Collaborative Management Framework for Cross-regional Brand Expansion: Cultural Adaptation, Service Standardization and Supply Chain Management

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Abstract. Against the backdrop of intensified global competition, cross-regional brand expansion faces multiple challenges such as cultural adaptation, service standardization, and supply chain management. This paper adopts a multi-case analysis method to extract the innovative practices of successful brands in balancing localization needs and globalization strategies and constructs a "brand expansion collaborative management model". The model integrates the key elements of the three dimensions of adaptation layer, standard layer, and operation layer. The study found that the three-layer collaboration needs to resolve contradictions through a dynamic balance mechanism: the flexibility of the adaptation layer needs to supplement the constraints of the standard layer, and the efficiency goals of the operation layer need to support the realization of the first two. On this basis, feasible suggestions are put forward: formulate a "core-edge-standardization" strategy, establish a cross-departmental collaborative decision-making mechanism, and develop an intelligent data management platform. The research conclusion shows that through system integration, brands can gain sustained competitive advantages in global expansion and provide theoretical support and practical paths for cross-regional strategies.

1 Introduction

Under the wave of economic globalization, the boundaries of market competition are constantly being broken, and cross-regional brand expansion has become an important strategic choice for many companies to seek development. With the diversification of consumer demand, there are significant differences between different regional markets in terms of cultural background, consumption habits, economic level, etc., and brands face unprecedented challenges in the process of cross-regional development. The problem of cultural adaptation is the first to be affected. Consumers of different cultures have different

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perceptions, values, and aesthetic orientations of brands. If brands cannot be accurately adapted, it is particularly easy to cause cultural conflicts and lead to low market acceptance. Service standardization has also become a key obstacle. How to ensure the consistency of brand core values and service quality while taking into account the diversified service needs of various regions is an urgent problem for brands to solve. In addition, supply chain management also faces tremendous pressure in cross-regional expansion. There are significant differences in cost structure, logistics efficiency, supply stability, etc. in different regions, which increases the complexity and risk of operations.

In this context, it is of great significance to conduct in-depth research on the collaborative management of brand cross-regional expansion. This study adopts a multi-case analysis method and selects several representative brand cases such as KFC, Haidilao, and Guangzhou Restaurant for in-depth analysis. By comparing the strategies and practices of different cases in cross-regional expansion, reconciling evidence from different cases and types, increasing the possibility of constructing a new theoretical perspective, and making the summarized theory more universally adaptable and objective.

From a theoretical perspective, the current academic research on cross-regional brand expansion is mostly focused on a single field, and there is a lack of systematic discussion on the integrated management of the three. This study aims to fill this theoretical gap, build a complete collaborative management framework, and provide new perspectives and ideas for the improvement of the cross-regional brand expansion theory system. From a practical perspective, this study can provide practical guidance for enterprises. By exploring the practical experience of successful brands, it can summarize operational collaborative management strategies to help enterprises effectively cope with complex market environments, improve operational efficiency, and enhance brand resilience.

2 Literature review

With the diversification of consumer demand and the intensification of market competition, catering brands face multiple challenges in cross-regional expansion. From the perspective of cultural adaptability, brands should adjust according to the culture and needs of the target market, improve consumer acceptance of the brand and service competitiveness, enhance consumer stickiness, and achieve sustainable development [1]. From the perspective of service standardization, catering brands should optimize employee management based on specific standards, provide personalized services, and enhance brand competitiveness [2]. In addition, optimizing the supply chain can improve efficiency, enhance service quality, and support efficient operations [3].

From the perspective of theoretical motivation, theoretical research on brand cross-regional expansion is still imperfect, and research in various fields lacks integration. This study attempts to make up for this theoretical defect, build a collaborative management framework, and improve the theoretical system of brand cross-regional expansion. In reality, when companies expand across regions, they often encounter difficulties because they cannot balance the relationship between cultural adaptation, service standardization, and supply chain management. For example, some brands over-pursue localization, resulting in a confusing brand image; some brands improperly implement standardization, causing consumer dissatisfaction; and some companies increase operating costs due to poor supply chain management. Therefore, in-depth research on this topic can provide companies with practical solutions and has important practical significance.

Taking this as the starting point, this paper innovatively constructs a "brand expansion collaborative management model", integrates key elements from the three dimensions of adaptation layer, standard layer, and operation layer, reveals the collaborative mechanism between the three levels, and proposes innovative measures such as "core-edge" standardization strategy, cross-departmental collaborative decision-making mechanism, and intelligent data management platform to provide new ideas for brand cross-regional expansion.

The subsequent chapters of this article will conduct an in-depth analysis of the collaborative management of cross-regional brand expansion. First, through case restoration and analysis, the problems encountered by different brands in cross-regional expansion are demonstrated, and the cases are deeply interpreted based on relevant theories. Secondly, the collaborative management model of brand expansion is explained, and the core issues, goals, key elements and challenges of the adaptation layer, standard layer, and operation layer are analysed. Finally, based on the research conclusions, feasible suggestions are put forward, the limitations of the research and future research directions are explored, and a comprehensive reference is provided for the research and practice of cross-regional brand expansion.

3 Case restoration based on SWOT analysis

KFC's core advantage in the Chinese market lies in its localized product strategy and flexible pricing system. It enhances brand awareness by launching products that suit local tastes, covers multiple consumer groups with tiered pricing, and optimizes the channel network to increase market penetration. However, the current product structure is still dominated by traditional fast food, which is difficult to match consumers' upgraded demand for healthy diets, and high-calorie products are facing growth pressure. In the future, it can rely on the trend of consumption upgrading to accelerate the transformation to health and deep localization and develop nutritionally balanced products to obtain new growth.

Haidilao relies on service standardization and systematic training to ensure user experience and improves service efficiency and customer stickiness through employee incentives and promotion mechanisms. However, its heavy asset model pushes up operating costs, and the service quality fluctuates during expansion due to the pressure of single-store management, diluting brand value. It is recommended to focus on the trend of upgrading consumer experience, optimize operational efficiency and control capabilities, and strengthen the advantage barriers in the catering competition.

As a traditional catering company, Guangzhou Restaurant consolidates its advantages by accelerating digital and intelligent transformation, using automated production lines to ensure product standardization and production efficiency, and building a supply chain collaboration platform to enhance competitiveness. However, its brand radiation range is still mainly in South China, and its national and global reputation needs to be improved. It is recommended to leverage the market opportunities of pre-prepared meals and frozen foods to expand business, while strengthening brand building to expand market influence.

4 Case analysis

4.1 Case analysis of KFC based on STP theory and 4P theory

STP theory is a marketing strategy that segments the market into different groups (Segmentation), selects target markets (Targeting), and conducts market positioning (Positioning) to meet specific consumer needs. 4P theory is a marketing strategy that combines four elements: product (Product), price (Price), channel (Place) and promotion (Promotion) to meet consumer needs and achieve corporate goals.

KFC has launched special products targeting different regional eating habits through market segmentation, such as "Old Beijing Chicken Roll" in Beijing and "Goji Berry

Pumpkin Porridge" in Shanghai and launched parent-child meal packages and healthy light meals for children, young people and breakfast needs. In terms of target market selection, KFC adopts the strategy of "big cities first and then the whole city", targeting family consumers and young groups, and strengthening connections with these groups through advertising and promotional activities. In terms of market positioning, KFC emphasizes "changing for China" and highlights the combination of family dining scenes and Chinese culture.

Through product localization, low-price strategies (such as value lunches), optimized channel layout (prioritize the layout of core business districts in large cities and gradually expand to small and medium-sized cities), and online channel expansion (online ordering). In terms of promotion, limited-time discounts (such as "buy one get one free" and gift activities) are launched to attract consumers.

4.2 Analysis of Haidilao case based on the perceived service quality gap model

The service quality gap model includes five aspects: manager cognitive gap, service quality standard gap, service delivery gap, market communication gap and perceived service quality gap to analyse the causes of service quality problems and make corresponding suggestions from a management perspective.

Haidilao is known for its high-quality service, but in recent years, food safety incidents (such as "bone soup gate", "rat gate" and excessive E. coli in chopsticks) have exposed its shortcomings in product quality control, resulting in an imbalance in the structure of products and services. In addition, the lack of standardization of service processes and staffing during peak hours has affected overall efficiency. The inconsistency of service staff's attitude and efficiency also reflects the gap between service delivery and standards. Although Haidilao emphasizes the quality of dishes and unique taste in marketing, the actual customer experience has not met expectations, resulting in low evaluations. During rapid expansion, Haidilao has not maintained the consistency of brand connotation and extension. Although it has optimized customer experience through technology, it still needs to improve in terms of tangible experience that meets consumer expectations.

4.3 Case analysis of Guangzhou restaurant group based on value chain theory

The value chain theory was proposed by Michael Porter, which divides the production and operation activities of an enterprise into basic activities (such as procurement, production, sales, after-sales service, etc.) and supporting activities (such as technology research and development, human resource management, etc.), and emphasizes improving the competitiveness of the enterprise by optimizing these activities [4].

Guangzhou Restaurant Group has successfully achieved brand advantage, cost leadership and product differentiation by optimizing value chain activities. Its efficient operation in basic activities such as procurement, production, sales and after-sales service, as well as its continuous investment in supporting activities such as technology research and development and human resource management, has provided strong support for its market competition. However, in the face of challenges of seasonal fluctuations and market competition, Guangzhou Restaurant needs to further optimize the value chain and promote cross-regional expansion and digital transformation to achieve sustainable development.

5 Analysis of the collaborative management framework for cross-regional brand expansion

Through the restoration and analysis of the cases, we found that only by integrating the three strategies can brands achieve efficient and sustainable development in the process of cross-regional expansion. Therefore, we proposed a collaborative management model for brand expansion. This model aims to promote the collaborative development of brands in different regional markets through strategies at three levels: collaborative adaptability, standardization, and operationalization, so as to achieve long-term success and enhance the brand's market competitiveness. Each level of the model will revolve around core issues, goals, key elements, and challenges. The three levels do not exist in isolation, but form an organic whole through goal coordination, element complementarity, and dynamic balance, which jointly support the sustainability of brands in cross-regional expansion.

5.1 Adaptation layer

In the adaptation layer, brands need to solve the problem of how to effectively localize in different regional markets, with the goal of improving local market acceptance through cultural adjustments, such as through key strategies such as product localization, brand cultural adaptation, and market preference analysis. However, this process faces challenges, such as excessive localization may weaken the brand's global unified image, and it is necessary to find a balance between cultural adaptation and brand consistency.

For example, when luxury goods first entered China, standardized global marketing strategies were favoured because they maintained brand consistency and reduced risk. After entering China, transnational localized marketing strategies became increasingly important, aiming to more effectively meet local needs, pay attention to regional differences, accumulate experience and knowledge, enhance brand awareness, and cope with market competition pressures [5]. Naming a product in Chinese is difficult and requires a deep understanding of local culture and consumer preferences. Otherwise, it will be difficult to increase brand awareness and loyalty.

To cater to India's vegetarian culture, McDonald's launched a fully vegetarian menu (such as the "McAloo Tikki" burger). However, the over-emphasis on localization led to the loss of its core global products (such as beef burgers), weakening the brand's identity as "American fast food". Some consumers believe that it has "lost its distinctiveness" [6].

Pay attention to the relationship between cultural adaptability and business performance. Research has found that brands with better cultural adaptability perform better in overseas revenue, and it is recommended that companies pay attention to the cultural adaptability of their websites to enhance their international market competitiveness [7]. For different industries (such as technology, consumer goods, etc.), companies should formulate differentiated cross-cultural communication strategies based on the characteristics of the industry.

5.2 Standard layer

The core issue of the standardization layer is how to maintain a consistent brand experience in different regions. To this end, brands need to ensure the unity of their core values and user experience. Specific measures include service standardization, product standardization, and optimization of management processes. However, different markets have different levels of acceptance of standardization. How to flexibly respond to the diverse needs of local markets while adhering to the core values of the brand has become the main challenge of this layer.

In the context of globalization, consumers' perceptions of products from different countries (i.e., COO effect) have a significant impact on brand evaluation and purchase decisions. COO stereotypes are consumers' simplified perceptions of countries and their products, which affect brand evaluation and purchase intentions. In summary, it was found that consumers have higher purchase intentions when COO stereotypes are consistent with brand positioning. Inconsistency in COO stereotypes can significantly increase consumers' cognitive conflict, so brands need to pay special attention to this.

5.3 Operational layer

The operational layer focuses on how to maintain efficient operations during the expansion process. Its goal is to improve efficiency through supply chain integration, intelligent operations and cost control. However, this layer also faces problems such as increasing supply chain pressure and difficulty in unifying cost structures and profit models in different regions. It needs to strike a balance between efficiency and adaptability.

Supply chain complexity is a multidimensional concept involving multiple driving factors such as uncertainty, diversity, and information asynchrony [8]. In the current economic and industrial development landscape, many strategies can be adopted to improve the efficiency and resilience of the supply chain, such as improving resource flexibility, strengthening information sharing and communication, and rationalizing products and customer-supplier bases. These strategies help companies maintain stable operations in a turbulent market environment.

At the same time, with the increasing scarcity of resources, the concept of circular economy (CE) has received widespread attention. CE is committed to achieving zero waste of resources through biological and technological cycles, which is more sustainable than the traditional linear economic model (mining-making-using-discarding). In order to achieve a circular economy, supply chain management transformation is imperative, which has given rise to the new concept of circular supply chain management (CSCM) [9]. CSCM covers five dimensions: closed-loop supply chain management, reverse supply chain management, remanufacturing supply chain management, recycling supply chain management, and industrial symbiosis. By integrating forward and reverse supply chains, it effectively promotes the supply chain to move towards the goal of zero waste [10]. In the long run, the future development of supply chain management must move towards sustainability.

At the operational level, the key to achieving sustainable and efficient operations lies in the use of systematic management methods, such as modular process design and data-driven decision support, to achieve economies of scale while retaining flexibility to cope with regional differences. This can not only help companies reduce costs and increase efficiency during expansion but also enhance their ability to cope with market changes and ultimately support brands to adapt to new trends in global economic development.

In short, the three form a closed loop of "localized innovation-standardization constraints-operational support": the adaptation layer injects regional vitality into the brand, the standard layer ensures the stability of the brand core, and the operation layer provides resource and efficiency guarantees. Decisions at any level must consider the impact on the other two levels, and ultimately achieve the unity of globalization and localization, flexibility and efficiency, and cost and value through collaboration.

6 Conclusion

This article analyses the successful experiences and challenges of brands in cross-regional expansion and proposes collaborative management strategies such as brand culture adaptation, service standardization, and supply chain optimization, providing practical strategic suggestions for other industries, helping companies to effectively improve operational efficiency and enhance brand adaptability during the expansion process, thereby achieving sustainable growth.

First, set the core elements of the brand (such as logo, core values, etc.) as unchangeable standards, and set non-core elements (such as service processes, product specifications, supply chain selection, etc.) as adjustable "marginal standards" to allow regional teams to adapt flexibly within the framework.

Second, a "Brand Expansion Coordination Committee" can be established, composed of representatives from the marketing, operations, and standardization departments, to regularly analyse data at three levels, including localization feedback, standardization execution efficiency, and operating costs, and formulate dynamic adjustment strategies.

Third, build a unified data platform, integrate market research data at the adaptation layer, process templates at the standard layer, and real-time supply chain data at the operation layer, and use demand forecasting models to generate collaborative decision-making suggestions.

However, the report focuses on summarizing, and the selected cases are mainly concentrated in the catering and luxury industries. Whether they can be well applied in other fields remains to be explored. It is also necessary to consider possible defects in actual implementation, case support and dynamic adjustment in order to achieve long-term sustainable development of the brand in cross-regional expansion.

Authors contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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