THE EFFECT OF CROCS BRAND IMAGE ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN

THE CHINESE MARKET

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Abstract

As Chinese consumers continue Spend more money on branded products, China has become the world's largest consumer market for branded products. At the same time, consumer demand is increasing, and brands that can win higher customer satisfaction will stand out in the market competition. It is an essential factor for brand development to increase customer favorability and satisfaction. New retail gradually becomes mainstream. The current research on products mainly focuses on consumer behavior, consumer psychology, brand influence, etc., and there needs to be more research on specific factors affecting customer satisfaction, as well as more in-depth analysis combining theory and practice.

This study analyzed the variables related to the influence of brand image and value perception on customer satisfaction with the Crocs brand. The research objectives of this paper were to find out the influencing factors of customer satisfaction with the Crocs brand, and to provide suggestions for enhancing the impact of brand image on customer satisfaction with the Crocs brand. The research method of this paper was the quantitative research method. This paper took the customers of the Crocs brand in the Chinese market as the research subject. The questionnaire survey used SPSS to analyze the reliability, validity, and correlation of the data.

Through the analysis, the results showed that:1) Brand Performance has a positive effect on Customer Satisfaction; 2) Company Image has a positive impact on Customer Satisfaction; 3) Brand

Characteristics have a positive effect on Customer Satisfaction; 4) Perceived Value has a positive effect on Customer Satisfaction. The Crocs brand should stress the social value that buyers seek in their product consumption, show the Crocs brand's social status and riches in order to match the customer's expectations and pursuit of brand in terms of social relevance, thus improving the brand's social image. Finally, client perceptions of the Crocs brand's social value may improve, resulting in increased customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Brand Image, Customer Satisfaction, Perceived Brand Value, Crocs Brand
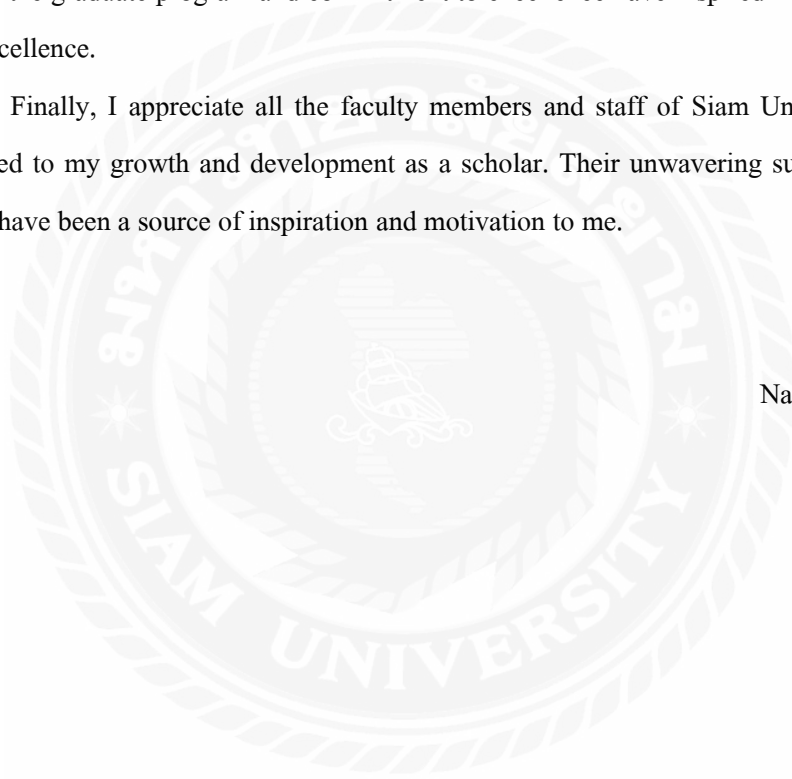
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1.1 Research Background

Against the backdrop of China's sustained economic take-off, the gradual expansion of the middle-class ranks will inevitably lead to increasing consumer demand, capability, and level of the entire country, with rising consumption levels and higher and higher needs for consumer branding. According to the National Statistical Office the retail sales of consumer goods in China in 2018 was 380987 billion RMB, and the total social consumption in China in 2022 was 439733 billion RMB. The Chinese consumer market grows by 5874.6 billion RMB from 2018 to 2022. That's a 15.4% increase over five years. China's consumer market has become a place of global competition as see in Figure1.1. Chinese consumers have become into the consumer group that all brands compete to win. The outlook for China's retail market industry is highly optimistic. Coupled with the development and application of big data technology, the new retail model based on the rise of online sales, the combination of online and offline is becoming more mature, which will inevitably bring new opportunities for the gradual expansion of the product market.

Figure1.1 Total Retail Sales of Consumer Goods in China (billions of RMB)

Source: https://www.ndrc.gov.cn/

Footwear Market Concentration is Climbing. China footwear market in 2017-2022 Crocs elevated about 13%. Sports brands accounted for a large proportion of the top 10 market share in 2022, a total of nine brands on the list, including Nike, Adidas, Crocs, Anta, Li-Ning,

Tebu, market share of 9.5%, 4.75%,4.3%,4.2%,4.2% 3.0%. Nike market share for six consecutive years ranked first, the market position is stable, 9.5% in 2022, the second place is Adidas, market share of 4.7%, the third place is Crocs, market share of 4.3% (Hanghan gcha), as see in Figure1.2.

Figure1.2 Market Share of Top 10 Brands in China Footwear Market, 2017-2022

Source: https://www.hanghangcha.com/industry

Along with the frequent purchase of products by Chinese consumers (Li et al., 2005), they are becoming more knowledgeable about the products, have more expectation, and even become pickier about brands, products, and services. Overall, the performance of product brands has been mixed. However, the brands that are better able to understand consumers and meet their needs promptly, and thus provide them with a good experience and higher levels of customer satisfaction, are the ones that will have more lucrative sales returns and brand loyalty. Between 2018 and 2022, Crocs' annual revenue grew from $10.88 billion to $35.55 billion, maintaining double-digit growth for the fourth consecutive year, even during the epidemic. China has been one of Crocs' core and one of the fast-growing markets. The first-quarter 2023 quarterly report showed that Crocs' revenue in China grew 110% year-on-year. In this case, all kinds of products brand companies follow the trend, adjust the direction of the development of new marketing strategies to improve the brand's operational efficiency and maximize profits to ensure that the brand can be stable and sustainable development of essential factors (Ali et al., 2010).
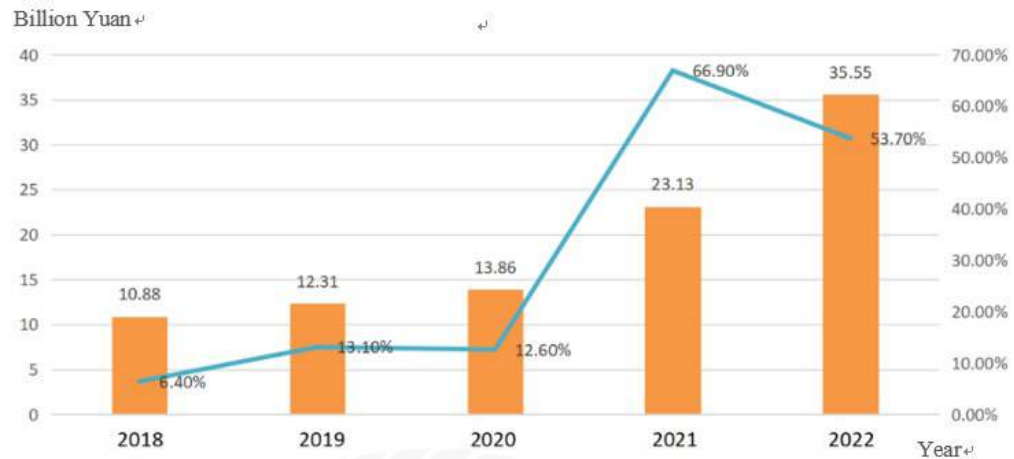
Figure1.3 Crocs' Annual Operating Income From 2018 to 2022 (billions of dollars)

Source: https://www.crocs.cn/

As an influential footwear brand, Crocs has established strong brand awareness worldwide. However, with escalating market competition and rising consumer expectations, Crocs is faced with continuously optimizing its customer relationship management. The brand image is the most significant impact of the Crocs on customer satisfaction. Brand image is a symbol of all aspects of a brand, representing the brand's positioning, culture, and the advantages and disadvantages of the brand compared with other brands, etc. Customers buy a brand of products, in addition to choosing the product itself, but also means that the brand conveys the recognition and love of the culture, as well as through the product to carry out the expression of the attitude of the self and manifestation (Risius et al., 2017). With a high degree of brand image recognition, customers will naturally have more identification and goodwill towards the brand, and customer satisfaction will be enhanced.

Therefore, it is of great theoretical and practical significance to study Crocs' innovative practices in CRM in-depth and explore how these practices affect brand image and customer satisfaction. In an intensely competitive market environment, Crocs' brand image, perceived value and customer satisfaction have become one of the most critical factors for companies to gain and maintain competitive advantages. In such a context, brand performance, company image, brand characteristics, perceived value, customer satisfaction become the core elements of corporate strategy. In an era of changing consumer demands, companies need to innovate to meet individual customer needs and build a positive brand image.

1.2 Research Problems

Competition among brands in the Chinese market is getting fiercer and fiercer, and each brand has high expectations of Chinese consumers. Whether the new season's products will be snapped up or put on the shelf, how the word-of-mouth reviews of the services provided will be spread in the various self-media outlets, the decision of these crucial results for each brand is controlled by the customers. To survive and grow in the Chinese market, Crocs pays attention to and understands customers' needs, keeps close interactions with customers, provides services and products to meet customers' needs, and finally achieves customers' satisfaction with the brand.

In recent years, with the rise of "national tide fever" in China's branded consumer market and the outbreak of the "Xinjiang cotton incident", the market share of international brands has shrunk, and the market share of national brands has been steadily increasing. Among them, the market share of Crocs is growing rapidly, from 2.0% in 2017 to 4.3% in 2022(https://www.crocs.cn/). In terms of purchase channels, offline physical stores and e-commerce platforms are the most popular purchase methods for consumers. Meanwhile, several factors such as brand performance, company image, brand characteristics, perceived value will affect consumers' purchase intention. The data shows that 61.4% of consumers are most concerned about comfort and 61.0% are concerned about style when purchasing a brand (https://www.hanghangcha.com/industry). In the environment of fierce competition in the industry, Crocs should accelerate its research strength, and constantly innovate and improve the process to meet consumer demand. However, there is a situation of increasing consumer complaints and decreasing brand recognition.

If Crocs does not gain customer satisfaction, getting a foothold in the Chinese market will not be easy. Therefore, it is essential to investigate and analyze the factors that can affect customer satisfaction and find the basis from the result data, to find the gap and deficiency between Crocs and customer satisfaction, and make the corresponding strategy, and ultimately achieve the purpose of improving the customer satisfaction of Crocs brand, and enhance its competitiveness in the Chinese market. Therefore, the main research questions include:

(1) What are the influencing factors influencing customer satisfaction with the Crocs brand?

(2) How to enhance the impact of the brand image and perceived value on customer satisfaction with the Crocs brand?

1.3 Research Objectives

As China's economy grows, Chinese consumers have become increasingly rational in their consumption. These are signs that China's consumer market is maturing. These consumers increasingly demand higher quality of life and spiritual pursuits. Consumers' experience from understanding the product and trying it out to the degree of demand fulfillment and subsequent service follow-up will directly generate their evaluation and preference for the brand, ultimately affecting customer satisfaction. Under the background of the new retail model maturing (Godfray et al., 2010), global product brands have settled in China, and it is necessary to conduct in-depth research on what aspects of their customer satisfaction in China, an increasingly mature and competitive consumer market, have seen new situations and changes. The results of this study will be of practical significance in terms of stimulating China's economic growth and promoting the development of the market in a healthy direction. At the same time, it also serves as an essential reference for other Chinese consumer brands struggling to make a breakthrough in the new market situation. The main research objectives of this paper are:

(1) To determine the influencing factors of customer satisfaction with the Crocs brand.

(2) To provide suggestions for enhancing the impact of brand image and perceived value on customer satisfaction with the Crocs brand.

1.4 Research Scope

The scope of the study is the customers of the Crocs brand in the Chinese consumer market. This paper takes the customers of the Crocs brand in the Chinese consumer market as the research object. The research subjects must have purchased Crocs brand products and experienced Crocs brand products and belong to the Chinese consumer market. The research subjects must have used at least one Crocs brand product. Customers who have purchased or experienced Crocs products outside the Chinese market will not be included in the study. The research includes gender, age, education, income, and other related variables.

1.5 Research Significance

China's consumer market and consumers are among the strongest in the world regarding purchasing power and demand. In contrast to these strong backgrounds, China's product market has only developed in the last decade. However, the product market in Europe and other countries has experienced more than a hundred years of gradual development and precipitation, so people's understanding and knowledge of branded products and the existing market development may not be enough to match, which will inevitably lead to differences in consumer behavior and psychological needs. At the same time, China's growth indicators have been gradually slowed down from the previous rapid development into the medium-high speed stage; the factors affecting customer satisfaction at this stage will change. Based on the perspective of China's existing market state, the choice of branded products for the market development of a more appropriate strategy to promote the economy's healthy development and enhance the industry's employment rate will help. At the same time, the market for the various brands of products in the future development of China can also find a way forward. China can also find practical guidance for the future development path of each branded market product in China.

Another level of practical significance is through the Crocs brand as an example of a customer satisfaction survey to find the current market factors affecting customer satisfaction of the Crocs brand for the brand's daily operation, management, and brand planning to provide evidence-based data description. Thus, we can finally find out the essential points of the Crocs brand to improve customer satisfaction and improve the overall customer satisfaction of the Crocs brand so that the customers of the Crocs brand can enjoy a more satisfactory shopping experience. At the same time, it is hoped that the study can be extended to product brands to provide practical strategies and suggestions for improving customer satisfaction for Crocs brands.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review aims to organize the literature related to brand image, perceived value, and customer satisfaction based on customer satisfaction theory and customer management theory. Based on the literature review, the concepts and dimensions of brand image and the concept of customer satisfaction are explained. A conceptual model for this study, using the analysis and conclusions of previous research and determining the relationship between variables is concluded.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Brand Image

As we all know, the influence of brand image on consumers' purchasing behavior is not as immediate as that of marketing activities but is a long-term process, so the research on brand image aims to clarify the extent of brand image's influence on consumers' purchasing behavior over a long period. On the other hand, from the point of view of enterprise management, research on brand image is an essential theoretical basis for enterprises to carry out brand marketing (Seo, 2016).

The concept of brand image needs to be unified, and scholars mainly focus on the comprehensive definition from the perspective of consumer perception. Mazloomi et al. (2015) pointed out that brand image is the consumer's subjective perception of the brand. The content of the perception includes attributes related to a specific brand and its related associations, and Lee et al. (2000) pointed out that the brand image is the associations and memories in the consumer's mind. The associations contain the brand and its related associations. Emari (2012) states that brand image is an association in the consumer's mind that is related to the brand, and the associations include brand attributes, brand attitudes, and brand benefits. Based on his endorsement of the brand association interpretation, he suggests that brand associations include brand knowledge and brand perspectives (Burmann et al., 2007), which can cause cognitive changes in consumers and enhance positive attitudes and consumer preferences for the brand.

In contrast to the brand association theory, Emari (2012) argues that brand image is the consumer's overall impression or perception of a brand. Based on the definitional explanations of subjective perception, association, and impression, it can be found that brand image is an integral part of the consumer's information processing process of a brand (Gaski, 2016). At the same time, since brand image is a subjective perception, brand image is easily influenced by consumers' subjective judgment (Lee et al., 2000). Emari (2012), on the other hand, from the perspective of brand composition, believes that brand image is a kind of symbol that contains product attributes and economic and social factors. Mazloomi et al. (2015), from the perspective of business management, look at the functional, operational, and symbolic elements to construct the brand image dimension, aiming to fully utilize the positive impact of brand image on company operations.

2.2.2 Brand Image Dimensions

Regarding the division of brand image dimensions, scholars have different views, but the consensus is that "brand image is complex and contains a variety of elements of different natures ."Salciuviene et al. (2007) believe that the content of consumers' perception of the brand, on the one hand, contains the reflection of the objective existence of the product qualities, technological level, and the current situation of the enterprise; on the other hand, contains the long-term advertising and marketing campaigns, and on the other hand, contains the positive influence of the brand image on the company's operation. Salciuviene et al. (2007) believe that consumers' perception of a brand includes the reflection of the objective existence of product characteristics, technological level, and the status quo of the company on the one hand and the reflection of the brand's conceptual propositions on the long-term advertising and marketing campaigns on the other hand and that the brand image is divided into three dimensions, namely, product functions, brand symbols, and consumer experience. Van Hoye et al. (2012) suggest that there are soft and complex attributes of brand image and divide brand image into three dimensions: user image, product (service) image, and company image. Su & Reynolds (2017) divide the brand image into three dimensions: product attributes, company image, and product (service) image. Dimensions: product attributes, corporate image, and brand characteristics. In his model, he affirms the existence of humanized features in brand image and believes that brand

characteristics aims to help consumers express themselves better. Academics have generally recognized the above brand image model, significantly inspiring latecomers in brand image research.

From the above combined, the concept of brand image tends to be defined comprehensively: brand image is consumers' overall perception and view of the brand. The comprehensive characteristics of this concept is well reflected in the division of brand image dimensions, and the concept includes both the content of product-service-related attributes directly related to consumer interests and non-product-service-related attributes (Su & Reynolds, 2017). The brand's non-product service-related attributes (soft attributes) include the brand's emotional characteristics. However, it does not bring consumers any actual benefits; it becomes an essential basis for consumers to choose the brand. The emotional characteristics accepted by consumers will increase the tendency of consumers to choose the brand. After the hard and soft attributes of brand image are generally accepted in the academic world, scholars have started the research on the subdivision of brand image dimensions and made different dimensions of brand image according to the characteristics of their respective industries and research purposes (Van Hoye et al., 2012).

(1) Brand Performance

"Brand Performance" in brand identity refers to how well a brand performs and executes in key business areas. Brand Performance encompasses how well a brand performs in terms of the quality of its products or services. This involves not only the performance and durability of the product itself, but also exceeding customer expectations and ensuring that the product or service excels in key areas. Brand innovativeness assesses the brand's ability to introduce new products, services, or solutions. Innovative performance is critical to keep the brand competitive and attractive to consumers (Seo, 2016). In terms of customer service this relates to the efficiency and quality of the brand in providing customer service. This includes pre-sales inquiries, post-sales support, and the speed and effectiveness of problem resolution. Brand social responsibility and sustainability practices are becoming increasingly important to the modern consumer. Brand Performance includes the performance of the brand in terms of environmental, social responsibility, etc. The brand's share of the market and competitive position are also part of assessing Brand Performance (Risius et al., 2017). This reflects the brand's

position and competitive advantage in the market in which it operates. Overall, Brand Performance looks at the overall performance of a brand in key areas, and clients often take these aspects into account to form a comprehensive assessment of the brand.

(2) Company Image

"Company Image" is a key component of brand identity and relates to the overall impression that consumers have of the company as a whole. The concept does not only focus on products and services, but also considers the company's performance, values, culture and social responsibility at a broader level. Company Image is also influenced by the leadership of the company, including factors such as the leader's decision-making style, corporate governance, and employee loyalty to the company. Company image reflects consumers' overall view of a company, including impressions of its business operations, leadership, employees and company culture. This extends beyond products and services to the company's overall performance in society and industry (Van Hoye et al., 2012). Company image encompasses the company's core values and culture. This includes the company's mission, vision, and the work environment within the company. Consumers may be more inclined to support companies whose values match theirs. Company image is also related to a company's performance in terms of social responsibility. Consumers are increasingly concerned about a company's contribution to society, which directly affects their image of the company. A company's reputation is a key component of a company's image. This includes the company's reputation in the industry, the quality of its products and services, and employee relations. A positive reputation helps consumers build trust in the company (Vanitha, 2020). Overall, company image is a broad and deep concept that encompasses many aspects of consumer perceptions and emotions about a company. A successful company image helps build trust and connection with consumers, which in turn influences their purchasing decisions and loyalty.

(3) Brand Characteristics

"Brand Characteristics" refers to the personality, attributes and values assigned to a brand. This concept relates to the emotional connection between the brand and the consumer, as well as the uniqueness that the brand conveys in the marketplace. Brand characteristics can be thought of as the personality of the brand, like a living entity. This may be expressed in the brand's voice, tone, attitude and behavior. For example, some brands may be given a youthful,

energetic personality, while others may emphasize stability and tradition. Brand personality also involves the brand's core values and belief system (Nelson, 2019). This reflects the principles the brand stands for and its stance on issues such as society and the environment. Consumers may be more inclined to associate with brands that are aligned with their personal values. Through brand personality, companies strive to create an emotional connection in the minds of consumers. Expressions of brand personality, such as characteristics in advertisements and brand stories, can help consumers build an emotional identification with the brand. Brand characteristics is part of brand differentiation. In a competitive market, some unique and clear brand characteristics can help a brand stand out in the minds of consumers (Lippa & Sanderson, 2013). Overall, Brand Characteristics helps to give uniqueness to a brand, builds an emotional connection with consumers, and improves the brand's recognizability in the marketplace. This element of brand characteristics and emotional connection helps to shape the deeper perception of the brand by consumers.

2.2.3 Perceived Value

Zeithaml et al. (1988) define perceived Value as the consumer's judgment of a particular commodity's overall superiority or excellence. This concept can be understood in four ways: first, perceived Value, as a subjective attitude, differs from the objective and actual product quality. It may be higher or lower than the actual quality. Second, it is an abstract, subjective perception that does not involve a specific product attribute. Third, it is a comprehensive, not an attitude evaluation in a specific context. Fourth, it significantly impacts consumers' final purchase decisions (Zeithaml et al., 1988).

Scholars' research on perceived Value can be categorized into "pre-experience" and "post-experience". In "pre-experience," the respondents have not experienced the product or service. For example, a questionnaire survey using a virtual brand name was conducted to study the relationship between the brand name and the perceived Value (Estenne et al., 2002). "Post-experience," the survey respondents have experienced participation in the product or service. Scholars have taken tourists who have already had the experience of traveling to destinations as the survey object and studied the relationship between the brand cognitive dimension of brand image and perceived Value (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Customer perceived value is the perception of

the product's benefits and benefits and losses. The customer's perceived Value is measured in terms of multiple aspects of the product, which may include additional services to the product itself or social factors such as economic technology. Customer perceived value can be the perception of a particular aspect of the product, the perception of the product's service, the perception of the product's quality, and so on (Lippa & Sanderson, 2013).

From the above, perceived Value is the consumer's judgment of a particular good's overall superiority or excellence. As a subjective judgment, it is determined to be different from the actual quality of the product (Nelson, 2019), so it may be higher or lower than the actual quality. The research on perceived Value can be divided into pre-experience perception (no first-hand experience of experiencing the product) and post-experience perception (experience of experiencing the product first-hand). The relationship between the influence of brand image and customer satisfaction will be more precise so that this study will measure the influence of perceived value on customer satisfaction as a variable (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

2.2.4 Customer Satisfaction

In 1999, Oliver put forward the "Expectation Inconsistency Model" with the background of behavioral and psychological theories, which explains the formation process of customer satisfaction: Consumers will form a confident expectation of benefits for the product before purchasing it, and after purchasing the product, they will compare and contrast the actual benefits of the product with the expected benefits before purchasing it, and then compare the "difference" with the "difference" (Oliver, 1999). After the purchase of the product is the actual benefits of the product and the benefits expected before the purchase of the contrast, the contrast "poor" can be understood as "inconsistency," and then the consumer judgment of this "inconsistency," according to the degree of "inconsistency" to form a different According to the degree of "inconsistency" to form a different customer satisfaction, such as the actual benefits do not meet the expected benefits, customer satisfaction will be negative, i.e., dissatisfaction. Thus, customer satisfaction can be defined as the emotional attitude of pleasure or disappointment formed by consumers through the comparison of the expected benefits of the product before consumption and the actual benefits of the product obtained after consumption.

However, some scholars have questions about this model. The relevant literature found that customer satisfaction is not only a knowledge of the product but also a cognitive process. In this "process," cognition will also be affected by the emotional impact. Oliver's model needs to consider the impact of changes in consumers' emotional factors in this process, so he believes that Oliver's expectation inconsistency model needs to explain the formation process of customer satisfaction fully. Scholars have classified and refined satisfaction to explore the guiding effect of customer satisfaction on business operations. Scholars divide the "transaction" link from the whole process of customer satisfaction formation and classify customer satisfaction into transaction-oriented customer satisfaction and cumulative customer satisfaction (Grant, 1991), and others believe that satisfaction assessment should be carried out at the end of each specific link of the consumption process to obtain several transient satisfaction results, as well as overall satisfaction. Results, as well as overall satisfaction measurements, to get comprehensive and integrated customer satisfaction (Max, 1995).

Customer satisfaction is an emotional attitude of pleasure or disappointment formed by consumers by comparing the expected benefits of the product before consumption and the actual benefits obtained after consumption, which is an emotional reflection. Whether transactional-oriented customer satisfaction or transient customer satisfaction is aimed at assessing the satisfaction of a specific part of the entire consumption process, is an effort to refine the assessment of satisfaction, but the essence of the concept of satisfaction is still used, the use of the "expectation inconsistency model" (Oliver, 1999) to assess the entire process of consumption of a specific service or link to achieve "satisfaction" or not (Max, 1995). The present study tends to adopt a comprehensive concept. In this study, we adopt the concept of comprehensiveness and interpret customer satisfaction as the overall evaluation of a particular product or service based on the customer's previous purchasing and experiencing experiences with that product or service.

2.3 Theory Review

2.3.1 Customer Satisfaction Theory

Customer satisfaction theory refers to the overall evaluation of a particular product and service made by customers based on their previous purchasing and experiencing experiences with that product and service (Bruhn & Grund, 2000). In the fierce market competitors, obtaining

customer satisfaction is the goal that enterprises have been striving for because a high level of wide-ranging customer satisfaction means market recognition, which represents a continuous and stable sales revenue so that enterprises have the possibility of continuous operation and development. Therefore, it is significant to conduct scientific measurement and evaluation of customer satisfaction to provide a reference basis for improving customer satisfaction. In the efforts of customer satisfaction research, many related satisfaction assessment models exist. The most representative satisfaction assessment models are the United States customer satisfaction and the European models.

(1) American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) Model

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) measures customer satisfaction across various industries in the United States. It assesses and reports on the satisfaction levels of consumers with products and services provided by different companies. Based on the Swedish satisfaction model, while including customer expectations, customer complaints, customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, and perceived Value, the American (ACSI) model adds perceived quality factors (Fornell et al., 1996), aiming at distinguishing quality from Value and analyzing the satisfaction formation path in a more detailed way. The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) was developed by researchers Claes Fornell and Forrest V. Morgeson III at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business.

The ACSI model provides a more nuanced division of the influences on satisfaction. The introduction of the perceived quality aspect of perceived product or service quality further distinguishes between the quality and value components of satisfaction. Also in distinguishing between quality and value, by incorporating perceived quality factors into the model, ACSI aims to distinguish more clearly the relationship between the quality of a product or service and the value it provides. On the other hand, satisfaction formation path analysis, the ACSI model aims to analyze in more detail the path of customer satisfaction formation, including the interrelationships between customer expectations, perceived quality, complaints, loyalty and other factors in the formation of satisfaction. By adding the perceived quality factor, the ACSI model is committed to considering quality and value more comprehensively in satisfaction research to provide a more detailed and accurate analysis of the satisfaction formation path.
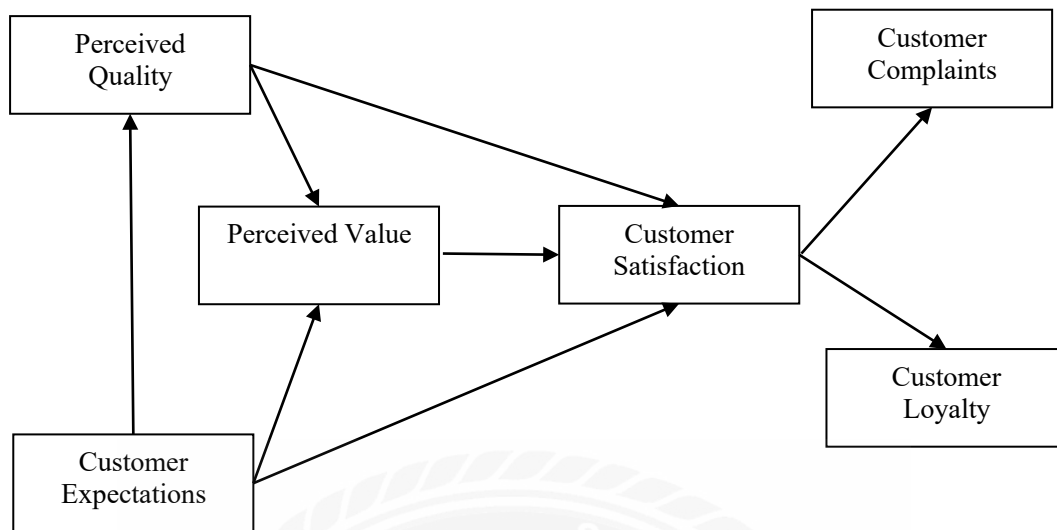
Figure2.1 United States (ACSI) Model

Source: Fornell, C., Johnson, M. D., Anderson, E. W., Cha, J., & Bryant, B. E. (1996). The American Customer Satisfaction Index: Nature, Purpose, and Findings.

    (2) European Customer Satisfaction Index (ESCI) Model

European countries and organizations may have their own distinct models or indices for measuring customer satisfaction. The model adds the brand image factor as the antecedent variable of perceived Value, which makes the brand image become part of the satisfaction research; on the other hand, the model divides the perceived quality into dimensions, including hardware perceived quality and software perceived quality, which represent the different perceptions of customers on products and services, respectively (Batista-Foguet et al., 2015).

The European Customer Satisfaction Index (ESCI) model index typically involves multiple factors, including product quality, service levels, and brand image, to provide a comprehensive assessment of the overall customer experience. When evaluating a customer satisfaction index, three key factors generally need to be considered: product quality, service level and brand image. Product quality relates to the design, manufacture, and performance of the product. This includes the reliability, durability, functionality, and conformity of the product. Customers typically have expectations about the performance and durability of the products they purchase, and whether these expectations are met will have a direct impact on customer satisfaction with the product. Service level relates to the services that customers receive during the purchase and use process. This includes pre-sales services (e.g., counseling and purchasing process), after-sales services (e.g., warranty, repair, and customer support), and the overall service

experience. Customers expect prompt and effective support when they need it, so the level of service is critical to customer satisfaction. Brand image covers the overall impression that customers have of a company or product brand. This includes the brand's reputation, credibility, values, and the emotional connection established with the customer. A brand image that is positive, honest, and aligned with customers' values usually increases customers' trust in the company and its products, which in turn affects their level of satisfaction.
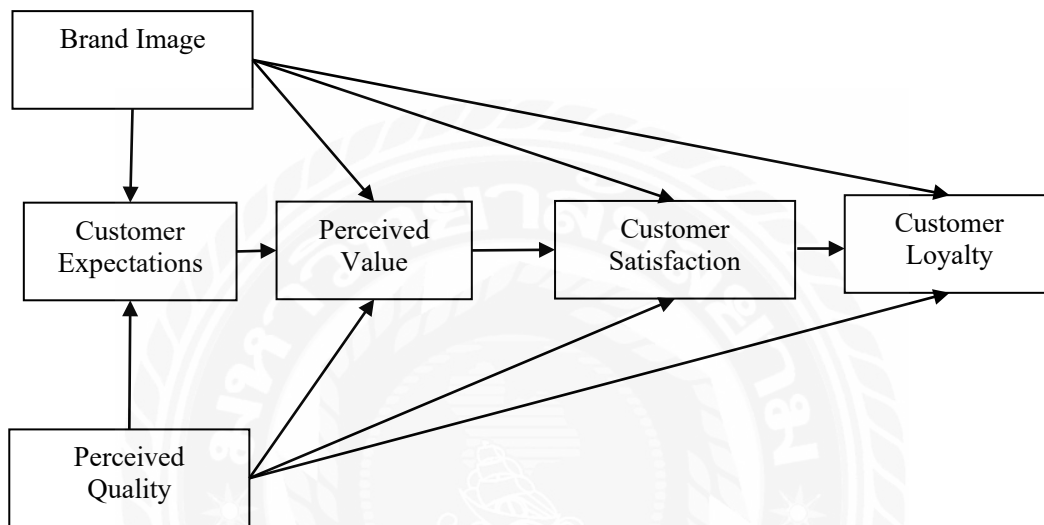
Figure2.2 European (ESCI) Model

Source: Batista-Foguet, J. M., Ferrer-Rosell, B., Serlavós, R., Coenders, G., & Boyatzis, R. E. (2015). An Alternative Approach to Analyze Ipsative Data. Revisiting Experiential Learning Theory

2.3.2 Customer Relationship Management Theory

"For a business, the core of the business objective is to maximize the acquisition and retention of customers." Customer Relationship Management, Customer Relationship Management (CRM). Business-type definition, proposed by Gartner Group and IBM.CRM is a business strategy or tactic of an enterprise, mainly based on customer resources, using information technology to redesign the enterprise's business functions to improve internal and external management (Vanitha, 2020). To attract new customers, maintain existing customers, and thus improve the ultimate economic efficiency of the enterprise and the advantage in the market competition, mainly through the enhancement of customer service, product performance, customer value, and customer satisfaction, and ultimately to achieve the brand with the customer

to establish a long-term, stable, and trusting relationship. This is defined in terms of the entire customer lifecycle and assumes the impact of other factors.

NCR Corporation (a global leader in data mining technology) and Hurwitz & Associates (a leading global business analyst firm) offer an alternative view of the "technology-based definition." According to this view, the primary purpose of CRM is to improve business processes related to customer relationships, such as selling products, providing customer service, marketing strategies, and support, while striving to automate the processes (Sinisalo & Karjaluoto, 2017). CRM is a set of processes that includes software and technology to meet the requirements of new markets and channels by increasing revenues, reducing sales cycles, and compressing the cost of sales, ultimately increasing customer value, customer satisfaction, and loyalty.

Summarizing the results of the above studies, the definition of CRM has a different conclusion: CRM is a kind of modern enterprise management software and technology that is a way for enterprises to improve their core competitiveness. It combines sales automation with other technologies to achieve marketing and service coordination between the enterprise and its customers. It can provide customers with a more personalized and high-quality service experience (Sinisalo & Karjaluoto, 2017). This enables the company to continuously recruit new customers, retain and develop existing customers, and increase the number of customers who repeatedly consume and become loyal customers, ultimately increasing the company's market share.

2.4 Research Relevant

Academic research on the relationship between brand image, perceived quality, and customer satisfaction is relatively early, involving more types of industries, both product brands and service brands, of which the service brand includes the tourism brand. The research of brand image was firstly based on the physical product as the research object, and due to the development of the service industry, it was introduced into the discussion of service brands in the later stage.

Andreasen researched product brand image and found that brand image significantly and positively affects customer satisfaction (Andreasen, 2002). Andreasen also confirmed that the company image dimension of brand image directly affects customer satisfaction. Lippa &

Sanderson (2013) took a shopping store as the object of study to explore the influence of overall store image on customer satisfaction and concluded that overall store image directly affects customer satisfaction by dividing overall store image into four dimensions: store infrastructure, store comprehensive services, convenience, and store marketing activities. Satisfaction.

Zeithaml (1988) suggested that qualities that are not attributes of the product itself affect consumers' perceived quality of the product, such as the style of advertising, the product's price, the name of the brand, etc. Andreasen et al. (2002), in exploring the applicability of the product brand image theory to service brands, found that the company image dimension of the service brand image significantly and positively affects the perceived quality of the service product. Venkatesh et al. (2012) found that the origin column on wine labels indicating that the grapes are from a premium source enhances consumers' perceived quality of the wine. This leads to the conclusion that the brand image of the product's origin positively influences consumers' perceived quality.

Max (1995) pointed out that perceived quality, rather than quality itself, is a critical factor in customer satisfaction and investigated the impact of objective quality on perceived quality. As the subject of their study, consulting service brands empirically analyzed that consulting services have multiple dimensions of perceived quality and a direct impact on customer satisfaction (Van Hoye et al., 2012). The service brand bank was the subject of their study, and they concluded that the brand image of the product's origin positively affects consumers' perceived quality (Salciuviene et al., 2007). The service brand bank, as the research object, through empirical analysis, concluded that the bank brand image significantly positively affects the perceived quality, and also through the perceived quality significantly positively affects customer satisfaction (Lee et al., 2000). The research object to explore the relationship between the three concluded that the perceived quality of existence has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

This study used the ACSI model as a reference and, at the same time, considered the current business situation of the Crocs brand, the importance of customer satisfaction, and the characteristics of the brand's product industry to construct a customer satisfaction model for the

brand. Brand image and perceived value are essential factors affecting customer satisfaction. However, the specificity of branded products lies in the fact that it is not simply selling the product to the customer. However, interacting with the customer in selling the product and after-sales service are also essential. At the same time, based on the characteristics of branded products, the perceived value of branded products customers was divided. The correlation between each variable is clarified through theoretical analysis and model construction, and finally, the conceptual model is determined, see Figure 2.3.
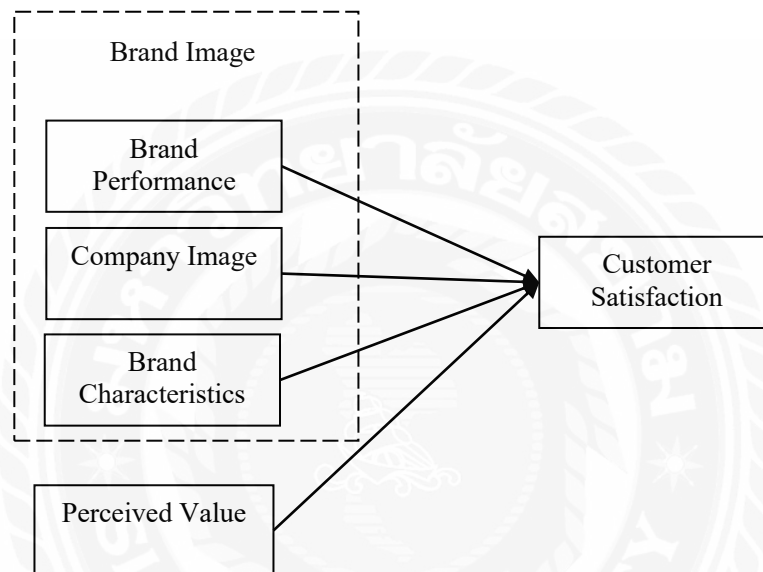

Figure 2.3 Conceptual Framework

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study summarizes the variables related to the influence of brand image and perceived brand value on customer satisfaction of the Crocs brand. The main research variables in this study are Brand Image, Perceived Value, and Customer Satisfaction. Brand Image includes three dimensions: Brand Performance, Company Image, and Brand Characteristics. During the literature review process, it was found that researchers classified each variable's dimension differently because of different research subjects and different research contexts. This study adopted the quantitative research method by using a questionnaire to study the customers of the Crocs brand in the Chinese consumer market. The questionnaire is divided into two parts. One part is the basic information of the survey sample, which is a control variable. The first part mainly includes the gender, income, and education level of the respondents. The second part of the survey is about the variables of the research hypothesis. Among them are brand performance, company image, brand characteristics, Perceived Value, and Customer Satisfaction, with three items for each variable totaling 15. Likert scale of five levels is used as the research scale. The questionnaires will be surveyed separately, the data from the sample survey will be collected and counted, and the study's conclusions will be summarized.

3.2 Research Design

The quantitative research method was used in this study. Quantitative research using the questionnaire survey method and the use of SPSS statistical analysis of the questionnaire analyze the reliability and validity of the questionnaire to determine the reliability and validity to meet the standard after using correlation analysis to determine the impact of customer satisfaction factors. In this paper, we choose the appropriate scale as a reference to provide a specific basis for the questionnaire design. This study investigates brand performance, company image, brand characteristics, perceived value, and customer satisfaction through reading and combing the literature. The scale of this paper has a total of 15 items, using a five-point Likert scale with a score of 1-5, which represents strongly disagree, disagree, generally, agree, and strongly agree. The higher the score represents, the more agreement with the item.

Table 3.1 Customer Satisfaction Measurement Items

Variable	Measurement item	NO.
Brand Perfor-mance	1. The Crocs brand offers high-quality products and services.	QS1
	2. Crocs products and services are very innovative.	QS2
	3. Crocs products and services are praction.	QS3
Company Image	4. Crocs brands are socially responsible.	QS4
	5. Crocs brand is honest and keeps its promises to its customers.	QS5
	6. Crocs brand company is large and robust.	QS6
Brand Character-istics	7. The Crocs brand is very stylish and classy.	QS7
	8. The Crocs brand is dynamic.	QS8
	9. The Crocs brand is a trustworthy partner.	QS9
Perceived Value	10. Good after-sales service when purchasing Crocs products	QS10
	11. there is an intimate relationship with the owners of Crocs-branded products.	QS11
	12. I will follow and share the Crocs brand with my friends.	QS12
Customer Satis-faction	13. I am overall delighted after using Crocs brand products.	QS13
	14. Crocs brand products were able to meet my level of expectation.	QS14
	15. I am more satisfied with Crocs brand products than similar brands.	QS15

3.3 Hypothesis

This study combined the related research literature with customer satisfaction theory and customer relationship management theory to sort out the factors influencing customer satisfaction. A brand can only ensure its image can stand out among many competing brands if it is of value to consumers. Therefore, enterprises need to pay more attention to consumers' perceived Value in this process and continuously optimize and improve. In the early stage of consumer choice of products, the product's brand image will already have an impact on the final purchase. With the gradual communication and sharing with customers, the brand's image is gradually established, developed, and ultimately clearly determined. When customers have a

favorable impression or expectation of the brand, this attitude is ultimately reflected in the customer's overall satisfaction. Perceived product quality is a customer's inner subjective evaluation or judgment, which is based on the use of the product or the enjoyment of the service after the personal experience; it is only a subjective, relative judgment, not necessarily the feedback of the objective facts, susceptible to the influence of the consumer's own shopping experience and emotions and other factors, which leads to the perceived value of different. The following hypotheses are proposed based on combing, see Figure 3.1:

H1: Brand Performance has a positive influence on Customer Satisfaction.

H2: Company Image has a positive influence on Customer Satisfaction.

H3: Brand Characteristics have a positive effect on Customer Satisfaction.

H4: Perceived Value has a positive effect on Customer Satisfaction.
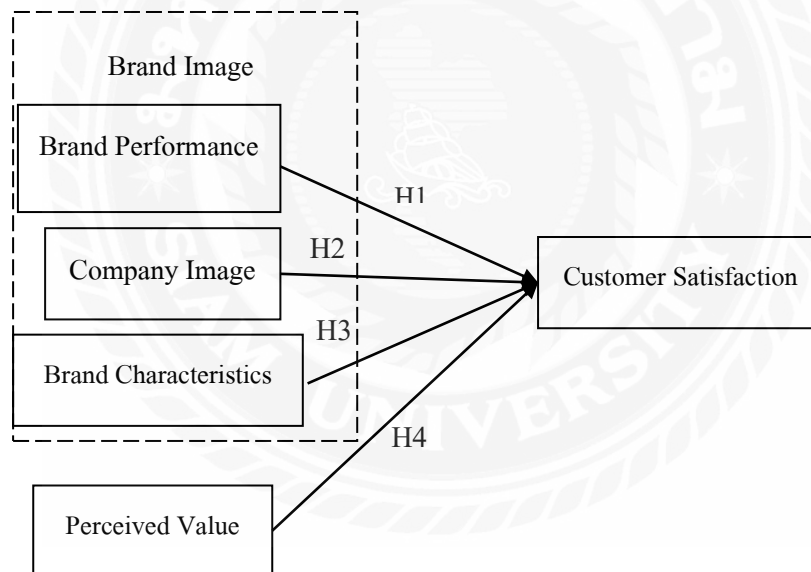

Figure 3.1 Hypotheses

3.4 Population and Sampling

This study focuses on the impact of brand image and perceived brand value of the Crocs brand on customer satisfaction. The main object of the study is the customers of the Crocs brand in the Chinese consumer market. For this study, the primary research method is the random sampling method.

$$n = \frac{s^2 * p^2}{E}$$

In the formula (Yamane, 1973), n represents the sample size, s Value for the standard normal distribution of the quartile, for the confidence level generally takes the Value of 95%, currently Z = 1.96. p for the sample standard deviation, the sample standard deviation of the estimated value of the standard deviation of the general use of 0.5, to determine the error tolerance E (i.e., the maximum permissible value of the difference between the sample mean and the overall mean), E = 0.05. Calculation of the results obtained for the 398 samples. For the random sampling method, an online survey will be conducted using Wenjuanxing platform website for questionnaire distribution, and the sample will be drawn randomly from the overall population.

3.5 Data Collection

The questionnaire collection for this study was done from May 1, 2023, to August 1, 2023. This is because the consumption of Crocs brand products is currently promoted in China. To obtain more realistic and representative data, the target population of this study was chosen to be customers who have successfully purchased from Crocs brand stores in China to have a comprehensive understanding of the actual situation. This study uses the Wenjuanxing platform website, adopting the online research method to obtain questionnaire data.

In this study, 450 questionnaires were distributed, and three criteria were established to determine whether the questionnaire was valid. First, according to the scale to screen the questions, the questionnaire that did not select the specified answers is invalid. Second, questionnaires that take less than 30 seconds to fill out. Third, questionnaires with almost the same score for each question. According to the above three criteria, 420 valid questionnaires were collected, and 30 invalid questionnaires were deleted, resulting in a valid questionnaire rate of 93.3%.

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Reliability

Reliability can also be referred to as the extent to which consistent results can be obtained when the same measured object is tested repeatedly with the same method. The Value of Cronbach's Alpha is an important index to test the reliability of a questionnaire, and the criterion

that represents the reliability of a questionnaire is the high value of Cronbach's Alpha. Taking SPSS as the analyzing software tool of this study, the following table shows that the Cronbach's Alpha value of the overall scale is 0.947, and comparing the Cronbach's Alpha value of each subscale in detail, all of them are greater than 0.80, which means that the reliability is high.

Table 3.2 Variable Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's α	Item
Brand Performance	0.854	3
Company Image	0.871	3
Brand Characteristics	0.898	3
Perceived Value	0.897	3
Customer Satisfaction	0.863	3
Total	0.947	15

3.6.2 Validity

Validity is the extent to which the items of the response scale accurately and comprehensively measure the variables. The validity analysis was conducted to evaluate the accuracy of the content presentation of the questionnaire, i.e., to analyze whether the descriptive text of the items accurately expresses the conceptual image of the study variables and subdivided dimensions. Validity analysis can test the rationality of the design of the items and is a judgment of the validity of the data collected by the questionnaire. There are various ways of validity analysis, content validity, and structural validity, and the purpose of data analysis determines their applicability. In this study, factor analysis was used for the structural validity test, and valid male factors were extracted by the principal component analysis method. The main evaluation indexes were KMO value (simple correlation coefficient and partial correlation coefficient test), Bartlett's spherical test (variable independence test), and cumulative contribution rate and factor loading.

The KMO value and Bartlett's Spherical Test are used together to determine whether the data are suitable for factor analysis. When the KMO value is closer to 1, it indicates that the stronger the correlation between the variables, the more suitable the factor analysis method is, and scholars generally agree that when the KMO is ≥ 0.7, the effect of factor analysis is better. At

the same time, when the significance of Bartlett's test of sphericity (Sig) < 0.05 indicates a correlation between the original variables, public factor extraction can be carried out.

(1) Brand Image

Brand Image was subjected to KMO value and Bartlett's spherical test. Table 3.3 shows that the KMO value of Brand Image is 0.893 (>0.7), and the Sig value of Bartlett's spherical test is 0.000, so it is in line with the conditions of factor analysis.

Table 3.3 Brand Image KMO and Bartlett's Spherical Tests

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.893
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2533.454
	df	36
	Sig.	0.000

After principal component analysis, three common factors were extracted from the nine interrogative items of brand image. Brand performance, company image, brand characteristics rotated sum of squares loadings contributed 77.402% (shown in Table 3.4),79.540% (shown in Table 3.5),83.013% (shown in Table 3.6), (>50%), indicating that the three extracted common factors extracted the information of the original variables more adequately and explained 60.921% of the overall variance, which is in line with the acceptable level. The factor rotation matrix table showed that each of the original variables had loadings greater than 0.5 on the common factors, and there were no double factors with high loadings on both factors. The original variables were aggregated in a manner consistent with the theoretical conceptualization. According to the above analysis, this part of the scale has good construct validity.

Table 3.4 Brand Performance Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.322	77.402	77.402	2.322	77.402	77.402
2	0.346	11.521	88.923			
3	0.332	11.077	100.000			

Table 3.5 Company Image Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.386	79.540	79.540	2.386	79.540	79.540
2	0.377	12.582	92.123			
3	0.236	7.877	100.000			

Table 3.6 Brand Characteristics Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.490	83.014	83.014	2.490	83.014	83.014
2	0.296	9.878	92.892			
3	0.213	7.108	100.000			

(2) Perceived Value

Perceived Value was subjected to KMO value and Bartlett's Spherical Test. Table 3.7 shows that the KMO value of Perceived Value is 0.749 (>0.7), and the Sig value of Bartlett's Spherical Test is 0.000, so it aligns with the conditions of factor analysis.

Table 3.7 Perceived Value KMO and Bartlett's Spherical Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.749
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	763.011
	df	3
	Sig.	0.000

Upon principal component analysis, the three interrogative items of Perceived Value extracted one common factor with a rotated sum of squares loading contribution of 82.970% (shown in Table 3.8) (>50%), indicating that the one extracted common factor extracted the

information of the original variable more adequately, explaining 82.970% of the overall variance, which is in line with the acceptable level. It indicates that this part of the scale possesses good construct validity.

Table 3.8 Perceived Value Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.489	82.970	82.970	2.489	82.970	82.970
2	0.283	9.426	92.396			
3	0.228	7.604	100.000			

(3) Customer Satisfaction

Customer Satisfaction is subjected to the KMO value and Bartlett's Spherical Test. Table 3.9 shows that the KMO value of Customer Satisfaction is 0.749 (>0.7), and the Sig value of Bartlett's Spherical Test is 0.000, so it is in line with the conditions of factor analysis.

Table 3.9 Customer Satisfaction KMO and Bartlett's Ball Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.735
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	590.181
	df	3
	Sig.	0.000

After principal component analysis, one common factor was extracted from the three interrogative items of Customer Satisfaction. Its rotated sum-of-squares loaded contribution amounted to 78.492% (>50%), indicating that the one extracted common factor extracted the information of the original variable more sufficiently and explained 78.492% (shown in Table 3.10) of the overall variance, which is in line with the acceptable level. This indicates that the partial scale possesses good construct validity. The factor analysis results for each variable were informed that each dimension was better independent. This indicates that the overall validity of the questionnaire is good.

Table 3.10 Customer Satisfaction Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.355	78.492	78.492	2.355	78.492	78.492
2	0.352	11.748	90.240			
3	0.293	9.760	100.000			

Chapter 4 Findings

4.1 Introduction

The factors influencing brand image and perceived brand value on customer satisfaction were sorted out through a literature review. Using quantitative research methods, the data reliability and validity of the collected questionnaires were analyzed to determine the validity of the collected data. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis analyzed the data to understand the variables' relationship further. The analysis to verify the hypotheses to clarify the relationship between the interactions of the variables in the model of the influence of brand image and brand value perception of Crocs brand on customer satisfaction.

4.2 Description of Statistical Variables

Table 4.1 shows that the proportion of male and female respondents is relatively balanced, with the corresponding proportions of 44.8% and 55.2%, and the number of females is slightly higher than the number of males; the age distribution of the sample is concentrated in the range of 18-25 years old and 36-45 years old, with the proportions of 41.9% and 27.9%, which indicates that young people and middle-aged and above people often buy Crocs brand products. The main income groups in the survey sample were concentrated in 2001-4000 yuan and more than 10000 yuan, reaching 24% and 31.7% of the overall sample, respectively. The education level is mainly concentrated in bachelor's degree and master's degree, reaching 30.7% and 29.5% respectively.

Table 4.1 Distribution of Basic Characteristics of Samples

Items	Options	Frequency	Percent%
Gen	Male	188	44.8
	Female	232	55.2
Age	18-25	176	41.9
	26-35	82	19.5
	36-45	117	27.9
	46-55	27	6.4
	above 55	18	4.3

Income	Less than 2000yuan	48	11.4
	2001-4000	101	24.0
	4001-6000	62	14.8
	6001-8000	43	10.2
	8001-10000	33	7.9
	More than 10,000 yuan	133	31.7
Education	Junior high school	53	12.6
	Senior high school	98	23.3
	Undergraduate	129	30.7
	Master's degree	124	29.5
	Others	16	3.8

As can be seen in Table 4.2, the means of all the key variables are at a high level (Mean = 3.25 - 3.39). This indicates that the respondents' opinions on all the key factors in this study are at a high level. The Brand Performance, Company Image, Brand Characteristics, Perceived Value, and Customer Satisfaction variables were surveyed at a high level. Next, the author tested the data for normality before conducting the correlation analysis. The data showed that skewness and kurtosis were analyzed for each measurement question item, and according to the requirement of normal distribution, when the absolute value of the skewness coefficient of the data is within 3 and the absolute value of the kurtosis coefficient is within 8, the data is in line with normal distribution. The results of the study allow us to understand that the absolute value of the skewness and kurtosis values of the data for each dimension meets the criteria.

Table 4.2 Statistics in Key Variables

Key variables	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Skewness Statistic	Kurtosis Statistic
Brand Performance	3.25	0.659	-0.638	0.721
Company Image	3.28	0.684	-0.603	0.521
Brand Characteristics	3.26	0.661	-0.648	0.792

Perceived Value	3.34	0.501	-0.837	0.938
Customer Satisfaction	3.39	0.246	-0.971	0.225

4.3 Results of the Study

Correlation analysis tests the linear relationship between two or more variables. Correlation analysis of the data gives an idea about the strength of the relationship ranging from -1 to 1. The closer the Value of r is to 1 or -1, the stronger the correlation, and the closer it is to 0, the weaker the correlation. According to Table 4.3, the correlation coefficients, r, range from 0 to 1 and are significantly correlated at the 0.01 level, and there is a significant correlation between the two variables (P<0.01).

Table 4.3 Correlation Between Variables (Pearson Correlation Matrix)

	Brand Performance	Company Image	Brand Characteristic	Perceived Value	Customer Satisfaction
Brand Performance	1				
Company Image	.645**	1			
Brand Characteristics	.608**	.672**	1		
Perceived Value	.602**	.706**	.669**	1	
Customer Satisfaction	.596**	.661**	.607**	.715**	1

NOTE： *P<0.05, **P<0.01, ***P<0.001

According to the table, it can be learned that Pearson's correlation coefficient of Brand Performance, Company Image, Brand Characteristics, Perceived Value, and Customer

Satisfaction are all greater than 0.5, less than 0.9, and P<0.01, which indicates that there is a correlation between each variable and it is positive. Correlation and positive correlation.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Brand Performance and Company Image is 0.645, and P<0.01, indicating that there is a high correlation between Brand Performance and Company Image.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Brand Performance and Brand Characteristics is 0.608, and P<0.01, indicating a high correlation between Brand Performance and Brand Characteristics.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Brand Performance and Perceived Value is 0.602, and P<0.01, indicating that there is a high correlation between Brand Performance and Perceived Value.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Brand Performance and Customer Satisfaction is 0.596, and P<0.01, indicating that there is a correlation between Brand Performance and Customer Satisfaction.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Company Image and Brand Characteristics is 0.672, and P<0.01, indicating a high correlation between Company Image and Brand Characteristics.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Company Image and Perceived Value is 0.706, and P<0.01, indicating a high correlation between Company Image and Perceived Value.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Company Image and Customer Satisfaction is 0.661, and P<0.01, indicating that there is a high correlation between Company Image and Customer Satisfaction.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Brand Characteristics and Perceived Value is 0.669, and P<0.01, indicating a high correlation between Brand Characteristics and Perceived Value.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Brand Characteristics and Customer Satisfaction is 0.607, and P<0.01, indicating that there is a high correlation between Brand Characteristics and Customer Satisfaction.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Perceived Value and Customer Satisfaction is 0.715, and P<0.01, indicating that there is a high correlation between Perceived Value and Customer Satisfaction.

Through the analysis, it can be understood that the correlation coefficient between each variable is between 0.5 and 0.7. There is no coefficient of more than 0.8 or less than 0.5, indicating no linear correlation between the variables in the research model. At the same time, a suitable correlation aligns with the requirements. The correlation between the variables indicates that each variable plays a specific role in the model, reflecting the rationality of the model construction.
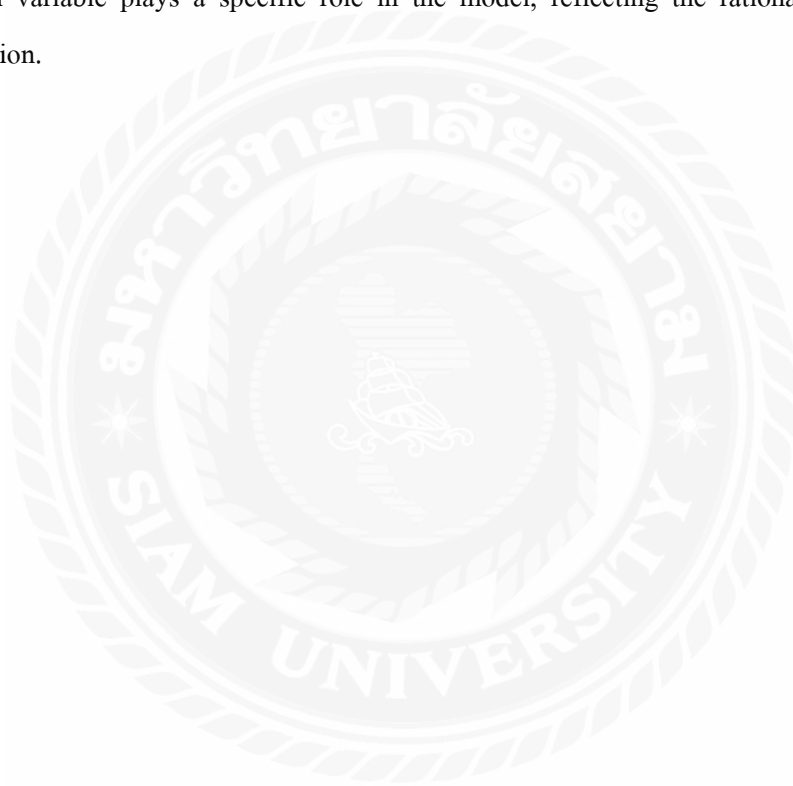
Chapter 5 Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

This study focuses on the research on the influence factors of brand image and brand value perception on customer satisfaction. Under the new background that global digital marketing is expanding and new retail is gradually becoming mainstream, based on combining CRM theory, customer satisfaction theory, and existing customer satisfaction models, we take the Crocs brand as an example to construct a research model of customer satisfaction, and design a questionnaire concerning the existing mature scale, and at the same time put forward hypotheses.

5.1.1 Factors Influencing the Crocs Brand Customer Satisfaction

Based on the literature review on brand image and customer satisfaction theories, this study finds that there is a correlation between customer satisfaction of Crocs products and Brand Performance, Company Image, Brand Characteristics, Perceived Value.

Each of these factors is identified in the study. Brand Performance encompasses how well a brand performs in terms of the quality of its products or services. Company image reflects Company image reflects consumers' overall view of a company, including impressions of its business operations, leadership, employees, and company culture. Brand characteristics can be thought of as the characteristics of the brand, like a living entity. Customer perceived value is the perception of the product's benefits and benefits and losses. benefits and benefits and losses. By analyzing the content of each factor, it can be determined that there is an impact of these factors on customer satisfaction. The exact impact of these factors on customer satisfaction needs to be known through correlation analysis.

5.1.2 Brand Performance, Company Image, Brand Characteristics, Perceived Value Have a Positive Effect on Customer Satisfaction

The conclusions of this study are as follows: Brand Performance positively affects Customer Satisfaction (r=0.596, P<0.01), and H1 holds. Company Image positively affects Customer Satisfaction (r=0.661, P<0.01), and H2 holds. Brand Characteristics positively influences

Customer Satisfaction (r= 0.607, P<0.01), H3 holds. Perceived Value positively influences Customer Satisfaction (r= 0.715, P<0.01), H4 holds. As showed in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Hypothesis Testing

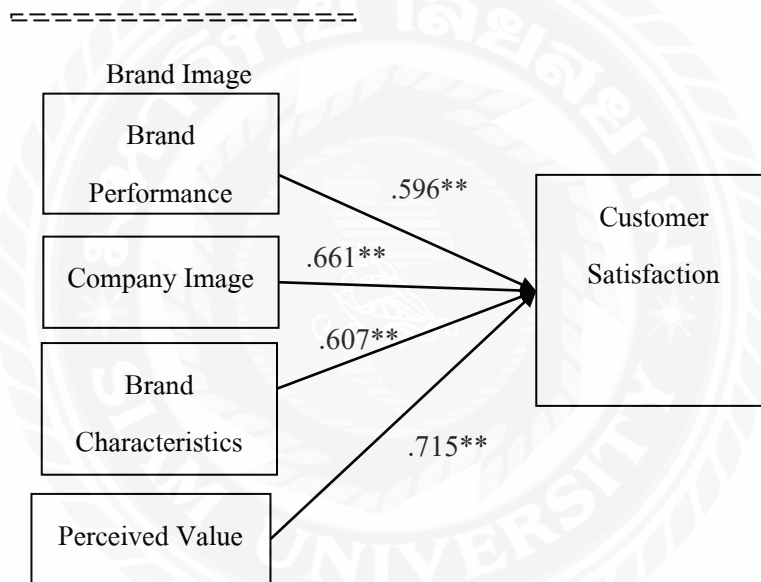|	Hypothesis	Result
1	Brand Performance has a positive influence on Customer Satisfaction.	Supported
2	Company Image has a positive influence on Customer Satisfaction.	Supported
3	Brand Characteristics have a positive effect on Customer Satisfaction.	Supported
4	Perceived Value has a positive effect on Customer Satisfaction.	Supported

Figure 5.1 Final Model

According to the above analysis, the brand image of the Crocs brand and customers' perceived value of the brand will affect customer satisfaction. The consumer market can reflect the local people's consumption psychology and concepts, i.e., it reflects the traditional values of this society and the culture of consumption and brand concepts. Crocs brand should emphasize the social value customers want in product consumption in the strategy to improve customer satisfaction. Show the social status and wealth of the Crocs brand to meet the customer's expectations and pursuit of the brand in the social significance, to help improve the customer's

social image. Ultimately, the customer's perception of the social value of the Crocs brand is improved, and customer satisfaction with the Crocs brand is enhanced.

5.2 Discussion

With a high degree of brand image recognition, customers will naturally have more identification and goodwill towards the luxury brand, and customer satisfaction is bound to increase. In the new market background, humanistic care has become the most critical care; consumers are no longer only regarded as consumers. However, as independent minds, spirits, and hearts of individuals, each brand's mission, vision, and values are emphasized. Crocs brand's future development needs to place consumers in the core position, pay more attention to the customer's spiritual needs, be humanistic and care-oriented to establish good communication and interaction with them, and gradually realize the brand in this interaction. Crocs's future brand development needs to place the consumer at the core of the position, pay more attention to the spiritual needs of the customer, and be oriented to humanistic care to achieve the purpose of establishing good communication and interaction with the customer and gradually realize the core value of the brand in the process of this interaction.

(1) Brand Performance

The first and foremost expectation of the customer in purchasing a product or enjoying a service is its quality. If a brand excels in its products or services, i.e., delivers high-quality, durable products that meet expectations, customers are satisfied. Crocs' excellence in product design and manufacturing as a brand allows customers to experience quality features and performance in real-world use, enhancing satisfaction. Crocs not only satisfies customers by providing products that meet market trends and consumer needs, but also has the potential to exceed customer expectations, thereby deepening trust and satisfaction with the brand. By providing products that meet market trends and consumer needs, Crocs not only satisfies customers, but also has the potential to exceed their expectations, thereby deepening trust and satisfaction with the brand. Excellent brand performance contributes to a positive brand reputation, which is essential for attracting new customers and retaining existing ones. Brand performance directly shapes a positive impression of the brand by customers by ensuring

excellence in product or service quality, meeting expectations, brand reputation, and trust, thereby increasing customer satisfaction levels.

(2) Company Image

A key element of a company's image is the efficiency of its business operations. A company's ability to maintain efficiency in its supply chain, production and delivery, and a seamless customer experience during the purchasing process enhances satisfaction. Company image is also influenced by the quality of its employees and their service attitude. If a company can develop a team of professional, friendly, and efficient employees, this will directly enhance customer satisfaction. Establishing a positive company culture and training employees to provide excellent customer service strengthens positive customer-brand interactions and promotes satisfaction. Company image through efficient business operations, staff quality and service attitude and positive company culture together builds an image that is positively presented to the customer, which in turn increases the level of customer satisfaction.

(3) Brand Characteristics

Brand identity gives a brand a unique characteristic and a sense of being a "living entity". Brand characteristics makes it easier for customers to establish an emotional connection with the brand, thus creating a sense of pleasure in the shopping experience and increasing satisfaction. Brand identity can trigger the emotional resonance of consumers. If a brand's characteristics matches the values and lifestyle of the target audience, customers are more likely to feel positive emotions towards the brand. Brand identity gives the brand uniqueness and differentiates it from its competitors. Customers are more likely to remember and choose a brand when it has unique and memorable characteristics in the marketplace. Brand characteristics trigger emotional resonance, differentiation, and build brand loyalty by creating an interesting, unique, and compelling brand image, which together lead to more satisfied customers choosing and supporting the Crocs brand.

(4) Perceived Value

The perceived product value of the Crocs brand will have a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction. Because the demand for the product's perceived Value is more reflected in the essential consumer goods, customer satisfaction is more from the perceived value of the brand and service. In addition to purchasing the product itself, the product can make the customer

feel the Value and affect their overall satisfaction with the brand. The brand image of Crocs brand has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction. Brand image is the overall response of the brand, and a brand with a higher identity will bring higher customer satisfaction. In product consumption, product service is always around the customer. The service process reflects the Crocs brand matching high-quality service to achieve customer expectations and satisfaction. Crocs brand customers, in addition to buying the product itself, enjoy the service process, which is also an essential part of the Crocs brand customer's goodwill towards the brand and customer satisfaction Crocs brand in the customer goodwill towards the brand and customer satisfaction. The enhancement can give the brand a more lasting vitality to continue accumulating Value.

5.3 Recommendation

(1) Brand Performance

Crocs products to enhance quality management, the implementation of strict quality control measures, using high-quality raw materials and advanced production technology, to ensure the durability, comfort, and overall texture of Crocs products. Establish an effective quality management system to monitor the production process to ensure that every pair of shoes meets the brand's high standards. Crocs has increased investment in research and development, and continues to introduce products with innovative designs and features. Maintain close contact with customers, collect feedback, understand market demand, and make timely adjustments to the product line. Maintain the brand's position at the forefront of trends by introducing new styles, colors, and collaborative collections, etc. Crocs set up channels to encourage customers to provide feedback. With the help of customers' opinions and suggestions, Crocs continuously improves the design and functionality of its products to ensure that the brand's performance continues to meet and exceed customers' expectations. Crocs provides a flexible after-sales policy to ensure that customers receive good support and service throughout the entire life cycle of a purchase. Crocs can achieve a significant increase in its brand performance and establish a high level of customer trust in the quality of its products, which in turn increases customer satisfaction. The Crocs has been able to achieve significant improvements in brand performance, building a high level of customer trust in the quality of its products, which in turn has led to increased customer satisfaction levels.

Based on perfecting the connotation of brand image, it is also crucial to improve customer satisfaction by enhancing consumer recognition of the brand through brand marketing. Focus on brand marketing planning through various activities and public relations means, to improve the public's recognition of the brand image and customer satisfaction. First, the advertising media to promote the Crocs brand image must refrain from bombardment, which will disgust the customer. However, it should be used in various advertising forms so that the customer unconsciously associates with the brand, thus deepening the understanding of the brand. Secondly, market segmentation and proposed targeted publicity programs can achieve better publicity. At the same time, through various online and offline activities, to increase the frequency of interaction between customers and the brand to help customers become more familiar with and understand the brand.

(2) Company Image

The Crocs brand's enhanced practices in social media engagement convey a positive brand image, increase brand awareness, and create a stronger connection with customers. The brand is actively engaged on all major social media platforms, posting fashion, lifestyle, and personalization content. By interacting with customers, responding to questions, and collecting feedback, the Crocs brand communicates its willingness to build a good relationship with its customers and reinforces its humanized image. By analyzing customer interactions and feedback on social media, the brand can better understand customer preferences and expectations to adjust and optimize its products and services. This two-way interaction strengthens the relationship between the brand and its customers, increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Crocs communicates the company's operation, decision-making and social responsibility information to the public through social media, the company's website, and other channels. Regularly releasing transparent reports to show the company's business situation and achievements, and building trust relationships. Crocs establishes a comprehensive crisis management mechanism, responding to negative events or crises faced by the company in a timely manner and taking effective measures to resolve them. Handle the crisis with openness and truthfulness to maintain the stability of the company's image. Crocs maintains a consistent brand image on all external and internal channels, including logos, advertisements, and employee dress code. Ensure brand oneness so that customer perceptions and expectations of the company are

consistent across touchpoints. Crocs can project a positive company image that will enhance overall satisfaction by making customers feel transparent, socially responsible, and motivated by its employees.

(3) Brand Characteristics

Crocs' unique brand characteristics are presented through storytelling and brand events. Emphasize the emotional connection with customers, so that customers can feel the brand's warmth, relaxation, and fun during the shopping experience. Crocs provides personalized customization services, allowing customers to customize the products according to their own preferences and styles. This not only increases the uniqueness of the product, but also creates opportunities for customers to interact with the brand and enhance its personalized appeal. Crocs strengthens its interaction on social media platforms, emphasizing the brand's relaxed and stylish personality by sharing user stories and shoe-matching inspiration. Respond positively to user comments to build a positive social brand image. Crocs reinforces the uniqueness of the brand through unique and easily recognizable brand logos, taglines, and other image elements. Ensure that the brand logo leaves a deep impression in customers' mind and increase brand recognition. Through the above measures, Crocs can consolidate and strengthen the brand's personalized characteristics, make it more unique in the market, and then enhance the customer's identification and satisfaction with the brand.

(4) Perceived Value

The Crocs brand successfully shaped a modern, fashionable, and personalized brand image through personalization, social media interaction, user experience innovation, and other innovative practices. Personalization allows consumers to blend products with their style, reinforcing the brand's individuality. Social media interaction creates an open and active brand image, attracting more young consumers. User experience innovation enhances the shopping experience and builds a high-quality brand image. Together, these innovative practices build a multi-dimensional brand image that makes the Crocs brand stand out in the marketplace and attract a wide range of consumer attention.

The Crocs brand has introduced user experience innovation models, such as virtual try-on technology and offline experience activities, to enhance customers' emotional identification and satisfaction with the brand. Virtual try-on technology enables customers to experience what it

is like to wear Crocs footwear online, enhancing the realism and engagement of the shopping experience. Offline experiential activities, such as fashion exhibitions and brand events, allow customers to interact with the brand and deepen their emotional connection. These innovations not only attracted more customers but also increased customer satisfaction. Customers feel that the brand cares about their experience, which makes them more willing to interact with the brand and purchase products. Innovations also enhance the brand's value in customers' minds, making them willing to build long-term relationships with the brand.

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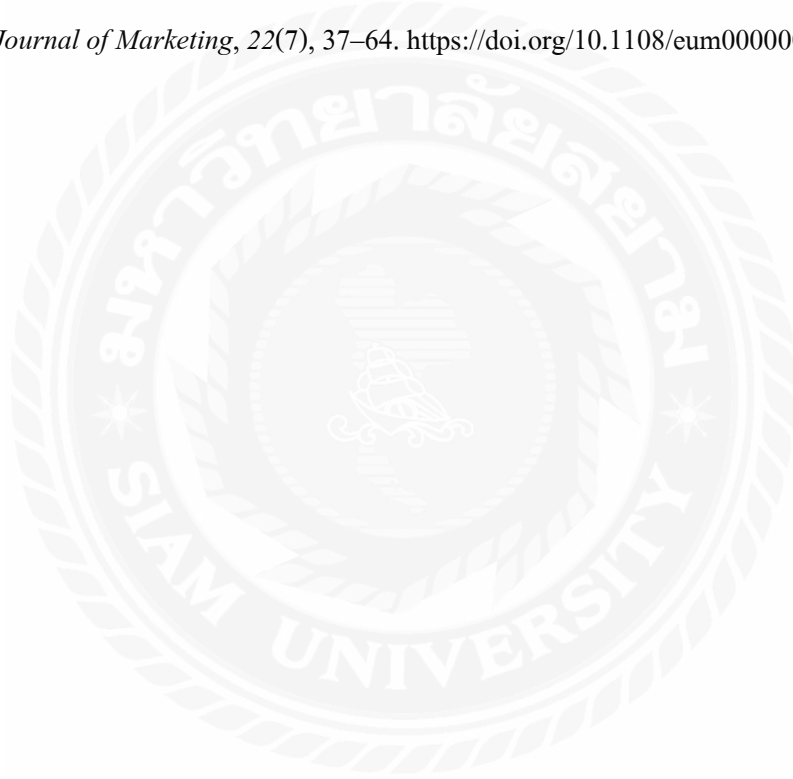
Appendix

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your participation in this questionnaire survey. The survey will be conducted anonymously, and your relevant information will be kept confidential. Thank you again for your cooperation.

Part 1：

1. Gender? A Male   B Female

2. Age? A 18-25   B26-35   C36-45   D46-55 E above 55

3. Monthly income?

A Below 2000yuan   B 2001-4000   C 4001-6000   D 6001-8000   E 8001-10000   F More than 10000 yuan

4. The highest education? A Junior high school   B Senior high school   C Undergraduate   D Master's degree   E Others

5. Have you ever purchased Crocs brand? Ayes   B No

6. Have you ever used Crocs brand? Ayes   B No

Part 2: Please judge to what extent you agree with the following statement; choose the most appropriate option, and mark the corresponding number "$\sqrt{}$." The questionnaire used a Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 5 in which one indicates strongly disagree (or strongly disagree), two indicates relatively disagree (or relatively disagree), three indicates neutral, four indicates relatively agree (or relatively agree), and five indicates strongly agree (or strongly agree)

Measuring item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	General	Agree	Strongly agree
Brand Performance					
1. The Crocs brand offers high-quality products and services.					
2. Crocs' brand products and services are					

very innovative.					
3. Crocs brand products and services are practical.					
Company Image					
4. Crocs brands are socially responsible.					
5. Crocs brand is honest and keeps its promises to its customers.					
6. Crocs brand company is large and robust.					
Brand Characteristics					
7. The Crocs brand is very stylish and classy.					
8. The Crocs brand is dynamic.					
9. The Crocs brand is a trustworthy partner.					
Perceived Value					
10. Good after-sales service when purchasing Crocs-branded products					
11. there is an intimate relationship with the owners of Crocs-branded products.					
12. I will follow and share the Crocs brand with my friends.					
Customer Satisfaction					
13. I am overall delighted after using Crocs brand products.					
14. Crocs brand products were able to meet my level of expectation.					
15. I am more satisfied with Crocs brand					

| products than similar brands. | | | | | |