

# Research on the competitive advantage of Wuchang rice-based on grounded theory

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**Abstract:** The Wuchang rice industry has taken the lead in domestic development due to the superior natural environment, mature technology and policy-driven reasons, and is the most important economic artery in the northeast region. Firstly, this paper deeply analyzes the market prospect and existing problems of Wuchang rice industry development by means of literature review and field investigation. Based on grounded theory, 316 reference sentences are obtained as labels, 23 concepts and 9 initial categories by using qualitative research methods. Through the analogy, analysis and induction of the nine initial categories, the five main categories of product research and development, sales channels, promotion activities, brand building and brand price are finally extracted. This study takes the competitive advantage of Wuchang rice as the main core, and analyzes the mechanism of the research content. The study found that the research on the competitive advantage of Wuchang rice is mainly based on the four mechanisms of product differentiation marketing mechanism, market segmentation mechanism, channel management mechanism and brand image construction mechanism, and thus summarizes the relevant measures for Wuchang rice to develop its own competitive advantage.

**Keywords:** Grounded theory, Wuchang Rice, competitive advantage, mechanism analysis

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Research Background

In recent years, China 's rice planting area has gradually declined, but the overall total rice output has not experienced a significant decline. According to the data from the National Bureau of Statistics, China 's total rice output in 2020 was 211.86 million tons, an increase of 1.1 % over the previous year. In 2021, the national rice output increased by 0.5 % compared with the previous year, that is, an increase of 100,000 tons, and the overall rice output reached 21.2843 million tons. However, with the continuous deepening of China 's supply-side structural reform, China 's rice consumption enthusiasm will continue to grow, and the overall rice consumption will also increase.

At the same time, with the continuous development of economy, people pay more and more attention to health and nutrition. Under the background of food safety and consumption upgrading, consumers ' demand for rice has gradually changed from meeting food and clothing to meeting the general direction of health and wellness, and the requirements for food quality, rice taste and related nutritional value have also been continuously improved. Because of this, people's demand for high-quality rice and brand rice will also continue to increase. However, in the current market, in addition to the pressure of domestic similar brand competition, domestic rice brands are also threatened by foreign rice brands in the development process. Compared with domestic rice, some consumers will prefer imported rice, so they will choose to consume rice produced in other countries, which makes the number of imported rice in China stay for a long time. According to the data provided by the US Department of Agriculture, in 2020-2021, China is the largest importer of rice in the world, ranking

first with 4,921 kilotons of imports, accounting for 9.53 % of total imports. Therefore, the market prospect of domestic rice in China is considerable. As one of the most important grain production bases in China, the northeast region not only has a superior rice planting environment and rich agricultural development resources, but also has scientific agricultural planting technology, and on this basis, the northeast rice has been bred. Northeast rice, known as the 'king of Chinese rice', as a regional brand, also has strong market competitiveness in the market.

However, because 'Wuchang rice' is highly sought after by people, it has been repeatedly impersonated. In order to further improve the competitiveness of their own brands in the market and seize the relevant market share, each Wuchang rice brand also needs to continuously optimize its own products and marketing strategies, so as to improve the brand's competitive advantage in the Wuchang rice market. Therefore, this study will use the grounded theory to study the competitive advantage of Wuchang rice. By analyzing its performance in the market, we will further explore and explore the advantages and disadvantages of Wuchang rice in marketing and brand building, and provide corresponding reference for the development of other rice brand products.

## **1.2. Study purpose and significance**

### **1.2.1. Study Purpose**

The primary objective of this research is to employ the grounded theory approach to comprehensively analyze and understand the competitive advantages of Wuchang rice, also known as the "Five Constant" rice. This unique variety of rice, cultivated in the Wuchang region, has gained prominence for its exceptional quality and distinct characteristics, making it a significant player in the rice market.

The grounded theory methodology is chosen for its qualitative research approach, aiming to develop a conceptual framework grounded in empirical data. The study seeks to identify and explore the key factors contributing to the competitive edge of Wuchang rice within the broader context of the rice industry. By adopting this inductive research method, we aim to uncover patterns, themes, and relationships that emerge from the data, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the factors driving the success of Wuchang rice.

Specifically, the research aims to address the following key questions: Quality Attributes, Cultivation Practices, Market Positioning and Supply Chain Dynamics. Through a rigorous analysis of these aspects, the research aims to provide valuable insights into the factors that contribute to the sustained competitive advantage of Wuchang rice. The findings of this study can not only contribute to the academic understanding of grounded theory application in agribusiness but also offer practical implications for stakeholders in the rice industry, including farmers, distributors, and policymakers.

## **2. Theoretical basis**

### **2.1. Grounded theory**

Grounded theory, also known as root theory, is one of the qualitative research methods. In 1967, American sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss put forward the definition in their book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, that is, the development of theory from data. In his 1987 book on the definition of grounded theory, Anselm Strauss proposed that qualitative data should not limit access to any particular form of data or research. In 1990, Anselm Strauss and Corbin argued in their book that grounded theory is an inductive approach to analyzing phenomena and sorting out the results obtained. In other words, grounded theory is the discovery and development of theory through systematic data collection and analysis. So far, rooted theory has formed three schools, which are the classical rooted theory of the most original Glaser, the programmed rooted theory of Strauss, which is used most in this paper, and the constructive rooted theory of Charmaz. The biggest difference between the three is the coding process. The coding process of classical rooted theory is divided into substantive coding and theoretical coding. Programmed rooted theory is divided into open coding and spindle coding. Constructivism grounded theory emphasizes the ability of researchers to question data, interact with the studied, and explain the meaning of their behavior. Even so, no matter which school of grounded theory, its purpose is to establish a theory on the basis of empirical data, is an inductive qualitative research method.

## **2.2. About agricultural research based on grounded theory**

In recent years, rooted theory has been widely applied in research of various disciplines. For example, in agricultural economics, Hu Aixiang (2023)<sup>[1]</sup> studied the development set mechanism of sericulture in Jiangsu based on rooted theory, conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with 15 sericulture industry practitioners, and analyzed and summarized the results in depth. It formed 86 concepts and 16 categories, and then concluded seven main categories, such as reducing sericulture risk, improving sericulture confidence of sericulture farmers and strengthening policy incentives, and finally extracted the theoretical core of the development of Jiangsu sericulture industry lies in the enthusiasm, innovation and suitability of the industry, and put forward relevant suggestions. For another example, Hou Yanjiang and Zhang Ru (2023)<sup>[2]</sup> conducted research on regional brand building of Wuchang rice from the perspective of stakeholders, randomly selected 20 interview data, 25 enterprise official website reports, 20 government reports, 20 academic journals and other different forms of data for open coding, and summarized 304 initial concepts and 26 initial categories. Twelve main categories were analyzed and summarized into six core categories, such as government, enterprises, industry associations and farmers, and then the mechanism model of stakeholders in regional brand building of agricultural products was constructed and relevant effective suggestions were put forward. It provides support for the regional brand building of Wuchang rice, and also provides new ideas for the practice of brand building of other agricultural products.

## **2.3. Research on the competitive advantage of Wuchang rice**

Wuchang City is one of the important rice production bases in Heilongjiang Province, and it is also one of the strong rice production counties in China. The main source of agricultural income in Wuchang City is rice, and the competitive advantage of Wuchang rice is obvious. Yang Wei (2020)<sup>[3]</sup> takes Wuchang City as the key research area to study the development status and development situation of rice industry in Northeast China, especially the current situation of rice industry development in Wuchang City. SWOT analysis was carried out on the development of rice industry. According to the four aspects of advantages, disadvantages, opportunities and challenges, the development of rice industry in Wuchang City was systematically, comprehensively and accurately studied and analyzed. It provides a theoretical basis for this paper to study the competitive advantage of Wuchang rice. In the study of the market competitiveness of Wuchang rice, Wang Panpan (2013)<sup>[4]</sup> finds out the difference between Heilongjiang rice brand and other domestic rice brands from 'point' to 'surface', correctly grasps the factors affecting the purchase of Heilongjiang market, and provides a comprehensive quantitative index system that can measure the competitiveness of rice brands, so that Heilongjiang rice brand can better adapt to the market demand of Heilongjiang rice.

## **3. Interview data coding model**

Open coding, spindle coding and selective coding are three commonly used coding methods in marketing research. These three coding methods can be used to analyze the research on the competitive advantage of Wuchang rice.

### **3.1. Open coding**

Open coding is a coding method without a preset classification system, which can be classified according to the characteristics of the data. Taking Wuchang rice as an example, through the analysis of the characteristics of the product, it can be divided into the following categories: quality, taste, origin, price, brand, packaging, etc. Then, we can analyze the data of these categories, such as the analysis of quality, the advantages of Wuchang rice in quality, how to improve the quality and so on.

According to the steps of procedural grounded theory, in the process of open coding, valuable reference sentences should be sorted out from text materials first, and such sentences should be labeled. For example, the first-hand text data obtained in this study 'to buy our Wuchang rice is the unit of government and school', which can be defined as the customer group. After labeling all the interview texts, we can make a preliminary summary of all the existing labels, and summarize the labels with similar meanings under the same concept. For example, in this study, 'the price of Wuchang rice is almost the same', this reference sentence can also be summarized into the concept of 'customer group'. Then, after all the labels are compared to obtain a smaller number of concepts with a wider degree of generalization, the last step of open coding is carried out to categorize the concepts. Categorization is a

more abstract analysis and clustering process on the basis of conceptualization, and it is a further excavation of the hidden links behind the text data. At this stage, researchers need to further summarize, refine and compare all concepts, and attribute the concepts describing the same phenomenon to the same initial category.

This study follows the principle of complete objectivity. From all the interview data, 316 reference sentences are sorted out as labels, 23 concepts and 9 initial categories ( the initial category coding corresponds to A-I, and the concept corresponding to each category, such as customer group, belongs to substitutability, so the customer group coding is A1 ). The results of open coding examples are shown in *Table 1*.

*Table 1: Open coding.*

initial category	concept	the interview content
A design	A1 idea generation	1. The degree of rice purchase depends on the customer 's own consumption level and living standard; 2. Wuchang rice user groups are more extensive, involving individuals, families, employers and so on.
	A2 product design	1. Northeast rice is divided into two kinds, mainly pearl rice, and not very popular Wuchang rice; 2. The merchant 's pickup location is usually a factory; 3. Pearl rice is mainly sold in the form of packaging, 20 catty from the sale, each catty two yuan ; Wuchang rice is sold in bulk or packaging, about five pieces per kilogram.
B market	B1 product origin	1. Northeast China has fertile black soil, rich in nutrients ; the temperature difference between day and night is large, and the growth time of grain and vegetables is long, so the grain and vegetables planted on the black soil are more delicious than the grain and vegetables in other places. For example, watermelon, tomatoes, corn, beans, etc., compared with other regions, high quality, unique taste.
	B2 client group	1. The Wuchang rice sold by merchants is generally more than four pieces and one pound, and the price is not biased ; there is not much relationship between its authenticity and price, and the difference between two and three yuan is not so big; 2. The main consumer groups of Wuchang rice are generally families or individuals with high consumption levels, followed by government and school units, and are unlikely to be school canteens; 3. The time point for the government or school to purchase Wuchang rice is generally a holiday, which is used to pay benefits to employees. When purchasing, basically every employee is paid ten catty.
	B3 brand positioning	1. The poor quality of northeast rice is called pearl rice, and the high quality is called Wuchang rice; 2. The most common in the market is pearl rice, but the popularity is not as good as Wuchang rice. This is because Wuchang rice has a good taste; 3. Small or remote stores generally do not sell Wuchang rice, which mainly exists in some high-level or full range of rice shops.
C platform	C1 e-commerce platform	1. E-commerce platform to take goods from the factory; 2. Customer groups are mainly families and individuals; 3. The price is similar to the wholesale market.
	C2 supermarket	1. Wuchang rice sold in small and medium-sized supermarkets will be more expensive than foreign brands like Thai rice, but Wuchang rice brands will be more varieties than wholesale stores and the prices will not differ much; 2. The price of Wuchang rice in large supermarkets will be generally expensive, and the brand will be more complete, but

		the prices of each brand are inconsistent, and some will differ a lot.
	C3 wholesale market	1. Smaller stores almost do not sell Wuchang rice, even if there is glutinous rice to deceive consumers, but the price is also expensive, five yuan a catty; 2. The distribution of rice stores in the wholesale market is scattered and not easy to find.
D middle man	D1 live promotion	1. The Wuchang rice promoted by direct seeding generally does not have any middlemen to earn the difference. The price is real and the quality is pure.
	D2 dealer	1. The Wuchang rice in the specialty store and the wholesale store is similar, and the source of the goods is the rice factory; 2. the dealer will help the store to find a suitable source of rice, generally near the local store, showing the characteristics of regionalization.
E internal measures	E1 advertising	1. The place of delivery is to post the origin, taste, promotional posters and promotional materials of bagged Wuchang rice on the shelf.
	E2 personal selling	1. Supermarket salesmen will make precise recommendations. The recommended object is five packs of five jin small bags of finely packed Wuchang rice; 2. The recommended form is mainly based on the salesman 's own understanding of Wuchang rice, in order to explain to customers; if there is a promotion, the salesman will also recommend to the customer.
	E3 position	1. The general position will be more prominent, because Wuchang rice sales are better; 2. Consumer groups tend to prefer customers with higher consumption levels and customers in the northeast; 3. The form is to put ' Fu Lin Men Northeast High Quality Rice ' on the shelf, write the normal price of 45.9 yuan 10 catty, special mark the membership price of 29.9 yuan 10 catty.
	E4 price-off promotions	1. There are as many as seven kinds of five regular rice brands on the shelf, and most of them will have promotional activities at different times, mainly to see whether the supermarket headquarters will arrange promotional activities; 2. The frequency of promotional activities is generally twice a month, once lasting half a month. For example, the rice fragrance brand, it is now 189 yuan down to 115 yuan a box, here a box is 4 packs of rice, a pack of 5 catty, so from a 9.45 yuan a catty down to 5.75 yuan a catty; 3. In general, no matter how much the original price of five meters, after the promotion will be reduced to 4-6 yuan a catty.
F external measures	F1 public relations	1. It generally cooperates with hotels, enterprises, government departments and so on.
	F2 cooperative extension	1. Cooperate with the hotel, if customers think rice is good, they will contact the hotel for further communication; 2. Joint activities with some enterprises. For example, in the opening activities of large enterprises, the prize setting will use Wuchang rice as a prize ; there are also some large public welfare activities, which will also organize the delivery of Wuchang rice.
G part	G1 brand awareness	1. It is difficult to find a selling point for Wuchang rice in the vicinity. The reason is that there are few people in the vicinity, but there are still many people like to eat Wuchang rice; 2. The poor quality of northeast rice is called pearl rice, and the better quality is called Wuchang rice; 3. Smaller stores in the farmers ' market almost do not sell Wuchang rice, most of which is to deceive consumers, but it is

		not Wuchang rice, but like the special white glutinous rice, the price is five yuan a catty.
	G2 brand loyalty	1. Families buy Wuchang rice to eat less, because it is more expensive; 2. Wuchang rice tastes different from other rice. Wuchang rice is very fragrant after cooking; 3. The quality of Wuchang rice is guaranteed and delicious, but the price is more expensive, which is obviously different from other rice. The cooked Wuchang rice is soft and fragrant, which is completely different from other rice.
	G3 Brand association	1. There are many brands of Wuchang rice, the biggest difference between brands is price, but there is basically no difference in rice itself; 2. Generally people think of Wuchang rice, they will think of it is delicious, delicious is the guest 's objective idea of Wuchang rice brand.
H entirety	H1 market situation	1. Almost every store specializing in selling rice has Wuchang rice, except for those relatively small stores, because if selling rice, it is sure to ensure that customers can buy the rice they want, so the stores selling rice will have Wuchang rice; 2. There are also many consumers of Wuchang rice, Wuchang rice consumer market is still very broad.
	H2 Brand patent	1. It is mainly characterized by geographical location of origin; 2. Wuchang rice brand participated in the Expo, competition, and won the award, for example, the Joe Mansion compound of Wuchang rice won the 105th Panama Pacific World Expo special prize; 3. Wuchang rice has a special quality inspection report to ensure that pure Wuchang rice is not mixed.
I price	I1 pricing policies	1. Smaller Wuchang rice is cheaper. There are 70 yuan five catty, 100 yuan five catty, the cost price of 5 yuan a catty, that is, the cheapest; 2. Wuchang rice is expensive rice, in any one store to buy is 20 yuan a catty; 3. Wuchang rice also has more than four pieces of one pound, this price is not expensive, but some guests think that seven or eight pieces of one pound of Wuchang rice is authentic, four or five pieces of not very authentic; 4. One brand is 50 yuan ten catty, and the other is 55 yuan ten catty, which is the favorite of the northeast people themselves; 5. Wuchang rice is generally three or four pieces of a pound, if it is seven or eight pieces of a pound, is generally false; 6. The main reason why customers choose brands is their own consumption level and living standard; 7. The price of Wuchang rice is almost the same, which is a few dollars. The reason why users choose brands is mainly their own.
	I2 price orientation	1. Wuchang rice sold in supermarkets is generally more expensive than Thai rice; 2. The main reason why customers choose brands is their own consumption level and living standard; 3. Its price is twice as high as the price of similar northeast rice, and slightly higher than the price of imported rice, mostly sold in small capacity; 4. Wuchang rice will generally have more brand choices than other types of rice.

### 3.2. Spindle coding

Spindle coding is a method of classifying data according to a topic based on previous theory or research. The research on the competitive advantage of Wuchang rice can be coded with the product marketing concept as the main axis. Product marketing concept refers to a concept or strategy adopted by enterprises in promoting products, such as differentiated marketing, positioning marketing, market segmentation and so on. Taking differentiated marketing as an example, we can analyze the differences between Wuchang rice and other rice brands and explore their competitive advantages.

After analogy, analysis and induction of the nine initial categories, this study finally extracted the five main categories of product development, sales channels, promotions, brand building, and brand price. The specific results are shown in *Table 2*.

*Table 2: Spindle coding.*

main category	initial category
product development	A design
	B market
channel of distribution	C platform
	D middle man
promotional activities	E internal measures
	F external measures
branding	G part
	H entirety
brand price	I price

### 3.3. Selective coding

Selective coding is a way of classifying data according to specific criteria. For the study of the competitive advantage of Wuchang rice, it can be selectively encoded. For example, Wuchang rice can be coded according to production process, taste, quality and other standards, and then the data under each standard can be analyzed to explore its competitive advantage. In addition, competitors can also be selectively encoded to compare the advantages and disadvantages of Wuchang rice with other brands.

This study takes the competitive advantage of Wuchang rice as the main core. This paper finally raises the five main categories of product research and development, sales channels, promotion activities, brand building and brand price to four core categories, namely, product, price, promotion and channel. The selective coding is shown in *Table 3* below. Under the interaction between the four, the competitive advantage of Wuchang rice is constantly emerging, which directly affects the industrial development of Wuchang rice.

*Table 3: Selective coding.*

core category	main category
product	product development
channel	channel of distribution
promotion	promotional activities
	branding
price	brand price

### 3.4. Theoretical saturation test

After the completion of selective coding, the generic relationship between categories has been basically formed, and a theoretical model can be constructed. After that, the saturation test was carried out by using the materials collected in the early stage. There was no new concept or new relationship construction, indicating that the current sample had reached saturation and could stop sampling.

## 4. Mechanism Analysis

The study of the competitive advantage of Wu Chang rice based on the concept of product

marketing. The following is a possible mechanism analysis:

#### **4.1. Product Differentiation Marketing Mechanism**

Wu Chang rice boasts distinct advantages in quality, taste, origin, price, branding, and packaging. These benefits stem from various factors, including product development, manufacturing processes, supply chain management, and a keen understanding of market demands and product placement.

Given the challenges of differentiating products within the rice category through innovation alone, Wu Chang rice should emphasize enhancing its current offerings. This involves comprehending customer needs and addressing any gaps in existing products, thereby catering to the diverse preferences of consumers. In a market saturated with grain options, it's crucial for Wu Chang rice to enhance its brand recognition by promoting its unique qualities, such as superior taste, stable blood sugar levels, and overall quality. Creating a distinct segment within a broader category, Wu Chang rice can gain recognition through strategic labeling and classification. Positioning the rice as an ideal festive gift or a health-conscious choice with slogans highlighting its benefits in stabilizing and reducing blood sugar levels can tap into new branding opportunities and capture consumer attention.

By focusing on its strengths and understanding market dynamics, Wu Chang rice can solidify its position in the minds of consumers, differentiating itself in a competitive market.

#### **4.2. Market Segmentation Mechanisms**

To thrive in a fiercely competitive market, Wu Chang rice must strategically employ market segmentation. Identifying distinct consumer sub-groups helps uncover unique market demands, allowing for tailored marketing strategies.

Given Wu Chang's high-quality but cost-intensive production, direct price competition is challenging. Instead, focusing on high-end and health-conscious consumer segments becomes essential. This strategy involves meticulous brand positioning, thorough market research, and understanding consumer insights. While targeting high-end and health-focused groups, it's crucial to recognize the diversity within the market.

Brands must provide diverse services to meet varied needs and purchasing behaviors, ensuring a comprehensive approach to consumer satisfaction. This approach encompasses brand positioning, market research, consumer insights, and analysis of market trends.

#### **4.3. Channel Management Mechanisms**

Wu Chang rice also has a strong advantage in channel management, with its products mainly sold through high-end supermarkets, shopping malls and other sales platforms, as well as online through e-commerce channels. The formation mechanism of this advantage may involve factors such as supply chain management, channel cooperation, marketing, as well as an in-depth understanding and grasp of consumer purchasing channels.

##### **4.3.1. Supply Chain Management**

Supply chain management significantly contributes to Wu Chang Rice's competitive edge. By refining supply chain elements, Wu Chang Rice guarantees efficient, consistent production and delivery, upholding product quality and punctuality.

a) Supplier Relationships: Wu Chang Rice forms enduring partnerships with reliable suppliers, ensuring raw material excellence and supply steadiness. Collaborating with local rice farmers, they advance cultivation, purchase, and processing of premium rice.

b) Production Strategy: Wu Chang Rice enhances production efficiency and cuts costs with meticulous planning and real-time control. Utilizing sophisticated production technologies and systems ensures smooth operational flow.

c) Inventory and Logistics: Wu Chang Rice achieves prompt product delivery and inventory cost management via strategic inventory control and logistics refinement. They employ advanced software for precise inventory forecasting and optimal allocation, aligning with market demands.

#### **4.3.2. Channel Cooperation**

Channel cooperation is critical to the competitive advantage of Wu Chang Rice. By building strong relationships with channel partners, Wu Chang Rice can expand its market reach and increase the marketability of its products.

a) Dealer cooperation: Wu Chang Rice establishes long-term and stable cooperative relationships with dealers to jointly promote product sales and market expansion. For example, cooperation agreements are signed with regional food distributors to ensure wide distribution of products in target markets.

b) Retailer relationship management: Wu Chang Rice builds strong ties with retailers to promote product display and sales through channel cooperation. For example, promotional strategies are developed with supermarkets and retailers to provide special displays and incentives to attract consumers to purchase Wu Chang rice.

c) Cooperation with e-commerce platforms: Wu Chang rice has established cooperative relationships with major e-commerce platforms and utilized e-commerce channels to expand sales. For example, it cooperates with well-known e-commerce platforms to establish online sales channels and increase product exposure and sales through the platform's promotion and sales policies.

#### **4.3.3. Marketing**

Marketing is pivotal for Wu Chang rice's competitive edge, fostering brand image, consumer attraction, and sales growth.

a) Brand Positioning: Wu Chang rice communicates core values—emphasizing quality, freshness, and nutrition—through advertising and media channels.

b) Promotions: Attractive strategies like giveaways, discounts, and gift packages enhance market share, enticing consumers to try and buy Wu Chang rice.

c) Market Research: Wu Chang Rice gains deep consumer insights through research, using questionnaires and interviews to understand preferences, adjusting strategies based on consumer needs regarding rice quality, packaging, and price.

#### **4.3.4. In-depth knowledge of Consumer Purchasing Channels**

Understanding consumer purchasing channels is vital for Wu Chang Rice to meet market demands and elevate its competitive edge.

a) Consumer Behavior Research: Analyzing habits, preferences, and decision-making processes in rice purchases unveils the importance consumers place on brand, price, packaging, and origin.

b) Multi-Channel Sales Strategy: Tailoring pricing, packaging, and promotions to consumer-preferred channels—be it supermarkets, retailers, or online platforms—shapes an effective sales approach.

c) After-Sales Service: Ensuring consumer satisfaction and loyalty through quality after-sales service and prompt response to feedback via customer hotlines and online platforms fosters a strong consumer relationship.

#### **4.4. Brand Image Building Mechanisms**

Wu Chang Rice boasts a robust brand image centered around "Wu Chang rice," accentuating product quality and flavor. The advantage stems from brand planning, dissemination, maintenance, and meticulous management of consumer brand awareness and loyalty.

a) Brand Planning: Involves strategic steps to shape unique brand characteristics and values. Wu Chang Rice highlights its distinctive origin and production processes, such as cultivation in Wu Chang, Heilongjiang, known for high-quality rice.

b) Brand Communication: Utilizes diverse channels like advertisements, promotions, and social media to convey brand information. TV ads showcase quality and nutritional richness, while social media interactions emphasize brand concepts and values.

c) Brand Maintenance: Ensures long-term brand image and value through quality control and after-sales service. Strict production processes guarantee product stability, and timely resolution of

consumer issues fosters positive customer relations.

d) Consumer Brand Awareness and Loyalty: Enhanced through quality products and positive experiences. Wu Chang Rice boosts awareness with promotions in major supermarkets and limited edition packages. Consistent quality and a superior purchasing experience foster consumer loyalty.

In conclusion, this analysis provides insights into some brand image building mechanisms for Wu Chang Rice. The competitive advantage's formation and maintenance may involve additional factors, necessitating in-depth exploration and analysis in future research.

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