Research on the effect of pull marketing from the perspective of Social responsibility

Zhang Shuoqi
School of Management, Capital University Of Physical Education And Sports, China
E-mail: zhangshuoqi0220@126.com

Abstract: In the post-epidemic era, with economic recovery and prosperity, how to market and establish a foothold in the market for fast retailing brands represented by instant noodles has become a long-term problem to be considered. Laotan brand in health problems, reputation declined sharply; The White Elephant brand focuses on the marketing of health and safety and social welfare, and the sales have been successful. In view of this phenomenon, the purpose of this study is to analyze the conditions for the successful marketing of White Elephant brand, and try to explore the role of social publicity in it.
Keywords: pull marketing, theory of social responsibility, effect study.

1 Introduction

At the beginning of 2022, as the epidemic situation was severe across the country and materials were scarce after the lockdown, instant noodles and other instant foods became essential items for people at home. In this context, CCTV 315 focused on the instant noodle industry and exposed Lao Tan pickled cabbage instant noodles as "stepping on pickled cabbage", which caused its brand reputation to decline. Meanwhile, a passer-by Weibo account posted a video detailing the entire process of processing White Elephant brand instant noodles. Netizens found that White Elephant instant noodles are not only clean and hygienic, but also allow many laid-off workers with physical disabilities to find new jobs, giving more job opportunities and sources of funding to socially disadvantaged groups. The video of White Elephant instant noodles was reposted by Weibo users, and it was a hot search on Weibo. The White Elephant brand also gained a good reputation unanimously recognized by consumers.

Brands of the same type are used to exploiting competitors' mistakes, forcing them into competition-style media events and inviting users to watch. However, only blindly using the strategy of pulling and stepping may not bring success, White Elephant brand also achieved its own hardware pass, in line with the public interest. In this regard, the researchers cannot help but ask: What conditions are required for the success of the pull marketing strategy? In line with the public nature of society, does it promote the marketing effect of media?

2 Literature review

2.1 Literature review on the marketing strategy of pull step

In recent years, marketing strategy has caused the academic research from many perspectives. Westbrook, a foreign scholar, published Product/Consumption-based Affective Responses and Post Purchase Process in 1987, believing that the marketing of passerby account releasing favorable content did not adulterate commercial profits. This informal communication channel belongs to the scope of building brand reputation. In 2016, foreign scholars Guo, B., Zhou, S. wrote the article called Understanding the Impact of Prior Reviews on Subsequent Reviews: According to The Role of Rating Volume. They thought in the article, when consumers are in a fuzzy situation where it is difficult to judge the quality of products or services, additional information supplemented by brands plays an important role in purchasing behaviors, such as the adjustment of product features.

Domestic scholars also analyzed marketing strategies from the perspective of new media and held different views. In 2016, Chen Qing published Research on Marketing of Brand Hot Topics on Weibo -- Taking Sina Weibo hot topics as an example, which concluded that brands need to choose the right topic to be on the hot search list according to their own characteristics, in order to expand the effect of marketing communication. In 2023, Pan Caihong and Liang Shuhui, in the Research on the Innovation of word-of-mouth marketing Strategy under the mode of "New retail",drew the conclusion that only by grasping the time node of marketing can the topic of word-of-mouth be triggered.

Combined with the marketing strategy of a single brand, Majia's Aim at online channel instant noodle brand to blow up the "high-end wind" in 2022 argues that instant noodle brands tend to compete with high-quality high-end products" in roll-style "after online channels become the main battlefield. In 2021, Cheng Jian's Research on word-of-mouth marketing Strategy under the background of "Internet +" analyzed from the perspective of the Internet, and his research showed that competitive brands could use the comparison effect to expand the audience market. In 2022, Bi Yueran made Market positioning strategy in transnational marketing of similar products in his book on Enterprises' Market Positioning Strategies in Transnational Marketing of similar Products. He believed that different brands of the same type could be marketed from the perspective of identifying the right positioning, establishing corporate culture and grasping the market attraction in all directions. Although these studies cover the marketing strategy of a single brand and the competitive marketing of different brands of the same type in the market, they ignore the Angle of "pull marketing".

2.2 A literature review of social publicity

In the 19th century, as soon as Marx's public value of media was put forward, scholars at home and abroad paid close attention to it and obtained many research results. In this study, one of the important conditions for the positive effect of pull marketing is that pull others' brands conform to the theory of social publicity.

In 2013, Too Popular to Ignore: Based on The prospect theory, The Influence of Online Reviews on Purchase Intentions of Search and Experience Products written by Jimenez, F. R. and Mendoza N. A, based on the risk avoidance principle of reference dependence. It is believed that consumers are more inclined to choose products that are in line with public interests (low

dispersion) when faced with decision-making situations with high discussion degree. In 2020, Ren Ying's The social public value implication of Marx's media Thought analyzed the social publicity from Marx's Media Thought. In her opinion, Marx's media theory lies in the all-round development of human and human society, which is based on the public world of social life, the public rationality and the public value of the society. In 2022, Pan Xiaoming's Research on the strategy of public welfare marketing under the background of Big data holds that brands can realize quantitative marketing through big data and adopt batch publicity strategy, which is in line with the interests of the general public in society. It can be seen that social publicity is crucial in the marketing link. Only from the current research status, there is no literature combining "social publicity" and "pull marketing", so there is no way to answer the initial question of "whether the condition for the success of pull marketing is in line with social publicity".

2.3 Problem raising

This paper will start from the social publicity and pull marketing strategy, and try to answer the following questions: why the particularity of pull marketing success after catering to the social public interest? How does this motivation play a role in the brand's marketing strategy to make it reflect its particularity? Besides conforming to the public nature of society, what other factors strengthen the positive effect of the brand marketing mode?

3 Research method

In this paper, the research methods of questionnaire survey and interview are used to try to answer the above questions.

3.1 Questionnaire survey method

3.1.1 Hypothesis establishment

Based on the above questions, corresponding hypotheses are proposed here:

H1: The more the problems of competitive brands are in line with the public nature of society, the more it will promote the positive effect of pull marketing.

H2: The more the marketing content conforms to the social publicity, the more obvious the positive effect of pulling marketing.

In order to prove the hypothesis, questionnaire survey method was adopted in this study to sample the population and make questionnaires.

3.1.2 Sampling method

The corresponding research object of this hypothesis is the group with the experience of buying instant noodles.

First of all, we take a representative sample of this group and select the students in universities as the research population. Secondly, we compile the overall sampling box according to the grade of students. Thirdly, we conducted stratified multilevel sampling of the sample frame with 95% confidence interval and 3% sampling error. A total of 331 questionnaires were collected in this survey. After ineffective questionnaires were screened according to the response time (longer than 30 seconds), 300 valid questionnaires were finally collected.

Data collection, collation and analysis were completed on April 15, 2023. The main contents of the survey are as follows: (1) Confirmation of basic information, including grade, gender and location. (2) The degree of problems of competitive brands in independent variables and the reduced sentence part of marketing content; (3) the reduced sentence part of the positive effect of marketing in dependent variables. The questionnaire contains 13 questions, including 8 single choice questions, 2 multiple choice questions,1 ranking question and 2 fill-in questions. It is distributed through wechat moments, wechat groups, Weibo and questionnaire star sample bank.

3.2 In-depth interview method

3.2.1 Interview outline making

The interview questions are mainly divided into three parts.

The first part mainly involves the basic information of the respondents, including their grade, gender and so on. In the second part, the research questions are reduced to interview questions. These include misconceptions about brands, specific purchasing strategies and ways of identifying with the public interest. The third part, preparation mainly deals with possible deep digging problems.

In the process of interview and research, researchers tried to avoid the four-fold ethical problems and deviant behaviors emphasized by scholar Al-an Bryman: (1) harm to the participants; (2) No use of informed consent license documents or materials; (3) violating the privacy of study participants; (4) Deceiving study participants. In addition, if the interviewees have any unwilling questions or dissatisfaction during the interview, they can keep silent or quit midway. The interview materials that the respondents declared that they did not want to be published were not included and quoted in this study.

3.2.2 Interviewee selection

In this study, 12 interviewees with experience of buying instant noodles were interviewed for 10 minutes in semi-structured depth. The interviews began on April 15, 2023 and ended on April 20, 2023. The interviewees first included college students around the researchers, and then more research samples were collected through questionnaires and microblog messages.

According to the principle of maximum sampling of qualitative research method, all the interview contents were enough to answer the research questions when the 12th respondent was collected, and the collection of samples was ended. The respondents have differences in location and other aspects, and the degree of homogeneity is low.

The interview was conducted by telephone interview/wechat interview/one-to-one face-to-face interview. The interview results were compiled into a verbatim manuscript with a total of 3,000 words.

Table 1 Basic Information of respondents

Serial number	Age	Gender	Location
1	18	female	Xi 'an, Shaanxi
2	19	female	Xiamen, Fujian
3	20	male	Beijing
4	21	female	Zhenjiang, Jiangsu
5	21	male	Nanjing, Jiangsu
6	21	male	Shenyang, Liaoning
7	22	male	Nanchang, Jiangxi
8	23	female	Chengdu, Sichuan
9	25	female	Kunming, Yunnan
10	28	male	Shenzhen, Guangdong
11	40	male	Weihai, Shandong
12	46	female	Beijing

4 Research findings and discussion points

When we conducted in-depth interviews on such questions as "how do we view the phenomenon of stepping on pickled cabbage" and "how do we evaluate the phenomenon that similar brands focus on marketing clean and sanitary products", the researchers were surprised to find that the answers of the interviewees were in line with the previous conjectures: The more the problems of competitive brands are in line with the public nature of society, the more it will promote the positive effect of pull marketing (S1); The more the marketing content conforms to the public nature of society, the more obvious the positive effect of pulling marketing (S2). Respondents' answers to questions about attitudes related to marketing and social publicity support the researchers' idea:

"I think this is a problem of lax production management and market supervision. I have never bought instant noodles containing pickled cabbage since my foot was exposed. I will definitely choose other brands." (S1)

"Stepping on pickled cabbage is an irresponsible behavior for consumers' food safety, may be the enterprise management is not in place, the system is not standardized, but take the life of consumers and health profit is absolutely wrong. And I may look at the brand with a colored eye when I buy it in the future, reducing my desire to buy and choosing other brands." (S1)

"The brand is very focused on marketing effect, and these practices (marketing cleanliness and reemployment of laid-off workers with physical disabilities) can make them more popular with consumers." (S2)

"This marketing strategy has successfully captured the public's good will, on the one hand, the hygiene of the product is guaranteed, and on the other hand, it creates jobs." (S2)

When consumers find problems with a brand, the more the problems damage the interests of

the public, the more obvious the positive effect of subsequent pull marketing will be. "Stepping on pickled cabbage" involves food hygiene problems, touches the fundamental interests of consumers, and is strongly disgusted. Many interviewers explicitly described the practice as "disgusting", "irresponsible" and "discredited". On this basis, compared with another brand marketing clean health, its positive effect is very obvious. Many interviewees commented on its "marketing success" and "like".

4.1 Basic information of interviewees

In the questionnaire survey, this study mainly focuses on the young group who are more familiar with pull marketing. In the educational survey, 86% of respondents are undergraduates and 13% are postgraduates. The average level of education of respondents is high. 65% were female and 35% were male; A relatively high proportion of respondents were women. In addition, this study investigated the locations of the schools of the interviewees, among which 70% of the interviewees' schools were in municipalities directly under the Central Government or provincial capitals, and 30% were from prefecture-level cities or counties and towns. According to the survey, 39.3% of respondents buy instant noodles more than six times every six months, and 29.0% buy four to six times (including four times) every six months. Most of the respondents have a high demand for instant noodles, which has the value of follow-up investigation.

Picture 1 Analysis of purchase frequency data



During the interview, the researcher intended to increase the audience coverage and expand the understanding of staff, ordinary residents of prefecture-level cities and male interviewees. But overall, the young group (25 and under) is still larger, accounting for 75%.

4.2 The importance of the brand to the public interest can affect the marketing effect more than the spokesperson

We found that among the brands of instant noodles that survey respondents often buy on a daily basis, Master Kong and White Elephant account for the highest proportion, at 25.0% and 22.5% respectively. Before "Laotan pickled cabbage beef noodle food health and safety issues" exposed is a unified brand, and the analysis of the case using pull step marketing means is white

elephant brand. Respondents choose these two brands at roughly the same frequency, so the variable of brand awareness can be basically controlled.

Table 2 Analysis of purchased brand data

$ The frequency of instant noodle brands

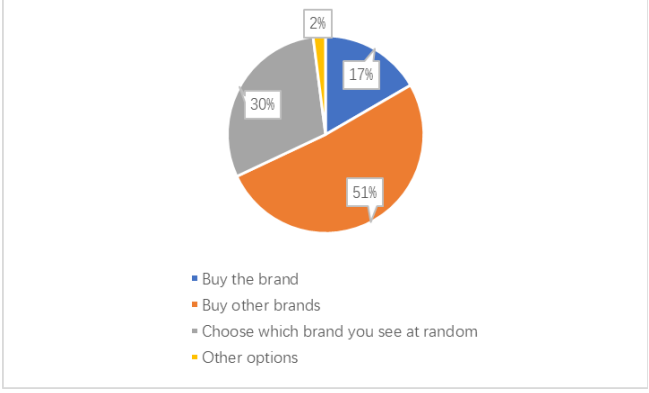
		response		
		Number of cases	percentage	Percentage of cases
brand	(Master Kong)	191	25.0%	68.0%
	(Uni-president)	149	19.5%	53.0%
	(White Elephant)	172	22.5%	61.2%
	(Tangdaren)	151	19.8%	53.7%
	(Jinmailang)	101	13.2%	35.9%
Total amount		764	100.0%	271.9%

a. The value 1 is used to tabulate the two groups.

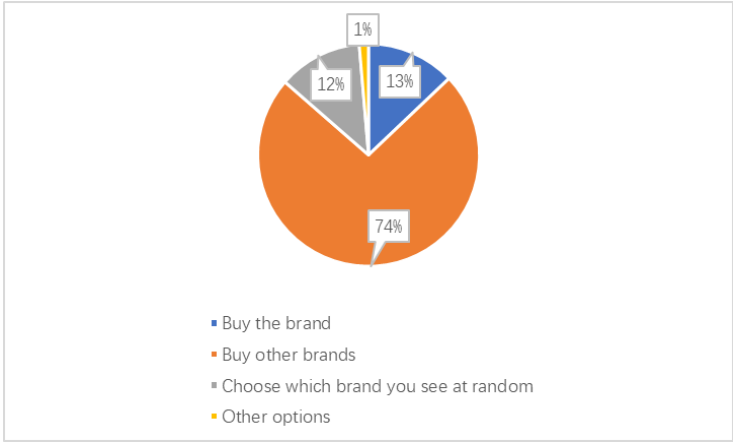
Through a questionnaire survey, the author found that when consumers don't like the spokesperson of a certain brand, 51.4% of consumers are more inclined to buy other brands. Consumers may not care who the spokesperson is, but the negative impact of the spokesperson will lead to the loss of consumers, presenting negative feedback. When consumers find the problem of "stepping on pickled cabbage" in a certain brand when buying instant noodles, 73.4% of respondents are more inclined to buy other brands, which is more obvious than the negative impact of spokespersons.

It can be seen that the more the problems of competitive brands conform to the public nature of society, the more it plays a role in promoting the positive effect of pull marketing. The choice of brand spokesperson is highly autonomous, and there is no unified standard in line with the public interest for the whole society. "Stepping on pickled cabbage" involves food safety issues, which belong to the public interest concerned by consumers. Therefore, compared with the problems in the choice of brand spokesmen and food safety, the audience who turned away from buying the brand increased by 22.1% year on year. This choice tendency provides a good foundation for the competitive brand's pull marketing and promotes the implementation of subsequent strategies.

Picture 2 Impact analysis of the problem of "Spokesperson"



Picture 3 Analysis on the impact of problems in "Clean sanitation and public welfare"



4.3 Attention to consumer demand is conducive to strengthening the effect of pull marketing

In addition to purchasing brand survey, the most important thing in brand marketing is to pay attention to the purchasing needs of customers and consumers. Brands can complete brand marketing more accurately by exploring consumers' purchasing power. According to the survey, when buying instant noodles, the respondents chose brands based on the order of taste, price, health issues and public welfare activities. In addition to these three factors, the influence of word-of-mouth is less; The spokesperson is the least considered factor. Therefore, when there is no obvious difference in the taste and price of all instant noodles, "health issues and public welfare activities" become an important influencing factor, which is also the reason why the marketing on "health issues" may be successful.

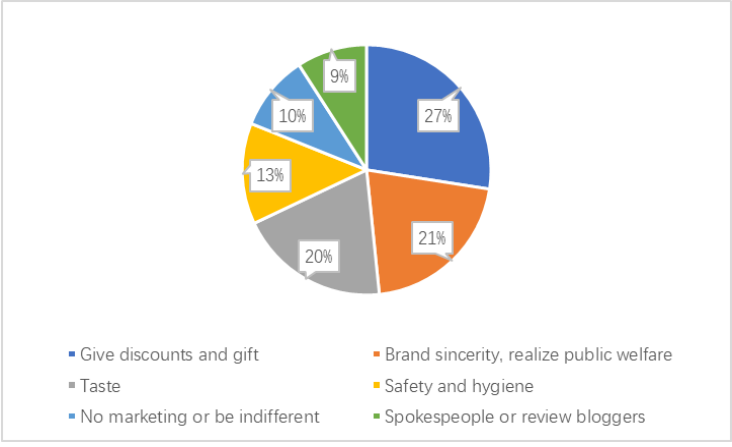
According to the investigation and analysis, "saving time and money" is the most important reason for buying motivation, accounting for 39.1%; Followed by "like to eat", accounting for 31.7%; "Health, safety and guarantee" accounted for 18.4%. The influence of spokesmen on the purchasing power of instant noodles is weak. According to the statistics, most people pay attention to price, followed by brand image, taste and taste, safety and hygiene, no obvious preference and spokesperson choice. The problem of "stepping on pickled cabbage" damages brand image, affects product taste and violates food hygiene and safety, which to some extent conforms to the common concerns of social groups. However, the audience who pay attention to "spokesperson" only accounts for 9%, which does not meet the social public conditions and can be used as a contrast variable.

Table 3 Purchasing reason data analysis

$ Frequency of reasons to purchase				
		response		
		Number of cases	percentage	Percentage of cases
Reason for purchase[a]	(Like to eat)	190	31.7%	65.5%
	(Save time and money)	234	39.1%	80.7%
	(Health, safety, guaranteed)	110	18.4%	37.9%
	(Support the brand's spokesperson)	65	10.9%	22.4%
Total amount		599	100.0%	206.6%

a. The value 1 is used to tabulate the two groups.

Picture 4 Data analysis of favorite marketing content

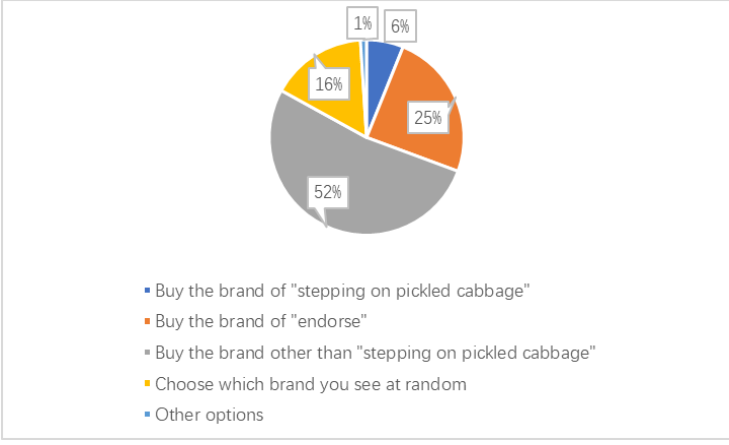


4.4 The more the marketing content is in line with the public interest, the stronger the positive effect of marketing

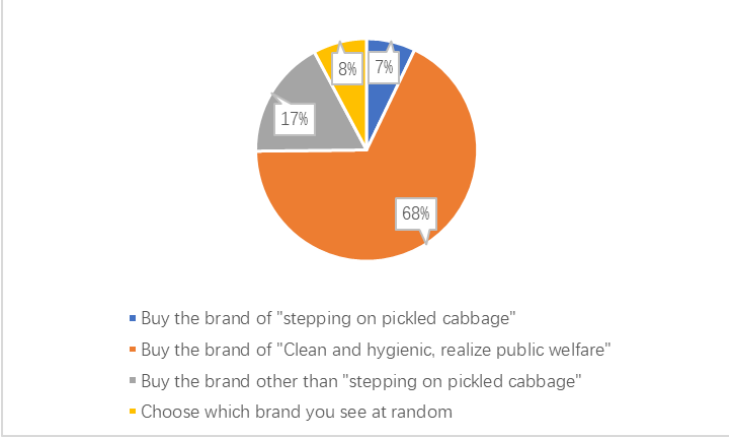
When a brand has the problem of "stepping on Sauerkraut", a brand of the same type focuses on marketing its spokesperson, and the spokesperson is favored by respondents. 52.4% of respondents only choose to "buy brands other than stepping on Sauerkraut" and 24.5% choose "buy the brand for endorsement". Therefore, when major health problems occur in competing brands, the official spokesperson has a certain marketing effect, but it is not obvious. On the other hand, under the same conditions, when consumers find that a brand of the same type emphasizes the marketing of cleanliness and hygiene and helps many laid-off workers with physical defects find new jobs, 67.7% of respondents prefer the brand of "cleanliness and hygiene and realizing public welfare", which has a higher impact than the spokesperson.

This shows that the more the marketing content is in line with the public nature of society, the more obvious the positive effect of pulling marketing. When a certain brand has problems, competitive brand marketing has unique spokespersons, or marketing meets the conditions of social publicity for food safety issues, consumers' purchasing behavior is very different. Under the former condition, most people just avoid the brand with problems, and only 72 people actively choose to buy the competitive brand. Under the latter condition, 199 people chose to buy competitive brands. It can be seen that the content of pull marketing needs to meet the conditions of social publicity, so as to produce effective positive effects.

Picture 5 Impact analysis of marketing "spokespersons"



Picture 6 Impact analysis of marketing "clean sanitation, public benefit"



4.5 Push other constraints on the positive effects of marketing

It is worth noting that, although the pull marketing under the condition of social publicity

can produce positive effects, but also pay attention to grasp the scale of marketing, so as not to overcorrect, but produce negative effects.

In the interview process, some interviewees pointed out that the marketing campaign, which took advantage of the exposure of the opponent's problems, was "clever, a bit opportunistic but the result is good" and "it is suspected of using public sympathy to increase sales, but more sales can also guarantee jobs, which is a good thing, depending on the company's treatment of disabled workers." Some interviewees were more blunt: "If we focus on re-employment of laid-off workers with defects at the very beginning, it shows that empathy has social responsibility. But it's an afterthought, a deliberate effort, and it's hard to say whether the company will let defective workers lose their jobs after the event."

The feedback above the interviewees made up for the limitation of the researchers' perspective to a certain extent, indicating that there is still room for improvement of the premise hypothesis. The conditions for the positive effect of pull marketing not only need to conform to the public nature of society, but also involve the beginning time, duration and operation scale of conformity. If the start time is too late and the duration is too short, there will be "taking advantage of the tuyere to show off". As for the operational scale, it is more important to grasp the "can truly help disabled workers" rather than "can truly report, reflect the brand value". The reason why White Elephant sales surge, widely acclaimed phenomenon, not only because the marketing content meets the real concern of the public this condition, but also because its years of obscurity to do practical things. At the same time, White Elephant's initial marketing is not the company's behavior, but the passer-by account spontaneous marketing. The change of marketing subject confirms the company's behavior from the side, and will also ease consumers' doubts. Therefore, the conditions for the positive effect of pull marketing should also supplement the time, length, scale and subject of social publicity marketing.

5 Summary and reflection

Through questionnaire survey and interview method, this study carried out a theoretical study on pull-step marketing and social publicity, trying to answer the question "what are the conditions for pull-step marketing to produce positive effects". In the questionnaire design and interview outline, researchers regard "social publicity" as the universal will of public, sharing, mass and society. The ways in which brands go against the public nature of society, such as misbehaving, breaking brand trust, and personalizing "beloved spokespeople". Marketing in line with social publicity is regarded as social welfare activities, as well as food hygiene and safety combined with the characteristics of the food industry. Assisted by the above dimension reduction measures, both questionnaire survey and interview method prove that hypothesis H1 and H2 are valid.

In addition to verifying the establishment of the hypothesis, this study also further obtains other preconditions besides the content of the hypothesis, and carries out more rigorous restrictions on the independent variables. That is, pull marketing should conform to the theory of social publicity, and attention should be paid to the time, length, scale and subject of marketing, in order to produce positive effects. Therefore, when marketing content in line with social publicity,

in addition to pay attention to health and do more public welfare, price can also become an important indicator affecting the purchase behavior. This suggests that when the brand side carries out the follow-up marketing, it can start from the point of view of price appropriately, and further achieve the positive effect of sales increase in a way that is more in line with the conditions of social publicity. On the other hand, it also provides a new marketing idea for how to rejuvenate Fast retailing brands and capture audiences in the post-epidemic context of modern China.

However, there are still some deficiencies in theory and research methods. From the point of view of theoretical analysis, the premise of the hypothesis is not complete. The researchers believe that as long as strengthening the social publicity conditions to promote marketing, it will have a positive effect on the brand. Through in-depth interviews, it can be seen that even if the content is in line with the issues of public concern and the marketing time is ignored, it will also bring negative effects such as loss of consumer trust. For example, long-term pull step on the right home, will make the audience feel "opportunistic" "show", and then reduce the purchase of the brand. Thus it can be seen that the conditions for successful marketing are not only in line with social publicity, but also need a comprehensive and in-depth investigation and analysis.

From the perspective of research methods, due to the limited place of questionnaire delivery in this study, the survey samples were mostly concentrated in university campuses and first-tier cities, etc. The lack of differences led to the concentration of views, which had a certain impact on the final conclusion. Although I try my best to make up for it in the selection of interviewees, there are still some errors that cannot be avoided. At the same time, the questionnaire collection was completely carried out on the network, with a large amount and high speed of recycling, resulting in the phenomenon of "big data brush". Obvious invalid samples have been deleted from the data statistics, and attention should be paid to online and offline distribution to reduce sample errors.

To sum up, in future studies, researchers in the field of brand marketing communication need to pay more attention to the phenomena in prefecture-level cities, counties and towns, as well as the opinions of consumers other than university students. On this basis, further expand the research and practice of social publicity and pull marketing.

References

[1] Westbrook, Robert. (1987). Product/Consumption-based Affective Responses and Post Purchase Process. Journal of Marketing Research (08).

[2]Guo, B & Zhou, S. (2016). Understanding the Impact of Prior Reviews on Subsequent Reviews: The Role of Rating Volume, Variance and Reviewer Characteristics. Electronic Commerce Research and Applications (20), 147-158.

[3] Chen Qing. (2016). Research on Marketing of Brand Hot Topics on Weibo -- Taking Sina Weibo hot topics as an example. Young Reporter (11),13-14. (in Chinese)

[4] Pan Caihong & Liang Shuhui. (2023). Research on the Innovation of word-of-mouth marketing Strategy under the mode of "New retail". Science and Technology Information (03),125-128.

[5] Ma Jia. (2022). Aim at online channel instant noodle brand to blow up the "high-end

wind". China Business Daily,006. (in Chinese)

[6] Cheng Jian. (2021). Research on word-of-mouth marketing Strategy under the background of "Internet +". Chinese Business Theory (04),57-58. (in Chinese)

[7] Bi, Yueran. (2022). Market positioning strategy in transnational marketing of similar products. China's transition from military to Civilian (10),67-68. (in Chinese)

[8] Jiménez, F. R.& Mendoza, N. A. (2013). Too Popular to Ignore: The Influence of Online Reviews on Purchase Intentions of Search and Experience Products. Journal of Interactive Marketing 27(3), 226-235.

[9] Ren Ying. (2020). The social public value implication of Marx's media Thought. Chinese Journal of Multimedia and Network Teaching (ten-day issue)(01),220-221. (in Chinese)

[10] Pan Xiaoming. (2022). Research on the strategy of public welfare marketing under the background of Big data. Industrial Innovation Research (11),103-105. (in Chinese)