

Original Paper

The Status Quo and Improvement Measures of Catering Industry in Chengdu

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Abstract

In recent years, with the continuous improvement of people's material life, the restaurant industry has increasingly become an indispensable part of people's lives and an important symbol of people's enrichment and improvement of life. No matter in a friend's dinner or a colleague's gathering, food has become a very significant part. It not only brings people enjoyment of various flavors, but also can narrow the distance between people. Located in the southwest plains, Chengdu, with the reputation of "Land of Abundance", is an excellent place for the development of catering industry. It is not only because of the high level of commercial development in Chengdu but also the people living there enjoy their lives and are keen on food. However, there are also some undesirable problems arising with the prosperity of the catering industry in Chengdu, which will disrupt market order and good environment. Based on this, this paper mainly elaborates the current development of the catering industry in Chengdu, and correspondingly puts forward some perfecting measures for specific problems.

Keywords

Chengdu, catering industry, status quo, existing problems, countermeasures

1. The Development of the Catering Industry in Chengdu

With the constant development of economy in Chengdu and the increase of resident disposable income, Chengdu people are increasingly pursuing a higher living standard. In addition, with the leisure nature, the citizens in Chengdu know how to enjoy their lives, and their preference for food is the typical representative. It is because of the preference for food that leads to the year-by-year increase on consumption, which also has greatly contributed to the prosperous and thriving catering industry there. In Chengdu, throughout which you can find a variety of catering outlets, such as individual restaurants, fast food chains and high-end western restaurants. The integration of thousands of years of cultural

heritage and new age features makes the cuisine in the city more attractive and appealing.

However, the development of things isn't always easy. Due to the relaxation of the market threshold and the influx of various types of enterprises and individuals, the catering market is becoming more and more inclusive as well as complicated. The relevant laws and regulations are not perfect enough to effectively regulate the disorder and restrict the phenomenon. In addition, the responsibilities of the supervisory authority haven't been clearly defined so that the market lacks adequate supervision, leading to the disruption of the market development order and the negative effect upon social atmosphere.

2. The Existing Problems of the Catering Industry Development in Chengdu

2.1 The High-End Catering Declined Significantly, and the Development of SMEs Sowed down

Affected by the "six prohibitions" carried out by the Party Central Committee and the policy "to practice strict economy and combat waste", the high-end restaurant industry in Chengdu has been in a generally poor state of operation since 2013. Up to 2017, the high-end restaurants have suffered a severe impact and the market has been severely shrunk, and almost all the related business suffered great losses. For example, the production value of the high-end restaurant industry in 2016 dropped by nearly 30 billion yuan compared with that in 2015. The high-end enterprises, such as the Chinese Club and the Baguo Buyi restaurant, started to go out of business one after another. The fundamental reason summarized is the narrow positioning of high-end catering. They mainly serve for those high-incomes, while the general public can hardly afford. It is difficult to achieve long-term and stable development. Small and medium-sized catering enterprises are characterized by low-cost operation and management, which is conducive to its faster money-return and obtain some benefits. But it's not easy to improve the internal management system, such as food quality control, staff management and incentives, and the potential problems existing in the management may lead to the slow development of enterprises. In the increasingly fierce market competition, many self-reliant small and medium-sized enterprises cannot conform to the development trend of the times and will finally be eliminated by emerging enterprises that are constantly pouring in the market.

2.2 Local Catering Industry Development Is Impacted by the Chain Catering

Chain catering, which has developed for decades, is the greatest competitor against local catering business in Chengdu. Chain catering has a complete industrial chain from production and processing to transport and sales, and an efficient and unified management has been established in it. Our lives have long been infiltrated with Catering chain. KFC, Starbucks have become the standard configurations for shopping plazas, and McDonald's, Pizza Hut can be seen everywhere, all of which are the main choice when people dining. In contrast, local catering enterprises in Chengdu are lagging far behind in the aspects of food supply, sales promotion and customer source. In the case of chain catering occupying half of the market, Chengdu local restaurants are limited and difficult to gain a better development.

Therefore, they are “unique” and individual ones without unification.

2.3 Poor Service Quality and Food Safety Guarantee

2.3.1 Food Safety Cannot Be Guaranteed

Catering industry is closely related to people’s lives, and the food safety has become one of the most concerned issues of consumers. In recent years, many well-known restaurants have been reported that their food isn’t safe enough, such as the use of recycled cooking oil, poisonous rice, false fungus, etc., resulting in nervous consumers and the negative brand confidence. In fact, the profitability of businesses, the asymmetry of market information or the absence of regulators will lead to an endless emergence of food safety problems in the catering industry.

2.3.2 Poor Service Quality

The satisfaction of the customer is reduced due to the lack of experience in some SMEs. On the one hand, the employees in some enterprises are of low quality, not diligent in their work, lazy in behavior and negative in attitude. On the other hand, the lack of employees in some enterprises reduces the efficiency of service and cannot timely respond to the needs of consumers.

2.4 Decoration and Publicity Are Focused, the Quality of Food Is Ignored

In recent years, there are a growing number of “instant popular shops” appearing in Chengdu, with the main business of desserts and café. Through the luxuriant decoration, they’ve attracted a large number of consumers, especially for women. But the majority of its food is specious, and its price is too high. In addition, some common businesses, such as hot pot restaurants and chuanchuan shops (another type of hotpot with food bunched with bamboo sticks), have also begun to pay too much attention to their decoration and publicity in order to raise the selling price, while ignoring the careful selection and production of ingredients. They have gradually become perfunctory, competing with other shops in the market with their shoddy food, which is contrary to the original intention of the restaurant industry.

3. The Corresponding Method for the Existing Problems of Catering Industry in Chengdu

3.1 Promote the Restructuring of Enterprises and Expand the Target Consumer

On the one hand, the high-end catering industry should “bow down”, and expand its target-consumer range, meeting the needs of high-incomes as well as ordinary people with popularized dishes and corresponding discounts. On the other hand, SMEs should base themselves on the market, investigate and analyze the needs of their own consumers so as to provide targeted services and make corresponding adjustments according to the industry trends.

3.2 Expand Local Restaurants and Develop Chain Agencies

Through the guidance of the government and the support of the whole industry, we should first develop a number of leading enterprises to specialize themselves under the assistance of many parties. Then implement centralized management on the basis of the specialization so as to realize the chain management. In this way, the positive development of the entire industry can be promoted, and the

standardization and management level of the local restaurant chains can be standardized, which will speed up the formation of a complete industrial chain covering supply, production and sales.

3.3 Strengthen Food Regulation and Improve Service Quality

3.3.1 Strengthen Food Regulation

First of all, catering enterprises are supposed to establish a correct awareness of food safety, and truly provide consumers with high-quality and safe food. Second, the food safety regulatory authorities should know clear about their own regulatory scope and supervision authority, increasing supervision and severely punishing the individuals or entities breaching the market order. Finally, the government should step up publicity and education on food safety so that consumers can properly adopt legal means to defend their own rights and interests when facing such problems.

3.3.2 Improve Service Quality

First, the government should broaden the employment information channels so that the job search and recruitment information can be promptly and effectively transmitted, continuously delivering talents to the catering industry. Second, enterprises should train their employees according to their own situations, such as clarifying the rules, regulations and incentive mechanism of the enterprises, so that practitioners will have a strong sense of discipline and work enthusiastically. Third, individuals should strive to learn and master professional skills and form a good professional ethics, so that their ability can perfectly match the position.

3.4 Attach Importance to Reform and Innovation and Carry forward Special Delicacies

The original intention of the catering industry is to provide consumers with delicious food. Therefore, enterprises and individuals can not violate the principle of industry for making profits. Instead, they should focus on food improvement and innovation. For the improvement of existing food, enterprises should not blindly proceed or blindly follow their own ideas, but should consult and respect the opinions of consumers. More importantly, they should have their own “characteristics”, their own “quality” and “brand”. This is the fundamental reason why a restaurant industry can endure.

4. Conclusion

Up to now, the catering industry in Chengdu has achieved rapid development, but there are also a series of problems to be solved urgently. Therefore, Chengdu Municipal Government and relevant catering enterprises should face and solve these problems with positive attitude, and take the initiative to cooperate with each other to promote the transformation and upgrading, reform and innovation of catering enterprises. So that a good market atmosphere for the catering industry in Chengdu can be created, which will promote the sustainable development for Chengdu’s catering industry.

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