The Development Status and Strategies of Digital Marketing in China's Pet Market

Youlin Li

Santa Monica College, 1900 Pico Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 90405, USA
Yulyn606060@gmail.com

Abstract. The pet market in China also has the advertising strategy that is undergoing a change towards digital marketing compared to traditional advertising, which is gradually becoming digital marketing. The paper is devoted to the digital marketing area, and methods: literature review, data analysis, and case studies help explore the modern situation and the approach of advertising marketing to the pet market in China in a profound way. The study results in the conclusion that the key target of this market is the post-95s generation that is very accepting of the web. There is also increased spending of silver-haired seniors on products related to pets. Part of the challenges that digital marketing faces include homogenized content, high production cost of quality content, uncertainty of information security boundaries and cultural differences during cross border advertising with digital marketing enjoy real-time responsiveness, expansive reach and rapid dissemination capabilities. The paper gives strategic recommendations on how pet medical and cosmetic businesses can make optimal use of their online marketing programs. It also provides some new insights on the consumption trends of both the generation Z and silver-haired groups.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Advertising Strategy, Pet Market.

1 Introduction

Nevertheless, some issues continue to trouble such as homogenized content, high production cost of high-value material, vague lines of information security and cultural differences in inter-country advertisement. Creative advertising, which is based on critical thinking is necessary in content advertising. However, ensuring a common language of delimiting limits of online cookies collecting and developing a single cross-border review of advertising standards will help in a manner to streamline market coordination. These measures give practical suggestions that the industry should take to lead in terms of the novel models.

The digital technology has encroached in all directions and the new media is still in a continuous state of development. It is against this backdrop that the advantages of digital marketing which is precisely and affordable are gradually becoming the marketing approach of the Chinese pet market. The scale of the industry and the conditions of its use is also on the rise. The aging population in China, low birth rate and increased

© The Author(s) 2026
L. C. Yoong (ed.), *Proceedings of the 2026 2nd International Conference on Financial Innovation and Marketing Management (FIMM 2026)*, Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research 408,
https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6239-801-6_107

disposable income are also some of the factors which have seen an increase in the demand of pets and an extension of the market even more. The marketing strategies are also changing because of the widening market. The digital marketing has seen a transformation of a small scale auxiliary type to one of the primary marketing channels. The given paper is a literature review and case study based on third-party data investigating the current situation in digital marketing in the Chinese pet market and its strategies. It checks the advantages and disadvantages of various digital marketing strategies. It will suggest even better optimization solutions to digital marketing to the pet market by taking into account market dynamics, and consumer behavior. Other concerns that the study offers in terms of reference suggestions include the homogenization of content advertising, unequal standards of cross-border advertising and others.

2 Current Development Status

2.1 Market Size

The national market is expanding continuously, with a gradual upward trend in year-on-year growth. The market size of China's pet industry continues to expand. The market scale keeps growing and gradually increases. From 1990 to 2024, with the continuous relaxation of restrictions and standardization in policies, regulations have been established for the development of the pet industry, promoting its high-quality growth. Economically, national economic growth has increased disposable income, thereby enhancing people's willingness to consume pets. The rise in consumption has simultaneously driven the expansion of the market scale. According to a report by iResearch, "The year-on-year growth rate was 6.3% from 2022 to 2023, and is expected to grow by 5.8% from 2023 to 2024, maintaining a steady growth trendwith the market size continuing to expand." Additionally, as the market scale of the pet industry expands, its sub-sectors have also grown in tandem. In 2024, the pet healthcare sector reached 94 billion yuan, and the pet service sector reached 33.2 billion yuan [1]. The expansion of the pet market has facilitated a shift in the industry's development model. In terms of marketing, the approach has evolved from relying solely on traditional advertising to gradually integrating with the internet.

2.2 Digitalization of Service Forms

The service model has transitioned from traditional to digital formats, with annual search volumes showing a steady upward trend. China's pet service industry is undergoing digital transformation, with annual search volume continuously increasing. The trend of digital transformation in services is particularly evident in pet healthcare and pet grooming. KPMG's 2025 China pet industry market report shows that the total online sales of pet-related categories across all platforms

reached 50.23 billion yuan in 2024, a year-on-year increase of 10% [2].

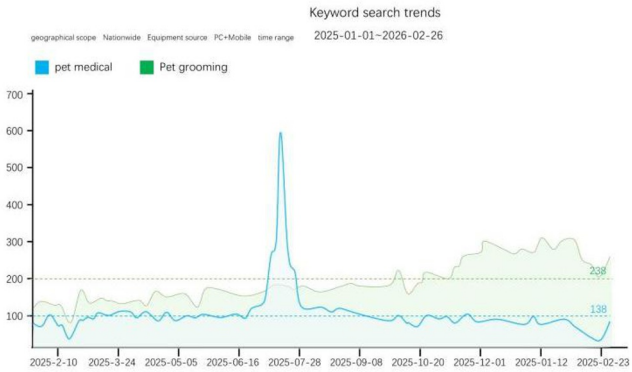


Fig. 1. Baidu index keyboard search trends [3]

As shown in figure 1 from Baidu Index demonstrate a steady rise in annual search volume. Consumers are increasingly turning to online platforms for price comparisons between stores. The post-95s generation shows strong adoption of digital channels, while their online shopping habits are accelerating the digital transformation of pet healthcare and grooming services.

2.3 Target Group

The target customer group is mainly the post-95s generation. Meanwhile, the elderly living alone are also gradually increasing in this regard. The Z generation is the primary consumer group for pets. The highly educated group emphasizes scientific pet feeding. Moreover, the pet consumption expenditure of empty-nest elders cannot be overlooked. Based on the core data from the 2025 China Pet Industry White Paper and the 2026 China Pet Industry White Paper, the post-90s generation is the absolute main force in consumption, while the post-00s generation is a rapidly growing consumer group. The Z generation has a higher percentage of pet owners at more than 69% [4]. The elders who are empty nests lack a sense of emotions and therefore perceive the companionship of the pet as a new emotional source. It has been demonstrated in several studies that the maintenance of pets can assist the elderly to enhance their health, manage social pressure, and feel less negative emotions [5, 6].

3 Analysis of the Marketing Strategy

3.1 Life Platform and Key Opinion Leader/Key Opinion Consumer Cooperation Practices

Such lifestyle apps as Meituan and Dazhong Dianping are characterized by close-knit community networks and fast service reaction. The collaboration with the appropriate KOLs and KOCs can be a good method to increase traffic and purchases. Online platforms such as Meituan and Dianping are lifestyle centers that accurately mirror the real-time requirements of the pet owners. Being targeted at different locations allows their target audiences to find their services, but this will be efficient since the pet service providers can easily reach customers in their area who require urgent medical care and grooming services. Such websites enable the owners to make price comparisons and verify business timings with various service operators and save their time in case of searching the official systems. The site is monetized using advertising commissions. Nevertheless, when the commission rate is overly increased to increase profits, it can not only lead to a decrease in the number of advertisers but the users as well [7]. This may make the advertisers deviate to other platforms to get better returns and eventually put the platform at a disadvantage.

Most pet healthcare and beauty businesses nowadays have implemented partnerships with KOL and KOC in the age of self-media information. They sell using the fan influence of internet celebrities and internet professionals through video and live-streaming sales. The level of engagement of the audience is indicative of the influence of the host. Hosts connect to the audience by attentively paying attention to the hot topics that are currently trending and reacting to them. By addressing these issues, hosts prove that they have deep knowledge of the interests and concerns of the viewers. This is a proactive strategy of sustaining the interest of the audience as well as acting to draw wider audiences who may need to discuss any area of interest and key topics [8]. Coupled with pet product services, promoting pet related hot events increases the audience coverage on live streams making pet products and services more attractive. The combination of professional scientific feeding and live Q&A sessions will greatly increase the popularity of a live-stream and engage more viewers resulting into an accurate audience demonstration towards the sales of pet products.

3.2 Content Marketing

The content advertisement and live marketing are far and wide and quick to spread. Nonetheless, content is extremely costly to produce of high quality, and the homogenization of the content is overwhelming. Live-stream marketing and content advertising display a massive coverage and speed of transmission. Although the production of premium content is very expensive, the content homogenization is dire in the industry. Taking advantage of social media platforms, huge user base and AI recommendation systems, live-stream marketing and social advertisements gain extensive approach and monumental coverage with the mass public domain traffic. In the WeChat ecosystem, the ad placements in Moments and Video Accounts direct the user to the WeChat Mini

Programs directly. This redirection is based on an ecosystem and using accurate targeting to make conversion of customers effective. Social advertisements in such resources as Douyin and Xiaohongshu (the most popular social media of China) have wide coverage, and their high exposure is gained within a limited period of time. Creation of high-quality social ad content and live-streaming necessitate professional participation in planning, filming, and production, requiring a lot of human, material, and time resources under the condition of the high competition in content. The mobile internet has initiated the mobile short video popular as a novel source of information, which has received a massive user interest. The reason being their high spread rate has seen them being the preferred means of advertising resulting in short video ads [9]. Nevertheless, recent issues are the ad saturation, harsh content homogenization, and reducing channels of ad exposure to users, which should be fought by concerted efforts on both the platforms and advertisers side [10]. The most common contents of pet-related mini-video advertisements include content creators displaying the everyday lives of their pets, which results in creative homogenization of the aesthetics presentation.

3.3 Remarketing Ads

Advertisements used by retargeting monitor information about users in order to increase brand recognition, however, leading to legal and information privacy issues. Retargeted advertising improves the impression of the user by tracking the data though, there are issues with its legality and security of information. The e-commerce websites that are related to pets utilize the data on user behavior, such as their search history, comments, and time of viewing, to interpret big data and use retargeting technology. This allows providing highly targeted ads, which increases user interest and contact rates. Being one of the most accurate forms of advertising, retargeting involves using online tracking techniques such as cookies to create user profiles and obtain a secondary reach to prospective customers [11]. Nonetheless, it has privacy issues including the extensive data gathering and unclear legal regulations of user profiling [12]. There is a concern among the users that surveillance of personal information is being over-collected, whereas advertisement privacy protection is not thoroughly watched. No one can see the online tracking technologies and thus users are not aware on what is being done with their data.

4 Strategic Recommendations

4.1 Optimize Social Ads Content, Enhance the Search Engine Optimization

To maximize the content of social media advertisements, better search engine optimization strategies, better the level of precision of targeting in a keyword, and finally to increase the rate of advertising conversions. The process of creating advertisements content should be on quality. Search advertisements are advised to be standardized in the terminologies to enhance quality and promotion of click through. The production of social advertisement must not be homogenized and critical thinking must be taken

into consideration. Produce good advertisement ads. The internet based product recommendations have high acceptance in the post 95s generation. There are varied content preferences in the social platforms of TikTok, Kuaishou, and Xiaohongshu. Prepare alternative content advertisements with regards to these preferences. Critical attitude towards creation will be embraced and adherence to trends to generate homogeneous work should not be practiced blindly. As an example, pet medical and beauty advertisements which overly borrow inspirational video ideas of influencers typically place ads following the pet short videos, causing occupational fatigue and frustration in the consumer. Advertisers ought to match contents with the real product to form various high impact points of advertising. The factors that can be enhanced through the increased content ad traffic include increased audience coverage and the number of customers visiting pet medical and beauty institutions. The pet medical and beauty services search adverts should utilize a third-party AI key-word search engine to track the real-time variation and trend on key-word searchers to make timely necessary changes to the key-word to increase its level of click-through.

4.2 Adaptation Scheme Depending on the Differences in the Cultures

Digitally market differently depending on cultural differences. Differences in the geography, environment and culture create particular preferences among consumers in pets. According to Euromonitor through its Global Pet Care Trends Report 2025, there exist wide regional differences where North American markets are more concerned with high-end products, healthcare solutions, and connected devices; European markets are more closely tied with natural-organic and sustainable solutions; and Asia-Pacific and Southeast Asian markets are more attuned to low-end products, localized products, and the younger population [13]. Businesses are able to use differentiated digital marketing strategies by developing region-specific advertisements that are sensitive to local tastes. This strategy increases the acceptance of consumers and increases their purchase intention.

4.3 Development of Universal Cross Border Criteria on Ad Review

There is need to come up with a uniform review criteria on cross-border advertising. Studies on advertising cross border e-commerce indicate that companies have to deal with complex issues such as regulatory disparities, content demands, data compliance as well as industry restrictions all over the globe. Nations and markets have worked out region-specific advert laws, depending on their laws of the land, culture and industrial environment, which have substantiated fundamental compliance challenges to cross-national e-commerce promotions. Global standardization is often lacking and these mean fines and ad removals, which substantially add to the marketing expenses and impede the promotion of quality pet products throughout the world. Standardizing cross-border advertising would not only increase the reach of consumers, but also cut hurdles of pet advertising to other countries in the global market.

5 Conclusion

Digital marketing has been used to market brands as well as products in the fast growing market of e-commerce. The digital marketing is highly non-discriminating in the everyday life of people. Advertising has the power of technology, which makes it effective. Disposable income also rises thus allowing people to keep pets. The market growth has resulted in a modification of marketing practices and now digital marketing is one of the key marketing strategies in the pet service market. The author provides the current situation of digital marketing in the pet service industry in China through the literature review and case analysis methods. Lifestyle platforms (Meituan/Dazhong Dianping) can be taken in close range and with great timeliness. The huge platform ad commissions also undermine advertising returns. The Kol-KOC model of partnership uses the influence of the fans to increase the sales of the live streaming.

Contemporary marketing and live ads have large coverage and swift distribution rates. Creation of quality content is very expensive and homogenization of content is drastic. Accurate targeted advertisement follows the information of the user to create better user impressions. There are however, legal challenges and information security challenges. Content advertising in China pet service industry will maximize digital marketing plans by increasing the reach of the target audience, maximizing customer conversion rates, and minimizing advertising expenses through critical thinking as a means of improving the quality of the content. Viral content is developed through building on the attributes of service products. It does not only increase reach and traffic but also enhances brand impressions. SEO optimization increases the accuracy of keywords and improves the turning of customers. Consumer preferences are defined by the regional cultural preferences. In the development of cross-border advertisements, digital marketing strategies should be customized to these cultures. The creation of cross-border ad review standards will bring the cost of digital marketing down. The collection of data was inadequate given that the study did not conduct a detailed research on pet medical cosmetology but the analysis was based on the third-party data. The literature review focused on theoretical issues but was not empirically validating the certain effects of various models of digital marketing. Future studies may be aimed at data gathering on the pet medical cosmetology niche market, narrowing on the data sources and executing practical operations and comparative experiments in order to offer more tangible operational reference points of the pet medical cosmetology business.

References

1. iResearch Inc.: 2024 China pet industry research report. iResearch Inc., Beijing (2024).
2. KPMG Hua Zhen Certified Public Accountants (Special General Partnership): Consumption upgrading and market insights of the pet economy. KPMG Hua Zhen Certified Public Accountants (Special General Partnership), Beijing (2025). https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmg/cn/pdf/zh/2025/06/2025-china-pet-industry-market-report
3. Baidu: Baidu index (mobile version). https://index.baidu.com/baidu-index-mobile/index.html#/ (Accessed Mar 8, 2026).

4. Petdata Big Data Platform: 2026 China pet industry white paper. Petdata Big Data Platform, Beijing (2026). https://www.petdata.cn/index.html (Accessed Mar 8, 2026).
5. Gan, H., Hill, A.M., Yeung, P., Keesing, S., Netto, J.A.: Pet ownership and its impact on mental health in older adults. Aging & Mental Health 24(10), 1605–1612 (2020).
6. Gee, N.R., Mueller, M.K.: A systematic review of research on pet ownership and animal interactions among older adults. Anthrozoös 32(2), 183–207 (2019).
7. Chen, W.J., Zhang, Y.Q.: Research on the pricing strategy of advertising revenue sharing on self-media platforms considering content advertising placement. Operations and Management (10), 6–13 (2023).
8. Chen, Y.: The alignment of current live streaming anchors with popular demand. Advances in Economics, Management and Political Sciences 84, 208–211 (2024).
9. Lin, X.T.: Analysis of communication characteristics and social effects of live streaming platforms. Social Science Research and Practice 1 (2025).
10. Liu, M.X.: Communication dilemmas and coping strategies of short-video advertising. News World (10), 26–29 (2021).
11. Qiao, Q.: Research on personal information protection in internet targeted advertising. Shanxi University of Finance and Economics, Shanxi (2025).
12. Guo, P.: Research on personal information protection in precision advertising delivery. Tianjin Normal University, Tianjin (2024).
13. Xu, Y.W., Xu, W.X.: Research on cross-border e-commerce advertising and marketing. E-Commerce Letters 14(5), 1741–1748 (2025).

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

