

The Influence of Private Consumers' Perceived Value on Sticky Behavior in the Digital Age

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Abstract: With the rapid development of the digital age, the perceived value of private consumers has changed to varying degrees, which has a profound impact on consumption stickiness. Based on the existing research results, this study constructs a model with four dimensions of perceived value as mechanism variables (namely, perceived functional value, perceived emotional value, perceived economic value, and perceived social value), and studies the influence of private domain consumers' perceived value on consumption sticky behavior in the digital age. The empirical study finds that private domain consumers' perceived functional value, perceived emotional value, and perceived economic value positively affect consumption sticky behavior, showing a relationship that sticky behavior increases with the increase of the above three dimensions, while private domain consumers' perceived social value has a negative effect.

Keywords: Private domain consumers; Perceived value; Sticky behavior

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1. Introduction

With the development of the digital economy, the maturity of the social business model, and the deepening of time fragmentation of private domain consumers, data shows that the scale of private domain consumers in China will exceed 650 million in 2025, and 78.3% of consumers of Generation Z will take private domain channels as their first choice for daily shopping^[1]. Private domain consumption has profoundly changed the daily consumption scene and has become one of the main shopping methods. At the same time, private domain consumers are showing brand-new behavior characteristics different from traditional consumers. In the scene of the digital private domain, the perceived value of private domain consumers changes; the formation of consumer stickiness in the private domain is essentially a dynamic accumulation process of "trust-commitment-ownership" realized through continuous value exchange. Based on the theory of perceived value and behavior, the value perception of private consumers will affect their consumption sticky behavior.

To sum up, under the background of the digital age, this paper discusses the influence of consumers' perceived value on sticky behavior in the private domain. In order to provide a reference for enterprises to enhance

consumer stickiness and increase market competitiveness in private domain operations.

2. Theoretical basis and research hypothesis

2.1. Theoretical basis

2.1.1. Private consumers

Rolling thinks that private domain consumers refer to the user groups that enterprises directly reach and operate for a long time through enterprise WeChat, community, APP, applet, etc. These users have the characteristics of a high repurchase rate, strong interaction, and precipitable data, which can bring higher lifelong value to enterprises. Jiao thinks that it is very necessary to manage the relationship between enterprises and private consumers. Using a private community to provide interaction, such as tasting and pre-sale, can enhance the stickiness of private consumers ^[2].

Therefore, based on the above research results, this study believes that private domain consumers are high-value consumers who have been directly contacted by enterprises through their own channels and have been operating for a long time. They have the characteristics of a high repurchase rate, strong interaction, and precipitable data. Their essence is to reduce decision-making costs through professional services and trust relationships, thus enhancing the stickiness of private domain consumers.

2.1.2. Consumer perceived value

Zeithaml proposed that consumer perceived value is the overall evaluation of the benefits and costs paid by consumers ^[3]. Sheth et al. put forward a multidimensional value model, emphasizing that consumer behavior is comprehensively influenced by functional, social, emotional, cognitive, and situational factors ^[4]. Chen thinks that customer perceived value involves five dimensions: perceived product value, information value, entertainment value, perceived economic value, and social value ^[5]. Therefore, based on the above research results, this study integrates the views of Chinese and foreign scholars, defines consumer perceived value as perceived functional value, perceived social value, perceived emotional value, and perceived economic value, and discusses the influence on sticky behavior from these four dimensions.

2.1.3. Sticky behavior

Cai pointed out that stickiness behavior is characterized by repeated purchase, time investment, and multi-dimensional resource investment, and consumers' perceived value has a positive impact on stickiness ^[6]. Zou pointed out in the research on the sticky behavior of new media users that the sticky behavior of consumers presents a dynamic development feature, which shows a gradual process from initial non-sticky to strong sticky, and the degree of investment is positively correlated with the sticky strength ^[7]. Therefore, based on the above research results, aiming at the sticky behavior of private consumers, this study holds that sticky behavior is a continuous interactive behavior of consumers in their own channels, which is characterized by not only repeated purchase and time investment, but also multi-dimensional resource investment.

2.2. Research hypotheses

Zhang's research on Weibo users' sticky behavior based on the technology acceptance model shows that four key factors, namely perceived ease of use, subjective norms, perceived interest, and perceived usefulness, will significantly enhance users' willingness to use, and the willingness to use will have a significant positive impact on

users' sticky behavior. Therefore, these factors together constitute an important driving force to promote the user's sticky behavior^[8]. Based on the analysis of new media consumers, Zou's research shows that perceived cognitive value, perceived emotional value, perceived social value, and perceived interactive value can positively promote the sticky behavior of new media users^[7].

Based on the above analysis, the following assumptions are put forward:

H1: The functional value of private consumers has a positive impact on sticky behavior.

H2: The emotional value of private consumers has a positive impact on sticky behavior.

H3: The economic value of private consumers has a positive impact on sticky behavior.

H4: The social value of private consumers has a positive impact on sticky behavior.

To sum up, the theoretical model of this study is shown in **Figure 1**.

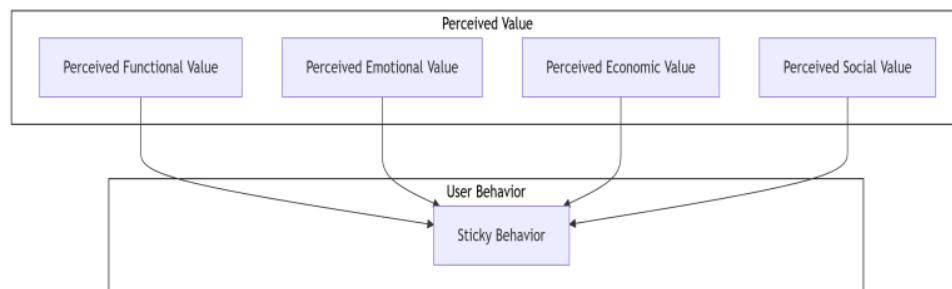


Figure 1. Theoretical framework model

3. Research design and methods

3.1. Description of samples

This study selected consumers who have been shopping in private areas in the past year as the research subject to ensure the scientific results of the survey. In this study, a questionnaire survey was used for empirical research. Firstly, the questionnaire was designed and generated using the platform of Questionnaires. Subsequently, the QR code of the questionnaire was published through social media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, and Tik Tok, and qualified samples were recruited by using the paid service of Questionnaires. A total of 354 questionnaires were distributed, and 326 questionnaires were recovered, with a recovery rate of 92.1%. Excluding some unqualified questionnaires, 321 valid questionnaires were obtained.

3.2. Questionnaire design

In order to ensure the accuracy and clarity of the questionnaire, the questionnaire design of this paper was modified according to the relevant scales of many experts and scholars. The contents of the questionnaire include: basic information, consumer perceived value survey in private domain, and consumer sticky behavior survey in private domain, and each dimension includes multiple questions, using the Likert scale method.

The measurement of the scale of perceived value of private consumers mainly draws on the scale of perceived value of Yi Chen and Bingyan Zhao^[9], including four dimensions: perceived functional value, perceived emotional value, perceived economic value, and perceived social value, with five items in each dimension; a total of 20 items were used for measurement.

The measurement of sticky behavior draws lessons from the scale design of Zou^[7] and Bao^[10], and adopts five items, which are scored by a Likert 5-point scale, where 1 means "very inconsistent," 5 means "very

consistent,” and 3 means “average” (see **Table 1**).

3.3. Validity and reliability

Reliability test: The analysis of the reliability test results is shown in **Table 2**. Cronbach’s α coefficient of the scale is higher than the standard 0.8, both of which are above 0.85, indicating that the scale has good internal consistency and reliability, and the measurement results are stable and credible.

Validity test: The analysis of validity test results is shown in **Table 3**. The overall KMO value of the scale is higher than the standard 0.7, reaching 0.880, and the Sig value of the Bartlett spherical test is 0.000, reaching a significant level, indicating that there is a significant correlation between variables, and the data is suitable for factor analysis. There is a significant correlation between the display variables, which fully meets the prerequisite for factor analysis.

Table 1. Scale design

Variable name	Number	Questions
Perceived functional value	A1	The products provided by private domain channels are better than other platforms in terms of functionality.
	A2	The customized product scheme through private domain customer service can accurately meet my needs.
	A3	Private domain members’ exclusive version of goods has a more practical functional configuration.
	A4	The product use tutorial in the private community helps me to better understand the function of the goods.
	A5	Before purchasing through private channels, I can fully understand the product functions through the real experience of other members.
Perceive emotional value	B1	The process of buying and using goods in private communities makes me feel happy.
	B2	The exclusive care of the brand’s private domain makes me feel valued.
	B3	Sharing shopping experiences with other members in the private community makes me feel a sense of belonging.
	B4	The personalized service of private customer service makes me emotionally dependent on the brand.
	B5	Participating in weekly interactive activities in the private domain makes me have more feelings for the brand.
Perceived economic value	C1	The exclusive discount provided by private domain channels is more favorable than other platforms.
	C2	I will increase unplanned purchases because of limited-time special offers in the private domain.
	C3	The price rights corresponding to the private domain membership level make me more willing to continue spending.
	C4	I feel that the “cash back from drying orders” provided by the private domain customer service is worth it.
	C5	Even if the goods are not discounted, the additional benefits provided by the private domain make me feel cost-effective.
Perceive social value	D1	Membership in private brand communities makes me feel more dignified.
	D2	My shopping experience shared in a private community is often praised and recognized by other members.
	D3	Participating in private brand activities makes me feel like an insider.
	D4	Products purchased through private channels bring more joy when they are in the circle of friends.
	D5	KOL/KOC recommendation in the brand’s private domain community convinces me more than other channels.
Sticky behavior	E1	Compared with other channels, I will give priority to buying goods in private channels.
	E2	I am willing to actively recommend a brand’s private domain to my friends and introduce its benefits.
	E3	I often participate in private activities
	E4	I will feel sorry if the private community is closed.
	E5	I am willing to provide product improvement suggestions or participate in research for a private brand.

Table 2. Analysis of reliability test results

Variable	Cronbach's α	Number of terms
Perceived functional value	0.863	5
Perceive emotional value	0.871	5
Perceived economic value	0.859	5
Perceive social value	0.869	5
Sticky behavior	0.868	5

Table 3. Analysis of validity test results

KMO	0.880
Approximate chi-square	3368.991
Bartlett spherical test	df
	300
	Sig.
	0.000

4. Result analysis

Pearson coefficients of the variables studied are analyzed as shown in **Table 4**. The maximum Pearson coefficient among variables is 0.319, which does not reach the threshold of multicollinearity of 0.75, so the multicollinearity among variables is not significant. According to the results, it is found that there is a positive correlation between perceived functional value ($r = 0.235$, $P < 0.01$) and sticky behavior, and there is a positive correlation between perceived emotional value ($r = 0.189$, $P < 0.01$) and sticky behavior. Perceived economic value ($r = 0.213$, $P < 0.01$) is positively correlated with sticky behavior, while perceived social value ($r = -0.216$, $P < 0.01$) is negatively correlated with sticky behavior. In this paper, it is found that assumptions H1, H2, and H3 are preliminarily tested except assumption H4, which provides some empirical support for the follow-up research.

There is a negative correlation between perceived social value and sticky behavior, and the assumption is not valid. This negative correlation does not mean that the perception of social value itself is not good, but comes from the double-edged sword effect of “perception of social value” and the change of consumer motivation in the private domain. When private consumers pay too much attention to or passively accept a certain social value, it may have the opposite effect. Li et al. found that private consumers will receive information from businesses and other consumers at the same time, which may lead consumers to face excessive information. Faced with information overload, private consumers will have evasive behavior, and the social business effect will decline^[11].

Table 4. Correlation analysis

Variable	Perceived functional value	Perceive emotional value	Perceived economic value	Perceive social value	Sticky behavior
Perceived functional value	1				
Perceive emotional value	0.319**	1			
Perceived economic value	0.245**	0.270**	1		
Perceive social value	-0.262**	-0.227**	-0.342**	1	
Sticky behavior	0.235**	0.189**	0.213**	-0.216**	1

Note: ** means $P < 0.01$.

5. Conclusion and enlightenment

In the digital age, the perceived value of private consumers is increasingly affecting consumers' sticky behavior. This paper discussed the influence of private consumers' perceived functional value, perceived emotional value, perceived economic value, and perceived social value on sticky behavior. The results show that: firstly, perceived functional value, perceived emotional value, and perceived economic value all have significant positive effects on sticky behavior. It shows that the convenient service and rich product information provided by the private domain platform are the basis for attracting private domain consumers to retain and reuse. Positive emotional experiences, such as pleasure, a sense of belonging, and trust gained by consumers in the private domain, can effectively enhance their stickiness. The incentives of exclusive benefits, discounts, bonus points, and other economic benefits directly satisfy the pursuit of cost performance of private consumers, and are a powerful driving force for them to produce repeated purchases and continuous attention behavior. Second, social value has a negative correlation with the sticky behavior of private consumers. It shows that the social value perceived by some private domain consumers through private domain platforms is not the main driving factor for their sticky behavior. When consumers in the private domain receive too much information from merchants and other consumers, this may lead to information overload for consumers, and consumers in the private domain will exhibit evasive behavior.

This study shows that in order to effectively enhance the stickiness of private consumers, operators should give priority to consolidating the functional foundation, optimizing emotional experience, and providing attractive economic incentives. In contrast, it may not be the most effective strategy to invest too many resources in building the social value perception of private consumers. In the future, private domain operations should strive to become a "useful, interesting, and beneficial" value hub for private domain consumers, so as to cultivate a group of private domain consumers with high loyalty.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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