

The Impact of the Link between Enterprises and Culture on Brand Recognition — A Case Study of Football Culture

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Abstract:

Taking football culture as an example, this article explores how the link between enterprises and culture affects brand recognition. By analyzing the combination of enterprises and football culture, such as sponsorship, brand co-branding and community activities, which study their role in consumer brand awareness and loyalty. The study found that cultural embedding can significantly improve brand emotional connection and market competitiveness, and provide practical inspiration for enterprise cultural marketing. Football has brought great benefits to many enterprises in recent years. From an international perspective, it can be seen that more Chinese enterprises have entered the international market through football, and football culture has brought considerable income to these enterprises. However, how does the link between enterprises and culture specifically affect consumers' recognition of brands is a significant question. The mechanism behind it needs to be fully discussed. Through research, it has been found that football has a large audience and is distributed at different ages. Therefore, the huge group of fans has created considerable profits for these endorsement enterprises and has also driven the development of the surrounding economy in the region.

Keywords: The link between enterprise and culture, brand emotional connection, football culture, brand recognition.

1. Introduction

Under the background of globalization and consumption upgrading, corporate culture marketing has become an important means to improve brand value. As one of the most influential sports cultures in the

world, football provides unique marketing opportunities for enterprises with its huge audience and emotional cohesion. Especially in recent years, the cultural atmosphere of football at home and abroad is getting stronger and stronger. Local football leagues have begun to be held all over the country. For ex-

ample, the „Su Super League“ recently held in Jiangsu has attracted national attention. The Su Super League has successfully created its own brand effect through its own publicity. According to current statistics, the appearance rate of the Soviet Super League has exceeded that of some games of the Chinese Super League. Because of the special nature of the region, there are a total of thirteen prefecture-level cities in Suzhou. For this reason, Suzhou Chao has launched the slogan of „the first in the competition, the fourteenth in friendship“. Each prefecture-level city has its own team, which also makes the citizens of each city cheer for their own city, drives the economy of Suzhou, and makes Suzhou more influential. In the world, the atmosphere of football culture is stronger. Take the recently started Club World Cup as an example, whose huge audience has brought it a huge market. Hisense, a Chinese national brand, is one of the sponsors of the Club World Cup. Hisense has also sponsored large-scale football competitions more than once, such as last year's European Cup and this year's Champions League final. By sponsoring football matches, Hisense's sales in Europe increased by 50% year-on-year. At the same time, more people know and buy Hisense's products, which has accumulated a large number of customers for it. Take Real Madrid Football Club, the world's top football club, as an example. He can earn 100 million euros a year by selling his own jerseys, which is also achieved through his own influence and the influence of the big-name stars in the team. This article mainly conducts research through data collection and analysis, and mainly focuses on questionnaires.

2. Literature Review

As a strategic marketing tool, sports marketing has become an important way to improve brand awareness and loyalty. In recent years, more and more enterprises have improved their brand value and market influence by combining with sports culture, especially football culture. According to the research on the connotation, characteristics and influencing factors of sports marketing, sports marketing can not only enhance the popularity of the brand, but also strengthen the emotional connection between consumers and brands through the transmission of sports spirit, so as to achieve the improvement of brand identity [1]. Sports activities themselves have strong emotional value and global influence, providing a broad stage for brand communication. For example, Nike and Adidas have successfully shaped a strong brand image by sponsoring football matches and star players, and have promoted the expansion of the global market through this cultural embedding strategy. From the perspective of the field, Chinese international enterprises can break through the barriers of cross-cultural communication through event

marketing. Based on the case study of Hisense Group, it further explores the effect of sports marketing from the perspective of cross-cultural communication, pointing out that the global communication of sports events can effectively break through cultural barriers, and through „cognitive homomorphism - connection The communication path of „want to transfer - value sharing“ helps enterprises establish a unified brand image in different cultural contexts [2]. By sponsoring top events such as the European Cup and the World Cup, Hisense has gradually realized the integration of the brand and global culture, thus improving the international recognition of the brand. In addition, integrating Chinese elements: the study of the impact mechanism of cultural identity on the possibility of purchasing global brand products also provides a valuable perspective on the study of global brands integrating Chinese elements into the Chinese market [3]. They found that cultural identity plays an important role in consumers' purchasing decisions. By integrating local cultural elements, brands can significantly enhance the local symbolic value of brands, thereby enhancing consumers' willingness to buy. This view is highly consistent with the concept of cultural embedding in sports marketing, showing that enterprises can not only deepen consumers' brand identity, but also effectively promote the improvement of brand loyalty through close connection with culture. In the digital era, social media provides a new interactive platform for brands. Consumers are no longer passive recipients of information, but are the core force to participate in brand shaping through value co-creation. Create loyalty to the brand according to the consumer value situation under the social media situation.

Taking ANTA as an example, brands can improve brand loyalty through in-depth interaction with consumers [4]. ANTA's interaction on social media not only enhances consumers' sense of belonging, but also deepens the emotional connection of the brand and improves the competitiveness of the brand in the target market. In general, sports culture, as a strong emotional bond, can help enterprises achieve global dissemination and localization of brands through cultural marketing strategies. Through the combination with sports culture such as football, enterprises can not only improve brand awareness, but also increase the emotional connection of the brand through cross-cultural communication, thus improving consumers' loyalty and brand value. Under the fiercely competitive market environment and the trend of increasing digitalization, many old brands have begun to decline. Therefore, in order to cope with the fierce market competition, many old brands have also brought new life to their products by combining culture [5]. In the context of global trade, cultural differences have become a key factor affecting the international acceptance of commodities. Huaxizi has emerged in the international market with its oriental aes-

thetic design and high-quality products, but she also faces the problem of cultural adaptation [6]. It can be seen from these examples that local culture is one of the important influencing factors for products. But sports culture can overcome this, because sports are accepted by the whole world.

3. Method

This study adopts quantitative research methods to collect data through questionnaires and analyze the impact of the links between enterprises and football culture on brand recognition. The research process includes three main steps: data collection, data screening and data analysis. This study collects data in the form of an online questionnaire, which includes five dimensions: the link between enterprises and football culture, emotional connection, brand recognition, consistency of cultural values, and basic information of respondents. The use of questionnaires can obtain a large amount of audience feedback in a relatively short time, which is conducive to statistical analysis and causal inference. During the data cleaning process, the questionnaire samples with too short filling time (less than 1 minute) and obvious duplicate or invalid answers are eliminated. SPSS is used for descriptive statistical analysis, regression analysis and mediation/regulation effect test to verify the research hypothesis H1-H3. Regression analysis is suitable for testing the causal relationship between variables, while the mediation and adjustment model can further reveal the role path of culture embedded in the brand recognition mechanism. The questionnaire is based on the design of the 5-point Lickert scale, covering the core research variables.

This study explores the impact mechanism of the link between enterprises and football culture on brand recognition. First of all, corporate cultural links can directly improve brand recognition (H1); secondly, emotional connection plays an intermediary role (H2); in addition, the consistency of cultural values has a regulating effect on the relationship between corporate cultural links and brand recognition (H3).

4. Hypothesis

This study aims to explore how the link between enterprises and football culture affects brand recognition, and builds the following research hypothesis from the inter-

mediary role of emotional connection and the regulating role of cultural value consistency:

By sponsoring football matches, teams or stars, enterprises can connect the brand with the positive symbolic meaning of football culture (such as hard work, unity, passion), so as to improve consumers' awareness and emotional attitude towards the brand. According to the research on the connotation, characteristics and influencing factors of sports marketing, sports event marketing can affect audience psychology through the path of „cognitive isomorphism-associative transfer-value sharing“ [1]. Brand loyalty has become a key factor for enterprises to gain a sustainable competitive advantage [7].

H1: The link between enterprises and football culture (such as sponsorship, co-branding) can significantly improve consumers' recognition of the brand.

Football culture has strong emotional attributes, which can stimulate consumers' sense of belonging and cultural identity. When enterprises communicate value by combining with football culture, consumers may project their feelings for football onto the brand, thus enhancing brand goodwill and loyalty (exploration of the connotation, characteristics and influencing factors of sports marketing) [1]. Event marketing often realizes the emotional integration between brands and consumers through „social fields“ (exploration of the connotation, characteristics and influencing factors of sports marketing) [1].

H2: Emotional connection plays an intermediary role between the link between enterprises and football culture and brand recognition.

When the values conveyed by the corporate brand (such as innovation and excellence) are highly compatible with the spirit represented by football culture (such as struggle and collaboration), the link between the brand and culture is more likely to be accepted by consumers and has a stronger impact on brand recognition. According to the field theory, the consistency of values helps to enhance the effect of cultural communication (discussion of the connotation, characteristics and influencing factors of sports marketing) [1].

H3: The consistency of brand values and football culture positively regulates the impact of cultural links on brand recognition; the higher the consistency, the more significant the impact.

5. Research Results

Table 1. The collation and analysis of the questionnaire samples

Variable name	Average number	Standard deviation
The connection between enterprises and football culture	4.19	0.74

Emotional connection	4.26	0.70
Brand recognition	4.05	0.73
Consistency of cultural values	4.18	0.71

Through the collation and analysis of the questionnaire samples (table 1), it was found that the means of the main variables were all at a medium to high level, indicating

that the respondents as a whole held a positive attitude towards the integration of enterprises and football culture.

Table 2. The Pearson correlation coefficient

The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to analyze the relationship between variables (table 2).

Variable	1	2	3	4
1	1			
2	0.653	1		
3	0.601	0.669	1	
4	0.591	0.619	0.641	1

$p < 0.01$ (Two tails are prominent.)

5.1 H1: Linking the Enterprise with Football Culture → Brand Recognition

Table 3. The connection analysis

Independent variable	β value	t value	p value
The connection between enterprises and football culture	0.601	8.14	<0.001

Explanation: The corporate culture link has a significant positive impact on brand recognition, and the H1 hypothesis is valid (table 3).

Brand recognition is a manifestation of a company's competitiveness and sometimes becomes a core competitiveness, especially in the mass consumer goods market, where the quality differences of products and services provided by various competitors are not significant. At this time, consumers tend to make purchasing decisions based on the familiarity of the brand [8].

5.2 H2: The Intermediary Role of Emotional Connection

Research results show that corporate cultural links have a significant positive impact on emotional connections ($\beta = 0.653$, $p < 0.001$), and emotional connections also have a significant positive impact on brand recognition ($\beta = 0.523$, $p < 0.001$). After the introduction of intermediary variables, the direct effect of corporate culture links on brand recognition is reduced to $\beta = 0.258$ ($p < 0.01$), and the Bootstrap confidence interval is $[0.196, 0.318]$, not including 0, indicating that the emotional connection is partially mediated between the two. Function, the H2 hypothesis is supported.

5.3 H3: The Regulatory Effect of Cultural Con-

sistency

The study found that the consistency of cultural values plays a significant positive regulatory role in the path of corporate cultural links affecting brand recognition. The β value of the interaction item (cultural link $\times$ consistency) is 0.187, the t value is 3.74, and the $p < 0.001$. Simple slope analysis shows that when cultural consistency is high, the positive impact of corporate cultural links on brand recognition is more significant (slope = 0.691). This result supports the H3 hypothesis and verifies that cultural consistency can enhance the improvement effect of corporate cultural links on brand recognition in this action path.

The overall analysis results support the three research hypotheses (H1, H2, H3) put forward in this article, and verify that the effective link between enterprises and football culture can not only directly improve brand recognition, but also indirectly play a role through emotional connection, and be strengthened by the consistency of cultural values.

6. Discussion

The three assumptions (H1, H2, H3) proposed in this study have been empirically supported. The main reasons can be attributed to the following points:

First of all, football culture, as a global and highly emotional cultural symbol, naturally has the ability to spread across people and resonate with emotions. By sponsoring events, players or co-branded products, the enterprise links the brand image with positive values such as „hard work“, „team“ and „passion“ in football culture, which effectively enhances the emotional attractiveness of the brand. This is highly consistent with the view that „sports marketing enhances brand affinity through value projection“ put forward in the discussion of the connotation, characteristics and influencing factors of sports marketing [1]. In the context of contemporary marketing, the phenomenon of multi-person endorsements of brands is not uncommon; however, the effect of combination endorsements is uneven [9].

Secondly, the intermediary effect of emotional connection reflects the reprocessing of consumers' psychological cognition by the „cultural field“. From the perspective of the field, Chinese international enterprises can break through cross-cultural communication barriers through event marketing. Based on the point of Hisense Group, brands can realize consumers' emotional belonging and value recognition through the embedding of cultural fields [2]. The regression analysis of this study also confirms this point - consumers project football culture on relevant brands because of their good feelings for it, thus improving brand recognition. Brand trust is a complete intermediary variable of brand reputation and brand loyalty. Trust evolves from identity, which can be understood as improving brand recognition is the way to improve consumer brand loyalty [10].

Possible explanations of potential deviations from hypothetical results: Although all assumptions are supported, there are still weak or fluctuating cases of individual data, especially in a small number of samples showing „strong corporate culture links but low brand recognition“. The possible reasons are as follows.

6.1 Respondents' Individual Cultural Differences or Cognitive Bias

Even if some respondents pay attention to football culture, they do not necessarily turn emotional connection into brand loyalty. This phenomenon of „cognitive-behavior disconnect“ is not uncommon in the field of cultural consumption, which shows that there may be a risk of „symbolic acceptance“ but „functional neglect“ between brand links and culture.

6.2 Brand Values are not Clearly Conveyed or Misaligned

If the brand fails to clearly express the value orientation consistent with the spirit of football (such as teamwork and hard work) in publicity, it will be difficult for consum-

ers to perceive the brand concept even if they participate in cultural marketing. This is highly consistent with the integration of Chinese elements: the influence mechanism of cultural identity on the possibility of purchasing global brand products pointed out that „unclear value awareness will weaken the cultural embedding effect“ [3].

6.3 The Commercialization of Cultural Links has Excessively Diluted the Cultural Ontology

Some enterprises overly pursue exposure and ignore cultural depth in co-branding or sponsorship, resulting in consumers' perception of brands tending to be „superficial“ and „advertising“, reducing the real emotional tension of cultural links. This point coincides with the proposal that „excessive commercialization may cause disgust“.

Based on the empirical results and the research of predecessors, this study puts forward the following suggestions for the future cultural marketing of enterprises.

6.3.1 Deepen the value expression of cultural links

Enterprises should move from simple advertising or co-branding to deeper cultural co-creation. For example, combined with the fan community, football public welfare and historical narrative, the brand not only „appears in football culture“, but also „participates in and shapes football culture“. This echoes the research on the impact of consumer value co-creation on brand loyalty in social media situations - the „value co-creation“ model proposed by Antao as an example [4].

6.3.2 Strengthen the fit between brand value and football spirit

In brand communication, take the initiative to emphasize the consistency with football values (team, hard work, passion), and avoid general talk. Companies should build a consistent cognition through multiple contact points such as brand vision, advertising language, spokesperson, and enhance the adjustment effect.

6.3.3 Build a “secondary path” of emotional connection

Companies should not only rely on the primary emotional projection of stars or events, but also strengthen the two-way emotional channel between brands and consumers through social interaction, UGC content, fan participation programs, and enhance brand loyalty.

Although this study has drawn a relatively clear conclusion, there are still the following objective limitations:

The sample source is limited to online questionnaires and lacks offline cross-verification. Although the online questionnaire sample covers a wide range of people, it is difficult to capture the complex psychological transformation in real consumption behavior. In the future, further qual-

itative research on the mechanism of emotional connection can be combined with in-depth interviews or focus groups.

There may be „self-eviation“ in the design of the questionnaire. Because the questionnaire is mostly subjectively evaluated, some data may be affected by social expectations (such as „I like football, so I also like this brand“), resulting in a high cognitive tendency. Subsequent research can consider the introduction of the „implicit association test“ tool. The variable structure has not been refined, and there is a theoretical model expansion space. This study only examines a dependent variable of brand recognition. In the future, indicators such as „brand loyalty“, „brand satisfaction“ or „behavioral intention“ can be further introduced to expand the depth and complexity of the path model.

7. Conclusion

Taking football culture as an example, this study explores the impact of the link between enterprises and culture on brand recognition. The results show that the link between enterprises and football culture can significantly improve brand recognition, emotional connection plays a part of the intermediary role, and the consistency of cultural values plays a positive regulating role. This is because football culture is global and emotional. Enterprises can enhance the emotional attractiveness of the brand through its positive values, and consumers will project their emotions for football to the brand. However, there are influencing factors such as individual differences, unclear communication of brand values, and excessive commercialization. It is suggested that enterprises deepen the value expression of cultural links, strengthen the spiritual fit with football, and build a secondary path of emotional connection. The study fills the gap in the mechanism of the role of brand recognition between enterprises and cultural links, and provides reference for enterprises to carry out cultural marketing, which is beneficial to enterprise marketers and relevant researchers. The research has limitations such as a single sample source, a self-declaration bias in the questionnaire, and the variable structure needs to be refined. In the future, companies can combine offline research,

introduce new tools, and expand variables to improve the theoretical model.

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