

Innovative Development Strategies for Zhaoqing Local Specialties

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Abstract: As a local characteristic resource, Zhaoqing's local specialties carry rich historical and cultural value but face many challenges in modern market competition. To cope with these challenges and seize development opportunities, this paper deeply analyzes the current state of Zhaoqing's local specialties, including product types, industrial chain structures, and brand building efforts. By drawing on successful development cases of local specialties at home and abroad, this paper proposes innovative development strategies for Zhaoqing's local specialties. In terms of product innovation, emphasis is placed on maintaining traditional characteristics while incorporating modern elements, optimizing product design, packaging, and green environmental protection concepts. In terms of brand building and enhancing cultural value, it is recommended to deeply explore the historical and cultural heritage of Zhaoqing's specialties, design a recognizable brand logo, and effectively promote it through diversified channels. In terms of marketing strategy, this paper advocates the use of e-commerce platforms and cross-border e-commerce to expand the market while combining Zhaoqing's rich tourism resources to develop a marketing model that integrates cultural tourism. Regarding industrial chain optimization and cooperative mechanisms, emphasis is placed on strengthening coordination and cooperation at each stage of the industrial chain to promote overall industrial upgrading. The purpose of this study is to provide theoretical guidance and practical pathways for the innovative development of Zhaoqing's local specialties, thereby promoting the sustained prosperity and development of local characteristic industries.

Keywords: Zhaoqing local specialties; Innovation-driven development; Brand building; Marketing strategy; Industrial chain optimization.

I. INTRODUCTION

A city with a long and rich history carries significant cultural value through its local specialties. These local specialties are not only unique symbols of Zhaoqing's regional culture but also embody the craftsmanship and wisdom of traditional practices. Over the course of history, these products have earned the affection and recognition of a broad consumer base due to their distinctive quality and flavor. However, with the passage of time and the intensification of market competition, Zhaoqing's local specialties are facing unprecedented challenges and opportunities.

Zhaoqing's local specialties are currently struggling against a variety of market challenges. On one hand, the transmission and development of traditional crafts are restricted, with many unique artisanal techniques facing the risk of being lost. On the other hand, the market competition is increasingly fierce, with a wide array of specialty products emerging from across the country, rendering Zhaoqing's specialties comparatively weak in terms of brand building and market expansion. Furthermore, the diversification and personalization of consumer demands present additional challenges for these products.

These challenges, however, also present opportunities for the innovative development of Zhaoqing's local specialties. By deeply exploring the cultural connotation of traditional craftsmanship and combining it with modern technological

improvements and innovations, Zhaoqing's specialties have the potential to achieve dual progress in both quality and branding. Innovation and development are not only capable of promoting the branding and commercialization of Zhaoqing's local products but also have the potential to secure a broader development space and stronger competitiveness for them in both domestic and international markets.

This study aims to provide theoretical support and strategic recommendations for the innovative development of Zhaoqing's local specialties. By deeply analyzing the historical and cultural value of these specialties, the study seeks to uncover the intrinsic motivations and external conditions necessary for their innovative development. Additionally, by aligning with market trends and consumer demands, it proposes feasible strategies for innovation and development, thereby helping Zhaoqing's specialties overcome existing difficulties and regain vitality.

In terms of enhancing the competitiveness and brand influence of Zhaoqing's local specialties in both domestic and international markets, this study focuses on several key aspects: brand building, market expansion, cultural transmission, and innovation. By establishing a comprehensive branding system, expanding diversified sales channels, and enhancing efforts in cultural transmission and innovation, Zhaoqing's local specialties may occupy a significant position in future markets, becoming a shining emblem that represents the cultural depth and image of the city.

As the cultural treasures of the region, the innovative development of Zhaoqing's local specialties plays a crucial role in preserving regional culture and promoting local economic development. This research is grounded in this perspective, aiming to contribute to the innovative development of Zhaoqing's local specialties, and anticipates that these specialties will shine more brightly in future market competitions.

In discussing the innovative development strategies for Zhaoqing's local specialties, we inevitably touch upon the integration of traditional craftsmanship and modern technology. Traditional craftsmanship is the soul of Zhaoqing's local specialties, while modern technology provides substantial support for their innovative development. How to skillfully integrate these two elements to maintain the traditional flavor and cultural uniqueness of the local specialties, while meeting the diversified needs of modern consumers, will be one of the core issues explored in this study. Additionally, we will explore the specific practices and initiatives of Zhaoqing's local specialties in brand building, market expansion, cultural transmission, and innovation, to provide useful references and guidance for their innovative development.

II. CURRENT SITUATION OF ZHAOQING'S LOCAL SPECIALTIES

Before proposing specific innovative strategies for the development of Zhaoqing's local specialties, it is essential to conduct an in-depth examination of their current situation. Understanding the types, characteristics, and current industrial chain structures, as well as the challenges faced by these specialties, provides a necessary foundation for formulating effective development strategies. This chapter will systematically analyze the status quo, laying the groundwork for subsequent discussions on innovative practices.

A. Types and Characteristics of Zhaoqing's Local Specialties

As an important city in Guangdong Province, Zhaoqing boasts a wide variety of local specialties that not only carry profound historical and cultural heritage but are also well-received for their unique quality. Among the numerous specialties, Guozheng Zongzi (Steamed Rice Dumplings) and Wenqing Carp are undoubtedly the most representative.

Guozheng Zongzi is a traditional and highly characteristic delicacy of the Zhaoqing region. Its production process is exquisite, with careful selection of ingredients such as glutinous rice, mung beans, and marbled pork, wrapped in winter leaves, and seasoned with five-spice powder and rice wine. After steaming, it exudes a fragrant aroma that makes it memorable. Guozheng Zongzi enjoys considerable popularity not only within Zhaoqing but across Guangdong Province and beyond. With the rise of e-commerce platforms, Guozheng Zongzi has expanded its reach nationwide, allowing more people to enjoy this authentic delicacy (Zhao, 2022).

Wenqing Carp, also known as Maixi Carp, is a high-quality carp species cultivated in fish ponds near Guoxi Village, Dawan Town, Gaoyao District, Zhaoqing. The carp is well-known for its tender flesh and delicate taste, which has earned it the admiration of many consumers. The cultivation of Maixi Carp has a long history and is closely related to the unique natural environment and aquaculture techniques of the region. In recent years, with advancements in aquaculture technology and growing market demand, the scale of Maixi Carp farming has continuously expanded, making it an iconic

product of the Zhaoqing area. During the harvest season, visitors from far and wide come to taste this delicious carp (Zhong, 2007).

Besides Guozheng Zongzi and Wenqing Carp, Zhaoqing also has other noteworthy local specialties, such as Qianshi (Euryale Ferox). Known as “ginseng of the water,” Qianshi is both a delicious food ingredient and a nutritious health product, rich in protein, amino acids, vitamins, and minerals. Locals often use Qianshi to prepare various delicacies such as Qianshi cakes and soups, which are well-loved by food enthusiasts (Chen, 2024).

These local specialties are doing well in both production and sales, securing a firm place in the local market and reaching national audiences through online and offline channels, with some even being exported overseas. Their growing recognition and market performance significantly contribute to the economic development of the Zhaoqing region..

B. Current Industrial Chain Structure and Problems

The industrial chain of Zhaoqing's local specialties involves several stages, including production, processing, and sales. Analyzing its structure reveals both advantages and drawbacks. In terms of production, Zhaoqing enjoys rich natural resources and a unique geographical environment, providing excellent conditions for producing local specialties. For instance, Guozheng Zongzi is renowned for its use of high-quality local glutinous rice and unique wrapping techniques, while Wenqing Carp benefits from being raised in clear waters that contribute to its fresh and delicate texture.

However, the processing stage faces challenges, primarily due to outdated technologies. Many traditional processing methods still rely on manual labor, lacking automation and modern equipment, which not only affects production efficiency but also limits quality consistency. Additionally, food safety and standardization issues during processing require urgent attention to ensure that the local specialties meet modern consumer standards for health and safety.

The sales stage is another crucial part of the industrial chain. Currently, Zhaoqing's local specialties are mainly sold through traditional physical stores and local markets. This limited distribution model restricts market expansion, particularly in the rapidly evolving e-commerce environment. Furthermore, the lack of robust brand building and marketing strategies limits the ability of Zhaoqing's local specialties to compete effectively in a broader market. Many high-quality specialties remain unknown to wider audiences due to insufficient promotion.

In summary, Zhaoqing's local specialties possess natural advantages in production, but outdated processing methods, limited sales channels, and weak brand promotion are significant bottlenecks. Addressing these issues through technology upgrades, sales diversification, and enhanced branding will be key to improving the competitiveness of Zhaoqing's specialties in domestic and international markets.

C. Brand Building and Market Positioning Analysis

In terms of brand building and market positioning, Zhaoqing's local specialties have developed unique characteristics. Currently, the brand image of Zhaoqing's local products emphasizes traditional, authentic, and healthy attributes, which align with consumer preferences for natural and high-quality foods. However, relying solely on traditional branding is insufficient for standing out in today's competitive market. Therefore, Zhaoqing's local specialties must innovate in branding to enhance their influence and competitiveness (Liu, 2017).

Compared to local specialty brands in other regions, Zhaoqing's specialties have both strengths and weaknesses. One strength lies in the deep cultural heritage and historical accumulation, which are valuable resources for brand building. By leveraging and preserving these cultural elements, Zhaoqing can create a distinctive brand image that attracts consumer interest. However, a significant weakness is the gap in brand dissemination and promotion. Compared to well-known local specialty brands from other regions, Zhaoqing's specialties lack visibility and recognition, which necessitates a focus on cultural continuity as well as aggressive marketing to build brand awareness.

To accurately position Zhaoqing's specialties in the market, it is essential to understand the needs and preferences of different consumer groups. As consumer demands diversify, Zhaoqing should target specific segments. For instance, products with organic and healthy characteristics could be promoted to health-conscious consumers, while premium cultural specialties could appeal to those interested in heritage and high-end foods. By precisely positioning these products, Zhaoqing's local specialties can better meet consumer needs and enhance their market competitiveness.

Brand protection and quality management should also be emphasized. A brand is the core competitive asset of local specialties, while quality is its lifeline. Therefore, Zhaoqing's local specialties need to establish comprehensive brand protection mechanisms and quality management systems to ensure product safety and maintain consumer trust.

III. SUCCESSFUL CASES OF LOCAL SPECIALTIES DEVELOPMENT AT HOME AND ABROAD

Based on the current analysis of Zhaoqing's local specialties, it is beneficial to draw upon successful development cases both domestically and internationally. Examining these examples allows us to understand how other regions have tackled similar challenges and harnessed opportunities, thereby providing useful lessons for the innovative development of Zhaoqing's specialties. This chapter will present a detailed analysis of both international and domestic success stories, offering a rich repository of insights that can inform our strategy.

A. International Success Stories

Globally, many local specialty brands have successfully established a unique market position through geographical indications and brand building. French Champagne and Italian Parma Ham are exemplary cases whose experiences offer valuable lessons for the innovative development of Zhaoqing's local specialties.

French Champagne, a globally renowned sparkling white wine, has a brand influence far surpassing ordinary wine products. This success is largely attributed to the strict protection of Champagne's geographical indications, which ensures the unique quality and authenticity of Champagne. The winemaking techniques are closely linked to the specific characteristics of the Champagne region, ensuring that every bottle embodies the essence of French winemaking culture. Through geographical indication protection, French Champagne has not only preserved its brand image but also gained broad recognition and respect in international markets (Li et al., 2015).

Similarly, Italian Parma Ham has gained global popularity for its distinctive quality and taste. The success of Parma Ham lies in Italy's strict adherence to food safety, quality control, and traditional production techniques. The Italian government has implemented a series of brand promotion and market marketing strategies, positioning Parma Ham as a significant symbol of Italian culinary culture. This approach has helped raise its international reputation (Xiao, 2018).

In terms of cultural innovation in local specialties, Japan has also achieved notable results by integrating local specialty ingredients with modern cooking techniques. Such initiatives have helped Japanese local specialties gain international recognition and invigorated local economies. The success stories of these countries provide useful lessons for Zhaoqing, emphasizing the importance of geographical protection, quality control, and cultural branding in establishing a global presence for local specialties.

B. Domestic Success Stories

As an agricultural powerhouse, China has numerous successful examples of local specialty innovation and brand building, which provide valuable insights for Zhaoqing.

Xinjiang Raisins are a prime example. Benefiting from Xinjiang's unique climate and geography, these raisins have established a high reputation nationwide. Effective branding and market positioning strategies have contributed significantly to their success. Key factors include promoting the unique climate conditions that influence grape quality and diversifying sales through e-commerce to reach wider markets (Yin et al., 2015).

Another successful case is Fujian Tea. As a major tea-producing province, Fujian boasts a rich tea culture and a robust industry base. Recent years have seen Fujian Tea successfully increase its value and market competitiveness through innovative branding and marketing strategies. By leveraging e-commerce, Fujian Tea has integrated both online and offline sales channels, providing consumers with convenient and personalized shopping experiences.

In addition to these, various other local specialties have successfully combined agricultural production with cultural tourism. By hosting festivals and promoting local delicacies, these regions have drawn significant numbers of tourists and have successfully increased brand awareness of their local products (Deng et al., 2008).

For Zhaoqing, these domestic success stories emphasize the importance of brand building, marketing innovation, and the integration of cultural elements. Learning from these examples, Zhaoqing can develop unique branding strategies and diversify sales channels to enhance the influence and competitiveness of its local specialties.

IV. CONSTRUCTION OF INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR ZHAOQING'S LOCAL SPECIALTIES

Drawing on the successful experiences from other regions and countries, we can now focus on crafting innovative development strategies for Zhaoqing's local specialties. This chapter will delve into specific strategic approaches that address product innovation, brand building, diversified marketing channels, and industrial chain optimization. Each of these aspects plays a crucial role in enhancing the overall competitiveness and sustainability of Zhaoqing's specialty industries.

A. Product Innovation Strategy

Product innovation is the key to the innovative development of Zhaoqing's local specialties. In a global and highly competitive market, innovation involves retaining traditional elements while incorporating modern features to meet diversified market needs. For example, Guozheng Zongzi's traditional hand-made craftsmanship should be complemented by modern production technologies to improve efficiency and maintain product consistency. Packaging innovation is also essential, focusing on creating designs that reflect Zhaoqing's cultural features while aligning with modern aesthetics, such as using biodegradable materials for eco-friendly packaging.

B. Brand Building and Cultural Value Enhancement Strategy

Brand building is not only about gaining market recognition but also about the cultural values behind the products. For Zhaoqing's local specialties, enhancing brand influence requires the effective integration of historical and cultural stories that highlight their heritage. Each specialty represents a piece of Zhaoqing's history and traditional culture, and tapping into these narratives will greatly enrich the value of the brand.

Exploring the historical origins and cultural significance of Zhaoqing's local specialties is crucial. By compiling and publicizing the stories behind the products, including historical data, folklore, and craftsmanship, a complete and attractive brand narrative can be formed. This approach helps to create a deeper connection between consumers and the product (Li et al., 2015).

Creating unique, memorable brand logos and symbols that reflect regional characteristics is also an effective way to enhance brand identity. For Zhaoqing's local specialties, brand logos should incorporate local cultural elements, traditional motifs, or iconic images to represent the product's uniqueness. The use of consistent colors and fonts aligned with the product's positioning will help to reinforce brand identity and build a loyal consumer base (Xiao, 2018).

In terms of brand promotion, diversified communication channels, such as social media, online platforms, and in-person events, should be utilized to reach a wider audience. Collaborating with the tourism sector to offer local specialty-themed experiences and establishing pop-up stores in popular tourist spots can also increase exposure to new consumer groups. This dual approach allows Zhaoqing's local specialties to grow beyond their traditional markets and connect with a global audience.

C. Diversified Marketing Channels Strategy

In the context of globalization and digital transformation, diversified marketing channels are crucial for the innovative development of Zhaoqing's local specialties. This strategy involves expanding online sales channels, exploring cross-border e-commerce opportunities, and combining cultural tourism with local specialty marketing to enhance the overall market reach.

The rapid rise of e-commerce and cross-border platforms offers unprecedented opportunities for Zhaoqing's local specialties to access a broader consumer base. Establishing a dedicated online platform or collaborating with established e-commerce giants enables Zhaoqing's products to transcend regional limitations. Utilizing digital marketing tools like data analytics and targeted advertising further enhances customer acquisition and retention rates, maximizing the effectiveness of online sales efforts.

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Additionally, Zhaoqing is rich in tourism resources, providing a unique opportunity to integrate local specialty marketing with cultural tourism. Developing specialty-themed tourism activities, such as workshops for making Guozheng Zongzi or guided tours highlighting traditional aquaculture practices, can attract tourists and offer them immersive experiences. Such initiatives not only boost local specialty sales but also strengthen consumer-brand connections through memorable cultural interactions.

To effectively implement diversified marketing channels, Zhaoqing must ensure the integration of online and offline strategies. The consistency of brand messaging and product quality across all channels is essential to maintain consumer trust. Moreover, building strategic partnerships with tourism agencies and e-commerce platforms can facilitate better resource sharing and market penetration.

D. Industrial Chain Optimization and Cooperative Mechanisms

The innovative development of Zhaoqing's local specialties cannot be separated from the optimization of the entire industrial chain and the establishment of cooperative mechanisms. Enhancing the competitiveness of the entire industry requires improvements in each link of the production, processing, and sales processes, leading to a coordinated and integrated industrial ecosystem.

At the production level, emphasis should be placed on improving raw material quality and production efficiency. Integrating advanced agricultural technologies and adopting modern farming practices will help optimize production processes and improve yields while ensuring product quality. Collaboration with research institutions can also foster innovations in cultivating new varieties and improving techniques.

The processing phase, which is crucial for product quality, must undergo technological upgrades. Encouraging processing enterprises to adopt automation and new technologies will boost efficiency and ensure the consistency and safety of processed products. Establishing a platform for enterprises to share technology, knowledge, and best practices will create a synergistic environment for growth.

For sales, expanding distribution channels through e-commerce platforms and combining sales with cultural tourism will help Zhaoqing's local specialties reach a wider audience. This should be supported by strong brand promotion activities that highlight the products' unique characteristics. Local specialties should also be marketed alongside Zhaoqing's rich cultural heritage to attract both local and international consumers.

Cooperation between different sectors and industries is essential for building a cohesive industrial chain. Partnerships with cultural, tourism, and technology sectors can lead to a multi-faceted development strategy that benefits all stakeholders. For example, integrating technological advancements like IoT (Internet of Things) for product traceability can enhance transparency and consumer trust, while collaborations with tourism can create experiential activities that boost both tourism and specialty product sales.

V. CONCLUSION

After conducting an in-depth study of the innovative development strategies for Zhaoqing's local specialties, it is clear that such development can yield significant economic benefits. The sales volume of local specialties will grow, leading to increased income for local farmers, improved livelihoods, and heightened motivation for production. The booming local specialty industry will drive rural economic transformation and promote diversified development.

Furthermore, the innovative development of Zhaoqing's local specialties will have profound cultural and social impacts. By deeply exploring and promoting the historical and cultural aspects of these specialties, Zhaoqing's traditional culture and history will be better preserved and revitalized. This will not only enhance the cultural confidence of the region but also significantly boost Zhaoqing's cultural influence, allowing more people to experience the unique charm of the city.

In terms of sustainability, the focus is on ecological protection and the sustainable use of resources during the development process of these specialties. By adopting environmentally friendly production technologies and packaging materials, the local specialty industry can move towards a greener, more organic direction, balancing long-term economic benefits with ecological needs.

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