# The Empirical Study on New Media Marketing of Three Squirrels' Online Community Platform Based on the 4I Theory

Yijia Sun

International Chinese College, Rangsit University, Thailand
Email: yiji.s66@rsu.ac.th

**Abstract**

In the new media era, consumer attention has become fragmented and traditional firm-centered marketing logic struggles to drive engagement on online community platforms. Grounded in the 4I theory and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, this study examines how four marketing characteristics of Three Squirrels' online community--entertainment (interesting), benefits, interaction, and personalization (individuality)--influence consumers' purchase intention, and tests whether brand identification mediates these relationships. An online questionnaire was distributed to consumers who follow or have participated in Three Squirrels' Weibo, WeChat, Xiaohongshu, and Douyin communities; 225 responses were collected and 202 valid responses were retained for analysis. Reliability and validity tests, exploratory factor analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, observed-variable structural equation modeling (SEM), and bootstrap mediation tests were conducted. The results show that entertainment, benefits, interaction, and personalization all have significant positive effects on brand identification. Brand identification has a significant positive effect on purchase intention (Std. beta = 0.616, $p < 0.001$). Bootstrap mediation tests indicate significant indirect effects for all four 4I dimensions. The SEM fit results are mixed rather than uniformly excellent, so the structural findings are interpreted cautiously.

***Keywords:*** *4I Theory, Three Squirrels, New Media Marketing, Brand Identification, Purchase Intention*

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background

The continuous improvement of household consumption capacity and the upgrading of dietary structure have positioned leisure food as a fast-growing segment of the Chinese food industry, with the snack-food market continuing to expand in recent years (Statista, 2025). As consumers increasingly value brand image, product quality, and consumption experience, the leisure-food sector has accelerated its migration from traditional offline channels to online e-commerce and new media platforms. The diffusion of mobile internet and the maturation of social platforms such as Weibo, Xiaohongshu, Douyin, and WeChat Official Accounts have transformed these platforms into the main channels through which firms communicate, interact, and build brand relationships with consumers (China Internet Network Information Center, 2025).

Three Squirrels, as a representative brand in the Chinese leisure-food industry, has long emphasized online communication, content marketing on multiple platforms, and brand-community operation to build a distinctive digital communication ecosystem, and its 2025 annual report describes an integrated full-category, full-channel, and brand-retail strategy (Three Squirrels Co., Ltd., 2026). However, in a new media environment characterized by information overload, fragmented attention, and content homogenization, how brands can continuously stimulate consumer interest through precise and engaging content—and thereby enhance brand influence and user stickiness—has become an urgent practical issue.

Traditional firm-centered marketing theories struggle to fully accommodate the communication features and user-behavior logic of the new media context. Constructing evaluative dimensions from the consumer's perspective has therefore become a research priority. The 4I theory, a consumer-experience-centered framework, emphasizes that brand communication should be evaluated along four dimensions—Interesting (entertainment), Interests (benefits), Interaction, and Individuality (personalization)—and matches the trends of new media communication, where short-video and social-community dissemination shift consumer demand from information-driven to emotion- and entertainment-driven content (Chen & Li, 2024; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Schultz & Schultz, 2004). An empirical study of Three Squirrels' new media community marketing under the 4I framework therefore carries both theoretical and practical value.

1.2 Research Objectives

Grounded in the 4I theory and the S-O-R framework, this study has three objectives:

1) To examine the direct effects of the four 4I dimensions (entertainment, benefits, interaction, personalization) of Three Squirrels' online community marketing on consumers' brand identification.
2) To verify the effect of brand identification on purchase intention.
3) To test the mediating role of brand identification between the 4I dimensions and purchase intention.

1.3 Research Significance

Theoretically, this study extends the 4I theory to the leisure-food online-community context by integrating it with the S-O-R framework and introducing brand identification as a mediating mechanism, thereby clarifying the cognitive-affective path from marketing stimuli to purchase response. Practically, the empirical evidence drawn from Three Squirrels offers small- and medium-sized leisure-food firms data-driven guidance on how to design entertaining content, configure benefit-oriented strategies, and operate high-frequency interaction so as to deepen brand identification and convert online attention into purchase intention.

## 2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Core Concepts and S-O-R Foundation

Based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, external environmental stimuli affect individuals' internal psychological states, which further lead to behavioral responses (Eroglu et al., 2001; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). In this study, the four 4I characteristics of Three Squirrels' online community serve as external Stimulus (S), brand identification functions as the internal Organism (O), and purchase intention represents the final behavioral Response (R). The framework implies that the effects of the 4I marketing dimensions on purchase intention operate, at least in part, through the mediating process of brand identification.

The 4I theory, introduced in Schultz and Schultz's integrated-marketing communication literature, identifies four consumer-centered dimensions of digital marketing communication: Interesting (entertainment), Interests (benefits), Interaction, and Individuality (personalization) (Schultz & Schultz, 2004). Entertainment refers to whether the content is attractive and topical, capable of capturing attention and arousing emotional resonance; benefits refer to the perceived practical returns conveyed by the content, such as price advantages, promotional offers, quality assurance, and health attributes; interaction refers to the depth of two-way communication between brand and user, including comment replies, livestream interaction, and community operation; personalization refers to whether the content and service meet consumers' differentiated preferences through targeted recommendations or customized communication.

Brand identification, rooted in social-identity theory, refers to the consumer's perceived oneness with, or psychological belonging to, a brand (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). When consumers identify with a brand, they tend to view the brand's image as an extension of their self-concept and are more likely to develop favorable attitudes, emotional attachment, and supportive behavior, including purchase decisions (Ahearne et al., 2005; Keller, 1993). In social-media environments, brand identification is shaped not only by one-way information reception but also by participatory and relational experiences (Hollebeek et al., 2014), making it a particularly suitable mediator linking community-based marketing stimuli to behavioral intentions.

2.2 Research Hypotheses

2.2.1 Effects of the 4I Dimensions on Brand Identification

In an attention-scarce media environment, entertaining content—humorous narration, anthropomorphic IP imagery, and visually appealing creative—captures users' initial attention and arouses positive affect, fostering familiarity and liking that translate into brand identification. Benefits convey clear and credible value returns through promotional offers, membership privileges, and quality cues, helping consumers form rational, favorable evaluations that anchor identification. Interaction, through comment replies, lucky-draw events, topic participation, and user-generated content campaigns, strengthens users' sense of participation and belonging, deepening the affective bond with the brand. Personalization, through user tagging and behavior-based recommendation, signals respect for consumers' differentiated preferences and is generally expected to enhance brand identification. Accordingly:

H1: Entertainment of Three Squirrels' online community has a significant positive effect on brand identification.

H2: Benefits of Three Squirrels' online community have a significant positive effect on brand identification.

H3: Interaction of Three Squirrels' online community has a significant positive effect on brand identification.

H4: Personalization of Three Squirrels' online community has a significant positive effect on brand identification.

2.2.2 Effect of Brand Identification on Purchase Intention

Brand identification has been widely documented as a strong predictor of consumers' supportive behaviors, including word-of-mouth, loyalty, and purchase intention (Ahearne et al., 2005; Keller, 1993). In leisure-food consumption, purchase decisions often carry affective and social attributes, so brand identification provides the psychological foundation that lowers decision-making barriers and drives purchase intention. Thus:

H5: Brand identification has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.

2.2.3 Mediating Role of Brand Identification

Under the S-O-R framework, the 4I community-marketing characteristics act as external stimuli that shape consumers' internal cognitive-affective state, which in turn drives behavioral response. Brand identification, as a key internal organism variable, transmits the impact of marketing stimuli to purchase intention. Therefore:

H6: Brand identification mediates the relationship between entertainment and purchase intention.

H7: Brand identification mediates the relationship between benefits and purchase intention.

H8: Brand identification mediates the relationship between interaction and purchase intention.

H9: Brand identification mediates the relationship between personalization and purchase intention.

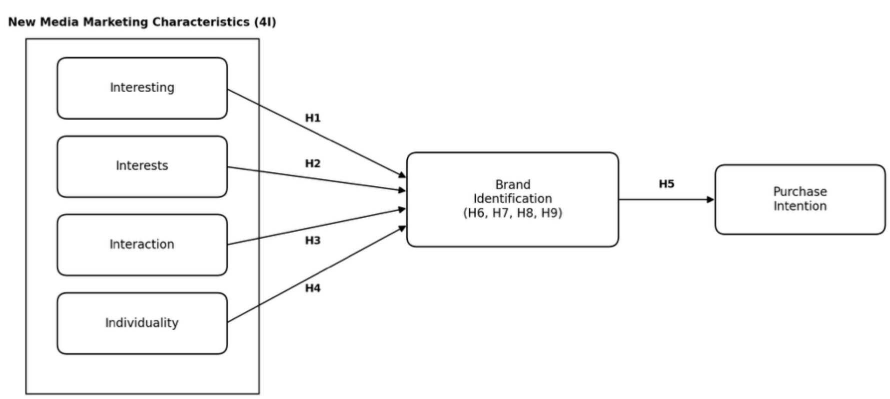


**Figure 1** Theoretical Research Model

## 3. Methodology

3.1 Measurement Scales

All measurement items were adapted from validated academic scales and translated into Chinese using a back-translation procedure. A five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) was used for all constructs. The scale structure is summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1** Measurement Scales

| Construct | Dimensions | Number of Items | Adapted Source |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4I Marketing Characteristics | Entertainment (IN), Benefits (VA), Interaction (IT), Personalization (ID) | 13 | Chen and Li (2024); Schultz and Schultz (2004) |
| Brand Identification (BI) | Single dimension | 4 | Ahearne et al. (2005); Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) |
| Purchase Intention (PI) | Single dimension | 4 | Dodds et al. (1991) |

3.2 Data Collection

An online questionnaire was distributed via Chinese social platforms (WeChat, Xiaohongshu, Weibo, and Douyin). The target respondents were consumers who follow or have participated in Three Squirrels' online community platforms; a screening question was used to retain only respondents with relevant brand-contact or purchase experience. A total of 225 questionnaires were returned, and 202 valid responses were retained after removing incomplete, straight-lined, or logically inconsistent responses. As shown by the demographic distribution, the sample is slightly skewed toward female respondents (57.43%); 70.29% of respondents are aged 18–35; 86.63% hold a college diploma or higher; company employees form the largest occupational group (38.12%); and monthly disposable income is distributed across all brackets, with 24.26% earning RMB 10,000–20,000. The sample profile is consistent with the core user base of new media community platforms in China and aligns with Three Squirrels' target market.

3.3 Data Analysis

SPSS 26.0 was used for descriptive statistics, reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha), exploratory factor analysis (KMO and Bartlett's sphericity test), and Pearson correlation analysis. Based on the final retained measurement items, construct scores were calculated and an observed-variable structural equation model (SEM), equivalent to a construct-score path model, was estimated to test the hypothesized relationships and report model-fit indices. The mediating role of brand identification was examined within the SEM path model using a percentile bootstrap test with 5,000 resamples; the 95% confidence interval (CI) was used as the significance criterion.

## 4. Empirical Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 summarizes the demographic profile of the 202 valid respondents. The sample is slightly female-dominated (57.43%), with 70.29% aged 18–35, 86.63% holding a college diploma or above, and the largest occupational group being company employees (38.12%). Monthly disposable income is distributed across all brackets, with the RMB 10,000–20,000 group accounting for the largest share (24.26%). This profile is consistent with Three Squirrels' target market of young, well-educated, financially stable consumers in the leisure-food sector.

**Table 2** Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 202)

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 86 | 42.57 |
| | Female | 116 | 57.43 |
| Age | Under 18 | 17 | 8.42 |
| | 18–25 | 42 | 20.79 |
| | 26–30 | 58 | 28.71 |
| | 31–35 | 42 | 20.79 |
| | 36–45 | 35 | 17.33 |
| | Above 45 | 8 | 3.96 |
| Education | High school or below | 24 | 11.88 |

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Junior college | 70 | 34.65 |
| | Bachelor's degree | 90 | 44.55 |
| | Master's degree | 15 | 7.43 |
| | Doctoral degree | 3 | 1.49 |
| Occupation | Full-time student | 24 | 11.88 |
| | Civil servant | 18 | 8.91 |
| | Company employee | 77 | 38.12 |
| | Public institution staff | 30 | 14.85 |
| | SOE / central enterprise | 29 | 14.36 |
| | Freelancer | 24 | 11.88 |
| Monthly Disposable Income (RMB) | Below 3,000 | 44 | 21.78 |
| | 3,000–7,000 | 47 | 23.27 |
| | 7,000–10,000 | 44 | 21.78 |
| | 10,000–20,000 | 49 | 24.26 |
| | Above 20,000 | 18 | 8.91 |

4.2 Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of each construct. As shown in Table 3, the alpha coefficients of entertainment, benefits, interaction, personalization, brand identification, and purchase intention are all acceptable for subsequent analysis. One brand-identification item (BI4) shows a relatively low corrected item-total correlation (CITC = 0.340), which is below the commonly recommended 0.40 reference point. However, the overall reliability of the brand-identification construct remains acceptable (Cronbach's alpha = 0.770), and BI4 was retained to preserve the theoretical coverage of consumers' brand-identification perception. This item is therefore acknowledged as a measurement limitation and should be refined in future research.

**Table 3** Reliability Analysis Results

| Dimension | Item | Corrected Item-Total Correlation (CITC) | Cronbach's α |
|---|---|---|---|
| Entertainment | IN1 | 0.740 | 0.894 |
| | IN2 | 0.709 | |
| | IN3 | 0.746 | |
| | IN4 | 0.737 | |
| | IN5 | 0.765 | |
| Benefits | VA1 | 0.645 | 0.818 |
| | VA2 | 0.699 | |
| | VA3 | 0.669 | |
| Interaction | IT1 | 0.647 | 0.823 |
| | IT2 | 0.705 | |
| | IT3 | 0.682 | |
| Personalization | ID1 | 0.646 | 0.784 |
| | ID2 | 0.646 | |
| Brand Identification | BI1 | 0.644 | 0.770 |
| | BI2 | 0.697 | |
| | BI3 | 0.637 | |

| Dimension | Item | Corrected Item-Total Correlation (CITC) | Cronbach's α |
|---|---|---|---|
| | BI4 | 0.340 | |
| Purchase Intention | PI1 | 0.721 | 0.883 |
| | PI2 | 0.765 | |
| | PI3 | 0.777 | |
| | PI4 | 0.719 | |

4.3 Validity Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to examine the construct validity of the final scales. As reported in Table 4, the KMO measure is 0.901 and Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant (chi-square = 2,331.344, df = 210, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the data structure is suitable for factor analysis. Principal-component results indicated six components with eigenvalues greater than 1, cumulatively explaining 74.486% of the variance.

**Table 4** KMO and Bartlett's Test

| Indicator | Value |
|---|---|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy | 0.901 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity - Approx. chi-square | 2,331.344 |
| df | 210 |
| Sig. | 0.000 |

The final 21-item measurement structure is therefore consistent with the six theoretical constructs proposed in this study. Because EFA provides exploratory rather than definitive evidence of discriminant validity, the reliability results, correlation matrix, and subsequent path analysis are interpreted together when evaluating the overall measurement and structural model.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation results (Table 5) show that all study variables are significantly and positively correlated. Notable correlations include entertainment with brand identification ($r = 0.550$), benefits with purchase intention ($r = 0.451$), interaction with purchase intention ($r = 0.442$), personalization with purchase intention ($r = 0.445$), and brand identification with purchase intention ($r = 0.616$). All correlation coefficients are below the multicollinearity threshold, supporting the appropriateness of further path and mediation analysis.

**Table 5** Correlation Matrix of Core Variables

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Entertainment | 1 | | | | | |
| 2. Benefits | 0.448 | 1 | | | | |
| 3. Interaction | 0.406 | 0.388 | 1 | | | |
| 4. Personalization | 0.323 | 0.326 | 0.379 | 1 | | |
| 5. Brand Identification | 0.550 | 0.473 | 0.428 | 0.407 | 1 | |
| 6. Purchase Intention | 0.438 | 0.451 | 0.442 | 0.445 | 0.616 | 1 |

4.5 Observed-variable Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

An observed-variable SEM based on final construct scores was estimated to test the hypothesized paths among the four 4I dimensions, brand identification, and purchase intention. Model-fit indices are reported in Table 6, including TLI and SRMR for a more complete assessment of model fit.

**Table 6 Observed-variable SEM Fit Indices**

| Fit Index | Acceptable | Excellent | Observed | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| chi-square/df (CMIN/DF) | < 5.00 | < 3.00 | 7.283 | Not acceptable |
| RMSEA | < 0.08 | < 0.05 | 0.177 | Not acceptable |
| RMR | < 0.08 | < 0.05 | 0.089 | Marginal |
| SRMR | < 0.10 | < 0.05 | 0.084 | Acceptable |
| GFI | > 0.80 | > 0.90 | 0.957 | Excellent |
| CFI | > 0.80 | > 0.90 | 0.930 | Excellent |
| NFI | > 0.80 | > 0.90 | 0.922 | Excellent |
| TLI (NNFI) | > 0.80 | > 0.90 | 0.737 | Not acceptable |

The observed-variable SEM does not demonstrate uniformly excellent fit. Although GFI, CFI, and NFI meet common recommended thresholds, chi-square/df, RMSEA, and TLI indicate insufficient fit; therefore, the model fit is interpreted as mixed, and the path results are discussed cautiously. The path coefficients and significance tests are reported in Table 7.

**Table 7 SEM Path Coefficients and Significance**

| Path | Unstd. beta | S.E. | t/C.R. | p | Std. beta |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Entertainment → Brand Identification | 0.319 | 0.059 | 5.372 | <0.001 | 0.343 |
| Benefits → Brand Identification | 0.199 | 0.061 | 3.252 | 0.001 | 0.207 |
| Interaction → Brand Identification | 0.135 | 0.060 | 2.245 | 0.025 | 0.142 |
| Personalization → Brand Identification | 0.154 | 0.053 | 2.893 | 0.004 | 0.175 |
| Brand Identification → Purchase Intention | 0.689 | 0.062 | 11.057 | <0.001 | 0.616 |

Note: A path is considered significant when $p < 0.05$ and $|t|$ or $|C.R.| > 1.96$.

As shown in Table 7, entertainment (Std. beta = 0.343, $p < 0.001$), benefits (Std. beta = 0.207, $p = 0.001$), interaction (Std. beta = 0.142, $p = 0.025$), and personalization (Std. beta = 0.175, $p = 0.004$) have significant positive effects on brand identification, supporting H1, H2, H3, and H4. Brand identification has a significant positive effect on purchase intention (Std. beta = 0.616, $p < 0.001$), supporting H5. A summary of the direct-effect hypothesis tests is provided in Table 8.

**Table 8** Summary of Direct-Effect Hypothesis Tests

| **Hypothesis** | **Result** |
|---|---|
| H1: Entertainment → Brand Identification | Supported |
| H2: Benefits → Brand Identification | Supported |
| H3: Interaction → Brand Identification | Supported |
| H4: Personalization → Brand Identification | Supported |
| H5: Brand Identification → Purchase Intention | Supported |

## 4.6 Mediation Effect Tests

A percentile bootstrap procedure with 5,000 resamples and 95% confidence intervals was used to test the mediating role of brand identification within the SEM path structure. The results are reported in Table 9.

**Table 9 SEM Mediation Effect Test Results (via Brand Identification)**

| Path | Total Effect (c) | Indirect Effect (a x b) | 95% Boot CI of a x b | Conclusion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Entertainment → BI → PI | 0.455*** | 0.220 | [0.132, 0.311] | Indirect effect supported |
| Benefits → BI → PI | 0.486*** | 0.136 | [0.050, 0.227] | Indirect effect supported |
| Interaction → BI → PI | 0.468*** | 0.093 | [0.005, 0.185] | Indirect effect supported |
| Personalization → BI → PI | 0.438*** | 0.105 | [0.030, 0.182] | Indirect effect supported |

Note: BI = Brand Identification; PI = Purchase Intention. *** $p < 0.001$. Bootstrap type = percentile bootstrap. Total effects are reported for reference; because the main SEM specification in Table 7 does not report direct c' paths from the 4I dimensions to purchase intention, the mediation conclusion is based on the significance of the indirect effects.

The SEM-based mediation tests indicate statistically significant indirect effects through brand identification for all four 4I dimensions. The indirect effects are significant for entertainment (a x b = 0.220, 95% Boot CI = [0.132, 0.311]), benefits (a x b = 0.136, 95% Boot CI = [0.050, 0.227]), interaction (a x b = 0.093, 95% Boot CI = [0.005, 0.185]), and personalization (a x b = 0.105, 95% Boot CI = [0.030, 0.182]). Therefore, H6, H7, H8, and H9 are supported. Because direct c' paths are not reported in the main SEM table, these findings should be interpreted as evidence of significant indirect mediation rather than definitive evidence of partial mediation. A summary of all nine hypothesis-test results is presented in Table 10.

**Table 10** Summary of All Hypothesis Test Results

| **Hypothesis** | **Result** |
|---|---|
| H1: Entertainment → Brand Identification | Supported |
| H2: Benefits → Brand Identification | Supported |
| H3: Interaction → Brand Identification | Supported |
| H4: Personalization → Brand Identification | Supported |
| H5: Brand Identification → Purchase Intention | Supported |
| H6: BI mediates Entertainment → PI | Supported (indirect effect) |
| H7: BI mediates Benefits → PI | Supported (indirect effect) |
| H8: BI mediates Interaction → PI | Supported (indirect effect) |
| H9: BI mediates Personalization → PI | Supported (indirect effect) |

## 5. Discussion and Implications

### 5.1 Key Findings

Entertainment, benefits, interaction, and personalization of Three Squirrels' online community marketing all produce significant positive effects on brand identification. Entertainment shows the largest standardized coefficient (Std. beta = 0.343), followed by benefits (Std. beta = 0.207), personalization (Std. beta = 0.175), and interaction (Std. beta = 0.142). This indicates that in a leisure-food online-community context characterized by light, social, and emotional consumption, entertaining content remains the strongest direct lever for building identification, while value cues, interaction, and personalization also play meaningful roles.

Personalization also shows a significant positive effect on brand identification. This suggests that consumers may respond positively when community content and product recommendations match their interests and preferences. For leisure-food brands, personalization is therefore more effective when it is experienced as relevant preference matching rather than generic commercial pushing.

Brand identification has a significant positive effect on purchase intention (Std. beta = 0.616, $p < 0.001$). The mediation evidence shows statistically significant indirect effects for all four paths: entertainment, benefits, interaction, and personalization each influence purchase intention indirectly through brand identification. This finding suggests that online community stimuli are more likely to translate into purchase intention when they first strengthen consumers' psychological identification with the brand.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it extends the 4I theory from general digital communication to the leisure-food online-community context, providing dimension-level evidence on how different 4I characteristics contribute to brand identification. Second, by integrating the 4I theory with the S-O-R framework and positioning brand identification as a mediator, it offers a clearer cognitive-affective transmission mechanism than additive 4I studies. Third, the findings show that the four 4I dimensions can operate jointly through brand identification while still differing in effect strength, highlighting the contextual nature of digital-marketing effectiveness in leisure-food communities.

5.3 Managerial Implications

For Three Squirrels and similar leisure-food brands, the findings suggest that content design in online communities should first secure entertaining content as a powerful identification trigger through humorous narration, anthropomorphic IP imagery, and visually engaging creative. Second, benefit cues and interactive mechanisms should be operated consistently: promotions, membership privileges, and quality information should be communicated clearly, while comment replies, lucky-draw events, topic participation, and user-generated content campaigns should deepen the sense of belonging. Third, personalization should be improved in quality rather than merely increased in volume. Brands should use user tags and behavioral data to deliver genuinely relevant content and avoid generic personalized pushes that may create fatigue or privacy concerns.

**6. Conclusion, Limitations and Future Research**

6.1 Conclusion

Drawing on 202 valid responses, this study empirically confirms that under the 4I framework, entertainment, benefits, interaction, and personalization of Three Squirrels' online community marketing significantly influence consumers' brand identification. Brand identification, in turn, has a significant positive effect on purchase intention. The SEM-based bootstrap results show significant indirect effects through brand identification for all four 4I paths. At the same time, the fit indices indicate mixed model fit rather than uniformly excellent fit; in particular, RMSEA = 0.177 is high and suggests poor absolute fit, so the structural findings should be interpreted with appropriate caution. Overall, the findings highlight brand identification as the core psychological bridge between new media community stimuli and consumer behavioral response.

6.2 Limitations and Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the sample was drawn online and skews toward younger digital users; future studies could broaden the age and regional distribution to enhance the generalizability of the results. Second, this study focuses on a single brand (Three Squirrels) and a single product category (leisure food); future research could test the model across multiple brands and categories and examine whether product involvement moderates the relationships. Third, this study uses an observed-variable SEM based on construct scores, and the model-fit results are not uniformly satisfactory, especially the high RMSEA value; future research should re-estimate the model with an independent sample and a fully specified latent-variable SEM in AMOS or equivalent SEM software. Fourth, future research should further refine the personalization and brand-identification scales, especially lower-CITC items such as BI4, to improve measurement quality. Fifth, the cross-sectional design captures consumers' contemporaneous evaluations only; longitudinal designs would help examine how brand identification accumulates over time and translates into brand loyalty and repurchase behavior.

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