



Marketing Strategy and Problem Analysis of Light Food Products under the Promotion of National Health

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Abstract. In recent years, with the development of the Internet economy, people's social life has undergone tremendous changes. The rapid development of the healthy light food industry has attracted the attention of academia and the industry, but the existing research on its marketing strategy is still insufficient. This article focuses on the marketing status and problems of light food products. Through analysis, it is found that the current industry generally has problems such as serious product homogenization, weak innovation and research and development capabilities, single brand marketing channels, and vague consumer awareness. Most companies are limited to the single category of "salad+chicken breast", and consumers often blindly pursue "low fat and low sugar" while ignoring nutritional balance. Based on the above analysis, this article proposes that light food brands should strengthen product innovation, expand diversified marketing channels, clarify brand positioning, and carry out consumer education to guide scientific and healthy light food concepts. The research aims to fill the existing academic gap and provide theoretical basis and practical reference for the healthy and sustainable development of the light food industry.

Keywords: Low Fat and Low Sugar, The Healthy Light Food Industry, Marketing Planning

1 Introduction

The rapid development of light food products is the result of policy guidance, consumption upgrading, health demand upgrading, and industrial development resonance. With the implementation of the "Healthy China" strategy, a series of policies advocate for a scientific diet, providing policy guidance for the development of light food [1]. The increase in residents' income drives consumption upgrading, and the demand for food has shifted from "satiety" to "health and quality". After the epidemic era, the public's awareness of health has further awakened, and the demand for "low burden, balanced nutrition" diets among urban white-collar workers, fitness enthusiasts, and others has surged. Social media has also accelerated the popularization of healthy eating concepts, becoming the core driving force behind the demand for light meals. At the same time, the increase in market demand has led to industrial expansion, with multiple entities such as chain brands, convenience stores, and pre packaged food enterprises entering the market, resulting in a rapid growth in the size of the light food

market. However, the wild growth of the industry has also exposed prominent problems such as product homogenization, marketing concept hype, pricing imbalance, and single channels.

Currently, research on light food is mostly focused on dimensions such as product development, ingredient pairing, preservation techniques, and purchasing motivation. Relevant studies are relatively scattered and focus on the micro level. There is insufficient systematic research on light food products in response to the core background of promoting national health, especially the lack of theoretical framework support for marketing strategies of light food products. There is no in-depth analysis of the intrinsic relationship between policy orientation, consumer health awareness, and brand marketing behavior, nor is there a deep exploration of the underlying causes and common problems of industry marketing chaos. The existing research results are difficult to effectively guide the marketing practices of light food brands, and cannot provide sufficient theoretical references for industry standardization and sustainable development. Targeted research is urgently needed to fill this gap [2].

The exploration of the development of light food products in this study has multiple values and is in line with the "Healthy China" strategy and industry development needs. On a theoretical level, it can make up for the shortcomings of existing research that focuses too little and has scattered content. Construct an analytical framework suitable for the light food industry, expand the application of relevant theories in the field of specialty foods, and improve the research system of the healthy food industry. At the industry level, in response to pain points such as homogenization of light food and concept hype, it will deeply explore the causes and propose optimization paths to provide practical references for brand management and promote the industry's transformation towards standardization and quality. At the same time, at the social and policy levels, it will assist in the development of scientific dietary habits and strategic implementation for the entire population. At the same time, it provides empirical evidence for regulatory authorities to formulate industry standards and improve policies, promoting the development of the light food industry.

2 Marketing Strategies for Light Food Products

2.1 Consumer Demand for Light Meals Across Different Social Classes

Regarding the choice of light food, with different monthly incomes and expenses, people's choices of light food types also vary, and can be divided into three levels: high, medium, and low.

There are significant differences in the selection of light food types among different social classes, which are highly correlated with their consumption ability, health awareness depth, taste preferences, and core consumption scenarios [3].

The high-income group pays more attention to high-end, specialized, and personalized choices in light food types. The core choices are focused on customized nutritionist meal preparation, organic ingredient light food (such as organic quinoa salad, wild salmon Pochi bowl), high-end fusion light food (such as wagas brand's feathered cabbage beef energy bowl, etc.), and imported functional light food (such as

Greek yogurt bowl containing probiotics, organic chia seed breakfast cup). Their demand for light food not only stays at the level of "weight loss", but also pursues the combination of "nutritional balance", "food quality" and "dietary experience". They will actively choose light food types with organic certification and traceable origin, and are willing to pay for customized services, such as daily light meal packages customized according to their own fitness goals (muscle gain, shaping). In addition, this class also tends to choose light food dishes from high-end restaurants in business and social scenarios, balancing health and social tone [4].

The types of light food for the middle income class focus on agility, popularity and high cost performance. The mainstream choices include standardized light food of chain brands (such as tuna panini of Starbucks), classic fat reduction meals of takeaway platforms (such as chicken breast brown rice, vegetable sandwiches), and ready to eat light food in convenience stores (such as seaweed chicken breast Rice and vegetable roll of 7-11) [5]. Their understanding of light food mainly focuses on "low calorie, fat reducing", and when choosing, they value convenience and cost-effectiveness, tend to stick to classic types, and try less niche ingredients for light food. At the same time, influenced by social media platforms, they will also follow the trend and choose popular light food types, such as taro mud meat pine whole wheat sandwiches and poplar branch sweet dew low calorie bowls. However, these choices are mostly short-term attempts, and the core consumption is still dominated by standardized and easily accessible light food. In addition, in scenarios such as workplace lunch and post workout energy supplementation, this class will prioritize choosing light foods that can quickly fill their stomachs, balancing health and practicality.

The selection of light food types for low-income groups presents characteristics of affordability, basics, and localization, mainly focusing on basic vegetable salads (paired with regular salad dressings), affordable grain light food (such as white rice with stir fried vegetables, corn and sweet potatoes, and other coarse grains), homemade simple light food (such as boiled eggs and cold cucumber salad), and low-priced ready to eat light food on e-commerce platforms. Due to limited purchasing power, their understanding of light food is relatively basic, often equating it with "foods with more vegetables and less fat". When choosing, they prioritize price and rarely purchase chain brands or high-end light food. In addition, the light food choices of this class rely more on localized ingredients and have less exposure to imported ingredients such as quinoa and chia seeds. Moreover, their consumption scenarios are mainly focused on daily family meals, lacking specialized light food consumption scenarios. The types of light food are mostly supplementary to regular meals

2.2 Marketing Strategies for Light Food Products Targeting Different Income Groups

In response to the differentiated needs of different income groups, light food brands need to develop refined market segmentation strategies to accurately match the core demands and consumption habits of each consumption level. The following elaborates on the corresponding marketing strategies and product layout directions for four typical groups: white-collar workers, middle class, high-income individuals, and low-income individuals in the workplace [6].

The light food marketing strategy for white-collar workers aged 25-35 in the workplace is scenario based penetration, which achieves marketing through scene promotion and price discounts. The core consumer group consists of white-collar workers aged 25-35, with moderate purchasing power and a preference for cost-effective light meals priced between 15-35 yuan. Their core needs are convenient satiety, card control, and weight loss. Positioned based on appearance, convenience, health, and emotional value, it precisely meets the core needs of this group for card control, weight loss, and efficient dining in the workplace, solving their core pain points such as heavy oil and salt in takeaway, bland and unappetizing weight loss meals, difficulty in meeting time-saving needs, and easy hunger in the afternoon. The product layout takes into account both basic needs and traffic flow, and is divided into weekday basic needs, appearance traffic flow, afternoon tea and meal options. It is labeled with nutritional information such as calories and protein to ensure taste and quantity, avoiding common problems such as "unappetizing and low quantity". The price is mainly in the mainstream range of 25-45 yuan, catering to the consumption ability of white-collar workers. It has launched a set meal combination of main meals and snacks, paired with weekly and monthly cards to lock in repeat purchases for users. Channel focuses on high-frequency white-collar activity scenarios: food delivery platforms optimize titles and header images, highlighting low card and convenient selling points; Offline pick-up discounts and group meal services are available at office locations; Private domain push menu, discounts, and weight loss knowledge, tailored to the high-frequency takeaway, social sharing, and willingness to pay a premium for health consumption habits of white-collar workers.

The marketing strategy of the middle class is centered on "quality and texture+health professionalism+circle recognition+scene ritual sense", focusing on high-end traceable ingredients and scientific nutritional ratios [7]. Launching customized packages and high-end gift boxes, priced between 60-120 yuan in the mid to high end range, and paired with membership services to lock in repeat purchases. The channel focuses on high-end scenarios, combined with circle communication to convey exquisite health concepts, avoiding the pain points of ordinary light food, meeting the high requirements of the middle class for quality and experience, and achieving dual improvement of reputation and conversion. The middle class focuses on "quality and health premium, strong consumption ability, pursuit of ingredients and experience, with a majority of light food consumption ranging from 25-50 yuan. Marketing needs to strengthen nutritional matching, while creating offline immersive stores, combined with a membership system, establishing trust through professional content, and establishing stable connections between light food and consumers [8].

The light food marketing strategy for high-income individuals is centered around "ultimate quality+exclusive customization+health traceability+identity recognition", with high-end ingredients as the main body and customized personalized nutrition plans. The pricing is high and highlights scarcity, paired with exclusive membership, private kitchen delivery and other services, meeting the needs of high-income individuals for ultimate experience and exclusivity. The channel focuses on high-end health and light food clubs, delivering a high-end healthy lifestyle and achieving high

premiums and repeat purchases. Provide exclusive delivery and health management solutions to shape a high-end light food brand.

The strategy of light food products for low-income groups is centered on "high cost-effectiveness+basic health+convenience and affordability", focusing on affordable home cooked ingredients, simple and light seasonings, affordable pricing and sufficient portions, avoiding premiums and meeting their needs for low-cost and healthy dining. The channel focuses on community convenience stores, affordable takeout, and street convenience points. Low income individuals are price sensitive and have a preference for basic health needs. Marketing focuses on low price attraction, simplifying product SKUs, relying on community stores and local channels, strengthening cost-effectiveness awareness through down-to-earth communication, and achieving market penetration. The consumption capacity of the low-end consumer market is limited, and the cost-effectiveness of products is highly valued. Sales can be increased and profits can be obtained by adjusting prices, discounts, coupons, and other means

3 Issues Concerning the Development of Light Food Products

3.1 Serious Homogenization of Products

Light food products generally suffer from insufficient innovation and similar forms. The mid to low end market is concentrated in classic combinations such as salads and chicken breast meat, while the coverage of high-end innovative categories is limited. Some brands, in order to control costs or pursue taste, have unscientific nutritional ratios and chaotic "pseudo light food" situations, resulting in an imbalance between taste and practicality and a low repurchase rate. The industry is trapped in a fixed formula of "salad+chicken breast+mixed grain rice", with over 70% of brand flagship products highly overlapping, with minimal differences in ingredients and prices. Small and medium-sized brands often directly imitate the top, lacking core competitiveness. Therefore, uneven regional development, low chain rates, serious product homogenization, and single product flavors are the main limiting factors for the development of the industry [9].

3.2 The Extensive Operation Mode

The marketing side is overly reliant on traffic platforms and concept hype, with homogenized content dissemination and an imbalanced pricing system. It is facing problems such as low price and low quality in the mid to low end, inflated premium in the mid to high end, and insufficient offline marketing capabilities. At the supply chain level, most small and medium-sized brands lack stable food procurement channels and complete cold chain logistics. At the same time, the freshness and quality of light food products are difficult to control, resulting in a high loss rate; Overreliance on online food delivery and offline stores in first - and second tier cities, insufficient coverage of downstream markets and community channels, and low integration of online and offline. Moreover, the cost control and profit model are not mature, and enterprises generally lack refined cost accounting, resulting in high food loss, labor costs, and

takeaway platform commissions, leading to prominent phenomena of high gross profit and low net profit.

Most stores rely on food delivery channels, have a high dependence on platform traffic, weak independent operation capabilities, and poor risk resistance.

3.3 Lack of Industry Standards and Immature Ecosystem

At present, there is a lack of official definitions, nutritional standards, and classification norms for light food in China. The industry entry threshold is low, and there are frequent irregularities such as non-standard labeling and false advertising. The regulatory and industry self-discipline mechanisms are not perfect, and disorderly competition undermines industry trust. At the same time, the light food industry ecosystem has not yet formed, the connection between policy guidance and market demand is insufficient, top brands have not taken the lead in establishing industry standards, and the layout of adaptable products for different income groups and regions is insufficient, which makes it difficult to drive the industry to transform towards standardization and quality, and restricts the sustainable development of the industry.

4 Suggestions for the Development of Light Food Products and Marketing Issues

The development of the light food industry requires joint progress in both product and marketing, in order to break through in other different industries. In terms of products, it should focus on differentiated positioning, develop functional packages for specific groups such as fitness and sugar control, and integrate regional flavor innovation to enhance acceptance. At the same time, it is necessary to optimize the product itself, establish a transparent and trustworthy image through brand promotion, balance taste and satiety, and adopt sustainable packaging. Local direct procurement and centralized kitchen standardization can be used in the supply chain to ensure freshness and production efficiency.

In terms of marketing, "differentiation should be highlighted in the process, and optimization should be carried out from three aspects: product, channel, and brand image" [6]. For example, professional value should be conveyed through advertising marketing and user evaluations, combined with scenario based displays to broaden consumer scenarios. Digital transformation is key, as it can enhance user repurchase and stickiness through community operations, and cross industry linkage with health institutions to attract traffic. Brands should advocate light food as a positive attitude towards life and enhance favorability through social responsibility projects. In the promotion process, different e-commerce platforms and audiences should be targeted with different efforts, and optimization plans should be proposed to attract new consumers. Summarize feasible safeguard measures for its implementation, so that the marketing strategy plan can be effectively implemented [10].

At the same time, different light food industry brands should establish their own brand image. "Enterprises can rely on professional teams to create their own websites and interactive mobile applications, which not only provide consumers with a space for

light food experience and communication, but also strengthen brand image promotion, thereby enhancing consumers' stickiness and identification with the enterprise degree, increase purchase rate.

To cope with industry challenges, the light food industry should adopt strategies such as "price stratification of different types of light food" to cover a wider consumer group, flexibly adjust dishes according to seasons, and use technological tools to provide personalized recommendations to enhance the experience. In the long run, deepening the supply chain, expanding derivative categories such as healthy snacks, and driving data-driven iteration will be the core path for light food brands to build lasting competitiveness.

5 Conclusion

This article analyzes the development and marketing issues of light food products, and identifies problems such as severe homogenization of light food product types, extensive operational models, weak supply chain and channel support, lack of industry standards, and immature ecosystems. These issues make it difficult for the industry to transform towards standardization and quality, and the difficulty of managing light food brands has intensified. In addition, this article can also provide insights into the demand for light food products among people of different social classes, as well as the marketing strategies of light food product merchants for people of different social classes. It also reflects the historical background and reasons for the rapid development of light food products. Future research can focus on the homogenization and ecological system of light food products, enabling diversified development of light food products and improving the ecological system of light food products. Moving towards a sustainable and stable chain development path with a scaled and standardized brand image. It also has certain reference value for improving the marketing management capabilities of enterprises in the same food delivery and catering industry.

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