A Study of Group Consumption Mode

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Abstract:*The comprehension of group consumption is the foundation of the grasping the future community-basedmarketing. In this paper, external environmental factors and internal motivational factorsthat impact group consumptionare analyzed and the nine characteristic dimensions of the group consumption behaviors are summarized. Vertical and horizontal coordinates, group relationship intensity and consumption action period to construct a 2x2 mode that divides, group consumption mode into four types, including instrument-oriented, information-oriented, enjoyment-oriented and relationship-oriented. The relationship-oriented consumption mode reflects the ideal form of the group loyalty and demonstrates out that consumption mode is dynamic, as it can evolve into two approaches, including the product identification and relationship identification. Finally, the marketing practice-enlightenment is given.*
Keywords:*Group, consumption mode, dynamics, group loyalty*

I. Introduction

No academic circle or business circle has focused on group consumption behaviors. For instance, the study and operation of consumption community, brand community. (Muñiz & O'guinn, 2001; McAlexander et al. 2002; Zhou Zhimin, 2005; Schau et al., 2009; Tsai et al., 2012; Thomas et al. 2013). However, many enterprises are trying to establish communities to offer benefits to consumers such as membership services, discounts. However, fail to be stuck to consumers, for instance, the membership system of the department store, anauto club of some auto brands, and so forth. Many members only join the community for temporarily, and it cannot form the constant actions. It seems that most enterprises do not understand the group consumption mode.

On the other hand, the rapid development of social media gets consumers closer. The consumer power has already developed to be the group resource-based power from the individual, resource-based power (Labrecque, 2013), and consumers would take consumption activities in the group. Form, which has already become one of the daily uses of the modern people, such as group purchase, relaxation, catering, business, tourism, crowd-funding, etc. No matter in the online or offline market, consumers have presented the group trend. These connected consumers are changing the pattern of the commercial world, and more and more scholars have pointed out. That the marketing focus of the new age is to break the analysis unit of individual study and study the consumption behavior at the group level (Cova, 1997; Bagozzi, 2000; Kuenzel & Musters, 2007; Jafari et al. 2013).

Consumers in the new age have surpassed the role of consumers and developed towards the more complete "human" with,the more spiritual pursuit. They are no longer the "hunting object" of marketing strategy, but the leading role in consumption market, creating unique consumption experience. Consumers no longer accept the market or the community or identity set up by the enterprise passively. New types of consumers are more positive and active, with abundant knowledge and they love to gather in the circles or communities formed by people of their kind, and create unique consumption experience (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2005; Kolter, 2011). Kolter (2011) pointed out that the consumer circle / community was the footstone of future marketing. Godin (2008) thought that consumers are more willing to stand with other consumers, instead of being connected to the enterprise. Therefore, the support from consumer circle is the necessary condition for the success of marketing. That is to say, the loyalty of group is a significant topic for the sustainable development of new consumer age.

Therefore, how to gain the support from the consumption circle and the loyalty of a group, the comprehension of group consumption mode is the key to this problem. The consumption mode is "a general summary of the standards and criterions followed by individual consumers in principles social form, as well as the consumption, features determined" (Li Baoku, 2005). The group consumption mode shall be the standards followed by the panelconsumption and the characteristics of group consumption determined. At present, there are few studies on the group consumption mode. In this paper, based on the previous studies, agents influencing the group consumption mode shall be sorted out at first, and then, the division of group consumption mode shall be discussed, and what are the consumption features in different group consumption modes. The consumption mode may change due to the influence factors, how different consumption model would evolve. Eventually, the marketing revelations and future study expectations are given.

II. Control factors in the formation of group consumption mode

American scholar Boorstin paid attention to the problem of group consumption mode at first, and he discovered that consumers would get together in the process of determining what to consume and how to consume, and develop the relationship between individuals by the groups in geographic. This consumption group may hold the same consumption ideology or focus on the same products and service, and it was called the "consumption community" by Boorstin. Afterward, scholars proposed different types of consumption communities, for instance, consumption sub-culture (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), brand communities (Muñiz & O'guinn, 2001), consumption tribe (Cova & Cova, 2002). With the progress of the internet and social media, the connection of consumers develops from online to offline, and as a result, a series of studies on the virtual consumption community emerge (Hamilton & Hewer, 2010; O'Sullivan, 2010). Meanwhile, the occurrence of new business mode endows the group consumption mode with new expressive style, for instance, group purchasing (Jing & Xie, 2011), crowd-funding (Seog & Hyun, 2009), etc. These accumulated consumers gain the abilities of gathering, transferring and planning all kinds of resources, and benefit the individuals and distinct groups (Labrecque, 2013). Meanwhile, consumers have more executing power, being faster in the information transmission and consumption actions, for instance, the flash mob (Barnes, 2006). It can be seen that there are all kinds of forms of group consumption, as well as different factors impacting the formation of group consumption mode. In this paper, investigations are mainly conducted from two aspects, including the internal factor and external factor.

2.1 External factor

The development of industrial technology offers material support to the group consumption. In an agricultural society, the clustering of consumers is mainly reflected by the upper class. Drinking and tea-tasting are a significant part of the noble class and celebrities in China. People would gather to drink, taste thetas and make poems, which has a far-reaching impact on the wine culture and tea culture in Chinese consumer culture. The medieval European nobility was fond of gambling, drinking and fighting due to the effects of hedonism, and many public consumption facilities occurred, such as the pit, opera house, etc. In the industrial society, the convenience of traffic instrument made the tourism as the primary mode of group leisure consumption. Thomas Cook organized the members of alcoholic prohibition association to take trains for sight-seeing in 1841 for the first time, and then assembled people in joining several domestic or overseas traveling. After the 20th century, the global economy developed rapidly, which turned the leisure consumption to be the fashion of society and cultural trend, such as the bowling, skating, KTV, swimming, etc. Family members and friends took part in the group consumption activities in more ways, and many consumers are sharing the same interest and hobbies got together and formed the consumption community (Boorstin, 1974; Sun Chengzhi, 1999).

In the 21st century, the expansion of the internet and social media technology turns the original linear interaction among consumers to the network and socialization interaction. They become the cooperators of enterprises in creating the value and consumption significance, and sometimes even the United resistors (Kozinets et al. 2010). The two technological factors change the interactive means of consumers: (1) Development of source code in the openness and interaction of hardware; (2) Software support reflecting the social exchange process (Labrecque et al., 2013). It offers diversified group activities and communication platforms for consumers, such as Wechat group, virtual community, etc. Consequently, group consumption is no longer limited to the offline, and it develops the online group interaction platforms, such as the virtual brand community, game community, etc. Meanwhile, the boundary of the online interaction and offline interaction is circulating and can be transformed mutually. Therefore, the group consumption activities also evolve to be the multi-channel interaction mode from the single offline activities, such as online communication, offline interaction, and different interaction, as shown in Fig. 1. The mixed interaction consists of two routes, namely the online-to-offline interaction, such as the self-driving activities of Auto home club, and the offline-to-online interaction, for instance, the WeChat agent-purchasing.
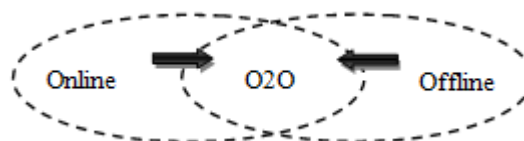

Fig. 1 multi-channel interaction of group consumption

The social environment is another significant factor driving the clustering of consumers. Maffesoli (1995) pointed out that at the end of the 20th century. Western human society entered the post-modernity from the modernity, and people are reflecting on the social separation and sociality deficiency of individual life caused by the excessive individuality, and as a result, the social aggregation actions began reversely with the

tribe as the foundation. The postmodern tribe consumers prefer achieving the significance of life through the social connection formed by one or several groups, instead of through the consuming behavior (Cova, 1997). In Chinese society, the circle culture provides fruitful soil for the group consumption activities. As long as there are people, there would be consumption, and as long as there are Chinese people, there would be circles. The establishment, maintenance and reinforcement of social relationship and operation of circles through consumption shall be a significant constituent part of the social life of each Chinese people. Many consumption activities of Chinese people are carried out in circles, and the dinner party and entertainment, etc. are the common social contact means of the circles.

2.2 Internal factor

According to the sociology, two main agents are forming the social group. One is that the group can satisfy the instrumental demand, and finish the work that cannot be accomplished by individuals, so that individuals can gain more interest, for instance, a project team. The other is that the group can satisfy the emotional demand, and members can gain the emotional support and opportunities for self-expression, for instance, the circle of friends (Poptun, 2007). Bagozzi (2002) investigated the determinants driving the members participating in the virtual community. Based on the mode of goal-directed behavior, two social influence factors, namely the social identity and group norm, are added. Ellemers et al. (1999) pointed out the three dimensions included in social identity, namely the cognition aspect, which is the cognition awareness of membership in the social group, and it is a kind of self-classification, emphasizing on the similarity of individuals. Moreover, group members, and the difference between non-group members; emotion dimension, namely individual's perception of group emotion relationship, and it is a kind of affective commitment, in which individuals may produce intimacy and belonging sense with the group and group members. Evaluation dimension, namely the assessment of membership value and significance, is the self-esteem out of the group identity. Bagozzi et al. (2002) summarized with anempirical study that the three dimensions of social identity may impact the intention of group participation. Subjective norm is the individual's consideration of doing or not doing something, and an individual's subjective norm is determined by the perception of others' expectation and the following of others' opinions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). People with personal norm care about others' views and concepts, especially the important ones, as a result, they usually want to gain the support and praise from others. When individuals take part in the group behavior, it aims to follow other members' expectation of obtaining awards or avoiding punishment; there may be the impact of subjective norm (Lascu & Zinkhan, 1999).

Dholakia et al. (2004) divided the motivation for joining the virtual communityat the group level and individual level based on the studies conducted by Bagozzi, et al. (2002). The motivation of level group consists of the social identity and group norm, while the motivation of individual level includes: (1) Information motivation, it refers that participants would gain and share information in the community. When obtaining information value from the community, the members would contribute what they know to the community, for instance, sharing the experience. (2) Instrumental motivation, it refers that participants would finish the specific tasks through thegroup, for example, solving a certain problem, impacting other members to get them focus on a certain problem or product. (3) Social connection, it refers that participants can establish and maintain the social relationship with others and gain social benefits by joining the community, for instance, dispatching the sense of loneliness, gaining the feeling of intimacy, looking for like-minded partners, achieving friendship and social support (McKenna, 1999). (4) Social intensification, it refers that participants would make contributions to the group and gain the recognition from other members, so as to intensify and improve the status in the community, for instance, the labeling the star level of members with the contribution degree in the virtual community. (5) Entertainment, it refers that participants would gain the pleasure by playing new roles in the virtual community.Wang and Fesenmaier (2004) proposed four kinds of participation profit with the virtual tourism community as the research object, namely the functional profit, which mainly refer to the transaction, information collection, resource exchange, etc. The social profit, which primarily refers to the relationship and communication, sharing of knowledge and experience, the offering of assistance and support, etc. among members; psychological profit. Which mainly refers to the sense of belonging in the society, sense of identity and intimacy among members; entertainment benefit, for instance, the internal enjoyment brought by the entertainment new field, role playing.

Studies on the group participation motivation offer theoretical support to the excavation of domestic factors formed by the group consumption mode. The internal factors also cover two levels, namely the group level and individual level. The group norm and social identity are the motivation in the two group levels. Whyte (2012) discovered in the study of a street gang in Italy that the group norm and traditional practices nearly control all group behaviors, for instance, group members would gather in the same bar, and they would take the same seat of the same desk. The impact of social identity on the consumer cluster is reflected by the distinct cognition, affection and evaluation of individuals to the group. Muñiz and O'Guinn (2001) found out that

consumers of the same brand community share the same values, which allow members to produce a strong sense of belonging to the brand community, and even a kind of kinship. Seen from the individual level, the consumption activities in-group satisfy the consumers with the profit that cannot be gained from individualconsumption. In this paper, by referring to the views of Dholakia et al. (2004), four kinds of individual motivation factors formed by the group consumption are put forward, including the information motivation, namely the product information, application experience, etc. Gained from the sharing among consumers; instrumental motivation, participating in the price discount that is exclusive to the group consumption or consumption activity that can only be finished with other consumers, such as crowdfunding, team game, sports. The social motivation, which refers to the establishment or maintenance of social relationship with other consumers in the group consumption, and the intensification of friendship and emotional relationship; enjoyment motivation, which refers to the joyful experience gained from the joint consumption with other group members.

III.   Types of group consumption mode
3.1 Characteristic dimension of group consumption

The study on the consumption behaviors at the group level is mainly concentrated in the brand community, consumption sub-culture, consumption tribe, etc. and these group consumption forms are summarized into the category of consumption communities (Thomas, 2013). However currently, scholars regard different consumption communities as independent entities for study, without considering the differences and relations between these group consumption entities (Canniford, 2011). In this paper, it is considered that the analysis of group consumption mode shall clarify the characteristics of these consumption entities, and nine kinds of characteristic dimensions are extractedfrom the study of domestic and foreignliterature about the group consumption.

Table 1: Characteristic dimension of group consumption

Characteristic dimension	Type and living examples
Focus: if it is centered on the brand, consumption action, concept, emotion	Brand-centered: Saab community(Muñiz & O'Guinn, 2001) Action-centered: surfing community(Canniford, 2011) Concept – centered: The Burning Man community(Kozinets, 2002) Emotion-centered: Circle of friends
Action cycle: time span of the action	Temporary: flash mob (Barnes, 2006); crowd-funding, group purchasing Persistent: Apple Newton community, the product has already exited the market, but the community is still active(Muñiz & Schau, 2005)
Group attraction: does the mode attract small amount of consumers or the masses	Small-crowd: simplicity communities, requiring consumers to give up many luxuries (Cherrier, 2009) Broad-crowd: The Tom Petty and Heartbreaker brand community are a large group of consumers(Schau &Muñiz, 2007)
Barriers to entry: minimum condition of participation (Von Hippel, 2005) and group greeting behavior (Schau et al., 2009)	Low-threshold: only through online registration (Mathwick et al., 2008) High-threshold: Harley-Davidson Motor Club, requiring substantial fund input (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995) Exclusive: Porsche club, boasting rareness, making it difficult for new members to gain official status in the club(Avery, 2007) Appealing: develop the consumption group actively and encourage the join of new members (Schau et al., 2009)
Communication channels: participant interaction is small offline clustering or scattered online or the combination of the two (Wind et al., 2002)	Aggregating type: circle of friends, interpersonal gathering Dispersing type: crowdfunding, only interacting in network environment Mixed type: Hummer club, with offline gathering and online network interaction (Luedicke et al., 2010)
Marketorientation: the relation with enterprise is cooperative, neutral or opposite	Collaborative type: Harley-Davidson Motor Club and enterprise launched all kinds of cooperation by focusing on the goals (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995); the group purchasing shall cooperate with target enterprise or the third party service of the group purchasing website Neutral type: Book club, members purchase the books of enterprise, but enterprise seldom joins the book purchasing activities of the club (Long, 2003) Opposite type: The Community Supported Agriculture, opposing all kinds of business of the mainstream business entities (Thompson & CoskunerBalli, 2007)
Resource flow structure: how the information resource, social resource, cultural resource and economic resource flow to the group, and in the group	One-way flow: consumers of association from the organization similar to fans by focusing a certain particular people, led by a leader, the resource would flow to the center, and few resources are flowing among members. It is also called the star structure community(Fournier, 2009) No-structural type: Fournier (2009) think that consumers sharing the same attitude towards a certain consumption value or brand may be like a party, with the same beliefs but few interactions. Therefore, the resource flow is scattering, without structure. Network flow: there is a strong interaction between the members of the community, and members may influence each other in different ways.
Collective sense of belonging: the group regards the group sense of	Low sense of belonging: much professional association has a low sense of belonging (Fournier, 2009)

belonging as a part of the group recognition to a great extent	High sense of belonging: the groupis devoted to reinforcing the cohesion and sense of belonging among members, such as drifting club (Arnould & Price, 1993)
Heterogeneity: changes of groups in the role of members and resource creation	Homogeneous type: gangdom stands for the homogeneous group, it suppresses and rejects the differentiation (Venkatesh, 1997)
	Heterogeneous type: in ethnic Chinese circle, from the member role to symbol significance to the brand, differences are presented in different forms (Dong & Tian, 2009)

(Data source: Thomas T C, Price L L, Schau H J. When differences unite: Resource dependence in heterogeneous consumption communities [J]. Journal of Consumer Research, 2013, 39(5): 1010-1033. With modifications)

3.2 Classification of group consumption mode

It can be discovered from the study of the formation motivation and characteristics of all kinds of group consumption that consumers may gather out of the instrumental demand or emotional demand. On that basis, it presents the differences in different dimensions, such as the action cycle, group attraction, barriers to entry, interaction channel, market orientation, resource flow structure, sense of belonging, heterogeneity, etc. However, the distinctions in each group consumption entity cannot display the differences in the group consumption mode systematically, and there are no explicit paths for the analysis of group consumption mode. Various group consumption entities are also the collection of therelationship between members. In these groups, there are intimate friends and acquaintances, and even a fellow traveler finishing one task. The current studies neglect the role of interpersonal relationships in the group consumption. On the other hand, the group consumption activities are formed by individuals, and the individual behavior is the foundation of the formation of group behaviors. Current studies on the group consumption fail to investigate the characteristic dimension from the motivation of the group formation. In this paper, dimensions are selected from two perspectives of the group consumption. Firstly, it is the group relationship strength reflecting the social characteristic; secondly, it is the action cycle reflecting the features of the consumption behavior. It divides the group consumption mode into four quadrants, which stand for the group consumption mode guided by four different group formation motivations.
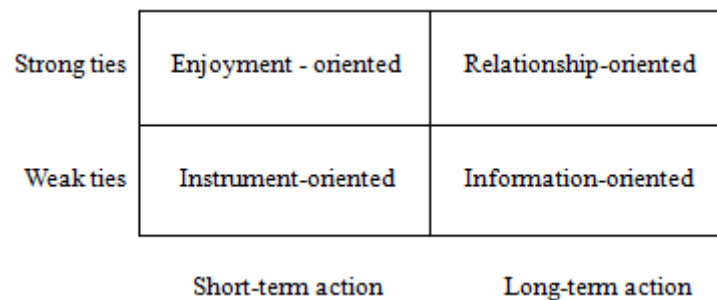

Strong ties	Enjoyment - oriented	Relationship-oriented
Weak ties	Instrument-oriented	Information-oriented
	Short-term action	Long-term action

Fig.2 Types of group consumption mode

3.2.1 Instrument-oriented

The short-term consumption behavior of weak-ties group is represented by the temporary gathering for accomplishing a certain consumption target, for instance, the tourist group, online group purchasing, crowd-funding, etc. Such group consumption can usually gain the profit that cannot be gained in individual actions, for instance, the favorable price, risk diversification, etc. With the online group purchasing as an example, the group purchasing shall be the purchasing behaviors conducted by individuals or groups sharing the same purchasing objects (Webster & Wind, 1972). The group purchasing consists of two factors, namely the purchasing behaviors and action groups. The online group purchasing may call on buyers with the same walls of purchasing the same products through the internet, and gain the bargaining capacity with merchants in two ways, namely the negotiation before calling up and negotiation after calling up (Tsvetovat et al. 2000). Kauffman (2001) studied the impact of the dynamic pricing mechanism of group purchasing website on the consumers' behaviors. To gain more favorable price, consumers may expand the group purchasing scale as much as possible. In the network group purchase based on the weak ties group, the internal social interaction in the group is relatively low. Jing et al. (2011) studied the social interactive behaviors in the network group purchase. Group purchase merchants offer more discounts to opinion leaders for encouraging them to call on more participants, and these consumers may have interpersonal interactions with other consumers through the sharing of information and knowledge.

3.2.2 Information-oriented

The long-term consumption activities conducted by weak-ties group is the information-based group consumption mode, in which, the group consumption activities mainly gain or share the information, knowledge, experience, etc. related to the consumption. It is pointed out in the strength of weak ties theory that the weak ties and strong ties may play the role of information transmission. In the strongties group, due to the high homogenization of group, the information transferring is usually limited and repeated. However, in the weak-ties group, the high homogenization of group may directly result in the diversified information and knowledge, and the interaction of group members is also represented by the transfer process of information and knowledge (Granovetter, 1973). For the weak-ties consumption group, the interaction between members is concentrated in the sharing of consumption experience and brand knowledge, for instance, the member sharing activities of cosmetic brand, car club forum, etc. Meanwhile, compared to the consumption group, in reality, the consumption group relationship in the network environment is not close, and most network members only interact on the internet, without contacting in reality, which is a kind of weak-ties group. The internet technology and mobile interconnection technique offer support for the information coordination of network group. Network members may accomplish the information coordination by various means, such as the characters, pictures, voice, etc. The information coordination gets online consumption groups discuss and solve the same problem and members in joint actions would form reciprocal relations and undertake risks together. Meanwhile, they would share the action results (Gray, 1989). The information communication is the basis of the continuous action of the weak-ties consumption groups. The emotion relationship between members and the cognition of groups is based on the information communication. For the information communication of network group may turn the reciprocal relations among members from "one to one" to "many to many", and the reciprocity is just the necessary means of creating, maintaining and strengthening the social relationship (Kollock, 1999; Ding Daoqun et al. 2005).

3.2.3 c. Enjoyment - oriented

The short-term consumption behavior of strong-ties group is represented by a joint participation of family members, friends, etc. in a certain consumption activity, and there is no long-term repetition. It may be the common try of new products or a vacation. In this paper, it is called the enjoyment-oriented group consumption mode. Caprariello et al. (2013) discovered in studies that the experience with others may bring more happiness than individual experience, for it is easier to share the experience with others, but it may be difficult to share tangible materials. Tynan and McKenzie (2009) discovered that the consumption experience is not enjoyed along by individual consumers, but other consumers experience it, and it may produce the common group creativity in the social interaction and experience sharing of collective consumption process. Arnould and Price (1993) found out in the common experience of groups in the study on drifting travel that high emotional connections and enjoyment experience may be produced in the overcoming of difficulties and mutual assistance, and the identity and sense of belonging may be produced. It can be said that interpersonal interaction is a significant trigger of the creation of extraordinary experience.

3.2.4 Relationship-oriented

The long-term consumption of the strongties group is usually manifested as the routine / ritual consumption carried out among family members, friends, and students. Durkheim (1912) considered that the durability of social entity exists in the rites. Just like the durability of social relationship maintained with rites, the group consumption entity mainly maintains the group durability with the routine/ ritual consumption, and such group consumption mode is called the relationship-oriented mode. The group consumption activity in the relationship-guided mode pays more attention to the establishment and maintenance of a relationship with other consumers.Such strong-ties group is also the circle in Chinese life. The group consumption ritual usually refers to the internal consumption activities of the circle and these activities may endow the consumers with the meaning of life just like these activities (Rook, 1985). According to the different source of consumption behaviors, the group consumption rate / routine is divided into six categories, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Types of group consumption ritual

Behavior source	Rite / convention type	Example
Cosmology	Incredible magic Aesthetic	Gamble, online game Artistic performance, film
Cultural value	Rite of passage Culture	Graduation celebration, birthday celebration Thanksgiving, mid-autumn festival
Group study	Small group Family	Office dinner party, sodality Dinner party, festival celebration

(Data source: Rook D W. The ritual dimension of consumer behavior[J]. Journal of Consumer Research, 1985: 251-264. With modifications)

Wallendorf et al. (1991) conducted studies on the routine consumption of Thanksgiving, finding out that consumers may enhance the relationship with relatives or friends after the prevailing dinner party. Gainer (1995) took consumers with the appreciation of art performance as rites as the research object and found out that consumers may enhance the understanding of each other during the experience sharing with family members and church members, and they would establish more social connections. McKechnie and Tynan (2006) studied the social significance created by consumers in the consumption rates of Christmas and pointed out that social, cultural factors may be transmitted to the consumption individuals from the commodity consumption. Jafari et al. (2013) pointed out the social value generated in the interpersonal interaction of family members during the visiting of the museum, as well as its impact on the consumption experience. Meanwhile, it is pointed out that the symbolic meaning of consumption creates the connections between human, and the social relationship between individuals and others is developed and maintained through emotion stimulation.

IV.   Evolution of group consumption mode

The four types of group consumption reflect different degrees of cohesion. According to Festinger, cohesion is the resultant force of all factors remained by individuals in the group (Liu Jingxiao et al. 2006). These factors include the interpersonal attraction, task commitment, group honor (Beal et al., 2003). When elements interact with each other, change, and develop with the group, the cohesion will also change. Carron et al. pointed out the dynamic features of cohesion, and it shall investigate the development stages in dynamic view (Carron et al., 2005). As for the group consumption mode, the strength of group relationship reflects the interpersonal attraction of group, and the continuous circle of consumption actions reflects the commitment of the group to the consumption target. In the four kinds of consumption mode, the relationship-oriented mode has high cohesion, and it mainly conducts long-term consumption activities in strong-ties group, realizing the loyalty of group relationship and consumption target, and it is the ideal state of binding the group loyalty. When the interpersonal attraction of group increases or the commitment of the group to the target consumption increases, the cohesion of the group consumption will also increase, and it can also be considered that the group consumption mode further evolves. In Fig. 3, it is reflected the evolution of four group consumption modes realized in two paths, including the relationship identification and product identification.
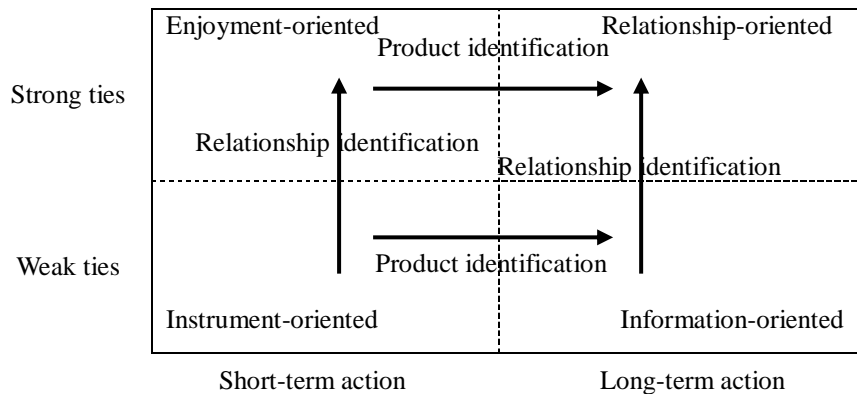

Fig. 3 Evolution path of group consumption mode

As for the instrument-oriented consumption mode, when a group approves a certain product, brand or concept, the weak-ties group may be turned to be the existing social relationship focusing on a certain consumption object. The consumption object amounts to the spiritual carrier of the group members, who have maintained the continuous attention and purchase of consumption object, and the instrument-oriented mode develops to be the information-oriented mode. When the group members establish the friendship and emotion in the consumption process, the interpersonal attraction of the group is enhanced, and at this moment, the interpersonal interaction may give rise to the enjoyment experience (Arnould& Price, 1993). The instrument-oriented mode may develop to be the enjoyment-oriented mode, for instance, the establishment of friendship with other visitors in the tour group may change the experience of traveling. The tour group formed for the convenience of traveling and favorable price may allow people to gain the joy of interpersonal interaction due to the strengthening of therelationshipbetween tourists.

As for the information-oriented consumption mode, when group members gain the ties identity through participating in various activities and interpersonal interaction, the weak ties among consumption group, may turn to be the strong ties. The long-term consumption actions of the group may turn to be the rites of the group, which may maintain the group relationship. As a result, the information-oriented mode develops to be the

relationship-oriented mode, for instance, the brand community is of the information-oriented group consumption mode based on the weak ties, with low cohesion.

While some brand communities may gain high cohesion through the relationship development of members, and the group consumption activities may become the rites or ceremonies of the community, for instance, the Harley-Davidson Motor Club.

As for the enjoyment-oriented consumption mode, when the strong ties produce common positive attitude towards the consumption experience in the consumption process, the common attitude of the group may amplify the satisfaction degree (Bohlmann et al. 2006), and reinforce the repeated consumption behaviors of the group. When the group forms long-term repeated consumption actions, the consumption activity may become the routine of group members, and members may carry out the interpersonal interaction in the consumption of the focus resource. The consumption activity is usually the emotion symbolization of a group, for instance, it is recognized in the circle of friends that the bar would become the "old place" for the gathering of members.

V. Marketing enlightenment and research prospect

The division of group consumption mode may show different starting point of the collection of consumers, and group consumption may gather the consumers with products as the center or select products based on the group relationship. Different consumption modes may show the differences in group relationship strength and product loyalty, and it can divide the four types of group consumption modes, including the instrument-oriented mode, information-oriented mode, enjoyment-oriented mode and relationship-oriented mode. The relationship-oriented mode displays the highest cohesion of consumption group and the strong interpersonal attraction and group consumption commitment forms the customer loyalty at agroup level, and other three modes may accomplish the evolution of consumption mode in two paths, namely the relationship identification and product identification. In this research, there are several revelations for the marketing practice:

Firstly, previously the attention to the group consumption mainly stays in the overall operation of the brand community and virtual community, neglecting the differences in theexistinggroup and group relationship in the community. Especially, the circle consumption conducted under the impact of the circle culture of Chinese consumers is the most common social interaction activities of Chinese people. The circle consumption is the group consumption carried out by the strong ties, which can be enjoyment-oriented mode and relationship-oriented mode, and the circle marketing is the key to future group consumption.

Secondly, consumers can gain multi-values by participating in the group consumption activities, including the information value, instrument valve, enjoyment value and social value, etc. different consumption modes reflect the attention to the various values from the consumption group. In other words, the division of consumption mode stands for the group segmentation market directed by four various types of value. Correspondingly, the marketing plan shall be adjusted with various group value orientations.

Thirdly, the relationship-oriented consumption mode is the final form of the group customer loyalty, revealing many differences between the successful consumption communities and other consumption communities. The relationship identification and product identification is the two paths of the evolution of the relationship-oriented mode. As for the enterprise, besides making strategies for strengthening the attitude of consumers towards the consumption objects like the product/ brand, it shall provide chances and space for the social interaction and emotion promotion of consumers as much as possible. When consumers develop the loyalty in the form of group, the group norms may have a huge constraining force on the consumers, that is to say, thehuge interpersonal cost may confront consumers during the product transfer.

The group consumption mode proposed in this research is a conceptual model, which can be further verified through data analysis. Also, in the strong-ties group consumption activities, the interpersonal interaction is a significant variable. So, for the instrument-oriented and information-oriented group use, how would interpersonal interaction impact the strong-ties group consumption, will it reflect different consumption characteristics? These problems shall be further studied in the future.

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