

## The Differential Impact of Optimized 4C Marketing Mix on Consumer Purchase Intention of Vintage Coffee Shops: The Mediating Role of Brand Attachment and Moderating Effect of Solitude Preference

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### Abstract

Vintage coffee, as an emerging cross-border format integrating "vintage retail + boutique coffee", has become a key growth point in China's coffee industry under the background of experience economy and digital marketing. This study, grounded in the optimized 4C marketing theory, brand attachment theory and consumer segmentation theory, examines how the optimized 4C marketing mix elements influence consumer purchase intention, as well as the mediating role of brand attachment and the moderating effect of solitude preference. A quantitative questionnaire survey was conducted among 450 valid customers with consumption experience in vintage coffee shops. Findings indicate that experiential value, spatial convenience and interactive communication exert significant positive effects on brand attachment, while psychological cost exerts a significant negative effect. Brand attachment plays a fully mediating role between psychological cost and purchase intention, and a partial mediating role between the other three 4C dimensions and purchase intention. Meanwhile, solitude preference has a significant positive moderating effect on the relationship between brand attachment and purchase intention. The research clarifies the influencing mechanism of consumer purchase intention in the vintage coffee format, and provides actionable recommendations for enterprises and valuable insights for comparable cross-border retail and catering formats.

**Keywords:** *Optimized 4C Marketing Mix, Vintage Coffee Format, Brand Attachment, Consumer Purchase Intention, Solitude Preference, Digital Marketing, Cross-border Catering and Retail Format*

### 1. Introduction

The global consumer market has shifted from functional consumption to experiential consumption. According to the experience economy theory proposed by Pine and Gilmore (1998), when physical goods and services become abundant, consumers attach greater importance to consumption experiences and the pleasant memories they bring. This trend is particularly prominent in China. Schmitt (1999) put forward the Strategic Experiential Modules theory, which divides consumption experience into five dimensions: sense, feel, think, act and relate. As consumers increasingly demand scenario-based and personalized experiences, this theory has been widely recognized and applied in subsequent studies (Bigné et al., 2009; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

New consumption trends have given rise to a constant stream of new business formats. Consumers are no longer satisfied with a single consumption mode, but expect all-round one-stop experiences. Since the concept of the "third place" proposed by Oldenburg (1989) gained widespread recognition, Schultz (2019) further popularized this concept in Starbucks' operation, driving the entire coffee industry to evolve from mere product sales into social spaces. Kotler (2018) argued that in the digital era, business format integration needs to cater to consumers' diverse needs and multiple touchpoints. The consumer demand for functional superposition and emotional empowerment underpins the emergence of cross-border business formats. As an emerging business format, vintage coffee shops also embody the value co-creation philosophy of diversified value provision put forward by Vargo and Lusch (2004).

Against the backdrop of digital marketing reshaping the catering and retail ecosystem, the "coffee +" cross-border format has become the core direction of industry differentiation competition, among which the "vintage + coffee" format has rapidly emerged among young consumer groups with its unique retro scene experience and dual-format integration advantages. However, the current vintage coffee industry is facing widespread problems such as serious homogenization of scene construction, low customer stickiness, mismatch between marketing strategies and target consumer needs, and unclear driving mechanism of consumer purchase intention. At present, academic research on the coffee industry mostly focuses on traditional single coffee formats, and the research on "coffee +" cross-border formats is mainly concentrated in mature fields such as "coffee +

bookstore" and "coffee + cultural and creative". There is a lack of systematic empirical research on the emerging vintage coffee format. The classic 4C marketing theory has been widely used in traditional single industries, the dimension of customer needs covers a broad scope and primarily focuses on the satisfaction of functional demands (Lauterborn, 1990). Against the backdrop of the experience economy and women-oriented economy, vintage coffee targets female consumers aged 20 to 35, who attach greater importance to perceptual and experiential demands (Pine & Gilmore, 2020; Bigné et al., 2009). Brakus et al. (2009) categorized experiential value into four dimensions, arguing that it serves as a criterion for evaluating whether consumer demands for a specific type of experience are fulfilled. The perceptual and emotional attributes of experiential value precisely match the vintage atmosphere and dual-format experience offered by vintage coffee. Furthermore, research on cross-border business formats conducted by Lemon and Verhoef (2016) indicates that experiential value is a core factor influencing customer loyalty in such formats. In line with this viewpoint, the value co-creation theory proposed by Vargo and Lusch (2004) state that experiential value is jointly created by customers and enterprises. Accordingly, refining the construct of customer needs into experiential value is more consistent with the characteristics of the business format investigated in this study. In terms of cost, the traditional 4C theory mainly emphasizes financial cost (Lauterborn, 1990). As an emotion-driven cross-border business model, vintage coffee is chosen by consumers not merely based on financial considerations, but more significantly affected by potential psychological costs. Sweeney and Soutar (2001) pointed out that psychological costs pose greater barriers than financial costs for experiential purchasing behavior. Meanwhile, the servicescape theory proposed by Bitner (1992) suggests that cluttered spatial environments will increase consumers' psychological costs, which is a prominent challenge for vintage coffee stores. Therefore, focusing on psychological cost can more accurately interpret the cost-related issues within this industry. Regarding convenience, the convenience dimension in the original 4C theory encompasses channels, procedures, space and other aspects. Nevertheless, vintage coffee functions as a typical "third place", where spatial convenience exerts a far stronger influence on consumers than other convenience factors. As for communication, the communication dimension of traditional 4C theory originally refers to one-way dissemination of advertisements and promotional information to consumers. Currently, interactive communication has become an essential approach to brand building. Voorhees et al. (2011) demonstrated that diverse forms of interactive communication can enhance customer experience in experiential business formats. In addition, Keller's (2013) brand resonance theory verifies that interactive communication facilitates the formation of brand resonance. But its application and dimension optimization in the "retail + catering" cross-border format are still insufficient. Meanwhile, existing studies rarely explore the psychological mechanism of how marketing mix elements affect purchase intention through brand attachment, and ignore the moderating effect of individual differences such as solitude preference on consumer decision-making.

This study optimizes the 4C marketing theory by extracting four core dimensions, namely experiential value (T), psychological cost (X), spatial convenience (B) and interactive communication (H). It further introduces brand attachment (P) as the mediating variable and solitude preference (D) as the moderating variable to empirically analyze the influencing mechanism of customer demand satisfaction in vintage coffee shops, so as to fill the research gaps in this emerging field.

Consumption in vintage coffee shops can be interpreted as a process where environmental factors affect consumers' physiology and psychology, and further trigger their purchase behaviors. Although numerous studies have explored consumption in coffee shops, most scholars adopt a single experiential perspective while neglecting the impacts of individual differences on this process. Grounded in the solitude preference theory proposed by Coplan et al. (2013), this paper examines the effects of individual solitude preference on consumers' cognition and behaviors. It also attempts to construct a theoretical framework that explains how environmental factors and individual traits interact and jointly influence consumption decisions in the context of vintage coffee shops.

Against the backdrop of digital marketing, this study addresses the following key questions:

RQ1: What is the impact of each dimension of the optimized 4C marketing mix on the brand attachment of vintage coffee consumers?

RQ2: What is the core driving variable for the enhancement of consumer purchase intention in vintage coffee shops?

RQ3: Does brand attachment play a mediating role between the optimized 4C marketing mix and consumer purchase intention? What is the specific mediating mechanism?

RQ4: Does consumers' solitude preference have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between brand attachment and purchase intention?

RQ5: Based on the empirical results, how should vintage coffee brands reconstruct their marketing paths and optimize their marketing strategies?

## 2. Objectives

This study conducts research on niche cross-border business formats from three perspectives. First, it expands the application scope and research dimensions of the 4C theory. Proposed by Lauterborn (1990), the 4C framework covering Customer, Cost, Convenience and Communication has been widely adopted in tourism (Jones et al., 2002) and catering industries (Hair et al., 2019). Nevertheless, few studies have applied this theory to niche cross-border formats that integrate retail and catering. Accordingly, this paper develops an extended 4Cs framework consisting of experiential value, psychological cost, spatial convenience and interactive communication for cross-border business scenarios. This revised framework addresses the limited explanatory power of the traditional 4Cs theory for mixed business formats and broadens its application scope. To a certain extent, it also echoes the viewpoint of Sheth and Sharma (2008) that multiple theories should be combined when researching mixed business formats.

Second, this study fills the research gaps concerning the vintage coffee industry. Existing literature on this topic remains scarce, and most relevant discussions only focus on a single research direction. Studies on the "coffee +" model mainly center on combinations such as coffee plus bookstores and coffee plus cultural and creative products (Zhang et al., 2023; Schultz, 2019). Research on vintage goods predominantly explores consumers' perceptions and consumption behaviors (Smith & Gilmore, 2022), yet rarely addresses the integration of vintage and coffee businesses. Targeting the characteristics of vintage coffee shops, namely scene-oriented experience and dual-format collaboration, this paper introduces the construct of brand attachment to analyze the key drivers and functional mechanisms of customer demand. It not only provides references for future relevant studies and insights into the classification of niche cross-border business formats, but also conforms to the mixed methods research philosophy proposed.

Finally, this study also enriches the understanding of consumer behavior. Most previous researches on customer satisfaction were conducted from a single perspective (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Oliver, 1980). By examining the differential impacts of the revised core 4C dimensions on brand attachment and purchase intention, this paper verifies the transmission mechanism of "core dimensions - brand attachment - purchase intention". Drawing on Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory and the brand attachment scale developed by Thomson et al. (2005), this research introduces brand attachment into the study of cross-border business formats. It remedies the limitation that prior studies merely adopted satisfaction to assess consumer attitudes, and offers a new perspective for exploring consumer purchase behavior in mixed business formats. This paper also conducts an empirical analysis on the factors influencing consumer purchase motivation, which is supported by relevant studies on brand attachment from Park et al. (2010) and Batra et al. (2012).

Based on the above research questions, the objectives of this study are as follows:

- 1) Within the context of digital marketing, and grounded in the optimized 4C marketing theory, to identify the intensity of influence and core drivers of the four 4C dimensions on brand attachment and consumer purchase intention of vintage coffee.
- 2) To verify the mediating mechanism of brand attachment between the optimized 4C marketing mix and consumer purchase intention, and clarify the specific mediating type and effect value of each dimension.
- 3) To examine the moderating effect of solitude preference on the path of "brand attachment → purchase intention", and clarify the boundary conditions of the influence of brand attachment on consumer behavior.
- 4) Adopting a quantitative questionnaire survey research design, to uncover the influence mechanisms of vintage coffee consumption decision-making, and provide theoretical reference and practical basis for format innovation and marketing strategy optimization of vintage coffee brands.

## 3. Literature Review

### 3.1 Literature Review

#### 1) The Enhanced 4C Theory and Brand Attachment

The traditional 4C theory (Customer, Cost, Convenience, Communication) was proposed by Lauterborn in 1990. Given the characteristics of the vintage coffee shop sector, this study optimizes its dimensions as follows:

Experience Value (T): Replacing the broad concept of “customer needs,” this encompasses sensory, emotional, and social experiences, constituting the core competitive advantage of vintage coffee shops (Brakus et al., 2009). According to the experience economy theory (Pine & Gilmore, 2020), consumers are no longer satisfied with merely the functional value of products or services; they increasingly seek immersive experiences during the consumption process. Vintage coffee shops create unique multisensory experiences for consumers by cultivating a retro atmosphere and offering specialty coffee and vintage merchandise, which can evoke emotional resonance and thereby enhance brand attachment (P).

H1: Experiential value (T) has a significant positive impact on brand attachment (P) among vintage coffee shop customers.

Psychological costs (X): Focusing on intangible costs faced by consumers in vintage consumption—such as quality anxiety and environmental pressures—these have a greater impact on emotionally driven consumption than monetary costs (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). According to Perceived Risk Theory, consumers experience higher perceived risks when purchasing secondhand goods, including quality and hygiene risks. These risks translate into psychological costs, reducing consumers’ brand favorability and trust.

H2: Psychological costs (X) have a significant negative impact on brand attachment (P) among vintage coffee shop customers.

Spatial Convenience (B): Highlights the importance of store location, interior layout, and circulation design for experiential retail formats (Baker, 1986). According to environmental psychology theory, the physical environment directly influences consumers’ emotions and behavior. A well-designed spatial layout can reduce consumers’ cognitive load, enhance the fluidity of the shopping experience, and thereby strengthen brand attachment (P).

H3: Spatial convenience (B) has a significant positive effect on brand attachment (P) among Vintage Coffee customers.

Interactive Communication (H): Emphasizes two-way emotional interaction between the brand and consumers, rather than one-way information dissemination (Fournier, 1998). According to relationship marketing theory, positive interaction between the brand and consumers can establish emotional connections and foster brand relationships. Vintage coffee shops can enhance consumers’ sense of participation and belonging through offline events and the creation of customer communities, thereby increasing brand attachment (P).

H4: Interactive communication (H) has a significant positive effect on brand attachment (P) among customers of Vintage Coffee.

## 2) Brand Attachment and Purchase Intention

Brand attachment (P) refers to the deep emotional bond formed between consumers and a brand, encompassing affective, cognitive, and behavioral attachment (Thomson et al., 2005). Existing research indicates that brand attachment (P) plays a crucial mediating role between consumer experience and purchasing behavior, serving as a key factor influencing customer loyalty and repurchase intention (Park et al., 2010).

According to attachment theory, when consumers develop emotional attachment to a brand, they perceive that brand as part of their self-concept, exhibiting higher brand loyalty and purchase intention. In the context of vintage coffee shops, consumers’ emotional attachment to a brand translates into actual consumption behaviors, including repeat purchases, recommendations to others, and acceptance of price increases.

H5: Brand attachment (P) has a significant positive effect on the purchase intention (Y) of vintage coffee shop customers.

## 3) The Mediating Role of Brand Attachment

If experiential value (T), psychological cost (X), spatial convenience (B), and interactive communication (H) fail to resonate emotionally with target consumers or satisfy their psychological needs, then positive commercial outcomes will not be achieved. Brand attachment (P) plays a crucial role: on the one hand, it serves as a cognitive mediator, transforming external information into a meaningful framework for consumers; on the other hand, it acts as a filter, eliminating unnecessary content and highlighting the most essential elements, thereby facilitating consumer decision-making.

Based on the above analysis, this paper proposes the following mediation hypotheses:

H6: Brand attachment (P) mediates the relationship between the four optimized 4C dimensions and purchase intention (Y). H6a: Brand attachment (P) mediates the relationship between perceived value (T) and purchase intention (Y).

H6b: Brand attachment (P) mediates the relationship between psychological cost (X) and purchase intention (Y).

H6c: Brand attachment (P) mediates the relationship between spatial convenience (B) and purchase intention (Y).

H6d: Brand attachment (P) mediates the relationship between interactive communication (H) and purchase intention (Y).

#### 4) Moderating Role of Solitude Preference

Solitude Preference (D) refers to the extent to which consumers prefer to consume alone and immerse themselves in the experience (Coplan et al., 2013). According to solitude theory, individuals differ in their needs and preferences for solitude; those with a high solitude preference enjoy solitary time more and derive greater psychological satisfaction from it.

In the vintage coffee shop setting, consumers with a high preference for solitude (D) place greater emphasis on private, immersive consumption experiences; when they develop emotional attachment to a brand (P), they are more willing to translate this emotion into actual purchasing behavior. In contrast, consumers with a low preference for solitude (D) prioritize social experiences, and the influence of brand attachment (P) on their purchase intention (Y) is relatively weak.

H7: Solitude Preference (D) positively moderates the relationship between brand attachment (P) and purchase intention (Y).

### 3.2 Research Model

This paper proposes a theoretical framework consisting of seven hypotheses to clearly elucidate the influence mechanisms between independent and dependent variables. Hypothesis 5 (H5) further explores potential directional effects, while Hypothesis 7 (H7) examines the moderating role of individual traits on the path, thereby providing a more comprehensive explanation of the moderated mediating effect. At the same time, this model reflects the complex pathways through which vintage coffee shop settings influence consumers, as well as how these influences operate via the mediating role of “brand attachment (P)” and manifest in multifaceted, multilevel ways. In this context, vintage coffee shop settings do not directly influence consumer behavior but rather guide consumers’ final decisions by influencing the aforementioned mediators.

The research framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

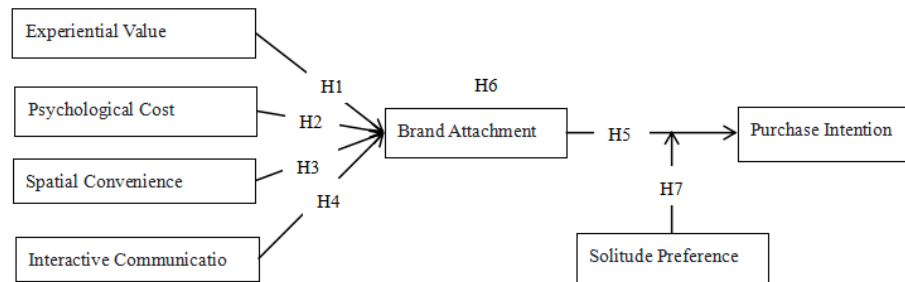


Figure 1 Research Framework

## 4. Materials and Methods

### 4.1 Research Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational research design. Quantitative analysis was conducted using SPSS 26.0 and the PROCESS plugin to analyze the collected data. Descriptive statistical analysis was performed on the demographic characteristics of the sample. For the study of consumers’ vintage coffee shopping behavior, the mean, standard deviation, and other measures were calculated for each variable to understand the overall situation and the central tendency of each variable. Reliability and validity testing ensured that the items accurately measured the target constructs through expert review and pilot testing; Correlation analysis calculated Pearson’s correlation coefficients between variables to determine whether linear, positive, or negative correlations existed and to assess their strength, thereby aiding subsequent regression analysis; multiple regression analysis examined the effects of optimizing the 4C dimensions (H1–H4) on consumer brand attachment (P) and the mediating mechanism of brand attachment (P) in consumer purchasing behavior (H5); Mediation analysis was conducted using the Process plugin (Model 4) to obtain the confidence interval for the mediating effect via the Bootstrap method (5,000 samples, 95% confidence level); Moderation effects were tested using the Process plugin (Model 1) for moderation analysis, with confidence intervals for the moderation effect obtained

via the Bootstrap method (5,000 samples, 95% confidence level). These analytical methods were employed to quantify the relationships and mechanisms of action among the variables.

#### 4.2 Research Instruments

The scale covers four core dimensions: independent variables, mediating variables, moderating variables, and dependent variables. The independent variables are the “Optimized 4C Dimensions,” which include experiential value (T), psychological cost (X), spatial convenience (B), and interactive communication (H); “brand attachment (P)” is the mediating variable; “preference for solitude (D)” is the moderating variable; “Purchase Intention (Y)” is the dependent variable. The item design for each dimension draws upon established scales developed by scholars to ensure the academic rigor and appropriateness of the measurement tool.

Specifically, “Experiential Value (T)” is based on the brand experience scale by Brakus et al. (2009), measuring three aspects: sensory experience, emotional experience, and social experience; “Psychological Cost (X)” draws on Sweeney and Soutar’s (2001) Perceived Value Scale, with items designed to reflect the characteristics of vintage clothing consumption; “Spatial Convenience (B)” draws on Baker’s (1986) Service Environment Scale, measuring three aspects: geographic location, internal layout, and circulation design; “Interactive Communication (H)” draws on Fournier (1998)’s Brand Relationship Scale and is measured across three dimensions: offline activities, community interaction, and feedback response; “Brand Attachment (P)” draws on Thomson et al. (2005)’s Brand Attachment Scale and is measured across three dimensions: emotional connection, self-consistency, and behavioral support; “Preference for Solitude (D)” is measured based on Coplan et al. (2013)’s Solitude Preference Scale, covering three dimensions: preference for solitude, experience of solitude, and duration of solitude; “Purchase Intention (Y)” is measured based on Ajzen (1991)’s Theory of Planned Behavior Scale, covering three dimensions: repurchase intention, recommendation intention, and price acceptance. Detailed dimensions are listed in Table 1.

**Table 1** Dimension Number

| Variable Type        | Variable Name                 | Number of Items |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Independent Variable | Experience Value (T)          | 4               |
| Independent Variable | Psychological Cost (X)        | 3               |
| Independent Variable | Spatial Convenience (B)       | 4               |
| Independent Variable | Interactive Communication (H) | 4               |
| Mediating Variable   | Brand Attachment (P)          | 4               |
| Moderating Variable  | Solitude Preference (D)       | 4               |
| Dependent Variable   | Purchase Intention (Y)        | 3               |

This study employs a five-point Likert scale: 1 represents “Strongly Disagree,” 2 represents “Somewhat Disagree,” 3 represents “Neutral,” 4 represents “Somewhat Agree,” and 5 represents “Strongly Agree.” The higher the score given by the respondent, the greater their level of agreement.

#### 4.3 Research Participants and Data Collection

The research subjects selected for this study were consumers with experience visiting vintage-themed coffee shops, and a non-probability sampling method known as “purposive sampling” was employed. The

application of this sampling method in research related to vintage consumption can be facilitated by data analysis tools provided by online platforms, such as targeted information pushes and targeted content publication in the “Vintage Coffee” topic section on “Xiaohongshu”, the “Vintage Shop Visits” comment section on “TikTok”, or “WeChat” communities for vintage enthusiasts.

This study employs a questionnaire survey method, distributing questionnaires via the Wenjuanxing platform to cover individuals of different genders, ages, educational levels, cities of residence, and income levels. Based on the fundamental principles of mediation and moderation effect analysis, and to ensure the validity and reliability of statistical inferences, the sample size is generally required to be at least 10 to 20 times the number of variables under study. This study involves a total of 26 primary assessment indicators. After excluding potential missing or outlier values, at least 300 valid samples are required to proceed to the next stage and to enhance the reliability, validity, and stability of the research results. The minimum sample size was calculated using a dual approach that combines the number of scale items with the statistical requirements for multiple groups, based on the formula  $n = k \times m$ . Here,  $n$  represents the basic minimum sample size. The final determination established a minimum sample size requirement of 260 and an ideal sample size of 390. Given an expected invalid questionnaire rate of 20%, the number of questionnaires to be distributed must therefore be at least 470.

#### 4.4 Sample

The questionnaire collection period was February–March 2026. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed. The questionnaires were distributed through the Wenjuanxing platform using a purposive sampling approach: a pre-screening question was set to verify whether respondents had actual consumption experience in vintage coffee shops, and only qualified participants who passed the screening could proceed to complete the full questionnaire. As a result, all 500 screened respondents completed the entire questionnaire, yielding a 100% completion rate among qualified participants. After excluding invalid samples, 450 valid questionnaires were obtained, accounting for 90% of the total. Among these, female respondents accounted for 74.9%, and male respondents accounted for 25.1%. Respondents aged 18–30 accounted for 77.8%, while 86.2% held a bachelor’s degree or higher, and 96.4% held an associate’s degree or higher. Regarding vintage coffee consumption, employees of private enterprises and full-time students were the primary consumers, accounting for 68.0%. Those with a monthly income between 5,001 and 10,000 yuan accounted for 58.4% of the sample and are the primary consumers of vintage-themed coffee.

#### 5. Results and Discussion

The scale is divided into 7 dimensions: Experiential Value (T), Psychological Cost (X), Spatial Convenience (B), Interactive Communication (H), Brand Attachment (P), Purchase Intention (Y), and Preference for Solitude (D). All Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  coefficients exceed the 0.79 standard, meeting the requirements; see Table 1 for details. Thus, this scale not only demonstrates good internal consistency but also effectively distinguishes the essential characteristics of the concepts it measures. The scale exhibits good internal consistency, structural stability, and measurement validity, effectively reflecting the concepts under investigation and the relationships among the dimensions, thereby enabling accurate and comprehensive evaluation.

**Table 2** Summary of Reliability Analysis

| Variable                      | Cronbach’s $\alpha$ | Number of topics |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Experience Value (T)          | 0.907               | 4                |
| Psychological Cost (X)        | 0.883               | 3                |
| Spatial Convenience (B)       | 0.920               | 4                |
| Interactive Communication (H) | 0.918               | 4                |
| Brand Attachment (P)          | 0.842               | 4                |
| Purchase Intention (Y)        | 0.793               | 3                |
| Solitude Preference (D)       | 0.947               | 4                |

To determine the suitability of factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) statistic and Bartlett’s sphericity test were conducted; the results are summarized in Table 3. After conducting a correlation analysis on the scale used in this study, the KMO value was found to be 0.876, which exceeds the standard of 0.8. This indicates that the scale has good internal consistency and potential higher-order structural validity. In the Bartlett’s sphericity test, approximate chi-square is 7907.044, degrees of freedom is 325, and  $P < 0.001$ , indicating that the dimensions are correlated with one another,

thus supporting the conduct of exploratory factor analysis.

**Table 3** Summary of KMO and Bartlett's test

|                               |                    |          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| KMO                           |                    | 0.876    |
| approximate chi-square        |                    | 7907.044 |
| Bartlett's test of sphericity | Degrees of freedom | 325      |
|                               | significance       | 0.000    |

Based on the results of the KMO test and Bartlett's sphericity test, the selected data meet the requirements for factor analysis. Here, principal component analysis is used to extract common factors, and Kaiser's varimax rotation is applied to enhance the explanatory power of each dimension.

Based on the results of the KMO test and Bartlett's sphericity test, the selected data meet the requirements for factor analysis. In this study, principal component analysis was used to extract common factors, and Kaiser's varimax rotation was applied to enhance the explanatory power of each dimension. Seven common factors were extracted.

As shown in Table 4, the factor loadings for all 26 items are greater than 0.638, and high loadings are observed only on the corresponding common factors, with no cross-loadings. The seven extracted common factors correspond to: Common Factor 1 = Brand Attachment (P), Common Factor 2 = Purchase Intention (Y), Factor 3 = Preference for Solitude (D), Factor 4 = Spatial Convenience (B), Factor 5 = Interactive Communication (H), Factor 6 = Experiential Value (T), and Factor 7 = Psychological Cost (X). These fully align with the seven dimensions predicted by theory, indicating that the scale possesses good construct validity.

**Table 4** Summary table of the rotated component matrix  
ingredient

|    | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     |
|----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| P1 | 0.660 |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| P2 | 0.684 |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| P3 | 0.675 |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| P4 | 0.638 |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Y1 |       | 0.785 |       |       |       |       |       |
| Y2 |       | 0.737 |       |       |       |       |       |
| Y3 |       | 0.792 |       |       |       |       |       |
| D1 |       |       | 0.929 |       |       |       |       |
| D2 |       |       | 0.932 |       |       |       |       |
| D3 |       |       | 0.920 |       |       |       |       |
| D4 |       |       | 0.927 |       |       |       |       |
| B1 |       |       |       | 0.891 |       |       |       |
| B2 |       |       |       | 0.881 |       |       |       |
| B3 |       |       |       | 0.870 |       |       |       |
| B4 |       |       |       | 0.877 |       |       |       |
| H1 |       |       |       |       | 0.888 |       |       |
| H2 |       |       |       |       | 0.889 |       |       |
| H3 |       |       |       |       | 0.877 |       |       |
| H4 |       |       |       |       | 0.859 |       |       |
| T1 |       |       |       |       |       | 0.876 |       |
| T2 |       |       |       |       |       | 0.881 |       |
| T3 |       |       |       |       |       | 0.843 |       |
| T4 |       |       |       |       |       | 0.868 |       |
| X1 |       |       |       |       |       |       | 0.883 |
| X2 |       |       |       |       |       |       | 0.893 |
| X3 |       |       |       |       |       |       | 0.868 |

As shown in Table 5, Experience Value (T), Spatial Convenience (B), and Interactive Communication (H) all exhibit a significant positive correlation with Purchase Intention (Y), with correlation coefficients of 0.358, 0.367, and 0.372, respectively; Psychological Cost (X) exhibits a significant negative correlation with Purchase Intention (Y), with a correlation coefficient of -0.324. This indicates that, within the vintage coffee shop environment, content optimization strategies and interaction methods have a significant influence on consumers'

purchasing decisions and provide a basis for further mediation analysis. A test for multicollinearity revealed that the data used in this study do not exhibit multicollinearity issues; the maximum correlation coefficient among variables in the correlation matrix is 0.621, which is far below the multicollinearity threshold (generally considered to be 0.7 or higher). Furthermore, when constructing the multiple linear regression model, the mean value of the variance inflation factor (VIF) for the selected independent variables was less than 1.2, indicating that there are no strong linear relationships among these explanatory variables.

**Table 5** Summary of Correlation analysis matrix

|   | 1        | 2        | 3       | 4       | 5       | 6       | 7 |
|---|----------|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---|
| T | 1        |          |         |         |         |         |   |
| X | -0.312** | 1        |         |         |         |         |   |
| B | 0.325**  | -0.308** | 1       |         |         |         |   |
| H | 0.301**  | -0.295** | 0.317** | 1       |         |         |   |
| P | 0.412**  | -0.385** | 0.426** | 0.397** | 1       |         |   |
| Y | 0.358**  | -0.324** | 0.367** | 0.372** | 0.621** | 1       |   |
| D | 0.102*   | -0.095*  | 0.112*  | 0.108*  | 0.124** | 0.118** | 1 |

Note: \* Significantly correlated at the 0.05 level (two-tailed); \*\* Significantly correlated at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

This study employs a two-level regression analysis framework for a comprehensive investigation. Based on this framework, we analyze the impact of optimized 4C dimensions on consumer brand attachment (P), and further examine how brand attachment (P) influences consumer purchase intention (Y) and its underlying mechanisms. To enhance the persuasiveness of the results, we use multiple linear regression analysis to test each hypothesis (H1 – H5) when examining the main hypotheses.

#### Testing the Main Effects of the Optimized 4C Dimensions on Brand Attachment (P)

Using multiple linear regression, brand attachment (P) was set as the dependent variable, with experiential value (T), psychological cost (X), spatial convenience (B), and interactive communication (H) selected as the main independent variables. Additionally, factors such as gender, age, educational level, monthly income, and vintage coffee consumption frequency were included as control variables.

As shown in Table 6, the standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) for experiential value (T) is 0.238( $t=5.213, p<0.001$ ), indicating high significance and a positive correlation; Hypothesis H1 is supported.

The standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) for psychological cost (X) is -0.221, ( $t=-4.622, p<0.001$ ), indicating a close relationship between psychological cost (X) and brand attachment (P), with a clear negative correlation. Hypothesis H2 is supported;

The standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) for spatial convenience (B) is 0.254, ( $t=5.587, p<0.001$ ). This indicates very high significance at the 1% level, Hypothesis H3 is supported;

The standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) for interactive communication (H) is 0.229, ( $t=4.702, p<0.001$ ). Thus, Hypothesis H4 is supported.

**Table 6** Summary of Regression Analyses (Dependent Variable: Brand Attachment P)

| Variable | $\beta$ | t      | p     | VIF   | R <sup>2</sup> | F      |
|----------|---------|--------|-------|-------|----------------|--------|
| T        | 0.238   | 5.213  | 0.000 | 1.188 |                |        |
| X        | -0.221  | -4.622 | 0.000 | 1.161 | 0.345          | 58.624 |
| B        | 0.254   | 5.587  | 0.000 | 1.198 |                |        |
| H        | 0.229   | 4.702  | 0.000 | 1.182 |                |        |

#### Testing the Main Effect of Brand Attachment (P) on Purchase Intention (Y)

The binary regression model constructed in this study treats “Purchase Intention (Y)” as the dependent variable and “Brand Attachment (P)” as the main independent variable. Control variables were then included, and multivariate statistical methods were used to analyze and validate the data.

According to Table 7, brand attachment (P) has a very strong influence on purchase intention (Y) ( $r=0.621$ ), indicating a strong correlation between the two. The adjusted coefficient of determination  $R^2$  is 0.384, suggesting that the regression equation provides a good explanation and possesses strong statistical significance and predictive power.

The results indicate that the regression model is valid. The F-test statistic is 281.325, with a corresponding p-value far below 0.001, indicating a significant correlation between brand attachment (P) and purchase intention. The standard  $\beta$  coefficient for brand attachment (P) is 0.621, and the corresponding t-test statistic is 16.773 with a p-value less than 0.001; thus, Hypothesis H5 is accepted.

Table 7 Summary of Regression Analyses(Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention Y)

| Variable | $\beta$ | t      | p     | VIF | R <sup>2</sup> | F       |
|----------|---------|--------|-------|-----|----------------|---------|
| Constant |         | 4.242  | 0.000 | 1   | 0.386          | 281.325 |
| P        | 0.621   | 16.773 | 0.000 | 1   |                |         |

#### Testing for Mediation Effects

This paper employs a mediating effect analysis to examine how the optimized 4C elements influence brand attachment (P), which in turn affects consumers' purchase intentions. It also establishes a theoretical model to illustrate the relationships among the variables and how they function. The discussion primarily focuses on experiential value (T), psychological cost (X), spatial convenience (B), and interactive communication (H), analyzing how these factors ultimately lead consumers to make purchase decisions through the mediating role of brand attachment (P), and testing hypotheses H6a through H6d.

#### Three-Step Approach

The mediating role of brand attachment (P) was tested using a three-step regression model, with the main results presented in Table 8. Three dimensions (experiential value, spatial convenience, interactive communication) exerted positive influences on, while psychological cost exerted a negative influence on consumers' purchase intention (Y), and in the regression equations, they all achieved a very high level of significance ( $p < 0.001$ ), thereby laying a solid foundation for further mediation studies and providing strong evidence.

In the second stage, regression analysis was employed to examine the relationship between the four main independent variables and the key mediating variable, "brand attachment (P)." The results of the regression analysis indicate that all independent variables are closely associated with "brand attachment (P)" ( $p < 0.001$ ), which plays a crucial role in the subsequent study of the mediating effect.

The mediation analysis examined the pathway through which brand attachment (P) influences consumer purchasing behavior. The results indicated a positive correlation between brand attachment (P) and purchase intention (Y), with a standardized regression coefficient of  $\beta = 0.537$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), demonstrating a statistically significant and practical relationship between the two.

Empirical analysis revealed that experiential value (T), spatial convenience (B), and interactive communication (H) all have a significant impact on consumers' purchase intentions ( $P < 0.05$ ), and the standardized  $\beta$  values for these three variables gradually decrease as the model level increases. This indicates that brand attachment (P) plays a crucial mediating role between these three factors and consumer purchasing behavior.

Table 8 Summary of Regression Results for the Three-Step Method of Perceived Value Mediation

| Process | DV | IV | Beta   | t      | p     | Model Fit Indices                                       |
|---------|----|----|--------|--------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 1       | Y  | T  | 0.215  | 4.726  | 0     | R=0.527<br>R <sup>2</sup> =0.278<br>F=42.837<br>p=0.000 |
|         |    | X  | -0.178 | -4.012 | 0     |                                                         |
|         |    | B  | 0.224  | 4.935  | 0     |                                                         |
|         |    | H  | 0.229  | 5.021  | 0     |                                                         |
|         |    | T  | 0.238  | 5.213  | 0     |                                                         |
| 2       | P  | X  | -0.221 | -4.622 | 0     | R=0.587<br>R <sup>2</sup> =0.345<br>F=58.624<br>p=0.000 |
|         |    | B  | 0.254  | 5.587  | 0     |                                                         |
|         |    | H  | 0.229  | 4.702  | 0     |                                                         |
|         |    | T  | 0.087  | 1.982  | 0.048 |                                                         |
| 3       | Y  | T  | 0.087  | 1.982  | 0.048 | R=0.654<br>R <sup>2</sup> =0.428                        |

|  |   |       |        |       |                     |
|--|---|-------|--------|-------|---------------------|
|  | X | 0.065 | 1.547  | 0.123 | F=66.446<br>p=0.000 |
|  | B | 0.095 | 2.174  | 0.03  |                     |
|  | H | 0.102 | 2.341  | 0.02  |                     |
|  | P | 0.537 | 12.684 | 0     |                     |

## 2) Bootstrap Robustness Test

We conducted 5,000 bootstrap resamples to examine the stability and reliability of the mediating effects. The results show that none of the four main independent variables fell outside the confidence intervals, indicating that their mediating roles in the formation of brand attachment (P) are significant and statistically valid. This is consistent with the findings of the three-step mediation model; The data reveal that the influence of each variable on brand attachment (P) generally exceeds 50%, with psychological cost (X) and experiential value (T) playing the largest roles (slightly above 60%). In the marketing of vintage coffee, brand attachment (P) serves as a mediating variable that plays a crucial role in consumers' purchasing behavior.

Overall, based on the results obtained using the three-step method and the Bootstrap method, all mediation hypotheses in this study are accepted. Hypotheses H6a – H6d are all supported.

**Table 9** Results of the Bootstrap mediation analysis (5,000 samples)

| IV | Mediation Effect Variable | SE    | LLCI   | ULCI   | Proportion of Mediation Effect |
|----|---------------------------|-------|--------|--------|--------------------------------|
| T  | 0.131                     | 0.024 | 0.089  | 0.182  | 60.93%                         |
| X  | -0.113                    | 0.022 | -0.189 | -0.060 | 63.48%                         |
| B  | 0.136                     | 0.025 | 0.092  | 0.189  | 58.88%                         |
| H  | 0.123                     | 0.023 | 0.083  | 0.172  | 53.71%                         |

## Testing the Moderating Effect

We used stratified regression to test the moderating effect of the tendency to spend time alone (D) on the relationship between brand attachment (P) and purchase intention (Y).

The regression coefficient for the interaction term was significant ( $\beta = 0.145$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with  $\Delta R^2 = 0.021$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that the tendency to be alone (D) positively moderates the relationship between brand attachment (P) and purchase intention (Y). Hypothesis H7 is supported.

A simple slope test revealed that in the high solitary tendency group (M+1SD), the effect of brand attachment (P) on purchase intention (Y) was 0.682 ( $p < 0.001$ ), while in the low solitary tendency group (M-1SD), it was 0.548 ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 10** Summary of Hierarchical Regression Results: Moderating Role of Solitude Preference

| Process | DV | IV       | $\beta$ | t     | p     | Model Fit Indices            |
|---------|----|----------|---------|-------|-------|------------------------------|
| 1       | Y  | constant | 0       | 4.242 | 0.000 | $R^2 = 0.386$<br>$R = 0.621$ |

|   |          |       |        |       |                                                          |
|---|----------|-------|--------|-------|----------------------------------------------------------|
|   |          |       |        |       | F=281.325<br>p=0.000                                     |
|   | P        | 0.621 | 16.773 | 0.000 |                                                          |
|   | constant | 0     | 0      | 1     |                                                          |
| 2 | P        | 0.618 | 16.624 | 0.000 | R <sup>2</sup> =0.386<br>F=142.158<br>P=0.000            |
|   | D        | 0.057 | 1.532  | 0.126 |                                                          |
|   | Constant | 0     | 0      | 1     |                                                          |
| 3 | P        | 0.615 | 16.897 | 0.000 | R=0.640<br>R <sup>2</sup> =0.410<br>F=103.247<br>P=0.000 |
|   | D        | 0.054 | 1.498  | 0.135 |                                                          |
|   | P × D    | 0.145 | 3.986  | 0.000 |                                                          |

Based on the above research and after extensive review of relevant literature, the proposed hypotheses were empirically tested, and all hypotheses were supported and proven to be valid.

**Table 11** Summary of research hypothesis results

| Hypothesis | Hypothesis Content                                                                                                         | Test Result                         |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| H1         | Experiential value (T) has a significant positive impact on brand attachment (P) among vintage coffee shop customers.      | Supported                           |
| H2         | Psychological costs (X) have a significant negative impact on brand attachment (P) among vintage coffee shop customers.    | Supported                           |
| H3         | Spatial convenience (B) has a significant positive effect on brand attachment (P) among Vintage Coffee customers.          | Supported                           |
| H4         | Interactive communication (H) has a significant positive effect on brand attachment (P) among customers of Vintage Coffee. | Supported                           |
| H5         | Brand attachment (P) has a significant positive effect on the purchase intention (Y) of vintage coffee shop customers.     | Supported                           |
| H6a        | Brand attachment (P) mediates the relationship between perceived value (T) and purchase intention (Y)                      | Supported<br>(Partial<br>Mediation) |
| H6b        | Brand attachment (P) mediates the relationship between psychological cost (X) and purchase intention (Y)                   | Supported<br>(Full<br>Mediation)    |
| H6c        | Brand attachment (P) mediates the relationship between spatial convenience (B) and purchase intention (Y)                  | Supported<br>(Partial<br>Mediation) |

| Hypothesis | Hypothesis Content                                                                                                     | Test Result                   |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| H6d        | Brand attachment (P) mediates the relationship between interactive communication (H) and purchase intention (Y).       | Supported (Partial Mediation) |
| H7         | Solitude Preference (D) positively moderates the relationship between brand attachment (P) and purchase intention (Y). | Supported                     |

## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1 The Impact of Optimizing the 4C Dimensions on Brand Attachment (P)

In the context of vintage coffee shops, the levels of experiential value (T), spatial convenience (B), and interactive communication (H) influence consumers' perceptions of the brand's value. Whether through static information presentation or dynamic community building, better alignment with the characteristics of the target consumer base will make consumers more willing to accept the brand's content and actively engage with it. This also illustrates the importance of prioritizing consumer experience in the experience economy and offers insights into how to enhance the effectiveness of such experiences.

Existing research confirms that both experiential value (T) ( $\beta = 0.238, p < 0.001$ ) and spatial convenience (B) ( $\beta = 0.254, p < 0.001$ ) play significant roles in promoting brand attachment (P). According to relevant perspectives in cognitive psychology and environmental psychology, when the scene is accurately crafted and the program content aligns with the audience's aesthetic preferences, the audience's information processing speed accelerates. This makes them more likely to experience positive emotions due to emotional resonance, thereby increasing their tendency to perceive the brand as authentic.

The results indicate a strong correlation between the cultural characteristics of the target market and consumers' perceived value of brand content ( $\beta = 0.229, p < 0.001$ ), consistent with the expectations of relationship marketing theory. Further research suggests that incorporating relevant cultural symbols or visual elements into brand operations can evoke stronger emotional resonance among audiences, thereby enhancing their recognition of the overall quality of the platform's content.

Existing research indicates that psychological cost (X) ( $\beta = -0.221, p < 0.001$ ) has a negative impact on users' perceived brand value. In experiential consumption scenarios, designs that account for specific consumer psychology are more effective at improving user experience than traditional static information displays. Furthermore, designing based on the psychological characteristics of the target audience not only meets their need for a sense of social belonging but also enhances emotional connections and fosters broader interpersonal relationships through immersive communication, thereby increasing people's recognition of the brand's value.

### 6.2 The Effect of Brand Attachment (P) on Purchase Intention (Y)

This study indicates that brand attachment (P) has a positive effect on consumer purchasing behavior ( $\beta = 0.621, p < 0.001$ ), which is consistent with the findings of other scholars (e.g., Thomson et al., 2005; Park et al., 2010). Consumers' purchasing decisions are determined by two factors: "benefits" and "costs." Here, "benefits" refer to the speed of information acquisition and the intensity of emotional experiences, while "costs" include monetary expenditure, time spent, and trust risks. When "benefits" exceed "costs"—that is, when consumers perceive the benefits gained from consumption to outweigh the costs incurred—they develop a willingness to purchase and ultimately engage in purchasing behavior.

### 6.3 The Mediating Role of Brand Attachment (P)

Brand attachment (P) serves as the primary mediating variable. In the context of the experience economy, among the various factors determining consumer purchase intent, brand attachment (P) plays a crucial bridging role (H6a – H6d were all validated). Although traditional strategies based on the 4C theory can help improve a product's market acceptance, they are ineffective in prompting customers to actually make a purchase decision. Even when the optimization of experience and spatial aspects is already high, if emotional or functional value is not effectively communicated, it will not lead to an increase in sales volume.

The influence of experiential value (T), spatial convenience (B), and interactive communication (H) on consumer purchase decisions operates through brand attachment (P) (Hypotheses H6a, H6c, H6d). In fact, the characteristics of interactive communication (H) not only make it easier for consumers to perceive the value of the service or product itself—thereby increasing the price they are willing to pay—but also play a role in consumers’ purchasing decisions. This is the distinct role that interactive communication (H) plays:

- 1) It can strengthen emotional bonds and a sense of social belonging among people, thereby fostering deep emotional attachment to the service or product and an understanding of its importance;
- 2) Behaviors that align with and effectively respond to consumer needs are often perceived as a sign of trustworthiness, helping to win the trust of potential customers and prompting them to make a purchase decision.

#### 6.4 The Moderating Role of Solitude Preference (D)

Solitude Preference (D) plays a positive moderating role in the relationship between brand attachment (P) and willingness to pay (Y) ( $\beta = 0.145$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). A simple slope comparison shows that when consumers have a higher preference for solitude (D), brand attachment (P) has a greater influence on their purchase intention (Y) (0.682) compared to when consumers have a lower preference for solitude (D), where brand attachment (P) has a smaller influence on their purchase intention (Y) (0.548). This suggests that individuals who prefer to shop alone and enjoy the shopping process are more likely to translate their brand preference into purchasing behavior. This finding provides important insights for Vintage Coffee’s market positioning and the development of related marketing campaigns.

#### 7. Limitations and future research directions

The study sample has certain limitations

the selected subjects are core user groups from major Chinese cities—primarily highly educated urban youth. However, this does not represent the purchasing habits and demand characteristics of middle-aged and elderly individuals, nor does it cover the diverse situations in international markets. Future research could:

- 1) Increase the sample size and modify data collection methods, conducting surveys with representative consumers in other countries
- 2) Incorporate demographic factors such as age distribution and income levels, and use time-series analysis to examine the role and trends of the optimized 4C dimensions in brand performance

The measurement of variables is not fully standardized

experiential value (T)” and “interactive communication (H)” are two commonly used terms, but further research is needed regarding their specific meanings and impacts; issues such as “product fit” and “service localization” have also not been given sufficient attention. Most studies on brand attachment (P) provide general descriptions rather than specific analyses of individual aspects, failing to adequately explain the respective mechanisms of functional and emotional value or the relationship between them. In future research, the following approaches could be taken:

- 1) Improve variable selection by incorporating the degree of product and service localization as primary independent variables into the model, and use multidimensional brand attachment (i.e., functional and emotional) to explain the underlying reasons.
- 2) Based on cultural factors and individual preferences, discuss potential interactions and limitations between them to develop a more comprehensive theoretical framework and enhance predictive power.

Shortcomings in contextual analysis

- 1) The scope of the study is too narrow, making it difficult to systematically compare the effectiveness of marketing practices across different scenarios and identify their distinctions
- 2) Insufficient consideration was given to platform characteristics. Future research could consider increasing the volume of ad placements across multiple platforms.

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