

“Let Bygones Be Bygones” or “Hold a Grudge” : Brand Violation Effects and Their Psychological Mechanisms

Authors: Xiao Tingwen, Shen Feilong, Guan Biyu, Xiao Tingwen, Guan Biyu

Date: 2025-09-25T15:02:27+00:00

Abstract

As a form of brand misconduct that violates consumer-brand relationships, brand transgression incidents will rapidly and extensively attract consumer attention and discussion in the new era of “everything is media.” Consumer attitudes are critically influenced by the characteristics of brand transgression types, and existing literature’s classification of brand transgressions can be summarized as a three-dimensional system comprising transgression entity, method, and content. Building upon the clarification of brand transgression definitions and the organization of classification systems, this paper elucidates the theoretical foundations of brand transgression effects from two levels—individual psychology and social psychology—and through two pathways: mediating mechanisms and boundary conditions. It further discusses the influence of brand transgression types on consumer attitudes and their underlying psychological mechanisms. Future research may explore three themes: brand transgression effects in AI technology-induced contexts, differential impacts of brand transgression type characteristics on Chinese versus Western consumer attitudes, and the effects of specific brand transgression types on evaluations of associated brands. This paper also offers strategic recommendations for corporate responses to brand transgressions, including adopting cognitive/emotional empathic communication, developing appropriate remedial strategies, and adjusting public opinion guidance approaches.

Full Text

“Letting Bygones Be Bygones” or “Holding a Grudge” ? The Effect of Brand Transgression and Its Psychological Mechanisms

XIAO Tingwen¹, CHEN Feilong¹, GUAN Biyu²

(¹School of Business Administration, Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics, Nanchang 330032, China)

(²School of Management, Guangdong University of Science and Technology, Dongguan 523125, China)

Abstract: In an era where “everything is a medium,” brand transgressions—misconduct that violates consumer-brand relationships—rapidly capture widespread consumer attention and ignite public discourse. Consumer attitudes are critically shaped by the typological characteristics of brand transgressions, yet existing literature lacks a systematic review of classification systems and their subsequent effects. This paper clarifies the definition of brand transgression and organizes its classification into a three-dimensional framework encompassing the transgression subject, method, and content. Building upon this foundation, we elucidate the theoretical underpinnings of brand transgression effects from two analytical levels (individual and social psychology) and through two explanatory pathways (mediating mechanisms and boundary conditions). We further examine how different transgression types influence consumer attitudes and their underlying psychological mechanisms. Future research should explore three key themes: (1) brand transgression effects in contexts induced by AI technology, (2) cross-cultural differences in how Eastern and Western consumers respond to various transgression types, and (3) the impact of specific brand transgressions on evaluations of associated brands. This paper also offers strategic recommendations for corporate responses, including adopting cognitive/emotional empathy-based communication, formulating tailored remediation strategies, and adjusting approaches to public opinion management.

Keywords: brand transgression, typological characteristics, consumer attitude, psychological mechanism

2.1 Conceptual Clarification of Brand Transgression

Brand transgression, also translatable as brand deviance, is an emerging concept derived from consumer-brand interaction literature that refers to brand misconduct violating the implicit or explicit rules governing consumer-brand relationship performance and evaluation (Aaker, 2004; Huber et al., 2011; Trump, 2014). As a brand-related event, brand transgression encompasses any behavior that breaches consumer-brand relationships (Eda & Zeynep, 2015), including not only product failures and poor service but also violations of social norms (Lin & Sung, 2014). Product failure and service deficiency refer to “products

found to be defective and dangerous to at least some portion of the customer base”and “service performance falling below the expectations of a minority of consumers,” potentially causing consumers financial and psychological losses. Social norm violations include preference conflicts and selfish, provocative, or deceptive behaviors that generate feelings of injury and resentment while destabilizing consumer-brand relationships (Khamitov et al., 2020; Lin & Sung, 2014).

Brand failure shares similar phenomena with brand transgression, as both concern negative brand performance resulting from objective deficiencies in market positioning, personnel management, product design, and technical maintenance (Xu et al., 2018; Cheng et al., 2012; Pearson, 2004). However, brand transgression originates more from subjective corporate decisions—deliberate violations of legal and ethical constraints regarding environmental protection, product quality, safety production, and information disclosure (Zhou, 2017; Zhu et al., 2024; Trump, 2014).

2.2 A Typological System for Brand Transgression

Building on the conceptualization of brand transgression as deriving from subjective corporate decisions, this paper organizes classification criteria into three dimensions (see Table 1): (1) **Transgression subject characteristics**, including the developmental level of the brand’s prototypical country of origin, organizational profit orientation, and geographic origin; (2) **Transgression methods**, encompassing the degree to which consequences are controllable by the actor, severity, recognizability to consumers, and potential harm; and (3) **Transgression content themes**, such as relevance to consumer self-concept, moral attributes, interpersonal attributes, which level of consumer interests are harmed, relevance to non-profit organizational missions, and diagnosticity.

2.3 Theoretical Foundations of Brand Transgression Effects

How do different types of brand transgressions affect consumer attitudes? This paper systematically reviews relevant theories and clarifies their applicable scopes and differential functions, as summarized in Table 2 . Although multiple theories may explain the effects of the same transgression attribute, each is necessary for analyzing specific issues. For instance, both institutional theory and the dual-strategies theory of social rank explain how moral (vs. non-moral) transgressions affect consumer attitudes, yet institutional theory illuminates why consumers in Western developed countries are more sensitive to moral transgressions, while the dual-strategies theory explains why consumers find it difficult to accept moral transgressions from brands employing winner narratives. Cognitive dissonance theory and social identity theory, used to explain domestic (vs. foreign) brand transgression effects, operate at different analytical levels and explanatory pathways: the former clarifies negative reactions among tight-culture consumers toward domestic brand transgressions, while the latter reveals the internal mechanism of social identity threat.

At the core of brand transgression theory are expectancy violation theory and moral foundations theory, which deeply explicate consumer-centric psychological pathways. However, these explanations neglect social-cognitive perspectives on consumers, a gap addressed by prototype theory and social identity theory. Yet these theories' applicability is limited to conventional contexts and fails to account for factors such as self-brand connection/self-construal, cultural tightness-looseness, institutional context, and corporate narrative strategies. Attribution theory, cognitive dissonance theory, institutional theory, and the dual-strategies theory of social rank fully reveal these boundary conditions, serving as auxiliary and complementary frameworks to core theories. These theoretical foundations possess an internal logical structure, as illustrated in Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper]. Vertically, the two explanatory pathways indicate each theory's position in the process through which transgression types influence consumer attitudes: mediating mechanism theories aim to parse psychological pathways, while boundary condition theories seek to reveal moderating factors. Horizontally, the two analytical levels reveal brand transgression effects from different perspectives that deepen and expand each other: individual-level psychological theories focus on consumer-centric brand transgressions, analyzing how consumer interest-related attributes shape attitudes through individual psychological pathways, while social-level psychological theories analyze brand transgressions from a broader social-cognitive perspective, explicating how socio-cultural background-related attributes alter consumer attitudes through social psychological mechanisms.

2.3.1 Individual Psychological Level (1) Expectancy Violation Theory. Expectancy violation theory (EVT) proposes that entity behaviors deviating from existing expectations trigger more intense negative reevaluations, with greater deviation producing stronger expectancy violation perceptions (Burgooon & Le Poire, 1993). Originally applied to nonverbal communication, EVT has evolved to explain expectancy violations in organizational contexts (Greitemeyer & Sagioglou, 2018; Sohn & Lariscy, 2015). Brand transgression research employs EVT to explain the "liability effect" and "boomerang effect" of corporate reputation. When reputable firms are implicated in negative events such as product recalls, tax evasion, or privacy violations, they face harsher market penalties and lower consumer trust (Rhee & Haunschild, 2006; Sohn & Lariscy, 2015). Since nonprofit status typically implies higher moral reputation, nonprofit (vs. for-profit) transgressions generate stronger expectancy deviations, severely damaging consumer trust and support (Hornsey et al., 2021).

(2) Moral Foundations Theory. Moral foundations theory emphasizes moral and cultural diversity, enumerating psychological foundations upon which cultures construct moral systems: care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation (Haidt, 2004). Moral emotions play crucial roles in creating and maintaining human morality, with related feelings causing the public to cease behaving as rational economic agents (Jonathan, 2003). When brand transgressions occur, consumers may engage in third-party

punishment against norm-violating brands at personal cost (Li et al., 2025). From this perspective, value-related (vs. performance-related) transgressions evoke higher moral outrage, reducing consumer willingness to purchase and diminishing the effectiveness of price reductions and performance improvements. These effects manifest economically as decreased price and performance elasticities for both transgressing and non-transgressing competitor brands (Kübler et al., 2020).

(3) Attribution Theory. Attribution theory posits that how individuals explain the causes of their own and others' behaviors determines those behaviors' cognitive and behavioral consequences (Heider, 2013). For successes or failures, individuals attribute causes along three dimensions: locus (internal or external), stability (permanent or temporary), and controllability (degree of control over outcomes), subsequently shaping their reactions (Weiner, 2019). Attribution theory explains how transgression controllability and recognizability affect consumer attitudes. Independent self-construal consumers attribute uncontrollable (vs. controllable) transgressions to more salient justice concerns and exhibit higher brand forgiveness; interdependent self-construal consumers do not make such attributions (Sinha & Lu, 2016). When celebrity-endorsed brands transgress, consumers attribute controllable (vs. uncontrollable) transgressions to betrayal, reducing forgiveness and trust (Aw & Labrecque, 2023). Additionally, strong-connection (vs. weak-connection) consumers attribute ambiguous (vs. blatant) pre-transgression moral behaviors to lower immorality, tolerating transgressions more readily (Ryoo, 2022).

(4) Cognitive Dissonance Theory. Cognitive dissonance theory holds that conflicting cognitions trigger a state of dissonance, motivating individuals to alter behaviors to reduce cognitive discrepancy (Festinger, 1962). Widely applied in management research, this theory explains and predicts the motivational nature of dissonance—how it induces attitude and behavior changes in managerial decisions and organizational contexts (Hinojosa et al., 2017). In tight-culture contexts, domestic (vs. foreign) brand transgressions create psychological conflict: consumers wish to punish transgressing brands yet feel compelled to protect brands important to their identity. This internal contradiction motivates consumers to invest more cognitive resources in reconciliation, reducing negative reactions. However, this effect holds only for consumers with personal tight culture; those with personal loose culture ignore brand origin, responding more negatively to severe (vs. mild) transgressions regardless of origin (Ge et al., 2023).

2.3.2 Social Psychological Level (1) Prototype Theory. Prototype theory posits that individuals achieve cognitive efficiency by categorizing objects into specific mental categories. Within a category, the member sharing the most features with other members and the fewest with other categories constitutes the “prototype” (Rosch & Mervis, 1975). Mainstream symbolic brands serve as prototypical representatives of their categories—consumers view Kindle,

iPhone, and Google as prototypes for e-readers, smartphones, and search engines, respectively (Magnusson et al., 2014). Prototypical brand transgressions can damage country image at both micro and macro levels: micro country image (beliefs about a specified country's products) and macro country image (broader national beliefs representing economic, political, and technological dimensions). For advanced economies, transgressions damage only micro country image; for newly industrialized economies, they damage both micro and macro country image. Both ultimately negatively affect attitudes toward same-origin brands, though non-prototypical brand transgressions affect only same-category, same-origin brands (Magnusson et al., 2014).

(2) Social Identity Theory. Social identity theory states that individuals possess cognitions of belonging to social groups and recognize that group membership carries emotional and value significance (Tajfel, 2010). Consequently, social identity threats from domestic (vs. foreign) brand transgressions produce stronger retaliation and lower forgiveness (Davvetas et al., 2024). Consumer-brand identification, a specific extension of this theory in consumer behavior, reflects the degree to which brands express and enhance consumer identity, fostering strong consumer-brand relationships and positive word-of-mouth (Krishna & Kim, 2021). Research on personal brand transgressions reveals that transgression diagnosticity negatively affects consumer-brand identification, with high-diagnosticity (vs. low-diagnosticity) transgressions reducing trust and digital engagement intentions (Matthews & Luebke, 2023).

(3) Institutional Theory. Institutional theory assumes that organizations and individuals adapt to and comply with fundamental rules and standards prescribed by social institutions, comprising regulative, cognitive, and normative dimensions (Scott, 2001). This framework has been applied across social-political science, information systems, and organizational behavior (Weerakkody et al., 2009), recently extending to corporate transgression consequences (Zhou, 2017). Fashion industry research indicates that Western developed markets, possessing more robust institutional frameworks, generate higher consumer expectations for brand morality. When moral (vs. non-moral) transgressions occur, consumers in these contexts experience stronger moral belief violations than those in Southeast Asian developing markets, responding more harshly through reduced price expectations (Tran & Bartsch, 2025).

(4) Dual-Strategies Theory of Social Rank. The dual-strategies theory of social rank proposes that individuals achieve status through two independent strategies: prestige and dominance (Cheng et al., 2013). Prestige reflects "cooperative intent" toward others, corresponding to social affiliation goals, while dominance reflects "competitive intent," corresponding to social distancing goals (Zhu et al., 2023). Management research shows that high-status individuals face harsher public punishment (Fragale et al., 2009; Kakkar et al., 2020). Brand narrative strategies often embed status cues, influencing consumer attitudes toward moral (vs. non-moral) transgressions. Consumers infer that winner-narrative brands rely more on coercive dominance than prestige strategies, im-

posing harsher punishment for moral (vs. non-moral) transgressions—an effect that disappears for non-moral transgressions (Schumacher & Mai, 2024).

2.4 Theoretical Controversies in Existing Research

Despite the internal logical relationships among theoretical perspectives, brand transgression research faces several controversies highlighting theoretical applicability ambiguities. First, different theories offer conflicting views when explaining effects of the same transgression attribute. For moral (vs. non-moral) transgressions, institutional theory suggests that Western developed (vs. Southeast Asian developing) country brands' moral issues only reduce expected prices (Tran & Bartsch, 2025), whereas the dual-strategies theory indicates that consumers cannot accept moral defects from winner-narrative (vs. underdog-narrative) brands, imposing harsher punishment (Schumacher & Mai, 2024).

Second, debate persists over the relative importance of individual versus social psychological factors. Individual-level theories argue that personal judgment is decisive, while social-level theories emphasize that sociocultural values may override personal cognition. For domestic (vs. foreign) brand transgressions, cognitive dissonance theory suggests that triggered dissonance leads to fewer negative reactions (Ge et al., 2023), yet social identity theory emphasizes that social identity threats from domestic brand transgressions produce stronger retaliation and lower forgiveness (Davvetas et al., 2024).

Finally, existing theories inadequately explain the relationship between internal mechanisms and boundary conditions. Mediating mechanism theories clarify internal pathways but not boundary conditions, while boundary condition theories mostly conduct shallow analyses of when pathways strengthen or weaken, overlooking deeper associations. For instance, cultural tightness-looseness not only moderates the intensity of domestic (vs. foreign) brand transgression effects (Ge et al., 2023) but may also reshape consumer attribution styles, such as attributing domestic brand transgressions to betrayal.

3 The Influence of Brand Transgression Types on Consumer Attitudes: Internal Mechanisms and Boundary Conditions

How do brand transgression types affect consumer attitudes, and what are the internal mechanisms and boundary conditions? Existing literature addresses these questions piecemeal, lacking systematic analysis. Based on the preceding clarification of definitions, classifications, and theoretical foundations, this chapter systematically organizes the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects of brand transgression types along with their internal mechanisms and boundary conditions. The theoretical foundations' mediating and boundary pathways support discussions of mechanisms and conditions, while individual and social

psychological levels provide theoretical bases for respective mechanisms.

3.1 Effects of Brand Transgression Types on Consumer Attitudes

According to the ABC attitude model, consumer attitudes comprise cognition, affect, and behavior (Minton et al., 2017). Brand transgression research similarly examines three types of attitudinal effects.

3.1.1 Cognitive Effects Upon encountering brand transgression information, consumers process it through their cognitive evaluation systems, altering brand- and product-related cognitions concerning brand evaluation, same-origin brand impressions, price and performance sensitivity, and price expectations.

First, brand transgressions reduce brand evaluation across four dimensions (good/bad, like/dislike, favorable/unfavorable, positive/negative) (Ozdemir et al., 2023). However, effects vary across consumer groups and relationship contexts. For strong-connection consumers facing product failures, self-relevant (vs. non-self-relevant) transgressions reduce brand evaluation; when facing negative moral behaviors, both self-relevant and non-self-relevant transgressions reduce evaluation. For weak-connection consumers, both transgression types negatively affect brand evaluation (Trump, 2014). For consumers in loose-culture contexts, both domestic and foreign severe (vs. mild) transgressions receive worse evaluations regardless of origin (Ge et al., 2023).

Second, because country of origin is a salient prototypical brand feature, prototypical brand transgressions alter judgments of same-origin brand products regarding quality, value-for-money, and overall evaluation (Hoang et al., 2022). While country-level beliefs typically influence product-level beliefs, the reverse also occurs. Prototypical brand transgressions from advanced and newly industrialized economies damage micro and macro country images, respectively, negatively affecting same-origin brand impressions. However, low-prototypicality transgressions affect only same-category, same-origin brands (Magnusson et al., 2014).

Third, value-related (vs. performance-related) transgressions diminish the effectiveness of price reductions and performance improvements in stimulating consumer demand, manifesting as decreased price and performance elasticities. High moral outrage in value-related transgressions leads consumers to question corporate values, reducing both elasticities for transgressing and competitor brands. In performance-related transgressions, lower moral outrage allows continued purchase consideration, with elasticities for transgressing brands increasing or remaining unchanged (Kübler et al., 2020).

Fourth, reduced price expectations—quantifying the negative financial impact of moral transgressions—indicate lower product value assessments. When fashion brands commit moral (vs. non-moral) transgressions, consumers' price expectations decrease, meaning they will only purchase at prices below category averages (Iglesias et al., 2019; Tran & Bartsch, 2025).

3.1.2 Emotional Effects Brand transgression events trigger emotional responses during consumers' evaluative processes. Research primarily examines how transgression types affect positive emotions such as forgiveness, sympathy, and trust.

First, transgression severity negatively affects forgiveness—the volitional effort to replace negative views, pain, and anger with positive views, sympathy, and affection (North, 1987). Consumers find it harder to forgive severe (vs. mild) transgressions (Tsarenko & Tojib, 2015). Independent self-construal consumers find it harder to forgive controllable (vs. uncontrollable) transgressions (Sinha & Lu, 2016). Brand biography also interacts with transgression type: underdog-narrative brands receive higher forgiveness for non-relational transgressions than winner-narrative brands, with no difference for relational transgressions (Kim et al., 2019). In celebrity endorsement contexts, transgression controllability and parasocial relationships interactively affect forgiveness; while strong parasocial relationships increase forgiveness, controllable (vs. uncontrollable) transgressions reverse this effect (Aw & Labrecque, 2023).

Second, consumers may experience sympathy toward transgression victims—other-oriented emotions triggered by witnessing others' suffering that promote helping behavior (Xie et al., 2022). Because consumers are inadequately protected by market transaction rules in moral (vs. non-moral) transgression contexts, they experience greater sympathy for victims (Xu et al., 2021).

Third, consumer trust—the specific emotion of perceiving brands as honest and non-harmful—is differentially affected by transgression types. Nonprofit (vs. for-profit) transgressions produce a “moral disillusionment effect,” significantly reducing trust, particularly when nonprofits commit mission-relevant (vs. mission-irrelevant) transgressions (Hornsey et al., 2021). Personal brand transgression diagnosticity also negatively affects trust; high-diagnosticity (vs. low-diagnosticity) transgressions reveal more of the personal brand's true self, creating feelings of deception that damage trust more severely (Matthews & Luebke, 2023).

3.1.3 Behavioral Effects Different brand transgression types shape not only cognitive and emotional responses but also behavioral intentions. Research examines behavioral effects across three branches: positive behaviors, negative behaviors, and choices between them.

First, regarding reduced positive behaviors, studies address transgression licensing, brand support, and digital engagement. For transgression licensing, when brands commit moral behaviors before ambiguous transgressions, consumers typically license such transgressions. However, for blatant transgressions preceded by moral behaviors, only strong-connection (vs. weak-connection) consumers perceive the prior moral behavior as moral and license the transgression (Ryoo, 2022). For brand support, nonprofit (vs. for-profit) transgressions' moral disillusionment effect reduces brand support (purchase, usage, and learning in-

tentions), particularly for mission-relevant transgressions (Hornsey et al., 2021). For digital engagement, high-diagnosticsity (vs. low-diagnosticsity) transgressions reduce digital engagement intentions with personal brands (browsing, clicking, following), decreasing personal brand revenue (Chen et al., 2022; Matthews & Luebke, 2023).

Second, research reveals negative behavioral responses primarily through brand punishment—actions that distance consumers from transgressing brands or harm them, including reduced repurchase intentions and negative word-of-mouth (Grégoire et al., 2009). Severe (vs. mild) transgressions reduce immediate and secondary purchase intentions (Tsarenko & Tojib, 2015). Uncontrollable (vs. controllable) transgressions reduce forgiveness and increase negative word-of-mouth among independent self-construal consumers but not interdependent consumers (Sinha & Lu, 2016). Value-related (vs. performance-related) transgressions elicit harsher comprehensive punishment for severe (vs. mild) transgressions, including product discontinuation, competitor purchasing, non-recommendation, and discouraging employment (Isiksal & Karaosmanoglu, 2020).

Finally, consumers choose between constructive and destructive responses to brand transgressions. High emotional intelligence consumers prefer constructive responses (voice and loyalty) over destructive ones (exit and retaliation), while self-relevant (vs. non-self-relevant) transgressions exacerbate these differential preferences (Ahn et al., 2016).

3.2 Internal Mechanisms Through Which Brand Transgression Types Influence Consumer Attitudes

With frequent brand transgression incidents attracting scholarly attention, this paper identifies nine internal mechanisms: expectancy violation perception, anger perception, immorality attribution, justice concern attribution, country-of-origin image, social identity threat, brand identification, brand immorality perception, and prestige/dominance perception. These mechanisms divide into individual and social psychological categories.

3.2.1 Individual Psychological Mechanisms Expectancy Violation Perception. As organizations that “should know better,” nonprofits violate existing consumer expectations when transgressing, triggering stronger negative reevaluations. Compared to for-profits, nonprofits’ moral reputations establish clear performance expectations, so transgressions produce intense expectancy violation perceptions, reducing trust and support (Hornsey et al., 2021).

Anger Perception. When consumers highly identify with a brand, relational transgressions may provoke greater anger, damaging consumer-brand relationships. Consequently, underdog-narrative brands elicit harsher judgments for relational transgressions than winner-narrative brands, with higher anger levels mediating the interactive effect of brand biography and transgression type on

forgiveness (Kim et al., 2019).

Immorality Attribution. This mechanism emphasizes moral interpretations of transgressions—consumers’ beliefs that brand behaviors are immoral or morally wrong/inappropriate. Blatant (vs. ambiguous) pre-transgression moral behaviors promote attributions of immoral motives, reducing transgression tolerance (Ryoo, 2022).

Justice Concern Attribution. This refers to consumers’ tendency to view transgressions as unjust gaps, believing only responsible parties should suffer negative consequences. Independent self-construal consumers, socialized in individualistic cultures, assign responsibility by attributing errors to internal, controllable causes. Thus, they attribute uncontrollable (vs. controllable) transgressions to justice concerns and more easily forgive brands (Sinha & Lu, 2016).

3.2.2 Social Psychological Mechanisms Country-of-Origin Image.

While prototypical brand transgressions negatively affect same-country brand attitudes, advanced economy and newly industrialized economy transgressions create different pathways: the former damages only micro country image (overall beliefs about a specified country’ s products), while the latter damages both micro and macro country image (broader beliefs representing economic, political, and technological dimensions) (Magnusson et al., 2014).

Social Identity Threat. Social identity threats divide into threats to group power status and group value systems (Okimoto & Wenzel, 2008). Exposure to negative ingroup information generates social identity threats. Domestic brand transgressions create power status threats (by damaging national image) and value system threats (by eroding national values). Consequently, social identity threats from domestic (vs. foreign) brand transgressions produce stronger retaliation and lower forgiveness (Davvetas et al., 2024).

Brand Identification. Consumer-brand identification forms when consumers believe brands are similar to themselves and provide social benefits, or when brands are distinctive, warm, and provide memorable experiences (Krishna & Kim, 2021; Lam et al., 2013). High-diagnosticsity (vs. low-diagnosticsity) transgressions reduce consumer identification with personal brands and perceptions of shared values, personality, and similarity with other brand fans. This identification reduction lowers brand trust and ultimately decreases digital engagement intentions (Matthews & Luebke, 2023).

Brand Immorality Perception. Consumers judge whether brands comply with social moral norms, forming brand immorality perceptions. Because Western developed markets possess stronger institutional frameworks than Southeast Asian developing markets, fashion brands’ moral (vs. non-moral) transgressions more easily trigger brand immorality perceptions, further reducing price expectations (Tran & Bartsch, 2025).

Prestige and Dominance Perception. Individuals infer that enterprises

achieve and maintain market position through prestige and dominance strategies, directly altering their views of moral (vs. non-moral) transgressions. When observing moral transgressions, consumers infer that winner-narrative brands rely more on coercive dominance than prestige strategies, imposing harsher punishment. However, this winner-narrative effect disappears for non-moral transgressions (Schumacher & Mai, 2024).

3.3 Boundary Conditions for Brand Transgression Effects

Although brand transgressions generally negatively affect consumer attitudes, specific conditions produce differential effects. This section examines boundary conditions across three factors: corporate behavior, consumer traits, and environmental context.

3.3.1 Corporate Behavior Factors Corporate behavior can alter consumer psychology, serving as an important boundary condition. First, for moral (vs. non-moral) transgressions, consumers punish brands with reduplicative naming or winner-narrative strategies more harshly, while tolerating brands with pre-transgression moral behaviors for ambiguous (vs. blatant) transgressions. Reduplicative brand naming (repeated syllables) reduces perceived mental dimensions and negative moral reactions (Ye et al., 2024), yet winner narratives imply dominance-based strategies, eliciting harsher punishment (Schumacher & Mai, 2024). Pre-transgression moral behaviors raise consumers' tolerance thresholds, licensing ambiguous (vs. blatant) transgressions (Ryoo, 2022).

Second, transgression source alters the “moral disillusionment effect” of non-profit (vs. for-profit) transgressions. Sources divide into “bad apple” (individual members) and “bad barrel” (many members) scenarios. In “bad barrel” situations, nonprofit transgressions significantly reduce trust and support (Hornsey et al., 2021).

Third, post-transgression communication frames and compensation strategies affect attitudes toward foreign (vs. domestic) brand transgressions. Intergroup conflict communication frames (interpreting transgressions as between-group rather than within-group conflicts) reduce social identity threats and negative reactions to foreign brand transgressions (Davvetas et al., 2024). Collective compensation (addressing ingroup dissatisfaction through monetary investment) better alleviates social identity threats from domestic transgressions than individual monetary compensation (Davvetas et al., 2024).

Finally, apology style moderates severe (vs. mild) transgression effects. Apology (full responsibility acceptance) and apologia (partial defense without regret) produce different outcomes; consumers more readily forgive and repurchase from brands offering apologies rather than apologias after severe transgressions (Tsarenko & Tojib, 2015).

3.3.2 Consumer Trait Factors Consumer personal traits directly affect reactions to different transgression types. First, power distance belief influences responses to moral (vs. non-moral) transgressions. Representing acceptance of hierarchical systems and power inequality (Han et al., 2017; Hofstede, 1980), low power distance belief increases sympathy for moral transgression victims, enhancing harm perception and negative moral emotions, leading to worse brand evaluations (Xu et al., 2021).

Second, consumer ethnocentrism and personal cultural tightness-looseness alter domestic (vs. foreign) brand transgression effects. Consumer ethnocentrism—viewing foreign product purchases as inappropriate or immoral to protect the domestic economy (Shimp & Sharma, 1987)—reduces perceived social identity threats from domestic brand transgressions, reversing the domestic (vs. foreign) brand transgression backlash effect (Davvetas et al., 2024). Personal cultural tightness-looseness (individual preference for social norm strictness) modifies the buffering effect of domestic brand transgressions in tight-culture contexts. The effect holds for personally tight consumers but not for personally loose consumers, for whom transgression severity replaces origin as the decisive factor (Ge et al., 2023).

Third, consumers with self-referential experiences punish value-related (vs. performance-related) transgressions more harshly. Self-referencing—the cognitive process of interpreting new information through past experiences stored in memory and embodied in the self (Escalas, 2007)—leads consumers with similar past experiences to recall negative events and punish value-related transgressions more severely (Isiksal & Karaosmanoglu, 2020).

Fourth, self-brand connection and self-affirmation jointly affect responses to ambiguous (vs. blatant) transgressions. While pre-transgression moral behaviors create “moral licensing effects” (attributing low immorality), strong-connection consumers tolerate first and second ambiguous transgressions, whereas weak-connection consumers tolerate only the first (Ryoo, 2022). Self-affirmation moderates these effects for strong-connection consumers, eliminating moral licensing and its positive downstream consequences on purchase intentions (Ryoo, 2022).

Finally, self-construal determines judgments of uncontrollable (vs. controllable) transgressions. Independent self-construal consumers attribute uncontrollable transgressions to justice concerns and show higher forgiveness, whereas interdependent consumers do not (Sinha & Lu, 2016).

3.3.3 Environmental Context Factors Environmental characteristics amplify or buffer brand transgression effects. First, institutional context strengthens or weakens moral (vs. non-moral) transgression consequences. Western developed markets’ stronger institutional frameworks create higher brand morality expectations and more severe moral belief violations than Southeast Asian developing markets. Consequently, consumers in the former contexts respond more harshly to moral transgressions, expressing lower brand morality perceptions

and reduced price expectations (Tran & Bartsch, 2025).

Second, cultural tightness-looseness shapes responses to domestic (vs. foreign) brand transgressions. Cultural tightness-looseness represents shared societal rule strictness and enforcement. Tight-culture consumers tend to protect domestic brands, while loose-culture consumers rely on transgression severity for forgiveness decisions, buffering the negative effects of severe transgressions in tight-culture contexts (Ge et al., 2023).

3.4 Unresolved Issues in Existing Research

Although existing research comprehensively reveals brand transgression effects, mechanisms, and boundary conditions, several key issues remain unresolved. Regarding transgression effects, cognitive effects focus on brand and product cognitions but neglect factors influencing cognitive reconstruction, such as differential impacts of information media. Emotional effects concentrate on positive emotions (forgiveness, sympathy, trust) while underexploring negative emotions (resentment, disgust, suspicion). Behavioral effects remain limited to behavioral intentions without employing field experiments or secondary data to examine actual consumer behavior.

Regarding internal mechanisms, the synergistic interaction between individual and social psychological mechanisms awaits exploration, and cross-cultural comparative research has only examined power distance and tightness-looseness, neglecting other cultural dimensions like uncertainty avoidance and masculinity/femininity (Hofstede, 1980). Regarding boundary conditions, research insufficiently examines interactive effects among corporate behavior, consumer traits, and environmental context factors, and whether established boundary conditions hold under digital information media requires further validation.

4 Research Summary and Future Directions

This paper consolidates brand transgression's conceptualization and typology, systematically reviewing transgression effects, internal mechanisms, and boundary conditions from interdisciplinary perspectives of social psychology, consumer behavior, and corporate management, forming a research framework (see Figure 2 [Figure 2: see original paper]). This framework provides theoretical inspiration for future research and practical guidance for brand transgression management. Although existing research has proposed various transgression classifications, theoretical development lags behind practice, leaving ample exploration space. Future research should pursue the following main directions:

4.1 Exploring Brand Transgression Effects in AI-Technology-Induced Contexts

While AI technology application enhances brand operational quality and efficiency, it also creates fertile ground for brand transgressions. For example, generative AI blurs boundaries between authenticity and falsehood, with AI-generated advertisements risking false advertising claims (Jitsu et al., 2023), and AI-composited images and text causing copyright disputes (Jiang, 2025). CCTV's "3·15" Consumer Rights Evening data revealed 220 AI risk incidents in 2024 involving AI technology abuse and legal violations, AI decision-making errors and ethical controversies, AI-fabricated rumors and disinformation, and AI security threats and data leaks. These risk events relate closely to transgression content's moral attributes, interpersonal attributes, potential harm severity, and consumer self-relevance. Future research should examine consumer judgment logic and tolerance thresholds for AI-technology-induced brand transgressions.

4.2 Comparing Cross-Cultural Differences in Eastern and Western Consumer Responses to Brand Transgression Types

Brand transgression research has flourished over the past decade, yet most studies focus on Western contexts with scarce Chinese-context investigation. Even cross-cultural studies examining domestic/foreign brand transgressions only compare tight vs. loose cultures (Ge et al., 2023). However, Eastern-Western cultural differences manifest across multiple dimensions: Western consumers employ internal/external attribution styles, while Chinese consumers use person-/event-focused attributions (Li et al., 2022); Chinese consumers are more susceptible to social comparison information than Western consumers (Xiao et al., 2025). Therefore, brand transgression effects in Chinese cultural contexts require deeper exploration, and comparative studies on Eastern-Western differences demand further investigation.

4.3 Examining Effects of Specific Brand Transgressions on Associated Brand Evaluations

Research on how brand transgressions spill over to associated brands has focused on prototypical brand transgressions affecting same-origin brand attitudes (Magnusson et al., 2014) and value-related transgressions reducing competitor brands' price and performance elasticities (Kübler et al., 2020). However, richer brand associations exist, such as corporate-regional brands, ingredient-finished brands, and co-branding partnerships (Chen et al., 2021; Han et al., 2022; He et al., 2017). For these associated brand pairs, how one party's specific transgression type affects the other's evaluation remains unclear and requires further investigation.

5 Strategic Recommendations for Corporate Responses to Brand Transgressions

Under intense online public scrutiny, brand transgressions attract high attention and heated discussion, with the public clearly understanding transgression types and adjusting attitudes accordingly. For enterprises, predicting how transgression types affect consumer attitudes is crucial, and appropriate response strategies can mitigate negative consequences. This paper recommends that enterprises develop response strategies based on transgression type to reduce reputational and market performance damage.

5.1 Adopting Cognitive/Emotional Empathy-Based Communication

Post-transgression, enterprises should anticipate consumer reactions based on transgression type and employ cognitive or emotional empathy-based communication. As this paper demonstrates, brand transgression effects manifest across cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions, with timely intervention in cognitive and emotional domains proving most effective. Research on online complaint management reveals that cognitive empathy responses (e.g., “You are correct, we should have provided high-quality products matching the price”) to specific complaints and emotional empathy responses (e.g., “We care about your feelings and understand your concerns”) to emotional complaints promote positive behaviors like purchase and liking (Tran et al., 2025). Similarly, when enterprises can anticipate negative impacts on consumer cognition (brand evaluation, same-origin impressions, price/performance sensitivity, price expectations) and emotion (forgiveness, sympathy, trust), employing cognitive and emotional empathy communication can effectively prevent negative behaviors.

5.2 Formulating Tailored Remediation Strategies

Enterprises should analyze transgression types to develop appropriate remediation strategies across governance, organizational support, and marketing communication. Existing literature identifies optimal remedies for specific transgression types, such as collective (vs. individual) compensation for foreign (vs. domestic) transgressions and apology (vs. apologia) for severe (vs. mild) transgressions (Davvetas et al., 2024; Tsarenko & Tojib, 2015). Beyond compensation and apology, enterprises should consider additional strategies to salvage reputation. For moral (vs. non-moral) transgressions, invite regulatory oversight and public executive apologies. For self-relevant (vs. non-self-relevant) transgressions, provide multiple personalized compensation options and conduct consumer satisfaction surveys.

5.3 Adjusting Public Opinion Management Approaches

Timely and effective adjustment of public opinion management can reduce discussion and dissemination heat of specific brand transgressions on social media platforms. Research on virtual brand sabotage indicates that dissatisfied

consumers may post retaliatory content after service failures, while effective corporate responses (informational rather than empathetic) can limit potential negative impacts (Hill et al., 2025). Therefore, enterprises should predict online public opinion based on transgression types, monitor it using modern technological tools, and launch targeted countermeasures promptly. When consumers merely express negative cognitive and emotional reactions, employ empathetic communication and disseminate positive brand information. When consumers demonstrate retaliatory behavioral intentions, adopt firm informational responses, such as inviting professional institutions to provide explanations.

References

- Aaker, J., Fournier, S., & Brasel, S. A. (2004). When Good Brands Do Bad. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(1), 1-16.
- Ahn, H., Sung, Y., & Drumwright, M. E. (2016). Consumer emotional intelligence and its effects on responses to transgressions. *Marketing Letters*, 27(2), 223-233.
- Aw, E. C.-X., & Labrecque, L. I. (2023). Celebrities as Brand Shields: The Role of Parasocial Relationships in Dampening Negative Consequences from Brand Transgressions. *Journal of Advertising*, 52(3), 387-405.
- Burgoon, J., & Le Poire, B. (1993). Effects of communication expectancies, actual communication, and expectancy disconfirmation on evaluations of communicators and their communication behavior. *Human Communication Research*, 20(1), 67-96.
- Chen, L., Yan, Y. & Smith, A.N. (2022). What drives digital engagement with sponsored videos? An investigation of video influencers' authenticity management strategies. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 51(1), 178-199.
- Cheng, J. T., Tracy, J. L., Foulsham T., Kingstone A., & Henrich J. (2013). Two ways to the top: Evidence that dominance and prestige are distinct yet viable avenues to social rank and influence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 104(1), 103-125.
- Cheng, S. Y. Y., White, T. B., & Chaplin, L. N. (2012). The effects of self-brand connections on responses to brand failure: A new look at the consumer-brand relationship. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22(2), 280-288.
- Coombs, W. T., Frandsen, F., Holladay, S. J., & Johansen, W. (2010). Why a concern for apology and crisis communication?. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 15(4), 337-349.
- Davvetas, V., Ulqinaku, A., & Katsikeas, C. S. (2024). Brand transgressions: How, when, and why home country bias backfires. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 52(4), 976-997.

- Eda, S., & Zeynep, G. C. (2015). Feeling Attached to Symbolic Brands within the Context of Brand Transgressions. In Macinnis D. J., Park C. W. (Eds.). *Review of Marketing Research* (pp. 233-256). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Escalas, J.E. (2007). Self-referencing and persuasion: Narrative transportation versus analytical elaboration. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 33(4), 421-429.
- Festinger, L. (1962). Cognitive dissonance. *Scientific American*, 207(4), 93-106.
- Fragale, A. R., Rosen, B., Xu, C., & Merideth, I. (2009). The higher they are, the harder they fall: The effects of wrongdoer status on observer punishment recommendations and intentionality attributions. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 108(1), 53-65.
- Ge, J., Jo, M.-S., & Sarigollu, E. (2023). How does cultural tightness-looseness affect attitudes toward a local vs foreign brand transgression?. *International Marketing Review*, 40(6), 1456-1479.
- Grégoire, Y., T.M. Tripp, & R. Legoux. (2009). When customer love turns into lasting hate: The effects of relationship strength and time on customer revenge and avoidance. *Journal of Marketing*, 73(6), 18-32.
- Greitemeyer, T., & Sagioglou, C. (2018). When positive ends tarnish the means: The morality of nonprofit more than of for-profit organizations is tainted by the use of compliance techniques. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 76, 67-75.
- Haidt, J., & Joseph, C. (2004). Intuitive ethics: How innately prepared intuitions generate culturally variable virtues. *Daedalus*, 133(4), 55-66.
- Han, D., Ashok K. L., & Adam D. (2017). Power Distance Belief, Power, and Charitable Giving. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44(1), 182-195.
- Heider, F. (2013). *The psychology of interpersonal relations*. Psychology Press.
- Hill Cummings, K., Herhausen, D., Roggeveen, A.L., Grewal, D. (2025). Countering Virtual Brand Sabotage: The Power of Informative Responses. *Journal of Service Research*, 28, 451-468.
- Hinojosa, A. S., Gardner, W. L., Walker, H. J., Cogliser, C., & Gullifor, D. (2017). A Review of Cognitive Dissonance Theory in Management Research: Opportunities for Further Development. *Journal of Management*, 43(1), 170-199.
- Hoang, H. T., Ho, K. N. B., Tran, T. P., & Le, T. Q. (2022). The extension of animosity model of foreign product purchase: Does country of origin matter?. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 64, 102758.
- Hofstede, G. (1980). Culture and Organizations. *International Studies of Management and Organization*, 10(4), 15-41.

- Hornsey, M. J., Chapman, C. M., Mangan, H., La Macchia, S., & Gillespie, N. (2021). The Moral Disillusionment Model of Organizational Transgressions: Ethical Transgressions Trigger More Negative Reactions from Consumers When Committed by Nonprofits. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 172(4), 653–671.
- Huber, F., Vollhardt, K., Matthes, I., & Vogel, J. (2010). Brand misconduct: Consequences on consumer–brand relationships. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(11), 1113–1120.
- Iglesias, O., Markovic, S., Singh, J. J., & Sierra, V. (2019). Do customer perceptions of corporate services brand ethicality improve brand equity? Considering the roles of brand heritage, brand image, and recognition benefits. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 154(2), 441–459.
- Isiksal, D. G., & Karaosmanoglu, E. (2020). Can self-referencing exacerbate punishing behavior toward corporate brand transgressors?. *Journal of Brand Management*, 27(6), 629–644.
- Jitsu H., Michelle R. N. & Cristel A. R. (2023). ChatGPT, AI Advertising, and Advertising Research and Education, *Journal of Advertising*, 52(4), 477–482.
- Jonathan, H. (2003). The moral emotions. In R. J. Davidson, K. R. Scherer, and H. H. Goldsmith (Eds.), *Handbook of affective sciences* (pp. 852-870). Oxford University Press.
- Kakkar, H., Sivanathan, N., & Gobel, M. S. (2020). Fall from grace: The role of dominance and prestige in the punishment of highstatus actors. *Academy of Management Journal*, 63(2), 530–553.
- Khamitov M, Grégoire Y, & Suri A. (2020). A systematic review of brand transgression, service failure recovery and product-harm crisis: integration and guiding insights. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 48(3), 519–542.
- Kim, Y., Park, K., & Stacey Lee, S. (2019). The underdog trap: The moderating role of transgression type in forgiving underdog brands. *Psychology & Marketing*, 36(1), 28–40.
- Krishna, A., Kim, S. (2021). Exploring the dynamics between brand investment, customer investment, brand identification, and brand identity fusion. *Journal of Business Research*, 137, 267–277.
- Kübler, R. V., Langmaack, M., Albers, S., & Hoyer, W. D. (2020). The impact of value-related crises on price and product-performance elasticities. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 48(4), 776–794.
- Lam, S.K., Ahearne, M., Mullins, R., Hayati, B., & Schillewaert, N. (2013). Exploring the dynamics of antecedents to consumer–brand identification with a new brand, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41, 234–252.
- Lin, J. S., & Sung, Y. (2014). Nothing can tear us apart: The effect of brand identity fusion in consumer–brand relationships. *Psychology & Marketing*, 31(1), 54–69.

- Magnusson, P., Krishnan, V., Westjohn, S. A., & Zdravkovic, S. (2014). The Spillover Effects of Prototype Brand Transgressions on Country Image and Related Brands. *Journal of International Marketing*, 22(1), 21-38.
- Matthews, A. L., & Luebke, S. S. F. (2023). Sympathy or shock: How transgression diagnosticity impacts consumer perceptions and intentions regarding person-brands. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 32(8), 1399-1414.
- Minton E. A., Cornwell T. B., & Kahle L. R. (2017). A theoretical review of consumer priming: Prospective theory, retrospective theory, and the affective-behavioral-cognitive model. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 16(4), 378-388.
- North, J. (1987). Wrongdoing and forgiveness. *Philosophy*, 62, 499-508.
- Okimoto, T. G., & Wenzel, M. (2018). The symbolic meaning of transgressions: Towards a unifying framework of justice restoration. In K. A. Hegtvedt & J. Clay-Warner (Eds.), *Justice: Advances in group processes* (pp.291-326). Emerald.
- Ozdemir, O., Kolfal, B., Messinger, P. R., & Rizvi, S. (2023). Human or virtual: How influencer type shapes brand attitudes. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 145, 107771.
- Pearson, D. (2004). *Brand failures: The truth about the 100 biggest branding mistakes of all time*. *Journal of Brand Management*, 11(3), 253-254.
- Rhee, M., & Haunschild, P. R. (2006). The liability of good reputation: A study of product recalls in the U.S. automobile industry. *Organization Science*, 17, 101-117.
- Rosch, E., & Mervis, C. B. (1975). Family resemblances: Studies in the internal structure of categories. *Cognitive Psychology*, 7, 573-605.
- Ryoo, Y. (2022). Moral credentials versus moral credits: Two paths to consumers' licensing of brand transgressions. *Journal of Business Research*, 146,13-31.
- Schumacher, A., & Mai, R. (2024). Organizational Top Dog (vs. Underdog) Narratives Increase the Punishment of Corporate Moral Transgressions: When Dominance is a Liability and Prestige is an Asset. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 194(1), 19-36.
- Scott, W. R. (2001). *Institutions and organizations*. Sage Publications.
- Shimp, T. A., & Sharma, S. (1987). Consumer ethnocentrism: Construction and validation of the CETSCALE. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 24(3), 280-289.
- Sinha, J., & Lu, F. (2016). "I" value justice, but "we" value relationships: Self-construal effects on post-transgression consumer forgiveness. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 26(2), 265-274.

Sohn, Y., & Lariscy, R. W. (2015). A “buffer” or “boomerang?” The role of corporate reputation in bad times. *Communication Research*, 42(2), 237-259.

Tajfel, H. (2010). *Social identity and intergroup relations*. Cambridge University Press.

Tran, T. T. H., & Bartsch, F. (2025). Consumers’ Responses to Moral Transgressions in the Fashion Industry: Comparative Insights from Western Developed and Southeast Asian Emerging Markets. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 196, 773-806.

Tran, H. A., Evanschitzky, H., Grégoire, Y., Bach, N., Anders G., & Stephan L. (2025). The role of empathy in providers’ online customer complaints management. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-025-01114-4>

Trump, R. K. (2014). Connected consumers’ responses to negative brand actions: The roles of transgression self-relevance and domain. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(9), 1824-1830.

Tsarenko Y., & Tojib D. (2015). Consumers’ forgiveness after brand transgression: the effect of the firm’s corporate social responsibility and response. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 31(17-18), 1851-1877.

Weerakkody, V., Dwivedi, Y. K., & Irani, Z. (2009). The diffusion and use of institutional theory: A cross-disciplinary longitudinal literature survey. *Journal of Information Technology*, 24, 354-368.

Weiner, B. (2019). Wither attribution theory? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 40(5), 603-604.

Xie, E., Liu, M., Liu, J., Gao, X., & Li, X. (2022). Neural mechanisms of the mood effects on third-party responses to injustice after unfair experiences. *Human Brain Mapping*, 43(12), 3646-3661.

Xu, H. (Felix), Bolton, L. E., & Winterich, K. P. (2021). How Do Consumers React to Company Moral Transgressions? The Role of Power Distance Belief and Empathy for Victims. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 48(1), 77-101.

Additional Chinese References Cited in Text:

Chen, F., Xiao, T., Xiong, X., & Wu, Q. (2021). Research on the willingness of multi-origin agricultural enterprises to use geographical indication brands: From the perspective of origin resource endowment. *Economic Geography*, 41(2), 174-184.

Han, J., Wang, D., & Yang, Z. (2022). Research on customer engagement behavior in cross-border co-branding of domestic brands: An exploration based on grounded theory. *Economic Management*, 44(7), 175-192.

He, Y., Zhong, K., & Sun, C. (2017). When the city gate catches fire, can the moat benefit? Research on the reverse spillover effect of finished product negative events on ingredient brands. *Foreign Economics and Management*, 39(11), 3-13.

Jiang, G. (2025). Cognitive economy analysis of AIGC copyright determination. *China Legal Science*, (2), 127-147.

Li, T., Wang, S., Luo, Y., & Feng, C. (2025). Third-party punishment under uncertainty: Psychological and brain network mechanisms. *Advances in Psychological Science*, 33(6), 1036-1048.

Li, Y., Hao, S., & Zhou, M. (2022). Does corporate brand hegemony necessarily lead to consumer brand retaliation? The moderating role of Chinese attribution style. *Nankai Business Review*, 25(3), 182-193.

Xiao, T., Wei, H., Chen, S., & Liu, F. (2023). The influence and mechanism of brand name audio-visual form representation on consumer psychology. *Advances in Psychological Science*, 31(9), 1756-1774.

Xiao, X., Qiu, L., & Pang, J. (2025). A cross-cultural study on the impact of cultural product review themes on usefulness. *Management Review*, 37(2), 163-174.

Xu, L., Li, Z., Jiang, Y., & Cui, N. (2018). Self-deprecating response strategies in brand transgression contexts. *China Industrial Economics*, (1), 174-192.

Ye, W., Xu, S., & Zhou, X. (2024). The impact of reduplicative brand names on consumer moral reactions across different moral situations: From the perspective of mind perception theory. *Acta Psychologica Sinica*, 56(5), 650-669.

Zhou, J. (2017). Institutional context and corporate violation: An empirical study based on cross-country panel data. *Foreign Economics and Management*, 39(3), 114-128.

Zhu, Y., Long, L., & Liu, W. (2023). Can leader gratitude expression enhance employee followership? The role of emotional expression sincerity. *Acta Psychologica Sinica*, 55(7), 1160-1175.

Zheng, H., Chen, R., & Mai, X. (2024). The cognitive neural mechanism of third-party punishment behavior. *Advances in Psychological Science*, 32(2), 398-419.

Zhu, P., et al. (2024). [Additional citation details as needed]

Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

Source: ChinaXiv – Machine translation. Verify with original.