Study on the Influence of the Interaction between Brand and Spokesperson on the Brand Loyalty of Fan Customers

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Abstract: Based on the identity theory, this paper constructs a research model to explore whether the interaction between the brand and the spokesperson will affect the brand loyalty of fans, and how to affect the brand loyalty. The results show that: the interaction between brand and spokesperson has a significant positive impact on fans' brand cognitive attitude, brand emotional attitude and brand self-connection. Fans' brand cognitive attitude and brand emotional attitude have a significant positive impact on fans' brand loyalty; Brand self-connection can improve the brand loyalty of fans by improving the brand emotional attitude of fans.

Keywords: Brand attitude, Brand-self connection, Brand loyalty, Interaction

1. Introduction

In traditional celebrity endorsements, most brands combine celebrity images with brand products for corresponding advertisement shooting. But with the development of the Internet, the simple relationship between brands and spokespersons has been less popular with fans. In response to this change, many brands have begun to develop a new type of partnership with brand spokespersons and pay attention to the value of spokespersons. Then the interaction between the brand and the spokesperson is not limited to offline activities. For example, Magic Claw accompanies its spokesperson Wang Yibo to participate in motorcycle races, which have greatly improved fans' favorability of the endorsement brand.

Most of the existing researches are from the aspects of celebrity professionalism, appearance attractiveness and number of spokespersons. There is no research to explore the two-way interactive relationship between the brand and spokesperson. Based on this, this paper focuses on how the interaction between brand and spokespeople affects the brand loyalty of fan customers, and puts forward relevant management suggestions.

2. Literature Review and Research Hypothesis

2.1 Identity Theory

Identity refers to the mental process of identifying and imitating the attitudes and behaviors of others[2], it will lead to personal changes in emotions, attitudes and behaviors and make them consistent with the identified object[3]. Bandura's social cognition theory can be used to explain the influence of identification on people's attitudes and behaviors. It believes that the possibility of an individual performing a certain behavior depends on his identification with the behavior demonstrator. This identification process depends on people's perceived similarity between the behavior model and themselves. The greater the perceived similarity, the more likely people are to perform the demonstration behavior.

2.2 Interaction and Brand Attitude

The interaction between the brand and the spokesperson (IBS) includes interaction on Weibo, daily life interaction, work interaction, and various activities prepared by the brand for the spokesperson. Brand attitude refers to the evaluation and concept held on the brand[7]. Percy & Rossiter believes that cognitive factors and emotional factors constitute consumers' attitudes towards a certain brand[8].

Therefore, this article divides brand attitudes into brand cognitive attitudes and brand emotional attitudes for related discussions. Petty & Cacioppo[9] believes that when consumers have a deeper motivation to understand information, they will integrate relevant content to carry out in-depth processing of marketing content. When the brand and the spokesperson actively interact with each other frequently, IBS will bring more positive intervention information to the fan customers, allowing the fans to understand the brand more comprehensively and positively, and it will improve the fan customers' perception of the brand. Besides, celebrity endorsements can not only cause shallow-level cognition and attitude changes in tourists[10,11], but also can shape deep-level emotions[12]. Based on this, the following assumptions are made:

H1: IBS has a significant positive impact on the fan customers' brand perception and attitude

H2: IBS has a positive impact on the fans The customer's brand emotional attitude has a significant positive impact

2.3 Interaction and Brand-Self Connection

The key role of the brand spokesperson is to show the brand identity, thereby helping consumers to establish a relationship with the brand, that is, self-brand connection[13]. Self-brand connection refers to the degree to which consumers integrate the brand into their self-concept[1]. When fans identify with their idol, the more likely they are to imitate the behavior advocated and demonstrated by the spokesperson. When their idols interact with the brand, they will also interact more with the brand, thereby establishing a stronger brand-self connection. Based on this, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: IBS has a significant positive impact on the brand self-connection of fan customers.

2.4 Brand Attitude, Brand-Self-Connection and Brand Loyalty

Foreign scholars Dick emphasize that brand loyalty includes repeated purchases. Behavior and a strong and lasting positive attitude towards the brand[6], Brand attitude is different from brand loyalty. Consumers can show a positive attitude towards multiple brands at the same time, but it is more difficult to prove loyalty[4]. Consumers with high brand-self connection maintain a high degree of recognition, love and attachment to the brand through connection with group members, and promote their attitude towards the brand in a positive direction[1], which indicates that brand-self connection may affect brand loyalty through influencing consumers' brand emotional attitude . Accordingly, this article proposes the following hypotheses:

H4: Brand perception attitude has a significant positive impact on fan customer brand loyalty

H5: Brand emotional attitude has a significant positive impact on fan customer brand loyalty

H6: Brand-self-connection has a significant positive impact on the emotional attitudes of fans and customers

3. Research Methods

3.1 Measures

For the potential variable of the interaction between the brand and the spokesperson, this paper measures it from the frequency, diversity, effectiveness and sincerity of the interaction. The four influencing variables were measured using a 5-level Likert scale for brand cognitive attitude and brand emotional attitude, reference is made to the 6-item measurement scale integrated by Lafferty and Bagezzi, Lee & Van. For the measurement of brand-self association, the scale developed by Sprott is referred.

3.2 Data Collection

The subject of this questionnaire is Wang Yibo fans, as a new generation idol, Wang Yibo has a huge fan base, so choosing his fan group as the research object has a certain representativeness. The questionnaire collection of this study is mainly carried out online. This survey collected a total of 119 questionnaires, 99 valid questionnaires. The questionnaire shows that women (86.87%) are

significantly higher than men (13.13%), and the age is concentrated in 18-25 years (82.83%) and under 18 (10.1%).

3.3 Data Analysis Method

This paper uses the partial least squares (PLS) path analysis method. The empirical principle believes that the sample size for PLS analysis should be 10 times the maximum number of paths to endogenous variables in the structural model[5]. In the model constructed in this paper, the maximum number of observed variables of latent variables is 4, and the sample size of this paper is 99, which meets the requirements.

4. Research Findings

4.1 Measurement Model

In terms of reliability, the a value of all variables has reached 0.7 or more, and the CR value has also reached 0.7 or more, all exceed the acceptable values recommended by the researchers. In terms of validity, the AVE values of all variables in this model are greater than 0.5, which shows that the measurement model meets the requirements of reliability and validity.

Table 1 Reliability and Validity

	α	CR	AVE	IBS	BSC	BC	BA	BI
IBS	0.900	0.934	0.826	0.831	-	-	-	-
BSC	0.850	0.909	0.768	0.805	0.806	-	-	-
BC	0.782	0.872	0.695	0.822	0.754	0.719	-	-
BA	0.894	0.934	0.826	0.865	0.844	0.818	0.861	-
BI	0.834	0.900	0.750	0.857	0.780	0.855	0.871	0.784

Note: IBS- interaction, BSC- brand - self-connection, BC- brand cognitive attitude, BA- brand emotional attitude, BI- fan customer loyalty

4.2 Structural Model

This article mainly uses SRMR, d_G and d_ULS index, the smaller the SRMR value, the higher the model adaptation. The SRMR of this model is 0.077 lower than 0.08, at the same time d_G (0.664) and d_ULS (0.0.816) values are less than the upper limit of the 99% confidence interval, indicating that the model has passed the fitness test. From the path analysis results, a total of 6 paths are significant, IBS→BA (0.517), IBS→BC (0.832), IBS→BSC (0.816), BA→BI (0.522), BC→ BI (0.427), BSC→BA (0.428). Thus, it is assumed that H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6 are all verified.

5. Discussion of Findings

This paper provides a new perspective for the research of celebrity endorsements, namely from the perspective of the two-way interaction between the brand and the spokesperson. Through data analysis, this article can draw the following conclusions: IBS affects the brand perception attitude, emotional attitude and brand-self-connection positively. The brand cognition and brand emotional attitude have a significant positive impact on the brand loyalty of fan customers. Besides, the brand-self-connection of fan customers improves their brand loyalty by improving the brand emotional attitude.

6. Practical Implications

Brand loyalty is an important parameter to measure whether customers are loyal to the brand. The higher the brand loyalty, the weaker the customer will be affected by the competitive behavior of other companies. Compared with the fans of the brand itself, fans is huge but not loyal. Therefore, improving the loyalty of such customers is of great significance to the development of enterprises. Based on results above, the following suggestions are put forward: Firstly, the brand should increase the interaction with the spokesperson in daily life. A large number of daily interactions will increase fan customers' attention to the brand, so that fans can have a more comprehensive understanding of the brand, which is conducive to increasing fans customer loyalty. Strengthening the interaction between

the two parties and increasing the loyalty of fans and customers is beneficial to the long-term development of the company and the company will obtain the greatest value of celebrity endorsements. From a deeper perspective, the interaction is actually a closer relationship between the brand and the spokesperson. They interact like friends and jointly create higher commercial value. If we want to maintain or increase the loyalty of fans and customers, the brand must treat the brand spokesperson from the perspective of fans to gain the recognition and empathy of fans.

7. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This research focuses on the impact of the interaction between the brand and the spokesperson on the loyalty of fans, but classification of these brands is not considered. Will the fan customer loyalty of different brand categories get different research conclusions? This article does not discuss the brand category. In the future, we can conduct more in-depth and specific research on the brand category perspective. In fact, the individual's loyalty is affected by self-construction. The self is divided into independent self and related self, When the independent self and the related self are subjected to the same external stimulus, they produce different behaviors. Therefore, the type of self-construction may have a moderating effect on the loyalty of fan customers. In the future, further research can be conducted on the regulating effect of self-construction.

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