

A Case Study of Mixue Bingcheng's Marketing Strategies in China's New-Style Tea Industry

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Abstract. Over the past decade, China's new-style tea beverage industry has grown rapidly amid fierce market competition. While high-end tea brands target consumers in large cities, mid- and low-cost brands compete for mass-market customers. As a representative mass-market chain, Mixue Bingcheng, the largest tea brand in China, has achieved large-scale domestic and overseas expansion. This paper adopts literature review and case-study methods, applies the 4P marketing theory, and analyses how Mixue Bingcheng responds to major industry trends through its marketing practices. The study finds that brand success relies on accurate identification of market trends and matched marketing strategies, rather than blind imitation of online marketing hotspots. Clear mass-market positioning, integrated supply-chain systems, and IP marketing are its core competitive advantages. Nevertheless, the brand still faces risks including franchise supervision challenges and product homogenization. This research provides practical references for catering chain enterprises and supplements case resources for mass-market beverage-chain research.

Keywords: New-Style Tea Industry, Mixue Bingcheng, 4P Theory, Marketing Strategy, Sinking-Market

1. Introduction

China's new-style tea drink business has grown really fast over the last ten years. Lots of brands have entered the market, and drink retailers face tough competition. High-end brands such as Heytea and Nayuki sell expensive products for big-city consumers, while many mid- and low-price brands compete for ordinary customers. However, not every brand can survive. Some simply copy popular online marketing tricks and end up failing [1].

Against this background, Mixue Bingcheng has stood out. It has opened tens of thousands of stores across China and overseas markets, and is widely loved by ordinary young consumers. Its success raises two key research questions. What core factors help catering brands succeed in this highly competitive market? And how can brands follow real market changes and use proper marketing tools to gain advantages? This paper uses Mixue Bingcheng as a case to explore these questions.

1.1. Research purpose and significance

This paper mainly tries to prove two points. Brand success depends on recognizing real market trends and adopting matching marketing strategies. Blindly chasing online trends or copying competitors cannot support long-term growth [2].

This study offers practical references for catering operators. Many small-and-medium food companies lack systematic thinking. They only pursue short-term online popularity and ignore real consumer needs. By analyzing Mixue Bingcheng's practice, this paper gives simple suggestions for brands to adjust marketing according to market shifts. It also adds case materials for research on Chinese mass-market beverage chains [3].

1.2. Research method and paper structure

Two methods are adopted. The first is a literature review: collect and sort studies on catering market changes, consumer demands, 4P theory, and IP marketing [4]. The second is a case study. Take Mixue Bingcheng as the research object, sort out its background, market environment, and business actions, and finish the analysis with relevant theories [5].

This paper has seven chapters. Section 1 is the introduction. Section 2 reviews existing literature and builds the analysis framework. Section 3 presents Mixue Bingcheng's basic situation and industry trends. Section 4 analyses how the brand adapts to market trends. Section 5 carries out 4P-based marketing analysis. Section 6 discusses success factors, brand risks, and management inspirations. Section 7 concludes and points out research limitations.

2. Literature review

2.1. Research on market trends in the catering industry

Scholars have summarized three major trends for China's new-style tea sector [6].

First, consumer demands have changed. Young people are the main buyers. They look for good value for money, and emotional consumption is becoming popular: they want fun, identity, and social experience besides drinks. Meanwhile, more customers pay attention to health, raw materials, and food safety [7].

Second, sinking-market potential is huge. First- and second-tier cities are crowded, while third-tier cities, counties and towns still have large growth space. Rising disposable income in these areas creates strong demand for affordable tea drinks [8].

Third, supply-chain integration matters greatly for chain brands. Fast store expansion needs stable raw-material supply, cost control, and quality management. Poor supply-chain support will cause unstable product quality and high operating costs [9].

2.2. Research on catering marketing strategies

Kotler's 4P theory is a classic analysis tool. It divides marketing into Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. Product covers design, standardization, and product portfolio; Price refers to pricing and profit setting; Place includes location selection and franchise management; Promotion contains advertising, public communication, and brand building [10]. It is still widely used for catering case studies [11].

In recent years, IP marketing and social-media viral marketing have attracted much attention. IP marketing builds personified brand symbols to create emotional bonds with consumers and lower

communication costs [12]. Social-media marketing mainly relies on short-video platforms to encourage user discussion and sharing [13].

Researchers also warn against blind imitation. Many brands copy popular marketing projects without considering their own positioning. Such trend-chasing wastes investment and fails to build stable customer groups [14].

2.3. The relationship between market trends and marketing strategies

Market trends show external operating directions and reflect real consumer demands and industry opportunities. Marketing strategies are brands' active responses, which turn market opportunities into real profits through product, price, channel, and promotion plans [15].

Market trends set boundaries for marketing decisions. Marketing activities going against market demands will fail even if they look creative. However, opportunities cannot bring profits automatically. Brands need proper marketing measures to seize them. Accordingly, this paper's core analysis logic is to check whether Mixue Bingcheng's marketing fits new-style-tea market trends.

3. Case overview: Mixue Bingcheng

3.1. Brand profile

Founded in Zhengzhou in 1997, Mixue Bingcheng is a Chinese new-style tea and soft-serve ice-cream chain. Its mission is "let everyone in the world enjoy high-quality but affordable tasty food" [16].

It positions itself as a mass-oriented, cost-effective brand. Most products are priced from 2-10 RMB. It avoids direct competition with high-end tea brands in big cities. Its core consumers are price-sensitive ordinary groups: teenagers, college students, and young people in small-and-medium-sized cities and towns. Young suburban residents in big cities are also important customers [17].

Franchising is its main expansion mode. Most stores are run by franchisees instead of headquarters-owned direct shops. Headquarters earns major income from selling raw materials and equipment rather than franchise fees. It provides unified products, supplies, store standards, and training. This lowers store-opening barriers and supports rapid expansion. Up to now, Mixue Bingcheng owns more than 50,000 stores worldwide [18].

3.2. Industry market trends faced by Mixue Bingcheng

Three trends shape its operating environment. First, cost-performance-oriented consumption and emotional consumption keep rising. Second, sinking markets bring huge business opportunities. Third, integrated supply chains become a necessary condition for large-scale chain development.

4. How Mixue Bingcheng responds to main market trends

Many brands know these trends but cannot make proper adjustments. Mixue Bingcheng takes practical actions for each trend.

For cost-effective and emotional consumption demands, it keeps low product prices even when material costs rise. Its Snow King IP produces songs, short videos, and cartoon images. Young consumers share this content online for fun, so buying drinks also brings emotional pleasure. Still, its emotional content is relatively simple and not deep-going [19].

It makes full use of sinking-market opportunities. While high-end brands focus on big cities, Mixue Bingcheng actively opens shops in counties and small towns. Low franchise thresholds attract local investors, helping fast market coverage. Even so, some small-town stores face limits such as narrow shop space.

The brand builds self-owned factories and logistics teams for supply-chain integration. Centralized raw-material production and distribution stabilize product quality and cut costs for thousands of stores. Its low-price strategy cannot work without such support. Nevertheless, managing this huge supply chain carries risks; problems in one link will influence many shops [20].

Overall, Mixue Bingcheng does not merely observe market changes. It adjusts business operations to catch market opportunities.

5. Marketing strategy analysis based on the 4P framework

5.1. Product

Mixue Bingcheng keeps a simple product line of fruit tea, milk tea, and soft-serve ice-cream. It launches new items occasionally but avoids overly complicated menus. Store-friendly production fits mass public taste, and low-sugar choices respond to health-conscious demands. But its innovation speed lags behind high-end competitors, and some products taste similar. Generally, its product design matches cost-performance expectations.

5.2. Price

Most products stay within 2-10 RMB. This suits students and young people with limited budgets. The brand gains profits through large sales volume instead of high unit prices. This pricing fits the cost-performance trend well. Yet low prices create constant cost-control pressure when raw-material prices fluctuate.

5.3. Place

Most outlets are franchise stores located near schools, business streets, and town shopping areas with heavy young-customer flow. Headquarters offers unified decoration and material supply, supporting fast sinking-market expansion. One weakness is limited supervision over all outlets; individual stores may have service or hygiene problems [21].

5.4. Promotion

Mixue Bingcheng seldom spends heavily on celebrity endorsements. It focuses on the Snow King IP and short-video social media. Lots of users create spontaneous funny content, bringing free brand exposure. It also holds simple offline activities to build emotional connections with youth. But its promotional content is somewhat singular and overly relies on the Snow King image.

In short, most of its 4P marketing arrangements are consistent with major market trends.

6. Core success factors, existing risks and management inspirations

6.1. Core success factors

First, it has clear positioning for mass-market target customers. All business decisions serve ordinary consumers instead of blindly chasing high-end markets. Second, its operations follow real market trends rather than copying hot marketing ideas. Third, self-built supply chains provide solid cost and quality support for low-price large-scale development. Fourth, the Snow King IP reduces advertising costs and builds emotional links with young buyers.

6.2. Existing brand risks

Large-scale franchising brings heavy supervision pressure. Bad performance of single stores may damage overall brand reputation. Mid-to-low-price competitors keep increasing, so market competition becomes fiercer. Product homogenization is obvious, and products are easy to copy. Besides, overseas expansion faces different local policies and consumption habits, bringing extra management challenges [22].

6.3. Management inspirations for other catering brands

Brands need clear customer positioning and should observe real-world trends instead of copying online hot cases blindly. For chain enterprises, complete supply-chain capacity is essential before large-scale expansion. Brands can build IP for emotional interaction, but product quality remains the core foundation. When expanding via franchising, quality supervision should keep pace with store quantity growth.

7. Conclusion

7.1. Main conclusion

Taking Mixue Bingcheng as a case, this paper studies how catering brands gain competitiveness in the new-style tea industry. The research finds two key success conditions: recognizing real market trends and formulating matching marketing strategies.

Mixue Bingcheng's 4P strategies largely fit market trends. Clear mass-market positioning, complete supply chains, and IP marketing drive its success. Meanwhile, it faces risks in franchise management, fierce competition, and product homogenization. Its experience offers practical references for other catering chain brands.

7.2. Research limitations

This is a single-case study mainly based on second-hand public materials. Questionnaires or face-to-face interviews with consumers and franchisees have not been conducted, so first-hand feedback is missing. Besides, factors such as policy influence and raw-material price changes are not discussed in depth.

7.3. Future research directions

Future research can collect primary data through surveys and interviews. Comparing Mixue Bingcheng with other mid-range tea brands can also produce more comprehensive conclusions.

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