future.

This study is committed to breaking backward ideas such as menstrual shame, and using tampons as an entry point to promote women's liberation, so that they are freer in both psychological and physical aspects. However, the old ideas are not easy to be affected, the road to achieve this goal is blocked and long. The future also needs women to develop a strong drive and society to give women a friendlier environment.

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