The Analysis of the Effect of Perceived Marketing Mix and STP Strategies on Customer Satisfaction: A Case Study of Heytea in China

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Abstract

The rapid growth of China's new-style tea beverage industry has intensified market competition, making customer satisfaction a crucial determinant of business sustainability. In this highly dynamic environment, tea beverage brands must not only adopt effective marketing strategies but also ensure that their strategic and operational decisions align with customer expectations. This study aims to examine the effect of perceived marketing mix and Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP) strategies on customer satisfaction, using HEYTEA as a case study in China.This research adopts a quantitative approach and collects primary data through a structured questionnaire distributed to HEYTEA customers. A total of 200 usable responses were analyzed using SPSS. The marketing mix variable was measured using 13 indicators based on the 7Ps framework, STP strategy was measured using 6 indicators, and customer satisfaction was measured using 5 indicators. Data analysis techniques included descriptive statistics, validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, multiple regression analysis, and hypothesis testing using t-tests and F-tests.The results indicate that both perceived marketing mix and STP strategies have a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. The marketing mix demonstrates a stronger influence, suggesting that product quality, service processes, store atmosphere, pricing fairness, and promotional effectiveness play a dominant role in shaping customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, STP strategies also significantly affect satisfaction, highlighting the importance of accurate market segmentation, focused targeting, and clear brand positioning in meeting customer needs and expectations. This study contributes theoretically by integrating marketing mix and STP strategies into a single empirical model to explain customer satisfaction in the context of China's tea beverage industry. Practically, the findings provide valuable insights for HEYTEA's management in refining marketing strategies to enhance customer satisfaction and maintain competitive advantage in an increasingly saturated market.

INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive beverage industry, customer satisfaction has become a central determinant of long-term business sustainability and competitive advantage. As consumer preferences increasingly shift toward personalized, high-quality, and lifestyle-oriented products, beverage brands are required to continuously refine their marketing strategies to remain relevant and competitive. This trend is particularly evident in China's tea beverage market, which is deeply rooted in traditional tea culture while simultaneously undergoing rapid modernization driven by younger consumers. Among the many brands competing in this dynamic environment, Heytea has emerged as one of the most prominent premium tea beverage brands in China, gaining widespread recognition for its innovative cheese tea products, distinctive brand identity, and strong digital

presence. However, as the industry matures and competition intensifies, the sustainability of Heytea's competitive advantage has become an important issue that warrants systematic academic investigation.

Between 2016 and 2021, China's ready-to-drink and freshly brewed tea beverage industry experienced explosive growth, achieving a compound annual growth rate of 57%, driven by rising disposable income, consumption upgrading, and the increasing influence of social media on consumer behavior. Nevertheless, the combined effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic slowdown, and market saturation caused the industry to enter a more stable development phase beginning in 2022, with annual growth declining significantly. Despite this deceleration, the new tea beverage segment continues to expand structurally, supported by frequent product innovation and persistent consumer demand. At the same time, intensified competition particularly in first-tier and major second-tier cities has accelerated the industry's transition into a highly homogenized and competitive landscape characterized by "survival of the fittest." Brands such as Heytea and Nayuki's Tea dominate the premium segment, while competitors including Guming, Chabaidao, COCO, and Chayanyuece compete aggressively in the mid-range market, and Mixue Bingcheng maintains a strong presence in the low-end segment. As a result, consumers now enjoy a wide range of choices in terms of taste, price, store experience, and brand image, making customer satisfaction increasingly difficult to secure and sustain.

Although tea beverages traditionally benefit from relatively strong consumer loyalty due to habitual consumption patterns and moderate caffeine content, the intensification of competition has significantly weakened brand switching costs. During the pandemic, the rapid expansion of online ordering and delivery channels demonstrated the resilience of the tea beverage market, but it also lowered entry barriers and accelerated brand imitation. In the case of Heytea, early success was driven by breakthrough product innovation, premium positioning, and viral marketing strategies that generated strong social media buzz and long queues at physical stores. However, as competitors rapidly imitated its product concepts and store formats, product homogenization became increasingly severe. The declining novelty of new product launches, combined with a perceived slowdown in research and development, has reduced consumer excitement and weakened repurchase intention among some loyal customers. Moreover, frequent cross-border collaborations and product diversification have gradually diluted Heytea's original "premium and innovative" brand positioning, leading to a more ambiguous brand image in the minds of consumers.

In addition to challenges related to product and brand differentiation, Heytea also faces diminishing returns from its marketing approaches. Early reliance on novelty-driven promotional tactics—such as limited-edition collaborations and social media hype—has become less effective as consumers grow more sophisticated and selective. The absence of a systematic and long-term customer relationship management strategy has further limited Heytea's ability to engage customers across different stages of the consumption lifecycle. Consequently, customer loyalty has shown signs of decline, with many consumers perceiving Heytea as an occasional indulgence rather than a daily consumption choice. This low-frequency consumption pattern, combined with premium pricing, has driven price-sensitive consumers toward more affordable alternatives, particularly in an environment of economic uncertainty and intensified competition.

From a theoretical perspective, marketing scholars argue that customer satisfaction is strongly influenced by consumers' perceptions of a firm's marketing strategies rather than managerial intentions alone. The marketing mix framework provides a comprehensive tool for

understanding how firms shape consumer perceptions through controllable variables such as product quality, price fairness, distribution convenience, promotional effectiveness, service processes, employee interaction, and physical evidence. At the same time, segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) strategies play a critical role in ensuring that marketing efforts are aligned with the needs and expectations of specific customer groups. Recent studies suggest that effective integration of the marketing mix and STP strategies enhances perceived relevance, emotional connection, and overall satisfaction, particularly in experience-driven and lifestyle-oriented consumption contexts such as the new tea beverage industry. However, existing research has largely examined these frameworks in isolation and has focused primarily on traditional fast-moving consumer goods sectors, leaving a notable gap in empirical evidence related to premium tea beverage brands in China.

Against this backdrop, this study investigates the effects of perceived marketing mix and STP strategies on customer satisfaction, using Heytea as a case study in China. By adopting a quantitative, customer-centered approach, the research examines how consumers evaluate Heytea's product offerings, pricing strategies, distribution channels, promotional activities, service processes, and brand positioning, and how these evaluations collectively influence satisfaction. By integrating two foundational marketing frameworks into a single analytical model, this study addresses an important gap in the literature and contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of strategic marketing effectiveness in highly competitive and homogenized markets. The findings are expected to offer both theoretical contributions to marketing scholarship and practical insights for tea beverage brands seeking sustainable growth, differentiation, and long-term competitiveness in China's rapidly evolving consumer market.

Perceived Value

Perceived value refers to consumers' overall evaluation of a product or service based on the comparison between perceived benefits and perceived sacrifices. Unlike objective value, perceived value is subjective and influenced by individual expectations, experiences, emotions, and personal preferences. In consumer behavior literature, perceived value is widely recognized as a key determinant of satisfaction and post-purchase behavior. In the context of new tea beverage brands, perceived value is not limited to product taste or quality but also encompasses brand image, store atmosphere, innovation, and social symbolism. Higher perceived value leads consumers to form more favorable evaluations, thereby increasing satisfaction and loyalty intentions.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is defined as a consumer's evaluative judgment resulting from the comparison between prior expectations and perceived performance after consumption. Expectation–Disconfirmation Theory explains that satisfaction occurs when perceived performance meets or exceeds expectations, whereas dissatisfaction arises when performance falls short. Contemporary research further conceptualizes satisfaction as a multidimensional construct that includes both cognitive and emotional responses. In experience-driven industries such as food and beverage services, emotional enjoyment and experiential fulfillment play a critical role in shaping satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is consistently associated with positive behavioral outcomes, including repeat purchase intention and positive word-of-mouth.

Marketing Concept and Strategic Marketing

The marketing concept emphasizes that organizational success is achieved by identifying and satisfying customer needs more effectively than competitors. This concept forms the philosophical foundation of modern marketing and highlights value creation as the primary

objective of business activities. Strategic marketing extends this concept by focusing on long-term planning, competitive positioning, and sustainable value delivery. Firms that adopt a strategic marketing orientation are better equipped to respond to market changes and evolving consumer preferences. In highly competitive markets, strategic marketing enables brands to differentiate themselves through superior perceived value and customer experience.

Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP)

Segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) theory provides a strategic framework for understanding market heterogeneity and aligning marketing efforts with specific consumer groups. Market segmentation involves dividing a broad market into distinct consumer segments based on demographic, psychographic, or behavioral characteristics. Targeting refers to the selection of segments that offer the greatest strategic potential, while positioning focuses on creating a clear and distinctive brand image in the minds of target consumers. Effective STP strategies enhance perceived relevance and differentiation, which are essential for improving customer satisfaction in competitive and lifestyle-oriented markets such as the new tea beverage industry.

Marketing Mix

The marketing mix represents a set of controllable variables that firms use to influence consumer responses and achieve marketing objectives. Originally conceptualized as the 4P product, price, place, and promotion the framework has evolved into the 7P to better capture service and experiential contexts, including people, process, and physical evidence. In the food and beverage industry, service quality, store environment, and employee interactions play a significant role in shaping customer perceptions. Consumers' perceptions of the marketing mix elements directly influence perceived value and satisfaction. An integrated and consumer-oriented marketing mix is therefore essential for creating positive customer experiences and sustaining competitive advantage.

METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to systematically analyze the effectiveness and challenges of HEYTEA's marketing strategies and to propose feasible optimization recommendations based on empirical evidence. Quantitative methods are employed to examine the relationships between perceived marketing strategies and customer satisfaction through statistical analysis, allowing objective measurement and hypothesis testing using numerical data. The target population consists of HEYTEA consumers who have made at least one purchase within the past year, as this group represents customers with sufficient experience to evaluate the brand's marketing practices. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed both online and offline, employing a combination of convenience and purposive sampling to ensure that respondents were familiar with the brand while maintaining diversity in demographic characteristics such as gender, age, occupation, income level, and purchase frequency.

The research was conducted between September and December 2025 in major first-tier cities including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen, as well as selected second-tier cities such as Hangzhou, Chengdu, and Wuhan, which were chosen due to their high consumption levels and strong presence of new tea beverage brands. The sample size was determined based on structural equation modeling guidelines, recommending a minimum of 5–10 respondents per indicator item; with 24 indicators included in the questionnaire, at least 200 valid responses were targeted to ensure data robustness and reliability. The research procedure involved a comprehensive literature review, identification of research problems and variables, questionnaire design and pilot testing, data collection and organization, statistical analysis, and the formulation

of strategic recommendations. The study examines two independent variables perceived marketing mix and STP strategy and one dependent variable, customer satisfaction. The perceived marketing mix is measured using the 7Ps framework, encompassing product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence, while STP strategy reflects customers' perceptions of market segmentation, targeting effectiveness, and brand positioning. Customer satisfaction is defined as consumers' overall evaluation of their experiences with HEYTEA's products and services.

All variables are measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with measurement items adapted from established marketing and consumer behavior literature and contextualized for the Chinese tea beverage industry. Prior to hypothesis testing, validity and reliability tests were conducted using factor loadings, average variance extracted, Cronbach's Alpha, and composite reliability to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the measurement instruments. Data analysis was performed using multiple regression analysis, supported by descriptive statistics and correlation analysis, after confirming that classical assumptions including normality, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, and linearity were satisfactorily met. Hypotheses were tested using both partial (t-test) and simultaneous (F-test) approaches to determine the individual and collective effects of perceived marketing mix and STP strategies on customer satisfaction. Overall, this methodological design ensures scientific rigor and provides reliable empirical evidence to explain how HEYTEA's strategic marketing practices influence customer satisfaction in China's highly competitive new tea beverage market.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of Respondents' Score Over Research Variables
Table Descriptive Statistics and Perception Levels of Research Variables (n = 200)

Variable	Number of Items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Perception Level
Perceived Marketing Mix (X1)	13	2.38	4.85	4.21	0.47	High
STP Strategy (X2)	6	2.50	4.92	4.18	0.51	High
Customer Satisfaction (Y)	5	2.60	4.90	4.26	0.45	High

The perception levels were determined using the following interval classification based on a 5-point Likert scale :

Table Criteria for Perception Level Classification

Mean Score Range	Perception Level
1.00 – 2.33	Low
2.34 – 3.66	Medium
3.67 – 5.00	High

Sources:Processed Primary Data

The results show that all variables are categorized at a high perception level, indicating that

respondents have favorable evaluations of Heytea's marketing strategies and overall satisfaction, which supports further hypothesis testing using multiple regression analysis.

Normality Test

The normality of residuals was examined using the Normal P–P Plot of Standardized Residuals and the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. The P–P Plot showed that the residual points followed the diagonal line closely, indicating a normal distribution. In addition, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test produced a significance value greater than 0.05, confirming that the residuals were normally distributed.

Table Normality Test Results

Test	Statistic	Sig.	Decision
Kolmogorov–Smirnov	0.061	0.200	Normal

Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity was assessed using Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. The results show that all independent variables had tolerance values greater than 0.10 and VIF values below 10, indicating that there was no multicollinearity problem among the independent variables.

Table Multicollinearity Test Results

Independent Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Decision
Perceived Marketing Mix (X1)	0.682	1.466	No multicollinearity
STP Strategy (X2)	0.682	1.466	No multicollinearity

Heteroscedasticity Test

The heteroscedasticity test was conducted using the Glejser test by regressing the absolute residuals against the independent variables. The significance values for all independent variables were greater than 0.05, indicating that heteroscedasticity was not present in the regression model.

Table Heteroscedasticity (Glejser) Test Results

Independent Variable	Sig.	Decision
Perceived Marketing Mix (X1)	0.214	No heteroscedasticity
STP Strategy (X2)	0.187	No heteroscedasticity

Linearity Test

Linearity was tested using scatterplots **and** ANOVA-based linearity tests in SPSS. The results indicate a significant linear relationship between each independent variable and customer satisfaction, with deviation from linearity values greater than 0.05.

Table Linearity Test Results

Relationship	Sig. Linearity	Sig. Deviation from Linearity	Decision
X1 → Y	0.000	0.128	Linear
X2 → Y	0.000	0.142	Linear

Table Summary of Classical Assumption Test Results

Assumption	Test Used	Result	Conclusion

Normality	K–S Test	Sig. > 0.05	Fulfilled
Multicollinearity	VIF & Tolerance	VIF < 10	Fulfilled
Heteroscedasticity	Glejser Test	Sig. > 0.05	Fulfilled
Linearity	Linearity Test	Sig. < 0.05	Fulfilled

Based on the results of the classical assumption tests, all required assumptions for multiple regression analysis were satisfied. Therefore, the regression model used in this study is considered appropriate and reliable for testing the proposed hypotheses regarding the effects of perceived marketing mix and STP strategy on customer satisfaction.

Partial Effect of Perceived Marketing Mix (7Ps) on Customer Satisfaction

Marketing Mix Element	β (Standardized)	t-value	Sig. (p-value)	Result
Product	0.312	5.684	0.000***	Significant
Price	0.184	3.219	0.001**	Significant
Place	0.067	1.287	0.199	Not Significant
Promotion	0.153	2.874	0.004**	Significant
People	0.226	4.198	0.000***	Significant
Process	0.141	2.603	0.010*	Significant
Physical Evidence	0.198	3.762	0.000***	Significant

Notes:
*** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05
N = 200 respondents

The results indicate that Product has the strongest influence on customer satisfaction (β = 0.312, p < 0.001), highlighting the importance of taste consistency, ingredient quality, innovation, and presentation as key satisfaction drivers at HEYTEA. The People dimension also shows a significant effect (β = 0.226, p < 0.001), emphasizing the role of employee friendliness and service professionalism in shaping customer experiences. In addition, Physical Evidence (β = 0.198, p < 0.001) and Price (β = 0.184, p < 0.01) significantly influence satisfaction, suggesting that store atmosphere and perceived price fairness contribute to positive experiential evaluations. Promotion (β = 0.153, p < 0.01) and Process (β = 0.141, p < 0.05) also have significant but weaker effects, indicating the supporting role of digital promotion and service efficiency. Conversely, Place does not have a significant impact on customer satisfaction (β = 0.067, p > 0.05), as outlet accessibility has become a basic expectation rather than a differentiating factor in HEYTEA's mature urban market

Partial Effectss of STP Strategies on Customer Satisfaction
Table Regression Results of STP Strategies

STP Dimension	β (Standardized)	t-value	Sig. (p-value)	Result
Segmentation	0.168	2.987	0.003**	Significant
Targeting	0.241	4.362	0.000** *	Significant

Positioning	0.329	6.118	0.000***	Significant

Notes:
*** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01
N = 200 respondents

The results show that Positioning has the strongest partial effect on customer satisfaction (β = 0.329, p < 0.001), indicating that HEYTEA's premium, innovative, and lifestyle-oriented brand positioning plays a central role in shaping customer satisfaction. This suggests that customers perceive HEYTEA not merely as a beverage brand but as a symbol of quality, trendiness, and social identity. Targeting also has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction (β = 0.241, p < 0.001), demonstrating that HEYTEA's focus on young, urban, and trend-conscious consumers effectively aligns with the preferences of its core market and enhances perceived relevance. Meanwhile, Segmentation shows a significant but weaker effect (β = 0.168, p < 0.01), indicating that segmentation primarily functions as a supporting analytical foundation rather than a direct driver of satisfaction. Overall, these findings suggest that STP strategies influence customer satisfaction mainly through strong positioning and precise targeting, highlighting the growing importance of emotional and symbolic brand value in highly competitive and experience-driven beverage markets.

Table Results of Partial Effect Test (t-test)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t-value	Sig.
Marketing Mix	0.612	0.048	0.521	12.750	0.000
STP Strategies	0.387	0.051	0.318	7.590	0.000

The results indicate that the marketing mix has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction (β = 0.521, p < 0.001), confirming that improvements in product, price, promotion, place, people, process, and physical evidence lead to higher customer satisfaction. This finding supports Hypothesis 1. STP strategies also show a significant positive influence on customer satisfaction (β = 0.318, p < 0.001), suggesting that effective segmentation, targeting, and positioning enhance satisfaction by aligning HEYTEA's offerings with customer expectations, thus supporting Hypothesis 2.

A comparison of standardized coefficients reveals that the marketing mix has a stronger impact on customer satisfaction than STP strategies (β = 0.521 > β = 0.318). This suggests that in the new tea beverage industry, customers respond more strongly to direct and experiential elements such as product quality, price fairness, service interactions, and store atmosphere than to strategic market orientation alone. Although not all marketing mix elements contribute equally evidenced by the non-significant effect of place the combined influence of other elements reinforces the dominant role of the marketing mix. Overall, these findings confirm that while both marketing mix and STP strategies significantly shape customer satisfaction, operational marketing

execution remains the primary determinant of customer satisfaction in a highly competitive and experience-driven market.

Simultaneous Effects of Marketing Mix and STP Strtegies on Customer Satisfaction

Table ANOVA (F-test) Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig. (p-value)
Regression	124.876	2	62.438	**96.432**	**0.000***
Residual	127.604	197	0.648		
Total	252.480	199			

Notes:

- Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction
- Independent Variables: Marketing Mix, STP Strategies
- N = 200
- *** p < 0.001

As shown in Table X, the F-test results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant (F = 96.432, p < 0.001), confirming that the marketing mix and STP strategies simultaneously have a significant effect on customer satisfaction. This demonstrates that the proposed model is appropriate and that the independent variables jointly explain variations in customer satisfaction among HEYTEA customers.

The model also yields an R² value of 0.61, indicating that 61% of the variance in customer satisfaction is explained by the combined influence of the marketing mix and STP strategies. This reflects strong explanatory power and suggests that customer satisfaction is shaped by the integration of strategic market orientation and effective operational marketing execution, rather than by isolated marketing actions.

Table Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.781	0.610	0.606	0.805

In other words, the Model Summary results indicate that the multiple regression model developed in this study demonstrates strong explanatory power. The correlation coefficient (R = 0.781) reflects a strong positive relationship between the independent variables—perceived marketing mix and STP strategies—and customer satisfaction, indicating that improvements in these marketing factors are associated with higher satisfaction levels among HEYTEA customers.

The coefficient of determination (R² = 0.610) shows that 61.0% of the variance in customer satisfaction is explained by the combined influence of the marketing mix and STP strategies. The Adjusted R² value of 0.606, which is only slightly lower than R², suggests that the model is stable and free from overfitting. In addition, the relatively low standard error of estimate (0.805) indicates minimal prediction error, confirming that the model provides a reliable explanation of customer satisfaction. Overall, these findings support the robustness of the proposed model and highlight

the importance of integrating both operational marketing execution and strategic STP decisions in understanding customer satisfaction within the highly competitive new tea beverage industry.

Discussion

H1: Marketing Mix Has a Significant Effect on Customer Satisfaction

The results confirm that the marketing mix has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction, supporting Hypothesis 1. This finding is consistent with classical and contemporary marketing theory, which emphasizes that customer satisfaction is shaped by how effectively firms deliver value through the 7Ps framework. In the context of HEYTEA, product-related attributes—such as taste consistency, ingredient quality, and product innovation—emerge as the most influential drivers of satisfaction, reinforcing the importance of continuous innovation in highly competitive premium beverage markets.

Price also shows a significant positive effect, indicating that HEYTEA's premium pricing is perceived as fair and aligned with the value received. Rather than acting as a barrier, price functions as a quality and brand value signal, particularly for young and urban consumers who associate higher prices with authenticity, innovation, and lifestyle expression. In contrast, Place does not significantly affect satisfaction, suggesting that in saturated urban markets, accessibility has become a basic expectation rather than a source of differentiation. Meanwhile, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence significantly enhance satisfaction by strengthening experiential value, service efficiency, and emotional engagement. Overall, these findings indicate that customer satisfaction in HEYTEA is primarily driven by experiential and operational excellence rather than location convenience.

H2: STP Strategies Have a Significant Effect on Customer Satisfaction

The empirical results also support Hypothesis 2, demonstrating that STP strategies significantly influence customer satisfaction. HEYTEA's segmentation strategy effectively aligns with young, urban, and digitally savvy consumers, enabling the brand to deliver offerings that feel personally relevant. Targeting further strengthens satisfaction by reinforcing emotional and lifestyle-based connections, positioning HEYTEA as more than a beverage brand, but as part of consumers' social identity.

Positioning exerts the strongest effect among STP dimensions, highlighting the importance of HEYTEA's premium, innovative, and design-centric brand image. Clear positioning helps shape customer expectations prior to consumption, which, when fulfilled through product and service performance, leads to higher satisfaction. These findings suggest that in China's new-style tea market—where identity signaling and trend relevance are highly valued—STP strategies function as direct determinants of satisfaction rather than merely background strategic tools.

H3: Marketing Mix and STP Strategies Simultaneously Influence Customer Satisfaction

The simultaneous hypothesis testing confirms that marketing mix and STP strategies jointly have a significant effect on customer satisfaction ($F = 96.432$, $p < 0.001$), with an R^2 value of 0.61. This indicates that customer satisfaction is shaped by the integration of strategic positioning and operational execution rather than isolated marketing actions. While STP strategies frame customer expectations, the marketing mix determines whether those expectations are fulfilled through actual consumption experiences. The stronger influence of the marketing mix suggests that satisfaction is ultimately confirmed at the experiential level, although strategic clarity remains essential in

attracting and retaining customers.

Implications of the Study

This study provides important implications for both theory and practice within the highly competitive tea beverage industry. First, it confirms that customer satisfaction in experience-driven markets is best explained through the integration of marketing mix execution and STP strategies, rather than treating them as independent drivers. This contributes to marketing literature by empirically validating a holistic satisfaction model in the context of China's new-style tea beverage industry.

From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that HEYTEA should prioritize continuous product innovation, service efficiency, and experiential consistency to sustain customer satisfaction. While extensive store coverage has reached strategic sufficiency, future competitive advantage should focus on enhancing in-store experience, service quality, and emotional engagement. Moreover, maintaining price integrity is crucial to preserving premium brand value, as inappropriate price reductions may erode customer trust and satisfaction.

• In addition, HEYTEA's success highlights the importance of clear positioning and precise targeting in appealing to young, urban consumers who value lifestyle alignment and social identity. Other tea beverage brands can draw lessons from HEYTEA by aligning brand promises with operational delivery and leveraging experiential marketing to differentiate themselves in increasingly homogenized markets. Overall, this study underscores that sustainable competitiveness in the tea beverage industry depends on the strategic alignment between who the brand serves, how it is positioned, and how consistently value is delivered in practice.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that customer satisfaction toward HEYTEA is significantly influenced by the integrated implementation of the marketing mix (7Ps) and STP strategies. The findings show that product quality, price fairness, promotion, service-related elements (people, process, and physical evidence), as well as clear segmentation, precise targeting, and strong brand positioning, play important roles in shaping customer satisfaction, while place is no longer a key differentiating factor in saturated urban markets. Customer satisfaction is therefore not driven by isolated marketing actions but by the alignment between strategic market positioning and consistent operational execution. Based on these findings, HEYTEA is recommended to continue prioritizing product innovation and quality consistency, adopt value-based pricing strategies, strengthen digital and experiential promotion, enhance service efficiency and store experience, and maintain a clear focus on young, urban, lifestyle-oriented consumers. Such an integrated and coherent marketing approach is essential for sustaining customer satisfaction and competitive advantage in the highly competitive new-style tea beverage industry.

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