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The Awkward Longan

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Abstract

This article analyses the weakening market position of China's longan industry in a context where the supply chain remains relatively stable. Over time, longan has relied on an established production base configuration and a supplementary mechanism of cross border trade, thereby forming a comparatively robust system of production and distribution. However, supply stability has not translated into sustained gains in market competitiveness. Instead, amid consumption upgrading and an intensified health orientation, longan has increasingly revealed a lack of alignment with demand side requirements. The challenges facing longan do not stem from insufficient production capacity, but from multiple mismatches triggered by a restructuring of consumer value systems. Within a health discourse that prioritises sugar control and low burden choices, its high sweetness image can readily induce risk avoidance. At the level of functional experience, its perceived value struggles to gain advantage across the dimensions of price, convenience, and perceived eatability. At the social level, the absence of salient category symbolism and a compelling gifting narrative constrains its role in identity expression and scenario based consumption. Meanwhile, existing research has largely focused on supply efficiency and industrial scale, paying insufficient attention to shifts in consumer preferences and meaning construction, and thus overlooking potential medium to long term demand risks. On this basis, this article argues that the longan industry should shift from a scale oriented approach to a value oriented approach. By reconstructing health oriented communication, optimising consumer experience, and reshaping category image, the industry can re establish fit with contemporary consumption logic.

Keywords

Longan; Supply Chain Stability; Market Position Imbalance; Demand Side Transformation; Value Alignment.

1. Introduction

1.1. Industry Background

Longan (Dimocarpus longan) is one of China's important tropical and subtropical fruit tree crops. Its major production areas are concentrated in South China and the southeastern coastal regions. The industry chain is centred on the supply of fresh fruit and further extends to grading and packaging, cold chain storage and transportation, as well as processing segments such as dried products and canned goods (Liu et al., 2022). Because longan production is characterised by pronounced seasonality and geographic concentration, annual supply depends not only on the planting scale of domestic producing regions and seasonal yield fluctuations, but also on seasonal supplementation through cross border trade (Chen et al., 2023). From the supply side perspective, China's fresh longan industry exhibited a pattern of phased growth followed by later adjustment from 2010 to 2025, against a relatively high baseline. According to the data reported in Table 1, national annual output of fresh longan increased steadily from 1.586

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million tonnes in 2010 to 1.912 million tonnes in 2017, indicating an expansion phase during which planting scale and production capacity continued to rise. However, beginning in 2018, output entered a period of volatility and declined to 1.793 million tonnes in 2020. Although output subsequently rebounded, the overall trajectory has shown a gradual downward movement, with output projected to reach 1.692 million tonnes by 2025. This trend suggests that the industry is moving from reliance on scale expansion toward a stage of structural adjustment (Zhang et al., 2021).

At the same time, the trade dimension demonstrates a clear seasonal supplementation pattern. A monthly import series reconstructed from annual customs data, together with harvest season regularities in major exporting countries in Southeast Asia, indicates that China's imports of fresh longan form a distinct peak between July and September each year. Over the long term, these imports have served to stabilise seasonal supply conditions and mitigate price fluctuations during the domestic peak season (Nguyen & Wang, 2022). In terms of trend dynamics, imports generally increased from 2010 to 2022, reflecting a gradual rise in the domestic market's reliance on cross border supply. In 2023, import volume experienced a temporary contraction, followed by recovery during 2024 to 2025, which highlights the sensitivity of cross border trade to changes in the external environment (Li & Huang, 2024). Overall, China's longan industry has formed a supply configuration that rests on stable domestic production and is complemented by seasonal imports. Yet the coexistence of slowing output growth and import volatility in recent years indicates that the industry is entering a critical phase of transition, shifting from scale driven expansion toward structural optimisation and stronger alignment with demand side requirements (Wang et al., 2023).

Table 1: Annual Production of Fresh Longan in China, 2010–2025 (Unit: 10,000 tons)

Year	Total Annual Production (10,000 tons)
2010	158.6
2011	162.9
2012	168.3
2013	171.5
2014	176.2
2015	183.7
2016	187.4
2017	191.2
2018	185.6
2019	188.9
2020	179.3
2021	186.5
2022	182.8
2023	176.9
2024	173.4
2025	169.2

*Note: The above data are estimated based on industry reports, FAO interval references, and structural data from major production regions.

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Table 2: China's Monthly Imports of Fresh Longan, 2010–2025 (Unit: 10,000 tons)

Year/Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2010	27,440	23,520	11,760	5,880	13,720	23,520	31,360	21,560	9,800	5,880	9,800	11,760
2011	29,400	25,200	12,600	6,300	14,700	25,200	33,600	23,100	10,500	6,300	10,500	12,600
2012	35,840	30,720	15,360	7,680	17,920	30,720	40,960	28,160	12,800	7,680	12,800	15,360
2013	39,200	33,600	16,800	8,400	19,600	33,600	44,800	30,800	14,000	8,400	14,000	16,800
2014	44,800	38,400	19,200	9,600	22,400	38,400	51,200	35,200	16,000	9,600	16,000	19,200
2015	49,000	42,000	21,000	10,500	24,500	42,000	56,000	38,500	17,500	10,500	17,500	21,000
2016	63,000	54,000	27,000	13,500	31,500	54,000	72,000	49,500	22,500	13,500	22,500	27,000
2017	67,200	57,600	28,800	14,400	33,600	57,600	76,800	52,800	24,000	14,400	24,000	28,800
2018	63,980	54,840	27,420	13,710	31,990	54,840	73,120	50,270	22,850	13,710	22,850	27,420
2019	65,800	56,400	28,200	14,100	32,900	56,400	75,200	51,700	23,500	14,100	23,500	28,200
2020	67,200	57,600	28,800	14,400	33,600	57,600	76,800	52,800	24,000	14,400	24,000	28,800
2021	70,000	60,000	30,000	15,000	35,000	60,000	80,000	55,000	25,000	15,000	25,000	30,000
2022	77,000	66,000	33,000	16,500	38,500	66,000	88,000	60,500	27,500	16,500	27,500	33,000
2023	47,600	40,800	20,400	10,200	23,800	40,800	54,400	37,400	17,000	10,200	17,000	20,400
2024	53,200	45,600	22,800	11,400	26,600	45,600	60,800	41,800	19,000	11,400	19,000	22,800
2025	57,260	49,080	24,540	12,270	28,630	49,080	65,440	44,990	20,450	12,270	20,450	24,540

*Note: The monthly import series of fresh longan used in this study was reconstructed from the annual total import volumes officially released by the General Administration of Customs of China, combined with the typical seasonal structure of cross-border longan trade, thereby generating a time-series reconstruction. As longan is a highly seasonal tropical fruit, its imports exhibit pronounced supply-cycle characteristics. Accordingly, this study allocates annual import volumes across months based on the production-season patterns of major Southeast Asian exporting countries, thereby constructing a continuous monthly import series from 2010 to 2025.

1. Official base data and other supporting sources:
2. General Administration of Customs of China
3. United Nations. (2023). UN Comtrade Database.

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4. CEIC Data. (2024). China Fresh Longan Import Statistics.
5. FAO. (2020). Tropical Fresh Fruit Exporters Guide to China.
6. Tropical Fresh Fruit Exporters Guide to China.

1.2. Current Industrial Problem

Although, from the supply perspective, China's longan industry continues to operate on the basis of relatively high output and achieves seasonal supplementation through cross border trade, thereby forming a comparatively stable supply system, supply stability has not been translated into sustained enhancement of market competitiveness. On the contrary, amid recent changes in the structure of fruit consumption, the market performance of longan has increasingly shown a pattern that is inconsistent with its supply scale, which is reflected in weakening sell through in modern retail channels and a synchronised decline across channels (see Table 3). Prior studies indicate that in agricultural product markets, when the structure of consumer preferences shifts, supply stability does not necessarily generate market advantage. Instead, demand side value reconfiguration often becomes the critical determinant of category competitiveness (Asioli et al., 2021). Accordingly, the challenges currently faced by the longan industry are not typical of a supply constrained predicament. They are more likely to arise from structural pressure generated by changes in demand logic under conditions of relatively stable supply. In this context, the key to understanding changes in the market position of longan does not lie in production capacity, but in the evolution of end consumer preferences, value evaluation criteria, and the structure of consumption scenarios.

On the demand side, the awkward position of longan is primarily manifested as misalignment across three dimensions, namely health attributes, the relationship between price and functional experience, and social value. First, at the level of health perceptions, as sugar control, weight management, and metabolic health have become dominant health narratives, consumers increasingly evaluate fruit in terms of low burden and metabolic friendliness. Health oriented consumers are more inclined to choose fruit categories perceived as low sugar or functional (Siegrist & Hartmann, 2020). By contrast, longan is more likely to be classified as a fruit that should be consumed in moderation due to its strongly perceived sweetness, a salient impression of sugar burden, and relatively limited satiety. This classification weakens its perceived legitimacy and use frequency in everyday healthy diet scenarios (see Table 4). Related research also shows that perceived sweetness and health labels exert significant effects on consumer decision making in fruit choice (Wang et al., 2022).

Second, in terms of price and functional experience, longan is typically positioned in the mid to upper price range. However, its overall consumption experience does not exhibit clear advantages with respect to edible yield, perceived eatability over repeated consumption, and eating convenience. As a result, consumers may perceive a value gap between what they pay and what they obtain, and may shift to alternatives that offer greater durability of consumption, higher convenience, or more consistent satisfaction at comparable price points (see Table 3). Research suggests that modern consumers have significantly increased the weight placed on convenience, ready to eat characteristics, and holistic eating experience in fruit choice. This trend toward functional efficiency is reshaping the competitive structure of fruit categories (Grunert, 2021).

Third, from the perspective of social value, fruit consumption increasingly carries functions of social expression and symbolic meaning in contemporary contexts. Certain categories achieve identity expression and scenario based price premiums through origin or cultivar labels, gifting scripts, and lifestyle narratives. Empirical evidence indicates that brand stories, origin labels, and symbolic value can significantly enhance consumers' willingness to pay a premium (Kähkönen et al., 2021). In contrast, longan lacks a clearly communicable category identity and

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premium symbolic markers, and it also lacks stable festive gifting meanings and social display scenarios. Its consumption meaning therefore remains largely at the level of traditional nourishment and everyday eating, making it difficult to capture symbolic premiums and scenario premiums (see Table 5). Taken together, the weakness of longan is not driven by supply shortages. Rather, it reflects a demand side decline in fit and a solidification of market tier positioning, arising from the combined effects of misalignment with health trends, asymmetry between price and functional experience, and insufficient construction of social meaning. This practical dilemma provides a strong research motivation to re explain the market position of traditional agricultural products from the perspectives of consumption meaning and category value.

Table 3: Annual Sales of Longan in Major Supermarket Chains in China (Unit: RMB 100 million)

Supermarket Chain	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Yonghui Superstores	4.86	4.71	4.49	4.33	4.12
Walmart China	3.77	3.69	3.58	3.46	3.28
China Resources Vanguard	3.17	3.06	2.95	2.79	2.61
RT-Mart	2.63	2.55	2.41	2.24	2.03
Hema Fresh	1.94	1.86	1.73	1.58	1.42

Table 4: Nutritional Comparison Between Longan and Common Health-Oriented Fruits

Fruit	Sugar Content (g)	Dietary Fibre (g)	Vitamin C (mg)	Energy (kcal)
Longan	14	1.1	84	60
Strawberry	4.9	2.0	59	32
Blueberry	9.1	2.4	9.7	57
Kiwifruit	6.0	3.0	93	49
Watermelon	6.2	0.4	8.1	30
Orange	8.2	2.4	53	47
Grapefruit	7.0	1.3	61	38
Papaya	5.9	1.7	60	26
Pineapple	9.9	1.4	48	50
Raspberry	4.4	6.5	26	25
Avocado	0.7	6.7	10	160

Table 5: Comparison Between Longan and Other Mainstream Fruits with Social-Attribute Positioning

Fruit	Perceived Value	Gift-Giving Attribute	IP-Branded?	Social Symbolism	Price Premium Potential	Typical Consumption/Use Scenario
Longan	Low–Medium	Weak	No	Traditional tonic/nourishing food	Weak	Everyday consumption

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Table 5: Comparison Between Longan and Other Mainstream Fruits with Social-Attribute Positioning

Fruit	Perceived Value	Gift-Giving Attribute	IP-Branded?	Social Symbolism	Price Premium Potential	Typical Consumption/Use Scenario
Cherries	High	Strong	Country-of-origin IP	Symbol of wealth	Strong	Gift-giving
Durian	Very High	Strong	Cultivar/variety IP	Status symbol	Very strong	Premium indulgence
Blueberry	Medium–High	Medium	Health IP	Antioxidant/health symbolism	Medium	Health-oriented consumption
Shine Muscat grapes	High	Strong	Cultivar/variety IP	Refined lifestyle	Strong	Gift-giving
Red-fleshed dragon fruit	Medium	Medium	Geographic-origin IP	"New consumption" symbolism	Medium	Light/occasion gifting
Apple	Medium	Strong	Regional-origin IP	Symbol of peace/safety	Medium	Festivals/holidays
Orange	Medium–High	Strong	Festival/holiday IP	Symbol of prosperity/wealth	Medium	Lunar New Year/holiday season
Peach	Medium	Medium	Cultural IP	Symbol of longevity	Medium	Cultural/ritual gifting
Pineapple	Medium	Medium	Linguistic/pun-based IP	Symbol of bringing wealth/fortune	Medium	Blessing/auspicious occasions
Avocado	Medium–High	Weak	Health IP	Urban lifestyle symbol	Medium	Health-related scenarios

1.3. Research Significance

The industry significance of this study lies in reframing the current difficulties faced by the longan industry. Rather than treating them as conventional issues of production and distribution, this study conceptualises them as a problem of value alignment under changing consumption logics, thereby offering a directional pathway for the industry's future transformation. For a long time, longan has primarily entered the market through a traditional positioning as a nourishing fruit. However, within a contemporary consumption structure where health orientation, experience orientation, and symbolic orientation coexist, this single value label is no longer sufficient to sustain long term competitiveness. This study argues that the fundamental challenge for longan does not reside in supply conditions, but in its limited integration into modern consumption narratives and scenario systems. This implies that the

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key to industry upgrading is no longer scale expansion, but the advancement of value reconfiguration.

More specifically, the industry needs to achieve repositioning across three dimensions, namely functional cognition, consumption experience, and social meaning. This can be accomplished through health friendly communication, improved eating convenience, and the renewed construction of category symbolism and gifting meanings, enabling longan to shift from a single purpose everyday agricultural product toward a consumption category capable of fitting multiple scenarios. In doing so, this study provides the industry with a transformation route from a scale driven model to a value driven model. It may help traditional fruits move away from competition based primarily on output toward a mode of competition grounded in meaning construction and scenario integration, thereby supporting category upgrading and the rebuilding of long term market resilience.

2. Theoretical Foundations and Research Innovation

2.1. Theoretical Framework

Against the backdrop of an increasingly health oriented consumption environment, the primary difficulty faced by longan does not arise simply from its objective nutritional profile. Rather, it stems from consumers' subjective mechanisms of health risk perception. The Health Belief Model continues to be widely employed in contemporary health behaviour research to explain how individuals make dietary choices on the basis of perceived risk. Evidence suggests that perceived susceptibility and perceived severity significantly influence health related food selection (Carfora et al., 2020). As sugar control, weight management, and metabolic health become mainstream concerns, attributes associated with high sugar and high energy are more readily interpreted as potential burdens, thereby triggering avoidance behaviour. Recent empirical work further indicates that consumers' risk sensitivity to a "high sugar" label can significantly reduce purchase intention, even when the overall nutritional profile is not markedly inferior (Huang et al., 2022). Importantly, consumers' judgements of health attributes are not determined solely by scientific indicators. They also rely on cognitive labels shaped by social communication. Research shows that the health image of food is often constructed through media narratives and social interaction, which then forms stable category stereotypes (Machín et al., 2020). Once a fruit is classified as a "burdensome food" within a health discourse, it becomes difficult for the product to enter everyday healthy consumption scenarios, even if it possesses other nutritional advantages. This implies that the decline in longan's health fit is, in essence, a consumer exclusion mechanism jointly driven by risk perception and social labelling.

At the same time, longan's disadvantages in the domains of price and functional experience can be interpreted through mechanisms of perceived value formation. Recent research on consumer value suggests that food choice is increasingly based on an integrated evaluation of perceived benefits relative to perceived costs, rather than on price alone (Konuk, 2020). In fruit consumption contexts, perceived eatability over repeated consumption, edible yield, and convenience constitute key functional benefits. When these benefits fail to align with price, consumers are likely to perceive value inequity and shift toward alternatives that offer more reliable returns (see Table 3). From a behavioural economics perspective, research on perceived fairness also shows that when consumers perceive transaction outcomes as unfair, both purchase intention and brand attitudes decrease significantly (Bolton et al., 2021). In addition, fruit consumption is influenced by mechanisms of symbolic consumption. Recent consumption culture studies indicate that food consumption increasingly serves functions of identity construction and social expression, with symbolic meaning substantially enhancing willingness to pay a premium (Grewal et al., 2021). When a category lacks gifting attributes, social display relevance, or a coherent cultural narrative, its social symbolic value is difficult to

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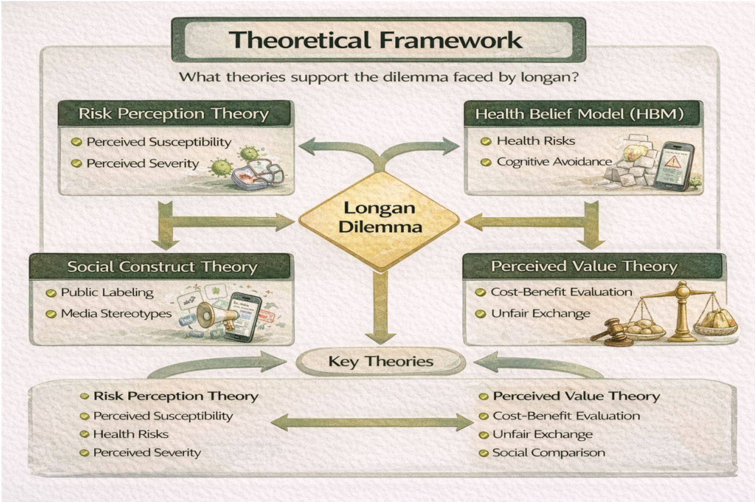
establish, and its premium potential becomes constrained accordingly. Therefore, the joint effects of insufficient functional value and the absence of symbolic value make it difficult for longan to gain advantage in both rational comparison and social expression, thereby consolidating its relatively weak position within the consumption hierarchy.

Graphic 1: Theoretical Framework to support the dilemma of Longan Market



2.2. Research Gaps

Existing studies on the longan industry exhibit a pronounced supply side orientation. Research attention has largely concentrated on production and circulation issues such as yield variation, planting efficiency, optimisation of regional layout, cultivar improvement, and trade structure. In recent years, agricultural industry research has commonly adopted production efficiency enhancement and industrial scale expansion as central analytical frameworks, emphasising the role of technological progress and trade structure optimisation in strengthening agricultural product competitiveness (Fuglie et al., 2020). Such studies typically use production capacity, export potential, and industrial scale as primary evaluation criteria, and accordingly conclude that the industry operates robustly and even retains sustained development potential. Related scholarship suggests that, in global agricultural markets, production scale and export capability remain important indicators of competitive advantage (Béné et al., 2021). Because longan has long maintained a relatively high domestic output base and can achieve a degree of seasonal supplementation and supply adjustment through cross border trade, the existing literature often defines it as a stable, traditionally advantaged agricultural product. This framing tends to generate comparatively positive development assessments and policy recommendations.

However, supply centred analytical frameworks contain structural blind spots when explaining longan's actual market performance. On the one hand, this perspective often assumes that demand is relatively stable and attributes competitiveness primarily to production and distribution capacity. On the other hand, it rarely examines the reordering effects generated by shifts in the structure of consumer preferences, and thus struggles to identify potential medium to long term risks that agricultural products may face in end markets. Recent agricultural economics research indicates that reliance on supply side indicators alone is insufficient to explain category substitution under consumption upgrading, because changes in demand structure can reshape market configurations (Reardon et al., 2021). More critically, existing research devotes limited attention to demand side dimensions such as consumer decision mechanisms, perceived value formation processes, and the construction of symbolic meaning. Consumer behaviour research shows that food choice is increasingly shaped by subjective

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perceived value and social meaning construction, rather than by objective attributes alone (Lusk & Briggeman, 2021). In addition, symbolic value and lifestyle narratives are becoming important sources of food competitiveness (Thøgersen et al., 2022). Consequently, the literature is often able to address whether longan can "continue to be produced and supplied", but it is less able to address whether it will still be "prioritised in consumer choice".

Under consumption upgrading and intensified health orientation, if a category gradually loses fit in health narratives, experiential value, or social symbolism, demand contraction, weakening sell through, and marginalisation of market position may occur even when the supply base remains stable. Empirical evidence shows that the competitive logic of food markets has shifted from scale based competition toward value based competition, and neglecting demand side structural change may expose traditional agricultural products to risks of structural decline (Gómez et al., 2022). Therefore, re examining the competitive logic of the longan industry from a demand side perspective, and identifying the latent risks implied by declining consumption fit, constitutes an important research gap that has not been adequately covered by existing research systems.

3. Implications and Recommendations

3.1. Implications for Upstream Production

From the perspective of industrial development, the upstream segment of the longan industry should no longer treat the expansion of planting area as its primary strategic direction. Instead, it should shift toward improving alignment with market demand. The pressures currently faced by longan do not originate from supply shortages, but from a problem of fit arising from changes in consumption structure. As sugar control awareness continues to strengthen, traditional cultivars that rely mainly on a high sweetness advantage are becoming increasingly unable to satisfy everyday consumption needs. Accordingly, the development of new cultivars is particularly necessary. For example, breeding longan varieties with a fresher taste profile, a softer perceived sweetness, or a lower perceived consumption burden would allow longan to integrate more effectively into routine dietary scenarios, rather than being confined to nourishment oriented or seasonal consumption. Through cultivar renewal, market acceptance can be enhanced without reliance on scale expansion, thereby creating new development space for the industry.

At the same time, planting systems should evolve from a single crop structure toward a more diversified configuration. In longan dominated industrial parks, if all resources are concentrated on a single crop, business risk can be substantially amplified once market demand fluctuates. Moderately adjusting planting proportions, and introducing selected popular fruit categories or economic crops in line with market trends to form a complementary planting structure, can help strengthen overall resilience to risk. On this basis, upstream actors should continue to optimise quality around consumers' actual experience, including improving edible yield, maintaining consistency in fruit size, enhancing stability in storage and transportation, and improving peeling convenience. In parallel, the industry should strengthen market recognisability through origin based branding and differentiated communication of cultivar attributes. When new cultivar development is combined with diversified planting structures, the longan industry will no longer be constrained by a traditional production logic. Instead, it can build more flexible market adaptability on the foundation of stable supply.

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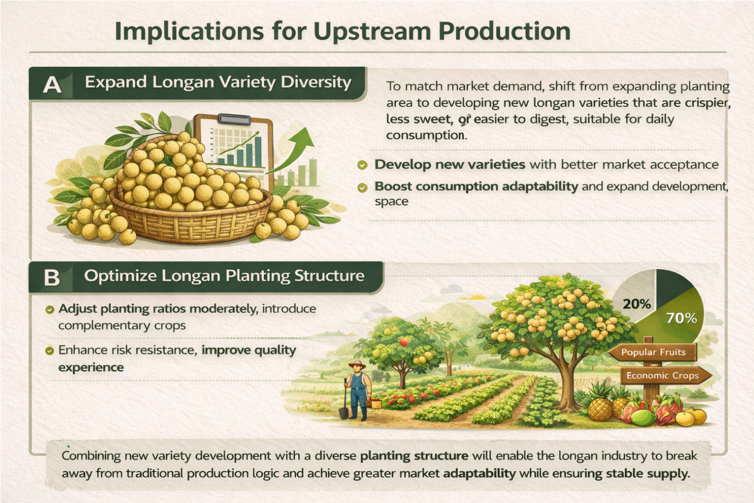
Graphic 2: Implication Implications for Upstream Production



3.2. Implications for Midstream Processing

The value of the midstream segment should no longer be confined to transportation and shelf placement. Instead, it should shift toward expanding longan's usage scenarios through processing and form reconfiguration. For a long time, longan's disadvantaged position in end markets has, to a considerable extent, stemmed from the operational costs embedded in its consumption process, such as peeling and discarding the pit, which makes it difficult to fit into fast paced lifestyles. Through approaches such as ready to eat fruit preparation, small portion packaging, peeling and de pitting, or the design of semi processed products, the consumption threshold can be substantially reduced. This would enable longan to enter high frequency everyday scenarios such as commuting, office snacking, and family top ups. Such form optimisation not only enhances convenience, but also reshapes the traditional perception that longan requires a dedicated consumption setting, supporting a gradual transition toward an everyday food that can be consumed flexibly, thereby improving market acceptance.

As consumer demand becomes increasingly diversified, a single fresh fruit format is insufficient to secure stable market space. The midstream processing sector therefore needs to promote the extension of longan into multiple use applications. Beyond common processing routes such as freeze dried snacks, light meal ingredients, or beverage inputs, longan can also be further developed into food and medicinal raw materials by building on its established traditional uses. For instance, dried longan pulp is an important ingredient in a number of classical formulations in traditional Chinese medicine, and it is associated with stable demand in products such as Yuling Gao and Guipi Wan. Through regulated processing and the establishment of quality standards, part of longan supply can be channelled directly into the medicinal materials market. This strategy not only broadens sales channels, but also alleviates the seasonal volatility that constrains fresh fruit sales. Such an extension toward functional raw materials helps to create more stable sources of demand, reduces reliance on the fresh produce market, and strengthens resilience across the value chain.

Meanwhile, quality stability remains a key determinant of consumer trust. By implementing grading systems and standardised processing procedures, longan of different quality levels can be matched to distinct use purposes. Premium grade products can be positioned for gifting markets, mid grade products can serve household consumption, and processing suitable raw materials can be allocated to food manufacturing or medicinal production systems. When combined with cold chain optimisation, standardised sorting, and loss control, these measures can improve supply consistency and reduce consumption uncertainty resulting from quality

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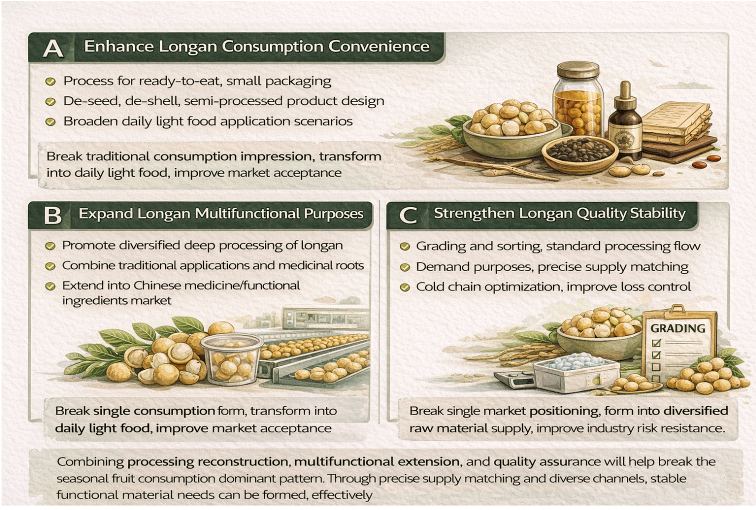
fluctuations. Once longan develops stable applications across multiple channels, including food and medicinal uses, its market role can shift from a single fresh commodity to a multi use raw material, thereby mitigating volatility risks associated with an overly narrow value chain structure.

Graphic 3: Implications for Midstream Processing



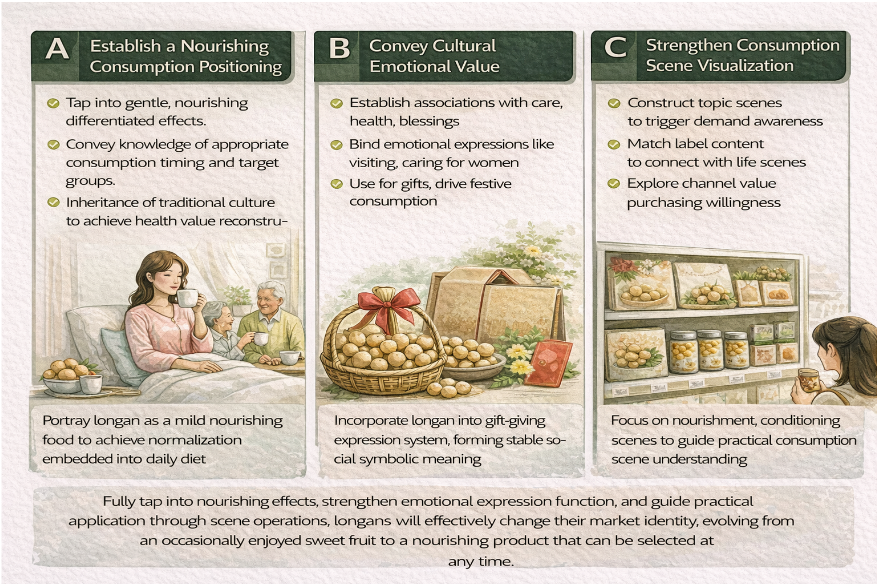
3.3. Implications for Downstream Markets

Longan's weakness in end markets largely stems from its long term association with a single label, namely high sweetness and a strong sense of burden, together with the absence of a clear contemporary positioning. Accordingly, downstream market actors need to employ a more systematic health narrative to guide consumers toward a renewed understanding of its value attributes. Rather than merely highlighting nutritional components, it is more important to establish an informed consumption cognition built around appropriate quantity, appropriate timing, and appropriate target groups. For example, longan can be linked to needs such as women's everyday conditioning and recovery of physical vitality among middle aged and older consumers, thereby repositioning it as an everyday option with a mild nourishing meaning. This type of repositioning is comparable to how brown sugar, through sustained cultural communication and its association with lifestyle practices, has gradually acquired a symbolic role in menstrual care. Longan similarly possesses cultural foundations and a tradition of use. Through consistent communication of its warming and nourishing characteristics, it can be reframed as a light supportive food, enabling it to re enter everyday dietary structures rather than being perceived as a sweet fruit consumed only occasionally.

In gifting and social contexts, longan currently lacks a widely recognisable cultural symbol, which limits its role in affective consumption scenarios. Through cultural embedding and image shaping, the emotional expressive value of longan can be progressively constructed. For instance, it can be associated with meanings such as care, thoughtfulness, and health related wishes, positioning it as an appropriate gifting choice for visiting older relatives, expressing care toward women, or conveying festive greetings. Such cultural construction not only enhances its function in social expression, but also provides a more stable foundation for emotional narratives, allowing longan to carry a clear symbolic meaning in gifting contexts rather than remaining a generic fruit.

From the perspective of channel operations, the specification of consumption scenarios is equally critical. Through scenario based merchandising and content communication, longan can be directly linked to everyday needs, such as women's nourishment, middle aged and older wellness support, or family sharing occasions, thereby enabling consumers to more readily understand its usage and value positioning. When supported by sustained cultural communication, longan can gradually establish stable consumption pathways, shifting from a product that is consumed sporadically under traditional perceptions to a regular choice with lifestyle meaning. Once consumers can interpret its role within clearly defined scenarios, both consumption frequency and market acceptance are likely to increase, facilitating a shift from passive selection to active preference.

Graphic 4: Implications for Downstream Markets



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