



**THE EFFECTS OF PUBLIC POLICY ON ORGANIZATIONAL
ISOMORPHIC BEHAVIORS AND RELATIONSHIP
MARKETING STRATEGIES: A CASE OF LIFE INSURANCE
COMPANIES IN SHANDONG PROVINCE, CHINA**

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**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Management)**

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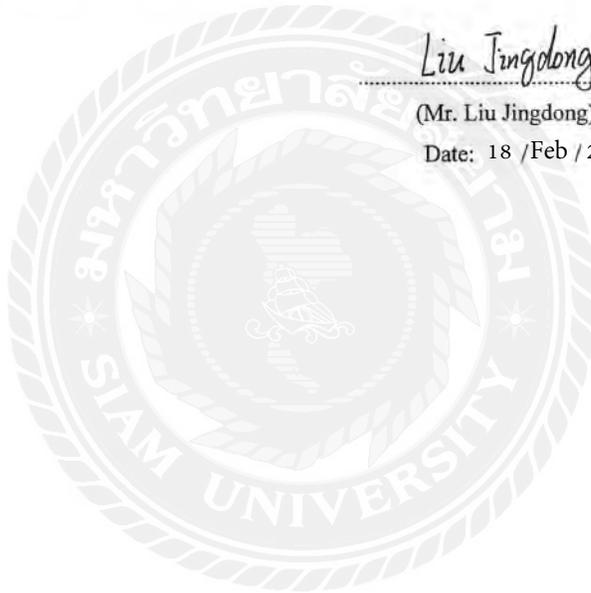
DECLARATION

I, Liu Jingdong (Student ID# 6419200010), hereby certify that the work embodied in this dissertation entitled "The Effects of Public Policy on Organizational Isomorphic Behaviors and Relationship Marketing Strategies: A Case of Life Insurance Companies in Shandong Province, China" is result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

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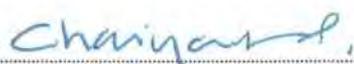
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ABSTRACT

Title : The Effects of Public Policy on Organizational Isomorphic Behaviors and Relationship Marketing Strategies: A Case of Life Insurance Companies in Shandong Province, China

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Over the past four decades of development, life insurance companies in China have exhibited increasing similarity, demonstrating characteristics of organizational isomorphism. A notable manifestation of this trend is their widespread adoption of comparable marketing strategies. Identifying and implementing relationship marketing strategies suited to the Chinese life insurance industry can significantly enhance the marketing efficiency of these companies. This research examined: 1) the role of public policy in fostering organizational isomorphic behaviors within China's life insurance industry, drawing on institutional theory; and 2) the impact of organizational isomorphic behaviors on relationship marketing strategies, informed by resource dependence theory. A mixed-methods approach was employed, incorporating quantitative analysis of 425 valid questionnaire responses and qualitative insights from interviews with 12 senior managers from life insurance companies.

The results indicate that public policy significantly shapes the strategies and behaviors of life insurance companies through three mechanisms: coercive, mimetic, and normative isomorphism. This influence extends to the selection and adjustment of relationship marketing strategies. Moreover, the flexible application and adaptation of relationship marketing strategies are crucial for improving marketing efficiency in the

life insurance sector. These findings extend the applicability of institutional theory and resource dependence theory, enrich existing research on marketing efficiency in the life insurance industry, and provide a valuable reference for future studies in this field.

Keyword: public policy, coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism, normative isomorphism, relationship marketing strategies, marketing efficiency



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

After the reform and opening up, China's economy has developed rapidly, and people's income has been greatly improved. In 2023, China's GDP has reached \$17.89 trillion, and the per capita disposable income of residents has reached \$5,511. In the future, China's GDP is expected to continue to grow at an average annual rate of about 5% (Chen et al., 2022). It is expected that by 2035, per capita GDP will reach the level of moderately developed countries.

Benefiting from the continuous improvement of residents' income level, China's life insurance industry has also developed rapidly. In 1979, when The State Council approved the resumption of domestic insurance business, there was only one insurance company in China, the People's Insurance Company of China, which only resumed property insurance business that year and did not resume life insurance business until 1982. After more than 40 years of development, China's insurance industry has made great achievements. Since 2017, China has become the world's second largest insurance market after the United States. In 2023, China's total premium income reached ¥4.6 trillion, of which life insurance premium income was ¥3.4 trillion, accounting for 73%. By the end of 2023, there were 238 insurance companies in China, including 13 insurance group (holding) companies and 76 life insurance companies (National Financial Regulatory Administration, 2023a).

Since 1949, in different historical periods, China's insurance industry has been supervised by the People's Bank of China, the former China Insurance Regulatory Commission (CIRC), the former Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission, and National Financial Regulatory Administration. In November 1998, The State Council approved the establishment of the CIRC, which is specifically responsible for the supervision of the insurance industry (Shi, 1998). In April 2018, China merged the

former CBRC and CIRC into the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission (CBIRC) to unify the supervision and management of the banking and insurance industries (Wang, 2018). In May 2023, the National Financial Regulatory Administration was established on the basis of the CBIRC (Guo, 2023).

Since 1991, The State Council, the former CIRC and other departments have successively issued policies to support and regulate the development of the insurance industry, covering the operation of insurance companies, insurance industry policies, laws and regulations, insurance finance, solvency, capital utilization and other aspects (Huang, 2017). Specifically, there are four types of policies related to the life insurance industry:

First is law. In 1995, China promulgated and implemented the Insurance Law, which was revised four times in 2002, 2009, 2014 and 2015 (Wang, 2019). It has improved the basic business code of conduct and the main framework of insurance supervision in China's insurance industry.

The second is administrative regulations. In 1985, The State Council promulgated the Interim Regulations on the Administration of Insurance Enterprises, which clearly stipulated that the People's Bank of China was the administrative organ of the insurance industry in China. After China's accession to the World Trade Organization, The State Council formulated the Regulations of the People's Republic of China on the Administration of Foreign-Funded Insurance Companies in 2001, which were revised three times successively in 2013, 2016 and 2019, providing institutional guarantee for deepening the opening up of China's insurance industry (Liu, 2019).

The third is departmental rules and regulations. Over the years, the rules and regulations issued by the regulatory authorities are generally divided into six aspects: management of business entities, product specifications, rules for the use of funds, management of professional personnel, solvency supervision, administration and supervision according to law. These rules and regulations have laid a solid foundation for the standardized development of the life insurance industry (Huang, 2017). In April 2015,

the former CIRC issued a notice to cancel the insurance agent qualification examination. Subsequently, the number of agents in the life insurance industry increased rapidly, and the growth of human scale promoted the development of personal insurance. In May 2017, the former CIRC issued The Notice on Regulating the Product Development and Design Behavior of Life Insurance Companies and The Notice on Further Strengthening the Sales Management of Life Insurance Companies, requiring life insurance companies to develop life insurance products with prominent security functions, attach great importance to sales management, and adhere to the correct business philosophy (CIRC, 2017). Compliance management and risk prevention and control are placed in a more important position. In November 2019, the former CBIRC promulgated the "Health Insurance Management Measures", positioning commercial health insurance as an important part of a multi-level medical security system (CBIRC, 2019). In July 2023, the National Financial Regulatory Administration issued the Notice on Matters Related to the Application of Commercial Health Insurance Individual Income Tax Preferential Policy Products, expanding the scope of commercial health insurance products applicable to personal income tax preferential policy to medical insurance, long-term care insurance and illness insurance and other major commercial health insurance types (National Financial Regulatory Administration, 2023b).

The fourth is normative documents. The State Council and regulatory departments have formulated a large number of normative documents and put forward operational system norms for practical work. In August 2014, The State Council issued Several Opinions on Accelerating the Development of Modern Insurance Service Industry, proposed that by 2020, the modern insurance service industry with comprehensive guarantee, complete functions, safety and stability, integrity norms, strong service ability, innovation ability and international competitiveness should be basically built and adapted to the needs of China's economic and social development (The State Council, 2014). In July 2017, The General Office of the State Council issued Several Opinions on Accelerating the Development of Commercial Endowment Insurance, providing policy support for the healthy development of commercial endowment insurance in China (The

General Office of the State Council, 2017). In April 2022, The General Office of the State Council officially issued the Opinions on Promoting the Development of Personal Pensions, proposing to promote the development of a personal pension system supported by government policies, voluntary participation of individuals, and market-oriented operation, which kicked off the accelerated development of the third pillar of pension security (The General Office of the State Council, 2022).

Table 1.1 Policies Issued by the PRC Government Relating to the Life Insurance Industry

Year	Policy	Department	Content
1985	the Interim Regulations on the Administration of Insurance Enterprises	The State Council	Stipulated that the People's Bank of China was the administrative organ of the insurance industry in China.
1995, 2002, 2009, 2014, 2015	the Insurance Law	The State Council	Formulated and continuously improved the basic business code of conduct and the main framework of insurance supervision in China's insurance industry.
2001, 2013, 2016, 2019	the Regulations of the People's Republic of China on the Administration of Foreign-Funded Insurance Companies	The State Council	Formulated in 2001, revised three times in 2013, 2016 and 2019, providing institutional guarantee for deepening the opening up of China's insurance industry.

Table 1.1 Policies Issued by the PRC Government Relating to the Life Insurance Industry

Year	Policy	Department	Content
2014	Several Opinions on Accelerating the Development of Modern Insurance Service Industry	The State Council	Proposed that by 2020, the modern insurance service industry with comprehensive guarantee, complete functions, safety and stability, integrity norms, strong service ability, innovation ability and international competitiveness
2017	Several Opinions on Accelerating the Development of Commercial Endowment Insurance	The General Office of the State Council	Providing policy support for the healthy development of commercial endowment insurance in China
2017	The Notice on Regulating the Product Development and Design Behavior of Life Insurance Companies	the former CIRC	Requiring life insurance companies to develop life insurance products with prominent security functions.
2017	The Notice on Further Strengthening the Sales Management of Life Insurance Companies	the former CIRC	Life insurance companies should attach great importance to sales management and adhere to the correct business philosophy.
2019	Health Insurance Management Measures	the former CBIRC	Positioning commercial health insurance as an important part of a multi-level medical security system.

Table 1.1 Policies Issued by the PRC Government Relating to the Life Insurance Industry

Year	Policy	Department	Content
2022	the Opinions on Promoting the Development of Personal Pensions	The General Office of the State Council	Kicked off the accelerated development of the third pillar of pension security
2023	the Notice on Matters Related to the Application of Commercial Health Insurance Individual Income Tax Preferential Policy Products	the National Financial Regulatory Administration	Expanding the scope of commercial health insurance products applicable to personal income tax preferential policy to medical insurance, long-term care insurance and illness insurance and other major commercial health insurance types

In the past 40 years of development, China's life insurance companies have gradually become more and more similar, showing the characteristics of isomorphism (Chen & Zhang, 2009). These isomorphic behaviors are mainly reflected in the following three aspects:

First, the business philosophy of life insurance companies are similar. At present, China's life insurance companies are taking the traditional insurance management philosophy of product as the center and sales as the orientation.

Second, the products of life insurance companies are similar. Life insurance companies have insufficient investment in product development and innovation, and many life insurance companies have adopted the product strategy of following. Moreover, insurance products have high transparency and are easy to be imitated. So when a best-selling insurance product appears on the market, it will be immediately copied by other life insurance companies.

Third, life insurance companies have established marketing channels with similar structures. Most life insurance companies have adopted the development strategy of pursuing the rapid growth of premium scale. The agent channel is the main source of insurance premiums and profits of life insurance companies. Life insurance companies generally adopted "huge-crowd strategy" in order to rapidly expand the premium scale (Wu, 2016).

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) asked the question "What makes organizations so similar?". They defined isomorphism as a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units facing the same set of environmental conditions. Different life insurance companies may have diverse organizational practices initially. However, they are expected to resemble each other over time when they face the same local conditions. The pursuit of legitimacy is an important driving force of institutional isomorphism. When organizations submit to institutional pressures and conform to social norms for certain organizational structures and processes, they are rewarded by earning increased legitimacy, resources, and survival capabilities for their operations (Oliver, 1997; Yang & Konrad, 2010). Without legitimacy, an organization, such as a company, cannot get the best return. Institutions or organizations obtain legitimacy through three mechanisms, which are coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism. Coercive isomorphism is obtaining governmental recognition, such as a legal or regulatory framework; Mimetic isomorphism is obtaining public approval, such as an expectation or opportunity for similar behavior; Normative isomorphism is professional recognition, such as formal training, industry standards.

China's life insurance companies have been affected by the above three kinds of isomorphic pressures. First, life insurance companies must abide by the laws issued by the government and the rules and regulations of the regulatory authority in order to exist and operate in the Chinese market, which leads to the coercive isomorphism of life insurance companies. Second, whether it is organization form, marketing strategy or product, China's life insurance companies generally imitate each other, which leads to mimetic isomorphism. Finally, due to the frequent personnel turnover among Chinese life

insurance companies and the large amount of training organized by China Insurance Industry Association, the normative isomorphism of life insurance companies has been brought about.

An important manifestation of the isomorphism of life insurance companies is that they all adopted similar marketing strategies. After AIA introduced the insurance agent system to China in 1992, it spread rapidly in the Chinese life insurance industry and has now become a major marketing channel for life insurance companies (Miao, 2022). Insurance contracts are characterized by professionalism and complexity, information asymmetry exists between customers and insurance companies, and insurance companies are faced with adverse selection and moral hazard, so professional insurance agents are needed to provide services.

China's life insurance companies should make full use of existing resources and adopt relationship marketing strategies to provide customers with good life insurance products and services to meet the needs of target customer groups. Wang and Chen (2009) pointed out that relationship building was important in the life insurance industry because there will be future opportunities for cross-selling and up-selling to the existing customer bases. Parsa and Sadeghi (2015) found that in addition to relationship marketing directly influencing positive word of mouth, trust and commitment influenced the satisfaction of life insurance industry customers. Satisfaction will influence loyalty, which in turn positively influence word of mouth. They posited that in life insurance, word of mouth played an important role as customers tended to trust the word of other customers more than the word of a life insurance organisation or representative.

Choosing the relationship marketing strategy suitable for China's life insurance industry and its own characteristics, and refining it in every link of life insurance company's operation, will greatly improve the marketing efficiency of China's life insurance companies, so as to obtain better economic and social benefits. Through the practice of relationship marketing strategies, insurance companies can build long-term relationships to retain customers and provide loyalty (Yurdakul & Dalkılıç, 2006). Karaman (2021) pointed out that the application of relationship marketing strategy in

insurance companies has improved customer satisfaction. Therefore, he advised insurance companies to select and implement relationship marketing strategies to ensure customer satisfaction and keep their customers loyal. Gruen (1997) believed that relationship marketing can improve the efficiency and effect of marketing work by paying attention to customers' individual needs and utilizing customers' resources. When relationships with customers are established and properly managed, businesses can not only reduce the cost of finding customers and conducting transactions, but also improve efficiency by integrating new value created by supplier and customer processes and functions.

1.2 Significance of the Problem

Based on Institutional Theory and Relationship Marketing Theory, this study analyzed the effect of public policies on the organizational isomorphic behaviors and marketing strategy choice of Chinese life insurance companies, and then explored the impact of public policies on the market efficiency of life insurance companies and the transmission mechanism of specific impacts.

Since China's insurance industry resumed operation in the early 1980s, along with the deepening of China's reform and opening up, the life insurance industry has achieved rapid growth, and the industry scale and social influence have been greatly enhanced. In this historical process, the government established and continuously improved market rules through the introduction of public policies, which played a crucial role in the rapid development of China's life insurance industry. Today, China's life insurance industry has presented a diversified situation of coexistence of state-owned, private, joint ventures and wholly foreign-owned enterprises. Life insurance companies with different ownership structures will show certain differences when affected by public policies. These differences are mainly reflected in the speed of policy response, the intensity of policy implementation, the ability to adapt to the market and the ability to innovate. Therefore, the government should fully consider the characteristics and needs of life insurance

companies with different ownership structures when formulating and implementing public policies, so as to promote the healthy development of the whole industry. At the same time, life insurance companies should also respond flexibly to policy changes according to their own ownership structure and market positioning to improve market competitiveness.

At the same time, in order to comply with the requirements of laws and regulations, various life insurance companies have appeared the situation of organizational convergence and institutional isomorphism. Studying the effect of public policies on organizational isomorphic behaviors in the life insurance industry holds significant importance for several reasons:

First, since public policies specify the governance structure, reporting requirements and overall regulatory framework that life insurance companies must abide by, it is crucial to study the mechanism of influence of public policies on the isomorphism of life insurance companies to ensure compliance.

Second, public policies, especially those related to financial stability and risk management, have a direct impact on the operations of life insurance companies. Studying the impact of these policies on life insurance companies can help companies predict future changes and effectively manage risks, thus contributing to the overall stability of China's life insurance industry.

Third, since public policies will affect the market dynamics and competition of the life insurance industry, studying the impact of policy on the competition pattern can help life insurance companies find the right market positioning and formulate appropriate strategies.

Fourth, public policies related to product requirements and consumer protection will regulate and guide innovation in the life insurance industry. Studying the impact of public policy can help companies adjust their product development and innovation strategies to meet regulatory requirements and promote company differentiation.

Fifth, public policies related to taxation and investment regulation affect the investment strategies of life insurance companies. Studying these policies is very important for life insurance companies to optimize their investment portfolios and effectively manage financial risks.

It is of great significance to study the influence of organizational isomorphic behaviors on the choice of marketing strategy in the life insurance industry, because it sheds light on how external pressures impact the marketing practices within the sector. First, since organizational isomorphic behaviors can lead to the convergence of behaviors and norms within an industry, studying its impact on the choices of marketing strategies can help to understand whether life insurance companies tend to adopt similar approaches in their marketing practices. Second, regulatory pressure is an important driver of institutional isomorphism, so studying the impact of organizational isomorphic behaviors on the choices of marketing strategies is crucial to assess how life insurers carry out marketing campaigns effectively while ensuring compliance. Third, isomorphic pressure can affect the types of insurance products and services provided by companies, so studying the impact of organizational isomorphic behaviors on marketing strategies is helpful to assess how should life insurance companies be encouraged and guided to innovate in product development and marketing.

Relationship marketing refers to the centralized management of consumers, competitors, suppliers, distributors, government agencies and social organizations through long-term cooperation, so as to achieve mutual benefit in a relatively complete marketing closed loop, in order to achieve a more solid and reliable long-term maintenance of business relations. There is a general misunderstanding of the concept of relationship marketing among life insurance industry practitioners. In the life insurance industry, in the face of fierce market competition and huge sales pressure, practitioners believe that relationship marketing is to construct relationship networks in various ways to obtain contracts, and even to adopt illegal ways to maintain high-quality customer resources. This cognitive error has inhibited the positive role of relationship marketing in promoting the development of the insurance industry. Most life insurance companies

focus their attention on existing customers and neglect the process management of relationship marketing.

Studying the impact of organizational isomorphic behaviors on marketing efficiency in the life insurance industry is crucial to understanding how external pressures shape market dynamics, competition and the overall operation of the industry. This study is of theoretical and practical value to policy makers, regulators, investors and industry players seeking to optimize marketing efficiency and ensure the long-term sustainability of the life insurance market. First, organizational isomorphic behaviors can affect the market structure, including the number of competitors and their market shares, so studying this impact is helpful to assess whether isomorphism pressure contributes to the formation of a healthy competitive environment in the life insurance industry. Second, since organizational isomorphic behaviors can influence the choices of marketing strategies of life insurance companies, studying this impact helps to assess whether the consistency of marketing strategies enhances or limits consumer choice, then explore how to affect the marketing efficiency of life insurance companies. Third, while isomorphism may bring stability, it can also stifle innovation, so studying the impact on market efficiency can help life insurance companies find a balance between stability and adaptability, as innovation is a key driver for the development of the life insurance industry.

The findings of this study can not only enrich the application of institutional theory in the life insurance industry, but also provide a theoretical basis for government departments to formulate public policies, so as to promote the healthy development of China's life insurance industry.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the effect of public policy on the organizational isomorphic behaviors of China's life insurance industry?
2. What is the effect of organizational isomorphic behaviors on the relationship marketing strategies of China's life insurance industry?
3. What is the path of public policy affecting the marketing efficiency of China's life insurance industry?

1.4 Research Objectives

The aim of this research was to examine the effects of public policy on market efficiency of China's life insurance industry, taking the companies of life insurance companies in Shandong Province, China, as research sample. This goal was accomplished by addressing the following research objectives.

1. To examine the effect of public policy on organizational isomorphic behaviors in China's life insurance industry based on institutional theory.
2. To identify the effect of organizational isomorphic behaviors on the relationship marketing strategies of life insurance companies based on resource dependence theory.

1.5 Scope of the Study

In this study, the scope was classified as follows:

1) Scope of area

The study area of this study was Shandong Province, China.

2) Scope of population

According to the data of China Insurance Yearbook 2023, as of the end of December 2022, there were 50 life insurance companies in Shandong Province. The respondents of this questionnaire survey were selected employees of these 50 life insurance companies, including regular employees engaged in marketing, and life insurance agents.

3) Scope of time

This research began in September 2023 and finished by September 2025.

1.6 Expected Benefits of the Study

1) This study explored the effect of public policy on organizational isomorphic behaviors and marketing strategy of life insurance companies. The research conclusions can provide theoretical support for government departments to formulate public policies.

2) This study analyzed the effect of relationship marketing strategies on the marketing efficiency of life insurance companies. The research results can be used as the theoretical basis for the marketing strategy formulation of life insurance companies.

3) This study combined institutional theory, resource dependence theory and relationship marketing theory to study the marketing efficiency of life insurance industry. This study expanded the application field of the above theories, and enriched the theoretical basis and achievements of the marketing efficiency research of life insurance industry, which can provide references for the future research on the efficiency of the insurance industry.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Table 1.2 Definition of Terms

Term	Definition
Public Policy	Public policy means the set of laws, guidelines, actions decided and taken by governments in order to work in favor of the public.
Organizational Isomorphic Behavior	Organizational isomorphic behavior means the fact that organizations adopt structures, processes, or behavior patterns similar to those of other organizations in order to obtain legitimacy, resources, or avoid punishment under specific environmental conditions.
Coercive Isomorphism	Coercive isomorphism means that important institutions outside the organization with authority or coercive power will force the organization to adopt a certain structure or behavior pattern.
Mimetic Isomorphism	Mimetic isomorphism means the phenomenon in which organizations seek legitimacy or adapt to the environment by imitating the behavioral patterns, structures, or practices of other successful or widely accepted organizations when facing external pressure.
Normative Isomorphism	Normative isomorphism means that when pursuing social recognition and legitimacy, organizations will follow or adopt widely accepted social norms, values, professional standards or industrial practices, thus showing similarities in structure or behavior.
Relationship Marketing Strategies	Relationship marketing Strategies means a comprehensive marketing strategy aimed at establishing and developing long-term, stable and good relations with partners.
Marketing Efficiency	Marketing efficiency means the ratio between the market effect produced by an enterprise and the marketing cost consumed after it invests certain resources.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter covers the literature on theories and concepts, divided into seven parts as follows:

2.1 Life Insurance Industry in Shandong Province

2.2 Public Policy

2.3 Organizational Isomorphic Behavior

2.4 Resource Dependence Theory

2.5 Relationship Marketing Strategies

2.6 Marketing Efficiency

2.7 Conceptual Framework, Hypothesis and Explanation of Hypothesis

2.1 Life Insurance Industry in Shandong Province

The development of life insurance industry in Shandong Province can be traced back to the founding of New China in 1949. On November 25, 1949, Shandong Branch of the People's Insurance Company of China was formally established, marking the official germination of Shandong insurance industry. However, in the subsequent decades, Shandong insurance industry has experienced twists and turns. For example, in 1958, insurance business was halted due to certain historical conditions. It was not until 1980, with the promotion of reform and opening up, that the insurance industry resumed its domestic business. In the decades after the resumption of domestic business, Shandong insurance industry has experienced a development process from scratch, from small to large, from weak to strong. Li and Jia (2022) pointed out that after the reform and opening up, the insurance market in Shandong Province has made remarkable achievements, the market system is increasingly perfect, the business structure is more optimized, the openness of the industry is significantly enhanced, and the scale continues

to grow. In 2023, the premium income of Shandong's insurance industry was RMB343.288 billion, up 6.78% year on year, ranking the third in China after Guangdong and Jiangsu. Among them, the premium income of life insurance companies reached RMB251.962 billion, representing a year-on-year increase of 7.53%, demonstrating the strong growth momentum of the life insurance industry in Shandong Province (Shandong Insurance Industry Association, 2024).

The life insurance market in Shandong Province presents a diversified competition pattern. State-owned insurance companies, joint-stock insurance companies and foreign insurance companies together constitute the main body of the market, and various insurance companies form a market pattern of dislocation competition according to their own advantages and characteristics. Among them, state-controlled insurance companies dominate the traditional life insurance market by virtue of brand influence and channel advantages; Joint-stock insurance companies show strong competitiveness in health insurance and accident insurance market by virtue of flexible management mechanism and innovation ability; Foreign insurance companies have formed a certain influence in the high-end market by virtue of their international business philosophy and service system. This diversified competition pattern is conducive to the healthy development of the market and the diversified choices of consumers (Wang & Liu, 2023).

The life insurance industry in Shandong Province faces a variety of risks, such as credit risk, market risk and operational risk. In order to effectively prevent and defuse these risks, insurance companies need to establish a sound risk management system and internal control system, and strengthen the risk monitoring and early warning of insurance business (Li & Zhao, 2020). At the same time, regulatory authorities also need to strengthen the supervision of the insurance market, crack down on violations of laws and regulations, maintain market order and protect the rights and interests of consumers. In recent years, the regulatory authorities have issued a series of policies and measures to strengthen the supervision of the insurance market and risk prevention, providing a strong

guarantee for the healthy development of the life insurance industry in Shandong Province.

Zhao and Li (2022) believed that the life insurance industry in Shandong Province will show the following development trends in the future:

First, product innovation and service upgrading. With the continuous change and upgrading of consumer demand, insurance companies need to constantly innovate products and services to meet market demand. For example, developing more personalized insurance products and providing more convenient claims settlement services.

Second, technology empowerment and digital transformation. With the rapid development of fintech, the life insurance industry will accelerate the pace of digital transformation. Remarkable results will be achieved in improving service efficiency, reducing costs and optimizing customer experience by using big data, artificial intelligence and other advanced technologies.

Third, cross-border cooperation and integrated development. The life insurance industry will carry out deeper cross-border cooperation and integrated development with other industries. For example, cooperate with medical institutions to develop medical insurance products, cooperate with pension institutions to develop endowment insurance products, etc.

Fourth, strengthening of risk management and supervision. With the increasingly complex and changeable financial risks and the continuous improvement of regulatory requirements, the life insurance industry will strengthen risk management and supervision. By establishing a sound risk management system and internal control system, strengthening risk monitoring and early warning of insurance business and other measures to effectively prevent and defuse risks.

2.2 Public Policy

Public policy plays a vital role in the development of a country and the life of the public, so the research and exploration of public policy has become the focus of many disciplines such as management, political science and sociology. In 1951, Lasswell and Lerner published *The Policy Sciences: Recent Development in Scope and Method*, which marked the birth of modern policy science. Since then, scholars have conducted research on public policy based on the practice of various countries, thus forming different schools of theoretical theories. In this process, the theoretical research of public policy was gradually improved, and it also provided guidance for policy practice in various countries.

2.2.1 Definition of Public Policy

Many scholars have tried to define public policy from different perspectives. In 1972, Thomas R. Dye defined public policy as “anything a government chooses to do or not to do.” He argued that public policy should be concerned with what government action involves. For example, how they manage conflicts within society; how they organize society to deal with conflicts with other societies and so on. Public policy may involve the regulation of behavior, the organization of bureaucratic systems, and the distribution of benefits (Dye, 2013). Anderson et al. (1978) defined public policy as a process of purposeful activities, which are taken by one or a group of actors to deal with a certain problem or related matter.

Easton (1965) gave the definition of public policy from the perspective of the purpose of making public policy. He believed that public policy is the authoritative distribution of values to the whole society, and through policy, it can be realized that some people do not enjoy certain things and allow others to possess them. He emphasized that the formulation of public policy is for the distribution of value, the scope of distribution is the whole society, and the influence of distribution is authoritative. Public policy is the decision made by the government to solve various problems such as the environment, crime and unemployment (Nagel, 1984). Public policy is made by

government agencies and government officials, the purpose is to reflect the way and process of their activities in the political system and specific environment, express their behavior and purpose, and reflect what they actually do and the effect (Zhang, 2000). Peters (2021) defined public policy as the set of activities that governments engage in for the purpose of changing their economy and society.

Many other scholars have defined public policy in terms of norms of behavior and social control. Richard (1974) believed that public policy is the principles that govern action directed towards given ends. Chen (1995) believed that public policy is the criterion followed by the government in selecting, synthesizing and distributing social public interests in order to achieve certain goals. Public policy was a public rational and consensual choice to realize public will and meet social needs, a guide to action or code of conduct to regulate and guide the public and the community, and a planned activity process formulated by a specific public authority and implemented by the society. Public policy is the embodiment of the operation of national public power, an important way for the government to implement public management, and the main mean for the government to safeguard public interests (Chen, 2002).

To sum up, we can believe that public policy is a kind of political behavior and a manifestation of the will of the government. Public policy is also an authoritative value distribution scheme, and any specific policy involves the interests of its related groups. Public policy is not only a means, but also a series of activities taken by the government to deal with some social problems and government affairs in order to achieve a certain goal.

2.2.2 Categories of Public Policy

Policies can be classified into four categories: distributive, redistributive, regulatory, and constituent policies (Lowi, 1972). Anderson (2000) classified public policies from four different dimensions. First, Anderson divided public policies into substantive policies and procedural policies. Substantive policies involve what government is going to do; Procedural policies pertain to how something is going to be

done or who is going to take action. Substantive policies directly allocate advantages and disadvantages, benefits and costs, to people; Procedural policies provide for the creation of the administrative agencies, determine the matters over which they have jurisdiction, specify the processes and techniques that they can use in carrying out their programs, and provide for presidential, judicial, and other controls over their operations. Second, Anderson divided public policies into distributive, regulatory, self-regulatory and redistributive public policies according to their impact on society and the relationships among all parties involved in the policy process. Among them, distributive, regulatory and redistributive public policies are consistent with Lowi's (1972) classification, but Anderson proposed self-regulatory policies. Third, Anderson divided public policies into material public policies and Symbolic public policies. Among them, material public policies provide the target audiences with positive or negative financial benefit or power, while symbolic public policies provide the beneficiaries with moral benefits rather than material benefits. Fourth, Anderson believed that public policies are divided into those involving the provision of collective goods or private goods.

Distributive Public Policy. Lowi (1972) believed that distributive policies allow government actors to provide beneficial goods and services to the majority at the expense of all taxpayers. Distributive policies aim to improve the equitable distribution of goods and services by providing benefits to large segments of the population (Peters et al., 1977). For example, housing policies, education funding, agricultural subsidies, etc., all belong to distribution policies. Distribution policies involve the allocation of services or benefits to specific segments of the population - individuals, groups, companies, and communities. Some distribution policies may provide benefits to one or a few beneficiaries, while others may provide benefits to a large number of people. Distribution policies usually involve the use of public funds to help specific groups, communities, or industries (Anderson, 2000).

Housing is a basic human need that affects the well-being of all citizens and has profound social and economic impacts on the lives of people in every country. The provision of adequate and affordable housing is a core policy objective of a country, and

has also risen to the fore in international frameworks through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda. Phang and Helble (2016) analyzed the key pillars of Singapore's housing policy, particularly land acquisition, the HDB-CPF system, the role of markets, housing market interventions, the Ethnic Integration Policy, and the Lease Buyback Scheme, and then summarized the lessons of Singapore for other countries to learn from. In their first attempt to consider the intersection of physical urban form and housing affordability from a national policy perspective, policy interventions that can achieve the dual objectives of housing affordability and urban compactness. On this basis, they proposed a new framework for understanding the housing market and provided an in-depth analysis of the policy options available to governments, illustrated with examples from around the world (Monroy et al., 2020). Gruber et al. (2021) looked at how tax subsidies affect housing decisions in Denmark following a major reform of the mortgage interest deduction for middle - and high-income households. They found that: first, the mortgage interest deduction has zero impact on the homeownership for middle - and high-income households; Second, the mortgage interest deduction has a clear effect on housing demand at the dense margin, prompting homeowners to buy larger and more expensive houses. Third, the mortgage interest deduction has sizeable effects on household financial decisions, inducing them to increase indebtedness; Finally, the reduction of tax subsidy lowered the equilibrium house price.

Free public education is also a public distribution policy that scholars pay more attention to. Donnelly (2020) analyzed the challenges faced by the U.S. public school system as it attempts to fulfill the promise of providing a "free and appropriate public education" to all of its students, and proposed possible responses to these challenges, thereby providing a possible roadmap for traditional public education to better fulfill its mission of "promoting the general welfare." By comparing the financial system, teacher salary system, poverty alleviation policy and laws and regulations of China and France, Zhou (2023) looked for the direction for the improvement of China's compulsory education in the future. The study found that China's legal system is incomplete in many areas, and the establishment of regulatory agencies and departments needs to be

improved. At the same time, China also needs to improve the social status of teaching and administrative staffs.

The agricultural subsidy policy has played a positive role in the process of raising farmers' income and promoting into agricultural development. Priyanka et al. (2022) analyzed the long-term effects of agricultural subsidies based on the review of the literature. The study found that agricultural subsidies support India's food security and national security; But inequitable distribution has led to disparities in interstate agricultural growth that will hurt the sustainability of Indian agriculture in the long run. Based on data from the Chinese Social Survey (CSS) on 13,359 interviewed farm households, Sha et al. (2023) systematically assessed the impact of agricultural subsidies on the common prosperity of farmers. The research shew that agricultural subsidies significantly improve the per capita income level of rural households, reduced income inequality between households, and helped to achieve the goal of common prosperity. The research results provided innovative experience and ideas for the Chinese government to improve the agricultural subsidy policy system and optimize the structure of agricultural subsidies, so as to make more comprehensive use of agricultural subsidies to promote common prosperity in rural areas.

In summary, the cost of distributing public policy is paid by all the public, and most people can benefit from distributing public policy, so distributing public policy is the least controversial form of public policy (Weingast, 1994). Through the formulation and implementation of these public distribution policies, such as housing policies, educational funding, agricultural subsidies, etc., the government establishes a balanced and effective distribution system to ensure a fair distribution of goods and services, thereby promoting the overall economic and social well-being of the society.

Redistributive Public Policy. Redistributive policies redistribute wealth, property, political or civil rights, or some other valuable item to the advantage of class-based groups (Hill & Leighley, 1992; Roh & Berry, 2008). Redistributive policies may redistribute economic and social status. The usual pattern in redistributive policy shifts resources from haves to have-nots (Anderson, 2000). For example, redistributive

economic policies redistribute income and wealth from the wealthiest population to the poorest. The civil rights policies aim to provide social welfare for ethnic minorities and women to achieve economic and social equality (Peters et al., 1977). Such as tax, social security system are redistributive policies.

Tax revenue is the main source of revenue for public finance, so tax is regarded as the most important tool of redistribution. Saez (2004) found through theoretical model research that indirect tax can play a relatively large role in income distribution in the short-run, but direct tax can promote income distribution more effectively in the long-run. This conclusion has been confirmed in the practice of fiscal and tax policies in the United States. Yang and Liu (2019) calculated the actual per capita indirect tax borne by urban and rural residents in China from 2001 to 2015, and found through empirical test that indirect tax mainly has a reverse influence on the income gap between urban and rural residents. The notable reason why the indirect tax plays a reverse role in the income adjustment is the difference between the primary income distribution results of urban and rural residents as well as the difference in their actual indirect tax rates. Using micro-observational data from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS), Guillaud et al. (2020) assessed the effects of tax and transfer configurations across redistribution in 22 OECD countries over the period 1999-2013. The results shew that in most countries, tax redistribution dominates transfer redistribution (excluding pensions), and both progressivity of taxes and the average tax rate have large impacts on redistribution. Malla and Pathranarakul (2022) examined the effects of fiscal policy and institutional capacity on income inequality among developed and developing countries. They concluded that the widening income gap is persistent in both developed and developing countries; Income taxes are more progressive in developing countries and may abate income inequality in a way that they are not in developed countries. By examining the corporate income tax of EU-28 Member States from 2007 to 2018, Tahova and Banociova (2020) used cluster analysis to assess the relationship between the progressivity level of selected taxes, Gini coefficients and selected macroeconomic variables. The study found that: During the reported period, the corporate income tax of EU-28 Member States could be

considered to meet the tax progressivity, which may affect the level of income inequality; The absolute values of corporate tax incomes in the EU-28 Member States are among the lower; Countries often have more often serious income inequality that cannot be sufficiently balanced by either a system of benefits and transfers, nor by collection of tax incomes.

Among the social security system, the most representative are the pension system and the public health insurance, which have played a positive redistributive role in narrowing the income gap of residents. Mahler and Jesuit (2004) analyzed the social security data of developed countries in the Luxembourg Income Study from 1980 to 2000 and found that social security has a significant effect on reducing the gap between the rich and the poor, which is stronger than the effect of tax redistribution. In a study of the 28 Member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Wang et al. (2012) found that public pensions account for the largest reduction in income inequality, and that social assistance, disability and family benefits also contribute to smaller income disparities. After the implementation of the pension system in developed countries, the Gini coefficient has decreased obviously, and the redistribution effect of the pension system is good (Jesuit & Mahler, 2017; Lustig, 2016). After the implementation of the pension system in developing countries, it has also played a role in narrowing the income gap, but there is still a certain gap compared with the redistribution effect in developed countries (Lustig, 2016). Public health insurance system can be an efficient means of redistribution, complementary to income taxation, which can reduce poverty and income inequality in developed countries (Henriet & Rochet, 2006; Spadaro et al., 2013). China's new rural cooperative medical system has significantly reduced the Gini coefficient of rural residents, alleviated the inequality of income distribution within villages (Qi, 2011; Xu & Ye, 2016), and the basic medical insurance for urban workers has significantly reduced the inequality of income in the primary distribution (Yu et al., 2022).

In general, the government plays a leading role in the process of redistribution. Redistribution policies emphasize the principle of fairness and achieve their goals through taxation and transfer payments represented by the social security system.

Regulatory Public Policy. Regulatory policies allow governments to force individuals or groups to perform certain beneficial behaviors while discouraging others. Government regulatory policies involve the implementation by government actors of rules that are backed by law (Brown & Jackson, 1994). Regulatory policies impose constraints on unacceptable individual and group behaviors (Peters et al., 1977). Environmental policy, food safety regulations, labor regulations, financial regulations and so on are all regulatory policies. Since this paper takes the life insurance industry in Shandong Province of China as the research object, the following is a review of scholars' research results on insurance industry regulatory policies.

The purpose of regulation is to overcome market failures, protect consumers from abuse, and pursue the maximization of economic efficiency or social welfare. Scholars have always paid close attention to the reform and development of insurance regulation system. Meier (1988) used the political theory of public policy to explain the role and effect of insurance regulatory policies. Insurance companies should provide enough capital to ensure their solvency, and the role of regulation in insurance markets should be confined to providing consumers with information about the default risk of insurers (Rees et al., 1999). Grace and Phillips (1999) proposed that regulators could not minimize costs, and they argued that there were also economies of scale in insurance regulatory services. Skipper and Klein (2000) tended to conduct regulation on the basis of ensuring full competition in the insurance market, in order to ensure the fairness, justice and transparency of insurance regulation and promote the healthy development of the insurance market. Huang and Zhang (2004) discussed measures to improve the efficiency of insurance regulation in China and the role and influence of regulation. Effective insurance regulation reflected advanced insurance regulation concepts and higher regulatory practice requirements. He listed the preconditions for effective insurance regulation in China and the constraints affecting the effectiveness of insurance regulation,

and then put forward a series of suggestions to improve China's insurance regulation to achieve regulatory effectiveness (Zhao, 2008). The global insurance regulatory rules tend to be unified, macro and micro prudential regulation are carried out simultaneously, counter-cyclical regulation and insurance innovation regulation are strengthened (Jiang, 2010). Zhu (2013) suggested that China build an effective insurance regulation system with insurance regulation as the core, including insurance company governance, insurance industry self-discipline and social regulation, in order to break through the current dilemma faced by insurance regulation. Swedloff (2020) argued that regulators need to adapt to the changes that AI and big data applications are bringing to the insurance industry to ensure they have the necessary capabilities to protect individual consumers and the insurance market. Data capitalization has brought forth a series of structural changes in the insurance industry, which has posed new challenges to insurance regulation. Suo and Wu (2021) analyzed the impacts of data capitalization on regulatory areas such as market access, capital adequacy, market behavior and consumer protection, and macro & prudential regulation. Based on this, they proposed the future reform direction for China's insurance regulatory system, provided directions for the in-depth application of data elements in the insurance industry.

Through the comparative study of insurance regulatory systems, scholars are actively exploring and perfecting insurance regulatory systems suitable for various countries. Baranoff and Baranoff (2003) analyzed the evolution history of insurance regulation in the United States over the past 200 years, affirmed the reform of insurance regulation in the United States from the late 1990s to the early 21st century, and believed that the United States was learning from and implementing the theory of government intervention in the insurance market. Lin and Shi (2003) believed that China's insurance regulation should adopt a model focusing on solvency regulation and taking into account market behavior regulation. Cooper and Dorfman (2004) analyzed the problems existing in the insurance regulatory system of American states, which put pressure on the reform of the insurance regulatory system in America. They argued that America's insurance regulatory regime should take advantage of the EU's financial regulatory regime. Hu and

Gao (2004) selected some typical developed countries and emerging market countries or regions, compared and analyzed the regulatory objectives, regulatory systems, regulatory contents and regulatory models in their insurance regulatory systems, and put forward suggestions to improve China's insurance regulatory system. Guo (2006) put forward the basic ideas for reforming and improving China's insurance regulatory system: strengthening the status and powers of the regulatory body of the CIRC according to law; Improve the efficiency of insurance regulation and law enforcement; Cultivate and improve the non-government insurance regulation mechanism; Strengthen exchanges and cooperation in insurance regulation. Based on the role of American International Group (AIG) and the insurance industry in the 2007-2009 financial crisis and its impact on insurance regulation, Harrington (2009) discussed whether insurance companies or other non-bank financial institutions need a systemic risk regulator, and finally discussed the impact of the financial crisis on insurance regulation. Leng (2009) made a comparative analysis of the core regulatory principles of IAIS, the EU Solvency II regulatory model, the US RBC regulatory model and the North American dynamic solvency regulatory model. Xu (2016) summed up the development trend of the insurance industry regulation model in developed countries in recent years, he believed that China's insurance regulation system needs further reform to promote the healthy development of the insurance industry. The Solvency II package, which went on force on January 1st, 2016, and the ongoing process of addressing systemic risk by the FSB and IAIS, had costs for insurers and the insurance industry as a whole, and costs had led to market concentration and uniformization. In order to promote the integration and development of the EU insurance market, they put forward a number of proposals on simplification and focusing of insurance regulation (Pradier & Chneiweiss, 2017). Zhang and Cao (2023) explored the impact of regulation on the operating burden of insurance companies, based on the quasi-natural experiment in the regulatory policy known as Solvency II, which took effect in 2016. They found that regulation has a significant positive impact on both the absolute costs and cost efficiency of insurance companies, indicating that although

regulation increases the absolute costs of insurance companies, it also improves output and operational efficiency.

To sum up, a country through the establishment of a suitable insurance industry regulation system, promulgation and implementation of regulatory public policies, the purpose is to regulate insurance activities according to law, create and maintain a fair competitive environment, so as to promote the development of the insurance market. In this process, the regulatory public policies should be constantly adjusted and reformed with the market environment, the application of new technologies and other factors.

Self-regulatory Public Policy. Self-regulatory policies are used to protect or promote the interests of members of a particular group. It is usually up to a professional or occupational group to act on its own, seeking licensing legislation from the legislature. In time, entry into the licensed occupation or profession may be restricted and the prices charged for its specialized services may increase (Anderson, 2000).

Self-regulatory can play an important role in the insurance regulatory system. Self-regulation is applicable to the situation where the reputation of insurance companies is too low and the information of consumers is incomplete (Hägg, 1998). Institutional regulation is applicable to situations where excessive competition among insurance companies leads to a credit crisis in the insurance industry. Industry self-regulation can play an important role in addressing consumer issues, particularly when business codes of conduct and standards are involved, thus being an advantageous complement to government policies (OECD, 2015). Self-regulation is superior to government regulation, so developing countries should focus on having more self-regulatory organizations than developed countries. He argued that the insurance industry has better information than government regulators, self-regulation costs less than government regulation, and regulatory costs can be shifted directly onto industry (Mathur, 2001). Odinkova (2018) considered self-regulation as an effective mechanism to monitor the activities of business entities. Establishing the Life Insurance Association (LIA) in Russia and increasing its role in insurance regulation could reduce the negative effects of the transition from state regulation to self-regulation.

In China, the insurance industry's self-regulatory organization is the Insurance Association of China (IAC), founded February 23, 2001. IAC is authorized by the CIRC and registered by the National Ministry of Civil Affairs. It is a voluntary, not-for-profit organization. Chen et al. (2014) believed that the role of industry self-regulation is less important in China, because the IAC has a very short history, is relatively small in size, and lacks real independence from the CIRC. On the basis of researching the function positioning and operation mode of insurance industry associations in many developed markets, Wang (2014) suggested that the IAC should improve its organizational structure, strengthen industry self-discipline, improve its ability to serve member companies and protect the rights and interests of consumers. Jiao (2018) found that the self-regulatory norms and guiding norms of the IAC played an important role in effectively guiding industry members, protecting insurance consumers and upholding the bottom line of business ethics. China should actively promote the development of the IAC, enhance the status and social recognition of the IAC in the regulatory system, in order to achieve services and management within the insurance industry (Deng, 2019).

As a self-regulatory organization, the IAC had formulated a series of self-regulatory policies, effectively promoting the healthy development of China's insurance industry. In September 2009, the IAC formulated and issued the "Rules for the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Insurance Practitioners" to strengthen the self-regulatory of practitioners, which is conducive to comprehensively improving the professional quality of practitioners and effectively enhancing the image of the insurance industry (Jin, 2010). In 2018, the IAC issued 16 standards and accelerated the popularization and application of these standards in the insurance industry, which is the concrete embodiment of the IAC's use of standardized means to strengthen industry self-regulatory (Cheng, 2019). In terms of strengthening the protection of the rights and interests of insurance consumers, the IAC has formulated the Self-Regulatory Convention on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Insurance Consumers, and issued industry standards such as the Norms for Handling Insurance Consumer Complaints, the Basic

Requirements for Insurance Company Customer Service Centers, and the Guidelines for the Identification of Dishonest Practices of Insurance Sales Practitioners (Fu, 2023).

2.2.3 Dimensions of Public Policy

Public policy is complex and multi-dimensional. Potucek & Vass (2003) discussed public policy from four dimensions: value, process, implementation and result. In addition, Howlett and Cashore (2013) pointed out that the dimensions of public policy include policy objectives and content, policy formulation process, policy implementation and feedback, policy environment and interaction, and policy evaluation and adjustment.

In the study of the impact of public policies, more emphasis is placed on the implementation and results of public policies. Specifically, it is analyzed from four aspects: policy cognition, policy influence, market environment adaptation, career development. The specific dimensions and sub-indicators are shown in Table 2.1:

Table 2.1 Dimensions of Public Policy and Sub-indicators

Dimension	Sub-indicator
Policy Cognition	Policy awareness, Policy understanding, Policy acceptance, Behavioral response
Policy Influence	Regulatory policy, Market demand, Product innovation, Industry structure, Social trust and image
Market Environment Adaptation	Market structure fitness, Market demand responsiveness, Market supply adjustment ability, Market resource allocation efficiency, Market competition environment, Market feedback and adjustment mechanism
Career Development	Career opportunities and access, Career development and promotion, Changes in the demand for vocational skills, Optimization of the professional environment

Table 2.2 Summary of Literature Review of Public Policy

Researcher	Focus	Research Finding
Easton (1965) Dye (2013) Anderson (1978) Nagel (1984)	Definition	They gave definitions of public policy from the point of view of the government or the purpose of making public policy.
Richard (1974) Chen (1995) Chen (2002)	Definition	They defined public policy in terms of norms of behavior and social control
Lowi (1972)	Categories	Distributive, redistributive, regulatory, and constituent policies.
Anderson (2000)	Categories	Anderson classified public policies from four different dimensions. First, substantive policies and procedural policies. Second, distributive, regulatory, self-regulatory and redistributive public policies. Third, material public policies and Symbolic public policies. Fourth, public policies involving the provision of collective goods or private goods.
Lowi (1972) Peters et al. (1977) Anderson (2000) Phang and Helble (2016) Donnelly (2020) Priyanka et al. (2022)	Distributive public policy	Distributing public policy is the least controversial form of public policy. Through the formulation and implementation of these public distribution policies, the government establishes a balanced and effective distribution system to ensure a fair

Table 2.2 Summary of Literature Review of Public Policy

Researcher	Focus	Research Finding
		distribution of goods and services, thereby promoting the overall economic and social well-being of the society.
Peters et al. (1977) Hill and Leighley (1992) Roh and Berry (2008) Anderson (2000) Saez (2004) Jesuit and Mahler (2017) Lustig (2016)	Redistributive public policy	Government plays a leading role in the process of redistribution. Redistribution policies emphasize the principle of fairness and achieve their goals through taxation and transfer payments represented by the social security system.
Meier (1988) Rees et al. (1999) Skipper and Klein (2000) Cooper and Dorfman (2004) Guo (2006)	Regulatory public policy	The regulatory public policies should be constantly adjusted and reformed with the market environment, the application of new technologies and other factors.
Hägg (1998) Mathur (2001) Odinkova (2018) Deng (2019) Fu (2023).	Self-regulatory public policy	Self-regulatory policies are used to protect or promote the interests of members of a particular group. It is usually up to a professional or occupational group to act on its own, seeking licensing legislation from the legislature.

Table 2.2 Summary of Literature Review of Public Policy

Researcher	Focus	Research Finding
Potucek and Vass (2003) Howlett and Cashore (2013)	Dimensions of Public Policy	Potucek & Vass (2003) discussed public policy from four dimensions: value, process, implementation and result. In addition, Howlett and Cashore (2013) pointed out that the dimensions of public policy include policy objectives and content, policy formulation – process, policy implementation and feedback, policy environment and interaction, and policy evaluation and adjustment.

2.3 Organizational Isomorphic Behavior

Organizational isomorphism is one of the manifestations of social change, which leads to the obsolescence of the original organizational theory and the emergence of a new organizational theory - institutional theory. In the second half of the twentieth century, contingency theory dominated organizational theory. According to contingency theory, organizations should be idiosyncratic rather than isomorphic, so contingency theory cannot explain the emergence of isomorphic phenomena. Organizational isomorphism is defined as the resemblance of a focal organization to other organizations in its environment (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Organizational isomorphic behavior refers to the tendency of different organizations, particularly within the same sector or industry, to adopt similar structures, processes, and practices over time. This phenomenon is rooted in institutional theory and is driven by various forces that lead organizations to converge on similar ways of operating.

2.3.1 Institutional Theory

Nowadays, different companies, regardless of their business areas, are increasingly organized in a similar way. This phenomenon is called isomorphism. Selznick (1949) found that organizations are affected by institutional environment in the process of operation, he pointed out that organizations are institutionalized. Meyer and Rowan (1977) argued that institutional rules function as myths which organizations gain legitimacy, resources, stability, and enhanced survival prospects by conforming to institutional rules. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) put forward the core concepts such as legitimacy and institutional isomorphism, which laid the foundation for the development of institutional theory. They defined the organizational field as "the sum total of a series of organizations that collectively constitute institutional life, including key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services or products." They argued that modern organizations are becoming more similar as a result of institutional isomorphism that is subject to external institutional pressures. They identified three mechanisms through which institutional isomorphic change occurs: coercive isomorphism that stems from political influence and the problem of legitimacy; mimetic isomorphism resulting from standard responses to uncertainty; normative isomorphism, associated with professionalization.

Scott (1995) put forward three pillars of institution, overcoming the lack of vague definition of institution in institutional theory, gave a system analysis framework about institutional isomorphism. The three pillars of institution including (1) regulative pillar, which supervises organizational behaviors through the establishment of rules, rewards and punishments; (2) normative pillar: institutions constrain organizational behavior through social values and role expectations in social norms; (3) cognitive pillar: the

organization constructs its institutional environment and thus gives meaning to organizational behavior. The organization realizes the constraint on the organization by defining "what we are". Furthermore, Scott believed that the regulative pillar, normative pillar and cognitive pillar constrain organizations through three mechanisms of coercive isomorphism, normative isomorphism and mimetic isomorphism respectively, so as to make the behaviors of organizations conform to the requirements of institutional environment.

Since the 1990s, many scholars have used the three mechanisms of institutional isomorphism to analyze the structure, practice and public policy changes of various organizations, which has achieved fruitful results and greatly enriched the theoretical achievements and practical applications of institutional theory. Hallonsten and Hugander (2014) analyzed the purpose and effect of Sweden's research funding program. They believed that coercive isomorphism is primarily driven by governmental legislation and oversight; normative isomorphism is the adherence by new actors to norm systems; mimetic isomorphism means that in the face of environmental uncertainty, new funding bodies imitated those that have already implemented the subvented system. Davies (2015) studied the National Mutual Acceptance in hospital governance practices in Victorian, Australia. He considered that institutions or organizations gain legitimacy through coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism. Coercive isomorphism is obtaining governmental recognition, such as a legal or regulatory framework; mimetic isomorphism is obtaining public approval, such as an expectation or opportunity for similar behavior; normative isomorphism is professional recognition, such as formal training, industry standards.

Coercive Isomorphism. Coercive isomorphism is generated by the formal and informal pressures exerted on organizations by other organizations upon which organizations are dependent and by the cultural expectations of the society in which organizations function. These pressures may be perceived as force, persuasion, or invitations to join in collusion (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Thus, coercive isomorphism is driven by external forces. Organizations may be under pressure from external

authorities to comply with certain expectations, such as legal or regulatory mandates, reporting or oversight obligations, and from entities that provide funding or other necessary resources to the organization.

Gaining legitimacy increases an organization's chances of survival. Coercive isomorphism can be perceived as a means to achieve the legitimacy of multinational subsidiaries. For multinational corporations, achieving and maintaining legitimacy is a complex process (Kostova et al., 2008). Tipurić and Krajnović (2020) pointed out that multinational companies' requirement for legitimacy is achieved through the legal framework of the host country. Coercive isomorphism assumes that environmental pressures are conducive to an organization's legitimacy, whether adopting standardized business practices, certifications, or regulatory requirements. Regulations and standards increase the likelihood that organizations within the same industry will adopt the same strategic solutions. Rahaman et al. (2004) used institutional theory and legitimacy theory to explain the social and environmental reports of the Volta River Authority (VRA), a public sector organization in Ghana. The findings suggested that coercive isomorphism has had a significant impact on the organization's social and environmental reporting. Because the VRA relied heavily on funding by the World Bank, it needed to comply with World Bank requirements to ensure institutional legitimacy. This resulted in prices that were beyond the reach of local people and ran counter to the original development goals of the VRA project.

Institutional theory argued that external forces drive the decision-making of enterprises. Clemens and Douglas (2006) used institutional theory to explore the relationship between external coercion and voluntary green initiatives (VGIs). The results show that there is a significant positive correlation between government coercion and VGIs. In other words, companies will only take green issues conscientiously if they are coerced by government. Coercive isomorphic factors such as government policies and pressure and international capital market are the fundamental institutional reasons affecting the corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies of Chinese listed companies. Government policies and pressure have shaped the CSR strategies and behaviors of

Chinese listed companies. International capital markets have pushed large listed Chinese companies to adopt proactive CSR strategies (Li and Yu, 2015). Based on institutional theory, Othman et al. (2011) analyzed whether coercive isomorphism imposed by regulatory authorities in developing countries is an effective mechanism to promote corporate social responsibility (CSR) reputation. Using 117 listed companies on the main board of Bursa Malaysia as a sample, they found through regression analysis that regulatory efforts are significant mechanisms in promoting CSR reputation.

Organizations with the power to set rules, such as states or governments, act as institutions, leading to coercive isomorphism in certain areas. Dénéšová (2017) examined the role of coercive isomorphic mechanisms in the formulation of parental leave legislation in EU member states. Dénéšová found that the coercive isomorphism mechanism led to a lot of legislative amendments or small amendments in some EU countries, thus the member states achieved parental leave systems to which fathers are entitled. Jarvis (2014) explored the role of coercive institutional isomorphism in policy adoption and its impact on regulatory performance, using higher education in Hong Kong as an example. The findings suggested that coercive state-led developmentalism is not always destined to success and sometimes produces meaningless regulatory or organizational performance.

The research on coercive isomorphism can be carried out from three dimensions: policies and regulations, market competition and standards, corporate culture and values. The specific sub-indicators of each dimension are shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Dimensions of Coercive Isomorphism and Sub-indicators

Dimension	Sub-indicator
Policies and Regulations	Compulsory force of policies and regulations, Coverage of policies and regulations, Implementation and supervision of policies and regulations, Adaptability and flexibility of policies and regulations
Market Competition and Standards	Intensity of market competition, Convergence of competitive strategies, Formulation and implementation of industry standards, External supervision and compliance requirements
Corporate Culture and Values	Consistency of corporate culture, Convergence of values, Influence of external pressure on corporate culture and values

Therefore, coercive isomorphism is an important means for organizations to pursue legitimacy. External factors, including government policies and supervision, are the main driving force to promote organizational coercive isomorphism. China's life insurance industry has to comply with various public policies issued by the government, and also needs to meet the requirements of the regulatory authorities, which are the driving force for China's life insurance companies to move towards coercive isomorphism.

Mimetic Isomorphism. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) proposed a definition of mimetic isomorphism, pointing out that when an organization's goals are ambiguous or its environment is uncertain, it will tend to model or copy other successful organizations. They pointed out that “The more uncertain the relationship between means and ends the greater the extent to which an organization will model itself after organizations it perceives to be successful. The more ambiguous the goals of an organization, the greater the extent to which the organization will model itself after organizations that it perceives

to be successful.” Haunschild and Miner (1997) classified inter-organizational imitation modes into frequency imitation, trait imitation and outcome imitation, where frequency imitation refers to the practice of copying very common, trait imitation refers to the practice of copying other organizations with certain features, and outcome imitation refers to imitation based on the obvious impact of the practice on others.

Under the influence of external competition, external risk and unfamiliar environment, enterprises will adopt similar behaviors or strategies, which leads to the phenomenon of mimetic isomorphism among enterprises. Asaba and Lieberman (1999) analyzed new product introduction in the Japanese soft-drink industry to explore why firms exhibit similar behavior. The study found that when firms observe larger competitors initial entry into brand-new, they will push out similar products, because the entry of large firms may give legitimacy to the new product. On the other hand, firms will imitate competitors who share a similar resource base to introduce new product within established product categories, which can economize information costs. Barreto and Baden-Fuller (2006) examined the branch decisions of Portuguese banks between 1988 and 1996, they found that legitimacy pressures would lead to mimetic isomorphism when banks set up branches, and mimetic isomorphism would reduce banks' profitability. Yang and Hyland (2012) used 4,881 mergers and acquisitions completed in the financial services industry as a sample to construct a generalized multivariate regression model and found that isomorphism would appear in the decisions made when firms imitate others, thus confirming the relationship between imitation and isomorphism. Based on legitimacy perspective in institutional theory and mimetic isomorphism in organizational field, Chen et al. (2016) analyzed data from China listed firms in manufacturing industry from 2009 to 2014, and found that imitative isomorphism based on institutional legitimacy has a significant positive moderating effect on the internationalization-performance relationship of firms. Therefore, firms can obtain more organizational legitimacy by mimetic isomorphism and then improve their international performance. Cormier and Gomez-Gutierrez (2018) studied companies in Canada, France and Germany, and analyzed how the environmental content disclosed in annual reports,

annual information forms and corporate social responsibility reports are mimicked internationally. The research results show that environmental disclosure mimetic isomorphism for different topics varies among countries and by industry sensitiveness to environment, and mimetic patterns being affected by environmental performance.

In addition to enterprises, many scholars have studied the mimetic isomorphism of non-profit organizations or government organizations. Hwang and Choi (2017) examined the information system security innovation of the South Korean government, established a model of mimetic isomorphism's influence on innovation-supportive culture, legitimacy, and organizational citizenship behavior. They surveyed 489 civil servants in the South Korean government and then used the partial least squares method to analyze the valid data. The results show that mimetic isomorphism has positive effects on both innovation-supportive culture and legitimacy in information system security innovation. However, mimetic isomorphism only affected the organizational citizenship behavior of individuals, but not the organizational citizenship behavior of organizations. Based on mimetic isomorphism, Campos-Alba et al. (2023) defined political mimetic isomorphism and then assumed that privatization of public services is influenced by an imitation effect between neighboring municipalities with a common political ideology. They analyzed a sample of municipalities that privatized water and/or waste collection services between 2014 and 2019 using geostatistical tools and logistic regression analysis with spatial variables. The results supported the validity of the political mimetic isomorphism hypothesis, and the effect of this mimicry on the privatization of public services is greater than certain economic variables.

When studying the mimetic isomorphic behaviors in the life insurance industry, the following three dimensions, which are marketing strategy, marketing behavior, marketing culture are addressed. The specific sub-indicators of each dimension are shown in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 Dimensions of Mimetic Isomorphism and Sub-indicators

Dimension	Sub-indicator
Marketing Strategy	Market insight and positioning, Product and service innovation, Promotion and promotion strategy, Customer relationship management and service
Marketing Behavior	Market entry and penetration, Product promotion and brand building, Pricing strategy and promotion means, Customer relationship management and maintenance, Marketing innovation and differentiation
Marketing Culture	Corporate core values, Brand story and image building, Marketing concept and strategy, Customer relationship management and service culture, Team culture and internal communication, Social responsibility

Normative Isomorphism. Normative isomorphism, as an important concept in Neo-Institutional Theory, is widely used to explain the convergence of organizational behavior. Normative Isomorphism refers to the process by which organizations gain legitimacy and social acceptance by imitating the behaviors, norms, values, and beliefs of other organizations or professional bodies in their industry. The concept of normative isomorphism was first proposed by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) in organizational sociology, who regarded it as a strategic behavior that organizations adopt when facing the pressure of institutional environment. Normative isomorphism emphasizes the behavior and practices of organizations that mimic professional bodies, trade associations, or industry standards in order to gain recognition and support within and outside the industry.

When facing institutional pressure, organizations are not limited to imitation, but may also adopt compromise, avoidance, resistance or manipulation strategies. These strategies provide a theoretical basis for understanding the diversity and complexity of normative isomorphism, showing that organizations are not completely passive in the process of imitation, but make strategic choices according to their own context and goals (Oliver, 1991). The mechanism of normative isomorphism. They believed that normative isomorphism is not only derived from professional education and socialization processes, but also influenced by professional associations, trade associations and other organizations, which further strengthen the effect of normative isomorphism by disseminating specific norms of behavior and values (Mizruchi & Fein, 1999).

In financial institutions, professional norms and industry standards are of great significance in maintaining market order and preventing corruption. For example, widespread adherence to high standards of professional ethics among employees of financial institutions would greatly reduce the incidence of corruption. In addition, industry associations and regulators can also promote normative isomorphism among financial institutions by developing and enforcing strict rules and regulations, thereby reducing corruption (Venard & Hanaffi, 2008).

Han et al. (2013) studied the historical impact of social insurance policy compliance among Chinese firms. They found that firms founded in the era of planned economy were more likely to comply with social insurance policies, reflecting the combined effect of Organizational Imprinting and normative isomorphism. These companies have mimicked the organizational behavior patterns of the planned economy era, treating social insurance as part of corporate responsibility to ensure social legitimacy. With the promotion of ERM framework by international organizations such as the International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS), insurance companies have adopted ERM system in order to conform to industry norms and enhance competitiveness. This process reflects the role of normative isomorphism, that is, insurance companies improve their management level and market position by imitating

the practices of leading companies in the industry and following international norms (Jabbour & Abdel-Kader, 2016).

Normative isomorphism has many influences on enterprise behavior. First, it promotes standardization and consistency within the industry and reduces transaction costs for firms (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Secondly, normative isomorphism helps to enhance the social legitimacy of enterprises and reduce uncertainty (Oliver, 1991). However, over-reliance on normative isomorphism may also lead to the decline of organizational innovation ability and the intensification of market homogeneous competition (Kshetri, 2020).

When studying normative isomorphic behaviors in the life insurance industry, there are the following three dimensions, which are industry norm cognition, marketing strategy, and professional behavior are examined. The specific sub-indicators of each dimension are shown in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 Dimensions of Normative Isomorphism and Sub-indicators

Dimension	Sub-indicator
Industry Norm Cognition	Common norms and standards cognition, Industry values and belief system, Industry practices and behavior patterns, Norm compliance and legitimacy perception, Industry certification and evaluation consensus
Marketing Strategy	Market norms and compliance with laws and regulations, Consumer needs and expectations, Compliant use of marketing means and tools, Customer relationship management and maintenance

Table 2.5 Dimensions of Normative Isomorphism and Sub-indicators

Dimension	Sub-indicator
Professional Behavior	Professional ethics and ethics, Professional norms and standards, Professional ability and literacy, Communication and cooperation, Compliance with laws and regulations

In summary, normative isomorphism not only explains why organizations imitate and converge on each other in structure, process, and practice, but also reveals the institutional pressures and specialization influences behind this convergence. Normative isomorphism, as a kind of strategic behavior of organizations facing the pressure of institutional environment, shows remarkable influence and applicability in different fields and situations. By mimicking accepted norms and standards in the industry, organizations can not only gain legitimacy and social acceptance, but also improve performance and social impact.

2.3.2 Relationship between Public Policy and Organizational Isomorphic Behavior

Organizational isomorphism refers to the phenomenon that organizations tend to exhibit similar structures, processes, and behavioral patterns when faced with similar environmental pressures. This phenomenon exists in a wide range of sectors, including the public sector, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. As an important part of the external environment, public policy has a profound impact on the process of organizational isomorphism.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) proposed three main mechanisms of organizational isomorphism: coercive isomorphism, normative isomorphism, and mimetic isomorphism. These mechanisms provide a theoretical basis for understanding how public policy promotes similarity between organizations. Under the framework of public policy, the

mandatory regulations of the government, the norms within the industry and the imitative behavior among organizations work together to affect the isomorphic process of organizational structure and behavior.

As an important means of government governance, public policy not only directly affects the development of social economy, but also has a profound impact on the structure and behavior of various organizations through its normative and coercive power. Among them, coercive isomorphism, as a core concept in new institutionalism theory, describes the phenomenon that organizations are forced to adopt similar structures and behaviors in the face of external coercive forces (such as laws, policies, etc.). Mason (2012) pointed out that with the increase of government support for social enterprises, public policies have become an important factor to promote forced isomorphism of social enterprises. Frumkin and Galaskiewicz (2004) showed that government agencies showed a higher isomorphic tendency when faced with external regulatory, certification, licensing and other mandatory institutional pressures. This reveals the significant role of public policy in promoting the convergence of organizational structures and behaviors in the public sector. The study of Molleda (2008) showed that public policy has a significant coercive isomorphic impact in the field of Venezuelan public relations. Through the formulation and implementation of a series of political, economic and social policies, the government has imposed mandatory constraints on the structure and behavior of public relations practitioners and organizations, forcing them to adjust their strategies to adapt to changes in the external environment. Villadsen (2011) pointed out that the mandatory policies formulated by the government, as an external normative force, directly shaped the decision-making framework and behavior pattern of various organizations. For example, the introduction of environmental protection policies has forced enterprises to adjust their production processes and adopt more environmentally friendly production methods, thus achieving coercive isomorphism among organizations.

Public policy speeds up or slows down the process of mimetic isomorphism by setting industry norms, providing incentives, or imposing regulatory requirements to guide organizations to imitate a particular model. Scott (1995) pointed out that

organizational imitation is not only to improve efficiency, but also to gain social recognition and legitimacy. He emphasized that public policy often influences the cognitive and behavioral patterns of organizations by constructing and strengthening specific institutional logic, thus promoting mimetic isomorphism. Luo et al. (2010) found that in promoting the internationalization of enterprises, public policies significantly affected the mimetic isomorphic behavior of enterprises by providing institutional incentives, reducing uncertainty and shaping social expectations. They pointed out that the internationalization strategy and policy orientation of the Chinese government directly promoted the mimetic behavior of enterprises and promoted the internationalization process of enterprises. Depoers and Jerome (2020) pointed out that mimetic isomorphism in corporate tax disclosures indicates that organizations tend to adopt practices of other organizations in the industry when faced with external pressures and uncertainties. This mimetic behavior is not limited to tax disclosure, but may also extend to other areas of public policy, such as environmental protection, social security, etc. Belle et al. (2020) found that when faced with uncertainty, public sector organizations are more inclined to mimetic the successful practices of other organizations rather than make independent decisions based on their own situations. This mimetic behavior may lead to efficiency gains and cost savings in the short term, but in the long term, it may cause the organization to lose its ability to innovate and adapt. They suggest that policymakers should find a balance between imitation and innovation to ensure the continued effectiveness of public policy.

By formulating and implementing specific policy requirements, public policy regulates and guides the behavior of organizations, and promotes the convergence of organizations in structure and behavior. DiMaggio and Powell(1983) pointed out that public policy, as an external institutional pressure, often regulates and guides organizational behavior through laws, regulations and administrative orders, so as to promote normative isomorphism among organizations. Greenwood et al. (2002) put forward a five-stage model of institutional change by studying institutional change in the field of business service. This model provides strong support for understanding how

public policies promote normative isomorphism by triggering institutional change. The introduction of public policies often acts as a trigger event, prompting organizations to re-examine and adjust their own behavioral norms and structures, thus promoting institutional changes in the whole field. Villadsen (2011) pointed out that the flow and interaction of senior executives across multiple organizations promotes the dissemination of policy practices and management models. As a part of the external institutional environment, public policy has an important impact on the decision-making and behavior of senior executives. Executives tend to adopt widely accepted and proven practices when responding to public policy requirements, thus exacerbating normative isomorphism across organizations. Kshetri (2020) pointed out that in the cyber insurance market, the government and professional associations promote the normative isomorphism of the market by formulating cyber security standards, promoting information sharing and strengthening supervision. These policies and measures not only improve the risk management capabilities of insurance companies, but also enhance consumers' awareness and acceptance of online insurance products.

To sum up, public policy has a profound impact on coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism of organizations by providing legal framework, incentive mechanism and social norms. These influences are not only reflected in the change of organizational structure and behavior, but also involve many aspects of organizational values, strategic goals and social responsibilities.

Table 2.6 Summary of Literature Review of Organizational Isomorphic Behavior

Researcher	Focus	Research Finding
Meyer and Rowan (1977) DiMaggio and Powell (1983) Scott (1995) Hallonsten and Hugander (2014) Davies (2015)	Institutional Theory	They used the three mechanisms of institutional isomorphism to analyze the structure, practice and public policy changes of various organizations, which has greatly enriched the theoretical achievements and practical applications of institutional theory.
DiMaggio and Powell (1983) Kostova et al. (2008) Rahaman et al. (2004) Clemens and Douglas (2006) Othman et al. (2011) Děnešová (2017)	Coercive isomorphism	Coercive isomorphism is an important means for organizations to pursue legitimacy. External factors, including government policies and supervision, are the main driving force to promote organizational coercive isomorphism.
DiMaggio and Powell (1983) Haunschild and Miner (1997) Asaba and Lieberman (1999) Barreto and Baden- Fuller (2006) Campos- Alba et al. (2023)	Mimetic isomorphism	Under the influence of external competition, external risk and unfamiliar environment, enterprises will adopt similar behaviors or strategies, which leads to the phenomenon of mimetic isomorphism among enterprises.

Table 2.6 Summary of Literature Review of Organizational Isomorphic Behavior

Researcher	Focus	Research Finding
Oliver (1991) Mizruchi and Fein (1999) Venard and Hanaffi (2008) Han et al. (2013) Jabbour and Abdel-Kader (2016)	Normative isomorphism.	Normative isomorphism, as a kind of strategic behavior of organizations facing the pressure of institutional environment, shows remarkable influence and applicability in different fields and situations. By mimicking accepted norms and standards in the industry, organizations can not only gain legitimacy and social acceptance, but also improve performance and social impact.
DiMaggio and Powell (1983) Scott (1995) Greenwood et al. (2002) Mason (2012) Frumkin and Galaskiewicz (2004) Molleda (2008) Villadsen (2011) Depoers and Jerome (2020)	The Relationship between Public Policy and Organizational Isomorphic Behavior	Public policy has a profound impact on the coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism of organizations by providing legal framework, incentive mechanism and social norms.

2.4 Resource Dependence Theory

Resource dependence theory (RDT) originated in the 1940s. When Selznick (1949) studied the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), he found that when the agency promoted advanced agricultural technology in the south, it attached great importance to cooperation with local "elites" such as the Soil Improvement Association. Through close cooperation with the Soil Improvement Association, the TVA was able to maintain its important position in agricultural projects. Therefore, Selznick came to the conclusion that there are certain limitations in the realization of the organization's own resources, the development and operation of organizations need to constantly adapt to changes in the external environment. Selznick defined the interaction between an organization and its environment as "co-optation." Thompson and McEwen (1958) established three types of cooperative relationships between organizations: bargaining, co-optation, and coalition. Zald (1970) made an in-depth analysis of organizational change from the perspective of political-economic research. He was concerned about the political structure inside and outside the organization, and believed that the formal and informal alliances between organizations will affect the survival and development of the organization. These views and conclusions promoted the formation of resource dependence theory to some extent.

The resource dependence theory was formally proposed by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salancik in 1978. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) systematically elaborated the core viewpoints of resource dependence theory. They put forward four core assumptions of resource dependence theory, which constituted the basic framework of resource dependence theory. The four assumptions are as follows:

Firstly, an organization is most concerned with its survival.

Secondly, in order for an organization to survive and function, it must rely on resources in the external environment. However, these resources are often not fully provided by the organization itself and must be acquired through interaction with the external environment.

Thirdly, in order to obtain the resources needed, organizations must actively interact and exchange with other organizations in the external environment.

Fourthly, the survival and success of an organization depends largely on its ability to control its relationships with other organizations.

2.4.1 Views of Resource Dependence Theory

According to resource dependence theory, an organization is an open system that depends on resources in the external environment to maintain its survival and development (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Resource dependence theory emphasized that organizational behavior is not only affected by internal factors, but also by constraints and influences imposed by resource providers in the external environment. From the perspective of resource dependence theory, in order to survive and grow, organizations need to constantly exchange resources with the external environment and take measures to reduce the dependence and uncertainty on the external environment (Hillman et al., 2009). The basic views of resource dependence theory include the following five aspects:

Firstly, organizations cannot be self-sufficient and must rely on resources in the external environment for survival and development. These resources include, but are not limited to, capital, technology, markets, information and legitimacy. The importance, scarcity and substitutability of resources determine the degree to which an organization depends on the external environment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The higher the degree of dependence, the more likely an organization is to reduce its dependence on the external environment by changing its structure or behavior pattern (Price & Schau, 2013).

Secondly, resource dependence theory emphasizes the interdependence between organizations, including competitive interdependence and symbiotic interdependence (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). In order to reduce the dependence on external resources, organizations will adopt various strategies, such as mergers and acquisitions, alliances and cross-shareholdings (Price & Schau, 2013). These strategies can not only help organizations acquire critical resources, but also enhance organizational autonomy and legitimacy (Drees & Heugens, 2013).

Thirdly, autonomy is the ability of an organization to be independent of external control in its decision-making process (Oliver, 1991). According to the resource dependence theory, organizations can improve their autonomy by reducing their dependence on external resources, so as to better cope with the uncertainty of external environment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). At the same time, legitimacy is the degree to which an organization is accepted and recognized in the social system, which is crucial for the organization to obtain resources and achieve its goals (Suchman, 1995). By establishing a positive relationship with the external environment, an organization can enhance its legitimacy and obtain more resource support (Drees & Heugens, 2013).

Fourthly, faced with the pressure and uncertainty of the external environment, organizations will adopt various strategic responses to adapt to the environment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). These strategic responses include but are not limited to the establishment of alliances, mergers and acquisitions, and adjustment of board structure (Price & Schau, 2013). Through these strategic responses, organizations can optimize the allocation of resources and improve their competitiveness in the market.

Fifthly, resource dependence theory emphasizes the influence of environmental factors on organizational behavior (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Policies, regulations, market demands and other factors in the external environment will have a profound impact on the behavior of the organization. For example, strict antitrust regulations may restrict access to resources through mergers and acquisitions, prompting organizations to seek alternative strategies such as alliances and joint ventures (Drees & Heugens, 2013).

Pfeffer & Salancik (1978) proposed three dimensions of organizational dependence, namely, the importance of resources to the organization, the scarcity of resources, and the existence of alternative resources.

Table 2.7 Dimensions of Resource Dependence Theory

Dimension	Meaning
The Importance of Resources to the Organization	The resources held by organization B must be indispensable to organization A.
The Scarcity of Resources	Organization B can decide whether or not to Provide these resources to Organization A.
The Existence of Alternative Resources	Organization A can only obtain these resources from organization B.

2.4.2 Application of Resource Dependence Theory in Insurance Industry

Resource dependence theory emphasizes the organization's dependence on the external environment, especially those resources that are critical to its survival (Hillman et al., 2009). In the insurance industry, these resources may include capital, technology, information, regulatory support, and customer relationships. Insurance companies rely on these external resources to maintain operations, enhance competitiveness and achieve financial performance. Kibicho (2015) pointed out that insurance companies need sufficient financial resources, human resources and technical resources to support their strategy implementation and business operations. The acquisition of these resources not only affects the daily operation of insurance companies, but also directly relates to the formulation and execution of their strategic decisions. Ombaka et al. (2015) also highlighted the critical role of resources in the insurance industry. They pointed out that the performance of insurance companies significantly depends on their resource base, including financial resources, technical resources and organizational resources. These resources provide insurers with a competitive advantage and directly impact their ability to innovate and respond to the market. The development of the life insurance industry is highly dependent on a series of internal and external resources. These resources mainly include economic resources, financial market resources, macroeconomic environment, human resources, regulatory resources and so on (Segodi & Sibindi, 2022).

As a capital-intensive industry, insurance industry is particularly dependent on financial resources. The participation of institutional ownership can significantly improve the financial performance of enterprises, which indicates the dependence of insurance enterprises on such an important source of funds as institutional investors (Muriuki et al., 2018). Eling and Marek (2019) pointed out that capital is one of the most basic and important resources in the insurance industry. Insurers need sufficient capital to cover potential exposures and meet regulatory requirements. Insurance companies need a stable source of funding to support their claims capacity, investment activities, and operating expenses. The adequacy of financial resources directly affects the underwriting ability, solvency and market competitiveness of insurance companies (Uma & Ilango, 2021).

Radwan (2019) discussed in detail the impact of digital technology on the value chain of the insurance industry, including marketing, product development, sales, underwriting pricing, claims processing and many other links. AI is reshaping the insurance industry in five emerging business models: personalized pricing, automated underwriting, customer engagement enhancement, fraud detection and prevention, and intelligent claims management. The application of these models has greatly changed the resource dependence structure of the insurance industry (Zarifis and Cheng, 2023).

In addition, Wong et al. (2008) argued that insurance companies rely on long-term stable customer relationships to secure their business revenue and market position. Therefore, establishing and maintaining good customer relationship has become an important part of the resource dependence strategy of insurance enterprises. The research of Core et al. (1999) and Gillan (2006) showed that reasonable compensation structure and incentive mechanism can encourage executives to create value for the company more actively, thus improving corporate performance.

In summary, the resource dependence of the insurance industry is reflected in many aspects, including financial resources, technical resources, policy environment and so on. The adequacy of these resources directly affects the operational efficiency and market competitiveness of insurance companies. Therefore, insurance companies need to

strengthen the investment and management of these resources to adapt to the changing market environment and regulatory requirements.

Table 2.8 Summary of Literature Review of Resource Dependence Theory

Researcher	Focus	Research Finding
Selznick (1949) Thompson and McEwen (1958) Zald (1970) Pfeffer and Salancik (1978)	The proposal of resource dependence theory	Resource dependence theory originated in the 1940s. The resource dependence theory was formally proposed by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salancik in 1978.
Suchman (1995) Hillman et al. (2009) Price & Schau (2013) Drees & Heugens (2013)	Views of Resource Dependence Theory	Resource dependence theory emphasized that organizational behavior is not only affected by internal factors, but also by constraints and influences imposed by resource providers in the external environment.
Hillman et al. (2009) Kibicho (2015) Ombaka et al. (2015) Segodi and Sibindi (2022) Muriuki et al. (2018) Eling and Marek (2019) Uma and Ilango (2021) Zarifis and Cheng (2023)	Application of Resource Dependence Theory in Insurance Industry	The resource dependence of the insurance industry is reflected in many aspects, including financial resources, technical resources, policy environment and so on. Insurance companies need to strengthen the investment and management of these resources to adapt to the changing market environment and regulatory requirements.

2.5 Relationship Marketing Strategies

In the 1980s, as the market became increasingly competitive, companies began to realize that relying solely on a single transaction could no longer maintain a long-term market advantage. In this context, relationship marketing as a new marketing paradigm came into being. Relationship marketing emphasized the establishment and maintenance of long-term relationships with customers, suppliers and other stakeholders to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty, so as to enhance the market competitiveness and profitability of enterprises.

2.5.1 Definition of Relationship Marketing Strategies

Berry (1983) first proposed the concept of "relationship marketing", and defined it as a series of activities to attract, maintain and enhance customer relationships. This definition laid the theoretical foundation for relationship marketing and emphasizes the importance of long-term relationships. Dwyer et al. (1987) defined relationship marketing as "the process of attracting, maintaining and enhancing the relationship between a business and its customers". This definition highlighted the dynamic nature of relationship marketing, where businesses need to establish and maintain long-term interactions with customers through a series of activities.

In the new market environment, the purpose of marketing changes to establish, maintain and enhance the relationship with customers and other partners to achieve the goals of all parties. This definition highlighted the central position of relationship marketing in service marketing, emphasizing the need to meet the needs of all parties through mutual exchange and fulfillment of commitments (Gronroos, 1990). Berry and Parasuraman(1991) further expanded the definition of relationship marketing, pointing out that it involves attracting, developing and maintaining customer relationships. This definition not only covered the initial stages of relationship building, but also emphasized the ongoing effort and investment in the development of the relationship.

Morgan and Hunt's (1994) definition of relationship marketing emphasized the importance of commitment and trust, and they believed that relationship marketing is all

marketing activities aimed at establishing, developing and maintaining a successful relationship exchange. This definition revealed the key mechanism in relationship marketing - building and maintaining long-term relationships through commitment and trust. Payne (1995) defined relationship marketing as a fully integrated marketing process that aims to create value, communicate value by identifying and building key relationships, and maximize these values through interactions with stakeholders. Payne's definition emphasized the comprehensiveness and interactivity of relationship marketing in the process of value creation, dissemination, and realization. Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) described relationship marketing as related to developing close interactions between selected customers, suppliers, and competitors that create value through collaborative and collaborative efforts. They emphasized the spirit of cooperation and collaboration in relationship marketing and the importance of creating value through close interaction. Morris et al. (1998) understood relationship marketing as a strategic orientation jointly adopted by both buyer and seller organizations, representing a commitment to long-term mutually beneficial cooperation. This definition highlighted the joint responsibility and shared benefits of buyers and sellers in long-term cooperation.

Gummesson (1999) defined relationship marketing as marketing based on interactions within a relationship network. He emphasized the network nature of relationship marketing, that is, marketing activities are carried out in a network composed of enterprises, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. Relationship marketing is the process by which organizations actively create, develop and maintain committed, interactive and profitable exchanges with selected customers (partners) (Harker, 1999). Parvatiyar and Sheth(2000) defined relationship marketing as the process of engaging in cooperative and collaborative activities and programs with end-user and direct user customers, aimed at creating or enhancing mutual economic value at a lower cost.

Relationship marketing is the process of identifying, establishing, maintaining, enhancing and, if necessary, terminating relationships with customers and other stakeholders in order to achieve mutual exchange of objectives and fulfillment of commitments. This definition provided a comprehensive overview of the stages and key

elements of relationship marketing (Gronroos, 2000). Bruhn (2005) regarded relationship marketing as a dynamic management process, which involves long-term interaction and cooperation with customers, suppliers, distributors and other stakeholders. This strategy emphasized the establishment and maintenance of trust relationship to enhance the market competitiveness of enterprises, improve customer satisfaction and loyalty. Bruhn believed that the success of relationship marketing depends on how effectively companies manage these relationships to ensure the maximum benefit of all parties. Bataineh et al. (2015) defined relationship marketing as a management process aimed at establishing and maintaining long-term customer relationships by meeting customer needs and improving customer satisfaction and loyalty. They believed that the core of relationship marketing lies in understanding customers' expectations and preferences and meeting those expectations by providing superior products and services. Through effective communication and coordination, companies can establish a solid partnership with customers to maximize value. De Seta et al. (2016) defined relationship marketing as a contemporary marketing strategy whose core lies in prioritizing customer needs and expectations through a series of activities aimed at improving customer satisfaction and building trust and loyalty. They believed that relationship marketing focuses not only on customer acquisition, but also on customer retention and long-term relationship building. This strategy emphasized building an emotional connection with customers and enhancing customer loyalty and satisfaction through personalized service and ongoing communication.

Payne and Frow (2017) described relationship marketing as a marketing strategy that achieves shared value by establishing, maintaining, and improving mutually beneficial relationships with customers and other stakeholders. They believed that relationship marketing goes beyond the traditional concept of transactional marketing and no longer focuses solely on the success of a single sale, but instead focuses on building long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with customers. This strategy requires companies to deeply understand customer needs, provide customized services, and enhance customer loyalty through continuous interaction and communication.

Echchakoui and Ghilal (2019) viewed relationship marketing as a way to build and maintain long-term business relationships by enhancing interaction and communication between salespeople and customers. They believed that relationship marketing is not just the job of the Marketing Department, but requires a concerted effort across the organization. Through personalized sales strategies, timely customer feedback and continuous after-sales service, companies can establish a deep emotional connection with customers, thereby improving customer satisfaction and loyalty.

To sum up, although scholars have different focuses on the definition of relationship marketing, they all emphasize the following core elements: establishing and maintaining long-term relationship, customer satisfaction and loyalty, commitment and trust, cooperation and collaboration, and optimizing customer relationship through technical means. In addition, scholars also put forward specific methods to implement relationship marketing through continuous communication and interaction, realizing common values and interests and other strategies. These definitions together constitute the basic framework of relationship marketing theory and provide important guidance for enterprises to carry out relationship marketing activities.

2.5.2 Dimensions of Relationship Marketing Strategies

Scholars have conducted in-depth discussions on the dimensions of relationship marketing, which are divided into two categories: basic dimensions and extended dimensions. These dimensions provide a rich theoretical basis and practical guidance for understanding, implementing and evaluating relationship marketing. The basic dimensions of relationship marketing include commitment, trust, cooperation and communication. The extended dimensions mainly include customization, reciprocity, dependence, relationship quality, conflict handling, and technology support.

Commitment is a core dimension of relationship marketing, which reflects the buyer and seller's continuous investment and willingness to maintain long-term cooperative relationship. Commitment is the cornerstone of the sustainable development of a relationship, reflecting the expectations of both parties for the stability and long-term

nature of the relationship. In relationship marketing, a high level of commitment helps to enhance trust and cooperation between the two parties, thus promoting the stability and development of the relationship (Anderson & Narus, 1990). Relationship commitment includes emotional commitment and computational commitment. Emotional commitment is based on personal emotional connection, while computational commitment is based on consideration of economic interests. In relationship marketing, both parties enhance the stability and sustainability of the relationship by demonstrating their commitment to the relationship (Mahmoud et al., 2018).

Trust is also one of the core dimensions of relationship marketing. Scholars generally agree that trust is the foundation for building long-term, stable customer relationships. Trust is a psychological state in which one is willing to rely on and believe that the other can fulfill his promise. In relationship marketing, the establishment of trust helps to reduce uncertainty and promote the free flow of information, thus enhancing the stability of the relationship and the efficiency of cooperation (Noordewier et al., 1990). Morgan (1994) put forward the commitment-trust theory, arguing that trust is the key to establishing a solid business relationship. Trust plays a crucial role in relationship marketing, which reduces uncertainty and risk in transactions and promotes mutual trust and cooperation between the two parties (Athanasopoulou, 2009). Bataineh et al. (2015) also emphasized that in relationship marketing, by establishing and maintaining trust, enterprises can enhance customer loyalty and improve customer retention.

Cooperation is a practical dimension of relationship marketing that involves coordinated actions taken by both parties to achieve a common goal. Gounaris (2005) believed that cooperation is one of the key elements of successful relationship marketing. Through mutual coordination and support, both parties can respond to market changes more effectively and jointly create value. Cooperation is not limited to collaboration at the business level, but also includes deep collaboration in information sharing and resource integration.

Communication is an indispensable part of relationship marketing. Good communication can not only promote the timely transmission and feedback of

information, but also enhance mutual understanding and trust. Selnes (1998) and Sichtmann (2007) emphasized the importance of formal and informal communication in relationship marketing, believing that through continuous, multi-channel communication, both parties can coordinate actions more effectively and solve problems together, thus enhancing the closeness and stability of the relationship. Effective communication can ensure that customers' needs and expectations are communicated timely and accurately, thus improving customer satisfaction and retention. In addition, continuous communication also helps the two sides to establish closer ties and promote the in-depth development of relations (Lindgreen, 2001).

Customization is an important extended dimension in relationship marketing, which emphasizes providing a unique product or service according to the individual needs of the customer. Customized services can meet the unique needs of customers and improve customer satisfaction and loyalty. In relationship marketing, by deeply understanding the needs and preferences of customers, enterprises can provide more targeted and personalized product or service solutions, thereby enhancing the connection and dependence of customers with enterprises (Gao et al., 2005). Miranda et al. (2005) believed that through customized services, enterprises can better meet the specific needs of customers and improve customer satisfaction and loyalty. Customized services require not only a deep understanding of customer needs and preferences, but also flexible production and delivery capabilities in order to quickly respond to changing customer needs.

Reciprocity is a fundamental principle in relationship marketing, which embodies the mutual giving and return of both parties in a transaction. It stresses that in the relationship, both sides should benefit from cooperation and achieve win-win results. Morgan and Hunt (1994) pointed out that Reciprocal behavior contributes to the stability and sustainability of relationships. In relationship marketing, reciprocity is not only reflected in the exchange of material benefits, but also includes non-material interactions such as emotional support and information sharing. Through reciprocal behavior, both parties can establish a closer and more stable cooperative relationship. Through the

principle of reciprocity, businesses are able to build stronger and lasting relationships with customers. This relationship not only helps to improve customer retention, but also helps to reduce the marketing cost of the enterprise and improve the profitability of the enterprise (Mathur and Kumar, 2013).

Dependence reflects the degree of interdependence between two parties in a cooperative relationship. Sin et al. (2005) believed that dependence is an important guarantee for the stability and continuity of relationships. In highly dependent relationships, both parties are more likely to maintain cooperation than to break off the relationship. Relationship marketing promotes the formation of long-term cooperation and win-win situation by enhancing the mutual dependence of both parties.

Relationship quality is an important index to measure the strength and stability of relationship. It includes many aspects, such as satisfaction, trust, commitment and so on. High-quality relationships can promote deep cooperation and long-term mutual trust between both parties, thus improving customer retention. By continuously improving the quality of relationships, companies can win the long-term loyalty and support of customers (Climis, 2016).

Conflict handling is a challenging dimension in relationship marketing. In any partnership, conflict is inevitable. Effective conflict management not only helps maintain the stability of the relationship, but also promotes greater understanding and trust between the two sides. Ndubisi (2007) pointed out that through active conflict handling mechanisms, both sides can more effectively resolve differences and contradictions, so as to maintain the harmony and stability of the relationship.

With the rapid development of information technology, technology support plays an increasingly prominent role in relationship marketing. The application of modern information technology enables enterprises to collect, analyze and use customer information more efficiently, so as to provide customers with more personalized and accurate services. Kotorov (2002) and Kelley et al. (2003) emphasized the importance of information technology in relationship marketing, believing that technical support can not

only improve the efficiency and quality of customer service, but also discover new market opportunities and business growth points through data analysis and mining. By using advanced information technology tools, enterprises can better understand customer needs and behavior patterns, so as to develop more effective relationship marketing strategies (Bruhn & Frommeyer, 2005).

To sum up, the dimensions of relationship marketing cover basic aspects such as commitment, trust, cooperation and communication, as well as extended aspects such as customization, reciprocity, dependence, relationship quality, conflict handling, and technology support. These dimensions together constitute the theoretical framework and practical guiding principles of relationship marketing. With a deep understanding of these dimensions and how they interact, companies can more effectively implement relationship marketing strategies, increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, reduce customer churn, and achieve long-term business growth and competitive advantage.

2.5.3 Application of Relationship Marketing Strategies in Insurance Industry

As the insurance industry becomes increasingly competitive, insurance companies not only need to work on products and services, but also need to adopt appropriate marketing strategies to attract and retain customers. As a customer-centric strategy, relationship marketing occupies an important position in the insurance industry. Relationship marketing is a marketing strategy with a long-term perspective, emphasizing the establishment, maintenance and enhancement of relationships with customers in order to achieve win-win goals (Gronroos, 2000). In the insurance industry, relationship marketing is particularly critical because insurance products are often long-term and complex and require deep customer trust relationships.

Trust is one of the key factors in relationship marketing. The commitment-trust theory proposed by Morgan and Hunt (1994) pointed out that trust and commitment are the keys to the success of relationship marketing. They believed that trust can reduce transaction costs and uncertainty, and promote customer loyalty. Customers' trust in insurance companies significantly affects their purchasing decisions and loyalty (De

Jager, 2006). Customers' trust in insurance companies directly affects their purchasing decisions and loyalty. Insurance companies need to win the trust of customers through honest and transparent services and timely and accurate claims processing (Ndubisi, 2007). Delpont (2009) found that customers with a high level of trust in insurance companies are more likely to form long-term relationships and show higher loyalty. Insurance companies and brokers need to build customer trust through transparent operation process, professional service attitude and timely claims settlement service (Ning, 2009). Customers' trust in insurance companies directly affects their purchase decisions and insurance renewal intentions. Therefore, insurance companies need to establish and maintain customer trust through transparent service processes and fair and reasonable claims processing (Parsa & Sadeghi, 2015). Sukmawan & Zulganef (2023) pointed out that insurance companies need to earn the trust of customers through honest, transparent communication and professional service. This trust relationship helps reduce customers' uncertainty and risk perception, thereby increasing their acceptance and satisfaction with insurance products.

Effective communication is the basis of relationship marketing, which can not only help insurance companies to timely convey product information, but also enhance the emotional connection with customers. In the insurance industry, insurance companies and brokers need to understand customers' needs and feedback through regular communication and interaction, and solve customers' problems and concerns in a timely manner. Ning (2009) emphasized that effective communication not only helps build trust, but also enhances customers' sense of identity and belonging to insurance companies. Akbari et al. (2016) showed that good communication can significantly improve customer satisfaction and loyalty. Addisu (2020) showed that insurance companies need to maintain close contact with customers through multiple channels, including phone, mail, social media, mobile apps, etc. This constant communication not only helps insurers keep abreast of changing customer needs, but also enhances the customer experience by providing customized advice and services.

In the insurance industry, the core of relationship marketing is to establish and maintain stable relationships with customers, and long-term customer relationships mean stable revenue streams and low customer acquisition costs. Ning (2009) pointed out that insurance brokers can significantly improve customer retention and business growth by establishing solid relationships with customers. At the same time, through regular customer communication and feedback mechanism, insurance companies can timely understand the changes in customer needs, adjust service strategies, and ensure the continuity and stability of customer relationships. CRM is an important tool for insurance companies to achieve competitive advantage. By deeply understanding customer needs and providing personalized insurance programs and services, insurance companies can enhance customer trust and satisfaction, thereby increasing customer loyalty. Customer relationship quality is the key to the success of relationship marketing (Eduankuma, 2011). According to the research of Yu and Tseng (2016), insurance salespeople's professional knowledge, affinity and similarity with customers have a significant positive impact on customer relationship quality.

Commitment is another key factor in relationship marketing, which indicates the willingness of both parties to maintain the relationship continuously (Moorman et al., 1992). In the insurance industry, customer commitment means that they are willing to maintain long-term cooperation with insurance companies and remain loyal to insurance products and services (Panda, 2013). Ndubisi (2007) pointed out that insurance companies should promise to provide customers with long-term stable protection and services, so as to enhance customers' confidence and dependence. Commitment not only helps insurance companies stabilize their customer base, but also attracts more potential customers through word of mouth (Whyatt & Koschek, 2010).

Relationship marketing also emphasizes meeting the unique needs of customers by providing personalized service and customized products. In the insurance industry, this means that insurance companies need to design insurance products that meet the needs of customers based on factors such as their age, occupation, health status, etc. (Sukmawan & Zulganef, 2023). Ning (2009) found that personalized service and

customized solutions can significantly increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. By gaining a deeper understanding of customers' needs and risk tolerance, insurance companies can design insurance products that better meet their customers' needs, thereby increasing customer satisfaction and stickiness. Olumoko et al. (2012) pointed out that relationship marketing emphasizes the provision of personalized services according to the specific needs and situations of customers. In the insurance industry, this means that insurance consultants need to provide customized insurance solutions based on their clients' financial situation, risk tolerance and protection needs. In addition, insurance companies can further consolidate customer relationships by providing value-added services (such as health advice, legal support, etc.) to enhance interaction and contact with customers. Insurance companies also need to have strong product development capabilities and market insight to adjust product strategies in a timely manner based on market changes and customer feedback (Kinoti et al., 2019).

Customer satisfaction is an important index to measure the success of relationship marketing. In the insurance industry, customer satisfaction usually depends on customers' overall perception of insurance products and services, including service quality, professionalism of sales staff and reasonableness of prices (Murugesan & Thirumoorthi, 2014). Christian et al. (2017) found a significant positive correlation between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Insurance companies can further enhance customer loyalty by improving customer satisfaction, thus consolidating their market position (Abtin & Pouramiri, 2016). Satisfied customers are often willing to recommend insurance company products and services to others through word of mouth. This positive word-of-mouth can not only attract new potential customers, but also strengthen the loyalty of existing customers (Gurcu & Korkmaz, 2018).

Sukmawan and Zulganef (2023) pointed out that customer loyalty in the insurance industry is relatively low, mainly due to the competitive market and the large number of customer choices. Relationship marketing can effectively increase customer loyalty by providing personalized service and continuous value creation. Loyal customers not only generate sustained premium income for insurance companies, but may also bring in new

customers through word of mouth (Nyarko, 2015). Loyalty programs are built through membership system, points and rewards to encourage customers to continue to purchase and use insurance products. Loyalty programs can not only increase customers' repeat purchase rate, but also attract new customers to join (Verhoef, 2003). A good customer experience can significantly increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. Insurance companies can provide customers with more convenient and efficient service experience by providing one-stop service, simplifying the claim settlement process, and strengthening the customer service team building. Loyal customers are not only more likely to continue to purchase insurance products, but also to recommend the insurance company's services to relatives and friends, thus bringing more potential customers to the business (Sukmawan & Zulganef, 2023).

To sum up, the application of relationship marketing in the insurance industry is of great significance for improving customer satisfaction, loyalty and enterprise competitiveness. By building long-term customer relationships, providing personalized service, continuous customer communication and interaction, and customized insurance solutions, insurance companies are better able to meet customer needs and win customer trust, thereby differentiating themselves in a highly competitive market. In the future, with the intensification of market competition and changes in customer demand, insurance companies need to constantly explore and optimize relationship marketing strategies to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty as the core goal, and promote the sustainable and healthy development of the insurance industry.

Table 2.9 Summary of Literature Review of Relationship Marketing Strategies

Researcher	Focus	Research Finding
Berry (1983) Dwyer et al. (1987) Gronroos (1990) Berry & Parasuraman (1991) Morgan & Hunt's (1994) Payne (1995) Morris et al. (1998) Gronroos (2000) Payne and Frow (2017)	Definition	Scholars emphasized the following core elements: establishing and maintaining long-term relationship, customer satisfaction and loyalty, commitment and trust, cooperation and collaboration, and optimizing customer relationship through technical means. Scholars also put forward specific methods to implement relationship marketing through continuous communication and interaction, realizing common values and interests and other strategies.
Anderson & Narus (1990) Morgan (1994) Mahmoud et al. (2018) Noordewier et al. (1990) Bataineh et al. (2015) Sichtmann (2007) Miranda et al. (2015) Mathur & Kumar (2013) Kotorov (2002)	Dimensions	The dimensions of relationship marketing cover basic aspects such as commitment, trust, cooperation and communication, as well as extended aspects such as customization, reciprocity, dependence, relationship quality, conflict handling, and technology support. These dimensions together constitute the theoretical framework and practical guiding principles of relationship marketing.

Table 2.9 Summary of Literature Review of Relationship Marketing Strategies

Researcher	Focus	Research Finding
De Jager (2006) Delpont (2009) Ning (2009) Eduankuma (2011) Yu and Tseng (2016) Oly Ndubisi (2007) Olumoko et al. (2012) Christian et al. (2017) Sukmawan & Zulganef (2023)	Application of Relationship Marketing in Insurance Industry	The application of relationship marketing in the insurance industry is of great significance for improving customer satisfaction, loyalty and enterprise competitiveness. By building long-term customer relationships, providing personalized service, continuous customer communication and interaction, and customized insurance solutions, insurance companies are better able to meet customer needs and win customer trust, thereby differentiating themselves in a highly competitive market.

2.6 Marketing Efficiency

Marketing efficiency is critical for any company because it is not only about market share and profitability, but also directly affects the company's brand image, customer satisfaction and long-term growth potential. The most efficient marketing strategy is the best marketing strategy (Al-Hadithi, 1994). Through the analysis of marketing efficiency, it is helpful for enterprises to formulate or adjust marketing strategies, so as to enhance the economic benefits and market competitiveness of enterprises, build a positive brand image, improve customer satisfaction, and promote the sustainable development of enterprises.

2.6.1 Definition of Marketing Efficiency

Marketing efficiency is an important concept in the field of marketing and an important index to measure the performance of marketing strategy. Scholars have given many different definitions of marketing efficiency.

Marketing efficiency is concerned with achieving maximum market coverage and sales growth with minimum resource investment. The resources here can be money, time, manpower, etc., and efficiency is reflected in the use of these resources (Clark, 1921). Marketing efficiency as "the benefit maximization of the input-output ratio". They pointed out that reducing marketing costs without reducing consumers' satisfaction with services or goods can improve marketing efficiency (Kriesberg & Steele, 1972). Similarly, Kohls and Uhl (1980) defined marketing efficiency as the ratio of marketing output (satisfaction) to marketing input (cost). An improvement in marketing efficiency is expressed as a reduction in marketing costs at a given level of satisfaction, or an increase in the level of satisfaction at a given cost. Sheth et al. (2002) defined marketing efficiency as the ability to acquire loyal customers at a lower marketing cost. They emphasized the cost-effectiveness of marketing campaigns, especially in terms of acquiring and maintaining loyal customers.

Rust et al. (2004) defined marketing efficiency as the link between marketing activities and short-term and long-term performance. They believed that marketing efficiency is not only the output of activities, but also includes how marketing activities affect the generation of marketing assets (such as customer satisfaction and brand value), and then affect the performance of enterprises. Kroeger (2007) defined marketing efficiency as achieving maximum marketing output with minimum resource input. This concept emphasized the optimal use of resources to ensure that enterprises can achieve the maximum market effect with the minimum cost.

Marketing efficiency is an enterprise's ability to maximize customer satisfaction and brand value better than competitors under the same marketing expenditure. This definition took into account not only marketing spend, but also the generation of

marketing assets and the performance of competitors, giving a more comprehensive measure of the efficiency of marketing campaigns (Angulo & Rialp, 2007). Stewart (2009) defined marketing efficiency as the ratio between the return of a marketing activity and the resources invested in it, aiming to achieve a goal by minimizing marketing expenditure while maximizing its return. Gao (2010) defined marketing efficiency as the ratio between inputs and outputs involved in marketing activities, especially in achieving market-related objectives such as revenue, growth, and market share.

Marketing efficiency refers to the proportional relationship between the resources invested in marketing activities and the market results obtained by enterprises (Longwe et al., 2010). It reflects the effectiveness and economy of enterprise marketing activities. The level of marketing efficiency directly determines the producer's income and market expansion ability (Gokkaya et al., 2016).

On this basis, many scholars also gave the definition of insurance marketing efficiency and life insurance marketing efficiency respectively. Sivakami & Ganesan (2014) defined the marketing efficiency of life insurance companies. They believed that the marketing efficiency of life insurance companies refers to the ability and efficiency of life insurance companies to achieve sales targets and meet customer needs through effective marketing strategies, channels and customer relationship management in the process of promoting and selling insurance products. Insurance marketing efficiency can be defined as the ability of insurance companies to effectively promote insurance products, accurately meet customer needs and steadily increase market share through scientific management means, innovative marketing strategies, efficient marketing channels and professional marketing teams in marketing activities (Huang, 2016). Marketing efficiency of life insurance refers to the comprehensive ability of life insurance companies to maximize premium income, effectively utilize resources, improve customer satisfaction and enhance market competitiveness through effective marketing strategies and means in the process of selling insurance products (Huang et al., 2019).

In summary, the definition of marketing effectiveness varies according to the context and purpose of the research. It not only deals with cost-benefit analysis, but also covers business's ability to maximize marketing outcomes for a given marketing spend, especially in comparison to competitors. In addition, marketing efficiency is also closely related to the enterprise's resource utilization ability and the creation of competitive advantage.

2.6.2 Measurement of Marketing Efficiency

Traditional marketing efficiency measurement methods mainly focused on financial indicators, such as sales, profit, market share and so on. These methods evaluated marketing efficiency by comparing the direct economic benefits of marketing inputs and outputs (Cox, 1948; Feder, 1965). However, these method ignored the influence of marketing activities on non-financial indicators such as brand loyalty and customer satisfaction, so they had certain limitations. With the development of marketing theory and practice, modern marketing efficiency measurement methods gradually take non-financial indicators into consideration. For example, Rust et al. (2004) proposed the "marketing productivity chain" model, which connects marketing actions with the overall situation of the enterprise, and evaluates the long-term impact of marketing activities through intermediate variables such as customer satisfaction, brand quality, and market share. Sheth et al. (2002) defined marketing efficiency as "effective efficiency" from the perspective of customers, that is, the ability of enterprises to create satisfied and loyal customers at low cost.

Gao (2010) pointed out that traditionally, the measurement of marketing performance mostly relies on financial indicators, such as sales, profits, etc., but these indicators often ignore the non-financial indicators of marketing activities. To assess marketing effectiveness more comprehensively, Gao introduced five key non-financial metrics: market share, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty/retention, brand equity, and innovation. The market share can directly reflect the competitive position of the enterprise in the market. Customer satisfaction can measure customers' satisfaction with products and services, and is an important embodiment of marketing efficiency.

Customer loyalty/retention reflects the willingness of customers to purchase or continue to use services, which directly affects the long-term earnings of a business. Brand equity refers to the recognition, reputation and loyalty of the brand in the market, which is an important part of the intangible assets of an enterprise. Innovation measures the degree of innovation of a product or service and reflects the competitiveness and adaptability of an enterprise. Gao's model combines the above non-financial indicators with financial indicators (such as sales growth, profit margins, etc.) to provide a comprehensive framework for measuring marketing performance. Through this framework, companies can more accurately evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of their marketing activities.

Innovation ability is an important source of sustainable competitive advantage and an important indicator to measure marketing efficiency. They believed that innovation is not only the key to enhance the competitiveness of products and services, but also an important way to improve the marketing efficiency of enterprises. Innovation includes product and service innovation, process innovation and marketing innovation. Product and service innovation refers to the introduction of new products or improvement of existing products to enhance market share and customer satisfaction, so as to improve marketing efficiency. Process innovation refers to enterprises optimizing production and service processes to reduce costs, improve quality, and indirectly improve the input-output ratio of marketing activities. Marketing innovation refers to the innovation of pricing, promotion and channels in order to attract and retain customers more effectively and improve marketing effect (Alam et al., 2013).

Marketing resources include not only tangible assets (such as brands and distribution channels), but also intangible assets (such as customer relationships and market knowledge). The effective deployment and utilization of these resources directly determines the marketing efficiency of enterprises. In particular, they emphasize two measurement variables: market dynamic response ability and customer relationship management. Market dynamic response ability is an important index to measure marketing efficiency, which reflects whether an enterprise can quickly adapt to market changes and adjust its marketing strategy. Customer relationship management

emphasizes that by establishing and maintaining good customer relationships, enterprises can improve customer satisfaction and loyalty, thus improving marketing efficiency (Davicik and Sharma, 2015). Davcik and Sharma emphasized that companies need to identify and integrate internal and external marketing resources to form unique marketing capabilities in order to stay ahead in a competitive market.

It is found that in many industries, relationship marketing can significantly improve marketing performance and customer satisfaction. Ndubisi and Wah (2005) studied on Malaysian bank customers and found that all dimensions of relationship marketing (such as customer focus, organizational efficiency, customer knowledge management, etc.) have a significant impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, Soliman's (2011) research on Egyptian financial institutions also supported this point, showing that CRM systems significantly improve the marketing efficiency of enterprises by enhancing the efficiency of customer relationship management. Tomczyk et al. (2016) studied the Polish insurance market and found that by improving the depth and breadth of customer analysis, insurance intermediaries can significantly improve their financial performance. This result showed that by deeply understanding customer needs and behavior patterns, enterprises can develop more accurate marketing strategies, thereby improving the efficiency of relationship marketing. A study of insurance salespeople in Indonesia found that relationship penetration ability has a significant impact on salespeople's performance (Aqmala & Ardyan, 2021). Sales personnel could effectively improve sales performance and customer satisfaction by improving the quality of the relationship with customers and enhancing the ability to acquire customer knowledge.

Relationship marketing efficiency is a multi-dimensional concept. Firstly, customer relationship management (CRM) is a crucial component of relationship marketing, which promotes customer satisfaction and loyalty by integrating sales, marketing and service functions and providing personalized service with customer focus (Swift, 2000; Payne & Frow, 2005). CRM system can help enterprises better understand customer needs, optimize resource allocation, and improve the pertinency and

effectiveness of marketing activities (Soliman, 2011). Research shows that the implementation of CRM system can significantly improve the marketing efficiency of enterprises (Verhoef, 2003). Davcik and Sharma (2015) pointed out that enterprises can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty by establishing customer database, conducting customer segmentation and providing personalized service, and thus improve the efficiency of relationship marketing.

Secondly, effective relationship marketing relies on a deep understanding of customer needs. Customer knowledge management (CKM) involves the collection, collation and analysis of customer information to help enterprises better understand customer needs and behavior patterns (Van den Brink et al., 2006). Customer knowledge includes not only basic information, but also customers' purchase history, preferences, and feedback (Hong-kit Yim et al, 2004). By making the most of this information, businesses can offer more personalized products and services, which increases customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Thirdly, customer relationship quality is an important indicator to measure the strength of the relationship between enterprises and customers, including customer satisfaction, trust and commitment (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002). Trust is one of the core elements of customer relationship quality, which is based on long-term interaction and mutual benefit (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). A relationship with high trust can reduce transaction costs, increase customers' willingness to repeat purchases, and promote word-of-mouth communication for the enterprise (Colgate & Danaher, 2000). Therefore, businesses need to make continuous efforts to build and maintain a trusting relationship with their customers. Customer satisfaction and loyalty are the core indicators of relationship marketing efficiency. Through regular surveys of customer satisfaction and loyalty, enterprises can understand customers' evaluation of products and services, and then adjust relationship marketing strategies (Gao, 2010).

Fourthly, brand equity is the intangible assets accumulated by enterprises in the long-term operation process, which includes many aspects such as brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty and brand quality. The improvement of brand equity can

significantly enhance the market competitiveness of enterprises, thus improving the efficiency of relationship marketing (Alam et al., 2013).

Finally, customized service is one of the important means of relationship marketing, which emphasizes the provision of unique products and services according to the individual needs of customers (Kotler, 1995). Through customized services, enterprises can meet the unique needs of customers and enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty (Hong-kit Yim et al, 2004). Customized service not only involves the design and manufacture of products, but also includes the way of providing services, communication strategies and many other aspects. By providing personalized service and experience, companies can stand out in the fierce market competition.

To sum up, relationship marketing efficiency can be measured from three dimensions: customer relationship management, marketing input and output, and product and service innovation. These dimensions respectively involve sub-indicators such as customer relationship, customer demand, customer service, brand and word-of-mouth. Relationship marketing efficiency is the key index to measure the success of enterprise relationship marketing strategy. The improvement of relationship marketing efficiency can enhance customer loyalty, reduce customer turnover rate, and stabilize the income source of enterprises. At the same time, by continuously improving the customer experience, enterprises can attract more new customers and further expand the market share. In addition, the improvement of the efficiency of relationship marketing can also enhance the brand equity of enterprises and enhance the competitiveness and bargaining power of enterprises in the market.

Table 2.10 Summary of Literature Review of Marketing Efficiency

Researcher	Focus	Research Finding
Clark (1921) Kriesberg & Steele (1972) Kohls and Uhl (1980) Sheth et al. (2002) Rust et al. (2004) Longwe et al. (2010) Sivakami & Ganesan (2014) Huang et al. (2019)	Dimensions	Marketing efficiency not only deals with cost-benefit analysis, but also covers a business's ability to maximize marketing outcomes for a given marketing spend, especially in comparison to competitors. In addition, marketing efficiency is also closely related to the enterprise's resource utilization ability and the creation of competitive advantage.
Sheth et al. (2002) Gao (2010) Alam et al. (2013) Davcik & Sharma (2015) Ndubisi & Wah (2005)	Measurement	The improvement of relationship marketing efficiency can enhance customer loyalty, reduce customer turnover rate, and stabilize the income source of enterprises. At the same time, by continuously improving the customer experience, enterprises can attract more new customers and further expand the market share. In addition, the improvement of the efficiency of relationship marketing can also enhance the brand equity of enterprises and enhance the competitiveness and bargaining power of enterprises in the market.

2.7 Conceptual Framework, Hypothesis and Explanation of Hypothesis

2.7.1 Conceptual Framework

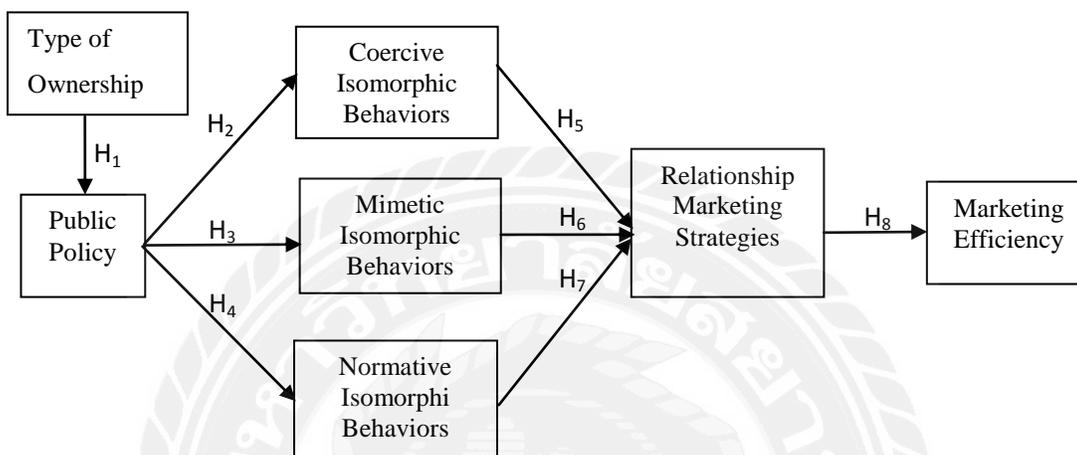


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

(Source: Researcher,2024)

2.7.2 Hypothesis

Through the investigation of life insurance industry in Shandong Province, this research aimed to examine the relationship between public policy, organizational isomorphic behaviors and relationship marketing strategy choices of life insurance companies, and further explore the impact of these relationships on marketing efficiency of life insurance companies. In order to reveal the relationship between the seven variables in the conceptual framework above, this research constructed the following seven hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Public policy is significantly affected by type of ownership of life insurance companies.

Hypothesis 2: Public policy is positively related to coercive isomorphic behaviors.

Hypothesis 3: Public policy is positively related to mimetic isomorphic behaviors.

Hypothesis 4: Public policy is positively related to normative isomorphic behaviors.

Hypothesis 5: Coercive isomorphic behaviors are positively related to the strategic choices of relationship marketing.

Hypothesis 6: Mimetic isomorphic behaviors are positively related to the strategic choices of relationship marketing.

Hypothesis 7: Normative isomorphic behaviors are positively related to the strategic choices of relationship marketing.

Hypothesis 8: The strategic choices of relationship marketing are positively related to marketing efficiency.

2.7.3 Explanation of Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Public policy is significantly affected by type of ownership of life insurance companies.

Life insurance companies with different ownership structures demonstrate significant differences in how they are impacted by public policies. These differences are mainly reflected in the speed of policy response, the intensity of policy implementation, the ability to adapt to the market and the ability to innovate. Because state-owned life insurance companies are often closely connected with the government, they are usually faster in policy response and have strong execution power and resource allocation ability in policy implementation. Moreover, state-owned life insurance companies usually have strong market influence and brand effect, and have certain advantages in coping with market changes. Private life insurance companies are more flexible and pragmatic in policy implementation and are able to respond to the market faster due to fewer decision-making layers. Due to insufficient understanding of the Chinese market or deviation in policy interpretation, foreign life insurance companies respond slowly, but their policy implementation is standardized and compliant.

Hypothesis 2: Public policy is positively related to coercive isomorphic behaviors.

Public policies are authoritative and mandatory, which set standards and requirements for social life through laws, regulations, administrative orders and other forms. These policy norms are not only guiding, but also enforceable, requiring relevant organizations or individuals to comply with them or face legal sanctions. This coercive force promotes organizations or individuals to gradually converge in behavior and form coercive isomorphism.

Hypothesis 3: Public policy is positively related to mimetic isomorphic behaviors.

To some extent, public policies can indirectly promote the occurrence of mimetic isomorphism. Firstly, in the process of making and implementing public policies, they may become the object of imitation by other organizations. In particular, when the behavioral patterns or standards advocated by the policies are perceived to be successful or effective, other organizations may imitate the practices embodied in these policies out of the need to learn, adapt, or compete. Secondly, the government may incentivize or guide the occurrence of specific behaviors through public policies. For example, tax incentives, capital subsidies and other incentives are provided to encourage enterprises to adopt specific technologies, management models or production methods. These incentives may induce some organizations to imitate the practices of successful firms, resulting in mimetic isomorphic behavior. Finally, changes and uncertainty in the policy environment may increase the pressure on organizations to imitate other successful organizations. When organizations are faced with uncertain factors such as policy adjustment and market fluctuation, imitating the successful practices of other organizations may become a strategic choice to reduce risks and improve adaptability. At this time, public policies, as part of the external environment, may indirectly promote the occurrence of mimetic isomorphism.

Hypothesis 4: Public policy is positively related to normative isomorphic behaviors.

There is a positive correlation between public policy and normative isomorphic behavior. On the one hand, public policies often set certain behavioral standards and requirements for social life through the formulation of laws and regulations, codes of conduct and other normative documents. These policy norms are authoritative and universal, and can guide different organizations or individuals to develop towards common goals and behavioral patterns, thus promoting the formation of normative isomorphism. On the other hand, public policy is often based on broad social consensus and values. When policy norms are widely recognized and supported by the society, different organizations or individuals will gradually form common values and codes of conduct in the process of following these norms, thus further promoting the formation of normative isomorphism.

Hypothesis 5: Coercive isomorphic behaviors are positively related to the strategic choices of relationship marketing.

There is a positive relationship between coercive isomorphic behaviors and relationship marketing strategy choice. On the one hand, coercive isomorphic behaviors often stem from the requirements of external norms such as laws and regulations and industry standards. These norms not only constrain the behavior of enterprises, but also provide guidance and framework for relationship marketing among enterprises. On the other hand, coercive isomorphic behaviors reduce the uncertainty of firms in the market environment through clear standards and requirements of behavior. This increase in certainty contributes to a more stable and predictable relationship between firms, providing the basis for a long-term orientation in relationship marketing. In relationship marketing, companies are more inclined to establish long-term relationships with partners whose behaviors are predictable and conform to industry standards.

Hypothesis 6: Mimetic isomorphic behaviors are positively related to the strategic choices of relationship marketing.

Firstly, enterprises can reduce the uncertainty of the environment by imitating the practices of other successful enterprises in the industry in an uncertain market

environment. By imitating the relationship marketing strategies of successful enterprises in the industry, enterprises can adapt to market changes more quickly, reduce decision-making risks caused by uncertainty, and improve the efficiency of relationship marketing. Secondly, mimetic isomorphic behaviors are not only a reference to successful experience, but also can improve the rationality of strategies through collective action. When multiple enterprises adopt similar relationship marketing strategies, the rationality of this behavior will be enhanced because the recognition and acceptance of this strategy has been formed in the market. This helps enterprises gain more support and trust from stakeholders when implementing relationship marketing, thus improving marketing effectiveness. Thirdly, mimetic isomorphic behaviors enable enterprises to directly learn from the practices of successful enterprises in the industry and reduce the cost of information search and strategy formulation. These imitated enterprises have often verified the effectiveness of their strategies through practice, so imitators can find their own relationship marketing strategies more quickly and improve marketing efficiency. Fourthly, mimetic isomorphic behaviors can promote resource sharing and cooperation among enterprises. In relationship marketing, enterprises may need to establish long-term and stable cooperative relationships with multiple stakeholders such as suppliers, distributors and consumers. By imitating the relationship marketing strategies of successful enterprises in the industry, enterprises can more easily find like-minded partners to carry out marketing activities together, realize resource sharing and complementary advantages, and thus improve marketing efficiency. Fifthly, imitating the relationship marketing strategies of successful enterprises in the industry helps enterprises to quickly establish and enhance brand trust and image. These successful enterprises have often established a good reputation and brand image in the market, and their relationship marketing strategies have also been recognized and accepted by consumers. By learning from these strategies, imitators can enhance their brand awareness and reputation in a relatively short period of time, enhance consumers' trust and loyalty, and thus improve the efficiency of relationship marketing.

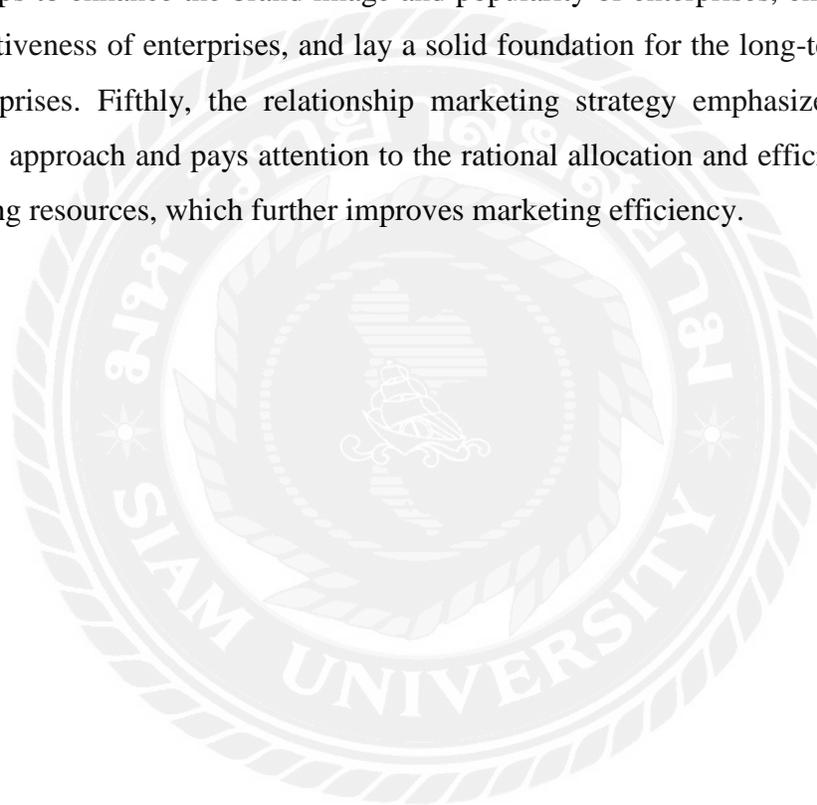
Hypothesis 7: Normative isomorphic behaviors are positively related to the strategic choices of relationship marketing.

There is a positive relationship between normative isomorphic behaviors and relationship marketing strategy choices. Firstly, normative isomorphic behaviors provide organizations with a common code of conduct and values through channels such as external norms, standards, or professional networks. These guidelines and values help enterprises to establish a clear and consistent image and positioning in relationship marketing, thus enhancing mutual trust and cooperation with stakeholders. Second, when firms follow a common code of conduct, the cost of cooperation between them may be reduced. This is because normative isomorphic behaviors reduce uncertainty and risk in the cooperation process, making it easier for firms to reach consensus and work together. This reduction in cooperation costs helps firms to choose relationship marketing strategies more actively to seek long-term cooperation and development. Finally, normative isomorphic behaviors also help enterprises to enhance social identity. When enterprises follow widely accepted codes of conduct and standards, they are more likely to gain recognition and support from all sectors of society. Such social identification helps enterprises to establish a good corporate image and brand image in relationship marketing, so as to attract more stakeholders and establish a closer relationship.

Hypothesis 8: The strategic choices of relationship marketing are positively related to marketing efficiency.

Firstly, the core of relationship marketing is to establish and maintain a long-term and close relationship with customers. This strategy can significantly increase customer loyalty and satisfaction. Loyal customers are not only more willing to make repeat purchases, but also attract new customers for the enterprise through word-of-mouth communication, thus expanding market share. This growth model based on customer loyalty can make more effective use of marketing resources and improve marketing efficiency. Secondly, relationship marketing emphasizes the retention of existing customers through quality service and continuous relationship maintenance. It is cheaper to retain existing customers than to develop new ones, which reduces customer

acquisition costs and improves marketing efficiency. Thirdly, in relationship marketing, good communication channels and feedback mechanisms have been established between enterprises and customers. This helps enterprises more accurately grasp market trends and customer needs, improve the pertinence and effectiveness of marketing decisions, and thus improve marketing efficiency. Fourthly, relationship marketing builds a solid market foundation through long-term relationship maintenance and customer cultivation. This helps to enhance the brand image and popularity of enterprises, enhance the market competitiveness of enterprises, and lay a solid foundation for the long-term development of enterprises. Fifthly, the relationship marketing strategy emphasizes the customer-centered approach and pays attention to the rational allocation and efficient utilization of marketing resources, which further improves marketing efficiency.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter is divided into seven parts as follows:

- 3.1 Research Design
- 3.2 Population and Sample
- 3.3 Research Tools
- 3.4 Data Collection Strategy and Procedure
- 3.5 Data Analysis
- 3.6 Research Ethics

3.1 Research Design

This research used the quantitative research method. The research steps were as follows:

1. Determine the research theme and core issues, and clarify the purpose and significance of the research. This research took the life insurance industry in Shandong Province of China as a case to study the impact of public policy on organizational isomorphic behaviors and relationship marketing strategy choices.
2. Conduct literature review to explore the achievements and shortcomings of previous studies.
3. Design scientific and reasonable research methods and tools. This research used a combination of questionnaires and in-depth interviews to collect data..
4. Conduct a pre-survey, and test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire according to the pre-survey data.
5. Conduct formal questionnaire survey to collect data.
6. Process and analyze the collected data and draw summarize the results.

7. Draw conclusions and propose recommendations.

3.2 Population and Sample

3.2.1 Population

The population of this research was the employees of life insurance companies in Shandong Province, including employees in management positions and frontline marketing staff (including insurance agents). Since the number of people engaged in life insurance in Shandong Province could not be obtained from public channels, this research estimated it. By the end of 2023, the total number of people engaged in life insurance marketing in China was 2.81 million. In 2023, the national life insurance premium income was ¥ 3.54 trillion, and the life insurance premium income of Shandong Province was ¥ 228.064 billion, accounting for 6.44% of the national life insurance premium income. Therefore, it was simply estimated that the number of life insurance personnel in Shandong Province is 181,000.

3.2.2 Sample

(1) Quantitative Research

The following sample estimation formula was applied to derive the initial sample size n_0 (Yamane, 1967):

$$n_0 = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n_0 signifies the sample size

N signifies the population under study

e signifies the margin error

Sample size for $\pm 5\%$ error level where confidence level is 95%:

$$n_0 = \frac{181000}{1 + 181000 \times 0.05^2} = 399.12$$

The total sample size of 400 was allocated to each life insurance company in Shandong Province according to the proportion of premium income in 2022. When the calculated quota for a company was less than one, it was adjusted to one respondent to ensure that each company was represented in the survey. The quota distribution results are shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Survey Quota of 50 Life Insurance Companies in Shandong Province

Insurance Company	Premium Income/Million ¥	Ratio/%	Quota
China Life Insurance	45769.84	22.36	90
Ping An Life Insurance of China	22875.95	11.18	45
China Pacific Life Insurance	16953.24	8.28	34
New China Life Insurance	15863.37	7.75	31
Taiping Life Insurance	14444.64	7.06	29
Taikang Life Insurance	13153.33	6.43	26
China Post Life Insurance	7533.80	3.68	15
ICBC-AXA Life Insurance	4788.94	2.34	10
Dajia Life Insurance	4653.65	2.27	10
Funde Sino Life Insurance	4462.68	2.18	9
CCB Life Insurance	4218.93	2.06	9
Xintai Insurance	4042.96	1.98	8
ABC Life Insurance	3690.50	1.80	8
Sunshine Life Insurance	3386.89	1.65	7
Foresea Life Insurance	3237.31	1.58	7
PICC Life Insurance	3231.89	1.58	7
Guohua Life Insurance	2355.73	1.15	5
Aeon Life Insurance	2273.81	1.11	5
Lian Life Insurance	1816.69	0.89	4

Table 3.1 Survey Quota of 50 Life Insurance Companies in Shandong Province

Insurance Company	Premium Income/Million ¥	Ratio/%	Quota
Minsheng Life Insurance	1800.29	0.88	4
Great Wall Life Insurance	1795.46	0.88	4
Hetai Life Insurance	1783.47	0.87	4
Happy Life Insurance	1544.64	0.75	3
Allianz Life Insurance	1379.01	0.67	3
Bocom Msig Life Insurance	1257.29	0.61	3
Yingda Taihe Life Insurance	1247.06	0.61	3
Cigna&CMB Life Insurance	1067.31	0.52	3
AVIVA-COFCO Life Insurance	1057.38	0.52	3
BOC-Samsung Life Insurance	1049.01	0.51	3
Heng An Standard Life Insurance	996.60	0.49	2
ERGO-Life Insurance	936.50	0.46	2
Union Life Insurance	913.74	0.45	2
Aegon THTF Life Insurance	845.60	0.41	2
Ping An Annuity Insurance	815.90	0.40	2
Generali China Life Insurance	703.74	0.34	2
Huatai Life Insurance	698.80	0.34	2
Taikang Pension Insurance	620.40	0.30	2
PICC Health Insurance	590.70	0.29	2
Hexie Health Insurance	576.43	0.28	2
Taiping Pension Insurance	540.98	0.26	2
Citic-Prudential Life Insurance	540.05	0.26	2
Manulife-Sinochem Insurance	512.41	0.25	1
Founder Meiji Yasuda Life Insurance	443.55	0.22	1

Table 3.1 Survey Quota of 50 Life Insurance Companies in Shandong Province

Insurance Company	Premium Income/Million ¥	Ratio/%	Quota
SunLife Everbrigh Life Insurance	433.83	0.21	1
Kunlun Health Insurance	387.57	0.19	1
BOB-CARDIF Life Insurance	366.27	0.18	1
Pramerica Fosun Life Insurance	320.81	0.16	1
Greatwall Changsheng Life Insurance	318.96	0.16	1
Cathay Lujiazui Life Insurance	261.73	0.13	1
Soochow Life Insurance	100.74	0.05	1
Total	204660.38	100	425

Note. The premium income data of each life insurance company in Table 3.1 comes from China Insurance Yearbook 2023.

(2) Qualitative Research

In the qualitative study, interviews were conducted with senior management personnel of 12 life insurance companies in Shandong Province. The interview distribution is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Number of Interviews for Qualitative Research

Name of Company	Type of Company	Number of Sample
China Life Insurance	State-owned insurance company, ranked first in premium scale in Shandong province	1
Ping An Life Insurance of China	Private insurance company, premium scale ranked second in Shandong province	1

Table 3.2 Number of Interviews for Qualitative Research

Name of Company	Type of Company	Number of Sample
China Pacific Life Insurance	State-owned insurance company, ranked third in premium scale in Shandong province	1
New China Life Insurance	State-owned insurance company, ranked fourth in premium scale in Shandong province	1
Taiping Life Insurance	State-owned insurance company, ranked fifth in premium scale in Shandong province	1
Taikang Life Insurance	Private insurance company, premium scale ranked sixth in Shandong province	1
Allianz Life Insurance	One of the two foreign life insurance companies in Shandong Province	1
Heng An Standard Life Insurance	Medium scale joint venture life insurance company	1
Union Life Insurance	Medium scale private life insurance company	1
Huatai Life Insurance	One of the two foreign life insurance companies in Shandong Province	1
SunLife Everbrigh Life Insurance	Small-scale joint venture life insurance company	1
Cathay Lujiazui Life Insurance	Small private life insurance company	1
Total		12

According to the different types of ownership, life insurance companies in Shandong Province are divided into state-owned life insurance companies, private life insurance companies, joint venture life insurance companies and wholly foreign-owned life insurance companies. This study covered all four types of life insurance companies when selecting in-depth interview subjects. Among them, state-owned life insurance companies occupy a pivotal position in Shandong province, so the four largest ones were selected. Among the private life insurance companies, two large scale, one medium scale and one small scale life insurance companies were selected. One medium size and one small size life insurance companies were selected from the joint venture. In Shandong, there were only two wholly foreign-owned life insurance companies, all of which were included in the in-depth interview.

3.3 Research Tools

3.3.1 Questionnaire

Through the literature review on public policy, organizational isomorphic behavior (coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism, normative isomorphism), relationship marketing strategies and marketing efficiency in Chapter 2, the following conceptual framework and hypotheses are obtained.

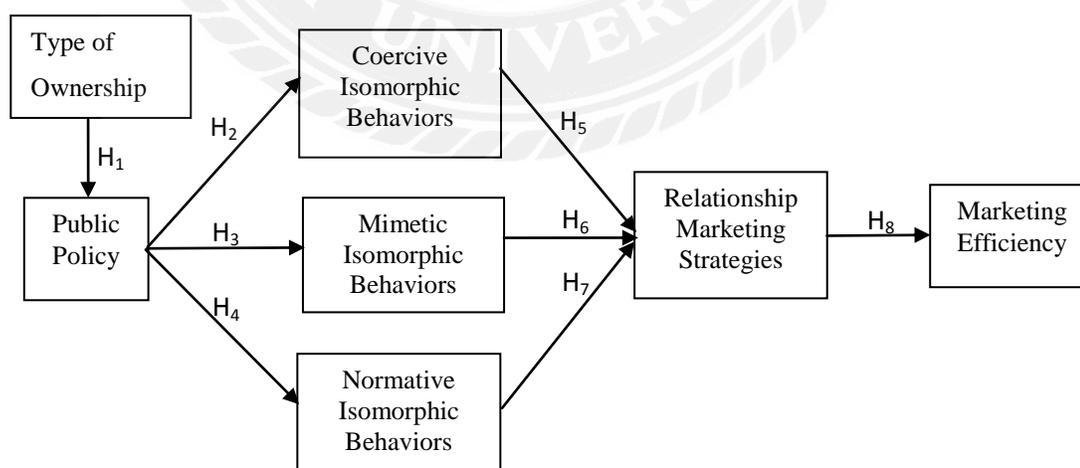


Figure 3.1 Conceptual Framework

(Source: Researcher, 2024)

The dimensions of the six variables in this research are given in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Dimensions of Variables

Variable	Dimension
Public Policy	Policy cognition
	Policy influence
	Market environment adaptation
	Career development
Coercive Isomorphic Behaviors	Policies and regulations
	Market competition and standards
	Corporate culture and values
Mimetic Isomorphic Behaviors	Marketing strategy
	Marketing behavior
	Marketing culture
Normative Isomorphic Behaviors	Industry norm cognition
	Marketing strategy choice
	Professional behavior
Relationship Marketing Strategies	Relationship establishment and maintenance
	Communication and interaction
	Investment and return
	Market competition
Marketing Efficiency	Customer relationship maintenance and development
	Customer satisfaction and loyalty
	Cross-selling and business growth
	Optimization of marketing strategy

The research hypotheses of this research are shown in Table 3.4:

Table 3.4 Hypotheses

No.	Hypotheses
H ₁	Public policy is significantly affected by type of ownership of life insurance companies.
H ₂	Public policy is positively related to coercive isomorphic behaviors.
H ₃	Public policy is positively related to mimetic isomorphic behaviors.
H ₄	Public policy is positively related to normative isomorphic behaviors.
H ₅	Coercive isomorphic behaviors are positively related to the strategic choices of relationship marketing strategies.
H ₆	Mimetic isomorphic behaviors are positively related to the strategic choices of relationship marketing strategies.
H ₇	Normative isomorphic behaviors are positively related to the strategic choices of relationship marketing strategies.
H ₈	The strategic choices of relationship marketing strategies are positively related to marketing efficiency.

In order to verify the hypotheses proposed in this research, a questionnaire was designed based on the literature review and research framework in Chapter 2. The questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part collects general information of the respondents, including gender, age, highest level of education, years of work in the life insurance industry, job position, and income. The second part is measurement items of public policy, coercive isomorphic behaviors, mimetic isomorphic behaviors, normative isomorphic behaviors, relationship marketing strategies, and marketing efficiency. Likert scale is used in with 5 levels as follows:

<u>Level</u>	<u>Score</u>
Strongly Agree	5
Agree	4
Undecided	3
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

The meaning of each score is:

Score 5 means the respondent strongly agrees with the statement

Score 4 means the respondent agrees with the statement

Score 3 means the respondent is undecided about the statement

Score 2 means the respondent disagrees with the statement

Score 1 means the respondent strongly disagrees with the statement

According to Best (1981), the interpretation of the score is as follows:

<u>Mean</u>	<u>Significance Level</u>
1.00 - 1.80	Strongly Disagree
1.81 - 2.60	Disagree
2.61 - 3.40	Undecided
3.41 - 4.20	Agree
4.21 - 5.00	Strongly Agree

The following are the measurement items included in the questionnaire.

Part 1: Types of ownership scale

Life insurance companies with different ownership types show certain differences when affected by public policies. These differences are mainly reflected in the speed of policy response, the intensity of policy implementation, the ability to adapt to the market and the ability to innovate.

Table 3.5 Type of Ownership Measurement Scale

Dimension	Measurement Item	No.
Type of ownership	You believe that the life insurance company you work for can strictly follow the government's public policies.	TOO1
	When the public policy changes, the life insurance company you work for can make timely adjustments to adapt to the corresponding policy changes.	TOO2
	You believe that the life insurance company you work for has sufficient resources to respond to changes in public policy.	TOO3
	You believe that the life insurance company you work for has enough influence to participate in the formulation of public policy.	TOO4

Part 2: Public policy scale

The public policy measurement items involving the life insurance industry are designed to evaluate the implementation effect, market impact and social value of life insurance policies, as shown in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6 Public Policy Measurement Scale

Dimension	Measurement Item	No.
Policy Cognition	The company often informs you of the latest public policies in the life insurance industry.	PP1
	The policy training provided by the company is enough to help you understand the policy content.	PP2
	You often follow industry trends to understand the latest changes in public policies in the life insurance industry.	PP3
Policy Influence	You believe that public policies have improved the product variety and service quality of life insurance companies.	PP4
	You believe that public policies in the life insurance industry play a significant role in improving customer satisfaction.	PP5
	The policy change has had a positive impact on your marketing strategy.	PP6
Market Environment Adaptation	In the current market environment, policy changes have put forward higher professional requirements for you.	PP7
	The company provides sufficient resources and support to help you adapt to the changes in the market environment.	PP8
	You can quickly adapt to changes in the market environment brought about by public policies in the life insurance industry.	PP9
Career Development	You believe that the implementation of public policies in the life insurance industry helps to improve the professional status of the whole industry.	PP10
	You believe that public policies in the life insurance industry provide more opportunities for your career development.	PP11
	Policy changes urge you to continuously improve your professional ability and skills.	PP12

Part 3: Coercive isomorphism scale

The coercive isomorphism measurement scale is mainly used to measure the degree of convergence in behaviors, strategies or structures of enterprises or other organizations when facing external coercive pressure. This pressure usually comes from the requirements of the government, laws and regulations, industry associations and other authoritative institutions. Coercive isomorphic behaviors in life insurance industry refers to a series of convergent behaviors adopted by life insurance companies when facing external compulsory pressure (such as laws and regulations, regulatory policies, industry standards, etc.). In order to measure these behaviors, the following items are designed for the dimension of policies and regulations, market competition and standards, and corporate culture and values, as shown in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7 Coercive Isomorphism Measurement Scale

Dimension	Measurement Item	No.
Policies and Regulations	You need to adjust your marketing strategy frequently to adapt to changes in policies and regulations.	CI1
	Policies and regulations in the life insurance industry have a positive impact on fair competition.	CI2
	Changes in policies and regulations have a significant impact on the design and promotion of life insurance companies' products.	CI3
	The compliance of policies and regulations of life insurance companies has an important impact on their market reputation.	CI4

Table 3.7 Coercive Isomorphism Measurement Scale

Dimension	Measurement Item	No.
Market Competition and Standards	Market competition has a great impact on the formulation of life insurance marketing strategies.	CI5
	Companies consider competitor dynamics when developing marketing strategies.	CI6
	Industry standards play an important guiding role in life insurance marketing practice.	CI7
	Poor implementation of industry standards will have a negative impact on the company	CI8
Corporate Culture and Values	The company's corporate culture has a positive impact on its competitiveness in the life insurance industry.	CI9
	The company's corporate culture plays an important role in enhancing team cohesion.	CI10
	The company encourages employees to follow industry standards, policies and regulations for marketing	CI11
	The company's values are in line with the overall trend of the life insurance industry	CI12

Part 4: Mimetic isomorphism scale

Mimetic isomorphism is a phenomenon in which an organization or system imitates the behavior, structure or characteristics of other organizations or systems under external environmental pressure. The mimetic isomorphism measurement scale for the life insurance industry is used to measure the degree to which life insurance companies' behaviors, structures or strategies converge with those of other companies in the face of external environmental pressure. In order to measure these behaviors, the following items are designed for the dimension of marketing strategy, marketing behavior, and marketing culture, as shown in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8 Mimetic Isomorphism Measurement Scale

Dimension	Measurement Item	No.
Marketing Strategy	Different life insurance companies tend to be similar in product positioning.	MI1
	In the selection of target customer groups, there is little difference among life insurance companies.	MI2
	The policies and practices of life insurance companies in customer service tend to mimic each other.	MI3
	The sales channels and strategies of different life insurance companies are increasingly similar.	MI4
Marketing Behavior	When communicating with potential customers, different life insurance companies use similar marketing techniques.	MI5
	When training marketing personnel, life insurance companies often teach skills and methods that are close to each other.	MI6
	The marketing personnel of different life insurance companies tend to have the same behavior pattern in the sales process.	MI7
	When dealing with customer complaints, the coping strategies and procedures of life insurance companies are often similar.	MI8
Marketing Culture	There are many similarities in the career development and promotion paths of marketers in different life insurance companies.	MI9
	In terms of team building, the practices and concepts of life insurance companies often imitate each other.	MI10
	The marketing teams of different life insurance companies tend to have the same attitude towards customers and service quality.	MI11
	In the marketing team, rewards and incentives are similar to those of other life insurance companies.	MI12

Part 5: Normative isomorphism scale

Normative isomorphism scale is used to quantitatively evaluate the similarity or equivalence of different organizations, systems or structures under the guidance of norms or standards. In order to measure the degree of normative isomorphism in the life insurance industry, including the dimension of industry norm cognition, marketing strategy and professional behavior, items are constructed to measure the degree of isomorphism in different life insurance companies, as shown in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9 Normative Isomorphism Measurement Scale

Dimension	Measurement Item	No.
Industry Norm Cognition	Marketing personnel of life insurance companies usually receive similar training in terms of laws, regulations and regulatory policies in the industry.	NI1
	Marketers of different life insurance companies often show consistency in complying with industry ethics and professional ethics.	NI2
	Marketers in the life insurance industry follow similar standards and procedures for handling customer information and protecting privacy.	NI3
	In terms of cooperation and competition in the industry, marketing personnel of different life insurance companies often hold similar attitudes.	NI4

Table 3.9 Normative Isomorphism Measurement Scale

Dimension	Measurement Item	No.
Marketing Strategy	When formulating marketing plans, life insurance companies tend to use similar promotion channels.	NI5
	Marketing activities (such as promotions and advertisements) of different life insurance companies are often similar in content and form.	NI6
	Life insurance companies have very similar strategies in customer segmentation and positioning.	NI7
	Life insurance companies usually follow similar proportions and principles in the allocation of marketing budgets.	NI8
Professional Behavior	There are great similarities in the professional code of conduct of marketing personnel in different life insurance companies.	NI9
	Marketers from different life insurance companies often show similar mindsets and behaviors when dealing with job stress.	NI10
	In terms of vocational training and skill upgrading, marketers from different life insurance companies often receive similar courses and resources.	NI11
	When working as a team, marketers in the life insurance industry usually exhibit similar collaborative styles.	NI12

Part 6: Relationship marketing strategies scale

The relationship marketing strategies scale is used to measure and evaluate an enterprise's orientation, strategy, implementation effect and customer perception in relationship marketing. It aims to comprehensively and systematically reflect the overall performance of enterprises in relationship marketing and customers' perception and evaluation. In order to comprehensively reflect the performance and effect of life insurance companies in implementing relationship marketing strategy, this research designed the measurement items of relationship establishment and maintenance, communication and interaction, investment and return, and market competition, as shown in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10 Relationship Marketing Strategies Measurement Scale

Dimension	Measurement Item	No.
Relationship Establishment and Maintenance	You focus on enhancing customer trust in life insurance products and services.	RM1
	You will actively solve customer problems and complaints to maintain good customer relations.	RM2
	You cultivate an emotional connection with your customers, not just a business relationship.	RM3
Communication and Interaction	You interact with customers through multiple channels (phone, social media, mobile apps).	RM4
	You take the initiative to provide valuable information and advice to customers to enhance their trust.	RM5
	You believe that listening to customers' opinions and suggestions is essential to improving service.	RM6
Investment and Return	You allocate your time and energy according to the value and potential of your customers.	RM7
	You reward your customers for their loyalty and support by offering discounts, gifts, or extra services.	RM8
	You regularly evaluate the return on your relationship investment and adjust your investment strategy accordingly.	RM9
Market Competition	You regularly analyze your competitors' marketing activities to develop differentiated competitive strategies.	RM10
	You will highlight your competitive advantage in the market through innovative and differentiated services.	RM11
	You focus on integrating enterprise social responsibility into your relationship marketing strategy to enhance your brand image and market recognition.	RM12

Part 7: Marketing efficiency scale

The marketing efficiency scale is designed to systematically evaluate the efficiency performance of enterprises in their marketing activities. This scale is constructed around four dimensions: maintaining and deepening customer relationship, customer satisfaction and loyalty, cross-selling and business growth, and optimization of marketing strategy. It consists of 12 measurement items (ME1–ME12), which comprehensively reflect the effectiveness and results of enterprises in marketing execution from aspects of customer relationship maintenance, satisfaction management, business expansion, and strategy optimization. The design of this scale focuses on practical operation and effect feedback, and is suitable for empirical measurement and evaluation of marketing efficiency in the life insurance industry, as shown in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11 Marketing Efficiency Measurement Scale

Dimension	Measurement Item	No.
Customer Relationship Maintenance and Development	You can effectively maintain relationships with customers and reduce customer churn through personalized service.	ME1
	You often share insurance knowledge and risk management experience with customers to enhance their trust and satisfaction.	ME2
	You focus on emotional connection with customers and build long-term business relationships through sincere service.	ME3
Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty	You often take the initiative to understand the needs of customers and provide insurance products and services that meet their expectations.	ME4
	You ensure continuous customer satisfaction with your insurance products by providing quality after-sales service.	ME5
	You keep in regular contact with customers to monitor their insurance experience and changes in their needs to enhance loyalty.	ME6

Table 3.11 Marketing Efficiency Measurement Scale

Dimension	Measurement Item	No.
Cross-selling and Business Growth	You often discuss their insurance plans with customers to look for opportunities for cross-selling and business growth.	ME7
	You can identify the potential needs of customers and proactively suggest new products or upgrades that suit them.	ME8
	You're effectively increasing your customers' insurance coverage and overall satisfaction through cross-selling.	ME9
Optimization of Marketing Strategy	You regularly analyze data from marketing campaigns to identify and optimize less cost-effective campaigns and improve marketing effectiveness.	ME10
	You often share successful marketing cases and experiences with the team to promote the common growth and efficiency of the team.	ME11
	You can flexibly adjust your marketing strategies and activities in response to market changes and customer needs to stay competitive.	ME12

3.3.2 In-depth Interview

This study conducted in-depth interviews with the senior managers of 12 life insurance companies. The interviews were conducted through face-to-face meetings, phone calls, or video software. Before the interviews, the researchers provided the interviewees with a summary of the in-depth interviews to enable them to obtain more accurate and relevant useful information for the research. The interviews mainly covered the following 9 aspects of questions.

Table 3.12 Questions for In-depth Interview

ID	Questions
Q1	What public policies do you think have had a significant impact on the life insurance industry in recent years?
Q2	How does your life insurance company adapt to changing public policies? Has there been a corresponding strategic adjustment or business transformation?
Q3	Do you think there is organizational isomorphism in the life insurance industry?
Q4	In what ways does public policy exert pressure on life insurance companies to coercive isomorphism? How do these policies specifically affect the decision-making process, business processes, or market strategies of life insurers?
Q5	Which public policies have a mimetic isomorphic impact on the behavior pattern, market positioning or brand image of life insurance companies? How do these policies induce life insurers to superficially imitate or converge to other successful companies or industry standards?
Q6	Which public policies have normative isomorphic impacts on the codes of conduct, operating standards or compliance requirements of life insurance companies? How do these policies promote life insurance companies to be consistent in operation and management and form a similar standard system?
Q7	What are the main challenges your life insurance company has encountered in the face of coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism caused by public policies??

Table 3.12 Questions for In-depth Interview

ID	Questions
Q8	What do you think are the impacts of coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism on the formulation and implementation of relationship marketing strategies of life insurance companies?
Q9	What are the main relationship marketing strategies adopted by your company? How does your company measure the effectiveness of the relationship marketing strategy?

3.4 Data Collection Strategy and Procedure

1. 1) Using IOC (Item Objective Congruence Index) to check Content Validity and seek comments from the following 5 specialists:

1. Dr. Jia Xiaoi, Professor, Dean of Statistics School of Shandong Technology and Business University.
2. Dr. Ma Yu, Professor, Director of the Financial Research Institute of Shandong Technology and Business University.
3. Dr. Song Yingjie, Professor, Dean of Finance School of Shandong Technology and Business University.
4. Dr. Hao Zhangang, Associate Professor, Business Administration School of Shandong Technology and Business University.
5. Dr. Yu Wenjing, Associate Professor, Finance School of Shandong Technology and Business University.

$$IOC = \frac{\sum R}{n}$$

where IOC = Index of item-objective congruence value

R = Score from experts

$\sum R$ = Total score from all experts

n = Number of experts

Criteria to verify score is

+1 means “the measurement item is in congruence with the objectives of the study”

0 means “the measurement item is undecided with the objectives of the study”

-1 means “the measurement item is inconsistent with the objectives of the study”

IOC needs to be between 0.7-1.00 for every question.

2) Find the value of the IOC using the following criteria.

A value between 0.7-1.00 means the measurement item passes the evaluation.

A value below 0.7 means the measurement item needs change or correction.

A value less than 0 means the measurement item fails the evaluation.

According to the above criteria, the researcher invited five specialists to evaluate the items in this questionnaire. The results showed that the average IOC score of each question was above 0.7, which passed the evaluation.

3) Do a try-out of the questionnaire on 30 samples respectively and check on the reliability. The formula of Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is

$$\alpha = \frac{n}{n-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n S_i^2}{S_t^2} \right)$$

where α = a coefficient of reliability

n = the number of scale items

S_i^2 = the variance associated with the scores of item i

S_i^2 = the variance associated with the observed total scores

4) Prepare updated questionnaire for distribution.

2. The following steps were followed for data collection in this research.

1) Request a letter from the management department of Siam University for permission to distribute the questionnaire.

2) Send the questionnaire together with the permission letter to the target group. When conducting the survey, the researcher uploaded the questionnaire and the permission letter to the professional survey website (Wen Juan Xing), and then posted the link to the answer in the form of QR code. In order to improve the efficiency of the questionnaire distribution, the researcher forwarded the answer link to each life insurance company through Shandong Insurance Industry Association, and each company assigned qualified personnel to fill in the questionnaire online. Shandong Insurance Industry Association is the self-regulatory organization of the insurance industry in Shandong Province, and all life insurance companies are members of the organization.

3) Responses and collection of all 425 questionnaires were completed within a period of two weeks after the commencement of the survey. Then, the researchers conducted a preliminary review of the questionnaire data collected online. In case of invalid questionnaires, a supplementary survey was conducted within one week.

3.5 Data Analysis

This research followed the following steps to analyze the collected questionnaire data.

1) This study conducted descriptive statistical analysis on the data collected by the questionnaire, including calculating, mean value, variance and other indicators, and display them in appropriate statistical charts or tables.

2) Based on the questionnaire data, correlation coefficients or Pearson coefficients were calculated to conduct correlation analysis on the relationship between variables.

3) The variable data were cross-analyzed based on the general information of the respondents.

4) In this study, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to model and analyze the data. SEM is a multivariate data analysis tool that combines two or more structural models to implement a statistical framework for modeling multivariate relationships. SEM integrates two statistical methods, factor analysis and path analysis. The research used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) by AMOS to pass the criteria of factor loading values at 0.5 for the quality of questionnaire.

5) This study analyzed the relationship between factors affecting marketing efficiency, and test the hypothesis, structure and relationship between variables of the model.

6) The study conducted a systematic analysis of the content of in-depth interviews to identify recurring viewpoints and relationships. This process involved organizing the textual data into meaningful groups and tracking common themes, recurring trends, and different classifications. Through careful evaluation, key elements were identified. In qualitative analysis, the results were cross-verified by multiple researchers to ensure reliability. This helped to reduce the researcher's bias, enhance credibility, and deepen the understanding of the background.

3.6 Research Ethics

Research ethics is an integral part of the field of academic research that aims to apply ethical principles to research activities. Research ethics not only focuses on the legitimacy of the research process and the authenticity of the research results, but also emphasizes the respect and protection of participants. In order to ensure that the above requirements were met, this research strictly observed the following ethical principles while following the scientific method:

Firstly, respect participants' autonomy and right to know. Each participant was surveyed or interviewed voluntarily, and the researcher fully respected the autonomy of the participants and would not force or induce their participation. Prior to the survey or interview, participants were fully informed about the purpose, procedures and personal information protection measures of this study, and voluntarily agreed to participate on the basis of full understanding.

Secondly, the personal information and privacy of participants were strictly protected. The questionnaire contained as few questions or options as possible that involved participants' privacy, and participants were surveyed or interviewed anonymously. All survey data collected were used solely for conducting academic research and would not be used for other purposes or transferred to any other third party.

Thirdly, during the questionnaire, the researcher did not have any physical contact with the participants, so it would not cause physical harm to the participants. The researcher conducted the interview in a friendly manner and did not have any conflict with the participants.

Fourthly, the researcher properly stored the survey data to ensure the security of the data. The researcher strictly abided by the principle of academic integrity, ensured the authenticity and accuracy of research data, and ensured that research activities were legal and compliant.

Finally, in order to maintain academic integrity and ethical standards, The researcher submitted research ethics check applications and approval, which were reviewed by the dissertation examination committee.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH RESULTS

The details in this chapter would be separated into eight parts as follows:

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Symbols Representing Variables
- 4.3 Descriptive Statistical Analysis
- 4.4 Reliability, Validity, and Primary Confirmatory Factor Analysis
- 4.5 Correlation Analysis
- 4.6 Structural Equation Models and Hypothesis Testing
- 4.7 In-depth Interview Data Analysis
- 4.8 Conclusion

4.1 Introduction

The questionnaire survey in this study collected data from the staff of 50 life insurance companies in Shandong Province, including regular employees engaged in marketing, managers and life insurance agents. The questionnaire aimed to collect information about ownership type, public policy, coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism, normative isomorphism, relationship marketing strategies, and marketing efficiency of life insurance companies. In the data analysis stage, this study used SPSS to conduct descriptive statistical analysis, reliability test and regression analysis to determine the relationship between variables. AMOS 26.0 was used to fit the structural equation model, to evaluate the relationship strength among ownership type, public policy, coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism, normative isomorphism, relationship marketing strategies, and marketing efficiency. This study aimed to investigate how these factors affect the marketing efficiency of life insurance companies.

The statistical analysis process in this study included the statistical description and normal distribution analysis of the questionnaire data, and the reliability and validity analysis of the survey data. Cronbach's Alpha and corrected item total correlation (CITC) were used for reliability analysis, and CFA was used for validity test, including path coefficient, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extraction (AVE). The above analysis results ensured the reliability and particularity of the survey data. After the data passed the reliability and validity test, the correlation analysis was conducted, and then the structural equation model was constructed. GFI, CFI, AGFI and RMSEA were used to verify the fit of the model when constructing the structural equation model. Finally, this study conducted a path analysis of each variable to verify the research hypotheses, and then drew the final conclusion.

4.2 Symbols Representing Variables

The objective of this research was to analyze the impact of public policy on the isomorphic behaviors and relationship marketing strategies of life insurance companies in Shandong Province, China. The symbols representing variables and number of items for questionnaire are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Symbols Representing Variables

Latent variables	Observed variables	Number of Items
Type of Ownership	---	4 (TOO1-TOO4)
Public Policy	Policy Cognition (PC)	3(PP1-PP3)
	Policy Influence (PI)	3 (PP4-PP6)
	Market Environment Adaptation (MEA)	3 (PP7-PP9)
	Career Development (CD)	3 (PP10-PP12)
Coercive Isomorphism	Policies and Regulations (PR)	4 (CI1-CI4)
	Market Competition and Standards (MCS)	4 (CI5-CI8)
	Corporate Culture and Values (CCV)	4 (CI9-CI12)

Table 4.1 Symbols Representing Variables

Latent variables	Observed variables	Number of Items
Mimetic Isomorphism	Marketing Strategy (MS)	4 (MI1-MI4)
	Marketing Behavior (MB)	4 (MI5-MI8)
	Marketing Culture (MC)	4 (MI9-MI12)
Normative Isomorphism	Industry Norm Cognition (INC)	4 (NI1-NI4)
	Marketing Strategy (MST)	4 (NI5-NI8)
	Professional Behavior (PB)	4 (NI9-NI12)
Relationship Marketing Strategies	Relationship Establishment and Maintenance (REM)	3 (RM1-RM3)
	Communication and Interaction (CAI)	3 (RM4-RM6)
	Investment and Return (IAR)	3 (RM7-RM9)
	Market Competition (MCO)	3 (RM10-RM12)
Marketing Efficiency	Customer Relationship Maintenance and Development (CRMD)	3 (ME1-ME3)
	Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty (CSL)	3 (ME4-ME6)
	Cross-selling and Business Growth (CBG)	3 (ME7-ME9)
	Optimization of Marketing Strategy (OMS)	3 (ME10-ME12)

4.3 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

In this survey, 447 questionnaires were sent out and 436 were returned, with a recovery rate of 97.54%. After excluding 11 invalid questionnaires, 425 valid questionnaires were left, with an effective rate of 97.48%.

4.3.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Sample Characteristics

In the descriptive statistical analysis, sample information including gender, age, education level, type of ownership, work years, job position and average monthly income were analyzed. In this research, 425 valid questionnaires were gathered and analyzed, with descriptive statistics reported in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Sample Characteristics

Item No.	Item	Choice	Number	Percentage/%
1	Gender	Male	222	52.2
		Female	203	47.8
2	Age	Under 30 years old	130	30.6
		30-39 years old	172	40.5
		40-49 years old	80	18.8
		50-60 years old	43	10.1
3	Education Level	Junior high school	19	4.5
		High school	46	10.8
		Junior college degree	132	31.1
		Bachelor's Degree	175	41.2
		Master's Degree	42	9.9
		Doctoral Degree	11	2.6
4	Type of Ownership	State-owned life insurance company	235	55.3
		Private life insurance company	85	20
		Joint venture life insurance company	102	24
		Foreign life insurance company	3	0.7
5	Working Years	Less than 1 year	79	18.6
		1-5 years	173	40.7
		5-10 years	118	27.8
		10-15 years	39	9.2
		15-20 years	12	2.8
		More than 20 years	4	0.9
6	Job Position	Agent	119	28
		Group Supervisor	154	36.2
		Sales Department Manager	82	19.3
		Channel Manager	51	12
		Marketing Specialist	13	3.1
		Director of Marketing	6	1.4
7	Average Monthly Income	Less than ¥ 5,000	72	16.9
		¥ 5,000- ¥ 7,500	117	27.5
		¥ 7,500- ¥ 10,000	169	39.8
		¥ 10,000- ¥ 12,500	41	9.6
		¥ 12,500- ¥ 15,000	18	4.2
		More than ¥ 15,000	8	1.9

As can be seen from Table 4.2, in terms of gender, males slightly outnumber females, accounting for 52.2%. In terms of age distribution, the group between 30-39

years old accounts for the highest proportion, reaching 40.5%, followed by the group under 30 years old and the group between 40-49 years old. In terms of education level, those with a bachelor's degree account for the largest proportion, 41.2 %, followed by college and high school degrees. Among ownership types, state-owned life insurance companies account for the highest proportion of 55.3%, showing the dominant position of state-owned enterprises in the industry. In terms of working years, the group with 1-5 years of work experience accounts for the highest proportion, 40.7%, reflecting the large number of fresh blood in the industry. In terms of job positions, supervisor and agent account for the top 36.2% and 28% respectively. In terms of average monthly income, the group with an income of 7,500-10,000 yuan accounts for the highest proportion, 39.8%, but there are also a certain proportion of groups with low income (less than 5,000 yuan) and high income (more than 15,000 yuan).

4.3.2 Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Variables

Descriptive Statistical analysis was used to examine the overall situation of quantitative data, and describes the overall situation of data through the mean value or skewness and other values. It can be seen from Table 4.3 that the absolute value of kurtosis is less than 3, and the current data distribution is flat and approximately normal. The skewness is all around 0, and the current data distribution offset state is approximately normal distribution.

Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics of Dimensions of Variables

No.	Sample size	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
TOO1	425	1	5	3.584	1.308	-0.663	-0.680
TOO2	425	1	5	3.605	1.303	-0.684	-0.637
TOO3	425	1	5	3.600	1.279	-0.686	-0.554
TOO4	425	1	5	3.619	1.270	-0.712	-0.514
PP1	425	1	5	3.468	1.316	-0.549	-0.826
PP2	425	1	5	3.494	1.303	-0.607	-0.703
PP3	425	1	5	3.522	1.253	-0.571	-0.692
PP4	425	1	5	3.508	1.335	-0.588	-0.808
PP5	425	1	5	3.504	1.292	-0.597	-0.755

Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics of Dimensions of Variables

No.	Sample size	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
PP6	425	1	5	3.473	1.276	-0.480	-0.833
PP7	425	1	5	3.449	1.333	-0.540	-0.882
PP8	425	1	5	3.504	1.328	-0.508	-0.933
PP9	425	1	5	3.344	1.288	-0.475	-0.835
PP10	425	1	5	3.440	1.325	-0.456	-0.963
PP11	425	1	5	3.492	1.268	-0.560	-0.772
PP12	425	1	5	3.461	1.351	-0.546	-0.905
CI1	425	1	5	3.532	1.251	-0.555	-0.691
CI2	425	1	5	3.537	1.292	-0.579	-0.759
CI3	425	1	5	3.541	1.283	-0.611	-0.747
CI4	425	1	5	3.607	1.288	-0.661	-0.655
CI5	425	1	5	3.537	1.288	-0.557	-0.766
CI6	425	1	5	3.527	1.279	-0.611	-0.671
CI7	425	1	5	3.657	1.228	-0.649	-0.599
CI8	425	1	5	3.532	1.191	-0.563	-0.578
CI9	425	1	5	3.579	1.301	-0.642	-0.721
CI10	425	1	5	3.595	1.274	-0.623	-0.664
CI11	425	1	5	3.579	1.247	-0.613	-0.659
CI12	425	1	5	3.605	1.275	-0.571	-0.803
MI1	425	1	5	3.668	1.257	-0.764	-0.418
MI2	425	1	5	3.673	1.193	-0.645	-0.527
MI3	425	1	5	3.689	1.214	-0.801	-0.268
MI4	425	1	5	3.671	1.232	-0.636	-0.632
MI5	425	1	5	3.609	1.214	-0.686	-0.426
MI6	425	1	5	3.645	1.222	-0.767	-0.297
MI7	425	1	5	3.739	1.274	-0.849	-0.365
MI8	425	1	5	3.697	1.253	-0.762	-0.429
MI9	425	1	5	3.668	1.267	-0.735	-0.523
MI10	425	1	5	3.661	1.239	-0.791	-0.348
MI11	425	1	5	3.671	1.236	-0.746	-0.415
MI12	425	1	5	3.678	1.224	-0.668	-0.567
NI1	425	1	5	3.497	1.316	-0.541	-0.835
NI2	425	1	5	3.504	1.285	-0.554	-0.763
NI3	425	1	5	3.494	1.327	-0.523	-0.922
NI4	425	1	5	3.497	1.320	-0.586	-0.832
NI5	425	1	5	3.442	1.367	-0.490	-1.018
NI6	425	1	5	3.445	1.326	-0.472	-0.958
NI7	425	1	5	3.480	1.337	-0.522	-0.917
NI8	425	1	5	3.574	1.281	-0.612	-0.709

Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics of Dimensions of Variables

No.	Sample size	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
NI9	425	1	5	3.440	1.306	-0.466	-0.918
NI10	425	1	5	3.518	1.330	-0.546	-0.880
NI11	425	1	5	3.480	1.259	-0.542	-0.771
NI12	425	1	5	3.518	1.261	-0.536	-0.760
RM1	425	1	5	3.617	1.250	-0.612	-0.665
RM2	425	1	5	3.605	1.226	-0.637	-0.563
RM3	425	1	5	3.532	1.197	-0.651	-0.458
RM4	425	1	5	3.522	1.305	-0.599	-0.739
RM5	425	1	5	3.588	1.260	-0.595	-0.684
RM6	425	1	5	3.612	1.293	-0.695	-0.659
RM7	425	1	5	3.546	1.299	-0.591	-0.713
RM8	425	1	5	3.692	1.246	-0.766	-0.423
RM9	425	1	5	3.588	1.231	-0.654	-0.508
RM10	425	1	5	3.631	1.231	-0.676	-0.509
RM11	425	1	5	3.595	1.272	-0.663	-0.622
RM12	425	1	5	3.633	1.258	-0.617	-0.700
ME1	425	1	5	3.628	1.195	-0.677	-0.437
ME2	425	1	5	3.626	1.290	-0.681	-0.608
ME3	425	1	5	3.694	1.242	-0.754	-0.432
ME4	425	1	5	3.612	1.241	-0.734	-0.441
ME5	425	1	5	3.609	1.275	-0.685	-0.583
ME6	425	1	5	3.609	1.251	-0.654	-0.569
ME7	425	1	5	3.638	1.265	-0.614	-0.703
ME8	425	1	5	3.591	1.267	-0.641	-0.633
ME9	425	1	5	3.607	1.214	-0.593	-0.596
ME10	425	1	5	3.659	1.195	-0.617	-0.540
ME11	425	1	5	3.661	1.249	-0.761	-0.435
ME12	425	1	5	3.640	1.229	-0.660	-0.514

In Table 4.4, the mean value of each variable is mostly concentrated between 3.4 and 3.7, indicating that the respondents' evaluation or cognition of these variables tends to be above the medium level. For example, the mean values of type of ownership, policy cognition, and policy influence are all close to or slightly higher than 3.5, showing that the respondents have some understanding and identification with these aspects. Secondly, the standard deviation reveals that there is a certain degree of difference in the perception

of these variables among respondents. The larger the standard deviation is, the more scattered the opinions or evaluations of the respondents are; A smaller standard deviation indicates a more concentrated view or evaluation of the respondents. For example, the standard deviations of policy cognition and policy influence are relatively large, indicating that respondents have a large difference in perception in these two aspects. However, the standard deviations of public policy, coercive isomorphism, and mimetic isomorphism are relatively small, indicating that the perceptions of the respondents are relatively consistent in these aspects.

Table 4.4 Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variable	Sample size	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Type of Ownership	425	1.000	5.000	3.602	0.987	-0.705	-0.703
Policy Cognition	425	1.000	5.000	3.495	1.110	-0.705	-0.847
Policy Influence	425	1.000	5.000	3.495	1.113	-0.627	-0.980
Market Environment Adaptation	425	1.000	5.000	3.432	1.153	-0.612	-1.056
Career Development	425	1.000	5.000	3.464	1.144	-0.638	-1.024
Public Policy	425	1.420	4.670	3.472	0.896	-0.691	-1.009
Policies and Regulations	425	1.000	5.000	3.554	1.076	-0.730	-0.967
Market Competition and Standards	425	1.000	5.000	3.563	1.042	-0.776	-0.820
Corporate Culture and Values	425	1.250	5.000	3.589	1.062	-0.745	-0.978
Coercive Isomorphism	425	1.330	4.750	3.569	0.901	-0.754	-0.917
Marketing Strategy	425	1.500	5.000	3.675	1.014	-0.938	-0.602
Marketing Behavior	425	1.250	5.000	3.672	1.038	-0.963	-0.571
Marketing Culture	425	1.250	5.000	3.669	1.032	-0.977	-0.542
Mimetic Isomorphism	425	1.670	4.750	3.672	0.861	-1.041	-0.354
Industry Norm Cognition	425	1.250	5.000	3.498	1.097	-0.662	-1.112

Table 4.4 Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variable	Sample size	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Marketing Strategy	425	1.000	5.000	3.485	1.128	-0.609	-1.182
Professional Behavior	425	1.000	5.000	3.489	1.083	-0.617	-1.151
Normative Isomorphism	425	1.420	4.750	3.491	0.947	-0.599	-1.186
Relationship Establishment and Maintenance	425	1.330	5.000	3.584	1.040	-0.789	-0.722
Communication and Interaction	425	1.000	5.000	3.574	1.115	-0.777	-0.782
Investment and Return	425	1.000	5.000	3.609	1.071	-0.819	-0.548
Market Competition	425	1.330	5.000	3.620	1.081	-0.794	-0.768
Relationship Marketing Strategies	425	1.580	4.750	3.597	0.859	-0.952	-0.506
Maintain and Deepen Customer Relationship	425	1.330	5.000	3.649	1.049	-0.822	-0.689
Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty	425	1.000	5.000	3.610	1.071	-0.891	-0.501
Cross-selling and Business Growth	425	1.000	5.000	3.612	1.073	-0.775	-0.737
Optimization of Marketing Strategy	425	1.000	5.000	3.653	1.044	-0.862	-0.504
Marketing Efficiency	425	1.420	4.750	3.631	0.852	-0.964	-0.477

4.4 Reliability, Validity, and Confirmatory Factor Analysis

4.4.1 Reliability Analysis

Cronbach alpha is an indicator to test the reliability of questionnaires, which is widely used in the analysis of empirical data. Generally speaking, when the Cronbach alpha value of the scale is lower than 0.7, it means that the internal consistency of the variables of the scale is poor, and the scale needs to be reformulated. When the Cronbach alpha value of the scale is higher than 0.7, it means that the internal consistency of several variables constructed by the scale is good. If the Cronbach alpha of the scale is

higher than 0.9, it means that the internal consistency of the variables designed by the scale is excellent.

This study used the corrected item-total correlation (CITC) to measure the reliability of individual question items. In the study, when the following two conditions are met, a question item should be deleted: (1) the overall correlation coefficient CITC of a question item is less than 0.4; (2) The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale after deleting the question items is greater than the value of the Cronbach alpha coefficient of the corresponding dimension.

The results of the reliability analysis are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Reliability Analysis of Type of Ownership Items

Variable	Item	CITC	Cronbach Alpha after Deleting the Items	Cronbach Alpha
Type of Ownership	TOO1	0.676	0.795	0.840
	TOO2	0.668	0.799	
	TOO3	0.693	0.788	
	TOO4	0.651	0.806	

Table 4.6 Reliability Analysis of Public Policy Items

Variable	Item	CITC	Cronbach Alpha after Deleting the Items	Cronbach Alpha
Policy Cognition	PP1	0.663	0.774	0.824
	PP2	0.674	0.762	
	PP3	0.702	0.735	
Policy Influence	PP4	0.678	0.738	0.817
	PP5	0.668	0.748	
	PP6	0.659	0.757	
Market Environment Adaptation	PP7	0.730	0.773	0.848
	PP8	0.713	0.790	
	PP9	0.703	0.799	
Career Development	PP10	0.716	0.762	0.839
	PP11	0.688	0.790	
	PP12	0.703	0.776	
Public Policy				0.898

Table 4.7 Reliability Analysis of Coercive Isomorphism Items

Variable	Item	CITC	Cronbach Alpha after Deleting the Items	Cronbach Alpha
Policies and Regulations	CI1	0.697	0.831	0.863
	CI2	0.719	0.822	
	CI3	0.719	0.822	
	CI4	0.707	0.827	
Market Competition and Standards	CI5	0.725	0.804	0.855
	CI6	0.689	0.82	
	CI7	0.68	0.823	
	CI8	0.699	0.816	
Corporate Culture and Values	CI9	0.701	0.81	0.853
	CI10	0.676	0.821	
	CI11	0.686	0.817	
	CI12	0.713	0.805	
Coercive Isomorphism				0.911

Table 4.8 Reliability Analysis of Mimetic Isomorphism Items

Variable	Item	CITC	Cronbach Alpha after Deleting the Items	Cronbach Alpha
Marketing Strategy	MI1	0.673	0.811	0.847
	MI2	0.701	0.799	
	MI3	0.671	0.811	
	MI4	0.692	0.802	
Marketing Behavior	MI5	0.681	0.825	0.857
	MI6	0.701	0.817	
	MI7	0.727	0.806	
	MI8	0.691	0.821	
Marketing Culture	MI9	0.7	0.807	0.851
	MI10	0.691	0.811	
	MI11	0.686	0.813	
	MI12	0.688	0.812	
Mimetic Isomorphism				0.904

Table 4.9 Reliability Analysis of Normative Isomorphism Items

Variable	Item	CITC	Cronbach Alpha after Deleting the Items	Cronbach Alpha
Industry Norm Cognition	NI1	0.696	0.82	0.857
	NI2	0.694	0.821	
	NI3	0.702	0.817	
	NI4	0.71	0.814	
Marketing Strategy	NI5	0.735	0.831	0.871
	NI6	0.722	0.836	
	NI7	0.73	0.833	
	NI8	0.712	0.841	
Professional Behavior	NI9	0.711	0.821	0.861
	NI10	0.723	0.817	
	NI11	0.694	0.829	
	NI12	0.703	0.825	
Normative Isomorphism				0.917

Table 4.10 Reliability Analysis of Relationship Marketing Strategies Items

Variable	Item	CITC	Cronbach Alpha after Deleting the Items	Cronbach Alpha
Relationship Establishment and Maintenance	RM1	0.654	0.737	0.807
	RM2	0.663	0.727	
	RM3	0.647	0.743	
Communication and Interaction	RM4	0.701	0.765	0.834
	RM5	0.675	0.79	
	RM6	0.71	0.755	
Investment and Return	RM7	0.669	0.725	0.809
	RM8	0.66	0.735	
	RM9	0.642	0.753	
Market Competition	RM10	0.687	0.76	0.828
	RM11	0.665	0.782	
	RM12	0.703	0.744	
Relationship Marketing Strategies				0.896

Table 4.11 Reliability Analysis of Marketing Efficiency Items

Variable	Item	CITC	Cronbach Alpha after Deleting the Items	Cronbach Alpha
Maintain and Deepen Customer Relationship	ME1	0.658	0.711	0.799
	ME2	0.64	0.73	
	ME3	0.633	0.736	
Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty	ME4	0.671	0.735	0.813
	ME5	0.663	0.744	
	ME6	0.656	0.751	
Cross-selling and Business Growth	ME7	0.68	0.752	0.822
	ME8	0.67	0.762	
	ME9	0.681	0.751	
Optimization of Marketing Strategy	ME10	0.643	0.762	0.812
	ME11	0.681	0.723	
	ME12	0.664	0.741	
Marketing Efficiency				0.897

Table 4.5 to Table 4.11 show that the Cronbach alpha coefficient value of each variable is greater than 0.7, and the CITC value of each item and the Cronbach alpha value of the deleted item all meet the research requirements, indicating that the stability of each variable in the questionnaire is high, and the reliability basically passed the test.

4.4.2 Validity Analysis

Table 4.12 Validity Analysis of Type of Ownership Items

Item	Factor Loading Coefficient	Communality
	Factor 1	
TOO1	0.825	0.680
TOO2	0.819	0.671
TOO3	0.837	0.700
TOO4	0.806	0.650
Characteristic root value (before rotation)	2.701	-
Variance explained rate % (before rotation)	67.517%	-
Cumulative variance explained rate % (before rotation)	67.517%	-
Characteristic root value (after rotation)	2.701	-
Variance explained rate % (after rotation)	67.517%	-
Cumulative variance explained rate % (after rotation)	67.517%	-
KMO value	0.815	-
Barthes spherical value	644.968	-
df	6	-
P value	0.000	-

As shown in Table 4.12, the communalities of all measurement items are greater than 0.4, indicating that the items share sufficient common variance and are suitable for factor analysis. In addition, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure is 0.815, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.6, which confirms the adequacy of the sample for factor extraction. Furthermore, the cumulative variance explained after rotation is 67.517%, exceeding the minimum acceptable level of 50%, suggesting that the extracted factor adequately explains the variance of the measurement items.

Table 4.13 Validity Analysis of Public Policy Items

Item	Factor Loading Coefficient				Communality
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	
PP1	0.259	0.192	0.252	0.733	0.705
PP2	0.157	0.204	0.136	0.821	0.759
PP3	0.177	0.166	0.204	0.819	0.771
PP4	0.187	0.164	0.812	0.175	0.752
PP5	0.155	0.248	0.770	0.208	0.721
PP6	0.202	0.190	0.783	0.185	0.724
PP7	0.830	0.201	0.150	0.184	0.786
PP8	0.795	0.221	0.194	0.197	0.756
PP9	0.812	0.146	0.207	0.191	0.760
PP10	0.175	0.813	0.206	0.192	0.771
PP11	0.196	0.802	0.181	0.178	0.746
PP12	0.195	0.794	0.215	0.188	0.751
Characteristic root value (before rotation)	5.649	1.182	1.113	1.060	-
Variance explained rate % (before rotation)	47.076%	9.847%	9.273%	8.832%	-
Cumulative variance explained rate % (before rotation)	47.076%	56.923%	66.196%	75.029%	-
Characteristic root value (after rotation)	2.311	2.276	2.213	2.203	-
Variance explained rate % (after rotation)	19.257%	18.966%	18.446%	18.360%	-
Cumulative variance explained rate % (after rotation)	19.257%	38.223%	56.669%	75.029%	-
KMO value	0.897				-
Barthes spherical value	2460.852				-
df	66				-
P value	0.000				-

As shown in Table 4.13, the communalities of all measurement items are greater than 0.4, indicating that the items share sufficient common variance and are appropriate for factor analysis. In addition, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value is 0.897, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.6, which confirms the adequacy of the sample. Furthermore, the variance explained by the four extracted factors is 19.257%, 18.966%, 18.446%, and 18.360%, respectively. The cumulative variance explained after rotation

reaches 75.029%, exceeding the acceptable level of 50%, indicating that the factor structure adequately represents the measurement items.

Table 4.14 Validity Analysis of Coercive Isomorphism Items

Item	Factor Loading Coefficient			Communality
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	
CI1	0.794	0.208	0.182	0.706
CI2	0.774	0.313	0.171	0.726
CI3	0.767	0.204	0.296	0.718
CI4	0.757	0.226	0.277	0.701
CI5	0.296	0.224	0.769	0.729
CI6	0.169	0.311	0.752	0.691
CI7	0.265	0.162	0.766	0.683
CI8	0.177	0.221	0.792	0.707
CI9	0.285	0.757	0.209	0.698
CI10	0.232	0.733	0.264	0.662
CI11	0.183	0.779	0.230	0.693
CI12	0.232	0.796	0.200	0.727
Characteristic root value (before rotation)	6.066	1.205	1.170	-
Variance explained rate % (before rotation)	50.547%	10.044%	9.747%	-
Cumulative variance explained rate % (before rotation)	50.547%	60.592%	70.339%	-
Characteristic root value (after rotation)	2.832	2.806	2.803	-
Variance explained rate % (after rotation)	23.597%	23.382%	23.360%	-
Cumulative variance explained rate % (after rotation)	23.597%	46.979%	70.339%	-
KMO value	0.924			-
Barthes spherical value	2649.499			-
df	66			-
P value	0.000			-

As shown in Table 4.14, the communalities of all measurement items exceed 0.4, indicating that the items share sufficient common variance and are appropriate for factor analysis. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value is 0.924, which is greater than the recommended threshold of 0.6, confirming sampling adequacy. After rotation, the three

extracted factors explain 23.597%, 23.382%, and 23.360% of the variance, respectively. The cumulative variance explained reaches 70.339%, exceeding the acceptable level of 50%, indicating that the factor structure adequately represents the measurement items.

Table 4.15 Validity Analysis of Mimetic Isomorphism Items

Item	Factor Loading Coefficient			Communality
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	
MI1	0.184	0.769	0.210	0.670
MI2	0.189	0.786	0.233	0.708
MI3	0.247	0.775	0.146	0.683
MI4	0.183	0.759	0.286	0.691
MI5	0.791	0.134	0.221	0.693
MI6	0.786	0.205	0.208	0.703
MI7	0.794	0.224	0.219	0.729
MI8	0.744	0.260	0.237	0.678
MI9	0.292	0.247	0.734	0.686
MI10	0.197	0.231	0.777	0.696
MI11	0.213	0.153	0.802	0.711
MI12	0.222	0.277	0.747	0.684
Characteristic root value (before rotation)	5.834	1.325	1.174	-
Variance explained rate % (before rotation)	48.619%	11.041%	9.785%	-
Cumulative variance explained rate % (before rotation)	48.619%	59.660%	69.445%	-
Characteristic root value (after rotation)	2.812	2.779	2.743	-
Variance explained rate % (after rotation)	23.431%	23.159%	22.855%	-
Cumulative variance explained rate % (after rotation)	23.431%	46.590%	69.445%	-
KMO value	0.913			-
Barthes spherical value	2528.602			-
df	66			-
P value	0.000			-

As shown in Table 4.15, the communalities of all measurement items are greater than 0.40, indicating that the items share sufficient common variance and are appropriate for factor analysis. In addition, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value is 0.913, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.60, which confirms the adequacy of the data

for factor analysis. Furthermore, the variance explained by the three extracted factors is 23.431%, 23.159%, and 22.855%, respectively. The cumulative variance explained after rotation reaches 69.445%, exceeding the acceptable level of 50%, indicating that the extracted factor structure adequately represents the measurement items.

Table 4.16 Validity Analysis of Normative Isomorphism Items

Item	Factor Loading Coefficient			Communality
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	
NI1	0.260	0.220	0.759	0.692
NI2	0.177	0.213	0.800	0.716
NI3	0.282	0.242	0.746	0.694
NI4	0.231	0.284	0.755	0.704
NI5	0.758	0.262	0.284	0.724
NI6	0.770	0.268	0.234	0.720
NI7	0.774	0.224	0.272	0.724
NI8	0.800	0.228	0.177	0.723
NI9	0.253	0.760	0.251	0.705
NI10	0.298	0.770	0.206	0.724
NI11	0.200	0.766	0.264	0.696
NI12	0.225	0.774	0.235	0.705
Characteristic root value (before rotation)	6.274	1.146	1.109	-
Variance explained rate % (before rotation)	52.285%	9.546%	9.241%	-
Cumulative variance explained rate % (before rotation)	52.285%	61.832%	71.072%	-
Characteristic root value (after rotation)	2.884	2.832	2.813	-
Variance explained rate % (after rotation)	24.031%	23.599%	23.442%	-
Cumulative variance explained rate % (after rotation)	24.031%	47.630%	71.072%	-
KMO value	0.931			-
Barthes spherical value	2766.026			-
df	66			-
P value	0.000			-

As shown in Table 4.16, the communalities of all measurement items are greater than 0.40, indicating that the items share sufficient common variance and are appropriate for factor analysis. In addition, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value is 0.931,

exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.60, which confirms the adequacy of the data for factor analysis. Furthermore, the variance explained by the three extracted factors is 24.031%, 23.599%, and 23.442%, respectively. The cumulative variance explained after rotation reaches 71.072%, exceeding the acceptable level of 50%, indicating that the extracted factor structure adequately represents the measurement items.

Table 4.17 Validity Analysis of Relationship Marketing Strategies Items

Item	Factor Loading Coefficient				Communality
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	
RM1	0.161	0.223	0.194	0.783	0.726
RM2	0.215	0.174	0.191	0.792	0.740
RM3	0.227	0.213	0.198	0.750	0.699
RM4	0.800	0.208	0.148	0.224	0.755
RM5	0.816	0.175	0.148	0.166	0.746
RM6	0.773	0.223	0.253	0.218	0.760
RM7	0.221	0.121	0.792	0.219	0.739
RM8	0.199	0.241	0.784	0.129	0.730
RM9	0.102	0.173	0.795	0.217	0.719
RM10	0.193	0.805	0.207	0.159	0.754
RM11	0.232	0.768	0.161	0.219	0.717
RM12	0.176	0.803	0.181	0.236	0.763
Characteristic root value (before rotation)	5.615	1.161	1.069	1.004	-
Variance explained rate % (before rotation)	46.793%	9.672%	8.905%	8.365%	-
Cumulative variance explained rate % (before rotation)	46.793%	56.464%	65.370%	73.735%	-
Characteristic root value (after rotation)	2.248	2.234	2.198	2.168	-
Variance explained rate % (after rotation)	18.735%	18.619%	18.313%	18.069%	-
Cumulative variance explained rate % (after rotation)	18.735%	37.353%	55.666%	73.735%	-
KMO value	0.899				-
Barthes spherical value	2350.923				-
df	66				-
P value	0.000				-

As shown in Table 4.17, the communalities of all measurement items are greater than 0.40, indicating that the items share sufficient common variance and are appropriate

for factor analysis. In addition, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value is 0.899, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.60, which confirms the adequacy of the data for factor analysis. Furthermore, the variance explained by the four extracted factors is 18.735%, 18.619%, 18.313%, and 18.069%, respectively. The cumulative variance explained after rotation reaches 73.735%, exceeding the acceptable level of 50%, indicating that the extracted factor structure adequately represents the measurement items.

Table 4.18 Validity Analysis of Marketing Efficiency Items

Item	Factor Loading Coefficient				Communality
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	
ME1	0.236	0.139	0.204	0.784	0.732
ME2	0.220	0.204	0.227	0.745	0.696
ME3	0.126	0.230	0.154	0.796	0.726
ME4	0.295	0.217	0.746	0.184	0.725
ME5	0.195	0.166	0.783	0.227	0.731
ME6	0.109	0.224	0.808	0.180	0.746
ME7	0.265	0.769	0.182	0.198	0.733
ME8	0.200	0.769	0.238	0.188	0.724
ME9	0.150	0.813	0.189	0.200	0.760
ME10	0.770	0.122	0.232	0.217	0.709
ME11	0.809	0.229	0.173	0.149	0.759
ME12	0.767	0.249	0.154	0.211	0.719
Characteristic root value (before rotation)	5.637	1.068	1.044	1.012	-
Variance explained rate % (before rotation)	46.973%	8.900%	8.698%	8.433%	-
Cumulative variance explained rate % (before rotation)	46.973%	55.873%	64.571%	73.004%	-
Characteristic root value (after rotation)	2.226	2.213	2.172	2.149	-
Variance explained rate % (after rotation)	18.552%	18.444%	18.097%	17.911%	-
Cumulative variance explained rate % (after rotation)	18.552%	36.996%	55.093%	73.004%	-
KMO value	0.907				-
Barthes spherical value	2282.019				-
df	66				-
P value	0.000				-

As shown in Table 4.18, the communalities of all measurement items are greater than 0.40, indicating that the items share sufficient common variance and are appropriate for factor analysis. In addition, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value is 0.907, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.60, which confirms the adequacy of the data for factor analysis. Furthermore, the variance explained by the four extracted factors is 18.552%, 18.444%, 18.097%, and 17.911%, respectively. The cumulative variance explained after rotation reaches 73.004%, exceeding the acceptable level of 50%, indicating that the extracted factor structure adequately represents the measurement items.

4.4.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In this study, AMOS 26.0 software was used to conduct confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on the variables of type of ownership, public policy, coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism, normative isomorphism, relationship marketing strategies and marketing efficiency, and composite reliability (CR) and average variance extraction (AVE) were used to determine the convergent validity of each variable dimension.

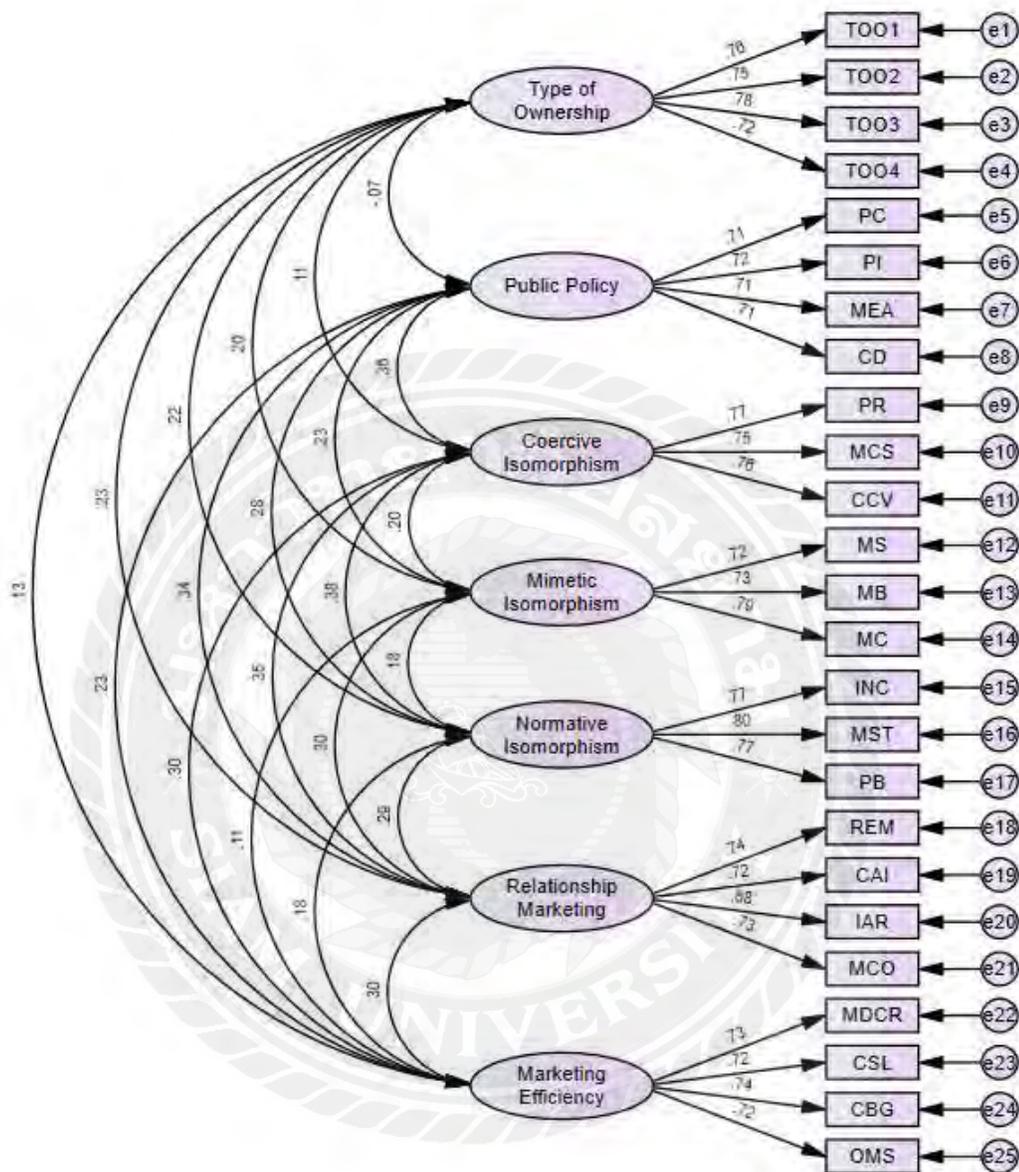


Figure 4.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

(Source: Researcher, 2024)

The data collected by the questionnaire were imported into AMOS26 software, and the model fitting parameters obtained by applying the maximum likelihood method are shown in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19 Model Fit of Factor Analysis

Model Fitting	CMIN	DF	CMIN/DF	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	GFI	RMSEA
Results of Fitting	429.569	254	1.691	0.897	0.878	0.955	0.946	0.955	0.922	0.040
Value of Judgement			<3	>0.8	>0.8	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	<0.08

It can be seen from Table 4.19 that the value of CMIN/DF is $1.691 < 3$, NFI, RFI are all greater than 0.8, IFI, TLI and CFI are all greater than 0.9, and RMSEA is $0.040 < 0.08$, indicating that the model has a good fitting degree of confirmatory factor analysis. The models of type of ownership, public policy, coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism, normative isomorphism, relationship marketing strategies and marketing efficiency fit well.

Table 4.20 Convergent Validity Analysis Results

Variable	Item	Unstandardized Factor Loadings	S.E.	C.R.	P	Standardized Factor Loading	AVE	CR
Type of Ownership	TOO1	1.000				0.760	0.568	0.840
	TOO2	0.993	0.069	14.297	***	0.746		
	TOO3	1.046	0.070	14.919	***	0.785		
	TOO4	0.919	0.066	13.853	***	0.721		
Public Policy	PC	1.000				0.710	0.505	0.803
	PI	1.013	0.082	12.367	***	0.717		
	MEA	1.037	0.085	12.266	***	0.709		
	CD	1.025	0.084	12.233	***	0.707		
Coercive Isomorphism	PR	1.000				0.774	0.583	0.807
	MCS	0.939	0.069	13.664	***	0.752		
	CCV	0.973	0.071	13.781	***	0.764		
Mimetic Isomorphism	MS	1.000				0.715	0.554	0.788
	MB	1.038	0.086	12.116	***	0.725		
	MC	1.125	0.091	12.311	***	0.790		
Normative Isomorphism	INC	1.000				0.768	0.605	0.822
	MST	1.065	0.074	14.461	***	0.795		
	PB	0.992	0.069	14.270	***	0.771		

Table 4.20 Convergent Validity Analysis Results

Variable	Item	Unstandardized Factor Loadings	S.E.	C.R.	P	Standardized Factor Loading	AVE	CR
Relationship Marketing Strategies	REM	1.000				0.742	0.515	0.810
	CAI	1.045	0.080	13.090	***	0.723		
	IAR	0.938	0.076	12.355	***	0.676		
	MCO	1.022	0.078	13.170	***	0.729		
Marketing Efficiency	MDCR	1.000				0.733	0.528	0.818
	CSL	1.014	0.078	12.949	***	0.725		
	CBG	1.030	0.079	13.095	***	0.735		
	OMS	0.977	0.076	12.839	***	0.717		

It can be seen from Table 4.20 that in the factor analysis model verified in this research, the measurement values of standardized factor loadings are between 0.676 and 0.795, all of which are greater than 0.50, and the corresponding significant p values are less than 0.05, indicating that the latent variables have a significant impact on the observed variables. At the same time, the AVE value of the average variance extracted is between 0.505 and 0.605, all greater than 0.5, and the CR value of the joint reliability is between 0.788-0.840, all greater than 0.7, indicating that the convergence validity of the variables in this research is good.

Table 4.21 Pearson Correlation with AVE Square Root Values

	Type of Ownership	Public Policy	Coercive Isomorphism	Mimetic Isomorphism	Normative Isomorphism	Relationship Marketing Strategies	Marketing Efficiency
Type of Ownership	0.754						
Public Policy	-0.071	0.711					
Coercive Isomorphism	0.114	0.360	0.764				
Mimetic Isomorphism	0.197	0.226	0.203	0.744			
Normative Isomorphism	0.222	0.275	0.377	0.183	0.778		
Relationship Marketing Strategies	0.232	0.345	0.347	0.303	0.289	0.718	
Marketing Efficiency	0.130	0.235	0.303	0.112	0.178	0.303	0.727

When the squared AVE value of the latent variable is greater than the correlation coefficient between the variable and other variables, it indicates that there is a good discrimination between the variables. As shown in Table 4.21, the correlation coefficients among the variables in this research are all less than the square root value of AVE of each latent variable, indicating that the discriminant validity among the latent variables is good.

4.5 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis, as a means and tool to measure the strength of statistical relationship between variables, focuses on the strength and direction of the direct linear correlation between two variables. In the correlation analysis, both variables are outcome variables, regardless of primary or secondary. At the same time, the correlation coefficient R is generally used to describe the degree of linear correlation between variables. The absolute value of R indicates the closeness of the linear correlation between two variables. The closer the absolute value of R is to 1, the higher the closeness is. The closer the absolute value of R is to zero, the less close it is. Pearson correlation coefficient is a common index to quantitatively describe the degree of linear correlation.

Table 4.22 Pearson Correlation Coefficients

	Average	Standard Deviation	Type of Ownership	Public Policy	Coercive Isomorphism	Mimetic Isomorphism	Normative Isomorphism	Relationship Marketing Strategies	Marketing Efficiency
Type of Ownership	3.602	0.987	1						
Public Policy	3.472	0.896	-0.057	1					
Coercive Isomorphism	3.569	0.901	0.091	0.290**	1				
Mimetic Isomorphism	3.672	0.861	0.154**	0.181**	0.156**	1			

Table 4.22 Pearson Correlation Coefficients

	Average	Standard Deviation	Type of Ownership	Public Policy	Coercive Isomorphism	Mimetic Isomorphism	Normative Isomorphism	Relationship Marketing Strategies	Marketing Efficiency
Normative Isomorphism	3.491	0.947	0.186**	0.221**	0.308**	0.145**	1		
Relationship Marketing Strategies	3.597	0.859	0.186**	0.279**	0.279**	0.246**	0.233**	1	
Marketing Efficiency	3.631	0.852	0.107*	0.189**	0.245**	0.090	0.143**	0.246**	1

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

In Table 4.22, correlation analysis was conducted to analyze the correlation among relationship marketing strategies, marketing efficiency, type of ownership, public policy, coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism. Pearson correlation coefficients were used to indicate the strength of the correlation. The specific analysis results are as follows:

The correlation value between type of ownership and public policy is -0.057, so there is a significant negative correlation between type of ownership and public policy.

The correlation value between public policy and coercive isomorphism is 0.290 and shows the significance at the level of 0.01, indicating that there is a significant positive correlation between public policy and coercive isomorphism.

The correlation value between public policy and mimetic isomorphism is 0.181 and shows the significance at the level of 0.01, indicating that there is a significant positive correlation between public policy and mimetic isomorphism.

The correlation value between public policy and normative isomorphism is 0.221 and shows the significance at the level of 0.01, indicating that there is a significant positive correlation between public policy and normative isomorphism.

The correlation value between coercive isomorphism and relationship marketing strategies is 0.279, and it shows the significance level of 0.01, so there is a significant positive correlation between coercive isomorphism and relationship marketing strategies.

The correlation value between mimetic isomorphism and relationship marketing strategies is 0.246 and shows the significance level of 0.01, which indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between mimetic isomorphism and relationship marketing strategies

The correlation value between normative isomorphism and relationship marketing strategies is 0.233, and it shows the significance level of 0.01, showing a significant positive correlation between normative isomorphism and relationship marketing strategies.

The correlation value between relationship marketing strategies and marketing efficiency is 0.246 and shows the significance level of 0.01, which indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between relationship marketing strategies and marketing efficiency.

4.6 Structural Equation Models and Hypothesis Testing

The data collected by the questionnaire were imported into AMOS26.0 software, and the model fitting parameters obtained by applying the maximum likelihood method are shown in Figure 4.2 and Table 4.23.

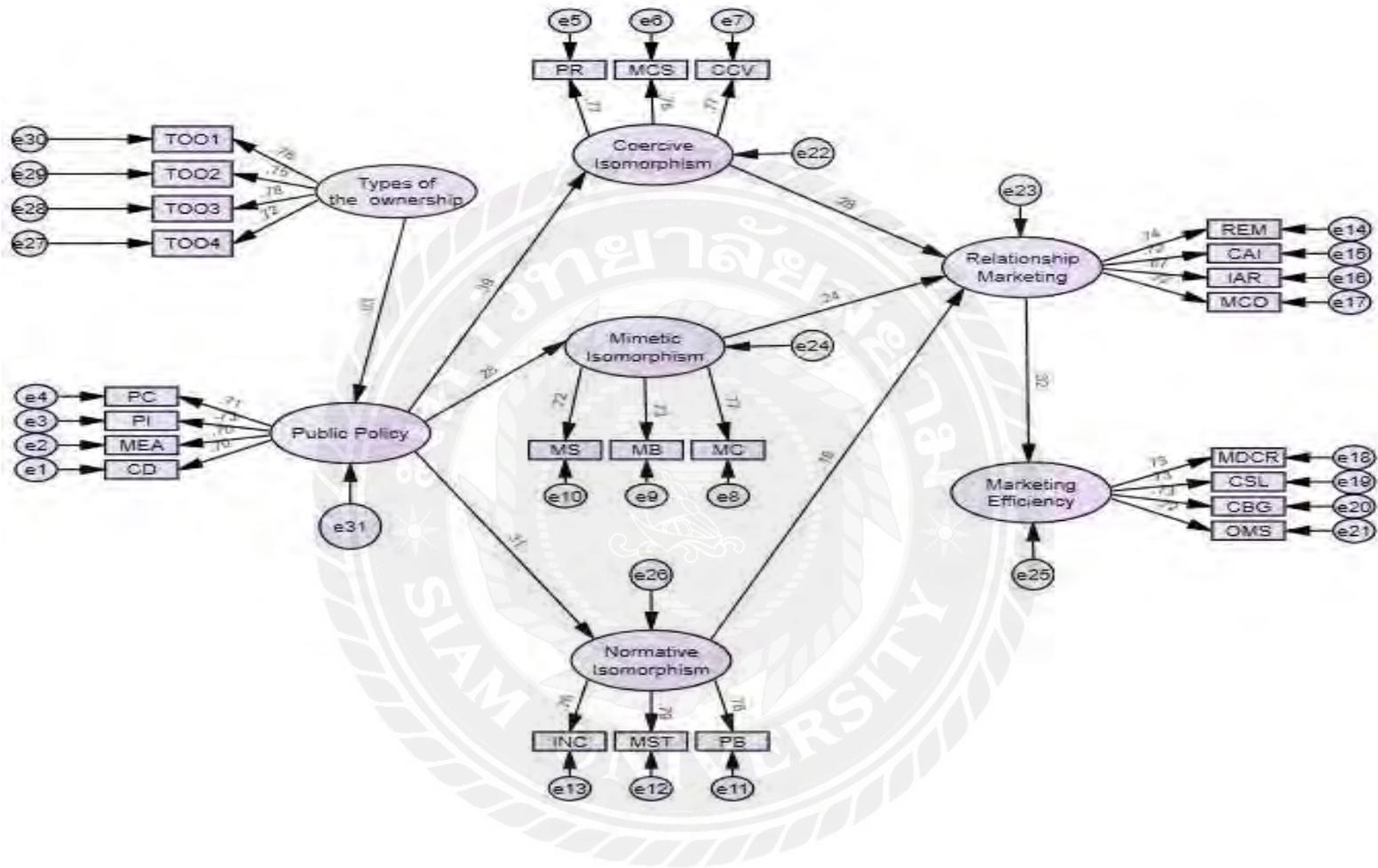


Figure 4.2 Structural Equation Model

(Source: Researcher, 2024)

Table 4.23 Validation of the Model Fit of Factor Analysis

Model Fitting	CMIN	DF	CMIN/DF	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	GFI	RMSEA
Results of Fitting	528.538	267	1.980	0.873	0.858	0.933	0.924	0.932	0.907	0.048
Value of Judgement			<3	>0.8	>0.8	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	<0.08

Before path analysis, the fitting of the model was analyzed first. It can be seen from Table 4.23 that the CMIN/DF value is 1.980, less than 3; The RMSEA value is 0.048, less than 0.08; NFI and RFI are all greater than 0.8, IFI, TLI, CFI, and GFI are all greater than 0.9, indicating that the model fits well.

After the validity of the structural equation model is proved by the analysis of fit indicators, the model path was analyzed. In this research, AMOS 26.0 software was used to test the hypothesized relationships in the research model. The specific hypothesis test results are shown in Table 4.24.

Table 4.24 Structural Equation Model Path Coefficient Test

Hypothesis	Path			Unstandardized Path Coefficient	S.E.	C.R.	P	Standardized Path Coefficient	Conclusion
H ₁	Public policy	<---	Type of ownership	-0.027	0.056	-0.480	0.631	-0.028	Rejected
H ₂	Coercive isomorphism	<---	Public policy	0.406	0.065	6.218	***	0.393	Accepted
H ₃	Mimetic isomorphism	<---	Public policy	0.253	0.062	4.093	***	0.253	Accepted
H ₄	Normative isomorphism	<---	Public policy	0.324	0.064	5.031	***	0.309	Accepted
H ₅	Relationship marketing strategies	<---	Coercive isomorphism	0.254	0.055	4.645	***	0.277	Accepted
H ₆	Relationship marketing strategies	<---	Mimetic isomorphism	0.228	0.056	4.043	***	0.240	Accepted
H ₇	Relationship marketing strategies	<---	Normative isomorphism	0.164	0.052	3.149	0.002	0.180	Accepted
H ₈	Marketing efficiency	<---	Relationship marketing strategies	0.316	0.061	5.144	***	0.317	Accepted

According to the hypothesis of type of ownership and public policy, there is no significant impact of type of ownership on public policy. The standardized path coefficient is -0.028 ($p = 0.631$), so H_1 is rejected.

According to the hypothesis of public policy and coercive isomorphism, public policy has a significantly positive impact on coercive isomorphism, and the standardized path coefficient is 0.393 ($p=0.000$, $p<0.05$), so H_2 is accepted.

According to the hypothesis of public policy and mimetic isomorphism, public policy has a significantly positive impact on mimetic isomorphism, and the standardized path coefficient is 0.253 ($p=0.000$, $p<0.05$), so H_3 is accepted.

According to the hypothesis of public policy and normative isomorphism, public policy has a significantly positive impact on normative isomorphism, and the standardized path coefficient is 0.309 ($p=0.000$, $p<0.05$), so H_4 is accepted.

According to the hypothesis of coercive isomorphism and relationship marketing strategies, coercive isomorphism has a significant positive impact on relationship marketing strategies, and the standardized path coefficient is 0.277 ($p=0.000$, $p<0.05$), so H_5 is accepted.

According to the hypothesis of mimetic isomorphism and relationship marketing strategies, mimetic isomorphism has a significantly positive impact on relationship marketing strategies, and the standardized path coefficient is 0.240 ($p=0.000$, $p<0.05$), so H_6 is accepted.

According to the hypothesis of normative isomorphism and relationship marketing strategies, normative isomorphism has a significantly positive impact on relationship marketing strategies, and the standardized path coefficient is 0.180 ($p=0.002$, $p<0.05$), so H_7 is accepted.

According to the hypothesis of relationship marketing strategies and marketing efficiency, relationship marketing strategies has a significantly positive impact on

marketing efficiency, and the standardized path coefficient is 0.317 ($p=0.000$, $p<0.05$), so H_8 is accepted.

Table 4.25 Hypotheses Test Results

NO.	Hypothesis	Result
H ₁	Public policy is significantly affected by the type of ownership of life insurance companies.	Rejected
H ₂	Public policy is positively related to coercive isomorphic behaviors.	Accepted
H ₃	Public policy is positively related to mimetic isomorphic behaviors.	Accepted
H ₄	Public policy is positively related to normative isomorphic behaviors.	Accepted
H ₅	Coercive isomorphic behaviors are positively related to the strategic choices of relationship marketing.	Accepted
H ₆	Mimetic isomorphic behaviors are positively related to the strategic choices of relationship marketing.	Accepted
H ₇	Normative isomorphic behaviors are positively related to the strategic choices of relationship marketing.	Accepted
H ₈	The strategic choices of relationship marketing are positively related to marketing efficiency.	Accepted

4.7 In-depth Interview Data Analysis

This study used in-depth interviews for qualitative research. The researcher interviewed senior managers of 12 life insurance companies in Shandong Province, and the list of interviewees is shown in Table 4.26. Among them, Interviewees A, C, D and E are employed in state-owned life insurance companies; Interviewees B and F are employed in large private life insurance companies, Interviewee I is employed in a

medium private life insurance company, and Interviewee L is employed in a small private life insurance company. Interviewees G and J are employed in wholly foreign-owned life insurance companies. Interviewee H is employed in a medium joint venture life insurance company and Interviewee K is employed in a small joint venture life insurance company.

Table 4.26 Interviewees from 12 Life Insurance Companies

Company	Current job position	Code name
China Life Insurance	Director of Marketing	Interviewee A
Ping An Life Insurance of China	Director of Marketing	Interviewee B
China Pacific Life Insurance	Channel Manager	Interviewee C
New China Life Insurance	Channel Manager	Interviewee D
Taiping Life Insurance	Director of Marketing	Interviewee E
Taikang Life Insurance	General Manager	Interviewee F
Allianz Life Insurance	Director of Marketing	Interviewee G
Heng An Standard Life Insurance	Director of Marketing	Interviewee H
Union Life Insurance	General Manager	Interviewee I
Huatai Life Insurance	Channel Manager	Interviewee J
SunLife Everbrigh Life Insurance	Director of Marketing	Interviewee K
Cathay Lujiazui Life Insurance	General Manager	Interviewee L

4.7.1 In-depth Interview Data Analysis on Type of Ownership and Public Policy

Managers of life insurance companies with different ownership types have some similarities in facing and understanding the impact of public policies. Interviewees A, B, E and K agreed that the strengthening and improvement of regulatory policies had a significant impact on the life insurance industry. This includes higher requirements for product design, sales behavior, risk management and other aspects, which has promoted the standardized development of the industry. Interviewees C, H and L believed that the

adjustment of tax policy, especially the reform related to personal income tax, had an impact on the market demand of life insurance products and consumers' purchase decisions. Interviewees F and J mentioned that the reform and improvement of the social security system and the policy orientation of encouraging the development of commercial endowment insurance have provided new development opportunities for the life insurance industry.

Similarly, life insurance companies with different ownership types have similarities in adapting to public policy. Interviewees A, F, G and K mentioned that life insurance companies need to pay close attention to the changes of public policies, which is the basis of adapting to the changes of policies. Interviewees B, D, I and J believed that life insurance companies should make corresponding strategic adjustment or business transformation according to the policy orientation. Interviewees E, H and L mentioned strengthening communication and cooperation with regulatory authorities to ensure that the company's business operations comply with policy requirements.

Foreign insurance companies, state-owned insurance companies, private insurance companies, and joint venture insurance companies will show some differences in understanding public policy adjustments due to different forms of ownership. For example, China Life Insurance, China Pacific Life Insurance, New China Life Insurance and other state-owned insurance companies focus more on policy orientation and social responsibility in understanding public policy adjustment. Private insurance companies such as Ping An Life Insurance and Taikang Life Insurance will pay attention to the impact of policy adjustment on market demand and competition pattern to adjust business layout and marketing strategy. Allianz Life Insurance and Huatai Life Insurance, two foreign life insurance companies, tend to interpret public policy changes from an international perspective and a professional perspective; Joint venture Life Insurance companies such as Hengan Standard Life Insurance and SunLife Everbrigh Life Insurance need to coordinate the interests of foreign shareholders and local shareholders, and pay more attention to the balance and coordination of interests of both parties when understanding public policy adjustment.

Similarly, in response to public policy adjustments, foreign insurance companies, state-owned insurance companies, private insurance companies, and joint venture insurance companies will show some differences due to different forms of ownership. Allianz and Huatai, two foreign life insurance companies, focus on compliance and risk management and seek policy opportunities; State-owned insurance companies such as China Life Insurance and Taiping Life Insurance emphasized policy orientation and social responsibility, and gradually market-oriented reform; Private insurance companies such as Taikang Life Insurance and United Life Insurance have high market sensitivity and emphasize innovation and flexibility; The joint venture insurance company combines the advantages of both parties and flexibly responds to policy changes. These differences enable all kinds of insurance companies to adopt different coping strategies and measures in the face of public policy adjustment, so as to adapt to the changes in market competition and policy environment.

4.7.2 In-depth Interview Data Analysis on Coercive Isomorphism

More than half of the interviewees agreed that organizational isomorphism in the life insurance industry is a widespread problem. They believed that it contributes to the standardization of the industry, but it may also bring challenges of homogeneous competition and insufficient innovation.

Most interviewees mentioned that the regulatory policy exerted pressure on life insurance companies to coercive isomorphism, requiring life insurance companies to comply with specific business rules and risk control standards. Among them, Interviewees E, G and I listed specific regulatory policies, such as solvency regulation and insurance fund use regulation, in detail when referring to regulatory requirements, and explained how these policies affect the decision-making process and business process of the company. Although Interviewees J and L also mentioned regulatory requirements, they were relatively general and did not specify the name of the policy. Interviewees C and H mentioned that the tax policy has an impact on the market strategy of life insurance companies, affecting the product pricing and sales strategy of life insurance companies through tax incentives or restrictions.

Different interviewees have slightly different emphases when analyzing the specific impact of coercive isomorphism on the company's decision-making process, business process or market strategy. Allianz emphasizes the impact of coercive isomorphism on product design, sales behavior and claims services; Lujiazui Cathay Life Insurance mentioned the impact of coercive isomorphism on market strategy; In their answers, China Life Insurance and Ping An Life Insurance mentioned their coping strategies to deal with coercive isomorphism, such as optimizing decision-making process, strengthening risk management and improving customer experience.

In conclusion, the interview data confirmed the questionnaire data for Hypothesis 2.

4.7.3 In-depth Interview Data Analysis on Mimetic Isomorphism

Interviewees A, C, D, G and H believed that some public policies to encourage innovation, improve service quality and strengthen the protection of consumer rights and interests have a mimetic isomorphic impact on the behavior mode, market positioning or brand image of life insurance companies. Interviewee A noted that these policies often guide the development of life insurers by setting industry benchmarks or promoting best practices. Interviewee D emphasized that in order to gain a competitive advantage in the market, the company may imitate or converge to successful companies or industry standards to a certain extent. Interviewee G mentioned that in order to establish a good brand image in the market, the company actively learns from successful cases in the industry, constantly optimizes the service process and improves the service quality. Interviewee H stressed that in order to establish a good brand image in the market, the company actively draws on the best practices in the industry. Interviewee C stressed that these policies have prompted companies to focus more on customer experience and service quality, thus converging in their behaviour patterns to those that have done well in this regard.

In conclusion, the interview data confirmed the questionnaire data for Hypothesis 3.

4.7.4 In-depth Interview Data Analysis on Normative Isomorphism

The interviewees generally believed that public policies such as anti-money laundering regulations, insurance consumer rights protection regulations, and insurance company governance norms have a normative isomorphic impact on the code of conduct, operating standards and compliance requirements of life insurance companies. These policies require life insurance companies to establish and implement strict operational procedures and compliance mechanisms to ensure the legality and safety of their business. In the process of following these common requirements, life insurance companies tend to be consistent in operation and management and form a similar standard system. Among them, Interviewee F mentioned that these policies promoted the company to be more standardized in operation and management, which helped improve the company's market competitiveness and brand image. In particular, Interviewee G mentioned that the Company has been strictly complied with these policy requirements, constantly improving the internal control system and strengthening compliance management to ensure the sound operation of the Company. Interviewee K pointed out that these policies require companies to converge in operation and management, forming a similar standard system, thus improving the compliance level and reputation of the whole industry.

In conclusion, the interview data confirmed the questionnaire data for Hypothesis 4.

4.7.5 In-depth Interview Data Analysis on Relationship Marketing Strategies

When dealing with coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism caused by public policy, the managers of each life insurance company give their own views respectively. Interviewee A stressed that the company needs to increase investment in science and technology, improve operational efficiency and reduce operating costs to adapt to changes in the market environment and policy requirements. Interviewee F believed that the company needs to adjust its product strategy and market positioning in a timely manner through in-depth market research to understand changes in

consumer demand. Interviewee B mentioned that the company needs to continuously strengthen internal management, optimize service processes and improve customer experience to enhance customer loyalty. Interviewee H mentioned that the company needs to continue to explore and innovate, and strives to seek differentiated development in isomorphism, so as to highlight brand characteristics and service advantages.

Coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism also have a significant impact on the formulation and implementation of relationship marketing strategies of life insurance companies. Interviewee B mentioned that the isomorphism phenomenon has put forward higher requirements for the formulation and implementation of the company's relationship marketing strategy, and the company needs to continuously strengthen internal management and process optimization to ensure the effective implementation of the strategy. Interviewee G believed that although isomorphism brings challenges, it also urges the company to pay more attention to service quality and customer experience, and enhance competitiveness through innovative service methods. Interviewee I believed that the isomorphism phenomenon puts forward higher requirements for the formulation and implementation of relationship marketing strategies, and the company needs to continuously strengthen market research and customer demand analysis to develop more accurate marketing strategies. Interviewee E believed that isomorphism puts forward higher requirements for the innovation of the company's relationship marketing strategy, and the company needs to constantly explore new marketing methods and means to meet the diversification of customer needs. Interviewee H mentioned that the isomorphism phenomenon has prompted the company to pay more attention to the establishment and maintenance of long-term relationships with customers, and enhance customer loyalty by providing continuous and high-quality services.

In conclusion, the interview data confirmed the questionnaire data for Hypothesis 5, Hypothesis 6 and Hypothesis 7.

4.7.6 In-depth Interview Data Analysis on Marketing Efficiency

The interviewees generally agreed that the choices of relationship marketing strategy directly affect the marketing efficiency of the company. Although the 12 life insurance companies show diversity in relationship marketing strategies, they generally cover five aspects: (1) customer segmentation and personalized service, (2) enhanced customer interaction and communication, (3) value proposition and brand building, (4) long-term relationship establishment and maintenance, (5) technological innovation and digital transformation. Among them, Interviewee A focused on improving the level of personalization and customization of customer service, and met the diversified needs of customers by introducing intelligent recommendation system and optimizing product design. Interviewee B emphasized the importance of digital transformation in customer relationship management, and improved customer service efficiency by building digital platforms and optimizing service processes. Interviewee F paid attention to the application of cross-border cooperation in customer relationship management, and provided a full range of health management services through cooperation with enterprises in the medical and health fields. Interviewee C emphasized the response speed and quality of customer service, and improved customer satisfaction by establishing a quick response mechanism and optimizing service processes. Interviewee E paid attention to the protection and privacy management of customer data, and strictly abided by relevant laws and regulations in customer relationship management to ensure the security of customer information. Interviewee G paid special attention to the consistent customer experience on a global scale, through the cross-border customer relationship management strategy, to ensure that customers in different markets can receive the same high-quality service. Interviewee J attached great importance to cooperation with partners to expand customer channels and improve service efficiency through partnership. Interviewee I focused on using social media for customer interaction and brand building, and increased brand exposure and customer engagement through social media marketing.

In conclusion, the interview data confirmed the questionnaire data for Hypothesis 8.

4.8 Conclusion

This study achieved the research objectives outlined in Chapter 1. Through the use of SPSS and AMOS software tools for empirical analysis of the survey questionnaire, this study first confirmed the reliability and validity of the scale through exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis, then employed structural equation modeling (SEM) as a quantitative method to examine the relationships between type of ownership (TOO), public policy (PP), coercive isomorphism (CI), mimetic isomorphism (MI), normative isomorphism (NI), relationship marketing strategies (RM), and marketing efficiency (ME) of life insurance companies. Additionally, this study tested the hypotheses proposed in Chapter 2. Finally, through interviews, this study conducted a qualitative analysis of the relationships between the model variables.

4.8.1 The Effect of Public Policy on the Organizational Isomorphic Behaviors of Life Insurance Industry

Based on the relevant analysis and the fitting results of the structural equation model, it can be concluded that in the life insurance industry of Shandong Province, public policy has a significant positive effect on the organizational isomorphism behaviors of life insurance companies.

Firstly, as shown in Table 4.22, the correlation coefficient between public policy and coercive isomorphism is 0.290, and it shows a significance level of 0.01. Thus, it indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between public policies and mandatory homogenization. According to the fitting results of the structural equation model, public policy has a significant positive influence on coercive isomorphism, with a standardized path coefficient of 0.393 ($p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$), and Hypothesis H₂ is established, indicating that public policy is positively related to coercive isomorphic behaviors.

Secondly, the correlation coefficient between public policy and mimetic isomorphism is 0.181, and it is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between public policy and mimetic isomorphism. According to the fitting results of the structural equation model, public

policy has a significant positive influence on mimetic isomorphism, with a standardized path coefficient of 0.253 ($p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$), and Hypothesis H₃ is thus established, indicating that public policy is positively related to mimetic isomorphic behaviors.

Finally, the correlation coefficient between public policy and normative isomorphism is 0.221, and it is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates a significant positive correlation between public policy and normative isomorphism. According to the fitting results of the structural equation model, public policy has a significant positive influence on normative isomorphism, with a standardized path coefficient of 0.309 ($p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$), and Hypothesis H₄ is thus established, indicating that public policy is positively related to normative isomorphic behaviors.

4.8.2 The Impact of Organizational Isomorphic Behaviors on the Relationship Marketing Strategies of Life Insurance Industry

Based on the relevant analysis and the fitting results of the structural equation model, it can be concluded that in the life insurance industry of Shandong Province, organizational isomorphism behaviors have a significant positive effect on the relationship marketing strategies of life insurance companies.

Firstly, as shown in Table 4.22, the correlation coefficient between coercive isomorphism and relationship marketing strategies is 0.279, and it is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between coercive isomorphism and relationship marketing strategies. According to the fitting results of the structural equation model, coercive isomorphism has a significant positive impact on relationship marketing strategies, with a standardized path coefficient of 0.277 ($p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$), and Hypothesis H₅ is thus established, indicating that coercive isomorphic behaviors is positively related to relationship marketing strategies .

Secondly, the correlation coefficient between mimetic isomorphism and relationship marketing strategies is 0.246, and it is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that there is a significant positive correlation between mimetic isomorphism and relationship marketing strategies. According to the fitting results of the structural equation model, mimetic isomorphism has a significant positive influence on

relationship marketing strategies, with a standardized path coefficient of 0.240 ($p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$), and Hypothesis H₆ is thus established, indicating that mimetic isomorphic behaviors is positively related to relationship marketing strategies.

Finally, the correlation coefficient between normative isomorphism and relationship marketing strategies is 0.233, and it is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates a significant positive correlation between normative isomorphism and relationship marketing strategies. According to the fitting results of the structural equation model, normative isomorphism has a significant positive influence on relationship marketing strategies, with a standardized path coefficient of 0.180 ($p = 0.002$, $p < 0.05$), and Hypothesis H₇ is thus established, indicating that normative isomorphic behaviors is positively related to relationship marketing strategies.

4.8.3 The Path of Public Policy Affecting the Marketing Efficiency of Life Insurance Industry

Based on the data obtained from the questionnaire survey, this study conducted descriptive statistical analysis and correlation analysis, and used the structural equation model to fit the data. The results showed that public policy could promote the convergence of life insurance companies in terms of organizational structure, business strategies and marketing methods through three mechanisms: coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism. This, in turn, influenced the formulation and implementation of their relationship marketing strategies, and ultimately affected marketing efficiency.

Finally, this study conducted in-depth interviews with senior management personnel from 12 life insurance companies, and analyzed the data obtained from the interviews. The researcher identified the commonalities and differences in their responses. By cross-comparing and conducting qualitative analysis of the data obtained from the interviewees, the conclusions obtained through the structural equation model were further verified.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter summarizes and discusses the empirical research results obtained by using structural equation modeling and regression analysis. This study systematically analyzed the hypothesized relationships among the variables, thereby rigorously verifying the proposed theoretical framework. Subsequently, the study critically examined the obtained research results and discovered both commonalities and differences with previous literature. Based on the summary and analysis, this chapter finally presents feasible suggestions and potential directions for further academic exploration in the future to address the limitations of this study. This chapter is divided into the following four parts:

5.1 Research Conclusion

5.2 Discussion

5.3 Recommendation

5.4 Research Limitations and Future Research

5.1 Research Conclusion

This study conducted a questionnaire survey and employed a variety of comprehensive analytical methods to explore the relationship between public policy, organizational isomorphism behaviors, relationship marketing strategies, and marketing efficiency of life insurance companies in Shandong Province.

5.1.1 Questionnaire Data Analysis Results

This study collected 425 valid survey questionnaires from the employees of 50 life insurance companies in Shandong Province.

1) Descriptive statistical analysis of the survey data

Among the 425 respondents, 52.2% were male and 47.8% were female. In terms of age, 30.6% of the respondents were under 30 years old, 40.5% were between 30 and 39 years old, 18.8% were between 40 and 49 years old, and 10.1% were between 50 and 60 years old. In terms of educational attainment, 4.5% of the respondents had only a junior high school education, 10.8% had a high school education, 31.1% had a junior college degree, 41.2% had a bachelor's degree, 9.9% had a master's degree, and 2.6% had a doctoral degree. In terms of the ownership type of the company, 55.3% of the respondents were employed by state-owned life insurance companies, 20.0% were employed by private life insurance companies, 24.0% were employed by joint venture life insurance companies, and only 0.7% were employed by foreign-owned life insurance companies.

In terms of the working years in life insurance companies, 18.6% of the respondents had less than one year of work experience, 40.7% had 1-5 years of work experience, 27.8% had 5-10 years of work experience, 9.2% had 10-15 years of work experience, 2.8% had 15-20 years of work experience, and only 0.9% had more than 20 years of work experience. 28.0% of the respondents held the position of agent, 36.2% held the position of group supervisor, 19.3% held the position of sales department manager, 12.0% held the position of channel manager, 3.1% held the position of marketing specialist, and 1.4% held the position of marketing director. Finally, in terms of monthly income, 16.9% of the respondents had a monthly income of less than ¥5,000, 27.5% had a monthly income of ¥5,000-¥7,500, 39.8% had a monthly income of ¥7,500-¥10,000, 9.6% had a monthly income of ¥10,000-¥12,500, 4.2% had a monthly income of ¥12,500-¥15,000, and 1.9% had a monthly income of more than ¥15,000.

The survey questionnaire included 76 items related to type of ownership, public policies, coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism, normative isomorphism, relationship marketing strategies, and marketing efficiency. Through the use of SPSS for

analysis, the average value of all items was greater than 3.30, indicating that all measurement items were rated at the 'agree' level or higher. The skewness of each item was less than 0, and all were close to 0, meaning that the data distribution was approximately symmetrical. The kurtosis of the data was less than 0, indicating that the distribution was flatter than a normal distribution. Overall, the data distribution was approximately normal.

2) Reliability

In this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the questionnaire data consisting of 76 items were calculated using SPSS. The results showed that the alpha values of each variable were all greater than 0.7. At the same time, the CITC values of each item and the Cronbach's alpha values of the deleted items all met the research requirements, indicating that the stability of each variable in the questionnaire was high and the reliability was basically passed the test. Therefore, the reliability of the data met the research standards, ensuring the reliability of the data in the subsequent analysis.

3) Validity

This study first formulated the measurement items in the scale based on the references, and sought the opinions of experts in management, statistics, and finance to ensure the validity of the content. Subsequently, the KMO and Bartlett tests were conducted for each variable, and the results showed that the KMO values of all variables were greater than 0.6, indicating that the data could effectively extract information. Additionally, the cumulative variance explanation rate after rotation was all greater than 50%, meaning that the information of the research items could be effectively extracted.

Furthermore, this study used AMOS 26.0 software to conduct confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on type of ownership, public policy, coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism, normative isomorphism, relationship marketing strategies, and marketing efficiency. The composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were used to determine the convergent validity of each variable dimension. The results showed that NFI and RFI were greater than 0.8, IFI, TLI, CFI and GFI were all greater than 0.9,

indicating that the confirmatory factor analysis fit of this model was good. The values of standardized factor loadings were all greater than 0.50, and the corresponding significant p-values were all less than 0.05, indicating that the influence between latent variables and observed variables was significant. Moreover, the correlation coefficients between variables were all less than the square root of each latent variable's AVE, so the discriminant validity between latent variables was good.

4) Correlation analysis

This study conducted a correlation analysis on seven variables: type of ownership, public policy, coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism, normative isomorphism, relationship marketing strategies, and marketing efficiency. The results showed that the correlation coefficient between type of ownership and public policy was -0.057; the correlation coefficients between public policy and coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism, and normative isomorphism were 0.290, 0.181, and 0.221, respectively, and all were statistically significant at the 0.01 level; the correlation coefficients between coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism, normative isomorphism and relationship marketing strategies were 0.279, 0.246, and 0.233, respectively, and all were statistically significant at the 0.01 level; the correlation coefficient between relationship marketing strategies and marketing efficiency was 0.246, and it was statistically significant at the 0.01 level. The above results indicate that there is a significant positive correlation among these variables.

5) The structural equation model and hypotheses test

This study used AMOS 26.0 software to construct a structural equation model. The main fitting indicators obtained include: CMIN/DF = 1.980, which is less than 3; RMSEA = 0.048, which is less than 0.08; GFI = 0.907, CFI = 0.932, TLI = 0.924, IFI = 0.933, all of which are greater than 0.9, indicating that the model had good fit. Therefore, these indicators all met the requirements, and the model was reasonable and can effectively reflect the relationships between the variables.

As shown in Table 4.24, there was no significant impact of type of ownership on public policy. The standardized path coefficient is -0.028 ($p = 0.631$), so H_1 is rejected.

Public policy had a significant positive impact on coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism, and normative isomorphism. The standardized path coefficients were 0.393 ($p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$), 0.253 ($p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$), and 0.309 ($p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$) respectively. Therefore, H_2 , H_3 and H_4 were all accepted.

Similarly, coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism, and normative isomorphism had significant positive impacts on relationship marketing strategies. The standardized path coefficients were 0.277 ($p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$), 0.240 ($p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$), and 0.180 ($p = 0.002$, $p < 0.05$) respectively. Therefore, H_5 , H_6 and H_7 were all accepted.

Finally, relationship marketing strategies had a significant positive impact on marketing efficiency. The standardized path coefficient was 0.317 ($p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$), thus H_8 was accepted.

In summary, the results of hypotheses testing indicated that $H_2 - H_8$ were accepted, while H_1 was rejected.

5.1.2 Qualitative Data Analysis Results

This study conducted in-depth interviews with senior management personnel from 12 life insurance companies and obtained the following conclusions.

Firstly, there was no significant difference in the understanding and adaptation to public policy among life insurance companies of different ownership types. Almost all the respondents believed that regulatory policies, tax policies and social security reforms have a significant impact on the industry. Companies need to closely monitor policy changes and adjust their strategies accordingly.

Secondly, public policy had a significant impact on the organizational isomorphic behaviors of life insurance companies. For instance, several interviewees agreed that regulatory policies (such as solvency requirements and regulations on fund usage) have

promoted industry standardization. Some interviewees believed that public policies had encouraged innovation and improvement in service quality, prompting life insurance companies to imitate successful industry cases (such as optimizing service processes and enhancing customer experience). Others mentioned that policies such as anti-money laundering and consumer rights protection had driven life insurance companies to establish standardized operations and compliance mechanisms.

Thirdly, the existence of organizational isomorphic behaviors prompted life insurance companies to constantly adjust their relationship marketing strategies. Different interviewees respectively proposed the following adjustment strategies: (1) increase investment in technology (such as the construction of digital platforms), (2) optimize customer service (such as personalized recommendations, rapid response mechanisms), (3) explore differentiated development (such as cross-border cooperation, social media marketing). Almost all interviewees believed that they should strengthen (1) customer segmentation and personalized services, (2) customer interaction and communication, (3) value proposition and brand building, (4) long-term customer relationship maintenance, and (5) technological innovation and digital transformation.

Finally, the relationship marketing strategies directly affected the marketing efficiency of life insurance companies. Typical successful cases included Ping An Life Insurance enhancing service efficiency through digital tools; Taikang Life Insurance strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation with the medical industry to expand service scenarios; Allianz Insurance providing a globally consistent service experience.

In conclusion, the in-depth interview data verified the hypotheses H2-H8 of the study, indicating that public policy significantly influence the strategies and behaviors of life insurance companies through three mechanisms: coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism, and normative isomorphism. Moreover, the flexible application of relationship marketing strategies is the key to enhancing the marketing efficiency of life insurance companies.

5.2 Discussion

The following section explains the relationships among the variables in this study.

5.2.1 Discussion on the Relationship between Type of Ownership and Public Policy

All life insurance companies in Shandong Province, regardless of their ownership type (state-owned, private, joint venture, or foreign-owned), were significantly influenced by public policies. Firstly is the general constraint of regulatory policies. All life insurance companies, regardless of their ownership types, must abide by the industry norms set by regulatory authorities, such as solvency supervision (e.g., "Solvency II"), restrictions on insurance fund utilization, and protection of consumer rights. These policies mandated that all companies optimize risk management, standardize sales practices, and enhance transparency. For instance, several managers interviewed (such as Interviewees A, E and G) mentioned that the tightening of regulations had driven industry standardization, but it had also increased compliance costs. Secondly is the impact of tax policies. Tax policies (such as the tax deferral policy for individual income tax-advantaged insurance products) affected all life insurance companies, and all companies must adjusted product pricing and marketing strategies according to tax policies. For example, Interviewees C, H and L pointed out that tax adjustments would affect consumers' purchasing decisions and thereby changed market demand. Thirdly is the linkage effect of social security policies. The government's encouragement of the development of commercial pension insurance (such as the "Personal Pension System") provided new opportunities for all companies. Interviewees F and J mentioned that both state-owned and private companies were actively developing pension insurance products to fill the gap in social security, while foreign companies were using international experience to launch differentiated products. Finally, there was the pressure brought about by industry isomorphism. Coercive isomorphism (such as regulatory compliance), mimetic isomorphism (such as learning from industry benchmarks), and normative isomorphism (such as anti-money laundering requirements) exerted pressure on all life insurance companies. For example, Interviewees B, G, and K all stated that companies

need to adapt to these isomorphic pressures through digital transformation or optimizing service processes.

Meanwhile, there were some differences in the understanding and response strategies of life insurance companies of different ownership types towards public policy. This was mainly due to the differences in their equity structure, market positioning and resource endowment. Among them, state-owned life insurance companies need to balance economic benefits and social responsibilities, and paid more attention to the synergy between public policies and national strategies. For example, China Life Insurance and Pacific Life Insurance actively participated in policy-based health insurance or inclusive insurance projects. Private life insurance companies paid more attention to the impact of public policies on the market competition landscape. They will quickly analyze the market opportunities (such as tax-advantaged health insurance) or threats (such as channel restrictions) brought by public policies. Foreign-owned life insurance companies tend to interpret public policies from a global perspective and paid attention to compliance risks. Their policy understanding was often influenced by the experience of the home country. Joint venture life insurance companies need to coordinate the different interpretations of public policies by Chinese and foreign shareholders. Generally speaking, foreign shareholders paid more attention to long-term compliance, while Chinese shareholders paid more attention to short-term market opportunities.

Although life insurance companies of different ownership types have differences in their understanding of public policies and their response strategies, in general, they still followed common patterns. This was because in the life insurance market of Shandong Province, several state-owned life insurance companies and private life insurance companies held a dominant position in the market, and other smaller life insurance companies will actively learn from their strategies. Secondly, the Chinese insurance industry implemented a centralized regulatory model at the central level. All life insurance companies, regardless of their ownership types, must abide by unified regulations such as the Insurance Law and the Solvency II system, which forced all

enterprises to operate within the same policy framework. Finally, the economic regulatory tools in public policies were usually not designed for specific ownership structures, but rather oriented towards the overall development goals of the industry.

5.2.2 Discussion on the Relationship between Public Policy and Organizational Isomorphic Behaviors

Coercive isomorphism stemmed from the external authoritative pressure in institutional theory, mainly referring to the government and regulatory agencies' use of laws, administrative orders, etc. to force organizations to follow specific rules. In the life insurance industry, public policies generated the effect of coercive isomorphism through legal constraints, regulatory deterrence, and policy transmission mechanisms. Legal constraints mean that the Insurance Law clearly stipulated mandatory requirements for life insurance companies such as capital adequacy ratios and product filings, and enterprises must comply; regulatory deterrence means that regulatory agencies' on-site inspections, off-site supervision, etc. formed continuous pressure, for example, the "Second Generation Solvency System" regulatory framework used quantitative indicators (such as comprehensive solvency adequacy ratio $\geq 100\%$) to force enterprises to adjust their business behaviors; the policy transmission mechanism means that central policies were issued at administrative levels step by step, forming a rigid chain of "policy - local supervision - enterprise implementation".

Mimetic isomorphism stemmed from an organization's response to uncertainty. When the policy environment changed, life insurance companies tend to follow the behavior patterns of successful companies. The driving mechanisms of mimetic isomorphism mainly include the ambiguity of public policy signals, competitive pressure, and cognitive limitations regarding public policies. Among these, the ambiguity of public policy signals means that some guiding documents needed to be interpreted by life insurance companies themselves, thus imitating the leaders became a low-risk option; competitive pressure refers to the industry benchmark companies selected by regulatory authorities will be imitated by other life insurance companies; the cognitive limitations

regarding public policies were because some small and medium-sized companies lacked the analytical ability for public policies, so directly copying the strategies of large companies became their optimal choice.

Normative isomorphism stemmed from the process of specialization. It was conveyed through insurance industry associations and the groups of industry practitioners, etc., to spread common values. The strengthening paths of public policies on the standardization and integration of life insurance companies mainly included qualification certification systems, industry self-regulatory conventions, and ESG policy guidance. Among them, the qualification certification system was mainly aimed at actuaries, and it shaped unified behavioral standards through professional qualification requirements; industry self-regulatory conventions referred to the service standards formulated by insurance industry associations becoming implicit norms; ESG policy guidance means that the regulatory authorities encourage the green insurance concept, which reshaped the industry values.

In conclusion, public policies induced life insurance companies to exhibit coercive isomorphic behaviors through legal coercive power, to adopt mimetic isomorphic behaviors through uncertainty, and to develop normative isomorphic behaviors through professionalization.

5.2.3 Discussion on the Relationship between Organizational Isomorphic Behaviors and Relationship Marketing Strategies

The coercive isomorphic behaviors of life insurance companies stemmed from the rigid requirements of regulatory policies, which had a direct impact on the relationship marketing strategies of life insurance companies. This influence was mainly achieved through three mechanisms: compliance constraints, resource allocation, and risk avoidance. The regulatory policies clearly stipulated requirements regarding the use of customer data, sales behavior norms, etc., forcing life insurance companies to adjust their original marketing methods. For example, the "Insurance Sales Behavior Management Measures" standardizing the sales process directly changed the way life insurance

companies interacted with customers. To meet regulatory requirements, life insurance companies had to shift their limited resources to the compliance area, thereby affecting the investment in other marketing activities. For instance, solvency supervision led some life insurance companies to reduce their marketing budget. Strict penalties for violations prompted life insurance companies to adopt conservative marketing strategies to avoid the compliance risks that innovation might bring.

The mimetic isomorphic behaviors of life insurance companies mainly exerted influence on the relationship marketing strategies of these companies through benchmark learning effects, competitive pressure transmission, and cognitive simplification mechanisms. In the life insurance industry, the successful marketing models of leading companies became the imitation targets for other life insurance companies. At the same time, market share pressure prompted life insurance companies to quickly replicate proven successful marketing strategies. Moreover, in a complex market environment, imitation was regarded as a rational choice to reduce decision-making risks.

The normative isomorphic behaviors of life insurance companies influenced their relationship marketing strategies through specialized mechanisms. This mainly included the insurance industry association setting service standards to guide the behavior of marketing personnel, the common talent cultivation system in the life insurance industry leading to the convergence of marketing concepts among various companies, and the emphasis on ESG and other social responsibilities prompting life insurance companies to adjust their marketing priorities.

5.2.4 Discussion on the Relationship between Relationship Marketing Strategies and Marketing Efficiency

Marketing efficiency is the core competitiveness for life insurance companies to achieve sustainable growth. Efficient marketing strategies can significantly reduce customer acquisition costs, enhance customer lifetime value, and optimize risk selection through targeted marketing. Meanwhile, in the "Solvency II" regulatory framework of the life insurance industry, efficient customer retention and precise resource allocation can

optimize capital utilization efficiency. Currently, the life insurance industry is shifting from scale competition to value competition, and marketing efficiency has become a key indicator for measuring the high-quality development of life insurance companies and achieving "cost reduction and efficiency improvement".

The impact of relationship marketing strategies on the marketing efficiency of life insurance companies mainly lies in two dimensions: in-depth exploration of customer value and optimization of resource allocation. Relationship marketing, by establishing long-term and stable customer relationships, can significantly reduce the cost of acquiring customers and simultaneously enhance the lifetime value of customers. This efficiency improvement stems from three mechanisms: first, data-driven precise marketing, through customer profiling and demand analysis, to improve product matching, thereby significantly reducing ineffective investments; second, customer stickiness brought about by service value addition, such as the "insurance + health management" model can effectively increase the renewal rate of policies; third, the application of digital tools, intelligent customer service and automated marketing systems can handle the vast majority of routine service demands, thereby enhancing the company's work efficiency. Currently, under the regulatory environment that is becoming increasingly strict, relationship marketing, by enhancing transparency and trust, can reduce the risk of sales misguidance and compliance costs.

5.3 Recommendation

Based on the conclusions of this study, this research put forward the following relevant suggestions for the insurance industry regulatory authorities that formulate public policies, senior management personnel of life insurance companies, and frontline marketing personnel (including insurance agents).

5.3.1 Recommendations for Regulatory Authorities

1) Establish a differentiated regulatory framework and guide targeted measures. When formulating public policies, the regulatory authorities in the life insurance industry should fully consider the characteristics of different types of life insurance companies in terms of ownership, scale, and market positioning, and avoid "one-size-fits-all" policies that lead to inefficient imitation or market rigidity. Specific measures that can be taken include: On one hand, a hierarchical regulatory mechanism can be established. For large state-owned life insurance companies, the focus should be on strengthening their fulfillment of social responsibilities and guiding them to play a leading role in policy implementation; for small and medium-sized state-owned as well as private life insurance companies, the entry threshold for innovation pilot programs can be appropriately relaxed, allowing them to explore differentiated marketing strategies under the premise of compliance, avoiding blind imitation of leading institutions; for foreign-owned and joint venture life insurance companies, international regulatory standards (such as IFRS 17) can be referred to, and a certain period of local adaptation can be granted to avoid market withdrawal due to sudden policy changes. On the other hand, public policies should be dynamically adapted. By establishing a "regulatory sandbox" mechanism, enterprises that meet the conditions can be allowed to trial-run new marketing models within a limited scope, and the details of public policies can be adjusted based on the pilot results; and public policies' impact on different types of enterprises should be regularly evaluated, and the regulatory intensity can be optimized through regional research and data analysis.

By implementing differentiated policies, it is possible to not only ensure the achievement of public policy goals (such as industry standardization), but also reduce the suppression of market vitality caused by coercive isomorphic behaviors. Ultimately, this will enhance the overall marketing efficiency of life insurance companies.

2) Promote the construction of a data sharing platform in the life insurance industry to reduce inefficiency caused by information asymmetry and imitation. Currently, there is a serious phenomenon of mimetic isomorphism in the marketing strategies of life insurance companies. Part of the reason lies in the information barrier.

The regulatory authorities can establish unified data disclosure standards and build intelligent analysis tools, thereby optimizing the data ecosystem of the life insurance industry. The regulatory authorities can mandate that life insurance companies regularly report key marketing indicators and anonymize them before making them accessible to the life insurance industry, facilitating enterprise benchmarking and analysis. They can also establish a "best practice library" to include compliant and efficient marketing cases for the entire life insurance industry to refer to, in order to avoid low-level replication. The regulatory authorities can collaborate with the insurance industry association to develop a "marketing efficiency assessment model" to integrate multi-dimensional data and help enterprises identify their own strengths and weaknesses; the regulatory authorities can use big data to monitor the risk of mimetic isomorphism and promptly guide enterprises to adjust their strategies.

Through the above measures, it is possible to reduce the blind following caused by information deficiency in life insurance companies, promote the transformation of the life insurance industry from "passive isomorphism" to "active innovation", and thereby enhance the efficiency of resource allocation.

3) Strengthen the dynamic connection between public policies and market demands, and avoid policy lag that may suppress marketing vitality. Public policies need to be flexibly adjusted in response to market changes; otherwise, it may force enterprises to adopt short-sighted marketing strategies. Regulatory authorities can establish a rapid policy feedback channel, allowing life insurance companies to provide real-time feedback on policy implementation difficulties, thereby shortening the policy revision cycle; they can also hold regular industry hearings, inviting front-line marketing personnel to participate in policy discussions, ensuring the operability of public policies. In addition, regulatory authorities can introduce "policy flexibility zones", allowing life insurance companies to make autonomous adjustments within a certain range for non-core regulatory indicators.

Through these measures, it can reduce the "pseudo-compliance" behaviors of life insurance companies caused by rigid policies, and truly enhance the market adaptability of marketing strategies.

5.3.2 Recommendations for Senior Management

(1) Establish a differentiated compliance innovation system. Senior management of life insurance companies need to design flexible response strategies within the framework of compliance, and establish innovative error-tolerance mechanisms. For non-principled issues caused by policy understanding deviations, they should set up rapid rectification channels instead of simply pursuing accountability. Senior management needs to regularly assess the input-output ratio of compliance innovation and ensure that resources are allocated to projects that can simultaneously enhance compliance and marketing efficiency.

(2) Optimize the proactive management capabilities of organizational isomorphism. Senior managers of life insurance companies should identify the value differences of three types of isomorphic behaviors: for coercive isomorphism, establish standardized response procedures; for mimetic isomorphism, set up screening mechanisms, only learn proven effective models to avoid resource waste caused by blind following; for normative isomorphism, it transforms into a competitive advantage. Senior managers should establish an isomorphic decision-making evaluation model, conducting quantitative assessment from three dimensions: strategic compatibility, resource feasibility, and expected benefits.

(3) Build a relationship marketing system that is sensitive to public policies. Senior management of life insurance companies need to restructure their customer management strategies, integrating policy variables deeply into the entire marketing process. At the product design stage, establish policy-oriented product matrices, such as individual tax-advantaged health insurance and personal pension-exclusive products. At the channel management stage, dynamically adjust channel weights based on regulatory guidance, and cultivate professional agency channels. At the customer operation stage,

use regulatory policies to enhance customer trust. The most important thing is to establish a policy-market linkage mechanism. It is necessary to promptly grasp the potential impact of policy adjustments on various customer groups, and be able to support the front-line teams to complete the adjustment of marketing strategies as soon as possible. Senior management personnel need to regularly assess the impact of public policies on the asset structure of customers, in order to ensure that relationship marketing resources are allocated to the customer groups that are encouraged by the policies and have the highest efficiency.

5.3.3 Recommendations for Frontline Marketing Personnel

(1) Gain a deep understanding of the essence of public policies and transform compliance requirements into marketing advantages. The frontline marketing personnel (including agents) are the ultimate executors of policy implementation. They must accurately understand the core requirements of public policies to avoid violations or inefficient marketing due to misunderstandings. First, the frontline marketing personnel should proactively study the key points of policies. While keeping abreast of the latest policy developments, they should also pay particular attention to the policy adjustments that are relevant to their own business. Secondly, the frontline marketing personnel can incorporate policy compliance into their marketing language and use policy support points as the differentiating selling points for life insurance products, in order to attract specific customer groups. Finally, the frontline marketing personnel need to gradually establish a "policy - demand" matching mindset. Policy adjustments often reflect changes in social needs, and marketers can use this to optimize customer demand analysis and provide more accurate protection plans. Based on the above measures, frontline marketing personnel can reduce sales violations caused by policy understanding deviations and use policy benefits to enhance customer trust and closing rates.

(2) Optimize the customer service process and adapt to the regulatory-oriented relationship marketing. Public policies directly affect the marketing process. Frontline marketing personnel need to adjust their service models to ensure compliance and efficiency. Frontline marketing personnel should be familiar with the key standardized

service processes, strengthen the maintenance of long-term customer relationships, and utilize digital tools to enhance efficiency. Only in this way can frontline marketing personnel enhance the service experience while complying with regulations, reduce the customer churn rate, and at the same time meet the regulatory requirements for sales quality.

(3) Flexibly adjust marketing strategies to adapt to the policy-driven market changes. Public policy adjustments may alter the competitive landscape. Frontline marketing personnel need to adapt quickly. Frontline marketing personnel should pay attention to the impact of policies on channels, promptly adjust product recommendation strategies, and fully utilize the opportunities of policy pilots. Frontline marketing personnel should reduce performance fluctuations caused by changes in public policies and strive to seize the market benefits brought by public policies.

5.4 Research Limitations and Future Research

Although this study, through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, analyzed the organizational isomorphic behaviors, relationship marketing strategies, and marketing efficiency of life insurance companies in Shandong Province, it provides valuable insights for life insurance companies. However, it is necessary to acknowledge that there are still some limitations in the research process and methods.

(1) The limitation of research area

This study selected life insurance companies in Shandong Province as the research subjects. However, there are certain differences between the life insurance industry in Shandong Province and the national average level. On one hand, regional economic characteristics lead to insufficient representativeness of the sample. Shandong was a major industrial province, and its demand for enterprise annuities was significantly higher than that in service-oriented regions. Moreover, the special combination of the urbanization rate (63.9%) and the aging degree (21.8%) made it difficult to extend the performance of the pension insurance market to other provinces with different population

structures. On the other hand, there was a systematic deviation in the market competition pattern. The market share of state-owned life insurance companies in Shandong was higher than the national average, and the number of foreign institutions was significantly lower. The contribution rate of insurance premiums through bancassurance channels was more prominent in Shandong than in the rest of the country. This special channel ecosystem will significantly affect the general judgment of the universality of public policy effects.

(2) The limitation of sample representativeness

This study was conducted through a questionnaire survey among the employees of 50 life insurance companies in Shandong Province. The sampling covered grassroots employees, middle-level managers and senior managers. However, from the valid questionnaires collected, it can be observed that the respondents were still mainly composed of grassroots employees, accounting for over 60% of the total. This could potentially lead to cognitive biases resulting from the job roles.

(3) The limitation of the scale data

In this study, a five-level scale was used to collect data, which enabled the data to be standardized and reduced the cognitive burden on the respondents. However, the five-level scale can only reflect the subjective perception of the respondents at a static point in time, but it is unable to capture the dynamic evolution of organizational behaviors, such as the adjustments made by life insurance companies' relationship marketing strategies in response to regulatory cycles.

In the future, when conducting further research, the area of the research can be expanded to include regional comparative studies across the country, in order to overcome the limitations of a single provincial sample. At the same time, future research should enhance the hierarchical coverage and data diversity of the samples, and ensure a balanced proportion of senior management, middle-level staff, and frontline personnel. Finally, based on the scale data, actual operational data of the life insurance companies are introduced to complement the subjective ratings.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

The Effects of Public Policy on Organizational Isomorphic Behaviors and Relationship Marketing Strategies: A Case of Life Insurance Companies in Shandong Province, China

Dear Respondent,

Thank you very much for participating in this survey! This questionnaire survey aims to deeply understand the impact of public policy on the organizational isomorphic behaviors and the strategic choices of relationship marketing of life insurance companies. This questionnaire is anonymous and your personal information will be kept strictly confidential. Please fill in according to your actual situation and true feelings, each of your answers will be of great help to us. Thank you again for taking the time to participate in this survey!

Liu Jingdong, Ph.D. Student

Siam University

Part I

1. Your gender:

- Male Female

2. Your age:

- Under 30 years old 30-39 years old
 40-49 years old 50-60 years old

3. Your highest level of education

- Junior high school High school
 Junior college degree Bachelor's Degree
 Master's Degree Doctoral degree

4. The type of ownership of the life insurance company you currently work for

- State-owned life insurance company
- Private life insurance company
- Joint venture life insurance company
- Wholly foreign-owned life insurance company

5. Your years of work in the life insurance industry

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years
- 15-20 years
- More than 20 years

6. Your current job position

- Agent
- Group supervisor
- Sales department manager
- Channel manager
- Marketing specialist
- Director of marketing

7. Your average monthly income for the most recent year

- Less than ¥ 5,000
- ¥ 5,000- ¥ 7,500
- ¥ 7,500- ¥ 10,000
- ¥ 10,000- ¥ 12,500
- ¥ 12,500- ¥ 15,000
- More than ¥ 15,000

Part II

Please select the most appropriate option from the five options given in each question. Among them:

1 points for Strongly Disagree

2 points for Disagree

3 points for Neutral

4 points for Agree

5 points for Strongly Agree

Table I: The Type of Ownership

Factors	Title items	Degree of agreement				
		1	2	3	4	5
Types of the ownership	You believe that the life insurance company you work for can strictly follow the government's public policies.					
	When the public policy changes, the life insurance company you work for can make timely adjustments to adapt to the corresponding policy changes.					
	You believe that the life insurance company you work for has sufficient resources to respond to changes in public policy.					
	You believe that the life insurance company you work for has enough influence to participate in the formulation of public policy.					

Table II: Public Policy

Factors	Title items	Degree of agreement				
		1	2	3	4	5
Policy Cognition	The company often informs you of the latest public policies in the life insurance industry.					
	The policy training provided by the company is enough to help you understand the policy content.					
	You often follow industry trends to understand the latest changes in public policies in the life insurance industry.					
Policy Influence	You believe that public policies have improved the product variety and service quality of life insurance companies.					
	You believe that public policies in the life insurance industry play a significant role in improving customer satisfaction.					
	The policy change has had a positive impact on your marketing strategy.					
Market Environment Adaptation	In the current market environment, policy changes have put forward higher professional requirements for you.					
	The company provides sufficient resources and support to help you adapt to the changes in the market environment.					
	You can quickly adapt to changes in the market environment brought about by public policies in the life insurance industry.					
Career Development	You believe that the implementation of public policies in the life insurance industry helps to improve the professional status of the whole industry.					
	You believe that public policies in the life insurance industry provide more opportunities for your career development.					
	Policy changes urge you to continuously improve your professional ability and skills.					

Table III: Coercive Isomorphism

Factors	Title items	Degree of agreement				
		1	2	3	4	5
Policies and Regulations	You need to adjust your marketing strategy frequently to adapt to changes in policies and regulations.					
	Policies and regulations in the life insurance industry have a positive impact on fair competition.					
	Changes in policies and regulations have a significant impact on the design and promotion of life insurance companies' products.					
	The compliance of policies and regulations of life insurance companies has an important impact on their market reputation.					
Market Competition and Standards	Market competition has a great impact on the formulation of life insurance marketing strategies.					
	Companies consider competitor dynamics when developing marketing strategies.					
	Industry standards play an important guiding role in life insurance marketing practice.					
	Poor implementation of industry standards will have a negative impact on the company					
Corporate Culture and Values	The company's corporate culture has a positive impact on its competitiveness in the life insurance industry.					
	The company's corporate culture plays an important role in enhancing team cohesion.					
	The company encourages employees to follow industry standards, policies and regulations for marketing					
	The company's values are in line with the overall trend of the life insurance industry					

Table IV: Mimetic Isomorphism

Factors	Title items	Degree of agreement				
		1	2	3	4	5
Marketing Strategy	Different life insurance companies tend to be similar in product positioning.					
	In the selection of target customer groups, there is little difference among life insurance companies.					
	The policies and practices of life insurance companies in customer service tend to mimic each other.					
	The sales channels and strategies of different life insurance companies are increasingly similar.					
Marketing Behavior	When communicating with potential customers, different life insurance companies use similar marketing techniques.					
	When training marketing personnel, life insurance companies often teach skills and methods that are close to each other.					
	The marketing personnel of different life insurance companies tend to have the same behavior pattern in the sales process.					
	When dealing with customer complaints, the coping strategies and procedures of life insurance companies are often similar.					
Marketing Culture	There are many similarities in the career development and promotion paths of marketers in different life insurance companies.					
	In terms of team building, the practices and concepts of life insurance companies often imitate each other.					
	The marketing teams of different life insurance companies tend to have the same attitude towards customers and service quality.					
	In the marketing team, rewards and incentives are similar to those of other life insurance companies.					

Table V: Normative Isomorphism

Factors	Title items	Degree of agreement				
		1	2	3	4	5
Industry Norm Cognition	Marketing personnel of life insurance companies usually receive similar training in terms of laws, regulations and regulatory policies in the industry.					
	Marketers of different life insurance companies often show consistency in complying with industry ethics and professional ethics.					
	Marketers in the life insurance industry follow similar standards and procedures for handling customer information and protecting privacy.					
	In terms of cooperation and competition in the industry, marketing personnel of different life insurance companies often hold similar attitudes.					
Marketing Strategy	When formulating marketing plans, life insurance companies tend to use similar promotion channels.					
	Marketing activities (such as promotions and advertisements) of different life insurance companies are often similar in content and form.					
	Life insurance companies have very similar strategies in customer segmentation and positioning.					
	Life insurance companies usually follow similar proportions and principles in the allocation of marketing budgets.					
Professional Behavior	There are great similarities in the professional code of conduct of marketing personnel in different life insurance companies.					
	Marketers from different life insurance companies often show similar mindsets and behaviors when dealing with job stress.					
	In terms of vocational training and skill upgrading, marketers from different life insurance companies often receive similar courses and resources.					
	When working as a team, marketers in the life insurance industry usually exhibit similar collaborative styles.					

Table VI: Relationship Marketing

Factors	Title items	Degree of agreement				
		1	2	3	4	5
Relationship Establishment and Maintenance	You focus on enhancing customer trust in life insurance products and services.					
	You will actively solve customer problems and complaints to maintain good customer relations.					
	You cultivate an emotional connection with your customers, not just a business relationship.					
Communication and Interaction	You interact with customers through multiple channels (phone, social media, mobile apps).					
	You take the initiative to provide valuable information and advice to customers to enhance their trust.					
	You believe that listening to customers' opinions and suggestions is essential to improving service.					
Investment and Return	You allocate your time and energy according to the value and potential of your customers.					
	You reward your customers for their loyalty and support by offering discounts, gifts, or extra services.					
	You regularly evaluate the return on your relationship investment and adjust your investment strategy accordingly.					
Market Competition	You regularly analyze your competitors' marketing activities to develop differentiated competitive strategies.					
	You will highlight your competitive advantage in the market through innovative and differentiated services.					
	You focus on integrating enterprise social responsibility into your relationship marketing strategy to enhance your brand image and market recognition.					

Table VII: Marketing Efficiency

Factors	Title items	Degree of agreement				
		1	2	3	4	5
Maintain and Deepen Customer Relationship	You can effectively maintain relationships with customers and reduce customer churn through personalized service.					
	You often share insurance knowledge and risk management experience with customers to enhance their trust and satisfaction.					
	You focus on emotional connection with customers and build long-term business relationships through sincere service.					
Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty	You often take the initiative to understand the needs of customers and provide insurance products and services that meet their expectations.					
	You ensure continuous customer satisfaction with your insurance products by providing quality after-sales service.					
	You keep in regular contact with customers to monitor their insurance experience and changes in their needs to enhance loyalty.					
Cross-selling and Business Growth	You often discuss their insurance plans with customers to look for opportunities for cross-selling and business growth.					
	You can identify the potential needs of customers and proactively suggest new products or upgrades that suit them.					
	You're effectively increasing your customers' insurance coverage and overall satisfaction through cross-selling.					
Optimization of Marketing Strategy	You regularly analyze data from marketing campaigns to identify and optimize less cost-effective campaigns and improve marketing effectiveness.					
	You often share successful marketing cases and experiences with the team to promote the common growth and efficiency of the team.					
	You can flexibly adjust your marketing strategies and activities in response to market changes and customer needs to stay competitive.					

Interview for Dissertation

**The Effects of Public Policy on Organizational Isomorphic Behaviors
and Relationship Marketing Strategies: A Case of Life Insurance
Companies in Shandong Province, China**

Study conducted by Mr. Liu Jingdong

PhD student, Doctor of Philosophy Program in Management, Siam University

Greetings, honored respondents! First of all, please allow me to express my deep respect and gratitude to you. We are very grateful that you are willing to take out your valuable time to have an in-depth communication with us, which is undoubtedly a great support and encouragement to our work. Today, we are honored to have you here to discuss the topic of "The Effects of Public Policy on Organizational Isomorphic Behaviors and Relationship Marketing Strategies: A Case of Life Insurance Companies in Shandong Province, China".

Your participation and sharing will have a significant impact on our research. We promise that all your responses will be kept strictly confidential and used only for the research purpose of this interview. We hope that you will be open to a sincere and in-depth conversation.

Interview Date.....

Company Name:

Current Job Position:.....

Now, we will start the interview with the following questions:

1. What public policies do you think have had a significant impact on the life insurance industry in recent years?

.....
.....

2. How does your life insurance company adapt to changing public policies? Has there been a corresponding strategic adjustment or business transformation?

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.....

.....
3. Do you think there is organizational isomorphism in the life insurance industry?
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.....
.....

4. In what ways does public policy exert pressure on life insurance companies to coercive isomorphism? How do these policies specifically affect the decision-making process, business processes, or market strategies of life insurers?
.....
.....
.....

5. Which public policies have a mimetic isomorphic impact on the behavior pattern, market positioning or brand image of life insurance companies? How do these policies induce life insurers to superficially imitate or converge to other successful companies or industry standards?
.....
.....
.....

6. Which public policies have normative isomorphic impacts on the codes of conduct, operating standards or compliance requirements of life insurance companies? How do these policies promote life insurance companies to be consistent in operation and management and form a similar standard system?
.....
.....
.....

7. What are the main challenges your life insurance company has encountered in the face of coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism caused by public policies??
.....
.....
.....

8. What do you think are the impacts of coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism on the formulation and implementation of

relationship marketing strategies of life insurance companies??

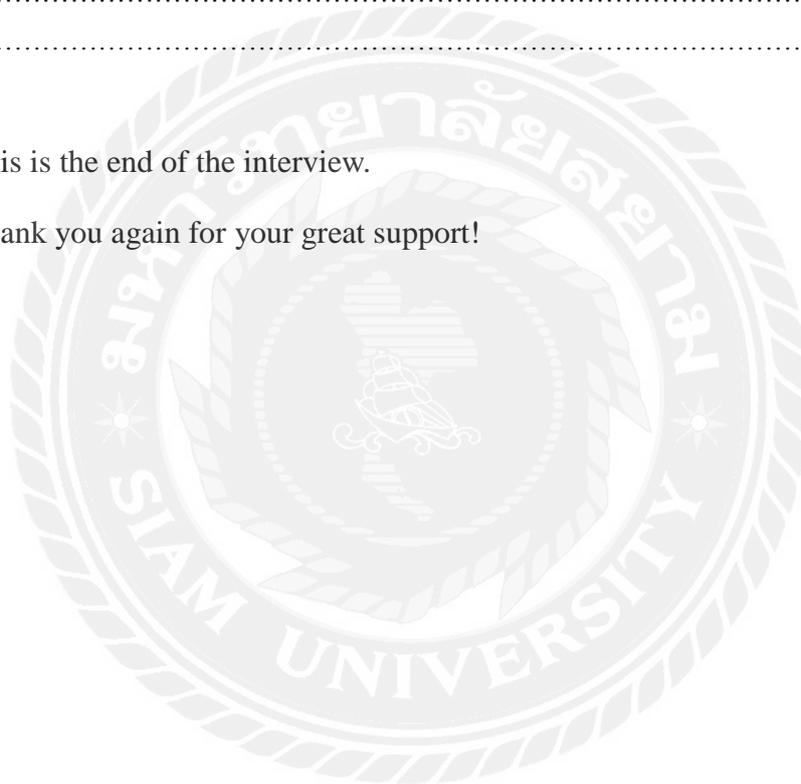
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9. What are the main relationship marketing strategies adopted by your company? How does your company measure the effectiveness of the relationship marketing strategy?

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.....
.....

This is the end of the interview.

Thank you again for your great support!



Questionnaire accuracy assessment form – IOC

The Effects of Public Policy on Organizational Isomorphic Behaviors and Relationship Marketing Strategies: A Case of Life Insurance Companies in Shandong Province, China

Dear Respondent,

Thank you very much for participating in this survey! This questionnaire survey aims to deeply understand the impact of public policy on the organizational isomorphic behaviors and the strategic choices of relationship marketing of life insurance companies. This questionnaire is anonymous and your personal information will be kept strictly confidential. Please fill in according to your actual situation and true feelings, each of your answers will be of great help to us. Thank you again for taking the time to participate in this survey!

Liu Jingdong, Ph.D. Student
Siam University

Part I

1. Your gender:

- Male Female

2. Your age:

- Under 30 years old 30-39 years old
 40-49 years old 50-60 years old

3. Your highest level of education

- Junior high school High school
 Junior college degree Bachelor's Degree
 Master's Degree Doctoral degree

4. The type of ownership of the life insurance company you currently work for

- State-owned life insurance company
- Private life insurance company
- Joint venture life insurance company
- Wholly foreign-owned life insurance company

5. Your years of work in the life insurance industry

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years
- 15-20 years
- More than 20 years

6. Your current job position

- Agent
- Group supervisor
- Sales department manager
- Channel manager
- Marketing specialist
- Director of marketing

7. Your average monthly income for the most recent year

- Less than ¥ 5,000
- ¥ 5,000- ¥ 7,500
- ¥ 7,500- ¥ 10,000
- ¥ 10,000- ¥ 12,500
- ¥ 12,500- ¥ 15,000
- More than ¥ 15,000

Part II

Please select the most appropriate option from the five options given in each question. Among them:

1 points for Strongly Disagree

2 points for Disagree

3 points for Neutral

4 points for Agree

5 points for Strongly Agree

Table I: The Type of Ownership

	IOC from Experts					Total	Average
	1	2	3	4	5		
You believe that the life insurance company you work for can strictly follow the government's public policies.	0	1	1	1	1	4	0.8
When the public policy changes, the life insurance company you work for can make timely adjustments to adapt to the corresponding policy changes.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
You believe that the life insurance company you work for has sufficient resources to respond to changes in public policy.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
You believe that the life insurance company you work for has enough influence to participate in the formulation of public policy.	1	1	0	1	1	4	0.8

Table II: Public Policy

	IOC from Experts						Total	Average	
	1	2	3	4	5				
Policy Cognition									
The company often informs you of the latest public policies in the life insurance industry.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1		
The policy training provided by the company is enough to help you understand the policy content.	1	1	1	0	1	4	0.8		
You often follow industry trends to understand the latest changes in public policies in the life insurance industry.	1	1	0	1	1	4	0.8		
Policy Influence									
You believe that public policies have improved the product variety and service quality of life insurance companies.	1	1	1	0	1	4	0.8		
You believe that public policies in the life insurance industry play a significant role in improving customer satisfaction.	1	1	1	1	0	4	0.8		
The policy change has had a positive impact on your marketing strategy.	1	1	1	0	1	4	0.8		
Market Environment Adaptation									
In the current market environment, policy changes have put forward higher professional requirements for you.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1		
The company provides sufficient resources and support to help you adapt to the changes in the market environment.	1	0	1	1	1	4	0.8		
You can quickly adapt to changes in the market environment brought about by public policies in the life insurance industry.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1		
Career Development									
You believe that the implementation of public policies in the life insurance industry helps to improve the professional status of the whole industry.	0	1	1	1	1	4	0.8		
You believe that public policies in the life insurance industry provide more opportunities for your career development.	1	0	1	1	1	4	0.8		
Policy changes urge you to continuously improve your professional ability and skills.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1		

Table III: Coercive Isomorphism

	IOC from Experts						
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
Policies and Regulations							
You need to adjust your marketing strategy frequently to adapt to changes in policies and regulations.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
Policies and regulations in the life insurance industry have a positive impact on fair competition.	1	1	1	1	0	4	0.8
Changes in policies and regulations have a significant impact on the design and promotion of life insurance companies' products.	0	1	1	1	1	4	0.8
The compliance of policies and regulations of life insurance companies has an important impact on their market reputation.	1	1	1	0	1	4	0.8
Market Competition and Standards							
Market competition has a great impact on the formulation of life insurance marketing strategies.	1	0	1	1	1	4	0.8
Companies consider competitor dynamics when developing marketing strategies.	0	1	1	1	1	4	0.8
Industry standards play an important guiding role in life insurance marketing practice.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
Poor implementation of industry standards will have a negative impact on the company.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
Corporate Culture and Values							
The company's corporate culture has a positive impact on its competitiveness in the life insurance industry.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
The company's corporate culture plays an important role in enhancing team cohesion.	1	1	0	1	1	4	0.8
The company encourages employees to follow industry standards, policies and regulations for marketing.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
The company's values are in line with the overall trend of the life insurance industry.	1	1	1	0	1	4	0.8

Table IV: Mimetic Isomorphism

	IOC from Experts						
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
Marketing Strategy							
Different life insurance companies tend to be similar in product positioning.	1	0	1	1	1	4	0.8
In the selection of target customer groups, there is little difference among life insurance companies.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
The policies and practices of life insurance companies in customer service tend to mimic each other.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
The sales channels and strategies of different life insurance companies are increasingly similar.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
Marketing Behavior							
When communicating with potential customers, different life insurance companies use similar marketing techniques.	1	1	1	0	1	4	0.8
When training marketing personnel, life insurance companies often teach skills and methods that are close to each other.	0	1	1	1	1	4	0.8
The marketing personnel of different life insurance companies tend to have the same behavior pattern in the sales process.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
When dealing with customer complaints, the coping strategies and procedures of life insurance companies are often similar.	1	1	1	1	0	4	0.8
Marketing Culture							
There are many similarities in the career development and promotion paths of marketers in different life insurance companies.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
In terms of team building, the practices and concepts of life insurance companies often imitate each other.	1	0	1	1	1	4	0.8
The marketing teams of different life insurance companies tend to have the same attitude towards customers and service quality.	1	1	1	0	1	4	0.8
In the marketing team, rewards and incentives are similar to those of other life insurance companies.	1	1	1	1	0	4	0.8

Table V: Normative Isomorphism

	IOC from Experts						
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
Industry Norm Cognition							
Marketing personnel of life insurance companies usually receive similar training in terms of laws, regulations and regulatory policies in the industry.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
Marketers of different life insurance companies often show consistency in complying with industry ethics and professional ethics.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
Marketers in the life insurance industry follow similar standards and procedures for handling customer information and protecting privacy.	1	0	1	1	1	4	0.8
In terms of cooperation and competition in the industry, marketing personnel of different life insurance companies often hold similar attitudes.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
Marketing Strategy							
When formulating marketing plans, life insurance companies tend to use similar promotion channels.	1	0	1	1	1	4	0.8
Marketing activities (such as promotions and advertisements) of different life insurance companies are often similar in content and form.	1	1	0	1	1	4	0.8
Life insurance companies have very similar strategies in customer segmentation and positioning.	1	1	1	0	1	4	0.8
Life insurance companies usually follow similar proportions and principles in the allocation of marketing budgets.	1	1	1	1	0	4	0.8
Professional Behavior							
There are great similarities in the professional code of conduct of marketing personnel in different life insurance companies.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
Marketers from different life insurance companies often show similar mindsets and behaviors when dealing with job stress.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
In terms of vocational training and skill upgrading, marketers from different life insurance companies often receive similar courses and resources.	1	1	0	1	1	4	0.8
When working as a team, marketers in the life insurance industry usually exhibit similar collaborative styles.	0	1	1	1	1	4	0.8

Table VI: Relationship Marketing

	IOC from Experts						
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
Relationship Establishment and Maintenance							
You focus on enhancing customer trust in life insurance products and services.	1	1	1	0	1	4	0.8
You will actively solve customer problems and complaints to maintain good customer relations.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
You cultivate an emotional connection with your customers, not just a business relationship.	1	0	1	1	1	4	0.8
Communication and Interaction							
You interact with customers through multiple channels (phone, social media, mobile apps).	0	1	1	1	1	4	0.8
You take the initiative to provide valuable information and advice to customers to enhance their trust.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
You believe that listening to customers' opinions and suggestions is essential to improving service.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
Investment and Return							
You allocate your time and energy according to the value and potential of your customers.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
You reward your customers for their loyalty and support by offering discounts, gifts, or extra services.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
You regularly evaluate the return on your relationship investment and adjust your investment strategy accordingly.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
Market Competition							
You regularly analyze your competitors' marketing activities to develop differentiated competitive strategies.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
You will highlight your competitive advantage in the market through innovative and differentiated services.	1	0	1	1	1	4	0.8
You focus on integrating enterprise social responsibility into your relationship marketing strategy to enhance your brand image and market recognition.	1	1	1	1	0	4	0.8

Table YII: Marketing Efficiency

	IOC from Experts						
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average
Maintain and Deepen Customer Relationship							
You can effectively maintain relationships with customers and reduce customer churn through personalized service.	1	1	1	1	0	4	0.8
You often share insurance knowledge and risk management experience with customers to enhance their trust and satisfaction.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
You focus on emotional connection with customers and build long-term business relationships through sincere service.	1	0	1	1	1	4	0.8
Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty							
You often take the initiative to understand the needs of customers and provide insurance products and services that meet their expectations.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
You ensure continuous customer satisfaction with your insurance products by providing quality after-sales service.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
You keep in regular contact with customers to monitor their insurance experience and changes in their needs to enhance loyalty.	0	1	1	1	1	4	0.8
Cross-selling and Business Growth							
You often discuss their insurance plans with customers to look for opportunities for cross-selling and business growth.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1
You can identify the potential needs of customers and proactively suggest new products or upgrades that suit them.	1	0	1	1	1	4	0.8
You're effectively increasing your customers' insurance coverage and overall satisfaction through cross-selling.	1	1	1	0	1	4	0.8
Optimization of Marketing Strategy							
You regularly analyze data from marketing campaigns to identify and optimize less cost-effective campaigns and improve marketing effectiveness.	0	1	1	1	1	4	0.8
You often share successful marketing cases and experiences with the team to promote the common growth and efficiency of the team.	1	0	1	1	1	4	0.8
You can flexibly adjust your marketing strategies and activities in response to market changes and customer needs to stay competitive.	0	1	1	1	1	4	0.8

CURRICULUM VITAE

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 Country : China
 Year : 2004-2007