

# ***Exploring the Reasons Behind Consumers' Crazy Buying Behavior***

**Xinyu Fang<sup>1,a,\*</sup>**

*<sup>1</sup>School of Management, Xiamen University Tan Tah Kee College, Zhangzhou City, Fujian Province, 363105, China*

*a. bus21088@stu.xujc.com*

*\*corresponding author*

**Abstract:** The ongoing expansion of the social economy has resulted in an improvement in Chinese inhabitants' living conditions. This has also influenced people's consuming concepts and actions. People are increasingly developing national self-confidence, deepening emotional resonance, and earning public awareness for a variety of national brand enterprises. As a result, these firms are progressively becoming a key factor in China's economic development. The Wahaha Company is depicted in the paper as an exploratory item. The purpose of this article is to look into Wahaha's actions, which may have influenced consumers to buy the product in huge amounts following the death of its inventor, Zong Qinghou. The analysis method is based on the marketing mix theory of 4Rs. This article uses the marketing mix theory of 4Rs to investigate why consumers purchased enormous quantities of products following Zong Qinghou's death, resulting in a significant boost in the company's sales. The study concludes that companies can improve consumer interaction by combining the marketing theory of 4Rs with appropriate emotional marketing, as well as staying current with health trends by developing specialty beverages that are more in line with consumer needs, using AI to provide better human care for the company, and developing closer relationships with consumers.

**Keywords:** The marketing mix theory of 4Rs, Relevance, Reaction, Relationship

## **1. Introduction**

In recent years, China's economy has expanded, and national income has risen. As living standards rise, consumer behavior changes. China's economic development is being driven by the externalization of consumption concepts such as "buying national brands," "supporting national products," and emotional resonance. As a result, many national enterprises have gained public attention and are becoming a significant force. Hangzhou Wahaha Group Co., Ltd., founded by Zong Qinghou in 1987, is a food and beverage manufacturer whose scale and efficiency have led the industry for the past 20 years. 2024 Zong Qinghou, the Wahaha Group's founder and chairman, died of sickness on February 25. The public spontaneously purchased his company's products, and sales volume skyrocketed for a while, sparking intense disputes among netizens.

There are numerous academic studies about Wahaha. For example, Zhu used the brand communication strategy of national brands as the analysis object and the post-95 group as the analysis subject. He investigated what motivates individuals to consider and purchase a brand using

questionnaire surveys, case studies, and other analytical tools [1]. By doing so, he developed important insights for businesses, such as "empower product emotion with the help of national product cognition to enhance brand preference" [1]. Wang Chenhui, on the other hand, begins by examining the new economic situation. He examines the basic competitiveness of national firms as well as the usual innovation methods of foreign enterprises. Based on this analysis, he presents national firms' respective innovation strategies, which comprise independent innovation, cooperative innovation, and copycat innovation [2]. Gao Wei's study, unlike the previous two studies, uses national product awareness as a new entry point [3]. It investigates the impact of national product awareness on the performance of national firms using two analytical methods: case analysis and questionnaire surveys [3]. Finally, it finishes with observations like "strengthening the guidance of national product awareness and focusing on the utilization of the national tide for publicity," which are useful learning and reference points [3]. In the new media era, Zhu Lujie elaborated on innovative cultural development and marketing management techniques for national firms [4]. He proposes that in order to successfully promote the long-term management and development of national companies, people should first realize the innovation of marketing strategy and product output, then realize the innovation of product and development paths, and adopt diverse measures [4].

Most of the academic analysis has focused on analyzing the importance of the enterprise's factors or the national environmental context on the development of the enterprise, and very few people have explored national enterprises from the perspective of the marketing mix theory of 4Rs. In addition, the rise of national sentiment consciousness, whether the increase in consumer purchases of products of national enterprises under the influence of emotional resonance will have an impact on the long-term development of the enterprise, whether the occurrence of events related to the "death of Zong Qinghou" will affect Wahaha's overall position in the capital market and the long-term development of the enterprise, all these issues need to be further explored and resolved.

The rapid rise of national corporations in recent years serves as the backdrop for this paper's research. The Wahaha brand serves as an example. The paper's theoretical proof demonstrates that the marketing mix theory of 4Rs has an impact on business performance and argues that it can assist national businesses grow strategically. It helps to establish a link between a sense of national emotional resonance and the growth of national enterprises. It also encourages firms to fully utilize their national characteristics in order to boost enterprise development, stimulate the vitality of the home market, and support the high-quality development of China's economy.

## 2. Case Description

On February 25, 2024, Zong Qinghou, founder and chairman of the Wahaha Group, passed away. On the internet, people spontaneously paid tribute to this civic-minded entrepreneur and benchmark figure of Chinese private enterprise, while at the same time drawing attention to Wahaha's products. According to a third-party data platform, four days before February 25, Wahaha's official flagship store Douban accounts for sales of 1,000–2,500, or 25–50,000 yuan [5].

On February 25, his account did not live broadcast, but the sales of goods in the account window increased rapidly. Compared with the 27th, the increase in sales volume was as high as 500%. On the 29th, the sales volume was 7,500–10,000 yuan, and the sales volume was 250,000–500,000 yuan. On March 1, Wahaha's official announcement called for rational consumption, but the data showed that two days after the announcement, his account fans increased by more than 1 million, and the current number of fans is close to 2.5 million. 4 March, noon. Wahaha's official flagship store resumed live broadcasting after many days. Only one hour after the start of broadcasting, real-time sales exceeded 1 million yuan and ranked first in the live hot sales list and catering list.

From 12 March, sales began to decline significantly, to 18, and 19 March, two consecutive days of sales remained at about 200,000 yuan, compared with the peak period, sales fell by about 90%, cliff decline once again caused netizens to discuss [5].

### 3. Analysis

#### 3.1. Marketing Mix Theory of 4Rs

Don E. Schultz is credited as the originator of the marketing mix theory of the 4Rs in the United States [6]. He developed a unique marketing theory based on well-established marketing principles. The acronym stands for the concepts of relevance, reaction, relationship, and return [6].

The marketing mix theory of the 4Rs investigates both the internal and external factors that influence a company's success and how they are interconnected. Furthermore, the theory encompasses the integration of internal and external relationship management, ensuring the fulfillment of all parties' requirements, establishing connections within the network of internal and external relationships, and attaining efficient and prompt communication and reaction from all concerned parties. Furthermore, the theory effectively applies the concept of relationship marketing, establishing a strong and mutually advantageous alliance with relevant stakeholders. Ultimately, it computes marketing returns by combining expenses, pricing, earnings, and reciprocal advantage. This marketing theory is dynamic and inventive, and it will significantly influence marketing activities in the modern period [7].

#### 3.2. Reasons on Relevance

Relevance strategy is one of the 4Rs of marketing mix theory that enables organizations to interact with their customers in a variety of ways. It enables long-term, more stable mutual needs, mutual assistance, and mutual demand between the enterprise and the consumer. This, in turn, helps to establish customer loyalty and maintain a stable market. The essence of affiliation lies in relationship management, and the "connection" with consumers is the premise and foundation for relationship formation. To win a long-term and stable market, it is necessary to take action to prevent customer loss. Wahaha has consistently upheld the principle of prioritizing the consumer. Straws are deliberately made short to prevent them from being utilized as a means of poking consumers, especially children's throats. High costs are incurred to avoid thick-bottomed cartons, which take into account the fact that the grassroots rely on picking up cartons for a living. Consumers can easily distinguish Wahaha mineral water bottles due to their humane design and iconic locations. Light-blocking materials make up AD calcium milk bottles, preventing deterioration from direct sunlight.

Wahaha Nutrition Express also contains niacinamide, a water-soluble vitamin, as well as other vitamins and minerals, such as calcium. Wahaha has built a steady and beneficial relationship with its customers over the years. Following Zong Qinghou's death, this succession of details became known to a larger consumer base, making a lasting impression on them and contributing significantly to the frenetic purchases made by consumers in this occurrence.

Furthermore, Zong Qinghou was helpful in providing financial aid to approximately 58,000 poor students, totaling more than 700 million yuan. He employs the disabled, builds low-cost housing for his employees to address the housing crisis, insists on giving his employees an annual wage increase, implements full shareholding so that his employees can receive dividends every year, does not fire employees over the age of 45 who are dragging their families around, and gives his employees a day off on Children's Day to accompany their children. He also distributes eight-treasure porridge to people in need and conducts charitable sales for the crippled.

Whether it is his strategic policies on products or his contributions to society, he has inadvertently established a certain degree of practice with consumers and also closely associated himself with the

brand Wahaha. His philanthropic activities have evoked good reactions from customers, earning broad respect and adoration. This, in turn, has fueled consumers' desire to buy Wahaha items in honor of this extraordinary entrepreneur.

Previous literature has demonstrated the feasibility of using simultaneous correlation [8]. Relevance refers to the importance of meaningful interactions with peers, mentors, students, administrators, and university staff. In other words, everyone should focus on their own education, their students' education, or fostering communication among pre-service teachers, mentors, and students in their designated classrooms [8].

### 3.3. Reasons of Reaction

The implementation of the reaction strategy has also had a role in the increased purchase activity.

Right after the death of the founder of Wahaha, the company's brand representative expressed appreciation to the community for its recent focus on Wahaha during a relevant gathering. In addition, he noted that a significant number of internet users had posted messages on Wahaha's different platform profiles.

Moreover, it has been noted that the beverage sector has introduced a period of widespread health and is slowly reshaping customer perspective. Consumers are placing a growing emphasis on beverages that are devoid of sugar, have minimal amounts of sugar, offer functional benefits, are derived from plants, and align with other expanding areas of consumer interest. Consumer demand is increasingly being driven by scientific and technological innovation, bio-engineering technology, and industry empowerment in the health sector. Considering this, Wahaha is currently prioritizing its endeavors towards the domestic market, capitalizing on the increasing need of consumers for both health and flavor. Additionally, the company is actively exploring innovative approaches to utilize traditional Chinese resources in order to create superior products. Wahaha's products encompass a wide array of Chinese cultural manifestations, including the rich "legacy" of China's culinary traditions, as well as the development of a greater variety and quality of products to cater to the demands of the majority of consumers.

### 3.4. Reasons of Relationship

Following the Wahaha incident, consumers gained a deeper understanding of the brand's history and decided to demonstrate their support for the national enterprise by purchasing Wahaha-related products. Wahaha has become not only a brand in people's minds, but a collective memory of a generation. Consumers' collective emotions closely align with the emotional resonance of the Wahaha brand. Consumers simultaneously miss the brand and that carefree, innocent time. The close intertwining of Wahaha's brand story with consumers is evidence of this. Wahaha's official mall sales increased by over 500% in two days, and the mall account gained over one million fans. Wahaha initiated a campaign to promote calcium milk sales, which resulted in a surge in sales at major supermarkets and stores. Other products such as Wahaha pure water, calcium milk, nutritional fast food, and eight treasure porridges also saw a surge in sales, with a collective growth of over 100% [9]. This resulted in a significant increase in Wahaha product sales, as well as the establishment of a productive relationship between the enterprise and consumers [9].

Following the majority of consumers purchasing its items, Wahaha Group said on its official social media channel that it would actively connect with them. Wahaha announced that it had recently seen some irrational consumption habits in the market and, in order to guide consumers toward a correct notion of consumption, launched the rational consumption program. Wahaha encouraged customers to consider their own requirements when making product purchases, as well as to avoid impulsive trends and excessive consumption.

Concurrently, Wahaha stated that it would continue to provide premium, secure, and healthy products to meet consumer needs and improve the shopping experience. This communication and interaction project actively helps consumers build a solid consumption idea and fosters a positive retail environment in the community. Wahaha's positive involvement with consumers creates a virtuous circle between the company and its customers, with far-reaching ramifications for the relationship's long-term development.

Previous literature has demonstrated some validity for this application [9]. Relationships refer to the importance of building and developing positive relationships with different people in the student-teaching process [8]. Positive interactions do not happen overnight. Building good relationships takes time and even hard work [8].

## 4. Suggestion of Wahaha

### 4.1. Suggestion of Relevancy Strategy

Based on the relevance strategy and the current state of emotional demand in the market, this paper proposes that Wahaha should appropriately improve interaction with consumers to enhance consumers' loyalty.

China has gradually transitioned from a production-based to a consumption-based society. Consumption is no longer just about meeting actual needs; the "emotional value" of consumption and "emotional connections" are more important. Wahaha can use the emotional value to strengthen brand awareness and reputation, close the distance between consumers, and enhance the sense of trust in order to form a real sales conversion.

For example, China Southern Airlines, based on a true story, brought to the screen the airline's mission to help a group of children in a remote area of Xinjiang realize their seemingly unattainable dream of playing football. It is a common occurrence for these young boys to fantasize about playing football in the vast, arid plains of the desert. They engage in this activity with great enthusiasm, practicing their skills on the playground. They aspire to become professional footballers and dedicate themselves to achieving this goal. Eventually, they succeed in reaching the pinnacle of their ambition, playing on the same field as their idols. The spirit of the young people of SAF in realizing their dreams impressed the audience in front of the screen, and they could not help but applaud their efforts [10].

### 4.2. Suggestion of Reaction Strategy

Based on an analysis of the reasons for reaction strategy, this article proposes that Wahaha respond swiftly to consumer demand in order to improve its relationship with customers. In addition to consumers' desire for a healthy diet, Wahaha should stay current with the health trend and offer special drinks that meet consumers' needs.

Residents' health awareness has improved significantly since the crisis. According to Avery Consulting's 2022 China Health Management White Paper, just 60% of inhabitants are pleased with their overall health. According to Tetra Pak's newest Milk Consumption Trend Report, 75% of Chinese customers chose healthy and pleasant food and beverage products.

Other brands have embraced and applied this theory. Doctor V, an Australian energy drink company, has released Sparkling Wild Lingonberry, a focus and energy drink containing carbonated water, apple juice, grape juice, sugar, wild lingonberry juice, rowan berry juice, caffeine, schizandra, vitamin B6, Siberian pine flavoring, natural flavoring, pine needle extract, pine needles, natural flavoring, and other cognitive and adaptogenic ingredients. Pine needle extract, sea buckthorn berry, and schizandra are adaptogen substances that aid drinkers in increasing their focus and mental clarity. This enables Wahaha to keep up with the industry trend of generating more functional health goods while also responding to consumers' realistic requests quickly.

### 4.3. Suggestion on Relationship Strategy

Based on the examination of the most recent major work on relationship strategy, this paper proposes that Wahaha use artificial intelligence to provide consumers with more humanized wind services while also closing the relationship with consumers.

The 2024 Government Work Report places "employment" at the top of the list, emphasizing "emphasizing the employment priority orientation, strengthening fiscal, financial, and other employment stabilization policy support, and increasing the strength of special policies to promote employment," as well as "increasing support for enterprises in industries with large employment capacity."

The year 2023 is referred to as the "first year of artificial intelligence," with a significant impact on the scientific and technology industries. Artificial intelligence has now become a key aspect of catering innovation, providing limitless prospects for the growth of the overall beverage business.

Restaurant brands have pioneered and successfully implemented this notion. Wendy's®, a fast-food corporation, has collaborated with Google Cloud to create Wendy's Fresh AI, a pioneering AI platform that will enable automated ordering at its drive-through outlets. Wendy's Fresh AI self-driving ordering system is intended to seem as natural as interacting with a staff member, with the capacity to promptly answer customer questions and offer accurate food orders, even if the item's wording does not match the real description [10].

Based on this, Wahaha can create more jobs for the public while remaining within the reasonable scope of its operations, leveraging artificial intelligence technology to empower enterprise development, utilizing big data to better understand consumer demand, and promoting long-term stable and healthy development between enterprises and consumers.

## 5. Conclusion

China's national firms continue to thrive and grow, increasing consumer awareness of local products. This article investigates the Wahaha brand in this setting following the death of its founder, Zong Qinghou, which prompted a huge number of consumers to purchase its products. The case analysis investigates its causes and identifies the following factors: Wahaha has long followed a consumer-first approach. Following Zong Qinghou's death, several specifics about its products became more widely known to consumers. Zong Qinghou also arranged charitable sales events for the disabled. Furthermore, public welfare behavior has the effect of making consumers more understanding of Wahaha and willing to pay for this attitude, and the brand's spokeswoman at the meeting thanked the community for its attention and willingness to continue developing products to make customers happier. This behavior also had a positive impact on consumers. Concurrently, the event allowed Wahaha to illustrate the effectiveness of emotional marketing, highlighting the company's ability to link product development with consumer demand for specialty beverages. Furthermore, the event emphasized the potential of artificial intelligence in improving an organization's ability to deliver humane care, as well as other recommendations for long-term organizational growth.

This paper uses the case study approach and the marketing mix theory of 4Rs to analyze the actions of businesses that influence consumer decision-making processes. However, due to academic ability and data gathering restrictions, it does not use other analysis methodologies to support its findings. As a result, the inability to effectively validate the analysis results creates some constraints and subjectivity. Future research could use a questionnaire survey and other analysis tools to test the conclusion with a larger sample.

This paper serves as a case study for the aforementioned firm, known for its irrational influence on consumer purchase decisions. The analysis is carried out in the setting of the fast-moving consumer goods business, where items are highly substitutable. Note that this paper's analysis did not

make any distinctions between industries for comparison purposes. Consider this research's conclusions to be biased. Future studies should confirm the substitutability of high-value, non-essential national industries.

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