Research on the Effect of Brand Spokesperson's Choice on Consumers' Purchase Intention ——Take "Yang Li Intel Event" as an example

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Abstract: In 2021, the event of Yang Li's endorsement of Intel attracted the attention of the whole network. A discussion was triggered by Yang Li's controversial remarks, which directly led to the fluctuation of the purchase intention of Intel consumers. With the trend of product homogenization in the market, the brand spokesperson is crucial to the development of the brand. This paper, starting from the hot issue of Yang Li Intel, uses questionnaire investigation and in-depth interview to study the impact of the choice of brand spokesperson on consumers' purchase intention from the short-term and long-term dimensions. The study found that, in the short term, the more controversial the choice of spokespersons is, the greater the brand awareness is, and the lower the product purchase desire is. In the long run, the more conflicting the choice of spokesmen, the higher the brand awareness, and the higher the desire to buy the brand products when purchasing related products in the later stage. Under the influence of the sleeper effect, consumers' willingness to buy increased rather than decreased, in which brand awareness and goodwill played a mediating role. These findings provide a reference for brand choice spokesmen, and further expand the research of effect research in the time dimension.

Keywords: Brand spokesperson. Sleeper effect. Purchase intention. Effect study. Yang Li Intel Event

1 Introduction

Under the background of homogenization of market product sales, the shaping and dissemination of brand image has become a sharp tool for enterprises to quickly occupy the market. As the shaping of brand knowledge is to improve consumers' awareness of the brand, the brand spokesperson can quickly attract consumers' attention, visually and vividly present the brand personality, and promote consumers' continuous and in-depth understanding of the brand. Even in some occasions, the brand spokesperson has become the decisive factor affecting consumers' purchase intention. Therefore, using the brand spokesperson has become the choice for brands to shape brand knowledge, occupy the market and open up sales. Recently, we observed that with the explosion of the ROCK & ROAST, Yang Li quickly get great attention

because of her "frequent golden sentences". Market brands such as Intel and Xiaopeng Automobile have chosen Yang Li as their brand spokesperson in order to expand their popularity and promote product sales. However, because of the "gender opposition" color of Yang Li's speech, the event of "choosing Yang Li as the spokesman" made Intel resisted by some male users on the network, and even led Intel to remove all promotional materials. We were curious about this: Why did Yang Li's endorsement meet the resistance of the market? What impact will the choice of brand spokesperson have on consumers' purchase intention?

2 Literature Review

2.1 Literature review on brand spokesperson and consumer willingness

"Brand spokesperson" and "purchase intention" have become the areas of concern of the academic community. There are 46 related literatures searched on CNKI using them as keywords. It is found that the current research on this issue focuses on four aspects. First, the impact of the negative information of the brand spokesperson on consumers (Hong Xiaoqi, 2019). Second, the impact of the image of the brand spokesperson and the matching degree of the brand on consumers' purchase intention (Liu Dingji & Jiang Minghua et al., 2006). Third, the influence of the characteristics of the brand spokesperson as a source of information (such as source credibility) on the purchase intention (Han Zhao, 2020). Fourth, the influence of brand spokespersons of specific categories or spokespersons on specific consumer groups (Wang Jueyao, 2013). While there has been few studies from the perspective of sleeper effect and long-term impact to research the relationship between brand image spokesperson and consumers' purchase intention, the main research perspective focuses on Attribution theory, SOR theory, source credibility and other perspectives, which focuses on short-term effects.

2.2 Literature review on sleeper effect

Sleepers effect was first reported by Peterson and Thurstone. They let middle school and high school students from different regions watch movies to try to change their attitudes towards some social problems. Through experiments, they found that the effect of attitude change did not decrease but improved over time. Later, after systematic research between 1946 and 1961, Carl Hovland et al. concluded that the influence of information sources on the communication effect was more obvious only in the immediate effect, and the difference gradually narrowed over time. That is to say, after a period of time, the positive effects brought by high credibility sources are declining, while the negative effects brought by low credibility sources are turning to positive effects. After the Sleeper Effect was proposed, it has been studied in the field of communication and advertising marketing. In the field of communication, Zhang Chaohong, Ling Wengui and other scholars (2004) comprehensively combed the research approach of

sleeper effect, elaborated the possible mechanism of sleeper effect, and summarized the research and development trend of sleeper effect; In terms of advertising marketing research, the effect of sleepers mainly focuses on the pure measurement effect of consumers, as well as the research on advertising effects such as spot ads (Wang Li, 2009) and video patch ads (Zhang Ni&Cheng Xulan, 2016). On the whole, the number of literature on the effect of sleepers is small, and the research from the perspective of advertising marketing mainly focuses on the advertising effect, which is more general and macro. There is no in-depth and detailed discussion on the relevant attributes of the source, and there is no answer to the question about the impact of the brand spokesperson on consumers' purchase intentions.

2.3 Problem posing

Therefore, based on the sleeper effect theory, this paper attempts to answer the following questions: Will consumers' preference for brands be affected when brands choose controversial spokespersons? Will it affect the purchase intention? In the short term and long term, what will happen to consumers' wishes?

3 Method

3.1 Questionnaire

Fajer and Schouten (1995) pointed out that, when the brand personality is consistent with the personality trend that consumers have or advocate, it can more trigger consumers' recognition of the brand, enhance consumers' good impression of the brand, and thus enhance their purchase intention. In the Yang Li Intel event, the most discussed point of Yang Li was her expression of her views on "male female opposition". Therefore, whether the views of Yang Li and consumers are consistent has become a decisive factor for consumers' attitudes towards Yang Li. Kamins (19901994) and Wang Huaiming (1999) pointed out that, when the image and grade of the advertising spokesperson are consistent with the brand being endorsed, consumers' preference for the brand will be significantly improved.

Based on the above questions, we propose corresponding assumptions:

H1: The greater the difference between the opinion of the brand spokesperson and that of the consumer, the lower the consumer's preference for the brand;

H2: The lower the matching degree between the brand spokesperson and the brand, the lower the consumer's preference for the brand;

H3: The greater the difference between the opinion of the brand spokesperson and that of the consumer, the lower the consumer's willingness to buy;

H4: The lower the matching degree between the brand spokesperson and the brand, the lower the consumers' purchase intention;

In order to explore whether consumers' willingness to buy the brand products will decline in a short period of time when the brand chooses a spokesperson with different social evaluations, this part uses the method of questionnaire to analyze. 167 college students were randomly selected for investigation. The reason why college students were chosen just because they are easy to accept new things, pay high attention to hot topics and are willing to express their views, which can effectively reduce the number of invalid questionnaires.

The main body of the questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part is background information. The first part is mainly about consumers' cognition and evaluation of the spokespersons facing disputes. The item about the consistency between the brand spokespersons and the brand is based on the scale developed by Ohanian (1990) and Sun Xiaoqiang (2008). The second part is the measurement of consumer brand attitude after the Yang Li Intel incident. The items are adapted from the measurement scales of Lafferty (2007), Kim&Han (2005), Mitchell & Olsen (1999), Dodds and Grewal (1991). The third part is the measurement of consumers' willingness to buy in the short term. The scale is mainly based on the scale developed by Wan, Pfau (2004), Ma, Gill, Jiang (2015) and the scale designed by Cheng Yu in the Research on Attitudes towards Disputed Advertising in China (2014), and adapted according to the research scenario in this paper.

The questionnaire uses the Likert five point scale to measure consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions. It is conducted through online survey via WeChat friends circle and QQ.

3.2 Depth Interview

3.2.1 Interview questions

The interview questions are mainly divided into three parts.

The first part mainly involves the basic information of the interviewee, including his name, gender and age.In the second part, the research questions are reduced to interview questions. Including what impression they still have on the Yang Li Intel event, whether they will still purchase Intel related products after the event, what factors impel them to continue to purchase, and why they do not continue to purchase.The third part, preparation mainly involves the problem of possible deep excavation.

In the process of interview and research, the researchers tried to avoid the four ethical problems and deviant behaviors emphasized by the scholar Al an Bryman: (1) Cause damage to research participants; (2) Do not use informed consent permit documents or materials; (3) Infringe the privacy of research participants; (4) Deceive research participants. And if the interviewee has any question or dissatisfaction that he/she is unwilling to answer during the interview, he/she can remain silent or withdraw halfway. The interview materials that the interviewees stated that they would not disclose were not included and quoted in this study.

3.2.2 Interviewee selection

In this study, six interviewers who are familiar with or have used Intel products were interviewed in depth for about 10 minutes. The interview starts on October 10, 2022 and ends on October 15, 2022. The interviewees first included students who were familiar with and used Intel's products, and then collected more research samples through WeChat friends circle forwarding. According to the maximum sampling principle of the qualitative research method, when the sixth interviewee was recruited, all the interview content was enough to answer the research questions, and the sample collection was ended. The interviewees are different in age, occupation, education level, location, attitude towards brand spokespersons, etc., and the degree of homogeneity is low.

The interview was conducted in the form of WeChat text interview. The interview results were compiled into a verbatim manuscript, with a total of 2132 words. The processing of interview content is completed by the author himself. The basic information of the interviewees is shown in the table.

Table 1 Basic information of the interviewee

Item		Rate of recurrence	Proportion
Gender	Male	3	50
	Famle	3	50
Education	Undergraduate	4	63.7%
	Master or above	2	33.3%
Age	18-24	4	63.7%
	25-34	2	33.3%

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Sample characteristics

A total of 167 questionnaires were collected in this survey, of which female respondents accounted for 67.66%, most of them were young people, and the 18-24 year olds accounted for 86.23%. From the perspective of descriptive analysis, the proportion of 80 respondents who "pay attention to the brand spokesperson when purchasing products" exceeded 48%. Only about 5% of respondents said that they "never pay attention to the spokesperson". There are 6 interviewees in this in-depth interview, including 3 male and 3 female interviewees, each accounting for 50%. All 4 interviewees are young people, and 2 interviewees are 25-34 years old; All interviewees have bachelor's degree or above.

4.2 The controversy of the brand spokesperson will affect consumers' purchase intention

Among consumers' purchase intentions, brand goodwill is a very important interfering factor and an important perceptual factor affecting consumers' purchase, which will directly affect consumers' subsequent purchase process.

The spokesmen's controversial performance has many aspects. In the Yang Li Intel event, the most prominent controversial performance is the views expressed by Yang Li and the matching degree between Yang Li and Intel brands. Therefore, this study will further refine the controversy, and consider it from two dimensions: the similarity of viewpoints and positions and the matching degree of endorsement image.

4.2.1 The higher the similarity between the views of consumers and brand spokespersons, the stronger the consumers' brand perception and purchase intention

In the event that Intel selected Yang Li as its spokesman, more than 55% of the respondents agreed with Yang Li's remarks. In the measurement of brand and spokesperson matching, the overall matching score reached 22.8 points, with the lowest score of 7 points and the highest score of 35 points, indicating that most people recognized the matching degree. In the brand perception measurement, the overall perception score reached 20.3, with the lowest score of 6 and the highest score of 30, indicating that most people have a high perception. In the measurement of brand purchase intention, the overall score reached 16.389, with the lowest score of 5 and the highest score of 25. The purchase intention was relatively average.

Pearson correlation analysis found that the degree of recognition of Yang Li's remarks and brand perception showed a significant positive correlation (r=0.428 * *, p=0.000 * *), indicating that H1 was established, the more similar the views of the brand spokesperson and consumers, the higher the consumers' brand perception. The analysis of the difference of spokespersons' views and consumers' purchase intention shows that they are significantly positively correlated (r=0.426 * *, p=0.000 * *), and H3 is established.

The above data shows that the similarity between consumers' views and those of the brand image spokesperson is an important factor affecting consumers' brand perception. For Intel, after using Yang Li as the brand spokesperson, the similarity of a series of views Yang Li has expressed with consumers' views or the degree of consumers' recognition of such views will affect consumers' preference for the Intel brand, and brand preference will directly affect the subsequent purchase intention of the brand. According to the conclusion of this study, when the existing views of consumers are highly similar to those held by Yang Li, consumers will have a positive cognitive and emotional attitude towards the brand, significantly improving their liking for the Intel brand, thus directly affecting consumers' purchase intention and even consumption behavior to buy the brand products.

4.2.2 The higher the match between the spokesperson and the brand, the stronger the consumer's brand perception and purchase intention

There is a significant positive correlation between the match between the spokesperson and the brand and the good feeling for the brand (r=0.723 * *, p=0.000 * *). H2 is established, which means the lower the match between the spokesperson and the brand, the lower the consumer's good feeling for the brand. The results show that the choice of appropriate spokesmen in line with the public concept can effectively improve brand goodwill. The analysis of the difference of spokespersons' views and consumers' purchase intention shows that they are significantly positively correlated (r=0.426 * *, p=0.000 * *), and H3 is established. Finally, the correlation analysis between spokesperson and brand matching and purchase intention shows that they are positively correlated (r=0.620 * *, p=0.000 * *), and H4 is established.

Besides, the matching degree between the brand image spokesperson and the brand is also one of the significant factors that affect the consumers' good impression of the brand. In the ROCK & ROAST, Yang Li creates a different style and path from other talk show actors. For example, Pang Bo of ROCK & ROAST is characterized by "sincerity and kindness"; Fu Seoul, the founder of "A Tale of Wonderful Flowers", is famous for his "self mockery". While Yang Li's language style is direct and sharp, bold and innovative, and he dares to ridicule traditional issues between men and women. His golden sentences are so frequent, so that she is known as "a gentle and sharp girl". Some people even call her a "hooligan" because her roast directly pokes at the pain points of life, which can resonate with the audience. Yang Li's unconventional style is consistent with Intel's own brand image and development path of "honoring tradition and constantly breaking through innovation". In addition, in this speech, intel created a scene of consumers' daily work from the perspective of everyone's life, portraying the image of Yang Li as a "gold investor", further narrowing the psychological distance with consumers, enhancing the matching between Yang Li and Intel, and strengthening brand association, so as to enhance consumers' preference for the brand and affect consumers' willingness to purchase intel related products.

4.3 In the short term, consumers' willingness to buy will decline, but in the long term, it will rise instead of decline

Purchase is the ultimate goal of a brand. Previous studies have often focused on short-term purchase intention. This study breaks through this limitation and analyzes consumers' purchase intention from two different dimensions: short-term and long-term. The results show that in the short term, consumers' willingness to buy will decline, while in the long term, consumers' willingness to buy will increase rather than decline.

In the questionnaire, 22 interviewees said "I will not continue to buy other products of this brand in the short term". In the interview, some interviewees also said that they would not consider purchasing related products of Intel in the short term. This shows that the controversial

nature of the spokesperson will indeed affect the consumer's favorable attitude to the brand and reduce the consumer's willingness to buy within a period of time after the event. But in the long run, consumers' willingness to buy will rise.

When we further studied the impact of the "Yang Li Intel event" on brand goodwill and consumers' purchase intention from a longer time dimension and tried to get answers, we were surprised to find that, from a longer time dimension, the popularity of Intel brand and consumers' brand goodwill were not affected by the previous endorsement dispute, but the brand's own influence expanded, the purchase intention of consumers has improved to a certain extent. The answers of the interviewees support this idea. In the questionnaire survey, 76 interviewees said that "when similar new products of two brands come into the market, I am more likely to choose to buy Intel". In the in-depth interview, the interviewees also said that they would continue to buy Intel products.

"It doesn't affect the purchase. Now people around will have fun talking about it, and the understanding will pass with a smile" (S6)

"When the event was fermenting, everyone was discussing the event, but people around me were not affected by the event on Intel products, and they still chose Intel when they bought it." (S5)

The sleeper effect points out that because of the time interval, people are easy to forget the source of the message, but only retain the vague memory of the content. In attitude psychology, scholars call the phenomenon that the influence of the speaker due to prestige factors produces the opposite effect with the passage of time as the sleeper effect. In the Yang Li Intel incident, although Yang Li's endorsement caused a temporary controversy, the intensity of the controversy declined with the development of time, and the public will gradually return to reason from the "emotional" state, gradually forgetting the "righteous indignation" state. Under the effect of the sleeper effect, consumers have forgotten about this controversial event, but brand related associative information such as "intel" and "Yang Li" has been retained in their minds. Therefore, in the long run, after the discussion of "Yang Li Intel", under the influence of the sleeper effect, consumers' willingness to buy the Intel brand has increased rather than decreased.

When we conducted a deeper interview on the impact of the "Yang Li Intel event" on brand goodwill and consumers' purchase intention from a longer time dimension and tried to get answers, we were surprised to find that, from a longer time dimension, the popularity of the intel brand and consumers' brand goodwill were not affected by the previous endorsement dispute, but the brand's own influence expanded, The purchase intention of consumers has improved to a certain extent. The answers of the interviewees support this idea.

4.4 Brand awareness becomes an important basis for promoting purchase

So, what factors affect the brand's subsequent purchase intention? We communicated with the interviewees on this issue.

"When I first came into contact with the computer (about years ago), I knew about and

contacted Intel, and the computer displays the logo of Intel. In addition, I also like Yang Li very much, and I am also very concerned about this cooperation. This time I changed the computer and specifically asked about the slug. " (S2)

"I knew about Intel when I assembled my own computer in junior high school. Later, I found some advertisements and others by my own search engine. Because I paid more attention to it, I also paid attention to relevant information. This event of Yang Li was also seen by myself". (S6)

It can be seen that brand awareness is an important factor affecting consumers' purchase intention. Brand awareness is divided into three levels: brand identity, brand recall and first mentioned awareness. First of all, brand identity is a kind of association that marketers hope to create and maintain, which can leave consumers a good impression of the brand. These associations contain a certain commitment of the enterprise to consumers, and together with the core value of the brand, they form a full brand association. Second, brand recall is an important indicator of whether a brand is rooted in the mind of consumers. Generally, given a product category, consumers can point out or recall a brand without further prompting. Third, the “Top of Mind(TOM)” is the highest level of brand awareness, because without any prompts, the first brand or thing that consumers take the initiative to answer is often the brand that consumers like most or have the deepest impression on, which means that the brand has a higher status in people's minds than other brands, and this recognition is bound to affect consumers' brand choice and purchase. As a senior brand, Intel has established a complete brand identity through years of operation and image updating, and has a certain popularity, which has been recognized by consumers. However, in recent years, the rise of IBM, Oracle, AMD and other enterprises has shifted the attention of some consumers and even KOL, which has also had a certain impact on the development of Intel. Therefore, Intel can enter the center of public discussion again through the cooperation with Yang Li to enhance consumers' recall of the brand and deepen brand knowledge. Also, intel could strengthen brand memory in the existing market and cultivate brand loyalty of consumers , improve the brand's recall and popularity in the competitive market, so as to enter the channels for consumers to obtain information, and affect consumers' purchase intentions and purchase decisions.

4.5 Product quality is the focus of consumers' attention

"If the product has a large-scale quality problem or makes a wrong statement involving some bottom line problems, it will not consider purchasing the enterprise's product" (S4)

"I think the primary factor of a commodity is its function, price and use experience, and the spokesperson of the brand is also important, but the premise is that the spokesperson of the commodity does not have any illegal crimes or extreme remarks." (S2)

It is worth noting that Intel, as a senior and experienced brand in the technology industry, its product quality has been recognized by consumers through long-term marketing communication. Consumers have a strong memory of Intel's "good quality" and other brands, and brand associations are relatively stable. In another discussion boom, we can even boldly speculate that

the clue of "Yang Li" will be forgotten, but "Intel" "High quality" and other associations will remain in the mind.

5 Introspection and summary

This research conducted a long-term and short-term research on the phenomenon of "the influence of brand spokesperson's choice on consumers' purchase intention" from the theoretical perspective of the sleeper effect through questionnaires and in-depth interviews, trying to answer whether the brand choice of a controversial brand spokesperson will affect consumers' brand goodwill, purchase intention, and in the short and long term, the question of what will happen to consumers' wishes. Through the research, it is found that in the short term, the more controversial the choice of spokespersons is, the greater the brand awareness is, and the lower the product purchase desire is. In the long run, the more conflicting the choice of spokespersons, the higher the brand awareness, and the higher the desire to buy the brand products when purchasing related products in the later stage. In the long run, under the influence of the sleeper effect, consumers' willingness to buy has increased rather than decreased, in which brand awareness and goodwill play an intermediary role, and product quality is the focus of consumers' attention.

On the one hand, The impact of the brand image spokesperson on consumers' purchase intention proposed in this study is investigated from the short-term and long-term perspectives, which provides a reference for how to choose the brand spokesperson in the future. On the other hand, it also makes up for the lack of focusing on short-term effects and ignoring long-term effects in the current effect research field. However, it is worth noting that this study also found that brand spokesmen with controversial brand choices will also have a certain negative impact on the brand itself in the short term. If the brand spokesmen are more controversial, it will further affect the brand reputation and influence. In addition, product quality is an important factor affecting consumers' willingness to consume and decision-making; If the product quality is good, the negative impact of the controversial brand spokesperson can be offset to a certain extent.

However, due to the limitations of research perspective, time interval between events and sampling population, this study still has shortcomings. In future research, researchers in the field of advertising effect research can pay more attention to the choice of brand spokespersons, expand relevant research and experiments from a longer time span, and interpret from a diversified theoretical perspective.

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