

Article

Relationship Analysis among Apparel Brand Image, Self-Congruity, and Consumers' Purchase Intention

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Abstract: Brand image has been a crucial clue to making subjective judgment for consumers to determine the brand, which is critical to making a purchase decision. The influence mechanism from apparel brand images on consumers' purchase intention was explored for theoretical and positive analysis based on the self-congruity theory. This research first constructed a hypothetical model of apparel brand images influencing consumers' purchase intention with self-congruity and perceived quality as mediators, in which a questionnaire was designed and conducted to test the theoretical model. The research shows that apparel brand image and perceived quality can significantly influence consumers' purchase intention. The consumer purchase intention is directly related to clothing brand image provided self-consistency and perceived quality play an intermediary with the regulatory effect of self-motivation and brand familiarity. A positive attitude toward apparel brand image will stimulate consumers to build cognitive clues and associations between the consumers and the brand and strengthen cognitive consistency with the apparel brand's spirit. The research results are beneficial to textile fashion and clothing enterprises to improve brand building and marketing.

Keywords: fashion brand image; self-congruity; perceived quality; self-motivation; brand familiarity



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1. Introduction

Building substantial brand equity is a critical challenge in today's fast-paced, growing business world [1]. It is essential to continuously create a robust distribution network and establish brand extensions for consumers to compete. Brand image is the crucial element that drives brand equity and is the primary source of brand equity [2]. This is also an important marketing strategy for enterprises to obtain a sustainable economic lead [3]. However, in Chinese apparel companies' shaping of brand image, there are typical problems such as ambiguous brand positioning, similar image shaping, and low accuracy, resulting in a lack of brand recognition and poor brand image communication.

In clothing consumption, brand image has become the main clue for consumers' subjective evaluation of brands, and it plays a vital role in people's purchasing decisions [4]. Simultaneously, as a critical value asset for apparel companies' differentiated competitive advantage, brand image plays an increasingly important strategic role in business management [5]. Determining how to accurately shape a clothing brand's image, optimize its communication effect, and stimulate clothing consumption have become urgent problems for Chinese clothing brands [6]. Thus, this research was conducted to analyze the relationship among apparel brand image, self-congruity, and consumers' purchase intention to overcome these questions. This study aimed to answer the following research questions.

Do apparel brand images impact consumers' purchase intention, self-consistency, and perceived quality?

Do self-consistency and perceived quality impact consumers' purchase intention?

What role do self-consistency and perceived quality play for bridging clothing brand image and consumer purchase intention?

How does self-motivation, including self-improvement and self-confirmation, relate to self-consistency and purchase intention?

How are brand familiarity, perceived quality, self-consistency, and purchase intention connected?

This research would be beneficial to understand the problems related to the textile fashion and clothing industry of China, as well as showing the basis for understanding for other regions as well.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Deduction

2.1. Clothing Brand Image

One of the very critical aspects of branding that has received significant attention is the brand image [7]. Researchers generally believe that brand image is an essential factor affecting consumers' purchase decisions. A reputable brand image is a crucial aspect that helps customers make purchasing decisions efficiently and satisfactorily, which eventually gives favorable outcomes and associations in consumers' minds in the long run [8]. Brand equity is directly dependent on the brand image; however, the current literature does not contain clear evidence of how this relationship exists [9–11].

The current literature has not determined the intervention mechanism, which defines the impact of brand image background on brand equity. Therefore, it is still uncertain whether brand equity drivers play an essential role in connecting brand image and equity. Therefore, the controlling factors of brand equity may be one of the main mechanisms of brand image affecting brand equity. From the above discussion, it is essential to establish potential brand equity drivers, such as brand attitude, brand awareness, brand attachment, and brand value, which will shape the relationship between brand image and brand equity. These drivers will be considered more carefully when making purchase decisions and expanding consumer-based brand assets.

Brand image and brand equity relationships are also significantly influenced by the nature of products, and there is a big gap in understanding of how it is impacted as no research shows this critical aspect. The influence of the type of brand on consumer-based equity also differs depending on the type of products, such as search goods or experience goods, a concept developed by Philip Nelson [12]. For example, Adidas (clothing category) and Nike brands (shoe category) are classified as search goods (can be verified before purchase). In contrast, many personal services, such as personal care products, fall into the experience goods category, verified after purchase and use only. Therefore, the influence on consumer-based brand equity differs between these brands. Brand equity is measured using two approaches: financial-based and consumer-based [13]. Verhoef et al. [14] mentioned that competition becomes deeper when retailers create and market their brands and products by looking at ongoing styles and market demands. The cost of product is a highly significant component, and is being set by the reputation of certain brands in the appropriate manner and thus involves awareness, quality, uniqueness, social image, and country of origin [15]. These are definitive brand images; this study explains their impact on customers' willingness to pay price premiums. Moreover, from the factors mentioned above, it is essential to find out which one is highly crucial or worthy for customers to finalize and purchase branded clothes, and they can concentrate on certain parameters more than others to produce higher profits and lower marketing costs. There is a view that a brand can create a differentiated position, and this advantage brought by a brand relative to other brands will encourage consumers to pay more.

Tsai pointed out that consumers usually make consumption decisions based on the brand's evaluation results, significantly affecting brand image recognition [16]. Bird

pointed out that consumers have different perceptions of brand image with different product usage levels and verified through empirical research that brand image affects consumers' purchase intentions [17]. Jiang revealed that the brand image's customer perception would affect their consumption decision-making and purchasing behavior tendencies [18]. Jin's research results show that company and product brand images positively affect consumer attitudes and purchasing tendencies [19]. Online shopping research shows that after the online clothing brand image forms a value perception in customers' minds, it impacts pre-purchase intentions and purchase decisions [20]. Accordingly, hypothesis H1 is proposed:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *Apparel brand image has a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase intention.*

In brand image research, Jacoby research pointed out that the brand image strongly influences quality perception and found that the more positive the brand image, the more significant the impact [21]. Jiang and Lu divided the brand image into functional and non-functional factors and researched the impact of these two aspects on perceived quality, perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty. The results showed that perceived quality is affected by functions, gender, and non-functional factors [18]. Wang and Zhang used empirical research to prove that store images, including product images, environmental images, and service images, significantly impact brand perception quality [22]. In research on Chinese and Western brand names' influence on perceived quality, Yulistiana proved that brand names positively affect the perceived quality [23]. Accordingly, hypothesis H2 is proposed:

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *Apparel brand image has a significant positive impact on perceived quality.*

2.2. Self-Consistency

Self-consistency is a research perspective of the theory of cognitive coherence. The core issues concerned include two aspects: When the individual's self-concept participates in the process of recognizing things, if the cognitive subject is inconsistent with the individual's self-concept, the individual Cognitive disharmony will occur; when an individual's behavior or its consequences conflict with self-awareness, it will cause a cognitive inconsistency [24,25]. Self-consistency is the matching process resulting from the consumer's self-concept and cognition of things, including product images, brand images, store images, destination images, products, brands, or services with symbolic attributes and symbolic meanings. Self-concept (such as actual self, ideal self, and social self) is the sum of people's perceptions and emotions about themselves. It includes how an individual views oneself objectively and what kind of person he thinks he is and what kind of person he wants to be [26]. In the field of consumer behavior, self-consistency is mainly used to study the relationship between symbolic consumption trends and self-concept, focusing on two aspects: paying attention to the relationship between self-consistency and consumers' pre-purchase behavior, intentions, and decision-making; exploring self the effect of consistency on various post-consumer variables, such as satisfaction, loyalty, perceived quality, and post-purchase attitude.

This article uses self-consistency theory to explore the characteristics of consumers' selective perception of brand image information and the relationship between cognitive things and self-concept fit. Scholars' studies have emphasized the association between brand symbolic attributes and self-concept; the higher the degree of matching the brand's symbolic attributes and the consumer's self-concept, the more likely consumers are to think they can satisfy their needs. Sirgy et al. showed that when the symbolic attribute is associated with self-concept (that is, when there is a higher self-consistency), consumers will have a higher preference for products and brands [27]. Rogers evaluated self-concept to explain product symbolism and believes that products, brands, or things most like self-concept are more attractive to consumers [28]. Ibrahim's research shows that when a hotel's overall brand image is better, it can stimulate the connection between consumers'

self-concept and brand image and make it more self-consistent with the brand image [29]. Accordingly, hypothesis H3 is proposed:

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *Apparel brand image has a significant positive impact on self-consistency.*

Self-consistency affects consumer attitudes and behaviors. If people have a higher self-consistency when dealing with brand symbolic information, it will promote their good feelings about the brand. Otherwise, they will form an unfavorable attitude towards the brand, which will affect their evaluation of the brand. Mukherjee confirmed that self-consistency has a significant impact on consumer attitudes and behaviors and proposed that when consumers' self-concepts match their views on a sure thing, they will have a more positive attitude [30]. Therefore, people are more inclined to choose and buy brands with higher self-consistency [31]. Ericksen proposed the applicability of self-consistency in clothing consumption research and constructed a relationship between professional women's clothing preferences and self-consistency [32]. Tan Qing explored the relationship between clothing styles, colors, clothing brands, shopping environment, and the self-concept of female consumers and demonstrated empirical evidence that women's clothing choice is related to self-concept [33]. Research by Liu et al. showed that self-consistency positively affects consumers' brand attitude and loyalty [34]. Lee confirmed that consumer self-concept and consistency of brand personality directly impact brand clothing purchase intention [35]. Accordingly, hypotheses H4 and H5 are proposed:

Hypothesis 4 (H4). *Self-consistency has a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase intention.*

Hypothesis 5 (H5). *Self-consistency plays an intermediary role in the relationship between clothing brand image and consumer purchase intention.*

2.3. Perceived Quality

Research by scholars has shown that there is a meaningful relationship between perceived quality and purchase intention. Most use perceived quality as an intermediary variable to construct a theoretical model of the influence of brand information cues on purchase intention. Aaker defines perceived quality as an overall intangible perception of consumers' brand and found that perceived quality significantly impacts purchase intention [36]. Boulding established a perceived quality model on consumer decision-making, proposing that perceived quality is a consumer's judgment on brand quality and the expected result of actual service quality and has an essential predictive effect on consumers' purchase decision-making process [37]. Research by Lin et al. found that when customers' perceived quality of a particular brand is higher, they will have a more positive attitude towards the brand, which will produce a higher willingness to buy [38]. Consumers' perception of store quality is the primary measurement index for predicting store sales, and it is pointed out that the improvement of perceived quality is conducive to promoting consumers' buying behavior and willingness [39]. Dodds proposed a conceptual model of the influence of external cues (price, brand name, and store name) on consumers' perceived quality and purchase intention [40]. Recently, Kim proved that showing prices and positive brand information perception positively impact perceived quality [41]. Based on this, hypotheses H6 are proposed:

Hypothesis 6 (H6). *Perceived quality plays an intermediary role in the relationship between clothing brand image and consumer purchase intention.*

2.4. The Moderating Role of Self-Motivation in Self-Consistency

In the research on self-consistency and consumer purchasing decision, willingness and behavior, scholars found certain boundary conditions in the influence relationship between the two, and consumer motivation and consumer personality affect the two to a certain extent [42]. Among them, consumption motivation includes self-confirmation motivation and self-improvement motivation, collectively referred to as self-motivation. Self-motivation reflects two different purposes of consumers taking self-consistency as a

clue of judgment. When consumers are motivated by self-confirmation, people tend to explain and accept the same information or like self-concept [43]. This motivation is related to the self-concept's actual self and social reality and is the self-intrinsic standard and social standard for the individual to make informed judgments. Under the influence of self-confirmation motivation, consumers are more inclined to choose brands that maintain their authentic self or social self-image, have high consistency, and give positive evaluations [44]. When people aim to self-improve, they prefer brands with higher or better grades than self-image to enhance their self-image and display a higher social image or status [45]. Accordingly, hypotheses H7, H7a, and H7b are proposed.

Hypothesis 7 (H7). *Self-motivation regulates the relationship between self-consistency and purchase intention.*

Hypothesis 7a (H7a). *Self-improvement motivation regulates the relationship between self-consistency and purchase intention.*

Hypothesis 7b (H7b). *Self-confirmation motivation regulates the relationship between self-consistency and purchase intention.*

2.5. The Moderating Role of Brand Familiarity in Perceived Quality

Brand familiarity is an important indicator to measuring and evaluating customers' understanding of the target brand. It is possible to intuitively understand the degree of accumulation of consumer experience and knowledge of a particular brand [46]. Szybillo believes that consumer perception quality will be affected by internal product cues (i.e., physical product attributes) and product external cues (i.e., product's non-physical attributes) [47]. Karangi's research shows that consumers with a different product or brand familiarity have different judgment criteria for evaluating the same product or brand [48]. People with high product or brand familiarity tend to pay attention to the product and brand's actual attributes, while familiarity is low. People pay attention to external clues related to products or brands. Labeaga believes that low perceived risk caused by high brand familiarity can drive customers to have a higher brand consumption tendency without positive quality perception [49]. Accordingly, hypothesis H8 is proposed:

Hypothesis 8 (H8). *Brand familiarity regulates the relationship between perceived quality and purchase intention.*

2.6. Chain Mediation between Perceived Quality and Self-Consistency

When the symbolic utility of external clues makes people have a higher quality perception of products and brands, it can, to a certain extent, enhance the predictive value and confidence value of products and brands to consumers, thereby generating higher expectations and attention. The consistency between the concept and the brand image has a positive impact [50,51]. Quester et al. pointed out that product quality perception positively influences the cognitive fit relationship (i.e., self-consistency) between consumers and brands [52]. Graeff also confirmed that people's subjective evaluation of products positively correlates with consumer self-image and retail brand image [53]. Simultaneously, transmitting a clothing brand's image to consumers is a process of information dissemination, which has hierarchical transmission characteristics. The role of information disseminated in individual cognition formation ranges from shallow to deep, from shallow intuitive perception to the formation of thoughts and emotions, and then to the matching of deep self-personality and characteristics.

When consumers are unfamiliar with products or brands, self-concept clues cannot be obtained immediately, but a relatively complicated confirmation and cognitive processing process is required. Self-consistency is related to the fit between consumers' self-image and brand image. Consumers' self-concept and brand image comparison require more cognitive elaboration and more complex information processing. Therefore, this article speculates that in consumer brand image recognition, the perceived quality is first formed

through direct perception of image information, and then this information evaluation clue is used to associate self-image with the brand image. Accordingly, hypothesis H9 is proposed:

Hypothesis 9 (H9). *Perceived quality and self-consistency play a chain-like intermediary role in the process of clothing brand image influencing purchase intention.*

Given the above literature review and theoretical analysis, this paper proposes the following research model (Figure 1).

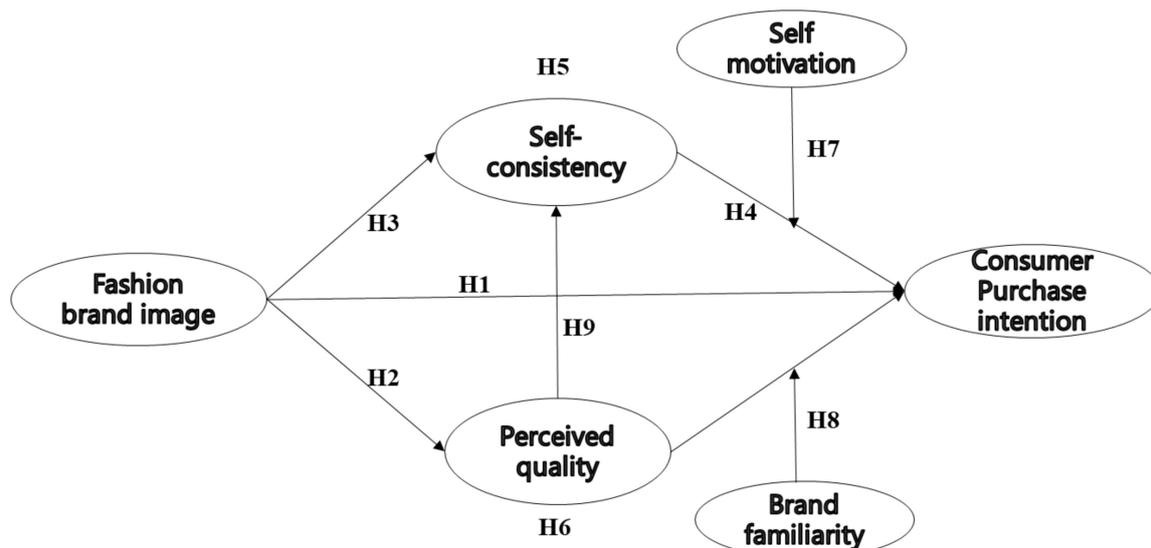


Figure 1. The theoretical model of this research.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Data Collection

This study used questionnaire surveys to collect data. The survey samples select people who had experience in online and offline clothing consumption in shops and distributed offline questionnaires and online questionnaires to investigate consumers fully. The offline questionnaires were distributed in the brand agglomeration area in Shanghai. Online questionnaires were distributed through the “Questionnaire Star” software. There were 134 offline questionnaires and 116 valid questionnaires, with an effective rate of 86.5%. Moreover, there are 412 online questionnaires and 352 valid questionnaires, with an effective rate of 85.4%. A total of 546 questionnaires were collected in this survey, of which 468 were valid questionnaires, the effective recovery rate was 85.71%, and the number of valid samples met the requirement of 5 times the measurement items.

The sampling control characteristics include consumers’ age, gender, education level, income, and city of residence. The results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the sample are as follows: women accounted for 53.19%, men accounted for 46.91%; 18–25 year olds accounted for 47.01%, 25–35 years olds accounted for 27.29%, 36–50 years olds accounted for 21.32%, under 18 and over 50 years olds accounted for 4.58%; Junior high school and below accounted for 2.19%, college degree accounted for 4.38%, bachelor degree accounted for 51%, master degree or above accounted for 42.23%; income below 2000 yuan accounted for 44.62%, 2000–4999 yuan accounted for 21.71%, 5000–9999 yuan accounted for 22.31%, 10,000–14,999 yuan accounted for 7.17%, 15,000–19,999 yuan accounted for 3.17%, and 20,000 yuan or more accounted for 1.02%; first-tier cities accounted for 59.96%, second-tier cities accounted for 21.71%, third-tier cities accounted for 6.37%, and fourth-tier and below 11.95%. Overall, the survey subjects are mostly school students and newcomers, and their monthly income is below 10,000 yuan. Such a sample structure is closer to the research

object's consumption characteristics, conducive to obtaining research results and general research conclusions that conform to objective facts.

3.2. Variable Measurement

This research involves seven constructs, namely clothing brand image (BI), self-consistency (SC), perceived quality (QP), brand familiarity (BF), self-motivation (SM), and purchase intention (PUI). All the constructs are derived from relevant mature scales at home and abroad, and experts in apparel and senior practitioners are invited to evaluate and correct the scale's semantic accuracy and revise it into a formal questionnaire. All items involved in this research use the Likert 6-point scale. Among them, "1" means "strongly disagree" and "6" means "strongly agree", and the scales are all derived from representative documents at home and abroad. The clothing brand image measurement draws on the brand image scale used in the research by Biel [54], Aaker [36], Keller [55], and Fan Xiucheng [56] to measure consumers' perception of clothing brands image. Self-consistency draws on the scale developed by Sirgy [27] and Escalas [57] to measure the degree of conformity between clothing brand image and consumer image. Perceived quality draws on the scale developed by Parasuraman [58] and Dodds [40] to measure consumers' overall brand quality, quality stability, and quality dependence. Self-motivation refers to the scale used in the research by Alexandrov [59] and Napper [60]. Brand familiarity draws on the scale used in research by Dursun [61] and Nepomuceno [62]. Refer to the scales used in the research by Diallo [63] and Fishbein [64] for purchase intention.

4. Empirical Analysis and Hypothesis Test Results

4.1. Reliability and Validity Test

The reliability test is judged by Cronbach's α coefficient value and the correction term's correlation coefficient (CITC). As shown in Table 1, the Cronbach's α coefficient values of clothing brand image, self-consistency, perceived quality, brand familiarity, self-motivation, and purchase intention are between 0.821 and 0.951, which are all greater than the critical value of 0.7, and the CITC value is 0.553~0.927, indicating that the scale has good reliability and a high level of reliability.

The validity test uses the AMOS 21.0 tool to perform confirmatory factor analysis on each variable to verify its convergent validity. As shown in the results in Table 1, the standardized factor load coefficients of each variable are all greater than 0.5 and reach a significant level ($p < 0.05$), and the combined reliability (CR) of each construct is more significant than 0.8, indicating that the scale has a good convergence effect degree. The average extraction amount (AVE) value of each construct reaches 0.5 judgment standard, and its square root is greater than the Pearson correlation coefficient between the two constructs (as shown in Table 2), indicating that the variable has a good discrimination validity.

4.2. Model Fitting and Hypothesis Testing

This study used the AMOS 21.0 tool to fit the collected questionnaire data and the hypothetical model that brand image affects consumers' purchase intention to fit the structural equation model. The statistical values of the fitness test indicators are shown in Table 3. The fit test index CMIN/DF value of this study is $2.778 < 3$, the values of GFI, NFI, CFI, TLI, and AGFI are all greater than 0.9, the RMSEA value is $0.062 < 0.1$, and the RMR is $0.037 < 0.5$, all of which are relatively good Level of fitness. The results show that the model has outstanding fit test results, and the fit effect is good.

Table 1. Reliability and validity test results of measurement items.

Construct	Item	Factor Loading	CITC	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Clothing Brand Image	NI	0.64	0.624	0.879	0.877	0.507
	PPI	0.60	0.553			
	SE	0.66	0.633			
	BC	0.72	0.646			
	PI	0.85	0.777			
	BI	0.83	0.751			
	SI	0.70	0.665			
Self-consistency	SC-1	0.813	0.734	0.869	0.870	0.627
	SC-2	0.836	0.758			
	SC-3	0.790	0.733			
	SC-4	0.724	0.660			
Perceived Quality	QP-1	0.945	0.898	0.951	0.960	0.889
	QP-2	0.96	0.927			
	QP-3	0.923	0.918			
Purchase Intention	PUI-1	0.718	0.640	0.821	0.867	0.567
	PUI-2	0.743	0.555			
	PUI-3	0.742	0.698			
Brand Familiarity	BF-1	0.687	0.665	0.843	0.930	0.767
	BF-2	0.712	0.665			
	BF-3	0.855	0.647			
	BF-4	0.855	0.623			
	BF-5	0.911	0.646			
Self-Motivation	SM-1	0.907	0.831	0.934	0.734	0.508
	SM-2	0.819	0.834			
	SM-3	0.858	0.860			
	SM-4	0.642	0.854			

Table 2. Questionnaire discriminative validity test results.

	BI	QP	SC	PUI
BI	0.507			
QP	0.046 ***	0.889		
SC	0.037 ***	0.043 ***	0.627	
PUI	0.030 ***	0.039 ***	0.051 ***	0.508
AVE square root	0.712	0.943	0.792	0.713

Note: *** means significant at 0.05 level.

Table 3. Main indicators of model fit test.

Index	χ^2/df	GFI	NFI	CFI	TLI	AGFI	RMR	RMSEA	
Value	CMIN 311.171	CMIN/DF 2.778	0.932	0.941	0.961	0.953	0.921	0.037	0.062

4.3. Test of the Scale

Data testing was carried out on the measurement scale of value creation of clothing brand image, mainly including reliability and validity test, factor test, and goodness of fit test of the model. The specific results are shown in Table 3. In the exploratory factor molecule, the cumulative variance contribution rate of the scale was 73.061% > 60%, and the overall KMO and Cronbach's α values were 0.946 and 0.965, respectively, both greater than 0.7. Meanwhile, the KOM and Cronbach's α values of each dimension also reached the acceptance standard. In the confirmative factor analysis, the standardized factor loading (EFA) was between 0.648 and 0.912, meeting the criteria of greater than 0.5, and the combinatorial reliability (CR) and square extraction variance (AVE) also met the criteria of 0.7 and 0.5. In the goodness of fit test of the model, the chi-square to the degree of

freedom ratio (X^2/DF) is 2.898, which is less than 3, AGFI and GFI are more significant than 0.8, and NFI, CFI, TLI, and IFI are all greater than 0.9. Based on the above analysis, the measurement scale has good reliability and validity.

The results of model fitting and hypothesis testing are shown in Table 4. The three vectors of clothing brand image that affect purchase intention, self-consistency, and perceived quality are significant at $p < 0.001$. Clothing brand image has a significant impact on purchase intention, self-consistency, and perceived quality. Suppose H1, H2, and H3 Be verified. Moreover, assuming that the vectors of H4 and H9 are also significant at the $p < 0.001$ level, this shows that self-consistency has a significant impact on purchase intention, and perceived quality has a significant impact on self-consistency.

Table 4. Model fitting and hypothesis testing results.

Hypothesis	Estimate	Std. Estimate	CR.	<i>p</i>	In Conclusion
H1	0.559	0.055	17.532	***	Valid
H2	0.631	0.076	15.557	***	Valid
H3	0.798	0.045	14.956	***	Valid
H4	0.554	0.060	13.571	***	Valid
H7	0.521	0.052	11.075	***	Valid

Note: *** means *p*-value is less than 0.001.

4.4. Reliability and Validity Test and Factor Analysis

This study uses the Bootstrap method to test self-consistency, the mediating effect of perceived quality (hypothesis H5, H6), and the chain-like mediating effect of self-consistency on perceived quality. Using Model 4 (simple intermediary model) in the SPSS macro written by Hayes, while controlling the demographic factors of gender, education, age, income, and residence, the self-consistency and perceived quality of the clothing brand image, and the mediating effect of the relationship between purchase intentions are tested, and the test results are shown in Tables 5 and 6.

The results show that the direct effect of clothing brand image on purchase intention and the mediating effect of self-consistency and perceived quality do not contain 0 at the upper and lower limits of the Bootstrap 95% confidence interval. This indicates that clothing brand image can directly predict purchase intention and pass the mediating effect of self-consistency and perceived quality predicts purchase intention. The direct effect action value is 0.280, the self-consistency mediation effect action value is 0.217, and the perceived quality action value is 0.180, accounting for 41.33%, 32.04%, and 26.63% of the total effect. Hypothesis H5 and H6 are established.

Table 5. Analysis results of mediation effect.

Path	Effect Size	Boot Standard Error	BootCI Confidence (Lower Bound)	BootCI Confidence (Upper Bound)	Effect Ratio
Indirect effects: mediating effects of perceived quality	0.180	0.0108	0.0034	0.0449	26.63%
Indirect effect: self-consistent mediation effect	0.217	0.0467	0.0997	0.2816	32.04%
Direct effect	0.280	0.0601	0.2634	0.4993	41.33%
Total effect	0.677	0.0410	0.5040	0.6630	—

Note: The interval value of [BootCI, BootCI] does not contain 0, which means it is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 6. Results of chain mediated effect analysis.

Path	Effect Size	Boot Standard Error	BootCI Confidence (Lower Bound)	BootCI Confidence (Upper Bound)
Total effect	0.773	0.045	0.127	0.306
Direct effect	0.286	0.049	0.290	0.482
Indirect effect: clothing brand image -> self-consistency -> purchase intention	0.224	0.046	0.098	0.277
Indirect effect: clothing brand image -> perceived quality -> purchase intention	0.136	0.012	0.005	0.051
Indirect effect: clothing brand image -> self-consistency -> perceived quality -> purchase intention	0.127	0.0137	0.002	0.005

This research uses clothing brand image as the independent variable X, purchase intention as the dependent variable Y, self-consistency as the first intermediary variable M1, and perception consistency as the second intermediary variable M2 using the SPSS macro written by Hayes. In Model6, a Bootstrap analysis is performed to test the chain mediation effect (i.e., continuous mediation effect) of self-consistency and perceived quality. The results show that the total effect's confidence interval is 0.127~0.306 excluding 0, indicating that the total effect of clothing brand image on purchase intention is significant. The confidence interval of direct effect is 0.290~0.482 excluding 0, indicating that the direct effect of clothing brand image on purchase intention is significant. In the indirect effect, the confidence interval of the action path of clothing brand image → self-consistency → purchase intention is 0.098~0.277 excluding 0, indicating that the clothing brand image passes self-consistency but does not pass the perceived quality. The effect on purchase intention is that the mediation effect is significant. The confidence interval of clothing brand image → perceived quality → purchasing intention is 0.005~0.051 excluding 0, which means that when clothing brand image passes through perceived quality but not self-consistency, the mediating effect on purchasing intention is significant. The path clothing brand image → self-consistency → perceived quality → purchase intention confidence interval is 0.002~0.005 excluding 0, indicating that when the clothing brand image passes self-consistency and perceives quality, it has a significant effect on purchase intention. In summary, self-consistency and perceived quality play a chain-like intermediary role in the relationship between clothing brand image and purchase intention.

4.5. Moderating Effect Test

This study uses a hierarchical regression model to test the adjustment effect taking purchase intention as a dependent variable, under the condition of controlling the demographic factors of gender, education, age, income, and residence, the cross product of self-consistency and self-motivation, perceived quality and brand familiarity is introduced for regression analysis. The analysis results are shown in Table 7. The results show that the adjustment R^2 gradually increases with the interaction term's introduction, indicating that the model is better fitted. The interaction item of perceived quality and brand familiarity significantly impacts purchase intention ($\beta = -0.153$, $t = -3.239$, $p < 0.001$), which indicates that brand familiarity has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between perceived quality and purchase intention, H8 was established. In addition, the interaction term between self-consistency and self-motivation has a significant positive effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.078$, $t = 1.972$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that self-motivation has a moderating effect in the relationship between self-consistency and purchase intention, H7 was established.

Table 7. Test results of adjustment effect.

Variable	Purchase Intention		Purchase Intention		Purchase Intention	
	Standardization Factor	t-Value	Standardization Factor	t-Value	Standardization Factor	t-Value
Gender	0.013	0.251	0.034	0.833	0.041	1.012
Degree	0.039	0.703	0.013	0.278	0.009	0.201
Profession	−0.034	−0.553	−0.003	−0.064	0.006	0.113
Age	0.077	1.358	0.048	1.052	0.04	0.876
Income	−0.023	−0.411	−0.011	−0.251	−0.015	−0.348
Place of residence	−0.027	−0.445	−0.033	−0.657	−0.038	−0.764
Perceived Quality			0.176 ***	4.423	0.255 ***	5.204
Brand Familiarity			0.11 **	2.509	0.14 **	3.063
Self-consistency			0.528 ***	12.527	0.512 ***	11.862
Self-Motivation			−0.052	−1.189	−0.065	−1.485
Perceived Quality × Brand Familiarity					−0.153 ***	−3.239
Self-motivation × self-consistency					0.078 *	1.972
Adjust R ²	−0.008		0.341		0.357	
F Value	0.36		24.861		22.318	

Note: * means significant at 0.005 level, ** means significant at 0.01 level, *** means significant at 0.05 level.

When H7 is established, this study further examines the moderating effects of different self-motivation types (i.e., self-confidence and self-improvement motivation) in the relationship between self-consistency and purchase intention. For self-confirmed motivation, self-consistency has a significant positive effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.096$, $t = 2.226$, $p < 0.05$); on the contrary, for self-improvement motivation, self-consistency has no significant effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.132$, $t = 1.323$). This shows that self-consistency on purchase intention will only significantly have an effect when consumers have self-confirmed consumer psychology. Hypothesis H7b holds, but H7a does not hold.

Based on the above test results, the summary of the model hypothesis testing in this study is as follows in Table 8.

Table 8. Summary of hypothesis test results.

Numbering	Research Hypothesis	Test Result
H1	Apparel brand image has a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase intention	Valid
H2	Apparel brand image has a significant positive impact on perceived quality	Valid
H3	Clothing brand image has a significant positive impact on self-consistency	Valid
H4	Self-consistency has a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase intention	Valid
H5	Self-consistency plays an intermediary role in the relationship between clothing brand image and consumer purchase intention	Valid (Partial Intermediary)
H6	Perceived quality plays an intermediary role in the relationship between clothing brand image and consumer purchase intention	Valid (Partial Intermediary)
H7	Self-motivation regulates the relationship between self-consistency and purchase intention	Valid
H8	Brand familiarity regulates the relationship between perceived quality and purchase intention	Valid
H9	Perceived quality and self-consistency play a chain-like intermediary role in the process of clothing brand image influencing purchase intention	Valid (Partial Intermediary)

5. Discussion and Marketing Implications

5.1. Discussion

This paper analyzes the influence mechanism of clothing brand image on consumer purchase intention from cognitive consistency theory. It obtains the following research conclusions: First, clothing brand image has a significant positive impact on consumer purchase intention, and part of its influence is the path is realized directly, and the other part is realized through two indirect paths of self-consistency perceived quality. Secondly, self-consistency has a significant impact on the relationship between clothing brand image and consumer purchase intention. Part of its influence is realized through direct paths and two indirect paths, self-improvement motivation and self-recognition motivation, and self-recognition motivation is better than self-improvement while the moderating effect of motivation is substantial. Moreover, perceived quality significantly impacts the relationship between clothing brand image and consumer purchase intentions. Part of its influence is realized through direct paths and partly through indirect paths of brand familiarity. Finally, perceived quality and self-consistency have a chain-like intermediary effect in the relationship between clothing brand image and purchase intention. Consumers form perceived quality after receiving clothing brand information and then affect purchase intention through self-consistency.

The influence of self-consistency and perceived quality on the relationship between clothing brand image and consumer purchase intention provides new ideas for brand marketing. Consumers' perception of clothing brand image affects their willingness and initiative to match their self-concept with the brand image and positively affects self-consistency. In the actual consumption process, people purchase products or brands like their personality and image characteristics to match their accurate self-image or ideal self-image and use the explicitness, display, and brand symbolism of clothing to create their ideas. Moreover, in consumer behavior, individuals will try to avoid choosing brands or products that conflict with their views and values or are different, and they tend to choose brands or products with values and connotations that match them. Otherwise, they will fall into cognitive dissonance. Therefore, compared with self-improvement motivation, self-confirmation motivation has a more substantial moderating effect on the process of self-consistency and purchase intention.

Perceived quality is the perceptual knowledge of the brand and belongs to the category of subjective evaluation. Therefore, an optimistic clothing brand image can prompt consumers to make more positive subjective evaluations, that is, to obtain higher perceived quality. As a subjective judgment produced by comprehensive brand information, perceived quality is also a comprehensive evaluation of brand attitude. A positive attitude guides consumers' thoughts and actions and directly affects their purchase intention. In consumer brand image recognition, the perceived quality is often formed through direct perception of image information, and then this information evaluation clue is used to associate self-image with the brand image; thus, self-consistency is produced. When receiving brand image information to produce positive perception quality, to maintain cognitive consistency, and avoid cognitive dissonance, individuals will more actively retrieve and process brand-related information in memory in the process of forming self-consistency.

5.2. Marketing Enlightenment

The research results on the influence of brand image on consumers' purchase intention improve brand building and marketing. A unilateral effect does not form the brand image but results from enterprise and consumers' joint action. Therefore, in the process of brand image shaping, companies should recognize their cultural advantages and brand and product characteristics, comprehensively sort out and integrate the brand information that needs to be transmitted, and identify the differences from other brands according to the core positioning of the brand and make the brand unique. The brand image is shaped according to sex so that consumers can have deep memories in brand image recognition

and quickly review and retrieve brand image information during the consumption process, which triggers a series of positive brand associations.

This research believes that companies should promote clothing brand building and marketing on three levels. First, consumers' perceptions of various clothing brand image dimensions will affect their willingness to buy, and companies should establish a corresponding brand image when formulating brand marketing strategies through the corporate image, product image, brand logo image, publicity image. The shaping and dissemination of service, network, and store images establish a positive brand image. Second, since self-consistency plays a crucial role in the relationship between brand image and consumer purchase intentions, companies should analyze consumer image characteristics, personality preferences, and self-concept in the target market and use this as a basis for targeting. Shaping the brand image and strengthening consumers' enthusiasm to match the brand image's self-concept strengthens the attraction between the brand and consumers invisibly. Finally, because a consistent brand image can achieve more substantial cognitive effects and persistence than a single dimension and enhance consumers' perception of the brand, companies should transmit the same brand core message in different dimensions and communication channels. This creates a consistent brand image to strengthen consumers' clear and complete cognition of the brand image. Delivering the same core brand information through different dimensions and communication channels can help consumers recall relevant brand memories in a competitive market with complex information and numerous choices, promoting purchase intentions.

6. Conclusions

Among other sectors of the textile industry, the clothing and apparel industry heavily rely on consumer purchase intention due to the largest numbers of consumers involved in the sales process. The consumer purchase intention is a complex mixture of several factors that work together to make overall purchase decisions of the buyer. Herein, we aimed to explore several key questions in the clothing industry. It was found that clothing brand image, self-consistency, and perceived quality can significantly affect consumers' purchase intention. Consumers' purchase intention is directly related to clothing brand image, wherein self-consistency and perceived quality play an intermediary role, and it is governed by brand familiarity and self-motivation, including self-improvement and self-confirmation. Therefore, during textile marketing, particularly garment or apparel marketing, these parameters must be analyzed carefully. The results would be of particular interest theoretically for academia exploring textile marketing and practically for textile fashion and clothing brands.

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