

Research on the Dilemma of Digital Marketing under the Traffic-Oriented Logic and the Complementary Value of Warm-Hearted Marketing

Xiaokai Shi

*Zhenhai High School, Ningbo, China
victoria@hfasteners.com*

Abstract. As China's consumer environment continues to mature, public consumption attitudes have shifted notably. In the past, consumers largely prioritised product quality, practicality and price when making purchases. By contrast, contemporary consumption behaviour is partly shaped by emotional experiences, psychological perceptions and brand affinity. Against a backdrop of market homogenisation, conventional marketing practices centred on price promotions, intensive advertising and traffic-driven sales tend to trigger aesthetic fatigue and psychological resistance among some consumers, with marketing effectiveness gradually diminishing over time. Unlike utilitarian traditional marketing, warm-hearted marketing is anchored in sincerity, gentleness and healing emotions. It downplays overt commercial persuasion and seeks to narrow the psychological distance between brands and consumers through thoughtful service experiences and life-oriented emotional resonance. Rather than deliberately chasing viral traffic success, warm-hearted marketing focuses more on gradually building consumer trust and reputation, aligning with the consumption inclinations of certain young demographic groups who seek emotional release and relaxed experiences. Drawing on consumer psychology, empathetic communication, and brand humanisation perspectives, this paper interprets the concept, characteristics, and scope of application of warm-hearted marketing. It identifies its differentiated competitive advantages and puts forward targeted suggestions to address industry malpractices such as fabricated sentimentality, mindless imitation, over-emphasis on publicity, and poor on-the-ground implementation. Constrained by the author's knowledge and accessible data sources, this study adopts a qualitative analytical approach. Its arguments may carry certain biases, yet it hopes to offer references for small-and-medium-sized enterprise owners and new-media practitioners conducting emotional marketing.

Keywords: Warm-Hearted Marketing, Consumer Psychology, Emotional Communication, Brand Value, Marketing Innovation

1. Introduction

1.1. Research background

With the rapid development of the market economy, product supply in most industries has reached saturation. Gaps among homogeneous products in function, craftsmanship, and pricing have narrowed progressively, pushing market competition into a phase of intense homogenisation. Many brands struggle to build distinct competitive edges relying merely on their products. They frequently resort to price cuts, discount campaigns and traffic investment to attract customers, trapping segments of the market in a vicious cycle of price-driven internal competition. Sustained price wars squeeze merchants' profit margins on the one hand, and desensitise consumers to routine marketing activities on the other. Stimuli stemming purely from price discounts seldom generate stable and sustainable consumption conversion [1].

Meanwhile, prominent changes have occurred in modern consumers' lifestyles and consumption psychology. Driven by fast-paced modern life and fierce social competition, major consumer groups including students and office-workers often live in states of tension, exhaustion and anxiety, with limited outlets for relaxation and emotional recuperation in daily life. Translated into consumption behaviour, the public no longer pursues only basic material needs. A considerable number of consumers are willing to pay a premium for emotional value, service experience and psychological satisfaction brought by brands. When choosing between products of comparable quality, some consumers tend to patronise merchants delivering a more pleasant service atmosphere; price is no longer the sole determinant of consumption decisions.

A salient limitation of traditional marketing lies in its strong commercial orientation. Its promotions, campaigns and services are mostly designed to boost sales conversion, characterised by impatience and utilitarianism that may subject consumers to an intrusive sense of being sold to. Within such market circumstances, warm-hearted marketing has garnered growing market attention for its low-utilitarian stance and emphasis on genuine experiences. Less reliant on sensational publicity or low-cost customer acquisition tactics, it resonates with audiences through thoughtful services, gentle communication, and life-based content. To a certain extent, it responds to contemporary people's emotional demands and represents a promising new marketing mindset. Accordingly, systematic examination of its application logic, existing flaws, and potential value carries practical significance.

1.2. Research significance

1.2.1. Theoretical significance

Domestic academic research on marketing models largely concentrates on popular areas such as livestream marketing, short-video traffic marketing, content marketing and scenario-based marketing. Systematic studies specifically targeting warm-hearted marketing remain relatively scarce. Most domestic literature categorises warm-hearted marketing as a subset of emotional marketing, yet few draw clear distinctions between warm-hearted marketing, manipulative emotional appeals and generic emotional marketing. Relevant research remains fragmented without a complete analytical framework.

Integrating domestic and international theories including Emotional Marketing, Emotional Appeal, Relationship Marketing, Brand Humanisation and Brand Loyalty, this paper sorts out the core connotations and unique features of warm-hearted marketing, defines its suitable application

scenarios, and summarises prevailing industry problems and optimisation paths [2-5]. It intends to supplement the research system of emotional marketing. Limited by research depth and lack of large-scale quantitative data support, this paper provides perspectives rooted in everyday operations of small-and-medium-sized merchants, offering theoretical references for subsequent coursework research and case analysis.

1.2.2. Practical significance

In real-world business operations, many brick-and-mortar stores, emerging niche brands, and individual new-media accounts are confronted with marketing challenges. Lacking substantial advertising budgets and professional marketing teams, they often depend on price promotions to draw foot traffic. Once discounts are scaled back, customer volume may decline, creating heavy long-term operational pressure and unsatisfactory user retention.

Warm-hearted marketing features controllable costs and strong implementability without requiring massive capital investment. When deployed appropriately, merchants can build user goodwill and raise repurchase potential by refining service details, adjusting communication styles and producing authentic content. The application insights, risk warnings and optimisation strategies summarised in this paper fit the operational realities of small-and-medium-sized businesses. For eligible operators, warm-hearted marketing can help mitigate cut-throat price competition and build differentiated competitive advantages through brand warmth. Nevertheless, warm-hearted marketing has clear application boundaries and is not suitable for all industries and market participants.

1.3. Research methods and innovations

1.3.1. Research methods

Three research methods are adopted in this paper.

First, literature research. Relevant Chinese- and English-language documents on consumer psychology, brand communication, emotional marketing, and relationship marketing are reviewed to construct the overall research framework and ensure logical coherence.

Second, the case-study method. Real-world operational cases covering offline physical outlets, online new-media accounts, and life-service industries are selected for analysis grounded in warm-hearted marketing theory, so as to identify its practical effects and real-world deficiencies.

Third, inductive summarisation. Scattered market phenomena, case experiences, and industry challenges are synthesised to generalise common rules for warm-hearted marketing and propose feasible directions for improvement.

1.3.2. Research innovations

Existing marketing studies tend to focus on large-scale campaigns implemented by major corporations and well-known brands, whose strategies offer limited reference value for small-scale individual merchants. This paper explores implementation pathways of warm-hearted marketing from the standpoint of small-and-medium-sized operators, highlighting cost-effective and highly actionable practices. Furthermore, it differentiates genuine warm-heart-oriented operations from scripted, fabricated sentimentality and discusses prevalent script-driven emotional marketing malpractices online. Its research perspective closely reflects the realities of today's internet-driven consumer market.

2. Core concept and theoretical foundations of warm-hearted marketing

2.1. Core connotation of warm-hearted marketing

Distinct from utilitarian marketing obsessed with short-term sales volume, warm-hearted marketing is a marketing approach internally driven by sincerity, benevolence, humanistic gentleness, and emotional healing. It is not equivalent to marketing gimmicks that feign tenderness for profit. Instead, it emphasises sustained benevolent services, authentic life-themed content, and human-centred thoughtful care. It mitigates commercial antagonism embedded in transactions, enabling consumers to feel respected and emotionally soothed during consumption. Word-of-mouth reputation gradually accumulates on this basis and drives sales conversion.

Simply put, traditional marketing proactively guides consumers toward purchases; warm-hearted marketing builds goodwill to encourage consumers to voluntarily prioritise the brand. It generally avoids manufacturing consumption anxiety, forceful selling, or manipulative customer acquisition, and advocates treating consumers with equality and respect. It should also be clarified that warm-hearted marketing does not mean unconditionally pandering to customers, nor can it compensate for inherent product quality defects. Built upon qualified products and compliant services, it functions as a value-adding marketing tool rather than an all-purpose solution for all operational difficulties.

2.2. Core characteristics of warm-hearted marketing

2.2.1. Low utilitarianism and mitigated commercial traces

Traditional marketing displays overt commercial objectives, with advertisements and promotional copy heavily oriented toward pushing sales, which may provoke resistance among certain consumers. A defining trait of warm-hearted marketing is its moderate reduction of commercial attributes and reinforcement of humanistic dimensions. In service delivery, content creation and scenario construction, greater weight is placed on conveying goodwill and enhancing user experience while minimising psychological pressure imposed on consumers. When audiences barely perceive obvious marketing intentions, their psychological defences may soften, and their acceptance of the brand improves [6].

2.2.2. Strong orientation toward authentic everyday life

Source materials and implementation scenarios for warm-hearted marketing are mostly derived from ordinary people's real-world daily experiences, focusing on universally shared feelings such as exhaustion, hard work, low spirits, and mundane kindness. Over-dramatised, unrealistic scripted narratives are largely avoided. Such delicate and authentic expressions readily evoke audience identification and empathy, constituting an advantage difficult for contrived sentimental marketing to replicate.

2.2.3. Emotional healing value

Major contemporary consumer groups possess latent demands for emotional relief. Intense work and study rhythms, fast-paced lifestyles and fragmented social interactions lead to a build-up of negative emotions, creating demand for gentle outlets for relaxation. Warm-hearted marketing tends to cultivate an atmosphere of healing, relaxation and companionship, offering consumers temporary

emotional comfort and partially filling emotional voids in modern life. Some repurchasing behaviour is motivated partly by consumers' desire to re-experience such pleasant emotional states.

2.2.4. Potential for long-lasting outcomes

Customer traffic generated by traffic-oriented marketing, internet-fame hype and price promotions is mostly short-lived; users tend to churn once popularity fades. Warm-hearted marketing prioritises accumulation of user trust, brand goodwill and reputational memory. Such emotional bonds generally do not vanish simply due to price fluctuations or shifts in online popularity. They may deliver relatively stable repurchases and organic word-of-mouth dissemination, supporting more sustainable business development. Admittedly, realisation of long-term effects requires consistent long-term operation; merely adopting warm-hearted marketing practices cannot guarantee favourable outcomes.

2.3. Theoretical foundations

2.3.1. Emotional marketing theory

Emotional Marketing theory posits that consumers' purchase decisions are influenced not only by product functionality and price but also by psychological perceptions and emotional experiences [7, 8]. When quality and price gaps between competing brands are limited, certain consumers gravitate toward merchants delivering friendlier experiences and more comfortable communication. Warm-hearted marketing responds to this trend of emotional consumption. By delivering positive emotional experiences, it helps brands retain users and achieve commercial conversion indirectly.

2.3.2. Emotional appeal theory

As an important theory in communication studies, Emotional Appeal suggests that content resonating with audiences' lived experiences can easily trigger emotional identification and in-depth communication [2]. Audiences are rarely moved by hollow advertising slogans, yet they readily empathise with trivial yet authentic moments of daily life. Rejecting rigid commercial publicity, warm-hearted marketing conducts communication starting from ordinary people's life emotions, yielding gentle, profound, and comparatively durable communication outcomes. Warm-hearted marketing employs constructive emotional appeals, distinguishing itself from manipulative sentimental appeals that fabricate stories to win sympathy and erode audience trust.

2.3.3. Relationship marketing theory

Relationship Marketing theory highlights that enterprises ought to prioritise building and sustaining long-term bonds with consumers instead of fixating solely on completing one-off transactions [3, 9]. Warm-hearted marketing does not chase single-deal closures but attaches greater importance to cultivating trust-based relationships with users. Through consistent benevolent services, merchants narrow psychological distances with consumers and build two-way trust connections, which are highly consistent with the core logic of Relationship Marketing.

2.3.4. Brand humanisation theory

Cold trademarks and commercial symbols can hardly retain users over extended periods. Brands with distinct personalities, warmth and clear attitudes are more capable of gaining consumer trust [4, 10]. Through long-term outputs of gentleness, sincerity and benevolence, warm-hearted marketing shapes a brand persona characterised by tenderness, reliability and authenticity. It shortens psychological distance between brands and consumers and fosters stable long-term user relationships.

2.3.5. Brand loyalty theory

Brand loyalty refers to consumers' psychological preference toward a brand, manifested through repeat purchases and voluntary positive word-of-mouth [11, 12]. Warm-hearted marketing does not cultivate loyalty directly through price incentives. Instead, it nurtures users' psychological preference by means of emotional experiences and humanistic care. Brand loyalty generated from emotional affinity is less susceptible to disruptions from short-term marketing campaigns and helps operators build a solid user base.

3. Primary application scenarios of warm-hearted marketing

3.1. Offline physical consumption scenarios

Offline brick-and-mortar stores constitute one of the most fundamental and readily implementable contexts for warm-hearted marketing, covering catering, convenience stores, life services, retail, and other sectors. Offline warm-hearted marketing does not rely on heavy capital investment; goodwill is accumulated primarily through routine service details.

Many physical stores deliver products of comparable quality yet vastly divergent customer experiences. Merchants with a purely utilitarian mindset may provide impatient and perfunctory services, for instance, urging customers to settle bills before closing time or discriminating among patrons while only fulfilling standardised service workflows. By contrast, operators practising warm-hearted marketing prioritise human-centred details and cultivate mild in-store atmospheres. They permit customers to sit and rest for reasonable durations, treat emotionally distressed or solo diners with quiet respect, proffer hot water, answer inquiries patiently, refrain from pushing sales aggressively, and reduce overly utilitarian guidance.

- Case: Independent community coffee shops

Numerous independent community coffee shops in China serve as typical examples of warm-hearted marketing in practice. These stores avoid large-scale advertising campaigns. They allow customers to stay quietly without rushing orders or departure. Staff maintain appropriate interpersonal distance from solo visitors and avoid excessive disturbance. For emotionally upset guests, they offer emotional accommodation through gentle service. Built on above-standard product quality, these shops win goodwill among residents via thoughtful service details, prompting repeated visits. Nonetheless, this model carries limitations: it incurs labour costs and demands strong empathy and patience from employees. Therefore, it is unsuitable for fast-food establishments pursuing maximum table turnover rates.

These small acts of kindness may not trigger sharp immediate sales surges. Nevertheless, they offer much-needed relaxing experiences for fatigued consumers. Against product homogenisation,

such memories of thoughtful service can become critical drivers of repurchases and equip small businesses with alternatives to price-cutting competition.

3.2. Online new-media communication scenarios

Online platforms including short-video sites, Xiaohongshu and social-media accounts constitute vital arenas for disseminating warm-hearted marketing. Niche accounts and online shops constrained by limited budgets and lack of specialist teams can gradually build followers and customer bases by publishing warm-hearted content.

The core principle of online warm-hearted marketing is "cultivate goodwill first, pursue conversion afterwards". Operators refrain from frequent hard-sell posts, exaggerated product claims, or manufacturing consumption anxiety. Instead, they continuously publish life-oriented, healing, and relaxing content. Food accounts document the warmth derived from meals; fashion accounts convey gentle and laid-back lifestyles; lifestyle accounts share kindness and beauty embedded in ordinary life.

- Case: Lifestyle-oriented food bloggers on xiaohongshu

Certain vertical food bloggers on Xiaohongshu do not relentlessly promote their own merchandise. Their daily outputs mainly feature cooking routines, ordinary meals, and fragments of everyday life, delivered in a mild, down-to-earth tone free of anxiety-inducing narratives. After accumulating sufficient goodwill among followers, bloggers moderately embed their self-owned food products or kitchenware. Followers make purchases largely out of identification with the blogger's life philosophy, yielding relatively high fan loyalty. Even so, creating warm-hearted online content demands sustained creative effort. Mere replication of warm-hearted copy without authentic supporting content will fail to win audience recognition.

Sustained positive content output fosters natural affinity and trust toward accounts among users. When consumption needs arise, audiences tend to prioritise familiar and well-regarded brands. Conversions built on emotional resonance bring higher fan loyalty and stable repurchases, representing a cost-effective online operational approach. Still, desirable outcomes require long-term accumulation; explosive short-term growth is rarely achievable.

3.3. Service-oriented consumption scenarios

Service-intensive industries such as educational counselling, life services and community-group operations are highly compatible with warm-hearted marketing given their emphasis on communication, experience and long-term relationships. Transactions within service industries are seldom one-off exchanges but ongoing interactive processes. Communication attitudes and emotional accommodation substantially influence user retention rates.

Conventional service models can be mechanical and rigid, focusing merely on completing procedural tasks while responding perfunctorily or indifferently to users' anxieties, questions, and emotions. By contrast, warm-hearted-oriented services entail patiently listening to user demands, accommodating users' nervousness and confusion, answering inquiries gently, and providing extra assistance within feasible boundaries, free of perfunctoriness, impatience, or excessive utilitarianism.

- Case: Community services attached to online psychological counselling

Some online psychological-service agencies operate user communities alongside paid counselling services. Communities avoid forceful promotion of paid courses. Moderators patiently accept users' emotional disclosures, offer appropriate companionship for ordinary participants, and disseminate

gentle psychological-science popularisation content. Many users develop trust gradually through long-term community engagement and subsequently become willing to purchase counselling services. Even so, warm-hearted services do not mean unconditional acceptance of all user requests; professional service boundaries must be maintained to avoid excessive operational burdens.

Warm-infused services can mitigate antagonism between merchants and users and build equal trust-based companionship relationships, helping reduce user churn and achieve stable customer accumulation.

4. Communication advantages and market value of warm-hearted marketing

4.1. Core communication advantages

4.1.1. Controllable costs, suitable for operators of diverse scales

Traditional advertising investment, traffic promotion, and large-scale event planning incur substantial costs and are more applicable to major brands. Warm-hearted marketing does not require enormous capital outlay and features strong practicality. Chain brands, individual small stores, and small-scale online accounts can selectively implement relevant practices according to their own conditions, offering small-and-medium-sized merchants potential pathways out of operational predicaments. It should nonetheless be noted that warm-hearted marketing consumes manpower and time; it is not cost-free and is not universally applicable for every market participant.

4.1.2. Broad audience reach and cross-circle communication potential

Trend-chasing, hot-topic-driven and niche-oriented marketing tends to target specific demographic groups with relatively limited audience coverage. By comparison, benevolence, gentleness and respect represent universally acknowledged positive values that are not rigidly constrained by age, occupation or social circles. Accordingly, warm-hearted marketing can help brands expand audience scope and build broader user bases. Admittedly, perceptions of "warm-heartedness" vary across individuals, so communication effects will differ among recipients.

4.1.3. Facilitating differentiation and alleviating homogenised cut-throat competition

Product features, pricing frameworks and promotional campaigns can easily be copied by competitors. Nevertheless, brand warmth, user trust and warm-hearted reputation accumulated through long-term operations prove far harder to replicate. Warm-hearted marketing enables brands to partially escape pure price competition, cultivate unique brand personalities and construct differentiated competitive strengths.

4.1.4. Mitigating public-opinion risks for stable long-term operations

Script-driven hype, traffic-oriented marketing and internet-celebrity-focused campaigns frequently suffer reputational collapses. Once manipulative practices are exposed, brands may sustain severe reputational damage. Oriented toward sincerity and benevolence and aligned with public morality, warm-hearted marketing lowers the probability of major public-opinion crises if brands maintain consistency between words and deeds, which benefits long-term business development. This does not mean warm-hearted marketing is entirely risk-free. Inconsistent conduct and fabricated sentimentality will still trigger negative user evaluations.

4.2. Diverse market value

4.2.1. Commercial value: facilitating stable and long-term profitability

Warm-hearted marketing does not target viral short-term traffic, yet it can foster loyal users and organic word-of-mouth. Loyal customers demonstrate stronger repurchase willingness and may voluntarily spread positive information, generating continuous organic customer flows. It can help merchants escape vicious competition whereby businesses struggle to attract customers without discounts, and supports healthier and more sustainable business models.

4.2.2. Brand value: accumulation of intangible brand assets

Short-term promotional activities can only deliver temporary sales spikes. Warm-hearted marketing contributes toward long-term brand reputation building. Consistent warm-hearted outputs dilute brands' cold, utilitarian commercial labels, cultivate warm, reliable, and purpose-driven brand images, improve brand recognition and credibility, and accumulate precious intangible brand assets.

4.2.3. Social value: conveying positive humanistic temperament

Fast-paced commercial environments are generally preoccupied with efficiency and profit, often yielding an atmosphere permeated by utilitarianism and anxiety. By integrating benevolence, respect, and emotional solace into commercial transactions, warm-hearted marketing can partially ease societal anxiety in modern life and deliver emotional consolation to consumers. It endows commercial exchanges with humanistic significance beyond mere monetary transactions.

5. Prevailing problems within warm-hearted marketing

5.1. Fabricated sentimentality and loss of authentic core

Authenticity constitutes the cornerstone of warm-hearted marketing. At present, many merchants follow this marketing fad, deliberately inventing false stories, designing tear-jerking scripts, and staging artificial benevolence in pursuit of traffic. Contrived emotional appeals detached from real life may attract short-term traffic yet risk detection by consumers. Once audiences discover that brand tenderness is performative and kindness is merely a gimmick, goodwill quickly turns into aversion, triggering reputational collapses and eroding accumulated user trust [8].

5.2. Severe homogenisation of form and lack of innovative core

Numerous merchants only imitate superficial manifestations of warm-hearted marketing: copying heart-warming copy, applying standard tender-toned posters, and reproducing formulaic thoughtful services, without grasping that its essence lies in sincerity and attention to detail. Template-driven uniform operations strip warm-hearted marketing of uniqueness, triggering audience aesthetic fatigue and significantly weakening empathetic effects. It degenerates into generic marketing tactics and fails to generate differentiated competitive advantages.

5.3. Emphasis on publicity while neglecting implementation; inconsistent words and deeds erode trust

Some brands reduce warm-hearted marketing merely to online persona construction. They project gentle and sincere brand images and publish abundant healing-oriented content online, while delivering perfunctory, cold, and utilitarian services offline. Severe dissonance emerges between online self-presentation and real-world offline service delivery. Such contradictory operations rapidly deplete user trust and damage long-established brand reputations.

5.4. Utilitarian backlash and reversal of priorities

Certain merchants uphold genuine warm-hearted services in initial phases and accumulate a sound reputation and traffic. Afterwards, they instrumentalise and formulaicise warm-hearted approaches. Kind-hearted service becomes a tactic to harvest goodwill and induce consumption. Original sincere benevolence degenerates into calculated pandering, and healing experiences turn into marketing gimmicks. Stripped of its humanistic core, warm-hearted marketing becomes utilitarian and hypocritical, provoking user dissatisfaction and user churn.

6. Optimisation strategies and development paths for warm-hearted marketing

6.1. Uphold authentic core and reject script-driven marketing

The foremost principle for warm-hearted marketing is authenticity. Brands need not fabricate moving narratives or stage tear-inducing scenarios. Ordinary everyday kindness, thoughtful services, and sincere interpersonal attitudes are often more compelling than scripted hype. Online content ought to be rooted in real-life experiences and offline services grounded in genuine attitudes. Rejecting fabrication and manipulative sentimentality and treating authenticity as the foundation of content facilitates durable emotional resonance and avoids reputational collapse risks.

6.2. Build differentiated warm-hearted systems aligned with brand features

Merchants should abandon blind imitation and construct their own warm-hearted styles tailored to industry attributes, brand positioning and target-user groups. Catering businesses may prioritise down-to-earth healing and thoughtful companionship; service industries may highlight patience, accommodation and meticulous accountability; online accounts can centre on laid-back authenticity and genuine empathy. Adjust warm-hearted outputs according to user profiles, steer clear of template-based operations, develop distinctive warm-hearted brand labels, and mitigate homogenised competition.

6.3. Prioritise off-the-ground implementation and realise consistency between words and deeds

Brands should discard the misconception of "valuing packaging over delivery". Warm-hearted positioning must be translated from online persona into tangible offline service details. Sincerity and gentleness communicated online must be synchronously embodied in daily services, user communications, and minor service interactions, striving for internal-external consistency. Only stable and authentic service experiences can retain users, accumulate reputation, and fully realise the value of warm-hearted marketing.

6.4. Return to humanistic original aspiration and guard against utilitarian gimmicks

Merchants need to adopt appropriate mindsets for deploying warm-hearted marketing. Warm-hearted marketing is not a tool for emotional exploitation but an approach for conveying benevolence and building trust in business operations. Operators should remain genuine in practice, refrain from transforming tenderness into marketing tricks, and avoid profiting by preying on audiences' emotions. Maintaining moderately non-utilitarian service orientations helps improve user stickiness and unlock long-term development potential.

7. Conclusion

Amid consumption upgrading and the prevalence of emotion-driven consumption, mere product advantages and price discounts can hardly satisfy all consumer demands. Emotional experiences and brand warmth have gradually become non-negotiable elements in market competition. Characterised by low utilitarian orientation, authenticity-centred philosophy, healing properties, and potential for long-term effectiveness, warm-hearted marketing responds to partial trends within modern consumer markets. It offers a viable pathway for small-and-medium-sized merchants to escape vicious competition and build brand reputation.

This paper sorts out the concept, features, theoretical foundations, and application scenarios of warm-hearted marketing, analyses its market-oriented strengths and multi-faceted value, summarises prevailing industry problems including fabricated sentimentality, homogenised imitation, insufficient implementation, and utilitarian tendencies, and puts forward corresponding optimisation strategies. It can be observed that the essence of warm-hearted marketing lies not in marketing techniques, but in sincere business attitudes and humanistic benevolence.

Naturally, this study carries certain limitations. Case coverage is limited; the research is predominantly qualitative and lacks large-scale big-data quantitative support. Looking ahead, brand marketing will attach growing importance to humanistic warmth and user experience. Warm-hearted marketing that preserves sincere original aspirations is expected to see expanded practical deployment across diverse consumption contexts and constitutes a noteworthy developmental direction worthy of sustained attention within emotional-marketing research.

References

- [1] He, J. X. (2021). *Emotional marketing: Brand growth driven by emotion*. Shanghai People's Publishing House, Shanghai.
- [2] Yu, G. M. (2022). Empathetic communication: Logical mechanism and practical paths. *News and Writing*(5), 51-6.
- [3] Zhou, Z. M. (2010). A review of research on relationship marketing theory. *Journal of Marketing Science*, 6(1), 1-14.
- [4] Zhang, H. X., & Wang, C. (2019). Research on the influence of brand humanisation on consumers' brand attitudes. *Management Review*, 31(8), 142-151.
- [5] Lu, J., & Zhang, D. H. (2004). Empirical analysis of factors influencing consumer brand loyalty. *Finance & Trade Economics*(6), 79-82.
- [6] Li, Y. (2023). Boundaries, misconceptions and optimisation paths of emotional marketing. *Commercial Economic Research*(12), 78-81.
- [7] Chen, L. X. (2021). Research on emotion-oriented consumption from the perspective of consumer society. *Zhejiang Social Sciences*(7), 89-96+158.
- [8] Wang, J. (2022). Malpractices and governance of emotional marketing on short-video platforms. *New Media Research*, 8(18), 67-70.
- [9] Sheth, J. N., & Parvatiyar, A. (1995). Relationship marketing in consumer markets. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 23(4), 255-271.

- [10] Aaker, J. L. (1997). Dimensions of brand personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(3), 347-356.
- [11] Bagozzi, R. P. (1999). Emotional marketing. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 8(2), 149-166.
- [12] Holbrook, M. B. (1999). *Consumer value: A framework for analysis and research*. Routledge, London.