

Haidilao's Corporate Image and Strategies for Enhancing Corporate Reputation

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Abstract: This paper takes Haidilao as an example to analyze the relationship between corporate image, corporate reputation, and customer behavioral intention. It studies the mediating role of corporate reputation between corporate image and customer behavioral intention. An online questionnaire survey was conducted, with 370 valid responses collected. The results show that there is a significant positive impact among corporate image, corporate reputation, and customer behavioral intention. Corporate reputation has a mediating effect in the relationship between corporate image and customer behavioral intention.

Keywords: Haidilao, Corporate Image, Corporate Reputation, Customer Behavioral Intention.

1. Introduction

The catering industry has a large scale, a wide variety of categories, countless brands, and each track has its own unique features and different operating methods. The "2022 China Catering Industry Annual Report" shows that in 2021, the business income of China's catering industry reached 4689.5 billion yuan, an increase of 18.6% year-on-year. The business income of the catering industry above designated size was more than 1400 billion yuan, an increase of 23.5% compared to the same period last year. In terms of various consumption types, the consumption growth of formal meals and hot pot is stable. Among the surveyed enterprises, the approximate proportions of each main business type are: formal meal enterprises account for 27.8%, hot pot enterprises account for 24.3%, and group meal enterprises account for 18.9% [1]. It can be seen that hot pot enterprises are the highest proportion of catering enterprises besides formal meal enterprises. Among them, Haidilao, as a typical representative of Sichuan-Chongqing hot pot, is in a leading position among its peers. Haidilao International Holdings Limited (hereinafter referred to as Haidilao) was established in 1994 and is a Sichuan-style hot pot chain brand. After more than 20 years of development, it has become the leading catering enterprise in the country, with the number of stores reaching more than 1400. As of 2022, Haidilao ranks first in both domestic and foreign Chinese catering markets.

The catering industry, especially the hot pot sector, is already a fiercely competitive market. However, Haidilao has stood out from many competitors by virtue of its distinctive corporate image and excellent corporate reputation. With the continuous advancement of the economy, consumers are paying more and more attention to the quality, taste, dining environment, and service attitude when choosing catering services. Haidilao attracts and retains customers by providing sincere and high-quality services. This sincere and high-quality service, as a label of Haidilao, is a measure in the hearts of customers and has become an integral part of the corporate image and corporate reputation. The corporate image and corporate reputation of Haidilao are the key factors that enable it to lead in the fierce market competition.

With the development of the hot pot market, more and more enterprises have begun to learn from and imitate Haidilao's

service, and improve on this basis, which has put great competitive pressure on Haidilao. If customers show a positive attitude towards Haidilao's service, environment, food, etc., they are more likely not to switch consumption and become loyal customers of Haidilao. Customer behavioral intention will also affect Haidilao's market reputation and image. Satisfied customers often spread by word of mouth, recommending Haidilao to their friends and relatives, thereby attracting more potential customers. Customer behavioral intention has a positive impact on Haidilao's long-term operation and brand building, so Haidilao must pay close attention to customer behavioral intention and meet customer needs and expectations in order to maintain its competitiveness and development.

This study, based on the perspective of tourists, explores the relationship between corporate image, corporate reputation, and customer behavioral intention through literature research and questionnaire survey methods. By conducting a questionnaire survey on the customer group of Haidilao restaurants, and using SPSS software to analyze the impact among corporate image, corporate reputation, and customer behavioral intention in the questionnaire, suggestions are provided for improving the corporate image and reputation of Haidilao enterprises.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Corporate Image

The corporate image variable encompasses four dimensions: corporate culture, brand image, social responsibility, and public evaluation. Corporate image plays a role in shaping consumers' overall perception of a company, covering aspects from brand image to corporate culture, and from public opinion to the social responsibilities the company undertakes. Corporate image is how the public perceives the goodwill formed by a company towards its customers (consumers), society, employees, and other stakeholders such as partners [2]. Some scholars believe that one of the subjects perceiving the corporate image is the general public. Due to the varying interest relationships and social connections each individual has with the company, their expectations of the company's value differ, resulting in variations in the corporate image among different people [3].

2.2. Customer Behavior Intention

The variable of customer behavioral intention includes three dimensions: repurchase intention, word-of-mouth behavior, and brand loyalty [4]. Behavioral intention refers to the willingness of customers to adopt a certain behavior in specific situations [5]. Post-purchase behavioral intentions of customers include satisfactory evaluations, word-of-mouth behaviors, and plans for repurchase; customer behavioral intentions are influenced by loyalty and switching costs [6]. Repurchase intention is an integral part of consumer psychology, reflecting the specific attitudes and feelings generated by consumers after purchasing a particular brand's product or service, which may evoke a sense of pleasure towards that brand. When consumers have a pleasant purchasing experience, they voluntarily recommend the brand's products or services to others and decide to continue purchasing them [7]. Brand loyalty, on the other hand, refers to the overall attitude towards a company's products or services and is one of the important factors governing actual purchasing behavior.

2.3. Corporate Reputation

The corporate reputation variable includes two dimensions: products and services, and emotional appeal [8]. Corporate reputation is a comprehensive evaluation of a company formed by its stakeholders based on personal feelings and experiences, specific corporate behaviors, and comparisons with the behaviors of competitors. Li Haiqin and Zhang Zigang view corporate reputation as the overall assessment expressed by groups interested in the company's interests, such as customers, investors, employees, and the general public [9]. That is, corporate reputation can be simply defined as the public's overall evaluation of a company [10].

2.4. The Relationship Between Corporate Image and Customer Behavioral Intentions

If a corporate image aligns with public expectations, the company can consistently receive positive feedback from the public when there is no crisis [11]. A good brand image not only provides a unique competitive advantage for the company but also brings more business opportunities and consumer loyalty [12].

2.5. The Relationship Between Corporate Image and Corporate Reputation

Building a corporate image is an opportunity, and enterprises can gain their own competitive advantages in the process of benefiting society. Enterprises enhance their corporate image by fulfilling their social responsibilities to stakeholders, making stakeholders feel the consistency

between their values and the values advocated by the enterprise, that is, establishing a good relationship with the enterprise, which can directly or indirectly improve the reputation of the enterprise [13]. Esen's (2013) research results show that corporate image and corporate social responsibility can improve the reputation of enterprises among a wide range of stakeholders [14].

2.6. The Relationship between Corporate Reputation and Customer Behavioral Intentions

Corporate reputation indeed has a significant impact on customer identification [9]. Reputation has a positive effect on customer behavioral intention and customer loyalty. Corporate reputation influences customer behavioral loyalty and emotional loyalty through its appeal and competitiveness, thereby playing a positive role in enhancing customer loyalty. Fombrun & Van Riel have confirmed through research that a good corporate reputation can enhance consumers' perceived effectiveness of the company's products and services, thereby strengthening consumers' determination to purchase [15]; Lafferty & Goldsmith found that corporate reputation significantly affects consumers' attitudes towards product brands and purchase intentions [16].

There is a strong correlation between corporate reputation and customer satisfaction, indicating that the impact of corporate reputation on customer churn is fully mediated by customer satisfaction [8].

Based on the above derivation, this study makes the following theoretical assumptions:

H1: Corporate image positively influences customer behavioral intention.

H2: Corporate image positively affects corporate reputation.

H3: Corporate reputation positively affects customer behavioral intention.

H4: Corporate reputation has a mediating effect in the relationship between corporate image and customer behavioral intention.

3. Study Design

3.1. Research Ideas

This study aims to explore the relationship between the corporate image, corporate reputation, and customer behavioral intentions of Haidilao restaurants. It analyzes and studies according to the dimensions corresponding to the three variables of corporate image, corporate reputation, and customer behavioral intentions. The research model is shown in Figure 1:

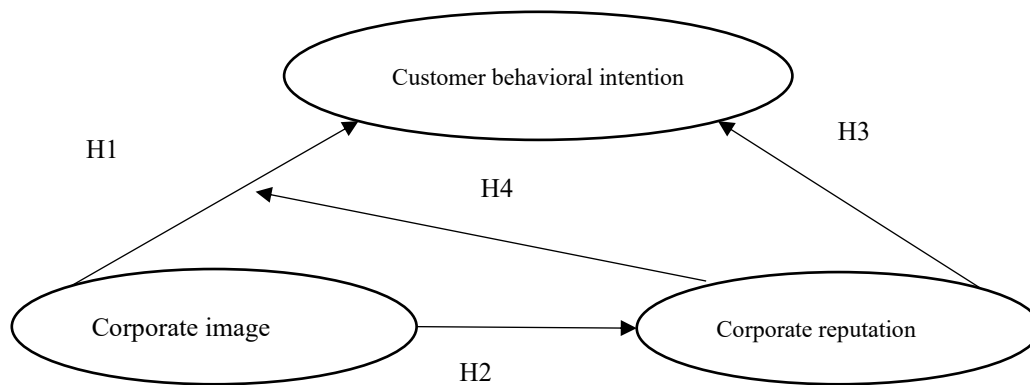


Figure 1. The hypothesized relationship between Haidilao's corporate image, customer behavioral intention, and corporate reputation

3.2. Research Methods

This paper aims to explore the understanding and perception of Haidilao's customer base towards the corporate image and reputation of Haidilao. A survey questionnaire was designed, targeting consumers at Haidilao restaurants. Both printed and electronic versions of the questionnaire were distributed to collect opinions from university students regarding their satisfaction with dining at Haidilao. The specific process involved designing the questions for the survey, distributing it to all university students, collecting the completed questionnaires, and then statistically analyzing the data. Using the survey as a research method can objectively reflect the awareness of undergraduate students, who are the primary customer group of Haidilao, about the brand. This allows researchers to gather useful data and conduct preliminary analyses, further understanding and grasping strategies to enhance Haidilao's corporate image and reputation, providing references for studying Haidilao's improvement strategies.

The method of this survey was to distribute questionnaires online. The designed questionnaire questions were made into formal questionnaires through the Questionnaire Star software, and then distributed and collected on platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, QQ, Moments, and Xiaohongshu, and the data was exported using Questionnaire Star. The survey was conducted from March 3, 2024 to March 23, 2023, lasting for a total of twenty days.

The survey collected a total of 406 questionnaires, of which 36 were excluded because they did not mark "yes" for the first question. The final number of valid questionnaires received was 370, with an effective recovery rate of 91.13%.

4. Analysis of Questionnaire Data

4.1. Reliability and Validity Analysis

The SPSS25.0 statistical analysis tool was used to test the reliability and validity of three scales: corporate reputation, customer behavioral intention, and corporate image. Reliability analysis measures the stability, credibility, and consistency of the survey questionnaire's analysis and measurement results. The analysis shows that the alpha coefficient of this scale is $0.973 > 0.9$, indicating that the consistency of this scale is very high, and the overall reliability of the survey questionnaire is "very high", which can be further analyzed and verified. Further analysis found that the alpha coefficients of the three scales are 0.884, 0.911, and 0.959 respectively. Among them, the scales for customer behavioral intention and corporate image are $0.911 > 0.9$ and 0.959, indicating that the consistency of these two scales is

very high; the scale for corporate reputation is 0.884, which is between 0.7 and 0.9, indicating that the internal consistency of this scale is good and can truly reflect the situation.

Validity analysis is mainly used to test the rationality of the survey questionnaire. This study uses SPSS25.0 software to analyze the validity of the questionnaire. Factor analysis is the main statistical method for testing the construct validity of scales. This study mainly uses the tool SPASS25.0 software to perform exploratory factor analysis on the data, obtaining the KMO value and Bartlett spherical test value of the data, thereby analyzing the construct validity of the data. The analysis found that the KMO value of this scale is $0.746 > 0.6$, and the significance is $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating that the survey data has reached a good level of validity.

4.2. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Analysis of sample attributes reveals: In terms of gender, females account for 52.16%, while males make up 47.84%. Regarding age, the largest group consists of customers aged 20 to 30 years, numbering 189 individuals, representing 51.08%, and the smallest group is those over 60 years old, with only 17 individuals, accounting for 4.59%. In terms of educational level, the majority have a bachelor's degree, with 204 individuals, making up 55.14%. For monthly income, the largest group earns below 3000, totaling 241 individuals, which constitutes 65.14%, primarily because the surveyed subjects are mainly students.

4.3. Regression Analysis

This study uses a univariate linear regression analysis method to verify each regression path.

Firstly, the relationship between corporate image and customer behavioral intention was analyzed. The Anova analysis found that the F value of the model is 1090.705 and the significance P is 0.000, which is less than 0.01, indicating a significant linear impact relationship between the variables of corporate image and customer behavioral intention, reaching a significant level. Further analysis of the regression coefficient revealed that the regression coefficient of the two variables is 0.829, and it is significant at the level of < 0.05 , meaning that the independent variable of corporate image dimension can significantly affect the dependent variable of customer behavioral intention dimension. This implies that the corporate image dimension is a causal variable of the customer behavioral intention dimension, and the corporate image can significantly positively influence customer behavioral intention. The higher the corporate image, the higher the customer behavioral intention will be. For every unit increase in corporate image, customer behavioral intention increases by 0.829. In the regression model of

corporate image and customer behavioral intention, the R-squared value is 0.783, indicating that 78.3% of the overall variation in the dependent variable of customer behavioral intention dimension comes from the independent variable of corporate image dimension. The regression model can explain 78.3% of the variation, and this regression model is valid, thus confirming the hypothesis H1.

Secondly, analyzing the regression relationship between corporate image and corporate reputation, ANOVA analysis of this model shows an F value of 699.492 and a significance P of $0.000 < 0.01$, indicating a significant linear impact relationship between the variables of corporate image and corporate reputation, reaching a significant level. Further analysis reveals a regression coefficient of 0.74, and it is significant at the level of < 0.05 , meaning that the independent variable of corporate image dimension can significantly affect the dependent variable of corporate reputation dimension. This implies that the corporate image dimension is a causal variable for the corporate reputation dimension; the higher the corporate image, the higher the corporate reputation will be. For every unit increase in corporate image, corporate reputation increases by 0.740. Additionally, the R-squared value of the regression model is 0.645, indicating that 64.5% of the overall variation in the dependent variable of corporate reputation dimension comes from the independent variable of corporate image dimension. The regression model can explain 64.5% of the variability, proving that hypothesis H2 is valid.

Thirdly, the regression relationship between corporate

reputation and customer behavioral intention was analyzed. The ANOVA analysis found that the model's F value is 1090.705 and the significance P is $0.000 < 0.01$, indicating a significant linear impact relationship between them, reaching a significant level. The regression coefficient is 0.879, and it is significant at the level of < 0.05 , meaning that the independent variable of corporate reputation dimension can significantly affect the dependent variable of customer behavioral intention dimension. This implies that the corporate reputation dimension is a causal variable for the customer behavioral intention dimension, with each unit increase in corporate reputation leading to a 0.879 increase in customer behavioral intention. The R-squared value in the regression model is 0.748, indicating that 74.8% of the overall variation in the dependent variable of environmental responsibility behavior dimension comes from the independent variable of corporate reputation dimension. The regression model can explain 74.8% of the variation, proving that the hypothesis H3 is valid.

4.4. Mediating Effect

This study adopts a stepwise method to test whether corporate reputation plays a mediating role between corporate image and customer behavioral intention. The analysis results are shown in Table 1, with an adjusted R-squared of 0.783. After adding the mediating variable, it rises to 0.849, showing significant effects, indicating that corporate reputation plays a mediating role in this model.

Table 1. Summary of Corporate Image, Corporate Reputation, and Customer Behavioral Intention Model

Model	R	R ²	R square after adjustment	Error in standard estimation	R-square variation	F Variation	Change statistical degrees of freedom 1	Degrees of freedom 2	Ignificance F variation
1	0.885 ^a	0.783	0.783	0.58476	0.783	1330.799	1	368	0
2	0.922 ^b	0.85	0.849	0.48957	0.067	162.976	1	367	0
a. Predictor variable: (Constant), Corporate Image									
b. Predictor variables: (Constant), Corporate Image, Corporate Reputation									
c. Dependent variable: Customer Behavioral Intention									

The coefficient test found the results in Table 2. When the independent variable is only corporate image, the coefficient is 0.850. After adding the mediating variable of corporate reputation, the coefficient of the independent variable

corporate image becomes 0.698, decreasing from 0.850 to 0.698, and the significance is < 0.001 , indicating that the mediating variable of corporate reputation plays a partial mediating role. Therefore, hypothesis H4 is established.

Table 2. Test of Coefficients a for Corporate Image, Corporate Reputation, and Customer Behavioral Intention

Model		Unnormalized coefficient		Normalization factor	t	Significance	Collinearity statistics		
		B	Standard error	Beta			Tolerances	VIF	
1	(Constant)	0.506	0.134		3.773	0.000			
	Corporate image	0.850	0.026	0.865	33.026	0.000	1.000	1.000	
2	(Constant)	0.445	0.134		3.324	0.000			
	Corporate image	0.698	0.055	0.710	12.766	0.000	0.496	0.217	
	Corporate Reputation	0.161	0.051	0.175	3.153	0.000	0.496	0.217	
a. Dependent variable: Customer behavioral intention									

5. Research Conclusions

5.1. Study Summary

This paper takes corporate image, corporate reputation, and customer behavioral intentions as research objects. By comprehensively analyzing the research results of previous scholars, this paper establishes a set of practical investigation ideas and method systems. After determining the

investigation ideas and methods, the design, distribution, and collection of the survey questionnaire are carried out. The collected survey questionnaires are analyzed using SPSS 25.0 software tools. Through detailed interpretation and analysis of the survey data, hypotheses are made about the mutual influences among the three dimensions of corporate image, corporate reputation, and customer behavioral intentions. The research hypotheses are verified through correlation analysis and regression analysis, concluding that all hypotheses are

valid.

From the empirical test results, all four proposed research hypotheses have been verified. That is, "corporate image" can significantly positively affect "customer behavioral intention." The better the "corporate image," the stronger the "customer behavioral intention." The better the "corporate image," the better the "corporate reputation." The better the "corporate reputation," the stronger the "customer behavioral intention." Through the mediating effect, it can be concluded that the mediating variable of corporate reputation plays a partial mediating role.

The study found that the corporate image of Haidilao Hot Pot Restaurant has a significant positive impact on its reputation. Corporate image, as a comprehensive reflection of a company's external display and internal quality, directly affects customers' evaluations and trust in the company. When the corporate image is good, customers are more inclined to give the company positive reviews, thereby enhancing the company's reputation. This finding emphasizes the importance of building a corporate image; companies should focus on improving service quality, ambiance, and other aspects to shape a positive corporate image. Because the corporate image not only concerns the company's reputation but also directly influences customers' purchasing decisions and behavioral intentions. Haidilao, with its high-quality service and unique brand image, has stimulated customer loyalty and the desire for repeat visits. This indicates that when shaping their image, companies should focus on establishing emotional connections with customers, enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Corporate reputation has a significant positive impact on customer behavioral intentions. Haidilao Hot Pot Restaurant, due to its high-quality service, delicious food, and positive customer feedback, has accumulated a high reputation, attracting both new and returning customers. A strong reputation reduces the cost and risk for customers in making choices, prompting them to trust and rely on these businesses among many options. Satisfied customers also share their positive experiences with others, further expanding the company's customer base and market share. This demonstrates the crucial role of corporate reputation in shaping customer loyalty and promoting word-of-mouth marketing. Therefore, companies should focus on reputation management by improving service quality and customer satisfaction to enhance customer behavioral intentions, thereby achieving sustainable development.

Corporate reputation not only directly influences customer behavioral intentions but also plays a significant intermediary role between corporate image and customer behavioral intentions. A company with a good corporate image, by providing high-quality products and services, accumulates positive word-of-mouth and a high degree of corporate reputation. This reputation further translates into customer trust and loyalty, prompting them to make positive purchasing decisions and behavioral intentions. Therefore, corporate reputation serves as a bridge connecting corporate image and customer behavioral intentions, enabling the indirect impact of corporate image on customer behavioral intentions to be realized. This finding emphasizes that while shaping a favorable image, companies should also focus on accumulating and maintaining their reputation to better promote the formation of customer behavioral intentions and achieve long-term development for the enterprise.

5.2. Research Implications

Based on the above research conclusions and discussions, the following three management insights are proposed for Haidilao Hot Pot Restaurant:

Continuously strengthen corporate image building. Haidilao should continue to focus on improving service quality, ambiance, and staff training to shape and maintain its unique and positive corporate image. Through continuous innovation and optimization, the company can maintain a leading position in the minds of customers, thereby indirectly enhancing corporate reputation and customer behavioral intentions.

Strengthen corporate reputation management. Haidilao should pay attention to customer feedback and word-of-mouth dissemination, actively respond to customer needs and complaints, in order to maintain its high reputation. By regularly collecting and analyzing customer opinions, timely adjusting business strategies and service standards, to ensure the continuous improvement of corporate reputation.

Utilizing corporate reputation to promote customer behavioral intentions. Haidilao can fully leverage its high reputation, enhancing customer loyalty and repeat purchase intentions through membership systems, promotional activities, and other means. At the same time, it encourages satisfied customers to share their positive experiences, attracting more new customers through word-of-mouth marketing, thereby further expanding its market share.

5.3. Insufficient Research

The first limitation of this study is that the respondents are mainly concentrated in the age group of 20-30 years, which limits the representativeness of the sample. Secondly, the data collection for this study was conducted online through questionnaires. Due to limited collection time, neither the quantity nor the response time could be guaranteed. Future researchers might consider extending the data collection period.

Acknowledgements

Supported by the Innovative Training Program Project for Students of Zhaoqing University "The Influence of Corporate Image of Hotpot Restaurants on Repur-chase Intention" (X202310580161).

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