

# The Influence of Clothing Brand Extension on Its Loyalty

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**Abstract**—Brand extension is a commonly used method and strategy in marketing. Improper brand extension can easily lead to the failure of new product marketing, which may bring economic losses to enterprises, and even damage the original good image, reputation and assets of the brand. For clothing brands, high-loyalty customers are the driving force for brand development and play a huge role in the brand's development. In order to explore the behavioral reaction process of clothing brand extension affecting its loyalty evaluation, this paper divides the direction of clothing brand extension into three categories: theme extension, category extension, and different theme & category extension, evaluate brand loyalty from the dimension of favorite, product, style and persistence. The experimental results show that brand extension has a negative impact on its loyalty, theme extension has the least negative impact, and different theme & category extension has the greatest negative impact.

**Keywords**—Clothing; Brand extension; Brand loyalty

## I. INTRODUCTION

Brand extension is a double-edged sword. Successful brand extension can expand the market and gain a wider consumer base. On the contrary, improper brand extension can damage brand image, brand equity and lose loyal customers. The more loyal customers a brand has, the better the development prospects of the brand and the higher the probability of successful brand extension. It can be seen that brand extension and brand loyalty affect each other.

Many scholars at home and abroad have studied the relationship between brand extension and brand loyalty. Martínez et al. conducted research on emotional loyalty and propensity loyalty, found that consumer loyalty is not affected by changes in the external environment of the company and the marketing methods of competitors, and has a positive role in promoting brand extension, reflecting the emotional tendencies of loyal consumers<sup>[1]</sup>. The research on the role of brand loyalty by Boush et al. shows that users with higher loyalty have higher purchase frequency and maintain higher loyalty to extended products<sup>[2]</sup>. The study by Hem et al. found that consumers' brand loyalty, brand trust and brand image are affected when the brand extension fit is different. At the same time, combined with structural equation model and empirical research, they verified the relationship between brand extension and consumer loyalty. Brand value and trust play an intermediary role, and make an in-depth study on the possibility of improving the success of brand extension<sup>[3]</sup>. Gong Yanping found through empirical research and analysis that the influence of brand extension on consumer brand loyalty is through two intermediary variables, brand trust and brand symbolic value<sup>[4]</sup>. When the brand extension fit is low,

it has a negative impact on brand loyalty<sup>[5]</sup>. The influence model of international brand extension on brand loyalty constructed by Fan Shuli shows that the degree of brand extension has a negative impact on brand loyalty, and the negative impact of far extension is greater than that of near extension<sup>[6]</sup>. Taking durable consumer goods as an example, Wang Lianjun proposed a model of the influence of brand vertical extension on brand loyalty. The research results show that brand extension upward has a positive impact on brand loyalty, while downward extension has a negative impact on brand loyalty, and downward extension has a positive impact on prestige orientation. The negative impact of brand loyalty is greater than that of function-oriented brands<sup>[7]</sup>. Fan Shuang took consumer goods brands as the research object, established the influence model of consumer brand loyalty on brand extension, and found that brand emotional loyalty, quality loyalty, conditional loyalty, risk loyalty, and brand extension feasibility evaluation have a significant positive impact<sup>[8]</sup>. Shan Congwen et al.'s research on brand concept and brand extension architecture shows that for functional brands, brand extension will have a negative impact on consumer brand loyalty<sup>[9]</sup>.

These studies mostly use empirical analysis and structural equation model to explore the influence of brand extension on its loyalty, but few methods of behavioral experimental research are used, and most of the studies only divide the direction of brand extension into near extension and far extension according to the degree of fit both directions. In addition, studies have shown that compared with other categories of clothing, the loyalty coefficient of sportswear brands is higher<sup>[10]</sup>, and sportswear brands have dual attributes. It can be considered that the extension of sports attributes is series extension, that is, the extension of sports theme. Clothing attribute extension can also be considered as category extension, that is, clothing category extension. Adding the extension of different theme and category of far sports and far clothing extension, that is, the extension of nonsports & nonclothing, can constitute the extension of the entire sportswear brand. Therefore, this study takes sportswear brands as an example to explore the behavioral response process and brain processing process of brand theme extension, category extension, and different theme & category extension affecting brand loyalty.

## II. QUESTIONNAIRE

### A. Brand Selection

Select the top ten brands in the real-time transaction list of sportswear brands for the Tmall Double Eleven event in 2020

in the first hour. Since the follow-up experiment requires brand extension, the following 8 brands are obtained after removing the brands that have been successfully extended: ANTA, Nike, adidas, FILA, PUMA, Jordan, SKECHERS, New Balance.

**B. Questionnaire Survey**

The questionnaire contains two questions. Question 1 asks questions from attitude loyalty and behavioral loyalty to determine the loyalty of participants to a certain brand; Question 2 asks participants to evaluate the degree of compliance of the questionnaire for the brand selected in the previous question. The questionnaire was in the form of an online survey, and 129 valid questionnaires were finally recovered.

**C. Data Analysis**

Exploratory factor analysis was carried out on the evaluation results of brand loyalty by principal component analysis, and the results are shown in Table I. It can be seen from the table that the cumulative explanation rate of the first four factors is 63.127 %, so the brand loyalty evaluation results can be divided into four dimensions for further analysis. After the weighted conversion, the weight values of each factor are 0.3014, 0.2921, 0.2298, and 0.1767. It can be seen that the first and second factors have a greater effect on the evaluation of the results than the third and fourth factors.

TABLE I. EXPLANATION OF TOTAL VARIANCE OF BRAND EXTENSION EVALUATION RESULTS

Component	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.806	19.092	19.029
2	3.688	18.442	37.471
3	2.901	14.504	51.975
4	2.230	11.152	63.127

Table II shows the rotated component matrix. If the absolute value of the factor loading coefficient of the item is greater than 0.5, it is considered that the item has a corresponding relationship with the dimension (factor). It can be seen that questions 15, 12, 13, 19, and 7 are a group, which is regarded as a favorite dimension; questions 10, 18, 9, 11, 20, and 6 are a group, which is regarded as a product dimension; questions 2, 1, 3, and 4 are grouped as a style dimension; questions 5, 8, and 14 are grouped as a continuous dimension.

TABLE II. EXPLANATION OF TOTAL VARIANCE OF BRAND EXTENSION EVALUATION RESULTS

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
15. I think the brand's product style matches my personal style	0.735	0.229	0.416	0.057
12. I think the brand's products are suitable for me	0.709	0.268	0.287	0.023
13. My satisfaction with the brand is high	0.679	0.416	0.176	0.197
19. I personally love the brand's products	0.652	0.405	0.133	0.313
7. I like the brand itself	0.601	0.169	0.031	0.480
17. I think the brand is well positioned	0.494	0.451	0.325	0.206
16. I think the brand has a good reputation	0.422	0.392	0.157	0.396
10. I think the brand's products are of good quality	0.315	0.764	0.165	0.095

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
18. I think the brand's products are finely crafted	0.370	0.732	0.133	0.151
9. I think the brand's product fabrics are of high quality	0.123	0.708	0.366	0.260
11. I think the brand's products are size stable	0.364	0.601	0.257	0.040
20. The brand launches an extension product that I will also buy	0.017	0.587	0.008	0.471
6. I think the brand's after-sales service is good	0.254	0.551	0.063	0.214
2. I think the product style of the brand has good continuity	0.108	0.214	0.770	0.102
1. I think the brand's product design is stylish	0.272	0.136	0.730	0.063
3. I think the brand's products are updated quickly	0.034	0.030	0.671	0.120
4. I think the brand's product design style is stable	0.244	0.079	0.664	0.138
5. My own aesthetic changes will continue to pay attention to this brand	0.079	0.198	0.368	0.787
8. My own age will continue to pay attention to this brand	0.537	0.179	0.138	0.600
14. My identity change will also continue to focus on this brand	0.454	0.263	0.212	0.515

**D. Summary**

According to the data analysis of the results of the brand loyalty questionnaire, four dimensions for evaluating brand loyalty are obtained: favorite dimension X<sub>1</sub>, product dimension X<sub>2</sub>, style dimension X<sub>3</sub>, and persistence dimension X<sub>4</sub>. Summarize the problems of each dimension and extract the following problems for subsequent experiments:

TABLE III. LOYALTY EVALUATION DIMENSIONS AND QUESTIONS

Dimension	Question
Favorite Dimension X <sub>1</sub>	How much do I like this brand and this product?
Product dimension X <sub>2</sub>	What is my intention to buy this product from this brand?
Style dimension X <sub>3</sub>	What is my style satisfaction with this product from this brand?
Persistence dimension X <sub>4</sub>	Will I continue to pay attention to this brand and this product?

The formula for calculating brand extension loyalty Y is:  
 $Y = 0.3014X_1 + 0.2921X_2 + 0.2298X_3 + 0.1767X_4$

**III. BEHAVIORAL EXPERIMENT**

**A. Experimental Design**

A 4 × 4 mixed experimental design was used. The two independent variables are: evaluation dimension (favorite dimension, product dimension, style dimension, persistence dimension), extension direction (original products, theme extension products, category extension products, and different theme & category products). The dependent variable is the behavioral data of loyalty evaluation.

**B. Subject Selection**

Before the experiment, the subjects need to fill in the brand loyalty questionnaire to determine the brands with high loyalty. All the subjects had normal vision or normal after correction, and were healthy in body and mind. They were all right-handed and volunteered to participate in this experiment.

**C. Stimulus Material**

Arrange and combine high-loyalty brands with original brand products, theme extension products, category extension products, and different theme & category extension products, as shown in Table IV. In order to avoid the influence of irrelevant stimuli, only the text of the brand logo is kept and processed in black and white. For extended products, text pictures are made. The background of the picture is white, the size of the picture is 500×700 pixels, the font is bold, the color is black, and the font height is 100 pixels, the text is centered, and all pictures are processed using PhotoShop 2020, a total of 32 pictures.

TABLE IV. STIMULUS MATERIAL

Direction		Product Name
Original Products		Sports Shoes, Sports Vests, Sports Pants, Sports Socks, Sweaters, Yoga Pants, Jerseys, Sports Hair Bands
Theme Products	Extension	Skateboards, Treadmills, Bicycles, Yoga Mats, Skipping Ropes, Elastic Bands, Rackets, Volleyball
Category Products	Extension	Jeans, Leather Shoes, Shirts, Leather Jackets, Sweaters, Suits, Skirts, Coats
Different Products	Theme & Category Extension	Mineral Water, Coffee, Tea Drinks, Fruit And Vegetable Juices, Carbonated Drinks, Milk, Lactic Acid Bacteria Drinks, Beer



Fig. 1. Examples of Stimulus Materials.

**D. Experimental Procedure**

The experiment was conducted in a quiet laboratory. The subjects sat in a comfortable chair, read the instructions, filled out the questionnaire, and confirm the sportswear brand with high loyalty. Before the formal experiment, there were 8 pictures to familiarize the subjects with the experimental operation process, and then the experiment was officially started. During the formal experiment, a "+" will appear on the screen to remind the subjects that the experiment has started; after 500ms of white screen, the brand stimulus pictures will be presented, and then the white screen will be displayed for 500ms, and the extended product stimulation pictures will be presented; Button rating, the larger the number, the higher the loyalty rating. According to the experimental design and there are 8 products in each extension direction, there are 32 trials in total. The experimental program is written by E-prime. The experimental process and the duration of each stimulus are shown in the following picture:

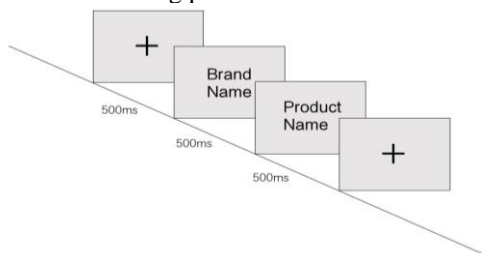


Fig. 2. Stimulus Presentation Sequence.

**E. Analysis of Brand Loyalty Evaluation Data**

Analyze the data obtained from the behavioral experiments, as shown in Pic 3-3. The average value of product brand loyalty evaluation in each extension direction has decreased compared with the loyalty of the original product, and the degree of decline in the loyalty of extension products according to the theme, category extension products, and different theme & category extension products increases in turn.

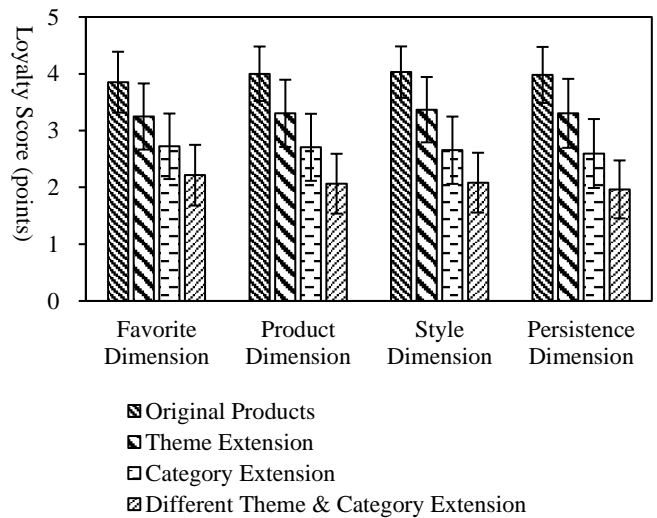


Fig. 3. The Mean Value of Brand Loyalty Evaluation in Different Extension Directions of Each Dimension.

According to the weight of each dimension obtained from the previous data analysis, the final result of the average brand loyalty in each extension direction is shown in Table V. The weighted average value of brand loyalty evaluation decreased by theme extension, category extension and different theme & category extension.

TABLE V. THE WEIGHTED AVERAGE OF BRAND LOYALTY IN EACH EXTENSION DIRECTION

	Original Products	Theme Extension	Category Extension	Different Theme & Category Extension
Brand Loyalty	3.958	3.301	2.680	2.092

One-way ANOVA was performed on the evaluation of brand loyalty in each dimension, and the results are shown in Table VI. The significance level between groups in each dimension is less than 0.05, so there are significant differences between different groups in the four dimensions.

TABLE VI. ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE FOR BRAND LOYALTY EVALUATION IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Favorite Dimension Between Groups	663.957	3	221.319	124.171	0.000
Product Dimension Between Groups	919.448	3	306.483	171.626	0.000
Style Dimension Between Groups	963.821	3	321.274	187.347	0.000
Persistence Dimension Between Groups	1022.431	3	340.810	188.610	0.000

**F. Brand Loyalty Evaluation Response Time**

Analyze the response time data of brand loyalty evaluation, as shown in Pic 3-4. In the favorite dimension, the response time of the original products and the different theme & category extension products are lower than the response time of the theme extension products and the category extension products; in the product dimension, the response time of the theme extension products is the longest, the other response time is decreased by category extension products, original products and different theme & category extension products; in the style dimension, the response time of category extension products was the highest, and the response time of theme extension products and original products were higher than different theme & category extension products; in the persistence dimension, category extension products have the longest response time, and the remaining response times decrease in order of theme extension products, original products, and different theme & category extension products.

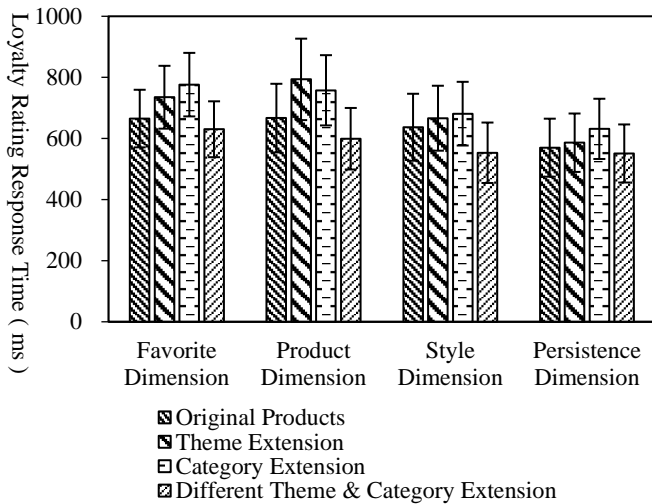


Fig. 4. The Average Response Time of Brand Loyalty Evaluation in Different Extension Directions of Each Dimension.

One-way ANOVA was performed on the data of each dimension of brand loyalty evaluation response time, and the results are shown in Table VII. Among them, the significance levels of the favorite dimension, product dimension and style dimension are all less than 0.05, and there is a significant difference; the significance level of the continuous dimension is greater than 0.05, and there is no significant difference.

TABLE VII. ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE IN RESPONSE TIME OF BRAND LOYALTY EVALUATION EXTENDING IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Favorite Dimension Between Groups	5873529.943	3	1957843.314	6.952	0.000
Product Dimension Between Groups	10406075.720	3	3468691.908	6.506	0.000
Style Dimension Between Groups	4392774.781	3	1464258.260	4.232	0.005
Persistence Dimension Between Groups	1589442.607	3	529814.202	1.917	0.125

In the favorite dimension, there is no significant difference between the evaluation response time of the original products and the different theme & category extended products, and

there is no significant difference between the evaluation response time of the theme extended products and the category extended products.

TABLE VIII. FAVORITE DIMENSION MULTIPLE COMPARISONS

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Original Product	Theme Extension	-71.6923 *	35.855	0.048
	Category Extension	-100.7649 *	36.130	0.005
	Different Theme & Category Extension	43.8133	34.255	0.227
Theme Extension	Original Product	71.6923 *	35.855	0.048
	Category Extension	-29.0725	36.622	0.422
	Different Theme & Category Extension	115.5057 *	34.774	0.001
Category Extension	Original Product	100.7649 *	36.130	0.005
	Theme Extension	29.0725	36.622	0.422
	Different Theme & Category Extension	144.5782 *	35.058	0.000
Different Theme & Category Extension	Original Product	-43.8133	34.255	0.227
	Theme Extension	-115.5057 *	34.774	0.001
	Category Extension	-144.5782 *	35.058	0.000

<sup>a</sup> \* Indicate statistically significant differences at p < 0.05.

In the product dimension, there is no significant difference between the evaluation response time of the original products and the different theme & category extension products, and there is no significant difference between the evaluation response time of the theme extension products and the category extension products.

TABLE IX. PRODUCT DIMENSION MULTIPLE COMPARISONS

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Original Product	Theme Extension	-126.7165 *	52.235	0.010
	Category Extension	-91.0000	49.826	0.063
	Different Theme & Category Extension	63.6138	46.879	0.193
Theme Extension	Original Product	126.7165 *	52.235	0.010
	Category Extension	35.7165	50.633	0.465
	Different Theme & Category Extension	190.3304 *	47.736	0.000
Category Extension	Original Product	91.0000	49.826	0.063
	Theme Extension	-35.7165	50.633	0.465
	Different Theme & Category Extension	154.6138 *	45.087	0.002
Different Theme & Category Extension	Original Product	-63.6138	46.879	0.193
	Theme Extension	-190.3304 *	47.736	0.000
	Category Extension	-154.6138 *	45.087	0.002

<sup>b</sup> \* Indicate statistically significant differences at p < 0.05.

In the style dimension, there is no significant difference between the evaluation response time of the original products, the theme extension products and the category extension products, but there is a significant difference between the evaluation response time of the different theme extension

products, the original products, the theme extension products and the category extension products.

TABLE X. STYLE DIMENSIONS MULTIPLE COMPARISONS

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Original Product	Theme Extension	-16.158	40.015	0.685
	Category Extension	-40.141	40.390	0.313
	Different Theme & Category Extension	95.609 *	39.316	0.016
Theme Extension	Original Product	16.158	40.015	0.685
	Category Extension	-23.982	39.292	0.547
	Different Theme & Category Extension	111.768 *	38.186	0.005
Category Extension	Original Product	40.141	40.390	0.313
	Theme Extension	23.982	39.292	0.547
	Different Theme & Category Extension	135.750 *	38.579	0.001
Different Theme & Category Extension	Original Product	-95.609 *	39.316	0.016
	Theme Extension	-111.768 *	38.186	0.005
	Category Extension	-135.750 *	38.579	0.001

<sup>c, \*</sup> Indicate statistically significant differences at  $p < 0.05$ .

In the persistence dimension, there is only a significant difference between the evaluation response times of the different theme & category extension products and the category extension products.

TABLE XI. PERSISTENCE DIMENSION MULTIPLE COMPARISONS

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Original Product	Theme Extension	-14.420	34.229	0.683
	Category Extension	-62.161	34.835	0.079
	Different Theme & Category Extension	25.237	34.568	0.475
Theme Extension	Original Product	14.420	34.229	0.683
	Category Extension	-47.741	35.678	0.177
	Different Theme & Category Extension	39.656	35.418	0.262
Category Extension	Original Product	62.161	34.835	0.079
	Theme Extension	47.741	35.678	0.177
	Different Theme & Category Extension	87.397 *	36.004	0.013
Different Theme & Category Extension	Original Product	-25.237	34.568	0.475
	Theme Extension	-39.656	35.418	0.262
	Category Extension	-87.397 *	36.004	0.013

<sup>d, \*</sup> Indicate statistically significant differences at  $p < 0.05$ .

#### IV. DISCUSSION

This paper explores the influence of brand extension in different directions on its loyalty through behavioral experiments, and evaluates brand loyalty from four dimensions: favorite dimension, product dimension, style dimension and persistence dimension. The experimental results show that: brand loyalty decreases sequentially according to theme extension, category extension, different theme & category

extension, and there are significant differences between each extension direction. From the analysis results of the reaction time, it is found that the subjects can always make the fastest response to the original products and the different theme & category extension products, but the evaluation results are the opposite: the original products loyalty evaluation is always the highest, and the different theme & category extension products is always the lowest, indicating that the extension direction of the brand with different theme & category was rejected by the subjects without hesitation, reflecting that the subjects showed the lowest loyalty to the brand in the extension direction. On theme extension products and category extension products, the subjects needed more time to evaluate the response, indicating that these two types of extensions are more in line with the subjects' perception of the original brand image than the different theme & category extension, but the theme extension products get higher evaluation than the category extension products and maintain higher brand loyalty.

Although the loyalty evaluation of the theme extension products has declined compared with the original products, it is higher than the other two extension directions in four dimensions, and has the highest evaluation in the style dimension, indicating the highest degree of fit between the theme extension and the original brand style. Theme extension products more easily accepted by consumers than other extension directions, and maintains better brand loyalty. The response time of theme extension products is higher in product dimension than that of other extension directions, it means that the subjects are cautious at the consumption level, and it takes more time to evaluate the theme extension product, But they are also more likely to make consumption choices in that direction.

There was no significant difference in the evaluation mean of the category extension direction in the four dimensions, and the mean value of each dimension and the weighted mean value were both less than 3 (common), indicating that the subjects were mostly negative evaluations of this extension direction. In terms of response time, only the product dimension has a lower response time than the theme extension, and the other three dimensions have the highest response time, indicating that the subjects need to think for a long time to evaluate the extension in this direction, and there is a conflict between the products in this extension direction and the subjects' orientation, the brand loyalty is reduced.

The average evaluation value of the extension direction of different theme & category is lower than other extension directions in four dimensions, and even lower than 2 (dislike) in the continuous dimension, and the response time is the lowest in all four dimensions. Subjects can quickly make negative evaluation on this extension direction, indicating that this extension direction has the greatest conflict with the original brand, which is difficult to be accepted by the subjects and has the lowest brand loyalty.

#### V. BRAND MANAGEMENT INSPIRATION

Brand extension is an important aspect of brand strategy. For a brand with customer loyalty, constantly pursuing brand extension and accurately grasping and applying brand extension strategy can make the brand always attractive and make it long-term favored and highly loyal by customers.

Therefore, enterprises should carefully formulate brand extension strategy. According to the results of this experimental study, suggestions are made for the formulation of brand extension strategies from the following aspects:

1) *Maintain brand loyalty and avoid extension risks*: The experimental results show that when the brand extends with different theme and different category, it will cause great damage to consumers' brand loyalty. Therefore, this direction should be avoided as much as possible when formulating extension strategies. Enterprises can scientifically formulate brand extension strategies on the basis of brand loyalty. When brands carry out theme extension, the damage to consumers' brand loyalty is small, and consumers are more willing to buy products in this extension direction. Therefore, for sportswear brands, extending in the direction of sports theme is an effective means to avoid extension risks and maintain brand loyalty.

2) *Clarify brand theme and improve product strength*: The experimental results show that consumers spend more time considering the product dimension than other dimensions, and the mean value of the theme extension loyalty evaluation is higher than other extension directions, indicating that this dimension plays an important role in the occurrence of consumer behavior. For clothing brands, in the process of brand development, improving product strength, clarifying brand theme, and establishing a distinct brand image will help maintain consumer brand loyalty and lay the foundation for successful brand extension.

3) *Adopt the main and sub-brand strategy*: In the process of brand extension, enterprises can add sub-brands of extended products on the premise that the main brand remains unchanged, which can form an overall concept of various products in the minds of consumers, and form differences among various products. In this way, diversified choices can be provided for consumers in the process of product unification, and loyal customer groups can be consolidated.

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