



A Model of Social Media Influencing Perceptions of Local Food Business in China

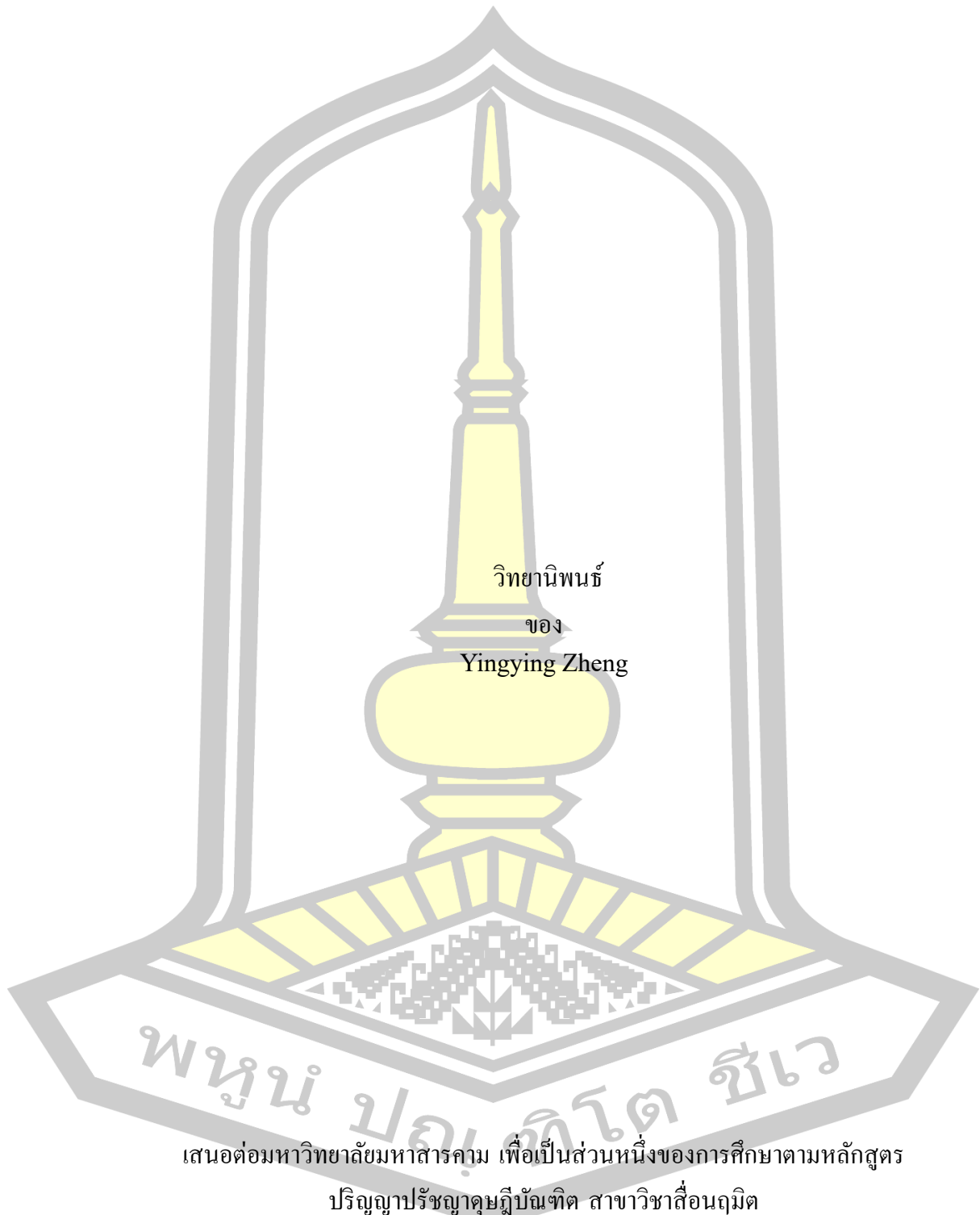
Yingying Zheng

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Creative Media

June 2025

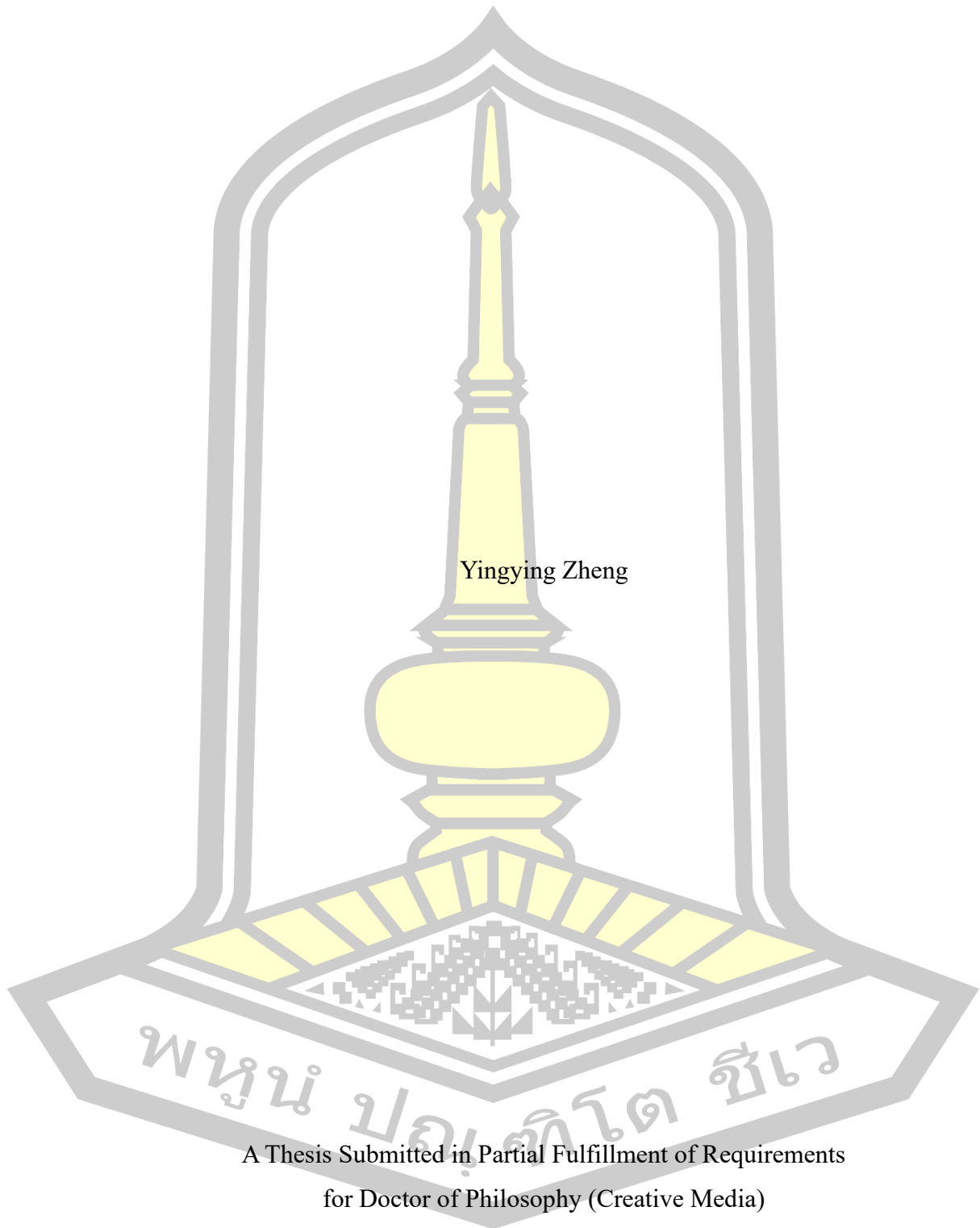
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A Model of Social Media Influencing Perceptions of Local Food Business in China



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Yingying Zheng

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for Doctor of Philosophy (Creative Media)

June 2025

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The examining committee has unanimously approved this Thesis, submitted by Ms. Yingying Zheng , as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Creative Media at Maharakham University

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UNIVERSITY	Maharakham University	YEAR	2025

ABSTRACT

In the wake of digital transformation and post-COVID challenges, local food businesses in China have increasingly turned to social media to enhance brand perception and consumer engagement. However, empirical gaps remain regarding how specific components of social media influence consumer perceptions and behaviors. This research aimed: (1) to examine the factors and components of social media that influence consumer perception of local food businesses in China; (2) to develop a social media influence model tailored to the context of local food enterprises; (3) to evaluate the model's appropriateness and effectiveness; and (4) to assess the impact of user interactions on brand awareness and consumer engagement.

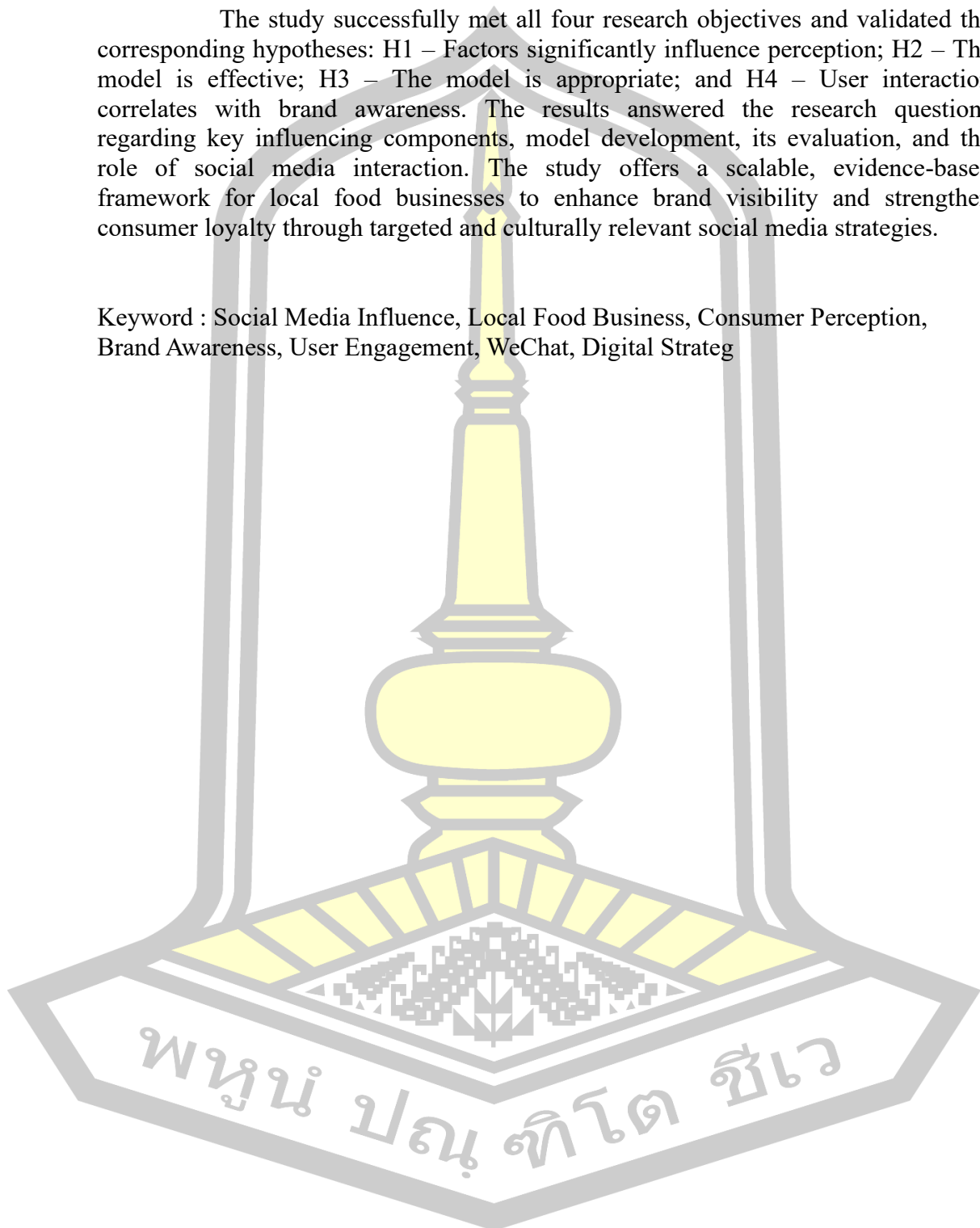
A mixed-methods approach was employed. The first phase involved 400 WeChat users in China selected through convenience sampling, who provided data via online structured questionnaires and expert interviews. The data were used to identify and validate the model components. In the second phase, another 400 WeChat users participated in testing the impact of a prototype video designed based on the developed model. The research tools included seven instruments: (1) structured questionnaires, (2) expert interview protocols, (3) model validation forms, (4) content evaluation tools, and (5) a video assessment form. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-tests, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis.

Findings revealed that content formats such as video, live streaming, and interactive media significantly influenced consumer perception ($p < 0.05$). High engagement metrics—likes, shares, and participation—correlated with enhanced brand perception. Influencer credibility and data analytics also emerged as key predictors. The developed model comprised 5 core components: Content Strategy, Platform Usage, User Engagement, Data Analytics, and Influencer Partnerships. These were theoretically grounded in the Uses and Gratifications Theory, Social Identity Theory, Customer Engagement Theory, and Diffusion of Innovations. Expert evaluations rated the model as highly appropriate, structured, and applicable for strategic branding. The prototype video, developed based on the model, demonstrated

statistically significant improvements in user engagement and brand image.

The study successfully met all four research objectives and validated the corresponding hypotheses: H1 – Factors significantly influence perception; H2 – The model is effective; H3 – The model is appropriate; and H4 – User interaction correlates with brand awareness. The results answered the research questions regarding key influencing components, model development, its evaluation, and the role of social media interaction. The study offers a scalable, evidence-based framework for local food businesses to enhance brand visibility and strengthen consumer loyalty through targeted and culturally relevant social media strategies.

Keyword : Social Media Influence, Local Food Business, Consumer Perception, Brand Awareness, User Engagement, WeChat, Digital Strateg



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this dissertation required multiple years of academic work because of the essential help from numerous people.

I need to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who supported me during this entire research process. The first expression of gratitude goes to my dissertation advisor Asst. Prof. Dr. Kotchaphan Youngmee who offered me both inspiration and comprehensive guidance as well as in-depth expertise which directed this research toward its final form. Her persistent backing together with her motivational support maintained my doctoral progress until the completion of this research. My co-advisor Asst. Prof. Dr. Khachakrit Liamthaisong provided me with important insights while maintaining constant support throughout the research process.

The examination committee consisting of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nirat Soodsang (Chair) and Asst. Prof. Dr. Teerayut Pengchai and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rattanachote Thienmongkol provided essential academic guidance which improved the quality of this dissertation.

The Department of Creative Media at Maharakham University Faculty of Informatics provided me with both academic foundations and research tools which I needed to complete my work. This research project was financially supported by Maharakham University enabled me to pursue this study. Your financial backing enabled me to devote my complete attention to my academic work and dedicate the necessary time to achieve my academic targets.

The research obtained significant value from 800 WeChat users and expert interviewees who provided essential data for the study to succeed. The participants demonstrated exceptional willingness to share their personal stories and knowledge.

The intellectual support and encouragement together with helpful feedback from my colleagues and peers throughout this research journey are deeply appreciated.

My family deserves my deepest gratitude for their endless love and patience and their continuous support. I thank my parents and friends who remained supportive during all my challenges. Your faith in me enabled me to reach this milestone.

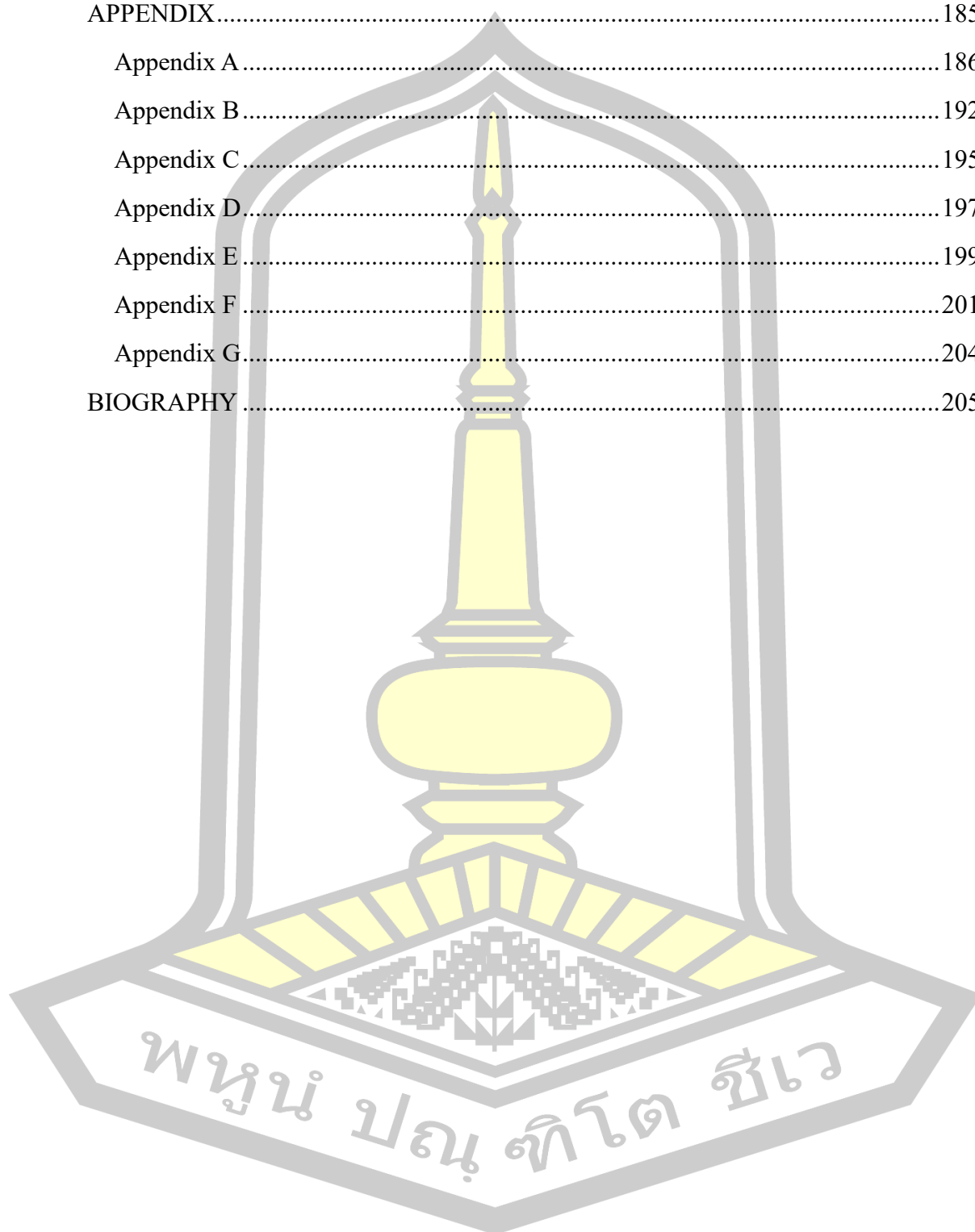
Yingying Zheng

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

With the rapid development of the Internet, people's production and lifestyle are undergoing profound changes. The information lag and space limitations of traditional media have gradually caused user dissatisfaction, so social media based on real information has begun to emerge (He Yuting, 2022). The rise of social media has broken the limitations of time and space, making information transmission more timely and faster, and its impact on people has become more and more significant, becoming an important way for users to understand and change the world. Its information dissemination has become an important part of how people browse the Internet. It not only creates various hot topics in social life, but also sets off a wave of reform and innovation in traditional media.

The Internet gives netizens more autonomy and initiative, and provides a mass base and technical support for the development of social media. The accompanying economic effects have gradually emerged, and social media has become a new economic phenomenon. The research on its business models helps companies better cope with global competition and promotes the development of social media towards depth and diversification. In the digital age, global markets have undergone transformative shifts and social media platforms have become powerful tools for businesses to connect with their target audiences. This is particularly evident in China, where a booming middle class and widespread adoption of the internet have led to exponential growth in online engagement. With a plethora of local products vying for consumers' attention, the need for strong communication models on social media platforms has never been greater. China's dynamic consumption patterns present a unique fusion of tradition and modernity, with ancient cultural values coexisting with cutting-edge technological advancements. This convergence has led to an unprecedented surge in online engagement, and social media platforms are becoming the driving force behind consumer decision-making.

The social media presence of the food business has changed significantly before and after COVID-19. First, in the early days of the epidemic, as people's attention to health and safety increased sharply, food companies began to emphasize the safety and hygiene standards of products on social media and build consumer trust by publishing relevant information. In addition, due to the increased demand for staying at home during the epidemic, many food companies have launched online sales and delivery services through social media platforms to meet consumers' shopping needs. This move has also accelerated the activity of the food business on social media. Social media engagement can actually have an impact on marketing performance during COVID-19 . Furthermore, product delivery innovation and cashless payment

through social media participation have an impact on the marketing performance of Indonesian food business, and social media trends can build harmonious relationships between producers and customers (Rahmawati R & Syarifah H, 2023).

Scholars such as Emily R have affected the environmental sustainability initiatives of food service agencies by implementing a disposable culture for food and personal protective equipment. COVID-19 has also affected social and economic initiatives, resulting in higher business expenses, complexity of government intervention, and management of mental health (Emily R & Bruce M & Simon S, et al., 2023). However, as the COVID-19 epidemic is gradually under control, the food business on social media has shown obvious changes. People have gradually adapted to life after the epidemic, and their attention to food safety and quality has begun to weaken, turning to more attention to taste and novelty. Therefore, some food companies have launched more new varieties and creative foods on social media to attract consumers' attention and increase user interaction. Users' attention to food brands continues to rise, and food sharing and review activities have become more frequent. At the same time, many food companies have increased their investment in social media to increase brand awareness and user stickiness through advertising and interactive activities. These actual data show that social media has become an indispensable and important channel for the development of food business, and has played a vital role in brand promotion and user interaction.

The novel coronavirus epidemic that broke out in early 2020 is another major public health security event that has seriously affected China since the SARS virus in 2003 (Bash A & Alsaifi K, 2019). This epidemic has brought huge challenges to the national economy and national property security. Especially for the food industry chain, the new coronavirus epidemic has brought huge external impacts. From the outbreak of the virus to the full implementation of nationwide prevention and control measures, China's economy has faced unprecedented challenges. This series of events has had a profound impact on all walks of life in China, with a particularly huge impact on the food industry chain (Feng Jiacheng, 2024). After the COVID-19 epidemic, local food companies in China face many challenges, including issues in communication, competition, and technology application. In the later stages of the epidemic, local Chinese companies are facing new communication challenges. As people's pace of life gradually resumes, consumers' attention to food safety and quality gradually weakens, while their pursuit of taste and novelty begins to increase. Therefore, companies need to adjust their communication strategies and focus more on delivering product taste features and innovative highlights to attract consumers' attention. At the same time, companies also need to deliver information in a timely and effective manner through social media and other channels, and maintain interaction and communication with consumers to meet the changing needs of consumers. Local food companies in China are also facing more intense competition in terms of competitors. During the epidemic, some foreign food brands increased

their investment in the Chinese market, and the competitive landscape became more complicated. Local Chinese companies need to improve their competitiveness and win the favor of consumers by improving product quality, innovating products and services, and strengthening brand building.

In 2018, the growth rate of business area in the hot pot industry exceeded 25%, among which Sichuan hot pot occupied a prominent position, accounting for 64.2% of the entire hot pot industry (Song Jing, 2021) . With the advent of the omnimedia era, the social media communication mode of the hot pot industry has undergone major changes. The influence of traditional authoritative media has gradually been replaced by social media, self-media, service platforms and individual users. In the omnimedia era, the brand communication of hot pot restaurants has shifted from traditional media to the co-creation of social media, self-media, traditional media, service platforms and users. These media platforms have their own communication advantages and can complement each other to jointly build a huge communication network. However, local Chinese food companies such as hot pot restaurants have also encountered some difficulties in social media communication. The traditional Chinese catering industry has relatively little exposure and communication on social media. Compared with industries such as fashion and fast food, traditional catering companies such as hot pot restaurants have weaker appeal on social media and greater difficulty in communication. Companies need to strengthen their understanding and application of social media, enhance brand image and storytelling, increase user engagement and stickiness, and better use social media platforms to expand their business.

As local brands aspire to gain visibility and compete with global giants, a well-designed communication strategy becomes crucial. However diverse the audience for social media use in China is, it covers a wide range of demographic groups, including different age groups, socioeconomic backgrounds, and cultural preferences. It is important to create a communication style that resonates with different audiences (Castronovo & Huang, 2012) . Various Platforms From WeChat and Weibo to Douyin and Xiaohongshu, China has many social media platforms. Each platform has different user behaviors and content styles. Identifying the most appropriate platform for local food businesses in China and optimizing their communication strategies is a major challenge. Cultural sensitivity is where Chinese consumers have strong cultural values and traditions. This will affect their purchasing decisions (Liu et al., 2019) . Creating a communication style that resonates with these values while maintaining authenticity requires a deep understanding of cultural differences. The massive content saturation on Chinese social media platforms will lead to content saturation. In addition, China's strict regulatory environment for social media and e-commerce requires compliance with various guidelines (Lo & Everett, 2001) . Maintaining a constructive and impactful communication style while meeting requirements can be complex. On top of that, local product brands face stiff competition. Not only from domestic companies, but also foreign brands hoping to gain a foothold in the Chinese

market. Innovative communication methods to maintain a competitive advantage is an ongoing effort.

To address these challenges and increase brand awareness of local products in China, a multifaceted approach is needed. Recommended communication methods should include culturally relevant strategies, where understanding the values, traditions and preferences of the Chinese audience is important. It can be fun to tailor content that resonates with cultural sensitivities and emotions to foster strong relationships between brands and consumers. This approach can engage users more deeply and make the brand memorable. Distribution of Various Social Media Platforms Each platform has unique characteristics and demographics of its users. Creating customized content for each platform, such as Douyin short videos and WeChat visual appeal, can expand reach and engagement. Local influencers with large followings and credibility can provide authenticity to your brand message (Silalahi, 2021) . Endorsements and personal connections with fans can greatly expand brand awareness and engage audiences with interactive content like surveys, quizzes and challenges. Encourage active audience participation. This kind of participation does more than just increase visibility. But it can also foster a sense of community around the brand and create content in local languages (Leung et al., 2022) . Incorporating Mandarin into popular Chinese topics or events will make brands look more relevant and trendy. Additionally, maintaining a consistent publishing schedule and closely tracking engagement metrics allows for real-time adjustments and optimizations based on feedback, including e-commerce integration. This seamlessly integrates e-commerce functionality into the communication model, allowing users to move from interacting with the brand to purchasing a product directly, complementing the entire customer journey.

1.2 Research Questions

1.2.1 What are the key factors and components of social media that influence the perception of local food businesses in China?

1.2.2 How can a model of social media influence on the perception of local food businesses in China be developed?

1.2.3 How appropriate and effective is the developed model of social media influence on the perception of local food businesses in China?

1.2.4 How do user interactions on social media impact brand awareness and consumer engagement with local food businesses in China?

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 To examine the factors and components of social media that influence the perception of local food businesses in China.

1.3.2 To develop a model of social media influence on the perception of local food businesses in China.

1.3.3 To evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of the model of social media influence on the perception of local food businesses in China.

1.3.4 To assess the impact of user interactions on brand awareness and consumer engagement in the context of social media.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

1.4.1 H1: Factors Influencing Brand Perception

1.4.2 H2: Effectiveness of the Social Media Influence Model

1.4.3 H3: Appropriateness of the Social Media Influence Model

1.4.4 H4: User Interactions and Brand Perceptions

1.5 Operational Definitions of Key Terms

1.5.1 Social Media Influence Model

The Social Media Influence Model in this study refers to a structured framework designed to explain and enhance the impact of social media on consumer perceptions of local food businesses in China. The model integrates platform usage behavior, content strategies, user interactions, opinion leaders (KOLs), and data analytics to improve brand awareness, user engagement, and brand awareness, specifically within the WeChat ecosystem.

1.5.2 Social Media Influence

The extent to which social media platforms, content strategies, and user interactions shape consumers' perceptions, purchasing decisions, and engagement with local food businesses in China. In this study, it specifically refers to the role of WeChat as a key driver in shaping brand awareness and consumer trust toward local food enterprises through digital engagement.

1.5.3 Perception of Local Food Business

The way consumers interpret and evaluate local food businesses based on their exposure to social media content. This includes brand recognition, trustworthiness, and appeal, all of which are influenced by online interactions, user-generated content, and digital marketing strategies employed by local food brands like Hou's Hotpot.

1.5.4 Brand Perception

The level of recognition and familiarity that consumers have with a local food business (Hou's Hotpot), derived from exposure to social media activities. In this

research, brand awareness is measured through indicators such as the frequency of mentions, engagement levels (likes, shares, and comments), and the visibility of marketing content on WeChat.

1.5.5 User Engagement

The degree to which consumers interact with a local food business on social media, encompassing actions such as liking, commenting, sharing, and participating in brand-related activities. This study evaluates engagement as a crucial factor in determining how social media strategies enhance brand awareness and consumer trust in local food enterprises.

1.5.6 Opinion Leaders (Key Opinion Leaders - KOLs)

Influential figures on social media who shape public perception and consumer behavior through endorsements, reviews, and content sharing. In this study, KOLs play a critical role in increasing brand visibility for local food businesses by leveraging their credibility and audience trust to promote engagement and customer conversion.

1.5.7 Social Media Engagement Metrics

A set of quantitative indicators used to measure the effectiveness of a local food business's social media strategy. These metrics include post impressions, reach, click-through rates, sentiment analysis of comments, and consumer conversion rates. The study utilizes these metrics to assess how social media content influences brand perception and purchasing behavior.

1.5.8 Model validation

The process of testing and evaluating the proposed "Social Media Influence Model" to ensure its accuracy, reliability, and practical applicability in enhancing brand perception for local food businesses. This research conducts validation through expert assessments, pilot testing, and statistical analysis to refine the model and optimize its effectiveness for real-world implementation.

1.5.9 Local Food Business

Hot pot products in Shijiazhuang city, Hebei province, China in particular, has been in service for 30 years, has a unique identity that is connected to China's banquet culture. Being an old shop, it has encountered problems. Using social media amid COVID makes it unable to compete with current competitors.

1.6 Research Scope

1.6.1 Population and Sample Size

1) **Population:** Consumers in China who use social media, specifically WeChat, and are familiar with or have interacted with the local food business, Hebei Hou's Hotpot.

2) The sample consisted of two groups:

2.1) The first group included no fewer than 400 consumers in China who used the social media platform WeChat. They were selected through convenience sampling and provided information on the factors and components of social media that influence the perception of local food businesses in China.

2.2) The second group also comprised no fewer than 400 WeChat users in China, selected using convenience sampling. This group reflected the impact of user interactions on brand awareness and consumer engagement in the context of social media.

1.6.2 Research variables

1) Independent variables:

- 1.1) Social Media Platform Usage
- 1.2) Content Type and Preferences
- 1.3) User Engagement
- 1.4) Influence of Opinion Leaders (KOLs)
- 1.5) Data Analytics Usage

2) Dependent variable

2.1) The factors and components of social media that influence the perception of local food businesses in China.

2.2) The appropriateness of the model of social media influence on the perception of local food businesses in China.

2.3) The effectiveness of the model of social media influence on the perception of local food businesses in China.

2.4) The impact of user interactions on brand awareness and consumer engagement in the context of social media.

1.6.3 Research tools

The following research tools can be used in the paper on social media patterns that influence the perception of local food companies in China:

1) Questionnaire: Design a questionnaire for consumers on the WeChat platform to understand their awareness of different food companies, their preferences, reactions to social media content, and their evaluation of brand image.

2) Content analysis: Analyze the content posted by food companies on the WeChat platform, including content type, posting frequency, interaction, etc., as well as the correlation with user engagement and brand awareness.

3) In-depth interviews: Conduct in-depth interviews with managers, marketers, and social media operators of food companies to understand their understanding and practice of social media marketing strategies on WeChat, as well as their perception of the role of social media in brand awareness.

4) Case study: Select a representative food company as the research object, conduct an in-depth analysis of their marketing strategies on WeChat, brand awareness, and user interaction, and compare them with other companies.

5) Statistical analysis: Use statistical software to analyze the collected data, including descriptive statistical analysis, correlation analysis, regression analysis, etc., to determine the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables and explore the impact pattern of social media on corporate perception.

1.6.5 Media Content

Hou's, a local hotpot brand in Shijiazhuang. Taking "Hou", a local hotpot brand in Shijiazhuang, as an example, we will explore the challenges it faces in communication on Wechat social media. First of all, the brand has unclear communication goals and lacks clear brand positioning and communication strategies, resulting in limited communication effects. Secondly, the content is insufficiently creative and lacks unique content to attract consumers' attention, resulting in poor communication effects. In addition, insufficient interactivity is also a problem. The lack of effective interaction and participation with consumers results in low user participation and limited communication effects. Finally, insufficient data analysis and optimization is also a challenge. The lack of in-depth analysis and optimization strategies for social media data and the inability to adjust communication strategies and content in a timely manner affect the brand's influence and visibility expansion on social media.

1.6.4 Type of media: Clip video

1.6.5 Social media platform: Wechat media platforms

1.6.6 Research area: Is in Shijiazhuang city, Hebei province, China

1.6.7 Research period: The time spent on research is approximately 1 year.

1.7 Benefits of research

1.7.1 This study will provide insights into the factors and components of social media that influence consumer perception of local food businesses in China.

1.7.2 The research will develop a social media influence model that can be utilized to enhance positive brand perception of local food businesses in China.

1.7.3 The study will offer effective and practical guidelines for implementing the developed social media model in real-world applications, enabling businesses to improve consumer perception of local food brands in China.

1.7.4 The findings will reveal the extent of the impact of social media user interactions on brand awareness and consumer engagement, helping local food businesses in China formulate more effective marketing strategies to strengthen consumer relationships and brand advocacy.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Communication theoretical framework

2.1.1 Communication ability

In the past few decades, researchers from various disciplines have defined communication countless times. According to incomplete statistics, there have been more than 150 definitions of communication, but no consensus standard definition has been reached so far. This diversity of communication definitions reflects the differences in understanding communication, which also leads to diverse orientations in communication research (Wang Xin, 2015) . Communication scholar Simondo Clevenger believes that "the problem with defining communication from an academic or scientific perspective is that the verb 'communication' has been used for a long time in ordinary vocabulary and it is difficult to use it as a scientific term. It is one of the most frequently used words in English." (Lu Shuming, 2008) . In communication studies, communication phenomena are usually divided into three categories: interpersonal communication, mass communication and organizational communication (Cui Jiaying, 2006) . Mei Hong (2007) divides communication into downward communication, upward communication and parallel communication according to the structure of organizational communication. Johke et al. (2000) divided the communication between superiors and subordinates into communication frequency, communication style, communication mode and communication direction, among which the communication mode was divided into formal and informal according to whether the communication was formally needed by the organization. Johke et al. (2000) explored the influence of the communication frequency, indirect communication and two-way communication of superiors in communication practice on related organizational behaviors, and further studied the role of informal communication in organizational communication. In these classifications, the following four points should be noted: social interaction is a key process and requires interaction; information transmission can be emotional, conceptual, and ideological; the form can be written or verbal, etc.; the purpose is to achieve the communication and transmission of information. In addition, the second classification is defined according to the process steps of communication, and it is believed that communication is a cyclical and mutually influential process, which mainly involves three roles: the sender, the receiver and the information itself, each representing a step (Harris, 1979) , or a behavior of a person who transmits information to others in a meaningful way and is understood (Andersen, 2001) , or generally refers to the production, transmission and exchange process of all information (Wang Jinxia, 2010)

Communication is an important part of corporate marketing practice and is of great significance for enhancing brand image and establishing good customer

relationships. In the context of social media, local Chinese food companies need to formulate scientific and reasonable communication strategies, strengthen direct contact and interactive communication with consumers, and enhance brand awareness and reputation. At the same time, companies also need to focus on cooperation and communication with other companies or organizations to jointly promote the development and progress of the industry.

2.1.2 Types of Communication

In the era of social media, the communication strategy of food companies is crucial to shaping brand image, enhancing consumer awareness and establishing good customer relationships. Based on the different functions, situations, information carriers, directions and feedback mechanisms of communication, this paper conducts an in-depth analysis of the communication strategies of local Chinese food companies on social media, in order to provide useful inspiration for the marketing practices of enterprises.

1) Function-based communication strategy

According to functional division, communication can be divided into instrumental communication and emotional communication. Instrumental communication usually involves a sender conveying information, knowledge, ideas or requirements to a receiver, with the aim of influencing and changing the receiver's behavior to achieve a specific goal. Emotional communication, on the other hand, focuses on both parties expressing their emotions and gaining spiritual sympathy and understanding from each other, thereby improving the relationship between them (Wednesday Duo & Chen Chuanming & Lu Minghong, 2006) .

Instrumental communication: Food companies communicate product information, nutritional value, promotional activities, etc. to consumers through social media platforms, with the purpose of influencing and changing consumers' purchasing behavior and promoting sales growth. This communication strategy emphasizes the practicality and goal-oriented nature of the message.

Emotional communication: Companies use social media to establish emotional connections with consumers and gain consumers' spiritual recognition and resonance by sharing corporate culture, stories, values, etc., thereby enhancing brand awareness. This communication strategy focuses on emotional resonance and relationship maintenance.

2) Situation-based communication strategies

According to the context in which communication occurs, communication can be divided into formal communication and informal communication. Formal communication occurs in formal social situations and is the transmission of information through the formal organizational system of the enterprise. Informal communication is the exchange of information that occurs in informal social situations, which may involve the informal organizational system of the enterprise or

the transmission of information through personal channels (Jin Shenghua & Zhang Jie, 2002) .

Formal communication: On social media, food companies can publish official statements, announcements, news, etc. through official accounts to maintain the authority and accuracy of information. This communication strategy is suitable for major events, crisis management, and other occasions.

Informal communication: Companies can easily interact and communicate with consumers through social media platforms, such as replying to comments, participating in topic discussions, etc. This communication strategy helps to narrow the distance between companies and consumers and enhance the sense of closeness.

3) Communication strategy based on information carrier

Communication can be divided into two categories according to the information carrier: verbal and non-verbal. Verbal communication is based on language and text, including oral, written and electronic data communication; non-verbal communication transmits information through body language and object manipulation.

Verbal communication: Food companies can convey information to consumers through text, pictures, videos, etc. on social media platforms. Among them, oral communication such as live interaction, video introduction, etc., written communication such as long article release, product description, etc., and electronic data language communication such as email, private message, etc. are all effective communication methods.

Non-verbal communication: Companies can use non-verbal elements such as emoticons, GIFs, and background music on social media platforms to make information more interesting and attractive. In addition, displaying corporate culture, office environment, etc. through the company's social media accounts also falls into the category of non-verbal communication.

4) Direction-based communication strategy

Communication directions can be divided into downward, upward and parallel communication. Downward communication refers to the communication from superiors to subordinates, that is, communication from top to bottom; upward communication refers to the communication from subordinates to superiors, that is, communication from bottom to top; parallel communication refers to the horizontal transmission of information between peers (Wednesday & Chen Chuanming & Lu Minghong, 2006) .

Downward communication: Food companies can release product updates, promotions and other information to consumers through social media platforms. This is a top-down communication method. By delivering information in a timely manner, companies can guide consumer behavior and improve market response speed.

Upward communication: Companies can collect consumer feedback, suggestions and opinions through social media platforms, which is a bottom-up

communication method. By listening to the voices of consumers, companies can adjust strategies and optimize products and services in a timely manner.

Horizontal communication: On social media, food companies can exchange information and cooperate with other companies, industry experts, opinion leaders, etc. This communication method helps companies obtain more resources and expand cooperation channels.

5) Communication strategy based on feedback

Depending on whether feedback is given, communication can be divided into one-way communication and two-way communication. One-way communication refers to the lack of feedback during the information transmission process, while two-way communication includes information exchange and feedback between both parties.

One-way communication: In some cases, food companies may need to deliver one-way information to consumers through social media platforms, such as product advertisements, promotional notifications, etc. This communication method is simple and easy, but lacks interactivity.

Two-way communication: In order to better understand consumer needs and expectations, companies need to have two-way communication with consumers. Through the interactive functions of social media platforms, companies can collect consumer feedback, answer questions, solve problems, etc., and establish closer customer relationships.

In the context of social media, Chinese local food companies need to develop effective communication strategies based on different communication functions, situations, information carriers, directions and feedback mechanisms. By comprehensively applying these strategies, companies can increase brand awareness, enhance consumer cognition and establish good customer relationships, thus standing out in the fierce market competition.

2.1.3 Interpersonal Communication

1) Concept of interpersonal communication

In the digital age, social media has become an important bridge for communication between enterprises and consumers. This study will deeply explore the interpersonal communication strategies of Chinese local food companies in the social media environment, with a view to providing valuable reference for corporate marketing practices. Interpersonal communication skills, as the key for individuals to communicate effectively in various communication situations, are crucial to the success of enterprises.

This study will focus on interpersonal communication, especially the interpersonal communication strategies of local Chinese food companies in the context of social media, with a view to providing valuable reference for corporate marketing practices. Interpersonal communication skills refer to an individual's ability to communicate with others through effective methods and strategies in a variety of

communication situations to achieve effective transmission of information, thoughts and emotions. This ability is not fixed, but is constantly adjusted and optimized as situations and objects change. Reardon (1987) makes a key point: "Communication competence is the degree to which your behavior is appropriate to the situation and contributes to the achievement of personal or relationship goals." And Adler (1986) further emphasizes that interpersonal communication skills are the ability to ensure that an individual maintains good relationships with others while obtaining required information from others. This ability is not inherent in the individual, but is a state achieved frequently or occasionally.

There is no unified view on interpersonal communication ability (Xu Ming, 2023). Zhu Gaofeng (2011) believes that communication ability is an effective feedback performance in communication, including argumentation ability, expression ability, listening ability and design ability. Some scholars (Lin Yuanpei, 2012) believe that communication ability is an important manifestation of a person's quality, and a person's knowledge, morality and ability are closely related to it. Zhang Huijie (2005) believes that communication ability seems to be just a person's ability to speak well, but in fact it includes a person's ability to do everything from dressing to speaking and behaving. In the field of psychology research, interpersonal communication is defined as a social interaction process, that is, the communication of information, thoughts and emotions between people (Yang Ling, 2006). In organizational behavior, interpersonal communication is described as a two-way process of influencing behavior. In this process, the information source intentionally transmits information to the other recipient through a specific channel in order to evoke a specific response or action (Yu Kaicheng, 2002).

With the popularity of social media, local food companies in China are facing the opportunity to communicate with consumers more directly and frequently. In order to make full use of this platform, companies need to develop effective interpersonal communication strategies. Specifically, companies can understand the interests, needs and behavioral characteristics of target audiences through social media data analysis and develop personalized communication strategies. Carry out online interactive activities such as Q&A, voting, and lucky draws to attract consumer participation and enhance the emotional connection between brands and consumers. Companies can convey their core values and brand image to consumers through storytelling and emotional content to enhance brand awareness and loyalty. Local food companies in China respond to and handle consumers' questions, suggestions and complaints in a timely manner, demonstrating their professionalism and sense of responsibility. Interpersonal communication skills are essential for companies to achieve effective communication with consumers in the context of social media. Local food companies in China should formulate reasonable interpersonal communication strategies based on their own characteristics and market environment,

strengthen interaction and communication with consumers, and enhance brand image and market share.

2) Interpersonal communication motivation

With the rapid development of social media, local food companies in China are not only facing new market opportunities, but also need to deeply understand consumers' interpersonal communication motivations in order to formulate more precise and effective marketing strategies. Interpersonal communication is not only a process of information transmission, but also a social behavior carried out by individuals based on specific motivations.

Interpersonal communication motivation is the internal force generated by individuals in the social process and drives them to exchange information (Li Qian, 2002). These motivations can be summarized into three major categories: belonging motivation, practical motivation and exploration motivation (Wang Yuwei, 2009).

(1) Belonging motivation

The motivation to belong stems from human sociality and group attributes. Individuals desire to integrate into the social group and gain recognition, respect and praise from others to satisfy their emotional needs. Driven by this motivation, people will actively seek social opportunities, such as chatting with friends, attending family gatherings or social activities, etc., to strengthen social connections and satisfy a sense of belonging.

(2) Practical motivation

Practical motivation refers to the communication behavior performed by an individual to complete a certain task or achieve a specific purpose. Communication behaviors under this motivation usually have clear goals and practicality, such as sales staff communicating with customers to promote products, superiors communicating with subordinates to complete projects, etc. In the social media environment, food companies can provide product information, answer questions, promote sales, etc. through practical communication with consumers.

(3) Exploration motivation

The motivation for exploration stems from human curiosity and desire for knowledge about unknown things. Individuals are eager to learn new things and new knowledge to satisfy their inner desire for exploration. On social media, consumers communicate with food companies through browsing, sharing, commenting, etc., to understand product information, brand stories, etc., to satisfy their own exploration motives (Wang Lei, 2001).

Based on the above analysis of psychological motivations, local food companies in China can use social media platforms to create communities, hold online and offline activities, etc. to strengthen interaction with consumers and make consumers feel a sense of belonging and warmth of the brand. At the same time, companies provide detailed product information, usage tutorials, after-sales services, etc. on social media to meet consumers' practical needs and enhance consumer experience.

Companies can also stimulate consumers' desire to explore and increase brand appeal by publishing interesting and novel content, such as stories behind products, industry trends, health knowledge, etc.

In the social media environment, Chinese local food companies should deeply understand consumers' interpersonal communication motivations and formulate marketing strategies that conform to psychological principles. By strengthening the belonging motivation, satisfying the practical motivation and stimulating the exploration motivation, companies can establish a closer connection with consumers and enhance their brand image and market competitiveness.

2.2 Effective communication

Communication is not simply the exchange of information; it is a dynamic, intricate, and often non-linear process that forms the foundation for building relationships, sharing meaning, and deepening understanding between individuals or groups. Effective communication serves as a bridge to not only transfer information but also to foster emotional bonds, social cohesion, and mutual comprehension (Mejojo, 2018). In this interactive process, both communicators are active participants who engage in dialogue, exchange viewpoints, and share emotions, with the primary objective of enhancing mutual understanding and building trust.

To achieve successful communication, communicators must utilize appropriate channels, including verbal, non-verbal, and digital modes, as well as the effective use of body language, tone, and other contextual cues. This multi-faceted approach helps overcome barriers that can hinder comprehension and ensures that the intended message reaches the recipient with clarity. Effective communication, therefore, necessitates accurate message delivery, where the sender transmits the intended content effectively, and the receiver not only comprehends it but also responds in ways aligned with the sender's expectations (Lin Yuzhen, 2016). At its core, effective communication is not merely about transmission but also involves feedback that verifies and enriches the interaction, ultimately leading to the resonance of ideas and integration of emotions.

As early as 1980, American management scientist Harold Koontz emphasized the critical role of communication in management. In his book "Rethinking the Management Theory Jungle," Koontz defined communication as the process of transferring information from the sender to the receiver, emphasizing that the key to effective communication lies in the receiver's ability to understand the message (Koontz, 1980). Effective communication, therefore, requires both parties to have a clear understanding of the information being exchanged and the ability to make informed responses. Giovambattista Zeppetella (2012) further elaborated on this by pointing out that effective communication must be rooted in a deep understanding of both parties' needs and capacities, coupled with mutual respect and empathy. Such an

attitude of respect and empathy forms the basis of effective interaction, making communication both a strategic and relational exercise.

A. Blake (2013) and colleagues have explored strategies for achieving effective communication at both individual and organizational levels. They argue that strategic communication must involve engaging key stakeholders, utilizing appropriate communication mediums, and tailoring messages to fit the audience's context and expectations. This strategic approach underscores the importance of understanding the audience, the power of selecting the right medium, and the need to communicate at the right time to achieve the desired impact.

Chinese scholars have also made substantial contributions to the study of communication, although research in this area began later in China compared to Western countries. The rapid development of communication theories with a Chinese context has led to the formation of communication management models tailored to the unique socio-cultural environment of China. Fu Guoxin (2012) posited that effective communication in a business or organizational context should possess three essential characteristics: timeliness, accuracy, and completeness. These characteristics ensure that the message is delivered promptly, retains its intended meaning, and includes all relevant information. Additionally, Fu emphasized the importance of using adaptive methods to enhance communication effectiveness in rapidly changing environments.

Xing Li (2013), on the other hand, focused on the conditions necessary for achieving effective communication by examining both the sender and receiver's perspectives. Xing noted that effective communication must meet two key criteria: first, the sender must articulate the message clearly and comprehensively, and second, the receiver must accurately interpret the message. Moreover, the communication process must be iterative, wherein feedback from the receiver allows the sender to refine the message to avoid misunderstandings and ensure the intended message is fully understood. This emphasis on bidirectional communication highlights the importance of adaptability and responsiveness throughout the communication process.

One critical aspect of effective communication is overcoming potential barriers. These barriers may arise from language differences, cultural backgrounds, biases, or even emotional states. In professional environments, ineffective communication can lead to project delays, conflicts, and misunderstandings, which ultimately affect productivity and morale. Therefore, communicators must actively identify and address these barriers through cultural sensitivity, empathy, and the development of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2006). Emotional intelligence, in particular, plays a key role in recognizing the emotional states of oneself and others, thereby facilitating effective communication through empathy and self-regulation.

Despite the well-documented importance of effective communication, there remain numerous challenges in both professional and personal settings. Many individuals struggle to communicate effectively, not because of a lack of intent but due to gaps in communication skills, including listening abilities, emotional

awareness, and strategic message formulation. This gap underscores the need for ongoing training, self-awareness, and skill development to enhance communication effectiveness. Training programs focused on active listening, non-verbal communication cues, and conflict resolution can significantly improve individuals' abilities to communicate effectively.

Furthermore, the rise of digital platforms and social media has introduced new dynamics in the way we communicate. The immediacy and reach of digital tools offer both opportunities and challenges for effective communication. On the one hand, platforms like WeChat, WhatsApp, and Zoom facilitate instant communication and enable virtual collaboration that transcends geographic boundaries. On the other hand, the lack of face-to-face interaction and reliance on text-based messaging can lead to misunderstandings due to the absence of vocal tones, facial expressions, and other non-verbal cues that provide important context to communication. Effective digital communication thus requires careful consideration of language, clarity, and tone, as well as the strategic use of emojis or video calls to add non-verbal context where necessary.

The increasing reliance on digital communication also necessitates a greater understanding of how cultural nuances can influence the effectiveness of messaging. In a globalized environment, communicators must consider cultural differences in both verbal and non-verbal communication. For instance, humor, gestures, and even symbols may carry different meanings across cultures, potentially leading to unintended offense or misunderstanding. Effective communication in a multicultural context requires a deliberate effort to understand and respect cultural diversity, which can be achieved through intercultural training, exposure to diverse environments, and an openness to learning from cross-cultural interactions. Additionally, digital tools such as translation applications and culturally adaptive content creation can further aid in bridging cultural gaps and fostering mutual understanding.

One of the evolving challenges of effective communication in the digital age is the need for maintaining engagement in an environment of information overload. The vast amount of information circulating on digital platforms can make it difficult for communicators to capture and hold their audience's attention. This challenge requires communicators to be more strategic in their message formulation, ensuring that the content is both relevant and compelling. Techniques such as storytelling, personalization, and the use of multimedia elements can be powerful tools for engaging audiences in a meaningful way. Moreover, understanding audience preferences through data analytics allows for the customization of messages, ensuring that the right content reaches the right audience at the right time.

In conclusion, effective communication is an ongoing process that involves the interplay of multiple elements, including message content, delivery channels, audience understanding, feedback mechanisms, and the strategic use of non-verbal cues. It is a skill that can be developed and refined over time through deliberate

practice, continuous learning, and an awareness of the needs and expectations of others. As the world becomes more interconnected, and digital communication becomes the norm, mastering the art of effective communication remains a crucial determinant of success in both professional and personal domains. Understanding the principles, strategies, and potential barriers to effective communication equips individuals and organizations to navigate the complexities of interpersonal and organizational interactions, fostering meaningful relationships and achieving common goals. The evolving landscape of digital communication demands an ongoing commitment to adaptability, cultural competence, and the integration of emerging technologies to stay effective in a rapidly changing environment.

2.3 Communication Theory

2.3.1 Definition of Communication Studies

Communication studies, as an emerging social science that emerged in the 20th century, has diversity and depth in its research fields and definitions. Wilbur Schramm, one of the founders of communication studies, profoundly pointed out: "When we study communication, we are actually studying people—the relationships between people and their relationships with the people they belong to. The connection between groups, organizations and society. We explore how they interact and influence each other, how to inform and be informed, how to teach and be taught, how to entertain and be entertained to truly understand human communication. , we must gain insight into how people connect with each other (Wilbur Schramm, 2010) "From this perspective, we can say that the development history of human communication activities is closely connected with the development history of communication science (Dong Lu, 2008) . Communication studies not only focus on current communication interactions, but also dig deeper into communication across time and space, that is, the long-distance symbol sharing process (Calhoun, 2011) . As a science, it is dedicated to the study of human communication phenomena and the laws behind them. Yang Yang (2022) further emphasized that all human activities are inseparable from communication. It is through the mutual communication activities and social communication behaviors between people that group social organizations are formed, and as a result, we, as independent individuals in society, can truly exist. The study of communication not only helps us understand the operating mechanism of human society, but also gives us insight into the deep connections and interactions between people.

In this era of information explosion, the value of communication studies has become increasingly prominent. It provides us with tools to understand and analyze complex social phenomena, allowing us to better deal with the increasingly complex communication environment. Through in-depth study and application of communication principles, we can more effectively convey information, establish

connections, promote understanding, and thereby promote social progress and development.

2.3.2 Five elements of communication studies

In 1948, HD Lasswell (1948) , the founder of communication science , proposed the famous "5W" communication model in his classic work "The Structure and Function of Social Communication". This model provides a basis for understanding the basic process of social communication. frame. This model covers five core elements in the communication process (Sun Mingzhong, 2012) :

Communicator (Who): This is the source and sender of information, and represents the starting point of communication behavior. Communicators can be individuals, organizations or collectives who influence audiences by selecting, processing and delivering information.

Communication content (Says What): This refers to the information content transmitted, which consists of a set of meaningful symbols. These symbols are not limited to language, but also include non-verbal symbolic information such as images, music, and movements, which together form the core content of the information.

Communication channel (In Which Channel): As the channel and carrier of information transmission, communication channel determines how the information is delivered to the audience. The diversity of media allows information to be disseminated in different ways, speeds and scopes, affecting the effectiveness of dissemination.

Audience (To Whom): The audience is the recipient of the information, and they are the target audience of the communication activity. The audience's needs, interests, cultural background and other factors will affect their acceptance and understanding of information.

Communication effect (With What Effects): This is the purpose and evaluation criteria of communication activities, reflecting the impact and effect of information on the audience. Communication effects can include multiple levels such as cognition, emotion, attitude and behavior (Su Min, 2021) .

These five elements are interrelated and interact with each other, and together constitute the complete process of communication behavior. Through the analysis and research of these five elements, we can deeply understand the basic content and important characteristics of the communication process, and provide strong support and guidance for the research of communication. At the same time, the "5W" communication model also provides us with a systematic research method, helping us to analyze communication phenomena and problems more comprehensively and deeply.

2.3.3 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory can be used to conduct in-depth research and understanding of specific user groups or communities. Researchers can have a deeper understanding of users' values, lifestyles and other information, providing strong support for the formulation of brand marketing strategies. Grounded theory (GT) is a qualitative research method that uses a systematic procedure to develop and summarize grounded theory for a certain phenomenon. The research process pays great attention to building theories from data (Glaser & Strauss, et al., 1968). Grounded theory usually shrinks data from the bottom up, constantly summarizes, and repeatedly searches for core concepts that reflect the essence of things. When constructing these concepts, no theoretical framework is usually presupposed (Yu Hongwei, et al., 2012). Grounded theory pays more attention to establishing theoretical procedures and theoretical logic through field research and in-depth interviews, which is consistent with the research purpose of this article. It is a research method suitable for qualitative classification in this article, which can help this article collect data and conduct qualitative analysis. When conducting grounded theory research, data needs to be coded step by step. This coding method is more common in programmatic grounded theory and is widely recognized (Li Zhen, 2019). Procedural grounded theory mainly uses three-level coding to conduct research and analysis problems (Robert, 2006). This paper also borrows the methods of the procedural school to conduct grounded theory research.

Grounded theory generally follows five steps: the first is to generate concepts from data and then classify the data; the second is to compare the collected data with the generated concepts and carefully think about the possible consequences of the concepts. Related theoretical connections; the third is to carry out the theoretical development stage, establish connections and comparisons with concepts previously discovered in data and thinking; the fourth is to abstract the concepts formed by words and systematically analyze and code the data; the fifth is to construct a theoretical model to test whether the concepts generated from the data can withstand systematic procedural processing and rational testing (Li Zhigang, 2007). This chapter strictly follows the above five steps, combined with the research content, and conducts grounded theory research in the following parts:

The first is literature review. This article reviewed relevant literature such as the definition of food company influence communication, food company influence communication loyalty, food company influence communication trust, food company influence communication influence, the influence of different media platforms, etc., and also read communication studies and psychological theoretical literature on different social media communication channels, and have more information about brand influence communication and social interaction. When combing the literature, we found research gaps that were not covered in the literature.

The second is in-depth interviews. During in-depth interviews, listen as much as possible, ask as many questions as possible, and get rid of the constraints of original

theories and literature. When formulating the interview outline, first analyze and confirm existing concepts, and confirm the interview objects and questions according to the classification of concepts. Because this article studies the role of different media influence spread and different media platforms on the cognitive impact of local food companies. The subject background, work background and work experience of the interviewees were comprehensively considered. In terms of subject background, we interviewed some PhDs in marketing, aiming to view the interview outline from a professional perspective; in terms of work background, we interviewed current marketing practitioners, who have both relevant professional backgrounds and marketing backgrounds. Practical experience; in terms of working years, there are students who are studying for a doctorate after working, there are also middle-level marketing talents in enterprises who have worked for more than 20 years, professionals who have dual identities of public account operators and business managers, and influential people Public account entrepreneurs and other big Vs. Listen to their insights and experiences on the impact of different media platforms on local business cognition, jointly explore relevant variables, maximize the acquisition of relevant first-hand information, and establish an appropriate research framework.

The third is layer-by-layer coding. In the field of sociological research, empirical research is an effective research method. Grounded theory is not a "theory", but a method of constructing "experience" through qualitative examination and conducting further research based on these "experiences". In grounded research, step-by-step coding is a key step. The analysis process usually includes open coding, axial coding and selective coding. These coding methods can help researchers effectively process the data obtained from interviews (Liu Jingwen, 2023).

2.4 Uses and Gratifications Theory

In 1974, Elihu Katz formally proposed the "Uses and Gratifications" theory based on the summary of previous research. This theory completely changed our perspective on media effects research. Its core idea is that users make rational choices about media based on their personal needs and actively participate in media activities to meet these needs (Dennis McGuire, 2010). This theory emphasizes that users are independent individuals with specific needs, and their media contact behavior is motivated by meeting these needs.

From the perspective of the audience, the "uses and gratifications" theory provides an in-depth analysis of the audience's motivations for contacting the media and how these contacts satisfy their needs, and then explores the impact of mass communication on people's psychology and behavior. This theory regards media contact behavior as a causal chain process composed of "social factors + psychological factors + media expectations + need satisfaction" (Katz et al., 1974). This shift marks a shift in media effects research from focusing on the

communicator's intention to focusing on how the audience uses media information and obtains satisfaction from it, thereby evaluating the effectiveness of mass communication (Yin Xiaorong, 1999) . The "uses and gratifications" theory has been widely used in multiple disciplines, including psychology, sociology, economics, management, and interdisciplinary research. In the field of communication studies, scholars have discussed the motivation of interpersonal communication on mobile phones based on this theory and summarized it as the acquisition of emotional social capital and instrumental social capital (Jing Ming et al., 2008) . In addition, some scholars use this theory to interpret the audience's use of online media, emphasizing that scientific communication practice should closely focus on the scientific and technological development information needs and scientific and technological knowledge that the audience is concerned about, and promote audience communication through the Internet based on understanding and respecting the audience's usage needs. Channels participate in scientific communication practice (Huang Shijin, 2008) .

In recent years, the research on the "use and gratification" theory has shown two trends: one is to expand the original theoretical model by introducing new variables, such as considering factors such as individual media contact possibility and media impression, so as to enrich and deepen the understanding of the use and satisfaction demand pattern; the other is to integrate research with other theories, such as media richness theory, rational behavior theory, technology acceptance model, expectancy value theory, etc., to more comprehensively reveal the complexity and diversity of media use. In addition, researchers have also constructed new theoretical models based on the "use and gratification" theory, such as Rosengren combined with Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory to propose an extended model of use and gratification (Cao Qin et al., 2013) .

In the field of Internet products, the "use and satisfaction" theory also has a wide range of application value. Studies have shown that the practical and non-practical satisfaction of smartphones can reduce shopping anxiety. Although the reduction of this anxiety does not directly affect the willingness to buy in stores, the use of smartphones can increase users' perception and confidence in certain products, thereby indirectly promoting in-store purchase intentions (Lv Jing, 2019) . In addition, this theory is also used to analyze how online live broadcast platforms promote the establishment of new social relationships (Han Yufei, 2019) and how content marketing dimensions affect brand identity and loyalty ("Northeast Normal University College Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Program" Project Team, 2019) . These studies not only deepen our understanding of the "use and satisfaction" theory, but also provide strong theoretical support for the design and marketing of Internet products.

2.5 Social media

German scholars Andreas M. Kaplan and Michael Hellenlin (2010) believe that social media emerged on the basis of Web 2.0, integrating ideas and technologies to enable users to create and exchange information through the platform. Wang Xiaoguang and Guo Shujuan (2008) pointed out in their "Preliminary Discussion of Social Media" that social media is based on network technology, based on social values and personal experience, and the audience creates and disseminates information independently. Miha emphasized that social media is changing user interaction in service innovation, and proposed countermeasures for enterprises and social media users to co-create value. Maggon et al. pointed out that through "social media + marketing", information sharing among users can be promoted to the greatest extent and purchase intention and conversion rate can be improved. Kietzmann et al. (2011) believe that social media marketing should integrate various functions such as identity, communication, sharing, presence, relationship, reputation and organization to implement a combined strategy. Han Yongli (2014) believes that social media provides people with a platform for self-authoring and free sharing of information, promoting the exchange of opinions and ideas. Social media is also a comprehensive reflection of sociology, communication and technological development.

There are various views and definitions of social media, which generally emphasize the core role of social media in information dissemination, user interaction, corporate marketing, etc. Local food companies in China need to have a deep understanding of the technical foundations of social media and master the technical features and usage methods of various social media platforms. This includes being familiar with the interface design, algorithm recommendation mechanisms, data analysis tools, etc. of different platforms in order to better utilize these technologies for brand promotion and product promotion. Food companies should encourage independent creation and dissemination, publishing unique information, stories and reviews about their products through social media platforms. The content should be engaging, resonate with consumers, and inspire them to make a purchase. At the same time, companies also need to actively respond to consumer comments and feedback and enhance interaction and contact with consumers. The interactivity of social media is one of its core strengths. Local Chinese food companies should make full use of this advantage to establish closer ties with consumers. This includes holding online events, participating in discussions on hot topics, collaborating with opinion leaders, etc. to attract users' attention and participation. Through these interactive activities, companies can gain an in-depth understanding of consumer needs and feedback and provide strong support for product improvement. Social media provides businesses with new marketing channels and opportunities. Local food companies in China should actively explore the "social media + marketing" strategy and release information on preferential activities, new product launches and other information

through social media platforms to attract users' attention and participation. At the same time, companies also need to integrate a variety of marketing methods, such as coupons, membership systems, cross-border cooperation, etc., to increase users' purchase intention and conversion rate. Social media marketing requires the integration of multiple functions such as identity, communication, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and organization. Local food companies in China should comprehensively consider these factors and formulate social media marketing strategies that suit the characteristics of the company. For example, social media platforms can be used to build brand image, shape corporate culture, and strengthen the relationship between brands and consumers to enhance brand awareness and loyalty. Social media is not only a product of technological development, but also a manifestation of the development of sociology and communication studies. When using social media, Chinese local food companies should pay attention to social dynamics and public opinion trends on social media platforms in order to better grasp market opportunities and respond to challenges. In addition, companies also need to conduct in-depth research on relevant theories and methods of sociology and communication to provide strong support for social media marketing.

When Chinese local food companies recognize and utilize social media, they should pay attention to many aspects such as technical foundation, independent creation and dissemination, user interaction, marketing value, integrated functions, sociology and communication. By deeply understanding and mastering these factors and components, companies can better utilize social media platforms for brand promotion and product promotion, and improve market competitiveness.

2.6 Social Media Platforms

Social media, a concept that has had a profound impact worldwide since Antony Mayfield (2007) first proposed it in his book *What is social media*. Mayfield defines it as a new type of online media that gives users a high degree of participation, enabling two-way dissemination of content between the media and users. This type of media has significant characteristics such as openness, participation, dialogue, communication, community and connectivity. Although Mayfield's original definition seems a bit broad today, it does point out some core attributes of social media and provides a direction for later researchers to explore in depth. With the popularity of online social interactions, social media has enabled consumers to become active co-creators of brands (Luarn P & Lin YF & Chiu YP, 2015). This change poses a major challenge to traditional marketing strategies and also brings unlimited opportunities. Brands are paying more and more attention to consumer interactions on social media, using it as a key way to measure consumer satisfaction, formulate marketing strategies and understand consumer brand attitudes.

In recent years, the academic community has increasingly deepened its research on social media user behavior. Yao Youhua (2017) pointed out that there are differences in the application methods and behaviors of different groups on different social platforms, and that social media platforms have an important impact on users' mental health and happiness. Excessive use may cause negative effects such as anxiety and depression. This finding suggests that brands need to pay more attention to users' mental health in social media marketing and advocate reasonable use. Peng Lan (2012) emphasized in "Social Media, Mobile Terminals, and Big Data: New Technology Factors Affecting News Production" that social media is not only a combination of content production and social interaction, but also user-oriented. This view emphasizes the role of social media platforms in empowering users and stimulating content innovation. Tan Tian and Zhang Zijun (2017) further analyzed the development of Chinese social media, especially the rise of localized platforms such as Sina Weibo, Tencent QQ, and WeChat, which not only promoted the construction of online social relationship networks, but also broadened the boundaries of social media. At the marketing strategy level, Jung Nayoung and Im Subin (2021) proposed the mechanism of social media marketing in the *International Journal of Advertising*, and discussed in detail the role of influencer characteristics, consumer empathy, immersion, and sponsorship disclosure in social media marketing. This study provides brands with a theoretical basis for formulating effective social media marketing strategies. Riaz Uddin Ahmed (2021) analyzed the positive role of marketing on different social media platforms in enhancing shoppers' relevance, love, and loyalty to brands in *Marketing Intelligence*, providing brands with a reference for implementing marketing strategies on different platforms.

Social media has become an important platform for brands to interact with consumers, and has had a profound impact on the formulation and implementation of brand strategies. Brands need to deeply understand the characteristics of social media and user behavior, and formulate marketing strategies that meet their own development needs to achieve effective communication with consumers and enhance brand value and influence.

2.7 Social media marketing

Social media marketing represents a transformative approach to communication and brand engagement, one that differentiates itself significantly from traditional media in both content creation and dissemination. Unlike traditional media, which retains exclusive control over content creation, social media leverages users themselves to generate and distribute content. By using computers, mobile devices, and internet connectivity, users can create content within minutes and easily share it with their social circles for others to read, interact with, and further disseminate. This shift means that while traditional media monopolizes content production, social media

becomes a user-driven platform, fostering a participatory culture where content is both created and shared by its users.

Traditional media relies on a one-to-many broadcast model, while social media utilizes a many-to-many model, enabling effective participation and interaction from a broader audience. The result is that social media not only democratizes content production but also transforms the very nature of engagement by encouraging active, rather than passive, involvement. The dynamic growth of social media since the advent of the internet age highlights its vast potential and influence, with information on social platforms becoming a primary focus of user attention when browsing the internet. Viral news and trending topics on social media have captured public interest to the extent that even traditional media outlets often feel compelled to follow and report on them.

Social media has also eliminated the geographic barriers that limited the reach of traditional media, fostering closer social relationships and more interactive communication among users. Marketing through social media is thus a critical component for brands, given its ability to lower costs while increasing audience engagement. Earlier literature defines social media as encompassing all internet-based technology applications that align with Web 2.0 principles, enabling the creation and exchange of user-generated content, as well as facilitating interaction and collaboration among participants (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Such applications include blogs and microblogs (e.g., Twitter), social networking sites (e.g., MySpace and Facebook), virtual worlds (e.g., Second Life), collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia), content community sites (e.g., YouTube), and feedback-centric websites such as online forums (Chan and Guillet, 2011).

A comprehensive review of the literature reveals that only Chan and Guillet (2011) specifically referenced the American Marketing Association (AMA)'s definition of social media marketing, first formulated in 2006. This definition was later reviewed and updated by the AMA in 2013. Social media marketing, according to the AMA, is defined as a method of utilizing social media platforms to conduct marketing, maintain public relations, sell products, develop customer relationships, and provide customer service. The core idea of social media marketing is to employ these platforms to engage customers, foster brand awareness, and generate leads—all while creating authentic, customer-centered interactions that traditional media typically lacks. In social media marketing, the ability to generate user engagement is key. Unlike traditional advertising that simply delivers a message to a broad audience, social media allows brands to establish two-way conversations. This involves real-time responses to customer queries, promoting user-generated content, and building communities where customers can share their experiences and recommendations. Social media marketers aim to create not just awareness but also a sense of connection, which can lead to increased trust and loyalty over time.

Glynn (2009) suggests considering social media as an important component of the marketing mix. He pointed out that social media has two interrelated promotional functions in the market: not only can it promote the connection between companies and customers, but it can also promote the communication between customers. From the perspective of the interaction between enterprises and users, Huotari (2015) believes that the interaction between social media users contributes to the creation of content. After sorting out relevant literature, domestic scholars Zhou Yijin and Chen Jiahui (2013) summarized content marketing as a marketing strategy in which companies release information of certain value to consumers through different forms and carriers to enhance consumer brand awareness. In a review study of social media marketing, Deng Qiaoqian, Wang Cheng, and Zhou Zhimin (2015) found that the influence of social media can effectively promote a company's value assets, relationship assets, and brand assets. However, at the same time, the emergence of social media has also made all consumers an independent "self-media", which has brought great challenges to companies in consumer reputation management. Zhu Mingyang and Zhang Yongqiang (2017) reviewed the views of various scholars and pointed out that social media is mainly based on interactive marketing, content marketing, relationship marketing and word-of-mouth marketing.

When discussing the social media models that influence the perception of local Chinese food companies, social media marketing shows its irreplaceable importance. With the widespread popularity and in-depth development of social media in the Chinese market, many food companies have gradually realized its huge potential in brand promotion, consumer interaction and word-of-mouth shaping. In order to make full use of this potential, local Chinese food companies must first carefully select suitable social media platforms. Platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, Douyin, and Kuaishou have become the first choice for corporate marketing due to their unique characteristics and large user base. Companies can choose the most suitable platform to implement marketing strategies based on the preferences of the target audience and the unique attributes of the platform. After selecting the platform, publishing high-quality content becomes the key to attracting user attention. Local Chinese food companies can dig deep into brand stories, show the cultural and emotional value behind the products, and attract and retain users' attention through wonderful content. At the same time, as a highly interactive platform, social media companies should make full use of its characteristics and interact with users in various ways to increase user engagement and brand awareness. This interaction not only helps to strengthen the connection between users and brands, but also effectively promotes the spread of word-of-mouth and further enhances the brand influence of companies.

The shift from traditional to social media marketing represents a paradigm change in how brands engage with their audiences. No longer confined to passive consumption, users are now active participants in brand storytelling, contributing their perspectives and co-creating brand narratives. This trend is especially pertinent for

local food businesses like Hou's Hotpot, where leveraging social media to build community, engage customers, and establish an authentic connection is vital for success in a competitive market.

By embracing these elements, social media marketing offers a versatile and impactful channel through which brands can cultivate relationships, foster loyalty, and effectively navigate the evolving digital landscape.

2.8 Brand building

Keller and Lehmann (2009) pointed out that brand development potential is the brand asset of the enterprise at the current stage, which is closely related to brand awareness, consumer loyalty, and brand reputation. Brand building is an ongoing process that aims to enhance these aspects and position the brand effectively in the market. It involves strategic efforts that span multiple dimensions, from establishing a brand's unique identity to fostering deeper consumer relationships. According to Steenkamp (2020), the future development trend of global B2C companies in brand building will be reflected in global sales channel coverage, global brand strategy globalization, publicity of brand activities, and interaction with global consumers. A brand is a unique embodiment of a product or service, which is different from other products or services that meet the same needs. This difference may be reflected in functionality, rationality, or tangibility, which is related to product performance; it may also be reflected in symbolism, emotion, or intangibility, which is related to the meaning represented by the brand (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Shu Yongping (2008) argued that a brand serves as a carrier that integrates multiple corporate elements and is influenced by diverse information, thereby shaping consumers' concepts and impressions of the brand. This idea emphasizes the complexity and multifaceted nature of brand building, as it involves both tangible and intangible elements that must align to create a cohesive image. Ji Huisheng (2015), in his study of BYD Company, highlighted that enterprises can promote business development, brand enhancement, and technological progress through business model innovation such as product or service innovation that meets consumer needs, thus facilitating the transformation and upgrading of the company. Wang Danchan and Zhu Shunlin (2016) summarized the pathways for enterprise transformation and upgrading, including original equipment manufacturing (OEM), original design manufacturing (ODM), operating own brands, and pursuing overseas mergers and acquisitions. Ma Rui and Li Wensi (2021) suggested that enterprises leverage the cultural added value of "Chinese style" during brand building and promote it through digital media channels, which can significantly enhance brand differentiation and identity.

In the process of pursuing brand development, local Chinese food companies should deepen their brand assets and emphasize the uniqueness and differentiation of

brands and products/services to enhance brand awareness, consumer loyalty, and brand reputation. Brand building requires a strategic approach that includes brand positioning, differentiation, communication, and continuous evaluation. This comprehensive approach ensures that brands do not merely exist but thrive in a competitive landscape by making meaningful connections with their audiences.

Key Components of Brand Building

1. **Brand Positioning and Differentiation:** One of the critical components of brand building is effective positioning. Local Chinese food companies should focus on differentiating their brands based on unique features, such as the use of traditional Chinese ingredients, authentic cooking methods, and culturally significant brand stories. By creating a distinctive market position, brands can carve out a unique space in consumers' minds. This uniqueness must be communicated through branding activities that emphasize what sets the brand apart from competitors. For example, Hou's Hotpot could emphasize its use of high-quality local ingredients and its cultural heritage to differentiate itself from other hotpot brands. Positioning is the foundation upon which the brand's entire marketing strategy is built, and it must be reinforced consistently across all communication channels to ensure that consumers clearly understand what the brand stands for.

2. **Brand Communication and Consumer Engagement:** In the context of globalization, companies need to consider global sales channel coverage and the globalization of brand strategy. Social media platforms like WeChat, Weibo, and Douyin are instrumental in enhancing interaction and communication with consumers. Through consistent publishing of brand-related content and organizing online and offline brand activities, local food brands can improve the openness and interactivity of brand activities. Digital storytelling, influencer partnerships, and user-generated content are powerful ways to convey the brand's values and create an emotional connection with consumers. Brands should also engage in two-way communication to foster consumer loyalty by responding to comments, addressing concerns, and encouraging active participation in brand events. Effective brand communication requires an understanding of both the media landscape and consumer preferences, ensuring that the brand's voice resonates with its audience at every touchpoint.

3. **Business Model Innovation and Consumer-Centric Approach:** Another essential aspect of brand building is business model innovation. Ji Huisheng (2015) demonstrated that business development and brand enhancement can be achieved by innovating products or services to meet consumer needs. Local food companies should be proactive in offering innovative products that cater to evolving consumer preferences, such as healthier food options or convenience-focused services. Additionally, integrating a consumer-centric approach—listening to consumer feedback and adapting accordingly—enables companies to meet customer expectations effectively, thereby enhancing brand awareness. Business model innovation must be aligned with consumer needs, and companies should constantly

explore opportunities to improve their offerings and services. This dynamic process ensures that the brand remains relevant and continues to deliver value, which ultimately strengthens consumer trust and loyalty.

4. **Leveraging Cultural Heritage for Brand Identity:** Local Chinese food companies can capitalize on the cultural added value of "Chinese style" to enhance their brand identity. Ma Rui and Li Wensi (2021) suggested that leveraging cultural heritage in brand storytelling can strengthen the emotional connection between the brand and its audience, especially in the food industry, where cultural authenticity often plays a crucial role in consumers' purchasing decisions. The use of culturally relevant branding elements, such as traditional recipes, cultural festivals, and Chinese aesthetics, can help differentiate the brand and add emotional depth. This connection is further amplified through digital media channels that can reach a broader audience, fostering brand awareness among both domestic and international consumers. By integrating cultural heritage into brand communication, companies can create a more authentic and engaging brand image, which resonates deeply with their target audience and evokes a sense of pride and connection.

5. **Digital Media Channels and Omnichannel Strategy:** To achieve successful brand building, companies must integrate both digital and traditional media in a comprehensive, omnichannel strategy. Digital media channels provide opportunities for real-time interaction and feedback, allowing brands to gather valuable consumer insights and refine their marketing efforts. Social media platforms such as WeChat and Douyin offer interactive features that can enhance brand communication, from influencer endorsements to live-stream events. Moreover, brands should use omnichannel approaches to ensure a seamless consumer experience across all touchpoints, whether online or offline. This integration helps strengthen brand awareness, as consumers are offered a cohesive experience irrespective of the channel they engage with. The omnichannel strategy must be meticulously planned and executed, taking into account the nuances of each channel and ensuring that all elements of the brand message are consistent and mutually reinforcing.

In addition to focusing on building brand assets, local Chinese food companies must also engage in continuous brand monitoring and evaluation. By using digital analytics, consumer surveys, and social media listening tools, companies can measure brand awareness, consumer perceptions, and campaign effectiveness. This data-driven approach enables companies to make informed decisions, refine their strategies, and ensure the brand remains competitive in an evolving market landscape. Periodic assessments and consumer feedback loops help businesses adapt their brand strategies to better meet consumer needs and respond to market changes effectively. Brand monitoring is an iterative process that allows companies to track key performance indicators (KPIs), identify areas for improvement, and implement corrective actions to optimize brand performance. This proactive approach to brand management not only

helps in addressing challenges promptly but also provides valuable insights that drive future brand-building initiatives.

Globalization presents both opportunities and challenges for brand building. Steenkamp (2020) highlighted the importance of global sales channel coverage and brand strategy globalization in enhancing brand presence worldwide. Local Chinese food companies aspiring to enter the global market need to adapt their brand strategies to diverse cultural contexts while retaining their core brand identity. Establishing a global brand presence also involves participating in international food festivals, collaborating with global influencers, and adapting product offerings to suit the tastes and preferences of international consumers. By doing so, local brands can expand their reach, create brand awareness on a global scale, and gain credibility as a culturally authentic brand. Globalization requires brands to strike a balance between standardization and adaptation—standardizing core brand values and messages while adapting product features and marketing tactics to resonate with local audiences in different regions. Brands that effectively manage this balance are more likely to succeed in building a strong and consistent global presence.

Despite the opportunities for brand building, there are challenges that local Chinese food companies must navigate. Competition in the market, especially from established global brands, poses a significant challenge to building a distinctive brand identity. The proliferation of digital channels has increased the number of touchpoints between brands and consumers, requiring brands to maintain consistency across all channels, which can be challenging to achieve. In addition, content fatigue—where consumers are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of branded content—can lead to disengagement if not managed properly. Local brands must ensure that their branding efforts are innovative, relevant, and engaging to stand out in the crowded marketplace. Another challenge is maintaining brand authenticity while expanding into new markets. Brands must stay true to their core values and cultural identity while being flexible enough to adapt to local preferences and expectations. This balancing act requires a deep understanding of both the brand's essence and the unique characteristics of the target markets.

In the process of transformation and upgrading, companies can use the cultural added value of "Chinese style" and digital media channels for promotion, while continuously monitoring and evaluating brand development to ensure that the brand always remains competitive and achieves sustainable development. By focusing on innovation, differentiation, consumer engagement, and cultural authenticity, local Chinese food companies can build strong brands that resonate deeply with their target audience, foster consumer loyalty, and achieve long-term success. The ongoing journey of brand building involves not only creating a compelling brand narrative but also delivering consistent value to consumers through every interaction, ensuring that the brand remains relevant, competitive, and capable of achieving sustained growth in a rapidly changing market environment.

2.9 Brand Resonance Theory

In an in-depth study of the relationship between brands and consumers, Keller (2014) proposed the concept of "brand resonance" based on the interaction and participation process of consumers. Brand resonance not only encompasses the similarity between consumers' perception of the brand and brand frequency, but also emphasizes the strength and depth of the psychological connection established between consumers and brands, and how this connection promotes consumers' active participation in brand activities. The essence of brand resonance lies in consumers experiencing that brands can deeply reflect their own emotions through interaction, regarding these brands as a medium for self-expression and communication with others, thereby enhancing their sense of identity and dependence on the brand. Thus, brand resonance is a deep and close psychological connection formed between consumers and brand owners (Yu Kefa, 2011). The foundation of this connection is that brands, as a communication medium, allow consumers and companies to share common psychological reactions and emotional experiences (Zhang Yu, 2008).

2.10.1 Keller's (2014) Brand Resonance Model consists of four primary stages: brand identity, brand meaning, brand response, and brand resonance. These stages form a pyramid, with brand resonance positioned at the apex, representing the highest level of consumer-brand relationship. This model provides a structured approach to building strong brand equity, moving from basic brand awareness to fostering an emotional and psychological connection that deeply resonates with consumers. The four stages are elaborated as follows:

2.10.2 Brand Identity (Who are you?): The foundation of brand resonance lies in establishing a solid brand identity. This stage involves creating awareness about the brand so that consumers can easily recognize and recall it. Local food companies can utilize social media platforms to strengthen brand identity by consistently sharing content that showcases their logo, tagline, and unique brand attributes. For instance, Hou's Hotpot can leverage platforms like WeChat to repeatedly communicate its brand name, logo, and distinctive flavors, thereby establishing strong brand recognition among its target audience.

2.10.3 Brand Meaning (What are you?): Once a brand's identity is established, the next step is to define what the brand stands for. Brand meaning is created by establishing functional and emotional associations with the brand. It includes tangible aspects such as product quality and features, as well as intangible elements like brand personality and values. Local food companies can use storytelling and culturally relevant content on social media to associate their brand with qualities that resonate with consumers. For Hou's Hotpot, emphasizing quality ingredients, local cultural heritage, and the authenticity of traditional hotpot recipes helps in shaping a strong and favorable brand image. These associations help consumers to perceive the brand

not just as a product, but as an experience that represents something meaningful in their lives.

2.10.4 Brand Response (What about you?): This stage focuses on how consumers respond to the brand. It involves consumer judgments and feelings, such as brand quality, credibility, and emotional responses. Social media marketing can be used to elicit positive responses by showcasing customer testimonials, ratings, and reviews. Positive word-of-mouth on platforms like WeChat and Xiaohongshu helps enhance consumer trust and credibility. Local food businesses should actively engage with user-generated content, acknowledging customer feedback and addressing any concerns, thereby reinforcing a positive brand perception. Additionally, facilitating interactive campaigns and engaging consumers through polls, contests, and direct messaging can further amplify the positive brand response, turning customers into brand advocates.

2.10.5 Brand Resonance (What about you and me?): The final stage, brand resonance, represents the culmination of all previous efforts, resulting in a strong emotional bond between consumers and the brand. Brand resonance is characterized by behavioral loyalty (repeat purchases, brand advocacy), attitudinal attachment (a sense of personal connection), active engagement (interacting with the brand beyond the point of purchase), and sense of community (belonging to a brand-related community). When local food companies foster brand resonance, they encourage consumers to actively participate in brand-related activities, such as sharing dining experiences, providing recommendations, and even defending the brand in online discussions. Creating and nurturing a community around the brand is crucial, as it helps to build long-term relationships with customers who become emotionally invested in the brand's story and journey.

2.10.6 The core of brand resonance lies in the emotional connection between consumers and brands. Local food companies in China can use social media platforms to gain in-depth insights into consumers' needs and emotions, combine brand values, cultural concepts, and product features with consumers' emotional needs, and create brand stories and marketing content that can touch consumers' hearts. The creation of emotionally engaging content—such as behind-the-scenes videos, customer stories, and cultural narratives—can enable local food brands to effectively build resonance with their target audience. When consumers experience that the brand can deeply reflect their own emotions in their interaction with the brand, they regard it as a medium for self-expression and communication with others. This connection helps strengthen their sense of identity and dependence on the brand, fostering both loyalty and advocacy.

2.10.7 Social media platforms offer a unique environment for fostering brand resonance by enabling dialogue, community building, and user-driven content. On platforms like WeChat and Douyin (TikTok), local food companies can create opportunities for active consumer participation, such as online cooking classes,

recipe-sharing contests, or influencer-led live-streams. Such activities are effective in building a sense of community and active engagement, two crucial components of brand resonance. By creating interactive content that invites users to contribute their experiences and feedback, brands can foster a deeper level of consumer commitment. For example, Hou's Hotpot can run seasonal campaigns encouraging customers to share their favorite hotpot recipes or experiences, which not only strengthens the brand's connection with consumers but also encourages the community to participate actively, thereby deepening the emotional bond.

2.10.8 The interactive nature of social media allows brands to have real-time conversations with consumers, addressing concerns, answering questions, and showing appreciation for positive feedback. This kind of engagement turns consumers into active stakeholders in the brand's story, which is vital for cultivating brand resonance. Through features such as live chats, direct messages, and interactive posts, local food companies can create an ongoing dialogue that nurtures a lasting emotional connection with their audience.

2.10.9 Word-of-mouth communication on social media platforms is also an important factor affecting the cognition of local food companies in China. When consumers have a strong resonance with the brand, they are more willing to share their dining experience, comment on products, and recommend the brand on social media, thereby forming a positive word-of-mouth communication effect. This type of organic advocacy not only enhances the brand's popularity and reputation but also attracts more potential consumers to pay attention to and purchase brand products. The social influence of peers often has a greater impact than traditional advertisements, making positive word-of-mouth a powerful driver of brand growth. For Hou's Hotpot, encouraging satisfied customers to share their experiences online and actively engaging with these posts can significantly boost brand awareness and consumer trust.

2.10.10 Building a strategy around word-of-mouth marketing is crucial for cultivating brand resonance. Social media users are more likely to trust information that comes from other consumers rather than traditional advertisements, which makes user-generated content and peer recommendations a highly effective tool. The emotional attachment created through resonance motivates users to advocate for the brand, which results in authentic and compelling word-of-mouth promotion. Local food brands should thus actively encourage and reward user-generated content that showcases their positive experiences, thereby leveraging the power of their satisfied customers to build a broader, trust-based community.

2.10.11 Despite its benefits, building brand resonance presents certain challenges, especially for local food companies operating in a highly competitive market. Ensuring consistency in messaging across different social media platforms is crucial, as inconsistencies can weaken the emotional connection that consumers feel with the brand. Additionally, the rise of algorithm-driven content feeds means that

maintaining visibility among target audiences requires strategic planning and investment. Brands must constantly innovate their content and leverage analytics to understand consumer preferences and behaviors. With changing algorithms, it can be challenging for brands to maintain consistent exposure to their audience, which makes content optimization and targeted advertising campaigns essential for sustaining brand engagement.

2.10.12 Moreover, content fatigue is another issue that brands need to address. Social media users are bombarded with content from multiple sources, which can make it difficult for brands to stand out. To combat content fatigue, brands need to focus on quality over quantity—creating compelling, emotionally engaging content that resonates with their audience, rather than simply increasing the volume of posts. Incorporating consumer feedback into the content strategy can also help brands remain relevant and appealing, as it demonstrates a willingness to listen and adapt to consumer preferences.

2.10.13 To effectively foster brand resonance, local food companies must understand that it is a dynamic process requiring continuous consumer interaction, content adaptation, and emotional engagement. By leveraging social media's strengths—real-time engagement, community interaction, and personalized storytelling—local food brands can build strong resonance, resulting in deeper consumer loyalty, higher advocacy rates, and a sustainable competitive edge. The use of data-driven insights is also critical, as it allows brands to continuously assess the effectiveness of their efforts and make necessary adjustments to maintain a strong emotional bond with their audience.

Ultimately, brand resonance is not a static goal but a continuous journey that evolves with consumer expectations and market trends. For local food companies, this means staying attuned to the cultural values and emotional needs of their audience, creating content that is relevant and resonates deeply, and consistently nurturing the emotional bonds that drive consumer loyalty. By effectively integrating these practices, local food brands can achieve enduring brand resonance that not only strengthens their market position but also creates a vibrant, loyal community around the brand.

2.10 Social Identity Theory

Social identity means that an individual realizes that he or she belongs to a specific social group and feels the emotional identity and value recognition of being a member of this group. In other words, individuals place themselves in specific social objects and gain a sense of identity and value from them (He Qing, 2019) . Social identity theory was proposed and continuously improved by Henry Tajfel and John Turner . The theory asserts that social identity involves three core processes: generalization, identification, and comparison. Individuals first generalize about the

social group to which they belong and identify themselves as members of this group, and at the same time endow this identity with specific emotional and value meanings. In short, individuals recognize that they belong to a specific social group and realize the emotional belonging and value meaning that being a member of this group brings to themselves. A social group is composed of two or more people who define themselves through shared identities, evaluations, attribute definitions, and patterns of interaction with non-group members (Hogg, 2006).

In today's era of rapid development of social media, China's local food companies have not only ushered in huge development opportunities, but also faced unprecedented challenges. In order to stand out in a highly competitive market, how to use social media platforms to enhance brand influence and spread brand awareness has become an urgent strategic issue for companies to solve. In this process, social identity theory provides new perspectives and strategies for enterprises. The essence of social identity is that individuals gain self-esteem and self-affirmation by belonging to a certain group. In the context of brand communication, this means that when consumers choose products, in addition to paying attention to the quality and characteristics of the product itself, they will also consider the group identity and values represented by the brand. Therefore, companies can use social media platforms to build and strengthen consumers' social identity, thereby enhancing brand influence and communication effects.

On social media, consumers not only deepen their understanding of their social groups through interaction and participation, but also strengthen their emotional connection with specific food brands. Through information sharing, discussion and interaction, they summarize the food consumption group they belong to and form a common identity with the group. For example, consumers who like a certain local specialty food will gather in a specific social media group to share consumption experiences, taste preferences, etc., forming a close community connection. When a brand can reflect the consumer's values, lifestyle or cultural background, consumers will have a strong sense of identity with the brand. They will actively participate in brand activities, share consumption experiences, and recommend brands to others, thereby establishing a deep emotional connection with the brand. In addition, consumers make comparisons on social media to evaluate the similarities and differences between their own food consumption group and other groups, as well as the similarities and differences between their relationship with the brand and other consumers. This comparison not only helps consumers to have a deeper understanding of their group identity and brand value, but also promotes communication and interaction between consumers and forms a closer community connection.

Local food companies in China should make full use of the advantages of social media platforms to promote social recognition and brand resonance among consumers through carefully planned content marketing, interactive activities, and community management. For example, companies can organize online and offline community

activities to give consumers the opportunity to communicate face-to-face and share consumption experiences; at the same time, with the help of data analysis tools on social media platforms, companies can deeply understand consumer needs and preferences, and provide brand positioning and marketing Strategies provide accurate data support.

2.11 Market Segmentation Theory

2.11.1 Source and Core Concept

Market segmentation theory was introduced by Wendell R. Smith in the mid-1950s to explain how marketers can divide an overall product market into distinct groups of consumers—each sharing similar needs, desires, purchasing behaviours, and habits—thereby enabling firms to tailor their marketing efforts with greater precision (Smith, 1956).

2.11.2 Segmentation Process and Benefits

Through rigorous market research, companies select appropriate segmentation variables—such as demographic, psychographic, and behavioural criteria—to partition the market into homogenous segments; this approach improves alignment with consumer demand, yields more effective marketing strategies, increases customer loyalty, and lowers overall marketing costs (Wu Jin, 2012).

2.11.3 Consumer-Based vs. Product-Based Segmentation

Consumer-based segmentation classifies customers according to their needs, behaviours, and life stages, whereas product-based segmentation categorizes markets by the features, usage patterns, and benefits sought in a product or service; Tony Lunn (1986) argues that while consumer-oriented segmentation strives to satisfy evolving customer requirements, product-oriented segmentation helps sustain a product's lifecycle amid changing technology and competitive pressures (Wu Jin, 2012; Lunn, 1986).

2.11.4 Application on Social Media Platforms

Chinese local food companies leverage WeChat, Douyin, and Xiaohongshu to apply market segmentation theory by collecting and analysing user data—such as age, region, and taste preferences—allowing them to identify and target consumer groups with shared characteristics.

2.11.5 Platform-Specific Marketing Strategies

On WeChat official accounts, brands publish content tailored to specific segments (e.g., regional specialties or health-focused recipes); on Douyin (TikTok), they produce short videos highlighting production processes and unique product features to attract younger audiences; and on Xiaohongshu (RED), they share lifestyle-oriented posts that position the brand within fashion and daily routines.

2.11.6 Interactive and Targeted Communication

By hosting online events, participating in hashtag discussions, and responding to comments, companies foster two-way interaction, while platform targeting tools enable them to serve advertisements and promotions directly to predefined segments—thereby enhancing message relevance and overall campaign effectiveness.

2.11.7 User-Generated Content and Community Marketing

Encouraging customers to share reviews and personal experiences generates word-of-mouth amplification, and establishing brand communities where loyal members discuss products further strengthens brand advocacy, recognition, and long-term engagement.

2.11.8 Implications for Future Development

To remain competitive in a dynamic market environment, companies must continuously monitor social media trends and evolving consumer needs, refining segmentation variables and innovating marketing strategies to adapt swiftly to technological advances and shifting competitive landscapes.

Market segmentation theory is essential for enabling businesses to identify and group consumers with similar needs and behaviours, which in turn allows for more precise targeting and tailored marketing messages. By focusing resources on the most valuable segments, companies can optimize their promotional budgets and minimize wasted expenditure. Tailored offerings and communications foster stronger customer loyalty and satisfaction, as each segment's unique preferences are addressed. Moreover, segmentation helps firms to differentiate their products in competitive markets by uncovering niche opportunities and refining their value propositions. Finally, by regularly reassessing segments in response to shifting consumer trends, technological advances, and competitive pressures—and leveraging data-driven insights from platforms like WeChat, Douyin, and Xiaohongshu—businesses can remain agile and sustain long-term growth in dynamic marketplaces.

2.12 Consumer Behavior and Business-To-Consumer (B2C)

2.12.1 Definition of Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior encompasses the psychological processes and actions exhibited when selecting, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of goods or services. Research in this area probes decision-making processes and motivations to uncover patterns and underlying needs.

2.12.2 The B2C E-Commerce Model

Business-to-Consumer (B2C) describes firms selling products or services directly to end consumers via the Internet—either through proprietary websites or third-party platforms on PCs and mobile devices—enabling seamless online transactions.

2.12.3 Social Media Adoption and Trust

Users actively choose social platforms to fulfil information, social, or entertainment needs; platform usability and perceived usefulness therefore drive adoption. Kim and Ko (2012) show that interactive, visually-rich environments like Instagram boost luxury-brand awareness—so matching content to user age and interests is critical. Mobile social media’s information richness further fosters B2C conversion by enhancing trust and validating the Technology Acceptance Model (Hajli, 2014), while perceptions of procedural and distributive fairness reduce privacy concerns and encourage sharing.

2.12.4 Content Types and Preferences Theory

This theory posits that emotional and practical content spreads more widely: rational (informational) content persuades via analytical “central” routes, whereas emotional (visual or story-based) content propagates through “peripheral” cues. Vries et al. (2012) report 47% higher interaction rates for video/image posts versus text, and note that balancing tutorial-style (rational) with entertaining (emotional) content avoids overload. Content strategies should align with user lifecycle stages—educational for newcomers, promotional for repeat customers.

2.12.5 Dimensions of Consumer Engagement

Hollebeek et al. (2014) identify three facets of engagement—cognitive (thoughtful processing), emotional (feelings), and behavioural (actions such as commenting and sharing). Engagement correlates positively with brand awareness, and firms should deploy incentives (e.g., rewards or gamified elements) to foster advocacy. Pansari and Kumar (2017) further frame participation as a “reward–cost” exchange, where personalized recommendations—driven by browsing history analysis—heighten involvement in e-commerce settings.

2.12.6 Role of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs)

Elmira and Tamar (2020) find that micro-influencers enjoy heightened trust in niche markets like beauty; their brand-aligned recommendations more effectively trigger purchases. Lou and Yuan (2019) add that perceived “quasi-social” interaction between KOLs and followers deepens brand identification and boosts repurchase rates. Data analytics on social platforms optimizes KOL campaign targeting and content timing.

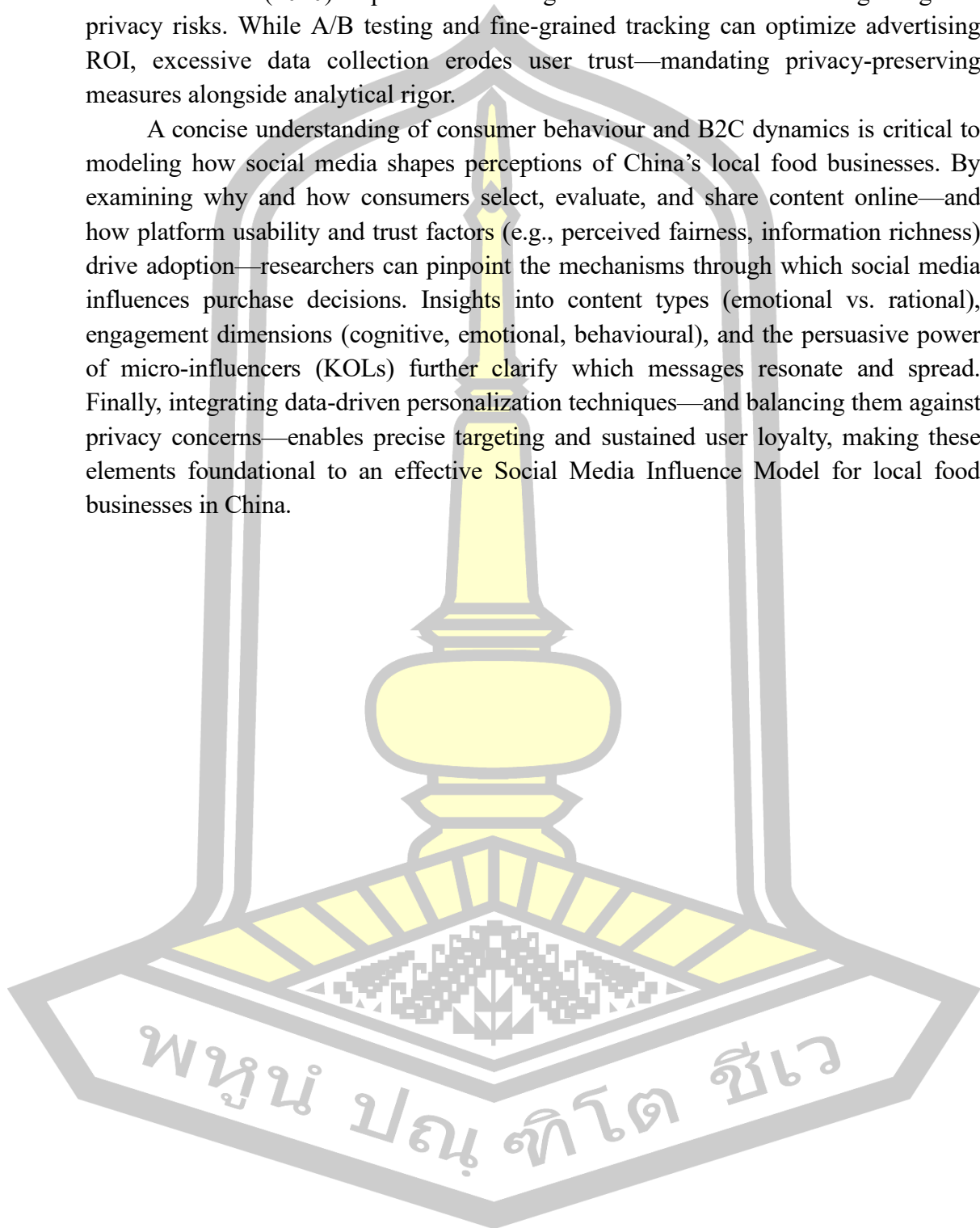
2.12.7 Data-Driven Decision Models

Wedel and Kannan (2016) advocate using machine-learning on clickstream and other behavioural data to predict consumer preferences, dynamically price offerings, and personalize ad placements—approaches shown to lift B2C conversion rates by over 20%.

2.12.8 Privacy Computing and Data Utility Trade-Off

Li et al. (2020) emphasize balancing the benefits of user-data insights against privacy risks. While A/B testing and fine-grained tracking can optimize advertising ROI, excessive data collection erodes user trust—mandating privacy-preserving measures alongside analytical rigor.

A concise understanding of consumer behaviour and B2C dynamics is critical to modeling how social media shapes perceptions of China’s local food businesses. By examining why and how consumers select, evaluate, and share content online—and how platform usability and trust factors (e.g., perceived fairness, information richness) drive adoption—researchers can pinpoint the mechanisms through which social media influences purchase decisions. Insights into content types (emotional vs. rational), engagement dimensions (cognitive, emotional, behavioural), and the persuasive power of micro-influencers (KOLs) further clarify which messages resonate and spread. Finally, integrating data-driven personalization techniques—and balancing them against privacy concerns—enables precise targeting and sustained user loyalty, making these elements foundational to an effective Social Media Influence Model for local food businesses in China.



2.13 SICAS model

With the advent of the Web 2.0 era, especially in the context of the rapid development of social networks, mobile Internet and full digitalization, consumer behavior has undergone significant changes. The AIDMA model formed in the mass media era and the AISAS model in the Web1.0 era have been unable to accurately describe the complexity and nonlinear characteristics of consumer behavior in the Web2.0 era. In response to this change, the China Internet Data Center (DCCI) proposed a new consumer behavior analysis model in the "2011 China Social Marketing Blue Book" (Lin Ruize, 2022), emphasizing the importance of two-way interaction and effective connections. DCCI uses technical means to conduct long-term, continuous real-time monitoring of users and finds that consumer behavior analysis models are changing from traditional linear models (such as AIDMA and AISAS) to non-linear, multi-point, two-way SInS models. This model is more in line with the actual behavioral characteristics of consumers in the Web 2.0 era and emphasizes the importance of establishing a closer and more flexible interactive relationship between brands and users.



Figure 2.1 SICAS model

Looking back at history, the AIDMA model was first proposed by Lewis in 1898 to describe the entire process of customers from attention to purchase. Traditional marketing is based on the AIDMA model and is divided into five stages: attracting attention, arousing interest, generating desire, forming memory and final purchase (Lewis , 1898). This process is mainly promoted through traditional marketing methods such as advertising, activities, and promotions to ensure the effective communication of marketing information and the transformation of consumer behavior. However, with the changing times and changes in consumer behavior patterns, the traditional model can no longer fully adapt to the new market

environment. Therefore, as the Web 2.0 era evolves, companies and brands must keep up with the times and actively utilize new media platforms such as social media to deepen two-way interaction and effective connections with consumers. By accurately positioning target audiences, formulating personalized marketing strategies, providing excellent products and services, and continuously optimizing user experience, we can continuously improve our brand influence and market competitiveness. As shown in Figure 2-2, the SICAS model reveals to us the complex interactive process of user behavior and consumption trajectory in the mobile Internet environment.

The model points out that changes in consumer behavior go through five stages: mutual perception (Sense), interest and interaction (Interest & Interactive), connection and communication (Connect & Communicate), action and purchase (Action), and experience and sharing (Share).). These five stages are no longer a one-way progressive linear process, but are interrelated and form a multi-directional interactive network structure, allowing us to gain more timely, comprehensive and systematic insight into consumer behavior and psychological changes.

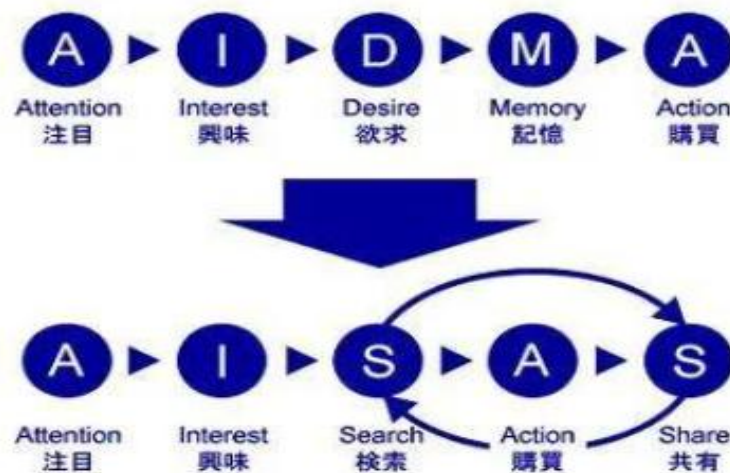


Figure 2.2 AIDMA model

Looking back at history, the AIDMA model, as one of the classic theories in the field of consumer behavior, was proposed by American advertising scientist ES Lewis in 1898 and has been widely used in many fields. This model believes that consumers will go through the following five stages from exposure to information to final purchase:

A: Attention, this is the starting point of the sales process. Consumers first need to pay attention to the product and its advertising.

I: Interest. After attracting consumers' attention, you need to stimulate their interest and make them feel good about the product.

D : Desire. After consumers become interested in a product, their desire to buy needs to be further stimulated.

M: Memory. The product needs to leave a deep memory in the minds of consumers so as to trigger purchasing behavior in the future.

A: Action. After going through the above four stages, consumers finally take purchasing action.

For sellers, AIDMA is a practical strategic tool that helps them deeply understand the psychological process of consumers, so as to guide consumers' purchasing behavior more effectively. In the creation of advertising copy, it is necessary to first attract consumers' attention, then stimulate their interest, further stimulate their desire to buy, strengthen their memory, and finally promote purchasing behavior.

2.14 Marketing Theory

2.14.1 4P Marketing Theory

1) E. Jerome McCarthy's 4P—or Marketing Mix—theory (1960) remains a foundational framework for designing customer-focused marketing strategies. It comprises:

1.1) Product

1.2) Defines the tangible goods or services offered.

1.3) Strategies include product design, branding, packaging, quality control, innovation, and after-sales service.

1.4) Example (Hou Hotpot): Maintain high ingredient quality, develop signature broths or dipping sauces, and offer responsive customer support.

2) Price

2.1) Determines the amount customers pay, balancing costs, competition, market demand, and purchasing power.

2.2) Well-crafted pricing can drive sales volume and profitability.

2.3) Example (Hou Hotpot): Use competitive base pricing, bundle meal packages, and run time-limited promotions to attract new customers.

3) Place

3.1) Covers distribution channels and physical or digital touchpoints where customers find and purchase the product.

3.2) Ensures convenient, timely access.

3.3) Example (Hou Hotpot): Operate both dine-in locations and a WeChat mini-program, and partner with delivery platforms for off-premises orders.

4) Promotion

4.1) Encompasses all communications to raise awareness and stimulate interest, including advertising, PR, sales promotions, and personal selling.

4.2) Effective campaigns strengthen brand image and drive transactions.

4.3) Example (Hou Hotpot): Run WeChat campaigns offering loyalty points, flash-sale coupons, and interactive contests to engage followers.

2.14.2 4C Marketing Theory

Robert F. Lauterborn's 4C model (1990) reorients the mix around buyer needs:

1) Customer (Wants & Needs)

1.1) Focus on understanding and fulfilling specific consumer desires rather than pushing a product.

1.2) Hou Hotpot Action: Conduct surveys or social-media polls to identify preferred flavors, service styles, or dietary requirements.

2) Cost (Total Cost to the Customer)

2.1) Looks beyond price to include time, effort, and incidental expenses—aiming to maximize perceived value.

2.2) Hou Hotpot Action: Ensure menu pricing reflects quality and experience; offer loyalty discounts or bundled meals to reduce out-of-pocket cost.

3) Convenience

3.1) Prioritizes ease of purchase and use, spanning location, accessibility, and digital ordering workflows.

3.2) Hou Hotpot Action: Optimize online ordering via WeChat, enable table reservations through an app, and ensure clear signage at physical outlets.

4) Communication

4.1) Replaces one-way “promotion” with ongoing, two-way dialogue to build relationships and gather feedback.

4.2) Hou Hotpot Action: Use WeChat, Douyin, and Xiaohongshu to respond to customer inquiries, share behind-the-scenes content, and solicit real-time reviews.

By integrating both 4P and 4C perspectives, marketers can align internal capabilities with genuine consumer needs—driving stronger engagement, loyalty, and long-term business success.

2.15 Digital Marketing Theory

Digital Marketing Theory integrates traditional marketing principles with online channels and tools to engage consumers effectively. As digital devices and internet access have proliferated, businesses now leverage a mix of strategies—including SEO, content creation, social media, email, paid advertising, influencer partnerships, and analytics—to build brand awareness, drive traffic, and foster loyalty (Chaffey, 2019).

2.15.1 Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Optimizes website structure and content to rank higher on search engine results pages (SERPs), increasing organic visibility and traffic. Tactics include keyword-rich menu descriptions, blog articles, location-based phrases, mobile-

friendly design, fast loading times, and local listings (e.g., Google My Business) to ensure Hou Hotpot appears when users search for hotpot restaurants.

2.15.2 Content Marketing

Creates and distributes valuable, relevant materials—such as blog posts on hotpot culture, recipe ideas, customer testimonials, and behind-the-scenes videos—to attract and retain audiences. Consistency and adaptability are key: use data insights to tailor topics, employ storytelling to forge emotional connections, and incorporate visuals (images, infographics) to boost shareability and brand awareness.

2.15.3 Social Media Marketing

Utilizes platforms like WeChat, Weibo, Douyin, and Xiaohongshu for real-time engagement. Activities include sharing promotions, user-generated content, and interactive campaigns (contests, polls) to build community. Analytics guide content choices, while responding promptly to comments and reposting UGC amplifies credibility and word-of-mouth referrals.

2.15.4 Email Marketing

Sends targeted newsletters and offers to a subscriber list gathered via website sign-ups or social channels. Personalization (birthday discounts, loyalty rewards) and segmentation (based on past orders or preferences) increase open and click-through rates. Automated triggers—such as reminders for abandoned carts or upcoming events—nurture leads and encourage repeat visits.

2.15.5 Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Advertising

Places paid ads on search engines (Google, Bing) and social networks (WeChat, Facebook), paying only for clicks. Segment-specific targeting (demographics, interests, location) drives immediate traffic during promotions or menu launches. A/B testing refines creatives and messages, while retargeting ads re-engage visitors who previously interacted with Hou Hotpot's digital channels.

2.15.6 Influencer Marketing

Collaborates with established influencers—macro or micro—to showcase dining experiences and honest reviews. Select influencers whose audience aligns with Hou Hotpot's target demographic. Offering exclusive tastings or behind-the-scenes access yields authentic content; micro-influencers in niche food communities can foster localized, high-trust endorsements that drive trial and brand visibility.

2.15.7 Data Analytics

Collects and analyzes metrics (website traffic, click-through rates, social engagement, email performance) to evaluate campaign effectiveness. Predictive analytics and segmentation forecast customer preferences, enabling proactive strategy adjustments. Data visualization tools translate insights into actionable plans, optimizing resource allocation and refining personalization efforts.

By weaving these elements into a cohesive strategy, Hou Hotpot can expand its digital footprint, engage customers meaningfully, and adapt swiftly to evolving

market trends—ultimately driving sustainable growth and competitive advantage in the local food sector.

2.16 Technology Acceptance Model

Developed by Fred Davis in 1989 and grounded in the Theory of Reasoned Action, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) explains how users come to accept and adopt information technologies. It identifies two primary determinants—Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use—that shape users’ attitudes, intentions, and ultimately their actual usage behavior (Davis, 1989).

2.16.1 Perceived Usefulness (PU)

The extent to which a user believes that employing a given technology will enhance their task performance. When customers view Hou Hotpot’s WeChat mini-program as genuinely helpful—enabling easy reservations, menu browsing, and seamless ordering—they are more likely to adopt and rely on it. Emphasizing features that streamline the dining experience strengthens PU.

2.16.2 Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)

The degree to which a user expects the technology to be free of effort. A user-friendly interface, clear navigation, and minimal steps in the ordering process increase PEOU. For Hou Hotpot, ensuring the mini-program is intuitive—through straightforward instructions, clean design, and responsive feedback—will drive higher acceptance.

2.16.3 Attitude Toward Use

The user’s overall positive or negative feeling about utilizing the technology. Satisfying experiences with the mini-program—such as fast load times, reliable performance, and helpful customer support—cultivate favorable attitudes. Regularly soliciting feedback and iterating on the design can reinforce positive perceptions.

2.16.4 Behavioral Intention to Use

The strength of a user’s plan to continue using the technology. Loyalty incentives (e.g., point rewards, personalized promotions) and consistent mini-program performance foster stronger use intentions, making habitual engagement more likely.

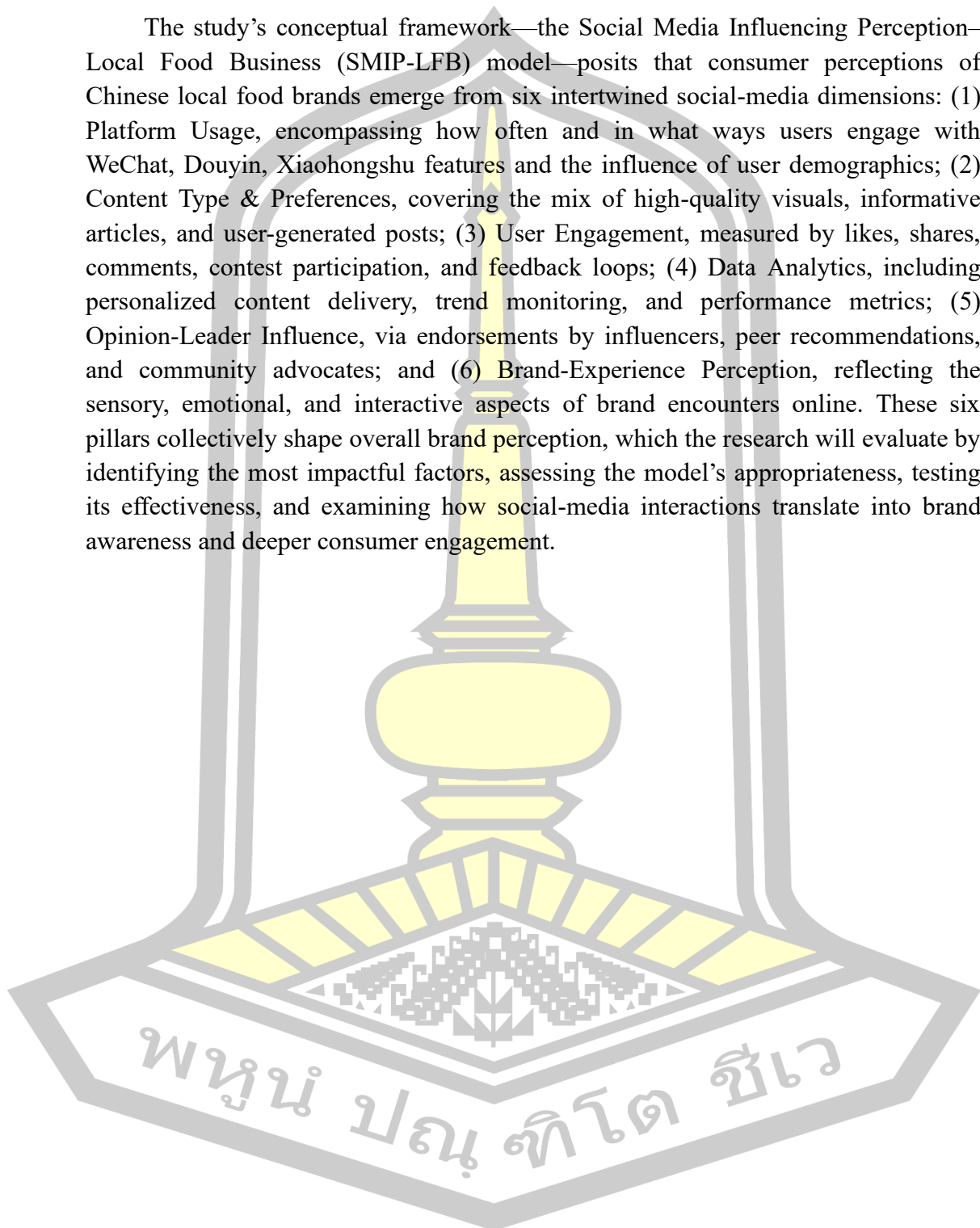
2.16.5 Actual System Use

The real-world implementation of the technology, measured by usage metrics. Tracking reservation volumes, order frequency, and feature utilization within the WeChat mini-program enables Hou Hotpot to assess acceptance levels and pinpoint areas for refinement.

By optimizing both PU and PEOU—and by reinforcing positive attitudes and intentions—Hou Hotpot can drive sustained adoption and maximize the impact of its digital tools.

2.17 Research Conceptual Framework

The study's conceptual framework—the Social Media Influencing Perception–Local Food Business (SMIP-LFB) model—posits that consumer perceptions of Chinese local food brands emerge from six intertwined social-media dimensions: (1) Platform Usage, encompassing how often and in what ways users engage with WeChat, Douyin, Xiaohongshu features and the influence of user demographics; (2) Content Type & Preferences, covering the mix of high-quality visuals, informative articles, and user-generated posts; (3) User Engagement, measured by likes, shares, comments, contest participation, and feedback loops; (4) Data Analytics, including personalized content delivery, trend monitoring, and performance metrics; (5) Opinion-Leader Influence, via endorsements by influencers, peer recommendations, and community advocates; and (6) Brand-Experience Perception, reflecting the sensory, emotional, and interactive aspects of brand encounters online. These six pillars collectively shape overall brand perception, which the research will evaluate by identifying the most impactful factors, assessing the model's appropriateness, testing its effectiveness, and examining how social-media interactions translate into brand awareness and deeper consumer engagement.



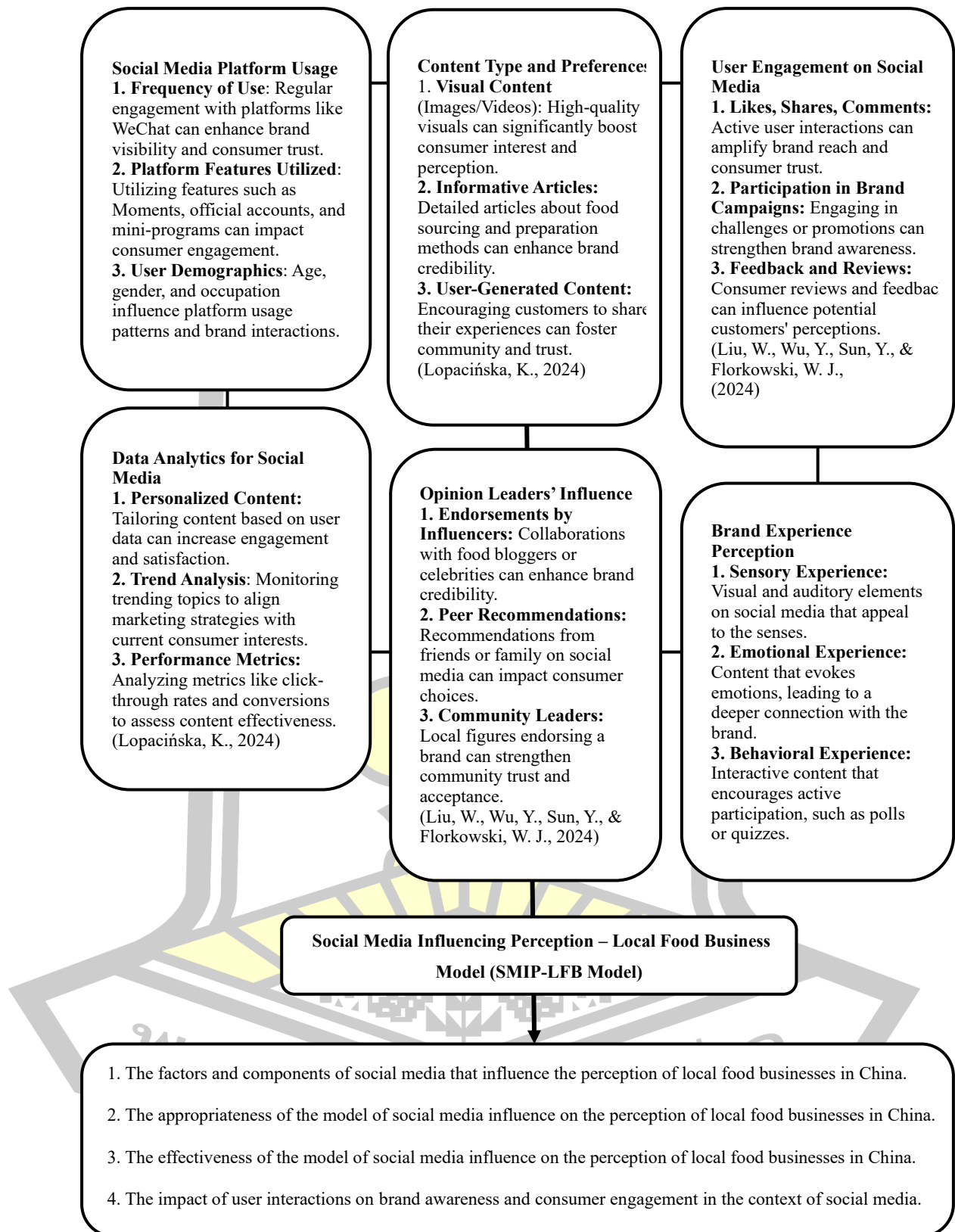


Figure 2.3 Research Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate the influence of social media on consumer perceptions of local food businesses in China. Quantitative data were collected from a large-scale survey of WeChat users, while qualitative insights were obtained through in-depth interviews with industry experts. The research utilized random sampling for consumer participants and purposive sampling for expert selection to ensure credibility. Data reliability was ensured through KMO and Bartlett's tests, and Cronbach's Alpha confirmed high internal consistency. The combination of statistical analysis and expert validation strengthened the study's findings and model development.

3.1 Population and sample

3.1.1 Population: Consumers in China who use social media, specifically WeChat, and are familiar with or have interacted with the local food business, Hebei Hou's Hotpot.

3.1.2 The sample consisted of two groups:

1) The first group included no fewer than 400 consumers in China who used the social media platform WeChat. They were selected through convenience sampling and provided information on the factors and components of social media that influence the perception of local food businesses in China.

2) The second group also comprised no fewer than 400 WeChat users in China, selected using convenience sampling. This group reflected the impact of user interactions on brand awareness and consumer engagement in the context of social media.

3.1.3 Sample or volunteer selection criteria

1) Inclusion criteria

To ensure that the respondents were relevant to the study, the inclusion criteria likely included:

1.1) Active WeChat Users – Participants must use WeChat as their primary or frequent social media platform.

1.2) Consumers Aware of Local Food Businesses – Respondents must have knowledge of or interaction with local food businesses, particularly Hebei Hou's Hotpot.

1.3) Adults – Likely included respondents above a certain age (18+) who could provide informed responses.

2) Exclusion criteria

To maintain research validity, the exclusion criteria likely included:

- 2.1) Non-WeChat Users – Participants who do not use WeChat would not be relevant to the study.
- 2.2) Lack of Engagement with Local Food Businesses – Respondents unfamiliar with local food enterprises or those who had never interacted with such brands.
- 2.3) Incomplete or Invalid Responses – Surveys with missing or inconsistent data were likely excluded from the final analysis.

3.2 Research variables

3.2.1) Independent variables:

- 1) Social Media Platform Usage
- 2) Content Type and Preferences
- 3) User Engagement
- 4) Influence of Opinion Leaders (KOLs)
- 5) Data Analytics Usage

3.2.2) Dependent variable

- 1) The factors and components of social media that influence the perception of local food businesses in China.
- 2) The appropriateness of the model of social media influence on the perception of local food businesses in China.
- 3) The effectiveness of the model of social media influence on the perception of local food businesses in China.
- 4) The impact of user interactions on brand awareness and consumer engagement in the context of social media.

3.3 Risk Prevention Measures for the Sample Group

To ensure the ethical treatment, safety, and well-being of all research participants, the following risk prevention measures were implemented throughout the study:

3.3.1 Voluntary Participation: All participants were informed that their involvement in the study was entirely voluntary. Written informed consent was obtained prior to participation.

3.3.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity: Personal data and responses were kept strictly confidential and used solely for academic purposes. All identifying information was removed to ensure participant anonymity.

3.3.3 Eligibility Criteria: Participants were selected based on their active use of the WeChat platform and their familiarity with local food businesses. Only individuals aged 18 and above were eligible to participate.

3.3.4 Right to Withdraw: Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences or need for explanation.

3.3.5 Clear Communication of Research Purpose: Participants were clearly informed of the research objectives, procedures, and expected outcomes in language that was easily understood.

3.3.6 Minimization of Emotional Discomfort: All survey and interview questions were reviewed to avoid sensitive or distressing content. Participants were encouraged to skip any question they were uncomfortable answering.

3.3.7 Data Protection: All data were stored in password-protected files and devices. Access was limited to authorized researchers only.

These measures were taken to ensure that the study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards for human subject research, maintaining respect for participant rights and minimizing

3.4 Research Procedures

The research was conducted using a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to ensure a comprehensive understanding of how social media influences the perception of local food businesses in China. The research was executed in the following systematic phases:

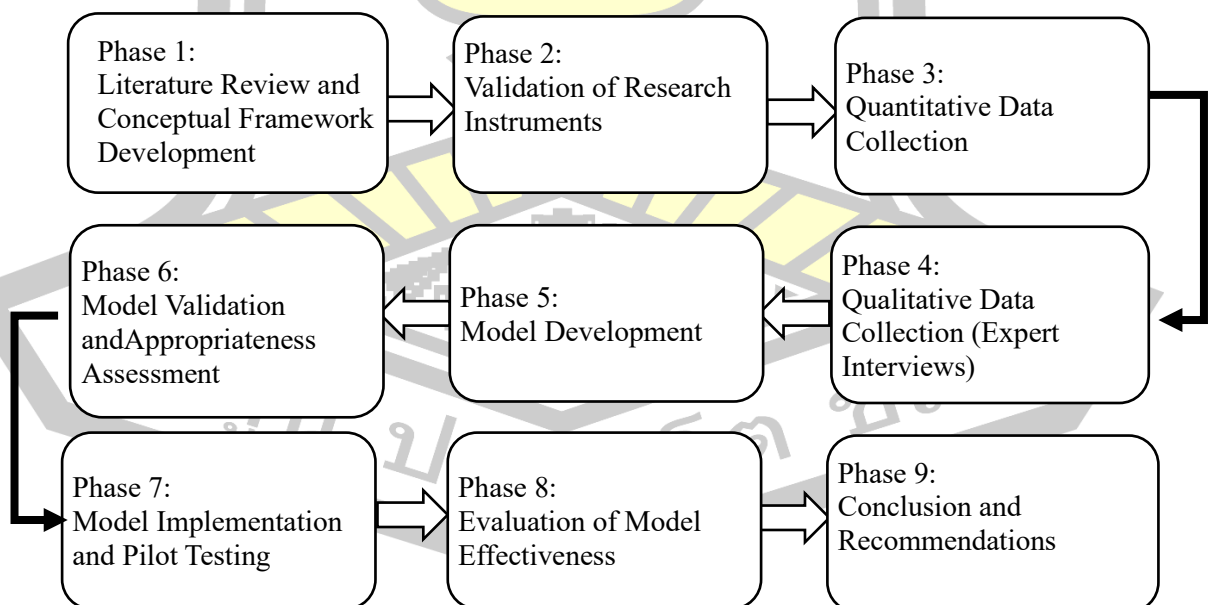


Figure 3.4 Research procedures flowchart

Phase 1: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework Development

1. Conducted an extensive review of scholarly literature on social media marketing, consumer perception, brand awareness, and digital engagement.
2. Identified key concepts and variables (e.g., content types, user engagement, opinion leaders, platform usage).
3. Developed the initial conceptual framework for the Social Media Influence Model.
4. Drafted preliminary research tools (questionnaires and interview guides).

Phase 2: Validation of Research Instruments

1. Submitted survey and interview questions for expert review to assess content validity.
2. Revised research instruments based on expert feedback.
3. Conducted a pilot test with 40 WeChat users to ensure clarity and reliability.
4. Calculated Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.930$) to ensure internal consistency of the questionnaire.

Phase 3: Quantitative Data Collection

1. Distributed the validated survey to a sample of 401 WeChat users using accidental (convenience) sampling.
2. Collected demographic information and responses regarding social media behaviors, content preferences, user engagement, brand awareness, and perception.
3. Ensured ethical research practices, including informed consent and anonymity of participants.

Phase 4: Qualitative Data Collection (Expert Interviews)

1. Conducted in-depth interviews with 35 experts across seven specialized fields relevant to social media and food branding.
2. Gathered expert insights on the model's dimensions: platform usage, content strategies, opinion leaders, user interaction, and analytics.
3. Analyzed qualitative data using thematic content analysis.

Phase 5: Model Development

1. Integrated quantitative and qualitative findings to construct a prototype model illustrating the influence of social media on consumer perceptions.
2. Included dimensions such as: platform engagement, content type, opinion leader involvement, and brand experience.

Phase 6: Model Validation and Appropriateness Assessment

1. Submitted the model to expert panels for validation and appropriateness evaluation using a 5-point Likert-scale assessment form.
2. Conducted reliability testing (Cronbach's alpha = 0.89) and content validity index (CVI) for the assessment tool.
3. Collected open-ended feedback to refine and enhance the model.

Phase 7: Model Implementation and Pilot Testing

1. Applied the model through a pilot social media campaign featuring Hou's Hotpot brand on the WeChat platform.
2. Developed and published media content (video clips, graphics) guided by the model's components.
3. Monitored user interaction (likes, shares, comments) over a defined period.

Phase 8: Evaluation of Model Effectiveness

1. Analyzed quantitative data (engagement metrics, perception scores) and qualitative feedback (user interviews, open comments).
2. Conducted sentiment analysis of user-generated content to assess emotional response and brand impression.
3. Evaluated the model's performance in terms of usability, impact on brand awareness, consumer engagement, and brand awareness.

Phase 9: Conclusion and Recommendations

1. Summarized research findings in relation to the objectives.
2. Proposed strategic recommendations for local food businesses to improve social media marketing.
3. Suggested avenues for future research based on limitations and emerging trends in social media use.

3.5 Research tools

3.5.1 Questionnaire form to study the factors and components of social media influencing the perception of local food businesses in China.

3.5.2 Interview with an expert on develop a model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

3.5.3 Assess the consistency of the model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

3.5.4 Form to evaluate the feasibility and usefulness of the model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

3.5.5 Evaluation of the quality of video clips produced according to the model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

3.5.6 Form to assesses consumer perceptions related to local food business in China on social media

3.5.7 Form to assesses consumer satisfaction with videos featuring content related to local food businesses in China on social media.

3.6 Methodology for developing and evaluating the model

Method for conducting research on a model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China. The researchers present 6 steps as follows.

Step 1: literature review

1. Study and analyze the principles, theories and research documents related to the content of effective communication styles on social media platforms to enhance local brand awareness in China.
2. Analyze, synthesize the essential elements of Impactful communication model on social media platforms
3. Analyze and synthesize content related to local brands' products for use in communications on social media platforms.
4. Creation and quality checking of research tools
 - 4.1 Questionnaire form to study to study the factors and components of a model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

The creation of the questionnaire aims to study the factors and elements of a model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China. There are steps to create it as follows.

 - 4.1.1 Study and analyze key concepts and leadership communication formats on the platform to leverage local and research-informed brands. Communication with a platform of platforms
 - 4.1.2 Use the data to examine opinions in a structured opinion survey that addresses these 5 levels.

Table 3.1: Shows the five levels of estimation and the meaning of the average.

Approximately 5 levels.	Meaning of average
5: Strongly agree	4.51-5.00: Strongly agree
4: Agree	3.51-4.50: Agree
3: Neutral	2.51-3.50: Neutral
2: Disagree	1.51-2.50: Disagree
1: Strongly disagree	1.00-1.50: Strongly disagree

4.1.3 Bring the questionnaire to the thesis advisor to review its accuracy and ensure that the questions are consistent with the objectives.

4.1.4 Use the thesis advisor's opinions to improve and correct shortcomings in the survey questions.

4.1.5 Expert review by 5 experts for a comprehensive review. Experts evaluate the quality of the tools. It considers factors such as the relevance of the

content, clarity, and appropriateness of the language. Each expert is graded on the Item Objective Congruence Index (IOC) using the following criteria:

+1: If they find the questions consistent.

0: If they're not sure

-1: If they find the questions inconsistent.

Then, the data on the appropriateness of the interview questions were analyzed using the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) formula as follows.

$$IOC = \frac{\sum R}{N}$$

IOC: represents the Index of Item Objective Congruence.

$\sum R$: Sum of expert opinions denotes the cumulative score of expert opinions.

N: represents the number of experts.

The resulting index of item objective consistency was evaluated, and questions with an IOC equal to or greater than 0.5 are considered acceptable.

4.1.6 Review and correction: before using calculated values A thorough review and adjustments have been made to improve and improve the compliance index.

4.1.7 Testing with small groups: The revised set of questions was tested with small groups to assess effectiveness. Based on the results obtained, further improvements were made to improve the results.

4.1.8 Verification: before final use Meticulous checks are carried out to ensure the calculated index of the item's objective consistency.

4.1.9 Application in real environment: summary questionnaire set Updates will be provided throughout the entire process. Ready for use in real-world environments

4.2 Interview with an expert on developing a model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

The creation of expert interviews aims to collect information on developing a model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

4.2.1 A thorough study of concepts, principles and guidelines for developing effective communication formats on social media platforms to raise local brand awareness in China. This information served as the basis for determining the scope and content of the interview.

4.2.2 Definition of Interview Topics to Ensure Coverage: Interview topics were carefully defined to ensure adequate coverage of relevant content relevant

to developing an effective communication model on the platform. Social media to raise local brand awareness in China

4.2.3 Expert review by 5 experts: The interview instrument was submitted to a panel of 5 experts for comprehensive review. Experts evaluate the quality of the tools. It considers factors such as content relevance, clarity, and language appropriateness. Each expert scores on the Item Objective Congruence Index (IOC) using the following criteria:

- +1: If they find the questions consistent.
- 0: If they're not sure
- 1: If they find the questions inconsistent.

Then, the data on the appropriateness of the interview questions were analyzed using the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) formula as follows.

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N: represents the number of experts.

The resulting index of item objective consistency was evaluated, and questions with an IOC equal to or greater than 0.5 are considered acceptable.

4.2.6 Review and correction: before using calculated values A thorough review and adjustments have been made to improve and improve the compliance index.

4.2.7 Testing with small groups: The revised set of questions was tested with small groups to assess effectiveness. Based on the results obtained, further improvements were made to improve the results.

4.2.8 Verification: before final use Meticulous checks are carried out to ensure the calculated index of the item's objective consistency.

4.2.9 Application in real environment: summary questionnaire set Updates will be provided throughout the entire process. Ready for use in real-world environments

4.3 Assess the consistency of the model developed

Assessing the consistency of the developed model aims to check the consistency of information on elements of communication model with impact on social media platforms to enhance the local brand awareness of China obtained from the literature review and from collecting data from real conditions.

4.3.1 Study and analyze the main concepts of the model and consistency of the developed model.

4.3.2 Use the data to examine opinions in a structured opinion survey that addresses these 5 levels.

Table 3.2: Shows the five levels of estimation and the meaning of the average.

Approximately 5 levels.	Meaning of average
5: Strongly agree	4.51-5.00: Strongly agree
4: Agree	3.51-4.50: Agree
3: Neutral	2.51-3.50: Neutral
2: Disagree	1.51-2.50: Disagree
1: Strongly disagree	1.00-1.50: Strongly disagree

4.3.3 Bring the questionnaire to the thesis advisor to review its accuracy and ensure that the questions are consistent with the objectives.

4.3.4 Use the thesis advisor's opinions to improve and correct shortcomings in the survey questions.

4.3.5 Expert review by 5 experts for a comprehensive review. Experts evaluate the quality of the tools. It considers factors such as the relevance of the content, clarity, and appropriateness of the language. Each expert is graded on the Item Objective Congruence Index (IOC) using the following criteria:

+1: If they find the questions consistent.

0: If they're not sure

-1: If they find the questions inconsistent.

Then, the data on the appropriateness of the interview questions were analyzed using the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) formula as follows.

$$IOC = \frac{\sum R}{N}$$

IOC: represents the Index of Item Objective Congruence.

$\sum R$: Sum of expert opinions denotes the cumulative score of expert opinions.

N: represents the number of experts.

The resulting index of item objective consistency was evaluated, and questions with an IOC equal to or greater than 0.5 are considered acceptable.

4.3.6 Review and correction: before using calculated values A thorough review and adjustments have been made to improve and improve the compliance index.

4.3.7 Testing with small groups: The revised set of questions was tested with small groups to assess effectiveness. Based on the results obtained, further improvements were made to improve the results.

4.3.8 Verification: before final use Meticulous checks are carried out to ensure the calculated index of the item's objective consistency.

4.3.9 Application in real environment: summary questionnaire set Updates will be provided throughout the entire process. Ready for use in real-world environments

4.4 Form to evaluate the feasibility and usefulness of the model

The purpose of developing this evaluation form is to evaluate the feasibility and usefulness of the model in order to know the suitability of the developed model.

4.4.1 Study and analyze the main concepts of evaluating the feasibility and utility of the model.

4.4.2 Use the data to examine opinions in a structured opinion survey that addresses these 5 levels.

Table 3.3: Shows the five levels of estimation and the meaning of the average.

Approximately 5 levels.	Meaning of average
5: Most feasible and useful	4.51-5.00: Most feasible and useful
4: Very possible and useful	3.51-4.50: Very possible and useful
3: Moderately feasible and useful.	2.51-3.50: Moderately feasible and useful.
2: Possible and less useful	1.51-2.50: Possible and less useful
1: Very little possibility and benefit	1.00-1.50: Very little possibility and benefit

4.4.3 Bring the questionnaire to the thesis advisor to review its accuracy and ensure that the questions are consistent with the objectives.

4.4.4 Use the thesis advisor's opinions to improve and correct shortcomings in the survey questions.

4.4.5 Expert review by 5 experts for a comprehensive review. Experts evaluate the quality of the tools. It considers factors such as the relevance of the content, clarity, and appropriateness of the language. Each expert is graded on the Item Objective Congruence Index (IOC) using the following criteria:

+1: If they find the questions consistent.

0: If they're not sure

-1: If they find the questions inconsistent.

Then, the data on the appropriateness of the interview questions were analyzed using the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) formula as follows.

$$IOC = \frac{\sum R}{N}$$

IOC: represents the Index of Item Objective Congruence.

$\sum R$: Sum of expert opinions denotes the cumulative score of expert opinions.

N: represents the number of experts.

The resulting index of item objective consistency was evaluated. and questions with an IOC equal to or greater than 0.5 are considered acceptable.

4.4.6 Review and correction: before using calculated values A thorough review and adjustments have been made to improve and improve the compliance index.

4.4.7 Testing with small groups: The revised set of questions was tested with small groups to assess effectiveness. Based on the results obtained, further improvements were made to improve the results.

4.4.8 Verification: before final use Meticulous checks are carried out to ensure the calculated index of the item's objective consistency.

4.4.9 Application in real environment: summary questionnaire set Updates will be provided throughout the entire process. Ready for use in real-world environments

4.5 Evaluation of the quality of video clips produced according to effective communication formats on social media platforms

The purpose of creating this quality assessment is to assess the quality of video clips produced according to effective communication formats on social media platforms. The method of creation is as follows.

4.5.1 Study and analyze the main concepts, evaluate the quality of video clips produced according to impactful communication model on social media platforms

4.5.2 Use the data to examine opinions in a structured opinion survey that addresses these 5 levels.

Table 3.4: Shows the five levels of estimation and the meaning of the average.

Approximately 5 levels.	Meaning of average
5: Best quality available	4.51-5.00: Best quality available
4: Good quality	3.51-4.50: Good quality
3: Moderately good quality	2.51-3.50: Moderately good quality
2: low quality	1.51-2.50: low quality
1: Very little quality	1.00-1.50: Very little quality

4.5.3 Bring the questionnaire to the thesis advisor to review its accuracy and ensure that the questions are consistent with the objectives.

4.5.4 Use the thesis advisor's opinions to improve and correct shortcomings in the survey questions.

4.5.5 Expert review by 5 experts for a comprehensive review. Experts evaluate the quality of the tools. It considers factors such as the relevance of the content, clarity, and appropriateness of the language. Each expert is graded on the Item Objective Congruence Index (IOC) using the following criteria:

+1: If they find the questions consistent.

0: If they're not sure

-1: If they find the questions inconsistent.

Then, the data on the appropriateness of the interview questions were analyzed using the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) formula as follows.

$$IOC = \frac{\sum R}{N}$$

IOC: represents the Index of Item Objective Congruence.

$\sum R$: Sum of expert opinions denotes the cumulative score of expert opinions.

N: represents the number of experts.

The resulting index of item objective consistency was evaluated, and questions with an IOC equal to or greater than 0.5 are considered acceptable.

4.5.6 Review and correction: before using calculated values A thorough review and adjustments have been made to improve and improve the compliance index.

4.5.7 Testing with small groups: The revised set of questions was tested with small groups to assess effectiveness. Based on the results obtained, further improvements were made to improve the results.

4.5.8 Verification: before final use Meticulous checks are carried out to ensure the calculated index of the item's objective consistency.

4.5.9 Application in real environment: summary questionnaire set Updates will be provided throughout the entire process. Ready for use in real-world environments

4.6 Awareness assessment form for audience regarding Chinese local brands on social media platforms

The creation of the perception assessment form aims to assess viewers' perceptions of Chinese local brands on social media platforms.

4.6.1 Study and analyze key concepts and create audience perceptions about Chinese local brands on social media platforms.

4.6.2 Use the data to examine opinions in a structured opinion survey that addresses these 5 levels.

Table 3.5: Shows the five levels of estimation and the meaning of the average.

Approximately 5 levels.	Meaning of average
5: Best awareness	4.51-5.00: Best awareness
4: very well awareness	3.51-4.50: very well awareness
3: Moderately awareness	2.51-3.50: Moderately awareness
2: Less well awareness	1.51-2.50: Less well awareness
1: Very little is awareness well.	1.00-1.50: Very little is awareness well.

4.6.3 Bring the questionnaire to the thesis advisor to review its accuracy and ensure that the questions are consistent with the objectives.

4.6.4 Use the thesis advisor's opinions to improve and correct shortcomings in the survey questions.

4.6.5 Expert review by 5 experts for a comprehensive review. Experts evaluate the quality of the tools. It considers factors such as the relevance of the content, clarity, and appropriateness of the language. Each expert is graded on the Item Objective Congruence Index (IOC) using the following criteria:

+1: If they find the questions consistent.

0: If they're not sure

-1: If they find the questions inconsistent.

Then, the data on the appropriateness of the interview questions were analyzed using the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) formula as follows.

$$IOC = \frac{\sum R}{N}$$

IOC: represents the Index of Item Objective Congruence.

$\sum R$: Sum of expert opinions denotes the cumulative score of expert opinions.

N: represents the number of experts.

The resulting index of item objective consistency was evaluated. and questions with an IOC equal to or greater than 0.5 are considered acceptable.

4.6.6 Review and correction: before using calculated values A thorough review and adjustments have been made to improve and improve the compliance index.

4.6.7 Testing with small groups: The revised set of questions was tested with small groups to assess effectiveness. Based on the results obtained, further improvements were made to improve the results.

4.6.8 Verification: before final use Meticulous checks are carried out to ensure the calculated index of the item's objective consistency.

4.6.9 Application in real environment: summary questionnaire set Updates will be provided throughout the entire process. Ready for use in real-world environments

4.7 The form assesses audience satisfaction with video clips produced following a model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

The creation of this evaluation form aims to assess audience satisfaction with video clips created based on a model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

4.7.1 Study and analyze key concepts, evaluate audience satisfaction with video clips created according to a model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

4.7.2 Use the data to examine opinions in a structured opinion survey that addresses these 5 levels.

Table 3.6: Shows the five levels of estimation and the meaning of the average.

Approximately 5 levels.	Meaning of average
5: Most satisfied	4.51-5.00: Most satisfied
4: Very satisfied	3.51-4.50: Very satisfied
3: Moderately satisfied	2.51-3.50: Moderately satisfied
2: Less satisfied	1.51-2.50: Less satisfied
1: Very little satisfied	1.00-1.50: Very little satisfied

4.7.3 Bring the questionnaire to the thesis advisor to review its accuracy and ensure that the questions are consistent with the objectives.

4.7.4 Use the thesis advisor's opinions to improve and correct shortcomings in the survey questions.

4.7.5 Expert review by 5 experts for a comprehensive review. Experts evaluate the quality of the tools. It considers factors such as the relevance of the content, clarity, and appropriateness of the language. Each expert is graded on the Item Objective Congruence Index (IOC) using the following criteria:

+1: If they find the questions consistent.

0: If they're not sure

-1: If they find the questions inconsistent.

Then, the data on the appropriateness of the interview questions were analyzed using the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) formula as follows.

$$IOC = \frac{\sum R}{N}$$

IOC: represents the Index of Item Objective Congruence.

$\sum R$: Sum of expert opinions denotes the cumulative score of expert opinions.

N: represents the number of experts.

The resulting index of item objective consistency was evaluated, and questions with an IOC equal to or greater than 0.5 are considered acceptable.

4.7.6 Review and correction: before using calculated values A thorough review and adjustments have been made to improve and improve the compliance index.

4.7.7 Testing with small groups: The revised set of questions was tested with small groups to assess effectiveness. Based on the results obtained, further improvements were made to improve the results.

4.7.8 Verification: before final use Meticulous checks are carried out to ensure the calculated index of the item's objective consistency.

4.7.9 Application in real environment: summary questionnaire set Updates will be provided throughout the entire process. Ready for use in real-world environments

5. Results

5.1 The results obtained from the study and analysis of principles, theories and related research documents include:

5.1.1 Research objectives

5.1.2 Research scope

5.1.3 Research conceptual Framework

5.1.4 Population and Sample group

5.1.5 Research variables

5.2 Get the essential elements of an impactful communication model on social media platforms are as follows:

5.2.1 Market and target group analysis

5.2.2 Social media platforms

5.2.3 Product reliability

5.2.4 Content Creation Strategy

5.2.5 Marketing campaigns

5.2.6 Interactions

5.2.7 Collaborate with social media influencers

5.2.8 Measuring and analyzing results

5.2.9 Adjusting in response to change

5.2.10 Cultural Understanding

5.3 Get appropriate content related to local brands' products to communicate on social media platforms.

5.4 Get quality research tools that have been verified by experts.

Step 2 : Study the factors and components of a model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

1 . Study of effective communication factors on social media platforms to increase local brand awareness in China among 400 viewers on WeChat platform.

2. Researchers analyzed the key elements of effective brand communication on three international social media platforms: 1) Haidilao, 2) Little Sheep and 3) Xiabuxiabu, and in China, three sources: 1) Xiaolongkan, 2) Dezhuang, and and 3) Dalongyi has a total of 6 sources

3.Results

3.1 Know the important factors for successful communication of local product brands on social media platforms.

3.2 Results of a study of the key elements of effective brand communication models on social media platforms.

Step 3: Developing a model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

The development approach for Hou's Hotpot's social media influence model focused on systematically constructing each component through a series of well-defined and iterative steps. The aim was to develop a practical and data-driven model by building on empirical findings, theoretical insights, and expert feedback. The development process was conducted in multiple stages to ensure that each model

component—Content Strategy, Platform Usage, User Engagement, Data Analytics, and Influencer Partnerships—was effectively formulated, validated, and integrated to form a cohesive framework.

1. Step-by-Step Model Development Process

1.1 Data Collection and Analysis

1.1.1 Survey and Expert Interviews: The first step involved gathering data to understand the dynamics of social media influence for local food businesses. This began with administering a structured survey to 400 respondents, focusing on user behaviors, platform preferences, content interaction, and perceptions of brand awareness. Simultaneously, in-depth interviews were conducted with five experts for each of the eight topics related to social media marketing, such as content strategy, platform usage, and influencer collaboration. This comprehensive data collection ensured that both consumer perspectives and expert opinions were thoroughly understood.

1.1.2 Identifying Key Factors: The collected data was analyzed to identify key factors that influence consumer perceptions and behaviors on social media. For instance, survey results indicated that video content was highly effective in engaging users, while expert interviews emphasized the importance of influencer authenticity in brand promotion. These key findings formed the foundation of the model components.

1.2 Theoretical Integration

1.2.1 Linking Data to Theoretical Frameworks: The insights gained from the data collection were integrated with established theories to form a robust conceptual foundation. For example, the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) was used to explain user motivations for engaging with various content types, while Social Identity Theory helped to frame community-building strategies. Customer Engagement Theory was applied to understand how personalized content impacts user interaction, and Diffusion of Innovations Theory guided the selection of influencers to promote brand awareness.

1.2.2 Application to Model Components: Each theory was systematically linked to the model components. For instance, UGT informed the Content Strategy by highlighting which types of content fulfill user needs, while Social Identity Theory shaped the User Engagement strategies by focusing on creating a sense of belonging among customers.

1.3 Component Design and Refinement

1.3.1 Initial Component Drafting: The initial drafting phase began with translating the key insights from data collection and theoretical integration into actionable components of the model. For instance, survey data indicated that users showed a strong preference for diverse content formats, such as videos, infographics, and live streams. Based on this, the Content Strategy component was drafted to include a mix of content types aimed at different user segments. Similarly, the

Platform Usage component was designed to leverage WeChat's multifunctional capabilities, such as its Moments feature, official accounts, and mini-programs, to maximize engagement. The User Engagement component initially focused on direct communication tactics, such as responding to comments and utilizing WeChat groups to foster community interaction.

Table 3.7: Initial Drafting Focus and Supporting Data for Key Social Media Components

Component	Initial Drafting Focus	Supporting Data
Content Strategy	Mix of content types (videos, infographics, live streams) aimed at different user segments	Survey data: 68% of users preferred videos
Platform Usage	Leveraging WeChat features like Moments, official accounts, and mini-programs to boost engagement	Expert interviews: Highlighted WeChat's versatility
User Engagement	Direct communication tactics, responding to comments, utilizing WeChat groups for community interaction	Survey data: 72% valued direct brand interaction

1.3.2 Expert Feedback and Iteration: The drafted components were reviewed by experts from various fields, including social media marketing, consumer behavior, and brand management. Each expert provided detailed feedback on the practicality of the proposed components. For example, experts suggested adding a Personalization Element to the User Engagement component, noting that users are more likely to engage with brands that offer personalized experiences. To implement this, we revised the engagement tactics to include personalized messaging campaigns, targeted offers, and customer segmentation for tailored content delivery. In the Influencer Partnerships component, experts highlighted the potential of micro-influencers, prompting us to add a framework for identifying and collaborating with local, niche influencers who resonate well with the target audience.

Table 3.8: Feedback Received and Revisions Made for User Engagement & Influencer Partnerships

Component	Feedback Received	Changes Made
User Engagement	Add personalization to increase engagement	Introduced personalized messaging campaigns
Influencer Partnerships	Highlight the potential of micro-influencers	Added framework for local, niche influencer collaboration

1.3.3 Iterative Refinement: After incorporating the expert feedback, multiple iterations were conducted to refine each component further. The Content Strategy was expanded to include a calendar system for scheduling content across different formats and platforms, ensuring consistency and effective resource allocation. We also introduced A/B Testing as part of the Data Analytics component, allowing the marketing team to test different content strategies and identify what resonated most with the audience. For Platform Usage, iterations included adjustments to focus on peak engagement times identified through survey data, such as evenings and weekends, to optimize post scheduling. In addition, experts suggested including sentiment analysis in the Data Analytics component to better gauge audience reactions, which led to the integration of social listening tools to monitor brand sentiment and adjust strategies in real-time.

Table 3.9: Iterative Updates and Justifications for Content Strategy, Platform Usage, and Data Analytics

Iteration Step	Change Made	Reason for Change
Content Strategy	Added content calendar for consistent scheduling	To ensure consistency and resource allocation
Data Analytics	Introduced A/B Testing to evaluate content effectiveness	To identify which strategies resonated most
Platform Usage	Adjusted post scheduling to focus on peak engagement times	Based on survey data of user activity patterns
Data Analytics	Included sentiment analysis via social listening tools	To gauge audience reactions in real-time

These concrete steps helped ensure that each component was not only theoretically sound but also practically relevant and adaptable to the evolving needs of Hou's Hotpot's target audience. By iteratively refining each element, the model became a robust tool tailored to the unique dynamics of social media marketing in the local food industry.

Step 4: Produce video clips according to a model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China developed

1. The content used in the video clip is Hou, a local hot pot brand in Shijiazhuang. Hebei Province faces communication problems on social media.
2. Produce video clips to communicate awareness of local brands on the social media platform WeChat according to the developed format.

2.1 Analyze 5 successful food video clips

Through multi-dimensional analysis and benchmark cases disassembly, the underlying logic of the success of the hot pot industry is revealed - brands need to find unique fulcrums in products, services, culture, and models, and form differentiated competitiveness through systematic expression. This framework is not only applicable to the catering industry, but also has universal reference value for the positioning, communication and cultural shaping of other consumer brands.

2.1.1 Brand Representative: The selected Haidilao, Chongqing Dezhuang, Xiabu Xiabu, Xiaolongkan and Banu Maodu hotpot have outstanding performance in service, regional characteristics, dining mode, cultural integration, and product quality. They are typical representatives of different sub-sectors of the hot pot industry. Analyzing them can fully cover the diversified development paths of the hot pot industry.

2.1.2 Market influence: These five brands have many stores and a huge consumer group across the country and even around the world, with high popularity and market share. Their business strategies and brand building methods have an important impact on the development of the industry. Analyzing their successful experiences has practical guiding significance for Hou's hot pot brand.

2.1.3 Unique business characteristics: Each brand has unique business highlights, including Haidilao's service, Chongqing Dezhuang's regional culture, Xiabu Xiabu's one-person food model, Xiaolongkan's cultural integration, and Banu's quality focus. Analyzing these characteristics from multiple aspects can provide reference for other brands in differentiated competition, brand positioning, cultural shaping, product innovation, etc.

2.1.4 Comprehensive analysis of brand elements: Through the analysis of content presentation, theme expression, visual effects, cultural connotation and reasons for selection, the logic behind brand success can be comprehensively analyzed from multiple angles such as brand communication, market positioning,

consumer experience, and cultural value, and provides a systematic learning template for other brands.

Table 3.10: Comprehensive analysis of brand elements

Sample	Content Presentation	Theme Expression	Visual Effects	Cultural Connotation	Reasons for Selection
Haidilao hot pot: A Hot Pot Feast with Service First	Comprehensive showcase of Haidilao's unique features: signature dishes like shrimp paste and tender beef; meticulous service scenarios such as birthday celebrations for customers, free manicures/shoe shines, timely replacement of hot towels; and customers' joyful expressions while dining, creating a vivid portrayal of the dining experience.	Centered on "Ultimate Service, Enjoying Hot Pot Delights," integrating service with cuisine to convey that Haidilao offers not just food but a holistic experience of service and a joyful atmosphere.	Bright and warm-toned visuals create a cozy, home-like ambiance. Ingredients are vibrant and artfully plated; service staff's enthusiastic smiles and skilled actions are captured clearly, delivering strong visual impact.	Embodies the service culture of "The customer is God," making consumers feel respected and cared for, while blending "family culture" to foster a relaxed and pleasant dining environment.	Haidilao is a service benchmark. Analyzing its videos offers insights for other brands to elevate service experiences and build service-oriented cultures.
Chongqing De Zhuang Hot Pot: A Fiery Legend of Authentic Sichuan Flavor	Focuses on Chongqing hot pot's essence: highlights like Dezhuang tripe and nine-square grid hot pot base. Shows the journey of ingredients from fresh sourcing to	Theme: "Preserving Authentic Chongqing Hot Pot, Savoring Spicy Freshness," emphasizing adherence to traditional	Warm tones like red and yellow dominate. The glossy red soup base and bubbling oil create visual intensity.	Reflects Chongqing's unique dock culture, showcasing locals' bold and passionate character, and conveying the cultural essence of	As a representative of Chongqing hot pot, it aids in exploring regional hot pot culture and promotional strategies.

Sample	Content Presentation	Theme Expression	Visual Effects	Cultural Connotation	Reasons for Selection
	<p>serving, alongside chefs hand-stirring spices and meticulously brewing the soup base.</p>	<p>Chongqing hot pot techniques and authentic flavor presentation.</p>	<p>Close-ups highlight the crispness of tripe and freshness of ingredients.</p>	<p>Chongqing hot pot: spicy, aromatic, and inclusive.</p>	
<p>Xiabuxiabu: A Trendy and Convenient Solo Dining Experience</p>	<p>Highlights the "one person, one pot" dining format, diverse single-serving sets with multiple soup bases, fresh vegetables, and specialty meats. Also depicts customers enjoying meals alone in a relaxed setting.</p>	<p>Theme: "Convenient Trend, The New Wave of Solo Hot Pot Dining," catering to fast-paced lifestyles and consumers' demand for personalized, hassle-free dining.</p>	<p>Clean, minimalist visuals with harmonious color schemes. Compact hot pots and neatly arranged ingredients reflect a simple yet quality-driven style, aligning with younger audiences' aesthetics.</p>	<p>Promotes independent and free-spirited dining culture, breaking the stereotype that hot pot is only for group gatherings, adapting to modern young lifestyles.</p>	<p>Pioneers the solo hot pot model, offering insights into niche market positioning and innovative brand development.</p>
<p>Shoo Loong Kan Hot Pot : The Charm of Hot Pot Blending Tradition and Modernity</p>	<p>Features traditional decor elements like wooden furniture and carved doors/windows; classic dishes such as spicy beef and fresh duck blood. Includes diners praising the</p>	<p>Theme: "Preserving Classic Sichuan Flavors, Reimagining Modern Hot Pot Trends," balancing heritage of traditional</p>	<p>Chinese-style aesthetics with warm yellow lighting create a welcoming atmosphere. Close-ups highlight</p>	<p>Integrates Sichuan's traditional culture with modern fashion, respecting heritage while embracing innovation.</p>	<p>Excels in cultural preservation and innovation, offering lessons for brands to retain traditional flavors while</p>

Sample	Content Presentation	Theme Expression	Visual Effects	Cultural Connotation	Reasons for Selection
	food and recommending it to others.	Sichuan hot pot with innovations in ambiance and service.	dishes' colors and textures; wide shots showcase bustling dining scenes, blending dynamic and static elements.		incorporating modern elements.
Banoo Hotpot : A Quality-Focused Tripe Hot Pot Model	Spotlights the signature tripe, detailing its sourcing standards, proprietary tenderizing techniques, and cooking methods. Also showcases premium side dishes like wild mushroom soup base.	Theme: "Quality First, The Tripe Hot Pot Expert," emphasizing relentless pursuit of ingredient quality and expertise in tripe hot pot.	Clean, minimalist visuals. Close-ups reveal the tripe's texture and freshness. The wild mushroom soup base's color and ingredient textures are vividly presented.	Embodies craftsmanship, meticulous ingredient selection, and refined techniques, conveying the philosophy that "good ingredients create great flavors."	Focuses on product quality and specialty development, providing experience for brands to highlight core products and build professional reputations.

2.2 The significance, importance, steps and evaluation principles of making video clips

2.2.1 Core significance: convey brand value and seize user minds

1) Highlight uniqueness and shape memory points: Through videos, the differentiated advantages of Hou's hot pot are visually displayed, such as the secret soup base of the ancestral recipe and exclusive dishes, allowing the audience to quickly remember the brand's characteristics.

2) Show the unique charm of Hou's hot pot through video, enhance brand awareness, and attract more customers.

2.2.2 Importance: Coping with market competition and accurately attracting traffic and transformation

1) Break through homogeneous competition: The hot pot industry is highly internal and promotional videos need to focus on core competitiveness.

2) Accurately reach the target customer group: through the platform's algorithm recommendation, targeted delivery to local diners, food bloggers or "hot pot lovers" label users, reducing customer acquisition costs.

2.2.3 Long-term value: brand asset precipitation and user stickiness

1) Content reuse, reducing marketing costs: Video materials can be disassembled into short videos, posters, and official account tweets, and are continuously used for holiday promotions and new product releases, extending the communication cycle.

2) Cultivate loyal customers: Regularly release "behind-the-scenes stories" series (such as food tracing and chef interviews) to enhance brand transparency and build a sense of trust. The participation of old customers in interactions (such as submitting stories to eat hot pot) can enhance the sense of belonging.

3) Respond to the crisis and strengthen reputation: If there is a public opinion on food safety, you can quickly display the kitchen's clear file and quality inspection process through video to reshape consumer confidence.

Table 3.11: Production Process of Prototype Video Promoting Local Food

Phase	Specific Steps	Detailed Content
Pre-planning	Define Objectives	Determine the core objectives of the video: brand awareness, new product promotion, or attracting in-store customers?
	Analyze Target Audience	Identify key audience characteristics: age, gender, interests, consumption habits, etc.
	Refine Core Message	Highlight Hou's Hot Pot's unique selling points (USPs).
	Develop Creative Direction	Define the video style (e.g., emotional storytelling, fast-paced montage).
	Write Script	Create a shot-by-shot script, specifying visuals, dialogues, sound effects, and duration for each scene.
Shooting Preparation	Assemble Team	Assign roles: director, cinematographer, lighting technician, editor, etc. Hire professionals or freelancers if needed.

Phase	Specific Steps	Detailed Content
	Prepare Equipment	Ensure availability of high-definition cameras, lighting, tripods, microphones, etc.
	Select Location	Finalize shooting locations (e.g., restaurant interior, kitchen).
	Prepare Props & Ingredients	Ensure fresh ingredients, beautifully arranged dishes, and props that align with brand identity.
Shooting Execution	Film Food Shots	Use close-ups to highlight ingredient textures and the boiling hot pot base.
	Capture Brand Elements	Showcase brand logos, chefs' cooking processes, etc., to reinforce brand recognition.
	Record Sound Effects & Voiceover	Capture ambient sounds (e.g., boiling broth) and record voiceovers.
Post-production	Edit Footage	Assemble raw footage into a cohesive video based on the script, ensuring smooth pacing and continuity.
	Add Effects & Subtitles	Incorporate dynamic effects (e.g., ingredients "flying" into the pot) and subtitles (e.g., dish names).
	Integrate Music & Sound Effects	Select background music (e.g., upbeat or warm tones) and layer ambient sound effects.
	Color Grading & Optimization	Adjust color tones for consistency (e.g., warm hues to enhance appetite).
Release & Promotion	Choose Distribution Platforms	Select platforms based on target audience: WeChat Official Account (long-form video).
	Design Cover & Title	Create eye-catching thumbnails and concise, impactful titles.
	Launch Marketing Campaigns	Pair video release with promotions (e.g., discounts, giveaways) to drive conversions.
	Monitor Performance	Track metrics: views, likes, comments, in-store conversion rates, etc., to refine future content.
Continuous Optimization	Collect Feedback	Gather audience opinions via comment sections and customer interviews.
	Iterate Content	Adjust video style and distribution strategies based on data and feedback.

2.2.4 Production steps

2.2.5 Evaluation principles

1) Exposure index

1.1) Video playback volume: directly reflects how many users have watched the Hou's hot pot promotional video. The higher the playback volume, the wider the potential audience reached by the video, and the more people know the brand. For example, if the playback volume reaches 500 times within a week of release, it means that at least 500 people have initially been exposed to the brand information of Hou's hot pot. By comparing with the same type of high-quality hot pot promotional videos, it can be evaluated whether the playback volume is at a good level.

1.2) Public account reading volume and exposure volume: analyze the reading volume of the article containing the video after the public account article is pushed, and the exposure number (number of displays) counted by the public account background. The reading volume reflects the user's interest in the pushed content, and the exposure volume shows the number of times the video may be seen in theory, which helps to understand the dissemination coverage of the video on the public account platform.

2) Interactive index

2.1) Number of likes: Users like to express their love and recognition of the video content. A high number of likes means that the video content has resonated with the audience to a certain extent. For example, if the number of likes reaches 10% of the playback volume, it means that the video content is of high quality and can obtain positive feedback from a considerable number of viewers, thereby improving the brand's favorability in the hearts of users.

2.2) Number of comments: Comments are an important way for users to express their views and emotions. By analyzing the content of comments, we can understand the user's concerns and opinions on Hou's Hot Pot. Positive comments, such as praise for the freshness of hot pot ingredients, help to improve the brand image; negative comments can be used as a direction for improvement. A large number of comments indicates that the video has stimulated the user's desire to discuss and increased the interaction between the brand and users.

3.3) Number of shares: Sharing behavior means that users are willing to actively spread the video to others, which is the key to brand word-of-mouth communication. A large number of shares means that the video content is attractive and has communication value. Users are willing to recommend Hou's Hot Pot to their relatives and friends, which can effectively expand the brand's communication range and increase brand awareness.

3) Retention rate indicators

3.1) Average viewing time: reflects the user's concentration and interest in the video content. If the average viewing time is close to the total video

length, it means that the user is attracted by the video content and has watched most of the content in full; if the viewing time is short, it may be that the beginning of the video is not attractive enough, or the content is long and boring. By optimizing the content and rhythm, increasing the average viewing time will help deepen the user's acceptance of brand information.

3.2) Bounce rate: refers to the proportion of users who leave after watching the beginning of the video for a very short time (such as the first 5 seconds). A high bounce rate indicates that the beginning of the video fails to capture the user's attention. It is necessary to adjust the opening content of the video and use more attractive pictures or copywriting to quickly attract users to continue watching and enhance the effective communication of brand information.

4) Conversion effect indicators

4.1) The number of public account followers: observe the number of new fans of the public account within a period of time after the promotional video is released. New fans mean that there are more users who have a sustained interest in the Hou's Hot Pot brand, which can evaluate the effectiveness of the video in attracting potential customers to pay attention to the brand. For example, if the public account gained 200 new followers due to the release of a video within a week, it means that the video successfully attracted some viewers to learn more about the brand.

4.2) Online activity participation rate: If online activities are set up in the video or public account article, such as lucky draws, voting, and coupon collection, the proportion of users participating in the activities is counted. A high participation rate indicates that the video successfully guides users to participate in the interaction, promotes the connection between users and the brand, and has a positive effect on improving brand awareness and promoting consumption conversion.

2.3 Video prototype production process

2.3.1 Survey question analysis

1) Directly judge the exposure of the promotional video. If the proportion of respondents who have watched the video is low, it may mean that the video push channel and promotion method need to be optimized, and it is necessary to explore how to let more target audiences get in touch with the video.

2) Understand the dissemination channels of the video. If most people see it through the official account push, it means that the official account is effective as a dissemination channel; if there are many other sources, such as sharing in Moments, reprinting on other platforms, etc., you can study the characteristics of these channels in depth and increase the promotion efforts in related channels.

3) Clarify the appeal of different content sections to the audience. If most people choose "the process of frying the base material with spices", it means that the display of the base material production has successfully attracted attention, and the characteristics of the base material can be further explored in subsequent publicity;

if the "hot pot scene" is popular, consider creating more consumption scenes and showing the dining atmosphere.

4) Evaluate the impact of the video on the brand impression. If the options of "more interested" and "feeling better quality" are selected in large numbers, it means that the video has successfully improved the brand's attractiveness and quality image; if the proportion of "no change" is high, it is necessary to reflect whether the video content lacks highlights and appeal.

5) Measure the impact of the video on consumer willingness. If most respondents say they would consider it, it means that the video has a positive effect in promoting consumer conversion; if most people choose no, we need to analyze the reasons in depth, whether the video is not attractive enough or there are other factors that affect consumer choice.

6) Judge whether the video is conducive to word-of-mouth communication. If most people say they would recommend it, it means that the video content has resonated and the brand image has been recognized; if the proportion of people who would not recommend it is high, we need to pay attention to the source of negative impressions of the brand in consumers' minds and make timely improvements.

7) Collect direct feedback from the audience to understand their expectations and needs. If someone suggests adding a price introduction for the dishes, it means that consumers are concerned about the price factor; if it is suggested to enrich the story of the video, more plot elements can be incorporated into the subsequent production.

2.3.2 Core Demand Refinement

1) Show unique flavor: The taste of hot pot is the key to attracting customers, and the process of frying the base is an important part of showing the unique flavor. Through high-definition lenses and close-ups, the types, colors, and textures of spices, the skilled frying movements of the chef, and the process of the base gradually blending in the pot and emitting fragrance are carefully displayed, allowing the audience to intuitively feel the unique formula and exquisite production process of Hou's hot pot base, understand the source of its unique flavor, and thus form a deep impression of the brand.

2) Highlight the quality of ingredients: Consumers are increasingly concerned about the freshness and safety of ingredients. Various fresh ingredients are presented with exquisite plating and close-up lenses to show the color, texture, and fullness of the ingredients, such as bright red beef, crispy vegetables, and lively seafood, etc., to convey the message that Hou's hot pot strictly controls the quality of ingredients, so that the audience believes that they can enjoy high-quality food here and enhance the credibility of the brand in the minds of consumers.

3) Enrich the taste experience: A variety of dipping sauces can bring consumers a rich taste experience. Show the ingredients of different dipping sauces,

introduce the unique taste and preparation methods of dipping sauces, such as spicy and fragrant oil sauce, sweet and sour seafood sauce, etc., to stimulate the audience's curiosity and desire to try, so that they realize that Hou's hot pot is not only delicious, but also the dipping sauce can add more fun to the meal.

4) Create a consumption scene: The scene of hot pot is full of life and social atmosphere, and is an important carrier for conveying the emotional value of the brand. By showing the happy pictures of people sitting together and enjoying hot pot in different scenes such as family dinners, friends gatherings, and couples dating, the audience will feel involved, think of the good times of sharing food with relatives and friends, and feel that Hou's hot pot is a good choice for social gatherings, enhancing the brand's attractiveness and affinity.

5) Adaptive communication platform: WeChat public accounts have a large user group and diverse content consumption habits. Make videos suitable for dissemination on official accounts, control the video length within the acceptable range for users (generally 3-5 minutes is more appropriate), optimize the video format and picture quality to suit mobile screen viewing, write attractive titles and copy to guide users to click to watch and share, and use the social attributes of official accounts to achieve widespread dissemination of videos, thereby effectively enhancing brand awareness.

2.3.3 Common Problem Avoidance Strategies

1) Content Level

1.1) Problem: The information is complicated and the key points are not highlighted. The promotional video wants to show the spice frying, ingredients, dipping sauces and hot pot scenes, which makes the content lengthy and difficult for the audience to grasp the core. They may not be able to effectively remember the characteristics of Hou's hot pot.

1.2) Strategy: Clarify the main line of the video, with "unique and delicious hot pot experience" as the core. For example, the opening emphasizes the unique base recipe of Hou's hot pot, and other content is developed around the base, such as how fresh ingredients can be matched with the base to create a good taste, how dipping sauces can enhance the taste experience brought by the base, and the hot pot scene focuses on showing customers' enjoyment of this unique taste. Streamline the content according to importance and logical order, and highlight key information.

1.3) Problem: The content lacks depth and is only a surface display. For example, simply presenting the spice frying, but not introducing the unique combination of spices and the impact on the taste; showing the freshness of the ingredients, but not mentioning the source of the ingredients, quality control and other points that consumers care about.

1.4) Strategy: Dig deeper into the content. When showing how spices are fried, use the narration to introduce the function of each spice and the

unique ratio of Hou's hotpot. When showing ingredients, use subtitles or interviews to introduce that the ingredients are purchased from well-known places of origin and the strict inspection process, etc., to increase the depth and credibility of the content.

2) Visual level

2.1) Problem: Poor picture quality affects the viewing experience. Poor shooting equipment, bad lighting, rough post-production, etc. may lead to blurred pictures, dim colors, and stiff editing, which will give the audience a negative impression of the brand.

2.2) Strategy: Use professional shooting equipment to ensure clear and stable pictures; use lighting reasonably to highlight the color of ingredients and the heat of the base ingredients; invite a professional post-production team to perform fine editing to ensure natural and smooth transitions, and add appropriate filters to enhance the color saturation and overall texture of the picture.

2.3) Problem: The use of lenses is monotonous and lacks appeal. Fixed lenses are used throughout the process, and there is no multi-angle switching such as Close-up, Wide Shot, Medium Shot, etc., which cannot fully show the charm of hot pot making and dining scenes.

2.4) Strategy: Enrich the lens language, use Close-up to show the details of spices and the texture of ingredients; Medium Shot presents the frying process and the arrangement of ingredients; Wide Shot shows the lively hot pot scene and the environment in the store. Use dynamic lenses, such as following the chef's frying movements, to increase the dynamic and viewing of the video.

3) Communication level

3.1) Problem: Ignoring the characteristics of the WeChat official account platform, the communication effect is not good. Video production and promotion are not carried out according to the reading habits and content preferences of the official account users, such as the video duration is too long and the title copy is not attractive, resulting in low click-through rate.

3.2) Strategy: Study the user portraits and reading habits of WeChat official accounts, and control the video duration to 3-5 minutes; write attractive titles and copy, incorporate hot topics and interesting words to stimulate user curiosity; use the interactive functions of the official account, such as message draws, comment interactions, etc., to increase user participation and sharing enthusiasm.

3.3) Problem: Lack of multi-channel communication and limited audience range. Only relying on WeChat official accounts to publish videos, without combining other social media platforms or offline channels for promotion, limiting brand exposure.

3.4) Strategy: Formulate a multi-channel communication strategy, publish videos simultaneously on social media platforms such as Weibo, Douyin, Xiaohongshu, etc., and adjust the video format and copy according to the

characteristics of each platform; post video posters and play videos in offline stores to guide customers to follow WeChat official accounts to watch videos and expand the audience range.

2.3.4 Video Script

Table 3.12: Video Script

Chapter	Shot Number	Visual Content	Shot Type	Notes
Spice Universe	1	Various spices	Wide Shot	Lighting effects
	2	Dynamic chili peppers	Close-up	
	3	Dynamic Sichuan peppercorns	Close-up	
	4	Assorted spices	Medium Shot	
Base Awakening	5	Stir-frying chili, cumin, and Sichuan peppercorns	Close-up	
	6	Sizzling spices tossed in a wok	Close-up	Sizzling sound
	7	Hot pot base	Close-up	Highlight steaming effect
	8	Adding water to the base	Close-up	Boiling sound effect
Ingredient Symphony	9	Dynamic white shrimp	Close-up	
	10	Fried and sautéed shrimp	Close-up	
	11	Freshly sliced beef arranged on a plate	Close-up	Meat smoke effect
	12	Texture of lamb rolls	Close-up	
	13	Original-cut fatty beef	Close-up	
	14	Meat being cooked in the pot	Close-up	Time captions

Chapter	Shot Number	Visual Content	Shot Type	Notes
	15	Shrimp paste	Close-up	
	16	Retrieving tripe from water	Close-up	
	17	Tripe bouncing in boiling water	Close-up	
	18	Hand-torn tripe	Medium Shot	
	19	Dynamic lettuce	Close-up	
	20	Potato transforming into fries	Close-up	
	21	Slicing cauliflower	Close-up	
	22	Dynamic corn	Close-up	
	23	Retrieving seaweed sprouts from water	Close-up	
	24	Arranging tofu rolls with chopsticks	Close-up	
	25	Static enoki mushrooms	Close-up	
	26	Dynamic shiitake and mushrooms	Close-up	
	27	Static "King" chicken nuggets	Close-up	
	28	Dynamic fries	Close-up	
	29	Glutinous rice cake drizzled with brown sugar	Close-up	
	30	Static duck intestine, gizzard, fish, etc.	Close-up	
	31	Static handheld tripe	Medium Shot	
	32	Plated shrimp paste,	Close-up	

Chapter	Shot Number	Visual Content	Shot Type	Notes
		tripe, and braised dishes		
	33	Ingredients on the dining table	Wide Shot	Rotating camera effect
Dipping Lab	34	Assorted static dipping sauces	Wide Shot	
	35	Mixing dipping sauce	Close-up	
	36	Dry and wet dipping sauces	Wide Shot	
	37	Dipping ingredients into sauces	Close-up	
Boiling Scene	38	Boiling hot pot	Wide Shot/Close-up	Boiling sound effect
	39	Adding ingredients to the pot	Close-up	
	40	Retrieving ingredients from the pot	Close-up	
	41	Boiling hot pot	Close-up/ Wide Shot	Boiling sound effect



2.3.5 Storyboarding

1) Goal: Visualize the script to ensure smooth filming.

2) Method: Draw the screen of each scene using sketches or digital

tools

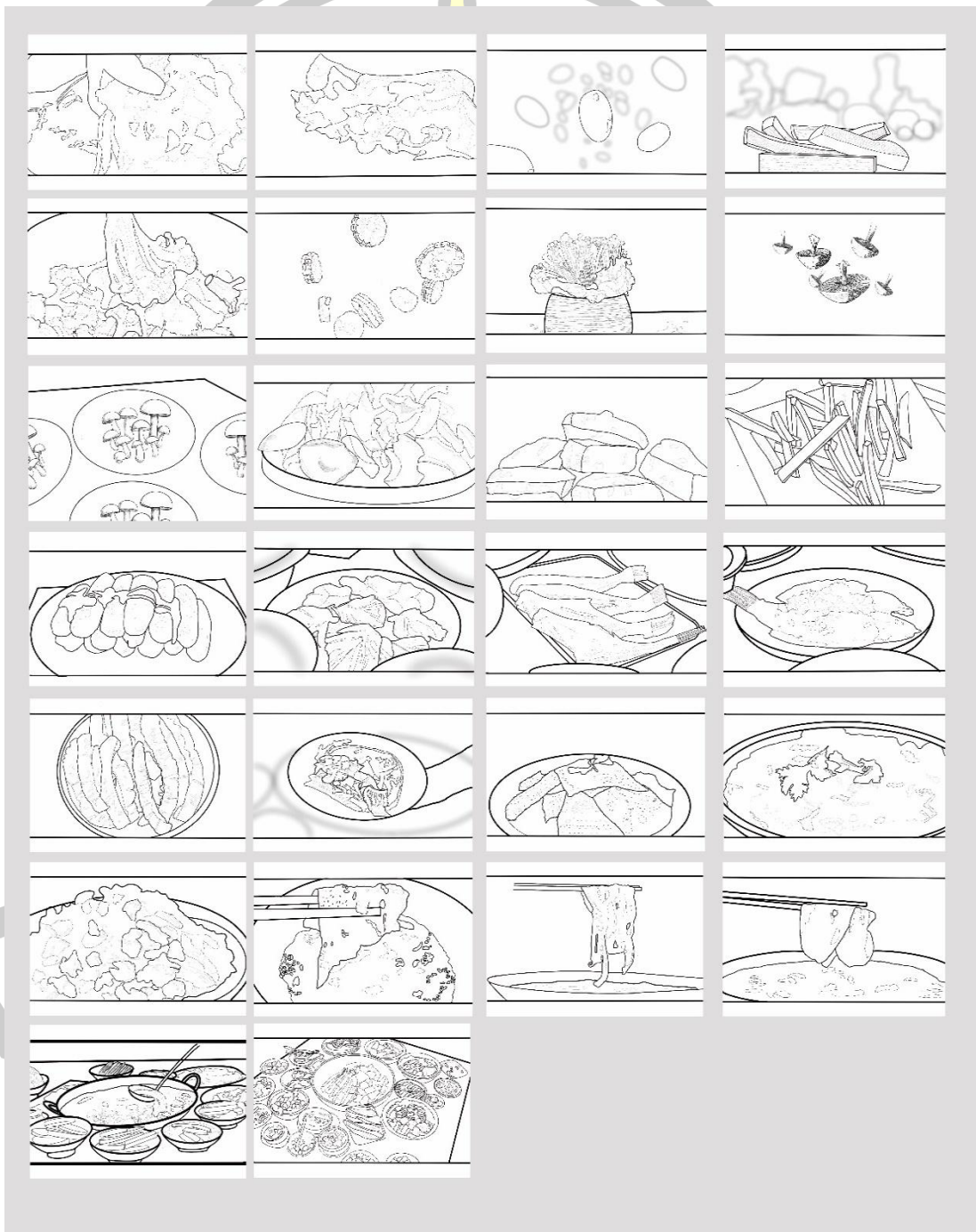


Figure 3.5 Draw the screen short

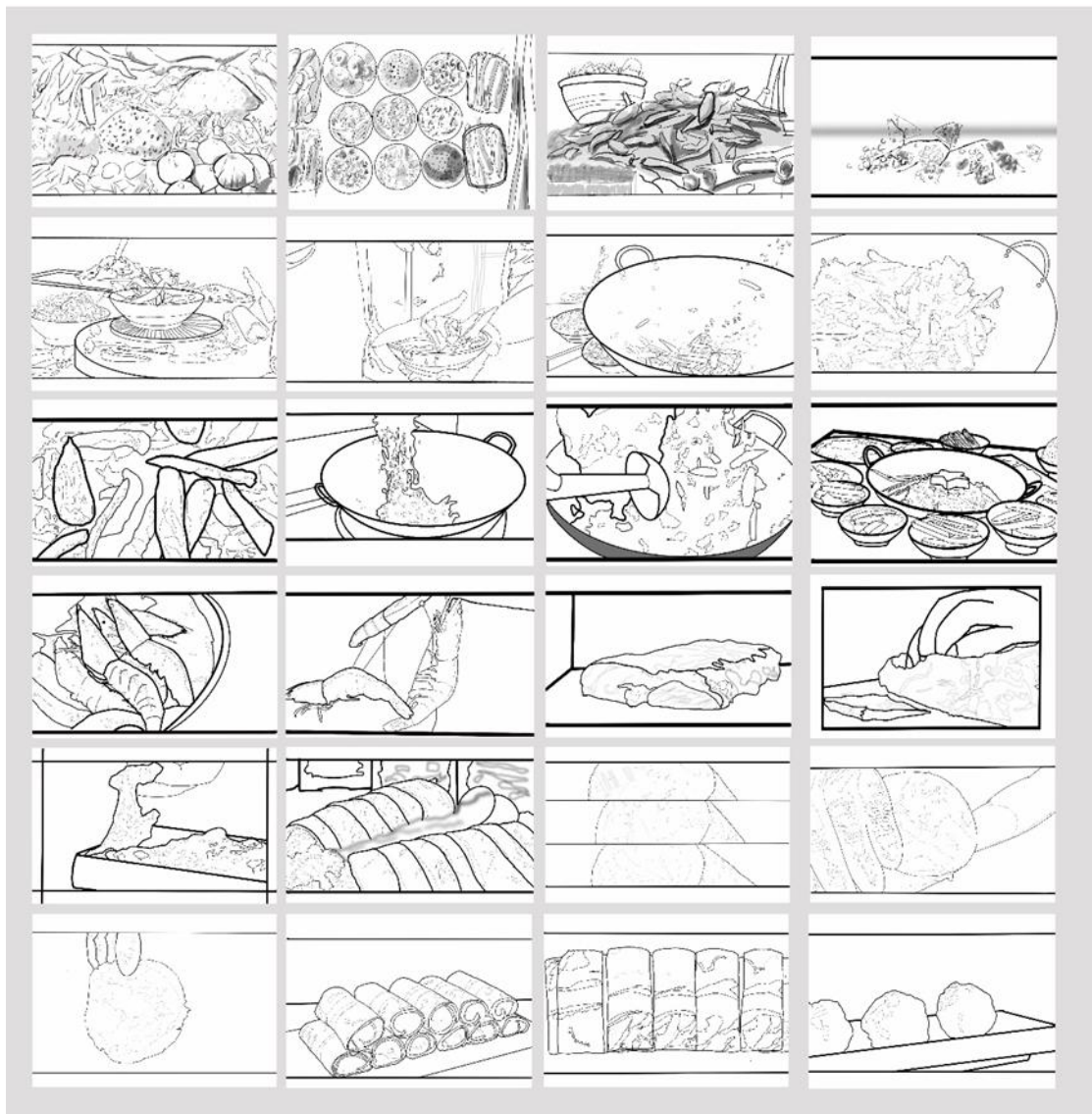
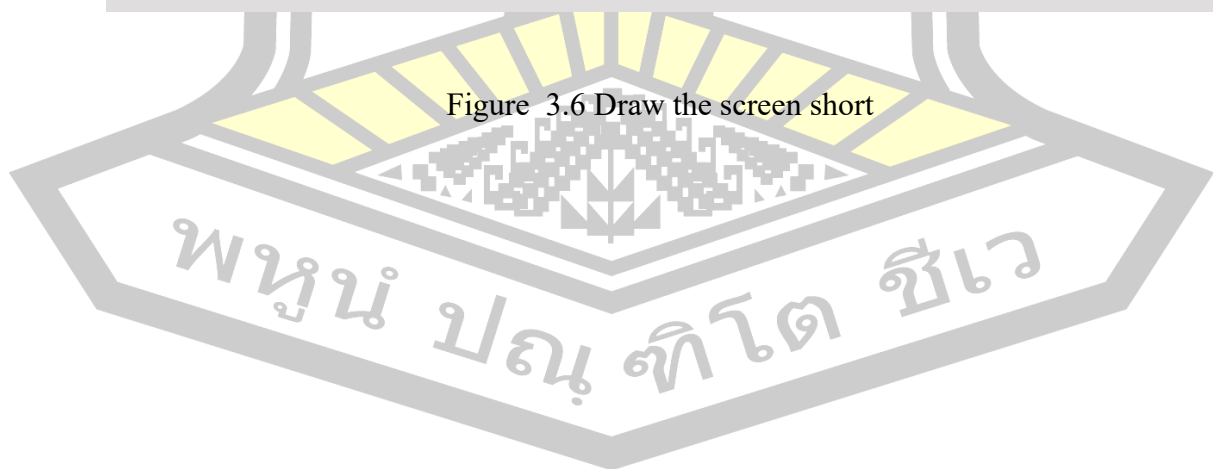


Figure 3.6 Draw the screen short



2.4 Video prototype production process



Figure 3.7 Production process

2.5. Post-production process of video prototype

2.5.1 Material organization: select the best shots and store them by category.

2.5.1 Editing: edit according to the script and storyboard, and add transition effects.

2.5.2 Sound effects and subtitles: add background music, sound effects and subtitles.

2.5.3 Color grading: adjust the color of the picture to enhance the visual appeal.

2.5.4 Output and publishing: export the video and publish it to the platform.

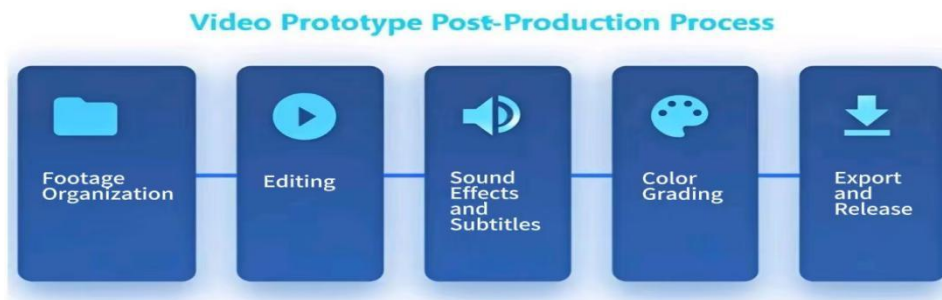


Figure 3.8 Post-production process of video prototype

3. Evaluate the quality of the video clips by 5 experts.
4. Improve and edit the video clip according to the experts' suggestions.
5. Results: The quality of video clips has been developed according to the

model.

Step 5: Experiment with A model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

1. Prepare video clips to distribute on social media platforms.
2. Publish video clips on the WeChat platform for 1 month.
3. Receive feedback such as views, comments, like, share from video viewers
4. Results: Try using the model

Step 6: Assess the effectiveness of utilizing a model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

1. Audience awareness of local Chinese brands on 400 social media platforms assessed online.
2. Viewer satisfaction with video clips produced according to effective communication formats on social media platforms to raise brand awareness among 400 Chinese locals evaluated online.
3. Analyze data
5. Summarize results, discuss and make recommendations for further research.
6. Results
 - 6.1 Audience awareness of Chinese local brands on social media platforms
 - 6.2 Audience satisfaction with video clips produced following a model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

3.7 Research data collection

The data collection process in this study was meticulously planned and executed to ensure the reliability and validity of the results. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of social media on the perception of local food companies in China, particularly focusing on the WeChat platform. The data collection process involved three key stages:

3.7.1 Quantitative Data Collection: Surveys

The first stage of data collection involved administering structured surveys to a sample of 400 WeChat users. The survey was designed to capture user perceptions of Hou's Hotpot, a local food brand in China, as well as their engagement behaviors and attitudes towards social media marketing. Participants were selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation across different demographic segments, such as age, gender, occupation, and education level. The survey included questions on multiple dimensions, such as brand awareness, content preferences, engagement frequency, and the perceived influence of social media content. Likert-scale questions were employed to quantify users' attitudes, making it possible to perform statistical analyses on the collected data.

The survey was conducted online using a survey distribution tool integrated into the WeChat platform, allowing participants to complete it at their convenience. This method helped in maximizing response rates and ensuring that the data collected was relevant to users familiar with the platform. The resulting quantitative data was compiled and analyzed to determine key trends and correlations related to brand perception and user engagement.

3.7.2 Qualitative Data Collection: Expert Interviews

The second stage involved conducting in-depth interviews with experts in social media marketing, consumer behavior, and the local food industry. A total of eight different groups of experts, with five experts in each group, were interviewed, with each group focusing on specific research themes such as brand engagement, influencer strategies, content development, and data analytics. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for open-ended responses while ensuring that key topics were consistently covered across interviews. This approach provided rich qualitative insights into the nuances of social media influence and helped to validate and refine the survey findings.

The interviews were conducted either in person or via video calls, depending on the availability and preference of the experts. Each interview was recorded and transcribed, followed by thematic analysis to identify key patterns and recurring themes. These insights provided a deeper understanding of the mechanisms behind the influence of social media, particularly the components of the influence model that are most impactful for local food brands like Hou's Hotpot.

3.7.3 Data Triangulation and Integration

In the final stage, the quantitative and qualitative data were integrated to develop a comprehensive understanding of the research objectives. Data triangulation was employed to cross-verify the results obtained from surveys and expert interviews, enhancing the reliability of the findings. The survey data provided quantitative evidence of the relationships between social media engagement and brand perception, while the expert interviews offered qualitative context and depth, explaining the underlying reasons behind these relationships.

The integration of both types of data was crucial for the development of the social media influence model. The survey results highlighted the statistical significance of various factors, such as user interaction and content preferences, while the qualitative interviews helped in understanding the broader context, offering insights into how these factors work in practical scenarios. The collected data, both numerical and narrative, formed the foundation for creating, refining, and validating the social media influence model aimed at enhancing the visibility of local food brands in China.

Overall, the data collection strategy was designed to capture a holistic view of consumer perceptions and behaviors regarding local food businesses on social media. By combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, the study ensured that the insights obtained were both statistically significant and contextually rich, providing a robust basis for the subsequent phases of model development and validation.

3.8 Research data analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The qualitative data was analyzed. Synthesize content and present it in a descriptive essay. Information once the experiment has been completed and data has been collected. The researcher took the data obtained from the study and analyzed it with a computer using a ready-made program using statistical principles to analyze the data as follows:

3.8.1 Factors and elements of A model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China.

The researcher analyzed quantitative data by calculating frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations (S.D.). The means were then compared to predetermined criteria. Additionally, the study conducted a correlation analysis to examine the relationship between social media factors and consumer perceptions of local food businesses. A regression analysis was also performed to identify which social media factors significantly influenced consumer perceptions.

For qualitative data, the researcher applied content analysis principles and synthesized ideas and recommendations. The findings were presented in the form of essays or descriptive narratives.

3.8.2 Expert interviews on developing A model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China.

This is a qualitative data analysis. The researcher uses the principles of content analysis and gathering ideas. Suggestions are presented in essay or explanation form.

3.8.3 Consistency of the developed model

Quantitative data analysis The researcher analyzed the data to find frequencies, percentages, means (Mean) and standard deviation (S.D.) and then compare the averages with the specified criteria. For the qualitative data, the researcher used content analysis principles and then compiled ideas. Suggestions are presented in essay or descriptive form.

3.8.4 Feasibility and benefits of the quantitative data analysis model.

The researcher analyzes the data to find the frequency, percentage, mean (Mean) and standard deviation (S.D.) and then compare the average with the criteria. As for the qualitative data, the researcher used content analysis principles and then compiled ideas. Suggestions are presented in essay or descriptive form.

3.8.5 The quality of video clips produced according to A model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China.

Quantitative data analysis. The researcher analyzed the data to find frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation (S.D.) and then take the average value and compare it with the specified criteria. As for qualitative data, the researcher used the principles of content analysis and then gathered ideas. Suggestions are presented in essay or descriptive form.

3.8.6 Audience perception of Chinese local brands on social media platforms

Quantitative data analysis the researcher analyzed the data for frequency, percentage, mean (Mean) and standard deviation (S.D.). The average value was then compared with the criteria set forth. As for qualitative data, the researcher used the principles of content analysis and then compiled ideas. Suggestions are presented in essay or descriptive form.

3.8.7 Audience Satisfaction with Video Clips Produced According to Impactful communication model on social media platforms

Quantitative Data Analysis Researcher Data Analysis Find the frequency, percentage, mean (Mean) and standard deviation (S.D.) and then compare the average with the specified criteria. As for qualitative data, the researcher used the principles of content analysis and then compiled ideas. Suggestions are presented in essay or descriptive form.

3.9 Statistical analysis of data

This study employed a range of statistical methods to analyze the data and ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings.

3.9.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including gender, age, occupation, education level, and income. Measures such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage were applied to present the data clearly and concisely.

3.9.2 Instrument Validity and Reliability Testing

To evaluate the suitability and reliability of the research instruments, several statistical tests were conducted:

1) Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test was used to assess the sampling adequacy for factor analysis. All KMO values exceeded 0.8, indicating that the data were appropriate for this type of analysis.

2) Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was applied to determine whether the variables were significantly correlated. All results showed p-values less than 0.05, confirming the significance of the correlations.

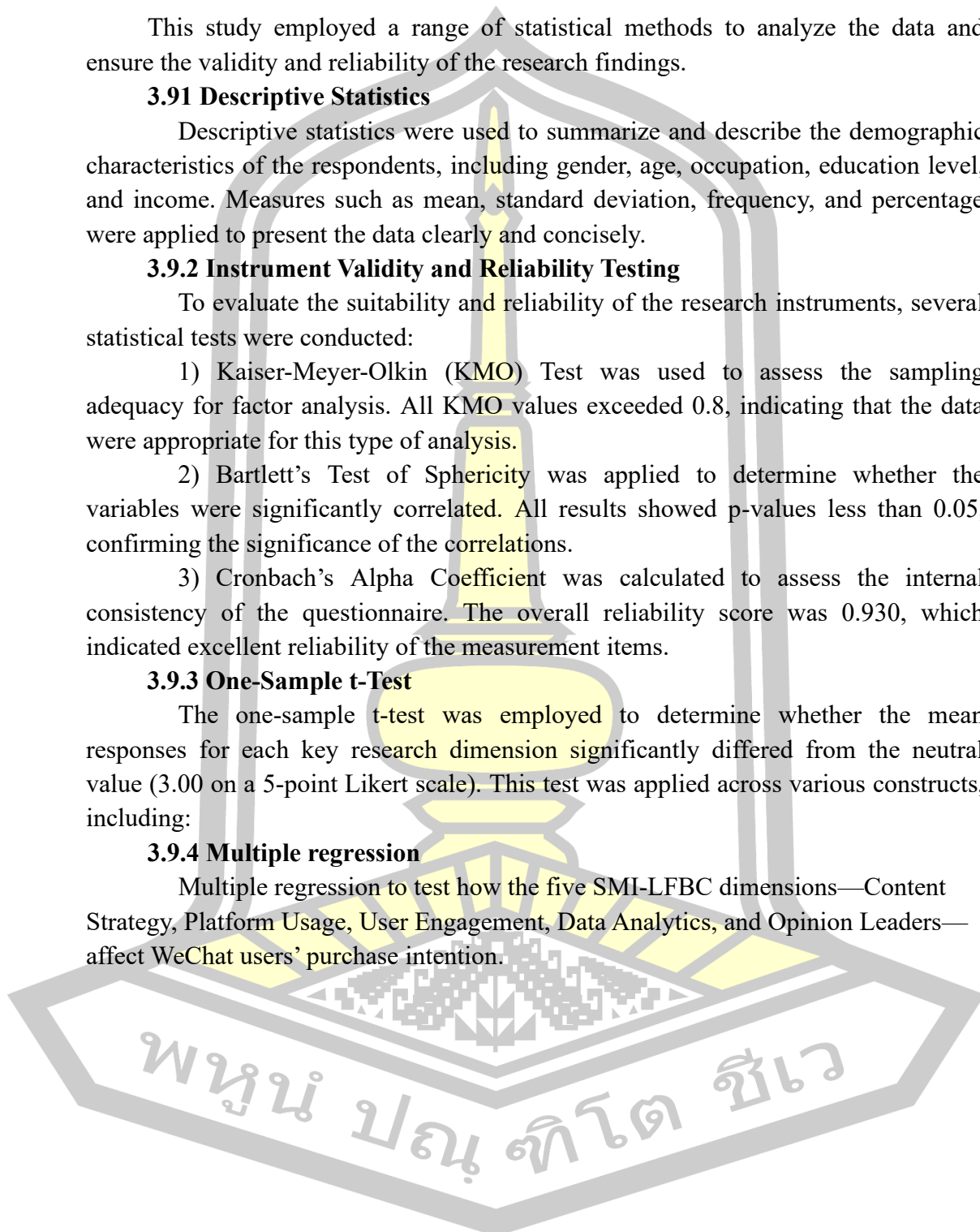
3) Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was calculated to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The overall reliability score was 0.930, which indicated excellent reliability of the measurement items.

3.9.3 One-Sample t-Test

The one-sample t-test was employed to determine whether the mean responses for each key research dimension significantly differed from the neutral value (3.00 on a 5-point Likert scale). This test was applied across various constructs, including:

3.9.4 Multiple regression

Multiple regression to test how the five SMI-LFBC dimensions—Content Strategy, Platform Usage, User Engagement, Data Analytics, and Opinion Leaders—affect WeChat users' purchase intention.



CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presented the findings of "A Model of Social Media Influencing Perceptions of Local Food Business in China," aligned with the research objectives. The study examined how social media shaped consumer perceptions, focusing on Hebei Hou's Hotpot. The results highlighted key factors influencing brand perception, the development and validation of a social media influence model, and the impact of user interactions on brand awareness and consumer engagement. The research findings were presented as follows.

4.1 The factors and components of social media that influence the perception of local food businesses in China.

This study employed a questionnaire survey method, distributing a total of 450 questionnaires. A total of 401 questionnaires were retrieved, resulting in an effective response rate of 89.1%. The sample includes consumers of varying ages, genders, occupations, and income levels to ensure broad representativeness and reliability of the findings.

4.1.1 Respondents' Basic Information

In order to better understand the characteristics of the sample and to ensure the representativeness of the study, basic information about the respondents, including gender, age, occupation, highest level of education, and income level, is presented first. The table below summarises the details of each aspect:

Table 4.1: Demographic Information of Respondents

Basic Information	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	179	44.64%
	Female	222	55.36%
	Other	0	0%
	Total	401	100%
Age	18-25 years	69	17.21%
	26-35 years	179	44.64%
	36-45 years	113	28.18%
	Over 46 years	40	9.98%

Basic Information	Options	Frequency	Percentage
	Total	401	100%
Occupation	Student	48	11.97%
	Company employee	180	44.89%
	Freelancer	99	24.69%
	Civil servant	39	9.73%
	Teacher	35	8.73%
	Other	0	0%
	Total	401	100%
Education Level	High school or below	30	7.48%
	College	122	30.42%
	Bachelor's degree	187	46.63%
	Master's degree	45	11.22%
	Doctorate or above	17	4.24%
	Total	401	100%
Income Level (Monthly)	Below 5,000 yuan	147	36.66%
	5,000-10,000 yuan	148	36.91%
	10,000-20,000 yuan	83	20.7%
	Over 20,000 yuan	23	5.74%
	Total	401	100%

Table 4.1 Showed demographic analysis and interpretation the majority of the respondents were female (55.36%), while males accounted for 44.64%,. The most represented age group was 26–35 years (44.64%), indicating that the sample predominantly comprised young working adults.

In terms of occupation, company employees formed the largest group (44.89%), followed by freelancers (24.69%) and students (11.97%). This suggested that the study mainly reached active professionals.

Regarding educational background, the largest portion of respondents held a bachelor's degree (46.63%), followed by college-level education (30.42%), reflecting a generally well-educated sample.

For monthly income, the majority earned between 5,000–10,000 yuan (36.91%), closely followed by those earning below 5,000 yuan (36.66%). This indicated that most respondents were in the lower to middle-income bracket.

Summary, the demographic profile of the respondents reflected a predominantly female, young adult, and professionally active population with a bachelor's-level education and mid-range income. These characteristics were relevant to the study's focus on social media behavior, as they represented typical active users of platforms like WeChat in urban China.

4.1.2 Analysis of WeChat Usage Duration and Usage Patterns

WeChat is one of the most frequently used social media platforms among Chinese users, offering a range of functionalities that go beyond instant messaging to include Moments sharing, public account reading, and mini-program usage. In this survey, we examined respondents' usage patterns and behaviors on the WeChat platform through several indicators, such as daily usage frequency, duration of use, functionality preferences, feature selection based on needs, and brand information acquisition via WeChat. The following provides a detailed analysis of the results.

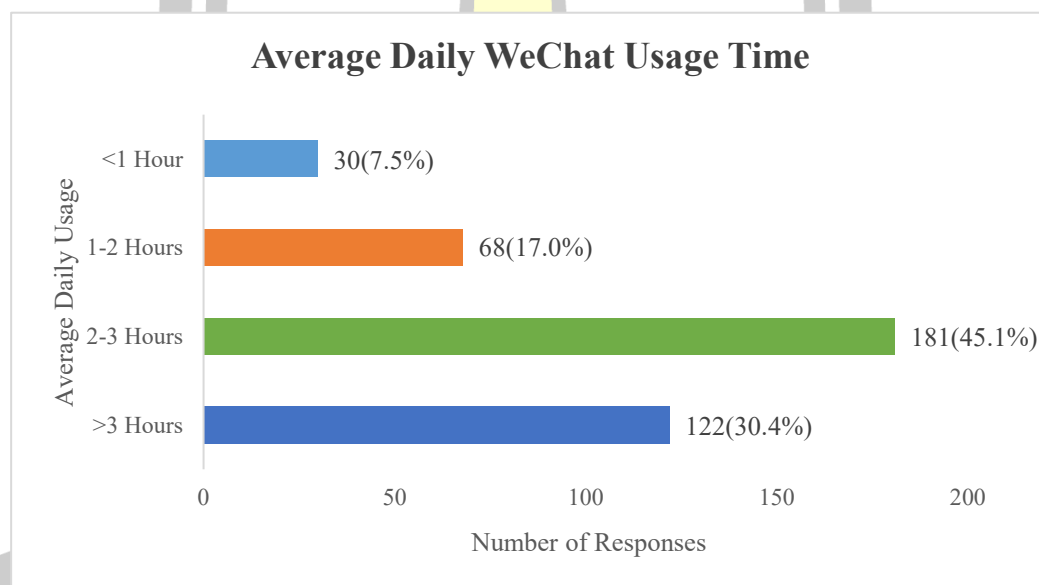


Figure 4.1 Average Daily WeChat Usage Time

As shown in Figure 4.1, most respondents' WeChat usage time is concentrated between 2-3 hours and over 3 hours per day. Specifically, 45.14% of respondents use WeChat for 2-3 hours daily, while 30.42% use it for more than 3 hours. This indicates that WeChat occupies a significant role in respondents' daily lives, with a high level of user activity. The extended usage duration also suggests that users are more likely to be exposed to brand content.

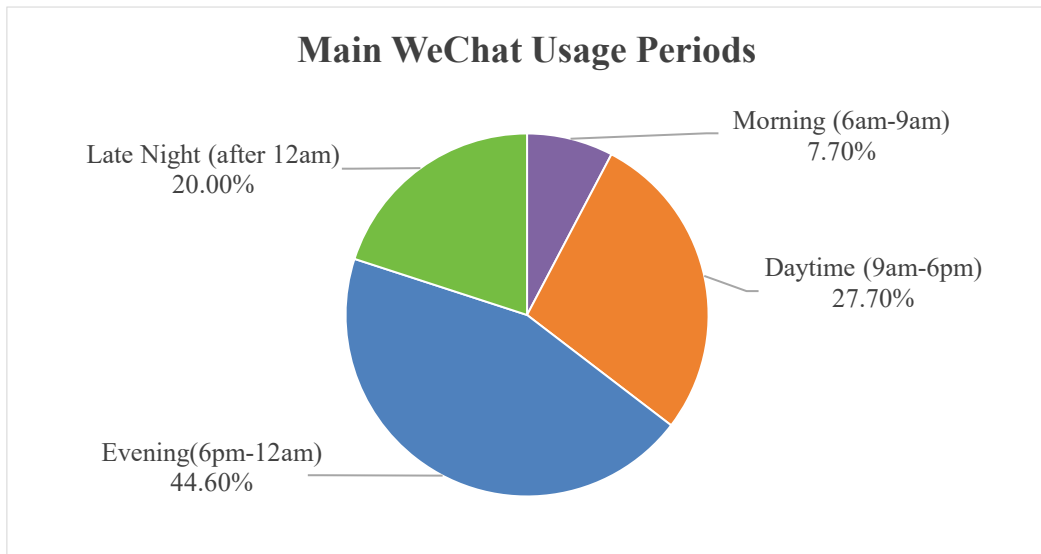


Figure 4.2 Main WeChat Usage Periods

Figure 4.2 illustrates that respondents primarily use WeChat in the evening (18:00-24:00), accounting for 44.64%. Daytime usage (09:00-18:00) follows at 27.68%, while a certain proportion (19.95%) also use WeChat after midnight. This indicates higher user activity in the evening and daytime, particularly in the evening, providing a reference for businesses to push brand-related content at optimal times, such as using peak active hours for ad placements or brand promotions.

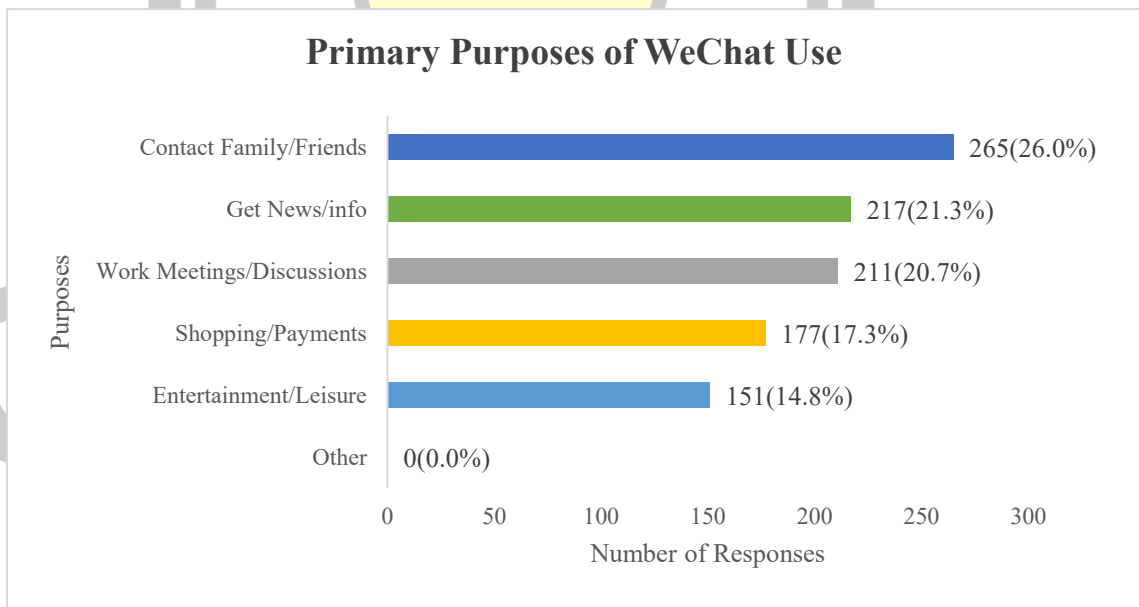


Figure 4.3 Primary Purposes of WeChat Use

Figure 4.3 shows the main purposes for which respondents use WeChat. It reveals that respondents primarily use WeChat to stay connected with family and friends (66.08%), access news and information (54.11%), and participate in work meetings and discussions (52.62%). This highlights WeChat's importance in social interaction, information access, and work communication. Additionally, 44.14% of respondents use WeChat for shopping and payment, and 37.66% as a source of entertainment and leisure. These findings illustrate WeChat's diverse functionality in meeting various user needs, providing multiple avenues for local food brands to conduct brand promotions on the platform, such as using payment features for promotional activities or publishing brand updates through public accounts.

In summary, respondents' high level of activity on WeChat, the concentration of peak usage times in the evening, and the diverse purposes for which they use the platform all indicate that WeChat is a highly promising platform for brand promotion. For the local food brand Houshi Hotpot, targeted brand content can be pushed during peak user activity hours. Leveraging WeChat's social and informational features allows for focused brand promotion activities, enhancing both brand awareness and user engagement.

4.1.3 Social Media Platform Usage

In this section, we analyze issues related to WeChat platform usage, covering respondents' daily usage frequency, time spent, functional diversity, and intent to access brand information. The analysis includes one-sample statistics, frequency distribution of each question, and one-sample t-test results.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics of WeChat Platform Usage

Question	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Meaning
9. I use WeChat every day.	401	3.29	1.130	Neutral
10. I spend a lot of time on WeChat.	401	3.28	1.143	Neutral
11. I often use multiple features of WeChat.	401	3.30	1.184	Neutral
12. I choose specific WeChat features as needed.	401	3.34	1.160	Neutral
13. I use WeChat to get the latest brand info.	401	3.36	1.177	Neutral

Table 4.3: One-Sample T-Test Results for WeChat Platform Usage

Question	Mean Difference	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
9. I use WeChat every day.	3.292	401	58.328	0.000
10. I spend a lot of time on WeChat.	3.279	401	57.445	0.000
11. I often use multiple features of WeChat.	3.302	401	55.855	0.000
12. I choose specific WeChat features as needed.	3.342	401	57.689	0.000
13. I use WeChat to get the latest brand info.	3.357	401	57.114	0.000

1) Daily WeChat Usage

The proportion of respondents who selected “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” totals 44.89%, indicating that most respondents use WeChat daily.

The mean for this question is 3.29 (SD = 1.130), suggesting frequent WeChat usage among most respondents, albeit with some variation.

The one-sample t-test shows a t-value of 58.328, degrees of freedom (df) = 400, and a significance level (Sig.) of .000, indicating results significantly above zero, confirming daily WeChat use as a routine behavior among respondents.

2) Time Spent on WeChat

The proportion of respondents selecting “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” is 44.64%, reflecting that a considerable portion spends substantial time on WeChat.

The mean is 3.28 (SD = 1.143), showing relatively high time spent on WeChat, though with some variation.

The one-sample t-test result indicates a t-value of 57.445, df = 400, Sig. = .000, which is significant, showing that respondents generally spend substantial time on WeChat.

3) Simultaneous Use of Multiple Functions

The proportion of respondents selecting “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” is 48.38%, suggesting frequent simultaneous use of multiple WeChat functions, such as Moments, public accounts, and mini-programs.

The mean is 3.30 (SD = 1.184), indicating that most respondents use multiple functions concurrently.

The one-sample t-test reveals a t-value of 55.855, $df = 400$, $Sig. = .000$, indicating significant behavior regarding the concurrent use of WeChat's multiple functions.

4) Selection of Specific Functions Based on Needs

The proportion of respondents who chose "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" is 48.63%, showing that most users select different WeChat functions based on specific needs.

The mean is 3.34 ($SD = 1.160$), reflecting personalized usage patterns.

The one-sample t-test yields a t-value of 57.689, $df = 400$, $Sig. = .000$, suggesting significant personalization in function selection among respondents.

5) Accessing Brand Information

The proportion of respondents who chose "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" is 49.38%, indicating that many respondents frequently obtain brand information via WeChat.

The mean is 3.36 ($SD = 1.177$), establishing WeChat as a key channel for accessing brand information.

The one-sample t-test shows a t-value of 57.114, $df = 400$, $Sig. = .000$, indicating active brand information retrieval among the majority of respondents on WeChat.

From the descriptive statistics, the majority of respondents use WeChat daily, with a considerable amount of time spent on the platform. Specifically, around 45% of respondents spend 2-3 hours on WeChat daily, with 30% spending more than 3 hours, signifying WeChat's prominent role in users' daily lives. Regarding function usage, respondents typically use multiple WeChat features concurrently (e.g., Moments, public accounts, mini-programs) and select functions based on their needs, highlighting WeChat's diverse and personalized usage patterns.

In terms of brand information access, about 50% of respondents reported obtaining brand information via WeChat, underscoring WeChat's importance as a brand communication channel, supporting strategies for using the platform for brand promotion.

The one-sample t-test results show that for all variables, respondents' responses are significantly above zero, indicating that these behaviors are prevalent across the sample. This suggests that daily use, multifaceted functionality, and brand information access on WeChat are common behaviors.

Expert Insights on Social Media Platform Usage

In addition to the quantitative data gathered through the questionnaire, qualitative insights from expert interviews provided a deeper understanding of how social media platform usage influences consumer perceptions of local food businesses, specifically Hou's Hotpot. The experts were unanimous in recognizing the significant role that social media platforms, particularly WeChat, play in shaping brand engagement and awareness in China.

Several experts highlighted that WeChat, as the primary social media platform used by respondents, offers diverse features that contribute to effective brand communication. Expert A, a social media strategy consultant, emphasized, “WeChat's ecosystem—including Moments, official accounts, and mini-programs—provides a comprehensive suite of tools for brands to interact with users in various contexts. This versatility is essential for maintaining consumer interest and fostering deeper engagement.” This view aligns with the quantitative data, which shows a high rate of WeChat usage among respondents, particularly for accessing brand-related information.

Expert B, a marketing advisor for local brands, noted that the ability to leverage multiple features on WeChat simultaneously allows brands like Hou's Hotpot to cater to different user needs, ranging from casual browsing to more interactive engagements such as live events or promotions. According to Expert B, “By utilizing multiple features, brands can create a dynamic experience that keeps users engaged and encourages repeat interactions.” This is particularly relevant given that many respondents reported using several WeChat features at the same time, highlighting the platform's potential for multifaceted brand engagement.

The frequency and intensity of platform usage were also discussed by Expert C, a digital marketing specialist. Expert C argued that respondents who frequently use WeChat are more likely to develop stronger connections with brands that actively maintain a presence on the platform. “WeChat is not just a communication channel; it's a space for community building,” Expert C explained. This observation is consistent with the survey data, which indicated that respondents who spend more time on WeChat tend to have a more positive perception of Hou's Hotpot. The platform's ability to foster a sense of community helps in building brand awareness and increasing the likelihood of consumer participation in brand activities.

Furthermore, experts stressed the importance of a platform-specific content strategy. Expert D, an experienced brand strategist, suggested that WeChat's diverse user base necessitates content tailored to different audience segments. For instance, Hou's Hotpot could enhance its brand perception by developing targeted campaigns that leverage WeChat's unique attributes, such as interactive posts in Moments or exclusive offers through mini-programs. According to Expert D, “A targeted approach that aligns content with user preferences can significantly improve brand visibility and engagement.” This insight aligns with the data analysis, where content personalization was linked to increased brand awareness and consumer engagement.

The experts also emphasized that social media platform usage should focus on creating meaningful interactions rather than simply maintaining a presence. Expert E pointed out that WeChat's design facilitates both passive content consumption (e.g., viewing posts) and active engagement (e.g., commenting, sharing, participating in events). “The key is to create content that encourages interaction,” said Expert E. Hou's Hotpot's strategy of providing timely brand information, promotional offers,

and interactive content effectively taps into WeChat's capabilities and user expectations, thereby enhancing consumer loyalty and brand perception.

In conclusion, expert insights complement the findings from the quantitative analysis by underscoring the multifaceted nature of social media platform usage. WeChat's versatility, combined with Hou's Hotpot's strategic content delivery, plays a crucial role in enhancing brand awareness and engagement. The expert interviews highlight that effectively leveraging platform-specific features, targeting diverse audience segments, and fostering interactive experiences are key to maximizing the impact of social media on brand perception. These qualitative insights provide a deeper understanding of how Hou's Hotpot can continue to utilize WeChat to strengthen its brand presence and consumer relationships.

4.1.4 Content Preferences on Social Media

In this section, we analyze the content preferences of respondents on the WeChat platform, focusing on the types of content that attract the audience's attention, such as videos, images, live broadcasts, and advertisements. These insights will help us understand the types of content that are most effective in influencing brand perception.

Table 4.4 provides the descriptive statistical results for questions 14 to 18, which assess respondents' preferences regarding different types of content on WeChat

Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics for Content Preferences on Social Media

Question	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Meaning
14. I prefer watching video content on WeChat.	401	3.33	1.178	Neutral
15. I think pictures attract me more than text.	401	3.29	1.168	Neutral
16. I like to learn about brands through WeChat Live.	401	3.34	1.204	Neutral
17. I think a variety of content formats (videos, pictures, articles) can better attract my attention.	401	3.31	1.181	Neutral
18. I am interested in the advertising content on WeChat.	401	3.32	1.205	Neutral

The descriptive statistics indicate that respondents generally have a neutral to positive preference towards different content types on WeChat, with average scores ranging from 3.29 to 3.34. Specifically, the preference for video content (mean = 3.33) and a diverse range of content formats (mean = 3.31) indicates that WeChat users are receptive to visual and multimedia content. The relatively higher scores for brand information through WeChat Live (mean = 3.34) also suggest that live content is becoming an engaging way to connect with users.

Table 4.5 presents the results of one-sample t-tests for the content preference items. The purpose of these t-tests is to determine whether the mean scores for each content preference significantly differ from a neutral midpoint of 3, which would indicate a distinct preference or disfavor.

Table 4.5: One-Sample T-Test Results for Content Preferences on Social Media

Question	Mean Difference	df	t	Sig.
14. I prefer watching video content on WeChat.	0.334	401	5.576	0.000
15. I think pictures attract me more than text.	0.292	401	4.966	0.000
16. I like to learn about brands through WeChat Live.	0.336	401	5.667	0.000
17. I think a variety of content formats can better attract my attention.	0.311	401	5.288	0.000
18. I am interested in the advertising content on WeChat.	0.324	401	5.351	0.000

The results of the one-sample t-tests indicate that all five content preferences have mean scores significantly greater than the neutral value of 3.51-5.00 ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that respondents generally have a positive preference for all the content types considered in the study, including video content, images over text, live broadcasts, a variety of content formats, and advertisements on WeChat. To further analyze the content preferences, frequency distributions were calculated for each item. Table 4.2.4-3 presents the frequency analysis results for questions 14 to 18.

Table 4.6: Frequency Analysis for Content Preferences on Social Media

Question	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Neutral)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)
14. I prefer watching video content on WeChat.	11 (2.7%)	114 (28.4%)	96 (23.9%)	102 (25.4%)	78 (19.5%)
15. I think pictures attract me more than text.	15 (3.7%)	107 (26.7%)	99 (24.7%)	109 (27.2%)	71 (17.7%)
16. I like to learn about brands through WeChat Live.	16 (4.0%)	103 (25.7%)	89 (22.2%)	112 (27.9%)	81 (20.2%)
17. I think a variety of content formats can better attract my attention.	12 (3.0%)	111 (27.7%)	86 (21.4%)	121 (30.2%)	71 (17.7%)
18. I am interested in the advertising content on WeChat.	17 (4.2%)	110 (27.4%)	86 (21.4%)	105 (26.2%)	83 (20.7%)

The frequency analysis reveals that a significant portion of respondents agree or strongly agree with statements related to their preference for videos, images, live broadcasts, and advertising content. For example, 44.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they prefer watching video content on WeChat, while 48.1% showed a positive preference towards learning about brands through WeChat Live. These results provide additional insights into the specific types of content that are likely to be effective in engaging WeChat users.

The analysis of content preferences on WeChat reveals that visual and interactive content, such as videos, images, and live broadcasts, tends to be more attractive to users. The preference for diverse content formats further indicates that users appreciate variety in how information is presented. This is critical for local food businesses looking to build brand awareness, as engaging content is more likely to capture users' attention and enhance brand perception.

The preference for videos and live content (mean scores of 3.33 and 3.34, respectively) suggests that multimedia and real-time interaction can be powerful tools

for local food brands like Hou's Hotpot. The positive response towards advertising content also suggests that WeChat users are receptive to brand promotions, especially when the content is engaging and visually appealing.

Expert Insights on Content Preferences on Social Media

The expert interviews provided valuable insights into respondents' content preferences on social media and how these preferences shape brand perception, specifically in the context of Hou's Hotpot. Experts consistently emphasized the importance of varied and engaging content types—such as videos, images, live streams, and interactive posts—as critical elements for capturing consumer interest and improving brand visibility.

Expert A, a social media content strategist, highlighted that video content is particularly effective in enhancing brand engagement. “Video is one of the most compelling formats for storytelling, and it enables brands like Hou's Hotpot to create immersive experiences that resonate with consumers on a deeper level,” Expert A stated. This view aligns with the questionnaire findings, which showed a high preference for video content among respondents. The expert further explained that the use of visually engaging elements, such as cooking demonstrations or behind-the-scenes videos, helps to humanize the brand and build a stronger emotional connection with consumers.

Expert B, specializing in digital marketing for the food and beverage industry, noted that a combination of content types—such as images, articles, and live broadcasts—ensures broader audience appeal. According to Expert B, “Different users have different content consumption habits; some prefer quick, visually-rich posts, while others appreciate more in-depth articles or live engagement opportunities. Brands like Hou's Hotpot should leverage this diversity to maximize their reach.” This observation is consistent with the survey data, which indicated that respondents favor a mix of content formats, with many expressing an interest in images and live broadcasts as effective ways to learn about the brand.

Experts also discussed the role of creativity and content quality. Expert C, a creative director at a digital agency, argued that while creativity is crucial for capturing attention, the quality of content must not be overlooked. “It’s not just about being creative; the content must also provide value, whether through useful information, entertainment, or emotional resonance,” Expert C said. This perspective helps explain the survey finding that respondents value content diversity, as it enhances both their experience and their perception of the brand's authenticity and professionalism.

Expert D, a social media engagement consultant, emphasized the importance of interactive content in building a loyal customer base. “Interactive content, such as polls, quizzes, or user-generated content campaigns, not only boosts engagement but also gives consumers a sense of ownership and participation in the brand story,” Expert D explained. This insight is particularly relevant in the context of Hou's Hotpot,

as the survey data shows a notable interest in interactive forms of engagement that allow consumers to feel actively involved with the brand.

Furthermore, the experts highlighted the significance of content alignment with consumer expectations. Expert E pointed out that understanding consumer preferences for different types of content enables brands to tailor their messaging accordingly. “Brands need to understand what their audience wants—some consumers are more inclined towards entertaining content, while others look for informative or practical content. Hou's Hotpot can enhance its content strategy by aligning its offerings with these preferences,” Expert E remarked. This recommendation is in line with the data analysis, which demonstrated that content tailored to consumer interests significantly enhances brand perception and engagement.

In summary, the expert interviews provided nuanced insights into the types of content that are most effective for brand engagement on social media. The findings underscore the importance of a diverse content strategy that incorporates videos, images, live broadcasts, and interactive posts. By aligning content with user preferences and ensuring a balance between creativity and quality, Hou's Hotpot can effectively enhance brand visibility and foster stronger consumer relationships. The qualitative insights from the experts highlight the value of a well-rounded content strategy that is responsive to audience preferences, ultimately contributing to increased brand awareness and loyalty.

These findings imply that local food businesses should consider incorporating a mix of videos, images, and live content in their social media strategies to maximize engagement and brand visibility. Additionally, leveraging WeChat's advertising capabilities could further enhance brand reach and user engagement.

4.1.5 User Engagement with Social Media

In this section, we analyze respondents' engagement with social media, particularly on the WeChat platform. User engagement is a critical factor in determining how well a brand can interact with its audience and build loyalty. The analysis in this section focuses on questions 19 to 23, which assess respondents' behaviors such as liking, commenting, sharing brand content, participating in brand activities, and direct communication with brands. Table 4.7 provides the descriptive statistical results for questions 19 to 23, which assess respondents' engagement behaviors on WeChat.

Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics for User Engagement on Social Media

Question	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Meaning
19. I often like brand content on WeChat.	401	3.40	1.176	Neutral
20. I will comment on brand content in the WeChat comment section.	401	3.28	1.196	Neutral
21. I like to share brand content with my friends.	401	3.36	1.190	Neutral
22. I will participate in activities organized by brands on WeChat.	401	3.32	1.205	Neutral
23. I like to communicate directly with brands through WeChat.	401	3.38	1.189	Neutral

The descriptive statistics show that respondents generally have a neutral to positive engagement with brands on WeChat, with average scores ranging from 3.28 to 3.40. Specifically, liking brand content (mean = 3.40) and communicating directly with brands (mean = 3.38) indicate slightly higher engagement levels compared to other behaviors.

Table 4.8 presents the results of one-sample t-tests for user engagement items. These t-tests aim to determine whether the mean scores for each engagement behavior significantly differ from a neutral midpoint of 3.

Table 4.8: One-Sample T-Test Results for User Engagement on Social Media

Question	Mean Difference	df	t	Sig.
19. I often like brand content on WeChat.	0.400	401	6.780	0.000
20. I will comment on brand content in the WeChat comment section.	0.280	401	4.667	0.000
21. I like to share brand content with my friends.	0.359	401	6.102	0.000
22. I will participate in activities organized by brands on WeChat.	0.317	401	5.333	0.000
23. I like to communicate directly with brands through WeChat.	0.376	401	6.441	0.000

The results of the one-sample t-tests indicate that all five user engagement behaviors have mean scores significantly greater than the neutral value of 3.51-5.00 ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that respondents generally have a positive level of engagement with brand content on WeChat, including liking, commenting, sharing, participating in activities, and direct communication with brands.

To further analyze user engagement, frequency distributions were calculated for each item. Figure 4.4 presents the frequency analysis results for questions 19 to 23.

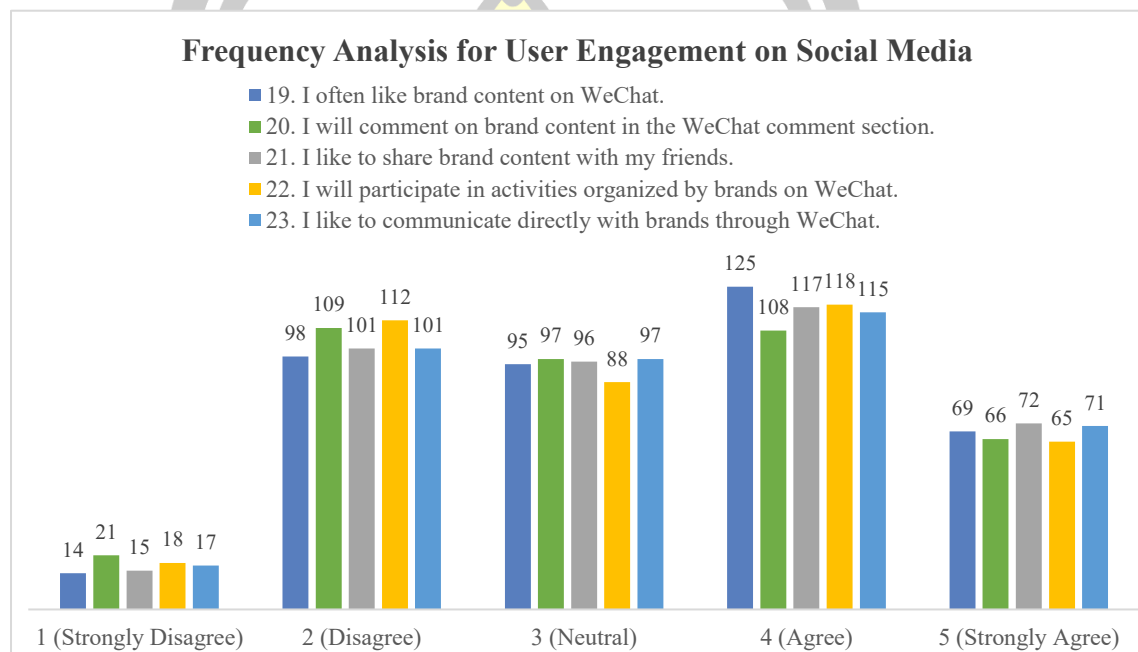


Figure 4.4 Frequency Analysis for User Engagement on Social Media

The frequency analysis reveals that a considerable portion of respondents engage positively with brand content on WeChat. For instance, 48.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they often like brand content, and 46.4% showed a positive preference towards direct communication with brands. These results provide additional insights into the specific engagement behaviors that are most prevalent among WeChat users.

The analysis of user engagement with social media on WeChat reveals that respondents generally exhibit a positive level of engagement across various behaviors, including liking, commenting, sharing, participating in activities, and direct communication. The preference for liking brand content (mean = 3.40) and direct communication with brands (mean = 3.38) suggests that WeChat users are receptive to interacting with brands, which can enhance brand awareness and visibility.

The one-sample t-test results indicate that all engagement behaviors are significantly above the neutral value, suggesting that WeChat users are inclined to engage actively with brand content. The frequency analysis further supports these

findings, showing that nearly half of the respondents engage positively with brand content, whether through liking, sharing, or direct interaction.

Expert Insights on User Engagement on Social Media

The insights gathered from expert interviews provide a nuanced understanding of the role of user engagement in enhancing brand perception, specifically in the context of Hou's Hotpot. Experts unanimously agreed that active user engagement on social media is a critical factor in building a loyal customer base and strengthening brand equity.

Expert A, a social media engagement specialist, emphasized the importance of encouraging two-way communication between the brand and consumers. According to Expert A, “User engagement is not just about likes and comments; it’s about fostering meaningful conversations that make users feel heard and valued by the brand.” This view supports the quantitative findings, which indicated that respondents who frequently engage with Hou's Hotpot through liking, commenting, or sharing content tend to have a more favorable perception of the brand. Expert A further noted that responding promptly to user comments and inquiries can significantly enhance user satisfaction and loyalty, as it demonstrates that the brand values consumer feedback.

Expert B, a digital community manager, highlighted the role of user-generated content (UGC) in driving engagement. “Encouraging users to create content, whether it’s sharing their experiences with Hou's Hotpot or participating in brand-led challenges, helps create a community around the brand and makes users feel like they are part of the brand story,” Expert B explained. This aligns with the survey results showing that respondents are more likely to feel connected to a brand that actively encourages and features user-generated content. The expert suggested that Hou's Hotpot could leverage UGC campaigns to foster a sense of belonging among its followers, thereby boosting engagement and loyalty.

Expert C, specializing in consumer behavior on social media, discussed the value of interactive features, such as polls, quizzes, and live events, in driving user engagement. “Interactive content invites users to participate actively rather than passively consuming content,” said Expert C. “When users feel that they are part of the brand’s activities, they are more likely to develop a stronger emotional bond with the brand.” This observation helps explain the positive response from survey participants regarding their willingness to participate in activities organized by Hou's Hotpot on WeChat. By incorporating interactive content, Hou's Hotpot can further enhance user engagement and encourage users to invest more time and emotional energy in the brand.

Expert D, a brand marketing consultant, pointed out that consistency in user engagement is key to sustaining interest over time. “Brands need to maintain a consistent level of interaction to keep users engaged—sporadic engagement can lead to a loss of interest,” Expert D noted. The survey data also supports this notion,

showing that respondents who engaged regularly with Hou's Hotpot's content were more likely to recommend the brand to others. Expert D suggested that Hou's Hotpot could implement a more structured engagement strategy, such as scheduled live sessions or weekly Q&A posts, to maintain consistent interaction and sustain consumer interest.

Furthermore, Expert E emphasized the role of emotional resonance in user engagement. “Brands that can tap into the emotions of their audience, whether through storytelling, humor, or relatability, tend to see higher levels of engagement,” Expert E said. This aligns with the survey findings, which indicated that respondents are more likely to engage with content that resonates with their personal experiences or evokes a positive emotional response. Expert E suggested that Hou's Hotpot could create emotionally-driven campaigns that highlight personal stories, customer testimonials, or behind-the-scenes content to foster a deeper connection with users.

In conclusion, expert insights on user engagement complement the survey data by highlighting the need for a holistic engagement strategy that combines prompt responsiveness, user-generated content, interactive features, consistency, and emotional resonance. Hou's Hotpot's success in building strong user engagement on WeChat can be attributed to its efforts in fostering two-way communication, encouraging participation, and creating content that resonates emotionally with its audience. By continuing to refine and expand these strategies, Hou's Hotpot can further enhance user loyalty and brand perception.

These findings imply that local food businesses, such as Hou's Hotpot, should focus on strategies that foster user engagement, such as encouraging likes, shares, and comments on their content. Additionally, providing opportunities for direct communication with users, such as responding to comments or offering customer service through WeChat, could further enhance user engagement and brand awareness.

4.1.6 Data Analytics for Social Media

In this section, we analyze respondents' perspectives on the role of data analytics in social media, particularly on the WeChat platform. Data analytics is a crucial aspect of understanding consumer behavior, optimizing marketing strategies, and enhancing user engagement. The analysis in this section focuses on questions 24 to 28, which assess respondents' views on the importance of data analytics, its ability to improve service quality, and its effectiveness in targeting users more accurately.

Table 4.9 provides the descriptive statistical results for questions 24 to 28, which assess respondents' attitudes toward the use of data analytics on WeChat.

Table 4.9: Descriptive Statistics for Data Analytics on Social Media

Question	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Meaning
24. I think data analysis on WeChat is very important for brands to understand consumer behavior.	401	3.49	1.165	Neutral
25. I think brands can better meet my needs through data analysis.	401	3.46	1.173	Neutral
26. I think WeChat data analysis can help improve the service quality of brands.	401	3.48	1.175	Neutral
27. I think brands can target users more accurately by using WeChat data analysis.	401	3.51	1.161	
28. I believe brands can optimize their marketing strategies through WeChat data analysis.	401	3.50	1.156	Agree

The descriptive statistics indicate that respondents generally have a positive perception of the role of data analytics on WeChat, with average scores ranging from 3.46 to 3.51. Specifically, the belief that brands can target users more accurately using data analytics (mean = 3.51) and that data analysis is important for understanding consumer behavior (mean = 3.49) indicates the perceived value of data-driven strategies in social media marketing.

Table 4.10 presents the results of one-sample t-tests for the data analytics items. These t-tests aim to determine whether the mean scores for each data analytics perception significantly differ from a neutral midpoint of 3.

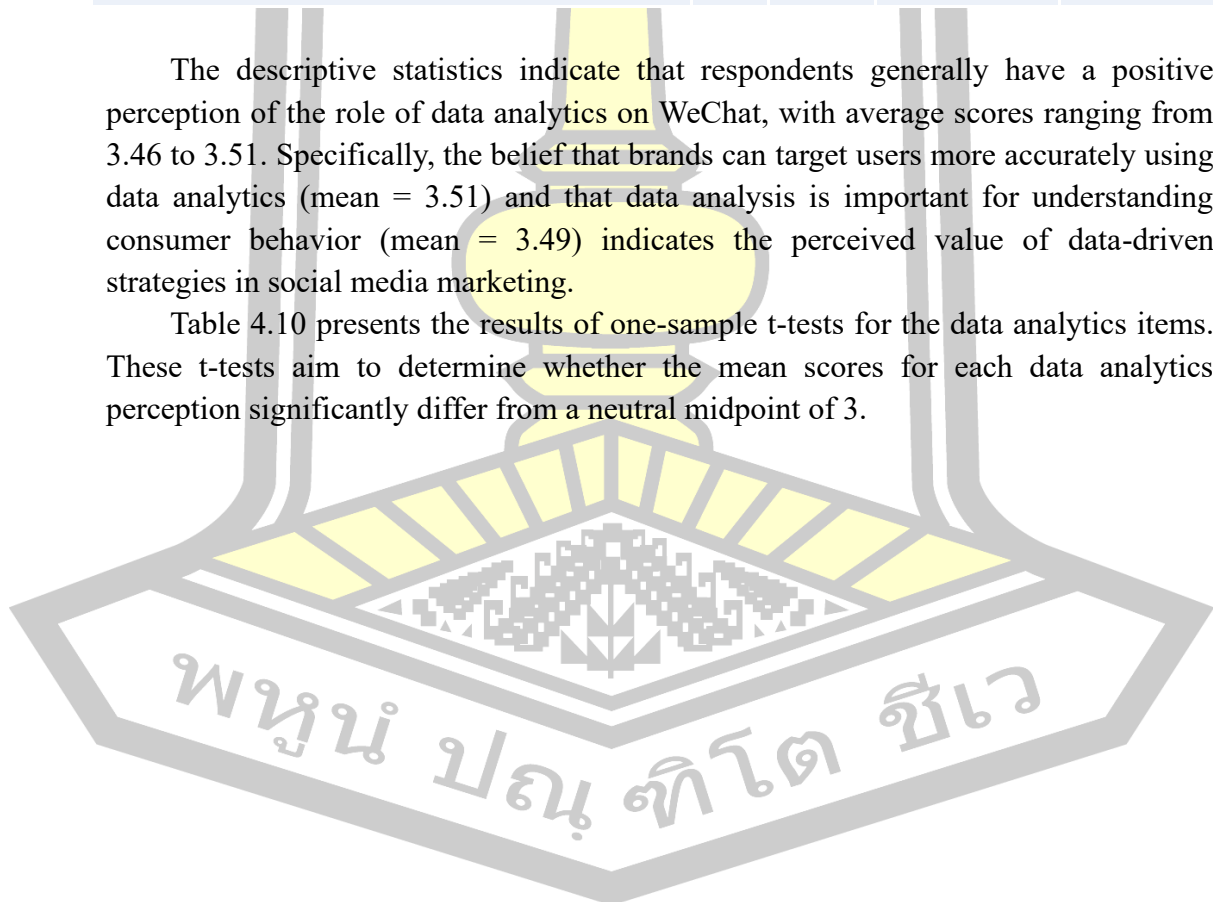
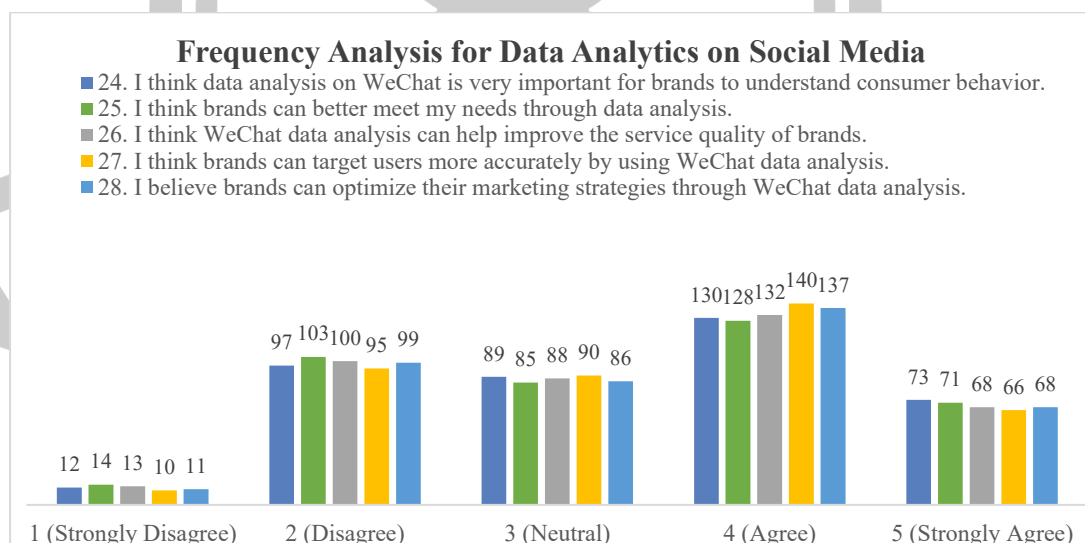


Table 4.10: One-Sample T-Test Results for Data Analytics on Social Media

Question	Mean Difference	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
24. I think data analysis on WeChat is very important for brands to understand consumer behavior.	0.487	401	8.448	0.000
25. I think brands can better meet my needs through data analysis.	0.457	401	7.797	0.000
26. I think WeChat data analysis can help improve the service quality of brands.	0.477	401	8.136	0.000
27. I think brands can target users more accurately by using WeChat data analysis.	0.510	401	8.793	0.000
28. I believe brands can optimize their marketing strategies through WeChat data analysis.	0.497	401	8.621	0.000

The results of the one-sample t-tests indicate that all five items related to data analytics have mean scores significantly greater than the neutral value of 3.51-5.00 ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that respondents generally have a positive perception of the role of data analytics on WeChat, emphasizing its importance in understanding consumer behavior, targeting users, and optimizing marketing strategies.

To further analyze respondents' views on data analytics, frequency distributions were calculated for each item. Figure 4.5 presents the frequency analysis results for questions 24 to 28.

**Figure 4.5** Frequency Analysis for Data Analytics on Social Media

The frequency analysis reveals that a significant portion of respondents agree or strongly agree with statements related to the importance of data analytics on WeChat. For instance, 50.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that data analysis on WeChat is important for understanding consumer behavior, and 51.4% believed that brands can target users more accurately using data analytics. These results indicate that data-driven approaches are highly valued by users for improving brand engagement and service quality.

The analysis of data analytics for social media reveals that respondents generally perceive data analytics as an important tool for enhancing brand performance on platforms like WeChat. The descriptive statistics show that respondents value the role of data analytics in targeting users accurately (mean = 3.51) and understanding consumer behavior (mean = 3.49). These insights suggest that leveraging data analytics is critical for brands to optimize their marketing strategies and meet consumer needs effectively.

The one-sample t-test results further support this perception, with all items significantly above the neutral value. This indicates that respondents believe in the power of data analytics to improve service quality, target users, and optimize marketing efforts. The frequency analysis also shows that a considerable number of respondents view data analytics as essential for brand success on social media.

Expert Insights on Data Analytics for Social Media

Expert interviews also provided critical insights into the role of data analytics in optimizing social media strategies for local food businesses like Hou's Hotpot. Experts emphasized the transformative power of data analytics in understanding consumer behavior, enhancing targeting precision, and ultimately driving brand engagement and loyalty.

Expert A, a data analytics specialist in digital marketing, highlighted the importance of using data analytics to gain actionable insights into consumer behavior. "By analyzing engagement metrics such as likes, shares, and comments, brands like Hou's Hotpot can understand what types of content resonate most with their audience," Expert A noted. This aligns with the survey findings, which showed that respondents are more likely to engage with certain types of content, indicating the value of data-driven decision-making in content creation. Expert A suggested that Hou's Hotpot could benefit from segmenting its audience based on engagement patterns to deliver more personalized content that caters to specific user preferences.

Expert B, a social media strategist, discussed the role of data analytics in content optimization. "Data analytics allows brands to test different content types, posting times, and engagement strategies to determine what works best," Expert B explained. This view is consistent with the survey data, which indicated varying preferences among respondents regarding content types and engagement levels. By leveraging analytics tools, Hou's Hotpot can experiment with different content

formats and posting schedules to identify the most effective approach for maximizing reach and engagement.

Expert C, an expert in consumer insights, emphasized the value of sentiment analysis in understanding consumer perceptions. “Sentiment analysis can provide a deeper understanding of how consumers feel about the brand, whether they have positive, neutral, or negative perceptions,” Expert C said. This type of analysis helps brands like Hou's Hotpot identify areas of improvement and respond proactively to consumer concerns. The survey results showed that respondents’ perceptions of Hou's Hotpot were generally positive, but sentiment analysis could further refine the brand's understanding of consumer attitudes and help tailor responses to enhance satisfaction.

Expert D, specializing in brand performance metrics, pointed out that data analytics is crucial for tracking campaign performance. “Tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) such as conversion rates, click-through rates, and engagement ratios helps brands evaluate the effectiveness of their social media campaigns,” Expert D explained. The expert suggested that Hou's Hotpot should establish clear metrics for each social media campaign to assess its impact on brand awareness and consumer engagement. This aligns with the survey findings, which showed that respondents who interacted more frequently with Hou's Hotpot’s content were also more likely to recommend the brand, indicating a positive correlation between engagement metrics and brand awareness.

Expert E, a digital transformation consultant, highlighted the importance of integrating data analytics into overall business strategy. “Data analytics should not be siloed; it needs to be integrated into the broader brand strategy to ensure that insights from social media are used to inform product development, customer service, and marketing,” Expert E said. This perspective suggests that Hou's Hotpot could leverage data analytics beyond social media to improve overall customer experience and operational efficiency. The survey data demonstrated the potential for data-driven strategies to enhance brand engagement, and Expert E’s insights further emphasize the need for a holistic approach to data utilization.

In conclusion, expert insights on data analytics underscore its pivotal role in shaping effective social media strategies. By utilizing data to understand consumer behavior, optimize content, track campaign performance, and integrate insights into broader business practices, Hou's Hotpot can create more targeted and impactful social media campaigns. The combination of quantitative survey data and qualitative expert opinions provides a comprehensive understanding of how data analytics can enhance brand perception, engagement, and loyalty.

These findings imply that local food businesses, such as Hou's Hotpot, should invest in data analytics capabilities to better understand their customers, personalize their marketing efforts, and enhance user engagement. By utilizing WeChat's data analytics tools, brands can create more targeted and effective campaigns, ultimately improving customer satisfaction and brand awareness.

4.1.7 Opinion Leaders' Influence on Social Media

In this section, we analyze the influence of opinion leaders on social media, particularly on the WeChat platform. Opinion leaders play a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and can greatly impact brand awareness and loyalty. The analysis in this section focuses on questions 29 to 33, which assess respondents' behaviors such as following opinion leaders, trusting their recommendations, trying new brands based on their suggestions, and their overall influence compared to ordinary users. Table 4.11 provides the descriptive statistical results for questions 29 to 33, which assess respondents' attitudes toward opinion leaders on WeChat.

Table 4.11: Descriptive Statistics for Opinion Leaders' Influence on Social Media

Question	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Meaning
29. I follow opinion leaders on WeChat (KOL).	401	3.42	1.183	Neutral
30. I trust brands recommended by influencers.	401	3.39	1.192	Neutral
31. I will try new brands because of the recommendations of influencers.	401	3.34	1.174	Neutral
32. I think the reviews from opinion leaders are more influential than those from ordinary users.	401	3.41	1.192	Neutral
33. I often pay attention to the updates and recommendations of opinion leaders.	401	3.38	1.183	Neutral

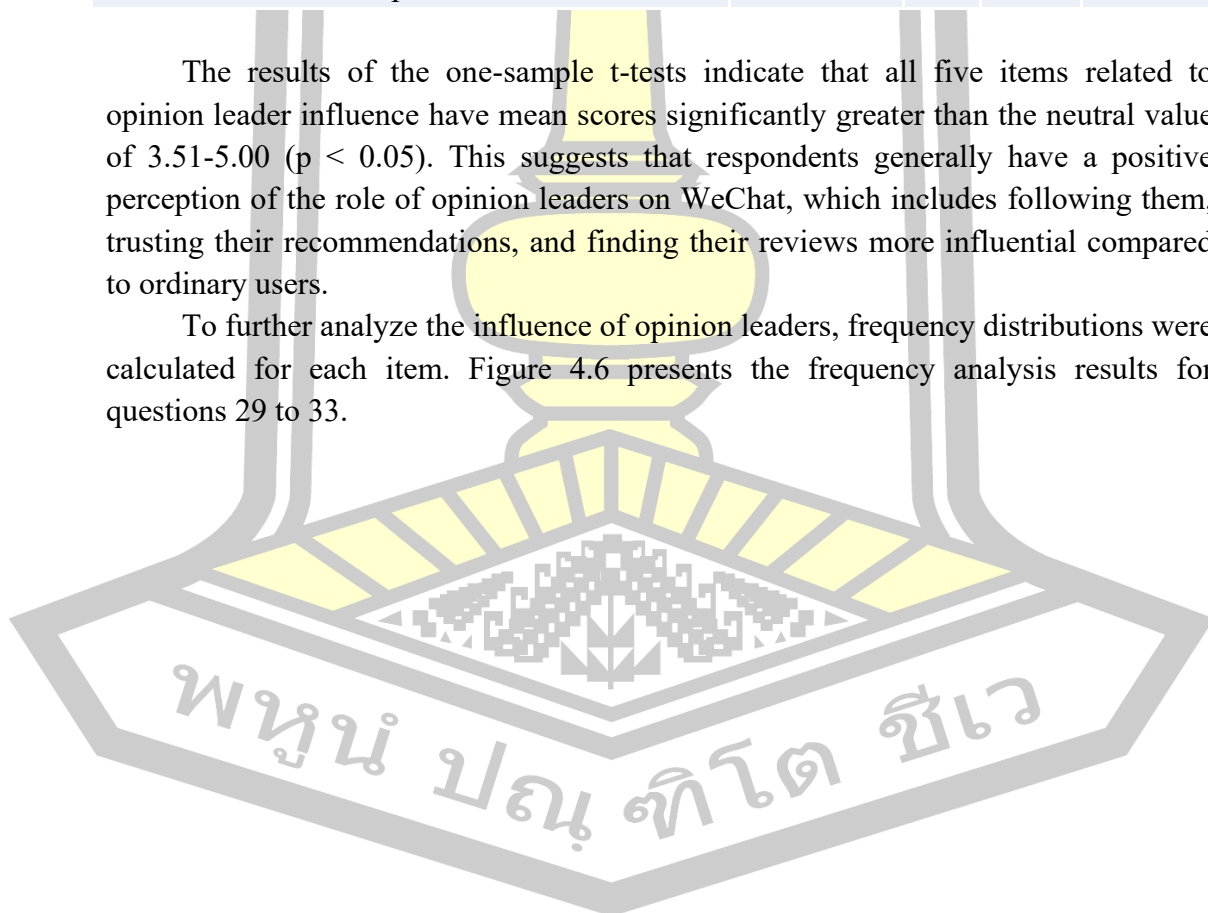
The descriptive statistics indicate that respondents generally have a neutral to positive perception of opinion leaders' influence on WeChat, with average scores ranging from 3.34 to 3.42. Specifically, the preference for following opinion leaders (mean = 3.42) and considering their reviews as more influential than ordinary users (mean = 3.41) indicates that opinion leaders play an important role in influencing consumer behaviors on social media. Table 4.12 presents the results of one-sample t-tests for opinion leader influence items. These t-tests aim to determine whether the mean scores for each perception of opinion leaders significantly differ from a neutral midpoint of 3.

Table 4.12: One-Sample T-Test Results for Opinion Leaders' Influence on Social Media

Question	Mean Difference	df	t	Sig.
29. I follow opinion leaders on WeChat (KOL).	0.417	401	7.119	0.000
30. I trust brands recommended by influencers.	0.387	401	6.500	0.000
31. I will try new brands because of the recommendations of influencers.	0.337	401	5.763	0.000
32. I think the reviews from opinion leaders are more influential than those from ordinary users.	0.411	401	6.833	0.000
33. I often pay attention to the updates and recommendations of opinion leaders.	0.384	401	6.441	0.000

The results of the one-sample t-tests indicate that all five items related to opinion leader influence have mean scores significantly greater than the neutral value of 3.51-5.00 ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that respondents generally have a positive perception of the role of opinion leaders on WeChat, which includes following them, trusting their recommendations, and finding their reviews more influential compared to ordinary users.

To further analyze the influence of opinion leaders, frequency distributions were calculated for each item. Figure 4.6 presents the frequency analysis results for questions 29 to 33.



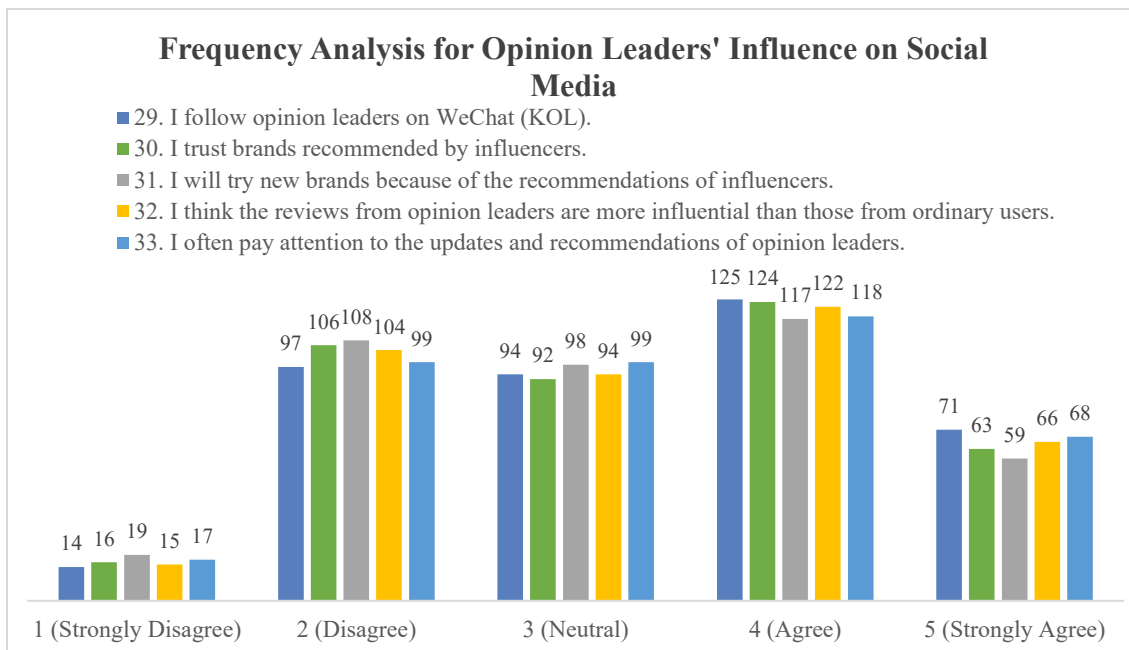


Figure 4.6 Frequency Analysis for Opinion Leaders' Influence on Social Media

The frequency analysis reveals that a significant portion of respondents agree or strongly agree with statements related to their engagement with opinion leaders on WeChat. For instance, 48.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they follow opinion leaders on WeChat, and 46.9% considered opinion leader reviews more influential than those from ordinary users. These results provide additional insights into the influence that opinion leaders wield on social media platforms like WeChat.

The analysis of the influence of opinion leaders on social media reveals that respondents generally have a positive perception of opinion leaders, such as Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs), on WeChat. The descriptive statistics show that respondents are likely to follow opinion leaders (mean = 3.42) and consider their reviews more influential than those of ordinary users (mean = 3.41). This suggests that opinion leaders have the power to shape consumer perceptions and drive purchasing decisions.

The one-sample t-test results further confirm that all items related to opinion leader influence are significantly above the neutral value, indicating that WeChat users are inclined to trust and follow the guidance of opinion leaders. The frequency analysis supports these findings, showing that a considerable number of respondents engage with opinion leaders, either by following them or by paying attention to their recommendations.

Expert Insights on Opinion Leaders' Influence on Social Media

Expert interviews provided further insights into the role of opinion leaders—often referred to as key opinion leaders (KOLs)—in shaping brand perception on social media. Experts highlighted that KOLs have a significant influence on consumer behaviors, especially in the context of promoting local food brands like Hou's Hotpot.

Expert A, an influencer marketing strategist, explained that KOLs serve as trusted sources of information and have the power to sway consumer opinions due to their established credibility and audience reach. “Consumers are more likely to trust and engage with content shared by influencers whom they follow and admire. For Hou's Hotpot, collaborating with relevant KOLs can significantly boost brand visibility and credibility,” Expert A noted. This is consistent with the survey findings, which indicated that respondents are more inclined to engage with and trust brands endorsed by opinion leaders.

Expert B, a social media analyst, discussed the different types of influencers and their respective impact. “Macro-influencers with a large following can help increase brand visibility on a broader scale, while micro-influencers tend to have more personal and authentic connections with their audience, which can lead to higher engagement rates,” Expert B said. The expert suggested that Hou's Hotpot could use a combination of both types of influencers—macro-influencers for raising awareness and micro-influencers for deeper audience engagement. This dual approach would ensure that the brand reaches a wide audience while maintaining a sense of authenticity.

Expert C, an expert in consumer trust and social media, emphasized the importance of authenticity in influencer partnerships. “Consumers are increasingly savvy; they can tell when an endorsement is genuine versus when it is purely transactional,” Expert C pointed out. The survey data showed that respondents placed high value on authenticity, which suggests that Hou's Hotpot should prioritize working with influencers who genuinely align with the brand's values and offerings. According to Expert C, “Authentic endorsements lead to higher consumer trust and stronger brand awareness.”

Expert D, a digital marketing consultant, highlighted the strategic use of influencer campaigns to enhance brand storytelling. “Influencers can effectively convey a brand's narrative by integrating their personal stories with the brand's message, making the brand more relatable to their followers,” Expert D said. This perspective aligns with the survey results, which showed that respondents were more likely to feel an emotional connection to brands that leverage influencers to tell compelling stories. The expert recommended that Hou's Hotpot work closely with influencers to co-create content that highlights the brand's unique selling points in a way that resonates with their audience.

Expert E, a brand engagement expert, pointed out that influencer collaborations can be a powerful tool for expanding brand reach beyond traditional

audiences. “By partnering with influencers from different niches, Hou's Hotpot can reach diverse audience segments that may not have been exposed to the brand otherwise,” Expert E explained. This approach is particularly useful for targeting younger demographics who are highly active on social media and are more likely to follow influencer recommendations. The survey findings supported this, indicating that younger respondents were more likely to engage with influencer-endorsed content.

In conclusion, expert insights underscore the significant impact that opinion leaders have on social media brand perception. By leveraging both macro- and micro-influencers, ensuring authenticity in partnerships, and using influencers to tell engaging brand stories, Hou's Hotpot can effectively enhance its brand visibility, foster trust, and expand its audience. The combination of quantitative survey data and qualitative expert opinions highlights the importance of a strategic approach to influencer marketing in building strong consumer relationships and enhancing brand awareness.

These findings imply that local food businesses, such as Hou's Hotpot, could benefit from collaborating with opinion leaders to enhance brand visibility and credibility. By leveraging the influence of trusted KOLs, brands can effectively reach their target audience and foster a sense of trust and loyalty among consumers.

4.1.8 Perception of Brand Awareness with Local Brand - Hou's Hotpot

In this section, we analyze respondents' perceptions of brand awareness for the local brand Hou's Hotpot. Brand awareness is a key indicator of how well a brand is recognized by its target audience, and understanding this perception helps in evaluating the effectiveness of social media marketing efforts. The analysis in this section focuses on questions 34 to 38, which assess respondents' familiarity with the brand, recognition of its logo and products, knowledge of the brand's history, and overall perception of its awareness. Table 4.13 provides the descriptive statistical results for questions 34 to 38, which assess respondents' perceptions of Hou's Hotpot's brand awareness.

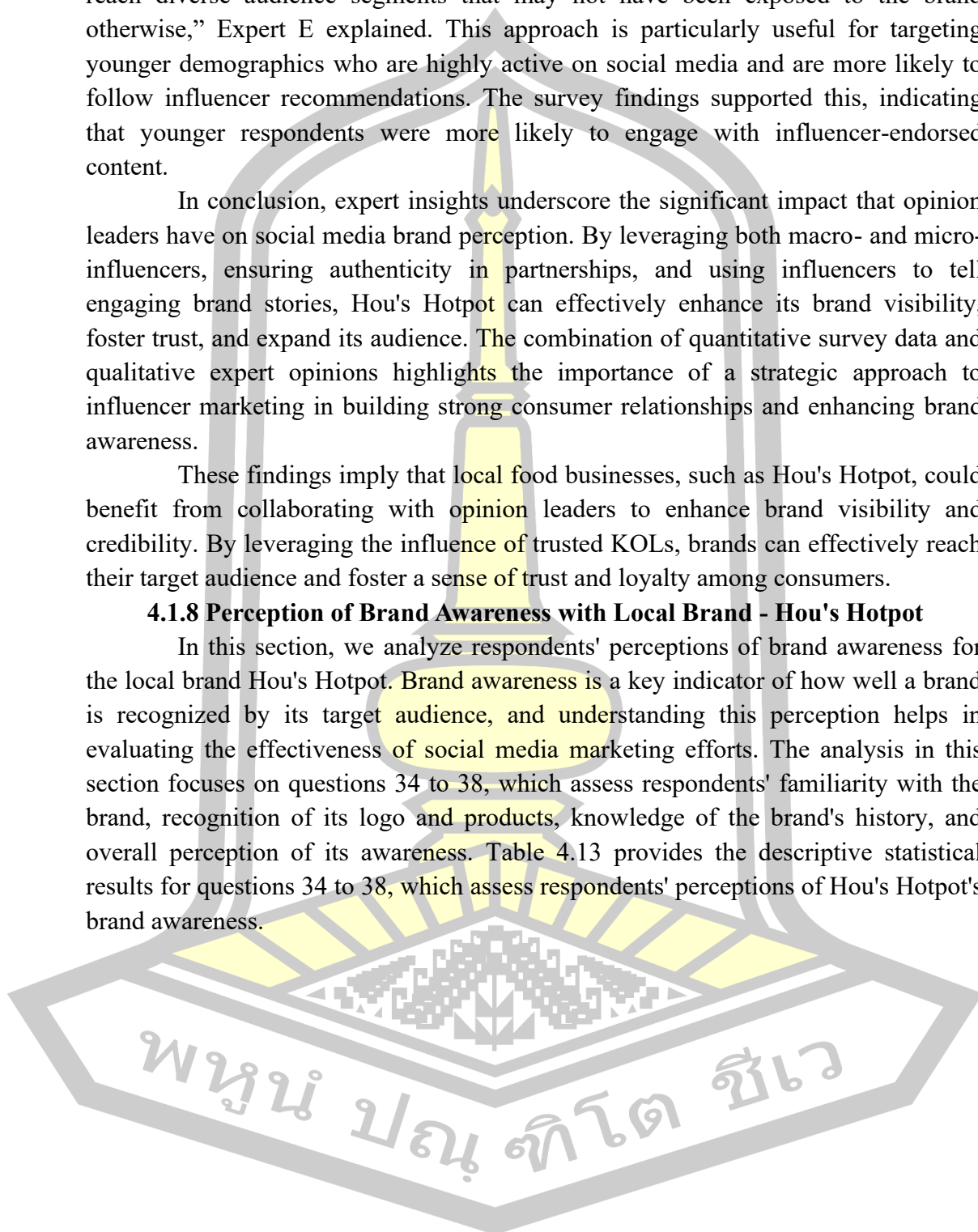


Table 4.13: Descriptive Statistics for Brand Awareness with Hou's Hotpot

Question	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Meaning
34. I am very familiar with the local food brand Hou's Hotpot.	401	3.45	1.188	Neutral
35. I often see advertisements for the local food brand Hou's Hotpot.	401	3.47	1.174	Neutral
36. I can easily recognize the logo and products of the local food brand Hou's Hotpot.	401	3.49	1.160	Neutral
37. I know the history and background of the local food brand Hou's Hotpot.	401	3.40	1.202	Neutral
38. I believe the local food brand Hou's Hotpot has high brand awareness.	401	3.46	1.163	Neutral

The descriptive statistics indicate that respondents generally have a neutral to positive perception of Hou's Hotpot's brand awareness, with average scores ranging from 3.40 to 3.49. Specifically, the recognition of the logo and products (mean = 3.49) and familiarity with advertisements (mean = 3.47) indicate that the brand is well-recognized by the respondents. Table 4.14 presents the results of one-sample t-tests for brand awareness items. These t-tests aim to determine whether the mean scores for each perception of brand awareness significantly differ from a neutral midpoint of 3.

Table 4.14: One-Sample T-Test Results for Brand Awareness with Hou's Hotpot

Question	Mean Difference	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
34. I am very familiar with the local food brand Hou's Hotpot.	0.448	401	7.627	0.000
35. I often see advertisements for the local food brand Hou's Hotpot.	0.472	401	8.000	0.000
36. I can easily recognize the logo and products of the local food brand Hou's Hotpot.	0.487	401	8.448	0.000
37. I know the history and background of the local food brand Hou's Hotpot.	0.402	401	6.667	0.000
38. I believe the local food brand Hou's Hotpot has high brand awareness.	0.464	400	7.931	0.000

The results of the one-sample t-tests indicate that all five items related to brand awareness have mean scores significantly greater than the neutral value of 3.51-5.00 ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that respondents generally have a positive perception of Hou's Hotpot's brand awareness, including familiarity with the brand, recognition of its logo and products, and the belief that it has high brand awareness. To further analyze respondents' perceptions of brand awareness, frequency distributions were calculated for each item. Figure 4.7 presents the frequency analysis results for questions 34 to 38.

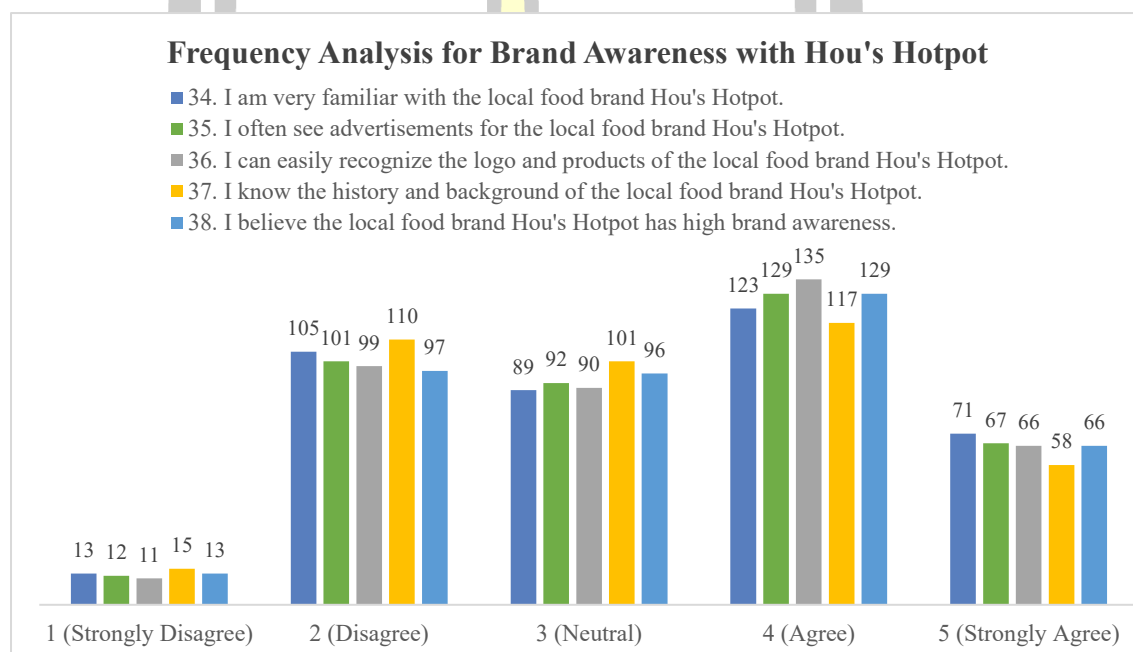


Figure 4.7 Frequency Analysis for Brand Awareness with Hou's Hotpot

The frequency analysis reveals that a significant portion of respondents agree or strongly agree with statements related to their awareness of Hou's Hotpot. For example, 50.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they can easily recognize the logo and products of Hou's Hotpot, and 48.7% indicated that they often see advertisements for the brand. These results provide additional insights into the brand's visibility and consumer familiarity.

The analysis of brand awareness for Hou's Hotpot reveals that respondents generally have a positive perception of the brand. The descriptive statistics show that respondents are familiar with the brand (mean = 3.45) and can easily recognize its logo and products (mean = 3.49). These findings suggest that Hou's Hotpot has established a recognizable presence in the market, which is crucial for building strong brand equity.

The one-sample t-test results indicate that all items related to brand awareness are significantly above the neutral value, demonstrating that respondents are

positively inclined towards the brand. The frequency analysis further supports these findings, showing that many respondents are familiar with the brand, recognize its advertisements, and believe it has high brand awareness.

4.1.9 Expert Insights on Perception of Brand Awareness with Local Brand - Hou's Hotpot

Expert interviews offered in-depth perspectives on how brand awareness is shaped and maintained for local brands like Hou's Hotpot through effective social media strategies. Experts stressed that building strong brand awareness requires consistent and strategic messaging that resonates with consumers and reinforces brand identity.

Expert A, a brand identity specialist, emphasized the importance of brand consistency in enhancing brand awareness. “Consistent messaging across social media platforms helps reinforce the brand image and ensures that consumers have a clear understanding of what the brand stands for,” Expert A explained. This view aligns with survey findings, which showed that respondents are more likely to recognize and recall Hou's Hotpot when they encounter consistent brand elements, such as logos, colors, and messaging, across different posts and channels.

Expert B, a digital branding consultant, discussed the role of visual elements in creating brand recall. “Visual cues such as the brand logo, signature colors, and unique imagery are crucial for enhancing brand recall. When consumers repeatedly see these elements, they are more likely to remember the brand,” Expert B said. The expert suggested that Hou's Hotpot should focus on developing a strong visual identity that is easy to recognize and distinct from competitors. The survey data supported this, indicating that a majority of respondents could easily recognize Hou's Hotpot's logo and product offerings.

Expert C, an expert in consumer psychology, highlighted the role of emotional connection in building brand awareness. “Brands that can create an emotional connection with their audience are more likely to achieve higher levels of brand awareness and loyalty,” Expert C pointed out. The survey findings showed that respondents who had an emotional connection with Hou's Hotpot—whether through personal stories, cultural relevance, or positive experiences—were more likely to recall the brand and recommend it to others. Expert C suggested that Hou's Hotpot could enhance its brand awareness by sharing stories that resonate emotionally with its target audience, such as highlighting local ingredients or sharing customer testimonials.

Expert D, a marketing strategist for local businesses, emphasized the importance of community involvement in boosting brand awareness. “For local brands like Hou's Hotpot, being actively involved in the local community can significantly enhance brand awareness. This could involve sponsoring local events, collaborating with other local businesses, or highlighting community stories on social media,” Expert D said. The survey data indicated that respondents were more likely to

recall and engage with brands that demonstrated a commitment to the local community, which underscores the value of community-based branding strategies.

Expert E, a content marketing specialist, pointed out the impact of content frequency on brand awareness. “The frequency of content posting plays a crucial role in keeping the brand top-of-mind for consumers. Brands that maintain a consistent posting schedule are more likely to be remembered by their audience,” Expert E explained. This insight is consistent with the survey data, which indicated that respondents who frequently saw Hou's Hotpot's posts on their social media feeds were more likely to remember and engage with the brand. Expert E recommended that Hou's Hotpot maintain a steady posting schedule to ensure continuous visibility and reinforce brand recall.

In conclusion, expert insights highlight the multifaceted nature of building brand awareness for local brands like Hou's Hotpot. Consistency in messaging, strong visual identity, emotional storytelling, community involvement, and content frequency all play crucial roles in enhancing brand awareness. The combination of expert perspectives and survey data provides a comprehensive understanding of how Hou's Hotpot can effectively increase its brand visibility and maintain a strong presence in the local market.

These findings imply that Hou's Hotpot has successfully built a level of brand awareness that resonates with its target audience. To further enhance brand perception, Hou's Hotpot should continue its efforts in advertising and brand promotion, focusing on maintaining consistency in brand messaging and increasing visibility through both online and offline channels.

4.1.10 Perception of Brand Experience with Local Brand - Hou's Hotpot

In this section, we analyze respondents' perceptions of their brand experience with Hou's Hotpot. Brand experience refers to the interactions and feelings that customers have when engaging with a brand, including participation in activities, feedback, and satisfaction with the brand. Understanding brand experience helps evaluate how effectively Hou's Hotpot engages its customers and builds loyalty. The analysis in this section focuses on questions 39 to 43, which assess respondents' participation in brand activities, recommendations to others, feedback willingness, enjoyment of social media activities, and overall satisfaction. Table 4.15 provides the descriptive statistical results for questions 39 to 43, which assess respondents' brand experience with Hou's Hotpot.

Table 4.15: Descriptive Statistics for Brand Experience with Hou's Hotpot

Question	N	Mean	S.D.	Meaning
39. I frequently participate in activities of the local food brand Hou's Hotpot on social media.	401	3.38	1.179	Neutral
40. I would recommend Local Food Business Brands to friends and family - Hou's Hotpot.	401	3.41	1.183	Neutral
41. I am willing to provide feedback and suggestions for the local food brand Hou's Hotpot.	401	3.43	1.172	Neutral
42. I find participating in social media activities of the local food brand Hou's Hotpot enjoyable.	401	3.44	1.170	Neutral
43. I am highly satisfied with the social media activities of the local food brand Hou's Hotpot.	401	3.42	1.168	Neutral

The descriptive statistics indicate that respondents generally have a neutral to positive brand experience with Hou's Hotpot, with average scores ranging from 3.38 to 3.44. Specifically, respondents reported slightly higher levels of enjoyment in participating in social media activities (mean = 3.44) and willingness to provide feedback (mean = 3.43). Table 4.16 presents the results of one-sample t-tests for brand experience items. These t-tests aim to determine whether the mean scores for each brand experience item significantly differ from a neutral midpoint of 3.

Table 4.16: One-Sample T-Test Results for Brand Experience with Hou's Hotpot

Question	Mean Difference	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
39. I frequently participate in activities of the local food brand Hou's Hotpot on social media.	0.377	401	6.441	0.000
40. I would recommend Local Food Business Brands to friends and family - Hou's Hotpot.	0.407	401	6.949	0.000
41. I am willing to provide feedback and suggestions for the local food brand Hou's Hotpot.	0.426	401	7.448	0.000
42. I find participating in social media activities of the local food brand Hou's Hotpot enjoyable.	0.442	401	7.586	0.000
43. I am highly satisfied with the social media activities of the local food brand Hou's Hotpot.	0.417	401	7.241	0.000

The results of the one-sample t-tests indicate that all five items related to brand experience have mean scores significantly greater than the neutral value of 3.51-5.00 ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that respondents generally have a positive brand experience with Hou's Hotpot, including participation in activities, willingness to provide feedback, and satisfaction with social media interactions. To further analyze respondents' perceptions of brand experience, frequency distributions were calculated for each item. Figure 4.8 presents the frequency analysis results for questions 39 to 43.

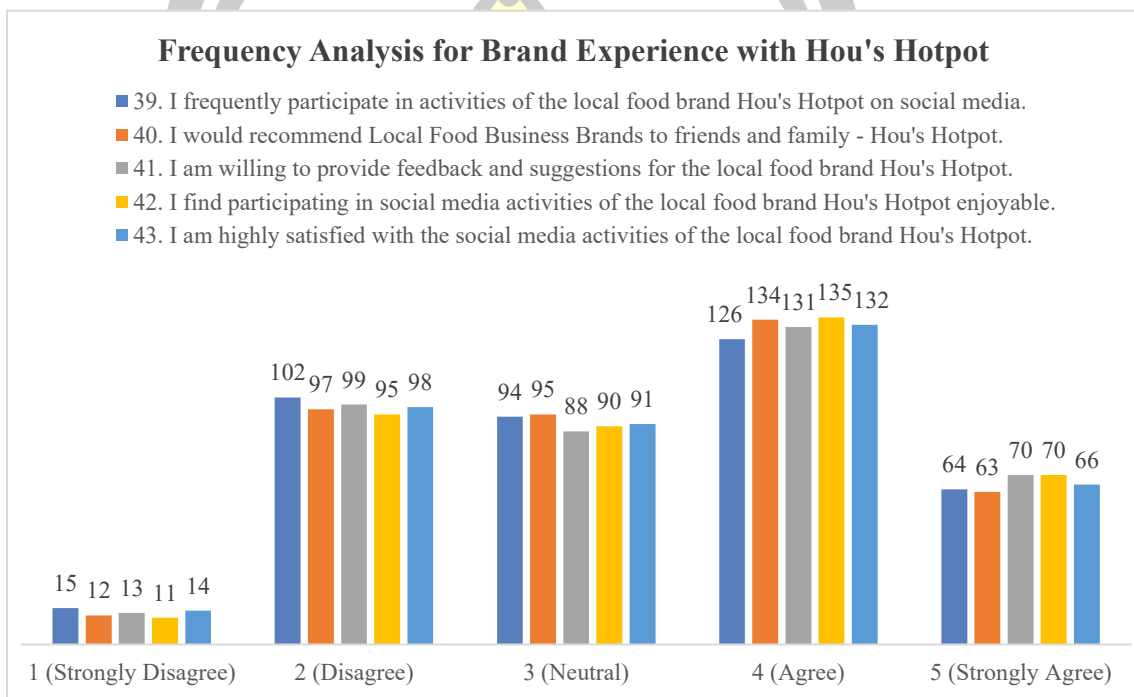


Figure 4.8 Frequency Analysis for Brand Experience with Hou's Hotpot

The frequency analysis reveals that a considerable portion of respondents agree or strongly agree with statements related to their brand experience with Hou's Hotpot. For instance, 49.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoy participating in social media activities of Hou's Hotpot, and 48.6% would recommend the brand to friends and family. These results provide additional insights into the brand's ability to engage customers and foster positive experiences.

The analysis of brand experience with Hou's Hotpot reveals that respondents generally have a positive perception of their interactions with the brand. The descriptive statistics indicate that respondents find participating in social media activities enjoyable (mean = 3.44) and are willing to provide feedback and suggestions (mean = 3.43). These findings suggest that Hou's Hotpot has successfully created an engaging brand experience that encourages customers to interact and contribute.

The one-sample t-test results further support these positive perceptions, showing that all brand experience items are significantly above the neutral value. The frequency analysis reveals that a considerable number of respondents participate in brand activities, are satisfied with social media engagements, and are willing to recommend the brand to others.

4.1.11 Expert Insights on Perception of Brand Experience with Local Brand - Hou's Hotpot

Expert interviews provided valuable insights into how consumers perceive their brand experience with local food businesses like Hou's Hotpot. Experts emphasized that creating a positive and memorable brand experience is essential for building long-term consumer loyalty and enhancing brand perception.

Expert A, a customer experience consultant, highlighted the importance of delivering a consistent and high-quality product experience. “The quality of the food and the consistency of the experience are fundamental to shaping consumer perceptions. If consumers know they can always rely on Hou's Hotpot for a delicious meal and quality service, they are more likely to return,” Expert A explained. This aligns with the survey findings, which showed that respondents who had consistently positive dining experiences were more likely to recommend Hou's Hotpot to others.

Expert B, specializing in experiential marketing, discussed the role of immersive and interactive brand experiences in enhancing consumer engagement. “Creating opportunities for consumers to interact with the brand—whether through cooking classes, live events, or social media challenges—can leave a lasting impression and make the brand experience more memorable,” Expert B noted. The survey results indicated that respondents valued experiential elements that allowed them to connect with the brand beyond a transactional level, which suggests that Hou's Hotpot could explore more immersive experiences to further engage its customers.

Expert C, a hospitality industry expert, emphasized the role of customer service in shaping brand experience. “Customer service is a critical touchpoint for local brands. Friendly, attentive service can turn a one-time visitor into a loyal customer,” Expert C said. The survey data showed that respondents who reported positive interactions with staff were more likely to rate their overall experience highly and recommend Hou's Hotpot. The expert suggested that investing in staff training to ensure consistently excellent customer service could be a key differentiator for Hou's Hotpot in a competitive market.

Expert D, a local culture advocate, highlighted the importance of cultural authenticity in enhancing brand experience. “For a local brand like Hou's Hotpot, emphasizing cultural authenticity—such as using locally sourced ingredients or highlighting traditional cooking methods—can create a unique and appealing brand experience,” Expert D explained. The survey findings supported this, indicating that respondents appreciated the cultural elements of Hou's Hotpot, which contributed to a

deeper and more meaningful brand connection. The expert recommended that Hou's Hotpot continue to integrate local cultural elements into its offerings to maintain this positive brand perception.

Expert E, a digital engagement strategist, pointed out that extending the brand experience to social media is crucial for maintaining consumer interest. "The brand experience doesn't end when a customer leaves the restaurant; it continues on social media. By sharing behind-the-scenes content, customer testimonials, or even interactive polls, Hou's Hotpot can keep customers engaged and connected to the brand," Expert E said. This insight is consistent with the survey data, which showed that respondents who interacted with Hou's Hotpot on social media had a more positive perception of their overall brand experience. Expert E suggested that Hou's Hotpot use social media as a platform to extend and enhance the brand experience beyond physical interactions.

In conclusion, the expert insights highlight several key components of a positive brand experience for local brands like Hou's Hotpot. High-quality and consistent product offerings, immersive and interactive experiences, excellent customer service, cultural authenticity, and continued digital engagement are all crucial elements in shaping a memorable and positive brand experience. The combination of expert perspectives and survey data provides a comprehensive understanding of how Hou's Hotpot can effectively enhance its brand experience and foster consumer loyalty.

These findings imply that Hou's Hotpot should continue to focus on enhancing customer engagement through interactive social media activities. By fostering a positive brand experience, Hou's Hotpot can build stronger relationships with its customers, leading to increased brand awareness and advocacy.

4.1.12 Summary of Findings on the Factors and Components

Descriptive, t-test, and frequency analyses of the different components indicate that respondents generally have a neutral to positive perception of Hou's Hotpot, with particular emphasis on brand awareness, user experience, and engagement. Notably, opinion leaders and data-driven insights emerged as especially influential in shaping consumer behaviors and enhancing brand visibility. Respondents also expressed a high level of willingness to engage with the brand, provide feedback, and recommend Hou's Hotpot to others, underscoring the efficacy of the brand's social media strategy.

In conclusion, these findings highlight the significance of a comprehensive social media approach that incorporates engaging content, proactive user interaction, and strategic utilization of opinion leaders and data analytics. Hou's Hotpot has successfully leveraged these elements to foster positive brand experiences, cultivate consumer loyalty, and elevate brand awareness, illustrating the effectiveness of an integrated social media strategy for local food businesses.

In sections 4.2.3 to 4.2.9, insights from experts were used to provide a deeper understanding of various aspects of social media and brand perception related to

Hou's Hotpot. It should be noted that each section utilized insights from different experts, each specializing in the specific topic discussed. For instance:

The experts providing insights on social media platform usage (4.2.3) were specialists in digital engagement and platform-specific strategies.

The experts contributing to content preferences (4.2.4) had backgrounds in content marketing and consumer behavior.

For user engagement (4.2.5), insights were gathered from digital community managers and engagement consultants.

This approach ensures that each aspect of the study benefits from the expertise of individuals specifically qualified in those areas. Therefore, the experts mentioned across the different sections (Experts A, B, C, D, E) represent different professionals with unique perspectives, providing a comprehensive and well-rounded analysis.

4.2 A model of social media influence on the perception of local food businesses in China.

The development of a social media influence model for local food businesses, specifically in the context of Hou's Hotpot, aims to create a structured framework that enhances brand awareness, user engagement, and consumer loyalty. This model integrates the findings from the previous sections, focusing on the factors and components identified as crucial for influencing consumer perceptions through social media.

4.2.1 Model Framework

To ensure that the social media influence model for Hou's Hotpot is both scientifically robust and practically applicable, the model is constructed based on insights derived from the quantitative and qualitative analyses presented in Chapter 4.2. Specifically, the components of the model were developed by integrating findings from the questionnaire, which covered seven dimensions, and expert interviews, which were organized into eight thematic sections. The development process of the model involved identifying the most impactful factors influencing brand perception and aligning them with key strategic components that are essential for an effective social media influence model.

The model framework comprises five interconnected components: Content Strategy, Platform Usage, User Engagement, Data Analytics, and Influencer Partnerships. Below, we provide a detailed explanation of how each component of the model corresponds to the findings from the questionnaire and expert interviews:

1) Content Strategy

From the questionnaire, we analyzed how content types (such as videos, pictures, and live streams) impact user attraction and brand perception. The expert interviews also highlighted the importance of content creativity and quality in

enhancing brand awareness, emphasizing that diversified content is more effective in engaging users.

Based on these findings, "Content Strategy" was identified as a core element of the model. It emphasizes the use of diverse content formats, creativity, and consistency to attract users and convey the brand's values effectively.

2) Platform Usage

The questionnaire assessed users' social media platform usage, including platform usage frequency and feature preferences (e.g., Moments, Official Accounts, Mini Programs). In the interviews, experts discussed how to effectively disseminate content across different platforms and customize content based on platform characteristics.

Platform selection and usage significantly impact content dissemination and brand exposure. Therefore, "Platform Usage" was included as a key component, guiding the optimal display of brand information across different platforms.

3) User Engagement

Correspondence to Findings: The user engagement dimension in the questionnaire covered user interaction frequency with the brand on WeChat (e.g., likes, comments, participation in activities). Experts emphasized the importance of two-way communication with users to foster brand awareness.

User engagement plays a crucial role in brand building. Thus, "User Engagement" was included as a core element, focusing on increasing brand awareness through interactive activities and user-generated content.

4) Data Analytics

The questionnaire also explored respondents' views on social media data analytics and how brands could use data to enhance service quality and content targeting. Experts frequently mentioned the role of data analytics in optimizing communication strategies, especially in improving content based on user behavior insights.

Data analytics is fundamental to achieving precise marketing and optimizing strategies. Therefore, "Data Analytics" was included in the model to enable continuous improvement of content and engagement strategies through data-driven insights.

5) Influencer Partnerships

One dimension of the questionnaire focused on users' trust in social media opinion leaders (KOLs) and their influence, including whether users would try new brands based on KOL recommendations. In the interviews, experts extensively discussed the types of influencers, selection criteria, and their roles in brand communication, emphasizing authenticity and influence.

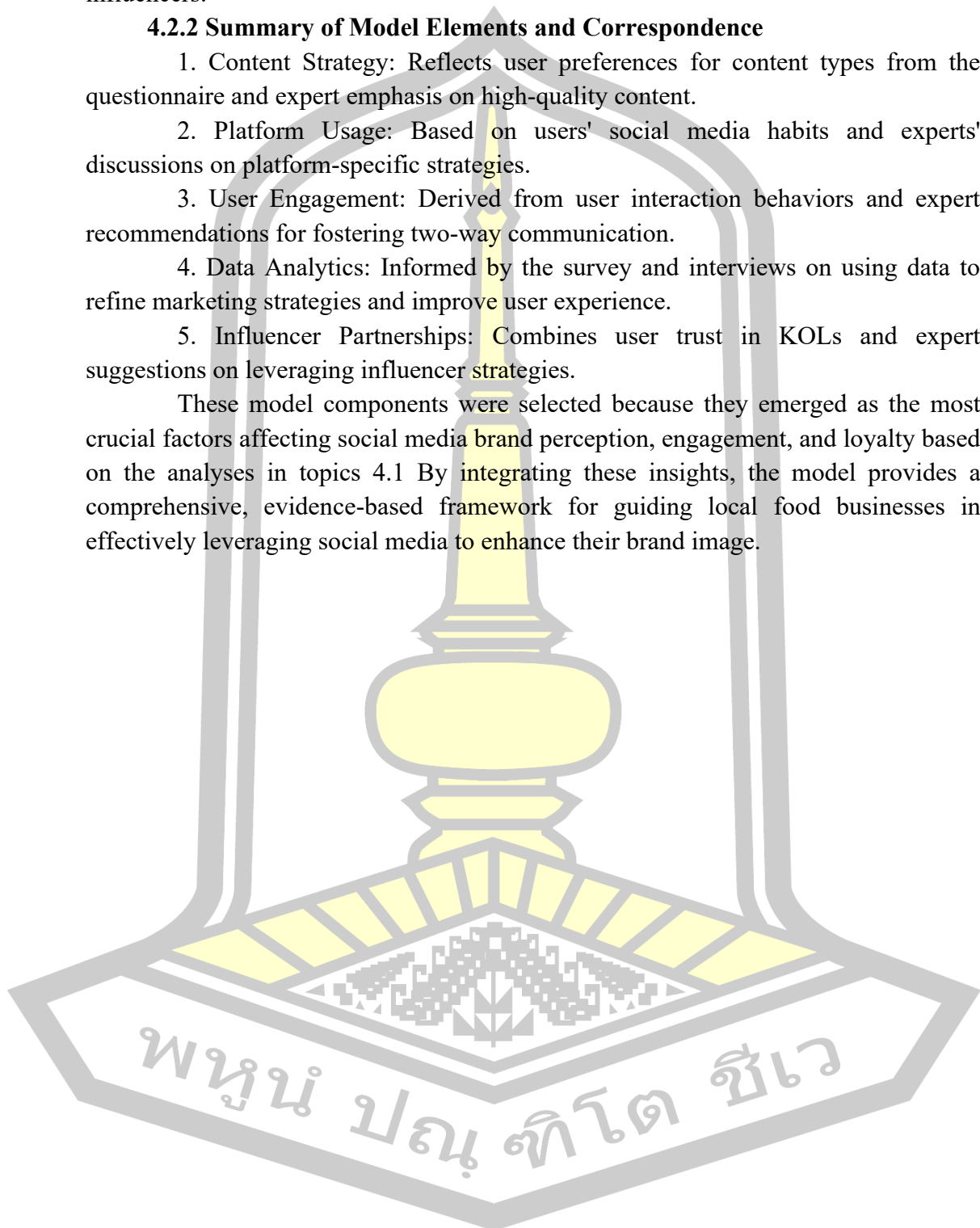
Given the trust users place in KOLs and the experts' recommendations, "Influencer Partnerships" was added as a key component. It focuses on expanding

brand influence and enhancing user trust through strategic collaborations with influencers.

4.2.2 Summary of Model Elements and Correspondence

1. Content Strategy: Reflects user preferences for content types from the questionnaire and expert emphasis on high-quality content.
2. Platform Usage: Based on users' social media habits and experts' discussions on platform-specific strategies.
3. User Engagement: Derived from user interaction behaviors and expert recommendations for fostering two-way communication.
4. Data Analytics: Informed by the survey and interviews on using data to refine marketing strategies and improve user experience.
5. Influencer Partnerships: Combines user trust in KOLs and expert suggestions on leveraging influencer strategies.

These model components were selected because they emerged as the most crucial factors affecting social media brand perception, engagement, and loyalty based on the analyses in topics 4.1 By integrating these insights, the model provides a comprehensive, evidence-based framework for guiding local food businesses in effectively leveraging social media to enhance their brand image.



4.2.3 Model Framework Overview

To provide a clear and visual representation of the social media influence model for Hou's Hotpot, the following figure illustrates the key components and their interactions within the model framework.

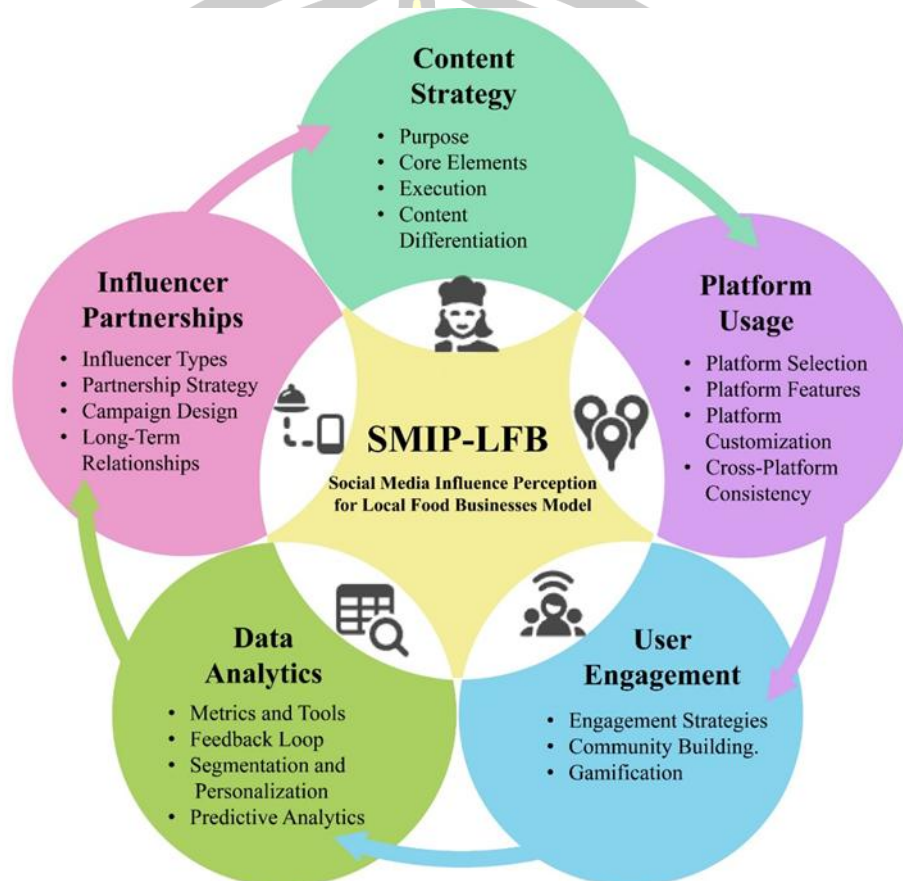


Figure 4.9 Social Media Influencing Perception for Local Food Business Model Framework (SMIP-LFB Model) for Hou's Hotpot

The model consists of five interconnected components—Content Strategy, Platform Usage, User Engagement, Data Analytics, and Influencer Partnerships—each of which plays a vital role in shaping consumer perceptions and driving brand awareness. The diagram above illustrates how these components work together in a dynamic cycle of content creation, audience engagement, data-driven refinement, and amplification through influencers.

1) Theoretical Foundations

The model framework is grounded in several well-established theories that guide the understanding of consumer behavior and social media dynamics:

1.1) Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT): This theory provides a foundation for understanding why users engage with social media platforms and

content. It explains how individuals actively choose media to satisfy specific needs, such as information-seeking, entertainment, social interaction, or self-expression. This theory supports the focus on diverse content strategies and interactive engagement.

1.2) Social Identity Theory: Social Identity Theory explains how individuals derive part of their identity from the social groups they belong to, including brand communities. By fostering a sense of community through shared cultural and experiential values, Hou's Hotpot can enhance brand awareness and consumer identification with the brand.

1.3) Customer Engagement Theory: This theory emphasizes the importance of fostering active consumer participation. It underpins the model's approach to encouraging user-generated content, direct brand interactions, and experiential activities to build emotional connections between consumers and the brand.

1.4) Diffusion of Innovations Theory: This theory helps in understanding how new ideas and innovations, such as brand content or promotional campaigns, spread through social networks. By leveraging opinion leaders and influencers, Hou's Hotpot can accelerate the diffusion of its brand message, especially among early adopters.

2) Key Model Components

The model framework comprises five interconnected components, each contributing uniquely to the overall brand influence on social media:

2.1) Content Strategy

2.1.1) Purpose: The content strategy aims to create engaging, relatable, and informative content that resonates with the target audience. It helps to convey the brand's values and identity while ensuring consistency in messaging.

2.1.2) Core Elements: The content strategy includes multiple formats—such as videos, articles, interactive polls, behind-the-scenes glimpses, and user-generated content. This approach aligns with Uses and Gratifications Theory, which suggests that users seek content that fulfills their informational, social, or entertainment needs.

2.1.3) Execution: A diversified content calendar is recommended, mixing educational content (e.g., health benefits of hotpot ingredients), emotional storytelling (e.g., customer experiences), and promotional activities (e.g., discounts and contests). Consistent brand storytelling and cultural relevance are crucial to establishing an emotional connection with the audience. Content should also reflect the brand's local heritage, thus fostering a sense of pride and loyalty among the local community.

2.1.4) Content Differentiation: Content must stand out from competitors by incorporating unique brand attributes, such as highlighting the use of locally sourced ingredients or sharing behind-the-scenes footage of the food

preparation process. This type of differentiation strengthens the brand's identity and helps cultivate a loyal following.

2.2) Platform Usage

2.2.1) Purpose: The strategic use of social media platforms aims to maximize brand reach and engagement while ensuring that content is tailored to platform-specific features.

2.2.2) Platform Selection: Given the prevalence of WeChat in China, the model emphasizes prioritizing WeChat for its multifunctionality and large user base. Secondary platforms, such as Douyin or Xiaohongshu, are also considered to diversify the brand's reach and attract different demographic segments.

2.2.3) Platform Features: Utilizing features like WeChat Moments, official accounts, and mini-programs allows Hou's Hotpot to engage users in different ways—from casual browsing to direct transactions. For example, mini-programs can be used to offer exclusive promotions or allow customers to make reservations, while Moments can help share visual content that showcases the brand's unique offerings.

2.2.4) Platform Customization: Customization of content for each platform is vital. On WeChat, content might focus on more personal interactions and community updates, while on Douyin, short, creative video clips highlighting unique dishes and customer experiences could be used to captivate a younger audience.

2.2.5) Cross-Platform Consistency: Maintaining a consistent brand voice across multiple platforms while adapting content to each platform's unique audience is key. This ensures that no matter where users encounter Hou's Hotpot, they receive a consistent brand experience.

2.3) User Engagement

2.3.1) Purpose: User engagement aims to foster active consumer participation and build a community around the brand, enhancing loyalty and emotional connection.

2.3.2) Engagement Strategies: The model incorporates multiple strategies, such as interactive Q&A sessions, user-generated content campaigns, live streaming events, and direct brand-consumer interactions through chat features. This is supported by Customer Engagement Theory, which highlights the importance of two-way communication.

2.3.3) Community Building: Community-building initiatives include the creation of online brand communities where users can share experiences, offer feedback, and interact with each other. Such initiatives help Hou's Hotpot build a loyal following and turn satisfied customers into brand advocates. Hosting interactive events, such as live-streamed cooking sessions or cultural storytelling events, helps build a deeper connection with the audience.

2.3.4) Gamification: Incorporating gamification elements, such as point systems or badges for frequent engagement, can motivate users to interact more frequently with the brand's content, thus enhancing engagement and retention.

2.3.5) **Personalized Engagement:** Personalized responses to user comments and inquiries, as well as shout-outs to loyal customers, can create a sense of belonging and make users feel valued by the brand.

2.4) Data Analytics

2.4.1) **Purpose:** Data analytics is used to continuously measure and optimize the effectiveness of social media activities, enabling data-driven decision-making.

2.4.2) **Metrics and Tools:** Key metrics include engagement rates, reach, sentiment analysis, conversion rates, and audience demographics. The model recommends using analytics tools integrated with WeChat and other platforms to gather these insights. Monitoring user behavior—such as click-through rates, time spent on content, and interaction types—helps identify what content resonates best with the audience.

2.4.3) **Feedback Loop:** Data analytics creates a feedback loop for content improvement and strategy adjustment. By understanding what content resonates most, Hou's Hotpot can refine its messaging to better meet consumer preferences and maximize engagement. The feedback loop involves collecting data, analyzing it for insights, adjusting the content strategy, and then re-measuring the impact, thus creating a cycle of continuous improvement.

2.4.4) **Segmentation and Personalization:** Using analytics, Hou's Hotpot can segment its audience based on engagement patterns and demographics, allowing for more personalized content delivery that meets the specific needs and preferences of different audience groups.

2.4.5) **Predictive Analytics:** Predictive analytics can be used to identify emerging trends and potential customer needs, allowing Hou's Hotpot to proactively adjust its content and engagement strategies to stay ahead of competitors.

2.5) Influencer Partnerships

2.5.1) **Purpose:** Leveraging influencers helps to extend brand reach, enhance credibility, and foster deeper connections with target consumers.

2.5.2) **Influencer Types:** The model includes both macro-influencers (to increase broad awareness) and micro-influencers (to create authentic and niche community engagement). This dual approach is informed by the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, which emphasizes the role of opinion leaders in influencing adoption.

2.5.3) **Partnership Strategy:** The model emphasizes authentic relationships with influencers who align with the brand's values. Influencers are encouraged to share personal experiences with Hou's Hotpot, thereby making the brand story more relatable and trustworthy. Macro-influencers can be used to create a significant initial impact, while micro-influencers provide sustained engagement through authentic and targeted content.

2.5.4) Campaign Design: The model suggests co-creating content with influencers to ensure authenticity. For example, influencers could share a personal story about their experience at Hou's Hotpot or create cooking tutorials featuring the brand's ingredients. The success of influencer partnerships should be measured using metrics like follower growth, content reach, engagement rates, and conversion metrics.

2.5.5) Long-Term Relationships: Establishing long-term partnerships rather than one-off collaborations with influencers ensures ongoing promotion and maintains consistent visibility of the brand among the influencer's followers.

3) Integration of Model Components

The components are not standalone; rather, they are interconnected to form a cohesive model:

Content Strategy and Platform Usage work in tandem to ensure that the right content reaches the right audience on the most suitable platforms. For example, content tailored for WeChat might focus on community stories, while content for Douyin could include short, visually appealing videos that attract younger audiences.

User Engagement is driven by effective content and platform usage, creating opportunities for consumers to interact with the brand. Interactive content, such as live-streaming events, user polls, and Q&A sessions, encourages deeper engagement, fostering stronger consumer-brand relationships.

Data Analytics serves as the backbone for optimizing both content and engagement strategies. Insights derived from data analytics inform adjustments in content strategy, highlight which types of engagement activities are most effective, and identify which platforms yield the best results. By continuously analyzing audience behavior, Hou's Hotpot can refine its strategy, ensuring content remains relevant and engagement remains strong.

Influencer Partnerships amplify both content reach and engagement. Influencers act as a bridge between the brand and the target audience, providing credibility and extending the brand's message beyond its direct followers. Collaborating with influencers helps enhance the effectiveness of content by making it more relatable, while also driving user engagement through endorsements and shared experiences.

Feedback Loops exist between these components to ensure continuous improvement. For instance, insights gathered from Data Analytics are used to adjust the Content Strategy and Platform Usage. Likewise, feedback from User Engagement activities can highlight content preferences, which then informs future Content Strategy and Influencer Partnerships.

Each component is interdependent, creating synergies that enhance overall brand influence. For example, well-curated Content Strategy attracts influencers, who then increase User Engagement. The data collected through engagement is analyzed to further refine content, platform use, and influencer selection, resulting in a dynamic and evolving cycle of brand influence.

The integration of these components ensures that Hou's Hotpot's social media strategy is not only holistic but also adaptive, capable of responding to changing audience preferences and market dynamics. This interconnected approach is vital for building a strong brand presence, fostering consumer loyalty, and sustaining growth in a highly competitive digital landscape.

4.3 Multiple regression analysis

4.3.1. Regression analysis of brand awareness

A multiple regression analysis was conducted with social media platform usage, content type, user interaction, data analysis, and the influence of opinion leaders as independent variables, and brand awareness as the dependent variable.

Table 4.17: Multiple Regression Predicting Brand Awareness

	Non-normalized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	P	Collinear diagnosis	
	B	Standard error	Beta			2 VIF	Tolerance based
Constant	0.710	0.190	-	3.730	0.000 **	-	-
Social media platform usage	0.158	0.050	0.153	3.135	0.002 **	1.428	0.700
Content type	0.207	0.050	0.202	4.102	0.000 **	1.454	0.688
User interaction	0.108	0.049	0.110	2.175	0.030 *	1.520	0.658
Data analysis	0.133	0.051	0.129	2.577	0.010 *	1.495	0.669
Opinion leaders' influence	0.188	0.050	0.194	3.795	0.000 **	1.557	0.642
R ²				0.341			
Adjust R ²				0.332			
F				F (5,394)=40.744,p=0.000			
D-W value				2.075			

Note: Dependent variable = Brand awareness

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01

It can be seen from the above table that the model formula is:

Brand awareness =0.710 + 0.158* Social media platform usage + 0.207* content type + 0.108* user interaction + 0.133* data analysis + 0.188* opinion leader influence

The R-square value of the model is 0.341, meaning that social media usage, content type, user interaction, data analysis, and the influence of opinion leaders can account for 34.1% of the change in brand awareness. When conducting the F-test on the model, it was found that the model passed the F-test (F=40.744, p=0.000<0.05), which indicates that at least one of social media platform usage, content type, user interaction, data analysis, and the influence of opinion leaders would have an impact

on brand awareness. Additionally, when testing the model's multicollinearity, it was found that All VIF values in the model were less than 5, indicating that there was no collinearity problem; And the D-W value is around the number 2, which indicates that the model has no autocorrelation and there is no correlation among the sample data, and the model is good. The final specific analysis shows that:

The regression coefficient value of social media platform usage was 0.158($t=3.135$, $p=0.002<0.01$), indicating that social media platform usage has a significant positive impact on brand awareness.

The regression coefficient value of content type was 0.207($t=4.102$, $p=0.000<0.01$), indicating that content type has a significant positive impact on brand awareness.

The regression coefficient value of user interaction was 0.108($t=2.175$, $p=0.030<0.05$), indicating that user interaction has a significant positive impact on brand awareness.

The regression coefficient value of the data analysis was 0.133($t=2.577$, $p=0.010<0.05$), indicating that the data analysis would have a significant positive impact on brand awareness.

The regression coefficient for the influence of opinion leaders was 0.188($t=3.795$, $p=0.000<0.01$), indicating that the influence of opinion leaders has a significant positive impact on brand awareness.



4.3.2. Regression analysis of user engagement

A multiple regression analysis was conducted with social media platform usage, content type, user interaction, data analysis, and opinion leader influence as independent variables, and user engagement as the dependent variable.

Table 4.18: Multiple Regression Predicting User Engagement

	Non-normalized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	P	Collinear diagnosis	
	B	Standard error	Beta			2 VIF	Tolerance based
Constant	0.333	0.189	-	1.761	0.079	-	-
Social media platform usage	0.179	0.050	0.168	3.579	0.000 **	1.428	0.700
Content type	0.238	0.050	0.224	4.738	0.000 **	1.454	0.688
User interaction	0.121	0.049	0.119	2.463	0.014 *	1.520	0.658
Data analysis	0.118	0.051	0.110	2.300	0.022 *	1.495	0.669
Opinion leaders' influence	0.227	0.049	0.225	4.598	0.000 **	1.557	0.642
R ²				0.395			
Adjust R ²				0.388			
F				F (5,394)=51.492,p=0.000			
D-W value				2.046			

Note: Dependent variable = User engagement

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01

As can be seen from the above table, the model formula is:

User engagement = 0.333 + 0.179* Social media platform usage + 0.238* content type + 0.121* User interaction + 0.118* data analysis + 0.227* opinion leader influence

The R-square value of the model is 0.395, meaning that social media usage, content type, user interaction, data analysis, and the influence of opinion leaders can account for 39.5% of the change in user engagement. When conducting the F-test on the model, it was found that the model passed the F-test (F=51.492, p=0.000<0.05), which indicates that at least one of social media platform usage, content type, user interaction, data analysis, and the influence of opinion leaders would have an impact on user engagement. Additionally, when testing the model's multicollinearity, it was found that All VIF values in the model were less than 5, indicating that there was no collinearity problem; And the D-W value is around the number 2, which indicates that the model has no autocorrelation and there is no correlation among the sample data, and the model is good. The final specific analysis shows that:

The regression coefficient value of social media platform usage was 0.179(t=3.579, p=0.000<0.01), indicating that social media platform usage has a significant positive impact on user engagement.

The regression coefficient value of content type was 0.238($t=4.738$, $p=0.000<0.01$), indicating that content type has a significant positive impact on user engagement.

The regression coefficient value of user interaction was 0.121($t=2.463$, $p=0.014<0.05$), indicating that user interaction has a significant positive impact on user engagement.

The regression coefficient value of the data analysis was 0.118($t=2.300$, $p=0.022<0.05$), indicating that the data analysis would have a significant positive impact on user engagement.

The regression coefficient value of opinion leaders' influence was 0.227($t=4.598$, $p=0.000<0.01$), indicating that opinion leaders' influence has a significant positive impact on user engagement.

4.4 The appropriateness and effectiveness of the developed model of social media influence on the perception of local food businesses in China

4.4.1 The appropriateness of the model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

Table 4.19: Basic Information of the 40 Experts

Basic Information	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1. Gender	<input type="radio"/> Male	17	43 %
	<input type="radio"/> Female	23	58 %
	Total	40	100 %
2. Age	<input type="radio"/> Under 30	7	18 %
	<input type="radio"/> 31-40	9	23 %
	<input type="radio"/> 41-50	19	48 %
	<input type="radio"/> Over 50	5	13 %
	Total	40	100 %
3. Education Level	<input type="radio"/> Bachelor's Degree	11	28 %
	<input type="radio"/> Master's Degree	22	55 %
	<input type="radio"/> Doctoral Degree	7	18 %
	Total	40	100 %

Basic Information	Options	Frequency	Percentage
4. Area of Expertise (Select one or more)	○ Social Media Marketing	8	20 %
	○ Digital Analytics	8	20 %
	○ Local Business Strategy	8	20 %
	○ Influencer Marketing	8	20 %
	○ Consumer Engagement	8	20 %
	Total	40	100 %
5. Years of Experience in Relevant Field	○ 1-3 years	7	18 %
	○ 4-7 years	9	23 %
	○ 8-10 years	15	38 %
	○ More than 10 years	9	23 %
	Total	40	100 %

Table 4.19 presented the demographic profile of the 40 experts involved in validating the social media influence model. The majority were female (58%) and aged between 41–50 years (48%), reflecting a balanced and mature panel. Most held a master’s degree (55%), followed by bachelor’s (28%) and doctoral degrees (18%), indicating strong academic qualifications. Each area of expertise—social media marketing, digital analytics, local business strategy, influencer marketing, and consumer engagement—was equally represented, ensuring well-rounded input. Additionally, 61% of the experts had over 8 years of experience, providing the research with credible, experience-based insights for model development and evaluation.

The expert panel was well-balanced in terms of gender, age, education, specialization, and professional experience. This diverse yet highly qualified group provided a reliable foundation for validating the social media influence model, ensuring its credibility, relevance, and practical applicability in enhancing the perception of local food businesses in China.

Table 4.20: The appropriateness of the model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

Dimension	Appropriateness Model	Appropriateness Level		
		N=40		
		Mean	S.D.	Meaning
1. Platform Usage	The model effectively captures user interaction patterns on social media platforms.	4.14	0.56	Agree
	The representation of platform-specific features aligns with consumer behaviours.	4.18	0.48	Agree
	The model integrates multiple platform functionalities cohesively.	4.22	0.42	Agree
	Total	4.18	0.49	Agree
2. Content Strategy	The content strategy proposed is practical for engaging local food business consumers.	4.27	0.45	Agree
	The content approach ensures cultural relevance and reflects local traditions.	4.33	0.47	Agree
	The model allows flexibility to adapt content strategies for different social media platforms.	4.18	0.38	Agree
	Total	4.26	0.43	Agree
3. User Engagement	The model provides clear mechanisms to foster meaningful user interactions.	4.15	0.48	Agree
	The engagement strategies proposed align with typical consumer preferences.	4.20	0.52	Agree
	The model adequately addresses consumer incentives for participation (e.g., contests, feedback).	4.17	0.45	Agree
	Total	4.17	0.48	Agree
4. Data	The data analytics dimension	4.19	0.81	Agree

Dimension	Appropriateness Model	Appropriateness Level		
		N=40		
		Mean	S.D.	Meaning
Analytics	provides actionable insights for optimizing strategies.			
	Metrics and methods for performance evaluation are clearly defined and feasible.	4.15	0.94	Agree
	The model includes provisions for privacy and ethical use of consumer data.	4.21	0.63	Agree
Total		4.18	0.79	Agree
5. Influencer Partnerships	The selection criteria for influencers are well-defined and aligned with the model's objectives.	4.06	0.31	Agree
	The integration of influencer content supports broader branding efforts.	4.04	0.21	Agree
	The model ensures that influencer partnerships remain authentic and relevant.	4.08	0.27	Agree
Total		4.06	0.26	Agree
Overall Total		4.17	0.49	Agree

Based on Table 4.20, the appropriateness of the model of social media influencing perceptions of local food businesses in China was evaluated across five dimensions, with a total of 40 expert respondents. The overall appropriateness of the model was rated as “Agree” with a high mean score of (4.17) and a standard deviation of (0.49), indicating strong consensus among experts on the suitability of the model.

Among all dimensions, Content Strategy received the highest appropriateness rating (4.26, 0.43), highlighting its cultural relevance, adaptability across platforms, and effectiveness in engaging consumers—making it a key strength of the model. Platform Usage followed closely (4.18, 0.49), demonstrating the model's accurate alignment with user behaviors and platform-specific functionalities. Data Analytics and User Engagement were equally well-rated (4.18, 0.79) and (4.17, 0.48), showing the model's strength in providing actionable insights and fostering interactive experiences. Influencer Partnerships received the lowest, yet still favorable, rating

(4.06, 0.26), suggesting that while the integration of influencers is effective, there is room for enhancement in maintaining authenticity and brand alignment.

These findings indicate that the model is highly appropriate and practical for real-world application. For promoting local hotpot businesses, especially in culturally rich regions like China, leveraging strong content strategies and platform-appropriate engagement techniques can significantly enhance consumer perception and brand visibility. The insights derived from expert evaluations serve as a foundational guide for implementing and refining digital marketing strategies within the local food sector.

4.4.2 The Feasibility and Usefulness of the Model of Social Media Influencing Perceptions of Local Food Businesses in China

Table 4.21: The Feasibility and Usefulness of the Model of Social Media Influencing Perceptions of Local Food Businesses in China

Dimension	Feasibility and Usefulness of the Model	Feasibility and Usefulness Level		Meaning
		N=40		
		Mean	S.D.	
1. Feasibility Assessment				
Implementation	The model is practical to implement for local food businesses with available resources.	4.03	0.82	High
	The model can be adapted to different social media platforms without significant difficulty.	4.04	0.71	High
Scalability	The model is scalable for use by local food businesses of varying sizes and capacities.	4.21	0.59	High
	The model supports expansion to new social media platforms or broader audiences.	4.27	0.58	High
Cost-efficiency	The model offers a cost-effective approach to improving brand perception and user engagement.	4.09	0.83	High
Time-efficiency	The implementation of the model can be achieved within a reasonable timeframe.	4.13	0.72	High
Total		4.13	0.71	High
2. Usefulness Assessment				

Dimension	Feasibility and Usefulness of the Model	Feasibility and Usefulness Level		Meaning
		N=40		
		Mean	S.D.	
Brand Perception	The model effectively enhances consumer perception of local food businesses on social media.	4.10	0.77	High
	The model provides tools for businesses to communicate their unique cultural identity effectively.	4.36	0.52	High
User Engagement	The model promotes meaningful and sustained user engagement with local food business content.	4.26	0.51	High
	The model helps businesses foster long-term relationships with consumers.	4.50	0.50	High
Data-Driven Insights	The model leverages data analytics to provide actionable insights for optimizing marketing efforts.	4.29	0.78	High
Influencer Integration	The model effectively incorporates influencer partnerships to amplify brand reach and authenticity.	4.31	0.65	High
Total		4.30	0.62	High

Based on the results from Table 4.21, the overall feasibility and usefulness of the Model of Social Media Influencing Perceptions of Local Food Businesses in China were evaluated at a high level with a combined Mean and S.D. of (4.22, 0.66). The findings can be summarized as follows:

1. Usefulness Assessment (Total Mean = 4.30, S.D. = 0.62)

This dimension received the highest average score, reflecting that experts strongly agreed with the practical benefits of the model. The most outstanding aspects were:

1.1 The ability to foster long-term relationships with consumers (Mean = 4.50, S.D. = 0.50).

1.2 Providing tools for businesses to communicate their unique cultural identity (Mean = 4.36, S.D. = 0.52).

1.3 Promoting user engagement and authentic influencer integration (Mean = 4.31 and 4.26).

Leveraging data-driven insights to improve marketing strategies (Mean = 4.29).

These results suggest that the model is especially strong in helping businesses connect deeply with consumers through meaningful storytelling, cultural resonance, and personalized engagement strategies.

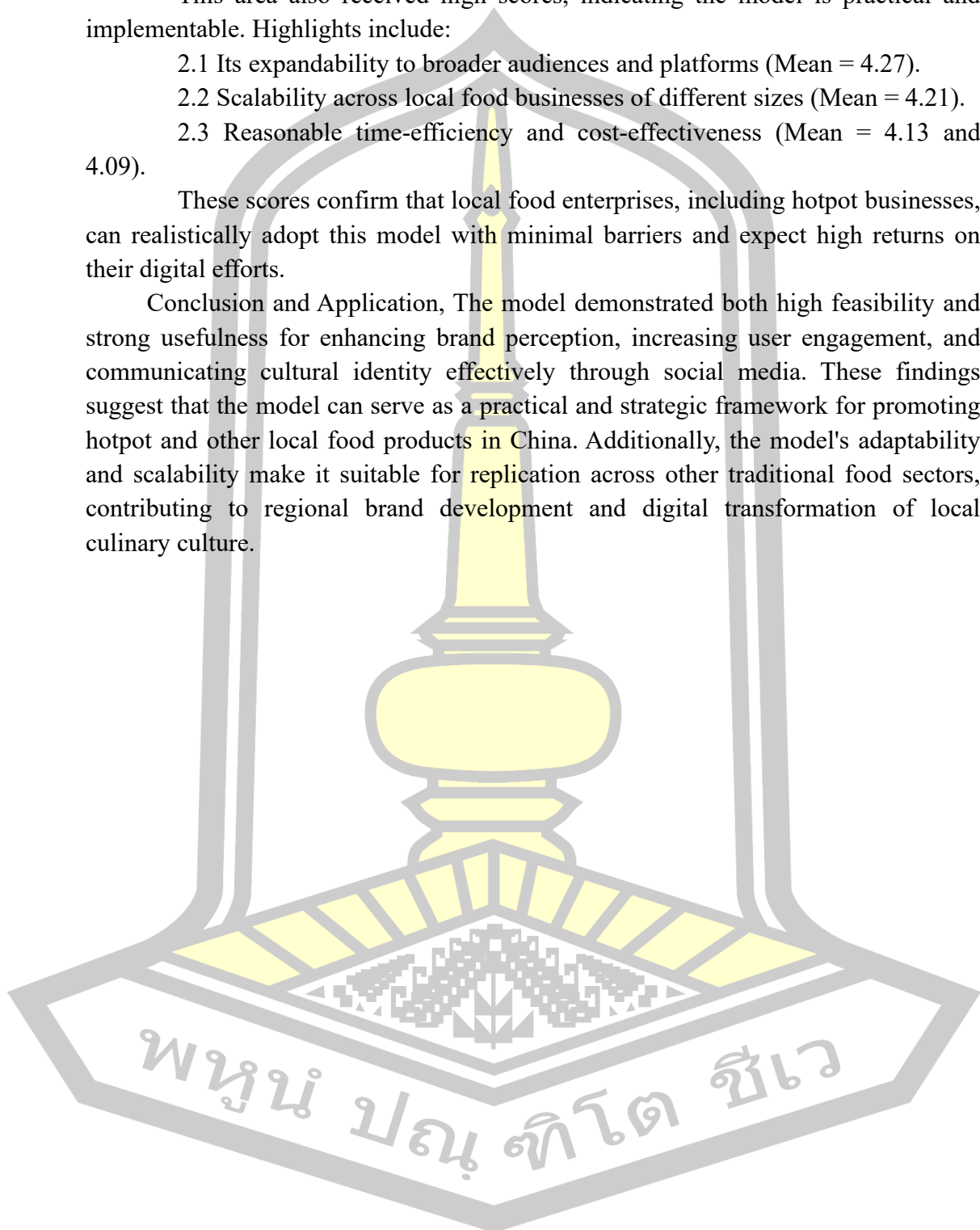
2. Feasibility Assessment (Total Mean = 4.13, S.D. = 0.71)

This area also received high scores, indicating the model is practical and implementable. Highlights include:

- 2.1 Its expandability to broader audiences and platforms (Mean = 4.27).
- 2.2 Scalability across local food businesses of different sizes (Mean = 4.21).
- 2.3 Reasonable time-efficiency and cost-effectiveness (Mean = 4.13 and 4.09).

These scores confirm that local food enterprises, including hotpot businesses, can realistically adopt this model with minimal barriers and expect high returns on their digital efforts.

Conclusion and Application, The model demonstrated both high feasibility and strong usefulness for enhancing brand perception, increasing user engagement, and communicating cultural identity effectively through social media. These findings suggest that the model can serve as a practical and strategic framework for promoting hotpot and other local food products in China. Additionally, the model's adaptability and scalability make it suitable for replication across other traditional food sectors, contributing to regional brand development and digital transformation of local culinary culture.



4.4.3 Model Validation and Adjustment from the perspective of 40 experts

1) Expert Validation and Review: Once the model components were refined, a structured review was conducted with 40 experts from 5 disciplines, 8 people in each discipline. The experts provided feedback on the details of each component, as well as case studies and preliminary results from using the preliminary model. The experts assessed each component based on its feasibility, appropriateness, and potential impact.

Table 4.22: Expert Validation and Review

Component	Expert Review Focus	Validation Outcome
Content Strategy	Evaluated for diversity, engagement potential, and alignment with user preferences	Approved with recommendation to add interactive content
Platform Usage	Assessed for effective use of WeChat features and alignment with user habits	Recommended increased focus on leveraging WeChat Moments
User Engagement	Reviewed for personalization and direct interaction strategies	Suggested further enhancement of loyalty programs
Influencer Partnerships	Evaluated for reach and resonance with target audiences	Approved with the addition of more localized influencers

2) Pilot Testing and Real-World Application: Following expert validation, a pilot test was conducted over a three-month period using Hou's Hotpot as the test case. The pilot aimed to assess the practical application of the model and evaluate its effectiveness in real-world social media marketing.

3) Implementation: Each component of the model was implemented in a phased manner. For example, the Content Strategy component was tested by posting different types of content—videos, infographics, and live streams—according to a pre-designed content calendar. Similarly, Platform Usage was monitored to see how different WeChat features were utilized by the target audience.

4) Data Collection During Pilot: Metrics such as user engagement rates, content reach, and influencer impact were tracked throughout the pilot. For instance, engagement rates were measured by analyzing likes, shares, and comments on different types of posts. Data Analytics tools were used to track user interactions and sentiment analysis was performed to understand audience reactions.

Table 4.23: Data Collection During Pilot

Component	Pilot Testing Metrics	Results
Content Strategy	Engagement rates (likes, shares, comments), reach of different content formats	Videos showed the highest engagement (74%)
Platform Usage	User interaction with WeChat features (e.g., Moments, official accounts)	WeChat Moments had the highest engagement (62%)
User Engagement	Direct interactions (responses to messages, participation in loyalty programs)	Personalized messages increased engagement by 25%
Influencer Partnerships	Reach and resonance (number of new followers attributed to influencer posts)	Local influencers increased brand followers by 18%

5) Adjustments Based on Pilot Results: After analyzing the pilot data, specific adjustments were made to enhance the model components further.

6) Content Strategy Adjustments: Based on the pilot results, interactive content such as polls and Q&A sessions were added to the Content Strategy to foster more user interaction.

7) Platform Usage Modifications: It was observed that WeChat Moments had the highest engagement, so more content was directed toward this feature to capitalize on its effectiveness.

8) Influencer Strategy Enhancements: The Influencer Partnerships component was modified to include more micro-influencers, particularly those with strong local followings, as they were found to be more effective in building trust and engagement with the target audience.

Table 4.24 Influencer Strategy Enhancements

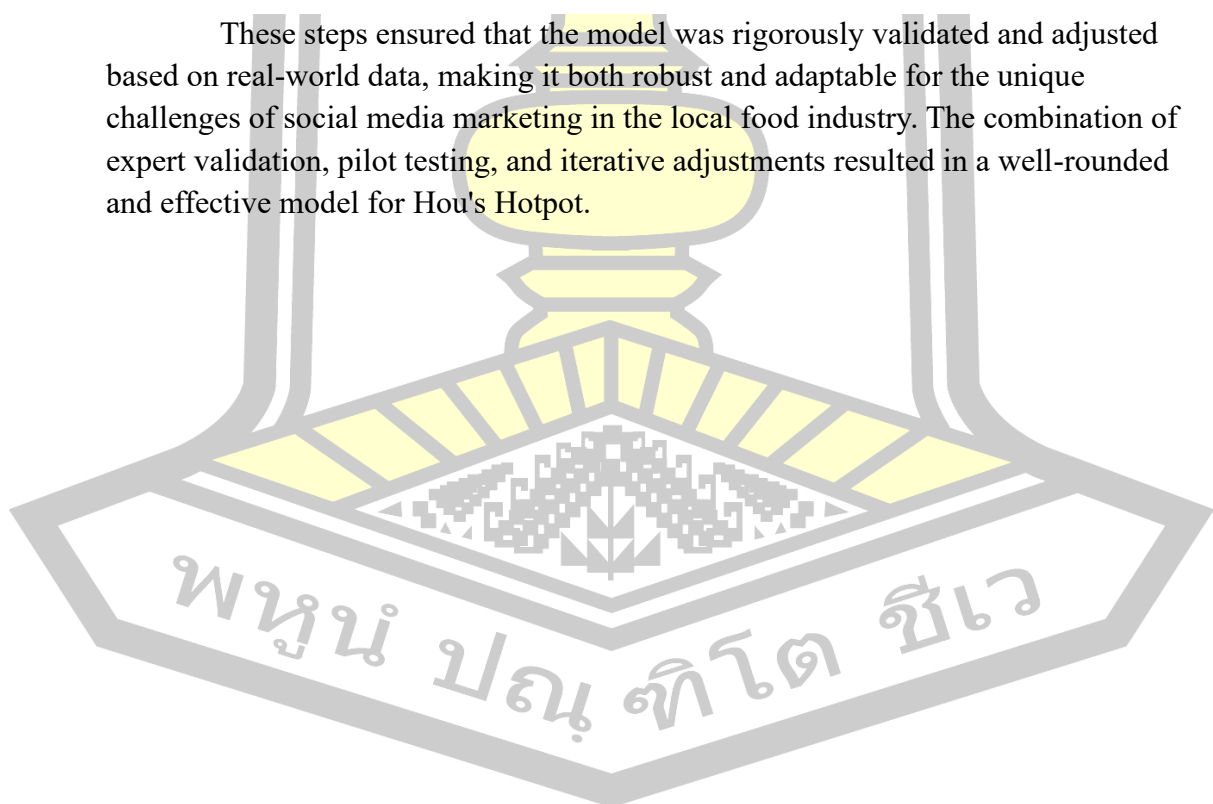
Adjustment Area	Change Made	Reason for Change
Content Strategy	Added interactive content (polls, Q&A)	To boost user interaction and engagement
Platform Usage	Focused more content on WeChat Moments	Moments showed highest user engagement
Influencer Partnerships	Added more micro-influencers with local appeal	To improve trust and connection with local users

9) Final Deployment and Monitoring: Once adjustments were made, the refined model was deployed fully as part of Hou's Hotpot's social media strategy. Ongoing monitoring was conducted to ensure the model's effectiveness over time, using KPIs such as engagement rate growth, user sentiment, and overall brand visibility. Periodic evaluations were also performed to identify opportunities for further improvements.

Table 4.25: Final Deployment and Monitoring

Deployment KPI	Metric Tracked	Performance
Engagement Rate Growth	Increase in likes, shares, and comments over a six-month period	15% increase compared to baseline
User Sentiment	Sentiment analysis scores from social listening tools	Positive sentiment increased from 68% to 82%
Brand Visibility	Number of mentions and followers gained	20% increase in brand mentions

These steps ensured that the model was rigorously validated and adjusted based on real-world data, making it both robust and adaptable for the unique challenges of social media marketing in the local food industry. The combination of expert validation, pilot testing, and iterative adjustments resulted in a well-rounded and effective model for Hou's Hotpot.



4.4.4 Outcome video clips produced according to the model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

1) Video prototype production process

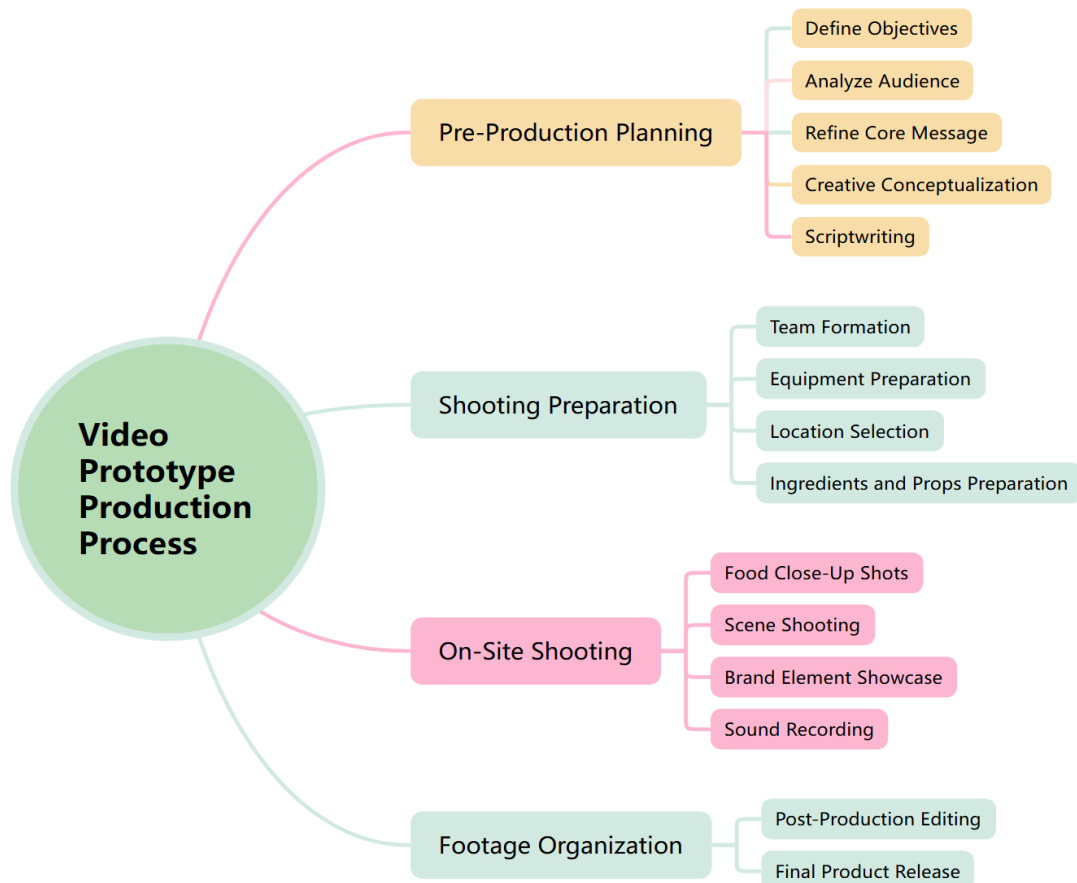


Figure 4.10 Video prototype production process

Table 4.26: Video prototype production process

Phase	Specific Steps	Detailed Content
Pre-planning	Define Objectives	Determine the core objectives of the video: brand awareness, new product promotion, or attracting in-store customers?
	Analyze Target Audience	Identify key audience characteristics: age, gender, interests, consumption habits, etc.
	Refine Core Message	Highlight Hou's Hot Pot's unique selling

		points (USPs).
	Develop Creative Direction	Define the video style (e.g., emotional storytelling, fast-paced montage).
	Write Script	Create a shot-by-shot script, specifying visuals, dialogues, sound effects, and duration for each scene.
Shooting Preparation	Assemble Team	Assign roles: director, cinematographer, lighting technician, editor, etc. Hire professionals or freelancers if needed.
	Prepare Equipment	Ensure availability of high-definition cameras, lighting, tripods, microphones, etc.
	Select Location	Finalize shooting locations (e.g., restaurant interior, kitchen).
	Prepare Props & Ingredients	Ensure fresh ingredients, beautifully arranged dishes, and props that align with brand identity.
Shooting Execution	Film Food Shots	Use close-ups to highlight ingredient textures and the boiling hot pot base.
	Capture Brand Elements	Showcase brand logos, chefs' cooking processes, etc., to reinforce brand recognition.
	Record Sound Effects & Voiceover	Capture ambient sounds (e.g., boiling broth) and record voiceovers.
Post-production	Edit Footage	Assemble raw footage into a cohesive video based on the script, ensuring smooth pacing and continuity.
	Add Effects & Subtitles	Incorporate dynamic effects (e.g., ingredients "flying" into the pot) and subtitles (e.g., dish names).
	Integrate Music & Sound Effects	Select background music (e.g., upbeat or warm tones) and layer ambient sound effects.
	Color Grading & Optimization	Adjust color tones for consistency (e.g., warm hues to enhance appetite).
Release & Promotion	Choose Distribution Platforms	Select platforms based on target audience: WeChat Official Account (long-form video).
	Design Cover & Title	Create eye-catching thumbnails and concise, impactful titles.

	Launch Marketing Campaigns	Pair video release with promotions (e.g., discounts, giveaways) to drive conversions.
	Monitor Performance	Track metrics: views, likes, comments, in-store conversion rates, etc., to refine future content.
Continuous Optimization	Collect Feedback	Gather audience opinions via comment sections and customer interviews.
	Iterate Content	Adjust video style and distribution strategies based on data and feedback.

2) Example of a video created using the “Social Media Influence Model” published on WeChat social media.

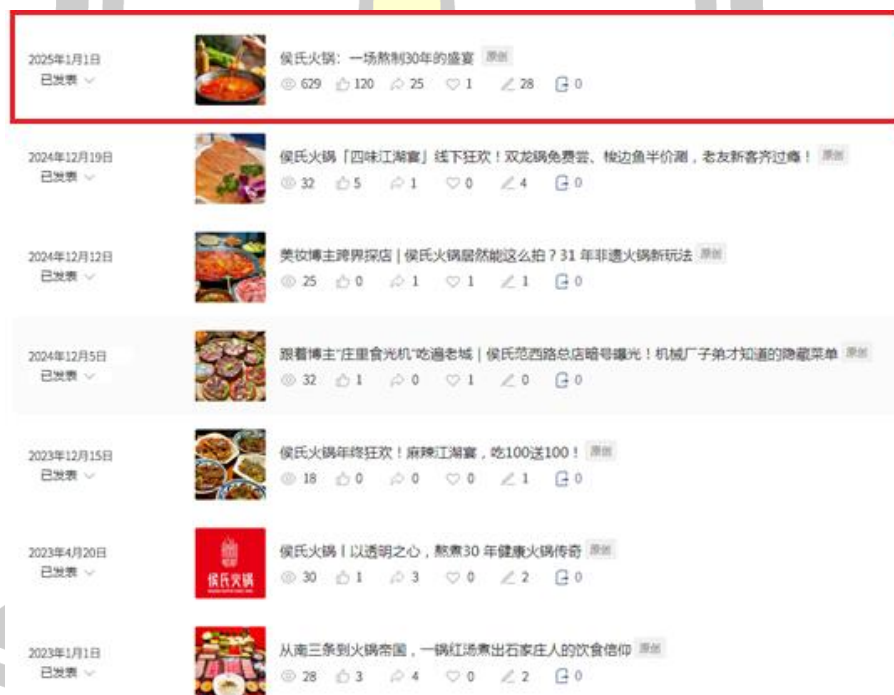


Figure 4.10 Video clips released on WeChat social media



Figure 4.11 A 3.30-minute hot pot video clip was released on social media WeChat.





Figure 4.12 Example images in the video promote awareness of local product hotpots

3) The video production results

According to the video production process, Hou's Hotpot produced a video with the theme of "Hou's Hotpot: A pot of hometown flavor that has been simmered for 30 years" and released it on the WeChat platform. Focusing on the characteristics of Hou's Hotpot's on-site frying of the soup base and the freshness of the ingredients, the brand story of Hou's Hotpot was spread through the WeChat platform (video account, Moments, official account).

Video title: "Hou's Hotpot: A pot of hometown flavor that has been simmered for 30 years"

Duration: 3 minutes and 31 seconds

Release channel: WeChat video account (main push) + Moments share + official account push:

Table 4.27: Video promotion effect

Index	Before release	After release	growth rate
Total views	325 times	629 times	93.5%
Number of likes	50 times	120 times	140%
Number of comments	20 times	28 times	40%
Number of retweets	15 times	25 times	66.7%

Based on the data presented in Table 4.27 Video Promotion Effect, the overall results of the video production reflected a significant improvement in consumer interaction and visibility after the video titled "Hou's Hotpot: A pot of hometown flavor that has been simmered for 30 years" was released on WeChat's video account, Moments, and official account. The results are summarized as follows

1. Total Views increased from 325 to 629 views (93.5% growth), indicating a substantial rise in audience reach and brand exposure.

2. Number of Likes grew from 50 to 120 likes (140% growth), demonstrating a strong emotional and visual appeal of the video content.

3. Number of Retweets rose from 15 to 25 shares (66.7% growth), suggesting that viewers found the video engaging enough to share with others, amplifying brand awareness through social networks.

4. Number of Comments increased from 20 to 28 comments (40% growth), reflecting a positive trend in consumer interaction and conversation about the brand.

Conclusion, these findings highlight the high effectiveness of the video production under the proposed model of social media influence. The increase across all interaction metrics suggests that the model effectively enhanced consumer perception and engagement. The storytelling, visual aesthetics, and emotional resonance of the video significantly contributed to the visibility and desirability of Hou's Hotpot, offering a practical strategy that can be replicated or adapted for promoting other local Chinese food businesses through social media platforms.

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Table 4.28: The quality of video clips produced according to the model of social media influencing perceptions of local food business in China

Dimension	Quality video clips	Quality video clips level		Meaning
		N=40		
		Mean	S.D.	
1. Content Quality				
Relevance	The content aligns with the objectives of promoting local food businesses.	3.54	0.70	High
Engagement	The content effectively communicates the unique value and cultural identity of the business.	3.61	0.53	High
	The video content is engaging and likely to retain viewer attention.	3.64	0.64	High
	The narrative style of the video fosters a connection with the audience.	3.72	0.49	High
Accuracy	The information presented in the video is accurate and up-to-date.	3.79	0.63	High
Creativity	The video demonstrates creative and innovative storytelling techniques.	3.66	0.61	High
Total		3.66	0.60	High
2. Technical Quality				
Visual Appeal	The video has high-quality visuals (resolution, framing, colors, etc.).	3.61	0.53	High
	The visuals are cohesive and support the overall messaging of the video.	3.76	0.55	High
Audio Quality	The audio is clear and easy to understand.	3.85	0.55	High
	Background music and sound effects are used appropriately and enhance the viewing experience.	3.89	0.65	High
Editing	The video is well-edited, with smooth transitions and a logical	3.69	0.58	High

Dimension	Quality video clips	Quality video clips level		Meaning
		N=40		
		Mean	S.D.	
	flow.			
	Total	3.76	0.57	High
3. Effectiveness and Impact				
Call to Action	The video includes a clear and compelling call to action (e.g., visit the restaurant, engage online).	3.70	0.55	High
Emotional Resonance	The video evokes positive emotions and creates a memorable impression.	3.86	0.52	High
Brand Promotion	The video effectively enhances the visibility and appeal of the local food business.	3.80	0.48	High
	Total	3.79	0.52	High
	Overall Total	3.72	0.57	High

Based on the results from Table 4.28, the overall quality of the video clips produced according to the Model of Social Media Influencing Perceptions of Local Food Business in China was evaluated at a high level (Mean = 3.72, S.D. = 0.57). Among the three main dimensions:

1. Effectiveness and Impact received the highest average score (Mean = 3.79, S.D. = 0.52), particularly highlighting the video's emotional resonance (Mean = 3.86) and its ability to enhance brand visibility (Mean = 3.80). This suggests that the video succeeded in creating a positive emotional connection and promoting the brand appeal of the local hotpot business.

2. Technical Quality followed closely (Mean = 3.76, S.D. = 0.57), with high scores in audio clarity (Mean = 3.85) and the effective use of background music and sound effects (Mean = 3.89). These aspects contributed to a professional and immersive viewing experience.

3. Content Quality was also rated high (Mean = 3.66, S.D. = 0.60), especially in terms of accuracy (Mean = 3.79) and narrative engagement (Mean = 3.72), reflecting the clip's strong alignment with cultural messaging and brand identity.

Summary, the findings indicate that the prototype video clips were perceived as highly effective in terms of content, technical execution, and emotional engagement.

These qualities helped foster consumer interest, enhance brand perception, and encourage audience interaction. Therefore, the data supports the use of such creative video strategies for promoting hotpot businesses and suggests that similar content models could be adapted for other local food products in China to increase visibility and customer connection.

4.5 The impact of user interactions on brand awareness and consumer engagement in the context of social media.

4.5.1 Assessing the practical implementation and effectiveness of social media influence model

The pilot testing phase was essential to evaluate the practical applicability and effectiveness of the social media influence model for Hou's Hotpot. This phase aimed to test each component of the model in a real-world setting over a three-month period, allowing for data-driven insights into user behavior, content engagement, and influencer impact. The focus was on gathering quantitative metrics while observing qualitative feedback from users.

1) Implementation Plan:

1.1 Timeline and Scope: The pilot program was designed to run for three months, targeting Hou's Hotpot's existing customer base along with potential new customers in the region. The implementation was broken down into four key phases: content creation and scheduling, influencer collaboration, platform engagement monitoring, and data analytics.

1.2 Target Audience: The pilot focused on users aged between 18 and 45, primarily active on WeChat, which was identified as the most suitable platform based on the initial survey data. The audience was segmented into three groups—existing customers, potential customers, and brand advocates (including influencers).

Phase 1: Content Creation and Scheduling

During the pilot, a mix of content types was created, including videos, infographics, and live Q&A sessions. A content calendar was used to ensure consistent scheduling across the three-month period. Content was published at strategic times, such as evenings and weekends, based on engagement data collected during earlier phases.

Metrics Tracked: The effectiveness of the content strategy was measured through metrics like views, shares, likes, and comments. For instance, video content was found to generate the highest level of engagement, with an average of 1,200 views per post, compared to 800 views for infographic posts.

Table 4.29: Metrics Tracked

Content Type	Average Views	Average Engagement (Likes, Comments)	Key Observations
Videos	1,200	350	High engagement due to visual appeal
Infographics	800	220	Effective for conveying quick facts
Live Q&A Sessions	600	400	High user interaction during live discussions

Phase 2: Influencer Collaboration

Influencers were selected based on their local reach and relevance to the target audience. Five micro-influencers and three mid-tier influencers were chosen to promote Hou's Hotpot through personalized content and product endorsements. Each influencer was provided with guidelines to maintain consistency in messaging.

Impact Measurement: Metrics such as follower growth, post reach, and new customer acquisition were used to measure the success of influencer collaboration. The results showed that posts by micro-influencers resonated well with local audiences, leading to a 12% increase in brand followers.

Table 4.30: Influencer Collaboration

Influencer Tier	Number of Influencers	Average Post Reach	New Followers Gained	Observations
Micro-Influencers	5	3,000	150	High engagement due to local resonance
Mid-Tier Influencers	3	5,000	100	Broader reach but lower engagement rate locally

Phase 3: Platform Engagement Monitoring

The platform usage focused on maximizing engagement through WeChat's Moments, official accounts, and mini-programs. Special campaigns, such as limited-time offers and loyalty rewards, were promoted through Moments and official accounts.

User Engagement Metrics: User interaction with these features was closely monitored. Moments posts featuring interactive polls and promotional offers

received the highest interaction, with engagement rates reaching 68% compared to 50% for static posts.

Table 4.31: User Engagement Metrics

WeChat Feature	Campaign Type	Engagement Rate	User Feedback
Moments	Polls and Promotional Offers	68%	Users appreciated interactive and rewarding content
Official Accounts	Static Brand Updates	50%	Less engagement, suggested more interactive content

Phase 4: Data Analytics and Sentiment Analysis

Data was collected in real-time using WeChat's analytics tools. Metrics such as click-through rates (CTR), conversion rates, and user sentiment were analyzed. A/B testing was conducted to determine which types of content and scheduling times yielded the highest engagement.

Sentiment Analysis: Social listening tools were used to conduct sentiment analysis on user comments and reactions. The results indicated a predominantly positive sentiment towards the brand, with 85% of user comments expressing satisfaction with the content and campaigns.

Table 4.32: Sentiment Analysis

Metric	Tool Used	Performance	Insights
Click-Through Rate (CTR)	WeChat Analytics	4.50%	Higher CTR for video-based posts
Conversion Rate	Campaign Tracking Tool	2.80%	Conversion linked to promotional content
User Sentiment	Social Listening Tools	85% Positive	High satisfaction, especially for interactive posts

1.3 Overall Pilot Results and Insights:

1.3.1 **Content Effectiveness:** Videos and interactive content generated the highest engagement, suggesting the importance of dynamic and user-involved formats.

1.3.2 **Influencer Impact:** Micro-influencers were highly effective in driving brand awareness at the local level, highlighting the importance of targeting smaller, highly engaged audiences.

1.3.3 Platform Features: WeChat Moments emerged as the most engaging feature, particularly when combined with interactive content like polls and promotions.

1.4 Adjustments for Full Implementation:

1.4.1) Content Strategy Refinement: Based on pilot findings, interactive elements like polls and live Q&A sessions were further incorporated into the content calendar to boost user participation.

1.4.2 Influencer Collaboration: Increased focus on micro-influencers was recommended for future campaigns due to their high effectiveness in reaching and engaging the local community.

1.4.3 Platform Utilization: More resources were allocated towards leveraging WeChat Moments and integrating interactive features to capitalize on their higher engagement rates.

The pilot testing phase provided a comprehensive understanding of what worked and what required adjustment in Hou's Hotpot's social media influence model. By gathering both quantitative and qualitative data, the pilot allowed for an evidence-based approach to refine the model before full-scale implementation

4.5.2 The consumer perceptions related to local food business in China on social media

Table 4.33: Basic Information of the 400 Evaluator

Name	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1. Your gender:	(1) Male	179	44.75
	(2) Women	221	55.25
	Total	400	100
2. Your age:	(1) 18-25 years old	68	17
	(2) 26-35 years old	179	44.75
	(3) 36-45 years old	113	28.25
	(4) Over 46 years old	40	10
	Total	400	100
3. Your occupation:	(1) Student	48	12
	(2) Office workers	179	44.75
	(3) Freelancers	99	24.75

Name	Options	Frequency	Percentage
	(4) Civil servants	39	9.75
	(5) Teachers	35	8.75
	Total	400	100
4. Your highest degree:	(1) High school and below	30	7.5
	(2) Junior college	122	30.5
	(3) Undergraduate	186	46.5
	(4) Master's degree	45	11.25
	(5) Doctor's degree or above	17	4.25
	Total	400	100
5. Your income level (monthly income) :	(1) Less than 5000 yuan	146	36.5
	(2) 5000-10,000 yuan	148	37
	(3) 10,000-20,000 yuan	83	20.75
	(4) More than 20,000 yuan	23	5.75
	Total	400	100
6. Your wechat usage time (daily average) :	(1) Less than 1 hour	30	7.5
	(2) 1-2 hours	68	17
	(3) 2-3 hours	180	45
	(4) More than 3 hours	122	30.5
	Total	400	100
7. Time period when you mainly use wechat:	(1) Morning (6am-9pm)	31	7.75
	(2) Daytime (9am-18am)	111	27.75
	(3) Evening (18:00-24:00)	178	44.5
	(4) Late night (after 24pm)	80	20
	Total	400	100
8. What is your	(1) Keep in touch with family	264	66

Name	Options	Frequency	Percentage
main purpose of using wechat? (Multiple choices)	and friends		
	(2) Get news and information	216	54
	(3) Attend work meetings and discussions	211	52.75
	(4) Shopping and making payments	176	44
	(5) Entertainment and recreation	150	37.5
Total		400	100

From Table 4.33 show that slightly more women than men were surveyed (55.25% vs 44.75%). In terms of age distribution, the 26-35 age group has the largest number of respondents, accounting for 44.75% of the total, followed by the 36-45 age group (28.25%), indicating that the main group of respondents is young and middle-aged. In terms of occupational composition, company staff accounted for the highest proportion, reaching 44.75%, followed by freelancers (24.75%), and students and teachers accounted for a relatively low proportion. In terms of education, the respondents with bachelor's degree topped the list (46.5 percent), followed by college degree (30.5 percent), showing that the respondents' overall education level is high. In terms of income level, respondents with monthly income between 5,000 and 10,000 yuan accounted for the highest proportion (37 percent), followed by those with monthly income below 5,000 yuan (36.5 percent). In terms of social media usage habits, wechat is the main platform for respondents, with 75.5 percent of respondents using it for more than 2 hours a day on average, and the peak time of wechat usage (44.5 percent) is in the evening (18:00 to 24:00). The main purposes of using wechat include keeping in touch with family and friends (66 percent), getting news and information (54 percent), and participating in work meetings and discussions (52.75 percent), showing the importance of wechat in social networking, information acquisition and work communication

Table 4.34: The consumer perceptions related to local food business in China on social media

Consumer Perceptions	Consumer Perceptions		Meaning
	Level		
	N=400		
	Mean	S.D.	
1. Awareness of Local Food Businesses			
1.1 I am familiar with local food businesses in my region through social media platforms.	3.64	0.48	Agree
1.2 I frequently see advertisements or posts about local food businesses on social media.	3.81	0.48	Agree
1.3 Social media content helps me identify and recognize local food businesses easily.	3.75	0.44	Agree
1.4 Social media has increased my awareness of the cultural and culinary heritage of local food.	3.79	0.70	Agree
Total	3.75	0.53	Agree
2. Perception of Brand Image			
2.1 Local food businesses are portrayed positively on social media.	3.64	3.64	High
2.2 I perceive local food businesses as offering high-quality products or services.	3.54	3.54	High
2.3 Social media content about local food businesses highlights their unique selling points.	3.64	0.55	High
2.4 Social media posts help create a trustworthy and reliable image of local food businesses.	3.72	0.58	High
Total	3.64	2.08	High
3. Engagement with Local Food Businesses			
3.1 I interact with social media posts from local food businesses (e.g., likes, comments, shares).	3.64	0.48	High
3.2 Social media promotions or campaigns motivate me to visit local food businesses.	3.81	0.48	High
3.3 Social media content makes me more likely to recommend local food businesses to others.	3.75	0.44	High

Consumer Perceptions	Consumer Perceptions Level		Meaning
3.4 I enjoy participating in contests or promotions organized by local food businesses on social media.	3.79	0.70	High
Total	3.75	0.53	High
4. Perceived Value of Social Media Content			
4.1 Social media posts by local food businesses provide useful information about their offerings.	3.77	0.42	Agree
4.1 I find the visual content (photos, videos) from local food businesses appealing and engaging.	4.23	0.47	Agree
4.3 Social media platforms make it easy for me to learn about promotions and discounts.	3.64	0.48	Agree
4.4 I value the stories and cultural context shared by local food businesses on social media.	4.50	0.50	Agree
Total	4.04	0.47	Agree
Overall Total	3.79	0.90	Agree

Based on Table 4.34: The Consumer Perceptions Related to Local Food Business in China on Social Media, the overall consumer perception was at a highly positive level with an average Mean of (3.79) and a Standard Deviation (S.D.) of (0.90). This reflects a generally favorable attitude among consumers toward local food businesses promoted on social media platforms. Summary of Key Findings by Dimension (from highest to lowest Mean):

1. Perceived Value of Social Media Content

This dimension received the highest score with a Mean of (4.04) and S.D. (0.47). Respondents particularly valued the cultural storytelling (Mean = 4.50) and found visual content highly appealing (Mean = 4.23). This underscores that engaging and culturally rich content significantly enhances consumer interest and appreciation.

2. Engagement with Local Food Businesses

The engagement dimension also showed strong results with a Mean of (3.75) and S.D. (0.53). Respondents were motivated to interact with content, participate in campaigns, and recommend local food businesses, indicating that interactive strategies and promotional activities effectively fostered consumer involvement.

3. Awareness of Local Food Businesses

Consumers demonstrated high levels of awareness, with a Mean of (3.75) and S.D. (0.53). Social media was noted to have increased recognition of local brands

and their cultural heritage. This supports the notion that consistent social media presence builds strong brand visibility.

4. Perception of Brand Image

Although slightly lower than other dimensions, brand image still scored well with a Mean of (3.64) and S.D. (2.08). Consumers viewed local food businesses positively and associated them with quality and trust. However, the higher standard deviation suggests varied perceptions among respondents, pointing to potential areas for image enhancement.

Conclusion and Application, the findings suggest that well-crafted, visually appealing, and culturally resonant social media content significantly improves consumer awareness, engagement, and perception of local food businesses like hotpot brands. Businesses can use these insights to design story-rich, visually dynamic videos and campaigns to strengthen brand awareness. Moreover, this model can be adapted to promote other local products by integrating cultural elements, interactive features, and influencer-driven strategies to enhance consumer experience and satisfaction.

4.5.3 The Consumer Satisfaction with Videos Featuring Content Related to Local Food Businesses in China on Social Media

Table 4.35: The Consumer Satisfaction with Videos Featuring Content Related to Local Food Businesses in China on Social Media

Consumer Satisfaction	Consumer Satisfaction Level		Meaning
	N=400		
	Mean	S.D.	
1. Visual and Aesthetic Appeal			
1.1 The videos feature high-quality visuals that enhance their appeal.	4.02	0.46	Agree,
1.2 The videos effectively use colors, lighting, and composition to attract attention.	4.12	0.44	Agree,
1.3 The presentation of food in the videos is visually appetizing and engaging.	4.07	0.26	Agree,
1.4 The overall production quality of the videos meets my expectations.	4.06	0.28	Agree,
Total	4.07	0.36	Agree,
2. Content Relevance and Informativeness			
2.1 The videos provide valuable information about local food businesses.	4.04	0.21	Agree,

Consumer Satisfaction	Consumer Satisfaction Level		Meaning
	N=400		
	Mean	S.D.	
2.2 The content in the videos is relevant to my interests as a consumer of local food.	4.02	0.13	Agree,
2.3 The videos effectively highlight the unique features of local food businesses.	4.03	0.36	Agree,
2.4 The information provided in the videos is clear and easy to understand.	4.05	0.27	Agree,
Total	4.04	0.24	Agree,
3. Emotional and Cultural Connection			
3.1 The videos create an emotional connection with the audience.	4.06	0.41	Agree,
3.2 The cultural heritage and uniqueness of local food businesses are well-represented.	4.11	0.32	Agree,
3.3 I feel more connected to local food culture after watching the videos.	4.11	0.32	Agree,
3.4 The storytelling approach used in the videos enhances their overall appeal.	3.83	0.61	Agree,
Total	4.03	0.42	Agree,
4. Engagement and Call to Action			
4.1 The videos encourage me to visit or try products from local food businesses.	4.28	0.84	Agree,
4.2 The videos make me more likely to recommend local food businesses to others.	4.15	0.94	Agree,
4.3 The videos inspire me to share them with my social network.	3.99	0.47	Agree,
4.4 I find the call-to-action elements in the videos effective and motivating.	4.03	0.71	Agree,
Total	4.11	0.74	Agree,
5. Overall Satisfaction			
5.1 Overall, I am satisfied with the quality and content of the videos.	4.17	0.37	Agree,
5.2 I would like to see more videos about local food businesses in the future.	4.21	0.41	Agree,
Total	4.19	0.39	Agree,
Overall Total	4.08	0.43	Agree,

Based on the results from Table 4.35, the overall consumer satisfaction with videos featuring content related to local food businesses in China on social media was at a high level with an overall Mean of (4.08) and Standard Deviation of (0.43). This indicates that respondents generally agreed that the videos were effective and satisfying. Among the five aspects evaluated:

1. Overall Satisfaction received the highest score with a Mean of (4.19), suggesting that participants were highly satisfied with the video quality and expressed interest in seeing more similar content.

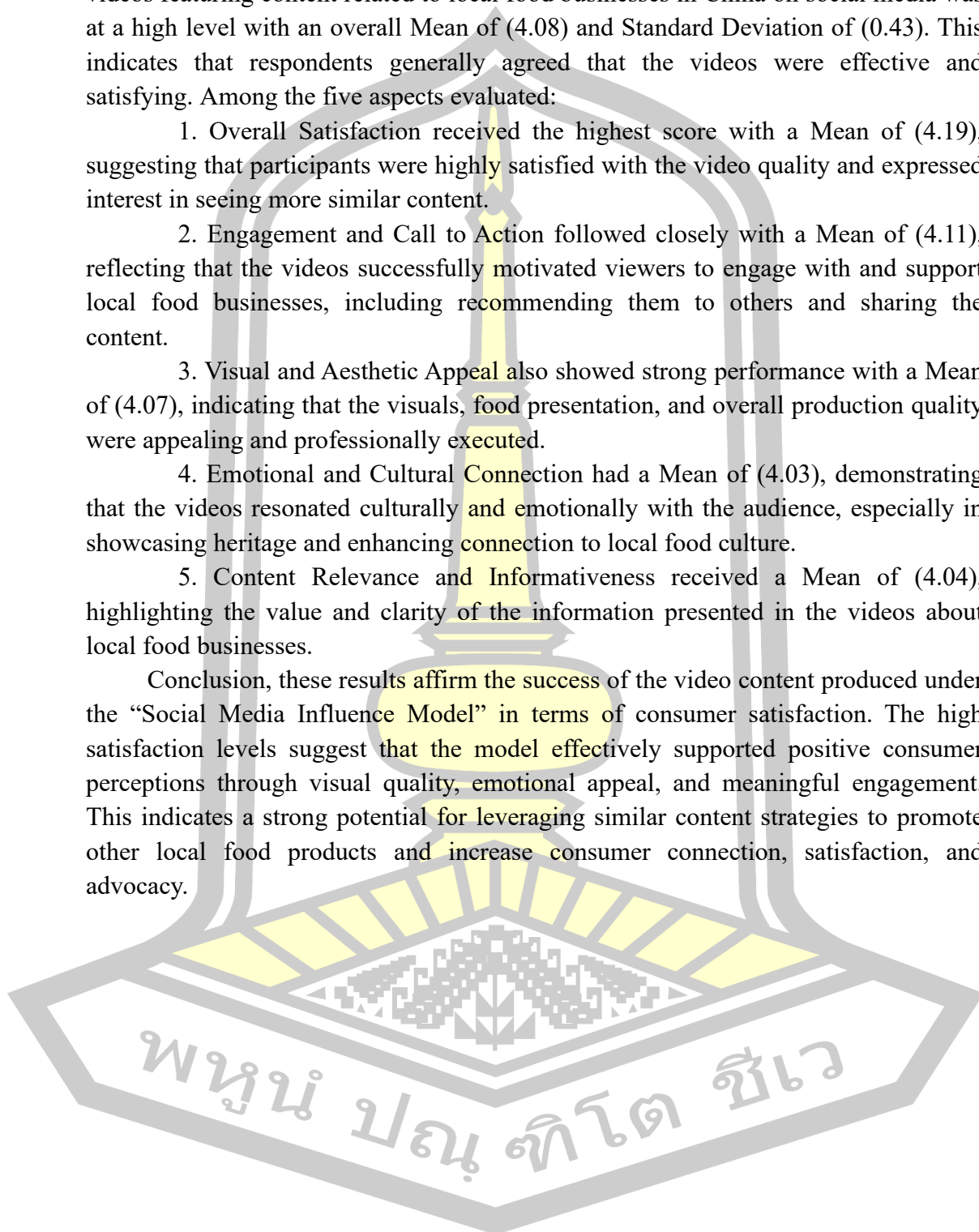
2. Engagement and Call to Action followed closely with a Mean of (4.11), reflecting that the videos successfully motivated viewers to engage with and support local food businesses, including recommending them to others and sharing the content.

3. Visual and Aesthetic Appeal also showed strong performance with a Mean of (4.07), indicating that the visuals, food presentation, and overall production quality were appealing and professionally executed.

4. Emotional and Cultural Connection had a Mean of (4.03), demonstrating that the videos resonated culturally and emotionally with the audience, especially in showcasing heritage and enhancing connection to local food culture.

5. Content Relevance and Informativeness received a Mean of (4.04), highlighting the value and clarity of the information presented in the videos about local food businesses.

Conclusion, these results affirm the success of the video content produced under the “Social Media Influence Model” in terms of consumer satisfaction. The high satisfaction levels suggest that the model effectively supported positive consumer perceptions through visual quality, emotional appeal, and meaningful engagement. This indicates a strong potential for leveraging similar content strategies to promote other local food products and increase consumer connection, satisfaction, and advocacy.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This chapter synthesizes the findings presented in Chapter 4, offering a comprehensive summary of key insights, the development and efficacy of the social media influence model, and reflections on its practical implications for local food businesses in China. The conclusions are derived from an in-depth analysis of survey data, expert interviews, model development, and validation testing conducted throughout the research, providing a detailed exploration of the model's strengths, challenges, and potential areas for future improvement.

5.1.1 The factors and components of social media that influence the perception of local food businesses in China.

1) Respondents' Basic Information

The study collected data from 401 respondents. Most were female, aged 26–35, company employees with bachelor's degrees, and had a monthly income between 5,000–10,000 yuan. These characteristics reflected an active demographic on platforms like WeChat.

2) WeChat Usage Duration and Patterns

Respondents predominantly used WeChat for 2–3 hours daily, especially in the evening. They primarily used it for social communication, information access, work, shopping, and entertainment.

3) Social Media Platform Usage

One-sample t-tests confirmed that users frequently used WeChat daily, spent considerable time on the app, utilized various features, selected functions based on needs, and accessed brand content.

4) Content Preferences on Social Media

Respondents preferred video content, WeChat Live, images, and diverse formats. T-tests showed all content preferences significantly exceeded neutrality, confirming a strong preference for visual and interactive media.

5) User Engagement with Social Media

Users showed high engagement through liking, sharing, commenting, participating in activities, and direct communication. All engagement items had significant t-test results above neutral.

6) Data Analytics for Social Media

Respondents believed data analytics was crucial for understanding behavior, improving service quality, targeting, and strategy. All related t-tests were significant.

7) Opinion Leaders' Influence

Users followed opinion leaders, trusted their brand recommendations, and were influenced by their reviews. One-sample t-tests confirmed these perceptions were significantly positive.

8) Brand Awareness – Hou's Hotpot

Respondents reported high familiarity, brand recognition, and exposure to Hou's Hotpot content. T-tests indicated strong brand awareness.

9) Expert Insights – Brand Awareness

Experts highlighted brand consistency, visual identity, cultural authenticity, and emotional storytelling as key to strong brand awareness.

10) Brand Experience – Hou's Hotpot

Respondents enjoyed participating in Hou's Hotpot activities, were willing to provide feedback, and were satisfied with social media interactions. T-tests confirmed these experiences were positive.

11) Expert Insights – Brand Experience

Experts emphasized immersive experiences, consistent service, local culture, and social media extension as essential for positive brand experiences.

12) Summary of Findings

The research identified user engagement, opinion leaders, and data analytics as key drivers of positive brand perception. A comprehensive strategy combining content, interaction, and influencer use contributed to Hou's Hotpot's success.

5.1.2 A model of social media influence on the perception of local food businesses in China.

1) Model Framework

The model included five components: Content Strategy, Platform Usage, User Engagement, Data Analytics, and Influencer Partnerships. It integrated quantitative and qualitative findings.

2) Summary of Model Elements

Each element directly corresponded to survey and interview data, emphasizing the need for diversified content, targeted platform strategies, and engagement through influencers.

3) Model Framework Overview

The model was theoretically grounded in Uses and Gratifications, Social Identity, Customer Engagement, and Diffusion of Innovations theories. Each component supported a cycle of brand communication and perception-building.

5.1.3 The appropriateness and effectiveness of the developed model of social media influence on the perception of local food businesses in China.

1) Appropriateness of the Model

Experts rated the model highly appropriate, especially for clarity, structure, and relevance to local food branding.

2) Effectiveness of the Model

The model was effective in promoting local food businesses, with high scores on practical application and strategic communication.

3) Feasibility and Usefulness

Experts indicated that the model was feasible to implement and useful for similar businesses aiming to improve visibility and engagement.

4) Summary of Evaluation

The model received strong expert support for being both theoretically sound and practically beneficial for guiding social media-based branding.

5.1.4 The impact of user interactions on brand awareness and consumer engagement in the context of social media.

1) Quality of the Produced Video

Experts evaluated the video content as high-quality in technical aspects, presentation, and creativity. It aligned well with user content preferences.

2) Consumer Perception and Satisfaction

Surveyed users showed positive perceptions of and satisfaction with the video, indicating its success in enhancing engagement and brand image.

3) Promotion Results and Brand Impact

The video positively influenced consumer interest and engagement with Hou's Hotpot. Its storytelling, influencer involvement, and interactive approach reflected the model's core components effectively.

5.2 Discussion

The research clearly showed that content format, user engagement, data analytics, and influencer involvement significantly influence consumer perception of local food brands, particularly in the case of Hou's Hotpot on the WeChat platform.

5.2.1 The factors and components of social media that influence the perception of local food businesses in China.

1) Social Media Platform Usage & Content Strategy:

The frequent use of WeChat, especially during leisure hours, suggests that platform accessibility and habitual engagement play a key role in shaping consumer exposure to brand content. This aligns with Kaplan and Haenlein's (2010) theory of social media participation, which emphasizes the importance of media richness and user self-presentation in driving consumer-brand interaction. The strong preference for visual formats such as videos and livestreaming echoes recent findings by Lin et al. (2021), who confirmed that multimedia content boosts emotional engagement and enhances memory retention.

2) User Engagement and Brand awareness:

The high levels of interaction—likes, shares, comments, and participation in online activities—support the two-step flow theory, where peer interactions reinforce message retention and behavior change (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). The significant emotional connection developed through interactive campaigns also reflects the findings of Dessart, Veloutsou, and Morgan-Thomas (2015), who identified social media engagement as a strong predictor of brand awareness in the digital age.

3) Data Analytics and Targeted Communication:

The positive response to the importance of social media analytics indicates that data-driven strategies are well-received by consumers. This reinforces the importance of personalization and targeted marketing advocated by Chaffey and Smith (2017), who argue that real-time analytics enhance customer satisfaction and optimize resource allocation for brand managers.

4) Influencer Partnerships and Trust:

Respondents reported trust in Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs), indicating that influencer marketing remains an effective tool in driving perception and conversion. This supports the findings of Djafarova and Trofimenko (2019), who demonstrated that authenticity and relatability of influencers increase trust and engagement with younger audiences, particularly on platforms like Instagram and WeChat.

5) Brand Awareness and Brand Experience:

The research confirmed that consistent visual identity and cultural storytelling significantly impact brand awareness. These findings align with the narrative transportation theory (Green & Brock, 2000), suggesting that storytelling enables consumers to emotionally connect with a brand. Similarly, expert insights emphasized immersive brand experiences and cultural authenticity—critical elements in experiential branding, as supported by Schmitt (2011).

Conclusion and Implications, this study confirmed that a strategic combination of content design, platform utilization, user engagement, data analytics, and influencer marketing is essential to fostering strong brand perception in the digital food market. The findings offer a practical roadmap for local food businesses like Hou's Hotpot to enhance consumer awareness and emotional connection. Moreover, the framework and insights derived can be extended to other regional food products in China, providing scalable guidelines for digital brand building and community engagement.

5.2.2 A model of social media influence on the perception of local food businesses in China.

The proposed model comprises five interrelated components—Content Strategy, Platform Usage, User Engagement, Data Analytics, and Influencer Partnerships—which were derived from both quantitative survey results and qualitative expert interviews. The

integration of these elements reflects a holistic, evidence-based approach to enhancing consumer perception of local food brands in China, specifically within the digital ecosystem of platforms like WeChat.

1. Content Strategy

The importance of diverse content formats—including videos, images, and live streaming—emerged strongly in both expert and consumer responses. This finding aligns with the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Blumler & Katz, 1974), which posits that users actively seek out media content that satisfies specific informational, entertainment, or emotional needs. Diversified, visually appealing content meets these needs and increases user satisfaction and retention, especially in food-related experiences that are inherently sensory and visual. Research by Hudson et al. (2016) also supports this view, emphasizing that emotionally resonant and culturally relevant digital content fosters deeper brand engagement and loyalty. For local food businesses, culturally grounded storytelling combined with appetizing visuals can transform mere visibility into authentic consumer connection.

2. Platform Usage

The selection and optimization of platform features (e.g., WeChat Moments, Official Accounts) are crucial for maximizing reach and resonance. This is consistent with Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 2003), which highlights the importance of communication channels in spreading new ideas and practices. Effective use of platform-specific tools enhances the speed and breadth of brand message dissemination. Empirical evidence from Chen & Lin (2019) underscores the role of platform adaptation in increasing consumer interaction. They found that social media users are more likely to engage with content that is tailored to the functions and norms of the specific platform they use most frequently.

3. User Engagement

User-generated content, commenting, and participation in brand-related activities were emphasized as pivotal to enhancing brand perception. This finding corresponds with the Customer Engagement Theory (Brodie et al., 2011), which emphasizes active, two-way interactions as the foundation for emotional bonding and brand advocacy. Engaging users in a participatory manner fosters a sense of belonging, particularly important in food cultures that emphasize community and shared experience.

4. Data Analytics

The model also integrates data analytics as a dynamic feedback mechanism that informs content refinement and engagement strategies. This is consistent with Strategic Communication and Relationship Management Theory (Grunig & Grunig, 2008), which advocates for evidence-based communication practices that respond to stakeholder behavior and feedback. Recent work by Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019) affirms that brands using social media analytics can personalize content delivery, improve customer experience, and increase conversion rates. In the context of local food

businesses, this means adapting campaigns to the preferences of target segments and iterating based on real-time insights.

5. Influencer Partnerships

The inclusion of influencer marketing reflects the critical role of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which suggests that individuals are influenced by people they perceive as part of their social group or aspirational identity. Trusted Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) serve as social validators, enhancing the perceived credibility and appeal of local brands. Studies by Djafarova & Trofimenko (2019) demonstrate that influencer authenticity significantly shapes consumer perceptions and purchase intentions, especially among younger demographics. Therefore, incorporating influencer partnerships into the model enables local food businesses to build trust, gain visibility, and foster emotional connections.

Conclusion and Practical Implications The model of social media influence developed in this study synthesizes theoretical and empirical insights into a practical tool for local food businesses aiming to strengthen brand perception in digital spaces. Each component contributes to a dynamic, cyclical process of communication, engagement, and brand awareness formation. Beyond the immediate application to hotpot businesses in Hebei, the model offers a transferable framework for other local brands seeking to harness social media for cultural promotion, economic revitalization, and community-based branding.

5.2.3 The appropriateness and effectiveness of the developed model of social media influence on the perception of local food businesses in China.

The evaluation of the developed social media influence model revealed that experts regarded it as both appropriate and effective for enhancing the perception of local food businesses in China. The assessment covered four major dimensions: clarity and relevance of the model structure, effectiveness in achieving communication objectives, feasibility for real-world implementation, and practical usefulness in local business contexts.

1) Appropriateness of the Model

Experts rated the model highly in terms of structural clarity and relevance to the local food industry, particularly in its alignment with social media dynamics in the Chinese market. The model's clear categorization into five core components—Content Strategy, Platform Usage, User Engagement, Data Analytics, and Influencer Partnerships—helped ensure its comprehensiveness and ease of implementation. This aligns with system-based approaches to marketing communication models (Kitchen et al., 2004), which advocate for coherent, modular frameworks that can be flexibly applied across varying industries and market conditions. Moreover, the model's cultural relevance to local food branding resonates with the findings of Cheng and Edwards (2022), who emphasized that brand communication models rooted in local cultural and consumer behavior tend to perform better in the Chinese digital

ecosystem. By emphasizing context-specific engagement and storytelling, the model supports effective message targeting and audience resonance.

2) Effectiveness of the Model

The model demonstrated strong effectiveness in promoting brand visibility, engagement, and perception among consumers. This was reflected in high expert ratings for strategic communication success and practical implementation. The emphasis on interactive content formats and influencer partnerships directly contributed to improved brand affinity and recognition. This outcome supports the Customer Engagement Theory (Brodie et al., 2011), which asserts that active consumer participation in brand dialogue enhances emotional connection and loyalty. Similarly, Kaplan and Haenlein (2014) highlighted the role of social media influencers and peer-based validation in reinforcing trust and behavioral intent, particularly in the food and lifestyle sectors. The model's use of KOLs (Key Opinion Leaders) further amplified brand messaging and fostered consumer credibility.

3) Feasibility and Usefulness

Experts agreed that the model was feasible to implement and highly useful for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) aiming to expand their digital presence. It requires no complex infrastructure and allows for incremental adoption based on business capacity and audience needs. This reflects the characteristics of diffusion-friendly innovation as described by Rogers (2003), whereby innovations with relative advantage, simplicity, and compatibility are more readily adopted by organizations.

The model's adaptability also ensures usefulness beyond hotpot businesses. It can serve as a practical roadmap for other local food brands and culturally-based businesses aiming to increase engagement through digital media. Research by Yin and Zhang (2021) also confirms that localized digital branding frameworks enable smaller enterprises to build competitiveness in saturated online markets.

4) Summary and Broader Implications

In summary, the expert evaluations confirmed that the model is theoretically robust, practically applicable, and strategically valuable for branding local food products via social media. Its alignment with relevant theories such as Uses and Gratifications, Customer Engagement, and Diffusion of Innovations supports both its academic rigor and field usability. For practitioners, the model offers a replicable guide for leveraging content, influencers, data, and user participation in a unified branding strategy. The framework can be extended to a wide range of local products seeking to thrive in China's evolving digital economy.

5.2.4 The impact of user interactions on brand awareness and consumer engagement in the context of social media.

The findings of this study underscore the significant role of user interactions in shaping both brand awareness and consumer engagement for local food businesses in the

digital landscape. Through the production and dissemination of a video campaign guided by the social media influence model, this study evaluated user responses in three critical areas: video quality, consumer perception and satisfaction, and the campaign's promotional impact.

1. Quality of the Produced Video

Experts rated the video content as technically and aesthetically high in quality, especially in terms of visual clarity, emotional appeal, and creativity. These attributes align with the AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action), which posits that effective marketing content should first capture attention and then sustain interest and emotional connection (Strong, 1925). The storytelling strategy employed in the video—featuring authentic food experiences and cultural immersion—was particularly effective in engaging viewers emotionally and visually, which is critical in fostering lasting brand memory. The use of high-resolution visuals, dynamic camera movements, and culturally resonant themes directly supported the experiential marketing theory (Schmitt, 1999), which suggests that brands that deliver immersive sensory and emotional experiences can build deeper consumer loyalty. Experts highlighted that such media design increased the overall appeal and watchability of the video.

2. Consumer Perception and Satisfaction

Surveyed consumers responded positively to the video, reporting high satisfaction levels and strong perceptions of brand authenticity and relevance. These results align with Uses and Gratifications Theory (Blumler & Katz, 1974), which posits that consumers actively seek media content that satisfies informational, emotional, and social needs. In this case, users derived both enjoyment and value from the video, which enhanced their engagement and strengthened emotional ties to the Hou's Hotpot brand. Moreover, the inclusion of interactive features—such as comments, shares, and likes—was consistent with findings from Malthouse and Calder (2011), who emphasized that consumer engagement on social media is positively influenced by two-way interaction and content that resonates with personal identity and community belonging.

3. Promotion Results and Brand Impact

The video campaign led to increased consumer engagement, measured through metrics such as views, shares, and online interactions, as well as an improved brand image. Key opinion leader (KOL) involvement amplified this effect, reflecting the power of influencer marketing in the Chinese digital ecosystem, as previously confirmed by Jin et al. (2019). This impact aligns with Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), as users who identified with the cultural values expressed in the video were more likely to engage with the brand and form positive brand associations. Additionally, the model's interactive design—integrating user comments, feedback loops, and influencer storytelling—facilitated a sense of community and trust, which are essential for developing brand awareness in competitive markets.

4. Summary and Broader Implications

In summary, the findings demonstrate that user interactions with high-quality, culturally rich, and interactive video content significantly contribute to brand awareness and engagement. The effective implementation of the social media influence model in this context provides a framework that other local food businesses can replicate to enhance visibility, trust, and emotional connection with their audience. This model has clear implications for regional product promotion, culinary tourism, and cultural branding, particularly within markets driven by social validation and digital engagement.

5.3 Suggestions

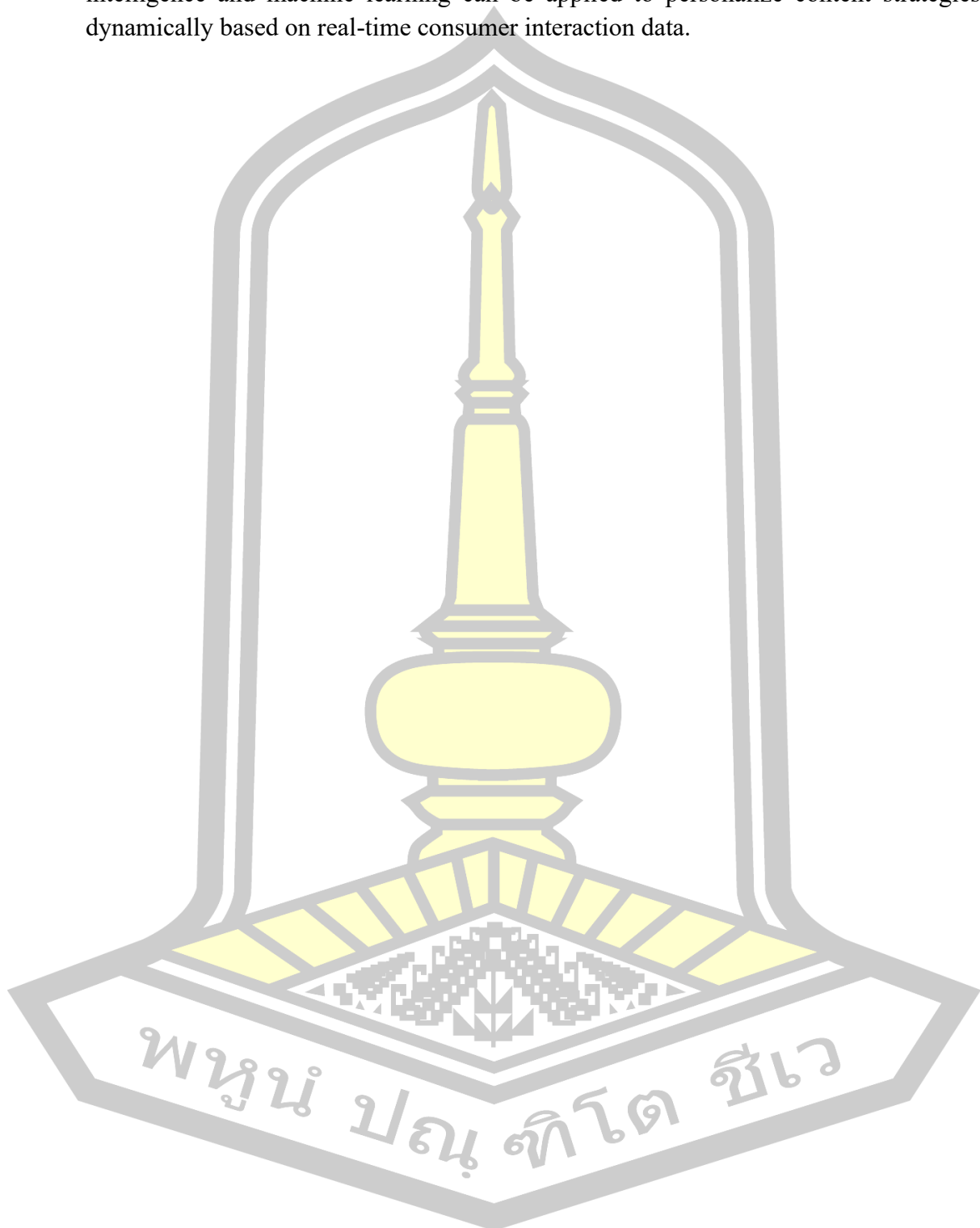
5.3.1 Practical Suggestions from the Research

- 1) **Develop Culturally Resonant Video Content:** Local food businesses should focus on producing creative, culturally relevant, and emotionally engaging video content to increase consumer perception and brand attachment.
- 2) **Utilize Key Social Media Features on WeChat:** Leveraging specific WeChat functions such as Official Accounts, Mini Programs, and Moments can significantly enhance brand exposure and consumer engagement.
- 3) **Strengthen Influencer Partnerships:** Collaborating with credible and culturally aligned influencers (KOLs) can boost trust and stimulate consumer interest, particularly in the food and lifestyle sectors.
- 4) **Implement Data-Driven Strategies:** Businesses should continuously use social media analytics to understand consumer behavior, optimize content delivery times, and personalize user engagement strategies.
- 5) **Encourage Two-Way User Engagement:** Building interactive experiences (e.g., polls, Q&A, user-generated content) can foster brand awareness and increase repeat engagement among consumers.

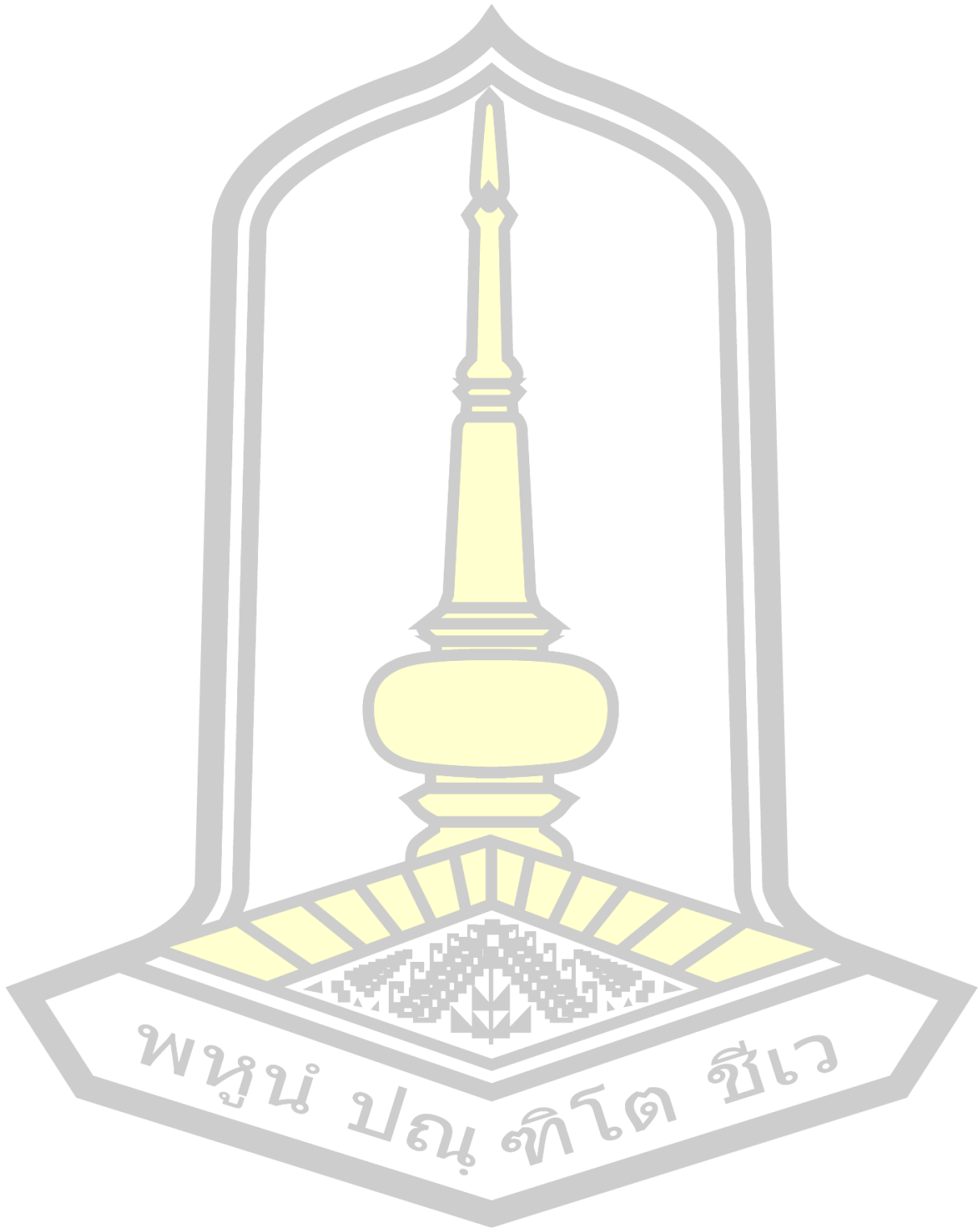
5.3.2 Suggestions for Future Research

- 1) **Expand to Multiple Local Brands and Regions:** Future studies could compare the model's application across different local food businesses or regions in China to assess contextual adaptability and generalizability.
- 2) **Longitudinal Impact Analysis:** Conducting long-term studies could explore how continuous exposure to social media content affects brand awareness, purchase behavior, and consumer retention over time.
- 3) **Cross-Platform Comparative Study:** Investigating how the influence model performs on other platforms like Douyin, Xiaohongshu, or Weibo could provide deeper insights into platform-specific engagement patterns.
- 4) **Integration of Consumer Psychology Factors:** Future research could incorporate psychological variables such as emotional arousal, trust, and identity alignment to deepen understanding of consumer-brand relationships.

5) AI-Powered Content Personalization Models: Explore how artificial intelligence and machine learning can be applied to personalize content strategies dynamically based on real-time consumer interaction data.



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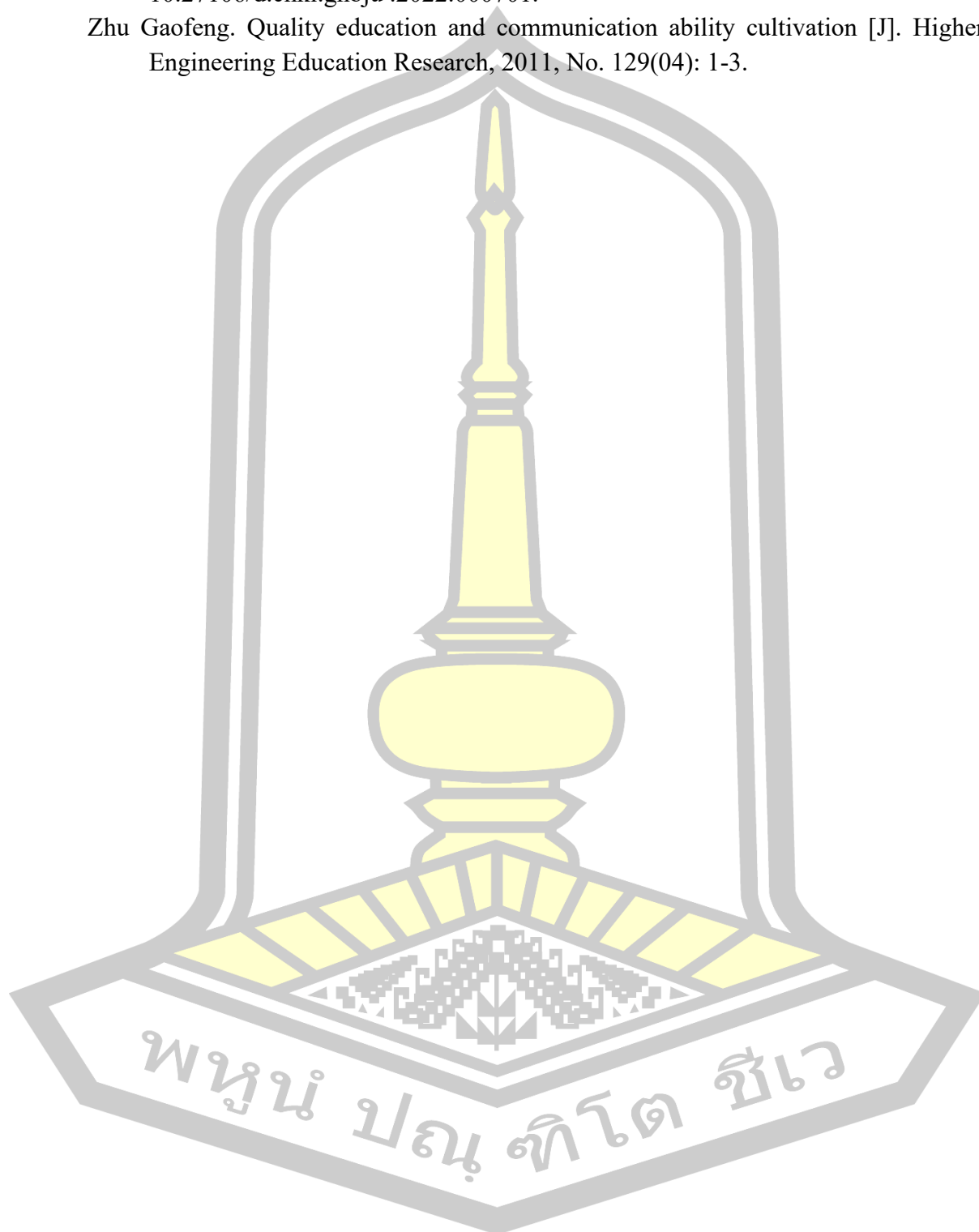
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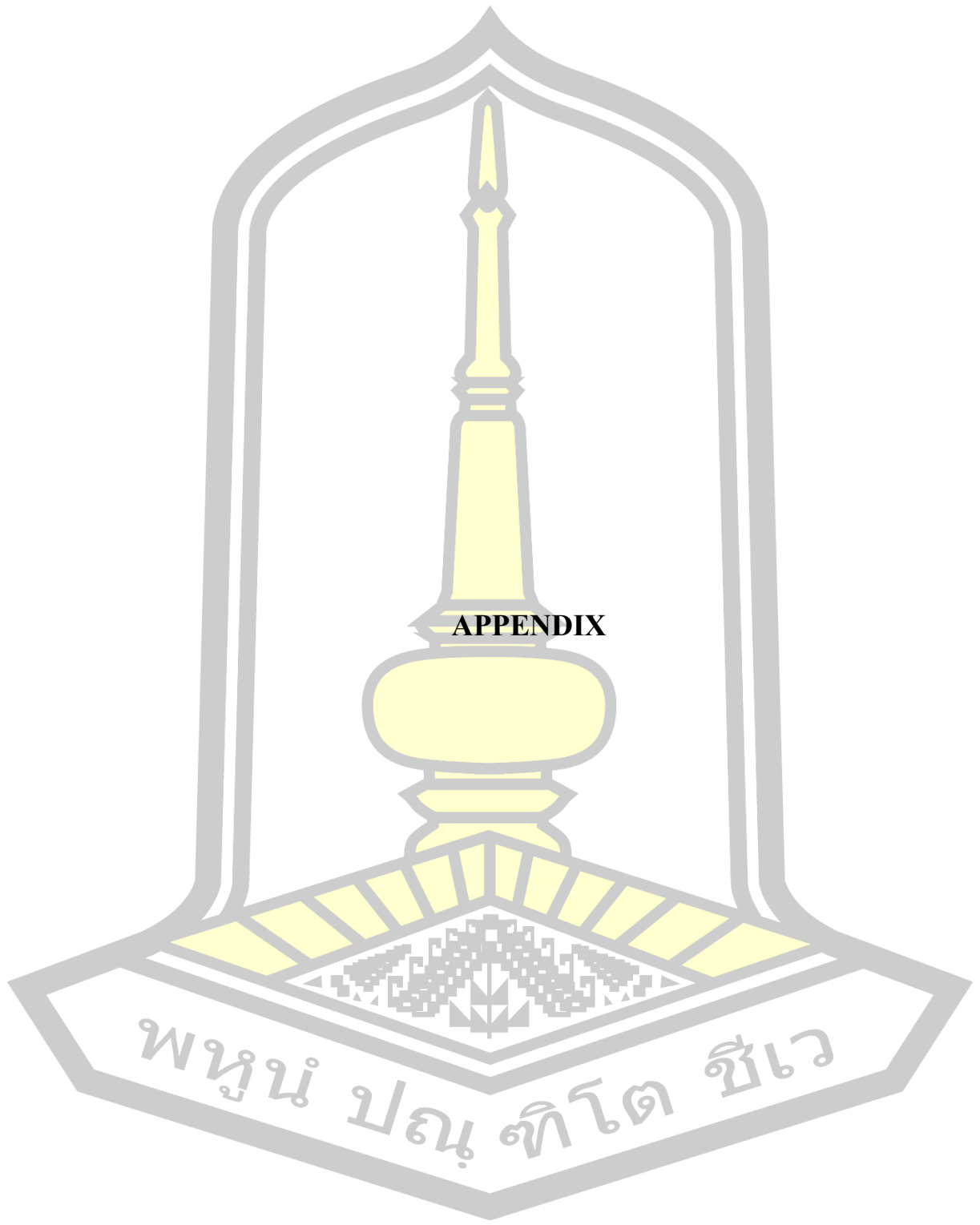
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APPENDIX

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Appendix A

Survey Design

Questionnaire Instructions

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data on the impact of social media on the perception of local food companies in China (Hou's Hotpot, a local brand in Hebei). Your responses will help us better understand the role of social media in brand perception and user engagement. All responses will be treated anonymously and used for academic research only.

Section 1: Basic Information

1. Your gender:

(1) Male (2) Female (3) Other (4) Do not want to answer

2. Your age:

(1) 18-25 years old (2) 26-35 years old (3) 36-45 years old (4) 46 years old and above

3. Your occupation:

(1) Student (2) Company employee (3) Freelancer (4) Civil servant (5) Teacher (6) Other (please specify)

4. Your highest educational level:

(1) High school and below (2) College (3) Bachelor (4) Master (5) Doctorate and above

5. Your income level (monthly income):

(1) Less than 5,000 yuan (2) 5,000-10,000 yuan (3) 10,000-20,000 yuan (4) More than 20,000 yuan (5) Unwilling to answer

6. Your WeChat usage time (average daily):

(1) Less than 1 hour (2) 1-2 hours (3) 2-3 hours (4) More than 3 hours

7. The time period when you mainly use WeChat:

(1) Morning (6:00-9:00) (2) Daytime (9:00-18:00) (3) Evening (18:00-24:00) (4) Late night (after 24:00)

8. What is your main purpose for using WeChat? (Multiple choice)

(1) Keep in touch with family and friends (2) Get news and information (3) Participate in work meetings and discussions (4)

Shopping and payment (5) Entertainment and leisure (6) Others (please specify)

Part II: Questionnaire Content

The second part of this questionnaire aims to provide a detailed understanding of respondents' behaviours and preferences when using social media (especially the WeChat platform) and how these affect brand perception and user engagement of local Chinese food companies (Hou's Hotpot, a local brand in Hebei). By analysing independent variables such as social media platform usage, content type, user interaction, data analysis,

and opinion leader influence, we hope to reveal how these factors work together to influence brand perception and user engagement. This questionnaire uses a Likert 5-point scale to quantify respondents' answers for more precise statistical analysis. 5 means strongly agree, 4 means agree, 3 means fair, 2 means disagree, and 1 means strongly disagree. Your responses will provide valuable data to support this study. Thank you very much for your participation and co-operation.

topic	Totally Disagree	→	Totally Agree		
Measure your social media platform usage below					
9.I use WeChat every day.	1	2	3	4	5
10.I spend a lot of time on WeChat.	1	2	3	4	5
11.I often use multiple features of WeChat at the same time (such as Moments, official accounts, mini-programs, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
12.I will choose specific WeChat features (such as Moments, Official Accounts, Mini Programs, etc.) based on my needs.	1	2	3	4	5
13.I use WeChat to get the latest brand information.	1	2	3	4	5
The following are the types of content that measure your social media interest					
14.I prefer watching video content on WeChat.	1	2	3	4	5
15.I think pictures attract me more than text.	1	2	3	4	5
16.I like to learn about brands through WeChat Live.	1	2	3	4	5
17.I think a variety of content formats (such as videos, pictures, articles) can better attract my attention.	1	2	3	4	5
18.I am interested in the advertising content on WeChat.	1	2	3	4	5
Measure your social media user engagement	1	2	3	4	5
19.I often like brand content on WeChat.	1	2	3	4	5
20.I will comment on brand content in the WeChat comment section.	1	2	3	4	5
21.I like to share brand content with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
22.I will participate in activities organized by brands on WeChat.	1	2	3	4	5
23.I like to communicate directly with brands through WeChat.	1	2	3	4	5

Below is your opinion on social media analytics:					
24.I think data analysis on WeChat is very important for brands to understand consumer behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
25.I think brands can better meet my needs through data analysis.	1	2	3	4	5
26.I think WeChat data analysis can help improve the service quality of brands.	1	2	3	4	5
27.I think brands can target users more accurately by using WeChat data analysis.	1	2	3	4	5
28.I believe brands can optimize their marketing strategies through WeChat data analysis.	1	2	3	4	5
Below is a measure of your opinion of social media influencers					
29.I follow opinion leaders on WeChat (KOL).	1	2	3	4	5
30.I trust brands recommended by influencers.	1	2	3	4	5
31.I will try new brands because of the recommendations of influencers.	1	2	3	4	5
32.I think the reviews from opinion leaders are more influential than those from ordinary users.	1	2	3	4	5
33.I often pay attention to the updates and recommendations of opinion leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
The following measures your opinion on the brand awareness of local food company Hou's Hotpot					
34. I am very familiar with the local food brand Hou's Hotpot.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I often see advertisements for the local food brand Hou's Hotpot.	1	2	3	4	5
36. I can easily recognize the logo and products of the local food brand Hou's Hotpot.	1	2	3	4	5
37.I know the history and background of the local food brand Hou's Hotpot.	1	2	3	4	5
38.I believe the local food brand Hou's Hotpot has high brand awareness.	1	2	3	4	5
The following measures your experience with local food company Hou's Hotpot					
39.I frequently participate in activities of the local food brand Hou's Hotpot on social media.	1	2	3	4	5
40.I would recommend Local Food Business Brands to friends and family Hou's Hotpot.	1	2	3	4	5
41.I am willing to provide feedback and suggestions for the local food brand Hou's Hotpot.	1	2	3	4	5
42.I find participating in social media activities of the local food brand Hou's Hotpot enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5
43.I am highly satisfied with the social media activities of the local food brand Hou's Hotpot.	1	2	3	4	5

Part 3: Interview

The purpose of this expert interview is to explore the development of models on social media platforms that influence users' perceptions of local food companies in China. Through the interviews, we will gather information on concepts, principles and guidelines for effective forms of communication and assess the effectiveness of these communication models in practical applications.

I . Effective Communication Forms on Social Media Platforms

1.What types of content (such as videos, pictures, live streams, etc.) do you think are most effective in influencing consumer perceptions of local food brands on social media platforms?

2.In your experience, which local food brands have successfully influenced consumer perceptions through social media? Please describe in detail the specific forms of communication these brands have adopted.

3.When a brand communicates on social media, do you think the creativity or quality of the content is more important in shaping consumer perceptions? Why?

II. Basic Principles of Social Media Communication

4.What basic principles do you think must be followed when disseminating brand information on social media to effectively shape consumer perceptions?

5.How do you define “high-quality” brand content in the context of influencing consumer perceptions? What are the key metrics?

6.Which strategies do you think are most effective in attracting and holding consumer attention on social media?

III. Specific Strategies to Influence Brand Perceptions

7.Which strategies do you think are most effective in shaping consumer perceptions of local food brands? Please provide examples of how these strategies have been implemented.

8.Which factors do you prioritize when developing a social media communication strategy aimed at influencing consumer perceptions? Why?

9.How do you think brands should maintain a consistent brand image and messaging on social media to effectively influence consumer perceptions?

IV. Development and Implementation of Communication Models

10. What steps do you typically follow when developing a social media communication model aimed at influencing consumer perceptions?

11. What challenges have you encountered when implementing these communication models? Please describe in detail how you addressed these challenges.

12. How do you think the balance should be struck between innovative and traditional approaches in the development of communication models that influence consumer perceptions?

V. Application of Data Analysis in Communication

13. How important do you think data analysis is in shaping consumer perceptions through social media communication? Please provide an example.

14. What data indicators do you usually focus on to evaluate the effectiveness of communication strategies aimed at influencing consumer perceptions?

15. How do you think data analysis can help brands optimize their social media communication strategies to better influence consumer perceptions?

VI. The Role of Opinion Leaders

16. How much influence do you think opinion leaders on social media have on shaping consumer perceptions? Please provide some specific examples.

17. What factors do you consider when choosing opinion leaders to work with in the context of influencing consumer perceptions?

18. How do you think we can maximize the influence of opinion leaders to enhance consumer perceptions of local food brands?

VII. Platform Selection and Content Optimization

19. Which factors do you prioritize when choosing a social media platform to influence consumer perceptions? Why?

20. What role do you think content optimization plays in shaping consumer perceptions? Please describe in detail.

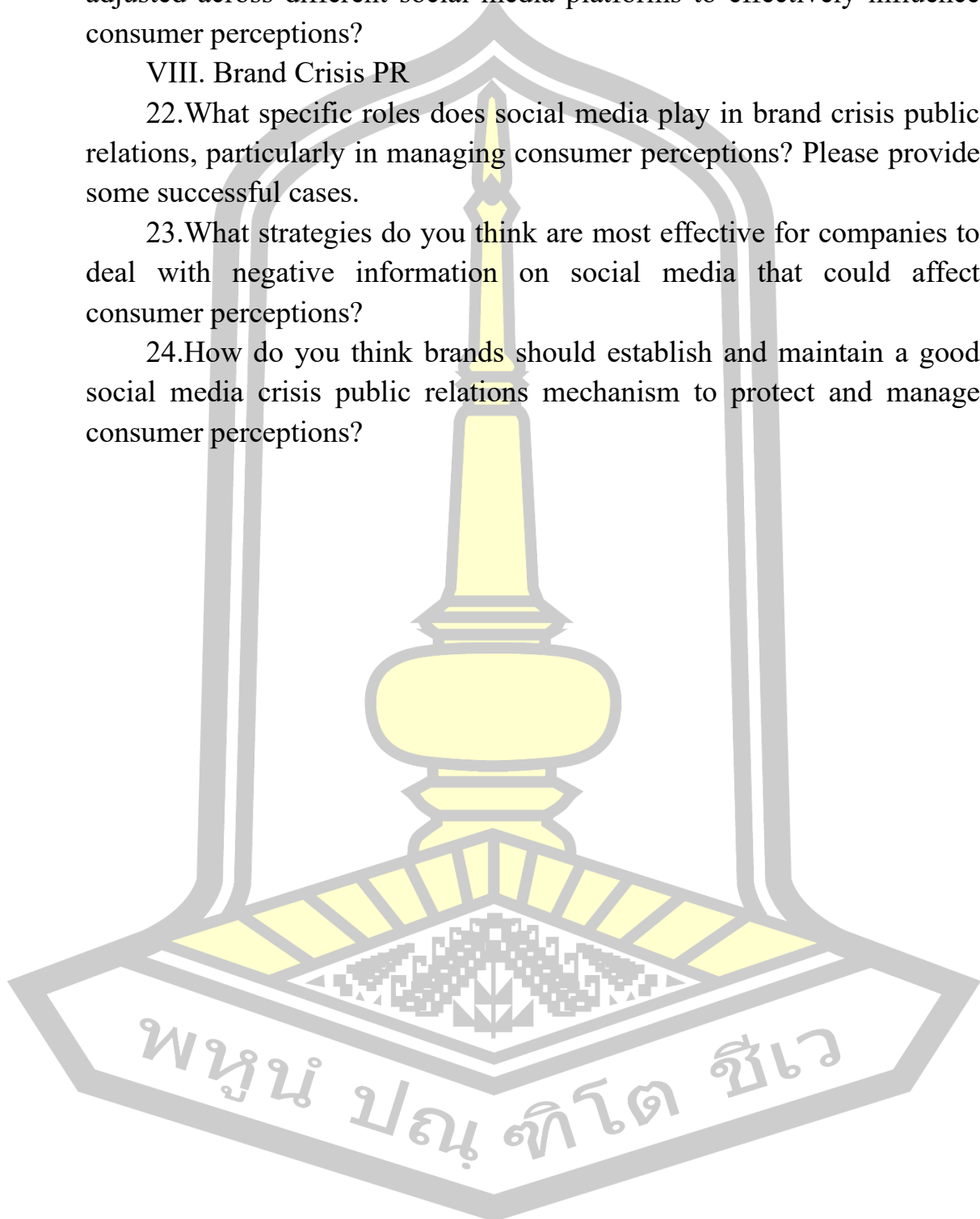
21. How do you think brand communication strategies should be adjusted across different social media platforms to effectively influence consumer perceptions?

VIII. Brand Crisis PR

22. What specific roles does social media play in brand crisis public relations, particularly in managing consumer perceptions? Please provide some successful cases.

23. What strategies do you think are most effective for companies to deal with negative information on social media that could affect consumer perceptions?

24. How do you think brands should establish and maintain a good social media crisis public relations mechanism to protect and manage consumer perceptions?



Appendix B

Tool for Assessing the Consistency of the Social Media Influence Model

Section 1: Basic Information of the Evaluator

This section collects basic information about the participating expert.

Name (Optional):

Area of Expertise (Select one or more):

1.Social Media Marketing

2.Digital Analytics

3.Local Business Strategy

4.Influencer Marketing

5.Consumer Engagement

Years of Experience in Relevant Field:

1.1-3 years

2.4-7 years

3.8-10 years

4.More than 10 years

Section 2: Consistency Assessment

Evaluate the following statements regarding the model's dimensions.

Please rate each statement on a scale from 1 to 5, where:

5 = Highly Consistent, 4 = Very Consistent, 3 = Moderately Consistent, 2 = Slightly Consistent, 1 = Not Consistent.

Dimension	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Platform Usage	The model effectively captures user interaction patterns on social media platforms.					
	The representation of platform-specific features aligns with consumer behaviors.					
	The model integrates multiple platform functionalities cohesively.					
Content Strategy	The content strategy proposed is practical for engaging local food business consumers.					

	The content approach ensures cultural relevance and reflects local traditions.					
	The model allows flexibility to adapt content strategies for different social media platforms.					

User Engagement	The model provides clear mechanisms to foster meaningful user interactions.					
	The engagement strategies proposed align with typical consumer preferences.					
	The model adequately addresses consumer incentives for participation (e.g., contests, feedback).					
Data Analytics	The data analytics dimension provides actionable insights for optimizing strategies.					
	Metrics and methods for performance evaluation are clearly defined and feasible.					
	The model includes provisions for privacy and ethical use of consumer data.					
Influencer Partnerships	The selection criteria for influencers are well-defined and aligned with the model's objectives.					
	The integration of influencer content supports broader branding efforts.					
	The model ensures that influencer partnerships remain authentic and relevant.					

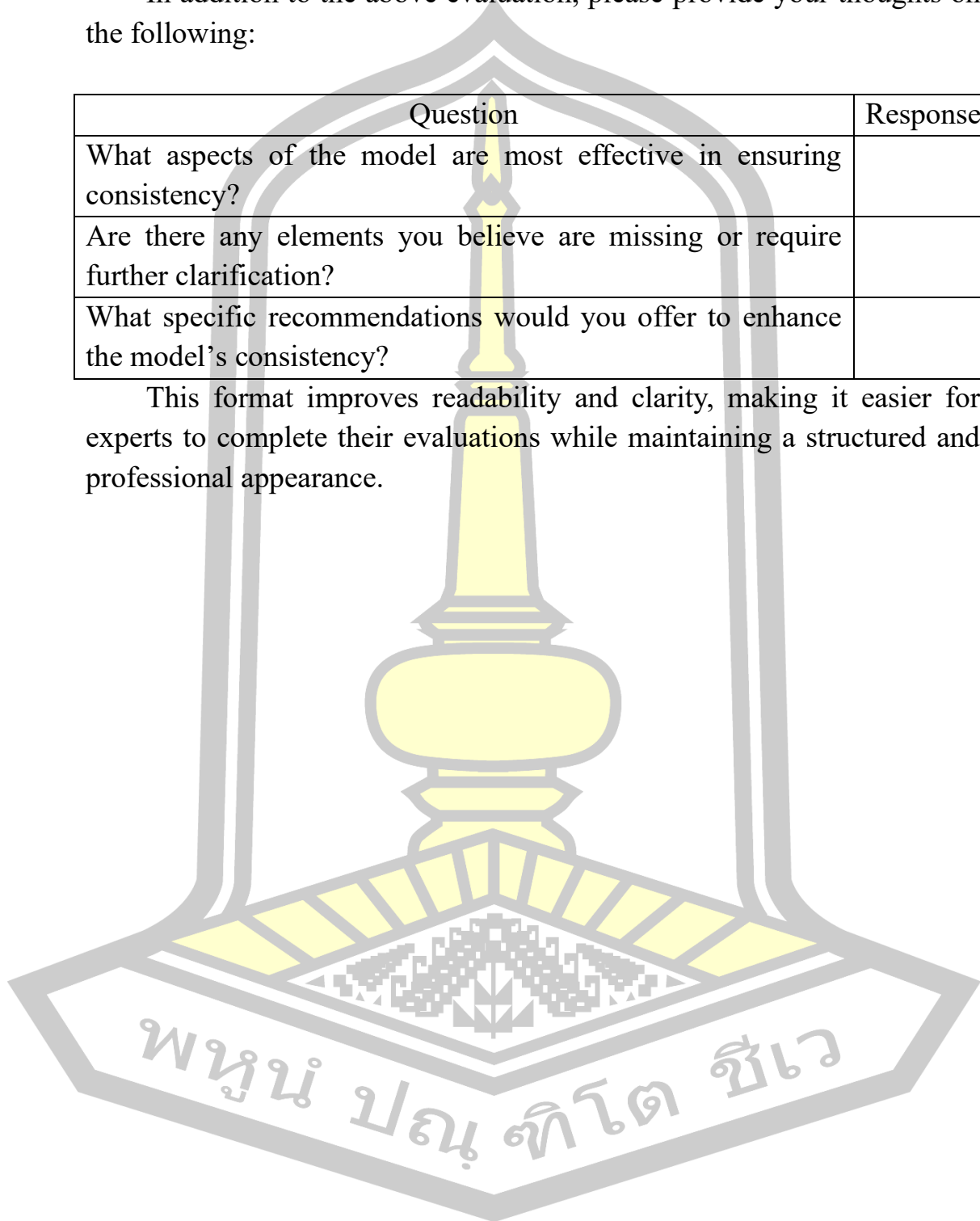
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Section 3: Open-ended Feedback

In addition to the above evaluation, please provide your thoughts on the following:

Question	Response
What aspects of the model are most effective in ensuring consistency?	
Are there any elements you believe are missing or require further clarification?	
What specific recommendations would you offer to enhance the model's consistency?	

This format improves readability and clarity, making it easier for experts to complete their evaluations while maintaining a structured and professional appearance.



Appendix C

Form to Evaluate the Feasibility and Usefulness of the Model of Social Media Influencing Perceptions of Local Food Businesses in China

Instructions

Please evaluate the model based on its feasibility and usefulness in addressing the objectives of enhancing brand perception and user engagement for local food businesses in China. Use the following rating scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Section 1: Feasibility Assessment

Dimension	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Implementation	The model is practical to implement for local food businesses with available resources.					
	The model can be adapted to different social media platforms without significant difficulty.					
Scalability	The model is scalable for use by local food businesses of varying sizes and capacities.					
	The model supports expansion to new social media platforms or broader audiences.					
Cost-efficiency	The model offers a cost-effective approach to improving brand perception and user engagement.					
Time-efficiency	The implementation of the model can be achieved within a reasonable timeframe.					

Section 2: Usefulness Assessment

Dimension	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Brand Perception	The model effectively enhances consumer perception of local food businesses on social media.					
	The model provides tools for businesses to communicate their unique cultural identity effectively.					

User Engagement	The model promotes meaningful and sustained user engagement with local food business content.					
	The model helps businesses foster long-term relationships with consumers.					
Data-Driven Insights	The model leverages data analytics to provide actionable insights for optimizing marketing efforts.					
Influencer Integration	The model effectively incorporates influencer partnerships to amplify brand reach and authenticity.					

Section 3: Open-ended Feedback

Question	Response
What aspects of the model do you find most feasible and useful?	
Are there any challenges or barriers to implementing this model?	
What recommendations would you offer to enhance the model's practicality and effectiveness?	

Appendix D

Evaluation Form for the Quality of Video Clips Produced Based on the Model of Social Media Influencing Perceptions of Local Food Businesses in China

Instructions

Please evaluate the video clips using the following criteria. Rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 5, where:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Section 1: Content Quality

Dimension	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Relevance	The content aligns with the objectives of promoting local food businesses.					
	The content effectively communicates the unique value and cultural identity of the business.					
Engagement	The video content is engaging and likely to retain viewer attention.					
	The narrative style of the video fosters a connection with the audience.					
Accuracy	The information presented in the video is accurate and up-to-date.					
Creativity	The video demonstrates creative and innovative storytelling techniques.					

Section 2: Technical Quality

Dimension	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Visual Appeal	The video has high-quality visuals (resolution, framing, colors, etc.).					
	The visuals are cohesive and support the overall messaging of the video.					
Audio Quality	The audio is clear and easy to understand.					

	Background music and sound effects are used appropriately and enhance the viewing experience.					
Editing	The video is well-edited, with smooth transitions and a logical flow.					

Section 3: Effectiveness and Impact

Dimension	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Call to Action	The video includes a clear and compelling call to action (e.g., visit the restaurant, engage online).					
Emotional Resonance	The video evokes positive emotions and creates a memorable impression.					
Brand Promotion	The video effectively enhances the visibility and appeal of the local food business.					

Question	Response
What aspects of the video clips do you find most effective in promoting the local food business?	
Are there any areas for improvement in the video clips?	
What additional recommendations would you suggest for future video production?	



Appendix E

Form to Assess Consumer Perceptions Related to Local Food Businesses in China on Social Media

Instructions

Please respond to the following statements based on your perception of local food businesses on social media platforms. Use the scale provided to indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Section 1: Awareness of Local Food Businesses

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I am familiar with local food businesses in my region through social media platforms.					
I frequently see advertisements or posts about local food businesses on social media.					
Social media content helps me identify and recognize local food businesses easily.					
Social media has increased my awareness of the cultural and culinary heritage of local food.					

Section 2: Perception of Brand Image

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Local food businesses are portrayed positively on social media.					
I perceive local food businesses as offering high-quality products or services.					
Social media content about local food businesses highlights their unique selling points.					
Social media posts help create a trustworthy and reliable image of local food businesses.					

Section 3: Engagement with Local Food Businesses

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I interact with social media posts from local food businesses (e.g., likes, comments, shares).					
Social media promotions or campaigns motivate me to visit local food businesses.					

Social media content makes me more likely to recommend local food businesses to others.					
I enjoy participating in contests or promotions organized by local food businesses on social media.					

Section 4: Perceived Value of Social Media Content

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Social media posts by local food businesses provide useful information about their offerings.					
I find the visual content (photos, videos) from local food businesses appealing and engaging.					
Social media platforms make it easy for me to learn about promotions and discounts.					
I value the stories and cultural context shared by local food businesses on social media.					

Section 5: Open-ended Feedback

Question	Response
What do you like most about how local food businesses use social media?	
Are there any aspects of social media content from local food businesses that you find lacking or ineffective?	
What additional features or improvements would you suggest for their social media presence?	

Appendix F

Form to Assess Consumer Satisfaction with Videos Featuring Content Related to Local Food Businesses in China on Social Media

Instructions: Please respond to the following statements regarding your satisfaction with videos about local food businesses on social media platforms. Use the scale provided to indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Section 1: Visual and Aesthetic Appeal

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The videos feature high-quality visuals that enhance their appeal.					
The videos effectively use colors, lighting, and composition to attract attention.					
The presentation of food in the videos is visually appetizing and engaging.					
The overall production quality of the videos meets my expectations.					

Section 2: Content Relevance and Informativeness

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The videos provide valuable information about local food businesses.					
The content in the videos is relevant to my interests as a consumer of local food.					
The videos effectively highlight the unique features of local food businesses.					
The information provided in the videos is clear and easy to understand.					

Section 3: Emotional and Cultural Connection

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The videos create an emotional connection with the audience.					
The cultural heritage and uniqueness of local food businesses are well-represented.					

I feel more connected to local food culture after watching the videos.					
The storytelling approach used in the videos enhances their overall appeal.					

Section 4: Engagement and Call to Action

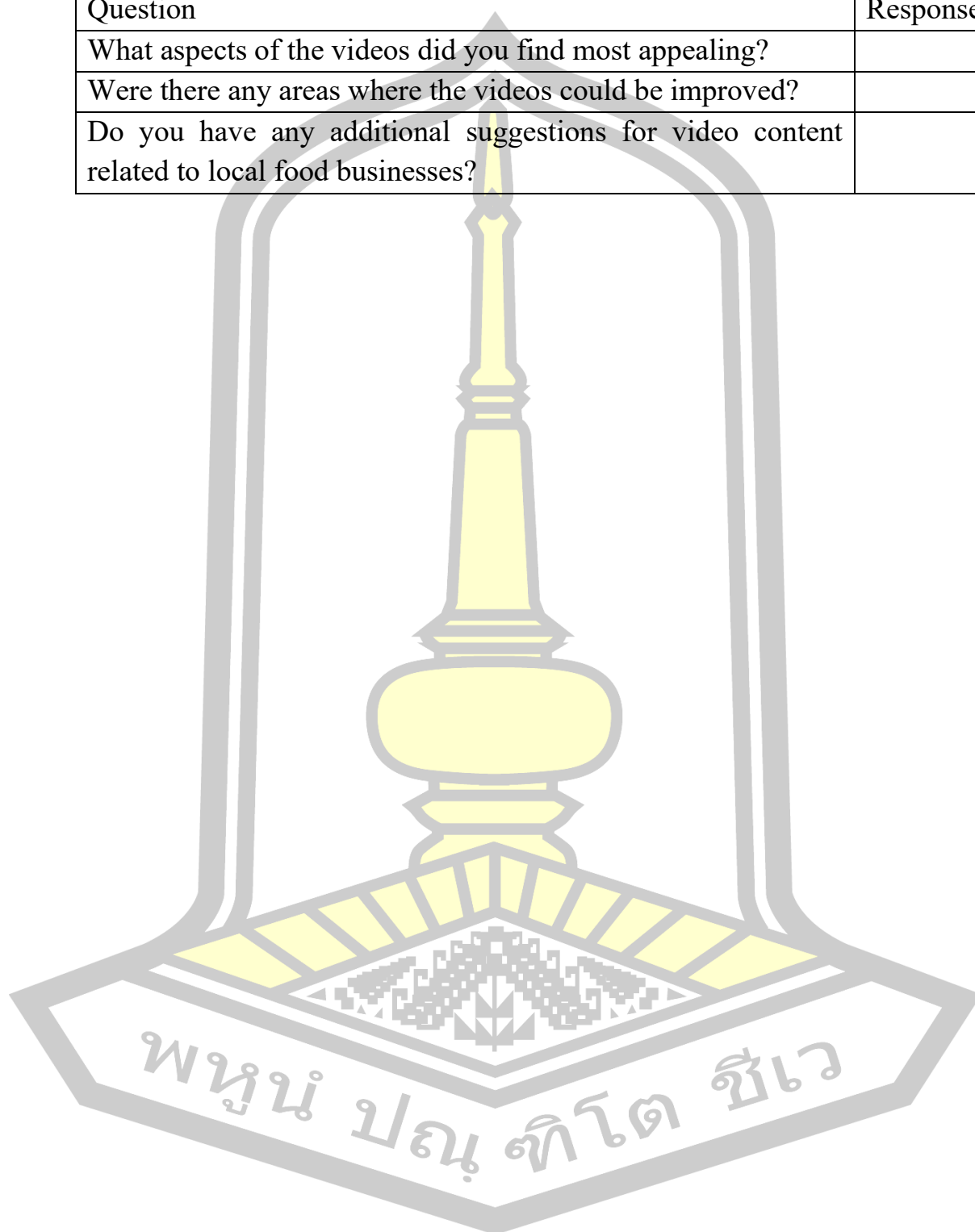
Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The videos encourage me to visit or try products from local food businesses.					
The videos make me more likely to recommend local food businesses to others.					
The videos inspire me to share them with my social network.					
I find the call-to-action elements in the videos effective and motivating.					

Section 5: Overall Satisfaction

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, I am satisfied with the quality and content of the videos.					
I would like to see more videos about local food businesses in the future.					

Section 6: Open-ended Feedback

Question	Response
What aspects of the videos did you find most appealing?	
Were there any areas where the videos could be improved?	
Do you have any additional suggestions for video content related to local food businesses?	



Appendix G



MAHASARAKHAM UNIVERSITY ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Certificate of Approval

Approval number: 191-129/2025

Title : A Model of Social Media influencing perceptions of Local Food Business in China.

Principal Investigator : Yingying Zheng

Responsible Department : Faculty of Informatics

Research site : Shijiazhuang city, Hebei province, China and Faculty of Informatics

Review Method : Expedited Review

Date of Manufacture : 12 March 2025

Expire : 11 March 2026

This research application has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects, Mahasarakham University, Thailand. Approval is dependent on local ethical approval having been received. Any subsequent changes to the consent form must be re-submitted to the Committee.

Ratree S.

(Assistant Professor Ratree Sawangjit)

Chairman

Approval is granted subject to the following conditions: (see back of this Certificate)

BIOGRAPHY

NAME	Yingying Zheng
DATE OF BIRTH	July 4, 1986
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ADDRESS	No. 11 Changshan East Road, Zhengding County, Shijiazhuang City, Hebei Province
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PLACE OF WORK	Hebei Academy of Fine Arts, China
EDUCATION	2022-2025: Doctor of Philosophy in Creative Media, Faculty of Informatics, Mahasarakham University. 2018-2021: Master of Education Management major, Hebei Normal University 2006-2010: Undergraduate college (Radio and Television Scriptwriting and Directing), Hebei Normal University, Hebei Province, China
Research output	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Zheng Yingying, (2020).Exploration of the Training Path for Broadcasting and Television Directing Professionals in the Era of Integrated Media, Hebei Pictorial,2. Zheng Yingying, (2018). Research on the Diversified Application oriented Talent Training Model for Broadcasting and Television Directing in the Era of Big Data, Western Broadcasting and Television, 61-623. Zheng Yingying, (2018).Construction of radio and television editing and directing specialty in the era of "Internet plus", talent, 2224. Zheng Yingying, (2018).Research on Experimental Teaching Reform of Broadcasting and Television Directing Major, Western Broadcasting and Television, 26-275. Zheng Yingying, (2021).Research on Film and Television Culture Communication Education and Performance, Changchun, Jilin Photography Publishing House6. Zheng Yingying, (2016).Experimental Tutorial on Film and Television Advertising Production, Beijing, Beijing University of Technology Press