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# The Influence of Sports Brand Image on Consumer Preferences and Behavioral Tendencies: Lululemon and Anta as Examples

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### **Abstract**

*Amidst the surging enthusiasm and demand for fitness activities, there is keen interest in understanding how sportswear brand preferences influence consumer behavioral tendencies. Given Lululemon's rapid global emergence as a contemporary brand icon and Anta's status as a popular national brand in China, this paper endeavors to compare the two, examining their impact on consumer behavior. The objective extends to offering recommendations for brand image cultivation and product design within the athletic apparel sector.*

### **Keywords**

*Lululemon, Anta, customer behavior, data analysis, international business, sports brands*

## **1. Introduction**

### *1.1 Research Background*

#### **1.1.1 Sports Brand Market**

The sporting-goods industry has grown strongly over the recent years and is likely to continue on that path. The domestic sporting goods industry is mature and with the increasing maturity of consumption upgrading and sports consumption concept, consumers' demand for sports products is increasing and sporting goods show a rise in quantity and price.

#### **1.1.2 Lululemon and Anta**

Lululemon, as a relatively young company, is known for its stylish appearance which provides a new sense of fashion for the younger generation. Lululemon focuses on the upscale market and fashion sports. Anta is one of the largest sports goods brands in China, with multiple brands under its umbrella. Anta has a strong sales network and brand awareness in the Chinese market, while also expanding its

business in overseas markets. Anta focuses on mass market and professional sports, pays attention to its high quality and cost-effective products and is committed to promoting the development of China's youth sports.

### *1.2 Objective of the Research*

We hope to understand the impact of different images on consumers through comparative analysis. This helps to guide the investment direction of investors and corporate brand orientation. Therefore, they can choose whether to develop the highend market or the mass market and make decisions about whether to transform the brand.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Previous Literature*

A brand constitutes a name, symbol, design, or product distinguished from competitors' offerings through brand identity (He, 2001). Keller et al. suggest that consumers often perceive brands as living entities, with personalities encapsulating a set of attributes that leave a lasting impression (Aaker, 1996). Peng Chen argues that Lululemon's primary value lies in delivering an ultimate sense of technology, creating beauty in the seen and unseen (Qiu & Wang, 2019).

### *2.2 Research Gap*

Previous research have singularly examined Lululemon and Anta's brand positioning and image strengths, lacking comparative analysis and investigation into which image more impacts consumer intent. Our research compares these sportswear brand images, leveraging 4 attractiveness variables to gauge consumer intention and behavior, offering insights into the direct link between brand image and consumer preference and behavior.

## **3. Methodology**

### *3.1 Measurement*

In this study, we investigated four variables: product image attraction, corporate image attraction, brand personality attraction and consumer behavioral preference. Product image attractiveness refers to consumers' satisfaction with product quality and service. Corporate image attractiveness refers to whether the enterprise pays attention to consumer needs, whether the enterprise actively participates in public welfare activities and whether it has a high industry status. Brand personality attraction refers to whether the brand conforms to my personal taste and whether it can reflect my social status. Consumer behavior bias refers to whether consumers are willing to buy back or recommend the brand to others.

### *3.2 Quantitative Approach*

In the analysis method, we mainly use correlation analysis, regression analysis and analysis of variance three methods. In the correlation analysis, we judge the relationship between product image, corporate image, brand personality and consumer preference by observing the correlation coefficient. In the regression analysis, we observe the P-value to determine whether the impact of product image

attraction, corporate image attraction and brand personality attraction on consumption preference is significant.

#### 4. Data Analysis

##### 4.1 Correlation Analysis

According to the data collected by the questionnaire and the problem-oriented analysis, we initially established four analytical dimensions of product image attraction index, enterprise image attraction index and brand personality attraction index, and evaluated the correlation between the variables that constitute the three dimensions and the correlation among the three dimensions.

**Table 1. Correlation Analysis between Three Dimensions**

variable		Product image attractiveness	Corporate image attractiveness	Brand personality attractiveness
Product image attractiveness	Pearson correlation	1		
Corporate image attractiveness	Pearson correlation	.660**	1	
Brand personality attractiveness	Pearson correlation	.439**	-.190*	1

At the 0.01 level (two tailed) and at the 0.05 level, **the correlation is significant.**

According to the above correlation analysis results, each variable has a significant correlation at the significance level of 99% or 95%, and only "brand personality attraction index" and "corporate image attraction index" are less than 0, which is a negative correlation, and the rest are positive correlation. Because consumers who attach more importance to the attractiveness are more inclined to choose Anta, while consumers who attach more importance to the attractiveness of brand personality are more inclined to choose Lululemon, so the two are negatively correlated. Table 1

##### 4.2 Regression Analysis

**Table 2. Calculation Results of Model Regression Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized coefficient	Standard coefficient	t	Sig.	Collinearity	
	B	Standard Error	Beta		Tolerance	VIF

1	(Constant)		2.083	0.068		30.788	0	
	Product image attractiveness	-0.008	0.003	-0.184	-2.664	0.009	0.234	4.281
	Corporate image attractiveness	0.04	0.004	0.592	9.349	0	0.279	3.584
	Brand personality attractiveness	-0.069	0.006	-0.625	-11.795	0	0.399	2.509

According to the results calculated by the regression coefficient of the model, it can be seen that product image attraction and brand personality attraction have a negative effect on consumption preference, and the corresponding regression coefficients are -0.008 and -0.069 respectively. The corporate image attraction has a positive impact on consumer preference, that is, the stronger the product image attraction and brand personality attraction, the more willing consumers are to choose Lululemon brand (1), and vice versa, the more willing they are to choose Anta brand. (2). Therefore, the regression equation is obtained: Consumer preferences = 2.0830.008 \* product image attraction + 0.04 \* corporate image is 0.069 \* brand personality appeal. Table 2

#### 4.3 Analysis of Variance

The Analysis of Variance is to study the difference of variables in different dimensions by means of independent sample t test, Chi-square test and one-way analysis of variance. In this analysis, independent sample t test and one-way analysis of variance were mainly used according to the characteristics of the data.

**Table 3. Analysis of Consumer Preferences: Lululemon vs. Anta**

	Purchased more in the past?	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error	t	sig
Product image attractiveness	Lululemon	29	40.76	7.366	1.368	0.74	0.461
	Anta	89	39.26	10.066	1.067		
Corporate image attractiveness	Lululemon	29	12.45	3.408	0.633	-7.853	0
	Anta	89	21.15	5.628	0.597		
Brand personality attractiveness	Lululemon	29	16.66	2.159	0.401	15.34	0
	Anta	89	9.2	2.307	0.245		

According to the results of the above independent sample T-test, it can be seen that the four dimensions evaluation indicators of this survey differ in consumer preferences of Lululemon and Anta. There is no statistically significant difference in consumer preference in the index of product image attractiveness, because the sig of 0.461 is greater than the standard 0.05, so the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. It shows that consumers who choose Lululemon and Anta have significant differences in their consideration of corporate image. According to the average value, Anta consumers are significantly higher than Lululemon buyers in terms of corporate image attractiveness. Table 3

## 5. Research Findings

From the above analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn: product image is not the main reason for consumers to choose Lululemon and Anta, but corporate image and brand personality are the main reasons for their consumption behavior. Lululemon's audience is more likely to be young people who believe that the brand can enhance their social status, while Anta's audience is more likely to be those who believe that the brand is a pioneer in the industry and that the brand has a high sense of social responsibility.

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1 Summary

In this study, we investigated consumers' preference for Lululemon and Anta images through questionnaire survey and compared their consumption intention through reasoning analysis. Among the three variables of product image attraction, corporate image attraction and brand personality attraction, the influence of corporate image and brand personality on consumption preference is particularly prominent and product image is not the main factor influencing consumers to choose Lululemon and Anta. Meanwhile, we observe that among the three indicators, the relationship between product image attraction and corporate image attraction is closer. Compared with Lululemon, which insists on personalized products and high-end market, most consumers prefer Anta brand with higher social responsibility, cost-effective and mass market. This may be due to the temporary difficulty for emerging brands to occupy market share quickly, and in these years of economic downturn, consumers are more willing to buy cost-effective products.

### 6.2 Suggestions and Implications

In the research, we also found that Lululemon has a strong development trend for young people, which is due to the prevalence of fitness culture and young people's pursuit of high value and fast fashion. Therefore, we suggest that Anta brand can have a deeper understanding of the fitness and clothing needs of contemporary young people in terms of fashion design and personality expression, in order to obtain a longer-term development. Anta has an unshakable advantage in terms of corporate social responsibility, price and brand status in the industry. Therefore, we suggest that Lululemon brand can adopt a certain degree of price reduction strategy in the future to occupy more market share. We make

the following recommendations for our e-commerce strategy: 1. Establish an independent e-commerce platform in China; 2. Extensive promotional and marketing activities; 3. Optimize supply chain management to reduce stock shortages; 4. Introduce virtual fitting technology.

### 6.3 Limitations and Future Studies

We have to admit that the sample of this study is limited, so the results may not be convincing enough. In addition, the questionnaire was distributed online, so people who seldom surf the Internet may fail to fill in it, which resulted in a loss of sample scope. In future research, more data should be collected and questionnaires should be distributed to global consumers on multiple platforms to reduce bias.

Researchers should also pay attention to the rise of fitness culture and the gradual improvement of the economic situation, like Lululemon this series of brand image has a stronger development trend, or still by the mass market Anta and a series of brand image crushed. What kind of corporate image can attract more customers in the future? In today's increasing emphasis on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and ESG, how strong is the impact of corporate image on brand image? This is something we need to study in the future.

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