

# *Analyzing the Strategy of Chicecream's Brand Image Based on Marketing Mix Theory*

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**Abstract:** Influencers refer to people who spread information through the internet and become popular due to their own attention from netizens. This idea is expanded by the term "Internet celebrity brand," which refers to a brand that has become popular with consumers through online marketing. The aim of this study was to explore how Internet celebrity brands could improve their brand image and foster consumer goodwill. This paper further developed Marketing Mix Theory by exploring the effectiveness of dimensions of Marketing Mix Theory and brand image. Besides, the research also exploited the SWOT method to analyze the product, price, place, and promotion of the Chicecream. This research concluded that Chicecream's high pricing can generate negative perceptions among consumers, and inappropriate positioning strategies can lead to fragmentation of the brand image and detract from the effectiveness of brand marketing. Through the above summary and analysis, the article provided ideas on how to cultivate a good brand image for online celebrity brands from the perspectives of price, product, place, and promotion.

**Keywords:** marketing mix theory, brand image, internet celebrity brand

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Research Background**

Nowadays, with the development of the economy and technology, the internet has become a necessity in the daily life of everyone. At the same time, many offline activities have spread to cyberspace. The gradually rising internet economy leads to the result that people's purchasing behavior can not only rely on physical shopping but also on the internet. It has also given birth to a new economic form called Internet Celebrity Economy. Following this trend, a series of brands have begun their business on the internet due to the fast development of the new internet economy. These brands rely on the internet to exist and build awareness through marketing. The network provides a broader publicity platform for advertising so that company can choose the right channel or advertising theme according to the brand characteristics and to apply the network to open sales channels faster. As a catering brand benefiting from the dividends of the Internet celebrity economy.

Chicecream is one of those new internet celebrity brands, that won the favor of internet users with comprehensive marketing at the beginning of its establishment. Chicecream was an ice cream brand, which was established in 2018, the brand tries to only choose online channels, rather than rely on

offline channel for all the selling activities. However, things are not always as smooth as expected, and the brand has been criticized by consumers for its quality and price several times.

This incident reflects the problems faced by most celebrity brands, who have a reputation far beyond the quality of their own products. Once the quality of the product cannot support their brand marketing strategy, it will make consumers have a low perception of their brand value.

To this day, there are several researchers who have done research into Chicecream incidents. Liu took the Chicecream trust crisis incident as an example to study the need for internet celebrity brands to adopt a more traditional business model on the way to long-term popularity [1]. Zhang et al. listed all the relevant events since Chicecream's establishment, believing that brands should not only be internet celebrities, but also need to cultivate user stickiness from the perspectives of quality, consumer pain points, and brand positioning [2]. Starting from the "burning Chicecream" incident, you proposed that product quality and value for money are the ways to make the brand stable and long-term [3]. In addition, researchers have studied the business model of branded tea enterprises under the background of the Internet celebrity economy on milk tea brands such as HEYTEA [4].

## 1.2. Research Gap

Most of the study on Chicecream's trust crisis event focused on the above perspectives half a year after the incident. Product quality as a fundamental factor has a decisive impact on brand image, but the factors affecting brand stickiness are not only focused on these points. As an online brand, Chicecream initially only sold its products through online store channels. When it switched to opening the offline market, it once again faced consumers' doubts about its quality and pricing. In addition to the shortcomings of the product itself, the brand also faced some questions about whether there was a mismatch between online and offline channels and marketing methods and whether there were problems with pricing. There has been less previous evidence for a connection between these two variables, and there has been no previous investigation using the SWOT approach to analyze the issues that Chicecream had. There are still some details that could be explained through the marketing mix theory. Because there is a lack of analysis on the elements mentioned above, this article will analyze the Chicecream brand from the aspects of pricing and distribution. Explore how internet celebrity brands can improve their brand image and change their perception.

## 1.3. Fill the Gap

In order to analyze the Chicecream brand's current issues, this article will combine the Marketing Mix Theory marketing strategy it has chosen with SWOT analysis. Based on Marketing Mix Theory, this analysis will choose SWOT to analyze the Chicecream brand itself and its marketing strategies. Finally, explore how internet celebrity brands can reverse their brand image at the brand level and cultivate consumers' positive cognition.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Marketing Mix Theory

The marketing mix is a concept proposed by Neil Borden in his inaugural speech at the American Marketing Institute in 1953. He concludes that there are twelve factors that affect corporate marketing activities. Marketing mix is an activity in which marketers comprehensively exploit and combine twelve uncontrollable factors according to actual marketing objectives and marketing strategies to realize their marketing goals [5]. In 1960, Eugene J. McCarthy further classified and summarized these twelve factors in his work "Basic Marketing" [5]. Enterprise marketing is actually a process of adapting to the external environment by controlling controllable factors. Address external

environments by adjusting controllable factors such as product, price, place, and promotion to achieve individual or organizational goals.

In 1986, Philip Kotler added political power and public relations to the 4Ps to form the 6Ps theory. This theory is based on Philip Kotler's belief that political and social factors are also within the scope of marketing considerations [5]. In addition to market environment factors, corporate marketers should also apply political and public relations skills to work effectively. Since the experience of the 4Ps theory mainly comes from the production of standardized consumer goods enterprises, it is difficult to meet the marketing requirements of service enterprises. In 1981, Booms and Bitner added three service elements based on the original 4Ps: participants, physical evidence, and process [5, 6]. In 1986, Robert F. Lauterborn proposed the consumer-centric 4C theory [5, 6]. This theory emphasizes the production of products or services according to the needs of consumers from the perspective of consumers, pricing based on customer costs, setting distribution channels to facilitate customers' purchase convenience, and achieving product promotion through communication. This theory reverses the position of being based on sellers, focuses on consumer orientation, and provides a new perspective for the marketing mix.

## 2.2. Important Results

Studying on formulating product strategies, brands can show their product content from both tangible and intangible perspectives, such as dividing products into core products, formal products, and extended products, showing the quality of core products from an actual perspective, and offering their designs, features, trademarks, packaging, and so on.

For the product aspect, many researchers have applied grounded theory and found that there is a positive relationship between consumers' perception of a product and their willingness to buy the product. For example, Chinnasamy et al. paid attention to modeling the significance of social media marketing activities, brand equity, and loyalty to forecast consumers' willingness to pay a premium price for portable tech gadgets [7]. They find that a favorable brand image will enhance customer satisfaction and brand loyalty [7]. Besides, Cheng and Chen study the purchase intention of consumers in the live broadcast of cultural perspective and find that when the product is put on the appropriate stage, it can effectively improve the consumers' desire to buy and then promote the generation of consumption behavior [8].

For the price aspect, several scholars have used sampling to make statistical analyses and shown that expenses and purchase intention have a negative relationship. For example, researchers Wang et al. reveal that, in the context of live streaming e-commerce, the higher the commodity price, the more consumers will worry about whether they can buy satisfactory products. On the contrary, consumers are likely to ignore the true value of products because they assert, they can buy cheap products and have confidence in their decisions [9]. Similarly, Kevin finds the correlation that higher average buying expenses were influenced by how consumers felt about the price bargain [10]. Actually, pricing strategies can have different effects depending on the type of product or service that is differentiated. Therefore, pricing needs to be based on the corresponding brand identity.

For the place aspect, a common idea is that distribution channels refer to the whole process of a product from producer to consumer, and the application of different channel strategies will also have a differentiated impact on brand image. For example, researcher Zhang came to a conclusion through a study on the influence of fresh agricultural products logistics on consumers' purchase intentions against the background of omni-channel. According to the investigation, when consumers' income is higher, convenience determines what kind of logistics mode they choose [11].

For the promotion, many scholars have applied qualitative research and found that the proper promotion strategy can lead to a positive brand image. Wen Xiong draws the conclusion through studying how Luckin Coffee maintains its brand and finds that a complete and proper IMC strategy

can bring up a good brand image [12]. By analyzing MINISO's promotion strategies, researcher Tang discovers that a proper marketing strategy that fits the brand image can help shape the brand image [13].

### 2.3. Summary

All of the studies looked at the idea that the marketing mix theory has an effect on brand image, either directly or indirectly. The core part and form of the product, as the most fundamental factor, directly affect the consumer's perception of the brand, and there is the simplest connection between the brand image. Consumers will appraise the brand's tonality based on price, which is directly related to the low-end or high-end of the brand's own positioning. The process of consumer contact with the product is determined by the distribution channel, and whether the channel strategy matches the brand image affects the consumer's perception of the brand image. Promotion is a set of tools used to get products in front of consumers. The tools chosen and used have a big effect on how a brand is seen and how stable that image is.

By choosing the right product, price, place, and promotion strategy, businesses can build their brand image and respond to outside factors they can't control, which helps them reach their sales goals. Since things have changed, it is important to draw conclusions about how the marketing mix strategy will work now that its application in the real world is uncertain. At the same time, when a brand's reputation is in trouble, it's important to figure out how to find holes in the current marketing mix strategy and change it.

## 3. Method

### 3.1. Research Design

In this paper, a qualitative research approach will be exploited to conduct a SWOT analysis of the research subject, Chicecream. The problem studied in this paper is to analyze the Chicecream brand based on the marketing mix theory and explore how the Internet celebrity brand can improve its brand image and change the degree of awareness. Mainly analyze the existing problems of the brand according to its current situation in order to put forward reasonable suggestions for the future development of the brand. Therefore, the qualitative research method and SWOT analysis method are in line with the research questions in this paper.

Inductive analysis involves getting first-hand information from the local area at the time, figuring out how people act and what they think about things from their point of view, coming up with hypotheses and theories, and testing and falsifying the study results [14]. SWOT analysis, also known as strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat analysis, was originally applied to guide business management and make reasonable corporate strategic plans by analyzing internal and external factors of the enterprise and has now been extended to a wider range of fields [15].

### 3.2. Chicecream

Founded in Shanghai in March 2018, Chicecream has built up brand awareness through a series of marketing measures in four years and has won a place in the ice cream market dominated by old brands. In 16 months of establishment, the revenue exceeded 100 million yuan; in 2020, in less than half a year, Chicecream accomplished the goal of sales of more than 100 million.

In 2021, founder Lin Sheng said in an interview with Beijing Satellite TV's "Ai Ask People": "The cost of the product is almost 40 yuan; at that price, do you love it or not?" " It has aroused heated public opinion. In the summer of 2022, because its products were selling alongside affordable ice cream in the same retail freezer, the high price impact on consumers at checkout generated public

dissatisfaction, and he was called the "ice cream assassin". Subsequently, a netizen released pictures of Chicecream brand ice cream that still did not melt when placed at room temperature (31 degrees) for half an hour, causing public opinion to be questioned. Chicecream, which entered the offline market, was requested by consumers because of excessive pricing and quality problems.

In September 2022, the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Consumer Association released a comparative test report on ice cream, testing all 36 hot-selling products that met the standard, but the protein and fat content differed greatly.

### 3.3. SWOT Analysis

#### 3.3.1. Strength

Since its establishment, Chicecream's comprehensive promotion strategy has always been an advantage of the brand. Chicecream mainly sells online, and its main marketing battlefield is also online, so electronic marketing is just in line with Chicecream's current situation and needs. At the beginning of its establishment, it gave up the mass consumer market and chose to directly build the mass category that has existed for more than a century into a high-end niche brand without competitors. It continues to co-brand across borders and establish its own trend-following, young, and fashionable brand image on various social network platforms. Let Taobao head anchors bring goods; on Weibo, Xiaohongshu, and Bilibili are targeted to open social accounts in line with the community atmosphere, which targets major platforms for user segmentation and content differentiation and emphasizes the maintenance of user relationships through emotional interaction maintenance and positive scene binding to create brand identity [16]. Social media communication has accomplished good results. According to the data of mainstream e-commerce platforms such as T-mall and JD.com from January to July 2021, Chicecream's "No One Can Lack More Flavor Series Ice Cream" ranked first among the industry's top stock keeping units (SKUs), and the Tmall flagship store score was 4.9 points [17].

#### 3.3.2. Weakness

Chicecream's high-end positioning makes price his weakness. In 2021, the brand was hotly discussed on the hot search for a 66-yuan ice cream, and the founder's sentence in an interview was, "It's at that price; do you love it?" Most people have a negative attitude towards Chicecream's high price, not thinking that it is high-end Chinese ice cream but rather thinking that the old brand of the same category, Häagen-Dazs, can be called high-end. Then the "ice cream assassin" incident in the summer of 2022 pushed its high pricing to another climax, and consumers had a negative attitude towards its higher price than the same category, believing that it was inexplicably expensive.

#### 3.3.3. Opportunity

Product is one of Chicecream's opportunities. In recent years, the concept of "national tide" in the Chinese market has been very popular, and the brand has seized the trend of the rise of Chinese domestic products, and chose the Jiangnan green tile of traditional Chinese culture as the appearance design, trying to stimulate consumers' sense of national identity. Although consumers have not been very impressed by the brand's "Chinese style", this is an angle that can be explored in depth.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the maturity of the online shopping system and the development of cold chain transportation technology made an opportunity for brands. Although limited by the product characteristics of ice cream itself, online sales are difficult to become the main sales method of ice cream, but in the environment of continuous development of transportation technology and transportation speed, the proportion of online sales in the ice cream industry will become higher and



higher, which is an opportunity to expand sales for Chicecream. Following the trend of increasing the proportion of online sales, Chicecream's existing cold chain technology and online sales positioning will help the brand open up sales channels and create a sense of convenience for consumers to purchase.

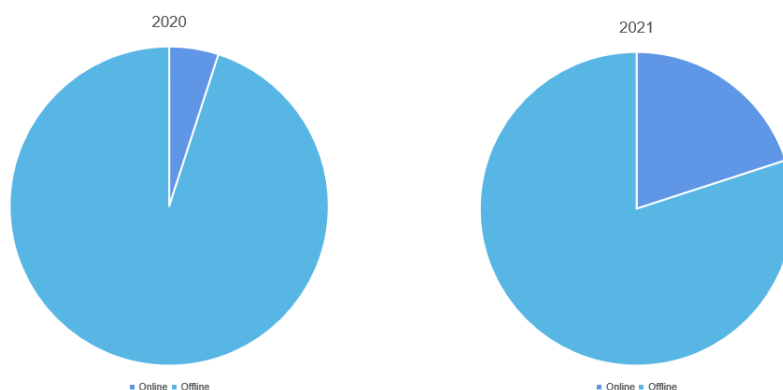


Figure 1: Online and offline sales of ice cream in China from 2020 to 2021 [18].

### 3.3.4. Threaten

Chicecream's place strategy is both an opportunity and a risk. The brand tried to enter the mass consumer market through third-party retail, but because the price was significantly different from other ice cream in the same freezer, consumers who were accustomed to buying affordable ice cream were very dissatisfied with the sudden appearance of high-priced ice cream. This choice of place also directly led to the Chicecream incident in the summer of 2022, but it is indeed difficult to broaden the consumer market by only choosing online sales, and the formulation of the place strategy has unknown risks for the current Chicecream brand. Taking offline sales channels will enable consumers to compare affordable ice cream with them, resulting in a perception of unreasonable pricing for the brand and hindering the brand from shaping its high-end image.

## 4. Results & Discussion

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that Chicecream brand has advantages in the past electronic marketing and Chinese positioning of products, which is conducive to cultivating its good brand image, and the distribution strategy based on online sales also conforms to the development of the times. The main weakness and threat of the brand lies in the ambiguity of distribution channels and the failure to create a high-end image through high pricing.

Product has a benefit on the brand image, and Chicecream's choice of traditional Chinese design is friendly to consumers in the Chinese sales market. Unlike most ice creams in the same category, the high price has a jeopardize effect on brand image, which creates negative perception of the brand among consumers. Furthermore, the location chosen is both beneficial to the brand's future development and risk. The promotion strategy has always been the advantage of the brand, and the comprehensive and appropriate promotion strategy has cultivated a positive brand image in the minds of consumers. As a result, influencer brands must still pay close attention to their marketing strategy and whether or not their pricing is appropriate for the given sales channel.

Based on the above analysis, Chicecream should maintain its own perfect marketing strategy to maintain its brand advantage, and make a distinction in terms of price to weaken its own disadvantages. Develop low-priced product lines and put them into the mass market to avoid the risk

of offline places. At the same time, it seizes the trend of online shopping to continue to maintain its own online place, put more publicity or improvement on its own Chinese style design product, and take advantage of the rise of domestic products to cultivate a good Chinese ice cream brand image.

Comparing the results of the proposed method with those of the traditional methods image validates the results of previous studies on product and promotion. In addition, Kevin found that marketing mixes containing price have an impact on whether consumers are willing to pay more, and the high price mentioned in this article will have a negative impact on consumers' purchase intention on the basis of the combination of product itself and offline sales channels, which is similar to Kevin's results, but this article adds that when the brand image created by the promotion strategy is very successful. Consumers will also accept paying more for the brand's products.

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## 5. Conclusion

This article looks at how the brand Chicecream manages its image in the context of the rise of the internet economy and the gradual rise of online celebrity products. Explore how the brand can improve its image and change its perception. By sorting out the relationship between the 4Ps of Marketing Mix Theory and brand image and using SWOT analysis methods to analyze the 4Ps of the brand Chicecream, it is concluded that Chicecream can improve his brand image by adjusting the price and place strategies.

This article reviews the relevant literature on marketing mix theory and brand image and verifies the practical significance of this theory in brand image management. By combing the literature of Marketing Mix Theory in the field of marketing, it is concluded that 4P and consumer brand perception deserve more analysis. In addition, studying the brand event of Chicecream can provide

reference significance for celebrity food brands in promoting consumer goodwill and cultivating a positive brand image, as well as providing risk aversion ideas for brands attempting to enter such markets.

There are two main limitations to this article. Firstly, at the time of writing, Chiccream was already registering the trademark for low-priced ice cream, but it had not yet been put on the market, so the impact on brand image is unknown. Secondly, there are individual differences in the brands studied in this paper, and the research content may be different when promoted to all Internet celebrity food brands.

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