

Original Paper

Research on the Comparison and Development of Matchmaking Services at Home and Abroad

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Abstract

This article summarizes the feasibility of using value co-creation theory to operate and manage the internet matchmaking industry by reviewing the matchmaking service models and characteristics of developed countries and regions abroad, and combining it with the current development status of internet matchmaking websites in China. This provides reference suggestions for the construction of services for Chinese internet matchmaking enterprises and has practical significance for the current development of internet matchmaking services in China.

Keywords

Value co-creation, Matchmaking services, Operation mode

1. Introduction

Matchmaking service refers to a kind of behavior that makes use of the information network advantages owned by people or institutions to provide paid or free services to people who need to find partners in society. (Wang, 2008) Generally, such organizations will use data matching and hold heterosexual friendship activities or similar blind date activities to help single people build their relationships and marriage. Many countries in the world have such institutions, especially in Japan, the United States, Britain, Australia, and other countries. Chinese matching agencies were gradually established after 1980. Its service activities include: registering for the singles, contacting by letter, organizing various social activities, and providing opportunities and places for singles to meet. Matchmaker provides a wider range of choices for singles who find it difficult to find the ideal person in their own life. With the development of Internet technology, matchmaking services have developed from offline to online. Online dating has become a form of matchmaking service. (Finkel & Eastwick, 2012; Finke, 2012)

2. Method

(1) Case Study Method. Taking zhenai.com, a large platform matchmaking company in China, as an example, around the relevant service items of the company, this paper analyzes the factors affecting the company's service management and the related problems in the service management process, to enrich the content of this study and increase the persuasion.

(2) Comparative Analysis. Compare and analyze the service management modes of platform matchmaking enterprises in developed countries and regions or countries with similar cultures. To put forward the reference.

3. Matchmaking Services Abroad

According to the cultural proximity, we selected matchmaking services in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan as the comparative research object. In addition, we selected matchmaking services in the United States in Western developed countries as the research object.

3.1 Main Service Modes of American Internet Matchmaking Companies

The first Internet matchmaking company was established in the United States in 1995. After more than ten years of development. After more than ten years of development, American matchmaking companies have successively established some influential matchmaking websites with the rapid development of Internet technology, such as eHarmony.com, Yahoo! Persona, BlackPlanet.com, my space.com, Friendster.com, etc. (Yu, 2012; Liu, 2008). Their main service model has matured in the matchmaking market. The service modes of American Internet matchmaking companies mainly include the following four types: First, psychological testing services. Take eHarmony Com as the representative, when a single person registers as a website member, he will immediately enter the questionnaire link of eHarmony, which is a set of detailed test links. It evaluates registered users in all aspects through more than 400 topics, including religious beliefs, personality characteristics, appearance, and body shape. Then, the system automatically recommends the appropriate member profile to the registered user according to the obtained data. Second, one-to-one membership service. Match.com, Yahoo! Personal is the representative. (Liu, Lou, & Xiao, 2008) Matchmaking companies manage members' independent accounts. The website provides members with a variety of keywords such as age, gender, and location to choose, and searches and classifies members according to the selection results. Now most dating websites have adopted this service mode. Third, social relationship network service. Blackplan.net. Com as the representative, members have independent portal pages. The website mainly provides members with many exchange topics and information, such as music, news, consultation, chat, games, and even various offline party activities, to achieve the purpose of serving members. Fourth, the community service online. Represented by My Space and Friendster, the website establishes communities, such as providing personal blogs, forums, activity circles, etc. through this community way, it can establish links with members through member search and news releases. Finally, extend the consumption cycle of users. The characteristic of matchmaking service is

one-time consumption by users. In order to tap the maximum value of users in the shortest time, American matchmaking websites have increased continuity and expansibility in services, such as answering love counseling, providing dating advice, and adjusting family feelings, so as to increase customer stickiness. (Wang, 2016)

3.2 According to the Introduction of Japanese Matchmaking Agency, Take the JMI Matchmaking Agency in Osaka as an Example

The Japanese marriage agency implements information management, and it has a very strict audit system for members. At the same time, members need to submit their own relevant materials when joining the club. For example, there must be a single certificate issued by the government-registered residence and marriage management department; the certificate and income certificate issued by the unit; Individuals must provide tax certificates for nearly two years; an education certificate and other relevant materials. (Liu, 2017; Chen, 2015) Second, Matchmaking agencies in Japan provide humanized services for marriage seekers. After becoming a paying member, the matchmaking agency will mail two more suitable recommended matching materials every month, with details of the height, weight, education, nature of work, income, family background, and other aspects of the potential marriage partner addition, in the first five months of dating, the matchmaking agency will continue to introduce potential marriage partners to members so that members can fully consider and select. After five months, if both men and women agree to fall in love formally and have the intention to get married, they will stop introducing other candidates. (Wang, 2016) Lastly, within a certain period of time, if the match is successful and married, the marriage seeker will pay additional fees. If it is not successful, a part of the fees can be refunded. (Yan, 2004)

3.3 Introduction to Korean Matchmaking Service

Korean matchmaking has become a big industry. On the one hand, South Korea has always had a high divorce rate. In addition, the growth of highly educated single women has promoted the rapid growth of the matchmaking market. Korean matchmaking agencies collect dues according to the identity and requirements of members. (Liu, Luo, & Xiao, 2008; Chen, 2012) For example, the membership fees of doctors, lawyers, and high-ranking “upper-class people” are about 3 million won; Business school graduates or lawyers will be more welcomed by matchmaking agencies; But they also pay twice as much for their services as others. The membership fee for “ordinary people” is about 600000 won. In addition, Korean female members usually pay more than men. (Chen & Zhou, 2005; Huang, 2014)

3.4 Taiwan's “Love Apartment” Profit Model

Love Apartment (www.ipart. CN) is a community dating website that fully explores young men's and women's online love needs. It was founded in Taiwan in 2002 and operated in 2003. As of February 2012, there were 27.22 million registered users. (Yan, 2004; Hu, 2012) Love apartment is mainly used by female college students and white-collar workers aged 18-28. Users set up their own apartments and communities on the website for various social activities. Love Apartment is like an online love game for many people. The fresh, clean, and healthy online dating environment and creative entertainment

interaction have attracted a large number of users. 50% of users are active and have high user satisfaction, which has laid a solid foundation for its unique profit model. There are two main ways for Love Apartment to make profits, user value-added services and commercial advertising, accounting for 70% and 30% of revenue respectively. At present, the charging items of value-added services mainly include VIP membership fees, I-currency recharge (for purchasing virtual goods), and stamp sales. (wang, 2021)

4. Matchmaking Services in China

The matchmaking service has experienced a long development process since ancient times. From ancient matchmakers providing matching information, parents helping unmarried adult children choose their mate, to modern free love, newspaper marriage-seeking, marriage agency registration services, to the popularity of online matchmaking service that have flourished all over the world in recent ten years. Matchmaking service has attracted more and more attention and deeply affected people's lives from a folk activity to a commercial activity. As an independent economic individual, matchmaking service has been widely accepted by the public. With the economic development and social changes, the form of matchmaking service, its development mode, service content and organizational structure are also changing.

The beginning of the modern matchmaking industry began in the 1980s. Guang Qing matchmaking agency was established In November 1982 by the Guangzhou Editorial Committee Office, Finance Bureau and Personnel Bureau, which is also the first matchmaking agency in China, (Hu, 2011) The marriage matchmaking agency at that time was an agency of government intervention. With the gradual development of society, the matchmaking agency has gradually separated from the government and become a service industry with its own business characteristics. According to the data provided by Tian Yan Cha, there are more than 20000 matchmaking agencies in China. (Chen, 2012; Zhao, 2021)

In 1994, Internet technology entered China. With the great development of computer network technology and communication technology, the Internet has been rapidly integrated into the development of Chinese society. With its huge amount of information and the sharing of information resources, the Internet provides an excellent information platform. The matchmaking industry can break through the original regional restrictions and realize the progress and development of the industry itself by relying on the Internet. Based on the industry's and business's needs, many online dating websites have emerged. From 1998 to 2017, the development of the Chinese online matchmaking industry experienced four periods: the embryonic period, the exploration period, growth period, and maturity period. In the embryonic period (1998-2003), the public lacked awareness of the online marriage industry, with a small traffic scale, small investment scale, and small revenue scale. During the exploration period (2004-2008), the online marriage and love industry was well known to the public, the traffic scale gradually expanded, the investment scale increased rapidly, and the revenue scale increased slowly. In the growth period (2008-2015), online marriage and love products are mature, the

growth of the traffic scale is slow, the growth of the investment scale is slow, and the growth of the revenue scale is rapid. In the mature period (2015-present), the online marriage and love market has been transformed, the traffic scale has remained stable, the growth of the investment scale has slowed down, and the ways of revenue have been diversified. (Liu, 2017)

The service mode of big matchmaking companies depending on the Internet, such as Baihe-Jiayuan.com, Zhenai.com, and Youyuan.com has developed from a single online service to a combination of (as shown in Figure 1) online and offline (O2O) (Huang, 2014) (chart 1: Total Sample data 2000,1600 Actual user who have used matchmaking services within half a year; Potential users who have not used Internet dating services 400.) At present, a stable service mode (O2O) has been formed. In addition, because of the establishment of online and offline businesses, matchmaking services extend from related businesses to weddings, wedding photography, emotional counseling, and other businesses. However, in terms of the share of business income, the share of extended business is very small. (Figure 2, Gray lines represent information flow, blue lines represent cash flow) This diversified business chain model poses a great challenge to the relevance and contact degree of various industrial links).

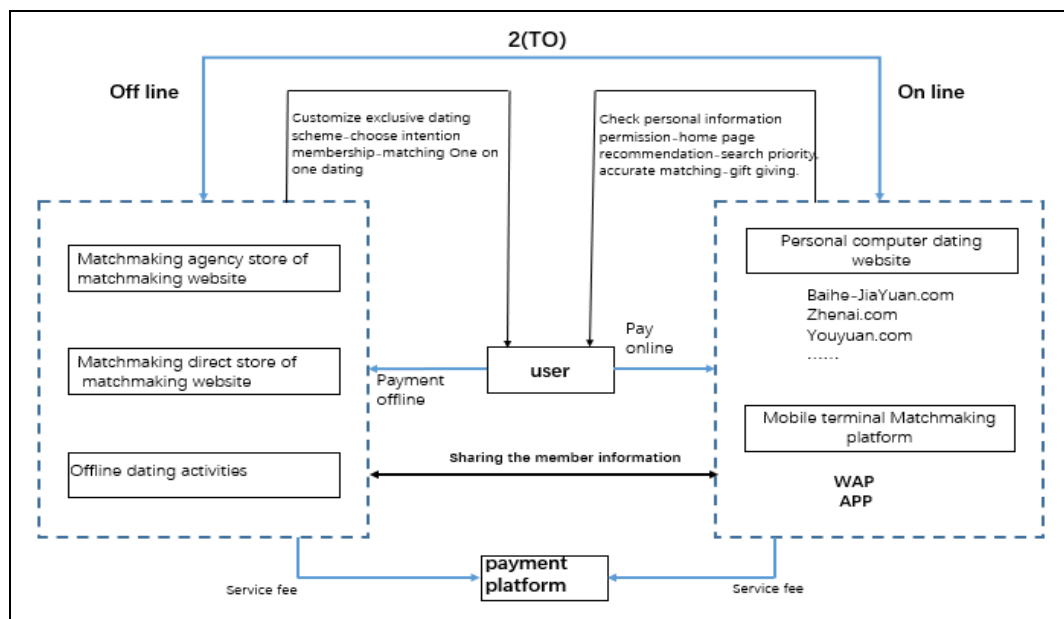


Figure 1. The Matchmaking Market Has Formed a Stable Operation Mode - Online and Offline Interaction Mode

Data source: Special research report on online matchmaking market in China 2019
<https://www.analysis.cn/>

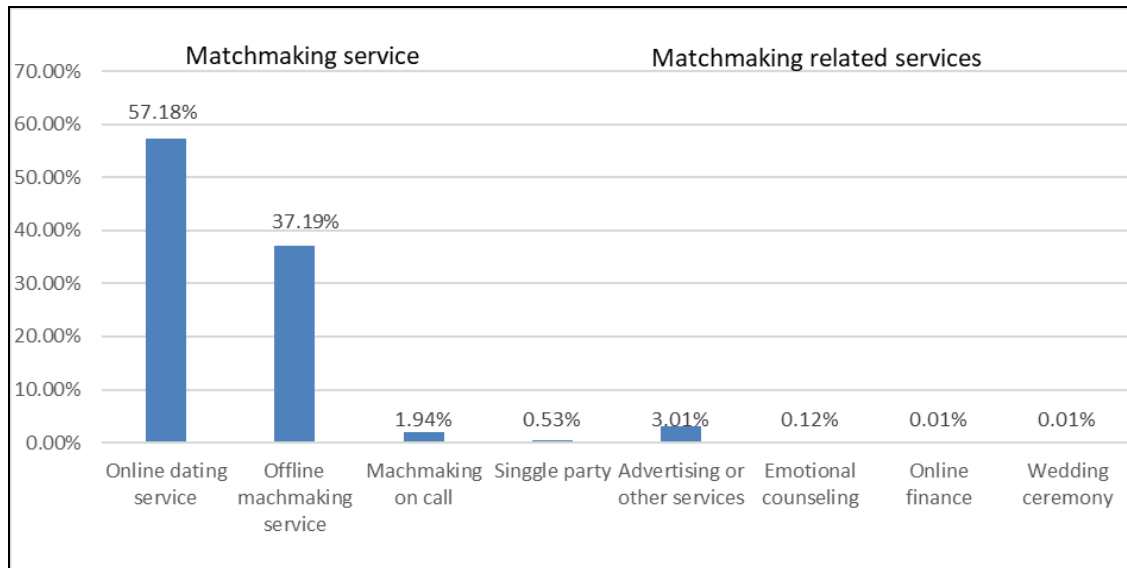


Figure 2. Income Distribution of Matchmaking Services in Different Business Segments

Data sources: www.analysys.cn Annual analysis of Internet matchmaking service in China 2019.

5. Conclusion

In 2021, the Internet platform matchmaking market economic income reached 7.2 billion (RMB), a year-on-year increase of 11.6%. It is expected that 2022 will maintain about the growth rate of 2021, and the market economic income will reach 8.05 billion (RMB). The demand for matchmaking services is growing in terms of economic scale and income. In the era of the experience economy, single customers have a higher degree of participation in the consumption process. Creating value together with single customers has also become an important way for modern matchmaking enterprises to gain a competitive advantage. Customer value comes from the perceived benefits and experience of customers (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004), which is the goal pursued by enterprises in value co-creation and a key factor for enterprises to gain a competitive advantage. The resource input of matchmaking enterprises and single customers is the basis for value creation. (Vargo et al., 2008) Customer resources, as important interactive resources of enterprises, play an important role in the process of value co-creation (Iyanna, 2016).

Throughout the domestic and international matchmaking service models and the current application of various emerging technologies in the matchmaking industry, it can be seen that:

(1) The new era requires service enterprises to improve their competitive advantages constantly. The establishment of a competitive advantage depends on whether the enterprise can create value for customers. Therefore, creating value for customers is the prerequisite for service enterprises to obtain customer satisfaction and loyalty.

(2) value is created jointly by enterprises and customers. Customers, as important operant resources, actively participate in the production or service process of enterprises, constantly create value in the value chain, realize value appreciation, and become value creators together with producers. (Vargo &

Lusch, 2004) Some matching enterprises have tried to actively interact and cooperate with customers in practice to improve customer experience and realize value creation. In China, Zhenai.com, a large matchmaking website, recently launched the “Preferred space” project - customers can interact with their favorite partners online. Enterprises use Big Data + Artificial Services to help customers judge their mate selection preferences from the interaction, to better help customers match and recommend their ideal partners. Through active interaction with customers, enterprises allow customers to deeply participate in the service process to meet customers’ personalized needs, which is an important way to improve customer experience under the Service-led logic in the era of the experience economy.

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