

The Interplay of Perceived Value: Analyzing the influence on customer satisfaction with apparel brands using social media marketing

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ABSTRACT: *The development of social media has changed traditional media by providing a platform to conduct marketing and advertising activities. Nowadays, social media offers the opportunity to build a relationship between customers and brands. The strategic use of social media marketing activities (SMMAs) is assessed on apparel brands' perceived value and Chinese customers' satisfaction. The data was collected through a quantitative survey-based approach from Chinese social media and apparel brands' users (n = 355). The collected data from respondents were analysed through the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and Hayes PROCESS macro. Based on our findings, it is noted that SMMAs play an essential role in improving the brand perceived value and customers' satisfaction in China. Moreover, it is also concluded that the apparel brand's perceived value significantly mediates the relationship between SMMAs and customers' satisfaction. This study provides several theoretical and practical guidelines to the marketers in China to effectively implement their advertising activities on social media platforms.*

Keywords: *social media marketing perceived value, customers' satisfaction, apparel brands, social media strategic use, social media*

Introduction

Social media channels (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube) are persistent platforms aiming to communicate consumers with different brands and companies (Shan et al., 2016). Nowadays, all brands make extensive use of digital technology, (i.e., social media platform) to reach customers (Bianchi & Andrews, 2018). Social media is one of the most potent advertising and marketing tools adopted by numerous brands and retailers for customer attraction and retention (Pookulangara & Koesler, 2011; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Ismail, 2017). China's fashion industry provides the largest consumer market in the world, where social media contributes significantly to attract and engage more customers (Zhao et al., 2019). From 2014, the usage of social media in China has exponentially increased to one hundred million, and is predicted to reach almost 580 million customers in 2018 (InternetWorldStats, 2019).

In contrast to Western countries' social media (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram), WeChat is the most popular social media platform in China, with the function of marketing and online shopping (Chiu et al., 2012; Tan & Teo, 2000). Numerous fashion retailers, such as Zara, YOOX, and Topshop, have adopted WeChat to extend their market in China (Consulate General of the Netherlands in Shanghai, 2014). Two-thirds of luxurious brands are attracting customers by using WeChat as a social media platform (Zhao et al., 2019). Since the young Chinese generation is strongly dedicated to social media and apparel brands, most of them log on to social media to search for different styles and brands. Thus, retailers must get information about the consumers' behaviour on social media regarding a particular brand. In the same note, this study focuses on the influence of apparel brands' social media marketing activities (SMMAs) over Chinese consumers' satisfaction.

The literature presents numerous studies related to the impact of social media advertising on customers' responses in different organisations (Chen & Liu, 2019; Alalwan, 2018; Khan et al., 2019; Godey et al., 2016; Seo & Park, 2018). Khan et al. (2019) studied the impact of four well-known apparel brands' SMMAs on brand equity and customers' response towards apparel brands in Pakistan (Khan et al., 2019). Similarly, the authors investigated the influence of social media use and perceived

environmentally sustainable apparel (ESA) purchase intentions by utilising hierarchical regression and a structural equation modelling approach (Zhao et al., 2019). Another study related to fashion and apparel brands assessed the impact on the purchase of apparel goods, such as market awareness, perceived brand output, and perceived personal relevance among the American consumers (Kang et al., 2013). Kim and Ko (2012) and Godey et al. (2016) studied the influence of five SMMAs, i.e., interaction, word-of-mouth (WoM), trendiness, entertainment, and customisation, on brand equity and customer response towards luxury brands. Despite the explosive popularity of social media, there is limited research that examines the influence of SMMAs on brand perceived value and customer satisfaction in China.

More specifically, customer satisfaction and brand perceived value are critical factors to be considered in the social media context. In the literature, Chen and Lin (2019), Prebensen and Xie (2017), and Chen and Liu (2019) studied the impact of SMMAs on satisfaction and perceived value assessment under different circumstances. Numerous studies used brand perceived value as a mediator to indirectly affect the customers' satisfaction or purchase intention on social media (Chen & Lin, 2019; Prebensen & Xie, 2017; Gan & Wang, 2017). However, we disclosed the two research gaps in the context of SMMAs impact on brand perceived value and Chinese customers' satisfaction towards a particular apparel brand. Firstly, there is scant research regarding the impact of social media efforts (i.e., likes, interaction, trendiness, and entertainment) on consumers' satisfaction towards Chinese apparel brands. Secondly, the association among SMMAs, brand perceived value, and customer satisfaction is not studied before in the context of apparel brand marketing in China. Thus, this study seeks to investigate consumer behaviour, in terms of satisfaction, towards apparel brands, and brand perceived value on Chinese social media platforms. According to the theoretical model of Li et al. (2008), the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) indicates that customer expectation, perceived quality, and perceived value affect the customer satisfaction, and they are the antecedent variables of customer satisfaction. Based on the classical structure of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) and Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977), Li et al. (2008) formed a research model, where customer satisfaction depended on many constructs including perceived value.

In the light of this mentioned research model, we considered Chinese customer satisfaction towards apparel brands supported by TAM and TRA. The primary goal is to clarify the influence of SMMAs on customer behaviour, in terms of satisfaction towards apparel brand, by combining the TRA with the TAM. The theories mentioned above have been found useful for investigating consumer behaviour in digital environments (Andrews & Bianchi, 2013; Wirtz & Göttel, 2016), and social media (Reiter et al., 2017).

This paper has three contributions. Firstly, it examines how SMMAs influence brand perceived value regarding a particular apparel brand in China. Secondly, it identifies the direct relationship between SMMAs and customer satisfaction towards apparel brand. Thirdly, this research also determines the mediating effect of brand perceived value on the relationship between SMMAs and customer satisfaction. The associations, as mentioned above, are analysed by pioneering apparel brands in China (ZARA, H&M, Meterbonwe). The selected social media for SMMAs assessment were WeChat, Sina Weibo, and QQ.

The results of this research not only provide the Chinese apparel brands with managerial insights but also contribute theoretical background to understand the relationship between SMMAs and apparel brands' customer satisfaction from a new perspective.

Literature Review

Social Media Marketing Activities

Social media marketing is defined as "marketing communications through digital applications, platforms, and media that facilitate interaction, collaboration, and content sharing among users" (Kim & Ko, 2012). The literature presents that social media has an enormous influence on brand's reputation (Godey et al., 2016; Khan et al., 2019; Seo & Park, 2018; Tuten & Solomon, 2017). Thus, organisations and brands should focus on existing SMMAs

to attract and engage more consumers. In the marketing literature, five aspects of SMMAAs, i.e., entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customisation, and WoM, have been found to influence customer response significantly. Numerous research works determined that entertainment is a strong motivating factor for social media adaptation, which initiates users to attach with a firm or brand on social media (Muntinga et al., 2011; Park et al., 2009; Parsad et al., 2019). Secondly, social media interaction is the exchange of information and opinions with other users on social media platforms (Godey et al., 2016). The interaction on social media motivates users to communicate with other customers about a particular product or brand. Consumers regularly look for the numerous forms of social media to get the latest news about a specific brand as this is to be the reliable source, as compared to firm-sponsored marketing communications (Seo & Park, 2018). Godey et al. (2016) defined that trendiness is the dissemination of the latest and trendiest information about a particular brand.

Similarly, customisation on social media offers the customised information search and service to users (Godey et al., 2016). A brand can always target a specific audience through customised messages on social media. Lastly, the electronic word of mouth (eWOM) activity on social media has been found to have higher credibility, empathy, and relevance for customers instead of firm-generated information on the web (Gruen et al., 2006; Topaloğlu, 2012). In terms of social media, eWOM is the behaviour that consumers pass information and upload content on social media related to a particular brand (Godey et al., 2016).

Perceived Value

Perceived value is the overall assessment of the utility of a product from the consumers side based on perceptions of what they received in return of what they have given (Zeithaml, 1988). From mobile commerce systems investigation, the authors (Lin & Wang, 2006) determined that perceived value enormously influence user satisfaction. Similarly, another study (Carlson et al., 2015) found that the perceived value of online platforms has a significant effect on user satisfaction. Nowadays, many researchers have been attracted to the social aspect of consumption and propose the part of social value in clarifying user behaviour of information systems (Hu et al., 2015; Rintamäki et al., 2006). Rintamäki et al. (2006) studied customer value impact on utilitarian, hedonic, and social values in the department stores. Similarly, Hu et al. (2015) found that online social values are critical to affect customers' satisfaction and sustained use of social media.

Social value is the perception of social self-concept resulting from social commerce sites (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Sweeney and Soutar (2001) and Gan and Wang (2017) determined that users assessed products and services not only by hedonic and utilitarian values but also by social value. A high level of social value significantly enhances user satisfaction towards social networking sites and increases their purchase intention. Secondly, the economic "value" has traditionally been associated with utility or desirability (Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007). In this context, the "theory of utility" explains that consumers derive value from the difference between the "utility" provided by a product and the "disutility" represented by the price paid (Tellis & Gaeth, 1990). Lastly, the role of "quality" in perceived value is considered different from "value" in most of the extant literature (Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007).

In light of the previous studies, this paper attempts to explore the effects of perceived value (social value, quality value, economic value) on apparel brand satisfaction in China in the context of social media marketing.

Satisfaction

Satisfaction deals with the users' assessments based on their needs and expectations (Oliver, 1980), representing users' positive emotional state derived from using the particular services (Hsu & Lin, 2016). Satisfaction reveals users' subjective assessment resulting when associate the experience with the previous expectations about the social networking sites (Oliver, 1981). The social media users with a higher level of satisfaction incline to have a

stronger intention to purchase through social networking sites (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Falahat et al., 2019). Zhang and Ip (2015) determined that users' satisfaction significantly influences consumers' purchase intention towards a particular brand. The use of social media sites manages marketing activities in such a way to attract users' satisfaction toward their social media platforms, which subsequently predicts users' purchase intention.

Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

Theoretical Background

This study is based on two well-known theories, namely TRA (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977) and TAM (Davis, 1989). The TRA, developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1977), aims to understand how people intentionally perform actions and evaluate the importance before those actions by a particular behaviour, i.e., linking attitude, subjective norms, and behavioural intentions. The TRA theory emphasises that positive attitude towards a given behaviour represents the possibility to participate will be significantly high (Zhao et al., 2019). In a nutshell, action is determined by the intention to perform. Generally, people within the available scope and space behave as they plan to do (Sheppard et al., 1988). The TRA has been fruitfully employed in the previous studies to investigate the background of coupon usage, online shopping channel selection, social media applications use, and consumer buying intention in numerous contexts (Shimp & Kavaz, 1984; Valentini et al., 2011; Wang & Chou, 2016). By using TRA, Wang and Chou (2016) determined that injunctive norms, descriptive norms, and social identity are associated positively to sustain the intention of mobile social networking applications. On the same note, Zhang and Ip (2015) assessed the association between customers' trust on social media advertising and customers' purchase intention using TRA. Our study concerns about the influence of marketing activities on customer satisfaction toward a particular apparel brand in the context of social media. By employing TRA, the positive SMMAs on a particular apparel brand are strongly associated with customer satisfaction and perceived value.

The TAM has been adapted from the TRA method to theorise computer technology usage behaviour (Davis, 1989). Both models are found to be useful in analysing consumer behaviour and retail in online environments, for example, internet shopping (Andrews & Bianchi, 2013), social media (Chiang, 2013; Girona & Korgaonkar, 2014; Reiter et al., 2017) and e-tailing (Liao et al., 2014). The use of TRA and TAM frameworks in this current study offers several theoretical advantages as they have been extensively tested and validated in various digital contexts (Wirtz & Göttel, 2016; Bianchi & Andrews, 2018). For example, Reiter et al. (2017) confirmed that when applied to social media technology, the TAM model maintains psychometric stability.

Hypotheses Development

The complete research framework is shown in Figure 1. Social media provides a virtual platform for users to share and discuss ideas about a particular product, firm, brand, or service. Social media enables users to form a community through continual communication. On the social media platform, long-term exchanges of information and ideas regarding a particular product or service significantly improve members' loyal social relationships (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). The impact of SMMAs on customer response has thoroughly been studied in the literature in a different context (Alalwan, 2018; Bianchi & Andrews, 2018; Khan et al., 2019; Seo & Park, 2018). All the marketing activities on the social media platform are significant for organisations to enhance customers' overall commitment toward a company (Lacey et al., 2007). Zhao et al. (2019) have studied the impact of WeChat marketing on Chinese customer attitudes and purchase intention towards apparel brands. Similarly, another study in McAlexander et al. (2002) investigated that the interactions and communication on social media between different users, building community

loyalty, enhancing customer satisfaction (Prebensen & Xie, 2017), are the keys to the long-term management of a community platform.

The previous research also investigated the impact of SMMAAs (i.e., interaction, WoM, trendiness, entertainment, and customisation) on brand equity, value equity, relationship equity, customer equity, customer preference, loyalty, price premium, and purchase intention in different industries, e.g., luxury brands and airline industry (Godey et al., 2016; Kim & Ko, 2012; Seo & Park, 2018). Similarly, Khan et al. (2019) also assessed the impact of individual SMMAAs on Pakistani apparel consumers' response. This study extended the research models of Godey et al. (2016), Kim and Ko (2012), Seo et al. (2018), and Khan et al. (2019) to new brands, organisations, and new constructs (social media advertising and brand perceived value, and customers' satisfaction). Based on this discussion, this study proposes the following hypothesis H1.

H1: SMMAAs of (a) interaction, (b) WoM, (c) entertainment, (d) trendiness, and (e) customisation have a significant and positive influence on apparel brands' customer satisfaction.

The significance of perceived value depends on the value of a product or service that is recognised by the customers (Zeithaml, 1988), which is the trade-off between perceived usefulness and perceived costs (Lovelock & Patterson, 2015). In an online shopping study, Kim et al. (2007) specified that perceived value is a factor of the overall effectiveness of service as evaluated by an individual, considering the efforts of the individual to use the interface and the benefits get from it.

Perceived value integrates the five theoretical types of values, i.e., functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional values (Ledden et al., 2007). The perceived value of a product or service comes in many forms from enormous sources, such as product utility, quality, availability, and some additional services. It was stated in the literature (Prebensen & Xie, 2017) that value perception mediates the relation between participation and satisfaction. Similarly, the analytical results showed (Chen & Lin, 2019) that SMMAAs indirectly (i.e., mediation effect) affect customers' satisfaction via social identification and perceived value. It was also noted by Chen and Lin (2019) that social identification and perceived value directly predict satisfaction and purchase intention. Based on these studies, we drew the following hypothesis.

H2: Apparel brands' perceived value mediates the relationship between SMMAAs comprising (a) interaction, (b) WoM, (c) trendiness, (d) entertainment, (e) customisation and customer satisfaction towards apparel brands.

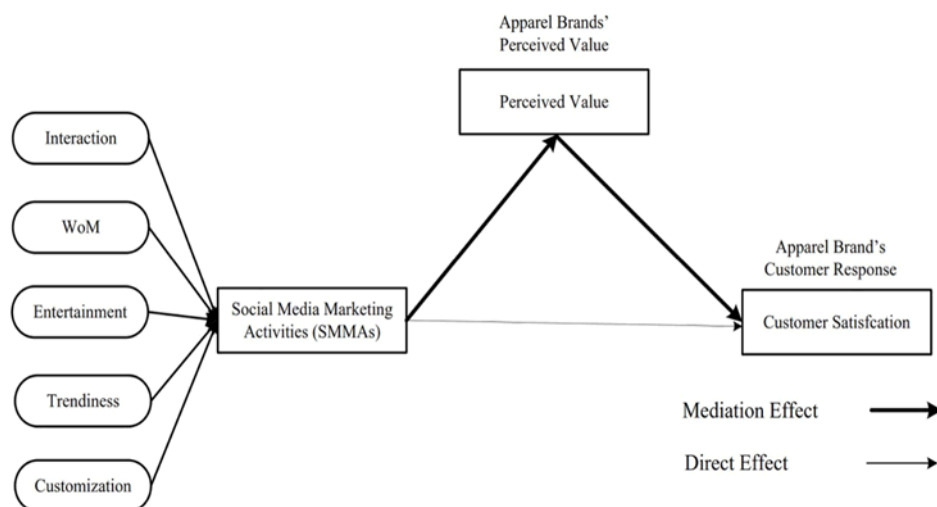


Figure 1. Research framework

Methods

Sampling and Data Analysis

For this research, the data were collected through an online survey in October 2019. We used a purposive sampling technique due to the lack of an adequate sampling frame, and because of its generalisations utility for studying a small subset of a large population (Jupp, 2006). Apart from the generalisation benefits, purposive sampling is very realistic in terms of time, effort, and cost in finding informants (Snedecor, 1939). To ensure the informant's reliability, participants were recruited with the help of a professional survey company in China. All respondents were active users of social media and apparel brands. The questionnaire was prepared in English, which was later translated into Chinese with the help of a native Chinese team member. All the questions in the survey were adapted from the literature. The scales used in our survey are shown in Table 1. A total of 355 usable responses were collected and used in the primary analysis. Measurement items were placed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This study used an online service to invite social media users to complete the questionnaire. All unusable questionnaires that were filled out randomly or with missing values were removed to improve the overall survey quality. The demographic diversity of respondents is shown in Table 2.

Table 1: Measurement scales used

SMMAs (Godey et al., 2016; Kim & Ko, 2012)
<i>Interactions construct questions</i>
1. It is easy to convey my opinion through the X apparel brand's social media.
2. It is possible to do two-way interaction through the X apparel brand's social media.
3. It is possible to share information with other users through the X apparel brand's social media.
<i>WoM construct questions</i>
1. I want to pass the information on the brand, product, or service from the X apparel brand's social media to my friends.
2. I want to upload content from the X apparel brand's social media on my blog or microblog.
3. I will recommend the X apparel brand to my social media (WeChat, QQ, Sina Weibo) friends.
<i>Trendiness constructs questions</i>
1. The X apparel brand has up-to-date content on its social media.
2. The X apparel brand has trendy information on its social media.
<i>Entertainment constructs questions</i>
1. The contents found on the X apparel brand's social media seems interesting.
2. Using the X apparel brand's social media is fun.
3. It is enjoyable to use the X apparel brand's social media.
<i>Customisation constructs questions</i>
1. X apparel brand's social media offers a customised information search.
2. X apparel brand's social media provides customised service.
3. X apparel brand's social media platform can be accessed anytime everywhere.
<i>Perceived value</i> (Williams & Soutar, 2009; Prebensen & Xie, 2017)
1. X apparel brand's social media makes me feel more socially accepted.
2. X apparel brand has a consistent level of quality.
3. X apparel brand represents "value" for money.
<i>Customer satisfaction</i> (Williams & Soutar, 2009; Prebensen & Xie, 2017)
1. Experiencing X apparel brand was exactly what I needed.
2. I will recommend the X apparel brand to others.
3. I am satisfied with the X apparel brand social media.

Table 2: Demographic summary of respondents

Variables	Items	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	154	43.4
	Female	201	56.6
Age	18–25	63	17.8
	26–30	93	26.3
	31–35	121	33.9
	36–40	27	7.6
	41–50	38	10.6
	51–60	12	3.4
	61 and above	1	0.8
Education	High secondary school & below	17	4.9
	Undergraduate	64	18.14
	Postgraduate	142.7	40.2
	Doctoral	113	32.11
	Others	17	4.66
Annual income	Less than CNY19,999	12	3.5
	CNY20,000–CNY39,999	17	4.5
	CNY40,000–CNY59,999	20	5.5
	CNY60,000–CNY79,999	35	10
	CNY80,000–CNY99,999	58	16.5
	CNY100,000–CNY199,99	88	25
	CNY200,000 or above	125	35
Apparel brand usage	Low	17	4.66
	Middle	202	56.87
	High	99	27.7
	Very high	37	10.78
Social media use duration	1–3 hours	195	54.9
	More than 3 hours	165	46.57

Empirical Results

The collected data of Chinese respondents are analysed with SPSS 23.0 and AMOS 24. For reliability and validity of data, we used the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) procedure to assess the fitness of data before further analysis. Our hypotheses primarily indicate the simple mediation effect of perceived value on the relationship between SMMA and customer satisfaction. Thus, we used conditional process modelling, i.e., Model 4 (simple mediation effect), to assess the mediation effect as mentioned earlier (Hayes, 2017). PROCESS has been used extensively in the literature for moderation and mediation effects (Ertürk & Vurgun, 2015; Leal-Rodríguez et al., 2014; Palmer et al., 2016).

CFA for SMMA and Perceived Value

In this section, a CFA is carried out before further analysis to evaluate construct and convergent validity. The complete CFA result for the measurement model considering factor loadings, t-value, and Cronbach's alpha are shown in Table 3. The result ($\chi^2 = 275.281$, $df = 170$, $GFI = 0.941$, $AGFI = 0.921$, $NFI = 0.970$, $IFI =$

0.990 , $CFI = 0.990$, $TLI = 0.989$) indicated that the proposed model is acceptable and within the threshold limit. Moreover, we also measured the average variance extracted (AVE)

to determine the discriminant validity of each construct. The results show that the boundaries of all constructs AVEs fall in the threshold limit of 0.5, which strongly supports the discriminant validity of our proposed conceptual model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Furthermore, the values of Cronbach's alpha of each construct also higher than 0.80, which indicates sufficient reliability of data for further analysis.

Direct and Simple Mediation Effect Analysis

Our proposed hypotheses (H1 and H2) demonstrate the direct and indirect relationship among dependent and independent variables. The simple mediation using Hayes PROCESS Model 4 measures the direct and indirect effect among SMMAs, perceived value, and customer satisfaction. The direct effect of SMMAs (interaction, WoM, entertainment, trendiness, and customisation) on customers' satisfaction is shown in Table 4. The direct effect of social media interaction on customers' satisfaction is not significant ($B = 0.076$, $t = 1.2$, $p = 0.06$). Here, B is the coefficient showing the strength of the relationship between interaction activity and customer satisfaction. The interaction on a specific apparel brand on social media does not influence Chinese customers' customer satisfaction. Hence, H1(a) is not supported in our experiments. The customisation ($B = 0.006$, $t = 2.7$, $p = 0.08$) activity also has the same effect like interaction, thus H1(e) is also not supported. The rest of the SMMAs such as WoM ($B = 0.261$, $t = 7.92$, $p = 0.03$), trendiness ($B = 0.23$, $t = 7.04$, $p = 0.006$), and entertainment ($B = 0.232$, $t = 7.5$, $p = 0.000$) having significant effect on customers' satisfaction, as shown in Table 4. However, the influence of WoM and entertainment on customers' satisfaction is more than other activities. Based on the findings in Table 4, we determine that H1(b), H1(c), and H1(d) are supported.

Table 3: CFA and reliability test for SMMAs

Constructs	Factor	Factor loadings	t-value	Cronbach's alpha
SMMAs	Interaction (AVE=0.681)	0.811	18.132	0.802
		0.877	18.168	
		0.831	Fix	
	WoM (AVE = 0.702)	0.851	19.502	0.825
		0.877	19.145	
		0.893	Fix	
	Trendiness (AVE = 0.710)	0.871	Fix	0.832
		0.871	20.511	
	Entertainment (AVE = 0.709)	0.868	21.767	0.871
		0.894	20.987	
		0.871	Fix	
	Customisation (AVE = 0.652)	0.849	17.985	0.844
		0.729	19.945	
		0.876	Fix	
Brands' perceived value	Perceived value (AVE = 0.619)	0.836	19.11	0.859
		0.834	20.007	
		0.845	20.112	
Customer satisfaction	Satisfaction (AVE=0.674)	0.856	19.444	0.865
		0.854	20.023	
		0.865	Fix	

Note: $\chi^2 = 275.281$; $df = 170$; goodness of fit index (GFI) = 0.941; adjusted GFI (AGFI) = 0.921; normed fit index (NFI) = 0.970; incremental fit index (IFI) = 0.990; comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.990; Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = 0.989.

Table 4: Testing the mediation effect of brand perceived value on customers' satisfaction

Model	B	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Interaction → PV (path a)	0.5470	0.0234	12.78	0.0100	0.7023	0.8326
PV → SAT (path b)	0.4981	0.0354	9.41	0.0020	0.5265	0.6218
Interaction → SAT (path c)	0.5285	0.0244	13.27	0.0040	0.5587	0.6784
Interaction → SAT (path c')	0.0762	0.0567	1.2	0.0670	0.2021	0.3453
Indirect effect PV	0.3523	0.0428			0.3562	0.4906
WoM → PV (path a)	0.6116	0.0310	13.06	0.0010	0.6501	0.7431
PV → SAT (path b)	0.5037	0.0344	10.76	0.0020	0.4240	0.5633
WoM → SAT (path c)	0.5995	0.0248	14.26	0.0030	0.5428	0.6562
WoM → SAT (path c')	0.2611	0.0308	7.92	0.0300	0.2067	0.3275
Indirect effect PV	0.4274	0.0323			0.3694	0.4785
Trendiness → PV (path a)	0.6097	0.0370	12.32	0.0050	0.6469	0.7726
PV → SAT (path b)	0.4976	0.0350	10.19	0.0060	0.4254	0.6114
Trendiness → SAT (path c)	0.5548	0.0292	13.89	0.0000	0.5284	0.7432
Trendiness → SAT (path c')	0.2314	0.0479	7.04	0.0060	0.2479	0.4068
Indirect effect PV	0.4135	0.0328			0.3640	0.5125

Model	B	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Ent → PV (path a)	0.6121	0.0309	13.03	0.0010	0.7135	0.8199
PV → SAT (path b)	0.5060	0.0342	10.89	0.0040	0.3391	0.5126
Ent → SAT (path c)	0.5958	0.0299	13.70	0.0000	0.6413	0.7503
Ent → SAT (path c')	0.2320	0.0475	7.53	0.0000	0.2413	0.4187
Indirect effect PV	0.4358	0.0325			0.3374	0.5337
Cust → PV (path a)	0.6058	0.0304	13.03	0.0020	0.6519	0.7597
PV → SAT (path b)	0.5001	0.0340	10.32	0.0050	0.4215	0.5887
Cust → SAT (path c)	0.4310	0.0483	11.38	0.0090	0.6754	0.7866
Cust → SAT (path c')	0.0689	0.0556	2.74	0.0800	0.2253	0.4226
Indirect effect PV	0.3620	0.0316			0.3506	0.5542

*Note: SAT = satisfaction, Ent = entertainment, Cust = customisation, PV = perceived value.

To evaluate the mediating effect of perceived value, we used bias-corrected bootstrapping (Hayes, 2017). The indirect impact of interaction activity on Chinese customers' satisfaction through perceived value was exclusively above zero (95% CI lower limit [LL] = 0.3562 and upper limit [UL] = 0.4906). This result determines that perceived value actively mediates the relationship between interaction and customer satisfaction. Based on the discussion, as mentioned earlier, we discovered that H2(a) is supported. The same notion is true for customisation activity, the direct effect is not supported, but the indirect through a mediator is significant. Thus, H2(e) is also supported. The complete findings of the bootstrap analysis are shown in Table 4. The indirect effect of WoM, trendiness, and entertainment on customer satisfaction through mediator perceived value fits the acceptable range (zero is not included in the 95% CI). Hence, the mediating effect in H2(b), H2(c), and H2(d) are all supported. Moreover, we also concluded from the findings that perceived value acts as a partial mediator in WoM, trendiness, and entertainment, while complete in case of interaction and customisation.

Discussion, Theoretical Contributions, and Practical Implications

Discussion

This study aims to investigate the impact of apparel brands SMMAAs on perceived value and customers' satisfaction. The purpose of clothes is not only to cover the human body, but it also aims to express more about someone's personality and status (Entwistle, 2015). The selection of clothing depends on different occasions, culture, and social situations. Social media plays a vital role in keeping update the users about new styles, designs, and fashion (Cheung et al., 2019; Zou & Peng, 2019). Most of the customers search for different apparel brands on social media before shopping (Jackson, 2018; Sultana, 2018). Nowadays, organisations invest much money on social media promotions to attract and retain their customers (Alalwan, 2018). Social media users are not just contents receivers; they are active agents to ask about the brands from the customers, from the service providers, look feedback from others, and electronic WoM (Muralidharan & Men, 2015). After a systematic literature review on social media advertising, we concluded that Chinese customers' satisfaction and brand perceived value regarding a particular apparel brand are strictly depended on SMMAAs.

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate whether the existing social media marketing efforts (i.e., interaction, WoM, entertainment, trendiness, and customisation) have an influence on apparel brands' customer satisfaction or not. Additionally, it also focuses that which marketing factor on social media is more important to impact brand perceived value and customer satisfaction positively. From our empirical findings, the SMMAAs on apparel brands in China were successfully able to predict a significant variance in brand perceived value and customer satisfaction (see Table 2). Thus, if a particular apparel brand has the right image on social media platforms in terms of consumers WoM, and trendiness, then it will significantly increase another consumers' satisfaction.

Similarly, if a particular social media platform keeps entertainment in all of their apparel brands' promotions, then it will also influence Chinese customers' satisfaction positively. The two marketing activities, i.e., interaction and customisation, are not very important in predicting Chinese customers' satisfaction. It means that if a particular apparel brand social media page is very active in interaction with users or sharing their brands or offering customisation services, it will not affect customers' satisfaction level. However, by considering the indirect relationship through perceived value, we noticed that all SMMAAs have a significant impact (interaction 0.35, WoM 0.42, entertainment 0.43, trendiness 0.41, and customisation 0.36) on Chinese customers' satisfaction as compared to the direct relationship between SMMAAs and satisfaction. Thus, it is concluded that perceived value is a good mediator in the Chinese apparel market. The findings of this study are parallel to the previous research that tested the role of SMMAAs and the mediating effect of perceived value on different brands' customer responses (Prebensen & Xie, 2017; Gan & Wang, 2017; Mishra, 2019; Chen & Lin, 2019).

Theoretical Contributions and Implications

The findings in this study have three broad theoretical contributions to the literature. First, this study draws on the TRA (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977) and TAM (Davis, 1989) frameworks to determine their applicability for understanding consumer behaviour in the digital space (Bianchi & Andrews, 2018). In the context of digital advertising, this study adopted the SMMAAs (interaction, WoM, entertainment, trendiness, and customisation) of Kim and Ko (2012) and investigated that it significantly influences apparel brands perceived value, which in turn affect customer satisfaction. Although several authors have previously analysed consumer behaviour in terms of purchase intension, loyalty, and satisfaction through social media (Khan et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2019; Chen & Lin, 2019; Alalwan, 2018; Zhao et al., 2019), scant research has examined consumer satisfaction with retail brands through social media sites (Wang et al., 2012; Gummerus et al., 2012; Bianchi & Andrews, 2018). Nevertheless, there is a lack of work in the literature that studied the influence of the SMMAAs, as mentioned earlier on Chinese customers' stratification. Thus, this study addresses the research gap in the literature by shedding light on the impact of SMMAAs on apparel brands perceived value and possible influence on Chinese customer satisfaction.

Secondly, this study also contributes to TAM by adding that Chinese consumers follow social media to develop a particular apparel brand perceived value and customers' satisfaction. Based on results, we assessed the importance of each SMMA on brand perceived value and customers' satisfaction. Which is the main contribution to TAM theory by adding the importance of individual SMMA. The findings determined that SMMA on WeChat, Sina Weibo, and QQ have a significant influence on brand perceived value and customer satisfaction, which is consistent with other research in the literature (Prebensen & Xie, 2017; Chen & Lin, 2019; Bianchi & Andrews, 2018). Specifically, this study extends the previous research (Khan et al., 2019; Zhao et al., 2019; Bianchi & Andrews, 2018) in this paper by adding a new brand, organisation, culture, and even new variables to assess SMMA impact on brand's perceived value and customer satisfaction. Although worldwide popular social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter are banned in China, Chinese local social network such as WeChat plays a vital role to attract users by offering numerous functions such as paying, buying, connecting, socialising, and learning (Zhao et al., 2019). Thus, it supports that the social influences of SMMA on WeChat, Sina Weibo, and QQ are critical ways to increase brand perceived value and satisfaction.

Third, the previous study (Zhao et al., 2019) analysed the impact of social media (i.e., WeChat) use and perception on apparel brands' customers' attitudes and purchase intention. Zhao et al. (2019) discussed the overall impact of WeChat promotions (apparel brands' marketing) on Chinese' consumers' attitudes without considering the significance of a particular social media marketing factor. This study further extended the literature (Zhao et al., 2019) by identifying which marketing factor of social media is essential to affect apparel brand's perceived value and customer satisfaction in China.

Practical Contributions and Implications

This study demonstrates for apparel brands' marketers and shoppers that social media in China (i.e., WeChat, Sina Weibo, and QQ) significantly influences the apparel brands' perceived value and consumers' satisfaction. The marketers of different apparel brands should post relevant information on their social media platforms about their new arrivals, trends, styles, etc., to enhance their brands' perceived values and also to increase their consumers' satisfaction. Moreover, on some specific events or promotions, apparel companies should encourage their followers/subscribers to spread the information among their network. The apparel brands should focus on their marketing social media platform to increase the WoM, trendiness, and entertainment activities. These activities are critical to getting the attention of Chinese customers towards the apparel brand. The company should start an interaction with its followers and should focus on positive WoM about its apparel brands.

As young generation are more potential users of social media for socialising and connecting with friends and colleagues, it can help the apparel brands' companies to educate and reach out to young consumers through WeChat, Sina Weibo, and QQ (Andersson & Öhman, 2017). Social media would be an excellent source of information transfer between government departments and consumers. Since the apparel industry has a robust relation to consumers' daily life, thus, the social network will be a convenient source for industries to reach their customers and enhance their satisfaction. As a substitute for one-way communication, interactions will help to disseminate apparel information more widely accepted and understood.

The findings also propose that apparel marketers should also combine SMMA related content into marketing and management classes, as social media is becoming a top-rated channel for consumers to get knowledge of apparel brands, as well as for retailers/brands to share knowledge to their followers on the platform.

Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Directions

Advertising on social media is widely practiced nowadays by both shoppers and marketers' side. Nowadays, people search for a particular brand on social media before

purchasing. The marketing activities on social media significantly influence the customers/users' response towards a specific brand in terms of loyalty, purchase intention, price premium willingness, and customers' satisfaction. This study investigated the impact of apparel brand SMMAAs on perceived value and Chinese customers' satisfaction. From the findings, it is concluded that advertising activities on social media highly influence Chinese customers' satisfaction. It is noted that WoM, trendiness, and entertainment activities are playing a vital role in positively affecting Chinese satisfaction towards a particular apparel brand as compared to interaction and customisation. The existing SMMAAs also have the same influence on apparel brands' perceived values.

Moreover, it is also found that the perceived value of apparel brands acts as a mediator between SMMAAs and customers' satisfactions. Here, we also determined that perceived value plays as a complete mediating role in interaction and customisation activities, during a partial role in WoM, trendiness, and entertainment. It means that SMMAAs first increase apparel brands' perceived values, which subsequently positively influences Chinese customers' satisfaction.

The experimental results show the importance of SMMAAs for both buyers and marketers in this study. However, it has some limitations, which are necessary to be addressed in the future. Firstly, here, the data is collected only from one side(i.e., from apparel brands' users). It will be more accurate if we also consider the responses of the retailers (apparel brand's social media platform operators). Secondly, this work is based on primary data (collected through a questionnaire). To increase the worth of this work, we should gather secondary data from different apparel brands social media platform and compare with initial data results. In the future, the researchers should consider different dimensions of perceived value for assessment. This model can also be easily extendable to other brands and organisations. The cross-culture study of various nations can also be the right direction to extend this study.

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