



A Review of Promotional Practices and Problems of Selected Fast-Food Chain Stores

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Abstract— The Philippines' fast food chain expansion can be attributed to the country's growing population and the changing characteristics of Filipino consumers. Fast-food franchises are perceived as diversifying their product offerings to meet demand, even if this encroaches on the territory of other cuisine concepts. As a result, it is vital for the management of various fast-food chains to develop the most effective advertising methods for improving their programs in order to keep market share. In keeping with the preceding debate, a commercial mall in Gapan, Nueva Ecija, has a plethora of fast food establishments that the researchers determined are capable of competing in the market. From the customers' standpoint, this study determined the most tempting promotional strategies used by the numerous fast-food restaurants located in Walter Mart. The study employed a descriptive approach to assess and interpret the firm profile, management profile, and consumer profile of six (6) fast food chain outlets in Walter Mart, Gapan City, Nueva Ecija. The numerical data obtained in this study were computed using appropriate statistical techniques, including frequency, percentage, rank, weighted mean, and average weighted mean. As a consequence of the study, the selected food chain stores promoted their items using the same types of promotions; direct selling, sales promotion, advertising, and public relations or publicity were only a few of their activities. It was recommended that the responders pursue new promotional methods in order to catch the attention of additional clients. Additionally, these businesses should conduct successful promotional training seminars and growth programs.

Keywords— Promotional Practices, Fast-food Chain, Commercial Mall, Direct Selling.

INTRODUCTION

Fast food chain growth in the Philippines can be ascribed to the country's expanding population and the changing features of Filipino consumers (Flores, 2014). Filipinos are true foodies. Even if they travel the world, they are still on the lookout for a delicious meal that will meet their nutritional requirements (lookupgrade.com). Despite the fact that Filipinos have an authentic and profound love for their families (Jake, 2011) and feel that food may bring them together (lookupgrade.com).

In the Philippines, food is served at every event, and each member of the family begins interacting with one another while holding food. When it comes to family bonding, friend hangouts, business meetings, or anything else that brings Filipinos together, there is food on the table and everyone becomes one when the meal is provided or served (lookupgrade.com). As a result, the food service business in the Philippines is booming, and everyone wants a piece of it (Masigan, 2019).



Fast food culture is a rapidly growing trend among teenagers (Kaushik et al., 2011). According to authoritative websites, fast food refers to food that can be prepared and supplied rapidly, while Habib et al. (2011) defined it as swiftly prepared, moderately priced, and easily available alternatives to home cooked cuisine. According to Marasigan (2019), fast-food expansion will continue unabated. Fast-food restaurants are expected to increase at the fastest rate in the next years, rising by 12 percent year on year.

Interestingly, fast-food sales within convenience stores would expand at a faster rate of 32%, owing to their improving quality and affordable pricing. Fast-food franchises are viewed as expanding their product options in order to meet demand, even if this results in the encroachment of other food concepts. For example, Filipinos will soon see burger chains serving pizza, chicken restaurants serving salads, and pizza restaurants serving rice meals.

This growth can be attributable to the branch network expansion conducted by the majority of fast-food companies. As a result, this shows that the market still has room to grow (Flores, 2014). If this is the case, it is critical for the management of the various fast-food chains to establish the most efficient advertising strategies for upgrading their programs in order to maintain their market share (Flores, 2014).

However, many in the business are unaware of the extent to which advertising and other promotional methods might assist in making decisions about how to integrate the product, pricing, location, and promotion strategies into a marketing program.

Recognizing the facts above, the researchers, recognized the critical nature of promotional practices in attracting new customers. Given that the fast-food industry is booming in the Philippines, it is therefore timely to describe the existing promotional practices of the fast-food chains in Walter Mart Gapan City Branch.

Additionally, the study will determine the most enticing promotional methods of the various fast-food restaurants located in Walter Mart from the customers' perspective. This study would further identify the issues plaguing fast food businesses in order to provide strategic ways to address those issues.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to identify the promotional practices of six (6) fast food chain stores in Walter Mart at Gapan City, Nueva Ecija. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. To describe the respondent's profile with respect to the following:
 - 1.1 Company
 - 1.1.1 Forms of organization
 - 1.1.2 Ownership
 - 1.1.3 Number of Personnel
 - 1.1.4 Years of operation
 - 1.2 Customers



- 1.2.1 Age
 - 1.2.2 Sex
 - 1.2.3 Civil Status
 - 1.2.4 Educational Attainment
 - 1.2.5 Family Income
 - 1.2.6 Employment
2. To describe the promotional practices implemented by the fast food chain store.
 3. To identify the most attractive promotional practices for the customers of the fast food chains.
 4. To identify the promotional problems besetting the managers of the fast food chain stores.
 5. To propose a strategic solution to solve the problems besetting the managers.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used descriptive method of research in an attempt to analyze and interpret the company's profile, manager's profile and customers' profile of the six (6) fast food chain stores in Walter Mart, Gapan City, Nueva Ecija. Descriptive research is a fact-finding study with adequate and accurate interpretation of data. It describes with emphasis what actually exist such as the current condition of the phenomenon (Calderon, 2007). Descriptive research in this study was utilized to describe the profile of the company, the manager and the customers.

The company's profile in terms of forms of organization, ownership, number of personnel and years of operations; the manager and customer's profile in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, family income and employment. It also includes the promotional practices of the fast-food chain stores as perceived by the managers and customers and the problems related to promotional practices as perceived by the managers.

Research Locale

This study was conducted in Walter Mart, Gapan City, Nueva Ecija.

Respondents

The respondents of the study were the six (6) managers of all the existing fast food chain stores in Walter Mart, Gapan City, Nueva Ecija. For this thesis, the influence of different promotional activities on consumer buying behavior was carried out through a survey to consumers of the six (6) fast food chain restaurants. A survey-questionnaire was filled out by 100 respondents in a good environment in order to avoid any hustle and weak response.

The Instrument

The researchers utilized a researcher-made questionnaire to collect the necessary data. The instrument is a structured questionnaire and is composed of close ended-questions that help to bring about information regarding the promotional practices of the fast-food chain stores as perceived by the managers and customers.



This is same with the questionnaire related to promotional problems besetting the managers of the fast-food chain stores. The rating scale of the close-ended questionnaire and corresponding verbal description were presented on Table 1.

Table 1. Scale for Promotional Practices of the Fast Food Chain and the Promotional Problems besetting the Managers

Scale	Range	Verbal Description
5	4.20–5.00	Strongly Agree
4	3.40–4.19	Agree
3	2.60–3.39	Neutral
2	1.80–2.59	Disagree
1	1.00–1.79	Strong Disagree

Table 2. Scale for Promotional Practices of the Fast Food Chain as perceived by the Customers

Scale	Range	Verbal Description
5	4.20–5.00	Extremely Attractive
4	3.40–4.19	Attractive
3	2.60–3.39	Neutral
2	1.80–2.59	Unattractive
1	1.00–1.79	Extremely Unattractive

The instrument was tried out to one (1) non-respondent manager at Jollibee located beside the public market of Gapan City, Nueva Ecija and two (2) non-respondent customers from that store as well.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers sought permission to the authorities concerned or to the manager of Walter Mart, Gapan City, Nueva Ecija and the managers of the different fast food chain stores in the mall.

After seeking all the permissions and identifying the respondents, the researchers personally conducted the administration of the questionnaire and interview. The data gathering lasted for 2 weeks.

Data Analysis Technique

Appropriate statistical tools, such as frequency, percentage, rank, weighted mean and average weighted mean were utilized to compute for the numerical data that were collected in this study.

Data analysis of Microsoft Excel 2007 was employed for computations of the gathered information of the questionnaire from the respondents.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides the presentation of data relevant to the problems. Corresponding analysis and interpretation regarding some presented data were discussed using some statistical tools.

Table 3. Profile of the Company

Form of Organization	Frequency	Percentage
Single Proprietorship	0	0.00
Partnership	0	0.00
Corporation	6	100.00
Total	6	100.00
Ownership	Frequency	Percentage
Filipino owned	2	33
Foreign owned	1	17
Filipino and foreign owned	3	50.00
Total	100	100.00

The table 3 above shows the profile of the company. It can be seen from the table above that all of the fast food chains were registered under corporation to which some were franchised. A corporation is a legal entity created by individuals, stockholders, or shareholders, with the purpose of operating for profit. The creation involves a legal process called incorporation where legal documents containing the primary purpose of the business, name and location, and the number of shares and types of stock issued, are drafted (corporatefinanceinstitute.com).

It can also be observed in table 3 that 50.00% of the respondent-fast food chains were Filipino and foreign owned; 33% of them were Filipino owned; and only 17% or only one was foreign owned. It is obvious from the data above that there were corporation in the Philippines that are established under the partnership of Filipino citizens and foreign ones due to the fact that most of the fast-food chains established in Walter Mart, Gapan City, Nueva Ecija were founded abroad.

Table 4. Number of Personnel in the Branch

Name of the Fast Food Chain	Number of Personnel
McDonalds	40
Jollibee	45
KFC	18
Greenwich	30
Mang Inasal	37
Chowking	40

The table 4 above shows that number of personnel of the different fast food chains existing in Walter Mart, Gapan City, Nueva Ecija. It can be noted that Jollibee has the highest number of personnel and this can be correlated to



the demand in the store. It only means that Jollibee has the highest demand that's why they have to maintain massive number of personnel to cater that demand.

Table 5. Years of Operations of the Branch

Name of the Fast Food Chain	Years of Operations
McDonalds	13
Jollibee	13
KFC	10
Greenwich	4
Mang Inasal	9
Chowking	13

The table 5 above shows the years of operations of the different fast-food chains in the branch. It can be remarked that McDonalds, Jollibee and Chowking have been in the mall for 13 years now due to the fact that since the mall was established at Gapan City, they have already been there.

Table 6. Profile of the Customers

Name of the Fast Food Chain	Frequency	Percentage
McDonalds	17	17
Jollibee	29	29
KFC	18	18
Greenwich	12	12
Mang Inasal	11	11
Chowking	13	13
Total	100	100
Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	39	39
Female	61	61
Total	100	100.00
Civil Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	67	67
Married	31	31
Separated	1	1
Widowed	1	1
Total	100	100
Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
Elementary Undergraduate	0	-
Elementary Graduate	3	3.



High School Undergraduate	15	15
High School Graduate	21	21
Continuation of Table 6.		
College Undergraduate	34	34
College Graduate	27	27
Unemployed	0	-
Total	100	100
Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage
Student	41	41
Casual	22	22
Contractual	8	8
Temporary	14	14
Permanent	5	5
Own a business	10	10
Total	365	100

The table 6 above shows the profile of the customers of the fast-food chains. It can be noticed that Jollibee has the highest number of customers with 29%. Some of the customers when asked why they love eating at Jollibee said that from a marketing perspective, Jollibee has always been very effective when it comes to promoting their brand. The popular personality approach is common not only with this brand but with other labels as well; it may quite possibly be the most effective. Many of our fellow Filipinos idolize TV and movie stars as if they are pseudo-gods, patronizing almost everything they promote.

The emotional appeal Jollibee is also enticing. Those tear jerker promo ads were certainly moving and will literally move customer towards a Jollibee store. But in reality, they just simply promote well and target the perfect audience. It was also mentioned by the customers the hash tag Pinoy pride. Jollibee is considered locally Pinoy made, Filipino-Chinese that is. But other than marketing, the food in general is also worth noting. Kids are often picky with food and yet they enjoy how Jollibee chicken, fries, and spaghetti taste like.

Lastly, it's a status quo. For someone who grew up from poor family, customers can attest to how special Jollibee is. It's the place to go for special occasions and bragging rights.

It can also be gleaned that 61.00% of the customers of fast-food chain stores in Walter Mart, Gapan City, Nueva Ecija were female due to the fact that based on population, female is more in number than male.

Also, it can be seen from the data above that 67.00% of the respondent-customers were single which means that those who were single would always love to go to have their breakfast, lunch, dinner or snacks at fast food chains instead of going to the market and buy food to prepare. This only shows that it is more convenient to eat at fast food chain stores than to prepare food at home.



It can also be noted that 34.00% of the customers were college graduates or those who were already working to different offices near the location of the Walter Mart, Gapan City, Nueva Ecija. The location of the mall is considered as a business center which means that it is surrounded with commercial banks, offices, business establishments, schools and even churches that make it accessible even to students and young professionals. Likewise, it can be noticed that 41.00% of the respondent-customers were students due to the reason that Walter Mart, Gapan City, Nueva Ecija is surrounded by both public and private schools which means that the location is very accessible for students both in high school and college.

Table 7. Promotional Practices of Fast Food Chain Stores as perceived by the Managers

No.	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1.	The fast food chain incorporates a toy in every set meal for kids	4.67	Strongly Agree
2.	The fast food chain gets celebrity endorsers or a well-known personalities to create brand consciousness and market loyalty to their customers	4.83	Strongly Agree
3.	The fast food chain uses TV Program as a form of Advertisement	4.83	Strongly Agree
4.	The fast food chain is engaged in publicity or public relations	4.67	Strongly Agree
5.	The fast food chain is giving out coupons that give the consumers discounted food items if the consumer purchases two items, free gift items, raffle draws and a lot more	4.67	Strongly Agree
6.	The fast food chain uses billboards as a means of advertisement	4.67	Strongly Agree
Continuation of Table 7.			
7.	The fast food chain comes up with value/combo meal/price pack that goes along with attractive ideas by offering some extra amount of food with a minor difference of amount	4.83	Strongly Agree
8.	The fast food chain introduces new products to its consumers in different seasons to attract new customers and keep hold of the existing customers by offering/adding something new in their menu	4.83	Strongly Agree
9.	The fast food chain is creating stories related to their products that are usually touching the hearts of many consumers and it can be viewed on social media like youtube and facebook as part of their endorsement	4.67	Strongly Agree
10.	The fast food chain stores utilizes the television as form of broadcast media in promoting their products	4.83	Strongly Agree
11.	The fast food chain employs magazines and newspapers as a form of print media in promoting their products	4.00	Agree
12.	The fast food chain uses tarpaulins as means of promoting their products and services	4.83	Strongly Agree
Average Weighted Mean		4.69	Strongly Agree



The table 7 above shows the promotional practices of fast-food chain stores as perceived by the managers. It can be observed that the managers strongly agreed that one of their promotional practices is the fast food chain gets celebrity endorsers or a well-known personalities to create brand consciousness and market loyalty to their customers. Several studies have indicated that celebrity endorsers can make positive effect on consumers' buying behavior (Till & Busler, 1998).

The use of celebrities in promotions is traced back to nineteenth century and these general promotional practices have revealed a large quantity of intellectual as well as realistic considerations (Randhawa & Khan, 2014). Celebrity endorsement has become a multi-million-dollar industry in the world. These celebrities or public personalities have huge influence on the consumer buying behavior of the fast-food chains.

Similarly, the managers strongly agreed that the fast-food chain uses TV Programs as a form of their advertisement. Advertisement is one among of the effective tools of integrated marketing communication to emotionally and psychologically motivate consumers to buy either goods or services. It is considered to have strong linkage with entertainment and the proliferation of media has blurred the distinguishing lines between advertisements and entertainment. Advertisements featuring products like snacks, toys, cookies, confectionaries and fast food are specifically targeted at children of all ages, in order to motivate them to try new brands and buy more. One of the new techniques of marketing of the 20th century has been the introduction and diffusion of television. Television is the most preferred means of communication for fast food retailers because of the effect on viewer. This medium of advertisement has allowed major food companies like KFC and MC Donald to plant influential images and themes within children's collective consciousness (Essays, 2018).

Correspondingly, the managers strongly agreed that the fast-food chain comes up with value/combo meal/price pack that goes along with attractive ideas by offering some extra amount of food with a minor difference of amount. fast food brands seem to be striking a balance between letting customers feel like they're getting a deal while still letting them make some choices on their own. In a way, the recent resurgence in fast food combo meals is the result of an expansion of the category. Now they're being sold as a bundle, and when that happens it's considered a combo meal (White, 2016). Actually, dishes from the menu combos are the best-selling items at the restaurants and the most often choice of the guests that's why people are fond of eating in fast food chain stores.

Moreover, the managers strongly agreed that the fast-food chain introduces new products to its consumers in different seasons to attract new customers and keep hold of the existing customers by offering/adding something new in their menu as one of their promotional practices. Fast food industry is one of the industries which very much rely on its foods promotion to increase the sales. For this purpose, it practices several techniques including price discounts, coupons, new product and offer different deals to attract its customers (Essays, 2018).

Additionally, the managers strongly agreed that the fast-food chain stores utilize the television as form of broadcast media in promoting their products. Everybody loves watching TV and that is also the reason why fast-food chains are spending millions of pesos to advertise on TV so that their target market would get aware of their



products offering or in the case that these fast food chains are offering new combo meals of products with the use of TV, the audience would be easily get informed.

Table 8. Promotional Practices of Fast-Food Chain Stores as perceived by the Customers

No.	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1.	The fast-food chain incorporates a toy in every set meal for kids	4.05	Attractive
2.	The fast-food chain gets celebrity endorsers or a well-known personalities to create brand consciousness and market loyalty to their customers	4.15	Attractive
3.	The fast-food chain uses TV Program as a form of Advertisement	4.12	Attractive
4.	The fast-food chain is engaged in publicity or public relations	3.86	Attractive
5.	The fast-food chain is giving out coupons that give the consumers discounted food items if the consumer purchases two items, free gift items, raffle draws and a lot more	4.13	Attractive
6.	The fast-food chain uses billboards as a means of advertisement	3.98	Attractive
7.	The fast-food chain comes up with value/combo meal/price pack that goes along with attractive ideas by offering some extra amount of food with a minor difference of amount	4.35	Extremely Attractive
8.	The fast-food chain introduces new products to its consumers in different seasons to attract new customers and keep hold of the existing customers by offering/adding something new in their menu	3.96	Attractive
9.	The fast-food chain is creating stories related to their products that are usually touching the hearts of many consumers and it can be viewed on social media like YouTube and Facebook as part of their endorsement	4.17	Attractive
10.	The fast-food chain stores utilizes the television as form of broadcast media in promoting their products	4.00	Attractive
11.	The fast-food chain employs magazines and newspapers as a form of print media in promoting their products	3.90	Attractive
12.	The fast-food chain uses tarpaulins as means of promoting their products and services	3.97	Attractive
	Average Weighted Mean	4.05	Attractive

Every organization wants a greater share of the total customer market and for this purpose it becomes very important for organizations to know their consumer's reactions and responses towards their promotional campaigns in order to implement them successfully (Essays, 2018). The promotional practices of the fast-food chains where they come up with value/combo meal/price pack that goes along with attractive ideas by offering some extra amount of food with a minor difference of amount were found by the customers as extremely attractive. Children are also an important market targeted by fast food because they offer special value meals for them. The



young generation who considers it faster is the potential high fat fast food consumers. The fast-food environment is not considered only for eating but for enjoyment also today, keeping in mind the several activities practiced in fast food especially for children such as birthday, get together parties and other unforgettable occasions. Several promotional activities are practiced in order to attract the new customers and to retain the existing one (Essays, 2018). The customers were attractive with combo and value meals because they feel like they are getting savings through it. Sharpe (2010) found that consumers place a perceived value on combo meals, even if it costs the same as choosing items a la carte.

"We were very much surprised that people chose the combo meal option even when there was no price discount," Sharpe said. "When a bundled meal is offered, these menu items are made more salient to the consumer and consequently it is more appealing and easier to select a "Letter A" or a "No. 3" rather than choosing each item individually," Sharpe (2010) added.

A respondent also learned that combo meals encourage consumers to "super-size" their orders, adding as much as 100 extra calories to their meal. As health care leaders caution the public about problems associated with obesity issues in America, part of the message is that consumers need to reduce their food portion sizes.

"Based on our research, it appears that the respondents would be just as happy with including smaller portion sizes as part of the combo meal," Sharpe said. "However, consumers are currently given subtle signals that smaller sizes are not appropriate. Realigning the meals to appropriate levels across the industry would make them just as satisfied."

Table 9. Promotional Problems of Fast Food Chain Stores as perceived by the Managers

No.	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1.	Staff assigned to direct selling program and activities lack necessary training and skills	3.33	Neutral
2.	There is a lack of continuous program to effectively launch direct selling strategies	2.67	Neutral
3.	Weak direct selling efforts does not improve the sales of many products	2.50	Disagree
4.	Direct selling is not consistent with other promotional activities of the company	2.17	Disagree
5.	Poor monitoring of local and international events and opportunities	1.50	Strongly Disagree
6.	The company does not always make use of effective price reduction as sales promotion	1.33	Strongly Disagree
7.	The company does not use all the incentives that could boost sales	2.00	Disagree
8.	The company lacks proper communication with the customers in promoting new products	3.00	Neutral



9.	Sociocultural activities and programs not properly monitored and effectively	1.67	Strongly Disagree
10.	The company is not concerned with government and private company activities related to the industries	1.67	Strongly Disagree
11.	Funds are not enough to support its publicity activities	1.33	Strongly Disagree
12.	The officers and staff are not sensitive to issues where effective publicity could be launched	1.67	Strongly Disagree
	Average Weighted Mean	2.07	Disagree

The table 9 above shows the promotional problems of fast-food chain stores as perceived by the managers. It can be perceived that managers believe that staff assigned to direct selling program and activities lack necessary training and skills as one of the minor problems they encountered while implementing their promotional practices. As perceived by the respondent-managers, food chain stores were confronted by direct selling problems due to weak direct selling efforts does not improve the sales of many products.

Furthermore, there is a lack of continuous program to effectively launch direct selling strategies which is believed to be a not so effective strategy in the fast-food chains.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The selected food chain stores used same type of promotions in promoting their products; Direct selling, sales promotion, advertising and public relations or publicity were some of their practices; Television Program and Endorsement by Well-known Personalities are still the most attractive promotional practices; Lastly, Broadcast media specifically television is the most commonly used media of communication used by the food chain stores.

Based on the findings of the study, the following are being recommended:

1. The respondents should deal with new promotional strategies in order to capture more customers' attention;
2. To attract more regular customers, fast food chain stores should serve similar products but distinguishably different from one another and should increase their advertising through various modes of communication;
3. The respondents should continue innovating their product lines by adding features that appeal to the middle income group as customers.
4. To address managers' concerns about promotional practices, it is suggested that these fast-food chain stores implement effective sales meetings and incentive programs for their salespeople;
5. Managers should conduct periodic inventory control and conduct periodic audits to determine which combo meals are the most marketable;
6. The company should also implement effective promotional training seminars and development programs.



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