Research on Factors of Influencing Consumer Behavior Patterns in the Food Service Industry

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Abstract: This article provides a comprehensive review of the literature on consumer behavior in the food and beverage industry, with the aim of summarizing and analyzing the factors that influence consumer behavior patterns and providing certain improvement measures for food and beverage industry enterprises. The food and beverage industry is an important part of the economy, so its consumer behavior patterns have a wide-ranging impact on social and economic development. This review mainly includes the factors that influence consumer behavior and their operating modes. Firstly, this paper explores the psychological motives of consumers to a certain extent, mainly divided into brand identification and demand, emphasizing the important roles of brand identification and consumer demand. Secondly, this paper analyzes the factors that influence consumer behavior, mainly including price-performance ratio, consumption experience, marketing strategies, brand image, and product variety, and explains the operating modes and underlying reasons of each factor. Finally, by summarizing consumer behavior patterns and providing some suggestions for the development of the food and beverage industry, this paper offers a forecast for the industry's development. These suggestions mainly include the creation of a brand image and the emphasis on consumption experience.

Keywords: food and beverage industry, psychological motives of consumers, marketing strategies

1. Introduction

At any time, the food and beverage industry is always an important part of the economic life, this is important because food presently is a big industry globally and can earn big profits and make a difference in the economy because it can impact economic development in many different forms.[1]In 2023, the national catering revenue was 5.289 trillion yuan, up 20.4% year-over-year. In the first half of 2024, more than one million large chain enterprises in the catering industry experienced declining sales, and consumers' pursuit of value for money became a trend. During Qingming Holiday: The operating revenue of the monitored catering enterprises in Beijing increased by 13.4% year-on-year, with notable increases in operating revenue for Quanjude, Bianyifang, and Huatian Catering. The operating revenue of 220 catering enterprises in Tianjin reached 14.8 million yuan, up 14.8% year-on-year. The operating revenue of the monitored catering enterprises in Xinjiang increased by 26.97% year-on-year compared to the same period in 2023. The operating revenue of the monitored catering enterprises in Hunan increased by 12.4% year-on-year compared to the same period in 2023. And

these regions are all famous for their local cuisine. Local specialty catering culture saw a consumption boom, and market competition intensified. The market was crowded with seven-eighths of the participants in the race. The severe homogenization competition led the industry to enter an adjustment period, and enterprises paid more attention to operational quality, which would become more important in the future. The trend is expected to be an improvement in both product and service quality. At the same time, the requirements for food safety were raised, and supervision was strengthened, so product quality would become increasingly important. Deeply analyzing the consumer's consumption psychology and the behavior patterns behind their consumption behavior can not only help brands accurately understand what consumers want, but also provide reference for the improvement of their marketing strategies. This study analyzes the past and present of three enterprises, including Luckin Coffee, Starbucks, and COTTI COFFEE Through factor analysis, comparative surveys, and case analysis, the study identifies the problems faced by these enterprises and proposes some improvement suggestions, thus having certain practical significance. This study provides certain reference value for the understanding and development of related research directions in consumer behavior patterns, consumer psychology, etc. Through factor analysis, comparative surveys, and case analysis, the study identifies the impact of factors such as value for money, consumption experience, marketing strategies, product variety, and brand image on consumer behavior patterns, and helps to apply theory to real life.

2. Consumer Psychological Motivation

The first important thing is brand identity: No matter what kind of enterprise, brand identity and corporate identity are key strategies to enhance customer loyalty. For example, Starbucks adheres to the sustainable development concept, striving to achieve positive feedback on the natural resources consumed by the enterprise and becoming a model for resource utilization. Luckin Coffee advocates a sincere and pragmatic business philosophy, adhering to quality first, continuous innovation, pursuing mutual trust and win-win results, and actively promoting the green and low-carbon development of the enterprise. The core value concepts of the enterprise can attract consumer groups that are in line with its values, enabling consumers to satisfy their emotional needs at a deep level while enjoying products and services.

The second one is demand. The basic psychological motive for consumer behavior is demand, as demonstrated by brands such as Starbucks, Luckin Coffee, and COTTI COFFEE, which have successfully captured consumer demand for coffee. However, each brand places emphasis on distinct aspects. Starbucks takes the traditional high-end route and focuses on providing high-quality coffee, while Luckin Coffee and COTTI COFFEE cater to the mass market's coffee needs and prioritize affordable, high-value coffee.

3. Factors That Affect Consumers' Consumption

3.1. Value for money

In the food and beverage industry, the relationship between value for money and consumption behavior is generally positive. This implies that the higher a business's value for money, the higher the consumer's willingness to consume. However, this model is moderated by the consumer's income level, with the higher the consumer's income level, the less significant the impact of value for money. Meanwhile, downgrading of consumer spending has become a trend of the times, and the importance of cost-effectiveness is increasingly emphasized.

3.2. Consumer Experience

The restaurant attributes have been demonstrated to influence diners' satisfaction and loyalty significantly and it is associated with the moderating variables of age, income and education.[2] Refers to the feelings and impressions that consumers receive during the process of purchasing goods or services, which mainly includes a comprehensive evaluation of the quality of products or services, service attitude, and shopping environment. Nowadays, many products have similar functions, and consumer experience has become a major weapon to attract consumers. For example, in coffee sales, Luckin and COTTI COFFEE Coffee have similar cost-effectiveness, but Luckin has a larger market share, one of the reasons being that it provides consumers with a better consumer experience, such as its cup sleeves, coasters, drink sealing, and dining places being better and more complete than COTTI COFFEE Coffee. It is these seemingly minor improvements that have allowed Luckin to establish a foothold in the coffee sales industry and continue to grow.

3.3. Marketing strategy

It refers to the planning of product, price, channel, promotion, etc. by enterprises in market competition based on their own capabilities and goals, in order to increase sales, expand market share, and improve brand awareness. In the catering industry, marketing strategy is an important part. A good marketing strategy can enable more consumers to engage in more consumption behaviors, and even enhance customer loyalty. For example, Luckin's rich cross-branding strategy, including its successful co-branding with Moutai , and its "9.9 yuan per week" marketing strategy, which truly made Luckin successful and gained extensive exposure. In contrast, Starbucks' marketing strategy is much less than that of Luckin, which is one of the reasons for its shrinking market share and increasing market share of Luckin.

3.4. Brand image

Brand image refers to the distinctive characteristics that a company or a particular brand presents in the market and in the minds of the general public. It reflects the public's, particularly consumers', evaluation and perception of the brand. The findings suggest that a positive brand image satisfies consumers and generates long-term trust and loyalty.[3]As mentioned earlier, brand identification is an important psychological motivation for consumer behavior, so brand image can have an impact on that behavior. Meanwhile, brand identity can also enhance consumer loyalty.

3.5. Product Variety

In the food and beverage industry, the variety of products offered can impact consumer behavior. A limited product selection can lead to consumer boredom, while a lack of variety can also decrease brand loyalty and ultimately result in a decrease in spending. However, some consumers have a preference for a single product and are not concerned with the variety of products offered. While increasing product variety, it is also important to maintain product quality. If product variety is increased without paying attention to maintaining product quality, product quality will decline, which will in turn reduce customers' consumption desire and loyalty.

4. Suggestions

Pay attention to building a strong brand image. A good brand image can increase consumer trust in your brand, so it's important to pay attention to building and maintaining it. Here are some ways to do this:

4.1. Value consumer feedback

The research results can help enterprise managers and service providers get insight into customers' satisfaction with their products or services and understand their feelings so that they can make adjustments and correct business decisions. It also helps food e-commerce managers ensure a better e-commerce service design and delivery.[4]The quality of a product is not determined by one's own perception, but by the consumer. If consumers do not recognize the product, no matter how much the company praises it, it will not be effective. Valuing consumer feedback means actively investigating consumer satisfaction with the product and suggestions for improvement. Additionally, simply conducting surveys and asking for feedback is not enough. After collecting consumer feedback and proposed improvements, it is important to quickly implement changes and make sure that reasonable suggestions are put into practice. This can be achieved through the use of survey questionnaires to gather consumer satisfaction with the product, etc.

4.2. Value product quality

Pay close attention to the control of product quality, ensuring consistent high quality and avoiding uneven quality that can make consumers lose trust in the company's quality control. This can lead them to fear buying inferior products and avoid shopping at the company, negatively impacting the company's image.

Third stay true to your original vision and values. Many businesses start out with a strong focus on product quality because they are unsure about their future. However, as they grow older, some businesses forget their original vision and the difficulties they faced in the beginning, which leads to a decline in product quality. Ultimately, they lose the trust and approval of their customers, damaging their brand image, and customers are no longer willing to make purchases.

4.3. Prioritize the user's consumption experience

Good user experience not only makes consumers more willing to engage in consumption behavior, but also enables them to spread the word spontaneously, which is much more effective than the company's advertising efforts. Research supports that a high number of followers may amplify an influencer's impact on consumer behaviour [5] It can also enhance customer loyalty and stimulate the desire for repeat consumption. Firsly, details are often overlooked, but their impact cannot be ignored. For example, the cup sleeve seal on Luckin Coffee products allows consumers to enjoy the company's products comfortably. At the same time, other catering industry brands should also pay attention to the details of product control. Secondly, the service attitude should be good. When people consume they can obtain satisfaction   not only from products, but also from service attitude, a good attitude can provide them with lots of emotional value. It may be a smile or a greeting, but this simple action can have a big impact on the user's consumption experience. Thirdly, solving problems proactively should be valued. When problems arise, don't run away from them. Instead, actively engage with consumers to find a solution. A positive attitude towards problem-solving can help calm consumers' emotions and make them more willing to cooperate. This not only helps resolve the issue more effectively, but also leaves a good impression on consumers and enhances their overall experience of using your product or service.

4.4. Prioritize product quality and avoid pointless collaborations

Pay attention to product quality, and don't engage in collaborations just for the sake of it. Low-quality collaborations will only undermine users' recognition of the brand, leaving them unwilling to continue choosing it. Accelerate digital transformation, cooperate with live streaming, e-commerce, social

reviews and other platforms to expand online consumption scenarios; use big data analysis to understand consumer needs and achieve targeted marketing. Strengthening industry cooperation, catering enterprises can achieve resource sharing and complementary advantages through cooperation, alliance, etc. to jointly face market competition. They can also establish long-term stable cooperative relationships with suppliers to ensure stable supply and quality of ingredients.

Preserving traditional craftsmanship, protecting and inheriting traditional Chinese culinary skills, encouraging catering enterprises and chefs to excavate, sort out, and innovate traditional dishes, so that classic delicacies can regain their vitality. Promoting cultural integration, combining excellent Chinese catering culture with modern consumption needs, creating catering brands and products with cultural connotations, such as developing dishes, tableware, and restaurant decorations related to cultural themes. Promoting international exchanges, actively carrying out international exchanges and cooperation in Chinese cuisine, such as participating in international culinary competitions and holding food festivals, promoting Chinese cuisine to the world and enhancing its global reputation and influence.

5. Conclusion

Building on previous research, this paper delves into the factors that influence consumer behavior patterns and concludes that factors such as value for money, consumption experience, marketing strategies, product variety, and brand image affect consumer behavior through factor analysis, comparative survey method, and case analysis method. In response to the current development challenges faced by the catering industry, health, brand and product quality, family, and promotion are the most prominent drivers, while price, habits, and taste are the most prominent barriers, this paper puts forward new suggestions[6], emphasizing the importance of brand image building and customer consumption experience. Findings Health and price consciousness, along with effort expectancy, significantly influence consumer attitudes toward the food and beverage industry.[7]By improving these two aspects, it provides a new perspective on solving the current problems faced by the catering industry. This article focuses on a subset of the catering industry for research, so there is a limitation in the scope of the study. At the same time, this article attaches great importance to external factors such as value for money and consumption strategies, but the study of consumer psychology is not deep enough. In the future, the scope of the research object can be expanded, combined with consumer psychology, to further explore what consumers really want and find more factors that influence their behavior patterns. At the same time, it can study the connection between the Internet and the catering industry in line with the trend of the times.

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