

# ***Implement of the Marketing Mix Theory in Increasing Customer Satisfaction at Internet-famous Restaurant***

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**Abstract:** Since people like to post photos on social platforms as a way to share them in their daily lives, restaurants have discovered that this can be utilized as a free promotional advertisement. The restaurant began to pay attention to the decoration of the store but also forgot the importance of the product itself. The purpose of this research was to discover how to improve the Internet-famous restaurant's current situation when the satisfaction of consumers shows a downward trend. Taking TASTIEN as an example, the marketing mix theory of the 4Ps and data from other scholars' research were utilized for relevant analysis. The reason for the decline in TASTIEN's product quality was the excessive number of franchised stores. Therefore, TASTIEN should improve the detection of food ingredients and continue to innovate. What's more, the problem of too many complaints from TASTIEN customers is due to poor quality of service. In this regard, TASTIEN should invest more time in training employees and improving basic behavioral qualities. Similarly, TASTIEN is not promoted well because it is overly reliant on one platform. It should try to follow the social trend, enter the market as a sponsor, and participate in more social platforms.

**Keywords:** internet-famous restaurant, customer loyalty, product, promotion

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Research Background**

In 2013, the term "influencer" appeared on Chinese social media, followed by terms such as "influencer restaurant," which attract more people and stimulate consumption decisions by posting photos of storefronts and products on social media. However, if the store only relies on layout marketing for a long time, it may impede successful outcomes. Here is TASTIEN as an example. TASTIEN is a Chinese fast-food brand, with Chinese red as the overall color tone of the store. TASTIEN integrates Chinese elements of decoration such as lion dance, auspicious clouds, etc., redefining Western-style burgers in a Chinese way and conveying Chinese culture with Chinese taste. TASTIEN spread all over the world and enabled foreigners to fall in love with China Fort. However, with the increasing number of franchised outlets in the last three years, retailers have been unable to guarantee their own service and food quality. The number of negative reviews on social media has been increasing, while consumer loyalty to businesses has decreased, resulting in a decrease in the flow of people into physical locations.

After the phenomenon of "Internet-famous restaurants" and "check-in" appeared, many scholars carried out relevant research. For example, in 2022, Yu took young people as the target group and studied how online celebrity stores apply social platforms to effectively promote and convey consumption concepts and values [1]. In the same year, Philip et al. applied Google Vision AI to assess the positive correlation between images and engagement (likes and comments) in order to study the relationship between the visual characteristics of Internet-famous restaurants and social media engagement and identify which products are attracting attention, providing marketers with easy-to-understand marketing strategies [2]. In 2021, Ma utilized the questionnaire survey method to deeply understand the current situation of Internet celebrity catering consumption and further explore the reasons behind it [3].

## 1.2. Research Gap

Many scholars have conducted research on many aspects of the term "Internet celebrity", but most of them are based on Internet celebrities as the main body to conduct divergent discussions. It can be known that no previous research has explored the layout of the store. Therefore, this paper would like to fill the research gap, study the marketing strategy that relies on social media photos to attract customers, and raise the research question, "How can a restaurant that is all over social media change the current situation when customer satisfaction declines in order to maintain and continue to grow?"

This research would observe phenomena and reveal insights through the analysis of TASTIEN due to its rapid development. TASTIEN cannot guarantee the quality of food in every franchise store, whether it is product taste or food safety problems that affect the brand's own reputation. For TASTIEN to continue to maintain the characteristics of the Internet-famous brand, the continuous innovation of products and models is a great challenge. Because of the increasing number of bad reviews, consumers' disappointment with him is also increasing. Not only TASTIEN, but many Internet celebrity stores use the same model. When it first opened, the flow of people was very large. There would be crowds and even scalpers to purchase on behalf of others, resulting in a reduction in ratings. Later on, buyers are more concerned with whether the restaurant's dishes are good or not, as well as the quality of service. It is not enough for a restaurant's success to rely on customers taking photos and posting them on social media.

## 1.3. Structure of This Paper

To address the previously mentioned issue, this research will use TASTIEN as a case study, combine the Marketing mix theory of 4Ps factors, analyze the reasons for Tustin's current decline in customer loyalty by querying the relevant articles and data published by TASTIEN on its official website (number of stores, store regional distribution, Internet-famous store layout, and so on), and make relevant recommendations at the end.

## 2. Case Description

TASTIEN was founded in 2012, and its headquarters are located in Fuzhou, Fujian. In recent years, the new Chinese style and national tide in the catering industry have become popular. From new Chinese roasting, new Chinese tea, and new Chinese tea houses, the rise of the Chinese burger concept is not surprising. The miracle of TASTIEN is that it has bucked the trend during the epidemic, and when most F&B brands are struggling, it has opened stores quickly and quickly got out of the loop. From 1,772 in August 2022 to 3,533 in January 2023, doubling in just 5 months [4]. TASTIEN takes "making a warm hamburger" as its original intention, defines the Western-style burger in the Chinese way, and promotes Chinese culture to let the world know Chinese burgers.

The main business model is Chinese element store layout, which is the main national trend in design style and stimulates the cultural identity of consumers. It can be seen in Figure 1, based on the brand logo and IP image inspired by China's awakening lion and the store decoration style with big red as the main tone [5]. The woodblock prints of Chinese intangible cultural heritage and the blessing packaging of the Year of the Tiger with traditional Chinese cultural attributes are yielded. TASTIEN's goal is to build cultural brands, create Chinese burgers, and keep customers close. TASTIEN, on the other hand, uses the benefits of social media discussion and celebrity popularity to enhance consumers' impressions of the brand and loyalty, motivating them to make purchasing decisions. For example, in 2023, the TASTIEN brand will open a new chapter in its second decade and make more efforts in brand building. TASTIEN recruited rapper Vannida to be the brand's good taste recommendation officer, to generate Chinese pride with love and firmness, and to promote the brand tagline "is China's stomach, love China fort", once again attracting the passion of young people. TASTIEN's core customer groups are young people and students, which almost overlap with its core heavy users, targeting the TikTok market. Tastien has opened multiple accounts on TikTok for differentiated operations and full-time live broadcasting.



Figure 1: TASTIEN logo [5].

Although Internet-famous restaurants have drawn a rising number of customers, numerous negative consequences have been revealed to the public, particularly in terms of food safety and service quality. For example, "TASTIEN stepping on thunder" and "How to complain about TASTIEN's poor service attitude" will appear in the Little Red Book. And when searching for TASTIEN on Dazhongdianping, the highest star rating is only 4 stars, with the majority being 3 and a half stars. These complaints will have an impact on the brand's consumer loyalty, and many potential customers will be discouraged from purchasing as a result of them.

### 3. Analysis on Problems

Marketing mix theory serves as a marketing tool and consists of four aspects—product, price, place, and promotion—that companies mix, generate, and deliver customer value according to their target markets. Product means the company combines goods and services for the target market [6]. Price means the amount of money that customers must pay for the product [6]. Place means the company makes the product available to target consumers [6]. Promotion means the activities that attract and persuade target consumers to purchase products [6]. A large and growing body of literature has investigated the marketing mix theory. For instance, Erlina investigated how does the marketing mix at a coffee shop in Bandung influence customer loyalty?" and emphasized that coffee shop businesses could utilize the marketing mix to increase customer loyalty. [7] Besides that, Reihani studied the connection between the marketing mix and sport tourism and randomly chose 265 sport tourists

watching a football game to research [8]. In this paper, based on the understanding on TASTIEN, the paper will focus on product (visible and invisible products) and promotion to analyze TASTIEN's marketing strategies.

### 3.1. Issues on Food Quality

When the number of physical stores increased, TASTIEN did not address food flavor, consequently the food quality could not be consistent from store to store. Customers developed food poisoning with diarrhea and vomiting after eating burgers in certain stores. This has an extremely negative effect on TASTIEN presently; the increasing unfavorable remarks on social media have a significant impact on people's confidence in TASTIEN. According to one customer, the fried chicken and French fries were moist, and the dish was chilly when it was presented. The quality and price did not correspond. In comparison to KFC and McDonald's, TASTIEN would not return.

It is now well established from a variety of studies that food quality (taste and safety) could change consumers' purchase decisions to a large extent. Julia Liguori utilized qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method study designs to prove that food safety would affect consumer behaviors, especially in low- and middle-income countries [9]. Zhigang Wang also conducted research on the consumption of pistachio in Beijing, and with the increase in disposable income of citizens, consumers pay more attention to the intake of food nutrition [10]. Relevant data show that in 2016, the annual per-nut consumption of Chinese residents was about 3.7kg [10]. The purchase likelihood of pistachios from the original too-sweet variety was reduced by 9.01%, 7.47%, and 2.78% in the United States, China, and Turkey, respectively, using the conditional Logit model to assess the marginal effect of product attribute modifications on customers' purchase decisions in terms of taste [10]. It reveals that sweet pistachios were the least preferred by consumers. This demonstrates how the product influences consumer decisions. As can be observed, whether it is taste or safety, it will have an effect on the product and influence consumers' purchasing intentions.

### 3.2. Issue on Serves Quality

Several lines of evidence suggest that poor service can also lead to the loss of consumers. TASTIEN's service quality is declining due to various reasons, such as insufficient staff training, too many customers but too few employees, and the number of franchised stores that cannot balance quality. Customers experienced ordering takeout and receiving the wrong food. There have also been cases where customers waited half an hour to enjoy the food, which is ridiculous because TASTIEN is a fast-food restaurant. All stores have always put the customer first as their management standard, but TASTIEN has had many disputes between sales and customers. Consumer satisfaction sometimes determines whether a store can continue to develop. The unabated bad reviews put TASTIEN in a confused position. Although customer feedback is still more positive than negative, overall satisfaction scores have shown a downward trend.

Karen's Diner Restaurant in Australia closed three stores in June 2023. Many customers said employees tried to offend them. The waiters maintained their poker faces, brought the customers to their seats, and threw the menu to them. No one cared that the customers felt the water was not ice cold enough. Karen's Diner proves that non-customer-oriented store closures are inevitable. Naini designed the questionnaire and interviewed customers to survey the effect of service quality on customer loyalty at Restaurant XYZ [11]. According to the evidence, service quality has a considerable impact on customer loyalty [11]. Effective word-of-mouth advertising is a free and successful strategy; once people are satisfied, they will promote it to those around them for free, which can broaden the potential consumer base, generating a virtuous circle. The high level of service

is one of the characteristics of Haidilao's consistent passenger flow. Small refreshments and even manicure services are available in the waiting area, which might alleviate consumer annoyance.

### 3.3. Issues on Promotion Strategy

Promotion includes the distribution of discount coupons, free gifts, advertisements, and even PR campaigns to inform consumers about the products. TASTIEN is mainly promoted online. Because TASTIEN's target customer is a younger group, it is often livestreamed on TikTok. This has had an excellent response, with the burger set meal selling for more than a million dollars. However, there are also many problems with promoting the restaurant as an Internet-famous restaurant. First of all, the products lack uniqueness. Even though TASTIEN's products are composed of Chinese elements, more and more fast-food restaurants have imitated them in recent years and can easily replace them in the future. In addition, TASTIEN has a single promotion strategy that only carries out large-scale live broadcasts on specific platforms. The lack of sponsorship and advertising by TV channels cannot be widely publicized.

Compared to TASTIEN, McDonald's and KFC target the market accurately because they enhance the consumers' feelings. Diverse countries have diverse eating traditions, and to progressively create its brand image, McDonald's has launched unique and limited-edition food sets in various places. McDonald's has also created a variety of toy or cartoon packaging for various age groups. It stresses the presence of something infantile in everyone's heart. McDonald's incorporates all of its promotion strategies and does not rely solely on one social media platform. Not only publish the latest news on the official account but also live broadcast on shopping platforms such as Taobao, and the audience is also relatively large. Publicity and promotion are the direct ways that a brand delivers products to its target consumers, with the aim of bringing the products to the core market and selling them.

## 4. Suggestion

### 4.1. Product Renovation

According to the product quality problem, this research suggests TASTIEN should renovate and improve its burger. It is common for franchised stores to fail to control the taste and safety of food, but Mixue avoids the mistake of disappointing consumers. It creates its own factory and strictly controls the quality of raw materials without using expired materials. Ingredients are inspected daily to avoid physical hazards to consumers. At the same time, it is also necessary to train employees in the skills of making food, and a cup of milk tea will not taste good if the ratio of milk and water is not controlled. Not to mention making burger dumplings and grilled beef patties daily. Staff should follow the standardized testing process, analyze whether there are harmful substances and ingredients, find potential safety risks, and further clarify the safety risk level of food samples.

Mixue has become popular through star products such as ice cream and lemonade, thereby increasing customer flow. The ranking of customer favorites can be seen in Figure 2 [12]. To a certain extent, it has driven the sales of other products, which is worth learning from TASTIEN. TASTIEN is quick to launch new products, but the impressive burger is not. Simply expressed, TASTIEN's products lack distinctiveness and memory, and it is likely that other businesses might produce the same products. TASTIEN's market personality traits include not only red Chinese themes but also paying attention to the product and producing an incomparable Chinese burger. Otherwise, the gap between identical items will narrow, brand homogeneity will increase, and the likelihood that consumers will choose TASTIEN will decrease.



Figure 2: The ranking of favorite product in Mixue [12].

The purpose is to maintain and build the brand, and achieving differentiation is an important aspect of market competition. Don't follow the hot elements on the market at will; reduce the frequency of new products as much as possible and stick to originality. TASTIEN must stick to its own line and rhythm and maintain the product's characteristics.

#### 4.2. Improve the Quality of Employees

In response to the problem of its service quality, this research proposes that TASTIEN needs to improve the quality of employees and create a good corporate atmosphere. The concept of "service first, customer first" is a must for those who work in the catering industry. Attaching importance to the customer's consumption experience, meeting the needs of customers, and improving their satisfaction are the hallmarks of great success in the catering industry.

Chinese citizens are aware of the intimidation level in Haidilao. Haidilao reflects meticulous care in the process of service. For example, each table has a corresponding waiter responsible for reception who can respond to the needs of customers in time and provide a good service experience to the greatest extent. As well, in order to satisfy guests of different sizes, half a dish is introduced to avoid waste. After the meal, customers will be given random small gifts and snacks, and they are welcome to come back next time. Haidilao has few conflicts with customers or food quality problems. For many customers, the purpose of going to Haidilao is not just to eat hot pot but to enjoy the experience of exquisite service. Haidilao's success illustrates the importance of employee training. From employee selection to post-stage guidance, it must be taken seriously. Because the behavior of employees and their attitude towards customers represent the image of the restaurant, Employees must also have the loyalty and cohesion of the restaurant company, something TASTIEN currently lacks. It is not enough to just superficially do it.

TASTIEN is able to examine employees every month, and those who perform well are rewarded, while those who do not fit are punished. Training must include learning pressure; otherwise, the learning effect will be weak. Companies must also be aware of their employees' requirements at all times in order to keep them motivated to execute their duties. Improving the quality of workers can help improve the restaurant's image and provide clients with exceptional service.

### 4.3. Reference to Other Restaurants

Through the analysis of publicity, this research states that TASTIEN can adjust its promotion strategy with reference to other restaurants. Social media promotion is the most convenient and effective way for current brands to promote themselves. TASTIEN's target customers are targeted at young people, which can be referred to as the promotion strategy of SexyTea based on the social group of Generation Z. One of the reasons why Sexy Tea is so successful at digging up potential consumers is that it catches Key Opinion consumers (KOC). Koc has a certain number of followers on social platforms and communicates with them. Bloggers have a great influence on their fans, and often fans trust them very much. TASTIEN can employ different platforms, such as Little Red Book, Weibo, etc., and not only focus on TikTok. A large number of posts and images can grab the attention of the audience, and the public will gain a sense of social recognition based on comments and the same consumption experience, thereby stimulating consumers to make purchases.

TASTIEN can carry out joint activities with other brands and borrow from each other. The two sides of the brand work together to borrow the influence of both parties to accomplish a win-win situation. For example, in the cooperation between SexyTea and Heytea in 2020, although the two are competitors, the overlap rate of audience groups is high, which can facilitate efficient precision marketing. Taking advantage of its own characteristic "Chinese burger", people can launch limited-edition burgers with limited packaging during the New Year.

TASTIEN can also act as a sponsor, participating in promotional activities to spread the message to society and build a bridge with the public. Promotion plays a key role in increasing brand awareness and influence. TASTIEN should pay attention to the operation of the platform, accumulate the number of loyal customers, and enhance the sense of interaction with customers. With the help of current hot things, restaurants can initiate topic discussions on social platforms and conduct lucky draws. Increasing the number of views on brand articles is also a means of attracting customers.

## 5. Conclusion

When the word "Internet-famous" gradually affects life, more and more stores focus on decoration and ignore the product itself, resulting in a decline in consumer loyalty. Through the case analysis of TASTIEN and the marketing mix theory of the 4Ps, this paper analyzes how to improve the long-term development of Internet celebrity restaurants that rely on store layout to attract consumers to check in. From the perspectives of product and promotion, it is concluded that Internet celebrity restaurants need to innovate products, improve staff quality, and make full utilization of various social media platforms for online promotion to solve problems.

This study proved that the marketing mix theory may be used as a strategy in actual restaurants to help customers make purchasing decisions. Furthermore, the study questions and analysis can be used as a reference for TASTIEN. This paper lacks first-hand data on restaurants that use the 4Ps in marketing mix theory, and the majority of it comes from surveys and research conducted by other scholars. And, according to the summary analysis of TASTIEN, there is a subjective influence that is due to personal opinions and judgments. The future study will focus on data collection and utilize the questionnaire distribution strategy in future investigations. Analyze real-world situations using additional marketing ideas and models.

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