

Research on Regional Public Brand Dissemination in Taigu Huping Jujube under the Theory of Innovation Diffusion

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Abstract: The research on brand construction of agricultural products is gradually rising. This paper takes the regional public brand of Taigu Huping Jujube as the research object, based on the theory of innovation diffusion, explores the innovation diffusion characteristics of Taigu Huping Jujube, and proves that they are compatible. From the perspective of communicator, receiver, communication channel and decision-making, the problems existing in the dissemination of Taigu Huping jujube brand are discovered. Finally, from the perspective of communicators, combined with the actual dissemination situation of Taigu Huping Jujube, on the basis of innovative diffusion development model, it is integrated into four stages: Cognitive positioning, Persuasion and satisfaction, Decision, and Re-diffusion, so as to promote brand communication and promote the development of local economy.

Keywords: Innovation diffusion theory, Taigu Huping Jujube, Brand dissemination

1. Introduction

The regional public brand dissemination of agricultural products is generally defined to mean that in a specific region, agricultural producers or operators use the naming method of "region name + category name" to convey key information such as product quality and origin to consumers in combination with regional image, so as to achieve the purpose of product marketing and brand dissemination and drive regional economic development. Document No. 1 in 2022 clearly emphasizes the construction of "new three products and one standard", which takes the brand construction of agricultural products as an important way to revitalize the countryside.

In the academic field, China's agricultural product brand research is gradually rising. As early as 2001, some scholars proposed that the brand construction of agricultural products would help promote the development of high-quality agriculture, improve the market position of agricultural products in China, and achieve quality and efficiency improvement [1]. The research on regional public brand of agricultural products in China mainly focuses on policy evolution and practical development, mostly focusing on the construction, development, protection and other aspects of agricultural product brand, and neglects the issue of brand dissemination. This paper attempts to solve the problems existing in the regional public brand dissemination in Taigu Huping Jujube based on innovation diffusion theory through qualitative research, aiming to supplement a research material of agricultural product brand promotion for innovation diffusion theory and promote brand construction.

2. Innovation diffusion theory and agricultural product brand dissemination

Schultz, winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics, once pointed out that any innovation without diffusion may not bring into play economic or social value [2]. Rogers has greatly enriched the connotation of innovation diffusion theory by defining the concept of "innovation" [3], and today it has become a mature theoretical perspective across all disciplines. The theory of innovation diffusion is often applied to journalism and communication, which not only focuses on the scope of innovative information in the macro space, studies the reasons and mechanisms for its unbalanced development and diffusion in the macro space [4], but also summarizes the basic law of innovation from appearance to diffusion, that is the S-curve theory: the innovation process generally includes cognition, persuasion, decision, implementation, confirmation (which is shown in Figure 1) and the characteristics of innovation diffusion [5]. What's more, the research on diffusion effect and process is the research on the process of audience

group's adoption behavior. The characteristics of innovation diffusion have a direct impact on the adoption efficiency of new technologies [6].

Some scholars have already applied this theory to the agricultural field, mostly focusing on how to promote new agricultural technologies in rural areas, but less in the field of agricultural product brand dissemination. As the brand may present "S" type development in the communication process and some scholars have demonstrated that the innovation diffusion theory and brand communication have the research comparability [7-8], it is feasible to apply this theory to the research of agricultural product brand dissemination.

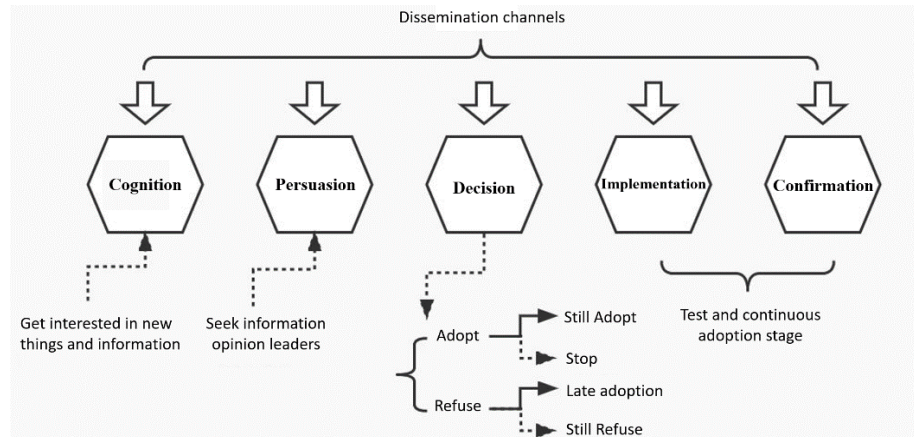


Figure 1: Models of each stage in innovation diffusion theory

3. Analysis on Innovation Diffusion Characteristics

Taigu Huping Jujube is produced in Taigu District, Jinzhong City, Shanxi Province, which is known as the "Chinese Jujube Township". With the support of the government, it has developed towards the direction of production specialization and standardization. Compared with the linkage effect of dissemination driving consumption of Xinjiang jujube [9], the low popularity of Shanxi jujube is largely due to the lack of brand communication. Therefore, it is necessary to start from the innovation diffusion characteristics of Taigu Huping jujube, analyze its advantages, and improve the brand communication.

3.1. Relative superiority: significant efficacy, rich jujube products

Relative superiority refers to the unique advantage that an innovation may replace the old thing. Compared with other jujube species, Taigu Huping jujube has the advantages of outstanding efficacy and rich jujube products. On the one hand, the origin of Taigu Huping Jujube is located in the northeast of Jinzhong Basin, Shanxi Province, with a temperate continental climate, four distinct seasons, abundant rainfall and excellent agricultural conditions [10]. With thin skin, thick meat, sweet taste and small nucleus, it is a good kind of raw food. It contains more protein, calcium, vitamins and other nutrients than similar products. It may replenish and nourish blood. In addition, its leaves, branches and cores can be used as medicine, which is beneficial to the stomach. Taking it for a long time may prolong the life [11]. On the other hand, the dry and wine jujube made of Huping jujube are also superior to ordinary jujube. The additional products of Huping jujube developed have established sales outlets throughout the country, with objective sales.

3.2. Compatibility: Innovation in the way of eating jujubes

Compatibility refers to the coexistence relationship between an innovation and existing values, experiences and needs. First of all, as one of the most widely accepted fruits, jujube is known as the "Queen of Fruits". Taking Taidong jujube industry in Taigu District as an example, the brand was started by the popular series of dried fruits with jujube clips. By changing people's way of eating jujube, the audience was expanded from the middle-aged to the whole age group, which not only met consumer needs, but also became one of the largest jujube processing enterprises with the largest variety of jujube products in Shanxi Province under the dual role of innovative ideas and quality assurance. Taigu Huping Jujube's innovative way of eating jujubes reflects a high degree of compatibility.

3.3. Complexity: diversified and stable purchase and sales channels

Complexity refers to the difficulty in understanding and applying an innovation. Rogers believes that as an important way of diffusion, the most appropriate order is to put specific information into public cognition through the mass media, and then transfer from interpersonal communication to individuals [12]. At present, the purchase and sales channels of Huping Jujube are divided into online, offline and a combination of the two. It is famous for its dependence on the image of the place of origin, supplemented by word of mouth. Most consumers come from the surrounding cities, and then through the supply of fresh food supermarkets and specialty stores, it provides consumers with intuitive display of products, tasting and comparison services. At the same time, search on the major shopping platforms with the keyword "Taigu Huping Jujube", and deliver the goods to your door after selection. The combination of online and offline has also become the choice of many enterprises. The characteristics of diversified and stable purchase and sales channels of Taigu Huping jujubes prove that it has low complexity.

3.4. Separability: high consumer acceptance

Separability refers to the effect of small-scale trial implementation of an innovation. If a product is easy to promote during trial, it will be more conducive to promotion in the future. According to survey on consumer groups of Taigu Huping Jujube in 2021, the penetration rate of female consumers is higher than that of male consumers, while growth rate of male consumers is faster, and people's acceptance of high-end products is also gradually increasing. The continuous influx of new customers means that the late adopters listened to the recommendations of the early adopters and tried new things. It also means that Taigu Huping Jujube has possibility of younger consumption habits and diversified consumer groups.

3.5. Dissemination possibility: innovative promotion methods

Dissemination possibility refers to the possibility of promoting an innovation result to others. The innovation of dissemination mode is mainly manifested in the gradual occupation of new media platforms by young people. Taking microblog as an example, the search for "Taigu Huping Jujube" will appear in topics such as "Food Shanxi", involving brand introduction, historical allusions and how to select. Early adopters from different regions and age groups will share their buying experiences and experiences through social media. The waiters at the hesitation stage, that is, potential late adopters, may become consumers. The development of mobile social media has brought the possibility of rapid development for the spread of Taigu Huping Jujube to a certain extent.

To sum up, among the five attributes of innovation diffusion theory, Relative superiority, Compatibility, Separability and Dissemination possibility have a positive impact on diffusion, while complexity has a negative impact on diffusion.

4. Problems in the process of innovation diffusion Characteristics

Rogers pointed out that the condition for the sustainable diffusion of innovative things is that there must be 10%~20% of receivers in the market. If this value is exceeded, the spread of innovative things will enter a rising period, reaching the effect of rapid spread [13]. Based on the dissemination status of Taigu Huping Jujube, the existing dissemination problems of Taigu Huping Jujube will be summarized from four aspects: Communicator, Receiver, Communication channel and Decision-making process.

4.1. From the perspective of Communicator

At present, Shanxi has famous jujube processing enterprises such as "Taidong Jujube Industry", but these enterprises do not completely sell Taigu Huping Jujube as the leading product, involving a large number of jujube types and unclear management classification. It is difficult to concentrate the cultural connotation and product advantages to promote because of the processing of enterprises relying on different brands. In addition, enterprises are eager to expand the market, blindly create brands, and the quality and safety supervision of products is not in place. The "free riding" behavior has caused vicious brand competition and market confusion. The brand culture and quality of Taigu Huping Jujube have not formed a unified measurement standard, which cannot form a joint force, and the publicity is blocked.

4.2. From the perspective of Receiver

From the perspective of Receiver: In the new media era, the main body of brand diffusion has been transferred from businesses to consumers, the publicity of social media is far more powerful than word of mouth. The benefits brought by the fan effect to the brand cannot be ignored and the existence of "opinion leaders" is more conducive to driving consumption [14]. According to the survey, Taigu Huping Jujube has not formed a fan group with fixed consumption habits. First, customers are mostly middle-aged and old people around, they are generally unfamiliar with social software and are not good at publishing purchase feelings and product information through modern technology. Second, for young and middle-aged people, there is little demand for jujube series products, there is no willingness and motivation to actively promote, and there is a lack of scale effect. The ability to spread is limited.

4.3. From the perspective of Communication channel

From the perspective of Communication channel: The local government gave strong support to Taigu Huping Jujube in the initial stage of brand communication. As early as 2007, Taigu Huping Jujube was protected as a geographical indication product, and in 2019, it was awarded a municipal regional public brand for agricultural products. It has held agricultural product promotion conferences in surrounding counties, creating a good brand reputation and reputation image. However, due to the lack of awareness of brand cultivation in the later stage, enterprises focused on the sales link and ignored the establishment of a benign information interaction channel with consumers. The buyer and the seller failed to interact harmoniously and were in a state of information fragmentation. Communication channels were not smooth and brand communication was blocked.

4.4. From the perspective of Decision-making process

From the perspective of Decision-making process: Rogers believes that it is a process for audiences to accept innovative things and adopt them, which includes five steps: contacting innovative things and their initial impressions, holding an attitude towards innovative things, whether to accept innovation, making decisions to enter the experimental stage, and finally determining to continue to adopt them. As Huping Jujube failed to fully integrate with the reality in these five stages, the problems of narrow channels in the cognitive stage limiting the audience, weak competitiveness in the persuasion stage without recognition, less communication in the decision-making stage and poor information flow, and low re communication rate and secondary purchase rate in the implementation and confirmation stage appeared respectively, which greatly reduced the communication effect.

5. Optimization of innovation diffusion mode

In the new media era, the brand diffusion path of agricultural products is clearer, and the path of accurate positioning of the market to lock customers, two-way communication to meet needs, smart maintenance, and re diffusion may be more suitable for brand communication. In combination with the above innovation diffusion characteristics and problem analysis, the early stage of Rogers' innovation diffusion theoretical model should be enriched: speed up the transition from the "top-down" cognitive persuasion stage to the "bottom-up" decision-making implementation stage, shorten the entire communication process, and promote adopters to make decisions. Therefore, from the perspective of communicators, the innovation diffusion model is integrated into four stages: Cognitive positioning, Persuasion and satisfaction, Decision and Re-diffusion, the flow chart is shown in Figure 2.

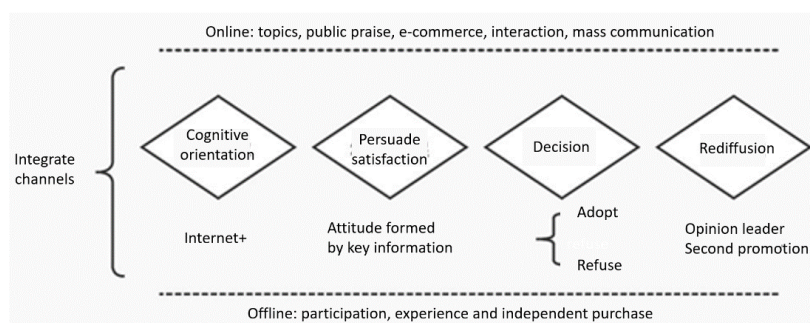


Figure 2: Innovation and diffusion mode of Taigu Huping Jujube

5.1. Cognitive orientation

Cognitive positioning is a group that enables individuals to have a certain understanding of innovative things and position them for the first time. Taigu Huping Jujube should establish a good brand image on the basis of ensuring the quality and make a market debut at the beginning of the brand establishment. In planting, picking, processing, logistics, sales and other links, the government should not only pay attention to quality, but also provide technical support through the Internet, quickly target people who meet the brand communication and diffusion, focus on attracting people who advocate healthy life and are interested in emerging food, and lay the foundation for communication and diffusion.

5.2. Persuade satisfaction

Persuasion satisfaction refers to that the communicator transmits key information to the receiver through specific channels to form an attitude towards innovation, meet the information needs of products and prepare for decision-making. As the basic element of innovation diffusion, communication channels should penetrate key information in multiple dimensions and angles through rich communication carriers, highlight product advantages through topical news, increase interaction with consumers before actual shopping on the social media platform, form a good initial attitude towards products, meet information needs, and lay a foundation for later decision-making.

5.3. Decision

Branding of agricultural products helps consumers understand product information, identify product quality, and decide their purchase behavior according to their understanding of products. The stronger the brand reputation, the shorter the period for consumers to accept innovative things, the faster they can occupy the market, and the more likely they are to have an impulse to buy. Taigu Huping Jujube can delimit consumer groups, provide unique product services to strengthen brand awareness, cultivate independent purchasing behavior by brand attraction, conduct market penetration through high-quality brand construction, stimulate purchasing power, and enable consumers to decide to buy products.

5.4. Rediffusion

For brands, loyal fans have a stable market share. The communicators use the secondary publicity and promotion effect to help expand market share, strengthen product brand awareness, and ensure brand development momentum. Taigu Huping Jujube can make good use of the role of "opinion leaders" in the fan group in spreading brand information, establishing brand image and optimizing products, accelerate the brand diffusion into the "take-off period", promote consumers' secondary publicity and promotion, repeat consumption behavior, and achieve the goal of rediffusion.

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