

# **The Impact of Brand Community Characteristics on Consumers' Willingness to Participate in Brand Value Creation**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Under the background of the development and expansion of the brand community, the theory of brand value co-creation based on the service leading logic has also made great progress. The two are based on the interaction between enterprises and consumers. Brand communities provide a platform for brand value creation, and brand value creation is one of the important outputs of brand communities. A good brand community environment promotes consumers' willingness to participate in brand value co-creation. We study and analyze the characteristics of brand community to influence consumers' willingness to participate in brand value co-creation. This paper studies the full intermediary role of the sense of consumer belonging in the impact of brand community characteristics on consumer participation in brand value creation intention. This paper provides a theoretical basis for the enterprise to manage and maintain the brand community.*

**KEY WORD:** *brand community, brand value co-creation, the sense of consumer belonging*

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## **I. Introduction And Literature Review**

### **1.1 Introduction**

With the rapid change of media environment and the general improvement of living standards, people are more and more involved in brand community organizations in the process of shopping, entertainment or learning. Under the background of the "Internet +" era, brand communities of various forms and sizes have grown stronger. Brand communities in the new era, through the Internet, new media and other technical channels, are no longer constrained by the traditional form of geographical and temporal constraints, and take brand products and services as the core, gathering consumer groups with similar hobbies and values. Therefore, the definition of brand community is a non-geographic social network based on the core brand consumers.

In the brand community, brand value co-creation is an important behavior. Value co-creation refers to the theory that the future competition of enterprises put forward by management master Prahalad et al at the beginning of the 21st century will depend on a new method of value creation, that is, individual-centered, value creation by consumers and enterprises together. According to the traditional view of value creation, value is created by enterprises and transmitted to consumers through exchange. Consumers are not the creators of value, but the users or consumers of value. With the change of environment, the role of consumers has changed greatly. Consumers are no longer negative buyers, but have become active participants. Consumers actively participate in R&D, design and production of enterprises, and contribute their knowledge and skills in the field of consumption to create better consumer experience. All these show that value is not only derived from producers, but also based on consumer participation, which is from the co-creation of consumers and enterprises or other stakeholders, and that value is ultimately determined by consumers.

Brand community and brand value co-creation are based on the interaction between enterprises and consumers. Brand community provides a platform for brand value co-creation, and brand value co-creation is one of the important outputs of brand community. A good brand community environment promotes consumers' willingness to participate in brand value co-creation. In order to analyze which specific characteristics of brand community have an impact on consumers' willingness to participate in brand value co-creation, that is the main research content of paper.

In order to better understand the impact of consumer behavior in brand communities, the research on brand communities will be conducted from the perspectives of Consumer Citizenship Behavior (Wang Tingting, 2015), network relationship between consumers (Zhao Jianbin, 2015), characteristics and interaction of community members (Jiao Huihui, 2016) or consumer participation motivation (Gao Zhimin, 2016). Consumer behavior has a certain impact on brand relationship quality and community performance.

Some scholars consider the influence of brand community value. Zhu Zheting (2015) systematically discusses the dimensions of brand community value and brand trust structure, and establishes a mechanism model between brand community value and brand trust. The relationship between brand community value and

brand trust is understood through customer experience as an intermediary variable. Gao Qian (2014) proposed a relationship model of virtual brand community value, community identity and brand identity.

Another kind of research perspective is from the characteristics of the brand community, to study its impact on the quality of brand relationship (Zhu Jin, 2012), brand loyalty (Shen Yuqi, 2016), and the correlation between the dimensions of brand community characteristics and customer belonging and loyalty (Xu Wei, Jiang Ruodun, Shengwei, 2010). This kind of research no longer focuses on the behavior and motivation of consumers themselves, starting from the characteristics of brand community, emphasizing the integrity, integrity and consistency.

NiuZhenbang (2015) believes that the factors influencing consumers'common desire for brand value include the interaction between consumers and enterprises, consumers and employees, consumers and consumers. Zhang Xinsheng (2017) believes that the quality of brand relationship plays a complete mediating role in the relationship between the characteristics of virtual community and the willingness of consumers to participate in value creation. Under the mediating role of the characteristics of virtual community, on the one hand, through the mediating role of consumers'trust in virtual community, it positively affects their willingness to participate in value creation; on the other hand, consumers' satisfaction and trust in the community playstwo-tier intermediary role positively to affect consumers'willingness to participate in value creation.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

The purpose of this paper is to study the impact of four basic characteristics of cross-border e-commerce websites (Kaola of Netease) on consumers'willingness to participate in brand value co-creation through empirical research methods, such as consumer informativeness, social interaction, common awareness and technical ease of use, taking the cross-border e-commerce websites (Kaola of Netease) as an example.

## **II. Research Methodology And Data Analysis**

This paper uses literature analysis, interview, analytic hierarchy process, questionnaire survey method. This paper uses literature analysis, interview and analytic hierarchy process to analyze the scale of brand community characteristics and brand performance. Zhu Jin (2012) believes that there are four types of brand community characteristics, consumer information, social interaction, common awareness and technology easy to use. Xu Wei and other scholars (2010) think that the characteristic dimensions of brand community characteristics are: core consumers, similar consciousness, tradition and spirit, moral responsibility. Communicate with experts through interviews to supplement and modify scalar alternatives. These scales are made into tables, and the experts are scored. According to the score and proportion, the final scales are obtained by analytic hierarchy process. The so-called Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP).

## **III. Research Hypotheses And Conclusions**

Based on the literature, the hypothesis of the impact of brand community characteristics on brand performance is put forward. Questionnaire scales were distributed to brand communities and collected. Using the data collected by the questionnaire, SPSS software is used to verify the hypothesis is correct and the impact is significant.

The characteristics of brand community determine the internal environment of brand community. A good brand community environment includes freedom, sharing, support, incentives and innovation. In the brand community, consumers can achieve their personal sense of achievement through participation and interaction, spiritually and materially. Good environmental conditions can promote the group identity of the members of the community, thereby strengthening the brand identity of consumers. Fan Zhiguo and other scholars (2016) have shown that both group identity and brand identity can positively affect value creation activities. Thus, the following conclusion can be made:

H1: The characteristics of brand community have a positive impact on consumers'willingness to participate in brand value creation.

Core customers refer to consumers who have certain leadership in the brand community. Such consumers are not necessarily the most consumed in the community, but they occupy a large proportion, and have strong autonomy, are willing to participate in interaction, and have a strong sense of citizenship. Such consumers can easily influence follower consumers in many aspects, such as purchase decision-making and interactive decision-making. So we assume that:

H1a: The existence of core customers has a positive impact on consumers'willingness to participate in brand value creation.

The interaction and even social experience of consumers in brand community will affect consumers'overall impression of brand community, which may affect consumers' initiative. Common sense in the collective is easier for consumers to make common decisions and create together.

H1b: Social interaction has a positive impact on consumers'willingness to participate in brand value creation.

H1c: Common sense has a positive impact on consumers' willingness to participate in brand value creation. Technological ease of use refers to whether consumers have access to the relevant technologies of commodity use and whether they can understand the value of technology for commodity-driven. If consumers have a thorough understanding of these issues, they will be more able and interested in further experimenting with product design and development.

H1d: Technological ease of use has a positive impact on consumers' willingness to participate in brand value creation.

According to the research of Xu Wei and other scholars (2010), brand community characteristics have an impact on consumers' sense of belonging. Zhang Xinsheng (2017) validated that consumers' sense of belonging has a certain impact on their willingness to participate in brand value creation. This study assumes that consumer belonging plays a complete mediating role in the influence of brand community characteristics on consumers' willingness to participate in brand value co-creation. Thus, the following assumptions can be made:

H2: Brand community characteristics have a positive impact on consumers' sense of belonging.

H3: Consumers' sense of belonging has a positive impact on consumers' willingness to participate in brand value creation.

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