

The Influence Mechanism of Purchase Intention of Domestic Brand Apparel for Middle-aged and Elderly People from the Consumption View

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Abstract:

This paper explores the mechanism influencing middle-aged and elderly people's willingness to purchase domestic brand apparel from the perspective of consumption. The authors use the structural equation modeling method, and analyze from the level of rational consumption and perceptual consumption. The results show that at the rational consumption level, product perceptions promote and hinder middle-aged and elderly consumers' willingness to purchase domestic brands by positively influencing perceived value and negatively influencing perceived risk, respectively. At the level of perceptual consumption, the degree of identity integration can contribute to the willingness of middle-aged and elderly consumers to purchase domestic brands by negatively influencing psychological distance and positively influencing perceived competence. In addition, although the degree of identity integration can positively affect warmth perception, there is no correlation between warmth perception and purchase intention. Finally, the total effect of rational consumption path on purchase intention is much larger than that of perceptual consumption path.

Keywords: *Middle-aged group; The elderly; Domestic brand; Rational consumption; Perceptual consumption; Intention.*

I. INTRODUCTION

With the development of the Internet economy and the background of consumer upgrading, new consumer demand has promoted the evolution and development of domestic brand apparel. With the promotion of policies, brand innovation and upgrading, as well as the support of "Generation Z" young consumers, domestic brand apparel has once again returned to the public view. However, as the original consumer group of domestic brands, the middle-aged and elderly people have not received the attention of most domestic brand manufacturers in the consumer environment dominated by "Generation Z" in terms of their demand and willingness to purchase domestic brand apparel. As China's aging process accelerates, the proportion of middle-aged and elderly people is increasing, their consumption demand continues to be released, the middle-aged and elderly market continues to expand, the consumption in foreign trade of clothing is also growing rapidly. When the youth market gradually tends to saturate, it is necessary for

domestic brand apparel enterprises to extend product positioning to the middle-aged and elderly market. In this context, it is important to study the influence mechanism of the purchase intention of domestic brand apparel for the middle-aged and the elderly. It is needful to know whether the original consumption pattern and marketing strategy of domestic brand apparel for young consumers are also suitable for the middle-aged and the elderly, and whether there are differences between the focus of the middle-aged and the young consumers.

Since the 20th century, scholars in many fields have explored a great deal about consumer buying behavior and developed a conceptual framework of consumer psychology and behavior based on the human behavior model proposed by Levin. They believe that consumer psychology is the most important influencing factor that affects consumers' willingness to purchase.

Consumption psychology can be divided into rational and emotional dimensions, where rational consumption psychology focuses on the utility, quality and matching degree of goods, while emotional consumption psychology is more inclined to the emotional experience when buying products. For different age groups, their consumption psychology may differ greatly. As a group whose physiology and psychology are in a special period, the middle-aged and elderly groups have relatively conservative consumption habits, are more sensitive to prices, and have a certain degree of psychological rejection of various new shopping channels. At the same time, they have stronger consumption motives because their long-term clothing purchase needs are not satisfied. Based on the above background, this paper takes consumer psychology as the entry point, and constructs a model of factors influencing the purchase intention of domestic brand apparel for middle-aged and elderly people from two perspectives: rational psychology and emotional psychology, combining perceived value, perceived risk, identity integration, psychological distance and stereotype theory. The paper uses structural equations to carry out empirical research in order to provide a theoretical source and basis for the future development and product positioning of domestic brand apparel.

II. FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

2.1 Product Cognition

Product cognition means the degree of consumers' understanding of product information, including intuitive information such as name, size and packaging, as well as abstract contents such as function, brand and culture, etc. Product cognition in the model refers to the degree of middle-aged and elderly people's access to information about the characteristics of domestic brand apparel. He Wenli [1] et al. found that an increase in consumer awareness of traceable tea products would enhance their trust in the products, reduce consumers' perceived risk and, in turn, increase consumers' willingness to purchase. Peng Zhen [2] et al. also found that consumers' perceptions of product attributes positively affect perceived value and negatively affect perceived risk based on an empirical study of consumers' online travel products. For the middle-aged and elderly groups, if they have higher perceptions of the appearance and style of domestic branded apparel products, they will have higher evaluations of the products and will also perceive lower risks in purchasing such products. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed in this paper.

H1: Product perception has a positive effect on perceived value

H2: Product perception has a negative effect on perceived risk

2.2 Identity Integration

Swann [3] et al. proposed that identity integration is an "internal sense of oneness" with the group and its individual members based on social identity theory and self-validation theory, which stimulates pro-group behavior in individuals. The middle-aged and elderly groups' close association with domestic brands, logos and culture can influence their psychological distance to the products and focus on appreciating the positive attributes of domestic brands, thus contributing to the construction of positive stereotypes of domestic brands among the middle-aged and elderly groups. For example, Liang Fangmei et al. [4] found through an experimental study that identity fusion reduces users' psychological distance and significantly and positively affects warmth perception. Liu Xiaoyuan [5] found that the degree of identity integration has a positive effect on the perceived warmth and perceived competence of national brands based on a study of the purchasing behavior of Generation Z consumers. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis.

H3: Identity integration has a negative effect on psychological distance

H4: Identity integration has a positive effect on warmth perception

H5: Identity integration has a positive effect on perceived competence

2.3 Perceived Value

Perceived value is a subjective evaluation of consumers' feelings after weighing the perceived benefits of a product or service against its cost. The perceived value of products by middle-aged and elderly people includes functional value, social value, emotional value, etc., all of which will influence their purchase intention. For example, Sheth [6] analyzed that perceived value positively influences customers' purchase behavior in five dimensions: emotional value, social value, contextual value, functional value, and cognitive value. Zhong Kai [7] used online consumers as the research object and verified that perceived value has a significant positive effect on purchase intention in three dimensions: functional value, emotional value, and social value. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis.

H6: Perceived value has a positive effect on purchase intention

2.4 Perceived Risk

Bauer [8], an American scholar, was the first to apply the theory of perceived risk to the study of consumer behavior. He viewed consumer decision making as a risk-taking behavior in which consumers' subjective perceptions of negative outcomes that they cannot accurately anticipate are perceived risks. Yeung R M W et al [9] combined marketing and psychometric paradigms and found that perceived risk itself was measured through health, money, time, lifestyle and taste loss and significantly influenced purchase behavior. Liao Wenliang [10] argued that consumers' purchase decisions are largely influenced by perceived

risk, where social risk has a significant negative effect on consumers' purchase intention. The middle-aged and elderly groups may be worried about negative effects such as criticism from others for wearing domestic brand clothing, which may have an impact on purchase intention. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed in this paper.

H7: Perceived risk has a negative effect on purchase intention

2.5 Psychological Distance

Psychological distance is considered to be an important tool to describe the degree of fit and intermingling between the user and the perceived object. Wang Xiaozhen et al. [11] studied the purchase intention of home PV based on subsidy policy and found that the reduction of psychological distance increases their purchase intention. Zhao Yixuan [12] et al. found that the decrease in consumer psychological distance significantly and positively affected purchase intention by studying the effect of product presentation on consumers' purchase intention in online channels. This study argued that the degree of perceived psychological distance of the product through product information by the middle-aged and elderly groups affects the generation of their final purchase intention. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed in this paper.

H8: Psychological distance has a negative effect on purchase intention

2.6 Stereotype

Stereotypes, as psychological representations of consumers' perceptions of products, brands and corporate images, consist of two main dimensions, namely "warmth" and "competence" [13]. When consumers are exposed to information stimuli, they are more likely to remember stereotype-consistent messages and have higher evaluations of products that are consistent with their own stereotypes. Some studies have shown that consumers in Asia prefer stereotype-consistent messages [14]. As a domestic brand of apparel with Chinese elements, when the brand forms the same impression with middle-aged and elderly consumers, they tend to prefer and trust the brand, which in turn leads to the purchase intention. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypotheses.

H9: Warmth perception has a positive effect on purchase intention

H10: Ability perception has a positive effect on purchase intention

In summary, the research model of this paper is derived, as shown in Figure 1.

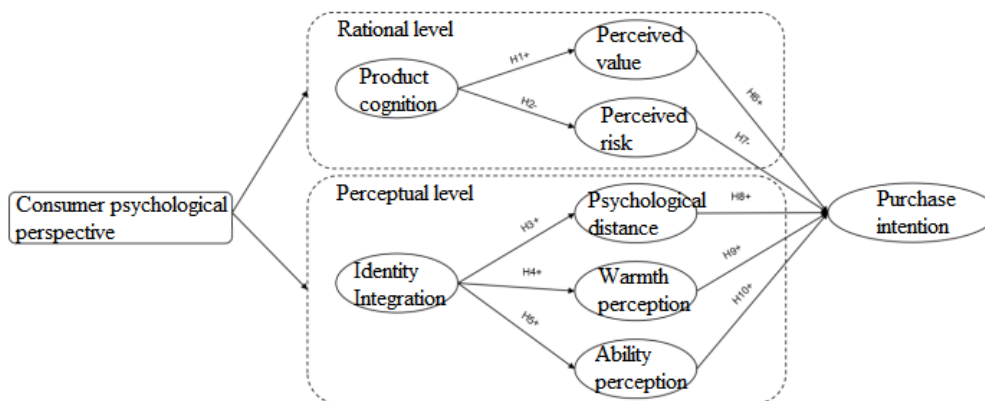


Figure 1 Influencing factor model of domestic brand apparel purchase intention of middle-aged and elderly groups

III. QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN AND DATA SOURCES

3.1 Questionnaire Design

In order to better reflect the influence of middle-aged and elderly people's consumption psychology on the purchase intention of domestic brand apparel, this paper drew on the scale design methods of Liu Xiaoyuan [5], Zhong Kai [7] and Gao Haixia [15] to design measurement items for the seven dimensions of consumption psychology and the purchase intention dimension, and modified and improved some of the items through pre-research. All latent variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale to help consumers better express their personal opinions and feelings, and the items measured by each latent variable in the model are shown in Table I.

TABLE I. Measurement question items

Measurement dimension	Potential variables	Measurement question items
Perceptual psychological level	Identity integration	I have deep feelings for my country
		I strongly recognize the traditional Chinese culture
		I prefer products with Chinese elements
	Psychological distance	I think the domestic brand of apparel real and reliable
		Domestic brand apparel can make me better integrated into society
		Domestic brand clothing can give me a sense of belonging and pride as a Chinese
	Warmth perception	The domestic brand of apparel gives people a warm and welcoming feeling
		The domestic brand of apparel gives an affinity
		Domestic brand apparel is more in line with the aesthetics and personality of Chinese people
	Ability perception	Domestic brands of apparel can be trusted
Domestic brands of apparel with high quality		

		I think the domestic brand of apparel has a very good prospect of development
Rational psychological level	Product cognition	I know very well the style of domestic brand apparel
		I understand the elements of domestic brand apparel and color matching
		I think domestic apparel meets my aesthetic sense
	Perceived value	The domestic brand of apparel can make me more easily accepted
		Domestic brand of apparel can make me win more praise
		Domestic brand apparel can make a better impression on me
		Wearing domestic brand apparel can make me feel good
		Wearing domestic brand apparel can make me feel more youthful
	Perceived risk	Wearing domestic brand apparel makes me feel dignified
		I am worried that it's inconvenient to wear domestic brand apparel in my daily work life
I am worried that the domestic brand of apparel will make me be pointed out by others		
Purchase intention		I am worried that the domestic brand of apparel is easily outdated
		I am willing to spend time buying domestic brand apparel
		I would like to replace other clothes with domestic brand apparel
		I would like to recommend my friends to buy domestic brand apparel together

3.2 Data Collection

In this paper, middle-aged and elderly consumers in Hefei City, Anhui Province were invited to fill in the questionnaire by scanning the code in each district of Hefei City. 550 questionnaires were collected, 144 invalid questionnaires with less than 100 seconds were excluded, and 406 valid questionnaires were finally obtained. According to the descriptive statistics of the sample, there were 148 males, accounting for 37%, and 258 females, accounting for 63%. Female consumers accounted for a larger proportion. In terms of age distribution, there were 299 people between 45-55 years old, accounting for 73.6% of the total respondents, 79 people between 56-65 years old, accounting for 19.5% of the respondents, and the smallest proportion of people over 65 years old, accounting for 6.9%. In terms of occupational distribution, civil servants/institutional workers accounted for the highest percentage, about 20%. This is followed by business managers and service industry personnel, with 16% and 15% respectively, while full-time fathers/full-time mothers accounted for about 8%. In terms of education level, the proportion of junior high school was 27%, and the proportion of high school was 21%. The percentage of bachelor's degree and above was 20%, which is in line with the characteristics of the times of middle and old age groups. The sample is in line with the actual situation in terms of gender proportion, age distribution, occupation distribution and education level.

IV. MODEL TESTING AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1 Reliability and Validity Test

TABLEII. Results of the reliability test of potential variables

Scale	Item number	Cronbach's α coefficient
Identity integration	3	0.859
Psychological distance	3	0.806
Warmth perception	3	0.855
Ability perception	3	0.822
Product cognition	3	0.831
Perceived value	6	0.924
Perceived risk	3	0.905
Purchase intention	3	0.846

In this paper, model validity was analyzed using AMOS 20.0 software, which yielded all Estimate values greater than 0. Standardized factor loadings (Std) located between 0.67-0.91, CR values were greater than 0.8 and AVE values were greater than 0.5 for each of the measured variables of latent variables, and the results of the analysis are shown in Table III.

TABLEIII. Results of the model convergent validity test

Potential variables	Observation variables	Estimate	Std	AVE	CR
Identity integration	A1	0.835	0.83	0.675	0.926
	A2	0.828	0.77		
	A3	0.837	0.85		
Psychological distance	B1	0.841	0.80	0.762	0.905
	B2	0.839	0.76		
	B3	0.745	0.74		
Warmth perception	C1	0.853	0.83	0.592	0.813
	C2	0.909	0.78		
	C3	0.855	0.83		
Ability perception	D1	0.804	0.88	0.666	0.857
	D2	0.761	0.80		
	D3	0.741	0.67		
Product cognition	E1	0.835	0.83	0.624	0.831
	E2	0.781	0.84		
	E3	0.832	0.70		
Perceived value	F1	0.882	0.83	0.668	0.857
	F2	0.804	0.84		
	F3	0.67	0.84		
	F4	0.849	0.84		
	F5	0.768	0.84		
	F6	0.832	0.75		

Perceived risk	G1	0.704	0.85	0.626	0.833
	G2	0.837	0.91		
	G3	0.826	0.85		
Purchase intention	H1	0.822	0.82	0.600	0.818
	H2	0.769	0.77		
	H3	0.73	0.73		

4.2 Model Fitting and Hypothesis Testing

In this paper, the parameters of the basic model were fitted and each test index is shown as follows: chi-squared degrees of freedom ratio = $1/953 < 2$, RMSEA = $0.049 < 0.08$, GFI = $0.928 > 0.09$, NFI = $0.927 > 0.09$, CFI = $0.959 > 0.09$, and the fit was good.

The standardized path coefficients among the latent variables of the model, the corresponding CR values, and the results of whether the hypotheses are supported are shown in Table IV, from which it can be seen that the hypotheses were significantly valid and consistent with the direction of the hypotheses, except for H9, which failed to pass the significance test.

TABLEIV. Results of the hypothesis test of the structure model of middle-aged and elderly people's willingness to buy domestic brand apparel

Hypotheses	Hypothetical path			Standardization coefficient	S.E.	C.R.	P	Test results
H1	Product cognition	-->	Perceived value	0.908	0.079	14.308	***	Accepted
H2	Product cognition	-->	Perceived risk	0.259	0.108	4.658	***	Accepted
H3	Identity integration	-->	Warmth perception	-0.177	0.03	-3.024	**	Accepted
H4	Identity integration	-->	Warmth perception	0.202	0.034	3.5	***	Accepted
H5	Identity integration	-->	Ability perception	0.133	0.035	2.301	**	Accepted
H6	Perceived value	-->	Purchase intention	0.495	0.047	9.204	***	Accepted
H7	Perceived risk	-->	Purchase intention	0.202	0.028	4.016	***	Accepted
H8	Psychological distance	-->	Purchase intention	-0.179	0.052	-3.527	***	Accepted
H9	Warmth perception	-->	Purchase intention	-0.033	0.044	-0.66	0.509	Rejected
H10	Ability perception	-->	Purchase intention	0.178	0.043	3.548	***	Accepted

Note: $p < 0.1$, denoted by *; $p < 0.05$, denoted by **; $p < 0.01$, denoted by ***

4.3 Path Effect Analysis

This paper quantified the influence of rational consumption psychology and emotional consumption psychology on middle-aged and elderly people's willingness to purchase domestic brand apparel. As shown in Table V, the total effect value ($0.908 \times 0.495 + 0.259 \times 0.202 = 0.502$) of rational consumption psychology and emotional consumption psychology on the purchase intention of middle-aged and old-aged people for domestic branded apparel was higher than the total effect value ($-0.177 \times (-0.179) + 0.133 \times 0.178 = 0.055$) of emotional path "product cognition--->perceived value/perceived risk--->purchase intention", which shows that rational consumption psychology dominates the purchase intention of middle-aged and old-aged people for domestic branded apparel.

TABLE V. Analysis of path effects

Intentional Impact		Psychological distance	Warmth perception	Ability perception	Perceived value	Perceived risk	Purchase intention	Purchase intention
		Direct effect						Total effect
Rational Level	Product cognition				0.908	0.259		0.502
	Perceived value						0.495	
	Perceived risk						0.202	
Perceptual level	Identity integration	-0.177	0.202	0.133				0.055
	Psychological distance						-0.179	
	Warmth perception							
	Ability perception						0.178	

V. CONCLUSION AND INSIGHTS

5.1 Conclusion

At the level of rational consumption, product perception of domestic brand apparel has a positive effect on the perceived value and a negative effect on the perceived risk of middle-aged and elderly consumers. The degree of middle-aged and elderly consumers' knowledge of attributes of domestic branded apparel such as colors, elements, and styles, as well as the match between the products. Their own aesthetic perceptions will

enhance their shopping economy, which in turn will increase the perceived benefits of this group and reduce the uncertainty of the products.

At the level of perceptual consumption, the degree of identity integration of domestic brand apparel negatively affects the psychological distance of middle-aged and elderly consumers, and positively affects the perception of warmth and ability. There is no correlation between the perception of warmth and purchase intention. The degree of identity integration can reduce consumers' "psychological rejection" of the product. The high recognition of Chinese elements and culture in domestic brand apparel can also strengthen the "origin effect", i.e., increase consumers' brand beliefs and purchase intentions, and promote middle-aged and elderly consumers' perceptions of the product and its actual attributes. Consumers' impressions of the products and the actual attributes of the products tend to be consistent. At the same time, warmth perception has no effect on the purchase intention of middle and old age groups, which is contradictory to the findings of existing literature, and may be related to the difference of research subjects. For example, Liu Xiaoyuan believes that the warmth perception of local brands has a significant positive effect on the purchase intention of Generation Z consumers, but middle and old age groups are different from Generation Z. Although they agree with the elemental culture of domestic brand apparel, they cannot influence the final purchase intention, which also proves side-by-side that domestic brand apparel should be differentiated marketing for youth groups and middle and old age groups.

Finally, the total effect of rational consumption path on purchase intention is much greater than that of perceptual consumption path. Rational consumption psychology dominates the purchase intention of middle-aged and elderly people for domestic brand apparel. In the process of purchasing domestic brand apparel, middle-aged and elderly consumers' purchase behavior is mainly influenced by the perceived value and perceived risk factors. The trade-off between middle-aged and elderly consumers' perceived value and perceived risk of the product basically determines the purchase intention. While the cultural characteristics and brand effect of domestic brand apparel have less influence on their purchase intention, middle-aged and elderly consumers pay more attention to the actual value of the products.

5.2 Insights

5.2.1 Domestic brand apparel should strengthen the introduction of product attributes in the sales strategy.

The age range of middle-aged and elderly consumers is mostly between 45-65 years old, which is significantly different from young people in terms of psychology, physiology and life experience. They have richer purchasing and consumption experience. Therefore, domestic brand apparel should focus on improving middle-aged and old-aged consumers' product awareness, and focus on the introduction of product attributes, such as price, quality, fabric and style, in order to highlight the high matching degree between products and consumers, reduce the error of middle-aged and old-aged consumers' understanding of products, and reduce the uncertainty of products.

5.2.2 Domestic brand apparel in product design should focus on practicality enhancement.

Domestic brands should pay attention to the functionality and practicality of the products in the design of middle-aged and old-aged groups' apparel, such as warmth function, material more fit and breathable, etc., in order to improve the perceived value of middle-aged and old-aged groups. At the same time, in product promotion, the functional value of the products should be emphasized to meet the psychological needs of middle-aged and old-aged groups, such as enhancing the social status of consumers, etc.

5.2.3 Domestic brand apparel in the marketing strategy should reduce the proportion of emotional marketing.

From the analysis of the results, the cultural and emotional attributes of the products, i.e., the warm perception of stereotypes, cannot enhance the purchase intention of middle-aged and elderly groups. Unlike youth groups, economic pressure and life pressure may inhibit the sensual needs of middle-aged and elderly groups, so the emotional marketing created by domestic brand apparel for youth groups will not work for middle-aged and elderly groups, and excessive emotional marketing may even lead to aversion of middle-aged and elderly consumers and thus reduce their purchase intention.

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