# Brand Community Values—The Moderating Effect of Brand Symbolism

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Abstract. The current research studies the relationship between customers' need for community values and customer community engagement. The SPSS statistical analysis software is used to test the reliability of the scale, the AMOS structural equation modeling software is used to test the validity of the scale, and the STATA statistical software is adopted for hypothesis testing. Study result has shown that customers' need for cognitive value and social activity has a positive effect on customer community engagement, and brand symbolism plays a different moderating role in the effect. Specifically, when there is a high level of brand symbolism, the community's emphasis on social value weakens community engagement, i.e., brand symbolism has a negative moderating effect on the relationship between customers' social value need and customer community engagement; conversely, it has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between customers' cognitive value need and customer community engagement. This finding suggests that if a brand with high symbolism emphasizes its social value in the community, its symbolic value will be weakened, as the interaction of peers in the community may dilute the symbolic value of social distance.

Keywords: brand community · community engagement · brand symbolism · community values · AMOS · STATA

1 Introduction

As the marketing strategy evolves from functional marketing, through experiential marketing, to emotional marketing, enterprises can no longer simply take the quality and price of products or services as their major competitive advantages; instead, they should seek new methods to establish and maintain the emotional connection between customers and brands. In this context, the brand community that provides user interaction and meets their symbolic values has emerged (Algesheimer et al. 2005 [1]; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001 [2]). The sociality of social media creates a good condition for enterprises to establish brand community and build a more intimate, long-term, and stable relationship with customers, which is the so-called customer community engagement. Previous studies have shown that customers who engage with the brand community are not only the loyalists of the enterprise, but also the advisors of the enterprise and the creators and testers of new products. They will bring purchase value and even serve as "supernumerary" staff. (Van Doorn et al. 2010) [3]. For this reason, many symbolic brands have

begun to build brand communities to strengthen consumer-brand relationships. But the question is, what kind of value do symbolic brand communities provide? As a brand community offers users cognitive value and social value (Nambisan et al. 2009) [4] and a symbolic brand needs to provide social symbolic value, it seems that an emphasis on social value can better enhance customer engagement in the symbolic brand community. This article tries to make an in-depth inquiry into this assumption.

The rise in Internet provides a good platform for individuals to share experiences and exchange hobbies and quickly becomes a new form of customer-enterprise interaction (Brodie R J et al. 2013) [5]. Customer engagement is a concept put forward with the development of the Internet and social media. Many enterprises establish online brand communities based on products or brands, which fosters a new and important way to develop customer relationships. A brand community is a group that customers voluntarily join based on brand cognition and brand emotion. The symbolic value and experiential value embodied by the brand are consistent with customers' outlook on life and values. For customers, a brand is not only a commitment to the function and quality of a product, but also the symbolic meaning it represents, which is increasingly prominent in an era where products grow highly homogeneous. Brand symbolism comprises social symbolism and self symbolism. The former reflects customers' social identity needs, while the latter reflects customers' needs for self-realization, differentness, and uniqueness. Brand symbolism reflects social attributes, and so does the brand community. But will the matching of the two enhance customer community engagement? Is there any contradiction between self symbolism, which represents the differentness and uniqueness of customers, and community interaction, which is the main form of communication? In other words, will brand symbolism affects customers' need for community value and then affects customer community engagement? What kind of community should enterprises build according to the characteristics of brand community, customer community engagement, and brand symbolism? What kind of role should a community play in promoting customer community engagement?

Given the abovementioned questions, this paper combs the theory of customer community engagement, community values, and brand symbolism, puts forward corresponding hypotheses, and selects users of different mobile phone brands as the research subjects. The relationship between customers' need for community values and customer community engagement is probed, and the effect of customers' perception of brand symbolism on this relationship is explored.

2 Theoretical Basis and Research Hypothesis

2.1 Customer Community Engagement

Customer engagement is deemed a powerful tool to establish and enhance consumer-brand relationships. Algesheimer et al. (2005) pioneered the concept of engagement into the research on the brand community to study the interactive experience among community members and defined customer community engagement as "the intrinsic motivation to interact and cooperate with community members." [1] The concept of customer engagement focuses on specific customer interaction experiences. Customer engagement is a context-dependent psychological state characterized by fluctuating intensity levels.

The dimensions of engagement include cognition, emotion, and behavior, which play a central role in the process of relational exchange. These interactive experiences include customer-to-customer interactions and customer-enterprise interactions in brand-based communities (Van Doorn et al. 2010) [3]. Online brand community engagement refers to customers' intention to help other community members, actively participate in community activities, voluntarily participate in community endorsement, and increase community values for themselves and others (Algesheimer et al. 2005) [1]. Engaged customers show trust, loyalty, pride, and passion toward the brand.

Later, some researchers believed that brand community engagement should also include behavioral engagement. Van Doorn et al. (2010) proposed that customer engagement goes beyond attitude [3]; it is behavioral manifestation driven by enterprises or brands, including word-of-mouth recommendation, helping other customers, blogging, writing reviews, etc., very much in line with the online brand community (Wirtz J et al. 2013) [6]. Van Doorn et al. (2010) pointed out that customer engagement behaviors can be both positive (positive comments) and negative (uniting others against enterprises) [3]. They specified five dimensions of customer engagement behaviors: valence (positive and negative), the form of modality (the way customers display engagement, such as time and money, etc.), scope (temporal and geographic), nature of its impact (direct/indirect, intensity, amplitude and timeliness), and customer goals (consistency of customer and enterprise goals). Retaining and nurturing a customer base requires enterprises to pursue customers' repurchase behavior and consider retention and cross-buying, sales and transaction metrics, word of mouth, customer recommendations and referrals, attribution, and online comments (Van Doorn et al. 2010) [3].

The first step of customer engagement is largely based on customers' need for information. The process is highly interactive and experiential, including a series of sub-processes, ranging from learning, sharing, supporting, and socializing to co-development (Wirtz J et al. 2013) [6]. In the online community, customers are keen on non-transactional behaviors, such as strengthening knowledge and prestige, social interests, and pursuing cost-saving economic interests (Nambisan and Baron 2009) [4]. Enterprises can promote customer engagement by providing an effective platform for information exchange and interaction and rewarding customers for their contributions. Van Doorn et al. (2010) believed that there are three driving factors for customer engagement behavior, namely, customer-based drivers (satisfaction, trust/commitment, identity, consumption goals, resources, perceived costs/benefits), firm-based drivers (brand characteristics, firm reputation, firm size/diversification, firm information usage and processes, industry) and context-based drivers (policy, economy/environment, society, and technology) [3]. From the cost-benefit perspective, some scholars argue that the engagement between individuals and online brand communities forms when the perceived functional values and interests exceed the perceived risk level. When the customers' perceived interactive, experiential values and expectations exceed the effort they made, engagement will quickly form. Moreover, the individual perceived cost-benefit balance may affect the degree of engagement; in other words, the higher the customers' perceived value, the more it will promote the formation of engagement.

Engaged customers have stronger brand commitment, brand trust, self-brand connection, emotional brand attachment, and loyalty, which implies that engaged customers

play a central role in viral marketing, such as providing other customers with references or recommendations on a certain product, service, or brand. They also play a crucial role in new product/service development and in recreating experience and value. They show trust, loyalty, pride, and passion toward the brand. Van Doorn et al. (2010) analyzed the value customer engagement brings to all parties from the three aspects of customers, enterprises, and others [3]. In terms of customers, customer engagement enhances the cognition, attitude, emotion, and social identity of products or brands. In terms of enterprises, they have gained economic benefits, reputation, competitive advantages, and product improvement. Other aspects included customer welfare, social surplus, cross-customers, etc. Community engagement promotes customer-brand engagement (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001) [2], fostering customers' commitment to the community, forming new loyal, small groups, stimulating purchase behavior, enhancing customers' motivation to help other members (Algesheimer et al. 2005), and generating useful ideas for product innovation [1].

2.2   Customers' Need for Community Values

Enterprises benefit greatly from building communities; in turn, customers also gain value through community engagement, and this expected or actual value is the key factor driving customer community engagement. Nambisan et al. (2009) analyzed four types of benefits in customer community engagement, including cognitive or learning benefits, social integrative benefits, personal integrative benefits, and hedonic benefits [4]. The degree of these four benefits provided by the community will affect customers' actual community interaction behavior. Customer interaction in the community is fundamentally based on three dimensions, product context, community/society context, and technology mediation. Product-context interaction is based on product knowledge; community-context interaction is the interaction between customers in the community; technology-mediation interaction means that interaction is supported / constrained by computers and other media. This paper mainly focuses on product-context interaction and community/society-context interaction to analyze customer interaction value since the main factor of user participation in the community is to seek product-related knowledge, and other important factors are social interaction and identity presence (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). [2] These two interactions correspond to customers' cognitive and social value needs. In comparison, the interaction between technology and media is less important because nowadays, customers are familiar with Internet technology and computer skills and are less disturbed by this. Therefore, this paper defines the values of customers participating in community interaction as cognitive and social value needs.

2.2.1   Cognitive Value Need

Through brand community, enterprises provide customers with channels to interact with others. Customer interaction in the community not only brings benefits to enterprises, but also promotes customers' cognition. Cognitive value is the increase of customer-perceived knowledge about product use, and it is an important driving factor of customer community engagement. Through continuous interaction in the community, customers learn useful products and gain knowledge about their use, including product-related

technologies, usage tips, etc. Typically, customers join a community to solve specific problems. Once they get solutions from the community, they will increase their knowledge about the products and establish and maintain their membership. This cognitive process enhances knowledge about product usage, strengthens customer awareness of transactions with enterprises, and reduces transaction costs. Cognitive value is a direct, information-based value that can address problems in product use. Through discussion, community members inquire about pre-purchase suggestions, potential issues, solutions, etc. In the enterprise-led online community, customers interact to solve other members' problems in service. With the development of cognition, they gradually accumulate their knowledge about products, which allows them to use products more efficiently. Research suggests that when individuals are rich in knowledge, their cognitive framework can be revised, making them more efficient in manipulating and applying their knowledge in the future.

The cognitive value perceived by customers positively impacts customers' future engagement behaviors, such as product support activities (Nambisan et al. 2009) [4]. The engagement between the individual and online brand community forms when the perceived functional values and interests exceed the perceived risk level. From the perspective of obtaining information, customers acquire knowledge and thus enhance their cognition of products. In addition, when they have a wealth of product knowledge, they may answer other people's questions, put forward their opinions and suggestions on product/service upgrading and product innovation (Jaakkola et al. 2014) [7], and write reviews on products to show their knowledge about the product and their problem-solving ability, so as to increase self-efficacy brought by prestige or status and achievements. Based on this, this paper puts forward the following hypothesis:

H1: The cognitive value of brand community positively affects customer community engagement.

2.2.2 Social Value Need

In addition to providing product/service support, customer community interaction can establish and maintain social relationships. The community allows customers to communicate with others, share personal experiences, give suggestions and opinions, generate new ideas, etc. Customers gain more social and emotional value by establishing social relationships with other members through community engagement (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001) [2], which is called social value in this paper. Social value refers to the relationships customers establish with other community members over time. It brings various benefits to customers, such as enhancing their sense of belonging or social identity. Community members share a common identity, which makes them label themselves as a part of the community, and is an individual's innate need for belonging. In the community, members should make acquaintance with each other to get information and advice quickly. For instance, answering other people's questions in the community promptly, initiating new discussions, and giving suggestions about the community are all methods for customers to build social networks. This social network will bring social value to community members, such as increasing job hunting opportunities, business opportunities, and getting new information first.

Like cognitive value, customer-perceived social value positively impacts their future product support activities (Nambisan et al. 2009) [4]. Those who receive social support are more willing to cooperate with other customers. Social value leads to the behavior of helping others from the standpoint of providing information. Customers give messages to other members in need and actively participate in community activities (Algesheimer et al. 2005; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). [1, 2] In addition, when the customers' perceived interactive, experiential values and expectations exceed the effort they made, engagement will quickly form. Community members often seek support through social dialogue, which promotes the connection between members, enhances their social value perception, and reinforces their engagement with the online brand community (Wirtz J et al. 2013) [6]. The social relationship between customers promotes such engagement behaviors as word-of-mouth activity, blogging, sharing experience about the firm, and product and service recommendation. Based on this, this paper puts forward the hypothesis as follows:

H2: The social value of brand community positively affects customer community engagement.

2.3 Brand's Symbolic Value

Symbolic value refers to people's need to maintain their identity, strengthen their self-image, or express themselves. The symbolic value of a brand mainly reflects the external characteristics of a product, typically involving attributes unrelated to the product itself. It represents a customer's potential need for social recognition, personal expression, and self-esteem (Orth U R et al. 2007) [8]. Customers consume brands for external benefits such as conformity, uniqueness, and prestige. Brand symbolic value plays an essential role in the formation of customer brand preference as it imbues customers with the self-expression and symbolic value of the brand, making it easier for them to manage their images. Among a brand's functional, symbolic, and aesthetic values, symbolic value has the most substantial impact on customer purchase intention and word-of-mouth influence (Homburg C et al. 2015) [9].

According to Vigneron et al. (2004), brand symbolic value can be divided into interpersonal influence and self-influence [10]. At the interpersonal influence level, perceived symbolic value can be classified as reputation value and social self-expressive value. At the self-influence level, perceived symbolic value can be divided into intrinsic self-value, uniqueness value, and hedonic value. This is similar to Vigneron's (2004) perspective, which highlights the external social identity and the need for internal individuality and uniqueness [10]. When people adopt specific consumption patterns to show their taste, they promote symbolic boundaries to confirm their differences from the collective. Therefore, there is an important demarcation between the social core and the collective periphery. Based on these viewpoints, brand symbolism has both a "similarity-seeking" value, which increases group affiliation, and a "uniqueness-seeking" value, which promotes individuality.

Customers generally believe that brands with high symbolism (such as high-grade goods and luxury goods) offer better product and service quality and higher taste levels and are symbols of social prestige and status. Customers use such brands to demonstrate the superiority of their social identity and differentiate themselves from others. However,

if more people use a brand with high symbolism, customers will view it as a common brand rather than a brand with symbolism and social attribute. This threatens the brand's perceived superiority and uniqueness; thus, customers are less likely to promote it to maintain their uniqueness and avoid becoming too similar to others (Tian K T et al. 2001) [11]. Therefore, in a brand community, if customers perceive the brand's symbolic value to be high, they may not need more social interaction because too much social interaction may make them feel they share the same brand with many people. Their purpose of participation in the community is more likely to obtain product-related information. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Brand symbolism (a) positively regulates the relationship between customers' cognitive value needs and community engagement, and (b) negatively regulates the relationship between customers' social value needs and community engagement.

3 Research Design

3.1 Research Model

Based on the above analysis, this paper examines the relationships between community, brand, and customers. The community dimension includes the cognitive and social values provided by the community, the brand dimension mainly refers to brand symbolism, and the customer dimension examines customers' perceived responses to their brand community engagement. On this basis, this paper extracts the relationship between community value, customer community engagement, and brand symbolism. The specific research model is shown in Fig. 1.

3.2 Research Samples

This study takes mobile phone users as the research subjects and collects data through online questionnaires. Before completing the questionnaire, respondents were asked to report their current mobile phone brand and whether they had ever engaged in a brand community. If not, they would be ruled out. We chose mobile phone users as the research subjects because nowadays, mobile phones are not merely a simple tool for communication but critical companions in people's lives and work. As they triggered more and more discussions, many mobile phone producers also worked to strengthen the firm-customer and customer-customer interactions by establishing brand communities. In this study, 300 questionnaires were distributed, and after removing those without community experience and other invalid questionnaires, 248 valid questionnaires were collected, with a response rate of 82.67%.

Control variables. In previous domestic and foreign research, scholars believe that the behaviors of brand community members are associated with factors such as gender, age, and education level (Nambisan and Baron 2009). Therefore, this study takes the three factors mentioned above as control variables [4].
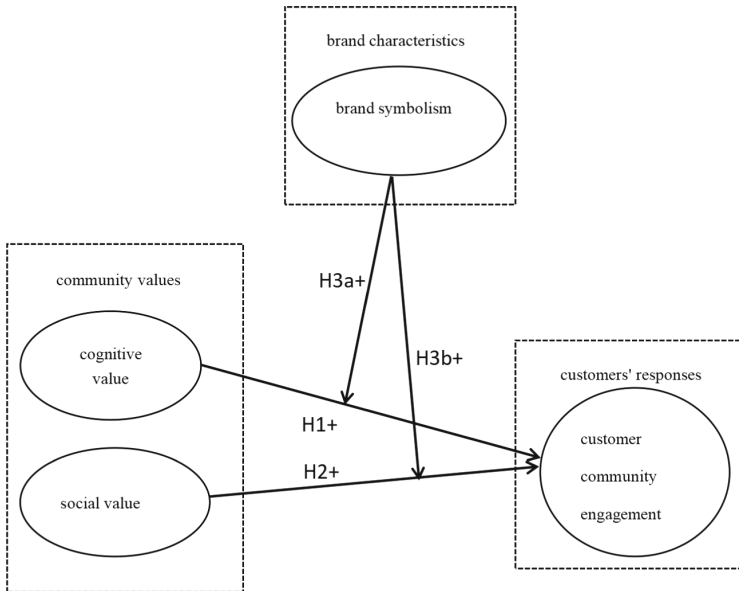
Fig. 1. Research model

4 Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Variable measurement. This paper mainly involves four constructs: "social value," "cognitive value," "brand symbolism," and "customer community engagement," and the measurement tools used for each construct mainly follow commonly used scales by domestic and foreign researchers. Among them, the social value scale includes four items, drawing on the study of Yoo et al. (2012) [12]; the cognitive value scale contains four items, referring to the study of Nambisan and Baron (2009) [4]; the brand symbolism scale includes three items, following the studies of Zou et al. (2007) [13]; the customer community engagement scale consists of five items, following the study of Vivek et al. (2009) [14]. All the measurement scales adopt the 5-point Likert scale.

4.1 Reliability and Validity Analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted using the SPSS statistical software as the analysis tool. Then, the validity of the scale was tested using the AMOS structural equation modeling software.

Reliability analysis. Typically, reliability analysis includes internal consistency reliability and composite reliability (CR). Firstly, internal consistency analysis was conducted for each construct, showing that Cronbach's α values were all above 0.70, indicating good internal consistency. In addition, the CR values of all constructs were above 0.829, indicating high CR.

Validity analysis. The validity analysis includes a convergent validity test and a discriminant validity test. As can be seen in Table 1, the factor loadings of all items are

Table 1. Confirmatory factor analysis result

Construct	Item	Factor loading
Social value Cronbach α = 0.745 CR = 0.840 AVE = 0.569	The relationship with other members of the XX brand online community means a lot to me	0.754
	It is a pleasure to communicate with XX community members	0.749
	I have established a profound friendship with XX community members	0.790
	I often talk, exchange feelings, and establish relationships with online community members	0.722
Cognitive value Cronbach α = 0.753 CR = 0.845 AVE = 0.578	I look up information about XX product technology through the XX brand community	0.745
	I look up the usage information about XX products (such as product features and updates) through the XX brand community.	0.712
	I can share my needs and suggestions for new products with the firm through the XX community	0.765
	The firm keeps me informed of product-related knowledge through the XX community	0.815
Brand symbolism Cronbach α = 0.70 CR = 0.829 AVE = 0.618	Using XX brand mobile phone reflects what kind of person I am	0.793
	Using XX brand mobile phone makes people stand out from the crowd	0.818
	Compared with other brands, owning XX brand mobile phone upgrades my public image	0.745
Customer community engagement Cronbach α = 0.815 CR = 0.872 AVE = 0.576	I hope to know more about the XX brand community	0.777
	I am very concerned about any information of XX brand community	0.776
	I like to discuss with my friends in the XX brand community	0.756

Table 1. (*continued*)

Construct	Item	Factor loading
	I feel better when discussing with others in the XX brand community	0.772
	I find it more interesting when people around me participate in the discussion of the XX brand community	0.713

Table 2. Latent variable correlation matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cognitive value	1						
Social value	.561***	1					
Customer community engagement	.652***	.746***	1				
Brand symbolism	.472***	.619***	.631***	1			
Gender	−.082	.065	.010	−.006	1		
Age	.200***	.177**	.253***	.176**	.061	1	
Education level	.050	.103	.030	.062	−.022	−.097	1
Mean	4.10	3.94	4.00	3.80	0.54	3.51	3.96
Standard deviation	0.56	0.58	0.616	0.65	0.50	0.85	0.51
AVE	0.578	0.569	0.576	0.618	1	1	1
CR	0.845	0.840	0.872	0.829	1	1	1

**p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01

above 0.712, and the model's various fit indices ($\chi 2$ (80) = 95.376, df = 64, $\chi 2$/df = 1.490, $p < 0.01$, RMSEA = 0.049, CFI = 0.967, NFI = 0.906, IFI = 0.967, GFI = 0.934) meet the standards, indicating high convergent validity. The discriminant validity was examined using the average variance extracted (AVE) and the square of the correlation coefficient between latent variables. The AVE values of the four main latent variables are all greater than 0.5, and the AVE value of any variable is also greater than the square of its correlation with other variables, indicating high discriminant validity.

4.2 Common Method Biases Test

This paper employed two testing methods to examine the potential common method bias. First, the Harman single-factor test was utilized, which assumes that if common method bias exists, the first unrotated factor will explain a large proportion of the variance (more than 50%) when conducting an exploratory factor analysis with all measures of the constructs. After performing the Harman single-factor test, it was found that the first unrotated factor explained 42.34% of the variance, which was less than 50%, indicating

that the common method bias is not a severe issue in this study. Another method for testing common method bias is to examine the correlations of the constructs. Generally, if the correlation coefficient between constructs is greater than 0.9, the issue of common method bias in the data is considered severe. The correlations among the constructs in this study are presented in Table 2. The largest correlation coefficient is 0.746, less than 0.9, suggesting that the issue of common method bias in this study is not severe.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the statistical analysis tool STATA, with the results presented in Table 3. Model 1 examines the impacts of control variables on customer community engagement, while Model 2 explores the effects of independent variables on customer community engagement. The data in Table 3 indicate that perceived cognitive value ($\beta = 0.202$, $p < 0.01$) and social value ($\beta = 0.339$, $p < 0.01$) are both positively correlated with customer community engagement, verifying H1 and H2.

Moderation analysis. Model 3 includes the moderator of brand symbolism, and the regression results show that brand symbolism ($\beta = 0.129$, $p < 0.01$) positively affects customer community engagement. Model 4 introduces the interaction terms, where brand symbolism positively moderates the relationship between cognitive value and customer community engagement ($\beta = 0.102$, $p < 0.01$), and negatively moderates the relationship between social value and customer community engagement ($\beta = -0.104$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H3(a) and H3(b). The interaction effects are shown in Fig. 2. Moreover, the change of R^2 in Model 2 and Model 4 is both significant ($p < 0.01$), indicating a tremendous improvement in the model's explanatory power after adding the moderator.

Table 3. Model testing results

| | Dependent variable: customer community engagement | | | |
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Control variable				
Gender	0.001	−0.006	0.002	−0.019
	(0.08)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Age	0.162***	0.065*	0.053	0.047
	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Education level	0.030	−0.041	−0.048	−0.061
	(0.09)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Independent variable				
Cognitive value		0.202***	0.178***	0.242***

(*continued*)

Table 3. (*continued*)

	Dependent variable: customer community engagement			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Social value		0.339***	0.272***	0.204***
		(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Moderator				
Brand symbolism			0.129***	0.112***
			(0.03)	(0.03)
Interaction effect				
Cognitive value × Brand symbolism				0.102***
				(0.03)
Social value × Brand symbolism				−0.104***
				(0.02)
Constant	3.150***	3.961***	3.989***	4.132***
	(0.41)	(0.26)	(0.25)	(0.24)
R Square	0.0800	0.645	0.670	0.702
Adjusted R Square	0.0610	0.634	0.658	0.688
R Square Change			0.025**	0.032**
F	4.299	59.30	56.64	50.46
N	248	248	248	248

Note: All the coefficients are normalized.
* $p < 0.1$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$
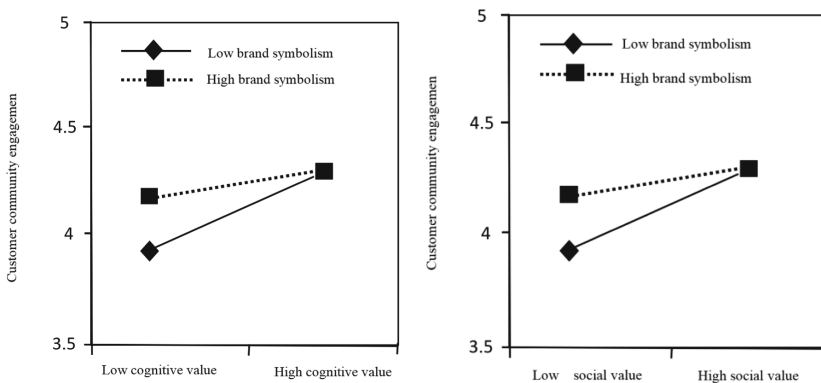
Fig. 2. Interaction effects of community values and brand

5 Discussion

5.1 Discussion

The brand community established by enterprises relying on the Internet and social media can promote the interaction between customers and brands/products, customers and customers, and the emotional relationship between customers and brands. The interactivity of the brand community stimulates behaviors that benefit enterprises and other customers beyond customer purchase behavior, such as participating in word-of-mouth activity, writing reviews, helping other community members, giving suggestions for product upgrading, sharing ideas for new product development, etc. All this is a part of customer community engagement. In this study, we mainly explore the factors that affect customer community engagement and under what circumstances these factors are more likely to intensify or inhibit customer community engagement.

First, following existing studies (Nambisan et al. 2009) [4], this paper divides customer interactions in the brand community into product-based interaction and community/society-based interaction. The two interactive forms will generate different needs for interactive value for customers. Product-based interaction is based on customers' cognitive needs, while customer community/society-based interaction derives from customers' social needs. It is precisely the two needs, rather than altruism, that drive customers to participate in the community (Nambisan et al. 2009) [4]. According to the results of empirical analysis, customers' cognitive value needs ($\beta = 0.202$, $p < 0.01$) and social value needs ($\beta = 0.339$, $p < 0.01$) have a positive impact on customer community engagement, so H1 and H2 are supported. Driven by their cognitive value need, customers absorb knowledge about products from the community, which makes them more efficient while using products. According to the reciprocity principle and to reflect their professionality and enhance their status in the community, customers are more willing to answer other people's questions, give advice and comments for product improvement, etc. Moreover, with the deepening of interaction in the community, they will gradually gain recognition from others and establish close friendships with other members to expand their social networks. To maintain such relationships or the responsibility between friends, they may also help and cooperate with each other or engage in word-of-mouth activities.

Next, this paper introduces brand symbolism as the mediator to analyze under what circumstances will brand symbolism influence the relationship between customers' needs for cognitive value and social value and customer community engagement. According to the empirical results, brand symbolism has a positive effect on the relationship between customers' cognitive value needs and customer community engagement ($\beta = 0.102$, $p < 0.01$), while it has a negative moderating effect on the relationship between customers' social value needs and customer community engagement ($\beta = -0.104$, $p < 0.01$). This paper argues that a brand with high symbolism represents high prestige value, such as social status and identity; customers confirm their uniqueness and superiority by utilizing this symbolic value. If they perceive more people are using the same brand or having the same brand experience as themselves, they will feel that they are too similar to others or that the brand has degraded to a common brand.

Therefore, excessive customer interaction in the brand community reduces their perception of brand prestige value and uniqueness. Under this circumstance, customers' participation in the community is more about seeking the cognitive value of product knowledge rather than social value. From the above conclusions, we can observe that although brand community and brand symbolism reflect social values, they are negatively correlated regarding customer community engagement behavior/attitude.

5.2   Marketing Significance

This paper has great practical significance for enterprises. First, it helps enterprises to realize that the value of customers is not only reflected in their purchase behaviors, but also in other engagement behaviors such as recommendations and other contributions. So in the future, enterprises can take engagement as an indicator to judge the value of customers. In addition, before constructing brand communities, enterprises need to make their brand images explicit to customers: whether it is high symbolism or low symbolism, or which value of the brand (functional or symbolic value) is considered more critical for customers. Finally, enterprises can manage and control the types and interaction styles of community content by clarifying the characteristics of information generation and transmission and specific website functions. They can regulate the cognitive and social values provided by the community through corresponding measures. To be specific, enterprises can adjust the information features in the community and establish relevant rules to clarify whether it provides cognitive value or social value. Specific website (community) functions can facilitate enterprises' community management without excessive involvement in customer interaction, thus creating an atmosphere where communication flows freely. For example, for brands with high symbolism, the community should focus on releasing formal information related to the product or brand usage, maintenance, upgrading, innovation, etc., and reduce entertaining content. On top of that, the community design should be simple and just enough for information display, reception, and response. For brands with lower symbolism, there is no need to limit the information characteristics too much, and the community design should be versatile to meet customers' social interaction needs.

Overall, building a community may not be a good thing for symbolic brands that pursue social value, as it may weaken their symbolic value. This is because those communities are based on peer interactions, which may play down the symbolism of pursuing social distance. The most suitable brand community is one that is displayed information vertically, such as the boasting style of Twitter-like Weibo.

5.3   Limitations and Prospects

This paper probes the cognitive and social values of brand community, but according to Nambisan et al. (2009) [4], customers also pursue personal integrative benefits and hedonic benefits when participating in communities. Personal integrative benefits are the self-efficacy brought by prestige or status and achievements. Communities provide a platform for customers to showcase their knowledge and problem-solving abilities regarding products. By contributing their knowledge to support the product, customers enhance their reputation and status among other customers and in the firm. They also

strengthen their self-efficacy by influencing others and improving the company's products. Hedonic benefits are derived from customers' community interactions, which are a source of interest, entertainment, and mental stimulation experience. Customers gain pleasure from discussing product usage and features with other customers in the community (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001) Acknowledgments [2], and problem-solving skills stimulate customers' mental or intellectual development, creating hedonic benefits. This paper believes that personal integrative benefits and hedonic benefits are primarily based on the self-efficacy and mental experiences brought by product knowledge. They are already reflected in cognitive and social value needs, so this article does not explicitly discuss the impact of these two benefits on customer community engagement. In the future, a more in-depth categorization of customers' need for community values can be conducted to study their specific impact on community engagement.

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