Research on Customer Satisfaction, Brand Trust, and Perceived Brand Value in the Luxury Brand Sector

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Abstract. This study examines the relationship between customer satisfaction, brand trust, and brand perceived value, using the luxury watch brand Rolex as its research subject. Adopting a case study approach featuring Rolex as a representative example, it systematically explores the intrinsic relationships and influencing mechanisms among customer satisfaction, brand trust, and brand perceived value. The research reveals that customer satisfaction with luxury brands positively enhances brand trust through quality control, after-sales support, and value communication, with perceived brand value acting as a mediator in this relationship. The marketing strategy of Rolex, characterized by "scarcity construction + value perception transmission," provides a practical paradigm for the synergistic enhancement of these three elements. The findings of this study enrich the theoretical framework of luxury brand management, offering targeted practical guidance for luxury brands to optimize satisfaction management, strengthen trust-building, and enhance perceived value.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction; Brand trust; Brand perception; Marketing strategy

1 Introduction

As the global luxury market continues to expand, Chinese consumers have emerged as the core driving force behind worldwide luxury spending. Competition among luxury brands is gradually shifting from the product level to the realm of consumer value perception. The core competitiveness of luxury brands is no longer confined to product craftsmanship and premium positioning; it increasingly hinges on a brand's ability to cultivate long-term emotional connections with consumers by enhancing customer satisfaction, building robust brand trust, and deepening perceived value.

Existing scholarly research has confirmed the close interrelationship among customer satisfaction, brand trust, and perceived brand value. However, in-depth analyses focusing on specific luxury brands remain insufficient, and explanations of the interaction mechanisms and implementation pathways among these three elements in practical marketing contexts are still lacking. Against this backdrop, this paper selects the global luxury watch brand Rolex as a case study. Through a review of relevant

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literature and an analysis of its development trajectory and core marketing strategies, it explores how customer satisfaction enhances brand trust in luxury brands, as well as the reciprocal relationship between customer satisfaction and perceived brand value. The aim is to elucidate the intrinsic logic of their synergistic development, thereby providing theoretical support and practical insights for luxury brands to optimize their operational strategies and enhance market competitiveness, empowering them to achieve sustainable growth in an intensely competitive landscape.

2 Literature Review

2.1 The Relationship Between Brand Customer Satisfaction and Brand Trust

In the luxury goods sector, the interactive relationship between customer satisfaction and brand trust is deeply embedded within the characteristics of luxury consumption. Consumers perceive the fulfillment of brand promises through product experiences and service interactions, gradually building recognition of the brand's reliability and transforming it into brand trust. Enhanced customer satisfaction positively drives deeper brand trust, while strengthened brand trust provides reciprocal feedback that further solidifies customer satisfaction, creating a mutually reinforcing cycle between the two.

Shao Jingbo et al. (2019) found through their research that customer satisfaction and brand trust exhibit a chain-like mediating effect. This study provides quantitative evidence for analyzing the psychological transmission chain between customer satisfaction and brand trust, clarifying the distinct characteristics of their mediating effects under different value perception dimensions [1].

Yue Li (2020) constructed a luxury goods customer satisfaction model. His research revealed that brand image, perceived service quality, and perceived social value are core factors influencing customer satisfaction. Building brand trust relies on personalized service design and continuous after-sales follow-up, while customer satisfaction can be enhanced through humanistic care integration and targeted new media promotions[2].

Lyu Qiu Lina(2016) proposed the dynamic satisfaction theory, indicating that brand perception shaping during the pre-purchase stage, demonstration of service professionalism during the purchase stage, and the post-purchase membership maintenance system collectively form the key elements influencing customer satisfaction. Building brand trust relies on precise product recommendations and an efficient complaint handling mechanism [3].

Ji Ying (2022) analyzed the digital marketing pathways of luxury brands based on the 5A model. The study indicates that in digital scenarios, customer satisfaction stems from the dual effects of multi-channel interactive experiences and high-quality content marketing. Brand trust relies on the meticulous cultivation of private domain traffic and the effective monetization of community value. Simultaneously, real-time interactions through digital channels can strengthen customers' identification with the brand, thereby driving customer satisfaction toward brand trust [4].

Yang Xinran (2019) adopted a brand value perception perspective, demonstrating that brand value perception exerts the most significant influence on customer satisfaction. Therefore, brands must exercise caution when employing price discount strategies to prevent dilution of perceived value. Simultaneously, by actively managing brand communities, they should enhance customers' perceived relational value and brand trust, thereby establishing a solid psychological foundation for brand premium pricing [5].

Overall, existing research has systematically examined the associative logic and influencing factors between customer satisfaction and brand trust in luxury consumption from multiple perspectives, including mechanism analysis, dimensional classification, category adaptation, scenario expansion, and strategy optimization. This provides diverse theoretical underpinnings and practical guidance for luxury brands to optimize satisfaction management and strengthen brand trust building across various contexts.

2.2 The Relationship Between Brand Customer Satisfaction and Brand Perception

In the field of research examining the relationship between customer satisfaction and perceived brand value in luxury brands, scholars have conducted extensive explorations based on diverse perspectives and contexts. Shan Juan (2018) focused on the digital era context, proposing that luxury brands must balance online mass appeal with offline premium positioning to reconstruct perceived value. Her research found that when brands enhance perceived economic and functional value through strategies like selective online platforms and consistent online-offline pricing, they reduce cognitive biases in brand image perception. This, in turn, lowers post-purchase dissatisfaction and significantly improves customer satisfaction [6]. Li Zeyun (2019) demonstrated that higher brand perceived value correlates with stronger customer satisfaction and trust in the brand [7].

Ji Qiming (2007) noted in his analysis of China's luxury goods market that the efficiency of brand perceived value transmission directly impacts customer satisfaction [8]. Hu Yanni (2006) constructed a mediation model in her study on attitudes toward luxury brands, finding that perceived brand value positively shapes brand attitudes, thereby indirectly influencing customer satisfaction. For consumers with high brand identification, the positive effect of perceived value on brand attitudes is stronger, making the mediating effect of attitudes on satisfaction more pronounced .

Jiang Bing (2013), in constructing a model of luxury customers' perceived value, defined five major dimensions of perceived value, including scarcity, symbolism, and functionality. His research confirmed that emotional and experiential perceived values have the most prominent driving effect on customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the balance among the various value dimensions influences the stability of satisfaction. The scale developed also provides a standardized tool for quantitatively assessing the strength of the relationship between value perception and satisfaction. Zhang Jing (2021), in a case study of Chanel, found that the brand has established a strong link between perceived value and customer satisfaction by reinforcing functional value through "classic style preservation" and deepening emotional value via "haute couture services." The study points out that the consistency between a brand's value promise and actual delivery is key to maintaining high satisfaction, while digital private domain operations further optimize the immediacy of value perception and extend the duration of satisfaction .

Overall, existing research has revealed the pathways and mechanisms through which the perceived value of luxury brands influences customer satisfaction across multiple dimensions and contexts. It provides diverse theoretical underpinnings and practical references for brands to optimize value delivery and enhance customer satisfaction.

3 Case Studies

3.1 The Evolution of the Rolex Brand

Rolex, as a benchmark brand in the global luxury watch industry, offers an exceptionally valuable analytical case study for luxury brand management research due to the exemplary nature of its development trajectory and operational strategies. Therefore, this paper selects Rolex as its research case for in-depth analysis.

In 1905, German watchmaker Hans Wilsdorf and British businessman Alfred Davis jointly founded Wilsdorf & Davis in London, England, laying the foundation for the Rolex brand. Seeking to overcome the limitations of traditional pocket watches, Wilsdorf proposed the innovative product concept of “wearing a precise timekeeping instrument on the wrist.” In 1908, the wristwatch brand “Rolex” was officially registered. By 1919, Rolex relocated its brand headquarters to Geneva, Switzerland, leveraging the region's established watchmaking industry cluster to strategically establish a foothold in the heart of the global watchmaking world.

Through dual pathways of certification by authoritative institutions and real-world validation, Rolex has cemented its industry reputation. In 1910, Rolex became the world's first watchmaker to have its timepieces certified for precision by the Swiss Official Chronometer Testing Institute (COSC). By 1914, Rolex had achieved the prestigious “AA” precision rating from Britain's Kew Observatory—a distinction previously reserved solely for marine chronometers. This milestone signified that Rolex watches had reached the pinnacle of timekeeping accuracy in the industry.

In 1926, Rolex introduced the revolutionary Oyster watch, whose pioneering sealed case design achieved a breakthrough in waterproof and dustproof functionality. In 1927, British swimmer Mercedes Gleitze successfully swam across the English Channel wearing this watch. After over ten hours immersed in seawater, the Oyster watch maintained precise timekeeping. This test under extreme conditions vividly demonstrated the technical reliability of Rolex products. In 1931, Rolex developed the Perpetual Rotor self-winding mechanism, which revolutionized the operational logic of traditional manually wound watches. It became the core design paradigm for modern automatic mechanical watches and remains widely adopted throughout the industry to this day.

After the 1950s, Rolex entered a period of expanding its professional watch series, successively launching functional watches designed for specific scenarios, such as the Submariner and GMT-Master. By deeply associating these products with extreme activities like polar exploration and deep-sea diving, Rolex has seamlessly integrated its technical prowess with its brand spirit of "exploring the unknown and challenging limits." To date, Rolex has established 19 regional branches and 24 professional service centers worldwide, with an annual production capacity stabilized at around 450,000 units. It has consistently ranked among the *Fortune* World's 500 Most Valuable Brands for many years, continuing to lead the global luxury watch industry in both brand value and market influence.

3.2 Rolex's Core Marketing Strategy

The success of the Rolex brand lies in the scarcity and perceived value of its products. Rolex has established a systematic operational framework across three key dimensions: channel distribution, brand communication, and product strategy.

At the channel strategy level, Rolex selects authorized retailers to build a highly controlled offline sales network. The brand strictly manages the qualifications and number of authorized retailers worldwide to prevent excessive channel expansion from diluting brand premium value. Amid the digital wave, Rolex has not blindly expanded its online direct sales channels. Instead, it has focused on brand presentation as its core objective, strategically managing its official website and social media content to enhance its brand identity. This approach has not only enhanced brand visibility but also maintained the exclusivity and scarcity expected of a luxury brand by clearly differentiating the functions of its online and offline channels.

At the level of brand communication, Rolex focuses on a strategy of "validation through extreme scenarios + empowerment through authoritative endorsements," creating highly recognizable brand associations. The brand has long engaged in deep collaborations with globally top-tier sports events, polar explorations, deep-sea expeditions, and other high-end scenarios. For instance, it has sponsored the 24 Hours of Daytona for many consecutive years and supported Mount Everest expeditions, allowing its products to consistently prove their precision and durability in extreme environments, thereby conveying its core value through tangible, scenario-based experiences. Simultaneously, Rolex meticulously selects elite ambassadors from various fields, including sports, exploration, art, and technology, who embody outstanding achievements and resilient character. Through the personal image and success stories of these ambassadors, the brand communicates its core values of "precision, resilience, and achievement," further reinforcing its high-end positioning and fostering value recognition .

At the product strategy level, Rolex has established a product portfolio that combines distinctiveness with competitiveness. The brand's core collections maintain timeless design language over the long term, evolving solely through material selections and functional enhancements. Beyond its core lines, Rolex has solidified its leadership in watchmaking technology through sustained R&D investments focused on optimizing core technical metrics such as movement precision, water resistance, and durability.

4 Case Analysis

4.1 Mechanism of Brand Customer Satisfaction Enhancing Brand Trust

Rolex has established a comprehensive mechanism centered on “quality control as the foundation, after-sales service as the safeguard, and value delivery as the core” to enhance customer satisfaction and build brand trust, thereby creating a virtuous cycle of “quality-trust-loyalty.”

In terms of quality control, Rolex has established the most stringent production standards and testing systems within the industry. From raw material selection to movement assembly and final watch calibration, every production process undergoes multiple specialized inspections. Through its relentless pursuit of product excellence, Rolex fundamentally enhances customer satisfaction, laying a solid product foundation for building brand trust .

In establishing its after-sales service system, Rolex regards it as the cornerstone of brand trust, building a globally unified and standardized after-sales service network. The brand has established dedicated after-sales service centers in major cities worldwide. This standardized and professionalized after-sales system not only extends the product life cycle but also allows consumers to experience the brand's commitment and sincerity, effectively strengthening customer loyalty.

In conveying brand value, Rolex emphasizes enabling consumers to deeply understand the essence of its brand. Through diverse channels, it systematically communicates its century-long history, meticulous watchmaking craftsmanship, and stories of technological innovation, allowing consumers to appreciate the technical heritage and humanistic values behind its products. Furthermore, Rolex has consistently adhered to a stable pricing strategy, effectively safeguarding the brand's value stability and reinforcing consumer purchasing confidence. This approach further solidifies the virtuous cycle of "exceptional quality-consumer trust-brand loyalty," providing sustained momentum for the brand's long-term development .

4.2 Relationship Between Brand Customer Satisfaction and Brand Value

Brand customer satisfaction and brand value exhibit a mutually reinforcing, synergistic relationship. Rolex continuously strengthens its functional and emotional appeal alongside brand value through tiered enhancements in satisfaction levels. Conversely, this solidified brand value further consolidates customer satisfaction, creating a virtuous cycle.

In terms of driving brand value, Rolex solidifies its functional value through quality satisfaction. First, its stringent quality control establishes “reliability” as the brand's core functional attribute. Second, it deepens emotional value through after-sales satisfaction, where a standardized service system delivers reassuring experiences that foster consumers' emotional dependence on the brand . Finally, it amplifies brand value through premium positioning. Rigorous price control maintains high brand premiums, while marketing tactics like high-end sporting events and celebrity endorsements convey the brand's “achievement” symbolism, satisfying consumers' desire for social identity recognition.

Meanwhile, brand value can enhance customer satisfaction through perceived value. Rolex maintains stable pricing to preserve brand value consistency, reinforcing consumers' perception of “value for money.” Through integrated online and offline channels, Rolex actively promotes its heritage and brand values, elevating both brand recognition and customer satisfaction. This dual-pronged approach—using customer satisfaction to drive brand value growth while leveraging brand value to reinforce customer loyalty—creates a synergistic cycle that underpins the brand's sustained industry leadership.

5 Conclusion

This study examines the relationship among customer satisfaction, brand trust, and perceived brand value in the luxury sector. Findings confirm that customer satisfaction serves as the core prerequisite for building trust in luxury brands, with perceived brand value playing a significant mediating role between the two. Among perceived value dimensions, emotional and experiential value exert the most pronounced driving effects on customer satisfaction. Rolex demonstrates the synergistic enhancement of these three elements through rigorous quality control, a globally standardized after-sales system, precise value communication, and scientifically structured distribution channels. This validates the virtuous cycle logic of “quality-satisfaction-trust-perceived value-loyalty,” providing a practical paradigm for comparable brands.

Based on research findings, luxury brands must focus on four key dimensions to enhance their core competitiveness: quality control, after-sales service system development, channel operations, and value delivery. By strengthening product durability and precision, establishing a globally unified standardized service network, strictly controlling dealer qualifications and numbers, and conveying brand values through integrated online and offline channels, brands can maintain their exclusivity and premium positioning.

As this case study focuses exclusively on the watch brand Rolex, its conclusions may not be readily applicable to other luxury segments. Furthermore, the study did not categorize different consumer groups, meaning its findings may not apply to all types of consumers. Future research could broaden the scope of case studies and conduct cross-category comparisons to enhance the universality of the conclusions.

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