



THE FACTORS INFLUENCING WALMART'S INTERNATIONAL MARKETING STRATEGY



**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
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This Independent Study Has Been Approved as a Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Business Administration

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ABSTRACT

As the former retail giant, Walmart's current intentional marketing strategy has failed to effectively respond to shifting market conditions and the competitive landscape. This has led to a continuous erosion of its brand's competitive advantage, resulting in lackluster market expansion and sales growth. Consequently, the company has fallen behind its competitors in several key marketing battlegrounds. This study centered on a systematic analysis of the pivotal factors that determine the efficacy of its strategy, with the aim to explore the impact of cultural elements, digital construction and brand experience on international marketing strategy.

This study employed a quantitative research approach, targeting customers who had previously purchased products from Walmart stores in Nanning. A structured questionnaire was utilized to measure the impact of cultural elements, digital construction, and brand experience on international competition strategy. The distribution and collection of the questionnaires for this study were conducted from July 1, 2025, to August 1, 2025. A total of 465 questionnaires were collected, and 450 valid questionnaires were retained, resulting in a valid response rate of 96.77%.

The multiple regression analysis revealed a significant impact of cultural elements, digital construction and brand experience on international market competition strategy. To effectively develop international marketing strategy, this study proposed concrete recommendations based on data analysis findings, focusing on three core areas: adjusting the mix and intensity of cultural elements, enhancing synergy through digital channels, and crafting an enduring brand experience.

Key words: cultural elements, digital construction, brand experience, international marketing strategy, Walmart

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In the blink of an eye, my postgraduate journey is drawing to a close with the completion of this independent study. As I put the final touches on this manuscript, I found myself filled with mixed emotions, nostalgic for the intense yet fulfilling life that is about to end, and reluctant to leave this campus that has been my home for years. At this moment, only words of gratitude can fully express what I feel. Throughout my postgraduate studies, I have been fortunate to receive support and guidance from many people. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the professors, classmates, and friends who have helped me along the way. Thank you for your companionship, which has not only facilitated my growth but also left me with memories I will cherish for a lifetime.

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Chen Haosen

DECLARATION

I, Chen Haosen, hereby declare that this Independent Study entitled “*The Factors Influencing Walmart’s International Marketing Strategy*” is an original work and has never been submitted to any academic institution for a degree.

(Chen Haosen)

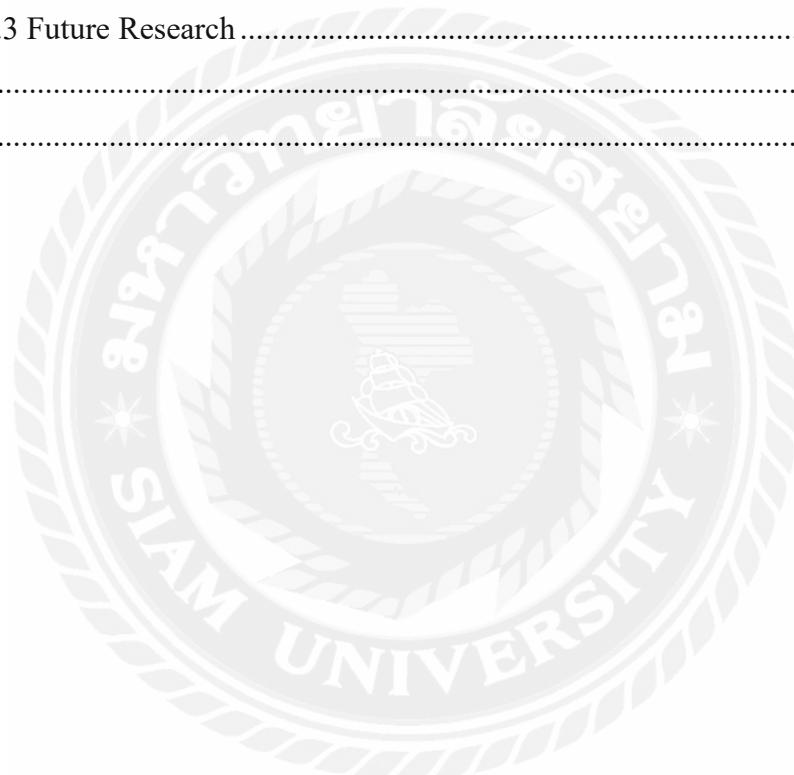
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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In recent years, rising living standards and evolving consumer attitudes have fueled the rapid global expansion and remarkable success of chain supermarkets. These stores have gained widespread popularity by offering a wide array of products at affordable prices in a convenient shopping environment. Traditional retail models often faced challenges such as relatively high prices, a limited selection of goods, and less comfortable shopping atmospheres (Jiang & Wang, 2020). In contrast, chain supermarkets leverage centralized procurement, economies of scale, and optimized operational efficiencies. This enables them to provide a more diverse product range at lower prices. Furthermore, they offer more pleasant and comfortable shopping environments, making it easier for consumers to find what they need.

However, the supermarket industry is now confronting unprecedented challenges necessitating profound transformation. This is driven by the increasingly evident trends of consumer demand diversification and personalization, coupled with the rapid expansion of online retail (Li, 2020). Chain supermarkets, in particular, are feeling distinct pressure from intensified competition, the disruptive impact of e-commerce, and persistently rising costs. Despite the continued growth of the total domestic retail market, the market share of physical supermarkets has been declining, posing significant threats to the sector. Firstly, with the increasing convenience of payment models and technological advancements, new omnichannel e-commerce supermarkets such as Tmall and JD.com leverage the robust resources of their parent companies. They have established nationwide procurement, warehousing, and logistics systems, offering high-quality shopping experiences like "next-day delivery" or even "same-day delivery," which have captured a substantial portion of the market share from conventional supermarkets (Liu, 2024). Secondly, as basic livelihood issues in China are increasingly being addressed, more consumers are pursuing quality, personalized, and differentiated service experiences. The rise of overseas purchasing platforms has further intensified competition in the high-end consumer goods market, exacerbating the challenges faced by domestic supermarkets.

This trend is clearly illustrated by the impact on Walmart. Walmart Inc. originated as a modest, family-owned discount store in a small American town. Founded by Sam Walton in 1962 as a single discount supermarket, it has evolved into a multinational retail corporation with over 11,600 stores globally and a workforce of

approximately two million employees. This remarkable growth has cemented its leading position in the global retail industry. In 1992, the State Council of China approved the "State Council Approval on Utilizing Foreign Capital in the Commercial Retailing Sector," formally opening the nation's retail industry to foreign investment. However, the growth of foreign retailers in China remained notably slow during this initial phase (Chen, 2010). The second significant push came in October 1995, when the Chinese government made another attempt to liberalize the retail sector (Sun et al., 2020). Seizing this opportunity, Walmart entered the vast and promising mainland Chinese market, opening its first Walmart Supercenter in the Luohu District of Shenzhen. According to Walmart's 2013 Annual Report, the company had established a dominant presence in China with 385 shopping malls and 8 Sam's Club stores, solidifying its position as the largest foreign retailer in the country.

However, its fortunes shifted in subsequent years. The rise of e-commerce, coupled with the complex realities of the Chinese retail market, posed significant challenges. Local retailers held inherent advantages in prime store locations and established regional supply chains, often backed by local government support (Wang, 2017). Furthermore, many foreign retailers, including Walmart, had initially overestimated their profit expectations. After a period of rapid expansion, they discovered that actual profits fell far short of projections, with numerous stores operating at a loss. This led to strategic retreats, including the closure of underperforming locations and a pivot to third- and fourth-tier cities; some competitors exited China entirely.

1.2 Questions of the Study

Walmart's current intentional marketing strategy has failed to effectively respond to shifting market conditions and the competitive landscape. This has led to a continuous erosion of its brand's competitive advantage, resulting in lackluster market expansion and sales growth. Consequently, the company has fallen behind its competitors in several key marketing battlegrounds. According to industry data, from 2016 to 2022, Walmart closed over 130 of its hypermarkets in mainland China (Wei et al., 2023). A systematic examination of the factors shaping Walmart's international marketing strategy is key to deciphering its global conduct, thereby providing invaluable insights that can inform the strategic and operational decisions of multinational retailers worldwide.

- 1) Do cultural elements affect international marketing strategy?

- 2) Does digital construction affect international marketing strategy?
- 3) Does brand experience affect international marketing strategy?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The interplay between globalization and localization, coupled with heightened global competition and refined market segmentation, presents a paramount challenge to Walmart's international marketing strategy. This study centers on a systematic analysis of the pivotal factors that determine the efficacy of its strategy, with the aim of furnishing a decision-making framework for the strategic realignment of its global operations and local market initiatives.

- 1) To explore the impact of cultural elements on international marketing strategy.
- 2) To explore the impact of digital construction on international marketing strategy.
- 3) To explore the impact of brand experience on international marketing strategy.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study adopted the regional operations of Walmart in Nanning as its specific research context, focusing on the key strategic challenges the company faced in its internationalization process. The research aimed to systematically identify and analyze the core factors influencing its international competition strategy. Based on this, it constructed a theoretical model of "factors influencing international competition strategy" that incorporated multidimensional variables. To validate the model's effectiveness and practical relevance, the study approached the issue from the consumer perspective and conducted an in-depth empirical analysis.

The study employed a quantitative approach, collecting data primarily from customers who had shopped at Walmart stores in Nanning. Using the collected questionnaire data, SPSS statistical software was utilized for data processing and

statistical analysis. The analytical procedures sequentially included: fundamental descriptive statistical analysis of sample demographic characteristics, tests of scale reliability and validity, correlation analysis between variables, and multiple regression analysis, all designed to precisely quantify the intensity and pathways through which various factors influenced international competition strategy.

Based on the conclusions derived from the empirical analysis, the study proposed targeted and actionable recommendations for enterprises to scientifically and effectively formulate and implement international competition strategies.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

The theoretical significance of this study is mainly reflected in the following aspects:

First, it broadens the case perspectives in research on factors influencing international marketing strategies. Existing studies have predominantly focused on technology or internet companies, paying insufficient attention to the strategy formation mechanisms of traditional retail enterprises in cross-national contexts. Using Walmart as an empirical case, this study systematically identifies the influence pathways of key factors: cultural elements, digital construction, and brand experience on international marketing strategy, thereby enriching the case-based evidence in this field.

Second, it deepens the understanding of how international marketing strategies are formed within traditional retail enterprises. As a retail giant that embarked on globalization early and has continuously optimized its international marketing strategy, Walmart has established a relatively mature transnational operation system. By analyzing the influencing factors and implementation pathways of its strategy, this study provides a theoretical reference for similar enterprises to optimize marketing decisions in cross-cultural market environments.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

This study focuses on the key influencing factors of Walmart's marketing strategies, holding dual significance for both retail theory and practice. For consumers, as a global retail giant, the formulation and implementation of Walmart's marketing

strategies directly impact the shopping experience and quality of life for hundreds of millions of people. With consumer demand shifting from basic product purchases toward experiential and personalized services, exploring how Walmart responds to this transition carries substantial practical relevance. Furthermore, by systematically analyzing the factors that shape Walmart's marketing strategies, this research not only provides a theoretical basis for optimizing Walmart's strategic approach in the Chinese market but also offers new insights for the localization strategies of multinational retailers operating in China. Ultimately, it aims to provide recommendations for maintaining Walmart's market competitiveness and serve as a reference for industry peers in planning marketing strategies in the digital economy era.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1) International marketing strategy

International marketing strategy is a dynamic strategic framework developed by enterprises to achieve global market objectives. Its core lies in conducting precise analysis of international markets, integrating differentiated positioning with optimized resource allocation, and establishing cross-cultural marketing systems. This approach maintains balance between globally unified strategies and localized implementation, ultimately forming a systematic solution for achieving sustainable competitive advantage.

2) Cultural elements

Cultural elements are the most basic and stable components of a cultural entity. As fundamental units that can be individually observed, described, and analyzed, they collectively constitute a society's complex cultural system and vividly reflect the unique identity, values, and lifestyle of a people or group.

3) Digital construction

Digital construction is a strategic undertaking that leverages a wide array of new-generation digital technologies, including big data, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and the internet of things.

4) Brand experience

Brand experience refers to the subjective responses generated by consumers during brand interactions, which evolve dynamically throughout the engagement process and ultimately shape their overall perception and memory of the brand.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

2.1.1 Retail Turnover Theory

Retail Turnover Theory, as a core theory of retail format evolution, provides a critical analytical framework for the formulation and adjustment of international marketing strategies. This theory profoundly reveals the universal cyclical pattern faced by multinational retail enterprises during global market expansion: when entering a new country or regional market, emerging retail organizations typically adopt a "low-cost, low-margin, low-price" strategy as their market entry weapon (Wang & Xu, 2023). The essence of this approach is an efficient method of market penetration, aimed at quickly attracting price-sensitive consumers, disrupting the established local retail landscape, and thereby securing a beachhead.

However, a successful model inevitably invites imitation. As competitors flock into the market, homogenization intensifies, and the initial price advantage gradually erodes. At this stage, in their quest for differentiation, companies inevitably enter an upgrade cycle: they enhance service levels, such as introducing "next-day delivery" logistics, extending return periods, or offering consumer credit, to strengthen customer loyalty. While this process improves the customer experience, it simultaneously drives up operational costs and product prices, causing the company to gradually deviate from its original low-price positioning and become vulnerable to new, low-cost competitors (Xu, 2019).

This dynamic gives rise to strategic implications at two distinct levels (Sun, 2020):

- 1) Dynamic Adaptation of Market Entry Strategies: When entering emerging markets or less developed regions, companies should decisively leverage cost leadership strategies to capture market share as "disruptors." Conversely, when penetrating mature markets, it is imperative to preemptively plan differentiation pathways to avoid becoming trapped in pure price competition.
- 2) Sustained Construction of Competitive Advantage: Enterprises must recognize that cost-based advantages are inherently temporary. After establishing a market foothold, they must proactively build defensive moats through service innovation, business model innovation, or technological advancement. This enables

them to maintain favorable positions longer throughout the rotational cycle.

2.1.2 Differentiation Strategy Theory

Differentiation Strategy Theory aims to provide unique services or products that distinguish a company from its competitors, thereby deeply exploring customers' distinct needs to achieve competitive advantage (Joachim, 2011). The core premise of this theory is that businesses should focus on satisfying the unique demands of specific market segments rather than attempting to meet the needs of all potential customers.

Implementing a differentiation strategy in international markets requires enterprises to possess exceptional global resource allocation capabilities and localized operational expertise. Companies must develop a profound understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds in consumer psychology and grasp the subtle nuances of regional consumption habits to accurately position their differentiation approach (Zuo & Jia, 2024). This deep localization should not only manifest in product-level customization but also establish a comprehensive differentiation system across multiple dimensions, including brand storytelling, service experience, and channel innovation.

The successful implementation of a differentiation strategy is often accompanied by significant first-mover advantages. When a company successfully enters a market through innovative product design, unique service systems, or distinctive brand image, it typically gains substantial pricing power and customer loyalty (Tong et al., 2024). This competitive advantage enables the enterprise to withstand competitor imitation for a considerable period while laying a solid foundation for subsequent market expansion. It is noteworthy that the value of a differentiation strategy extends beyond defensive advantages, as it also helps companies shape industry standards and guide consumption trends, thereby influencing the market landscape at a deeper level (Zhang & He, 2023).

2.2 International Marketing Strategy

Marketing is a social and managerial process whereby individuals and groups obtained what they needed and wanted through creating, offering, and freely exchanging products and services of value with others (Wang, 2019). A marketing strategy is conceptualized as a systematic plan and course of action developed by

enterprises to achieve specific market objectives, including market share expansion, brand enhancement, and sales growth (Diao & Qin, 2022). This approach is grounded in comprehensive analysis of market conditions, consumer needs, competitive landscape, and organizational capabilities. Its primary purpose is to establish competitive advantage in target markets through optimal resource allocation, ultimately achieving business goals. As a critical bridge connecting corporate resources with market opportunities, marketing strategy emphasizes "doing the right things" rather than "acting aimlessly." Its core components include target market selection, value proposition, marketing mix, competitive approach, data analytics, and dynamic adaptation (Tan, 2019). Successful strategies are characterized by their integration of strategic perspective and tactical execution, while maintaining adaptability in evolving market environments.

Traditional marketing theory has been widely applied in international trade, making research on marketing development particularly important. However, conventional marketing frameworks often fail to account for trade policies, geographical differences, and cultural variations between nations, thus exhibiting limitations in guiding international marketing strategies (Song & Shui, 2004). Lv (2021) suggested that international marketing encompasses three key components: analysis of target markets, long-term marketing strategy formulation, and implementation of specific marketing tactics.

Therefore, this study defines international marketing strategy as a dynamic strategic framework developed by enterprises to achieve global market objectives. Its core lies in conducting precise analysis of international markets, integrating differentiated positioning with optimized resource allocation, and establishing cross-cultural marketing systems. This approach maintains balance between globally unified strategies and localized implementation, ultimately forming a systematic solution for achieving sustainable competitive advantage.

Lu and Zhou (2006) emphasized that enterprises entering international markets must pay particular attention to the following two aspects: First, companies need to establish clear corporate and product positioning in international target markets based on their specific circumstances and product characteristics. Second, enterprises must make definitive choices regarding their development path in international markets. Shi and Xu (2021) argued that before entering international markets and formulating marketing strategies, companies must thoroughly consider the cultural elements of their target countries. In the research on international marketing, Wang and Chen (2021) introduced the concept of the new technological revolution, demonstrating

through analysis that international marketing strategies accelerate the evolution of digital construction, while digital construction conversely influence international marketing strategies, creating a mutually reinforcing relationship between the two. Meanwhile, brand experience not only contributes to the achievement of corporate marketing objectives but also facilitates the maintenance of long-term customer relationships. This demonstrates the increasingly prominent role of brand experience in enterprise marketing strategies.

2.2.1 Cultural Elements

Cultural elements are defined as the most basic and stable components of a cultural entity. As fundamental units that can be individually observed, described, and analyzed, they collectively constitute a society's complex cultural system and vividly reflect the unique identity, values, and lifestyle of a people or group (Zhang, 2013). Direct or indirect exposure to a culture leads consumers to form a cognitive representation of it. This activated schema creates a propensity to think and behave in accordance with that particular culture.

Through empirical research, He and Wu (2015) has demonstrated that incorporating cultural elements representative of the host country into product development and design can positively influence consumers' attitudes and behaviors toward the product. Hu et al. (2021) emphasized that successful international business negotiations require an understanding of the counterpart's decision-making style. They proposed three key strategies for negotiation success: respecting differences, maintaining neutrality, and adapting to local customs. Research by Cui and Zhang (2010) indirectly corroborates this perspective, cultural differences among channel members can impact the establishment of distribution channels, the maintenance of channel relationships, and the economic outcomes for all parties involved (Cui & Zhang, 2010).

Wen et al. (2005) examined the influence of national culture on international marketing through a comparative study of two cultures. The analysis was structured around four dimensions: individualism vs. collectivism, equality vs. hierarchy, control vs. nature, and uncertainty avoidance. The research concluded that culture exerts a considerable influence on international marketing strategy, with notable effects on market segmentation, target market selection, market positioning, and the choice of corresponding tactics. Therefore, for foreign companies entering China, a marketing strategy that aligns with local cultural identity can shape distinct brand perceptions and capitalize on a competitive advantage rooted in cultural affinity.

2.2.2 Digital Construction

Digital construction is a strategic undertaking that leverages a wide array of new-generation digital technologies, including big data, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and the internet of things (Zhang, 2022). It focuses on the systematic reshaping and upgrading of business processes, products, services, organizational structures, and ecosystems. This process centers on transitioning from physical-world operations to a data-centric, digital, and intelligent model, ultimately driving efficiency gains, fostering innovation, and creating new value. As information technology becomes deeply integrated into the operations of chain supermarkets, new retail technologies, information systems, and e-commerce have evolved into critical tools for retailers to achieve transformative growth (Zhang et al., 2019). The advancement of internet technology has significantly reshaped residents' shopping patterns and consumption habits, posing considerable challenges to the traditional retail sector while fundamentally transforming conventional business frameworks.

The presence of digital technology not only brings convenience to users but also enables businesses to integrate various processes such as product purchasing, sales, and inventory control, thereby further reducing operational costs. At the same time, retail enterprises are leveraging platforms like WeChat official accounts and mobile apps to establish more real-time and highly engaging interactions with consumers. The retail industry is undergoing a data-driven revolution. This shift has not only made marketing activities more intelligent and precise but has also endowed enterprises with unprecedented consumer insights. Through big data analytics, companies can comprehensively understand consumer behavior, preferences, and purchasing power, laying a solid foundation for developing differentiated marketing strategies (Wang, 2020). For example, by analyzing users' browsing history and shopping cart data, businesses can not only predict future demand but also provide personalized recommendations, making every interaction thoughtful and relevant. Furthermore, real-time data monitoring allows companies to dynamically adjust advertising strategies, significantly enhancing marketing effectiveness (Wang, 2017).

Digital construction is reshaping traditional trade models, making international marketing strategies more flexible and diverse. For instance, by leveraging social media platforms for brand promotion and customer engagement, companies can rapidly enhance brand awareness and cultivate a loyal customer base (Wang et al., 2020). This innovative approach to marketing is not only cost-effective but also delivers significant results, creating substantial opportunities for business growth.

2.2.3 Brand Experience

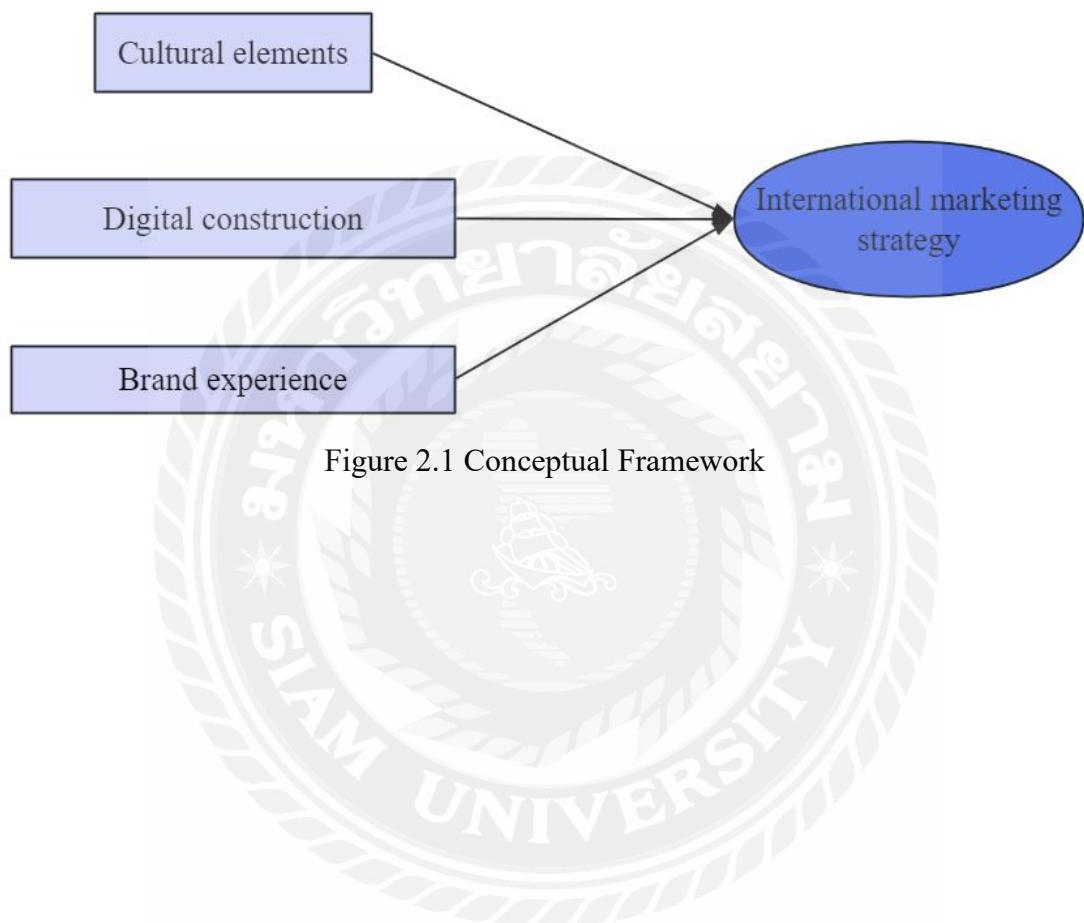
Based on a synthesis of research in marketing, philosophy, and other fields, Walker and Myrick (2006) defined brand experience as the subjective internal and behavioral responses evoked in consumers by brand-related stimuli (such as brand logos, product packaging, design, advertisements, etc.). Other scholars have defined it as the subjective, personalized, and emotional reactions elicited in consumers by the brand itself or brand-related stimuli (Xiao et al., 2015). Unlike consumer attitudes, evaluations, or associations, brand experience emphasizes all sensations perceived by consumers during brand interactions, spanning the entire process of engagement between the enterprise and the customer (Zhang, 2013). Therefore, this study defines brand experience as the subjective responses generated by consumers during brand interactions, which evolve dynamically throughout the engagement process and ultimately shape their overall perception and memory of the brand.

As a core element of the experience economy, brand experience is gradually displacing product- or service-related experiences to become the primary focus for consumers. In a survey of thousands of marketing professionals from various countries conducted by Foreman & Company, over half acknowledged the increasingly critical role of brand experience in corporate marketing. They affirmed that brand experience not only helps achieve marketing objectives but also fosters long-term customer relationships (Li & Qi, 2020). In other words, the impact of brand experience in corporate marketing is becoming increasingly evident.

Yu (2021)'s study on Shanxi white wine enterprises revealed that during digital transformation, integrating local cultural elements to enrich brand cultural connotation not only enhanced the brand's distinctiveness in the international market but also created unique brand experiences for overseas consumers through cultural resonance, thereby forming a differentiated competitive advantage. Similarly, Yang et al. (2021)'s research on Facebook users demonstrated that consumers' "perceived usefulness" of a brand platform significantly improved their brand experience, while "brand affection" strengthened this positive impact. These findings provided critical insights for international marketing: in cross-cultural contexts, fostering consumers' emotional connection with the brand effectively intensified their brand experience, ultimately boosting the brand's overall competitiveness in the global market.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

This study developed a research framework to analyze the factors influencing international marketing strategy. Initially, through literature analysis grounded in Retail Turnover Theory and Differentiation Strategy Theory, the factors affecting international competitive strategies were systematically organized and preliminarily refined, resulting in the following conceptual framework.



Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach, targeting consumers who had previously purchased products from Walmart stores in Nanning. A structured questionnaire was utilized to measure the impact of cultural elements, digital construction, and brand experience on international marketing strategy. To ensure the scientific validity and reliability of the questionnaire data, the survey design underwent careful development and optimization. This included adapting the item descriptions to align with the retail industry characteristics and the specific features of the Nanning regional market, ensuring that each measurement item accurately reflected the theoretical constructs. SPSS was used to test the reliability and validity of the collected data.

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population of this study was defined as all registered customer members within the official membership system of Walmart stores in Nanning. The Nanning Walmart store represents a total investment of 1.6 billion RMB. As one of Walmart's retail establishments in China, it is located in a prime commercial area with high customer traffic and ranks among the top ten Walmart supermarkets nationwide in terms of sales revenue.

Nanning, as the permanent host city of the China-ASEAN Expo, serves as a critical regional hub for transnational retailers implementing localization strategies in Southwest China. Walmart's store operations in this city naturally integrate global standards with local adaptations, providing a representative setting for investigating international competition strategies. At the same time, as a multi-ethnic city, Nanning's consumers demonstrate particular sensitivity to cultural elements. Walmart's strategic incorporation of Zhuang ethnic culture and ASEAN elements into its product assortments and marketing activities offers a rich sample for examining the role of cultural factors in international marketing.

The sample was drawn directly from the membership database of Walmart stores in Nanning. To ensure the sample aligned with the research objectives, the following screening criteria were applied:

- 1) Respondents must be at least 18 years old.
- 2) Respondents must have made at least one purchase at a Walmart store in Nanning within the past two months.

Recall bias is a major source of error in questionnaire surveys. Experiences from the past two months remain relatively fresh in memory, allowing respondents to provide more accurate and reliable evaluations of their actual shopping experiences. Meanwhile, members who have made a purchase within the past two months represent Walmart's current active customer base. Their perceptions and attitudes can genuinely reflect the market effectiveness of Walmart's current international marketing strategy. Consequently, a final sample of 465 individuals was selected.

3.3 Hypothesis

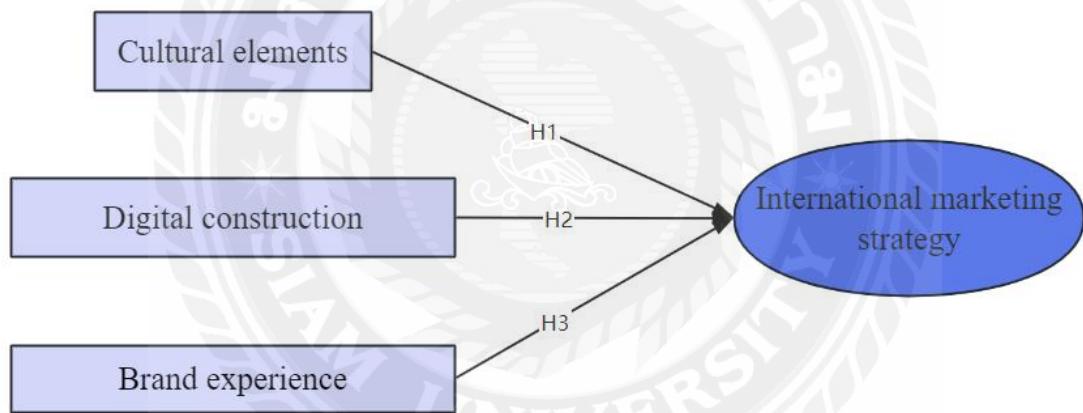


Figure 2.2 Hypothesis

This study proposed the following hypotheses:

H1: Cultural elements have a significant impact on international marketing strategy.

H2: Digital construction has a significant impact on international marketing strategy.

H3: Brand experience has a significant impact on international marketing strategy.

3.4 Research Instrument

According to the objectives of this study, the questionnaire is divided into two main parts, with the specific structure as follows:

Part 1: Personal Basic Information

This section primarily collects socio-demographic information from respondents, including gender, age, education level, monthly disposable income, and frequency of supermarket shopping.

Part 2: Core Variable Measurements

This section employs a five-point Likert scale for measurement, with response options ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." It comprises the following three main dimensions:

- 1) Cultural elements measurement (5 items)
- 2) Digital construction measurement (5 items)
- 3) Brand experience measurement (4 items)
- 4) International marketing strategy measurement (4 items)

Table 3.1 Scale Items

Factors	Items	No.
Cultural elements	During traditional Chinese festivals (such as the Spring Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival), the corresponding festive decorations and atmosphere arrangements in the supermarket make me feel more cheerful while shopping.	1
	If the supermarket could set up a dedicated section selling local specialties (such as Beijing Roast Duck, Yunnan Ham, or Shanxi Aged Vinegar), it would make me feel that the store's product range is particularly distinctive.	2
	I believe that when supermarkets use auspicious symbols such as the character "福" (Fu), Chinese knots, and lanterns in their promotional materials (like advertisements and posters), it enhances my sense of familiarity and closeness.	3
	Holding promotions in the supermarket with themes from	4

	foreign cultures (such as a Thai Fruit Festival or Italian Food Week) would make me more willing to visit.	
	I think that when supermarkets showcase different countries' lifestyles in their advertising (e.g., posters and flyers), it creates a more positive impression of the supermarket in my mind.	5
Digital construction	When the supermarket sends me personalized promotions and product recommendations through its mobile app, it increases my purchase intention.	6
	The self-checkout systems provided by the supermarket make my shopping process more convenient and efficient.	7
	The home delivery service offered by the supermarket through its online store greatly facilitates my daily life.	8
	Using virtual reality (VR) or augmented reality (AR) technologies to display product information would enhance my shopping experience.	9
	Displaying product traceability information through digital means (such as electronic screens or mobile devices) increases my trust in product quality.	10
Brand experience	The service attitude and professionalism of supermarket staff significantly influence my shopping mood and satisfaction.	11
	The merchandise display and store layout design affect the duration of my stay in the supermarket.	12
	The cleanliness and temperature control in the supermarket impact my overall shopping experience.	13
	The response speed and effectiveness of complaint handling influence my trust in the brand.	14
International marketing strategy	I believe that tailoring product offerings to meet the needs of customers in different countries is key to a supermarket's successful international operation.	15
	I think that promotional activities in overseas markets should be aligned with local festivals and cultural practices.	16
	In my view, adapting product assortments to different markets is more important than maintaining global standardization in international operations.	17
	In my view, customized membership systems tailored to specific markets are essential for supermarkets' global expansion.	18

3.5 Reliability and Validity Analysis of the Scale

Table 3.2 Reliability Test

Variables	Cronbach's α	N
Cultural elements	0.863	5
Digital construction	0.847	5
Brand experience	0.826	4
International marketing strategy	0.861	4
Total	0.835	18

In terms of reliability analysis, this study adopted Cronbach's α as the evaluation criterion. The reliability results are presented in Table 3.2. The overall Cronbach's α value for the questionnaire is 0.835, while the values for individual variable are as follows: 0.863 for cultural elements, 0.847 for digital construction, 0.826 for brand experience, and 0.861 for international marketing strategy. All Cronbach's α values significantly exceed 0.8, and the overall questionnaire value of 0.835 indicates excellent internal consistency.

Table 3.3 Validity Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.814
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	479.38
	df	239
	Sig.	.000

This study assessed the validity of the scale using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's sphericity tests. As shown in Table 3.3, the KMO value is 0.814, exceeding the threshold of 0.7, and Bartlett's test achieved statistical significance ($p = .000$). These results indicate that the questionnaire has good construct validity.

3.6 Data Collection

The distribution and collection of the questionnaires for this study were conducted from July 1, 2025, to August 1, 2025. The questionnaires were distributed online primarily through Wenjuanxing and WeChat Moments. A total of 465 questionnaires were collected. After excluding 15 invalid questionnaires due to uniform responses across all items or excessively short completion times, 450 valid

questionnaires were retained, resulting in a valid response rate of 96.77%.

3.7 Data Analysis

SPSS statistical software was utilized for data processing and statistical analysis. The analytical procedures sequentially included: fundamental descriptive statistical analysis of sample demographic characteristics, tests of scale reliability and validity, correlation analysis between variables, and multiple regression analysis.



Chapter 4 Findings

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1 Demographic Analysis Results

Items		Number	Percentage %
Total		450	100
Gender	Male	184	40.8
	Female	266	59.2
Age	18-25 years old	113	25.1
	26-44 years old	149	33.1
	45-60 years old	152	33.7
	Over 61 years old	36	8.1
Educational background	Completed high school or lower	79	17.5
	Bachelor's degree	135	30
	Master's degree	149	33.1
	Doctoral degree	87	19.4
Monthly disposable income	Under ¥1,500	52	11.5
	¥1,500-¥2,500	133	29.5
	¥3,501-¥4,500	157	34.8
	Upper ¥4,501	108	24.2
Monthly market shopping frequency	1 time	78	17.3
	2 times	166	36.8
	3 times	132	29.3
	4 times	47	10.4
	Above 4 times	27	6.2

Table 4.1 shows the sample characteristics of this study:

- 1) In terms of gender distribution, female respondents significantly outnumbered males, accounting for 59.2% of the total sample, which aligns with the commonly observed characteristic of a relatively higher proportion of females among supermarket shoppers.
- 2) Regarding age distribution, the sample was primarily concentrated in the core consumption age group of 26–60 years, collectively accounting for 66.8%. Specifically, the 18–25 age group represented 25.1% (113 individuals), the 26–44 age group accounted for 33.1% (149 individuals), and the 45–60 age group constituted 33.7% (152 individuals).

3) In terms of educational background, the sample overall exhibited a relatively high level of education. Only 17.5% (79 individuals) completed high school or lower, while those with a bachelor's degree or higher collectively accounted for 82.5%. This ensures respondents' comprehension of concepts such as brand experience and digital construction addressed in the questionnaire.

4) Regarding the distribution of monthly disposable income, 11.5% (52 individuals) reported ¥1,500 or less, 29.5% (133 individuals) fell into the ¥1,501–2,500 range, 34.8% (157 individuals) were in the ¥3,501–4,500 range, and 24.2% (108 individuals) reported above ¥4,501. The middle- to high-income group (above ¥3,501) collectively accounted for 59.0%, indicating relatively strong consumption capacity among the sample.

5) In terms of shopping frequency, 17.3% (78 individuals) reported shopping once per month, 36.8% (166 individuals) twice per month, 29.3% (132 individuals) three times per month, 10.4% (47 individuals) four times per month, and only 6.2% (27 individuals) more than four times per month. The data show that 83.7% of respondents shopped at least twice per month, ensuring sufficient familiarity with and exposure to Walmart supermarkets among the study participants.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Table 4.2 Correlation Analysis Results

	Cultural elements	Digital construction	Brand experience	International marketing strategy
Cultural elements	1			
Digital construction	.397**	1		
Brand experience	.457**	.424**	1	
International marketing strategy	.482**	.471**	.519**	1
Notes: *p < .05, **p < .01 (two-tailed tests)				

In Table 3.2, the correlation coefficient between cultural elements and international marketing strategy is 0.482, the correlation coefficient between digital

construction and international marketing strategy is 0.471, while the correlation coefficient between brand experience and international marketing strategy is 0.519. All these correlations are significant at the 0.01 level, indicating that all three dimensions are related to international marketing strategy. Among them, brand experience shows the strongest correlation with international marketing strategy, although their causal relationship requires further examination in subsequent steps.

4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis Results

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p	VIF
(Constant)	.231	.127	-	1.827	.000	-
Cultural elements	.214	.043	.263	4.544	.000	2.217
Digital construction	.462	.127	.291	5.248	.000	2.173
Brand experience	.359	.082	.341	4.314	.000	1.745
F	46.261**	DW			1.824	
R Square				.524		
Adjusting R Square				.519		

The F-statistic for the model is 46.261 and is significant at the .001 level ($p < .001$). This indicates that the regression model as a whole is highly effective, meaning that the independent variables (cultural elements, digital construction, and brand experience) collectively and significantly predict the variation in international marketing strategy. The R-squared value is 0.524, and the adjusted R-squared is 0.519. This implies that these three independent variables together explain approximately 52.4% of the variance in international marketing strategy. The Durbin-Watson statistic is 1.824, which is very close to 2, indicating no autocorrelation in the residual series of the regression model.

1) Cultural elements

The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.214$, $p < .001$) and the standardized coefficient ($Beta = 0.263$) for cultural elements both indicate a significant influence on the dependent variable, although its relative influence is somewhat weaker than

that of brand experience and digital construction, H1 was supported.

2) Digital construction

The unstandardized coefficient (B) for digital construction is 0.462, is significant at the .001 level ($p < .001$), indicating that with other variables held constant, each one-unit increase in digital construction leads to an average significant increase of 0.462 units in the dependent variable, while its standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.291) confirms a significant influence, H2 was supported.

3) Brand experience

Brand experience demonstrated the strongest influence among all variables, with a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.341, and a significant unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.359 ($p < .001$), indicating it is the most impact predictor of the dependent variable, H3 was supported.

The VIF values for all independent variables range from 1.745 to 2.217, well below the strict threshold of 5. This indicates the absence of severe multicollinearity in the model, ensuring stable and reliable estimation of the regression coefficients.

Chapter 5 Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

Based on Retail Turnover Theory and Differentiation Strategy Theory, this study empirically analyzed the relationships between cultural elements, digital construction, and brand experience with international marketing strategy. The main findings are as follows:

- 1) Cultural elements have a significant impact on international marketing strategy.
- 2) Digital construction has a significant impact on international marketing strategy.
- 3) Brand experience has a significant impact on international marketing strategy.

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to further examine the relationships. The results indicated that brand experience showed the strongest relative influence, followed by digital construction, while cultural elements, though still statistically significant, demonstrated a comparatively weaker effect, specifically:

1) Cultural elements hold a unique and profound appeal for consumers in foreign markets. When consumers encounter cultural symbols from another country, it often triggers cultural associations and curiosity within them. This emotional resonance and desire for exploration, sparked by cultural differences, become a significant force driving consumer behavior (Hu et al., 2011). Specifically, consumers not only develop cognitive interest in products carrying specific cultural connotations but also form an emotional identification with brand value, thereby generating a strong desire to try, experience, and even own related brand products.

From an international marketing perspective, successful strategies should transcend mere product functionality and instead focus on constructing culturally penetrating brand narratives. This requires marketers to develop culturally adaptive approaches that resonate with local consumers while maintaining global brand consistency. Effective implementation involves tailoring marketing communications to reflect culturally relevant values, traditions, and aesthetics, thereby creating deeper connections with target audiences across different markets.

2) The underlying logic and competitive rules of international marketing are being profoundly reshaped by the global penetration and iterative advancement of digital technologies. Emerging technologies, represented by the Internet of Things, big data, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence, are not only restructuring global supply chain collaboration but also enabling companies to redefine their approaches to value creation in cross-border markets (Zhang, 2013). Innovative practices such as smart robot delivery, unmanned retail solutions, and cross-border self-checkout systems, all powered by digital technology, further demonstrate the resilience and potential of technology-driven marketing models in the international arena.

Against this backdrop, retail enterprises must deeply integrate digital construction into their international marketing strategy systems to build sustainable advantages in global competition. This integration involves establishing a data-driven marketing philosophy, formulating a systematic digital transformation strategy, and building an omnichannel retail service ecosystem. Such strategic moves will enhance enterprises' capabilities in dynamic market adaptation and global value realization.

3) The influence of brand experience on international competition strategy signifies that enterprises must shift from one-way product export to two-way cultural dialogue, and from standardized expansion to agile innovation. In the current era where globalization and anti-globalization sentiments coexist, marketing strategies leveraging brand experience as a pivotal element are becoming critical pathways for enterprises to enhance their resilience in international markets and achieve sustainable development.

Exceptional brand experience creates memorable and shareable consumption scenarios that transform consumers from passive recipients into active advocates, thereby generating a word-of-mouth diffusion effect within a globalized context. This experience-driven brand cognition not only reduces the educational costs for enterprises entering new markets but also establishes long-term competitive barriers that are difficult for competitors to replicate. Through systematic design of sensory, emotional, and cultural touchpoints across customer journeys, companies can build distinctive brand assets that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries, ultimately reshaping the dynamics of global competition.

5.2 Recommendation

5.2.1 Adjusting the Mix and Intensity of Cultural Elements

In practice, enterprises should flexibly adjust the combination and intensity of cultural elements based on their product characteristics, brand positioning, and the cultural receptivity of target markets. For instance, when targeting European and American markets, it may be appropriate to emphasize the uniqueness and mystique of Chinese culture, while in Southeast Asian markets, highlighting cultural commonalities could be more effective. Such a differentiated and localized cultural marketing strategy not only preserves the brand's cultural identity but also ensures better acceptance across different markets, ultimately helping to build a distinctive brand image globally.

When integrating Chinese cultural elements into marketing strategies, companies often convey cultural connotations through various consumer touchpoints, thereby influencing consumer attitudes. Both material symbols and folk cultural elements can be widely applied across different touchpoints to build marketing strategies, though the specific categories and proportions integrated may vary. For example, in product and brand touchpoints, it is more suitable to incorporate traditional art forms from folk culture and representative material symbols of Chinese tangible elements. In media touchpoints, it is more appropriate to integrate material symbols related to Chinese festive foods and performing arts from folk culture. For experiential touchpoints such as international food festivals and seasonal markets, enterprises can focus on leveraging traditional Chinese values. Specific scenario design and atmosphere creation help convey cultural values more clearly, strengthen consumers' emotional resonance and cultural identification, and thus effectively achieve marketing objectives.

5.2.2 Enhancing Synergy through Digital Channels

In global market expansion, multi-language and multi-currency support are indispensable components. These capabilities not only serve as fundamental requirements for entering international markets but also represent a crucial strategy for enhancing a brand's global visibility. Companies should prioritize developing localized websites or applications, combined with sophisticated search engine optimization techniques, to systematically improve their online presence in target countries. Meanwhile, establishing partnerships with leading local e-commerce platforms can help build market trust more quickly with lower initial investment, thereby effectively increasing conversion rates.

At the user engagement level, it is advisable to recognize the strategic value of social media platforms. Through personalized advertising, influencer collaborations,

short-form video marketing, and other content-driven approaches, brands can strengthen emotional connections with overseas consumers. Deploying intelligent customer service and real-time interactive systems will significantly enhance user experience and improve service response efficiency.

To achieve a seamless omnichannel experience, businesses should advance the integration of data across platforms and systems. This ensures consistency and smoothness throughout the entire customer journey - from product display and online transactions to logistics tracking and payment completion. By building an integrated digital marketing ecosystem, companies can create a cohesive brand experience worldwide and strengthen their competitive advantage in international markets.

5.2.3 Crafting the Enduring Brand Experience

In building an exceptional brand experience, companies should focus on the entire consumer journey, delivering consistent brand value through carefully designed touchpoints. It is recommended to integrate core brand philosophy into product design details and user experience at the product level, while establishing rigorous quality standards and comprehensive after-sales support. This ensures customers perceive the brand's dedication at every stage, from purchase to usage.

For instance, a humanized customer service system should be developed, ensuring staff possess professional product knowledge and service awareness. Online channels should offer seamless integration of intelligent customer service and human support, while offline environments ought to create professional and comfortable service settings. This approach enables consumers to receive timely and accurate assistance at any touchpoint.

Meanwhile, companies can establish relationships that transcend mere transactions through resonant brand storytelling and emotional design. Well-designed membership benefits and loyalty programs allow consumers to feel sustained care and appreciation, thereby strengthening brand identification.

Furthermore, it is advisable to establish a systematic consumer feedback mechanism and continuously identify experience pain points through data analysis. By maintaining acute awareness of market trends and regularly optimizing experience design, brands can ensure their experiences remain current and build enduring competitive advantages in consumers' minds.

5.3 Future Research

This study took Walmart Supermarket as the research subject, conducting an in-depth analysis of the influencing factors in its international marketing strategies and proposing corresponding optimization recommendations. Due to the company's internal policies and restrictions, access to more detailed internal information and strategic plans was limited. As a result, the optimization suggestions put forward in this study may contain certain deviations, and their actual effectiveness needs to be verified through future business practices.

It is hoped that future research will be able to draw on more comprehensive data to further refine international marketing strategies for the company, support the development of Walmart's ecosystem, and enhance the representativeness of such studies. The findings are intended to serve as a valuable reference for other enterprises in the industry when formulating their own international marketing strategies.



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Appendix

Dear Madam/Sir,

This is an academic survey to explore the factors influencing Walmart's international market competition strategy. This research is solely for academic purposes and is completely anonymous. There are no right or wrong answers; we simply seek your honest opinions based on your actual perceptions. Thank you for your participation and support!

Part 1: Personal Basic Information

1. Your gender:
 Male Female
2. Your age:
 18-25 years old
 26-44 years old
 45-60 years old
 Over 61 years old
3. Your educational background:
 Completed high school or lower
 Bachelor's degree
 Master's degree
 Doctoral degree
4. Your monthly disposable income:
 Under ¥1,500
 ¥1,500-¥2,500
 ¥3,501-¥4,500
 Upper ¥4,501
5. Your monthly market shopping frequency:
 1 time
 2 times
 3 times
 4 times
 Above 4 times

Part 2: Please select the option that best matches your actual situation.

Cultural elements	Very Disagree -----Very Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5
During traditional Chinese festivals (such as the Spring Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival), the corresponding festive decorations and atmosphere arrangements in the supermarket make me feel more cheerful while shopping.					
If the supermarket could set up a dedicated section selling local specialties (such as Beijing Roast Duck, Yunnan Ham, or Shanxi Aged Vinegar), it would make me feel that the store's product range is particularly distinctive.					
I believe that when supermarkets use auspicious symbols such as the character "福" (Fu), Chinese knots, and lanterns in their promotional materials (like advertisements and posters), it enhances my sense of familiarity and closeness.					
Holding promotions in the supermarket with themes from foreign cultures (such as a Thai Fruit Festival or Italian Food Week) would make me more willing to visit.					
I think that when supermarkets showcase different countries' lifestyles in their advertising (e.g., posters and flyers), it creates a more positive impression of the supermarket in my mind.					
Digital construction	Very Disagree -----Very Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5
When the supermarket sends me personalized promotions and product recommendations through its mobile app, it increases my purchase intention.					
The self-checkout systems provided by the supermarket make my shopping process more convenient and efficient.					
The home delivery service offered by the supermarket through its online store greatly facilitates my daily life.					
Using virtual reality (VR) or augmented reality (AR) technologies to display product information would enhance my shopping					

experience.						
Displaying product traceability information through digital means (such as electronic screens or mobile devices) increases my trust in product quality.						
Brand experience		Very Disagree -----Very Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5	
The service attitude and professionalism of supermarket staff significantly influence my shopping mood and satisfaction.						
The merchandise display and store layout design affect the duration of my stay in the supermarket.						
The cleanliness and temperature control in the supermarket impact my overall shopping experience.						
The response speed and effectiveness of complaint handling influence my trust in the brand.						
International marketing strategy		Very Disagree -----Very Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5	
I believe that tailoring product offerings to meet the needs of customers in different countries is key to a supermarket's successful international operation.						
I think that promotional activities in overseas markets should be aligned with local festivals and cultural practices.						
In my view, adapting product assortments to different markets is more important than maintaining global standardization in international operations.						
In my view, customized membership systems tailored to specific markets are essential for supermarkets' global expansion.						