

The Influence of Blind Box Marketing on Purchase Intention and Brand Loyalty among Chinese Students in Thailand: A Case Study of POP MART

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of blind box marketing on purchase intention and brand loyalty among Chinese students in Thailand, using POP MART as a case study. Guided by the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework and the marketing mix (4P) concept, blind box marketing is treated as the independent variable, while purchase intention and brand loyalty are regarded as the dependent variables.

A quantitative research approach was employed through a structured online questionnaire distributed to Chinese students in Thailand who had purchasing experience with, or interest in, POP MART blind box products. The final sample consisted of 396 valid respondents. Data were collected using a five-point Likert scale and analyzed through descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, and simple linear regression.

The findings show that POP MART's blind box marketing has a significant and positive influence on both purchase intention and brand loyalty. The regression results indicate that blind box marketing explains 72.9% of the variance in purchase intention and 73.0% of the variance in brand loyalty. Therefore, both research hypotheses were supported.

The findings also suggest that uncertainty and randomness, collectability and limited editions, product and packaging design, as well as interactive and experiential marketing can stimulate purchase intention and strengthen brand loyalty. This study contributes to the literature on blind box marketing in a cross-cultural context and provides practical implications for art toy brands targeting young overseas consumers.

Keywords: *Blind box marketing, purchase intention, brand loyalty, POP MART, Chinese students in Thailand, SOR model*

1. Introduction

In recent years, blind box marketing has become an increasingly popular consumption phenomenon and marketing model among young consumers, particularly in Asian markets. A blind box refers to a sealed package containing an unknown collectible item, where consumers do not know the exact product before purchase. By combining uncertainty, surprise, aesthetic design, emotional anticipation, and chance-based reward, blind box marketing creates a unique consumption experience. This marketing model originated in Japan and became widely popular in China, gradually developing into a cultural phenomenon supported by emotional engagement, product design, and community interaction. Among the leading companies in this field, POP MART has become a major representative by using curated design, emotional storytelling, limited editions, and immersive brand experiences to attract young consumers.

The popularity of POP MART's blind box marketing is closely related to consumers' emotional and psychological responses. The unpredictability of blind boxes stimulates curiosity and anticipation because consumers face uncertainty before opening the product. This uncertainty increases emotional arousal and makes the purchasing process part of the entertainment experience. For young consumers, blind box consumption is not only a product purchase but also a form of hedonic consumption, self-expression, and social participation. Through physical stores, social media, unboxing videos, online reviews, and fan communities, consumers interact with both the product and the wider brand community. These experiences may further influence consumers' purchase intention and brand loyalty.

In Thailand, POP MART's expansion has intersected with a growing population of Chinese international students. These students are familiar with POP MART and blind box culture from China, while also experiencing the brand in Thailand's retail and social environment. Therefore, Chinese students in Thailand represent a meaningful cross-cultural consumer group for examining the influence of blind box marketing in an overseas context. Although previous studies have mainly focused on blind box consumers within mainland China, limited research has explored how Chinese consumers living abroad respond to blind box marketing in a foreign cultural environment.

This study is guided by the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework and the marketing mix (4P) concept. According to the SOR framework, external marketing stimuli can influence consumers' internal emotional and cognitive states, which may then lead to behavioral responses. In the context of this study, POP MART's blind box marketing strategies, including product design, packaging, pricing, scarcity, store accessibility, online platforms, and promotional activities, are considered external marketing stimuli. These stimuli may help explain consumers' emotional and cognitive reactions, including curiosity, excitement, and brand attachment, which are discussed theoretically within the SOR framework. The behavioral outcomes examined in this study are purchase intention and brand loyalty.

Based on the above background and research gap, this study examines the influence of blind box marketing on purchase intention and brand loyalty among Chinese students in Thailand, using POP MART as a case study. Specifically, the study aims to examine whether POP MART's blind box marketing significantly influences Chinese students' purchase intention and brand loyalty in Thailand. By focusing on this cross-cultural consumer group, the study contributes to a better understanding of blind box marketing, consumer psychology, and brand engagement among young overseas consumers.

2. Objectives

- 1) To examine the influence of blind box marketing on purchase intention among Chinese students in Thailand in the case of POP MART.
- 2) To examine the influence of blind box marketing on brand loyalty among Chinese students in Thailand in the case of POP MART.

3. Literature Review and Research Conceptual Framework

3.1 Literature Review

Blind box marketing is a distinctive form of experiential and emotional consumption that combines uncertainty, surprise, collectability, product design, scarcity, and social interaction. Unlike traditional product marketing, blind box marketing conceals the exact item inside the package before purchase. This uncertainty creates curiosity, anticipation, and excitement, which may encourage consumers to purchase and continue engaging with the brand (Loewenstein, 1994; Lee & Qiu, 2009). In the case of POP MART, blind box marketing is not only based on selling collectible toys, but also on creating emotional, interactive, and community-based consumption experiences through character IPs, product design, hidden editions, packaging, and collector communities (Zhang & Phakdeephirot, 2022; Wei & Yu, 2025).

The marketing mix (4P) concept provides a useful foundation for understanding POP MART's blind box marketing strategy. The product dimension is reflected in POP MART's artistic design, character IPs, collectible value, packaging, and hidden editions. The price dimension relates to the affordability of blind box products, which can reduce perceived purchase risk and encourage repeated purchases among young consumers. The place dimension includes physical stores, vending machines, and online channels, which increase product accessibility and convenience. The promotion dimension includes social media content, unboxing videos, electronic word-of-mouth, and collector communities, which strengthen consumer engagement and brand-related interaction (McCarthy, 1960; Zeithaml, 1988; Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Therefore, POP MART's blind box marketing can be understood as an integrated marketing strategy that combines product appeal, price accessibility, convenient distribution, and promotional interaction.

Purchase intention refers to consumers' likelihood or willingness to buy a product in the future. In the context of blind box marketing, purchase intention may be influenced by emotional stimulation, perceived value, product accessibility, social influence, brand familiarity, and cultural connection (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen, 1991; Dodds et al., 1991). POP MART's blind box products may encourage purchase intention because consumers are attracted by uncertainty, product design, hidden editions, and enjoyable unboxing experiences. For Chinese students in Thailand, POP MART blind boxes may stimulate purchase intention not only through product attractiveness and collectability, but also through emotional comfort and connection to Chinese youth culture (Zhou & Wong, 2008; Zhang & Zhang, 2022).

Brand loyalty refers to consumers' continued preference, repeat purchase behavior, recommendation, and long-term commitment to a brand. In blind box marketing, brand loyalty may be shaped by satisfaction, trust, emotional attachment, scarcity, self-expression, and community belonging (Keller, 1993; Oliver, 1999; Thomson et al., 2005). POP MART's series-based product strategy, hidden editions, collector communities, and brand-related interaction may encourage consumers to continue purchasing and engaging with the brand. For Chinese students in Thailand, POP MART may function not only as a toy brand, but also as a cultural symbol that helps

them maintain connection with home culture and peer communities. Therefore, brand loyalty in this study reflects both repeated purchasing behavior and continued engagement with the brand (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Zhou & Wong, 2008).

This study is guided by the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework. According to the SOR theory, external marketing stimuli can influence consumers' internal emotional and cognitive states, which then lead to behavioral responses (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). In this study, POP MART's blind box marketing is regarded as the external stimulus. Consumers' psychological mechanisms, such as curiosity, excitement, and brand attachment, are discussed theoretically within the SOR framework. The empirical model of this study focuses on the direct influence of blind box marketing on purchase intention and brand loyalty.

Previous research supports the relationship between blind box marketing and consumer behavior. Prior studies have shown that blind box product uncertainty can increase emotional value, perceived value, and purchase intention (Zhang & Zhang, 2022). Other studies have found that curiosity, symbolic value, social value, group interaction, perceived beauty, entertainment, and interactive experiences can encourage repeated purchasing behavior and brand loyalty (Zhang & Phakdeephrot, 2022; Gong et al., 2024; Wei & Yu, 2025). These findings provide theoretical and empirical support for examining the influence of POP MART's blind box marketing among Chinese students in Thailand.

3.2 Research Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is developed to explain the directional relationships between blind box marketing and consumer behavioral responses among Chinese students in Thailand, with specific reference to POP MART. The framework assumes that marketing strategies function as external stimuli that directly shape consumers' decision-making processes and long-term brand-related behaviors. Accordingly, blind box marketing is positioned as the independent variable, while purchase intention and brand loyalty are treated as the dependent variables. The framework proposes directional relationship in which blind box marketing exerts a direct influence on both dependent variables.

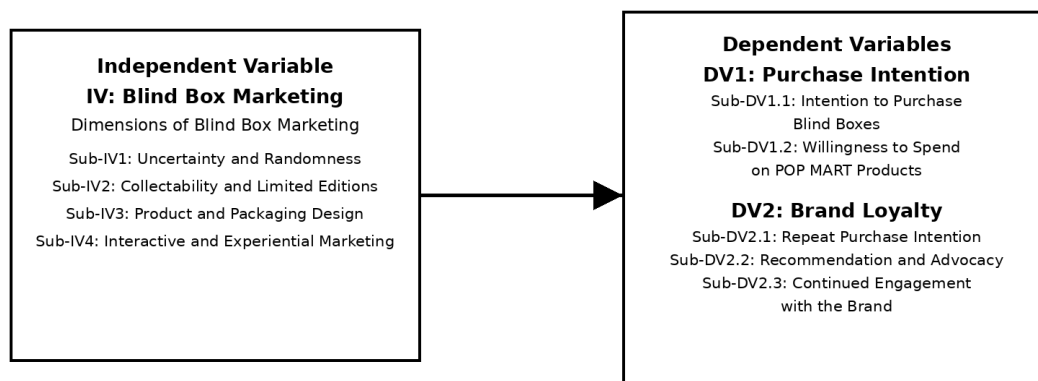


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review and the SOR framework, the conceptual framework of this study positions blind box marketing as the independent variable, while purchase intention and brand loyalty are treated as the dependent variables. Blind box marketing includes key attributes such as uncertainty and randomness, collectability and limited editions, product and packaging design, and interactive and experiential marketing. The framework proposes that blind box marketing has a direct influence on both purchase intention and brand loyalty among Chinese students in Thailand.

Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H1: Blind box marketing has a significant influence on purchase intention among Chinese students in Thailand in the case of POP MART.

H2: Blind box marketing has a significant influence on brand loyalty among Chinese students in Thailand in the case of POP MART.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative research design to examine the influence of blind box marketing on purchase intention and brand loyalty among Chinese students in Thailand. The quantitative approach was appropriate because the study aimed to test hypotheses and measure the strength and significance of relationships among variables. The study was guided by the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework and the marketing mix (4P) concept. In this article, blind box marketing was treated as the independent variable, while purchase intention and brand loyalty were treated as the dependent variables. Although psychological responses such as curiosity, excitement, and brand attachment were discussed theoretically within the SOR framework, the empirical analysis focused on the direct influence of blind box marketing on purchase intention and brand loyalty. A structured online questionnaire was used as the main research instrument to collect standardized data from respondents.

4.2 Population and Sampling

The target population of this study consisted of Chinese students studying in Thailand who had purchasing experience with, or interest in, POP MART blind box products. This group was selected because Chinese students in Thailand represent a cross-cultural consumer group that is familiar with POP MART and blind box culture from China, while also experiencing the brand in Thailand's retail and social environment.

The required sample size was calculated using Taro Yamane's formula (Yamane, 1967) with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Based on the population of approximately 34,000 Chinese students in Thailand, the minimum required sample size was 396 respondents. Therefore, a total of 396 valid questionnaires were retained for final analysis.

This study used a non-probability sampling method by combining purposive sampling and volunteer sampling. Purposive sampling was used to reach Chinese students in Thailand who were familiar with POP MART or blind box products. Volunteer sampling was then applied because participation in the online questionnaire was voluntary. The questionnaire was distributed through relevant LINE and WeChat groups used by Chinese students in Thailand, including student communities and POP MART-related hobby groups. Screening questions were used at the beginning of the questionnaire to ensure that respondents met the study criteria, including Chinese nationality, student status in Thailand, age requirement, and experience with or interest in POP MART blind box products.

4.3 Instrumentation and Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured online questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed based on the research objectives, the SOR framework, the marketing mix concept, and previous studies related to purchase intention and brand loyalty. The questionnaire included screening questions, demographic information, and five-point Likert scale items measuring blind box marketing, purchase intention, and brand loyalty. The scale ranged from 1 to 5, representing different levels of agreement.

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by three experts with relevant academic or professional knowledge in marketing, consumer behavior, research methodology, and cross-cultural communication. The expert review helped confirm that the questionnaire items were clear, relevant, and suitable for Chinese students in Thailand. Before the main data collection, a pre-test was conducted with 33 Chinese students in Thailand who had characteristics similar to the target population. The reliability results showed excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.921 for blind box marketing, 0.910 for purchase intention and brand loyalty, and 0.949 for the overall questionnaire.

The final questionnaire was distributed online through LINE and WeChat groups. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the research purpose before completing the questionnaire. Only responses that met the screening criteria and were complete were included in the final analysis.

4.4 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and the overall levels of the main variables. Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the relationships among blind box marketing, purchase intention, and brand loyalty.

Simple linear regression analysis was used to test the proposed hypotheses. The first regression model examined the influence of blind box marketing on purchase intention, while the second regression model examined the influence of blind box marketing on brand loyalty. Standardized beta coefficients, t-values, R Square

values, and significance levels were used to evaluate the strength and significance of the relationships. Since this article summarizes the completed thesis analysis, the data analysis focused on descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, and simple linear regression.

5. Results

A total of 396 valid responses were analyzed in this study. Screening questions were used at the beginning of the questionnaire to ensure that only Chinese students in Thailand who had purchasing experience with, or interest in, POP MART blind box products were included in the final dataset.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Valid Sample

Category	Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	277	69.9
Gender	Female	119	30.1
Age	18-20 years old	48	12.1
Age	21-23 years old	143	36.1
Age	24-26 years old	100	25.3
Age	27 years or above	105	26.5
Level of Study	Bachelor's Degree	103	26.0
Level of Study	Master's Degree	131	33.1
Level of Study	Doctoral Degree	97	24.5
Level of Study	Language/Foundation program	65	16.4
Length of Stay	Less than 1 year	24	6.1
Length of Stay	1-2 years	130	32.8
Length of Stay	3-4 years	157	39.6
Length of Stay	More than 4 years	85	21.5

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the valid sample. The results show that the sample was predominantly male, with 277 male respondents (69.9%) and 119 female respondents (30.1%). In terms of age, the largest group was 21–23 years old, accounting for 143 respondents (36.1%), followed by respondents aged 27 years or above (26.5%) and those aged 24–26 years old (25.3%). Regarding level of study, master's degree students formed the largest group (33.1%), followed by bachelor's degree students (26.0%), doctoral degree students (24.5%), and language or foundation program students (16.4%). Most respondents had stayed in Thailand for 3–4 years (39.6%) or 1–2 years (32.8%). These results indicate that the sample mainly consisted of young adult Chinese students with sufficient exposure to Thailand's retail and social environment.

Table 2 Consumption Profile of Valid Sample

Category	Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Frequency of Blind Box Purchases	Interested but not purchased yet	6	1.5
Frequency of Blind Box Purchases	Rarely (1–2 times per year)	41	10.4
Frequency of Blind Box Purchases	Occasionally (3–5 times per year)	152	38.4
Frequency of Blind Box Purchases	Frequently (more than 5 times per year)	197	49.7
Mode of Purchase	Offline store	138	34.8
Mode of Purchase	Online official store	44	11.1
Mode of Purchase	Third-party online sellers	23	5.8
Mode of Purchase	Mixed channels	191	48.2
Membership in Online Communities	Yes	194	49.0

Category	Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Membership in Online Communities	No	202	51.0

Table 2 presents the consumption profile of the valid sample. The results show that nearly half of the respondents purchased blind boxes frequently, defined as more than five times per year, accounting for 197 respondents (49.7%). This was followed by respondents who purchased occasionally, with 152 respondents (38.4%). Only 6 respondents (1.5%) were interested but had not purchased yet. In terms of purchase mode, mixed channels were the most common, accounting for 191 respondents (48.2%), followed by offline stores with 138 respondents (34.8%). Regarding online community participation, 194 respondents (49.0%) reported being members of POP MART or blind box-related online communities, while 202 respondents (51.0%) were not members. These findings suggest that the respondents were generally familiar with POP MART blind box products and were appropriate for examining purchase intention and brand loyalty.

5.1 Descriptive Statistics of Major Constructs

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Major Constructs

Construct	Mean	S.D.	Level of Agreement
Marketing stimuli and psychological responses	4.43	0.65	Highest
Purchase intention and brand loyalty	4.23	0.76	Highest

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of the major constructs. The total mean score for marketing stimuli and psychological responses was 4.43, with a standard deviation of 0.65, indicating the highest level of agreement. This result shows that respondents generally perceived POP MART's blind box marketing positively. In particular, respondents strongly agreed that POP MART products had attractive design, mystery, collectability, perceived value, and emotional appeal.

The total mean score for purchase intention and brand loyalty was 4.23, with a standard deviation of 0.76, also indicating the highest level of agreement. This suggests that respondents showed strong intention to purchase POP MART blind boxes and a high level of loyalty toward the brand. Recommendation intention, future purchase intention, repeat purchase, and continued engagement with POP MART were especially strong among the respondents.

Overall, the descriptive results indicate that POP MART's blind box marketing was positively perceived by the respondents. The high mean scores support the idea that product design, uncertainty, emotional excitement, perceived value, and collectability are important aspects of blind box marketing. At the same time, the high mean score for purchase intention and brand loyalty suggests that respondents were willing to purchase, repurchase, recommend, and continue engaging with POP MART products.

5.2 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression analysis. Blind box marketing was treated as the independent variable, while purchase intention and brand loyalty were treated as dependent variables. The following tables present the regression results for Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 1: Blind box marketing has a significant influence on purchase intention among Chinese students in Thailand in the case of POP MART.

Table 4 Regression Model Summary for Hypothesis 1

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.854	0.729	0.728	0.47430

Table 4 presents the model summary for Hypothesis 1. The R value of 0.854 indicates a strong relationship between blind box marketing and purchase intention. The R Square value of 0.729 shows that blind box marketing explained 72.9% of the variance in purchase intention. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.728 is

close to the R Square value, indicating that the model remained stable after adjustment. The standard error of the estimate was 0.47430, suggesting that the predicted values were relatively close to the observed values.

Table 5 Regression Coefficients for Hypothesis 1

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	-0.999	0.163	-	-6.111	< 0.001
Blind Box Marketing	1.190	0.037	0.854	32.567	< 0.001

Table 5 presents the regression coefficients for Hypothesis 1. The results show that blind box marketing had a positive and statistically significant influence on purchase intention, with $B = 1.190$, $Beta = 0.854$, $t = 32.567$, and $p < 0.001$. The positive Beta value indicates that stronger blind box marketing was associated with higher purchase intention among Chinese students in Thailand. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypothesis 2: Blind box marketing has a significant influence on brand loyalty among Chinese students in Thailand in the case of POP MART.

Table 6 Regression Model Summary for Hypothesis 2

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.854	0.730	0.729	0.46636

Table 6 presents the model summary for Hypothesis 2. The R value of 0.854 indicates a strong relationship between blind box marketing and brand loyalty. The R Square value of 0.730 shows that blind box marketing explained 73.0% of the variance in brand loyalty. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.729 is close to the R Square value, indicating that the model remained stable after adjustment. The standard error of the estimate was 0.46636, suggesting that the predicted values were relatively close to the observed values.

Table 7 Regression Coefficients for Hypothesis 2

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	-0.989	0.161	-	-6.152	< 0.001
Blind Box Marketing	1.172	0.036	0.854	32.628	< 0.001

Table 7 presents the regression coefficients for Hypothesis 2. The results show that blind box marketing had a positive and statistically significant influence on brand loyalty, with $B = 1.172$, $Beta = 0.854$, $t = 32.628$, and $p < 0.001$. The positive Beta value indicates that stronger blind box marketing was associated with higher brand loyalty among Chinese students in Thailand. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Table 8 Summary of Regression Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	R Square	B	Beta	t	Sig.	Result
H1	Blind Box Marketing → Purchase Intention	0.729	1.190	0.854	32.567	< 0.001	Supported
H2	Blind Box Marketing → Brand Loyalty	0.730	1.172	0.854	32.628	< 0.001	Supported

Table 8 summarizes the regression results for the two hypotheses. The findings show that blind box marketing had a significant influence on both purchase intention and brand loyalty. For purchase intention, the R Square value was 0.729, indicating that blind box marketing explained 72.9% of the variance in purchase intention. For brand loyalty, the R Square value was 0.730, indicating that blind box marketing explained 73.0% of the variance in brand loyalty. The Beta values for both relationships were 0.854, indicating strong positive effects. Since both p-values were less than 0.001, both hypotheses were supported.

Overall, the research results confirm that blind box marketing has a significant influence on purchase intention and brand loyalty among Chinese students in Thailand in the case of POP MART. These findings provide empirical support for the conceptual framework and the two proposed hypotheses.

6. Conclusions, Discussions, and Suggestions

6.1 Conclusions

This study examined the influence of blind box marketing on purchase intention and brand loyalty among Chinese students in Thailand, using POP MART as a case study. The study was guided by the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework and the marketing mix (4P) concept. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected through a structured online questionnaire. A total of 396 valid responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, and simple linear regression.

The findings show that POP MART's blind box marketing had a significant influence on both purchase intention and brand loyalty among Chinese students in Thailand. The descriptive results indicated that respondents generally had positive perceptions of POP MART's blind box marketing. Marketing stimuli and psychological responses received a high overall mean score, suggesting that product design, mystery, collectability, perceived value, and emotional excitement were important aspects of the blind box experience. Purchase intention and brand loyalty also received a high overall mean score, indicating that respondents showed willingness to purchase, repurchase, recommend, and continue engaging with POP MART products.

For the first research objective, the results confirmed that blind box marketing significantly influenced purchase intention. The regression results showed that blind box marketing explained 72.9% of the variance in purchase intention, with $B = 1.190$, $Beta = 0.854$, $t = 32.567$, and $p < 0.001$. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported. This indicates that stronger blind box marketing was associated with higher purchase intention among Chinese students in Thailand.

For the second research objective, the results confirmed that blind box marketing significantly influenced brand loyalty. The regression results showed that blind box marketing explained 73.0% of the variance in brand loyalty, with $B = 1.172$, $Beta = 0.854$, $t = 32.628$, and $p < 0.001$. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported. This indicates that stronger blind box marketing was associated with higher brand loyalty among Chinese students in Thailand.

Overall, the findings confirm that POP MART's blind box marketing can stimulate consumers' purchase intention and strengthen their brand loyalty. The results suggest that uncertainty, hidden editions, product and packaging design, collectability, perceived value, accessibility, and community-based experiences are important elements in shaping consumer responses. For Chinese students in Thailand, POP MART may function not only as a collectible toy brand, but also as a familiar cultural and emotional symbol connected to Chinese youth culture.

6.2 Discussion

The findings of this study are consistent with the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework. In this study, POP MART’s blind box marketing functioned as an external marketing stimulus that influenced consumer behavioral responses. Although the organism component, such as curiosity, excitement, enjoyment, perceived value, and brand attachment, was discussed theoretically rather than tested as a mediating mechanism, the results still support the general logic of the SOR framework. The significant influence of blind box marketing on purchase intention and brand loyalty suggests that external marketing stimuli can help explain consumer responses in the context of blind box consumption.

The findings are also consistent with the marketing mix (4P) concept. POP MART’s product strategy is reflected in its character IPs, product design, packaging, hidden editions, and collectible value. Its price strategy may reduce perceived purchase risk and support repeated purchasing among young consumers. Its place strategy, including offline stores, vending machines, online channels, and mixed purchasing channels, increases accessibility and convenience. Its promotion strategy, including social media, unboxing videos, electronic word-of-mouth, and collector communities, strengthens consumer engagement and brand interaction. Together, these elements help explain why blind box marketing can influence purchase intention and brand loyalty.

In relation to purchase intention, the results show that consumers were attracted by the mystery, surprise, product design, perceived value, and unboxing experience of POP MART blind boxes. Respondents reported strong willingness to purchase POP MART blind boxes in the future, especially when new series or special editions are released. This indicates that blind box marketing can create emotional stimulation and perceived value, which may encourage consumers to buy.

In relation to brand loyalty, the results show that respondents were willing to recommend POP MART blind boxes, continue purchasing POP MART products, follow brand updates, and show loyalty compared with other blind box brands. This suggests that POP MART’s blind box marketing does not only influence short-term purchase intention, but also supports longer-term consumer engagement. Series-based products, hidden editions, product quality, brand trust, and community interaction may contribute to repeated purchasing and continued brand involvement.

The findings are also meaningful in a cross-cultural context. Chinese students in Thailand are familiar with POP MART and blind box culture from China, while also experiencing the brand in Thailand’s retail and social environment. Therefore, their responses may reflect both consumer interest in blind box products and emotional connection to Chinese youth culture. This helps explain why POP MART’s blind box marketing may be effective among overseas Chinese students.

The results are consistent with previous studies showing that uncertainty, perceived value, curiosity, symbolic value, social value, group interaction, and experiential marketing are important in blind box consumption. The present study extends these ideas by focusing on Chinese students in Thailand and by examining both purchase intention and brand loyalty in the same research context.

6.3 Practical Suggestions

Based on the findings, POP MART and similar art toy brands should continue to strengthen the core characteristics of blind box marketing, especially uncertainty, product design, collectability, and emotional experience. The results show that respondents responded positively to unique design, mystery, enjoyment, perceived value, and collectible value. Therefore, brands should maintain the attractiveness of blind box products through creative IP design, hidden editions, limited series, and enjoyable unboxing experiences.

POP MART should also pay attention to the needs of Chinese students in Thailand as an overseas consumer group. This group may value both product attractiveness and cultural familiarity. Therefore, POP MART can strengthen emotional communication by using story-based IP development, Chinese youth culture elements, and community-based marketing activities that connect with overseas Chinese students.

In terms of channels, POP MART should continue to integrate online and offline purchasing experiences. The results show that mixed channels were the most common mode of purchase among respondents. Therefore, official offline stores, vending machines, online official stores, and social media platforms should work together to provide convenient and reliable access to products. This can help reduce concerns about product authenticity and improve consumers’ purchase confidence.

In terms of promotion, POP MART and similar brands should strengthen community interaction and electronic word-of-mouth. Unboxing videos, collector groups, exchange activities, online discussions, and student community events may increase consumer engagement. These activities can support both purchase intention and brand loyalty by making blind box consumption a shared social experience.

Finally, POP MART should maintain responsible marketing communication. Since blind box marketing relies on uncertainty and emotional excitement, brands should provide clear product information, transparent purchase rules, and responsible communication to avoid excessive consumption pressure. This is especially important when targeting young consumers and student groups.

7. Limitations and Future Research

Although this study provides empirical evidence on the influence of blind box marketing on purchase intention and brand loyalty among Chinese students in Thailand, several limitations should be acknowledged.

First, this study was guided by the SOR framework; however, the empirical analysis focused only on the direct influence of blind box marketing on purchase intention and brand loyalty. Psychological mechanisms such as curiosity, excitement, enjoyment, perceived value, and brand attachment were discussed theoretically, but they were not separately measured or tested as mediating variables. Therefore, this study did not fully test the complete SOR process. Future research should include organism variables as mediators and examine them through mediation analysis, path analysis, or Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Second, the research model was relatively simple. Blind box marketing was treated as one independent variable, while purchase intention and brand loyalty were treated as dependent variables. However, consumer behavior may also be influenced by perceived value, satisfaction, social influence, emotional attachment, cultural identity, and brand community participation. Future studies should develop a more comprehensive conceptual framework by including mediating and moderating variables to better explain purchase intention and brand loyalty.

Third, blind box marketing was analyzed as a single overall construct in this study. However, blind box marketing may include several dimensions, such as uncertainty and randomness, collectability and limited editions, product and packaging design, accessibility, and community engagement. Future research should measure and analyze these dimensions separately in order to identify which aspects of blind box marketing most strongly influence purchase intention and brand loyalty.

Fourth, the alignment between theory and statistical analysis can be further strengthened. The literature review discussed the 4P concept, SOR framework, curiosity, scarcity, perceived value, and emotional attachment, but the statistical model mainly tested the direct relationship between blind box marketing and the two consumer outcomes. Future research should ensure stronger consistency among the theoretical framework, hypotheses, questionnaire items, and statistical analysis.

Fifth, the generalizability of the findings is limited because the sample consisted only of Chinese students studying in Thailand. This group is meaningful for examining blind box marketing in a cross-cultural student context, but the results may not fully represent Thai consumers, POP MART consumers in China, working adults, or consumers from other cultural backgrounds. Future studies should expand the sample to include different nationalities, age groups, occupations, and cultural contexts.

Sixth, although this study used purposive sampling and volunteer sampling through LINE and WeChat groups, the use of non-probability sampling may limit the representativeness of the sample. Future research should describe the sampling strategy clearly and, where possible, use broader recruitment channels or probability sampling methods to improve methodological transparency and sample representativeness.

Seventh, the questionnaire showed strong reliability, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha values above the acceptable threshold. However, the study mainly relied on expert review for content validity and Cronbach's alpha for reliability. Construct validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were not fully tested through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) or Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Future studies should conduct EFA and CFA to strengthen measurement validity.

Eighth, all variables were measured through self-reported questionnaires collected at one point in time. This may increase the risk of common method bias and social desirability bias. Future research should apply procedural and statistical remedies, such as improving questionnaire design, separating measurement sections, using Harman's single-factor test (Harman, 1976), or applying marker-variable techniques.

Ninth, this study used descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and simple linear regression to test the proposed hypotheses. Although these methods were suitable for examining the direct relationships in the completed thesis model, they limited the depth of analysis. Future studies could use multiple regression, mediation analysis, path analysis, or SEM to examine more complex relationships among blind box marketing dimensions, psychological responses, purchase intention, and brand loyalty.

Tenth, the R Square values reported in this study were relatively high, with blind box marketing explaining 72.9% of the variance in purchase intention and 73.0% of the variance in brand loyalty. These results indicate strong explanatory power, but they should be interpreted with caution. The high values may be related to conceptual closeness among constructs, respondents' positive perceptions of POP MART, or common method variance from self-reported data. Future research should conduct additional validity assessments and common method bias tests to confirm the robustness of the findings.

In addition, future studies should improve the conceptual framework figure by clearly presenting the relationship among blind box marketing, psychological mechanisms, purchase intention, and brand loyalty. More recent literature on blind box marketing, art toy consumption, digital fandom, Gen Z consumers, and overseas consumer behavior should also be incorporated to strengthen the academic relevance of the study. Since this study focuses on Chinese students in Thailand, future research may also deepen the discussion of cross-cultural implications by considering cultural identity, acculturation, and international consumer behavior. Finally, future studies should provide more specific practical recommendations for POP MART, blind box retailers, and intellectual property-based marketing strategies, especially in overseas markets.

8. References

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