

Brand Digital Communication of Mixeu Ice Cream & Tea in Taishan District, Taian City, People's Republic of China

Received 28 April 2025

Revised 27 June 2025

Accepted 25 September 2025

Liu Dexiang*
Supanna Phatarametravorakul**

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was: 1) To analyze the brand image and positioning of MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea in Taian City, People's Republic of China. 2) To Explore potential branding strategies for MIXUE's market position 3) to find out about Brand Awareness and Recognition Communication of MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea in Taishan District, Taian City People's Republic of China

The research methodology was qualitative research. Through in-depth interviews, the key informants were chosen by purposive sampling in 3 groups of 16 people directly involved with brand awareness and recognition of the marketing director 1 person. Branch Manager 2 persons Public relations managers 2 persons, Marketing managers 2 persons, Brand academic Professional 2 persons, Communication Arts Professor 1 person and Consumers 6 persons. The research instruments used were structured in-depth interviews and data analysis to generate conclusions.

Research finding was found that 1) Consumers perceive MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea as affordable and stable in quality, with distinctive features like the "Snowman" of MIXUE Bingcheng is deeply rooted in the hearts of the people and its theme song is played in the street simage and "Youthful, Fun & Playful" image is built using "Brand Personification" strategy by creating the Snow King mascot, which has a cute, approachable, and humorous cartoon character. This mascot, along with vibrant store designs, creates a lively and welcoming atmosphere, appealing to younger demographics and fostering "Brand Affinity". 2) MIXUE and Cha's local marketing strategies are strengthened through collaborations with local food influencers and bloggers to increase brand

*Master of Communication Arts, Faculty of Communication Arts, Bangkokthonburi University

**Ph.D., Thesis supervisor Faculty of communication Arts, Bangkokthonburi University

Corresponding author E-mail: 1967639276@qq.com

awareness and credibility, as well as city-level marketing campaigns by cooperating with local events, universities, and community festivals. They use digital platforms for marketing, including WeChat's official account, which regularly updates new product information and promotions, introducing the product's highlights and flavors in detail, along with purchase links and discount codes. On the Douyin (Chinese TikTok) app, they post interesting short videos about the product-making process and the lives of their employees, to increase brand awareness and reinforce the brand's position as "delicious and affordable".³⁾ Consumers learn about MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea through various channels, and the brand is associated with affordability. The communication strategy has increased brand awareness, but it should adapt to the trend of healthy consumption, enrich the brand culture, and optimize services for different consumer groups

Keywords: Brand Digital Communication, MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea Communication, Taishan District, Taian City

Background of Research

MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea is a nationwide chain brand specializing in ice cream and tea beverages, operating under Mixue Bingcheng Co., Ltd. As of December 31, 2024, MIXUE has expanded to 46,479 stores. The brand has experienced rapid expansion in China and internationally, leveraging a cost-effective pricing model and an extensive franchise system. In Taishan District, Taian City, MIXUE has established a strong presence, attracting a diverse customer base, particularly among students and young professionals. However, despite its popularity, the brand faces challenges in maintaining consistent brand communication, differentiating itself from competitors, and ensuring franchisees adhere to standardized marketing strategies. Additionally, local consumer preferences and seasonal demand fluctuations pose further obstacles to sustaining customer engagement and sales performance. Addressing these issues requires a well-structured brand communication strategy to enhance brand loyalty, improve customer interaction, and reinforce a cohesive brand image across all franchise outlets (Smith, 2022a).

In the digital era, as a nationwide chain brand, MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea has rapidly expanded in the Chinese market with its cost-effective pricing and extensive franchise system. In Taishan District, Taian City, MIXUE has established a strong market presence, attracting a diverse customer base, particularly students and young professionals. However, despite the brand's notable success in the

Taian market, consumer perceptions of MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea also exhibit diverse characteristics (Johnson, 2023a).

Consumers in Taian generally perceive MIXUE's products as affordable and cost-effective, with items such as the 2-yuan ice cream and 4-yuan lemonade being particularly popular. The brand's "Snow King" mascot and its theme song have high recognition among consumers, conveying a youthful and lively image. Additionally, MIXUE maintains frequent interactions with consumers through social media platforms such as Douyin and Weibo, enhancing the brand's approachability and visibility (Zhang, 2023).

However, with the rise of health conscious consumption trends, some consumers hope that MIXUE introduce more low sugar and low fat healthy beverage options. Furthermore, although the "Snow King" image is fun, the brand's cultural depth still needs further enrichment. Consumers expect MIXUE to incorporate more cultural elements to strengthen emotional resonance with the brand. In terms of service, consumers have also suggested areas for improvement, such as providing more personalized service experiences tailored to the needs of different consumer groups, including students, office workers, and the elderly.

MIXUE's branding appeals to young consumers with its fun, playful image and affordable treats. Otherwise Strong Local Presence: The brand maintains visibility in Taishan District with eye catching store designs and strategic locations and Social Media Engagement: Active on digital platforms, leveraging trends and promotions to attract and retain customers. Giving rise to delving into the corporate image communication strategy of MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea in the new media environment is not only beneficial for the brand's growth but also has far-reaching implications for the entire industry and academic research. It has the potential to unlock new strategies for corporate success in the digital age. (Kotler & Keller, 2016)

Therefore Brand Digital Communication of MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea in Taishan District Taian City holds great practical significance. For the brand itself, a deeper understanding of new media communication characteristics can help it develop more targeted and effective communication plans. By analyzing user data and feedback from different platforms, MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea can optimize its content creation, timing of posts, and choice of communication channels. This, in turn, will enhance its brand image and give it a competitive edge in the market and a variety of marketing communication.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the brand image and positioning of MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea in Taishan District, Taian City, People's Republic of China
2. To Explore potential branding strategies for MIXUE's market position in Taishan District, Taian City, People's Republic of China
3. To find out Brand Awareness and Recognition Communication of MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea in Taishan District, Taian City, People's Republic of China

Conceptual Framework

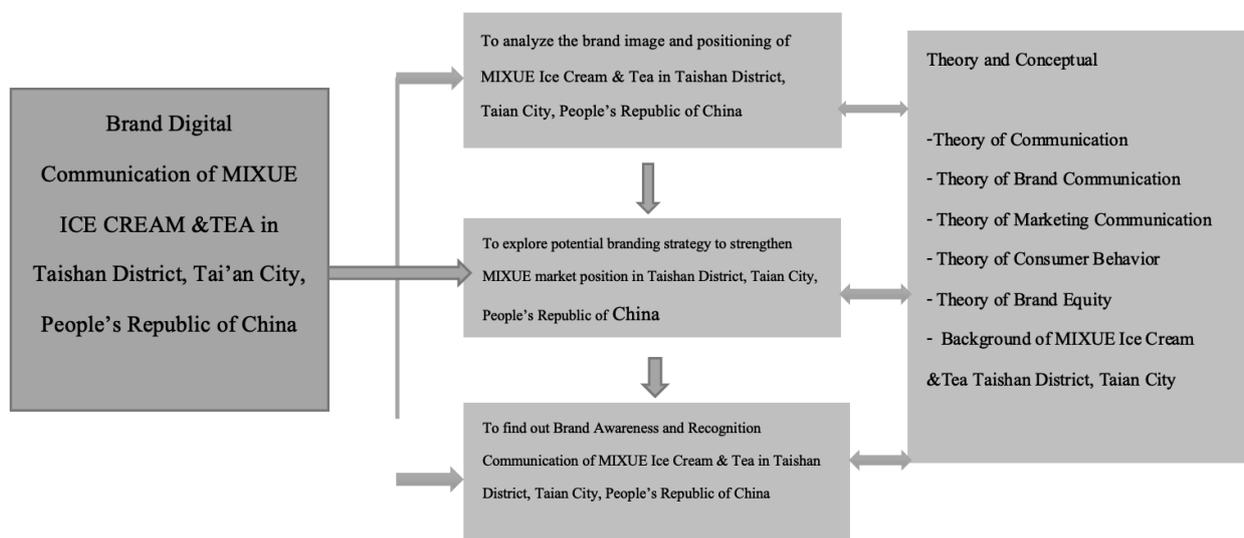


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Definitions of Terms:-

1) Brand Digital Communication

Refers to the strategies and methods a brand uses to interact with its audience through digital channels. This includes social media, websites, email marketing, online advertising, search engine optimization (SEO), and other digital platforms to create awareness, engage customers, and build brand loyalty in Taishan District, Taian City.

2) MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea Communication

Refers to the brand communication strategies and practices used by MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea, a popular Chinese beverage and dessert chain. It encompasses how MIXUE interacts with its target audience in this local area, including Marketing communication (advertising, promotions, and events) Brand Equity Brand image and messaging (how the brand presents itself to the

public) Customer engagement (online and offline interactions with consumers behavior), Local partnerships or community involvement Adaptation to regional culture and consumer behavior in Taishan District, Taian City.

3) Taishan District

Refers to Taishan District which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a major cultural and historical landmark in China. The district serves as the administrative, economic, and cultural center of Taian City a set of plans and actions formulated by an enterprise to adapt to the unique characteristics, demands, and competitive landscapes of a specific local area. For MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea in Taishan District, and Taian City, this could involve understanding the local consumer preferences in terms of flavors, price sensitivity, and consumption scenarios.

4) Taian City

Refers to City is a prefecture-level city in Shandong Province, China. It is best known for Mount Tai (Tai Shan), one of China's most sacred mountains and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Taian has a rich cultural and historical significance, attracting tourists, and pilgrims alike.

Theory and conceptual

1) Theory of Communication

Based on Berlo Communication Model SMCR model David K. Berlo communication model, S for the source, M for the message, C for the channel, R for the receiver. This model divides the communication process into four basic elements: source, message, channel, and receiver (Berlo, 1960). Conclusion of communication is the SMCR model allows for the analysis of the dissemination of Brand Digital Communication of MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea in Taishan District, Taian City People's of China. The SMCR model (Source, Message, Channel, Receiver) effectively explains how MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea communicates its brand to consumers: Source (S) – MIXUE, as the sender, develops its brand identity, promotional content, and marketing strategies, Message (M) – The brand conveys affordability, fun, and high-quality products through digital campaigns, advertisements, and in-store experiences., Channel (C) - MIXUE uses social media (Tik Tok, WeChat, Instagram), digital ads, physical stores, and influencers to reach its audience and Receiver (R) – The target audience, primarily young consumers and budget conscious customers, engages with the brand through these communication efforts.

By leveraging the SMCR model, MIXUE ensures effective brand communication, fostering brand loyalty and engagement across multiple platforms. This structured approach contributes to its rapid global expansion and strong market presence.

2) Theory of Brand Communication:

Concept about how brands communicate with consumers to create. Brand Image consists of 5 characteristics namely: Brand Identity, Brand Competence & Benefit, Brand Personality, Brand Behavior & Attitude and Brand Association through various channels. Then delve into how brands convey messages, interact with their audiences, and shape brand perceptions. In the current competitive business landscape, this theory holds significant importance for companies aiming to establish a strong brand presence. (Kotler & Keller, 2016).



Figure 2 Dimensions of Brand Image: A Conceptual from the Perspective of Brand Communication
Source: <https://www.glaselgrand.com/blog-post/5step>

3) Theory of Marketing Communication

MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea utilizes the Marketing Communication Model to build its brand and Engage with consumers in Taishan District, Taian City. The brand employs a mix of advertising, social media marketing, public relations, and sales promotions to create a strong brand presence. For example, MIXUE uses social media platforms like WeChat and Douyin to promote new products and engage with customers through interactive content. The brand also collaborates with local influencers and participates in community events to enhance its local identity and credibility. By leveraging the Marketing Communication Model, MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea effectively communicates its brand values, such as affordability, quality, and fun, to its target audience. This integrated approach helps the brand maintain a consistent image across different channels

- 1) Advertising
- 2) Public Relations
- 3) Sales Promotion
- 4) Personal Selling
- 5) Direct Marketing
- 6) Digital Marketing
- 7) Event Marketing
- 8) Word-of-Mouth Marketing.



Figure 3 Marketing Communication Model

Source: <https://www.marketing-communication-model>

4) Theory of Consumer Behavior

Theory examines how individuals and groups select, purchase, use, and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires. This field draws from psychology, sociology, economics, and anthropology to understand buying decisions and consumption patterns. (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). Understanding consumer behavior is essential for MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea to effectively attract, engage, and retain customers. By applying key consumer behavior theories, MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea has successfully built a strong brand presence and loyal customer base.

5) Concept of Aaker's Brand Equity Model

Focuses on how the value of a brand is built through consumer perceptions and associations. Developed by David A. Aaker, the model outlines the concept of brand equity as the value premium that a company gains from a product with a recognizable name, compared to a generic equivalent. Aaker's model emphasizes that strong brand equity leads to higher customer preference, premium pricing, and long-term brand success. By managing these elements effectively, businesses can build a brand that holds value in the minds of consumers.

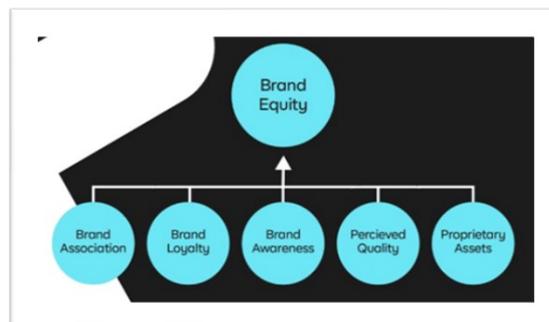


Figure 4 The Aaker model consists of five key components

Source: <https://brandwell.com.au/understanding-and-applying-brand-equity-models>

Concept of Aaker's Brand Equity Model:

Aaker's model suggests that brand equity is composed of five key components:

(1) Brand Loyalty The level of consumer attachment and repeat purchasing behavior towards a brand. High brand loyalty often leads to strong market stability and reduces the need for extensive marketing efforts.

(2) Brand Awareness The degree to which consumers can recognize or recall a brand. A high level of brand awareness means consumers are more likely to consider the brand when making purchasing decisions.

(3) Perceived Quality Consumers' perception of the overall quality or superiority of a brand, which often influences their purchasing decisions. Perceived quality is a crucial element in building a strong brand.

(4) Brand Associations The mental connections or associations consumers have with a brand, such as its values, image, or emotional appeal. Strong brand associations help position the brand distinctly in the minds of consumers.

(5) Brand Assets the tangible and intangible assets associated with the brand, including trademarks, patents, and the overall brand identity. These assets contribute to a brand's competitive advantage.

In Conclusion, Aaker's model posits that a strong brand equity is built over time through consistent positive MIXUE has successfully built brand experiences, emotional connections, and clear communication of brand values, which collectively contribute to the brand's long-term success. According to Aaker, brand equity is a straightforward concept built on the foundation of recognition. Brands that trigger emotional connections and are easily identifiable are the ones that achieve the most tremendous success.

6) Background of MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea Taishan District, Taian City

Mixue Ice Cream & Tea is a nationwide chain brand specializing in ice cream and tea beverages, operating under MIXUE Bingcheng Co., Ltd. As of December 31, 2024, MIXUE has expanded to 46,479 stores, MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea in Taishan District, Taian City, China, originated from the business of shaved ice and iced tea beverages. MIXUE was founded in 1997, starting with selling shaved ice and affordable cold drinks. Later, it expanded its menu to include bubble tea and ice cream, making it a highly popular brand in China and eventually expanding to other countries. Development Stages of MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea. The Beginning (1997 - Early 2000s) Founded by Zhang Hongchao in Zhengzhou, Henan Province. Started by selling shaved ice and fruit tea at affordable prices, attracting students and young consumers. Menu Expansion and Business Growth (2000s - 2010s), Expand the

menu to include bubble tea, ice cream, and other beverages. Adopted a "low price + good quality" strategy to compete in the market. Launched the franchise system, enabling rapid store expansion. Rapid Expansion and Brand Identity Development (2010s - Present) Introduced the Snow King mascot and implemented a Brand Personification strategy. Released a brand theme song, played in stores and on social media platforms. Utilized digital marketing campaigns via WeChat, Douyin (Chinese TikTok), and other platforms. Expanded into Southeast Asian markets, including Vietnam, Indonesia, and Thailand. Growth in Key Economic Areas like Caiyuan Street in Taian City



Figure 5 Logo Mixue Ice Cream & Tea

Source: www.google.com/search?q=mixue+logo+china

Therefore, the original beverages of MIXUE were shaved ice and iced tea, before evolving into the tea and ice cream chain it is today. And refer to Caiyuan Street in Taishan District is a bustling commercial thoroughfare, renowned for its high-density foot traffic and vibrant consumer atmosphere. As elaborated by Smith (2022b) in "Analysis of the Commercial Street Economy in Urban Areas: A Case Study of Caiyuan Street in Taishan", the street is a confluence of various consumer groups. Office workers from nearby business buildings, students from local educational institutions, and local residents all frequent the area. The economic development in the vicinity has led to an increase in the disposable income of these consumers, creating a strong demand for affordable and appealing beverage options. The street's layout, with a mix of shopping malls, small - scale retailers, and dining establishments, provides an ideal setting for a beverage store like MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea to thrive.

Research Methodology

1) Research Design: The study was Qualitative Research with In-Depth interview and Research Documentary.

2) The key informants: were chosen by purposive sampling 3 groups from 16 person directly involved with Brand Digital Communication of MIXUE ICE CREAM &TEA consisting of

Marketing director 1 person, Branch Manager 2 person, Marketing managers 2 person Public relations managers 2 person, Communication Art Professor 1 person, Brand academic experts 2 person, Consumers 6 person.

3) Research Instruments: The research instruments used were 3 sets of structured in-depth interview scripts used to collect data from the interviews. The researcher studied and reviewed the literature and related research, collected data to be used as a framework for creating a structured interview. Before using it, the researcher initially checked the quality of the created instruments by considering the consistency of the questions with the issues studied according to the objectives of the study. The instruments used for data collection were submitted to the advisor

4) Data collection method: The researcher made an appointment in advance to request an interview and explained the objectives before collecting data according to objectives 1-3. It was a self-data collection using a semi-structured in-depth interview and adhered to the ethics of human research. When an appointment was made for the date, time, and location with the informant, Based on current environmental factors and to make the interviews more convenient for the interviewees, the interviews will be conducted through videoconferencing software and audio recording. The purpose of the interviews will be made clear to the interviewees before the start of the interviews, and they will be informed that any information that is not readily available for public consumption will be kept confidential and that all the interviews will be audio-recorded with explicit consent to facilitate subsequent transcription and analysis. The researcher recorded the interview tape and transcribed it in detail after making a phone call via Line to facilitate data analysis.

5) Data Analysis

The researcher has collected details of data from in-depth inter-views with those involved, The researcher will analyze the data using the content analysis method according to the following steps: Step 1: Transcribe the data from the interviews. Transcription: The first step is to transcribe the recorded interviews accurately. This involves converting the spoken words into written text, capturing all the details and nuances of the conversations. 2: Prepare data from notes and interviews for analysis. Similar data will be categorized to find findings. Step 3: Collect data and summarize only important data. Step 4: Process and summarize real data to analyze the data by creating conclusions by describing the description analysis.

The results of the study obtained from the interviews will be analyzed by analyzing the conceptual framework. Theory of Communication, Theory of Brand Communication, Theory of Marketing Communication, Theory of Consumer Behavior, Theory of Brand Equity

Result

From objective 1: Analysis Results of the Brand Image and Positioning of MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea in Taishan District, Taian City: it can be seen that consumers in Taishan District, Taian City, have a clear perception of MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea's brand image, considering it affordable, stable in quality, and unique. MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea has achieved certain results in digital marketing, but there is still room for improvement, such as precise marketing using big data and strengthening brand culture construction. At the same time, product and marketing innovation combined with local characteristics will help further strengthen its market position in Taishan District, Taian City.

From objective 2: Exploration Results of Potential Branding Strategies to Strengthen MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea's Market Position in Taishan District, Taian City: Comprehensive views suggest that strengthening MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea's market position in Taishan District, Taian City, requires efforts in brand image shaping, marketing strategy optimization, service quality improvement, meeting consumers' personalized needs, and keeping up with market trends. By implementing targeted brand communication strategies, strengthening the integration with local elements, leveraging the advantages of digital platforms, and continuously innovating products and activities, IXUE Ice Cream & Tea is expected to further enhance its competitiveness and consolidate its market position in the Taishan District, Taian City market.

From objective 3: To find out Brand Awareness and Recognition Communication of MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea in Taishan District, Taian City, People's Republic of China. it can be seen that IXUE Ice Cream & Tea': Conclusion on Brand Awareness and Recognition Communication of MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea in Taishan District, Taian City, MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea has successfully built strong brand awareness and recognition in Taishan District, Taian City through a combination of digital marketing, physical store presence, and strategic brand communication. Wide Store Presence – The visibility of MIXUE stores in high-traffic areas strengthens local brand recognition. Digital Marketing & Social Media – The brand engages local customers through platforms like Douyin (TikTok China), WeChat, and online promotions. Affordable & Trendy Image–MIXUE's budget-friendly pricing and fun branding make it popular among students and young consumers in Taishan District. Word-of-Mouth & Community Engagement–Local promotions, customer interactions, and visually appealing storefronts contribute to organic brand recognition. Overall, MIXUE's consistent brand communication strategy has effectively established its presence in Taishan District, Taian City, making it a well-recognized and preferred choice for ice cream and tea lovers.

Conclusion

Table 1 Apply application of Marketing Concepts in MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea adjust from 5 models In Taishan District, Taian City, China

Theory	Developer	Concept	Application of marketing concepts with MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea
1. AIDA Model	St.Elmo Lewis	Attracting Attention and Stimulating Purchase	Use mascots, vibrant colors, and viral campaigns to attract customers.
2. IMC Model (Integrated Marketing Communications)	Kotler & Keller	Multichannel Communication for Brand Building	Leverage advertising, Social media, and promotions together.
3. Aaker's Brand Equity	David Aaker	Creating Brand Value through Brand Awareness & Loyalty	Utilize mascots and well- located stores to enhance brand recognition.
4. Keller's CBBE Model Customer- Based Brand Equity	Kevin Lane Keller	Building Long-Term Customer Relationships	Use Snow King and the brand's theme song to create Brand Resonance.
5. Word-of-Mouth & Viral marketing	George Silverman	George Silverman	Harness Tik Tok and viral campaigns to increase brand awareness.

Discussion

Based on the research objectives, the discussion will be presented as follows:

1) Discussion about major findings of objective 1

Objective 1 focuses on analyzing MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea's brand image and positioning in Taian. The research shows that its affordable prices and the "Snow King" image have created a distinct brand image, in line with Kotler and Keller's brand communication theory. However, it lacks in the high-end consumption segment. Thus, it should optimize its positioning and product quality to attract more consumers. Brand Image Perception, Consumers in Taian perceive MIXUE as an affordable and youthful brand, appealing mainly to students and young professionals. The brand is associated with fun, freshness, and affordability, making it a preferred choice for budget conscious customers. Some customers may perceive it as a low-cost alternative rather than a premium tea brand, which could affect its long-term brand equity consistent with Johnson (2023b). Title research was "The Role of User Generated Content in Brand Promotion in the New Media Era" found that explores the role of user generated content in brand promotion in the new media era. MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea

can encourage consumers to share their stories, photos, and videos related to MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea on social media, such as consumption experiences in Caiyuan Street stores and feelings of trying new products and Market Positioning that its affordable prices and the "Snow King" image have created a distinct brand image, in line with Kotler and Keller's brand communication theory. However, it lacks in the high - end consumption segment. Thus, it should optimize its positioning and product quality to attract more consumers, in addition customer engagement and Loyalty Social media engagement plays a crucial role in maintaining brand loyalty in Taian. Promotions, discounts, and interactive campaigns have helped retain a loyal customer base, particularly among young consumers. However, there may be inconsistencies in franchise-level service and branding, which could affect customer experience.

“Consumers here in Taishan District still recognize the price of MIXUE Bingcheng. Everyone thinks it is very affordable, like students and ordinary office workers, who are not rich in money, and the pricing of Mixue Bingcheng's products is very in line with their spending power. Speaking of quality, for so many years, the quality has been quite stable, although it is not as good as those high-end brands”

A1 (personal communication, February 19, 2025)

"Snow King" image is deeply rooted in people's hearts, and its theme song is widely spread. The brand continuously innovates its products, and items like the "Ferris Crunch" ice cream and Oreo milk tea are well-liked by consumers.”.

A2 (personal communication, February 19, 2025)

“Most consumers will feel very relaxed and happy when they see the online content of MIXUE Bingcheng. The various funny videos of "Snow King" are very interesting, and everyone will think that you can get a happy, relaxing experience by spending in Honey Snow Ice City, and you can also enjoy cost-effective drinks and ice cream.”.

A3 (personal communication, February 19, 2025)

In conclusion, this objective 1 using the Theory of Brand Communication, Theory of Communication according to the 5W principle :(Who, What, In Which Channel, To Whom, and With What Effect.) was focus on positive and consistent with analyzing MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea's brand image and positioning in Taian. Image according to the established framework.

2) Discussion about major findings of objective 2

Objective 2 focuses on about exploring strategies to strengthen MIXUE's market position in Taian. It can be seen that strengthening Localized Marketing Strategies Adapt to local consumer preferences by introducing flavors and product variations that align with Taian cultural and seasonal demands. And Collaborate with local influencers and food bloggers to increase brand awareness and credibility and engage in city-based marketing campaigns by partnering with local events, universities, and community festivals to create a stronger local identity. Consistent with Zhang (2023). Title research was "The Penetration and Influence of National Beverage Brands in Local Commercial Areas" found that explores the penetration and influence of national beverage brands in local commercial areas. Taking MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea as an example, it mentions that through the unique brand image shaping, such as the iconic Snow King IP and the highly catchy brand song, it quickly builds brand awareness in local markets. Adapt to local consumer preferences by introducing flavors and product variations that align with Taian cultural and seasonal demands. Collaborate with local influencers and food bloggers to increase brand awareness and credibility and engage in city-based marketing campaigns by partnering with local events, universities, and community festivals to create a stronger local identity. The current brand communication strategies, especially on social media, have increased brand awareness, as Smith's research on beverage brand marketing supports. However, limited brand culture exploration restricts brand development. MIXUE should strengthen brand culture, integrate local elements, and let Taishan stores adjust strategies based on local conditions for better communication results.

“The headquarters' marketing strategy provides a unified direction for brand promotion, while local stores can adapt strategies to better suit local conditions”.

A4 (personal communication, February 19, 2025)

“Adopt multi-platform operations, covering platforms such as WeChat, Douyin, and Meituan”.

A5 (personal communication, February 19, 2025)

“The headquarters focuses on brand image promotion and new product promotion, while single stores pay more attention to local promotions and customer service”.

A6 (personal communication, February 20, 2025)

“The headquarters focuses on brand image promotion and new product promotion, while single stores pay more attention to local promotions and customer service”.

A7 (personal communication, February 19, 2025)

“Strategies for brand identity reinforcement is the application of the concept of “Glocalization”, balancing global consistency with local adaptation across all markets. The red-and-white color scheme, snowman mascot, and store design guidelines remain consistent across all markets to maintain brand recognition, while recipes and product offerings are sometimes adjusted to match local preferences and the brand integrates online and offline communication.

A8 (personal communication, February 21, 2025)

In conclusion, this objective 2: using the Theory of Marketing Communication,-Theory of Consumer Behavior. Comprehensive views suggest that strengthening Mixue Ice Cream & Tea's market position in Taishan District, Taian City, requires efforts in brand image shaping, marketing strategy optimization, service quality improvement, meeting consumers' personalized needs, and keeping up with market trends. This strategy ensures a coherent global presence while respecting cultural differences.

3) Discussion about major findings of objective 3

Objective 3 focuses on finding out the brand awareness and recognition communication of MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea in Taian City. High Brand Awareness Due to Affordable Pricing and Widespread Presence MIXUE has gained significant attention in Taian due to its low-cost pricing strategy, making it accessible to a wide range of consumers, especially students and young professionals. The brand's extensive franchise network ensures high visibility across different locations, further strengthening its recognition. MIXUE's distinctive logo and mascot (Snow King) contribute to strong visual branding, making it easy for customers to identify the brand. Anywise impact high foot traffic and impulse purchases due to affordability and strong brand recall. However social Media and Digital Marketing as Key Communication Channels MIXUE effectively utilizes platforms like WeChat, Douyin, and Xiaohongshu for promotions, customer interaction, and viral marketing campaigns. Online campaigns, such as discount offers, interactive challenges, and user-generated content, enhance brand engagement and visibility. The brand's use of short videos, memes, and trending content helps maintain relevance among young consumers. Impact: Increased online visibility, stronger engagement, and brand loyalty. Word-of-Mouth and Community Engagement consistent with Smith (2022b). The title research was "Digital Marketing Strategies for Brand Building in the Beverage Industry" and found that the brand

building strategies in the beverage industry in the digital marketing era. It points out that social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok and customer recommendations play a significant role in boosting brand awareness, especially among students and local communities. MIXUE's participation in local events, sponsorships, and campus marketing enhances its recognition in Taian. Group buying deals and referral discounts encourage peer-to-peer brand promotion. Anywise Impact: Strengthened brand credibility and organic growth through word-of-mouth marketing and consistent with Davis et al., (2022). Title research was "The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Behavior in the Beverage Market" which monitor social media data to understand consumers' feedback and demands for products, and timely adjust product strategies and new media communication content. At the same time, it can use the word-of-mouth and consistent with Aaker (1991). Title research was "Innovative Marketing Communication Strategies in the Digital Age" that strategy, organically combine online and offline channels.

"I think there are two main aspects. On the one hand, there is the interaction of brands on social media our official account will reply to consumers' comments and private messages in a timely manner so that everyone feels valued. On the other hand, there are online membership activities, such as points can be exchanged for drinks, birthdays have exclusive discounts, etc., consumers have received tangible benefits, and their loyalty is naturally high."

A9 (personal communication, February 19, 2025)

"I think Brand Awareness Due to Affordable Pricing and Widespread Presence MIXUE has gained significant attention in Taian due to its low-cost pricing strategy, making it accessible to a wide range of consumers".

A10 (personal communication, February 19, 2025)

"Influencers and KOLs have a lot of influence, and their recommendations can let more people know about MIXUE Bingcheng. For example, when a food blogger recommends a new product from MIXUE Bingcheng, fans will want to try it after seeing it. Moreover, their evaluation can also influence consumers' perception of the brand".

A11 (personal communication, February 19, 2025)

“I believe that the brand's interaction and service in the digital space are very important. We actively interact with consumers on social media, answering their questions and suggestions to make them feel cared for.

A3 (personal communication, February 20, 2025)

“Members can exchange points for various gifts and drinks, and the birthday benefits are also very Thoughtful, which increases consumers' stickiness. Moreover, our online ordering and delivery services are very convenient. The delivery is fast, and the products are still fresh and delicious when they arrive, which makes consumers more willing to choose us”.

A12 (personal communication, February 19, 2025)

“Customers will feel that MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea is super cost-effective and a good choice for daily consumption. However, some customers also want us to improve the quality of our products, such as using better raw materials, so that we can meet more diverse needs”.

A13 (personal communication, February 19, 2025)

“Mainly students, such as primary and secondary school students, college students, they have limited spending power, but there is a large demand for drinks and ice cream. There are also young office workers, the pace of work is fast, and the price is affordable and easy to buy, which is very suitable for their needs”.

A14 (personal communication, February 19, 2025)

“We rely on a low price and a unique brand image. In terms of price, it is cheaper than many brands and can meet the daily consumption of the public. In terms of brand image, the awareness of "Snow King" red color mascot and the joyful brand atmosphere is very different from other brands”.

A15 (personal communication, February 20, 2025)

In conclusion, this objective 3: using Theory of Consumer Behavior, Theory of Brand Equity Otherwise Challenges in Brand Differentiation: Despite high awareness, MIXUE faces challenges in differentiating itself from competitors like Heytea, Nayuki, and CoCo in Taishan District, Taian City, China. In terms of product quality and brand perception. Some consumers view MIXUE as a budget friendly option rather than a premium brand, affecting its positioning in the market. Inconsistencies in franchise level marketing and service quality can lead to variations in customer experience and brand

perception. Anywise Impact: Potential limitations in attracting middle-to-high-income consumers who seek premium tea experiences.

Table 2 Brand Digital Communication of MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea in Taishan District, Taian city, People's Republic of China

Strategic Pillar	Challenge	Tactic
1. Brand Repositioning through Localized Storytelling	Seen as a mass-market, 'cheap' brand.	Localized campaigns like 'Taian Flavor Limited Edition'; social stories featuring students and youth culture.
2. Product Line Innovation	Lacks product excitement vs competitors.	Dual-tier pricing: core low-cost (¥ 6-10) and premium seasonal (¥ 12-15); influencer campaigns, aesthetic packaging.
3. In-store and Digital Experience Enhancement	Stores are basic; image is playful.	Pop-ups with local universities; photo zones; gamify ordering via WeChat (e.g., stamp rewards).
4. Community-Driven Marketing	Low emotional connection vs lifestyle brands.	Sponsor events; student ambassador program; fan-designed drinks or cups contests.
5. Sustainability & Health Emphasis	Growing demand for health-conscious options.	'Fresh & Light' drink line; sugar customization; eco-messaging with rewards for recycling.
6. Hyperlocal Delivery Strategy	Competitors dominate delivery convenience.	Partner with Meituan/Ele.me; 'MIXUE Express' 20-min delivery; dorm/office bundles like 'Study Pack'.

Conclusion: Taishan District, Taian City is a mixed urban district with students, office workers, and families. Consumers value affordability, uniqueness, taste, convenience, and social media appeal. MIXUE's Position: Known for affordability and scale but lacks brand image against competitors Heytea (premium), Nayuki (lifestyle), and CoCo (versatile). Strategic Goal: Differentiate MIXUE's brand to attract lifestyle-conscious youth while keeping affordability.

Table 3 Comparative Brand Digital Communication MIXUE vs Heytea, Nayuki, CoCo in Taishan District, Taian City, China

Strategic Pillar	MIXUE	Heytea	Nayuki	CoCo
1. Brand Repositioning through Localized Storytelling	Launch 'Taian Flavor' drinks; local culture & youth stories; affordable emotional image	National brand with innovation & youth sophistication; strong cultural storytelling	Lifestyle storytelling; premium aesthetics tied to wellness and romance	Urban convenience; friendly tone; less localized storytelling
2. Product Line Innovation	Dual-tier pricing; premium seasonal items; mass appeal	Frequent seasonal launches; high aesthetic value	Premium tea-bakery combo; trendy high-quality ingredients	Reliable menu; some seasonal drinks; less innovation
3. In-store & Digital Experience Enhancement	Simple stores; seating/photo zones; WeChat gamification; student pop-ups	Instagrammable interiors; app & mini-programs; consistent branding	High-end café atmosphere; lifestyle & mobile touchpoints	Functional stores; WeChat & delivery; less experiential
4. Community-Driven Marketing	Student ambassadors; fan design contests; campus sponsorships	Brand & artist collaborations; social media buzz; offline events	Emotional & influencer campaigns; lifestyle-oriented	Relatable tone online; limited community focus
5. Sustainability & Health Emphasis	Fresh & Light line; sugar customization; eco-rewards	Healthy ingredients; paper packaging; visible sustainability	Real fruits & tea; healthy focus; sustainable design	Customization offered; less public eco-health push

MIXUE differentiates through value include local emotional relevance, needing to boost perception via design, innovation, and digital-native campaigns. Heytea and Nayuki lead in premium experience, branding, and trend leadership. CoCo remains versatile and reliable, but less aggressive in innovation or community branding.

MIXUE doesn't need to out-luxury Heytea or out-fashion Nayuki. Instead, it should own the affordable-yet-fun, locally beloved identity. By blending localized marketing, tiered product inno-

vation, and community connection, it can turn its mass-market presence into a youthful lifestyle choice—especially in a diverse urban district like Taishan District, Taian City, and China.

Recommendation for policy formulation

1) The headquarters of MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea can formulate brand development policies that encourage innovation. To establish special funds to support Taishan District stores in carrying out product and marketing innovation activities that are deeply integrated with local culture.

2) The brand communication effect evaluation policy should be refined. In addition to conventional indicators such as sales data and social media interaction volume, indicators for assessing the depth of brand culture communication and the degree of consumer emotional resonance should be incorporated.

3) Training and introduction policies should be formulated. Professional training for the brand communication team in Taishan District should be strengthened to improve the creative capabilities, market insights, and cultural integration abilities of team members. Moreover, talents with rich brand communication experience and cultural and creative backgrounds should be recruited to inject new impetus into brand development.

4) Promote sustainable practices and enhance community engagement to build a responsible and trustworthy brand image.

Recommendation for Practical Application

1) In product innovation, more healthy beverages and food items with local characteristics should be developed in accordance with the taste preferences and health requirements of consumers in Taishan District.

2) In marketing activities, cooperation with local media and cultural institutions in Taishan District should be strengthened, and diversified brand culture activities should be carried out. Sponsor local cultural festivals, art exhibitions, etc., and setting up brand display areas and interactive experience areas at event sites can enhance the brand's cultural influence in the local area.

3) Regarding service improvement, the service process and content should be optimized for different consumer groups. For student groups, learning and communication spaces and preferential packages should be provided. For office workers, fast and convenient delivery services and customized drink options should be offered. For elderly consumers, comfortable rest

environments and attentive service guidance should be ensured, thus improving the overall service quality.

Recommendation for Further Research

1) Conduct long-term follow-up research to monitor the market response and consumer behavior after the adjustment of the strategy of MIXUE Ice Cream in Taishan District, and analyze the changes in key indicators to help the long-term development of the brand.

2) Explore the potential of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality in the brand communication of MIXUE Ice Cream and Tea and promote communication innovation.

3) Research mix Methods qualitative research and quantitative research to analyze the factors that affect consumers' attitudes towards the MIXUE Ice Cream and Tea brand.

Referencel

- Aaker, D. A. (1991). *Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name*. The Free Press.
- Berlo, D. K. (1960). *The Process of Communication: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Davis, J., Fischl, A. H., Beck, J., Browning, L., Carter, A., Condon, J. E., Dennison, M., Francis, T., Hughes, P. J., Jaime, S., Lau, K. H. K., McArthur, T., McAvoy, K., Magee, M., Newby, O., Ponder, S. W., Quraishi, U., Rawlings, K., Socke, J.,... Villalobos, S. (2022). 2022 National standards for diabetes self-management education and support. *The science of diabetes self management and care*, 48(1), 44-59.
- Johnson, L. (2023a). Rethinking Communication Models in the Digital Era. *Digital Communication Review*, 20(2), 15-25.
- Johnson, L. (2023b). *The Role of User Generated Content in Brand Promotion in the New Media Era*.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing Management* (15th ed.). Pearson.
- Schiffman, L. G., & Kanuk, L. L. (2010). *Consumer behavior* (10th ed.). Pearson.
- Smith, J. (2022a). Advances in Brand Communication Strategies in the Digital Age. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 55(3), 25-35.
- Smith, J. (2022b). The Importance of Consistent Messaging in IMC. *Brand Communication Quarterly*, 20(2), 25-35.
- Zhang, X. (2023). *The Penetration and Influence of National Beverage Brands in Local Commercial Areas*. Business Research Press.