

A Study of the Effect of Social Support on College Students' E-Brand Favourability



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ABSTRACT: The evaluation of favourability is a complex decision-making behaviour that is susceptible to a variety of factors. What factors influence College students' e-brand favourability? Based on social cognitive theory and social support theory, we observe the factors of social support, mass media, Official Corporate Media, self-media, and self-efficacy on College students' e-brand favourability. In this study, data were collected through questionnaires. SPSS26.0, AMOS26.0 and Stata17.0 were used to test the relationship between the above factors and favourability evaluation. The results show that social support has a significant positive effect on College students' e-brand favourability; self-efficacy between social support and College students' e-brand favourability mediated; Official Corporate Media mediated between social support and College students' e-brand favourability. mass media and self-media directly influenced College students' e-brand favourability.

KEYWORDS: social support, public opinion, self-efficacy, College students' e-brand favourability, Official Corporate Media

I. INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of science and technology and the increasing maturity of the consumer market, the competition among electronic brands is becoming more and more intense. In this context, college students as one of the main consumer groups of electronic products. College students' e-brand favourability has a crucial impact on brand image and purchase intention(1-3).

College students' e-brand favourability is a complex process of emotional expression(4, 5). It is the result of the interaction between personal and environmental factors. public opinion and social support are involved in the emotional expression of College students' e-brand favourability(6). Social support is the instrumental and expressive support given to a person by social networks and close associates(7). Social support is an emergent variable in the expression of College students' e-brand favourability emotions(8). Social support can increase the sense of identity and self-confidence in College students' e-brand favourability evaluation process(9). As inferred from the Social Cognitive Theory(10), social environmental factors can influence College students' e-brand favourability through factors such as college students' affective and cognitive levels(11). College students' self-efficacy is an individual's perception of the level of awareness of an e-brand. When college students are confident in the technological development and after-sales service level of the electronic brands they know, they are more likely to increase their favourable opinion of the electronic brands. official corporate media, self-media, and mass media reports on electronic brands are the most convenient and fastest way for college students to obtain external information in the evaluation process. The most convenient and fastest way for college students to obtain external information in the evaluation process.

Therefore, the current study is based on social cognition and support theories to investigate how social support affects College students' e-brand favourability(12). That is, to construct the social support-public opinion-self-efficacy-College students' e-brand favourability model. It explores the influence of personal and environmental factors on college students' e-brand favourability evaluation process. This time, the model is proposed to make an attempt to innovate in the following three aspects. Firstly, social support theory is of psychological origin and is an emerging variable in investigating College students' e-brand favourability(13). Since favourability survey is a socially embedded activity, College students' e-brand favourability depends on public opinion environment. Therefore social support plays an important role in college students' judgement of e-brand favourability. Secondly, about the antecedent variables of favourability survey. In the past, the majority of studies have focused on the investigators themselves and ignored the social environment. The current study explores the relationship between public opinion and favourability more comprehensively. Finally, social cognitive theory states that individual behaviour can be influenced by both environmental and personal factors. The current experiment adds public opinion and self-efficacy as mediating variables to the model, complementing and improving the research on College students' e-brand favourability.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

A. Social support and college students' e-brand favourability

The process of evaluating college students' e-brand favourability relies heavily on the support of the social environment. social support is a multidimensional perspective that not only influences behaviours such as the exchange of information and the flow of material goods in the social network theory, but also includes emotional factors that are often overlooked(14). Social support in the evaluation of favourability refers to the support given by the social environment to college students' e-brand information, emotion, material and so on.

The process of College students' e-brand favourability evaluation is often able to obtain the needed emotional, informational, and material aspects in social support. Emotional aspects of encouragement and motivation involve the influence exerted on the individual by fellow students or teachers in the individual's environment. The uncertainty and unpredictability of the favourability evaluation makes the process of College students' e-brand favourability evaluation of the individual factors that do not accurately rely on the cognitive schema that they know and have learnt to accurately make a judgement(15). In this case, social support plays an important role in the evaluation of College students' e-brand favourability. social support affects the way individuals perceive the outside world (source of information). Social support affects the way individuals perceive the outside world (source of information), because an encouraging and motivating social environment makes individuals evaluate e-brands more positively, and social information helps college students to understand the level of technological development and the quality of after-sales service of an e-brand. It will improve college students' ability to understand and analyse from multiple perspectives, and help them to distinguish some true and false news. At the same time, it will also make the personal factors more positive to affirm their own evaluation. Let the independent individuals get emotional support, so that they are more willing to accept and perceive the e-brand information and make judgement. Material support is the most important part of College students' e-brand favourability evaluation, college students get financial and resource support in the evaluation process, which will increase the favourability of the evaluated(16).

Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypotheses.

H1: Social support has a positive effect on College students' e-brand favourability.

B. social support, self-efficacy and College students' e-brand favourability

Social support plays an important role in the evaluation of e-brand favourability. The main reason for this is that social support is closely related to self-efficacy in the evaluation of favourability(17). The social cognitive theory focuses on self-efficacy. self-efficacy extends to the domain to which the e-brand evaluation belongs, which is both an affirmation of the college students' ability to understand and analyse the process of improvement from multiple perspectives(18). Emotional support provided by society influences self-efficacy by promoting favourable perceptions and enabling individuals to assert themselves. specifically, emotional factors support university students' favourable evaluations of e-brands and provide them with encouragement. Enabling college students to be confident in their judgements and more certain of their discernment reduces the perceived risk of college students' mistrust of themselves. To make College students' e-brand favourability evaluation goal achievement positive attitude, and then enhance the favourability self-efficacy. the information support provided by the society can help College students to understand the challenges faced by e-brands in the process of e-brand development. The information support provided by the society can help students to understand the challenges faced by e-brands in the process of development. It can help students to have the right attitude to understand an e-brand, so that they can better understand the external environment in which an e-brand is situated. Enhancement of college students' confidence in their own abilities, which in turn enhances their self-efficacy in the process of evaluating college students' favourability.

It has been found that people who believe that they have the ability to do something will show stronger goal persistence. Good sense evaluation is a complex, non-linear process(19). Evaluators will have their own new ideas at any time, and in this evaluation process, some evaluators will abandon his original perceptions at any time and choose to accept new information. Individuals with higher self-efficacy will have positive beliefs about their ability to make their own positive evaluations of current e-brands. Making their own ideas stick in the face of public opinion environmental challenges and thus making judgements. In addition, individuals who are confident in their abilities are more likely to identify the external environment, utilise external resources, and thus reinforce their expectations of their goals(20).

There are not many contemporary studies exploring the correlation between self-efficacy and College students' e-brand favourability evaluations, but the positive role that self-efficacy plays on favourability evaluations has been generally recognised(21). Therefore, this paper suggests that social support can influence college students' e-brand favourability ratings by influencing the self-efficacy of the favourability ratings. Based on this, this paper proposes the following hypotheses.

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H2: The self-efficacy of good sense evaluation has a mediating role in the relationship between social support and College students' e-brand favourability evaluation.

C. social support, public opinion and College students' e-brand favourability

Social support for e-brand favourability ratings can be channelled through public opinion(22).Public opinion refers to the information gained during the evaluation of College students' e-brand favourability. This information increases college students' identification with the event they are involved in. In a recent study, it was found that public opinion under social support can influence college students' identification and judgement of the events they are involved in(23).In the process of goodwill evaluation, support from public opinion helps college students to make their own judgement better. The support from public opinion helps college students to make their own judgement and to feel more confident about the identity of the events they are involved in, which in turn strengthens the positive emotions of the participants and enhances their passion for participation. In addition, support from public opinion is also likely to lead to a more positive evaluation of the activities in which the participants are engaged. The support of public opinion is also likely to make participants evaluate their own activities more positively. They think that what they are doing is valuable and have a more optimistic attitude towards the activities they are engaging in, which shapes their sense of identity and belonging to the activities, and improves their ability to understand and analyse the activities from multiple perspectives(24).

It has been found that public opinion can influence participant judgement. In Moon J. Lee's study of public opinion polls, it was found that comments in public opinion interact with individuals' early attitudes. For example, negative comments can make people with negative attitudes more negative(25).The public opinion of e-brand includes three parts: mass media, Official Corporate Media, and self-media. mass media, Official Corporate Media, and self-media play a positive role. It will make the participants in the survey hold optimistic attitudes towards the judgements made, making it less likely that participants will reevaluate or change the motivation of existing judgements, and participants are more likely to stick to their existing judgements in order to maintain this agreeable attitude. The self-concordance model in the previous study found that when a participant's pursued goal was determined to be meaningful, the participant would work harder to accomplish that goal. The reason why participants pursued their goals more diligently was because they had a stronger identification with their judgement or the decision they made(26).Essentially, individuals are trying to reconcile the relationship between identity and behaviour. When individuals take the identity of the activity participant as the core of their identity, they will participate in the action due to their sense of identity even if they are not fully equipped to participate in the activity at the moment. Therefore, social support plays an important role in the impact investigation of College students' e-brand favourability. Under the condition of social support through mass media, Official Corporate Media, and self-media in public opinion to shape the participants' sense of identification with the e-brand favourability evaluation activity, to make the participants more confident in their favourability activity evaluation and to enhance the favourability evaluation activity's value. Based on this, this paper proposes the following hypotheses.

H3: Public opinion mediates the relationship between social support and college students' e-brand favourability.

The proposed hypothesis model is shown in Figure 1

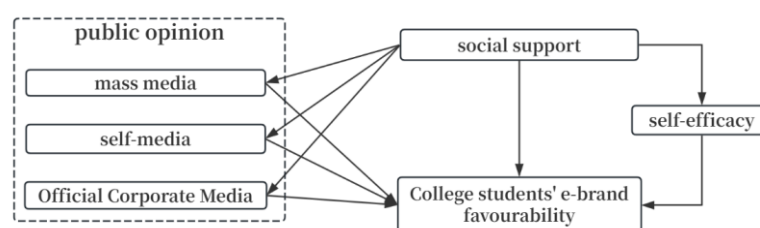


Figure 1 Evaluation model diagram of e-brand favourability

III. RESEARCH METHODS

A. Sample and data collection

This paper mainly explores how social support affects College students' e-brand favourability under the conditions of self-efficacy of favourability evaluation and public opinion as a mediator. Because the experimental study mainly focuses on college students, the subjects of the experimental study are college students. Sample data were collected by means of a questionnaire in this experiment. The initial draft of the questionnaire was prepared at the initial stage of the experiment, and the design of the questionnaire and the expression of the questions were improved through interviews with college student associations and heart counsellors. Before the distribution of the questionnaire, a pre-survey was conducted with 50 college students, and the questions of the questionnaire were finally adjusted. Finally, a large-scale distribution and collection of questionnaires was carried out, and the areas where the universities studied are located are mainly concentrated in Xinxiang City, Zhengzhou City, Kaifeng City and so on.

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A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed, 430 questionnaires were collected, excluding incomplete answers and questionnaires with obvious tendencies, 320 valid questionnaires were received, with an effective recovery rate of 64%.

B. Measurement of variables

The measurement scales used in this study were based on well-established foreign and domestic scales, and the borrowed foreign scales were translated several times, mainly to ensure the accuracy of the academic language of the scales. This paper draws on the research of Klyver(27), A six-item scale was used to measure social support on College students' e-brand favourability evaluation, and the main measurements included the emotional and material support given by classmates, teachers, parents, etc. during the e-brand favourability evaluation process, and the information support given by the brand during the e-brand favourability evaluation.

Refer to studies by Vonglao, Paothai(28) and Murano, Dana(29). A six-item scale was used to measure the influence of Official Corporate Media and self-media on college students' self-efficacy in public opinion. The main items include: I have the ability to make judgement on the evaluation of e-brands goodwill, and I will refer to Official Corporate Media reports in the process of evaluating e-brands goodwill. For the measurement of College students' e-brand favourability, this paper refers to the studies of Stieger(30) and Cotterill(31). There are 6 items in the setup scale, including I will continue to make my own judgement on the favourability of e-brands even if most people disagree with me, I will not give up my idea even if I face a lot of social pressures in the process of evaluating the favourability of e-brands, and I will seriously consider whether or not to continue evaluating the favourability of e-brands when college students around me drop out of the evaluation, etc. The above scale is measured on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 to 5 indicating from totally disagree to totally agree. The above scale items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 to 5 indicating from completely disagree to completely agree.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL RESULTS

A. Reliability and validity tests

The reliability test of the whole experiment was validated using the alpha coefficient of Cronbach's alpha as the test criterion, using the data statistics software SPSS. As shown in Table 1, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of social support, mass media, Official Corporate Media, self-media, self-efficacy, and College students' e-brand favourability constructs were all greater than 0.85. The alpha coefficients for the social support, mass media, Official Corporate Media, self-media, self-efficacy, and college students' e-brand favourability constructs were all greater than 0.85. Simultaneous deletion of any of the question items in the survey research scale did not result in a significant increase or decrease in the alpha coefficients for Cronbach's alpha. efficacy, and College students' e-brand favourability constructs had the smallest cumulative variance contribution of 61.655%. The reliability and internal consistency of the scale can be effectively determined using the average variance extracted (AVE) and combined reliability (CR), as can be seen in Table 1, the AVE values of the constructs tested are all greater than 0.5 CR are all greater than 0.8. This proves that the aggregated validity of the experimental variables is good. Combined with Table 2, it can be seen that the square root of the mean variance extracted for all variables is greater than the correlation coefficient between the variable and the other variables, which indicates that the discriminant validity of the sample is good. In addition, AMOS 26.0 software was used to conduct a validation factor analysis, and the results obtained were $\chi^2/df = 1.617$, CFI = 0.948, GFI = 0.856, TLI = 0.944, IFI = 0.948, NFI = 0.875, and RMSEA = 0.044 All of the above results indicate that the model fit is high and the discriminant validity is good.

Table 1. Impact factor analysis

<i>Variant</i>	<i>Minimum factor loadings</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>AVE</i>	<i>Cronbach α</i>	<i>KMO</i>	<i>Total variance explained</i>
social support	0.699	0.904	0.611	0.919	0.916	0.712
mass media	0.639	0.881	0.597	0.881	0.872	0.677
Official Corporate Media	0.650	0.879	0.592	0.883	0.872	0.682
self-media	0.639	0.879	0.590	0.878	0.878	0.673
self-efficacy	0.644	0.916	0.651	0.918	0.922	0.708
College students' e-brand favourability	0.562	0.921	0.569	0.922	0.941	0.616

B. Common method deviation test

The variables of social support, mass media, Official Corporate Media, self-media, and self-efficacy in this study are in the form of questionnaires. This will cause homoscedastic errors in the pilot survey, which in turn will make the pilot not accurately reflect the social support, mass media, Official Corporate Media, self-media, and self-efficacy on College students' e-brand

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relationship between favourability ratings. In order to reduce the impact of homoscedastic error on the experimental investigation, the experiment was conducted by using the following four methods. Firstly the questionnaire filled out by the survey sample was measured anonymously at multiple time points (different locations to go to the research), reaction point questions were set, and the questions were cross-arranged and other measures were used. Secondly, the test was carried out, and through unrotated principal component analysis of all the question items, it was found that a total of seven factors were extracted, which cumulatively explained 67.746% of the total variance. The first unrotated principal component explained only 31.269% of the variance variance, which did not exceed the recommended value of 50%. CFA analysis was further used due to the shortcomings of the Harman one-factor method. It was found that the results of the measured social support, mass media, Official Corporate Media, self-media, self-efficacy, and College students' e-brand favourability constructs ($\chi^2/df = 1.316$, and CFI = 0.974, GFI = 0.884, TLI = 0.971, IFI = 0.974, NFI = 0.899, RMSEA = 0.031) were significantly better than the one-way results ($\chi^2/df = 7.253$, CFI = 0.464, GFI = 0.441, TLI = 0.431, IFI = 0.466, NFI = 0.430, RMSEA = 0.140). Finally, the non-measurable latent factor approach was used for testing and the results obtained ($\chi^2/df = 1.221$, CFI = 0.983, GFI = 0.889, TLI = 0.980, IFI = 0.983, NFI = 0.912, RMSEA = 0.026) found that the results using non-measurable latent factors are comparable to the results of the measured social support, mass media, Official Corporate Media, self-media, and College students' e-brand favourability constructs results were only very marginally optimised. This suggests that the common method variance problem in this paper was effectively controlled and the covariance problem did not have a serious impact on the results of the study.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics results and correlation coefficient matrix of variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
<i>Social support</i>	3.100	1.187	-0.024	0.026	0.698**						
<i>Mass media</i>	3.477	1.187	0.067	0.033	-	-					
<i>Official Corporate Media</i>	3.178	1.120	-0.002	0.063	0.376**	0.501**	-0.32**				
<i>Self-media</i>	3.083	1.124	0.003	-0.087	0.367**	0.491**	-	0.239**	0.347**		
<i>Self-efficacy</i>	3.140	1.151	-0.03	-0.056	0.256**	0.375**	-	0.184**	0.217**	0.301**	
<i>College students' e-brand favourability</i>	3.073	1.085	0.058	0.018	0.440**	0.481**	-	0.226**	0.366**	0.290**	0.307**

Note:** denotes $p < 0.01$, * denotes $p < 0.05$, same below.

Table 3. Regression analysis of each influencing factor

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<i>Social support</i>	0.012		0.001					0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.002
<i>Mass media</i>	0.797			0.039					0.436				0.746
<i>Official Corporate Media</i>	0.009				0.001					0.004			0.009
<i>Self-media</i>	0.713					0.007					0.261		0.462
<i>Self-efficacy</i>	0.006						0.001					0.004	
<i>R²</i>	0.297	0.202	0.26	0.213	0.248	0.221	0.243	0.145	0.261	0.278	0.263	0.279	0.28
<i>Adjusted R²</i>	0.279	0.195	0.25	0.203	0.239	0.211	0.234	0.135	0.249	0.267	0.251	0.278	0.264
<i>F</i>	16.42	26.73	27.60	21.34	26.01	22.29	25.33	13.39	22.17	24.22	19.72	24.33	17.32
	6	9	2	3	0	0	3	3	6	7	8	2	6

Note:** denotes $p < 0.01$, * denotes $p < 0.05$, same below.

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C. Hypothesis testing

(1) Main effects test

The test for this research is the positive effect of social support and College students' e-brand favourability. The test was regressed on College students' e-brand favourability as the dependent variable and social support as the independent variable. As can be seen from Model 1 in Table 3, social support effectively explains 25% of the variance in the evaluation of College students' e-brand favourability. And social support has a significant positive effect on college students' e-brand favourability ($\beta = 0.334, p < 0.001$).

(2) A test of the relationship between social support, self-efficacy and College students' e-brand favourability

The pilot study mainly used hierarchical regression to verify the mediating role of self-efficacy of College students' e-brand favourability evaluation. The results, as can be seen in Model 8 of Table 3, show that the positive effect of social support on self-efficacy is significant ($\beta = 0.382, p < 0.001$). Meanwhile, as can be seen in Model 7 of Table 3, self-efficacy has a significant positive effect on College students' e-brand favourability evaluation process ($\beta = 0.210, p < 0.001$). Finally, social support and self-efficacy were simultaneously regressed as independent variables on College students' e-brand favourability evaluation. The results from model 2 in Table 3 show that social support ($\beta = 0.276, p < 0.001$) and self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.152, p < 0.004$) still have a significant positive effect on College students' e-brand favourability evaluation. However, the regression coefficients of social support and self-efficacy on College students' e-brand favourability evaluation showed a significant change, therefore, there is a significant change in the role of self-efficacy in the relationship between social support and College students' e-brand favourability evaluation. Brand favourability evaluation has a partial mediating role between social support and College students' e-brand favourability evaluation. The hierarchical regression method has some limitations and cannot attribute overlapping variation to any of the predictor variables in the model. In order to make the findings more convincing, the pilot study referred to the method of Wen Zhonglin et al. and used the Sobel test to further verify the mediating effect. The results showed that the mediating effect of self-efficacy between social support and College students' e-brand favourability evaluation was significant ($Z = 3.582, p < 0.01$).

(3) A test of the relationship between social support, public opinion and college students' e-brand favourability

The experiment used hierarchical regression to test the mediating role of mass media, Official Corporate Media, and self-media, respectively. As can be seen from models 4, 5, and 6 in Table 3, mass media, Official Corporate Media, self-media, present a positive and significant effect on college students' e-brand goodwill evaluation. It is further shown in Table 3 Models 9, 10, and 11 that mass media and social support also present a significant positive influence on College students' e-brand favourability ratings. Sobel's test was used to further verify the mediating effect, and the results were mass media ($Z=0.749, P>0.05$), Official Corporate Media ($Z=2.841, P<0.05$), and self-media ($Z=1.253, P>0.05$). From the results of the experiment, Official Corporate Media was found to have a mediating role between social support and College students' e-brand favourability evaluation.

(4) Model calibration

According to the hypothesis test it was found that mass media and self-media showed a significant positive effect on students' e-brand favourability ratings, but there was no mediating effect between social support and College students' e-brand favourability ratings. The hypothesised model was corrected according to the experimental results and the correction results are shown in Figure 2.

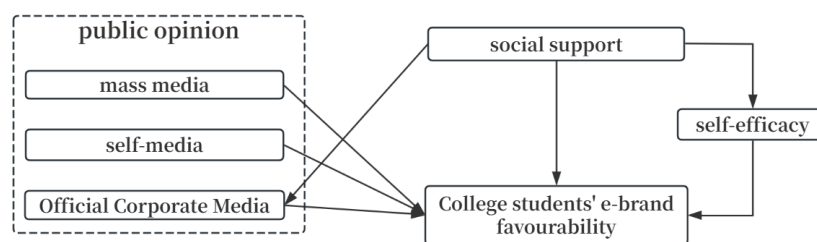


Fig. 2 Corrected e-brand favourability evaluation model map

V. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The experimental study is mainly based on social support theory and social cognitive theory, and after analysing the experimental results, the model of 'social support-Official Corporate Media-self-efficacy-College students' e-brand favourability evaluation' is finally constructed, as shown in Figure 2. efficacy-College students' e-brand favourability evaluation' model, as shown in Fig. 2, the experiment finally obtained the following conclusions. First, social support has a significant positive effect on college students' e-brand favourability. First, social support has a significant positive effect on college students' e-brand favourability evaluations, i.e., when college students perceive social support, they tend to make positive e-brand favourability evaluations; second, self-efficacy is the transmission mechanism between social support and college students' e-brand favourability

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evaluations. College students are in the main position in e-brand favourability evaluation activities. As the main position of college students, self-efficacy will affect all aspects of favourability evaluation. social support will give some help to college students in terms of emotion, information and so on. Social support can help college students to identify and analyse the evaluation of e-brands in the public opinion environment, enhance the confidence of college students in their own judgement ability, firmly believe in their own judgement ability, so that college students will not easily give up their own judgement because of some news or social media news. Thirdly, from social support to college students' e-brand favourability evaluation requires the promotion of Official Corporate Media. Official Corporate Media played a key intermediary role in the whole investigation process. Because the report of Official Corporate Media has certain authority. It will make college students believe more strongly in the reasonableness of their own evaluation of e-brands' favourability, and influence their attitudes towards the evaluation of favourability. And it increases the understanding of college students about electronic brands, which in turn improves their attitude towards the evaluation of goodwill towards electronic brands. Fourthly, from Table 3, it can be seen that the two factors of mass media and self-media in College students' e-brand favourability evaluation survey directly affect college students' evaluation of e-brand. However, mass media has a limited impact on college students' self-efficacy, mainly because college students trust the brand's official sources more when evaluating e-brands.

This paper provides some implications for the goodwill survey of electronic brands. First, the investigator should recognise the importance of the entire social support network on the evaluation of electronic brands before the implementation of the research, and keep abreast of the local social network trends or public opinion environment, so as to maintain a sharp perception, which is conducive to achieving the intended goals in the research process. Secondly, for enterprises, they can strengthen their brand publicity through the Official Corporate Media platform, and establish a positive, aggressive and responsible brand image in the minds of consumers. Thirdly, for the e-brand evaluation survey, Official Corporate Media plays an important role in the e-brand evaluation process of individual college students.

Although this research study provides some references for e-brand evaluation and has certain practical significance, there are some shortcomings. Firstly, the research adopts the Likert scale 5-point scale, but the Likert scale itself has some shortcomings, it can't distinguish the structural difference of the same score. Secondly, because our survey object for college students, and the use of the campus field interview mode, with the cost and collection of samples of the limitations, resulting in the distribution of the number of respondents in the region is not uniform, the future survey can be through the expansion of the scope of the research to increase the sample universality.

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