

On the Feasibility of Developing the Youth Market for Shaoxing Rice Wine

ZiYan Zhou. GuiFang Wang

Zhejiang Yuexiu University, Shaoxing, China

How to cite this paper: Zhou, Z. Y., & Wang, G. F. (2026). On the Feasibility of Developing the Youth Market for Shaoxing Rice Wine. *Economics & Business Management*, 4(3), 36-41. ISSN Print: 3079-5214; ISSN Online: 3079-5222.

<https://doi.org/10.63313/EBM.9149>

Published: 2026-02-20

Copyright © 2026 by author(s) and Erytis Publishing Limited.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Abstract

Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine has a long history and rich cultural heritage, but it has been unable to truly penetrate the youth market. Analyzing the survey data reveals that although it has a certain level of popularity in the youth market, it faces issues such as an outdated image and outdated packaging. Therefore, Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine should improve its taste and design its packaging, and create products that meet the aesthetic and needs of young consumers, in order to promote Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine to enter the youth market.

Keywords

Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine; Youth Market; Brand Innovation

1. Introduction

Chinese Yellow Rice Wine is one of the three oldest alcoholic beverages in the world. It originated in and remains unique to China, representing a distinctive category of its own. Half of China's cultural history has been nurtured by yellow rice wine, and this is especially true in Shaoxing. In a glass of aged yellow rice wine, one can find the profound and honored heritage of this city and the glorious literary anecdotes. (Wang,2025) Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine is one of the most representative and highly praised types of Chinese yellow rice wine. It has remained popular in both domestic and international markets for a long time. Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine is not only a local specialty of Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province, but also a national geographical indication product of China. However, in today's rapidly changing consumer environment, the profound historical heritage and outstanding craftsmanship quality of Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine, while being the foundation of its glory, also pose new challenges to its future inheritance. Specifically, it shows a certain degree of lag in aspects such as taste and packaging design. At present, the main consumers of Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine are still mainly composed of middle-aged and elderly people. The brand's penetration and appeal in the young

consumer market are significantly insufficient, and it has not fully adapted to the consumption trend dominated by the younger generation.

With the continuous development of the times, the consumption of the young consumer group has gradually become the main force of consumption. Young consumers not only have a large number but also possess strong purchasing power and communication capabilities. Yang Guang pointed out, "Generally speaking, the youth period is the stage in one's life cycle when the potential for income growth is the greatest and the consumption desire is the strongest. They will spend the vast majority of their income on consumption." (Wang, 2025) Therefore, it can be seen that the young generation is in the ascending phase of their personal careers. They are confident about their future income and career prospects. Therefore, in the process of consumption, the young consumer group often exhibits a more open and inclusive attitude. The youth group places great emphasis on satisfaction and emotional value, and is willing to pay for hobbies, experiences and social recognition. This means that young consumers are not only important contributors to the current consumer market, but are also more likely to define future consumption trends and consumption culture. Therefore, for traditional brands like Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine, a thorough understanding and active response to the consumption characteristics of this group can not only expand the market in a short period of time, but also, in the long run, if it can win over the youth market, it can rejuvenate the brand's vitality and contribute to the long-term development of the industry.

Based on that, this paper focuses on the backdrop of the youth oriented consumer market and explores how Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine, a traditional alcoholic beverage, can overcome the barriers of the era. Through a questionnaire survey, this study conducts a depth analysis of the main obstacles faced by Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine in the youth market and the potential directions for innovation. Based on the data results, it provides practical guidance and suggestions, aiming to offer valuable solutions for Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine to enter the youth market.

2. Situational Analysis and Market Opportunity Identification

This research on "Youth market's perception and purchase intention towards Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine" was conducted through an online questionnaire survey. A total of 119 invitations were sent out for the questionnaire, and 119 valid samples were received, with a response rate of approximately 100%.

2.1. Brand Awareness and Image Status Diagnosis

Through the analysis of the survey data, it can be seen that Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine has already gained a certain level of popularity among young consumers. Approximately 96% of the respondents stated that they have some understanding of Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine, but most of them still have a superficial understanding of it. From this, it can be seen that this kind of perception has failed to effectively

stimulate the purchasing desire of the young consumer group. Regarding the impression of Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine, the majority of respondents recognized its cultural value and regarded it as a part of Chinese traditional culture, accounting for as high as 86.56%. However, 28.57% of the respondents directly considered Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine to be a type of alcoholic beverage consumed only by the elderly. From the data analysis, it can be seen that although the cultural value of Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine has been widely recognized by young consumers, its brand image is generally regarded as traditional and outdated, failing to fully meet the daily life and social needs of young consumers. This is the problem that Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine faces when entering the youth market. In summary, Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine is confronted with the problem of having a high reputation but failing to stimulate the purchase intention of young consumers. Therefore, innovating the brand image and moving closer to the trend of youthfulness has become imperative.

2.2. Analysis of Core Obstacles in Market Expansion

Based on a further analysis of the survey data, it was concluded that the main obstacles hindering the reach of Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine to young consumers are the inability to adapt to the taste, the lack of fashionable packaging, and the restricted drinking scenarios. These three obstacles have become the barriers preventing Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine from entering the youth market. The survey data shows that 59.66% of young consumers believe that the unaccustomed taste is the main obstacle for young people to accept Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine. Traditional Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine is rich and has a high alcohol content, while the younger generation prefers beverages that are easy to drink, refreshing, and have a lower alcohol content. However, the taste of Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine conflicts with the preferences of young consumers. Secondly, from the perspectives of packaging, 44.54% of the respondents believed that the packaging design of Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine lacked appeal, and 43.7% of the respondents thought that the packaging was outdated. The current products of Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine mainly focus on tradition and culture, which is difficult to stimulate the purchase and dissemination intentions of young people at the visual level. Furthermore, the respondents indicated that in terms of consumption scenarios, Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine is currently mainly used in traditional scenarios such as formal banquets, family gatherings, and winter health preservation, and cannot be associated with the daily leisure socializing and friend gatherings that young people require. In conclusion, taste, packaging, and the single drinking scenario jointly constitute the core obstacles for Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine to deeply integrate into the young consumer market. These three elements are interrelated and require innovation to achieve breakthroughs.

2.3. Identification of Potential Opportunities

Although entering the youth market poses challenges, the research data simultaneously presents a strong market potential and a clear path for innovation. According to the survey results, 74.79% of the respondents expect that the traditional Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine can be modified in terms of taste, and be able to blend flavors with those of plums and osmanthus, etc. This shows that having a memorable feature, a flavor and taste suitable for young people, and being appealing to young consumers are the aspects they pay attention to during the consumption process. Secondly, 57.98% of the respondents believe that developing products with a lighter flavor, lower alcohol content, and easier drinking will better meet the requirements of the youth market. Meanwhile, 48.74% of the respondents consider it very important to adopt fashionable and portable packaging designs. Packaging designs with high aesthetic standards and those suitable for taking photos can well meet the social needs of the younger generation. Once these innovations are achieved, Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine can more smoothly integrate into the young consumer market. More importantly, the mentality of the youth market is more open and positive. Over 70% of the respondents indicated that they are willing to try the rice wine products targeted at young people in the next year, and nearly 80% of them believe that the “youth-oriented” market strategy is “relatively feasible” or “very feasible”. In summary, although Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine is facing challenges, if it can grasp the open and proactive consumption mentality of the younger generation and seize this opportunity, it will be able to successfully break through the boundaries in the future market and rejuvenate with the vigorous vitality of the integration of tradition and modernity.

3. Suggestions for the Implementation of Innovation Strategies in the Youth Market

Based on the analysis of the survey data presented in the second part, this study proposes the following strategic recommendations. These recommendations aim to transform the data findings and analysis into an executable, sustainable, and applicable business model, thereby facilitating the genuine integration of Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine into the youth market.

3.1. Product Innovation Strategies

Based on the above data analysis, it can be seen that “taste” and “packaging design” are the two major issues. The key to touching young people lies in continuous experimentation and iteration, in order to discover the products and expressions that they truly enjoy. (Cao, 2025) Therefore, brands should initiate innovation from these two aspects. Traditional Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine has a slightly sour and bitter taste and a relatively high alcohol content, while young consumers generally prefer low- alcohol beverages with fruity flavors. Therefore, in terms of taste, fruit - flavored Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine can be developed, and youthful drinking

methods such as iced drinks and specially blended rice wine beverages can be introduced in tandem. This approach enables the wine to retain the characteristic taste of Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine while moving closer to the tastes favored by young consumers. From the perspective of packaging, the original packaging lacked design appeal. Therefore, a packaging with a high level of appearance design and novelty can be adopted to attract the attention of young consumers. At the same time, it can be associated with current trendy IPs to integrate the product into the daily lives of young people, continuously promoting the integration of the product with the youth market.

3.2. Marketing and Scenario Strategies

From a deep perspective of marketing, the rejuvenation breakthrough of Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine should not merely focus on external aspects such as taste and packaging. Instead, it should also explore the internal needs of the young demographic. The health consumption of the young population in our country has shown a general and continuous growth trend, and has become the main force driving the continuous expansion of the health consumption market. (Xie, 2025) Young consumers are willing to pay for health. Therefore, yellow rice wine, with its various benefits such as “activating blood circulation, dispelling cold and promoting digestion”, can utilize its unique health-preserving features to meet the health demands of young consumers. To better meet the social needs of young consumers, Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine should not be confined to its original “Chinese banquet” and “holiday gift” positioning. Instead, it should be extended to daily life. Warmly drinking yellow rice wine can warm the stomach and nourish the body. Iced fruit-flavored yellow rice wine is suitable for leisure social occasions. Low-alcohol yellow rice wine is suitable for a light buzz and relaxation. At the same time, by combining new scenarios such as outdoor camping and music festivals, developing portable packaging and special recipe formulations, the goal of transforming Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine towards a youth market is achieved.

3.3. Marketing and Scenario Strategies

Finally, the trends pursued by the market are not static. Therefore, if Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine wants to continuously expand and develop in the young market, it needs to constantly explore market trends and keep up with the times. Thus, the brand and manufacturer of Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine should always focus on the youth market, accurately capture the needs of young consumers, and promote product innovation. At the same time, they can collect real feedback from young consumers through various channels such as online and offline, so that the brand can always keep up with the needs of young people and maintain the ability to be flexible and continuously evolve.

4. Conclusion

Overall, Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine has significant growth potential in the youth market. Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine brands and manufacturers should seize this opportunity, take the real needs of consumers as the direction for development, and design and manufacture products that young consumers truly need. Exploring and developing new consumer markets will undoubtedly encounter obstacles, but if the transformation of Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine towards youthfulness can be truly achieved, it will enable the sustainable and high quality development of Shaoxing Yellow Rice Wine, allowing this millennial delicacy to maintain its enduring vitality in the new era.

References

- [1] Cao Ziyi. Guyue Longshan Revitalizes the Yellow Rice Wine Industry: A Path to Industrial Renaissance[N]. Shanghai Securities News, 2025-11-29(006).
- [2] Wang Shu. Research on the "Yellow Rice Wine + Yue Culture" Industrial Innovation in the Context of Business, Travel, and Cultural Integration: A Case Study of Dongpu South Village in Shaoxing[J]. Commercial Economy, 2025, (13): 49-52.
- [3] Wang Xiaofei. Grasping New Trends in Youth Consumption to Activate New Drivers of Consumption[N]. Guangming Daily, 2025-05-06(011).
- [4] Xie E. New Trends in Young People's Health-Conscious Consumption[J]. People's Tribune, 2025, (02): 92-96.