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Original Paper

Under the "Light Wellness" Consumer Trend—A Study on Consumer Purchase Intentions and Market Expansion Strategies for Functional Snacks

Yunchen Gao[1*]

[1] School of International Business and Management, Sichuan International Studies University, Chongqing, China

[*] Yunchen Gao, E-mail: g98776655@163.com

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Abstract

This study examines consumer purchase intentions and market expansion strategies for functional snacks within the "light wellness" trend. It reviews relevant theories and the market landscape, combining questionnaire surveys with empirical analysis. Using SPSS and Stata, the study conducts reliability and validity tests, exploratory factor analysis, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and robustness tests. Findings show that perceived value—comprising functional, hedonic, symbolic, social, and conditional dimensions—positively influences purchase intention, with functional value exerting the strongest effect; health concern positively moderates this relationship, and sub-sample regressions confirm robustness. Firms should advance market expansion through product innovation, value communication, scenario building, and channel synergy.

Keywords

functional snacks, light wellness, perceived value, purchase intention

1. Introduction

With the continued implementation of the Healthy China strategy, public awareness of health and nutrition has grown, reshaping dietary preferences and creating new opportunities for the health food industry. Consumers are increasingly moving beyond basic concerns about food quantity and quality toward healthier and more informed dietary choices. This shift is particularly evident amid faster-paced lifestyles, rising work and study pressures, and increasingly irregular daily routines. Rather than making substantial changes to their existing habits, consumers are seeking convenient ways to maintain their health through dietary adjustments and nutritional supplementation. This approach, commonly referred to as "light wellness," has become an increasingly visible consumption trend and has contributed to the growing popularity of functional snacks.

Traditionally, functional foods have been understood as products designed to provide specific nutritional or health benefits, regulate bodily functions, and support particular health needs without serving as substitutes for medical treatment. Safety, clearly defined functions, and scientific evidence are central to their development. In recent years, however, changes in consumer preferences and

product innovation have considerably broadened the scope of this market. Functional foods are no longer confined to conventional supplements such as capsules, oral liquids, and effervescent tablets. They increasingly encompass healthy snacks, meal replacements, functional beverages, plant-based products, and probiotic foods. This expansion reflects a broader shift from function-oriented supplementation toward products that integrate health benefits into everyday dietary experiences.

Product innovation has played an important role in this transformation. Functional foods are increasingly offered in accessible and appealing formats, including gummies, dairy drinks, ice cream, snack foods, and meal replacement bars. Meanwhile, advances in ingredients and food technology, such as the use of plant-based proteins, alternative sweeteners, and bioactive compounds, have further diversified product offerings. Consumer preferences have also become more sophisticated. In addition to health benefits, consumers consider price, taste, convenience, portability, packaging, and brand image when making purchasing decisions. Younger consumers, in particular, increasingly seek products that address specific needs, including weight management, sleep improvement, digestive health, and immune support, while also fitting their lifestyles and social preferences. These changes have encouraged greater market segmentation and more scenario-oriented product development.

Functional snacks represent an important segment of this expanding market. By combining the health-oriented attributes of functional foods with the convenience and appeal of conventional snacks, they offer an accessible way to incorporate health management into everyday consumption. Their suitability for various settings, including workplaces, commuting, exercise, and meal replacement, makes them particularly compatible with the fragmented routines of modern consumers. Compared with traditional health supplements, functional snacks generally offer a more approachable consumption experience; compared with ordinary snacks, they provide additional nutritional or health-related benefits. Products featuring plant-based ingredients, probiotics, high protein, reduced sugar and fat, and sleep or stress support have consequently attracted increasing market attention. Functional snacks are thus emerging as a distinct consumer category with considerable growth potential.

The expansion of this market also raises an important question: what drives consumers to purchase functional snacks? Unlike ordinary snacks, whose appeal often rests primarily on taste, price, and convenience, functional snacks involve a broader set of value considerations. Consumers must assess not only their perceived health benefits but also the enjoyment of consumption, brand-related meanings, social appeal, and the conditions under which products are purchased and used. Purchase decisions therefore reflect the combined influence of multiple dimensions of perceived value rather than any single product attribute. Understanding these underlying mechanisms is important for explaining consumer behavior in the context of light wellness and identifying the factors shaping demand in this emerging market.

Against this background, this paper examines the formation of consumer purchase intention toward functional snacks under the light wellness trend. Drawing on relevant domestic and international literature, the study combines questionnaire surveys with empirical analysis to investigate the effects of functional, hedonic, symbolic, social, and conditional value on purchase intention, while also examining differences across consumer groups. It further draws on market developments and representative business cases to develop recommendations for market expansion. By examining functional snacks from a consumer perspective, this study seeks to provide insights into product

positioning, value communication, distribution channels, and marketing strategies, while contributing to a better understanding of the evolving functional food market.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Classification and Definition of Functional Foods

2.1.1 Definition of Functional Foods in China

In China, health foods constitute a legally recognized food category subject to specific regulatory requirements, whereas functional foods are generally understood as a broader concept encompassing products with particular nutritional or physiological functions. Despite the growing body of research in this field, no widely accepted definition of functional foods has yet emerged in the Chinese academic literature.

Existing studies differ mainly in how they distinguish functional foods from health foods. Some researchers use the two terms interchangeably or treat them as closely related concepts. For instance, Hui Bodi et al. equate functional foods with health foods when examining the application of food ingredients in China. Tian Ming et al. similarly draw on the regulatory framework for health foods to examine the management of ingredients and functional claims in comparable overseas products, offering implications for the regulation of functional food ingredients in China. Other studies adopt a broader understanding of functional foods, defining them according to the specific ingredients, production processes, or health-related properties under investigation. Bi Yunfeng et al. for example, describe functional foods as industrially produced foods containing specific functional factors for particular consumer groups, rather than products intended to treat diseases. This approach is also reflected in research focusing on individual ingredients and their applications. Wang Hongbo et al. examine functional foods developed from legumes rich in γ-aminobutyric acid, while Liao Jun explores the incorporation of tea-derived functional components into conventional foods, referring to the resulting products as tea-based functional foods.

Beyond the use of isolated functional ingredients, some researchers investigate the health-related properties of foods as a whole, often drawing on the traditional Chinese concept of food as medicine. Shen Lingzhi et al. review the functional properties of tartary buckwheat and its potential applications in food development, while Tian Yu et al. examine the interactions between foods containing medicinal ingredients, such as astragalus, and the gut microbiota. Research has also extended to edible fungi and their applications in functional food production. Mou Zhiyong et al. review the probiotic properties of yeast and their potential uses in food, whereas Tang Xiaohua et al. discuss the application of edible and medicinal fungal mycelia in functional foods.

2.1.2 Definitions of Functional Foods in Some Developed Countries

There is no universally accepted international definition of functional foods or a consistent regulatory framework governing this category. Although functional foods and health foods share certain characteristics, the two concepts are not interchangeable. Examining how different countries and regions define and regulate such products can therefore help clarify the scope of functional foods in China and inform improvements to its regulatory framework.

In the United States, functional foods are not recognized as a separate legal category. Research on their regulation therefore often draws comparisons between U.S. dietary supplements and Chinese health foods. The Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA), enacted in 1994, established the legal definition of dietary supplements and a regulatory framework administered primarily by the Food

and Drug Administration (FDA). The Act covers products intended to supplement the diet, including those containing vitamins, minerals, herbs, amino acids, and other dietary ingredients, as well as their extracts and combinations. With respect to product claims, U.S. regulations distinguish among nutrient content claims, structure/function claims, and health claims. The first two generally do not require pre-market FDA approval, whereas health claims are subject to specific evidentiary requirements and regulatory authorization.

Unlike the United States, the European Union has developed a broader scientific understanding of functional foods, although it has not established a single, dedicated legal category for them. The European Scientific Association for Functional Foods (FUFOSE), established in 1998, contributed to the development of this concept. Its 1999 consensus document defined functional foods in terms of their demonstrated effects on physiological functions beyond basic nutritional value, particularly their potential to improve health or reduce disease risk. Accordingly, functional foods are understood as a concept rather than a distinct product classification. In regulatory practice, relevant products fall under several existing categories, including food supplements, novel foods, foods for special nutritional uses (PARNUTS), fortified foods, and conventional foods carrying authorized nutrition or health claims.

Japan, by contrast, has established a relatively comprehensive regulatory system for foods making health-related claims. In 1991, it introduced the Food for Specified Health Uses (FOSHU) system, under which products could obtain approval to make specific health claims. The system emphasizes the physiological functions of food beyond its basic nutritional role, making it closely associated with the concept of functional foods. Japan subsequently expanded this framework into the Food with Health Claims (FHC) system, incorporating Foods with Nutrient Function Claims (FNFC) in 2001 and Foods with Function Claims (FFC) in 2015. These three categories are subject to different regulatory arrangements: individual product approval for FOSHU, compliance with prescribed standards for FNFC, and a notification-based system for FFC. This differentiated approach provides greater flexibility in the regulation and market entry of products carrying health-related claims.

2.2 Analysis of Factors Influencing Consumer Purchase Intentions Based on Perceived Value Theory

Under the light wellness trend, consumers' purchase intentions toward functional snacks are shaped by multiple dimensions of perceived value. Perceived value theory suggests that consumers evaluate products not only in terms of their practical benefits but also in relation to the experiences, meanings, and social or situational benefits associated with consumption. For functional snacks, these evaluations can be broadly classified into five dimensions: functional value, hedonic value, symbolic value, social value, and conditional value.

Functional value represents the most direct source of perceived value for functional snacks. Unlike conventional snacks, these products are expected to offer additional benefits, such as nutritional supplementation, health maintenance, and body management. Consumers therefore pay particular attention to product ingredients, the credibility of functional claims, and the extent to which advertised benefits correspond to their individual health needs. Such considerations are especially important because the perceived effectiveness of a product provides the primary justification for choosing it over ordinary snacks. When consumers regard its health benefits as credible and relevant, they are more likely to recognize its practical value and develop a favorable purchase intention.

Hedonic value captures the experiential benefits derived from consumption. Despite their health-oriented positioning, functional snacks remain consumer food products, and their market appeal depends partly on whether they deliver a satisfying eating experience. Taste, texture, appearance,

packaging, and the pleasure associated with consumption all contribute to this evaluation. Health benefits alone may not sustain consumer interest if products fail to meet basic expectations of enjoyment. Conversely, products that combine perceived health benefits with appealing sensory experiences are more likely to overcome the trade-off between healthy eating and consumption pleasure, encouraging consumers to incorporate them into their daily routines.

Symbolic value arises from the meanings consumers associate with products and the identities they express through consumption. As consumption increasingly reflects individual lifestyles and personal values, product choices serve purposes beyond satisfying immediate needs. This is particularly relevant to light wellness, where purchasing functional snacks may signal an individual's emphasis on health, self-discipline, and lifestyle quality. The symbolic appeal of these products thus extends beyond their physical attributes: they may reinforce consumers' desired self-image and provide a sense of identity consistent with their personal values. Such associations can make functional snacks more attractive to consumers who regard healthy living as an important part of their self-concept.

Social value concerns the benefits that consumption brings through interpersonal relationships and social interaction. Purchasing decisions are often influenced by the preferences and behaviors of others rather than made independently of the surrounding social environment. Functional snacks, particularly those associated with emerging health trends, can become subjects of recommendation, discussion, and sharing among friends or online communities. Their value may therefore extend to facilitating social interaction, reinforcing group affiliation, and gaining recognition from peers. When consumers perceive a product as socially acceptable or consistent with the preferences of their reference groups, such perceptions may strengthen their willingness to purchase and recommend it.

Conditional value refers to the value consumers perceive under particular consumption circumstances. Unlike products purchased primarily to meet routine needs, functional snacks often address demands that arise in specific situations. For example, working late, studying under pressure, exercising, or experiencing irregular daily routines may increase consumers' perceived need for products associated with energy supplementation, nutritional balance, or other health benefits. Purchasing decisions may also be affected by temporary external conditions, including promotional activities, recommendations, and special occasions. The perceived value of functional snacks therefore depends partly on the match between product attributes and immediate consumption needs. A stronger fit with specific circumstances can make consumers more inclined to purchase products that might otherwise remain outside their regular consumption choices.

Overall, these five dimensions capture different considerations underlying consumers' evaluations of functional snacks. Functional value concerns the benefits a product delivers, while hedonic value relates to the experience of consuming it. Symbolic and social value reflect the personal and interpersonal meanings attached to consumption, whereas conditional value highlights the influence of specific circumstances on purchasing decisions. Although analytically distinct, these dimensions jointly shape consumers' perceptions of functional snacks and provide a multidimensional basis for understanding their purchase intentions.

3. Analysis of the Current State of the Functional Snack Market

3.1 Current Status of the Global and Chinese Functional Snack Markets

3.1.1 Market Size and Growth Trends

The growing emphasis on everyday health management has made "light wellness" increasingly popular, particularly among younger consumers. Rather than making substantial changes to their lifestyles, consumers are turning to more accessible approaches, such as dietary adjustments and nutritional supplementation. This shift has also created opportunities for functional snacks, which combine the convenience of conventional snacks with additional nutritional and health-related benefits.

The expansion of the functional food market reflects this changing consumption pattern. According to Fortune Business Insights, the global functional food and beverage market was valued at USD 398.81 billion in 2025 and is expected to reach USD 983.17 billion by 2034, with a projected CAGR of 10.65% between 2026 and 2034. The U.S. market alone is forecast to reach USD 117.22 billion by 2032, reflecting the growing demand for foods containing beneficial nutrients and functional ingredients.

A similar trend can be observed in China. Rising health awareness and changes in dietary habits have supported the steady expansion of the domestic functional food market, which increased from RMB 316.58 billion in 2020 to RMB 435.85 billion in 2024 and is projected to reach RMB 464.18 billion in 2025. Within this broader market, functional snacks have attracted growing attention from younger consumers. Their appeal lies in combining the convenience and sensory appeal of everyday snacks with health-oriented product attributes, positioning them as an emerging segment of the food consumption market.

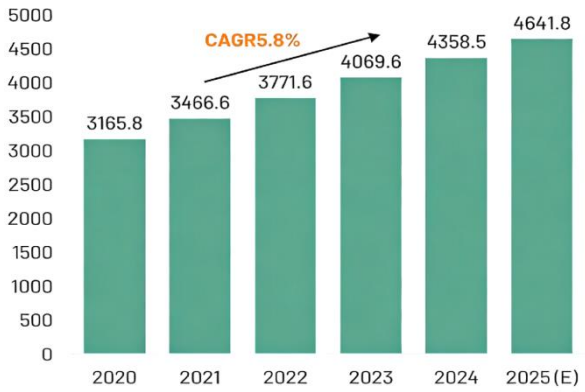


Figure 1. China's Functional Food Market Size, 2020-2025

Overall, multiple factors—including the upgrade in health-conscious consumption, the accelerating pace of life, and advancements in nutritional science—have collectively driven the expansion of the functional snack market. Functional snacks align with the trends of health-conscious consumption upgrades and the contextualization of snack consumption, combining practicality, convenience, and innovation. Their market penetration still has significant room for growth, and their development prospects are promising.

3.1.2 Analysis of Growth Drivers

The rapid development of the functional snack market is primarily driven by a combination of factors. First, young people—represented by Generation Z—are the core practitioners and main consumer force behind the "light wellness" trend. According to CBNData's 2020 Report on Young People's Wellness

Consumption Trends, more than 90% of young people are already health-conscious, and their consumption growth far exceeds that of other age groups. At the same time, this demographic's high level of "health awareness" makes them more likely to translate health needs into actual purchasing behavior, serving as a key driver of growth in the functional snack market. Unlike traditional snack consumers, health-conscious young people not only seek emotional satisfaction but are also proactive in examining product ingredients and benefits. This strong health-oriented mindset enables them to more easily overcome cognitive barriers, transforming their latent health management needs into actual consumption of functional snacks. According to a report released by CBNData, awareness shapes consumers' understanding of health, but the key to a healthy lifestyle lies in translating that awareness into actual behavior. In the process of "transforming health awareness into action," consumers of different ages and demographics exhibit variations due to factors such as time, money, and energy. Research shows that over 60% of consumers possess strong health awareness and actively take action; simultaneously, residents' health needs also influence consumption scenarios and opportunities for category penetration.

Second, the online information environment has significantly enhanced young consumers' health awareness. This demographic has grown up in an era of highly developed internet access; through platforms such as Xiaohongshu, Douyin, and Bilibili, consumers are frequently exposed to nutrition education, ingredient analysis, and product reviews. In this information landscape, consumers have gradually shifted their focus from simply wondering whether a product is effective to paying closer attention to whether its formulation is scientifically sound, its raw materials are from reliable sources, and its additives are safe. This evolution in consumer awareness has, in turn, compelled companies to continuously improve their product R&D capabilities and enhance information transparency.

Third, continuous advancements in functional ingredient technology have provided crucial support for industry development. For example, in the probiotics sector, the maturation of live-culture encapsulation technology has significantly improved the survival rate of probiotics in room-temperature foods, thereby enhancing the stability of product efficacy. In the field of beauty nutrition, ingredients such as small-molecule collagen peptides, hyaluronic acid, and niacinamide have gradually been adapted for food-grade applications, laying the technical foundation for the development of oral beauty-focused functional snacks. Additionally, in sleep-aid products, the formulation technology for functional ingredients such as gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) and L-theanine has been continuously optimized, making product efficacy more stable and reliable.

Finally, the gradual improvement of the policy environment has provided institutional safeguards for industry development. In recent years, the State Administration for Market Regulation has continued to advance the development of a regulatory framework for health foods and special dietary foods. For example, the release of the draft revision of the "National Food Safety Standard for Health Foods" has, to a certain extent, raised the industry's entry barriers while also strengthening consumer confidence in compliant products.

3.1.3 Competitive Landscape: Coexistence of International and Domestic Brands

Currently, the Chinese functional snack market features a competitive landscape where international brands and emerging domestic brands coexist and develop side by side.

Among international brands, multinational food companies such as Abbott and Nestlé have long held significant market positions in the functional food sector, leveraging their mature R&D systems and high brand credibility. These companies have accumulated extensive experience in medical nutrition

and specialized nutrition, but their product positioning typically leans more toward medical or specialized nutritional contexts, and they tend to be relatively cautious when it comes to innovation in snack-style and casual consumption formats.

In contrast, emerging domestic brands demonstrate greater flexibility in product innovation and marketing. For example, ffit8 entered the protein bar niche with a high-protein, low-sugar product positioning, targeting fitness supplementation and meal replacement needs, and rapidly built brand awareness through social media. Tomson Biotech, leveraging the brand trust it has built over many years in the health supplement sector, has extended its nutritional supplement products into snack formats, expanding into new consumption scenarios through a combination of "professional endorsement and snack-style design." In addition, new consumer brands such as WonderLab and Minayo have also rapidly gained visibility among young consumers through social media marketing and product functional segmentation.

Overall, domestic brands hold an advantage in product innovation and marketing communications, while international brands possess stronger competitiveness in technological R&D and brand reputation; together, they constitute the current market's primary competitive landscape.

3.2 SWOT Analysis Dimensions

Building on the analysis of the functional snack market size and competitive landscape, this section further systematically examines the competitive landscape using the SWOT model. By analyzing four dimensions—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats—the SWOT analysis helps provide a more comprehensive understanding of the development conditions and market challenges currently facing the functional snack industry.

Table 1. SWOT Analysis of Functional Snacks

Dimension	Content
Strengths (S)	1) The natural alignment between the concept of health and snack-eating habits; 2) The massive consumer base and strong demand among young people for "light wellness"; 3) A well-developed domestic food industry infrastructure and competitive production costs.
Weaknesses (W)	1) Some brands' efficacy claims lack rigorous clinical evidence; 2) A heavy reliance on imported ingredients for core functional benefits; 3) Industry standards are lagging, making it difficult for consumers to distinguish between genuine and counterfeit products, as well as between high-quality and low-quality items.
Opportunities (O)	1) The "Healthy China" policy continues to provide favorable conditions; 2) Young consumers' willingness to invest in themselves has increased significantly; 3) Rapid technological advancements in functional ingredients have lowered the barriers to product development; 4) New media marketing channels have reduced brand promotion costs.
Threats (T)	1) Tighter regulations may increase compliance costs;

2) An overheated market has led to intensified homogenized competition;

3) Consumer skepticism regarding "rip-off" pricing continues to erode trust in the category;

4) Multinational giants may increase their investment in localization, squeezing the survival space for emerging brands.

4. Survey and Results Analysis

4.1 Data Sources

The data for this study was primarily collected through a questionnaire survey. Focusing on consumer purchasing intentions for functional snacks amid the "light wellness" trend and the factors influencing them, the research team designed a structured questionnaire tailored to the study's theme. Generation Z served as the primary research subject, while other consumer groups, such as Generation Y, were also included to gain a more comprehensive understanding of different age groups' perceptions, consumption habits, value perceptions, and purchasing intentions regarding functional snacks.

Regarding data collection, this study employed an online survey method. The questionnaire was primarily distributed via the Wenjuanxing platform, with sample coverage expanded through social media and word-of-mouth sharing to enhance sample diversity and representativeness. The study ultimately yielded a relatively comprehensive set of first-hand data, providing a reliable foundation for subsequent consumer behavior analysis, reliability and validity testing, and the construction of empirical models.

In terms of research content, the survey data not only covered the respondents' basic demographic characteristics but also measured core variables such as the perceived value of functional snacks, health concerns, and purchase intention. Among these, perceived value was subdivided into five dimensions: functional value, hedonic value, symbolic value, social value, and conditional value. This provided robust data support for subsequent in-depth analysis of the mechanisms underlying the formation of consumer purchase intention.

4.2 Questionnaire Design and Content

To ensure the scientific rigor and relevance of the study, the questionnaire was systematically designed around the theme of functional snack purchase intent among consumers amid the "light wellness" trend, integrating consumer purchasing behavior theory, perceived value theory, and the consumption characteristics of functional snacks. Drawing on relevant established scales and existing research findings, and taking into account the cognitive characteristics, modes of expression, and consumption scenarios of the Gen Z consumer group, the questionnaire items were appropriately adjusted and localized to create the final version. The questionnaire as a whole serves the dual objectives of descriptive survey and explanatory analysis, reflecting both consumers' basic profiles and consumption behaviors while measuring the key factors influencing purchase intention.

Structurally, this questionnaire consists of four main sections.

Part One collects basic information about respondents, including gender, age, employment status, and disposable income. The purpose of this section is to outline a basic profile of functional snack consumers and to provide a foundation for subsequent analysis of differences in consumption habits, value perceptions, and purchase intent among various demographic groups.

Part Two measures the perceived value of functional snacks and constitutes the core of this study's questionnaire. This section employs a five-point Likert scale to assess consumers' value perceptions of

functional snacks across multiple dimensions. Specifically, functional value primarily examines consumers' perceptions of the health benefits, nutritional supplementation, and practical utility of functional snacks; hedonic value primarily reflects the taste experience, pleasure, and emotional satisfaction consumers derive from consuming them; symbolic value focuses on the role of functional snacks in shaping a healthy image, expressing lifestyle choices, and demonstrating personal attitudes; social value examines their significance in social contexts such as sharing, recommending, and interacting with others; Conditional value primarily measures the extent to which consumers endorse functional snacks in specific situations, such as staying up late, experiencing fatigue, during promotional events, upon recommendation, or when experiencing minor physical discomfort. Through these multidimensional measurements, the overall structure of consumers' value perceptions regarding functional snacks can be systematically revealed. In addition to perceived value, the questionnaire included several supplementary variables to further enhance the study's explanatory power. First is the trust measurement, which primarily examines consumers' trust in the authenticity of product claims, brand endorsements, certification information, and ingredient labeling; second is the risk perception measurement, which primarily reflects consumers' concerns regarding exaggerated claims, ingredient safety, side effects from long-term consumption, and uncertainty about product efficacy; third is the health concern measurement, which primarily examines the extent to which respondents prioritize their own health, dietary management, and nutritional information. The introduction of these variables helps provide a more comprehensive analysis of the mechanisms underlying the formation of consumer purchase intent.

Part Three focuses on measuring purchase intent, primarily exploring whether consumers are willing to purchase functional snacks in the future, whether they are willing to continue following new product releases, whether they are willing to incorporate them into their daily snack choices, and whether they are willing to pay a higher price for products with clearly defined health benefits. This section directly corresponds to the core dependent variable of this study and provides a relatively comprehensive reflection of consumers' actual acceptance of functional snacks and their potential purchasing tendencies.

Part Four consists of open-ended questions, primarily used to gather respondents' views on existing issues in the current functional snack market, as well as their suggestions for future product improvements and market development. The inclusion of open-ended questions helps compensate for the limitations of closed-ended items in information gathering, enabling the study not only to obtain quantitative results but also to gain a deeper understanding of consumers' genuine needs and subjective evaluations, thereby providing more concrete grounds for formulating future market expansion strategies.

Overall, the questionnaire design for this study features a clear structure and comprehensive content. The first half focuses on consumers' basic characteristics and consumption behavior, while the second half emphasizes the measurement of core variables such as perceived value, trust, risk, health concerns, and purchase intention. It provides a relatively comprehensive reflection of the cognitive and behavioral characteristics of functional snack consumers in the context of "light wellness" and offers a reliable data foundation for subsequent empirical analysis and market strategy research.

4.3 Analysis of Questionnaire Results

In terms of sample response rates, a total of 237 valid responses were obtained from the initial sample. In accordance with the research objectives, samples from respondents who had never purchased functional snacks were further screened out during the subsequent empirical analysis. Consequently, the valid sample sizes for the sections on purchasing behavior, channels, marketing exposure, and scale analysis differed by 237 and 214, respectively. This indicates that stricter sample screening criteria were applied during the descriptive statistics and empirical analysis phases, which helps enhance the relevance and explanatory power of the model estimates.

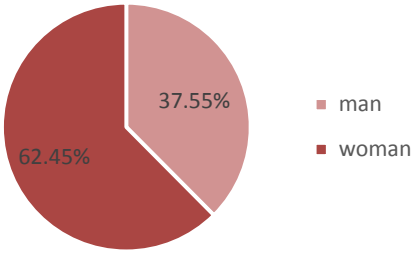


Figure 2. Gender Ratio

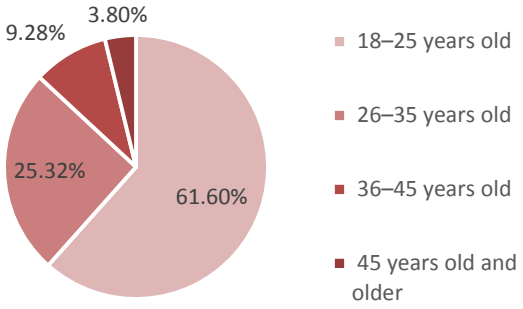


Figure 3. Age Distribution

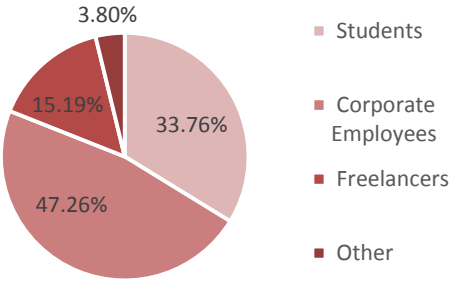


Figure 4. Occupation Distribution

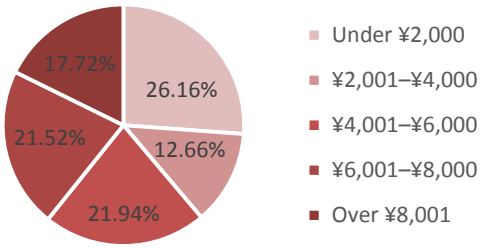


Figure 5. Disposable Income Distribution

In terms of overall sample structure, the sample in this study is characterized by a strong youth orientation and a certain degree of diversity. By age, the 18-25 age group accounted for 61.60%, while the 26-35 age group accounted for 25.32%; together, these two groups totaled 86.92%, indicating that the sample is highly focused on young consumers and those new to the workforce, which aligns closely with the "Generation Z-centered" research focus. In terms of gender, women outnumbered men, suggesting that women may be a more active group in terms of interest and consumption within the functional snack market; this demographic characteristic also indicates that relevant companies should place greater emphasis on female consumer preferences in product packaging, scenario-based marketing, and content dissemination. The occupational and income distributions encompassed various

groups—including students, working professionals, and freelancers—as well as multiple levels of disposable income, indicating that the sample reflects, to a certain extent, market differences among people with varying social roles and purchasing power.

4.4 Questionnaire Reliability and Validity Testing

To verify the scientific validity and usability of the questionnaire as a measurement tool, this study conducted reliability and validity analyses on the questionnaire data using SPSS. Generally speaking, reliability primarily measures the degree of consistency among scale items, while validity is used to determine whether the scale effectively reflects the underlying structure intended to be measured in the study. Only when both reliability and validity reach a satisfactory level can the results of subsequent empirical analyses possess statistical reliability and interpretive significance.

Regarding reliability testing, this study employed Cronbach's α coefficient to assess the internal consistency of the scale. The results showed that the Cronbach's α coefficient for the overall scale in this study was 0.955, indicating a strong consistency among the questionnaire items. This suggests that the questionnaire can reliably measure consumers' perceptions and attitudes toward functional snacks, and that the results possess a high degree of reliability. Regarding validity testing, this study employed the KMO test and Bartlett's sphericity test to assess whether the scale was suitable for factor analysis. The results showed that the KMO value was 0.907 with a significance level of 0.000, and the Bartlett's sphericity test statistic was 2,453.650, indicating that the sample data were suitable for factor analysis; Additionally, the significance level of the Bartlett's sphericity test was less than 0.05, indicating strong correlations among the variables and the ability to extract relatively stable common factors. Thus, the questionnaire used in this study demonstrates good construct validity and is suitable for further factor extraction, dimensional classification, and regression analysis.

Table 2. Questionnaire Reliability and Validity Analysis

Reliability Analysis	Cronbach's α	0.955
Validity Analysis	KMO value	0.907
	Bartlett's sphericity statistic	2,453.650
	Significance	0.000

5. Empirical Testing and Analysis of Results

5.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis and Variable Extraction

Building on the reliability and validity tests discussed earlier, this study further conducted an exploratory factor analysis of the scale items to identify the underlying structure of perceived value among functional snack consumers and to provide a basis for subsequent variable construction and regression analysis. Accordingly, 25 items from the perceived value section were selected for exploratory factor analysis. Principal component analysis was used to reduce the dimensionality of the original variables, and maximum variance rotation was applied to optimize the factor structure. The results show that a total of five common factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were extracted. Specifically, the initial eigenvalues for Factors 1 through 5 were 8.759, 2.658, 1.530, 1.191, and 0.975, respectively; after rotation, the variance explained by the five factors was 15.194%, 11.796%, 11.770%, 11.566%, and 10.128%, respectively, with a cumulative explanation of total variance reaching 60.455%.

These results indicate that the five extracted common factors effectively summarize the primary information contained in the original items and possess strong statistical explanatory power.

Table 3. Percentage of Variance Explained

Factor Number	Eigenvalue	Percentage of Variance Explained	Cumulative %	Percentage of Variance Explained Before Rotation			Percentage of variance explained after rotation		
				Eigenvalue	Percentage of Variance Explained	Cumulative %	Eigenvalue	Percentage of Variance Explained	Cumulative %
1	8.759	35.037	35.037	8.759	35.037	35.037	3.799	15.194	15.194
2	2.658	10.634	45.670	2.658	10.634	45.670	2.949	11.796	26.990
3	1.530	6.121	51.792	1.530	6.121	51.792	2.943	11.770	38.761
4	1.191	4.763	56.555	1.191	4.763	56.555	2.892	11.566	50.327
5	.975	3.900	60.455	.975	3.900	60.455	2.532	10.128	60.455
6	.916	3.663	64.118						
7	.865	3.459	67.577						
8	.753	3.012	70.589						
9	.712	2.850	73.438						
10	.672	2.687	76.125						
11	.631	2.522	78.647						
12	.594	2.376	81.024						
13	.553	2.212	83.236						
14	.490	1.958	85.194						
15	.448	1.790	86.984						
16	.445	1.780	88.764						
17	.392	1.568	90.332						
18	.372	1.490	91.822						
19	.354	1.417	93.239						
20	.327	1.310	94.548						
21	.312	1.247	95.795						
22	.293	1.171	96.966						
23	.271	1.084	98.051						
24	.254	1.018	99.069						
25	.233	.931	100.000						

Judging from the rotated factor loadings matrix, the loadings of each item on its respective factor reached a high level, indicating good overall convergent validity and a relatively clear factor structure, which suggests that the scale possesses good convergent and discriminant validity. Further analysis of the rotated factor loadings matrix reveals that the five extracted common factors exhibit relatively distinct structural characteristics. The first factor consists primarily of items 11-15. These items reflect consumers' perceptions of the health benefits, nutritional supplementation, and practical utility of functional snacks; therefore, this factor is named "Functional Value." The second factor consists primarily of items 21-25. The content of these items focuses on health image building, lifestyle expression, and personal identity; thus, this factor is named "Symbolic Value." The third principal factor consists of items 26-30, which primarily reflect the role of functional snacks in sharing, recommendations, and social interaction; it is therefore named "Social Value." The fourth principal factor consists of items 31-35, which primarily reflect consumers' purchasing tendencies under specific contexts and external stimuli—such as staying up late, fatigue, promotions, and recommendations—and is therefore named "Conditional Value." The fifth common factor consists of items 16-20 and primarily involves aspects such as product taste, packaging design, enjoyable experiences, and emotional satisfaction; it is therefore named "hedonic value." Overall, the assignment of items to each factor is relatively clear and effectively reflects the multidimensional structure of perceived value among consumers of functional snacks.

Table 4. Factor Loadings after Rotation and Corresponding Items

Variable	Item Number	Item Content	Factor				
			1	2	3	4	5
Functional Value	11	I believe functional snacks provide me with clear health benefits (such as promoting sleep, protecting eyesight, and boosting immunity).		0.741			
	12	I believe the functional ingredients added to functional snacks (such as probiotics and collagen) are effective.		0.821			
	13	I believe the nutritional content of functional snacks meets my health needs.		0.601			
	14	Compared to regular snacks, functional snacks are more beneficial to health.		0.520			
	15	Long-term consumption of functional snacks has a positive effect on my physical condition.		0.691			
Enjoyment Value	16	I think functional snacks taste great, and the addition of functional ingredients does not affect their flavor.					0.583
	17	Eating functional snacks makes me feel happy and relaxed.					0.679
	18	The packaging design of functional					

		snacks is attractive, which encourages me to buy them.				0.661
	19	Trying new flavors or formats of functional snacks is fun for me.				0.653
	20	Eating functional snacks gives me a sense of enjoying life.				0.578
	21	Buying functional snacks helps me cultivate a health-conscious self-image.	0.762			
	22	Eating functional snacks sends a signal to others that I am pursuing a healthy lifestyle.	0.734			
Symbolic value	23	Choosing functional snacks reflects my personal taste and attitude toward life.	0.736			
	24	I believe that people who eat functional snacks are generally more health-conscious and self-disciplined.	0.762			
	25	Buying functional snacks makes me feel like I'm keeping up with current health trends.	0.740			
	26	I share the functional snacks I buy with my friends.		0.685		
	27	Discussing or sharing functional snacks with others can strengthen our relationships.		0.632		
Social Value	28	I would recommend functional snacks to people around me who have health needs.		0.682		
	29	Sharing functional snacks on social media can help me gain attention and recognition from others.		0.736		
	30	Buying functional snacks gives me more topics to discuss with like-minded people.		0.613		
	31	When I'm pulling all-nighters, feeling tired, or under a lot of stress, I'm more likely to buy functional snacks.			0.714	
	32	I'm more likely to buy functional snacks during holiday sales or promotional events.			0.514	
Conditional Value	33	When friends or family recommend them, I'm more willing to try functional snacks.			0.674	
	34	Seeing popular reviews or recommendations on social media makes me want to buy the product.			0.748	
	35	When I experience minor health issues (such as insomnia, skin problems, or			0.665	

	fatigue), I actively look for functional snacks that address those concerns.

Overall, the results of the exploratory factor analysis show a high degree of consistency with the theoretical framework of this study, indicating that the perceived value of functional snack consumers is not a single-dimensional concept but is instead composed of five interrelated dimensions: functional, hedonic, symbolic, social, and situational. This not only validates the multidimensional nature of perceived value in research on functional snack consumption but also provides a relatively clear foundation of variables for the subsequent construction of an empirical model.

5.2 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Tests

After completing the exploratory factor analysis and extracting the five core variables—functional value, hedonic value, symbolic value, social value, and situational value—this study further conducted descriptive statistics and correlation tests on the main variables to preliminarily examine the distribution characteristics of each variable and their interrelationships. The results show that all variables included 214 valid samples. Since standardized data were used in subsequent analyses, the mean for each variable was 0 and the standard deviation was 1, indicating that the data possess good comparability and laying the foundation for subsequent regression analysis.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics

	Count	Mean	Sd	Min	Max
Purchase Intention	214	0.000	1.000	-3.153	1.551
Functional Value	214	0.000	1.000	-3.215	2.287
Utility	214	0.000	1.000	-3.278	3.051
Symbolic Value	214	0.000	1.000	-2.851	2.757
Social Value	214	0.000	1.000	-3.395	2.975
Conditional Value	214	0.000	1.000	-3.366	2.321

Based on the results of the correlation analysis, all five perceived value dimensions show a positive relationship with consumer purchase intention, though the strength of the effect varies. Among them, functional value exhibits the strongest correlation with purchase intention, indicating that the more consumers recognize the health benefits and practical value of functional snacks, the higher their purchase intention. Symbolic value, social value, and situational value also show significant positive correlations with purchase intention, suggesting that identity expression, social interaction, and specific consumption contexts all enhance consumers' propensity to purchase to some extent. In contrast, the correlation between hedonic value and purchase intention is relatively weak, indicating that while taste experience and emotional satisfaction have some influence, they are not the core factors determining consumers' purchase intention.

Table 6. Correlation Analysis

	Purchase Intention	Functional Value	Hedonic Value	Symbolic Value	Social Value	Conditional Value
Purchase Intention	1.000					
Functional Value	0.503***	1.000				
Hedonic Value	0.175*	0.000	1.000			
Symbolic Value	0.378***	0.000	0.000	1.000		
Social Value	0.310***	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	
Conditional Value	0.315***	-0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000

5.3 Variable Definition and Model Construction

Based on the results of factor extraction and correlation analysis, this study further constructs multiple regression models, simple regression models, and moderation models to examine the factors influencing consumers' purchase intentions for functional snacks.

Table 7. Variable Definitions

	Variable Name	Variable Symbol
Dependent Variable	Consumer Purchase Intention	Pur
Explanatory variable	Functional value	FuncV
	Hedonic Value	HedV
	Symbolic Value	SymV
	Social Value	SocV
	Conditional Value	CondV
	Perceived Value	Value
Control Variables	Gender	Gender
	Occupation	Pro
	Age	Age
	Disposable Income	Income

$$Pur = \beta_0 + \beta_1 FuncV + \beta_2 HedV + \beta_3 SymV + \beta_4 SocV + \beta_5 CondV + \beta_6 Controls + \varepsilon \#(1)$$

Equation (1) represents a multiple regression model, where the dependent variable is `*Pur* `, representing consumer purchase intention; the independent variables are `FunV`, `HedV`, `SymV`, `SocV`, and `CondV`, representing functional value, hedonic value, symbolic value, social value, and conditional value, respectively; `*Controls* ` denotes the set of control variables; and `$\varepsilon$ ` denotes the residuals. The same applies below.

To further examine the impact of perceived value on consumer purchase intention, functional value, hedonic value, symbolic value, social value, and conditional value are weighted and summed as shown in Equation (2), then standardized to obtain a comprehensive perceived value index as shown in Equation (3), which is used to construct a simple regression model as shown in Equation (4).

$$OriValue = 0.2 * FuncV + 0.2 * HedV + 0.2 * SymV + 0.2 * SocV + 0.2 * CondV \#(2)$$

$$Value_i = \frac{OriValue_i - \overline{OriValue}}{s} \#(3)$$

OriValue denotes the initial perceived value index obtained by summing each value weighted by 0.2; $\overline{OriValue}$ denotes the mean of the initial perceived value for the sample; s denotes the standard deviation of the sample; and $Value_i$ denotes the perceived value index obtained through standardization.

$$Pur = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Value + \beta_2 Controls + \varepsilon \#(4)$$

To further explore the moderating effect of health concern on the relationship between consumer purchase intention and perceived value, a moderating effect model is constructed as shown in Equation (5), where *Mod* is the moderator, i.e., health concern, and *Value***Mod* is the interaction term between perceived value and health concern.

$$Pur = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Value + \beta_2 Mod + \beta_3 Value * Mod + \beta_4 Controls + \varepsilon \#(5)$$

5.4 Analysis of Regression Results

Table 8. Results of the Multiple Regression Model

	Purchase Intention
Functional Value	0.417***
	(0.042)
Hedonic Value	0.162***
	(0.038)
Symbolic value	0.339***
	(0.042)
Social value	0.275***
	(0.044)
Conditional value	0.266***
	(0.047)
Gender	0.079
	(0.079)
Age	-0.032
	(0.044)
Occupation	0.015
	(0.065)
Disposable income	0.092***
	(0.032)
N	214
Ad_R2	0.626

Note. Standard errors are shown in parentheses. * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01. The same applies below.

Based on the regression results, after controlling for variables such as gender, age, occupation, and disposable income, functional value, hedonic value, symbolic value, social value, and conditional value all had a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase intentions. Among these, functional value had the highest regression coefficient at 0.417 and was significant at the 1% level, indicating that the more consumers recognize the value of functional snacks in terms of health benefits and practical utility, the stronger their purchase intention. The regression coefficients for symbolic value, social value, conditional value, and hedonic value were 0.339, 0.275, 0.266, and 0.162, respectively, and all passed the significance test. It can thus be seen that, among the five dimensions, functional value is the core factor influencing consumer purchase intention, while symbolic value, social value, and conditional value also possess strong explanatory power; although hedonic value has a relatively weaker influence, it likewise exerts a positive effect. The model's adjusted R^2 is 0.626, indicating a good overall fit; the five dimensions can adequately explain variations in consumer purchase intention. Among the control variables, only disposable income has a significant positive effect on purchase intention, suggesting that the higher the income level, the more likely consumers are to develop a stronger purchase intention; gender, age, and occupation did not show significant effects in this model.

Table 9. Results of Simple Regression and Moderation Effects

	(1) Purchase Intention	(2) Purchase Intention
Perceived Value	0.655***	0.681***
	(0.042)	(0.062)
Health Awareness		0.052
		(0.072)
Perceived Value ∗ Health Concern		0.070**
		(0.032)
Gender	0.108	0.134*
	(0.079)	(0.077)
Age	-0.062	-0.093*
	(0.050)	(0.055)
Occupation	0.011	0.014
	(0.066)	(0.066)
Disposable income	0.114***	0.105***
	(0.033)	(0.033)
N	214	214
Ad_R2	0.588	0.593

Based on the results of the simple regression model, a comprehensive perceived value index was derived by summing and standardizing functional value, hedonic value, symbolic value, social value, and conditional value with equal weights. The results show that comprehensive perceived value has a significant positive impact on consumer purchase intention, with a regression coefficient of 0.655, which is significant at the 1% level. This result indicates that the higher consumers' overall perceived value of functional snacks, the stronger their purchase intention. This suggests that, compared to a single dimension, consumers are more likely to base their purchasing decisions on a comprehensive

assessment of a product's overall value. The model's adjusted R^2 was 0.588, indicating that comprehensive perceived value has strong explanatory power for purchase intention. This further validates that perceived value is an important antecedent variable influencing consumer purchase intention, thereby supporting the relevant research hypotheses of this study.

Second, based on the results of the moderation effect model, after introducing health concern and its interaction term with comprehensive perceived value, the regression coefficient for comprehensive perceived value remained significantly positive at 0.681; the coefficient for health concern itself was 0.052 but did not pass the significance test, indicating that health concern does not have a direct and significant effect on purchase intention. However, the coefficient for the interaction term between perceived value and health concern was 0.070 and was significant at the 5% level, indicating that health concern plays a significant positive moderating role in the process by which perceived value influences purchase intention. In other words, the higher a consumer's level of health concern, the stronger the promotional effect of perceived value on their purchase intention. Compared to consumers with lower health concern, those with high health concern are more likely to translate their value perceptions of functional snacks into actual purchasing behavior. After adding the interaction term to the model, the adjusted R^2 increased from 0.588 to 0.593, indicating that the model's explanatory power has improved and further confirming the existence of the moderating effect.

Overall, the regression analysis results effectively validate the core research hypothesis of this study and demonstrate that the development of the functional snack market does not rely solely on a single functional selling point but is jointly influenced by multiple factors, including perceived efficacy, emotional experience, status symbolism, social sharing, and consumption contexts. This provides a solid empirical basis for formulating future market expansion strategies.

5.5 Robustness Tests

To further test the robustness of the regression results presented earlier, this study grouped the sample by gender, age, occupation, and disposable income, and conducted separate sub-sample regression analyses. The results show that, regardless of gender, age, occupation, or income group, comprehensive perceived value generally exerts a significant positive influence on consumers' purchase intention, indicating that the core conclusion presented earlier—that "perceived value can significantly enhance the purchase intention of functional snack consumers"—possesses good robustness.

Table 10. Robustness Test Results

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Male	Female	Ages 18–25	Ages 26–35	Ages 36–45	45 and above
ValuePerception	0.645***	0.659***	0.678***	0.615***	0.660***	0.550
	(0.062)	(0.060)	(0.074)	(0.050)	(0.089)	(0.162)
N	84	130	125	58	22	9
Ad_R2	0.662	0.527	0.527	0.666	0.478	0.544
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 11. Robustness Test Results

	(1) Enrolled Students	(2) Employees	(3) Freelancers	(4) Other
Value Perception	0.751***	0.584***	0.669***	-1.730
	(0.077)	(0.054)	(0.087)	(0.912)
N	66	107	34	7
Ad_R2	0.585	0.548	0.567	0.763
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 12. Robustness Test Results

	(1) 2,000 and below	(2) 2,001–4,000	(3) 4,001–6,000	(4) 6,001–8,000	(5) 8,001 and above
ValuePerception	0.805***	0.554***	0.592***	0.620***	0.675***
	(0.076)	(0.107)	(0.096)	(0.096)	(0.081)
N	50	25	51	50	38
Ad_R2	0.662	0.436	0.490	0.515	0.709
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Specifically, in the gender analysis, the regression coefficients for both male and female groups were significantly positive and showed little difference, indicating that perceived value has strong explanatory power for consumers of both genders. In the age analysis, the regression coefficients were positive across all age groups, with the most pronounced effect observed in the 18-25 age group, suggesting that young consumers are more likely to translate their perception of value into purchase intent. In the occupational groupings, students, office workers, and freelancers all exhibited a significant positive influence, with students standing out the most, reflecting their heightened sensitivity to the perceived value of functional snacks. The results for income groupings indicate that the purchase intent of consumers across different income levels is significantly enhanced by perceived value, suggesting that despite differences in purchasing power, consumers generally place a high value on the overall benefits of functional snacks.

In summary, based on questionnaire survey data, this chapter conducted an empirical examination of the factors influencing consumer purchase intent for functional snacks under the “light wellness” consumption trend. The research findings indicate that consumers’ value perceptions of functional snacks exhibit multidimensional characteristics, primarily encompassing five aspects: functional value, hedonic value, symbolic value, social value, and conditional value. This suggests that their purchasing decisions are not determined by a single factor but are based on comprehensive value judgments. Correlation and regression analyses further reveal that all five value dimensions exert a positive influence on consumer purchase intention, with functional value playing the most prominent role—indicating that consumers are most concerned with whether a product offers clear and credible health benefits. At the same time, factors such as hedonic experiences, identity expression, social interaction, and situational suitability also contribute to the formation of purchase intention to varying

degrees. The significant positive effect of comprehensive perceived value on purchase intention, coupled with the moderating role of health concern, further illustrates that under the "light wellness" trend, the more consumers prioritize health, the more likely they are to translate their positive perceptions of functional snacks into actual purchasing behavior. Subgroup regression results also indicate that this conclusion remains generally consistent across different gender, age, occupational, and income groups, demonstrating good robustness of the findings.

Overall, the empirical analysis results in this chapter corroborate the previous analysis of the current market landscape and changes in consumer demand, indicating that the rapid growth of functional snacks under the "light wellness" consumption trend stems primarily from their effective alignment with consumers' multifaceted needs for health, convenience, experience, and lifestyle expression. This also provides a basis for formulating targeted recommendations regarding product innovation, value communication, scenario building, and market expansion.

6. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

6.1 Summary of Research Findings

Against the backdrop of the gradually emerging "light wellness" consumption concept, functional snacks—as an emerging product category that combines health attributes with those of recreational foods—are gradually becoming an important means for young consumers to manage their daily health. Based on the theory of perceived value, this paper uses questionnaire surveys and empirical analysis to explore in depth the mechanisms driving consumers' purchase intentions for functional snacks. The study primarily reaches the following conclusions:

First, functional value is the core factor influencing consumer purchase intent. Among the five dimensions of perceived value, functional value has the most significant positive impact on purchase intent. The questionnaire survey revealed that consumers are more concerned with specific benefits—such as eye care and digestive health—rather than vague health concepts. This indicates that a product's scientific basis and practical efficacy form the foundation of consumers' purchasing decisions.

Second, consumers are price-sensitive and place great importance on the authenticity of a product's functional claims. Consumers exhibit high price sensitivity when purchasing functional snacks and pay close attention to whether a product's efficacy is scientifically substantiated. Consumers tend to pay a reasonable premium for products with credible health benefits while avoiding overpriced products lacking substantive efficacy. This suggests that establishing a product trust mechanism is a prerequisite for achieving a brand premium.

Third, health concern acts as a positive moderator, and consumption contexts significantly influence purchasing behavior. Consumers' "health concern" plays a significant positive moderating role between perceived value and purchase intention; groups with stronger health awareness are more likely to make purchases. At the same time, specific contexts—such as staying up late or feeling fatigued—have a significant positive impact on purchase intention, indicating that specific lifestyle scenarios can effectively stimulate consumer demand.

Fourth, symbolic, social, and hedonic values significantly promote purchase intention. The positive effects of symbolic and social values on purchase intention are particularly pronounced, indicating that young consumers value the role products play in expressing identity and facilitating social interaction.

Furthermore, the significance of hedonic value suggests that a pleasant taste experience remains a key factor in sustaining the consumption attributes of functional snacks.

6.2 Recommendations for Corporate Marketing and Market Expansion

Based on the above theoretical review and the results of the questionnaire data analysis, when facing an increasingly rational consumer base, functional snack companies should formulate systematic market expansion strategies across four areas—product, positioning, communication, and distribution—by focusing on the core dimensions of perceived value and objective market pain points.

First, companies should solidify the core value of their products, enhancing product appeal through scientific validation and superior taste. Functional value is the most critical factor driving consumer purchases; however, consumers generally harbor concerns about the authenticity of a product's efficacy. Therefore, during the R&D phase, companies should ensure the scientific validity of their products' efficacy and establish a foundation of trust by incorporating authoritative scientific endorsements and providing transparency regarding the amounts of key ingredients added, thereby supporting reasonable product pricing. Additionally, leveraging the positive influence of hedonic value, companies should optimize product formulations and flavors to strike a balance between health benefits and the eating experience.

Second, companies should deepen the development of specific consumption scenarios to shift product positioning toward "scenario-based consumption." Contextual value indicates that consumer demand for functional snacks is often triggered by specific life situations. Therefore, during product promotion, companies should design differentiated product portfolios and marketing content tailored to different life scenarios.

Third, companies should strengthen symbolic and social value by optimizing content marketing and communication strategies. In today's digital consumption environment, social media serves as a key channel for young consumers to access information. Companies should conduct marketing through content communities and short-video platforms, leveraging the authentic experiences of influencers in relevant fields to foster interactive communication and build consumer trust. By associating products with positive, self-disciplined, and healthy lifestyles, companies can enhance brand identity among their target audience and boost word-of-mouth effectiveness.

Finally, companies should optimize their sales channel layout and build a market expansion system that integrates online and offline channels. Online channels offer broad reach and purchasing convenience, helping to expand market coverage and conduct initial brand education; offline channels, on the other hand, enhance consumers' tangible experience and effectively meet immediate consumption needs in specific situations. By establishing an integrated online-offline sales system, companies can achieve coordinated multi-channel development and improve product accessibility and market penetration.

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