

消费失败情境下人际亲密度对口碑传播意愿的 U 型影响——基于动机冲突的视角*

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摘 要 消费失败情境下消费者对不同亲密度群体的口碑传播意愿受保护他人利益和保护自我形象动机的影响。不同于前期研究亲密度对口碑影响的线性关系结论, 本研究基于动机冲突的视角, 构建动机冲突模型, 考察了消费失败情境下人际亲密度对口碑传播意愿的影响及其内在机理。通过 4 个主实验和 2 个附加实验, 结果表明亲密度对口碑传播意愿的影响呈 U 型关系, 与低高亲密度对象相比, 消费者面对中亲密度对象时口碑传播意愿最低。这种影响可以通过消费者产生的保护他人利益动机和保护自我形象动机之间的张力来解释, 商家责任调节了以上机理, 当商家在导致消费失败的结果中承担的责任较高时, 口碑传播意愿不再随亲密度的增加呈现 U 型关系。

关键词 消费失败, 亲密度, 口碑传播意愿, U 型

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1 前言

1.1 问题提出

随着社交媒体和社交电商的日益普及, 社交关系更广泛地影响了消费者的行为(Appel et al., 2020; De Oliveira Santini et al., 2020)。无论是日常生活中还是社交平台上, 每个人都拥有不同亲密度的联系人(Cartwright et al., 2021; 王斌, 2015), 消费者不仅可以面对面与不同亲密度的人分享消费体验与心得, 还可以通过微信、QQ、微博等社交媒体与不同关系或群组的联系人分享购物信息。因此, 在这个社会关系更加多元和细化的时代, 社交情境下的口碑管理对管理者来说变得尤为重要, 尤其是当发生消费失败时(He et al., 2017)。

社交关系对消费者的口碑传播意愿产生了深刻的影响, 不同的社交关系会激发出不同的社会动机, 进而影响消费者的口碑传播意愿(Liu et al., 2021)。但目前, 仅有少数研究关注到社交背景下亲

密度是影响口碑的一个重要因素, 并揭示了亲密度对口碑存在线性影响。例如, Dubois 等人(2016)和 Chen (2017)探究了亲密度与口碑之间的关系, 发现相比低亲密度对象, 消费者更愿意向高亲密度对象传播负面信息。而 Olson 和 Ahluwalia (2021)却发现消费者会对高亲密度的对象分享消费失败的正面口碑, 目的是鼓励其他人做出同样糟糕的选择, 由此通过社会比较获得心理满足。以上研究证实了亲密度确实会影响口碑传播行为, 但是并没有探究亲密度对口碑传播意愿的影响, 更重要的是, 该研究对亲密度的划分是简单的二分类, 忽略了亲密度的多样性。当遭遇消费失败时, 这种多样的关系如何影响消费失败情境下消费者的口碑传播意愿有待深入探究。

本研究认为, 消费失败情境下消费者对不同亲密度群体的口碑传播意愿, 受到两种不同动机的影响。这是因为通过口碑分享失败经历可以帮助他人, 满足消费者保护他人利益的利他动机(简称为保他

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The U-shaped effect of intimacy on word-of-mouth intention about consumption failure: Based on the perspective of motivational conflict model

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Abstract

Consumers often share their shopping experiences with others. The strength of different social relationships can impact a consumer's word-of-mouth behavior, especially when an unpleasant purchase occurs. While some studies have explored that interpersonal closeness plays an important role in a social context, little has been known about how this diverse range of relationships affects consumers' word-of-mouth behavior in the case of consumption failures. Previous research has shown that consumers are more likely to spread negative information to individuals with whom they have high (vs. low) levels of interpersonal closeness. However, these studies have only taken a binary approach to classifying interpersonal closeness, ignoring the what would happen when the closeness was on the middle level. Literally, the impact of the diversity of relationships needs further investigation.

In this study, the impact of interpersonal closeness on consumers' word-of-mouth intention after a consumption failure was explored through six experiments, both online (Experiments 1, 2, and supplementary Experiment 1) and offline (Experiments 3, 4, and supplementary Experiment 2), in common social settings. Based on the literature on the attitudinal ambivalence literature, this research uses the SIM model to determine the level of motivation conflict and examines the U-shaped impact of interpersonal closeness on word-of-mouth intention in the event of a consumption failure. Experiment 1 ($N = 143$) is a between-subject design with a single factor of three levels of interpersonal closeness (low vs. medium vs. high). Participants were randomly assigned to different groups and asked to imagine a negative hotel service experience. They then had the opportunity to share the experience with others and answer related questions. The reading materials for the different experimental groups varied only in terms of the manipulation statement for interpersonal closeness. Experiment 2 ($N = 155$) was designed to verify the mediating role of motivation conflict. The manipulation method for interpersonal closeness was changed and the stimulus material was changed to a poorly performing cell phone purchase. Participants answered related questions after reading the materials. Experiment 3 ($N = 126$) was conducted in an offline airport waiting room to simulate a more natural face-to-face communication setting. The social background of the experiment was transferred from WeChat to the waiting room. The U-shaped relationship between interpersonal closeness and word-of-mouth intention was verified and the mediating effect of motivation conflict was determined. Experiment 4 ($N = 298$) is a 3 (interpersonal closeness: low vs. medium vs. high) $\times 2$ (merchant responsibility: low vs. high) between-subject design to validate the moderating effect of merchant liability. The stimulus material describes a negative private custom tour experience, and interpersonal closeness and merchant responsibility were manipulated. In the low merchant responsibility condition, the merchant only provided relevant reference options and the consumer chose the travel route. In the high merchant responsibility condition, the consumers chose the strongly recommended travel route provided by the merchant. The domestic samples were recruited from a professional survey website (Credamo) and completed online questionnaires, while the foreign samples were recruited from another professional survey website (Prolific). Samples can be considered representative of the mainstream consumer group.

The main findings of this study are as follows: (1) Consumers are least likely to discuss their negative consumer experiences in front of objects with medium interpersonal closeness, compared to low and high interpersonal closeness, therefore there is a U-shaped relationship between interpersonal closeness and word-of-mouth intention. (2) The cause of this difference lies in the conflict between the motivation to protect others' interests and the motivation to protect self-image: when faced with individuals of medium interpersonal

closeness, consumers are most concerned with protecting their self-image, which leads to a high degree of motivational conflict and results in the lowest willingness to spread word-of-mouth. (3) The level of responsibility taken by merchants moderates the effect of interpersonal closeness on word-of-mouth intention. When merchants take low responsibility, the effect of interpersonal closeness on word-of-mouth intention is U-shaped. However, when merchants take high responsibility, consumers' motivation to protect their self-image decreases in the presence of individuals with medium interpersonal closeness, causing the motivation to protect others' interests to become dominant and leading to low levels of motivational conflict. This results in an increase in word-of-mouth intention as interpersonal closeness increases, yielding an approximately linear effect of interpersonal closeness on word-of-mouth intention.

This study contributes to the important fields of word-of-mouth communication, social relationships, and word-of-mouth intention, and provides valuable insights for marketing professionals involved in market research, word-of-mouth management, social media operations, and marketing.

Keywords consumption failure, intimacy, word-of-mouth intention, U-shaped

附表 2 所有实验的刺激材料和操纵方式

实验名	操纵方式	刺激材料
实验 1	操纵变量(人际亲密度): 低 vs.中 vs.高 微信中不同关系的群组: - 低亲密度: 由本地陌生居民组成的社区闲聊群 - 中亲密度: 由公司普通同事组成的同事闲聊群 - 高亲密度: 由亲密好友组成的好友闲聊群	想象一下: 忙碌的一周终于结束, 你计划去临近的海滩风景区度过一个愉快的周末时光。于是, 你提前在网上预定了当地一家酒店。到达酒店后, 你发现酒店离景点比较近, 外观装修还不错, 房间也相对比较宽敞, 必要设施基本齐全, 但房间的 WiFi 信号断断续续的, 隔音效果也不太好, 洗澡时没有热水, 给前台打了三次电话才有人应答, 且服务员的态度不是很热情。总之, 你对此次入住经历并不满意。
实验 2	操纵变量(人际亲密度): 低 vs.中 vs.高 微信中不同关系的群组: - 低亲密度: 由本地陌生居民组成的社区闲聊群 - 中亲密度: 由普通朋友组成的好友闲聊群 - 高亲密度: 由亲密好友组成的好友闲聊群	最近, 你购买了一款比较热门的手机。这款手机外观设计独特, 价格适中, 但使用后你发现一旦同时打开多个应用, 手机的反应就会变慢, 有时还会闪退, 此外还存在像素不高, 指纹不易识别的问题。总之, 对于本次购买的手机你并不满意。
附加实验 1	操纵变量(人际亲密度): 低 vs.中 vs.高 微信中不同关系的群组: - 低亲密度: 由本地陌生居民组成的社区闲聊群 - 中亲密度: 由普通朋友组成的好友闲聊群 - 高亲密度: 由亲密好友组成的好友闲聊群	想象一下: 你买了一辆电动汽车, 但使用后你发现电动汽车的续航时间很短, 因此平时驾驶的时候速度不能过快, 空调也不能多开, 此外充电耗时较长。总之, 对于本次购买的电动汽车你并不满意。
实验 3	操纵变量(人际亲密度): 低 vs.中 vs.高 线下场景: - 低亲密度: 旅行结束后, 你乘坐飞机返程, 在候机室你遇到一个陌生乘客, 为了打发时间, 你们闲聊起来。 - 中亲密度: 旅行结束后, 你乘坐飞机返程, 在候机室你遇到一个关系普通的朋友, 为了打发时间, 你们闲聊起来。 - 高亲密度: 旅行结束后, 你乘坐飞机返程, 在候机室你遇到一个关系很好的密友, 为了打发时间, 你们闲聊起来。	想象一下: 忙碌的工作终于结束, 你计划到一个美丽的海岛游玩, 便提前在网上预定了当地一家酒店。到达酒店后, 你发现酒店离景点比较近, 外观装修还不错, 必要设施基本齐全, 但房间的 WiFi 信号断断续续的, 隔音效果也不太好, 洗澡的水温时冷时热, 早餐不丰富, 食材也不新鲜。总之, 你对此次入住经历并不满意。
附加实验 2	- 低亲密度组: After the trip, you take the flight back, you meet a stranger in the waiting room, and you chat to pass the time. - 中亲密度组: After the trip, you take the flight back, and in the waiting room you meet an ordinary friend, and in order to pass the time, you two gossip. - 高亲密度组: After the trip, you're on a flight back, and in the departure lounge you meet a close friend who is very close, and to pass the time, you gossip.	The busy work is finally over. You plan to visit a beautiful island, so you book a local hotel online in advance. After arriving at the hotel, you find that the hotel is relatively close to the scenic spots, the exterior decoration is good, and the necessary facilities are basically complete, but the WiFi signal in the room is intermittent, and the sound insulation effect is not very good. Not fresh either. All in all, you are not satisfied with your stay experience.
实验 4	操纵变量: ①人际亲密度: 低 vs.中 vs.高 线下场景: - 低亲密度: 旅行结束后, 你乘坐火车回家。在火车上你遇到一个陌生乘客, 为了打发时间, 你们闲聊起来。 - 旅行结束后, 你乘坐火车回家。在火车上你遇到一个关系普通的朋友, 为了打发时间, 你们闲聊起来。 - 旅行结束后, 你乘坐火车回家。在火车上你遇到一个关系很好的密友, 为了打发时间, 你们闲聊起来。 ②商家责任: 低 vs.高 - 商家低责任: 旅行社为你规划了 3 种旅游线路, 并向你推荐第 1 种。你考虑后, 没有接受旅行社的建议, 自己选择了第 3 种路线。 - 商家高责任: 旅行社为你规划了 3 种旅游线路, 并向你推荐第 1 种。你考虑后, 接受了旅行社的建议, 选择了第 1 种路线。	但是在旅行过程中你发现旅游路线规划得并不合理, 导致大量的时间被耗费在前往景区的途中, 此外大多数的景点都很普通, 卫生也不好, 景区到处充斥着叫卖声, 东西又贵又难吃。总之, 你对此次定制游并不满意。