A Study of College Students' Sport Shoes Brand Image Cognition and Trust on Loyalty

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between College students' cognitive sports shoes brand image, trust and loyalty. This study takes the students of the School of Physical Education, Putian University, China. By means of census, a total of 410 valid questionnaires were obtained. After statistical analysis, this study found that: (1) There are no differences in sports shoes brand image, trust and loyalty among different college students. However, there are significant differences in different grades. (2) College students' sports shoes brand image and trust can predict brand loyalty. According to the above results, this study not only puts forward marketing suggestions to the practical circles, but also provides the direction of study for future researchers.*

Keywords: *brand image, brand trust, brand loyalty, sport shoes.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the sports shoes launched by various sports brand manufacturers in the market have very high similarity in features such as function and appearance, which often makes consumers do not know how to make a choice. When the similarity and homogeneity of products are high, the process of identifying products is a competition among brands. When consumers make choices according to different needs, the brand image is very important. Therefore, the brand image has become an important factor in marketing.Brand image can create intangible added value for consumers and make consumers trust the brand [1]. For enterprises, it can also be clearly separated from other competitive brands, forming intangible assets of the company and difficult to be imitated.In other words, when consumers make a purchase decision, they can choose the brand they trust to reduce the risk [2]. Brand trust helps to reduce the uncertainty in the minds of consumers. In this case, the role of trust is to reduce consumers' concerns and make them feel safe about the brand [3].In relevant research, it is also found that consumers' brand trust has an effect on brand loyalty [4].As college students are the main group of sports shoes consumption, according to the above, the main motivation of this study is to understand college students' brand image, trust and loyalty to sports shoes. It is hoped that the results of the analysis can provide a reference for the industry in marketing.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Brand Image

There are many definitions of brand image. Morgan and Hunt [5] defined brand image as the generalization and evaluation of the connotation and characteristics of a brand by the consumer.For example, Low and Lamb [6] defined brand image as "consumers' rational or emotional perception of a specific brand" (p.352).Chen and Myagmarsuren [7] defined brand image as "a subjective perception, a psychological representation of functional and nonfunctional information about products or services" (p.960).Generally speaking, brand image refers to the perception, understanding, thoughts and feelings of the brand reflected by the brand association in consumers' memory, as well as the sum of the brand related activities undertaken by the organization [8].Kirmani and Zeithmal [9] pointed out that brand image is composed of five elements of consumers: perceived quality, brand attitude, perceived value, feeling, brand association and advertising attitude.Keller [10] proposed the brand

measurement dimension, which holds that brand image is the perceptual reflection of brand association in customer memory. In the measurement model, brand association is classified according to attribute and functional, symbolic and experiential interests and attitudes, and brand image is measured through different types of brand association, preference, intensity and uniqueness.

2.2. Brand Trust

The concept of brand trust is widely recognized as a key driver of consumer decision-making, especially in the choice of brand and brand relationship [11, 12].Chaudhuri and Holbrook [13] defined brand trust as "ordinary consumers are willing to 'rely on the ability of the brand to perform its specified functions'" (p.82).Similarly, Munuera-Aleman et al. [14] defined brand trust as "confident expectation of brand reliability and intention" (p.37).Similarly, Hawass [15] defined brand trust as "a kind of relationship chemistry, where customers are emotionally and rationally attached to specific brand names" (p.87).Therefore, Chen and Cheng [16] believe that trust is described as the market willingness of customers to return to the brand. In addition, Chinomona and Maziriri [17] defined brand trust as the customer's intention for the brand, taking into account the advantages and solutions of consumers, as well as the ability, ability and necessity to realize the wishes and needs of customers.Gupta and Ramachandran [18] believe that brand trust requires a prudent approach. Therefore, it is likely to describe that brand trust in enterprise relations is the key factor to define individual mentality [19].Morgan and hunt [5] divided consumer brand trust into brand quality, brand image, corporate values and brand identity. Among them, brand quality is defined as: the internal quality, cost performance and service quality of brand goods felt by consumers.

2.3. Brand Loyalty

The definition of brand loyalty and related research the concept of brand loyalty was put forward by Jacoby and Olson, who believed that brand loyalty is not a random behavior response, but a long-term purchase behavior.The early concept of brand loyalty mainly focused on behavior, purchase mode or the possibility of re purchase [20].However, this view cannot measure loyalty alone, and purchasing behavior is a misleading indication of loyalty. Therefore, another aspect of loyalty attitude refers to the psychological tendency of consumers, including the attitude, preference and commitment to the brand.Attitude loyalty leads to the potential factors of repeat purchase bias behavior [21]. From the above two points of view, brand loyalty is defined as a firm commitment to the brand in the future regardless of environmental factors [13].According to this definition, behavioral loyalty tends to bring higher market share, while attitudinal loyalty will bring higher relative brand value [22].Three main methods are widely accepted as the measurement standards of loyalty: attitude loyalty, behavior loyalty and combination loyalty [23].The researchers believe that the combined method involving attitude and behavior is the most robust and appropriate method in the current research, because it captures the two main influencing factors of consumer decision-making [24].

3. METHOD

3.1. Subjects and Sampling

This study takes the students of School of Physical Education as the research as the subjects in Putian University, Fujian Province, China. Adopts the way of general survey, and carries out the survey in class. A total of 436 questionnaires were sent out and 410 questionnaires were collected. After deducting the incomplete answers, a total of 392 valid questionnaires were obtained, and the effective questionnaire rate was 89%.

3.2. Questionnaire

The questionnaire is divided into four parts. The first part is the students' personal background information, including gender and grade. The second part is the brand image scale, with 19 questions, mainly to understand the image of college students on their sports shoes, such as the practicability, function, comfort, feeling and symbol of the brand.This scale mainly refers to Park, Jaworski and Mmaclinnis [25] developed the concept of brand image, any brand product can be classified into three aspects of product image measurement: functionality, symbolism and experience, and modified the wording of the items to fit the context of this study.The third part is the brand trust scale,this scale mainly references to the relevant research on sports shoe brand trust [26, 27], with a total of 17 questions. This scale mainly to understand college students' confidence, reputation, safety, security

and meeting expectations of their sports shoes.The fourth part is the brand loyalty scale, which has 7 questions, mainly to understand whether college students have been using, purchasing and using their sports shoes.The above scale is mainly based on the relevant research on brand loyalty [26, 27].

3.3. Data Analysis Methods

The valid questionnaires in this study were analyzed using the following steps: (1) Using the frequency distribution and percentage of descriptive statistics, analyze the background information of students. (2) Using the t-test, analyze the differences in brand image, trust, loyalty among students of different gender.(3) Using one-way ANOVA analysis to analyze the differences in brand image, trust, loyalty among students of different grade.When significant differences between groups were found, LSD post-hoc comparison method was used to further analyze the existence of differences between groups. Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the prediction of students' brand image cognition and trust on brand loyalty.

3.4. Reliability and Validity Analysis of Research Scale

3.4.1. Brand image scale

After exploratory factor analysis, the brand image scale of this study takes four factors. Each factor is named image of functional, comfort, life and symbolic according to the characteristics of items. The cumulative variation of this scale is 75.12, which can explain that the students' cognitive explanatory power of sports shoe brand image reaches 75.12%, as shown in Table 1.

Table1. *Summary of exploratory factor analysis of brand image analysis*

Items	Functional	Comfort	Life	Symbolic
3. 3. Sports shoes have superior functions	.767			
5. Sports shoes are reliable	.707			
2. Overall, sports shoes are well designed	.699			
1. Sports shoes are very practical	.697			
4. Sports shoes will continue to improve function	.694			
6. The quality of sports shoes is very good	.570			
11. Sports shoes have a good reputation	.503			
15. Give me a comfortable feeling		.753		
14. Give me a warm feeling		.663		
18. Can reflect my personal style		.651		
7. Sports shoes represent fashion		.624		
13. Give me a comfortable feeling		.509		
19. Emphasize the consumer demand for pursuing the joy of life			.764	
16. Give me a sense of joy			.725	
12. Give me an interesting feeling			.577	
17. Emphasize the consumer demand for diversified life			.565	
8. It can be used as a symbol of social status				.811
9. My friend owns a lot of sports shoes of this brand				.722
10. It is a leading brand				.548
Eigenvalue	4.45	3.88	3.51	2.43
Variance	23.43	20.44	18.45	12.79
Cumulative variance	23.43	43.87	62.33	75.12

3.4.1. Brand trust scale

After exploratory factor analysis, the brand trust scale of this study takes three factors. Each factor is named brand commitment, brand trust and brand satisfaction according to the characteristics of the options. The cumulative variance of this scale is 73.70, and the explanatory power of explaining brand image is 73.70%, as shown in Table 2. Since the factor load of question 5 is less than 0.5, it is deleted.

Table2. *Summary of exploratory factor analysis of brand trust analysis*

Items	Brand commitment	Brand trust	Brand satisfaction
14. The brand will keep its promise to customers	.772		
13.I rely on the brand's sport shoes	.750		
16. This brand is safe	.721		

15. Professional, can provide good service	.645		
11. Meet the use needs of customers	.617		
17. The brand meets my expectations	.614		
1. It is a trustworthy brand		.830	
2. Have good reputation		.724	
4. I have confidence in the brand of sports shoes		.685	
3. The use quality is guaranteed		.623	
7. The products of this brand are reliable in quality		.569	
10. The values conveyed by the brand are consistent with my ideas.			.795
6. Will not conceal product defect information			.694
8.Be sincere and care about customer needs			.652
12. Pay attention to customers' use evaluation of products			.582
9. All series of products satisfy me			.557
Eigenvalue	4.42	4.33	3.79
Variance	25.98	25.44	22.28
Cumulative variance	25.98	51.42	73.70

3.4.3. Reliability analysis

The results show that the brand image scale Cronbach's α value is.97; brand trust scale Cronbach's α value is.97; loyalty scale Cronbach's α value is.87. The above results show that the scales in this study have high reliability.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Subjects Characteristic Analysis

Among the 391 valid questionnaires collected in this study, 339 were male (86.7%) and 52 were female (13.3%). In the grade part, there are 125 (32%) in freshman, 91 (23.3%) in sophomore, 111 (28.4%) in junior and 64 (16.4%) in senior.

4.2. Difference Analysis

This study uses t-test to analyze the differences of sports shoe purchase behavior between students of different genders. The results show that there are no significant differences in brand image (t=1.41, P>.05), brand trust (t=.94, P>.05) and loyalty (t=. 01, P>.05). In terms of different grades, this study uses one-way ANOVA for analysis, and the results are shown in Table 3.

Table3. *Summary of one-way ANOVA results of age*

Factors	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Post-hoc comparison
Brand image	40993.199	3	13664.400	119.52	.000	1>2,4
	44246.197	387	114.331			3>1,2,4
	85239.396	390				
Brand trust	34662.851	3	11554.284	101.83	.000	1>2,4
	43911.927	387	113.468			3>1,2,4
	78574.777	390				
Brand loyalty	7011.087	3	2337.029	73.27	.000	1>2,4
	12343.967	387	31.897			3>1,2,4
	19355.054	390				

Source: **p< .05, 1.freshman, 2. sophomore, 3. junior,4. senior.*

The results of one-way ANOVA in Table 3 show that students of different grades have significant differences in brand image (F=119.52, P<.05), brand trust (F=101.83, P<.05) and brand loyalty (F=73.27, P<.05). The results of post comparison are the same in terms of brand image, brand trust and brand loyalty. Freshman is higher than sophomore and senior respectively. In addition, junior is also higher than freshman, sophomore, and senior.

4.3. Regression Analysis

4.3.1. Regression Analysis of Brand Image and Brand Loyalty

Table4. *summary of regression analysis between brand image andloyalty*

Variables	B	Std Error	Beta	t	Sig

Functional	.54	.11	.31	4.94**	.000
Comfort	.33	.09	.23	3.40**	.001
Life	.28	.12	.15	2.42**	.016
Symbolic	.41	.12	.17	3.36**	.001
R =.786 R^2=.602 adj R^2=.598 F=146.19**					

Source: *p<.05 , **p<.01*

According to the analysis results in Table 4, this study takes the four factors of brand image as the predict variable and the "brand loyalty" factor as the dependent variable. Using the results of multiple stepwise regression analysis, it is found that the four factors of image of functional (t= 4.94, p< 05), "comfort" (t=3.40, p<.05), "life" (t =2.42, p<. 05) and "symbolic" (t=3.36, p<.05) can predict loyalty, R2 =. 602, which can predict 60.2%.

4.3.2. Regression analysis of brand trust and brand loyalty

Table5. *summary of regression analysis between brand trust and loyalty*

Variables	B	Std Error	Beta	t	Sig
Brand commitment	.83	.08	.57	10.39**	.000
Brand trust	.09	.08	.06	1.11	.267
Brand satisfaction	.38	.09	.25	4.42**	.000
R =.844 R^2=.712 adj R^2=.71 F=319.86**					

Source: *p<.05 , **p<.01*

According to the analysis results in Table 5, this study takes the three factors of brand trust as the predict variable and the "brand loyalty" factor as the dependent variable. Using the results of multiple stepwise regression analysis, it is found that the two factors of brand commitment (t=10.39, p< 05) and brand satisfaction (t=4.42, p<.05) can predict loyalty, R^2=.712, which can predict 71.2%.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1. Conclusion

- There are significant differences in the cognition of brand image among college students. Among them, the junior students pay the most attention to the function, comfort, life and symbolic image of the brand when buying sports shoes.

- There are significant differences in the cognition of trust and loyalty among college students. Among them, the junior students have a high degree of commitment and trust in the fixed brand of sports shoes when purchasing. And they have high loyalty to the most frequently bought sports shoes.

- College students' brand loyalty to sports shoes will be affected by the brand's functionality, comfort, lifestyle and symbolic image.

- College students' brand loyalty to sports shoes will be affected by the brand they most often promise to buy and the degree of trust.

5.2. Suggestion

According to the research results, brand image can positively affect brand trust, and brand trust can affect brand loyalty. This study suggests that the industry can use the association of brand slogans, because the effect brought by brand slogans can strengthen consumers' association of the brand, coupled with the semantic communication, so that consumers can better associate with the effect that the brand wants to convey, and this effect is helpful to establish the brand image.As consumers' brand loyalty to sports shoes is generally not high, it is not easy to buy the same brand. There will be a large market for new entrants, and the primary goal is to establish brand loyalty and develop customer sources. For existing manufacturers, it is necessary to develop new customer base and maintain the original consumer market.This study suggests that future researchers can go further, carry out follow-up discussion on brand phenomenon, and add other variables that can affect customer loyalty to

expand the research framework. In addition, this study suggests that future researchers continue to expand the sample size or add some new influencing variables, and readjust the order relationship between variables in the framework for analysis.

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