

Exploring the Relationship Between Service Marketing, Brand Trust, and Brand Value in Cross-Border E-Commerce: The Moderating Effect of Product Market Strategy

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Abstract: *Brand value plays a central role in determining the international competitiveness of enterprises. However, existing research has yet to fully elucidate the mechanisms through which service marketing influences brand value via brand trust, nor has it sufficiently addressed the contingent role of product market strategy in this relationship. To address this gap, this study draws on service marketing theory and brand management theory to investigate the impact of service marketing on brand value in cross-border e-commerce, examining both the mediating role of brand trust and the moderating role of product market strategy. Based on an analysis of 212 survey responses, the empirical results indicate that service marketing significantly enhances brand value in cross-border e-commerce. Moreover, brand trust partially mediates the relationship between service marketing and brand value. In addition, product market strategy positively moderates the effect of service marketing on brand value, suggesting that the strength of this relationship depends on the strategic orientation of the firm. These findings imply that cross-border e-commerce enterprises can effectively strengthen their brand competitiveness in international markets by optimizing service marketing strategies, fostering brand trust, and aligning product market strategies with brand development objectives.*

Keywords: Service Marketing, Brand Trust, Cross-Border E-Commerce Brand Value, Product Market Strategy.

1. Introduction

With the deepening development of globalization, cross-border e-commerce has become an important part of today's international trade and is showing a rapid growth trend. Against this backdrop, enhancing the value of cross-border e-commerce brands has become a core issue in brand management and market competition. Brand value is not only a symbol of a company's market competitiveness but also an important asset that can drive a company's sustainable development in the global market. Enhancing brand value can increase consumer loyalty, expand market share, and build a good reputation for the company in the global market, thereby laying a solid foundation for the company's long-term development. Therefore, how to effectively enhance brand value has become a focal point of attention in both academic and practical circles, especially in the highly competitive field of cross-border e-commerce, where companies face the challenge of building brand value in a complex and ever-changing international market. In brand management strategies, service marketing has gradually been regarded as an important means to enhance brand value. Thus, the impact of service marketing on brand value in the context of cross-border e-commerce becomes a topic worthy of in-depth study. Existing research has shown that service marketing can significantly influence consumers' brand attitudes and loyalty, but the specific impact mechanism of service marketing on brand value in the particular context of cross-border e-commerce remains unclear. Therefore, conducting an in-depth study on the mechanism by which service marketing affects the value of cross-border e-commerce brands holds significant value for both theory and practice.

In the further study of the relationship between service marketing and brand value, the introduction of brand trust and

product market strategy is particularly crucial. Brand trust, as consumers' reliance on and identification with a brand, not only influences purchasing decisions but also plays a mediating role in the construction of brand value. Brand trust can, to a certain extent, reflect consumers' recognition of a brand's consistency, reliability, and sincerity. When a company's service marketing enhances consumers' trust in the brand, brand trust may become an important pathway through which service marketing impacts brand value. Therefore, incorporating brand trust into this study helps to gain a deeper understanding of how service marketing influences the value of cross-border e-commerce brands through the mechanism of brand trust. Additionally, different product market strategies, such as price orientation or product differentiation orientation, may amplify or weaken the effects of service marketing. In the complex environment of cross-border e-commerce, differences in market demand and customer preferences brought about by different market strategies will also affect the effectiveness of service marketing. Therefore, studying the moderating effect of product market strategy will further refine the theoretical framework of the relationship between service marketing and brand value, providing more targeted strategic guidance for brand management in cross-border e-commerce companies.

2. Theoretical Analysis and Research Hypotheses

2.1 Service Marketing and Cross-border E-commerce Brand Value

Service marketing is a strategy to enhance brand image and consumer loyalty by meeting customer needs and expectations, usually covering all-round services from pre-sales to after-sales (Liang Ruixian, 2017). Service

marketing includes product consultation, personalized recommendations, consumer education before sales, as well as logistics support, customer complaint handling, returns and exchanges in after-sales service. This method of creating positive experiences for consumers through a series of service actions has a profound impact on enhancing brand awareness and brand preference. Cross-border e-commerce brand value refers to the comprehensive competitive advantage and market position of the brand in the international market, including brand awareness, consumer loyalty, market share, and consumer perceptions and attitudes towards the brand. The level of brand value reflects the status and influence of the brand in the minds of consumers. For cross-border e-commerce, brand value not only determines consumers' willingness to choose but also affects the company's market expansion capabilities and sustained profitability.

Service marketing may have the following impacts on the brand value of cross-border e-commerce: First, a high-quality service experience can make consumers feel the brand's reliability, professionalism, and sense of care, thereby forming a positive brand perception in the minds of consumers (Liang Ruixian, 2017). Service marketing helps brands build trust and goodwill during the consumer decision-making process by providing clear and transparent communication, rapid response problem-solving mechanisms, and friendly customer support. After receiving these quality services, consumers gradually form a positive impression and higher trust in the brand, which can further translate into market recognition and loyalty, laying a foundation for enhancing brand value. Second, service marketing can directly drive the accumulation of brand value by significantly improving consumer satisfaction and loyalty. When consumers are satisfied with the services provided by a brand, they are more likely to continue choosing that brand, thereby increasing the brand's market share and customer retention rate (Liang Ruixian, 2017). For example, personalized recommendations, fast logistics delivery, and convenient return and exchange policies optimize the overall consumer experience. This satisfaction will encourage repeat purchases and foster brand dependency. At the same time, highly satisfied consumers are more willing to recommend the brand to others, and this word-of-mouth effect can further expand the brand's market influence and increase its value. Additionally, a highly loyal customer base established through service marketing can help the brand maintain a stable market foundation in a competitive environment, enhancing its risk resistance. Finally, service marketing can help companies establish a differentiated advantage in a fiercely competitive market, especially in the cross-border e-commerce sector where product homogeneity is severe, making service an important criterion for consumers when choosing a brand. In many cases, product differences between brands may be minimal, but service quality can become a key factor in consumers' purchasing decisions. Differentiated services not only increase consumers' reliance on the brand but also enhance the brand's recognition and competitiveness in the market. This differentiation allows the brand to occupy a more significant position in consumers' minds, achieving continuous enhancement of brand value while establishing a strong competitive position for the company in the cross-border e-commerce market. Therefore, in a cross-border e-commerce environment, service marketing not only

effectively enhances the value of cross-border e-commerce brands but also provides crucial support for the sustainable development of enterprises in the international market. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Service marketing enhances the value of cross-border e-commerce brands.

2.2 The Mediating Role of Brand Trust

Brand trust refers to consumers' trust and recognition of a brand's consistency, reliability, and sincerity. Brand trust not only promotes consumers' repurchase intention but also directly impacts the brand's long-term value in the market (Liu Xiaojuan, 2023). In the context of cross-border e-commerce, the role of brand trust is particularly crucial. Cross-border e-commerce platforms target global consumers, and due to factors such as geographical distance, cultural differences, and uncertainties in international logistics, consumers face higher risks when shopping across borders. Therefore, brand trust can help consumers reduce uncertainty during the cross-border shopping process and enhance their sense of identification with and loyalty to the brand. Especially in the international market, establishing brand trust is not only related to short-term sales but also determines the brand's sustainable development and market share on a global scale.

Firstly, service marketing significantly promotes the establishment of brand trust. As an important channel for direct interaction between enterprises and consumers, service marketing has a profound impact on building consumer brand trust (Liu Xiaojuan, 2023). High-quality services can convey professionalism, care, and responsibility to consumers, enhancing brand trust in the minds of consumers. The core of service marketing lies in meeting or even exceeding consumer expectations through various service activities, providing consumers with positive emotional experiences during the purchasing process. Specifically, quick responses, reliable after-sales support, and clear policy explanations in service marketing can effectively enhance consumers' trust in the brand. Additionally, comprehensive after-sales policies, such as return and exchange support and product quality assurance, can reassure consumers before and after purchases, continuously boosting their overall trust in the brand. Moreover, if cross-border e-commerce brands can provide precise logistics tracking information, convenient return and exchange processes, and timely order feedback through service marketing, it will greatly enhance the consumer shopping experience, thereby strengthening consumer trust in the brand. For instance, brands can offer detailed logistics information, such as delivery progress and estimated arrival times, helping consumers better control the shopping process and reducing concerns caused by logistics uncertainties. Thus, service marketing enhances brand trust.

Secondly, brand trust has a positive impact on the brand value of cross-border e-commerce. Brand trust plays a significant positive role in the enhancement process of cross-border e-commerce brand value. Brand value not only represents the comprehensive competitiveness of enterprises in the market but also largely reflects consumers' overall evaluation and loyalty towards the brand. The existence of brand trust

enhances consumer brand loyalty, making them more inclined to repurchase and recommend the brand to others (Liu Xiaojun, 2023). This trust relationship not only expands the brand's market share but also strengthens the brand's position in the market, as consumers in the cross-border e-commerce market with numerous brands often prioritize those they trust. Brand trust prompts consumers to reduce the time and cost of information search when making purchasing decisions, helping them establish purchase intentions and preferences more quickly, thereby directly boosting the overall brand value. The establishment of brand trust makes the brand a "safe choice" for consumers during complex decision-making processes, promoting the brand's recognition and priority among consumers. The presence of brand trust makes consumers more likely to continue choosing the brand when facing similar shopping needs in the future, not only because the trust relationship reduces the exploration cost of new brands but also because the trust relationship brings a pleasant purchasing experience. Therefore, brand trust plays an active role in promoting the formation of brand value and amplifies the effect of service marketing to a certain extent. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Brand trust mediates the positive relationship between service marketing and cross-border e-commerce brand value.

2.3 The Moderating Role of Product Market Strategy

Product market strategy refers to the core strategies adopted by enterprises in market competition, including price positioning, product differentiation, brand promotion, channel selection, etc. (Sun Lingling, 2024). Different product market strategies can significantly influence the actual effectiveness of service marketing on brand value, moderating the relationship between service marketing and brand value to a certain extent.

Management innovation moderates the relationship between service marketing and brand value. In the complex market environment of cross-border e-commerce, factors such as consumers' cultural backgrounds, preferences, and purchasing power vary greatly, and different market strategies play a key role in meeting consumer needs and enhancing brand value.

Product market strategy may have a significant impact on the relationship between service marketing and cross-border e-commerce brand value: First, product market strategy can clarify a company's product positioning and target market, making the direction of service marketing clearer and helping consumers form a clear perception of the brand. For example, when a company positions itself as a "high-quality, high-value-added" brand image in its product market strategy, service marketing can reinforce this brand positioning through efficient after-sales support, customer care, personalized services, etc. (Liang Ruixian, 2017). Second, product market strategy, through clear market segmentation, can help companies focus on high-value customer groups, making the effect of service marketing more significant. In the cross-border e-commerce market, consumers from different regions and cultures have varying expectations for products and services. Through product market strategy, companies

can more accurately identify and serve high-value customer groups and provide services that meet the needs of these groups in the service experience (Sun Lingling, 2024). Highly targeted service marketing methods further increase consumer recognition and reliance on the brand, significantly enhancing brand value. Finally, product market strategy can enhance the adaptability of service marketing in different market environments, making the effect of service marketing more influential in different consumption scenarios. For example, in the field of cross-border e-commerce, companies that understand and adapt to the consumption habits and preferences of target markets through product market strategy can provide directional guidance for the brand in service marketing. This adaptability is particularly important in the cross-border e-commerce environment because consumer expectations and demands for brand services vary across countries and regions. By flexibly adjusting service content and methods in the product market strategy, companies can make consumers feel the brand's adaptability and closeness, thereby increasing their trust and loyalty. This enhancement in market adaptability makes the positive impact of service marketing on brand value more apparent. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Product market strategy enhances the positive relationship between service marketing and cross-border e-commerce brand value.

3. Research Design

3.1 Sample Collection

This study focuses on the enterprise level as the research object and uses questionnaires as the primary data collection tool. In cross-border e-commerce companies, the customer department is typically responsible for handling consumer-related important matters. Therefore, the survey targets employees from the customer department to ensure that the results reflect the core content of enterprise-consumer interactions. Through rigorous investigation and sample screening, the following sample statistics were ultimately obtained: Among all respondents, 68% are male and 32% are female, showing a certain level of gender diversity. Most respondents indicated they have 6-10 years of work experience, indicating that the sample has high industry experience representation. Additionally, to maintain sample homogeneity and targeted research conclusions as much as possible, this study only selected cross-border e-commerce enterprises within China as the survey scope, excluding interference from data of cross-border e-commerce enterprises in other regions. After multiple rounds of data sorting and review, a total of 212 valid survey responses were obtained, providing a solid and reliable empirical foundation for this study's analysis.

3.2 Variable Measurement

This article references questionnaire designs from prior literature and uses a 7-point Likert scale to measure the core variables of this study. The specific scale content is as follows:

Service Marketing (Kunz and Hogreve, 2011): Our

department can provide accurate product consultations and personalized recommendations to customers during the pre-sales phase; logistics support services effectively meet customer needs and deliver on time; we help customers better understand and use products; through consumer education (e.g., product training or usage guidance), we assist customers in better understanding and using products; return and exchange processes are reasonably and efficiently designed, effectively reducing customer dissatisfaction.

Brand Trust (Yohana F. C. P. Meilani and Ian N. Suryawan, 2020): Our brand consistently earns consumer trust with reliable products and services; our brand sincerely responds to consumer needs and expectations; brand trust is an essential factor for our company to maintain long-term competitiveness in the market.

Brand Value (Gupta et al., 2020): Our brand has high recognition in international markets; consumer loyalty to our brand performs well; our brand holds a significant market share in target markets; international consumers generally hold positive perceptions and attitudes toward our brand.

Product Market Strategy (Sun Lingling, 2024): Our product pricing aligns with the demands of the target market and consumer purchasing power; through product differentiation strategies, we successfully distinguish ourselves from competitors; brand promotion activities effectively enhance the company’s visibility and influence in the market; the sales channels we choose can reach target consumers and offer convenient purchasing experiences.

4. Hypothesis Testing

4.1 Common Method Bias and Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Common method bias is used to examine potential issues occurring during the research process. Common method variance may arise when participants fill out questionnaires. As a preventive measure, this study adopted measures such as concealing participant information, hiding item meanings, randomizing item order, designing reverse-scored items, and organizing item wording to prevent common method variance. This study also employed Harman’s single-factor analysis to conduct a post-hoc test for common method variance. After performing an initial factor analysis on the evaluation items, the study generated 8 factors accounting for 76.8% of the cumulative explained variance, with Factor 1 explaining 13.9% of the variance. Due to the insignificant difference in single-factor analysis results, the issue of common method

variance in this study is not very severe.

In addition, this study used confirmatory factor analysis to examine the convergent validity of each dimension. Table 1 shows that the t-test values for the loadings of each dimension are all above 1.96. The factor loading values of all observed variables on their respective latent variables range from 0.59 to 0.83, exceeding the threshold, indicating that all observed variables sufficiently reflect the constructed dimensions, and the scale of this study has a certain degree of convergent validity. The composite reliability of these dimensions ranges from 0.82 to 0.87, indicating the reliability of the dimensions. The average variance extracted is greater than 0.5, indicating higher convergent validity of the dimensions.

Table 1: Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Variable	Factor Loading	Reliability	T Value	CR	AVE
Service Marketing	0.70-0.83	0.49-0.69	9.32-13.86	0.86	0.60
Brand Trust	0.67-0.78	0.45-0.61	8.76-12.45	0.85	0.54
Brand Value	0.65-0.80	0.42-0.64	8.28-13.26	0.83	0.55
Product Market Strategy	0.59-0.81	0.35-0.66	7.15-11.85	0.82	0.54

4.2 Path Testing

As shown in Table 2, this paper uses Amos software to perform SEM modeling via the maximum likelihood method, with path coefficients presented in Table 2. The results indicate that service marketing is positively correlated with cross-border e-commerce brand value, thus supporting H1. Additionally, the path coefficients for service marketing—brand trust—cross-border e-commerce brand value are all significantly positive; therefore, H2 of this paper is supported.

Table 2: Path Test Results

Assumption	Model Path	Standardized Coefficient	T Value
H1	Service Marketing - Cross-border E-commerce Brand Value	0.16***	13.94
H2	Service Marketing - Brand Trust	0.26***	17.88
	Brand Trust - Cross-border E-commerce Brand Value	0.18***	10.63

4.3 Moderation Effect Test

This paper tested the moderation effects of customer complexity and market efficiency, with results shown in Table 3. Using the Bootstrap method with a sample size of 4000, it was found that product market strategy enhances the positive relationship between service marketing and cross-border e-commerce brand value. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

Table 3: Test Results of Moderating Effect

Dependent variable	FX					
	Coef	p	90%CI	Coef	p	90%CI
Constant term	0.33	0.00	[2.16, 4.11]	0.34	0.06	[0.12, 1.38]
Service marketing	0.22	0.03	[0.07, 0.12]	0.18	0.04	[0.07, 0.15]
Product market strategy	0.16	0.02	[0.07, 0.19]	0.24	0.01	[0.13, 0.24]
Service marketing * Product market strategy				0.14	0.02	[0.16, 0.24]
	R ² =0.32			R ² =0.37		
	F=15.31			F=20.45		
	P=0.00			P=0.03		

5. Implications

This paper reveals the role of service marketing in promoting cross-border e-commerce brand value and uncovers the mediating effect of brand trust and the moderating effect of product market strategy. Based on this, the findings of this study may offer some reference value for cross-border e-commerce business managers. Below are specific management recommendations:

First, cross-border e-commerce companies should pay high attention to the role of service marketing in enhancing brand value. High-quality service marketing can directly strengthen a brand's competitiveness in the international market; therefore, companies should invest resources to optimize service processes, ensuring each step provides consumers with convenient and satisfactory service experiences. For instance, companies can improve response times for customer support, regularly track customer feedback, and offer personalized services based on needs. Given the complex and ever-changing market environment of cross-border e-commerce, companies should focus on details in customer service, such as transparency in order tracking and ease of return and exchange processes, to eliminate consumer uncertainty about cross-border shopping. These service optimization measures will help enhance brand credibility and market appeal, thereby driving up brand value.

Secondly, building brand trust should be one of the core goals of service marketing. The impact of service marketing on brand value is largely achieved through brand trust; therefore, cross-border e-commerce companies should consider brand trust as a crucial brand management objective. In management practice, companies can accumulate consumer trust by consistently providing high-quality services and ensuring the authenticity of product descriptions. Additionally, brands can further enhance trust by increasing transparency, such as offering detailed logistics tracking information, clear return and exchange policies, and protection of consumer privacy. These measures can significantly reduce the perceived risks of cross-border shopping and strengthen consumers' brand loyalty.

Finally, cross-border e-commerce companies should flexibly apply product market strategies to enhance the effect of service marketing on brand value. Companies in cross-border markets should adjust their product positioning based on the preferences and cultural backgrounds of target customers and improve the effectiveness of service marketing through appropriate market strategies. For example, for the high-end market, companies can provide customized service experiences, such as dedicated customer support and fast delivery, to meet the needs of high-end consumers; for price-sensitive markets, companies can focus on providing reliable basic services and reduce unnecessary cost investments. This localized product market strategy can effectively enhance the adaptability and market coverage of service marketing, enabling companies to gain stronger brand recognition in various niche markets.

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