

Research on the Impact of Scenario-based Design of New Tea-drinking Spaces on Brand Value

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Abstract: In recent years, the new-style tea-drinking market has expanded rapidly. With the upgrading of consumer demands and the younger generation becoming the primary consumer group, the space experience centered around the “third space” has become a crucial strategy for brands to differentiate themselves. This research focuses on the impact mechanism of spatial scenario design on the brand value of tea-drinking brands, aiming to explore the internal relationships among the key elements of spatial design, brand perception, consumers’ emotional connection, and consumption willingness, providing theoretical support and practical references for scenario-based design in the industry. Through a combination of literature research and case-analysis methods, this study systematically reviews relevant domestic and international research on scenario-based design and brand value over the past five years. It selects representative brands as cases, deeply analyzes their spatial design strategies, user feedback, and market performance, and summarizes both successful experiences and existing problems. Scenario-based design is an important means to enhance the brand value of tea-drinking brands, but it needs to follow the four-in-one design principle of “brand consistency, functional diversity, experience coherence, and cost controllability.” In the future, brands should focus on the in-depth exploration and innovative expression of cultural elements, strengthen the multi-functional attributes of spaces, and achieve seamless integration of online and offline scenarios through digital means. In addition, it is recommended to adopt modular design to reduce scenario-updating costs and increase the return on investment. This research provides a theoretical basis and practical path for the optimization of the spatial design of tea-drinking brands, and has important reference value for promoting the high-quality development of the industry.

Keywords: New-style tea-drinking; Scenario-based design; Brand value; Third space; Cultural symbols

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1. Research background and significance

1.1. The competition dilemma in the new tea-drinking industry

In recent years, the new-style tea-drinking market has witnessed explosive growth and has gradually become

the core growth engine in the consumer field. Data from the China Chain Store & Franchise Association shows that the industry scale has exceeded 200 billion yuan, with an annual compound growth rate of around 18%^[1]. However, behind the apparent prosperity, there are hidden concerns. Leading brands such as HEYTEA and NAI XUE's TEA, although having an advantage in market share, have fallen into an "innovation bottleneck." The phenomenon of similar product formulas and marketing methods are becoming more and more common. It is worth noting that the Generation Z group, which accounts for the majority of consumers (over 60%), has shifted from simply pursuing the taste of beverages to "spatial emotional consumption," and the traditional product-centered competition strategy is clearly lagging behind the evolution of market demands.

1.2. The theoretical breakthrough of scenario-based design

Against this background, the localization practice of the "third space" has opened up a new track for new tea-drinking brands. The experience economy theory proposed by Pine and Gilmore reveals that the essence of modern consumption has shifted from material acquisition to value experience^[2]. Schmitt's research on sensory marketing further corroborates that multi-dimensional spatial stimuli can significantly enhance brand memory points^[3]. Take HEYTEA's "Inspiration Tea" themed store as an example. Its spatial design that combines tea culture with modern aesthetics not only increased the average customer price by 20% but also triggered spontaneous dissemination on social media, verifying that scenario-based design has gone beyond the scope of physical space and become a strategic carrier for brand-culture output^[4].

1.3. The practical value dimension of the research

This research focuses on three practical values: First, to construct a quantitative model of "design elements-emotional resonance-commercial value" to provide a scientific decision-making tool for the industry^[5]. Second, in view of the resource constraints of small and medium-sized brands, to develop modular scenario solutions (such as detachable cultural walls, multi-functional furniture systems) to reduce the renovation cost of single stores. Third, to explore the implementation paths of technologies such as AR virtual tasting and digital-twin stores, and promote the construction of a closed-loop of "online traffic-offline experience-data precipitation." These explorations are not only related to the profitability of single stores but also involve the reconstruction of the brand ecosystem in the new-consumption era^[6].

2. Investigation and research

2.1. Selection of research methodology

To comprehensively reveal the impact mechanism of scenario-based design on the brand value of new tea-drinking brands, this research adopts a mixed-research method, combining qualitative research with quantitative research. This approach aims to obtain research data from multiple dimensions and levels, and enhance the reliability and depth of research conclusions through the complementarity of the two methods^[7].

2.1.1. Deconstructing design strategies through case-analysis method

The qualitative research part mainly deconstructs the scenario-based design strategies of new tea-drinking brands through the case-analysis method. The specific steps are as follows:

Select 20 typical stores of 5 leading brands (HEYTEA, NAI XUE's TEA, CHAYANYUESE, LELECHA, and MI XUE BING CHENG) as the research objects, covering high-end, mid-end, and budget-friendly brands to

ensure the diversity and representativeness of the samples.

Collect data through multiple channels such as field research, consumer interviews, and social-media comments^[8], focusing on spatial design elements, such as cultural symbols, functional zoning, and digital facilities and their impact on the consumer experience.

The advantage of qualitative research is that it can deeply explore the complexity and diversity of scenario-based design and reveal the deep-seated motivations behind consumer behavior. However, its limitation is that the sample size is small, and the universality of the conclusions may be limited.

2.1.2. Verifying hypotheses through consumer questionnaire surveys

The quantitative research part mainly verifies the hypotheses proposed in the qualitative research through consumer questionnaire surveys and quantifies the impact of scenario-based design on brand value. The specific steps are as follows:

Based on the results of qualitative research, design a questionnaire that includes scenario-design elements, such as the density of cultural symbols, the rationality of functional zoning, consumers' emotional resonance, such as NPS value, satisfaction score, and brand-value indicators, such as willingness to pay, repurchase rate^[9].

The advantage of quantitative research is that it can verify hypotheses through large-sample data and provide more universal conclusions. However, its limitation is that it is difficult to deeply reveal the complex motivations behind consumer behavior.

2.2. Data collection and processing

To ensure the scientificity and reliability of the research, this study uses a multi-source data-collection and mixed-analysis method to obtain and verify data from different dimensions, striving to comprehensively reflect the actual effects of the scenario-based design of new tea-drinking brands and its impact on brand value.

2.3. Research model construction

To systematically analyze the impact of scenario-based design on the brand value of new tea-drinking brands, this research constructs a multi-dimensional research model, clarifying independent variables, dependent variables, and control variables, and excluding the interference of other variables on brand value through scientific methods to ensure the accuracy and reliability of research conclusions^[10].

3. Data analysis

3.1. Quantitative analysis of scenario-design elements

To construct a scientific evaluation system for scenario-design elements, this research conducts quantitative analysis on cultural symbols, functional zoning, and the degree of digitalization through multi-dimensional indicators and mixed methods to ensure the objectivity and operability of the data.

3.1.1. Cultural symbol density index

Field Measurement: The research team conducted on-site inspections of 20 sample stores, measured the store area using a laser rangefinder, and counted the number of national-trend elements, such as calligraphy decorations, traditional patterns, regional-cultural symbols item by item, calculating the density value per square meter^[11]. Invite 5 brand-design experts with at least 5 years of working experience to conduct blind evaluations with a

full score of 10 on the relevance between cultural symbols and brand culture, and take the average value after excluding scores with large subjective deviations.

3.1.2. Functional diversity score

Scenario Classification: Divide the store functions into four categories: “Quick-pick-up consumption,” “social interaction,” “office and study,” and “cultural check-in,” and count the number of functional scenarios supported by each store.

Layout Rationality Assessment: Three spatial-design experts conduct 5-level evaluations (1 = chaotic, 5 = excellent) based on indicators such as the smoothness of the moving line and the clarity of area separation, and take the average value as the final score. For example, NAIXUE Dream Factory supports all four types of functions and has a layout score of 4.7; while a community store only supports quick-pick-up and social functions and has a score of 3.1. The correlation coefficient between the functional-diversity score and the repurchase rate is 0.62 ($P < 0.05$), and the correlation coefficient with the average customer price is 0.57 ($P < 0.05$).

3.2. Verification of consumer behavior data

Through the multi-source verification of consumer behavior data, reveal the actual impact of scenario-based design on user decisions.

3.2.1. Cultural relevance and NPS value

Data Comparison: The average NPS of stores with high cultural relevance (score ≥ 8) is 72, which is significantly higher than that of ordinary stores (score ≤ 5 , NPS = 40). Take the “Listening to the Wind in the Bamboo Grove” themed store of CHAYANYUESE as an example ^[12], its NPS value reaches 78, and keywords such as “strong cultural atmosphere” and “suitable for taking pictures and checking in” account for 63% in consumer comments. The study found that Generation Z consumers (aged 18–25) are more sensitive to cultural symbols, and their NPS value in stores with high cultural relevance reaches 81, which is 12% higher than that of other age groups.

3.2.2. Functional diversity and repurchase rate

Stores that support more than 3 functional scenarios have an average repurchase rate of 45%, which is significantly higher than that of single-function stores. For example, the “Social Island” area in HEYTEA Lab stores increases the average stay time of consumers by 25 minutes, and the repurchase rate reaches 48%. Through the tracking of consumer moving lines, it is found that in multi-functional stores, 72% of consumers will trigger at least two types of scenario-based behaviors (such as staying and checking in after purchase), while this proportion is only 35% in single-function stores.

3.3. The impact path of brand value

Through the structural equation model (SEM) and mediating-effect tests, reveal the direct and indirect action mechanisms of scenario-design elements on brand value ^[13].

3.3.1. The emotional conduction path of cultural symbol density

Model Results: The standardized path coefficient of cultural-symbol density on emotional resonance is $\beta = 0.47$ ($P < 0.01$), and the path coefficient of emotional resonance on willingness to pay is $\beta = 0.63$ ($P < 0.01$). For example, through the design of cultural symbols such as murals and music in HEYTEA’s “Dunhuang Flying Apsaras”

themed store, the consumers' emotional-resonance score reaches 8.5 (full score 10), and the willingness to pay increases by 28% (the average customer price increases from 35 yuan to 45 yuan).

3.3.2. The premium ability of digital scenarios

The study found that taking NAIXUE as an example, the direct effect of the degree of digitalization on brand value is $\beta = 0.35$ ($P < 0.05$), and the "virtual clerk" increases the consumer-interaction time by 40% and the average customer price by 18%. The improvement of enjoyment ($\beta = 0.28$, $P < 0.05$) through digital design indirectly affects brand value. For example, LELECHA's AR menu increases the click-through rate of new products by 65%, indirectly driving a 12% increase in the repurchase rate.

4. Discussion and suggestions

4.1. Discussion

This research further improves the theoretical framework of "scenario experience-brand value" through empirical analysis and proposes the "four-in-one" design principle, providing a new perspective for the application of the experience-economy theory in the new tea-drinking industry^[14].

Deepening of Cultural Symbols: Emphasize the in-depth integration of cultural symbols and brand narratives rather than simple piling up. For example, the "Jiangfeng Yuhuo" themed store of CHAYANYUESE constructs a complete cultural narrative by combining poems, music, and spatial design, enabling the consumers' emotional-resonance score to reach 8.7 (full score 10).

Complexification of functional scenarios: Meet the diverse needs of consumers through multi-functional zoning, such as quick-pick-up areas, social islands, cultural exhibition areas, improving space utilization and user stickiness^[15].

Immersion of digital experiences: Use technologies such as AR menus and virtual IPs to enhance scenario interactivity.

Modularization of cost control: Reduce scenario-updating costs by more than 30% through detachable and reusable design elements (such as modular walls, prop systems), providing a feasible solution for small and medium-sized brands.

At the same time, the research verifies the key mediating role of emotional resonance in the path of "cultural-symbol density \rightarrow willingness to pay" (the mediating-effect proportion is 68.5%).

4.2. Practical suggestions

Based on the empirical research conclusions, this paper proposes a four-dimensional implementation framework for the scenario-based design of new tea-drinking brands, covering cultural-symbol reconstruction, functional-configuration optimization, technology-integration innovation, and cost-benefit control. The specific strategies are as follows:

4.2.1. Narrative reconstruction of cultural symbols

Break through the paradigm of superficial symbol piling-up and establish a three-dimensional integration model of "symbols-narratives-emotions." Achieve systematic expression of cultural symbols through the design of storylines in the scenario space (such as regional-cultural tracing, brand-development history). Take the "Jiangfeng Yuhuo" themed store of CHAYANYUESE as an example. It deconstructs the poetic flavor of "Mooring by the

Maple Bridge at Night” into visual symbols (ink-wash screens), auditory symbols (guqin background music), and interactive devices (poem projections), forming a complete cultural-narrative field.

4.2.2. Composite configuration of functional zones

According to the principles of spatial behavior, construct a trinity functional system of “efficiency-social-culture,” and design quick-pick-up areas, social islands, and cultural exhibition areas. The quick-pick-up area adopts a linear layout and an intelligent ordering system to ensure service efficiency (the average pick-up time ≤ 3 minutes); the social island is equipped with semi-open booths and shared desktops to promote social interaction (the user’s stay time is extended by 25 minutes), and the cultural exhibition area realizes the visualization of brand culture through dynamic display cabinets and interactive screens.

4.2.3. Scenario-based integration of digital technologies

Construct a “physical-digital” dual-scenario coupling system; develop AR menus based on LBS to achieve the situational presentation of product information; at the same time, increase the implantation of virtual IPs and create brand digital-human shopping guides to enhance service touchpoints.

4.3. Research limitations and prospects

Although this research has achieved certain results, there are still the following limitations.

The research samples are concentrated on leading brands and do not fully cover regional niche brands, so the universality of the conclusions may be limited.

Insufficient time span: The research data is mainly based on cross-sectional analysis and fails to reflect the long-term effects of scenario-based design.

On this basis, future research is expected to be carried out in more directions. Explore the scenario-based design strategies of regional brands and the sinking market, and propose a more universal theoretical framework; combine meta-universe technology to develop virtual brand spaces and explore new models of “combination of virtual and real” scenario-based design. Through longitudinal research, analyze the long-term impact mechanism of scenario-based design on brand value.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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