



Role of KOL in Strategic Marketing Communication: A Case Study of Li Jiaqi Double Eleven Shopping Show, China

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the implication of marketing communication strategy on the personal branding of opinion leaders and consumers' purchase decisions. The study selected Li Jiaqi as a case study to examine his marketing communication strategy to promote the “ALL GIRLS’ OFFERS” of the Shopping Show on November 2022. The research used qualitative research including text analysis and in-depth interviews to explore the implication of Don Schultz's 4I theory and Dentsu's SIPS model on the consumers' purchase decision. The research found that the communication strategies used by Li Jiaqi's personal brand in the video series of the 2022 Double Eleven shopping show have a direct impact on the customers' purchase decisions, especially on their shopping behavior of consumers, and enhanced closer the intimacy with users, thus establishing the loyalty of the personal brand users (Interesting principle). The primary marketing communication strategies used by Li Jiaqi included: (1) Humor appeal by using personal brand cartoon personification, (2) empathetic marketing, which is essentially putting yourself in your customers' shoes to develop an understanding of their struggles, concerns, and desires (3) video contents to promote good interaction and mutual trust among customers, and (4) promoted the personal characteristics of Li Jiaqi's natural unique style naturally to give a personal brand a distinctive personalized style to connect with customers.

Keywords: Li Jiaqi, KOL, Marketing Communication Strategy, Personal Branding, Consumer Purchase Decision

Introduction

The concept of the key opinion leader was first proposed by Zarasfeld in the 1940s. With the emergence and popularization of the Internet and mobile Internet, media technology and media environment continue to develop, KOLs, as information publishers and brand builders, have rich information access channels, a wide social range, strong appeal, and other characteristics. KOLs promote their products through Weibo, WeChat



public numbers, Taobao live-streaming, and other self-media channels so that specific consumer groups can receive product information and trust it, and then influence their purchasing behavior to promote product sales and achieve marketing effects. Optimization of marketing effects. Research showed that 49 of consumers make consumption decisions based on KOLs recommendations, and KOLs recommendations have a significant impact on consumers' purchase intentions Zhou, 2022. This phenomenon has also received a lot of attention from academics. Academics generally believe that online opinion leaders are both consumption influencers and content generators and that more active online opinion leaders can influence the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of other users.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the marketing communication strategy used by Li Jiaqi to promote the Double Eleven shopping show “ALL GIRLS’ OFFERS” based on the 4I Theory.
2. To examine the types of the communication strategy of Li Jiaqi’s Double Eleven shopping show “ALL GIRLS’ OFFERS”.
3. To examine the impact of the personal branding strategy of Li Jiaqi’s Double Eleven shopping show “ALL GIRLS’ OFFERS” on the customers’ purchase decisions based on the SIPS model.
4. To explore the implication of Li Jiaqi’s Double Eleven shopping show " ALL GIRLS’ OFFERS" on the customers’ purchase decision.

Research Questions

1. What are the marketing communication strategies used by Li Jiaqi to promote the Double Eleven shopping show “ALL GIRLS’ OFFERS” based on the 4I Theory?
2. What are the types of communication strategies that Li Jiaqi used to promote the Double Eleven shopping show “ALL GIRLS’ OFFERS”?
3. What is the impact of the personal branding strategy of Li Jiaqi ‘s Double Eleven shopping show " ALL GIRLS’ OFFERS " on the customers’ purchase decisions based on the SIPS model?
4. What is the implication of Li Jiaqi ‘s Double Eleven shopping show " ALL GIRLS’ OFFERS" on the customers’ purchase decision?

Related Concepts, Theories and Theoretical Framework

1. Concept of Key Opinion Leaders (KOL)

As a result, KOLs can build trust and even relationship bonds by delivering information and analysis for others, while key opinion leader marketing KOL has become increasingly popular in China, with Li Jiaqi being one of the most successful KOLs. he



helped e-retailer Taobao achieve 145 million in sales during the 2019 Chinese Hanukkah shopping boom. This study uses the new personal brand Li Jiaqi as a case study to provide new ideas for personal brand communication strategies. The results of this study also demonstrate that mass communication messages do not flow directly to the general audience but through the intermediary of opinion leaders. This will help us understand how key opinion leaders, who are not part of the general consumer group, build and spread their brands in the current social context. This study is an academic demonstration of the spatially expanded influence of KOLs, and we hope to provide a scientific reference for the marketing model of cross-border e-commerce enterprises. In terms of academic research history, the overall situation has been fluctuating upward from 1999, when Tom Peters Personal Branding 50 1999 first formally introduced the concept of personal branding, to 2000, when some scholars began to conduct research specifically on it. Academic research has focused on the role of personal branding in enhancing the personal image, personal branding under social media, the construction of roles in shaping personal branding, the impact of personal branding on consumers, and personal branding and ideology.

2. Concept of Marketing Communication Strategy and Types of Marketing Communication Strategy

The marketing communication strategy is a plan that a company uses to convey the right marketing message to the right customer through the right medium at the right time to increase sales volume. Li Jiaqi used a range of communication techniques to promote the Double Eleven shopping program "ALL GIRLS' OFFERS". These include content strategy, value strategy, participation strategy, identification strategy, and utilizing social platforms. The content strategy aims to reach the audience, produce high-quality material in accordance with one's professional experience, and create content that caters to the audience's interests. The participation strategy aims to deepen user participation, while the identification strategy aims to establish a customized brand image and a distinctive cognition in the minds of the people (Kazuki, 2014).

3. Concept of Personal Branding and Personal branding on social media

Personal Web sites allow people to explore and express aspects of themselves that are difficult or impossible to examine in face-to-face contact. Personal branding identity is a concept that allows an individual to evaluate and identify oneself by constructing an idealized self-using the Internet. Kotler and Levy (1969) described how to transition from product sales to "human, ideology, and services" marketing. Branding is based on two main ideas: a) Brand acts as a conduit for delivering information to target audiences; b) Brand brands act as a differentiator among competitors. Personal branding is motivated by job advancement and is an ongoing process that involves interactions with



others. Research on social media has indicated that one's social capital can be improved or damaged through interactions in one social network (Ellison, 2007) indicated that personal branding “essentially offers a technique for individuals to increase their social capital as a means to flexibly adapt to changing labor markets.”

4. Concept of 4I Theory

The 4I theory, which belongs to the "Integrated Marketing" theory, was put forward by Don Schultz, a professor of marketing at Northwestern University in the 1990s, namely, interesting, interest, interactivity, and individuality. The most important details in this text are that any marketing communication strategy should pursue "interest", "Interests", "interaction" and "individuality" to provide benefits to the target audience. Interest involves collecting expressions in the video that arouse the audience's interest, while interaction aims to fully tap the interactivity of the network, make full use of the characteristics of the network to communicate with consumers, foster strengths and circumvent weaknesses, and let the function of the market communication strategy play to the extreme. Individuality (Zhou, 2022) is to make consumers feel satisfied that they are "focused". Individualized marketing strategies are more favorable to consumers and are more likely to trigger interaction and purchase action.

5. Concept of SIPS Model

The SIPS model, proposed by Dentsu Japan in 2011, is a way to bring users to participate in marketing, that is, sympathize (resonance), identify (confirmation), participate (participation), share & spread (sharing and diffusion). Nakaoka mentioned the SIPS model of information recommendation system based on word-of-mouth information and introduced the feature analysis using word-of-mouth information (Nakaoka, 2014). Kazuki (2014) further proposed to further study the marketing application model of public relations by analyzing the SIPS model, and at the same time applying the model to the marketing strategy research of promotional activities.

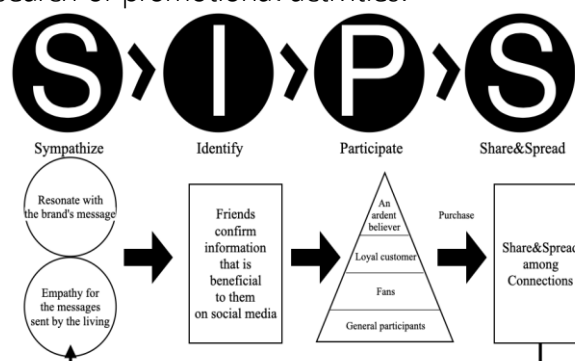


Figure 1: SIPS model (Wang, 2017)

Source: Wang, S. (2017). A Study of User Strategies for Web Self-Publishing Platforms Based on SIPS Model (in Chinese).



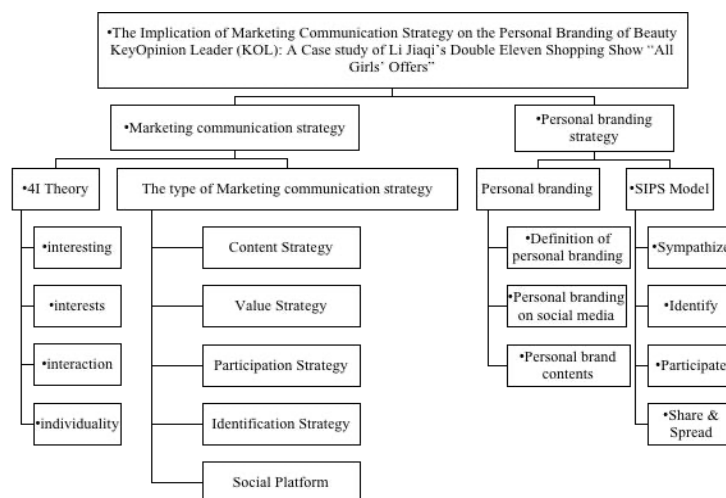
Research Methodology

This textual analysis and in-depth interview were conducted for nine months from September 24, 2021, to June 24, 2022. The study is divided into two stages. Text analysis and in-depth interviews constitute the first stage, and then the second stage will focus on data analysis. The reason for choosing the above method is that this research method requires an in-depth analysis of the case materials and the induction of their effectiveness, to explore the KOL's marketing communication strategies during the e-commerce festival. Textual analysis was conducted on the communication strategies and contents promoted in the nine episodes of Li Jiaqi's Double Eleven shopping show "ALL GIRLS' OFFERS". This study also examined the impact of Li Jiaqi's personal branding strategy using in-depth interview data. Key documents of this study are 9 episodes of Li Jiaqi's Double Eleven shopping show "ALL GIRLS' OFFERS", the text in this study included the contents of the collected and organized videos, the language as well as the behavior of Li Jiaqi himself and his team, and the data related to the broadcast of the videos, as well as the number of clicks, likes, hits, favorites, comments, and message content, pop-ups and pop-up content, and retweets.



Figure 2: The 9 episodes of Li Jiaqi's Double Eleven shopping show "ALL GIRLS' OFFERS" Source: Li Jiaqi Studio. (2021d).

Theoretical Framework





Findings

1. Marketing communication strategies used by Li Jiaqi to promote the Double Eleven shopping show “ALL GIRLS’ OFFERS” behavior based on the 4I Theory (Textual Analysis).

Principle 1: Interesting

Based on the textual analysis findings to promote the Interesting or persuasiveness of the video content, Li Jiaqi released the Double Eleven shopping show “ALL GIRLS’ OFFERS” during Double Eleven Shopping Festival. The main content is the process of Li visiting various cooperation brands to talk about the OFFER and benefits for "All GIRLS". This time, the new variety show broke the old conventions for the first time. The use of this strategy in the video has aroused the interest of the audience, who have left messages under the video, "This video is very interesting" and "very funny". In addition, Li Jiaqi used personal brand cartoon personification. The interesting principle in 4I theory has a natural affinity with Li Jiaqi's video marketing. With the aid of the video's own characteristics, personal brand marketing pays more and more attention to grasping and using the advantages of this marketing. Even major brands launch joint restricted commodities with never.

Principle 2: Interests

Li Jiaqi's Double Eleven Marketing launched Empathetic marketing, which is essentially putting yourself in your customers' shoes to develop an understanding of their struggles, concerns, and desires. The show "All Girls' OFFER" seeks the greatest common denominator of consumer psychology: empathy. Li Jiaqi transformed the interests of consumers in the 4I theory into the interests of brands and emotional value into material value. The number of fans who liked the video and the content of the comments shows this point.

Principle 3: Interaction

Video content needs to consider the audience's viewing psychology in front of the screen. Cooperation between audio and visual media encourages audience participation. Mutual trust can be strengthened through effective communication, which will serve as a strong basis for relationship marketing and word-of-mouth advertising. Video calls for more participation and interactivity than graphic content. The video's content must take the psychology of viewers into account, and the photographer cannot be totally preoccupied with self-talk while shooting. Consumer feedback and experience were frequently addressed in Li Jiaqi's “ALL GIRLS’ OFFERS” video for the Double Eleven, and the sixth episode even included a video of genuine customer experiences. There are tens of thousands of comments and bombardments in addition to the video. These interactions exist between specific brands and customers in Li Jiaqi.



Principle 4: Individuality

The individuality principle of the 4I theory requires brands to form their own unique positioning and do a good job in consumer segmentation. Personalized marketing is inseparable from the support of big data. Li Jiaqi's natural unique style naturally highlights his personal brand among many brands. Brand image is the personality characteristic of a brand in users' minds and shaping a personal brand image is to give a personal brand a distinctive personalized style. The distinctive personal style of "Li Jiaqi" makes it easier to create recognition for personal brands in the competition, just like labeling yourself and setting up personas. Its essence is to find the differences between yourself and others. For example, Li Jiaqi's image of "Lipstick Brother No.1" or "ALL GIRLS".

2. The types of communication strategies that Li Jiaqi used to promote the Double Eleven shopping show "ALL GIRLS' OFFERS" (Textual Analysis).

The textual analysis findings revealed that Li Jiaqi employed the following types of communication strategies to promote the Double Eleven shopping show "ALL GIRLS' OFFERS", including content strategy, value strategy, participation strategy, identification, and using social platforms:

2.1 Content Strategy: Create content that meets the interests of the audience

The key to attracting the consumers' attention is to share relevant, engaging content. Li Jiaqi has a single-brand narrative that follows the route of a "cheerful opening-creating tension- smooth explanation of the theme- natural guiding action". The development of the story is generally straightforward, with few suspenseful settings. Metaphor is a commonly used narrative method used to reflect the noumenon (a posited object) through the figurative body. This creates a synchronic space and affects the imagination of user consumers, generating strong empathy with users and consumers.

2.2 Value Strategy: Meet the needs of users at multiple levels

Users' contact with the media is to meet their own needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory believes that human needs are the most basic and inherent. If individual needs are met, this will motivate and guide individual behavior. In the context of diversified consumption, cultural diversity, and value diversity, consumers hope to help them make correct consumption decisions by watching the content. Li Jiaqi actively uses various communication methods and channels to meet the diversified needs of users. Value communication involves communicating credibly the differentiating benefits of your product. The goal, particularly for a higher-priced product, is to establish for the customer the "value" identified during the value creation stage. Li Jiaqi actively uses a variety of communication methods and channels to meet the diversified needs of users, which are not only users' use needs and emotional needs but also encourage users to actively practice themselves.



2.3 Participation Strategy: Deepen user participation through interaction

“Participation” is an important part of the dialogue between brands and users in the digital era. Li Jiaqi uses Taobao live-broadcast and shopping show videos to form multi-channel and multi-dimensional participation with users. During the research process, it was discovered that “Li Jiaqi” initiated a real-time vote on products with the theme of the current video as a clue. This type of interaction is reflected in part by the “fan voting in the star-making movement” and gives users a feeling of participation and satisfaction.

2.4 Identification Strategy: Shaping Individualized Brand Image beneficial to form a more three-dimensional rich cognition of individual

Li Jiaqi's personal brand image is important for shaping the personal brand image and forming unique cognition in the users' hearts, as it allows users to quickly grasp the core value and individuality of individual brands through their personalized image identification. Li Jiaqi actively constructs a personalized image of the female consumer group as a male, such as the “ALL GIRLS’ OFFERS” shopping show and the “My Girls” mantra, and its characters are labeled as “Lipstick Brother No.1” in front of the public and users and consumers. Differentiation positioning is key to creating a unique persona in order to find a foothold in the Red Sea of content. Shaping a unique personality is also an important tool to actively implement the differentiation strategy as a personal brand, as it can improve one's own identity and make consumers form special memories.

2.5 Using Social Platforms to Realize Three-dimensional Communication

Li Jiaqi's video is distributed across many platforms in accordance with the publishing tenet that “one content is distributed through several channels and diverse channels complement one another.” The main channels of communication in Li Jiaqi are the TikTok Short Video Platform and the Taobao Live-streaming Platform. TikTok serves as the primary position in content marketing and the primary platform for acquiring fans. The Weibo communication strategy focuses on “releasing the announcement of Taobao live-streaming and fans' lottery.” The content is dominated by pure content sharing and its primary value is found in the content itself. The vertical screen presentation style is more in line with the audience's current reading and audio-visual habits and comes near to the content updating frequency of each view.

3. The impact of the personal branding strategy of Li Jiaqi's Double Eleven shopping show “ALL GIRLS’ OFFERS” on the customers based on the SIPS model (Textual Analysis).

Based on the textual analysis, the Li Jiaqi Double Ten Shopping Show “All Girls’ Offers” on the one hand, creates “resonance” and “confirmation” scenarios in terms of communication content, means, and language symbols, and then stimulates users' desire



for "participation" through interactive behavior. On the other hand, the "sharing and diffusion" after users' purchase behavior through communication channels is no longer limited to word-of-mouth communication in offline real scenes, but instead shares perception and experience in major social platforms to enhance users' trust in e-commerce opinion leaders, thus promoting a higher turnover in the studio and maximizing the communication effect of opinion leaders

3.1 Emotional marketing arouses "Sympathize" of users

"Sympathize" is the emotion formed by the mutual infection of thoughts or emotions between individuals, which establishes a dialogue platform and arouses the group's attention. Li Jiaqi's marketing techniques are focused on enabling users to have emotional demands for the material they provide, which leads to emotional bonds with the host people or company. They also use the KOL influence in live streaming to increase the anchor's credibility and brand goodwill. To do this, they create creative videos that sympathize with content, and pay attention to image-building to trigger brand resonance.

3.2 Accurate marketing triggers "Identify" from users

"Identify" is the second part of the SIPS model, which means breaking through user barriers, raising users' awareness, and giving consumers the impression that the information that comes from the sender is valuable to them. Li Jiaqi launched the "ALL GIRLS' OFFERS" for the Double Eleven shopping show and pushed out an Excel form to update the price discount in real-time. The order of the live streaming of this year's Double Eleven is also by the program order of "ALL GIRLS' OFFERS", informing users in advance of the brand categories. To help customers and users associate themselves with value, they use professional, humorous, and objective personalized language symbols.

3.3 Interactive marketing triggers "Participate" of users

In interactive marketing, only when both the sender of information and the consumer seize common interests and find ingenious communication opportunities and methods can the two sides be closely combined to realize the "participation" of consumers. In the field of e-commerce marketing and communication, too, user participation is reflected through the interaction with the anchor. Li Jiaqi's study findings in this research make use of the preceding triggers for interactive marketing. Users' "participate" can be classified into three categories: Multi-channel studio entrance: participants together, exclusive interactive symbols and purchase links, and building interactive scenes: gathering user focus.

3.4 Word-of-mouth marketing to achieve "Share & Spread" of users

The SIPS model focuses on "Share & Spread" to stimulate target users to return to the social platform or live streaming studio to share their purchase experience and use experience, forming secondary communication that has a decisive impact on



purchase intention. This creates a "universal connection" centered on content products, maximizing the communication effect of anchors.

4. The implication of Li Jiaqi 's Double Eleven shopping show "ALL GIRLS' OFFERS" on the customers' behaviors (In-depth Analysis)

Based on the in-depth interview with customers, the findings of the in-depth interviews are presented in this section. Fifteen of Li Jiaqi's customers were interviewed as key informants in the in-depth interviews. The study aims to study the impact of Li Jiaqi's Double Eleven shopping show "ALL GIRLS' OFFERS" on consumers' purchase decisions. Fifteen key informants who are Li Jiaqi's consumers participated in in-depth interviews that lasted between 25 and 30 minutes, with each participant being interviewed separately. Respondents only gave their pseudonyms and annual pay since they specifically requested that their gender and personal identity remain private.

4.1 Stimulate consumers to generate consumer demand

The majority of the informant claimed that Li Jiaqi's fun, interesting, interactive, and personalized content in Li Jiaqi's videos significantly enhances the audience's acceptance and attraction, which further enhances the audience's desire to buy and stimulates consumers' needs and desires for shopping. The keywords "interesting," "like," "cheap price," "concerned," and "very special" frequently featured in the interviewees' responses, which may be compared to the 4I theoretical content, which refers to "Interesting," "Interests," "Interaction," and "Individuality" in the literature. The keywords "interesting," "clean," "good," "concerned," "lively," "attentive to user feedback," "funny," and "interact with the audience" also frequently appeared in the interviewees' responses. These words can be compared to the SIPS model's content, which is "Sympathize" "Identify" "Participate" and "Share & Spread" in the literature.

4.2 KOL provided accurate and reliable information that makes customers trust the products

Li Jiaqi's KOL marketing model relies on social media platforms to share and interact with information between consumers and companies, and to build a sense of trust and dependence with consumers. Interviewees praised his professionalism in products, especially cosmetics, and his cooperation between his individual brands and big brands. The keywords "known", "trust", "good", "fan service", "Responsibility", "carefully", "professionally" and "responsible" appeared many times. Li Jiaqi has won the favor and trust of consumers and has a certain influence.

4.3 KOL's truthful, accurate, and reliable product information increases customers' awareness of the value of the products

The most important details in this text are that Li Jiaqi's personal brand has won the favor and trust of consumers and has a certain influence on consumer



consumption. This is due to his ability to deliver truthful, accurate, and reliable product information and content to consumers, making them feel a sense of trust and leading to faster shopping and transactions. Additionally, the interviewees praised his professionalism in products, especially cosmetics, and his cooperation between his individual brands and big brands.

4.4 KOL stimulates and inspires consumers to post and spread quality reviews

Li Jiaqi's videos show consumers affectionately addressing consumers as "baby," "beauty," and "girl" to close the distance between KOL and the consumers but instead create intimacy between KOL and consumers by using products as the linkage. At the same time, Li Jiaqi will accurately, objectively, and comprehensively introduce the products to consumers, and enhance consumers' trust. Among the interviewees, all the information providers are without exception. All interviewees will recommend Li Jiaqi like others and will continue to pay attention to the development of Li Jiaqi. In sum, the interview found that Li Jiaqi's personal brand has won the favor and trust of consumers and has a certain influence. At the same time, Li Jiaqi, as the relationship between KOL and fans, stimulates and encourages consumers to publish and disseminate high-quality comments about themselves and their personal brands.

Conclusion and Discussion

This research examined the impact of marketing communication strategy on personal branding in Li Jiaqi's Double Eleven shopping show. Qualitative research methods such as textual analysis and in-depth interviews were used to investigate the marketing communication strategies of personal branding during e-commerce festival marketing. Li Jiaqi's personal branding in the Double Eleven Shopping Show "ALL GIRLS' OFFERS" showed characteristics of personal branding, such as planning around users' interests, needs, and feedback. He also took his own real characters as the main visual identification element in personal branding communication, which can close the psychological distance between users and form high-quality dialogue and communication. Additionally, he effectively attracted the audience's attention, discussion, and participation, and conveyed product information in a way that the audience was interested in, influencing consumers' shopping behavior. The findings suggested the impact of KOLs on consumers' purchases, by highlighting the personal brand and communication strategy of KOL influencing the customers' trust in the product. In sum, the findings supported the assumption of the Two-step flow of communication, which posited the creative process for mass media opinion leaders, allowing them to exert a stronger personal influence on consumers and establish consumer trust and influence.



Recommendations for Future Application and Future Research

1. Recommendation for Future Application

This study provides a comprehensive resource for other academics interested in personal branding or the impact of KOLs on customer behavior. Li Jiaqi's personal branding communication strategy, product evaluation, thorough explanation, prompt feedback, and design for users' interests demonstrate their consideration for users' concerns. Future researchers should use qualitative research techniques such as in-depth interviews, feedback forms, and theatrical observations, as well as expand the sample size. To stimulate consumers, purchase demand, enterprises need to attract consumers' attention in an effective way, stimulate consumption demand and purchase desire, and directly influence consumers' purchase behavior.

2. Recommendation for Future Research

This study forecasts that future personal branding research will employ more varied opinions, methodologies, and approaches, and that live delivery is an intriguing entrance point. China's live-feed business is expected to grow to \$171 billion by 2020, and Taobao Live-inspired import channels have been launched by Tik Tok, Amazon, Facebook, and Google. Future researchers can convert this study into a quantitative study to compare the precise elements that influence how different branding influences consumers' purchasing decisions or expand the data to produce more strategic outcomes. The outcomes could produce fantastic remedies for marketing and communications sectors as well as scholarly concerns

3. Limitations of the Study

The research based on the SIPS model and 4I marketing theory is rather simplistic and lacks a more complete grasp due to the researcher's limited research resources. There are still some flaws in the analysis of personal branding marketing strategies, such as a lack of in-depth understanding of the current state of marketing apart from holiday marketing.

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