# The Impact of Co-Branding in New-Style Tea Brands on Consumer Purchase Intention Based on the SOR Model

**Liuxin Li**
*City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China*

**Abstract: This study, based on the SOR (Stimulus-Organism-Response) model, deeply explores the impact of co-branding in new-style tea brands on consumer purchase intention. This study examines how co-branding, as an external stimulus, shapes consumer behavior by triggering internal changes in affect and cognition, thereby influencing purchase intention. It will provide theoretical basis and practical guidance for new-style tea brands to better carry out co-branding activities, helping them formulate more effective marketing strategies amid market competition.**

**Keywords: SOR Model; Co-Branding; Brand Attitude; Consumer Purchase Intention**

## 1. Research Background

The emergence of new-style tea brands in recent years has intensified market competition significantly. To consolidate their positions in the market, many major brands have embraced co-branding initiatives with diverse intellectual properties (IPs). This marketing strategy has become a new trend in the industry's development. By joining hands with well-known IPs such as popular animations, films and television works, games and works of art, new-style tea brands have sparked consumers' curiosity and interest, which has effectively enhanced the cultural added value of the brands. Based on the theoretical framework of the SOR model, this paper analyzes how the new-style tea brands' IP co-branding shapes consumers' purchase intention.

The SOR model serves as a general framework for understanding human behavior, following the logic of "Stimulus—Organism (physiological and psychological)—Response". Existing academic research has applied this theory to consumer field. For example, Hong Zhang et al. (2014) adopted the S-O-R framework to explore the factors affecting customer participation in social commerce. In their study, customers' perceptions of personalization and interactivity were regarded as external stimuli, while social support represented the internal organismic response. Social commerce intention was identified as the corresponding behavioral expression.

### 1.1 Co-Branding (S)

Anderson and Narus (1990) defined co-branding as a contractual agreement between different enterprises. Its purpose is to help both parties expand their operational scale while enhancing brand recognition and visibility. Yan Yan (2020) further characterized co-branding as an alliance formed between two or more brands that transcends their established frameworks. This partnership leverages mutual learning to achieve quality improvement and strengthen brand image.

### 1.2 Brand Attitude (O)

Regarding the definition of brand attitude, Chai Junwu (2007) defined it as the manifestation of consumers' cognitive perceptions and affective responses toward a brand . Yang Kangkang (2021) subsequently proposed a refined dimensional framework based on behavioral intention, categorizing brand attitude into three distinct dimensions: cognition, affect, and conation .

### 1.3 Consumer Purchase Intention (R)

Fishbebin et al. (1975) stated that consumer purchase intention refers to the willingness demonstrated by consumers in the actual consumption process and their final purchase decisio. Through their research, Dodds et al. (1991) found that there exists a significant positive correlation between consumers' brand attitude and their purchase intention.

## 2. Model Construction and Hypothesis Formulation

### 2.1 Definition of Variable Concepts

 

The study examines three types of variables, namely the independent variable—perceived co-branded products, the mediating variable—brand attitude, and the dependent variable—consumer purchase intention. The variables and their corresponding observation indicators are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Research Variables and Corresponding Observation Indicators**

| | Variable | Observation indicators | Reference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Independent variable S | Co-branding innovation | I think the co-branded products of the tea brand and IP is quite novel and unexpected (A1) | Huo Zijing (2022) |
| | | I like the creative and personalized merchandise launched by the co-branding (A2) | |
| | | Innovative and interesting advertising and marketing methods will be more attractive to me (A3) | |
| | Co-branding fit | I will be more willing to choose to co-brand with an IP that matches the style of the tea brand (B1) | Yang Yanxian (2021) |
| | | I will be more willing to choose to co-brand with an IP that is functionally complementary to the tea brand (B2) | |
| | | I will be more willing to choose to co-brand with an IP that is at the same level as the tea brand (B3) | |
| Mediating variable O | Brand attitude - cognition | The new-style tea IP co-branded product can deepen my impression of the brand (C1) | Bagozzi (2001) Lafferty (2007) |
| | | The new-style tea IP co-branded product can enable me to obtain more information about the brand (C2) | |
| | | I think the new-style tea IP co-branded product is attractive (C3) | |
| | Brand attitude - affect | Co-branding between new-style tea and IP will increase my favorability towards the brand (D1) | |
| | | Co-branding between new-style tea and IP will increase my recognition of the brand (D2) | |
| | | Compared with other tea brands, I am more interested in tea brands with IP co-branding (D3) | |
| Dependent variable R | Purchase intention | I will buy tea products and merchandise launched by tea-IP co-branding (W1) | Zhuang Cuiyao et al. (2022) |
| | | When purchasing products, compared with the original products, I am more willing to buy co-branded ones (W2) | |
| | | I will consider recommending tea-IP co-branded products to others (W3) | |

## 2.2 Model Construction and Hypotheses

This study puts forward the following hypotheses (see figure 1): First, as a dual-dimensional concept, co-branding exerts a consistent impact on purchase intention through both its innovation dimension and fit dimension. Second, when co-branding acts as an external stimulus, consumers serve as the organism, and their brand attitude—regarded as an internal response—will be influenced by co-branding. Third, as consumers' final response, purchase intention is subject to a positive correlation impact exerted by brand attitude. Based on the above hypotheses and combined with the research variables of this study, a theoretical model has been constructed.

H1a: Co-branding innovation positively influences consumer purchase intention

H1b: Co-branding fit positively influences consumer purchase intention

H2a: Co-branding innovation positively influences consumer brand attitude - cognition

H2b: Co-branding innovation positively influences consumer brand attitude - affect

H2c: Co-branding fit positively influences consumer brand attitude - cognition

H2d: Co-branding fit positively influences consumer brand attitude - affect

H3a: Brand attitude - cognition positively influences consumer purchase intention

H3b: Brand attitude - affect positively influences consumers purchase intention

H4a: Brand attitude - cognition can play a mediating role between co-branding innovation, co-branding fit and consumer purchase intention

H4b: Brand attitude - affect can play a mediating role between co-branding innovation, co-branding fit and consumer purchase intention

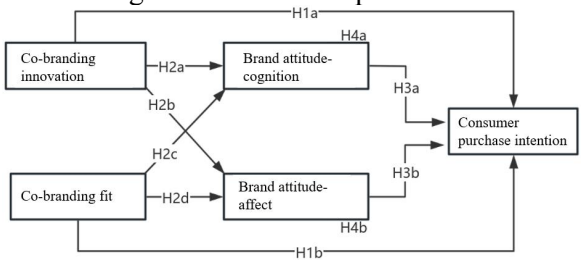


**Figure 1. The SOR Theoretical Model of the Impact of Co-Branding in New-Style Tea Brands on Consumer Purchase Intention**

## 3. Questionnaire Collection and Data Validation

This study collected a total of 344 valid questionnaires. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for each dimension exceeded 0.8, indicating that the questionnaire has high internal consistency. The results of factor analysis revealed that the structure of the questionnaire conforms to theoretical expectations, with high factor loadings and moderate correlations, which demonstrates good construct validity.

### 3.1 Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression model was established, with purchase intention (W) as the dependent variable and co-branding innovation (A) as well as co-branding fit (B) as the independent variables.

(1) W1: the dependent variable

**Results of linear regression analysis (n=344)**

| | Unstandardized coefficients | | Standardized coefficient | $t$ | $p$ | Multicollinearity diagnostics | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $B$ | Std. Error | $Beta$ | | | VIF | Tolerance |
| Constant | 0.360 | 0.140 | – | 2.573 | 0.011* | – | – |
| A1 | 0.128 | 0.053 | 0.132 | 2.436 | 0.015* | 2.770 | 0.361 |
| A2 | 0.185 | 0.055 | 0.191 | 3.345 | 0.001** | 3.083 | 0.324 |
| A3 | 0.209 | 0.053 | 0.212 | 3.940 | 0.000** | 2.741 | 0.365 |
| B1 | 0.162 | 0.051 | 0.167 | 3.180 | 0.002** | 2.597 | 0.385 |
| B2 | 0.104 | 0.059 | 0.104 | 1.770 | 0.078 | 3.295 | 0.304 |
| B3 | 0.109 | 0.054 | 0.117 | 2.009 | 0.045* | 3.213 | 0.311 |
| $R^2$ | 0.644 | | | | | | |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.637 | | | | | | |
| $F$ | $F$ (6, 337)=101.467, $p$=0.000 | | | | | | |
| D-W Value | 1.746 | | | | | | |

Note: Dependent variable is W1

* $p$<0.05 ** $p$<0.01

**Figure 2. Research Variables and Corresponding Observation Indicators**

The regression coefficient of A1 is 0.128 (t = 2.436, p = 0.015 < 0.05); the regression coefficient of A2 is 0.185 (t = 3.345, p = 0.001 < 0.01); the regression coefficient of A3 is 0.209 (t = 3.940, p = 0.000 < 0.01); the regression coefficient of B1 is 0.162 (t = 3.180, p = 0.002 < 0.01); the regression coefficient of B2 is 0.104 (t = 1.770, p = 0.078 > 0.05); the regression coefficient of B3 is 0.109 (t = 2.009, p = 0.045 < 0.05).

A1, A2, A3, B1, and B3 exert a significant positive impact on W1, while B2 has no impact on W1.

(2) W2: the dependent variable

**Results of linear regression analysis (n=344)**

| | Unstandardized coefficients | | Standardized coefficient | $t$ | $p$ | Multicollinearity diagnostics | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $B$ | Std. Error | $Beta$ | | | VIF | Tolerance |
| Constant | 0.389 | 0.138 | – | 2.824 | 0.005** | – | – |
| A1 | 0.116 | 0.052 | 0.120 | 2.233 | 0.026* | 2.770 | 0.361 |
| A2 | 0.274 | 0.055 | 0.284 | 5.018 | 0.000** | 3.083 | 0.324 |
| A3 | 0.098 | 0.052 | 0.099 | 1.864 | 0.063 | 2.741 | 0.365 |
| B1 | 0.185 | 0.050 | 0.191 | 3.676 | 0.000** | 2.597 | 0.385 |
| B2 | 0.081 | 0.058 | 0.082 | 1.404 | 0.161 | 3.295 | 0.304 |
| B3 | 0.137 | 0.053 | 0.148 | 2.570 | 0.011* | 3.213 | 0.311 |
| $R^2$ | 0.651 | | | | | | |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.645 | | | | | | |
| $F$ | $F$ (6, 337)=104.742, $p$=0.000 | | | | | | |
| D-W Value | 1.999 | | | | | | |

Note: Dependent variable is W2

* $p$<0.05 ** $p$<0.01

**Figure 3. Results of Linear Regression Analysis with Purchase Intention W1 as the Dependent Variable (n=344)**

 

The regression coefficient of A1 is 0.116 (t = 2.233, p = 0.026 < 0.05); the regression coefficient of A2 is 0.274 (t = 5.018, p = 0.000 < 0.01); the regression coefficient of A3 is 0.098 (t = 1.864, p = 0.063 > 0.05); the regression coefficient of B1 is 0.185 (t = 3.676, p = 0.000 < 0.01); the regression coefficient of B2 is 0.081 (t = 1.404, p = 0.161 > 0.05); the regression coefficient of B3 is 0.137 (t = 2.570, p = 0.011 < 0.05).

A1, A2, B1, and B3 exert a significant positive impact on W2, whereas A3 and B2 have no impact on W2.

(3) W3: the dependent variable

**Results of linear regression analysis (n=344)**

| | Unstandardized coefficients | | Standardized coefficient | t | p | Multicollinearity diagnostics | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *B* | Std. Error | *Beta* | | | VIF | Tolerance |
| Constant | ). 260 | 0. 147 | – | 1. 775 | 0. 077 | – | – |
| A1 | 0. 086 | 0. 055 | 0. 085 | 1. 556 | 0. 121 | 2. 770 | 0. 361 |
| A2 | 0. 197 | 0. 058 | 0. 195 | 3. 395 | 0. 001** | 3. 083 | 0. 324 |
| A3 | 0. 176 | 0. 056 | 0. 171 | 3. 159 | 0. 002** | 2. 741 | 0. 365 |
| B1 | 0. 232 | 0. 053 | 0. 229 | 4. 346 | 0. 000** | 2. 597 | 0. 385 |
| B2 | 0. 124 | 0. 062 | 0. 120 | 2. 015 | 0. 045* | 3. 295 | 0. 304 |
| B3 | 0. 113 | 0. 057 | 0. 117 | 1. 996 | 0. 047* | 3. 213 | 0. 311 |
| $R^2$ | | | 0. 638 | | | | |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | | | 0. 632 | | | | |
| *F* | | | *F* (6, 337)=99. 085, *p*=0. 000 | | | | |
| D-W Value | | | 1. 829 | | | | |

Note: Dependent variable is W3

* *p*<0. 05 ** *p*<0. 01

**Figure 4. Results of Linear Regression Analysis with Purchase Intention W3 as the Dependent Variable (n=344)**

The regression coefficient of A1 is 0.086 (t = 1.556, p = 0.121 > 0.05); the regression coefficient of A2 is 0.197 (t = 3.395, p = 0.001 < 0.01); the regression coefficient of A3 is 0.176 (t = 3.159, p = 0.002 < 0.01); the regression coefficient of B1 is 0.232 (t = 4.346, p = 0.000 < 0.01); the regression coefficient of B2 is 0.124 (t = 2.015, p = 0.045 < 0.05); the regression coefficient of B3 is 0.113 (t = 1.996, p = 0.047 < 0.05).

A2, A3, B1, B2, and B3 exert a significant positive impact on W3, while A1 has no impact on W3.

### 3.2 Mediation Effect Analysis

(1) C on W1

Summary of mediation effect test results

| Item | c Total effect | a | b | a*b Mediating effect value | a*b (Boot SE) | a*b (*Z* value) | a*b (*P* value) | a*b (95% BootCI) | c' Direct effect | Test conclusion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A1=>C1=>W1 | 0. 150 | 0. 255* | 0. 241* | 0. 061 | 0. 037 | 1. 662 | 0. 097 | 0. 005 ~ 0. 146 | 0. 041 | Complete mediation |
| A1=>C2=>W1 | 0. 150 | 0. 240** | 0. 105 | 0. 025 | 0. 027 | 0. 936 | 0. 349 | −0. 023 ~ 0. 086 | 0. 041 | Mediation effect not significant |
| A1=>C3=>W1 | 0. 150 | 0. 278** | 0. 079 | 0. 022 | 0. 034 | 0. 642 | 0. 521 | −0. 039 ~ 0. 101 | 0. 041 | Mediation effect not significant |
| A2=>C1=>W1 | 0. 374** | 0. 233* | 0. 241* | 0. 056 | 0. 032 | 1. 749 | 0. 080 | 0. 002 ~ 0. 126 | 0. 277** | Partial mediation |
| A2=>C2=>W1 | 0. 374** | 0. 232* | 0. 105 | 0. 025 | 0. 025 | 0. 988 | 0. 323 | −0. 020 ~ 0. 079 | 0. 277** | Mediation effect not significant |
| A2=>C3=>W1 | 0. 374** | 0. 198 | 0. 079 | 0. 016 | 0. 023 | 0. 667 | 0. 504 | −0. 025 ~ 0. 072 | 0. 277** | Mediation effect not significant |
| A3=>C1=>W1 | 0. 421** | 0. 292* | 0. 241* | 0. 070 | 0. 034 | 2. 075 | 0. 038 | 0. 005 ~ 0. 135 | 0. 278* | Partial mediation |
| A3=>C2=>W1 | 0. 421** | 0. 361** | 0. 105 | 0. 038 | 0. 035 | 1. 072 | 0. 284 | −0. 029 ~ 0. 111 | 0. 278* | Mediation effect not significant |
| A3=>C3=>W1 | 0. 421** | 0. 432** | 0. 079 | 0. 034 | 0. 046 | 0. 742 | 0. 458 | −0. 052 ~ 0. 129 | 0. 278* | Mediation effect not significant |

Note:

* *p*<0. 05 ** *p*<0. 01

Bootstrap type = Percentile Bootstrap method

**Figure 5. Summary of Mediation Effect Test Results of Brand Attitude-Cognition (C) on Purchase Intention W1**

The mediating variable C1 plays a partial or complete mediating role in the relationships between their respective independent variables and dependent variables, whereas C2 and C3 show no significant mediating role in all the paths examined. For A1, C1 exerts a complete mediating effect, while the mediating effects of C2 and C3 are not significant. For A2 and A3, although C1 has a certain partial mediating effect, the mediating effects of C2 and C3 are both insignificant.

(2) C on W2

Summary of mediation effect test results

| Item | c Total effect | a | b | a*b Mediating effect value | a*b (Boot SE) | a*b (Z value) | a*b (P value) | a*b (95% BootCI) | c' Direct effect | Test conclusion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A1=>C1=>W2 | 0.243** | 0.341** | 0.065 | 0.022 | 0.021 | 1.050 | 0.294 | −0.016 ~ 0.068 | 0.146** | Mediation effect not significant |
| A1=>C2=>W2 | 0.243** | 0.301** | 0.138** | 0.042 | 0.019 | 2.188 | 0.029 | 0.007 ~ 0.083 | 0.146** | Partial mediation |
| A1=>C3=>W2 | 0.243** | 0.230** | 0.146** | 0.034 | 0.016 | 2.092 | 0.036 | 0.007 ~ 0.070 | 0.146** | Partial mediation |
| A2=>C1=>W2 | 0.395** | 0.192** | 0.065 | 0.012 | 0.012 | 1.046 | 0.295 | −0.010 ~ 0.038 | 0.306** | Mediation effect not significant |
| A2=>C2=>W2 | 0.395** | 0.285** | 0.138** | 0.039 | 0.019 | 2.128 | 0.033 | 0.007 ~ 0.080 | 0.306** | Partial mediation |
| A2=>C3=>W2 | 0.395** | 0.257** | 0.146** | 0.038 | 0.017 | 2.198 | 0.028 | 0.009 ~ 0.076 | 0.306** | Partial mediation |
| A3=>C1=>W2 | 0.203** | 0.324** | 0.065 | 0.021 | 0.020 | 1.066 | 0.286 | −0.015 ~ 0.063 | 0.087 | Mediation effect not significant |
| A3=>C2=>W2 | 0.203** | 0.293** | 0.138** | 0.040 | 0.018 | 2.220 | 0.026 | 0.007 ~ 0.079 | 0.087 | Complete mediation |
| A3=>C3=>W2 | 0.203** | 0.372** | 0.146** | 0.054 | 0.023 | 2.314 | 0.021 | 0.013 ~ 0.104 | 0.087 | Complete mediation |

Note:
* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$
Bootstrap type = Percentile Bootstrap method

**Figure 6. Summary of Mediation Effect Test Results of Brand Attitude-Cognition (C) on Purchase**

The mediating variable C1 acts as either a partial or complete mediator in the relationships between its corresponding independent variables and the dependent variable, while C2 and C3 show no significant mediating effects across all the paths examined. For A1 and A3, C1 serves as a full mediator, with C2 and C3 failing to exert any notable mediating effects. In the case of A2, C1 plays a certain partial mediating role, yet neither C2 nor C3 demonstrates a significant mediating effect.

(3) C on W3

Summary of mediation effect test results

| Item | c Total effect | a | b | a*b Mediating effect value | a*b (Boot SE) | a*b (Z value) | a*b (P value) | a*b (95% BootCI) | c' Direct effect | Test conclusion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A1=>C1=>W3 | 0.229** | 0.341** | 0.210** | 0.072 | 0.024 | 3.009 | 0.003 | 0.027 ~ 0.120 | 0.086 | Complete mediation |
| A1=>C2=>W3 | 0.229** | 0.301** | 0.100 | 0.030 | 0.017 | 1.713 | 0.087 | −0.003 ~ 0.065 | 0.086 | Mediation effect not significant |
| A1=>C3=>W3 | 0.229** | 0.230** | 0.178** | 0.041 | 0.017 | 2.402 | 0.016 | 0.011 ~ 0.077 | 0.086 | Complete mediation |
| A2=>C1=>W3 | 0.342** | 0.192** | 0.210** | 0.040 | 0.017 | 2.376 | 0.018 | 0.010 ~ 0.076 | 0.227** | Partial mediation |
| A2=>C2=>W3 | 0.342** | 0.285** | 0.100 | 0.028 | 0.017 | 1.640 | 0.101 | −0.003 ~ 0.066 | 0.227** | Mediation effect not significant |
| A2=>C3=>W3 | 0.342** | 0.257** | 0.178** | 0.046 | 0.018 | 2.559 | 0.010 | 0.014 ~ 0.086 | 0.227** | Partial mediation |
| A3=>C1=>W3 | 0.297** | 0.324** | 0.210** | 0.068 | 0.024 | 2.820 | 0.005 | 0.023 ~ 0.119 | 0.134* | Partial mediation |
| A3=>C2=>W3 | 0.297** | 0.293** | 0.100 | 0.029 | 0.017 | 1.732 | 0.083 | −0.003 ~ 0.063 | 0.134* | Mediation effect not significant |
| A3=>C3=>W3 | 0.297** | 0.372** | 0.178** | 0.066 | 0.024 | 2.738 | 0.006 | 0.021 ~ 0.116 | 0.134* | Partial mediation |

Note:
* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$
Bootstrap type = Percentile Bootstrap method

**Figure 7. Summary of Mediation Effect Test Results of Brand Attitude-Cognition (C) on Purchase Intention W3**

The mediating variable C1 plays a partial or complete mediating role in the relationships between A1, A2, A3 and W3. C3 exerts a complete mediating effect in the relationship between A3 and W3, while C2 shows no significant mediating role in all the examined paths.

(4) D on W1

The mediating variable D1 plays a significant mediating role in the relationships between independent variables A1, A2, A3 and dependent variable W1, whereas the mediating effects of D2 and D3 are relatively weak or insignificant.

(5)D on W2

The mediating variables D1 and D3 exert a complete mediating role in the relationships between their respective independent variables and dependent variables, whereas D2 plays no significant mediating role in all the examined paths. Regarding A2, although D1 and D3 perform a partial mediating role, the mediating effect of D2 is not significant.

(6) D on W3

 

Summary of mediation effect test results

| Item | c Total effect | a | b | a*b Mediating effect value | a*b (Boot SE) | a*b (Z value) | a*b (P value) | a*b (95% BootCI) | c' Direct effect | Test conclusion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A1=>D1=>W1 | 0.150 | 0.234** | 0.169 | 0.040 | 0.029 | 1.358 | 0.175 | −0.014 ~ 0.101 | 0.054 | Mediation effect not significant |
| A1=>D2=>W1 | 0.150 | 0.455** | 0.053 | 0.024 | 0.050 | 0.483 | 0.629 | −0.062 ~ 0.137 | 0.054 | Mediation effect not significant |
| A1=>D3=>W1 | 0.150 | 0.212* | 0.152 | 0.032 | 0.029 | 1.126 | 0.260 | −0.009 ~ 0.103 | 0.054 | Mediation effect not significant |
| A2=>D1=>W1 | 0.374** | 0.284** | 0.169 | 0.048 | 0.037 | 1.312 | 0.190 | −0.012 ~ 0.132 | 0.287** | Mediation effect not significant |
| A2=>D2=>W1 | 0.374** | 0.092 | 0.053 | 0.005 | 0.014 | 0.337 | 0.736 | −0.022 ~ 0.038 | 0.287** | Mediation effect not significant |
| A2=>D3=>W1 | 0.374** | 0.220* | 0.152 | 0.033 | 0.026 | 1.263 | 0.206 | −0.009 ~ 0.094 | 0.287** | Mediation effect not significant |
| A3=>D1=>W1 | 0.421** | 0.372** | 0.169 | 0.063 | 0.043 | 1.460 | 0.144 | −0.016 ~ 0.154 | 0.274* | Mediation effect not significant |
| A3=>D2=>W1 | 0.421** | 0.253* | 0.053 | 0.013 | 0.026 | 0.525 | 0.600 | −0.034 ~ 0.067 | 0.274* | Mediation effect not significant |
| A3=>D3=>W1 | 0.421** | 0.464** | 0.152 | 0.071 | 0.046 | 1.533 | 0.125 | −0.017 ~ 0.164 | 0.274* | Mediation effect not significant |

Note:
* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$
Bootstrap type = Percentile Bootstrap method

**Figure 8. Summary of Mediation Effect Test Results of Brand Attitude-Affect (D) on Purchase Intention W1**

Summary of mediation effect test results

| Item | c Total effect | a | b | a*b Mediating effect value | a*b (Boot SE) | a*b (Z value) | a*b (P value) | a*b (95% BootCI) | c' Direct effect | Test conclusion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A1=>D1=>W2 | 0.321** | 0.234** | 0.251* | 0.059 | 0.040 | 1.453 | 0.146 | 0.000 ~ 0.156 | 0.154 | Complete mediation |
| A1=>D2=>W2 | 0.321** | 0.455** | 0.132 | 0.060 | 0.062 | 0.971 | 0.331 | −0.057 ~ 0.186 | 0.154 | Mediation effect not significant |
| A1=>D3=>W2 | 0.321** | 0.212* | 0.228* | 0.048 | 0.036 | 1.345 | 0.179 | −0.005 ~ 0.132 | 0.154 | Complete mediation |
| A2=>D1=>W2 | 0.405** | 0.284** | 0.251* | 0.071 | 0.041 | 1.744 | 0.081 | 0.002 ~ 0.160 | 0.271* | Partial mediation |
| A2=>D2=>W2 | 0.405** | 0.092 | 0.132 | 0.012 | 0.020 | 0.601 | 0.548 | −0.027 ~ 0.057 | 0.271* | Mediation effect not significant |
| A2=>D3=>W2 | 0.405** | 0.220* | 0.228* | 0.050 | 0.033 | 1.502 | 0.133 | −0.005 ~ 0.122 | 0.271* | Partial mediation |
| A3=>D1=>W2 | 0.130 | 0.372** | 0.251* | 0.093 | 0.049 | 1.904 | 0.057 | 0.004 ~ 0.198 | −0.102 | Complete mediation |
| A3=>D2=>W2 | 0.130 | 0.253* | 0.132 | 0.033 | 0.032 | 1.031 | 0.302 | −0.031 ~ 0.098 | −0.102 | Mediation effect not significant |
| A3=>D3=>W2 | 0.130 | 0.464** | 0.228* | 0.106 | 0.051 | 2.071 | 0.038 | −0.003 ~ 0.200 | −0.102 | Complete mediation |

Note:
* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$
Bootstrap type = Percentile Bootstrap method

**Figure 9. Summary of Mediation Effect Test Results of Brand Attitude-Affect (D) on Purchase Intention W2**

Summary of mediation effect test results

| Item | c Total effect | a | b | a*b Mediating effect value | a*b (Boot SE) | a*b (Z value) | a*b (P value) | a*b (95% BootCI) | c' Direct effect | Test conclusion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A1=>D1=>W3 | 0.311** | 0.234** | 0.270* | 0.063 | 0.038 | 1.668 | 0.095 | 0.001 ~ 0.145 | 0.160 | Complete mediation |
| A1=>D2=>W3 | 0.311** | 0.455** | 0.110 | 0.050 | 0.049 | 1.017 | 0.309 | −0.050 ~ 0.150 | 0.160 | Mediation effect not significant |
| A1=>D3=>W3 | 0.311** | 0.212* | 0.178 | 0.038 | 0.030 | 1.243 | 0.214 | −0.009 ~ 0.109 | 0.160 | Mediation effect not significant |
| A2=>D1=>W3 | 0.382** | 0.284** | 0.270* | 0.077 | 0.042 | 1.840 | 0.066 | 0.003 ~ 0.165 | 0.256* | Partial mediation |
| A2=>D2=>W3 | 0.382** | 0.092 | 0.110 | 0.010 | 0.018 | 0.580 | 0.562 | −0.018 ~ 0.052 | 0.256* | Mediation effect not significant |
| A2=>D3=>W3 | 0.382** | 0.220* | 0.178 | 0.039 | 0.028 | 1.401 | 0.161 | −0.009 ~ 0.099 | 0.256* | Mediation effect not significant |
| A3=>D1=>W3 | 0.257* | 0.372** | 0.270* | 0.100 | 0.044 | 2.288 | 0.022 | 0.007 ~ 0.182 | 0.046 | Complete mediation |
| A3=>D2=>W3 | 0.257* | 0.253* | 0.110 | 0.028 | 0.027 | 1.042 | 0.297 | −0.024 ~ 0.082 | 0.046 | Mediation effect not significant |
| A3=>D3=>W3 | 0.257* | 0.464** | 0.178 | 0.083 | 0.049 | 1.678 | 0.093 | −0.016 ~ 0.178 | 0.046 | Mediation effect not significant |

Note:
* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$
Bootstrap type = Percentile Bootstrap method

**Figure 10. Summary of Mediation Effect Test Results of Brand Attitude-Affect (D) on Purchase Intention W3**

 

As a mediating variable, D1 plays an important role in some paths, whereas neither D2 nor D3 demonstrates a significant mediating effect across all paths.

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 4.1 Research Conclusions

(1) Co-branding innovation and purchase intention

Co-branding innovation exerts a significant positive impact on consumers' cognitive and affective aspects of brand attitude, and also directly imposes a notable positive influence on their purchase intention. Among these impacts, the effect of co-branding innovation on cognitive brand attitude is the most prominent. This indicates that innovative co-branded products are capable of enhancing consumers' positive perceptions of the brand.

(2) Co-branding fit and purchase intention

Co-branding fit exerts a positive effect on purchase intention indirectly, primarily by influencing the brand attitude-affect, while its direct impact is not significant. This implies that when a new-style tea brand collaborates with an IP that matches its style, complements its functions, or is on a par with it in terms of grade, it can strengthen the emotional bonds with consumers, thereby boosting their purchase intention.

(3) Brand attitude-cognition and purchase intention

Consumers' cognition of a brand also shapes their purchase decisions, and a positive brand image helps enhance consumers' acceptance of the brand's co-branded products.

(3) Brand attitude-affect and purchase intention

Consumers' emotional responses can to a certain extent sway their purchasing behaviors. If a co-branding campaign succeeds in striking an emotional chord with consumers, this will stand to boost the likelihood of purchase.

(5) Mediation effect analysis

The study finds that certain factors—C3 and D1 among them—serve a key mediating role in how co-branding innovation and fit influence purchase intention. This means co-branding campaigns not only have a direct impact on consumers' purchase intention, but also indirectly shape that intention by changing how consumers think about and feel toward the brand.

### 4.2 Managerial Implications

(1) Select IPs aligned with the brand's target market.

Brands need to align an IP's value with their own brand tone. For instance, high-end brands may opt for IPs related to art and luxury goods, while mid-tier brands can choose well-known national-favorite IPs from animations, films and TV series.

(2) Explore cross-industry collaborations

Tea brands can look beyond tea products and cooperate with tech, sports or eco-friendly brands. Take partnering with a famous fitness brand to launch a "Fitness Tea Series" as an example—it will both expand the product selection and open up more consumer scenarios.

(3) Develop conspicuous consumption products

Brands can integrate elements of scarcity and collectibility into co-branded product designs, such as limited editions and individually numbered items, to encourage consumers to share their purchases on social media.

(4) Establish social sharing mechanisms

Brands can launch reward programs for co-branded purchases. For instance, consumers who share the purchase links of co-branded products can earn points, which can be redeemed for new products or exclusive benefits tailored to the co-branded collaboration.

(5) Integrate online and offline initiatives

Brands can launch exclusive co-branded packages on e-commerce platforms, and at the same time decorate co-branded themed scenes in physical stores. These scenes will attract consumers to take photos, providing ready-to-share content for their social media posts. In addition, brands may set up co-branded pop-up stores that open for a limited time—these stores will deliver unique consumer experiences and boost the brand's popularity.

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