The Relationship between Brand Image and Consumer Purchase Intention: An Investigation of Mediating Effects

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on exploring how innovation in brand image influences consumers' purchasing intentions, and further analyzes the mediating variables-brand archetype and brand sentiment. Employing structural equation modeling, the path from brand image innovation to consumer purchasing intentions is scrutinized, while investigating how brand archetype cognition and brand sentiment experience mediate within. Data were collected through a questionnaire survey of consumers of clothing brands, empirically verifying the model's effectiveness. The results indicate that brand image innovation significantly enhances consumers' purchasing intentions through the roles of brand archetype and brand sentiment. This research not only enriches the theoretical framework of brand management but also furnishes businesses with practical strategies to augment consumer purchasing intentions through innovative brand image in fiercely competitive markets.

KEYWORDS

Brand Image; Consumer Purchase Intention; Relationship; Mediating Effect.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary marketplace, the veracity of brand imagery as a pivotal determinant in consumer purchasing decisions has been established. Particularly within the realm of apparel, a captivating brand image can significantly augment consumer propensity to purchase. This discourse delves into the impact of brand image innovation on consumer purchase intention and explores the roles of brand prototypes and brand sentiments within this nexus. Brand imagery not only reflects the material attributes of commodities but also encapsulates a wealth of emotional value and societal significance. Understanding this intricate mechanism can aid enterprises in devising more efficacious market strategies, thereby sustaining competitiveness amidst volatile market landscapes. Through meticulous data analysis, this paper endeavors to elucidate how brand prototypes and brand sentiments collectively modulate the relationship between brand image innovation and consumer purchase intention, furnishing empirical validation.

2. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS AND MODEL CONSTRUCTION

2.1. Research Hypothesis

2.1.1. The Hypothesis of the Relationship between Clothing Brand Image Innovation and Purchase Intention

In the modern competitive market environment, apparel brands increasingly rely on image innovation to attract customers and increase market share. Image innovation involves updating and upgrading multiple aspects of the brand, such as product features, corporate culture, service experience, brand

identity, marketing strategy and store design. These innovations can not only improve brand recognition, but also deepen consumers' favorable impression of the brand, thus stimulating the desire to purchase. Wang Haibo et al [1] suggested that product image innovations may involve the use of advanced technologies or new materials to improve product quality or environmental characteristics, which can attract consumers who have a demand for high-quality or green products. In terms of corporate image, the brand's image of responsibility can be strengthened by demonstrating the company's innovativeness, social responsibility or leadership, so that consumers consider the brand trustworthy and worthy of support. Zhu Donghong et al [2] suggested that enhancing service image innovations such as providing customized services and optimizing customer experience can significantly increase consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Brand identity innovations, including redesigning logos, unifying and upgrading brand visual elements, can make a brand stand out from the crowd of competitors. Price et al [3] found that marketing image innovations, on the other hand, may be manifested in the adoption of the latest digital marketing technologies, such as social media interactions, Augmented Reality (AR) applications, and so on, all of which can greatly enhance brand attractiveness and recognizability. Innovations in store image, such as changing the store design and providing a unique shopping experience, are also important factors in enhancing consumers' shopping interest and purchase intention.

Synthesizing the aforementioned points, this study posits the following hypothesis:

H1: Innovation in apparel brand imagery positively impacts purchase intentions.

2.1.2. Apparel Brand Image Innovation and Brand Archetype, Brand Emotion Relationship Hypothesis

In today's marketplace, clothing brands enhance their brand image through innovation, thereby deepening the brand impression in consumers' minds and fostering emotional connections. Consumers' perception of a brand is multifaceted, encompassing aspects such as product, corporate culture, service, brand recognition, marketing, and store image. The innovation of these elements not only directly influences the construction of brand image but also has profound effects on brand archetype and emotional resonance formation.

Innovations in product image can be achieved through the introduction of technological advancements such as smart wearable technology or through sustainable design and production techniques to enhance the product's intrinsic characteristics and consumers' awareness of environmental protection. This type of innovation not only provides functional improvements but also resonates with consumers' values by emphasizing uniqueness and environmental consciousness. Corporate image innovation typically involves the consistency between internal culture and external representation, which can be achieved through the adoption of advanced management systems and the promotion of corporate social responsibility. Through this approach, brands can communicate their commitment to innovation, quality control, and social responsibility, deepening consumers' perception of the brand's reliability and trustworthiness.

Innovations in service image may manifest in improving customer service touchpoints, providing personalized service solutions, etc., which not only directly impact consumers' service experiences but also contribute to building the brand's intimate and professional image. Brand recognition innovation, such as updating logos, unifying visual styles, and enhancing the dissemination of brand stories, helps consumers identify and remember the brand more quickly. Innovations in marketing image, through advertising, social media, and other promotional activities, can attract consumers' attention and pique their interest in the brand through creative and positioning updates. Improvements in store image, such as optimizing store layouts and enhancing environmental aesthetics, also serve as important channels for constructing and conveying perceptions of brand high quality. Through the combined effects of these image innovations, brands not only construct a positively perceived brand archetype in consumers' minds but also stimulate emotional resonance with the brand. Brand archetype and emotional connections directly influence consumers' purchase decisions, as consumers

often evaluate brands based on this cognition and emotion, thereby influencing their purchasing behavior. Based on this, the present study proposes the hypothesis:

H2: Innovation in clothing brand image has a positive impact on brand archetype.

2.1.3. Hypothesized Relationship between Brand Archetypes and Brand Emotions

The relationship between brand archetypes and brand emotions constitutes one of the core issues of brand management. Brand archetypes refer to the overall concept of a brand in the minds of consumers, which covers not only the functional attributes, quality and style of the brand, but also the culture and values associated with the brand. In modern marketing research, according to the theory of category processing, consumers effectively integrate and evaluate detailed information about a brand with the help of brand archetypes. This evaluation process is not only related to cognitive level processing, but also touches the emotional level response.

Research has shown that the formation of brand archetypes can directly trigger consumers' emotional responses to brands. For example, when a brand archetype clearly conveys the uniqueness and value of a brand, consumers tend to develop positive emotional associations based on this perception. The research of Zhang Keyi et al [4] provides ample evidence that brand archetypes have a significant positive impact on brand emotions in the new economic environment. In addition, Wang Hazhong et al. [5] explored how brand archetypes contribute to the generation of brand emotion from multiple dimensions, and their study confirmed that archetypes formed from the aspects of brand personality, history, and heritage significantly enhance consumers' brand emotion. Specifically, a distinctive and positive brand archetype can increase consumers' emotional engagement because the archetype is usually aligned with consumers' personal values. When consumers perceive that a brand archetype is in line with their personal ideals, they usually experience a sense of emotional fulfillment, which translates into goodwill and loyalty to the brand. Therefore, brand managers need to deeply understand the dynamic relationship between brand archetypes and brand emotions, and strategically shape brand archetypes to stimulate and sustain positive consumer emotions. Based on the above analysis, this study proposes the hypothesis:

H3: Brand archetypes have a positive effect on brand emotions.

2.1.4. Hypothesizing the Relationship between Brand Archetypes, Brand Emotion and Purchase Intention

In the modern market environment, brand archetypes and brand emotions become the key factors driving consumers' purchase decisions. Brand archetype is an inductive summary of consumers' overall knowledge of the brand, which includes the brand's visual image, product quality, service attitude and other dimensions. When the brand image matches consumers' expectations and preferences, the brand archetype formed will greatly contribute to consumers' purchase intention. This hypothesis is supported by Nedungadi et al [6] who confirmed that brand archetypes can significantly influence consumers' preference and choice behavior. In addition, the study by Lianxiong Jiang et al [7] also pointed out that brand archetypes have a significant positive effect on consumer preference. Based on the above studies, this study proposes the hypothesis that.

H4: Brand archetypes have a positive effect on purchase intention.

At the same time, brand emotion is an emotional response formed in the process of establishing an emotional connection between consumers and brands, which often serves as the psychological basis for consumers' purchase decisions. The formation of brand emotion often comes from brand story, consumer experience, advertising and other aspects, which can trigger the emotional resonance of consumers. According to the research of Zhang Keyi et al, brand emotion can effectively promote consumers' purchase intention. In addition, Frijda's [8] findings also support that positive brand emotions can drive consumers' purchase behavior. Therefore, this study further proposes the hypothesis:

H5: Brand emotion has a positive effect on purchase intention.

In summary, brand archetypes and brand emotions are important factors that influence consumers' purchase intentions. Brand archetypes provide a cognitive framework that helps consumers evaluate and make judgments about a brand, while brand emotions reinforce consumers' loyalty and preference for a brand at the emotional level. The combination of these two forms an important driver of consumer purchase intention, which is of great theoretical and practical significance for understanding consumer behavior and formulating effective marketing strategies.

2.2. Model Building

In this study, our aim is to delve into how innovation in the image of clothing brands influences consumers' purchase intentions through two mediating variables: brand archetype and brand affect. To achieve this, we have crafted a comprehensive theoretical framework. The model, starting from the perspective of innovation in the image of clothing brands, initially contemplates how this variable acts as an external stimulus by shaping the brand archetype. Within this framework, the brand archetype is regarded as a central cognitive factor capable of directly stimulating and shaping consumers' perceptions of brand affect. Brand affect then functions as a secondary mediating variable, further influencing consumers' purchase intentions. This process not only reflects the transformation from cognitive factors to emotional factors but also reveals the psychological mechanisms underlying the transition from brand image to consumer decision-making behavior. Furthermore, the model encompasses external factors such as market trends and consumer culture, which may modulate the effects of innovation in the image of clothing brands and its influence on purchase intentions through brand archetype and brand affect. To intricately illustrate this complex interplay, the model visually demonstrates the dynamic connections and potential causal pathways among variables through a detailed flowchart (as depicted in Figure 1).
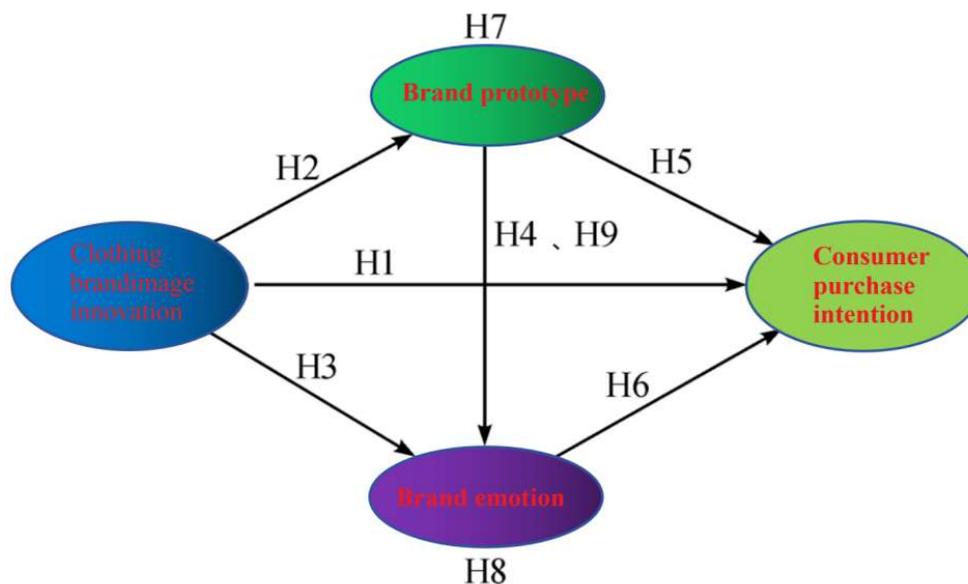

Figure 1. Theoretical model

Through this model, this study aims to provide a comprehensive theoretical framework for explaining and predicting how innovative brand image management strategies can effectively enhance consumer purchase intention in a changing market environment. This provides a scientific reference for strategy makers of apparel brands to help them position and optimize their brand management strategies more effectively in a competitive market.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

3.1. Questionnaire Design

In this study, to delve into the innovation of apparel brand imagery and its potential impact on consumer purchasing inclination, we meticulously crafted a three-part questionnaire. This design aims to capture pivotal variables associated with brand imagery innovation and to comprehend how brand prototypes and brand emotions mediate this influence.

The first segment of the questionnaire focuses on assessing consumers' perceptions of various metrics regarding apparel brand imagery innovation. This encompasses, though is not limited to, how consumers perceive the brand's performance in design novelty, innovative material utilization, technological applications, and innovative market positioning. By thoroughly querying these dimensions, the aim is to obtain consumers' intuitive understanding of the brand's innovative capabilities [9].

The second segment zeroes in on exploring the influence of brand prototypes and brand emotions on consumer purchasing decisions, endeavoring to unveil the mediating roles of these two variables. Within this section, the questionnaire features multiple inquiries to gauge consumers' cognition of brand narratives and brand personalities, and how these factors translate into emotional connections, thus impacting their purchasing behavior.

The third segment gathers respondents' demographic information, such as age, gender, occupation, and income level, with the aim of analyzing variances in the perceptions of brand imagery innovation and purchasing inclination among different demographics. This dataset is pivotal for subsequent statistical analyses, aiding in revealing specific demands and preferences within the target market.

Overall, the design of this questionnaire is guided by scientific rigor and logical coherence, employing quantitative data collection methods to meticulously measure and analyze how brand imagery innovation influences consumer purchasing inclination through brand prototypes and emotions. This endeavor will furnish robust data support for the market strategies and brand promotion of apparel brands.

3.2. Data Collection

In this study, to comprehensively assess the impact of innovative branding on target consumers, we employed a blended methodology for data collection, encompassing both online and offline distribution of questionnaires. A total of 335 surveys were disseminated, and through meticulous screening and validation procedures, we successfully retrieved 301 valid responses, achieving an impressive response rate of 89.85%. Analysis of the sample characteristics reveals a gender distribution of 41% male and 59% female, maintaining a near equilibrium close to the societal gender distribution ratio. In terms of age demographics, the youthful cohort aged 18 to 25 constitutes a significant 87% of the total sample, indicating a keen interest and purchasing potential among young consumers for fashion brands. Participants aged 26 to 30 comprise 10%, reflecting a representative presence in the slightly older age bracket. The overall sample tends towards youthfulness, aligning closely with the target market of innovative apparel branding. Regarding educational attainment, individuals with undergraduate and postgraduate degrees respectively account for 38% and 57% of the surveyed population, signifying a commendable level of educational achievement. Such a highly educated demographic typically possesses substantial purchasing power and discerning aesthetic preferences, capable of comprehensively evaluating various facets of brand imagery. Geographically, residents of first and second-tier cities comprise 64% and 20% respectively, indicating that the majority of respondents reside in economically developed regions, endowed with progressive consumer ideologies and sufficient economic foundations to support elevated consumption behaviors [10].

The analysis of the aforementioned data underscores the soundness of the sample structure in this study, rendering it representative of the primary consumer demographic for innovative apparel branding. Through thorough and systematic data collection, the broad applicability of research findings and the scientific rigor of the data are ensured, thereby furnishing empirical foundations for brand innovation strategies. Detailed descriptive statistical results are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the sample

Sample characteristics		Frequency/person	Proportion /%
sex	male	124	41
	female	177	59
age	<18 years old	2	1
	18 to 25 years old	262	87
	26 to 30 years old	31	10
	31 to 40 years old	4	1
	>40 years old	2	1
Educational background	High school and below	7	2
	Junior college	10	3
	Undergraduate course	114	38
	Master degree or above	170	57
Place of Residence	First-tier city	192	64
	Second-tier city	61	20
	Third-tier city	28	9
	Fourth tier cities and below	20	7

3.3. Reliability and Validity Tests

In this clothing brand image innovation research, in order to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the questionnaire data, SPSS 22.0 software was utilized to conduct an exhaustive test of reliability and validity, and the results are shown in Table 2. Through these statistical methods, the consistency of the questionnaire and the applicability of the data can be assessed, so that the results of the study will be more scientific and practical application value [11].

In the assessment of reliability, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was employed to gauge the internal consistency of the questionnaire. In this examination, the overall Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the questionnaire reached 0.973, far surpassing the conventional threshold of 0.7, manifesting an exceedingly high level of reliability. Furthermore, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for each distinct dimension remained above 0.7, further substantiating the questionnaire's reliability across multiple facets.

Regarding validity, both Bartlett's test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure were conducted to assess the suitability of the data for factor analysis. The Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded significant results (p-value of 0.000), while the KMO value of 0.962 indicated the data's excellent suitability for factor analysis, as both metrics exceeded the conventional acceptance threshold of 0.7.

Table 2. Results of the reliability of the questionnaire

variable	item	Combination reliability (CR)	Mean extraction variance (AVE)	Factor loading	Cronbachs Alpha
Clothing brand image innovation	A1	0.916	0.647	0.808	0.932
	A2			0.854	
	A3			0.772	
	A4			0.756	
	A5			0.816	
	A6			0.815	
Brand prototype	B1	0.922	0.664	0.852	0.921
	B2			0.850	
	B3			0.777	
	B4			0.850	
	B5			0.796	
	B6			0.758	
Brand emotion	C1	0.893	0.676	0.813	0.892
	C2			0.801	
	C3			0.855	
	C4			0.819	
Consumer purchase intention	D1	0.918	0.736	0.825	0.917
	D2			0.858	
	D3			0.877	
	D4			0.871	
Accepted value	>0.7	>0.5	>0.5	>0.7	

Moreover, all variables exhibited standardized factor loadings exceeding 0.5, duly validated at a significant level. Additionally, the average variance extracted (AVE) of the scales also exceeded 0.5, with composite reliability (CR) surpassing 0.7. These outcomes not only demonstrate the scales' commendable explanatory power for measuring constructs but also align with the assessment criteria for overall validity.

4. HYPOTHESIS TESTING

4.1. Correlation Test

This study first conducted a Pearson correlation analysis to systematically assess multiple components of apparel brand image innovation, including marketing, corporate culture, store environment, customer service, product design, and brand identity. The results of the correlation test are shown in Table 3. The analysis shows that marketing strategy is most closely linked to brand archetype and brand emotion, and the correlation coefficients show the significance of its overall

impact on the brand. This is followed by corporate culture, which shows a strong positive influence on brand prototypes.

Table 3. results of correlation test

variable	product	firm	service	recognize	MARKETING	shop
Clothing brand image innovation	0.860**	0.882**	0.862**	0.835**	0.892**	0.866**
Brand prototype	0.617**	0.641**	0.652**	0.667**	0.697**	0.711**
Brand emotion	0.644**	0.673**	0.682**	0.640**	0.687**	0.730**

Similarly, the ambiance of a store, the quality of customer service, and the finesse of product design also wield a notable influence on brand sentiment, albeit to a slightly lesser degree compared to marketing and corporate culture. While brand recognition may linger towards the lower end of the hierarchy, it still demonstrates a favorable impact on brand sentiment formation. This discovery underscores the indispensable synergy among these elements in crafting the brand archetype. Furthermore, employing partial least squares regression (PLS) and structural equation modeling (SEM) further validated these correlational findings, estimating the path coefficients between variables. This approach not only corroborates the results of Pearson correlation analysis but also delves deeper into the causal relationships among variables, furnishing our analysis with a more nuanced data foundation.

In summation, this study comprehensively analyzed the correlation and impact of innovative elements in the image of apparel brands, revealing the pivotal role of marketing and corporate culture in brand construction. Moreover, while the influence levels may vary, the ambiance of the store, customer service quality, product design, and brand recognition all stand as significant factors in shaping a positive brand archetype and reinforcing brand sentiment. These findings furnish brand managers with a scientific basis for formulating brand strategies, optimizing resource allocation, and enhancing various facets of brand image innovation.

4.2. Main Effects Model

In exploring the impact of apparel brand image innovation on consumer behavior, this study constructs a multivariate main effects model and verifies the correctness of the hypotheses through path analysis. Table 4 shows the path test after model correction. Through the careful modification of the model and statistical verification, the research results significantly support the original hypothesis and reveal the significant role of brand image innovation in shaping consumer psychology and behavior.

Table 4. Path test for model modification

Hypothesis	Influencing variable	Affected variable	Standardization Estimate	p	conclusion
H1	Clothing brand image innovation	Consumer purchase intention	0.208	***	support
H2	Clothing brand image innovation	Brand prototype	0.843	***	support
H3	Clothing brand image innovation	Brand emotion	0.611	***	support
H4	Brand prototype	Brand emotion	0.285	**	support
H5	Brand emotion	Consumer purchase intention	0.551	***	support

The research findings indicate that innovative branding significantly enhances consumers' willingness to purchase, with a path coefficient of β=0.208, statistically significant at (p<0.001). This suggests that when a brand presents a novel and distinctive image in the market, it markedly boosts consumers' motivation to purchase, thereby validating hypothesis H1.

Furthermore, the impact of innovative branding on brand archetype is remarkably pronounced, with a path coefficient as high as β=0.843, and statistical significance also highly elevated (p<0.001). This underscores the ability of brand image innovation to construct a robust and unique brand archetype in consumers' minds, thus confirming hypothesis H2.

In terms of brand affect, path analysis similarly reveals a strong positive correlation between innovative branding and brand affect (β=0.611, p<0.001). This implies that the higher the degree of brand image innovation, the deeper the emotional attachment consumers develop toward the brand, thereby lending support to hypothesis H3.

Regarding the influence of brand archetype on consumers' purchase intentions, the study finds a significant positive effect, with a β value of 0.427, and highly significant statistical results (p<0.001). This indicates that the stronger the brand archetype in consumers' minds, the higher their purchase intentions, thus affirming hypothesis H4.

Lastly, strong evidence is provided for the positive impact of brand affect on consumers' purchase intentions, with a path coefficient of β=0.551, confirmed at a significance level of 0.001. This suggests that the higher consumers' emotional attachment to the brand, the stronger their willingness to purchase the product, further validating hypothesis H5.

Through meticulous statistical analysis and model adjustments, this study not only successfully unveils the multifaceted pathways through which innovative branding influences consumers but also furnishes robust data support and theoretical underpinnings for brand management and marketing strategy formulation.

4.3. Mediation Effect Test

In this study, the ways in which apparel brand image innovation affects consumers' purchase intention are analyzed in depth, especially through the test of mediating effects to explore the role of brand archetype and brand emotion in this process. In order to ensure the reliability and statistical validity of the results, this study adopted the Bootstrap method for the calculation and validation of mediating effects. The precise Bootstrap sample resampling technique allows for the generation of estimated confidence intervals and significance tests for mediating effects. The results are shown in Table 5, suggesting that brand archetypes and brand emotions play an important mediating role between apparel brand image innovation and purchase intention.

Table 5. Bootstrap mediation effects test

Path	Effect size	Standard error	95% confidence interval		Effect ratio /%	conclusion
			floor	Upper limit		
Total effect	0.802	0.047	0.000	0.710	-	support
Clothing brand image innovation - Direct effect of purchase intention	0.119	0.071	-0.020	0.258	14.84	
The mediating effect of brand prototype	0.315	0.013	0.266	0.318	39.28	
The mediating effect of brand emotion	0.258	0.028	0.180	0.289	32.17	
Brand Archetype: the chain mediated effect of brand emotion	0.109	0.023	0.053	0.145	-	

Specifically, the results show statistically significant mediating effects of brand archetypes and brand emotions, verifying that they not only directly strengthen consumers' purchase motives, but also indirectly promote purchase intentions through the formation of positive brand perceptions and emotional connections. The confirmation of this mediation model further deepens the understanding of the innovative influence of brand image and reveals the intrinsic connection between more complex psychological mechanisms and consumer behavior. In addition, the results of the mediation effect test strengthen the understanding of the importance of image innovation in brand management, emphasizing the need to integrate the shaping and optimization of brand archetypes and brand emotions in the design and implementation of brand strategies to maximize their positive impact on consumers' purchase intentions. These findings provide a scientific basis for brand strategy development and point the way for future marketing activities.

5. CONCLUSION

Through the in-depth analysis of this study, we have learned that the innovativeness of brand image plays a very important role in driving consumers' purchase behavior, and also revealed the mechanism of brand archetype and brand emotion as important mediating variables in the whole influence process. These findings not only enrich the theoretical structure of brand management, but also provide guidance for brand strategy in practice. Apparel companies should realize that enhancing the innovativeness of brand image while focusing on the cultivation of brand emotion and the establishment of brand archetypes can help strengthen consumers' purchase intention. Follow-up studies can further explore the specific effects of brand image innovation on consumer behavior in different cultural contexts, as well as the roles of other potential mediating or moderating variables, to provide a more comprehensive understanding and application.

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