

Research on NLP-Based Brand Perception of Pangdonglai under the Mapping of Public CSR Expectations

Haoyu Zheng ¹, Na Tang ^{1,*}, Xuefei Zeng ¹, Zhongyuan Liu ¹ and Ying Jiang ¹

¹ Geely University of China, Chengdu, Sichuan, 641423, China

* Correspondence: Na Tang, Geely University of China, Chengdu, Sichuan, 641423, China

Abstract: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), as a pivotal factor shaping public brand perception, has become a key consideration in corporate brand evaluation. However, it often gives rise to ambiguous public opinion. Against this backdrop, this study examines Pangdonglai Enterprise to identify the core CSR themes influencing public brand perception by analyzing relevant public comments. The findings indicate that geographical influence (0.35827), humanized industry management (0.18527), internal and external services (0.22318), and responsibility (0.23328) are the primary dimensions shaping public perception in terms of theme intensity. This study contributes theoretically by linking corporate social responsibility to brand assets and values, and offers practical implications by enhancing the social connection between enterprises and the public.

Keywords: CSR; Pangdonglai; NLP; brand perception

1. Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a crucial criterion for evaluating brand image and influence. As a dynamic driver of consumer engagement, CSR increasingly shapes consumers' purchasing psychology and behavior. Positive social contributions by enterprises not only enhance product purchase rates but also allow consumers to indirectly participate in social value creation through CSR-related products, thereby achieving psychological satisfaction [1]. For prominent enterprises such as Pang Donglai, public expectations regarding CSR have emerged as a central factor in shaping brand perception. In today's rapidly changing and complex market environment, CSR is closely linked to both risk management and brand image development.

Against this backdrop, this study employs Natural Language Processing (NLP) methods to examine consumer brand perception in the context of corporate social responsibility, with the goal of identifying the emotional interface through which enterprises engage consumers. Focusing on Pang Donglai, we initially collected relevant public comment data, which was then cleaned and processed. The optimal number of topics was determined using metrics such as topic perplexity and coherence. Subsequently, topic content analysis was conducted, with high-probability keywords used to summarize core themes and explore inter-topic associations [2]. The identified themes were further elaborated upon, and public perception focus and enterprise development were analyzed through the lens of topic intensity and evolution.

This study contributes theoretically by enriching and expanding the conceptual understanding of CSR, offering Chinese enterprises strategic insights into brand building from the perspective of social opinion. Practically, it enhances awareness of corporate social responsibility, improves public brand perception, and stimulates enterprise and market vitality. Ultimately, these efforts are significant for strengthening public trust in enterprises and reshaping prevailing perceptions of labor-capital relations.

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2. Literature Review

2.1. Domestic Research Review

2.1.1. Definition and Measurement of Brand Social Responsibility

Brand social responsibility refers to a company's commitment to fulfilling its brand marketing mission by proactively addressing the concerns of stakeholders, including society, the environment, and employees, while simultaneously pursuing profit. It represents an advanced approach to brand building, enabling companies to gain recognition from consumers and the public and foster brand loyalty [3]. Product consumption has evolved from being product-oriented to brand-oriented, with consumers increasingly willing to pay premium prices for branded products or make repeat purchases. This underscores the significant role of establishing brand social responsibility in driving brand development.

The methods for measuring CSR are closely linked to the evolution of the CSR concept itself. Brand CSR perception can be defined as consumers' awareness of a brand's commitment to the long-term development of society, the environment, and resources, guided by sustainability principles [4]. Stakeholders' responses to CSR activities—whether supportive, neutral, or opposed—depend on their perception of the company's fulfillment of social responsibility, and variations in this perception directly influence judgments about the company's motivations. This shifts the focus of CSR measurement from evaluating a company's actions to assessing consumers' perceptions of its motivations. These measurement approaches form the foundation for the empirical analysis conducted in this study.

2.1.2. The Impact of Brand Social Responsibility on Consumer Purchasing Behavior

CSR increasingly influences consumer purchasing behavior, serving as a key factor for shaping brand image, building consumer trust, and driving purchasing decisions. The CSR framework can be understood as a hierarchical structure comprising economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities [5]. Economic and legal responsibilities are foundational obligations of enterprises, while ethical and philanthropic responsibilities reflect societal expectations that are less explicitly defined.

Enterprises performing well in philanthropic responsibilities enhance consumers' sense of identity and satisfaction, thereby increasing purchase intention. For example, brands that actively engage in disaster relief or charitable initiatives can significantly enhance their reputation and stimulate consumer purchasing [6]. Consumers interpret brand behavior through their subjective lens, leading to diverse attitudes and behavioral intentions. Enterprises that prioritize broader social welfare over short-term profits can reduce consumers' perceived risks and foster stronger emotional bonds, transforming brand identification into purchasing behavior. Thus, perceived responsibility is positively correlated with purchase intention [7].

2.2. Foreign Literature Review

2.2.1. Cross-Cultural Differences in CSR Dimensions and Purchase Intention

Research indicates that cultural differences significantly influence how various CSR dimensions affect consumers' brand perception and purchase intention [8,9]. Ethical CSR practices, such as fair operations, and philanthropic initiatives, such as social donations, generally enhance purchase intention, whereas economic and legal CSR tend to have less direct impact. The role of cultural values moderates these effects, with collectivist cultures often prioritizing socially-oriented CSR behaviors.

Environment-oriented CSR demonstrates a universal impact across cultures, particularly in high-involvement products [10]. Environmental CSR not only directly influences purchase intention but also indirectly affects consumers through mechanisms such as

green trust and green brand image. In certain markets, ethical, philanthropic, and environmental CSR orientations have particularly significant impacts, whereas economic and legal CSR play varying roles in shaping brand cognition [11]. Corporations that integrate CSR into core business strategies, rather than treating it as a peripheral activity, are generally more successful in building consumer trust and engagement. Companies that fulfill both economic and social responsibilities often outperform those focusing on only one aspect, benefiting from more frequent and meaningful consumer interactions [12].

Figure 1 illustrates the differences in public CSR perception across cultures, highlighting how ethical, philanthropic, and environmental CSR dimensions exert particularly significant effects in the Chinese market, while economic and legal CSR play varying roles depending on cultural context.

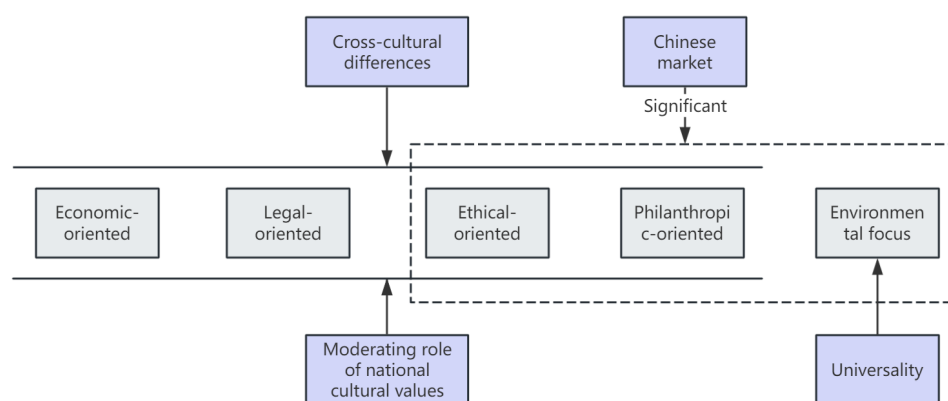


Figure 1. Public CSR Perception Differences Across Cultures.

2.2.2. Consumer Psychology and Behavioral Decision-Making

Consumers evaluate both "functional" and "social" attributes when assessing the value of CSR products. CSR activities that align closely with a company's core business, such as a food company promoting safety, elicit higher perceived value and purchase intention compared to unrelated activities, such as supporting education programs [13-15]. Consumers are increasingly transitioning from passive recipients to active participants, engaging in marketing, content creation, and serving as brand ambassadors. From a neurological perspective, consumer behavior triggers distinct neural responses across different contexts, highlighting biological underpinnings that can inform marketing strategies. However, sustaining responsible consumption in the long term requires continuous reinforcement of brand trust and ethical commitments.

In summary, prior studies have primarily examined CSR from the perspective of consumer behavior and psychology, with relatively limited research focusing on public brand perception within the context of corporate social responsibility.

3. Research Design

3.1. Research Objects and Data Acquisition

This study focuses on customer comments related to Pangdonglai enterprises [16]. All text data were collected from prominent domestic social media and short-video platforms, including Douyin, Weibo, Xiaohongshu, and Toutiao. The collected content primarily reflects public attitudes, evaluations of different consumer groups toward Pangdonglai enterprises, and perceptions of the company's social responsibility. In total, approximately 230,000 text entries were gathered for analysis.

3.2. Data Preprocessing

Among the 230,000 collected comments, preprocessing involved removing irrelevant characters, segmenting Chinese text using the Jieba tool in Python, refining stop-word lists and dictionaries, and filtering out non-target comments. After these procedures, a clean dataset of 160,000 comments was obtained, forming the basis for exploring the influence of corporate social responsibility on consumer brand perception [17,18].

3.3. Research Methods

3.3.1. LDA Topic Model

Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) is an unsupervised probabilistic topic model used to automatically identify hidden themes in document collections and reduce high-dimensional text data to low-dimensional topic distributions. In this study, the LDA model is applied to analyze commercial text feedback, extracting the key topics reflecting public opinion toward Pangdonglai.

3.3.2. Topic Intensity and Topic Evolution

Topic intensity refers to the popularity and attention a topic receives over a specific period, while topic evolution involves identifying and analyzing the dynamic changes of topics over time. Studying topic evolution is crucial in text mining, as it helps reveal underlying patterns in textual content and anticipate emerging trends. This study integrates both topic intensity and evolution to provide a comprehensive understanding of the lifecycle and trajectory of key research topics.

3.4. Research Steps

For the LDA topic model, the research first adjusts hyperparameters to ensure effective topic extraction, where α controls topic sparsity within documents and β controls word sparsity within topics. Default values are applied after optimization. Next, the optimal number of topics is determined based on perplexity and coherence metrics. Finally, visualization using PyLDAvis is employed, with minimal overlap between topic circles indicating well-distinguished topics. Highly similar topics are optimized to ensure clear differentiation.

For topic intensity and evolution analysis, the study calculates the intensity distribution based on the weights of high-probability keywords, identifies the primary consumer concerns under CSR expectations, and determines the evolution trends of each topic. The analysis further explores the internal and external factors influencing Pangdonglai's brand reputation, based on fluctuations in topic intensity and variations among different topics.

4. Empirical Analysis

4.1. Determining the Quantity of Subjects

The study employs the Gensim library to train the LDA model, using perplexity and topic coherence as criteria for determining the optimal number of topics. The ideal number of topics is identified when perplexity is relatively low and topic coherence is relatively high. In this process, the hyperparameters α and β are set to their default values, while the number of topics k is determined using the elbow method.

Based on the topic coherence shown in Figure 2 and the perplexity results in Figure 3, when the number of topics is set to four, both criteria meet the extraction requirements, indicating a satisfactory categorization effect.

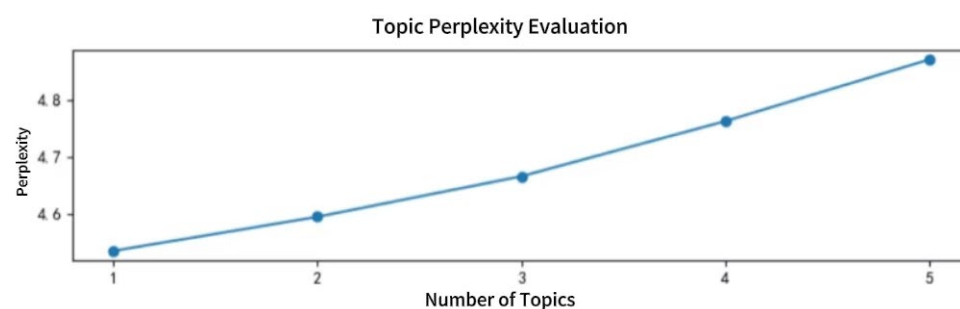


Figure 2. Topic Perplexity Evaluation.

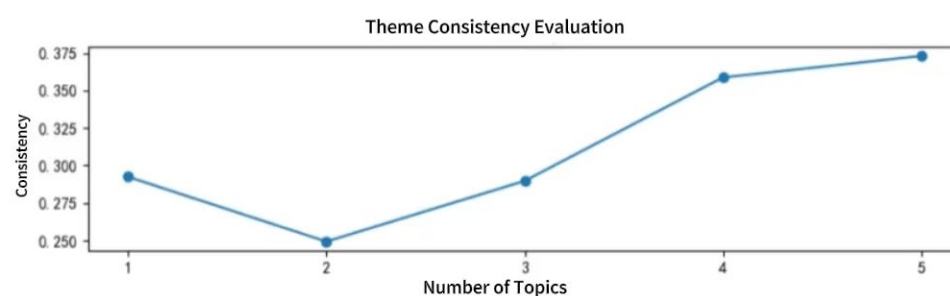


Figure 3. Theme Consistency Evaluation.

4.2. Subject Content Analysis

Before conducting topic modeling, this study first performs feature extraction to segment the comment content into vocabulary units that can be processed by the algorithm, based on parts of speech and grammatical rules. Meaningless words are removed to maximize the reliability and effectiveness of the word segmentation process, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample of word-breaking outcome.

Content	Word segmentation results
Pang Donglai was always intended to be a model. The owner has stated that he won't open chain stores to set an example, and also because quality can't be guaranteed with too many locations.	Pang Donglai/ Originally/ Plays a/ Demonstrative role/ The boss/ Chain stores/ Play an/ Exemplary role/ Quality/ There's no way to/ Guarantee
Seriously, this is so much better than Sam's Club, right? [Crying face R] Please open locations nationwide! No real reason, just to show some bosses how important it is to be generous and treat their employees well.	Sam's Club/ Nationwide/ Why/ Is it important to/ Educate/ Bosses/ On/ Being willing/ To share profits/ And/ Treat/ Employees well
No, Pang Dong Lai's products really are made with quality ingredients. The products are good, and they don't even advertise themselves as budget-friendly, yet people still complain about the price. This kind of picking winners and losers is really unnecessary. If you want good value for your money, do your own research. Not everything that's high quality in stores is cheap.	Not/Pang Donglai/Things/Indeed/ Genuine materials/ Things/ Indeed/ Promotion/Affordable/Too expensive/Want/Cost-effective/Homework/Not/ All/ Malls/ Shops/ Quality/Cheap
The best time to visit Pang Dong Lai is on Mondays and Wednesdays, when it's less crowded, almost like the good old days before it became so popular. It starts getting busier on Thursdays and Fridays. And hitting up the store near my place in the evening is just perfect - I can stroll over, snag some discounts, eat my fill, and then walk home!	Pang Dong Lai/ Happy/ Monday/ Wednesday/ Seldom/ Near/ Dong Lai/ Not popular/ Get busy/ Thursday/ Friday/ People will/ Get busy/ Evening/ Close to home/ Store/ Discount/ Full/ Walk/ Walk home

Based on the LDA results, high-probability feature words for each topic were identified, and the corresponding topic content was then manually refined, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Topic Identification.

Topic No	High Probability Feature Words	Topic Content
Topic 1	Pang Donglai, supermarket, Xuchang, boss, Xinxiang, service, employee, Henan, things, feeling, place, Zhengzhou, company, self-service, cheap, city, national, price, customer, a family	Pang Donglai's regional influence and reach
Topic 2	Crying loudly, video, capitalist, support, smile, salary, hour, tears of joy, Tibetan fox, overtime, like, welfare, most, envy, Afu, exploitation, work, opportunity, estimate, radish	Pang Donglai employee benefits and industry comparison
Topic 3	Employee, betrothal gifts, heart, profit, work, value, salary, cost, funny, reason, life, a kind of, commodity, treatment, environment, can only, relationship, someone, situation, child	Pang Donglai internal management and external service
Topic 4	Enterprise, capital, society, China, entrepreneur, listing, stars, employee, eyes, people, country, development, hahaha, title, golden hoop, world, worker, market, culture, comment	Public evaluation of the brand and perceived social responsibility

As shown in Figure 4, from the perspective of overall topic relationships, Theme 1, Theme 2, and Theme 4 are connected through the keyword "employee," while Theme 2 and Theme 3 are linked by "work" and "salary." These three keywords effectively capture the main aspects of the public's perception of Pang Donglai, highlighting the company's internal management practices.

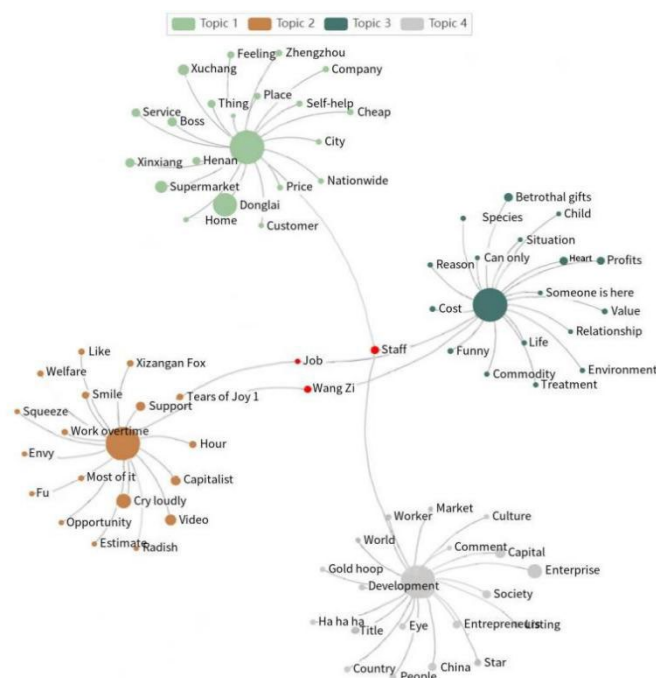


Figure 4. LDA Topic Relationship Diagram.

The overall sentiment analysis of nearly 230,000 comments indicates that the public holds a relatively positive attitude toward Pang Donglai (Figure 5). Specifically, there are 86,079 positive comments, accounting for 38% of the total, 90,719 neutral comments, representing 40%, and 50,916 negative comments, making up 22%. Compared with other

large enterprises, Pang Donglai demonstrates a more favorable public sentiment and enjoys stronger public support.

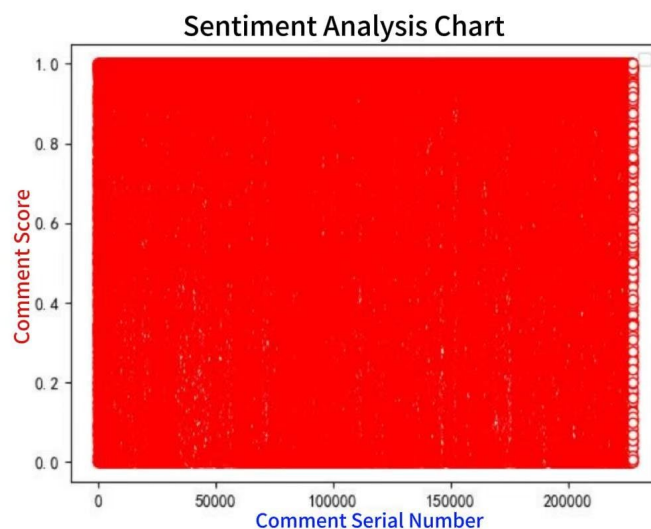


Figure 5. Sentiment Analysis Chart of Overall Reviews.

4.3. Theme Elaboration

4.3.1. Peng Dong Lai's Influence and Radiation within the Geographic Scope

As a supermarket brand originating in Xuchang, Henan, Pang Donglai has gradually established a significant presence within Henan Province—including cities such as Xuchang, Xinxiang, and Zhengzhou—and even expanded its influence nationwide through its unique business philosophy and high-quality service. High-probability feature words such as "supermarket," "employees," "cheap," and "service" highlight the public's core perceptions and praise of Pang Donglai's corporate image. The company's growth is not only attributed to its deep cultivation of the local market but also to its positive reputation, which radiates outward and subtly expands its market through public opinion.

4.3.2. Pang Donglai Employee Benefits and Industry Comparison

Pang Donglai stands out in public perception due to its generous employee benefits. Words like "crying," "like," and "envy" reflect strong public empathy for the company's humanistic care toward employees. In contrast, terms such as "capitalist," "exploitation," and "overtime" capture the public's comparison with other similar enterprises, highlighting prevalent industry shortcomings. These contrasts further reinforce Pang Donglai's positive image in labor-management relations.

4.3.3. Pang Donglai Internal Management and External Service

Pang Donglai's internal management model consistently centers on "employees." Keywords such as "value," "salary," and "benefits" indicate that the public perceives the company's management as both thoughtful and supportive, enabling employees to feel respected and experience a sense of self-worth and belonging. Simultaneously, words like "heart" and "environment" reflect public recognition of the company's external service quality. Moreover, well-treated employees are more motivated to provide high-quality service, creating a virtuous cycle that reinforces corporate reputation.

4.3.4. Public Evaluation of Brand and Perception of Responsibility

Pang Donglai has successfully developed a commercial model with industry demonstration effects, leading the public to expect the company to assume greater social responsibilities. Keywords such as "China," "society," and "enterprise" signify the public's trust

and recognition of the company at a higher level, while "people," "culture," and "world" illustrate expectations for Pang Donglai's corporate culture to continue growing and influencing broader industries. These evaluations reflect not only appreciation for the company's CSR efforts but also a collective desire for a healthier industry ecosystem.

4.4. Theme Intensity and Theme Evolution

Theme intensity is quantified based on the weights of high-probability feature words. As shown in Figure 6, the four themes and their corresponding intensity values are 0.35827, 0.18527, 0.22318, and 0.23328 for Theme 1, Theme 2, Theme 3, and Theme 4, respectively.

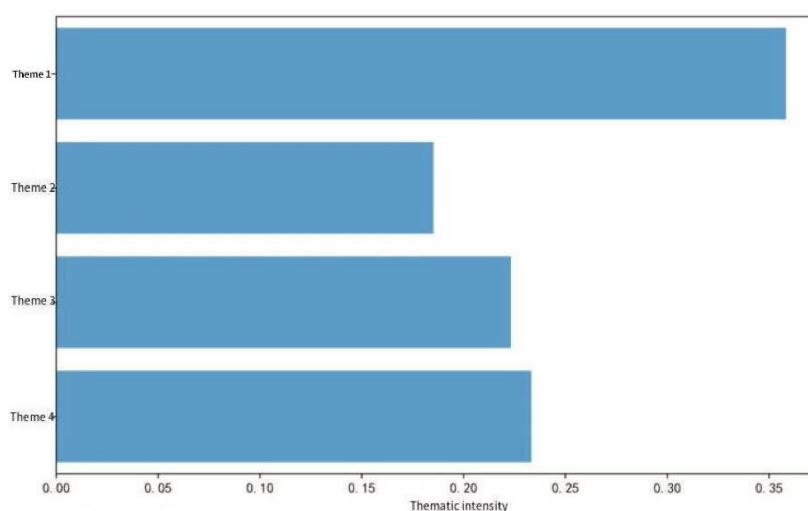


Figure 6. Subject Intensity.

The evolution of topics can be inferred from the distribution of topic intensity. As shown in Figures 7 and 8, the intensity of Topic 1 peaks in phase S5, exhibiting a trend of initial decline followed by a subsequent increase, with a relatively large variation range. Topic 2 remains generally stable, showing only minor fluctuations. Topics 3 and 4 display similar trends, characterized by an initial increase followed by a decrease, reaching their peak in phase S4. A notable difference is that Topic 3 experiences a slight downward trend during phases S1 to S3.

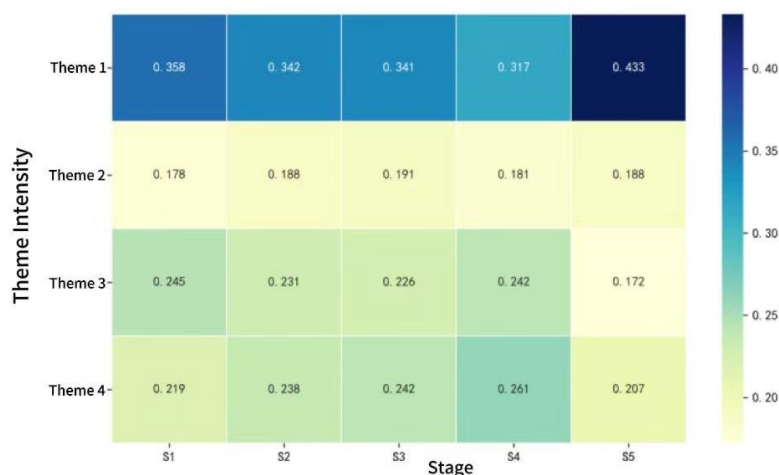


Figure 7. Topic evolution heatmap.

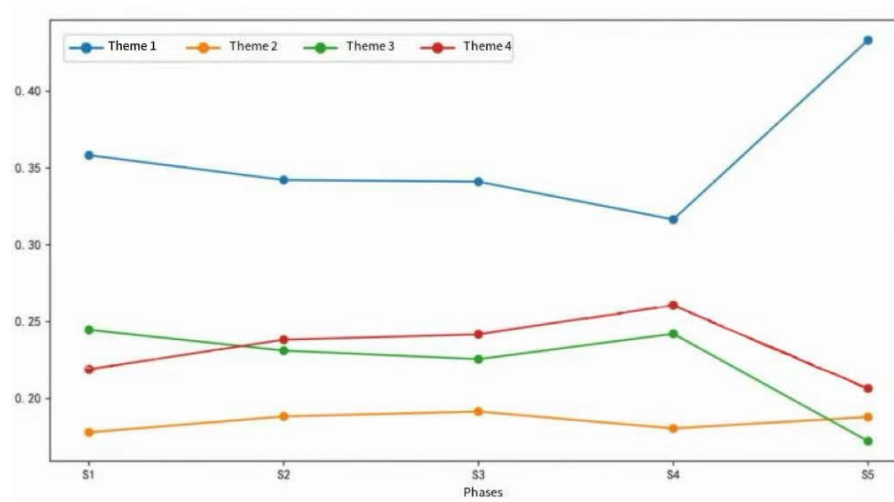


Figure 8. Topic evolution line chart.

Based on the evolution of key themes and landmark events, Pang Donglai's societal impact can be divided into five stages: 1995-1999, 2000-2010, 2011-2015, 2016-2020, and 2021-present. These stages collectively form the timeline of Pang Donglai's CSR practices.

In Stage S1, Pang Donglai disrupted traditional retail service standards with its "no-questions-asked return" policy, establishing a strong reputation and a loyal customer base. However, due to its business strategy, the company's regional influence initially expanded only from Xuchang to the broader Henan Province. Consequently, Theme 1 generally trended downward from S1 to S4. During Stages S1-S4, Pang Donglai also engaged in philanthropic activities, including a donation of 6 million yuan to Wenchuan earthquake victims, reflecting its active CSR efforts. In 2022, salary reforms sparked national discussion and increased brand visibility, leading to a consistent rise in Theme 4, while Theme 2 remained relatively stable.

In Stage S5, Pang Donglai's support for Changsha Bubugao Supermarket further extended its influence and validated the replicability of its business model, resulting in a significant boost to Theme 1 and a gradual but steady increase in Theme 2. Conversely, the "bride price" incident highlighted Pang Donglai's role in shaping public discourse, yet the sensitivity of the topic generated substantial public pressure, causing a decline in Themes 3 and 4.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Research Findings

The research results indicate that Pangdonglai meets most public expectations regarding corporate social responsibility (CSR), and these expectations have deeply influenced the brand perception of the company. The findings can be explained through four thematic dimensions.

Firstly, Pangdonglai's regional influence and outreach, initially cultivated in second- and third-tier cities in Henan, leveraged human-centered marketing rooted in local culture. As a result, many local and visiting customers repeatedly referenced relevant place names, reflecting strong regional recognition. Furthermore, the company's rigorous and professional business approach since its inception has gradually accumulated public praise across Henan, ultimately enhancing its broader influence.

Secondly, Pangdonglai's pioneering anti-involution labor system and highly humanized corporate culture have elicited strong emotional resonance among employees, prompting public discussions comparing the company with other industry peers. This

comparison extends beyond employee salaries and benefits to the overall humane approach embedded in the company's business model. Public acclaim also reflects the abnormal development and vicious cycles present in labor relations across other industries.

Thirdly, Pangdonglai's warm management practices and exceptional service have become synonymous with the brand. Its internal culture embodies equality in power relations and sustainable employee efficiency, generating goodwill among the public while motivating professional enthusiasm among employees. This dual effect enhances both customer satisfaction and employee well-being, while also prompting consumers to act as voluntary brand ambassadors.

Finally, the strong alignment between public evaluations of Pangdonglai and CSR expectations indicates that the company has earned public trust through tangible actions. By integrating altruistic practices into its corporate strategy, Pangdonglai has transformed social responsibility into a form of brand value and brand asset, gradually altering public perceptions of labor-capital relations and elevating these perceptions to a societal level.

5.2. Problem Identification

Based on NLP text analysis, several challenges regarding CSR perception have been identified:

Firstly, the public often holds excessively high expectations regarding the responsibilities undertaken by enterprises. While an enterprise's primary goal is profit, higher employee compensation entails increased management costs. If companies like Pangdonglai heavily emphasize their CSR engagement, the public may impose unrealistically high moral standards. For instance, prudent cost management may be perceived as utilitarian behavior, and widespread public opinion may pressure companies to assume responsibilities beyond their actual capacity. When negative events occur under such heightened expectations, biased dissemination can exaggerate the perceived severity of incidents, reducing public favorability toward CSR initiatives and potentially desensitizing the public to future CSR efforts.

Secondly, mainstream public opinion exerts a strong influence on CSR perception. Public understanding of CSR develops over a long-term cognitive process, as its benefits are often not immediately visible. Dominant narratives can weaken individuals' independent judgment and foster skepticism, leading some to perceive costly CSR activities as mere advertising. In certain cases, companies may highlight CSR engagement to mitigate or obscure internal and external crises, resulting in situations where form prevails over substance and ambiguous signals are released. Such practices can hinder enterprise development and trigger social anxiety and a public trust crisis.

Thirdly, there is often insufficient transparency in CSR activities. When companies disclose only the events they engage in without clarifying outcomes or fund allocation, public speculation and criticism are likely. Conversely, fully disclosing all details could provoke further public opinion crises, given differing perspectives between the company and the public. Additionally, precise data tracking entails varying levels of cost, prompting some enterprises to adopt vague descriptions or mandatory non-disclosure measures, which can produce counterproductive effects.

5.3. Research Recommendations

Based on the research background and findings, the following recommendations are proposed to clarify public CSR perceptions and enhance corporate social responsibility awareness:

Firstly, in balancing public CSR expectations and corporate operations, companies should actively respond to social demands in a reasonable and sustainable manner. Communication platforms can be established to collect public suggestions, alongside risk assessments for CSR initiatives. While gathering public expectations, companies should rea-

sonably plan the costs associated with social responsibility and use sincere actions to temper excessive expectations. This approach encourages public participation in co-creating CSR initiatives, avoiding the self-proving trap and achieving "win-win" outcomes.

Secondly, regarding corporate labor relations, excessively low compensation can reduce employee motivation and trigger labor disputes. Enterprises should actively safeguard employees' fundamental rights, provide competitive industry salaries, and establish a transparent compensation system. Adopting a people-oriented management model and creating a healthy work environment may increase short-term costs, but in the long run, systematic CSR labor practices enhance sustainable competitiveness and empower enterprise development.

Finally, with respect to CSR transparency, public expectations are high, and companies that perform well in fulfilling social responsibility can maintain high consumer engagement. However, CSR practices with insufficient transparency—such as selectively disclosing positive events while concealing negative news—can severely undermine public perception. Enterprises should adopt a responsible and transparent approach to CSR, ensuring that information is clearly communicated, thereby earning long-term public trust and reinforcing brand value.

6. Conclusion

This paper employs NLP-based text analysis to investigate brand perception under the lens of public corporate social responsibility (CSR) expectations, revealing the nuanced mechanisms through which Pang Donglai shapes its brand image. The study identifies four key dimensions—regional influence, internal management, external service quality, and responsibility undertaking—that collectively drive public perception and contribute to the company's overall reputation. By analyzing refined public opinion data from nearly 230,000 comments across multiple social media platforms, the research captures detailed, real-world insights into consumer attitudes, breaking away from traditional macro-level analyses and purely psychological approaches.

Compared with existing studies, this work provides a more granular understanding of how CSR activities translate into brand perception. For instance, Pang Donglai's strong regional cultivation and human-centered marketing practices reinforce local consumer loyalty, while its emphasis on fair labor practices and generous employee benefits generates emotional resonance and strengthens public trust. High-quality external services further amplify positive perceptions, creating a virtuous cycle that transforms consumers into proactive brand ambassadors. Moreover, the public's perception of the company's social responsibility demonstrates how altruistic initiatives can be integrated into brand assets, influencing both corporate reputation and societal expectations.

Despite these insights, the study has certain limitations. The analysis primarily relies on textual public opinion and lacks robust quantitative validation through enterprise-level data, such as financial performance, CSR expenditure, or consumer purchase behavior metrics. In addition, the findings are limited to a single representative company, which may constrain the generalizability of results across different industries or cultural contexts.

Future research should aim to integrate large-scale quantitative data, combining NLP-derived public opinion insights with measurable business outcomes to build a more comprehensive model of CSR-driven brand perception. Longitudinal studies tracking CSR initiatives, public sentiment, and consumer behavior over time would further clarify the causal relationships between corporate actions and brand value. Additionally, expanding the scope to include multiple enterprises across diverse sectors and regions could provide comparative insights, revealing industry-specific best practices and cultural nuances in CSR effectiveness.

Overall, this study demonstrates that thoughtful, transparent, and well-communicated CSR efforts can significantly shape public perception and enhance brand equity. By bridging public expectations with corporate strategy, enterprises can achieve sustainable

brand growth while simultaneously contributing to societal well-being, offering a valuable framework for both academic research and practical application in corporate management.

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