

Market Research on Chinese-style Tea Beverage Brands Using the AISAS Model: A Case Study of Chagee

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Abstract:

The segment of Chinese-style tea beverages holds significant importance within the broader tea drink market and is highly favored by consumers. Among these, Chagee stands out as a highly esteemed brand, exemplifying the category's appeal. This study employs the AISAS model to investigate consumer perceptions, satisfaction, and purchase intentions towards Chinese-style tea beverages, with a particular focus on Chagee. The findings reveal that physical stores are the predominant channel through which consumers become acquainted with brands like Chagee; the brand's unique taste profile is the most compelling factor for purchases. Although there is a high likelihood of repeat purchases, the inclination to share experiences related to the Chagee brand is comparatively low. Future strategies for Chinese-style tea beverage brands should prioritize health-oriented values to find a balance between taste and wellness, enhance the infusion of Chinese cultural elements, differentiate from competitors, and employ diverse marketing strategies to boost consumer engagement and sharing.

Keywords: Chinese-style tea beverage; Marketing strategy; AISAS model; Consumer purchase intentions.

1. Introduction

The tea beverage sector has seen prolific growth in recent years, becoming an integral part of daily consumer habits and a symbol of personal and collective identity among young people, often referred to as „social currency“ [1]. With the advent of innovative tea beverages, the market for Chinese-style tea drinks has carved out a distinctive niche, emphasizing tea's traditional roots while sidestepping the pitfalls of repetitive fruit tea offerings through a deep integration with Chinese-style and modern trends, thus earning widespread consumer approval and acclaim. Chagee, emerging as a promising brand within this niche, quickly established a national presence starting from the Southwest, achieved economies of scale, and sidestepped the saturated fruit tea market by strategically positioning itself within Chinese cultural themes, rapidly ascending to widespread popularity.

This research targets Chagee, a benchmark brand within the Chinese-style tea beverage market, and examines a demographic of consumers who have experienced Chagee's products. Utilizing surveys and data analysis methods augmented by literature review, the study concludes that unfamiliarity with a brand does not necessarily impede purchasing decisions. Elements such as brand name, logo

design, packaging, and pricing play critical roles in shaping initial consumer impressions and significantly influence their buying decisions.

This paper aims to delineate the consumer market for Chinese-style tea beverages from the vantage point of the consumer, sketching a broad picture of the market landscape. It seeks to offer robust marketing strategies for brands within this sector and provides recommendations that could improve consumer experiences and foster superior consumption environments.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 discusses the theoretical framework, focusing on the AISAS model; Section 3 covers the methodology involving surveys and data collection; Section 4 delves into data analysis; and the conclusion is presented in the final section.

2. Theoretical Foundation

This research is anchored on the AISAS model, which stands for Attention-Interest-Search-Action-Share. Proposed in 2005 by the globally renowned advertising agency Dentsu Inc. of Japan, the AISAS model serves as a theoretical framework to describe and explain the purchasing behavior of consumers in the internet era[2]. This model modernizes and expands upon the traditional AID-MA model (Attention-Interest-Desire-Memory-Action),

adapting it to the profound changes in consumer behavior patterns brought about by the widespread adoption of the internet and mobile internet.

The AISAS model encompasses the following stages[3]:

(1) Attention: During this phase, consumers are first exposed to information about a product or service, which could come through various channels such as television commercials, online advertisements, social media posts, search engine results, or recommendations from friends. The information must be sufficiently engaging to capture the consumers' attention and break through the cognitive barriers of their everyday life.

(2) Interest: When consumers become curious or resonate with the information they encounter, they move into the „interest“ stage. At this point, they show preliminary interest in the product or service and are willing to spend time understanding its features, functions, and advantages, laying the groundwork for their decision-making process.

(3) Search: The ubiquity of the internet has transformed consumer decision-making habits. Once interested, consumers typically turn to the internet for active research. They may enter keywords into search engines to find product reviews, visit official websites, read professional critiques, and compare features of different brands and models to gather more comprehensive and objective information to aid their purchasing decisions.

(4) Action: After gathering and evaluating information, consumers make purchasing decisions based on their needs, budget, and other considerations, entering the „action“ phase. This stage involves not only purchasing but also actions like registering for an account, downloading apps, scheduling test drives, or applying for trials, all of which are steps toward converting into actual user behaviors.

(5) Share: Following a purchase or experience, consumers in the internet age are more inclined to share their experiences, insights, and product evaluations through various online media such as social networks, blogs, forums, and video sites. This sharing not only helps in building and promoting the brand image but also generates word-of-mouth effects, directly influencing the purchase decisions of other potential consumers and completing a cycle of consumer experience.

The AISAS model underscores the imperative for companies to maintain continuous engagement throughout the consumer journey—from attention, through interest and search, to action and finally sharing. This approach demands an in-depth understanding of consumer behavior and needs, enabling businesses to holistically assess and refine their user engagement strategies[4]. The model captures the defining traits of digital-era consumer behaviors: increased initiative, streamlined decision-making

processes, and evolving methods for information access and distribution[5]. To leverage these insights, businesses must adapt their marketing strategies to this paradigm by creating captivating content that attracts consumer attention, piquing interest, improving search engine visibility to ease consumer searches, delivering superior purchasing and service experiences to encourage action, and fostering an environment that incentivizes sharing. This comprehensive approach not only strengthens market competitiveness but also establishes a beneficial cycle of consumer engagement[6].

In practical terms, any stage of marketing execution may result in customer attrition. It is crucial for businesses to employ targeted marketing tactics to minimize loss at each step and to enhance the efficiency of transitions between stages, allowing consumers to progress seamlessly and swiftly from one phase to the next[7]. This not only aids companies in managing the consumer decision cycle and boosting overall conversion rates but also highlights the profound insights provided by the AISAS sales theory into consumer psychology and the decision-making process.

Building on this theoretical framework, this study will operationalize the AISAS model's sequential stages of „Attention,“ „Interest,“ „Search,“ „Action,“ and „Share“ (i.e., user profiling, user awareness, user experience, user opinions, user impact). Through survey methods, this research will examine how the Chagee brand within the Chinese tea beverage market implements and exemplifies this model. The findings are intended to deepen the understanding of the market and to inform more effective marketing strategies for Chinese-style tea beverages.

3. Survey Questionnaire and Data Collection

To explore consumers' impressions and preferences towards traditional Chinese tea beverages and the brand of „Chagee“, a corresponding survey questionnaire was designed in this paper. The questionnaire is divided into seven sections, containing 26 questions, covering basic information of the respondents, attitude and willingness measurement at various stages of the AISAS model, as well as additional questions (measuring the attitude of consumers who have not purchased Chagee drinks towards Chinese-style marketing and Chagee). After a small-scale test, minor adjustments were made to the questionnaire content, which was finally released on March 6, 2024. A total of 242 questionnaires were distributed, and 240 valid questionnaires were collected.

The respondent demographics are shown in Table 1. The gender distribution of the respondents participating in the questionnaire is relatively balanced, with slightly more

females (50.8%) than males (49.2%). The age distribution of the respondents is quite wide, but mainly concentrated between 21 and 30 years old, accounting for 27.1%. The respondents have diverse occupational backgrounds, including students (28.7%), freelancers (27.1%), and government or institution staff (16.3%). Additionally, over half of the samples have a university degree or above (67.2%), including doctoral (8.8%) and master's (14.2%) degrees. The respondent group also exhibits a prepon-

derance of middle and low-income earners. 39.6% of the respondents have a monthly average income of 2000 yuan or less, and 27.5% have a monthly average income between 2001 and 5000 yuan. This indicates that most respondents belong to the middle and low-income class. Among the respondents, slightly more than half (51.7%) have purchased Chagee drinks before, while nearly half (48.3%) have never purchased them.

Table 1. Basic Information of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	122	50.8%
	Male	118	49.2%
Age	20 Years And Below	18	7.5%
	21-30 Years Old	65	27.1%
	31-40 Years Old	36	15.0%
	41-50 Years Old	38	15.8%
	51-60 Years Old	45	18.8%
	Over 60 Years Old	38	15.8%
Occupation	Individual and Private Businesses	32	13.3%
	Corporate Employees	21	8.8%
	Students	69	28.7%
	Government or Public Institutions	39	16.3%
	Freelancers	65	27.1%
	Others	14	5.8%
Highest Education	High School and Below	79	32.9%
	Bachelor's Degree	106	44.2%
	Master's Degree	34	14.2%
	Doctoral Degree	21	8.8%
Monthly Average Income	2000 Yuan and Below	95	39.6%
	2001-5000 Yuan	66	27.5%
	50001-10000 Yuan	50	20.8%
	Over 10000 Yuan	29	12.1%
Purchase History	Yes	124	51.7%
	No	116	48.3%

4. Analysis of Respondent Data

4.1 Attention

According to the survey results, most respondents do not have a high level of awareness of Chagee drinks, with a significant portion of the data (48.3%) missing, indicating that this group has not made a purchase. Among those

who provided answers, most tend to have little or only general knowledge.

Based on the survey findings, consumers' impressions of Chagee are most profound when it comes to the brand's name, accounting for 20.9%. Price (18.4%) and product packaging (17.3%) also rank high in consumers' impression. In contrast, endorsers (4.6%) and marketing activi-

ties (7.9%) have a relatively minor impact on consumers' impression. This suggests that brand name and price are crucial factors in consumers' impression (Table 2).

Table 2. Respondents' Impression of the Elements of the Chagee

Element		Frequency	Percentage
Which of the following information about Chagee impressed you the most?	Trademark	56	14.3%
	Name (Chagee)	82	20.9%
	Packaging	68	17.3%
	Spokesperson	18	4.6%
	Stores	65	16.6%
	Marketing Activities	31	7.9%
	Price	72	18.4%
	Total	392	100.0%

4.2 Interest

The main reason for consumers to choose Chagee drinks is the unique taste, accounting for 23.5%. Followed by quality assurance (13.7%) and cultural identity (11.9%). This suggests that Chagee has its uniqueness in taste, which is the most important factor attracting consumers.

At the same time, quality and cultural factors are also important considerations, reflecting consumers' emphasis on brand value and cultural background. In contrast, social experience (6.2%) and other reasons (2.7%) have a relatively low proportion, which may mean that these aspects have less influence on consumers' choices, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Reasons for Respondents to Choose Chagee Drinks

Reason		Frequency	Percentage
The reason why you choose to buy Chagee drinks is	Quality Assurance	51	13.7%
	Diverse Choices	42	11.3%
	Health Concept	39	10.5%
	Quality Service	38	10.2%
	Cultural Identity	44	11.9%
	Unique Taste	87	23.5%
	Social Experience	23	6.2%
	Interesting Marketing	37	10.0%
	Others	10	2.7%
	Total	371	100.0%

Figure 1 provides the results of customer satisfaction survey on specific aspects of Chagee, covering the integration of traditional Chinese cultural elements, the uniqueness of the taste of fresh milk tea with original leaves, the focus on quality assurance and health, the attractiveness of marketing activities, the provision of social experience, and satisfaction with after-sales service. Each aspect is statistically analyzed according to the respondents' agreement degree of „strongly disagree“, „relatively disagree“, „neutral“, „relatively agree“, and „strongly agree“, with

corresponding values of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 assigned. From the average data of characteristic types, except for the characteristic of „providing consumers with social experience“, the average values of other characteristics are greater than 3, indicating that the respondents tend to agree overall. Among them, the characteristic of „unique taste of fresh milk tea with original leaves“ has the highest average value, indicating that unique taste is considered as the most prominent brand characteristic of Chagee by the respondents. Followed by „integrating traditional Chinese

cultural elements“ and „focusing on quality assurance and health“, indicating that the respondents have affirmed the

effect of Chagee integrating traditional Chinese cultural elements and the quality and health of the drinks.

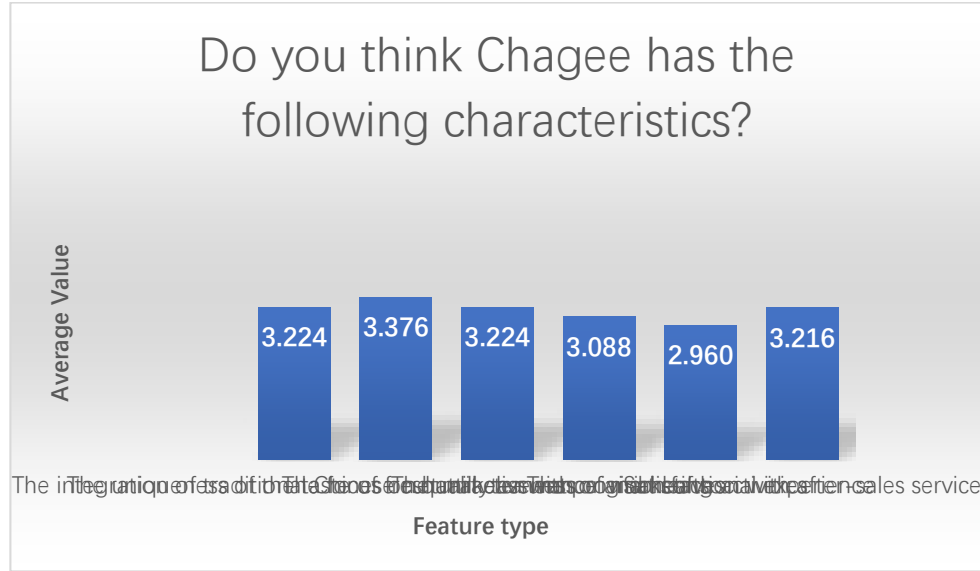


Fig.1 Respondents' Evaluation of Chagee

4.3 Search

Statistics indicate that offline stores and social media are the two main channels for consumers to learn about Chinese tea beverage brands, accounting for 21.2% and 20.3% respectively. This suggests that the experience in physical stores and the influence of social media play a significant role in brand recognition. Word-of-mouth recommendations from friends are also an important channel, accounting for 16.3%, indicating that the influence of word-of-mouth spread on the brand cannot be ignored. Other channels such as search engines, news and information platforms, and knowledge forums have relatively balanced influence, all around 9%, while the influence of

internet APP advertisements and other channels is relatively small.

The statistical results for understanding Chagee is also show high similarity. Offline stores are the most important channel for understanding the brand, followed by internet APP advertisements and word-of-mouth recommendations from friends. This suggests that the existence of physical stores, recommendations from friends, and advertisements on the internet have a significant impact on brand recognition. Social media, search engines, and video platforms are also important channels, demonstrating the importance of digital marketing in brand promotion. In contrast, news and information platforms and food delivery platforms have a relatively small impact (Table 4).

Table 4. Channels for Respondents to Learn about Chagee

Channel		Frequency	Percentage
Through which of the following channels did you learn about Chagee?	Offline Stores	74	18.2%
	Friends' Introduction	58	14.3%
	Search Engine	46	11.3%
	Social Media (Weibo, WeChat, Little Red Book, etc.)	45	11.1%
	News and Information Platforms (Sohu, Tencent, Sina, Netease)	21	5.2%
	Knowledge Forums (Zhihu, Douban, Tieba, etc.)	32	7.9%
	Internet APP Advertisements	63	15.5%

	Video Platforms(TikTok, Kwai, Bilibili, etc.)	41	10.1%
	Food Delivery Platforms (Meituan, Ele.me, Dianping, etc.)	25	6.2%
	Other Channels	1	0.2%
	Total	406	100.0%

4.4 Action

The process of consumers choosing a brand is also a process of seeking psychological identification and self-expression [8]. When investigating consumers' willingness to act (Action), the respondents' willingness was divided into five categories: „strongly unwilling“, „relatively unwilling“, „neutral“, „relatively willing“, and „strongly willing“, and assigned values of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, respectively. Consumer purchase intention refers to the demand and intention of consumers towards a certain product during the purchase process, that is, the probability that consumers are willing to adopt certain resources to exchange for the specific purchase behavior of the target product [9]. According to the results in Figure 2, the average scores for the three questions, „Are you willing to prioritize purchasing Chagee drinks under the same conditions?“ „Are you willing to recommend it to family and

friends?“ and „Are you willing to purchase again?“ are all greater than 3, indicating that respondents tend to have a positive attitude towards these questions. Among them, respondents have the highest willingness to purchase Chagee drinks again, with a score of 3.392. This suggests that among consumers who have purchased Chagee drinks, there is a high customer „retention rate,“ reflecting that the Chagee brand has a large number of „repeat customers“ and its drinks are loved by most consumers, with a large audience. However, comparatively, the willingness to prioritize purchasing Chagee drinks under the same conditions is relatively low, indicating that although Chagee drinks are popular among consumers, in the industry competition, consumers' preference for this brand is somewhat diminished, and some customer groups have been lost. At the same time, it also suggests that these customer groups are potential customer groups for the Chagee and there is still hope to „win them over.“

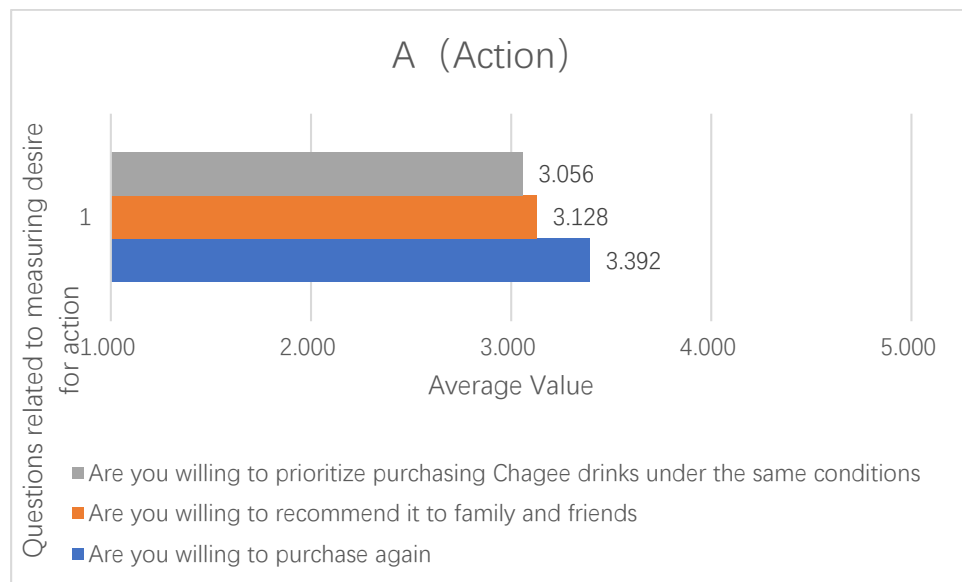


Fig.2 Respondents' Willingness to Act

Chagee is considered to have significant advantages in terms of store design (12.1%), popularity (11.8%), offline waiting time (10.7%), and taste (10.4%). These advantages may be important factors attracting consumers to the brand, reflecting that consumers' recognition of the brand is not just based on the product itself, but also includes the consumption experience and brand image.

Relatively speaking, the scores for product innovation and word-of-mouth are lower, at 7.0% and 3.7% respectively, indicating that these areas may be where Chagee needs to strengthen (Table 5).

Table 5. Advantages of Chagee Considered by Respondents in the Same Industry

Advantage		Frequency	Percentage
Compared to other Chinese-style tea brands (such as Sexy Tea), what advantages do you think Chagee has?	Price	46	8.1%
	Taste	59	10.4%
	Waiting Time in Stores	61	10.7%
	Service Attitude	55	9.7%
	Brand Culture	57	10.0%
	Physical Store Design	69	12.1%
	Product Innovation	40	7.0%
	Convenience of location Selection	44	7.7%
	Healthy Ingredients	47	8.3%
	Popularity	67	11.8%
	Word-of-mouth	21	3.7%
	Others	3	0.5%
Total		569	100.0%

4.5 Share

The statistics of the Share Index show a certain degree of variability, with a standard deviation of 2.50950, indicating a certain degree of dispersion in the data distribution. The mean value is 8.4435, indicating that consumers' willingness to share information about the Chagee is at a moderate level on average.

When investigating consumers' willingness to share, the respondents' willingness levels were also divided into five categories: „strongly unwilling“, „relatively unwilling“,

„neutral“, „relatively willing“, and „strongly willing“. These categories were assigned values of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, respectively. The results in Figure 3 show that the average scores for the three questions on „evaluation“, „liking and sharing“, and „sharing“ are all below 3, indicating that respondents tend to be unwilling to evaluate, like, share, and repost pictures or information related to the Chagee. This suggests that respondents have a low overall willingness to share, which will have a negative impact on the spread of the Chagee brand's influence.

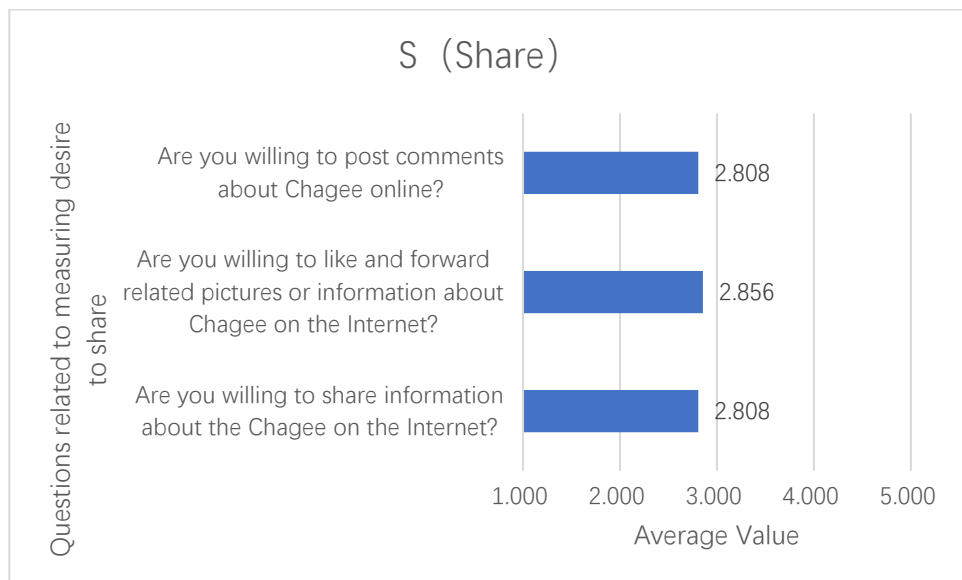


Fig.3 Respondents' Willingness to Share

Among the respondents who have not tried Chagee, a significant proportion expressed a willing (13.3%) or strongly willing (7.5%) to try this Chinese-style tea brand. This indicates that a certain proportion of consumers have an open attitude towards the Chinese-style marketing model. At the same time, there were also some who expressed unwilling or strongly unwilling (totaling 16.3%).

5. Conclusions

Our survey of the Chinese-style tea beverage market, coupled with statistical analysis, has led to several pertinent conclusions: Firstly, even in the highly digital age, the physical presence of stores remains the most crucial and effective promotional tool for Chinese-style tea beverage brands. Often, consumers are drawn to a brand through the aesthetic and cultural elements of its physical outlets. Secondly, unfamiliarity with a brand does not necessarily deter purchasing decisions. Thirdly, the initial impression of a Chinese-style tea beverage brand, shaped by its name, logo, packaging, and pricing, significantly influences consumer purchasing intentions. This finding supports existing research which suggests that visual identity is a fundamental component of brand communication[10]. Fourthly, Chinese-style tea beverage brands should prioritize healthfulness, ensuring rigorous selection of raw materials to enhance product quality while maintaining a balance between distinctive taste and health benefits—this balance being a primary purchasing factor for Chagee drinks. Fifthly, these brands should integrate more Chinese cultural elements into their products to strengthen consumers' cultural affiliation, which will not only enhance the marketing distinctiveness of the brands but also their economic gains. Sixthly, it is crucial for these brands to distinguish themselves from competitors by developing a unique brand culture and showcasing innovation. Seventhly, there is a need to diversify marketing strategies. Although respondents showed a low inclination to share information about Chagee, digital platforms, especially apps, are vital for brand discovery. Therefore, brands should leverage new marketing initiatives to encourage consumer engagement and sharing, such as social media campaigns that reward user interactions with discounts or exclusive branded merchandise.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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