

The Influence Mechanism of Trendy Toy IP Value Perception on Purchase Intention - Taking POP MART as an Example

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Abstract. With the rise of consumption upgrading and emotional consumption, Trendy Toy IP products have gradually become an important consumption target for young people. This paper takes POP MART as a case study to explore the influencing mechanism of emotional value, social value and consumer expectation on purchase intention. Based on Consumer Perceived Value Theory and Expectation-Confirmation Theory, a three-dimensional influence model is constructed, and 102 valid samples are obtained through questionnaire survey. The reliability analysis and multiple regression analysis are used for empirical test. Consumers' purchase intention can be significantly positively influenced by emotional value, social value and consumer expectation, among which consumer expectation exerts the most significant effect. The model as a whole has strong explanatory power ($R^2=0.791$), and the scale reliability is good. The conclusion drawn is that under the background of trendy consumption, consumers pay attention not only to the products themselves, but also to emotional experiences, social identity and the satisfaction of their expectations to a greater extent. Enterprises should enhance consumer expectations by strengthening IP emotional expression, enhancing social attributes and continuously innovating products, so as to effectively enhance purchase intention and brand loyalty.

Keywords: Trendy Toy IP, Emotional value, Social value, Consumer expectations, Purchase intention

1. Introduction

With the upgrading of consumption structure, Chinese consumers have gradually changed from traditional 'functional consumption' to 'experiential consumption' and 'emotional consumption'. Especially in young professionals, college students and Gen Z, the driving force of consumption is no longer limited to the satisfaction of material needs, but more emphasis on psychological satisfaction, emotional experience and self-expression. This 'self-rewarding consumption' is obvious in the field of trend culture and popular IP (Intellectual Property) products, especially POP MART's Labubu, Molly and other IP. These popular IP products have attracted wide attention among young consumers due to their excellent design, scarcity caused by blind box marketing strategy and strong social attributes brought by social media publicity. Consumers' consumption behavior of this kind of trendy toy products is often accompanied by obvious emotional characteristics, including pleasure, sense of belonging, sense of accomplishment and self-expression. These consumption experiences

belong to the category of emotional value and are an important part of consumers' purchase decision-making process.

At present, most of the research on consumer behavior in the academic community still focuses on traditional factors such as price, practical value and brand trust, while there are relatively few studies on how emotional value affects consumer purchase intention, especially in the fields of trendy toys, blind box and IP consumption. This provides theoretical significance for the study of the relationship between the emotional value of products and consumer expectations and purchase intentions. At the same time, if the emotional value perception significantly affects the purchase intention, then the enterprise can improve the consumer's emotional experience more specifically when designing products, promotion activities and brand communication. It can also optimize the product function for the subdivided group by understanding the user's emotional value needs, so as to improve the brand loyalty and repurchase rate. It provides practical significance for this study.

Based on this, this paper takes POP MART as the research object, constructs the influence model of consumer purchase intention around the three key variables namely emotional value, social value and consumer expectation, and tests the correlation through questionnaire survey and empirical analysis. The research theme of this paper is to explore how multi-dimensional value perceptions work together on consumers' purchasing decision-making process. The aim of this paper is to reveal the roles played by different value perception factors in fashion consumption and their respective relative influences, to provide theoretical basis and practical enlightenment for enterprises to optimize product design, enhance brand communication effect and enhance consumer stickiness.

2. Review of relevant literature and research hypotheses

2.1. The research status of trendy toy IP consumers' purchase intention

In recent years, as the cultural and creative industries and the IP economy have developed rapidly, trendy toy products have gradually become an important consumption target for young consumer groups. Trendy toy products usually rely on specific IP images to attract consumers through unique design styles and cultural symbols, thus forming a consumption model with emotional and cultural attributes. Lin Huijuan pointed out in the review of the development process of the trendy toy industry that the trendy toy products have gradually developed from niche cultural products to cultural consumer goods with broad market influence, and their consumer groups are mainly young consumers [1]. In Sun Li's opinion, the consumption of trendy toys reflects the trend of contemporary consumption from functional consumption to cultural experience consumption [2]. In the study of consumer behavior, purchase intention is usually regarded as an important indicator to predict consumers' future purchase behavior. Dodds et al. pointed out that purchase intention is the purchase tendency of consumers after comprehensive evaluation of product value, and it is a key variable in the decision-making process of consumers [3].

2.2. The relationship between emotional value and purchase intention

Within the consumption scenario of cultural and creative goods, emotional value is deemed a critical determinant shaping consumers' behavioral decisions. It represents the affective experiences and psychological well-being that consumers acquire throughout their purchasing process. In research concerning consumer perceived value, Sweeney and Soutar argued that emotional value serves as a fundamental component of overall consumer value, and consumers are more likely to make purchases when products bring them pleasure, happiness and other emotional experiences [4]. In the

context of trendy consumption, IP image usually establishes emotional connection with consumers through modeling design, story setting and emotional expression. According to Ke Xi, emotional design can enhance the emotional interaction between consumers and trendy IP, thereby enhancing consumers' preference for products [5]. Zhang Qian also pointed out that the core of IP design is emotional expression, and the emotion conveyed by IP image can enhance consumers' emotional identity [6]. Hence, a higher level of perceived emotional value derived from trendy toy IP products will boost consumers' willingness to purchase. On this basis, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Consumers' purchase intention can be significantly positively influenced by emotional value.

2.3. The relationship between social value and purchase intention

Apart from emotional value, social value also functions as a vital factor influencing consumers' purchasing behaviors. It denotes the value brought by products that enables consumers to display their self-image and obtain social recognition. According to Sweeney and Soutar, social value reflects the degree to which consumers gain social recognition or group identity through their consumption behavior [4]. In the context of trendy consumption, trendy toy products often have obvious cultural symbol attributes. Consumers can express their interest and personality by collecting or displaying trendy toy products. He and Wang believe that the consumption of trendy toy products has obvious social attributes among young people, and consumers express their identity and interact with the community through trendy toy products [7]. Shi Hui also found that community culture and symbolic value are important factors affecting young consumers' consumption decisions in the study of 'Fandom Merchandise Economy' consumption behavior [8]. Therefore, when consumers perceive that trendy toy products have high social value, their purchase intention will also increase accordingly. On this basis, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

H2: Consumers' purchase intention can be significantly positively influenced by social value.

2.4. The relationship between consumer expectation and purchase intention

Furthermore, consumer expectation constitutes a crucial psychological factor that influences purchase intention. Consumer expectation refers to the psychological expectation of consumers on product quality, design level and consumption experience before purchasing products. In the Expectation Confirmation Theory, Oliver points out that consumer expectations formed before purchase will affect their subsequent consumption attitudes and behaviors [9]. In the context of trendy consumption, brand influence, IP popularity and product innovation ability will affect consumer expectation level of products. In his research on the brand image of POP MART, Xu and Hou point out that the brand can enhance consumer expectation of products and increase their consumption tendency by continuously introducing new IP images and product series [10]. From the perspective of product life cycle theory, Jinyu also points out that continuous product innovation can maintain consumers' interest and expectation in the brand [11]. Therefore, when consumers have a high expectation for the IP products, their willingness to buy will also increase. On this basis, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Consumers' purchase intention can be significantly positively influenced by consumer expectation.

3. Research design

3.1. Research model

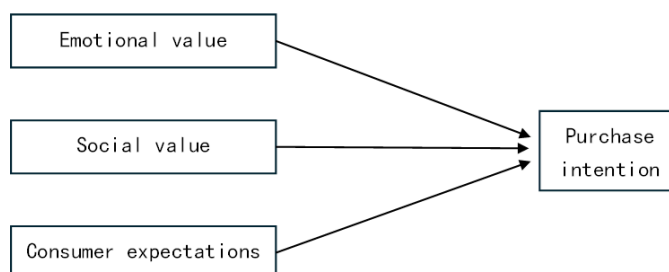


Figure 1. Research model

As presented in Figure 1, it is hypothesized in this study that the three independent variables, namely emotional value, social value, and consumer expectation, all have a notably positive influence on consumer purchase intention.

3.2. Questionnaire

To explore the factors influencing the purchase intention of trendy toy IP consumers, a questionnaire was designed in this study. Based on relevant mature scales, the questionnaire was appropriately adjusted in combination with the actual situation of trendy consumption to ensure the validity and applicability of the measurement content. Overall, the questionnaire adopted a five-point Likert scale, and all measurement items used a scoring method ranging from "1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree" to measure the respondents' degree of recognition for each statement. The questionnaire was mainly divided into two parts. The first part was the survey on the basic situation of the samples, including gender, age, monthly disposable income, and the frequency of purchasing trendy toy products. The second part was the investigation of the variables involved in the study. There were four variables in the model in total, namely Emotional Value, Social Value, Consumer Expectation, and Purchase Intention. In addition, the questionnaire also included demographic questions (covering gender, age, income level, and the frequency of purchasing trendy toy products) to describe the sample characteristics and provide control variables for subsequent data analysis. Before the formal distribution of the questionnaire, a small-scale pre-test was carried out to test the comprehensibility and logical consistency of the questionnaire items. According to the feedback obtained from the pre-test, individual expressions in the questionnaire were modified and improved, so as to ensure the reliability and validity of the formal questionnaire.

4. Data analysis

4.1. Sample descriptive statistical analysis

After refinement, pre-testing and revision of the questionnaire, it was released on the Wenjuanxing platform on March 16, 2026. As of March 19, 2026, a total of 102 valid questionnaires had been received, of which men accounted for 58.82 % and women accounted for 41.18 %. The results show that the core group participating in the questionnaire is young people. A total of 86.27 % of respondents are aged 30 and below. The proportion of monthly disposable income below 2000 yuan is 13.73 %. The proportion of more than 10,000 yuan is 10.78 %. The proportion between 2000 yuan and 10,000 yuan is the highest, which is 75.49 %. A total of 78.43 % of respondents have had at least one experience of buying trendy toy products.

4.2. Reliability analysis

Cronbach's alpha was employed in this research to assess the internal reliability of the questionnaire. All variables demonstrated satisfactory reliability, as the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for emotional value, social value, consumer expectation, and purchase intention were 0.871, 0.864, 0.893, and 0.878 respectively, exceeding the recommended benchmark of 0.7. In addition, the overall Cronbach's alpha of the scale reached 0.965, suggesting that the questionnaire possesses strong internal consistency and satisfactory measurement stability.

4.3. Regression analysis

To examine how emotional value, social value, and consumer expectation affect purchase intention, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. Purchase intention was treated as the dependent variable, while emotional value, social value, and consumer expectation served as explanatory variables.

From the summary results of the model, the correlation coefficient R of the model is 0.890, the determination coefficient R^2 is 0.791, and the adjusted R^2 is 0.785. This suggests that approximately 79.1% of the variance in purchase intention can be accounted for by the model, demonstrating a satisfactory level of explanatory capability. Furthermore, the standard error of estimation was 0.46716, implying that the regression model achieved an acceptable fitting performance (Table 1).

Table 1. Model summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Standard Error of the Estimate
.890	.791	.785	.46716

According to the ANOVA test, the regression model produced an F value of 118.828, and the corresponding significance level of the model is $p=0.000$ ($p < 0.001$), which confirms that the statistical validity of the regression equation as a whole (Table 2).

Table 2. ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	77.799	3	25.933	118.828	.000
Residual	20.514	94	.218		
Total	98.313	97			

From the regression coefficient results, it can be seen that the standardized regression coefficient of emotional value is $\beta=0.215$, $t=2.178$, $p=0.032$ ($p<0.05$), indicating that emotional value has a significant positive impact on purchase intention; the standardized regression coefficient of social value is $\beta=0.252$, $t=2.100$, $p=0.038$ ($p<0.05$), which reveals that social value exerts a significantly positive effect on purchase intention. For consumer expectation, the standardized regression coefficient is $\beta=0.458$, with t-value of 3.769 and p-value of 0.000 ($p<0.001$). This demonstrates that consumer expectation positively and significantly influences purchase intention, and its effect is the strongest among all factors (Table 3).

Table 3. Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.280	.167		1.670	.098
Emotional Value	.223	.103	.215	2.178	.032
Social Value	.249	.119	.252	2.100	.038
Consumer Expectation	.447	.119	.458	3.769	.000

5. Discussion

This study develops a research framework from the perspectives of emotional value, social value, and consumer expectation to explore how consumer value perception affects purchase intention. The proposed hypotheses were examined using questionnaire data and empirical statistical analysis. The results show that:

First, emotional value was found to positively influence consumers' purchase intention. The findings of this study indicate that the emotional attachment and psychological resonance generated by trendy toy IP products can strengthen consumers' purchase intention. These findings suggest that consumers in the trendy toy market are concerned not only with product attributes themselves, but also with the emotional satisfaction and psychological enjoyment associated with the products.

Second, social value also demonstrates a positive effect on consumers' purchase intention. To a certain extent, trendy toy products have identity expression and social attributes. By collecting and displaying trendy toy products, consumers can reflect their personal interests and aesthetics, and gain a certain sense of social identity. As a result, social value becomes an important driver of trendy toy consumption behavior.

Third, Consumer expectation exerts the strongest positive influence on purchase intention among all examined variables. The empirical findings further reveal that consumer expectation contributes

more strongly to purchase intention than emotional value or social value. This indicates that consumers tend to place greater emphasis on expected product attributes, including design quality, product performance, and future value, when purchasing trendy toys. When consumers develop high expectations for a product, their purchase intention will also significantly increase.

To sum up, emotional value, social value and consumer expectation are all important factors that affect the purchase intention of IP consumers, among which consumer expectation plays the most prominent role.

6. Conclusion

This study develops an analytical framework centered on emotional value, social value, and consumer expectation to examine their influence on consumers' purchase intention toward trendy toy IP products and the proposed model was statistically examined using questionnaire responses and regression analysis. The findings indicate that emotional value, social value, and consumer expectation all positively affect consumers' willingness to purchase trendy toy IP products and the impact of consumer expectation is the most prominent. This conclusion further verifies that in the trendy consumption situation, consumers' decision-making logic has gradually shifted from the traditional functional orientation to the multi-dimensional value-driven mechanism with emotional experience and psychological expectations as the core.

This paper theoretically enriches the research on consumer behavior and perceived value, introduces emotional value and social value into the trendy toy IP consumption situation, and combines consumer expectation variables to expand the research framework of the influence mechanism of purchase intention, which provides a new analysis perspective for subsequent related research. At the practical level, the research conclusion provides useful enlightenment for the marketing strategy of the trendy enterprises : enterprises should pay more attention to the emotional expression and story construction of IP image, and enhance the emotional resonance of consumers; at the same time, it enhances its social value by strengthening the social attributes and cultural symbolic significance of the product. In addition, consumer expectations should be enhanced through continuous product innovation and brand operation management, so as to effectively promote consumer conversion and brand loyalty.

Despite the meaningful findings obtained in this study, several limitations should still be acknowledged. First, the number of samples is relatively limited and mainly young groups, which may affect the extrapolation of research conclusions to a certain extent. Secondly, this paper uses cross-sectional data and fails to dynamically examine the changing process of consumer behavior; in addition, the research variables are relatively concentrated, and important factors such as brand trust and perceived risk that may affect purchase intention have not been included. Future research can adopt longitudinal research design on the basis of expanding the scope and diversity of samples to reveal the mechanism of consumer behavior change more comprehensively. At the same time, intermediary variables or regulatory variables can be further introduced to explore the path of action between different factors, so as to continuously improve the theoretical system of IP consumption behavior.

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