

From Cultural Expression to Brand Narrative: A Study on the Symbolic Value Generation of Ethnic Tourism Products

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Abstract

Purpose – This study addresses the prevalent market failure characterized by the superficial application of cultural elements and weak brand storytelling, which results in a severe deficiency in product symbolic value.

Design/Methodology/Approach – Drawing on cultural branding theory, narratology, and semiotics, this research builds an integrative analytical framework centered on the dual constructs of "Cultural Expression" (CE) and "Brand Narrative" (BN). The study deconstructs symbolic value generation into a dynamic, two-tiered process: CE constitutes the "deep structure" (providing content and legitimacy), while BN forms the "superstructure" (acting as a strategic engine for market activation and transformation).

Findings – This paper argues that Cultural Expression, through its core dimensions of authenticity, aesthetics, and storability, provides the foundational content and legitimacy for symbolic value. Brand Narrative, in turn, employs structured, emotionalized, and interactive strategies to activate, amplify, and convert this latent cultural value into consumer-perceivable brand equity. Their relationship is not linear but a mutually empowering, upward-spiraling mechanism. This process elevates a product from a mere "object" into a "symbolic entity" endowed with profound cultural connotation and strong emotional connection, ultimately unifying its market and cultural worth.

Research Implications – For both theory and practice, this study proposes a "generative" process model that bridges the gap between macro cultural branding theories and micro consumer experience research. It calls for a strategic shift in organizational logic: from "mining" cultural elements to "cultivating" cultural expression, and from one-way marketing "bombardment" to "narrative-led" community co-creation. The CE-BN framework provides a diagnostic and prescriptive tool for tourism and cultural organizations to achieve the creative transformation of cultural resources and the high-quality branding of their products.

Keywords: Cultural Expression; Brand Narrative; Symbolic Value; Ethnic Tourism Products; Branding

JEL Classifications: L83, O33, Z13, I31, M10

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I. Introduction

As special cultural and commercial articles, the important value of ethnic tourism products is based on their ability to convey and spread cultural ideas rather than their physical functions. With the increase of the experience economy, they have changed from common material souvenirs to "mobile symbols" representing the local culture and "means for tourists to express themselves" (Zeng, 2024). Therefore, it is significant to establish and improve their symbolic values systematically, which is necessary for both the protection of cultural heritages and the sustainable development of the tourism industry.

Furthermore, there is an existing contradiction: although the market requires more and more "culture", most ethnic tourism products still face the problem of "dual aphasia". One kind of aphasia is the lack of cultural expression. The use of ethnic symbols on a large quantity of products is limited to superficial reproduction and accumulation, making them "empty signs" without inner vitality (Huo et al., 2025). By adopting this way of "having elements without a story", it can not stimulate the consumers' emotional response and even weaken or change the cultural value carried by these symbols during the commercial process (Dai, 2014). The other kind of aphasia is the brand construction. Most developers are stuck in the marketing concepts of traditional fast-moving consumer goods, unable to understand the principles of building brands for cultural products. As a result, they encounter the situation of "having products without a brand". Such kind of "noise selling" can not establish a deep emotional bond with the consumers, finally causing ineffective price competition in the homogeneous market.

To solve this problem, scholars from different fields have provided valuable theoretical materials, but these ideas are like searchlights which do not meet each other. Cultural branding theory explains that brands should enter the consumer's mind through cultural stories, thus indicating the significance of brand storytelling (Lu et al., 2023). Tourism anthropology, such as the works of Ning (2017) and MacCannell (1973), has investigated the multi-layered aspects of 'authenticity', clarifying the consumers' demand for cultural experiences (Ning, 2017; MacCannell, 1973). At the same time, domestic research in design and folklore studies has concentrated on how to select and convey cultural factors, studying the method of implementing cultural expression (Zang & Wu, 2026).

Although these contributions have been made, a significant research deficiency exists regarding the relationship between these theories: we do not have a comprehensive process model which systematically elucidates the effective transformation of profound cultural meanings (content) into brand symbolic values with strong appeal (result) via various strategic marketing measures (form). Consequently, this paper intends to establish an integrated analytical structure to link these theoretical discrepancies. We will specifically focus on the following three main issues by introducing the 'Cultural Expression - Brand Narrative (CE-BN)' model.

What fundamental aspects should a "Cultural Expression" have to effectively convey symbolic meaning?

What crucial strategies should a "Brand Narrative" adopt to effectively promote cultural content?

What is the nature of the interactive relationship between "Cultural Expression" and "Brand Narrative" which jointly promote the creation and evaluation of symbolic values?

By responding to these queries, the study intends to offer a novel analytical approach for examining the branding of cultural resources, and also a more organized intellectual way for industrial application.

II. Theoretical Framework: The Binary Architecture of Cultural Expression-Brand Narrative (CE-BN)

To systematically explain the formation of symbolic value, this paper puts forward the Cultural Expression-Brand Narrative (CE-BN) model. We believe that the symbolic value should not be presented in a single way, but rather a two-way procedure with a Binary Structure. In this structure, 'Cultural Expression' plays the role of the Deep Structure of symbolic value, supplying both its content and supporting reasons. 'Brand Narrative' forms the Superstructure, acting as the conveying method which initiates, strengthens and implements the market change of this concealed value.

1. Construct 1: Cultural Expression (CE) — The Deep Structure and Legitimizing Foundation of Symbolic Value

In this paper, "Cultural Expression" is not merely a replication of the traditional components. It represents the change and integration process of a people's Symbolic Grammar, which consists of their historical experience, values, artistic concepts and lifestyle, into a work. This forms an important basis which endows the brand with content, depth and reliability. A cultural expression without substantial meaning and having only surface features can not maintain a significant and appealing brand story. From the studied materials (for example, Wang et al., 2011; Berger, 2019; Dong et al., 2009; Polfuß, 2021), we think that a stable profound structure is mainly based on the following three aspects:

Authenticity is the moral-legal basis for the whole symbolic value structure (Lee, 2025). It determines the right and qualification of the brand to use and interpret a certain culture, being an essential condition for consumer trust. It is not limited to mean "the original flavour", but has several layers. According to Wang's (1999) comprehensive classification, it may be "objective authenticity" based on historical evidence; "constructed authenticity" which is considered real by tourists although there is commercial arrangement; or "existential authenticity" which arouses deep personal emotional feelings. A non-authentic expression will make the brand story meaningless and reduce the product to a superficial "pseudo-ancient", or bring about charges of "cultural exploitation", thus destroying its symbolic value instantly.

Aesthetics plays the role of the deep structure's Sensory Signature and Capital Converter (Hu, 2026). As a sensory signature, it converts abstract cultural meanings into a special brand aesthetic style through a unique combination of visuals, textures and even scents (Pei, 2013). As a capital converter, it follows Bourdieu's (2018) theory to change cultural resources into the holder's 'cultural capital', which can be used as a symbol to differentiate social tastes and express personal identities. An outstanding aesthetic presentation can make the

culture overcome its own limitations and achieve resonance with other groups.

Storability is the important characteristic of the Narrative Gene Pool (Duero, 2019). It indicates that the cultural expressions have a large number of narrative 'genes' which can be chosen and rearranged, like exciting backgrounds, conflicts, characters or plots. For instance, the design of a piece of jewellery may be related to a legend; the particular method of a certain fabric may reflect the family history. According to Bruner (1991), people build their reality by means of narratives. These inherent 'story seeds' are the best materials for the brand narrative framework.

2. Construct 2: Brand Narrative (BN) — The Superstructure and Transmission Engine of Symbolic Value

If Cultural Expression stands for the precious "mineral deposits" buried in the deep ground, then Brand Narrative is the proper machine applied for discovering, refining and presenting them to the whole world. It is an efficient way of communication which transforms the hidden value in the internal structure into a brand reputation that can be noticed, retained and transmitted by the consumers. This 'machine' includes three main strategies (or 'parts'):

Strategy 1: Structuring - Transforming Disorder into Order: Culture is generally complicated, ambiguous and sometimes contradictory. The purpose of structuring is to organize this disarranged cultural information into a well-defined and coherent narrative structure (like the "Hero's Journey"). It defines the roles in the brand's world (for example, the brand as a guide and the consumer as the hero), constructs a plot and finally forms a meaningful theme (for instance, "retrieving roots" or "praising craftsmanship"). This process of "ordering" can decrease the consumer's cognitive burden, enabling them to comprehend and remember the complex culture more easily (Sanders & Van Krieken, 2018).

Strategy 2: Emotionalizing - Changing from Object to Feeling: This approach is applied to modify the brand story, aiming at transforming "object to feeling." By developing sympathetic characters and constructing some emotional settings, the difficult product is turned into an emotional carrier. The significance of the symbolic value is not to understand the symbol itself, but the emotions it arouses (e.g., being touched, a feeling of belonging or pride). Consumers buy the emotion rather than the product itself (Ai, 2008). Emotion is the "magic key" to touch the consumer's heart (Enterprise Research, (6), 18-19).

Strategy 3: Interaction - From Monologue to Polyphony: In the present era, the presentation of the brand's story has transformed from a single-directional "monologue" to a diversified "polyphonic" performance. Based on Service-Dominant Logic (Holt, 2007), customers are not only the receivers of value but also the "co-creators" of value. Through the use of platforms like social media, an interactive strategy motivates customers to participate in the narration, alteration and spread of the story. This approach can enhance the brand's vitality and at the same time enables customers to be the most active creators and communicators of symbolic values by their usage and diffusion.

III. The Engine of Value Generation: Bidirectional Empowerment and Spiral Appreciation in the CE-BN Framework

The relationship between Cultural Expression and Brand Narrative is not a series of actions such as 'do A first, then do B', but a dynamic system of mutual promotion and mutual influence. We consider it as an 'innovation' in value creation. This innovation is achieved through two main procedures-'Content Assistance' and 'Value Stimulation', leading to a continual increase and appreciation process, called 'The Spiral of Symbolic Value'.

1. Stroke 1: Content Substantiation — How Cultural Expression Injects "Legitimacy" and "Potential Energy" into Brand Narrative

This is the "intake and compression" stage of the engine. During this period, a profound and abundant Cultural Expression supplies the Brand Narrative with the "high-energy fuel" needed for ignition, mainly shown as:

Authenticity endows the story with both 'reliability' and 'power'. A brand's story constructed on an authentic cultural background will acquire the reliability to express itself. When there is plenty of information and people are generally 'ad-sensitive', this kind of story, supported by cultural truths, can successfully pass through the consumer's trust obstacles and cause an Ontological Security-feeling - meaning the story is not fabricated. This trust is the foundation for a brand to resist conventional competition and gain a considerable competitive advantage (Xu et al., 2020). A story without authenticity is similar to a fairy tale.

Aesthetics gives the "perceptibility" and "Focus of Desire" in the story. A special aesthetic is the main basis for expressing the culture of a brand. It changes an abstract cultural story into a clear form which can be observed, handled and sensed, making the story "lived through" instead of just "told". In the battle for attention, a good aesthetic is the key factor in capturing the consumer's interest and arousing his desire to know more and possess it. It assists in distinguishing a story from others and turning it into an attractive object of desire (Hoyer & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012).

Storability gives vitality to the story through "dramatic potential" and "Core Fuel." The "story kernels" contained in Cultural Expression supply the Brand Narrative with the most important dramatic tension and emotional power. It provides the basic outline for forming conflicts, determining heroes and building suspense. The main purpose of a Brand Narrative is to select, modify and rearrange these dispersed, hidden story elements (a myth, a craftsman, a ritual), converting them into a Brand Story from Cultural Materials. If there is no storability of cultural expressions, the brand narrative will be like a river without a source, and the engine will stop due to lack of fuel.

2. Stroke 2: Value Catalysis — How Brand Narrative Reversely Activates and Reshapes Cultural Expression

This is the stage of "starting and enhancing" for the engine. At present, the "exact devices" in the Brand Narrative are being improved. It not only shows the strength of "fuel", but mainly affects the Cultural Expression itself, giving it new vitality and enabling its update in the contemporary age.

A Structured Narrative creates a "Cognitive Map," leading to the transition from "Cultural Field" to "Brand Pathway." The Brand Narrative arranges the abundant and complicated cultural information (a broad "cultural field") into a clear and consistent story framework, offering consumers a "Cognitive Map." Following this carefully planned "brand pathway," consumers can easily understand the essence of the culture and its inner meaning, thus changing the vague and latent "cultural cognition" into a clear and firm "brand cognition," finishing the first process of value transformation (Chen, 2024).

An Emotionalized Narrative constructs a "Psychic Bridge," which connects the "Grand Narrative" to "Personal Relevance." Focusing on human emotions and destiny, Brand Narrative forms a "Psychic Bridge" between "grand culture" and "personal life." It evokes feelings of happiness, nostalgia, respect or aspiration in the consumers, transforming abstract cultural values into specific life experiences and personal emotions. It is this introduction of emotion that makes the cultural symbol warmer, achieving the important stage from "cultural identification" to "brand affection" (Chen et al., 2014).

An Interactive Narrative activates the "Meaning Engine", which is essential for changing "Historical Heritage" into "Living Culture". This is the main point for the whole engine to form a value-added cycle and start the next cycle. In the historical river, traditional culture is like a "past-tense" Heritage. By asking the consumers to participate in creating the story (by using, sharing, commenting and making derivatives), they are given the new positions of "cultural inheritors" and "contemporary interpreters". In this process, culture is no longer an exhibit in a museum but a Living Culture - a vital organism which is closely connected to people's daily life. Each time a consumer shares with his personal ideas, it adds new and modern meanings to the cultural symbol (Hu et al., 2026). This "meaning reproduction" thus greatly improves and strengthens the authenticity and storability of the "Cultural Expression", offering high-quality "fuel" for the next higher level of brand narration.

In conclusion, the process including "Content Substantiation → Value Catalysis → Meaning Reproduction → Content Re-fortification" is the main dynamic mechanism for the gradual increase in the symbolic value of the product. Each cycle enables the accumulation and appreciation of the product's symbolic value at a higher level.

IV. Framework Deployment: A Mechanistic Analysis of Paradigm Cases

If the CE-BN framework is the theoretical engine presented in this paper, then successful business cases

are the "test tracks" to prove its effectiveness. Our purpose is not only to apply the framework to the cases, but also to use it as an analytical tool. By a systematic analysis of two revolutionary brands in the Chinese market, "Florasis" and "The Palace Museum Cultural and Creative Products", we intend to illustrate, practically, the "Symbolic Value Spiral" operation in reality.

1. Case 1: Florasis — The Architectural Blueprint of an Aesthetics-Driven Brand

As a prominent company which has gained popularity in recent times, the achievement of Florasis is not due to a chance marketing success, but the outcome of a thorough brand establishment following the CE-BN framework strictly. It demonstrates the way to construct a stable brand foundation based on the concept of "Eastern Aesthetics", beginning with nothing.

Foundation of the Deep Structure (CE):

Authenticity: The brand studies extensively the ancient Chinese pharmacopoeia books such as the *Compendium of Materia Medica*, ensuring the objectivity and credibility for its main idea of "makeup nourished by flowers." This is not only a promotional story, but is clearly shown in its ingredient lists, which bases the consumer's trust.

Aesthetics: The "Eastern micro-carving" technique in its original form reproduces traditional designs such as landscapes and auspicious animals inside a miniature product. This special, clearly different aesthetic is able to change a quick-selling commodity into a "social currency" with collecting value, thus converting the cultural symbol into aesthetic wealth.

Storability: From the intangible cultural heritage stories contained in its "Miao Ethnic Silver" collection to the thousand-year-old love covenants related to its "Concentric Lock" lipstick [ref: 5, 8], each of Florasis's main product lines is not a single design but a particular "story embryo" drawn from a wide range of narrative gene pool.

Construction of the Superstructure (BN):

Structuring: The company has developed a great story about "Inheriting Eastern Beauty and Promoting Chinese Craftsmanship", considering itself as the "Spokesman of Eastern Aesthetics" and aiming at making its consumers as "Contemporary Adherents to Eastern Beauty". This traditional "mentor-protector" narrative scheme gives the process of purchasing a cultural mission which is not limited to the purchase itself.

Its "Concentric Lock Lipstick" portrays an emotional story. It successfully integrates the important cultural theme of romantic fidelity and eternal love in China, not only making the lipstick a color but also a significant object with a deep emotional commitment.

Interacting with many "Guofeng" (Chinese national style) Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs)" and participating

in "Eastern Makeup" challenges on the Internet indicates inviting people to discuss the concept of "What is the modern Eastern beauty?". During this procedure, consumers change from passive buyers to joint creators and active interpreters of the brand story, thus forming a value co-creation cycle.

The successful implementation of Florasis confirms the effectiveness of the "Content Substantiation → Value Catalysis" working principle. Its deep Cultural Expression (CE) gives the Brand Narrative (BN) an unquestionable authority and abundant dramatic resources. Consequently, the exact Brand Narrative (BN) transforms these abstract cultural ideas into realistic forms which the consumers can understand, feel and own. It should be mentioned that the "interacting" strategy used in forming the community collaboration continually introduces new, lively cultural contents recognized by the present youth into the brand. This helps to maintain and update the authenticity and lastingness of its Cultural Expression, thus promoting the next stronger cycle of value.

2. Case 2: The Palace Museum Stationery — The Alchemy of a Dormant Cultural IP

If Florasis indicates construction "from nothing to something", the development of The Palace Museum's cultural products shows a kind of cultural transformation which changes "something to a living thing". It proves that a famous, serious and possibly dull cultural image can be aroused and changed into a national famous brand with great vitality, by using the CE-BN system.

Revitalization of the Deep Structure (CE):

Authenticity: The creativity of our products originates from our own genuine relics or real historical events, like the "Got it." (朕知道了) tape which is derived from the vermilion inscriptions of the Kangxi Emperor. This authenticity, confirmed by 'national treasures', possesses special credibility and serves as the foundation for all the related stories.

Aesthetics: Its main approach is "the translation and reduction of aesthetics." It integrates classical styles with modern pop art and minimalist designs, for example, using the scenery images from the painting A Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains in stationery. This leads to an aesthetic change from "cultural relic" to "fashionable article," which is accepted and favored by a wider young group.

Storability: Since the Forbidden City has existed for about 600 years, each artifact, each emperor and each part of the palace walls contains a story. The Palace Museum possesses an abundant source of narrative materials.

Subversion via the Superstructure (BN):

Structuring: The final result arranged and classified the imperial figure. It modified the former serious and formal appearance of the imperial, and created an "adorable", "humorous" and "human-like" IP character with

a "cute contrast" through social media. Consequently, a humorous story about "What if the Emperor were in the present day?" was conceived.

Through the products such as "Travel by Imperial Decree" luggage tag and "I'm Just That Kind of Guy" folding fan, it made the distant and majestic imperial figure become an approachable and humorous "neighborhood CEO". This immediately reduced the psychological gap between the ordinary people and the supreme imperial power, establishing a strong and new emotional bond.

By regularly publishing posts like "The Palace Museum Cats," "The Palace Museum Lipsticks" and "The First Snow at the Palace Museum" on the Internet, the company has conferred its copyright to the public. It has succeeded in turning "visiting the Palace, purchasing the products and exhibiting them" into a popular cultural fashion, enhancing the spread of the brand's story throughout the country.

The Palace Museum provides a good illustration of the significant "catalyzing" and "stimulating" effect of Brand Narrative on Cultural Expression. Before the establishment of the CE of The Palace Museum, it was in a "high energy state but low activity state" for a long time. By applying the "cute-contrast" narrative structure and the "down-to-earth" emotionalized narrative, The Palace Museum has accomplished a remarkable cultural change. They have transformed the grand and distant history into a language which is easily understood, attractive and shared by the young customers. The interactive narrative, involving numerous people's participation, forms a positive feedback process: every sharing and discussion from the public add new contemporary vitality to this inactive Intellectual Property (IP), thereby truly "refreshing" it from a historical heritage to a living cultural entity coexisting with the current society.

V. Discussion: From Theoretical Construction to Practical Divergence

The main objective of this paper is to disclose the "black box" in the process of generating symbolic values in ethnic tourism products. By setting up the CE-BN framework, we have created both a "map" and an "analysis and implementation" model for value generation. The chapter aims to clarify the theoretical progress and practical distinctions brought by this framework.

1. Reshaping the Dialogue: Three Levels of Theoretical Contribution

The theoretical contribution of this study is not only to put forward new concepts, but also to rearrange and establish a new discussion on cultural branding from three different perspectives by "reorganizing" and "connecting" the existing theories.

The main significance of this study is to bridge the persistent theoretical gap between macro-level cultural branding theory (such as Holt, 2004) which deals with the response of brands to social and cultural trends, and micro-level tourism experience research (such as Wang, 1999) which concentrates on the tourist's personal perception of "authenticity". By harmoniously combining the fundamental structure of "Cultural Expression"

with the upper structure of "Brand Narrative", the CE-BN model systematically solves the fundamental problem of "how grand culture is converted into individual identity" for the first time, providing an opportunity to link these two important theoretical aspects.

At the analytical level, we present a 'Middle-Range Theory'. For the complicated and vague concepts of 'culture' and 'brand', this research specifies them into six analytically understandable dimensions (Authenticity, Aesthetics, Storability; Structuring, Emotionalizing, Interacting). This is referred to as a 'Middle-Range Theory' according to Robert K. Merton's idea. It is not too abstract to help empirical research as a grand theory, nor does it fail to have extensive explanatory power as pure empirical induction. The CE-BN framework, as an analytical heuristic, offers a set of analysable elements for future researchers to use in both theoretical reasoning and empirical verification.

At the Research Perspective Level: Proposing a "Generating" approach instead of a "Constituting" one. Previously, most research has followed a "constituting" principle - that a successful cultural brand is "constituted" by factors A, B and C. In this study, we suggest a "Generating" research strategy. By using the model of "Content Supportation → Value Activation → Meaning Reproduction", we point out that the symbolic value is not a fixed combination of elements but an interactive, continuous and spiraling increasing "Generating" procedure. This change in research direction leads us to focus on the more process-oriented and dynamic main question: "How does the symbolic value of a cultural brand develop?"

2. Reconfiguring Practice: Two Core Shifts in Organizational Logic

For industry practitioners, the CE-BN framework is not only an operating guide; it mainly promotes two significant changes in the organizational logic.

From "Mining Cultural Elements" to "Cultivating Cultural Expression," the role of the enterprise should be changed. It is no longer enough for the enterprise to merely extract cultural symbols superficially, but rather it has to cultivate culture deeply. The managers cannot be satisfied with merely taking cultural symbols as visual elements. Therefore, the organization should set up a function of "cultural researcher" or "cultural translator" to study the symbolic grammar behind the cultural symbols systematically. During the initial stage of product development, the three aspects of the CE framework (Authenticity, Aesthetics, Storability) should be used as the main criteria for evaluation, just like cultivating a plant to ensure it has strong roots and abundant foliage for the brand story. This may also lead to the establishment of a new position in the organization, the Chief Culture Officer.

From "Marketing Bombardment" to "Brand Narrative Leadership." It is necessary for the brand department of a company to change from a broadcasting station which only does one-way "information bombardment" to a campfire leader who initiates "meaning co-creation" in the community. The brand managers should be regarded as "Brand Bards", whose main task is not to repeatedly announce the Unique Selling Proposition (USP) of a product, but to plan and keep the "Narrative World" rich. By using the three strategies of the BN framework (Structuring, Emotionalizing, Interacting), the brand should be able to "set the stage" and attract customers to

"perform on it", thus transferring part of the control of the brand story to the community in order to stimulate strong network effects and cultural vitality.

In summary, the CE-BN model proposes a novel concept of "Cultural Ambidextrous Organization." This organization should have two contradictory but compatible abilities. On the one hand, it should be similar to an ethnographer or a museum director, valuing culture greatly and conducting thorough and strict exploration and presentation. On the other hand, it must also be like a film director of Hollywood or a product manager in Silicon Valley, being aware of the current consumer psychology and the media situation to carry out effective and attractive narration and communication. Only when both these abilities are mastered can a company effectively control the source of symbolic value creation and establish a lasting cultural brand in the intense market competition.

VI. Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Outlook

The final result of this study is the construction and initial validation of the Cultural Expression-Brand Narrative (CE-BN) model to explain the variations of symbolic values in ethnic tourist products. It indicates that symbolic value is not an invariant factor but a changing procedure. The fundamental rule consists of a cyclic process "Content Confirmation → Value Activation → Meaning Transmission." "Cultural Expression" (CE) provides "Brand Narrative" (BN) with its foundation and considerable help. Additionally, an efficient "Brand Narrative" (BN) can promote, modify and improve the present symbolic value. By promoting the collaborative creation of the consumers, it constantly introduces new meanings to the whole system, thus promoting the continuous appreciation of symbolic value.

This research on theoretical construction has some restrictions. Firstly, the CE-BN framework was established by theoretical reasoning and case study; its general applicability and the relationships among its different aspects need to be verified by empirical studies with a bigger sample. Secondly, in this paper, only successful examples were chosen and there is not enough discussion about the cases where value creation has not been achieved.

Therefore, future research can be expanded in the following directions:

Quantitative Verification: Construct well-established measurement scales for the six aspects of the CE-BN model. Then, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) can be applied to verify the relationships among these aspects and the outcomes such as symbolic value and purchase intention.

Comparative case studies should be carried out to analyze successfully and unsuccessfully examples in order to investigate the underlying obstacles resulting in failure in symbolic value creation. This will improve the framework's diagnostic ability.

Cross-cultural verification and "dark side" investigation: Examine the suitability of the framework in various national and cultural backgrounds. At the same time, carry out detailed studies on its "dark side". For example, under which circumstances does a brand's message change from "cultural empowerment" to the unethical

situation of "Cultural Appropriation"? This kind of study is of great practical significance for guaranteeing the healthy growth of cultural industries.

In summary, this study intends to offer a conceptual framework for both theoretical reasoning and practical use, with the purpose of going beyond simple explanations of "what is," to a more profound understanding of "why" and effective suggestions on "how to." Our main objective is to discover a balanced position, combining a respectful attitude towards cultural conservation with an innovative spirit in business, thus promoting a more responsible and significant culture industry through continuous investigation and thought.

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