

A Study of the Pink Tax Mess in the Current Consumer Era

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Abstract. With the progress of society and the promotion of women's status, women are playing an increasingly important role in the consumer market. As a kind of gender discrimination phenomenon, pink tax is widespread in the consumer market. It not only damages the interests of female consumers and the level playing field of the market, but also hinders the healthy development of women's consumer market. This paper aims to explore the causes, influences and solution strategies of pink tax chaos through the combination of direct and indirect laws, to provide a useful reference for protecting consumer rights and fair market competition. The government, consumers, enterprises and all sectors of society should make joint efforts to strengthen the construction of laws and regulations, improve the awareness of the protection of consumer rights and interests, advocate corporate social responsibility and moral management, strengthen the supervision of public opinion, and jointly promote the solution of the pink tax problem and the healthy development of the female consumer market.

Keywords: Pink tax; female consumer; direct law, indirect law.

1. Introduction

The pink tax is when women tend to pay more taxes than men. This phenomenon is not accidental, but is deeply influenced by social gender discrimination and consumer market strategy. The existence of the pink tax not only damages the interests of female consumers, but also damages the level playing field in the market. Therefore, this paper has important practical significance and theoretical value to explore the chaotic phenomenon of pink tax through direct and indirect laws. The reason why the "pink tax" causes the resentment of many female consumers is the lack of deep understanding of women and the products designed to make more profit from female consumers and excessive marketing of cute, tender, sweet and pure labels. In the process of studying the pink tax, consumers should look at more of the various policies and measures from a gender perspective. Consumers should focus on the root causes of gender inequality, change consumption and social attitudes, and create more opportunities for women. The pink tax is just the beginning of an exploration, and consumers need to work together to make gender equality a reality. The research method of this study is literature analysis.

2. The Embodiment of the Pink Tax Phenomenon

Even if females start reducing their chases of cosmetics from today, only buying affordable clothes, and reducing impulsive consumption, they still cannot avoid the pink tax. The "pink tax" tends to last for a woman's life. From buying toys as children to buying crutches in old age, women are almost always kidnapped by the "pink tax". US Media Bankrate made a rough calculation of the money: In childhood, the price of girls' toys was 11% higher than that of boys. In terms of childhood toys, the "pink tax" for girls could reach \$6,755.10% higher than that of girls' clothes, the cumulative pink tax was \$24,318, 48% higher for women, and the pink tax reached \$40,530. After entering middle and old age, women's crutches are 12% more expensive than men, including adult diapers, which may touch the bottom line of survival [1].

The essence of the "pink tax" is the "price discrimination" behavior in microeconomics. The term "price discrimination" means that merchants charge different prices for the same commodity. Luo

understands price discrimination, but also understands a concept called "surplus value". Residual value "is the difference between the maximum price that the consumer is willing to pay and the actual paid price for a commodity. Generally speaking, when a consumer buys a dress, the psychological price is 1000 yuan, but actually only spends 600 yuan, then the 400 yuan is the surplus value of the consumer is equivalent to the part that can be squeezed by the merchant, but not squeezed, this is the "wool" consumer's body.

The pink tax is the "surplus cost" that girls are willing to pay for but save through the feminine and favored by women.

It is worth pointing out that there is one area of "pink tax" that is relatively small one that is electronic products, such as mobile phones, computers, etc. Because the core value of these products lies in the function, there is no additional selling point through lace, packaging and other practices, at most is to do something on the color of the body, and just change the appearance, it is difficult to directly "tax" - the price of different colors of mobile phones is the same, is a proof.

So really is not the girl "loser", it is a smart business, the excess "hair" all to pull up. "Pink tax" is just a kind of price discrimination, in life, price discrimination is everywhere. For example, "the third cup is half price, it seems to" quantity "for price", but if consumers buy the third cup, the store still will not give a discount; plus, and people tend to buy in the form of "single" consumption, this practice is undoubtedly "high price discrimination" to "single" [2].

2.1. The Embodiment of the Pink Tax in the Consumer Goods Sector

In consumer goods, the pink tax is particularly evident. Many female products are more expensive than their counterparts, even if they have exactly the same function and quality. For example, cosmetics and skin care products are generally more expensive for women, while similar products for men are relatively cheap. This pricing strategy is often based on gender stereotypes, believing that women are more focused on appearance and image and are willing to pay more for beauty treatments. Companies use this psychological pricing to create a so-called "pink tax". In addition to cosmetics and skin care products, other consumer goods industries also have a similar phenomenon [3].

For example, accessories such as women's clothes, shoes and handbags tend to cost more than men's clothes. This pricing difference not only imposes a higher financial burden on female consumers, but also increases the spread of gender stereotypes. This means that women need to pay more for their beauty and image, while men can get the same product relatively easily.

2.2. Example of the Pink Tax in the Service Field

Salons and Services also have a pink tax. Women must pay higher fees in barbershops, beauty elsewhere, even if they provide the same services as men. This differential pricing is not only for disaffected female consumers, but also deepens the concept of gender inequality. This means that women need to pay more for their beauty and image, and men can get the same service relatively easily. In addition, women often have to pay more for services such as travel and dining. For example, some tourist attractions or restaurants charge women higher tickets or meals. This pricing strategy not only increases the financial burden on women, but also makes them feel sexist pressure when they enjoy services.

2.3. The Embodiment of the Pink Tax in the Medical Field

The pink tax phenomenon in the medical industry also cannot be ignored. Some medical examinations and treatment programs for women, such as gynecological examinations and breast cancer screening, often need to pay higher costs. This not only increases the economic burden on women, but may also may lead them to hesitate to face health problems, further aggravating the gender inequality. In addition, some female-specific diseases or symptoms also tend to be overlooked or underestimated. For example, the diagnosis and treatment of some gynecological diseases are often less important than others, leading to a lack of timely and effective treatment for female patients. This neglect and

underestimation not only affects women's physical health and quality of life, but also intensifies the concept of gender inequality [4,5].

2.4. The Pink Tax in the Workplace

In the workplace, the pink tax also exists. Women often need to work more in career development and salary to get the same status and treatment as men. This inequality is reflected not only in wages, but also in promotion opportunities, career paths, etc. It puts women at a disadvantage in the workplace, limiting their career development and personal growth. In addition, there is gender discrimination in some industries or positions. For example, some industries or positions that are traditionally considered "male fields," such as technology and finance, tend to impose higher barriers and restrictions on women. According to the "2023 Survey Report on the Current Situation of Chinese Women in the Workplace" with the participation of 39,000 professionals, 61.1% of women were asked about marriage and childbirth when looking for a job, which was much higher than 21.5% of men [6].

The reporter learned that although some employers do not limit the gender in the recruitment notice and recruitment process, they secretly "examine" the marriage and birth of female job seekers in the interview process and take this as an important factor in whether they can be hired [6]. This limitation not only limits women's career choices and development space, but also intensifies the concept of gender inequality [7].

3. Reasons for the Pink Tax Mess Analysis

3.1. The Root Cause of Social Gender Discrimination

Sexism is the root of pink tax chaos. Women have long suffered from unequal treatment in many social, economic, cultural, and other areas. In the consumer market, this discrimination is reflected in the neglect and misunderstanding of women's consumption needs, as well as the underestimation of women's consumption power [8].

3.2. Promote Consumer Market Strategies

In the process of pursuing profits, companies often use the gender differences to develop different pricing strategies. Some companies believe that female consumers are more focused on appearance and quality and are willing to pay higher prices for goods. This consumer market strategy has partly contributed to the formation of the pink tax [9].

3.3. Lack of Laws and Regulations, and Ineffective Supervision

At present, the laws and regulations on the pink tax are not perfect, and the regulation also needs to be improved. This allows some companies to exploit legal loopholes to impose unfair pricing on female consumers [10].

4. Analysis of the Impact of the Pink Tax Mess

In "The Invisible Woman," author Caroline believes that in most cases, the "default setting" of the world is men, and female absence is everywhere, yet little known.

The real needs of women are ignored, and women bear the price of "being a girl". For example, the New York University's Rudin Transportation Research Center once concluded that women also bear a "pink tax" on their commute. A large part of the findings is women's discomfort about public transport. In the survey, more than half of the women had concerns about being harassed on public transport, and 29 percent said they would not take transportation late at night, partly increasing women's spending on transport. Not only that, the basic work clothes, space suits, fire suits are all based on the standard of the man, the distance of the car clutch and the length of the piano keys, not the female finger length... because of gender, women pay the price they should not bear. What's more,

it is now an indisputable fact that the average salary of women is much lower than the average salary of men.

For a long time, women's consumption has been inseparable from social demands on women's appearance, and business consumption has become increasingly sophisticated. From the ancient times of "women to please themselves" to today's "please yourself", it seems that women can pursue "beauty" more freely, but the imagination of "beautiful" still does not jump out of the cage. Whether it is "goddess" or "queen", still have to rely on consumption to decorate themselves.

If the above circumstances, individuals may still have a choice, but the product design habitually ignores women, low-income groups cannot afford to use sanitary napkins, here are the solutions.

A study revealing the so-called "pink tax" suggests that women's personal hygiene products are 13% more expensive than men has sparked anger and action. But in essence, the pink tax is not just an economic phenomenon, but more sexism. While the consumer society regards women as the "shopping frenzy" consumption queen, it charges women more "pink tax" for universal and explicit sexism.

Ironically, although women usually have fewer economic resources than men, they are charged more on daily goods and services, which even prompted French policy makers to investigate the "secret tax" for women, also prompted the US Congress to issue the "pink tax repeal bill", prohibit price discrimination based on gender.

In 2021, a survey by the New York Department of Consumer Affairs (Department of Consumer Affairs) found that the pink tax was seen in consumer areas, from hair salons, health care, clothing washing, and used car trading, with varying levels of extra money. In 2022, a study from California found that the average woman spent about \$1,351 a year.

4.1. Harm the Interests of Female Consumers

The existence of the pink tax allows female consumers to pay more for similar goods, which undoubtedly harms their financial interests. At the same time, this may also bring unnecessary psychological pressure and frustration to female consumers in purchasing decisions [11].

4.2. Disrupt the Market

The existence of the pink tax destroys the level playing field in the market. On the one hand, it makes female consumers face higher price threshold when shopping, reducing their consumption willingness and purchasing power; on the other hand, it may cause some enterprises to use gender differences for unfair competition and disrupt the market order. The existence of pink tax chaos not only damages the interests of female consumers and the level playing field in the market, but also hinders the healthy development of women's consumer market. With the improvement of women's status and consumption power, women's consumption market has great potential and development space. However, the existence of a pink tax mess could be a stumbling block in the market.

5. Strategic Advice to Address the Pink Tax Mess

Although since the end of the last century, many areas in the price gender discrimination legal policy and related measures, until 2022, the Department of Consumer Affairs, according to the results of the survey women are pink tax has not improved significantly, still massive pink tax, since the baby followed women's life.

If the product tariff and the market monopoly are the force majeure factors of the price difference, then the bias of the brand merchants on the women's consumption concept can be changed. Brand merchants believe that "women are more likely to be cut leek", pursue to change the appearance and marketing strategy of products, and make use of women's stronger purchasing desire and consumption habits different from men to occupy the interests of female groups. Only when the behavior and concept of encroaching on the rights and interests of female consumers are fundamentally remedied, can the "pink tax" truly disappear from the market.

Different from the "stable, accurate and ruthless" of men when buying goods, female consumers have a cost performance scale in mind, and they are more willing to spend energy to shop around to buy real value for money. At present, consumers can obtain information through different channels. Only transparent and open information can make consumers truly have a sense of trust. And only a brand that wins a strong sense of consumer trust can transform the social mission into the long-term economic benefits of the brand.

The pink tax is not a simple economic problem, and there is still a long way to be eliminated. Money is votes. What ordinary consumers can do is to use consumer behavior to create a cultural and business environment they want.

Undoubtedly, the existence of the pink tax is unreasonable. Today, most of the life products in the market are still secretly allowing women to pay the "pink tax". These manufacturers are one-sided that female consumers are not rational enough, difficult to see through their tricks in the consumption flood, and are willing to pay for the famous "female customization". This premium is bound to shrink in the future.

5.1. Strengthen the Construction of Laws and Regulations

The study suggests strengthen supervision and legislation over the pink tax, formulate and improve relevant laws and regulations, and explicitly prohibit any form of gender discrimination and pricing. At the same time, the government should increase the punishment for illegal enterprises, to maintain the order of fair market competition [12].

5.2. Improve Consumers' Awareness of the Protection of Their Rights and Interests

Consumers should raise awareness of protecting their rights and interests, and understand the existence and harm of unfair pricing phenomena such as pink tax. In the process of shopping, actively compare the price, quality, cost performance and other factors, and choose more cost-effective goods. At the same time, consumers should have the courage to complain about and report on sexist pricing practices.

5.3. Advocate Corporate Social Responsibility and Moral Management

Enterprises should actively assume social responsibilities and adhere to moral management. When developing pricing strategies, consumer demand and affordability should be fully considered to avoid using gender differences for unfair pricing. At the same time, enterprises should strengthen self-restraint and industry self-discipline, and jointly maintain a fair competition environment in the market.

5.4. Strengthen Public Supervision and Public Opinion Supervision

The media and the public should increase their attention and supervision of the pink tax mess. Through reports and comments, the harm and irrationality of gender discrimination and pricing are revealed. At the same time, the government and enterprises should encourage consumers to actively participate in social supervision and jointly promote the solution of the problem of powder tax.

6. Conclusion

As a kind of gender discrimination phenomenon, the pink tax is widespread in the consumer market. It not only damages the interests of female consumers and the level playing field of the market, but also hinders the healthy development of women's consumer market. Therefore, the government, consumers, enterprises and all sectors of society should make joint efforts to strengthen the construction of laws and regulations, improve the awareness of the protection of consumer rights and interests, advocate corporate social responsibility and moral management, strengthen the supervision of public opinion, and jointly promote the solution of the pink tax problem and the healthy development of the female consumer market.

This study points out the manifestation of the pink tax in daily life, the reasons for the chaos caused by the pink tax, the consequences of the pink tax, and strategic suggestions for solving the chaos of the pink tax. In short, women's needs should be seen and protected.

Firstly, by studying the phenomenon of the pink tax, the underlying reasons and mechanisms can be revealed. This kind of research not only helps consumers understand the unfair phenomena in the market but also helps them understand the specific manifestations of gender discrimination in the consumer market. This understanding plays an important role in promoting social equity and gender equality.

Secondly, research on the phenomenon of the pink tax can provide strong evidence for policymakers. The rights of female consumers. These policies can include laws and regulations that restrict or prohibit pink tax behavior, as well as incentives to encourage businesses to provide fair pricing.

In addition, research on the phenomenon of the pink tax can also enhance the awareness of female consumers in protecting their rights. The improvement of this awareness of rights protection can not only promote the protection of the interests of female consumers themselves, but also promote the attention and importance of gender equality in the entire society.

In summary, the study of the pink tax phenomenon in this paper is of great significance for safeguarding the rights and interests of female consumers. By revealing the reasons and mechanisms behind the pink tax phenomenon and providing policymakers with a basis to enhance the awareness of female consumers in protecting their rights, consumers can effectively promote social equity and gender equality, and create a more fair and just consumption environment for female consumers. With the continuous changes in society, the thoughts, thoughts, and desires of female consumers are undergoing continuous and profound changes. The above research is just the beginning, and there are still more insights waiting to be explored through more advanced digital capabilities.

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