

Study on Promotion Strategy of Catering Service for Infant Supplementary Food

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Abstract: With the improvement of living standard, the market of infant supplementary food in China develops rapidly, and catering service for supplementary food also usher in a new development opportunity. Through the methods of field research, the present writer found that the infant supplementary food market rarely provides fresh supplementary food. Plus, there are few professional platforms of supplementary food catering service, and the supplementary food catering service market is not standardised. Based on the fact that supplementary food catering service is an inevitable requirement of market development, which could provide a scientific and reasonable arrangement of supplementary food and save the time and energy of homemade supplementary food, it is suggested to promote supplementary food catering service from the following six aspects: Initially, innovating product types to seize the supplementary food market. Secondly, strengthening technical support to reduce operational risks. Third, taking advantages of the network to enrich the promotion form. Moreover, promoting brand effect with the help of well-known platforms. What's more, providing special services to meet consumer demand. Last but not least, innovating business models and strengthening cooperation to increase flow.

1. Introduction

Supplementary food addition is used to supplement the nutritional deficiencies of breast milk and provided infants with other food besides breast milk.[1] In "*Feeding Guidelines for Infants Aged 7~24 Months*", Chinese Nutrition Society pointed out that "Infants who beyond six months old still need to be breastfed, and simultaneously fed with supplementary food".[2] The scientific and reasonable addition of supplementary food can provide sufficient energy and essential nutrients for the growth and development of infants, and promote the healthy growth of their physical and mental health as well as the formation of cognitive behaviour abilities.[3] With the implementation of the two-child policy, the demand for infant supplementary food in the market is gradually increasing. Nevertheless, there are few professional platforms of supplementary food catering service, which brings opportunities to the development of supplementary food catering industry. Meanwhile, the opportunities come with some challenges. There are some food safety problems occurring frequently in the market. What's more, how to solve the problems existing in supplementary food catering service, eliminate consumers' concerns, and open up more marketing space will be the problems that the producers and operators of supplementary food catering industry need to face.

2. Status Analysis

2.1 There are Fewer Fresh Supplementary Food

To some extent, the implementation of the two-child policy has promoted the increasing number of infants, stimulated the greater demand for supplementary food, and further expanded the market space. Whereas, it has also aggravated the contradiction between supply and demand, and made the market price raised. At present, supplementary food, like infant rice paste, noodles, rice cracker,

biscuits and so on, are sold more or less in every famous online shopping platforms, supermarkets and maternal and infant speciality stores. However, most of these supplementary foods exist in the form of finished products or semi-finished products. Consequently, buyers are difficult to confirm the components and nutritional elements in these supplementary foods, and they are worried about its safety problems, which makes them difficult to choose when buying. While even in the case of increasing consumer groups, there are still few fresh supplementary foods for infants on the market, which is very inconvenient for the working new parents. As a result, the new parents urgently hope that the infant supplementary food can be as convenient as the adult diet which can be ordered online and designed personally so that it could not only save time and energy, but also let infants eat more fresh supplementary foods, and get more nutrients to meet their growth and development needs.

2.2 There are Few Professional Platforms of Supplementary Food Catering Service

With the rapid development of e-commerce, infant supplementary foods usher in a new development opportunity. Both online flagship stores and offline speciality stores have a great variety to choose from. Nevertheless, most new parents lack child-rearing experience. They are not very clear about the growth and development of infants and their nutritional needs at all stages. As a result, a wide variety of supplementary foods has plagued their choices. Also, due to the parents' spoiling and wrong parenting style, some of the post-80s and post-90s generations are lack of practical ability since they were a child and are difficult to undertake the responsibility of raising children. What's more, their living skills need to be improved. However, these new parents early contact with the Internet and e-commerce and their thinking is avant-garde. They hope that there will be some professional platforms of catering services in the market, which can provide reasonable dietary recommendation, balanced nutrition, on-demand catering service and help them due to some difficulties while parenting.

2.3 The Supplementary Food Catering Service Market is not Standardised

With the improvement of life quality, the market of infant supplementary food in China develops rapidly. However, the problems of food safety exist for a long time, and the market of supplementary food catering service is in chaos and lacks effective supervision. In order to satisfy their personal interests, some producers and operators produce and sell a large number of supplementary foods without safety test or with substandard quality, which disturbs the normal market order and leads to vicious competition. Due to the limited workforce, material resources and financial resources, the market supervision department is difficult to supervise the details of all walks of life, resulting in the market of supplementary food catering services is not standardised. Production, management, sales and after-sales all link with one another. As long as one of the links is not standard, it may leads to safety risks for infants' physical and mental health. Therefore, national food safety departments and the supervision department of the market should strictly control the entry threshold of supplementary food catering services, formulate rigorous standards, implement the principal responsibilities, strengthen market supervision, carry out punishment regulations, eliminate safety risks, so as to establish a normal and standardised supplementary food catering service market and promote the healthy development of the industry.

3. Promotion Reasons

3.1 Supplementary Food Catering Service is an Inevitable Requirement of Market Development

Nowadays, the improvement of living standard has changed people's lifestyle. Meanwhile, the high-speed and convenient mobile network and all direction extending logistics have also changed people's consumption patterns. All these factors provide a good economic environment for the development of infant supplementary food catering service and are conducive to promoting its improvement, making it a part of the market economy. Simultaneously, people's yearning for a better life is well reflected in the parents who are the post-80s and post-90s generations. They generally pay

attention to the safety and scientific feeding of supplementary food for infants. What's more, these parents put forward higher requirements on infant supplementary food, such as the naturality of food ingredients, the science of nutritional requirements and the rationality of dietary matching. They pay attention to the physical and mental development of individuals and pursue life quality. These ideological changes profoundly affect their life style and lead to the vertical division of the market economy. Also, the release of the two-child policy has injected new development potential for the development of supplementary food industry, accelerated the transformation of market structure, stimulated the increase of consumer demand, promoted the development of catering service, and provided development opportunities for the platforms of supplementary food catering service. All in all, supplementary food catering service is a part of the market economy and the inevitable requirement of market development.

3.2 Supplementary Food Catering Service Could Provide a Scientific and Reasonable Arrangement of Supplementary Food

In "*Feeding Guidelines for Infants Aged 7~24 Months*", Yang Yuexin et al. from Chinese Nutrition Society pointed out that "supplementary food should be added reasonably for the infants after the age of six months". [2] The addition of supplementary foods can enable infants to obtain enough energy and nutrients such as Fe, Zn, I and Vitamin A, and promote their healthy growth and normal development. Nevertheless, the gastrointestinal digestive system of infants is still in the development stage and cannot eat the food adults. As a result, supplementary food is required to be refined. Plus, in order to help infants to experience and adapt to each kind of supplementary food step by step, the supplementary foods for infants of different months of age should be different, which could be a challenge for new parents who lack parenting experience and are not good at preparing supplementary food. Whereas, the new parents in the new era have strong ability to accept new things and are prefer to try to use supplementary food catering service. They could not only get scientific and reasonable supplementary food arrangement, but also more clearly know about the nutritional elements and corresponding food materials needed by infants at different months of age, avoiding the loss of nutrients caused by unscientific preparation methods, and reducing the possibility of food allergy caused by unreasonable supplementary food collocation. Also, the catering service provides a wide range of supplementary foods, which can be selected to meet the needs of infants at different months of age, so that they can adapt to different supplementary foods and form a healthy eating habit.

3.3 Supplementary Food Catering Service Could Save the Time and Energy of Homemade Supplementary Food

Nowadays, for parents who are the post-80s and post-90s generations in the new era, raising a child not only costs money but also requires a lot of time and energy. The production of supplementary food for infants is relatively elaborate and time-consuming, which is a particularly strenuous task for young parents who have to face complicated work and take care of the young and old at home. After all, a person has limited time and energy. Playing multiple roles at the same time is easy to attend to one and lose sight of another, resulting in greater pressure and more conflicts and bringing a negative impact on work and life. Also, young parents entrust their babies to the elders but worry about the elders' backward thinking and unscientific feeding, which may result in insufficient nutrition for the babies and affect their growth and development. However, in the new era, the new parents have higher education level, advanced ideas, strong acceptance ability and pay more attention to the scientific feeding of infants, hoping that the market can provide scientific and reasonable supplementary food catering service. Consequently, they can choose freely according to the infant's age, food hobby, and the type and function of supplementary foods through the catering service platforms, which could not only help them save the time and energy to prepare supplementary foods, but also make them do not need to worry about the unscientific production of supplementary foods and allow infants to eat a variety of fresh supplementary foods to ensure balanced nutrition.

4. Promotion Strategy

4.1 Innovating Product Types to Seize the Supplementary Food Market

In order to maintain the edge in the market, the platforms of supplementary food catering service not only need to offer catering service but also need to explain the production process and highlight their innovations and features. What's more, they should ensure the fresh and safe ingredients, standard preparation of supplementary foods, warm and thoughtful service, scientific and reasonable guidance, and make consumers enjoy high-quality catering service, so as to seize a larger market space for supplementary foods. The following are some advice. Above all, preparing supplementary food scientifically according to infants' month age. The platforms of supplementary food catering service could design supplementary foods that are suitable for infants of each month of age by the age of 7~36 months. Moreover, reasonably dividing the supplementary foods into categories according to the types of food materials. For instance, classifying some common types of supplementary foods according to different types such as mud, porridge, eggs, cakes, meats, pasta, noodles, soups, vegetables, whole grains, jams, etc., so that parents can choose suitable supplementary foods to satisfy infants dietary needs. Plus, improving diet targeted by the function of supplementary foods. By making specific supplementary foods, the platforms could be targeted to supplement calcium, iron and zinc for the infants, or provide feeding guidance for infants with colds, cough, constipation, diarrhoea, anorexia, fire-fighting and other symptoms, so as to ensure their rapid recovery.

4.2 Strengthening Technical Support to Reduce Operational Risks

With the popularity of the Internet, various network platforms and apps are full of people's vision. While enjoying the convenience brought by them, people also bear the risk of personal information being leaked and used. As the operators of the supplementary food catering service platforms, it is necessary to increase the awareness of information security management, strengthen the operation and maintenance of the platform, timely monitor the violations of laws and regulations, improve the professionalism of data management personnel, eliminate all potential security risks of the platform, so as to ensure users' information security. Although the service platform records a large amount of user information, the operators must not publish, transfer, buy or sell users' information, or inform others of the information. The above activities can only be carried out unless it is specifically obscured, does not disclose user information, or is authorised by the users. [4] Also, the platforms need to improve the quality and efficiency of online services, respond to consumers' inquiries in a timely manner, quickly process consumers' orders, and provide a good shopping experience for consumers.

4.3 Taking Advantages of the Network to Enrich the Promotion Form

In China, the unscientific addition of infant supplementary food is still a common phenomenon. More or fewer parents still have some misunderstandings when adding supplementary food to their babies. For this reason, it is necessary to carry out science education for parents on supplementary food addition. The platforms of supplementary food catering service could take advantage of the network to enrich the platform promotion form. For instance, the process of supplementary food catering can be published by Douyin, Xiaohongshu, WeChat business, E-commerce, WeChat Official Account, Applet, etc., or through the recording of vlogs, short videos, live broadcast, so as to be supervised by many parents online. In these ways, parents can see whether the ingredients used in the catering process are fresh and hygienic, whether the production process is standardized and reasonable, and whether various condiments are added. Simultaneously, through online supervision, parents who are unfamiliar with the production of supplementary foods can also learn the standard

operation of it, so as to improve the scientificity of supplementary food addition. Anyhow, only by maximizing the transparency of supplementary food catering can parents buy at ease and babies eat at ease; only by providing parents with high-quality catering services can parents increase their recognition of supplementary food catering, thereby expanding larger market space.

4.4 Promoting Brand Effect with the Help of Well-known Platforms

With the increasing types of takeaways, various brands of food have been gradually entered Meituan, Eleme and other takeout platforms, which not only satisfies the taste buds of foodies but also solves the dining problems of special groups. At the same time, the entry of infant supplementary food catering services into Meituan, Eleme and other takeout platforms can break the traditional sales model and achieve new revenue growth points. In order to ensure that the baby's supplementary food ingredients are fresh, delicious, and nutritious, the best way is to promote supplementary food catering services, so as to freshly made and delivered supplementary food for immediate consumption. This can not only solve the problem that parents are too busy to make supplementary food by themselves, but also provide infants with more scientific supplementary foods collocation. With the optimisation of the operation of service platforms, the catering service should not be limited to its own operation platform, but also need to rely on other third-party well-known platforms to increase the entry unit. Also, establishing its own brand with its strength and advantages, ensuring that consumers can not only order food through the app but also through QQ Wallet, WeChat pay, WeChat Official Account, Applet, Alipay, Baidu wallet, JD.com, etc. That is to say, consumers do not need to download specific ordering software to enjoy catering services anytime and anywhere.

4.5 Providing Customized Services to Meet Consumer Demand

At present, each supplementary food brand has demonstrated its special prowess in fighting for market share and strives to build brand influence. Meanwhile, a business model that focuses on services and provides customized supplementary food services to consumers is quietly emerging. Compared with the mainstream supplementary food brands on the market, customized supplementary foods have unique advantages. According to the individual needs of consumers, this model provides supplementary foods that are suitable for infants of different month ages and physiques and then delivers to consumers at the fastest speed. Consequently, freshness has become the biggest feature of customized supplementary foods. [5] Only by providing fresh, purely handmade, nutritionally balanced meals without any additives by infants' needs, can supplementary food catering services meet consumers' habits, meet their consumption needs, and increase user viscosity.

4.6 Innovating Business Models and Strengthening Cooperation to Increase the Flow

Nowadays, any successful business is inseparable from innovation and cooperation. Only by constantly innovating and finding new ways can business be viable and not be eliminated. In addition to the e-commerce channel and WeChat business model, the supplementary food catering service can also cooperate with other related brands offline, so as to form a new business model and obtain greater benefits through the client's customer traffic. It could be said that this model with such novelty degree is very few in China. One of the easiest ways that could be achieved is to provide supplementary food customization service in the form of "shop-in-shop". Supplementary food catering stores can try to cooperate with maternal stores, move the supplementary food production site to the maternal stores to make a small restaurant, and meet the individual needs of consumers by customized services. By doing so, it can not only reduce the operating costs of both parties, share customer resources, but also drive store reputation, increase consumption flow, and ultimately achieve a win-win situation.

5. Conclusion

The safety of supplementary food is related to the growth and health of infants. Nevertheless, the supplementary food catering service is still in the exploration stage. There are some problems, for example, the market is not standardised, the catering service can not keep up, etc., affecting its development speed. Consequently, the platforms of supplementary food catering service should strengthen product research and development, innovate product types, standardise the production of supplementary food, and provide customized services. Simultaneously, in order to better create the brand effect and achieve characteristic development, it should also attract more consumers with scientific and reasonable arrangement of supplementary food, fresh and safe food materials and high-quality and efficient service, catering to their consumption habits. Ultimately, with the continuous development and improvement of supplementary food catering services, the present writer believes that its future is very promising.

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