

Promotional Mix and Industry Practices of Leading Fast-food Industry in the Philippines: A Case of NE Pacific Mall, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija

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ABSTRACT: The focus of this research is to identify the situation of the fast-food chain industry in N.E Pacific Mall, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, Philippines and to address the leading fast-food industry's current promotional and industry practices. It also describes the socio-demographic profile of the target market and the target audience together with their evaluation of the current promotional tools utilized by the industry which served as a reference point for market researchers to formulate strategic courses of action that can be employed by the industry to lessen the problems besetting the top and the middle management of the organizations within the industry. For the research methodology, the market researchers utilized a descriptive type of research to discuss the current promotional tools used in the industry and also to define the target market and the target audience using socio-demographic profile such as age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, family net income, and status of employment and at the same time, the company's profile in terms of forms of organization, ownership, and number of personnel. The researchers handpicked six (6) managers from the existing fast-food chain stores in NE Pacific Mall, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, Philippines using a structured questionnaire to define the general promotional practices in the industry. It was found out that the fast-food chain stores used the same sort of advertisements to promote their products and that direct selling, sales promotion, advertising, and public relations or publicity were some of their existing promotional practices. Likewise, it can be inferred that the TV shows and endorsements by well-known celebrities are still the most appealing advertising practices, and the most widely used contact channels by the fast-food chain stores are broadcast media, mainly television. Lastly, the researchers proposed a strategic solution to lessen the problems related to the promotional practices of the said industry.

KEYWORDS—advertisement, fast-food chain, industry practices, promotional practices, strategic solutions

I. INTRODUCTION

The growth of fast-food chains in the Philippines can be attributed to the increasing growth of population in the country and the changing characteristics of Filipino consumers (Flores, 2014). Filipino people really love to eat. They also look for healthy food that can satisfy their eating needs, that they are even willing to travel across the globe. Food bring people together and Filipinos possess a genuine appreciation for family gathering and this is more enjoyed with food served on their table. Due to this fact, the food service industry in the Philippines is growing at a phenomenal rate and everyone wants a part of it (Masigan, 2019). Fast-food culture is a vigorously uprising trend among the youngsters (Kaushik et al., 2011). According to leading websites, fast-food is the term given to food that can be prepared and served very quickly while Habib et al. (2011) described fast-food as quickly prepared, reasonably priced and readily available alternatives to home cooked food.

According to Marasigan (2019), there is no stopping in the fast-food growth. The fast-food category is predicted to post the highest growth rate in the years to come expanding by 12% year on year. Interestingly, fast-food sales inside convenience stores will grow at a more phenomenal rate of 32%, thanks to their improving quality and democratic price. Fast-food chains are seen to expand their product offerings to sustain demand even if it encroaches on other food concepts. For instance, Filipinos would soon see burger chains offering pizza, chicken chains offering salads, and pizza chains offering rice meals.

This increase can be attributed to the expansion undertaken by fast-food restaurants in terms of branch network. Thus, this indicates that the market has still room for expansion (Flores, 2014). If this is the case, it is imperative therefore, for the management of the different fast-food chains to determine what effective promotional practices can be applied for the upgrade of their programs to sustain their market share (Flores, 2014). Many in the business, however, are not aware of the extent to which advertising or other promotional strategies can help to achieve the decision on how to fit the product, pricing, place and the promotion strategies into a marketing program.

Recognizing this fact, the researchers, who are faculty members of the College of Management and Business Technology at Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology in San Isidro Campus, San Isidro, Nueva Ecija, Philippines 3106 have realized the importance of the promotional practices in order for the business to attract more customers due to the fact that fast-food industry is a booming sector in the Philippines. This poses a good opportunity to describe the existing promotional practices of the fast-food chains in NE Pacific Mall, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija and thereby identify what effective promotional practices and new perspectives can be formulated to upgrade their marketing programs. This study would further identify the problems besetting the fast-food chains to be able to propose strategic solutions that address problems on such areas.

By identifying the promotional practices that are anchored on the fundamental measures on internal and external aspects affecting the operations of the business especially in terms of the promotional mixes such the tri-media (promotional tools) and promotional tactics of the entire industry, this study hopes to provide practical results in the field of fast-food industry.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aimed to identify the promotional and industry practices of six (6) fast-food chain stores in NE Pacific Mall, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the company's profile in terms of its form of organization, ownership, and number of personnel. Simultaneously, it is also designed to describe the customer's profile in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, family net income, and status of employment. The main objective of the study is to describe the promotional practices implemented by the fast-food chain stores, to identify the most attractive promotional practices for the customers of the fast-food chain stores, to identify the promotional problems besetting the managers of the fast-food chain stores, and to propose a strategic solution to solve the problems besetting the managers.

III. METHODOLOGY

To attain the objectives of this study, the researchers used a descriptive method of research in an attempt to analyze and interpret the company's and customers' profile of the six (6) fast-food chain stores in NE Pacific Mall, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija. Descriptive research can be explained as a statement of affairs as they are at present with the researchers having no control over the variables. Moreover, according to Ethridge (2014), descriptive studies may be characterized as simply the attempt to determine, describe or identify what is. Descriptive research in this study was utilized to describe the profile of the company, and the customers. The company's profile in terms of forms of organization, ownership, and number of personnel, and customer's profile in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, family net income and status of 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.

The respondents of the study were the six (6) managers of all the existing fast-food chain stores in NE Pacific Mall, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija. For this research study, 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 researchers utilized a researcher-made questionnaire to collect the necessary data. The instrument is a structured questionnaire and is composed of close ended-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. Structured questionnaire is a document that consists of a set of standardized questions with a fixed scheme, which specifies the exact wording and order of the questions, for gathering information from respondents (Marsden and Wright, 2010). 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 below:

Ranges	Rate	Promotional Practices Promotional Problems besetting the Fast-food Chain as perceived by Managers	Promotional Practices of the Fast- food Chain as perceived by the Customers
4.20-5.00	5	Strongly Agree	Extremely Attractive
3.40-4.19	4	Agree	Attractive
2.60-3.39	3	Neutral	Neutral
1.80-2.59	2	Disagree	Unattractive
1.00-1.79	1	Strong Disagree	Extremely Unattractive

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.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part provides the presentation of data relevant to the problems stated above. Corresponding analysis and interpretation regarding some presented data were discussed using some statistical tools which is also mentioned above.

Table 1. Profile of the Company

Form of Organization	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Single Proprietorship	0	0.00	2.5
Partnership	0	0.00	2.5
Corporation	6	100.00	1.0
Total	6	100.00	
Ownership	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Filipino owned	2	33.33	2.0
Foreign owned (Franchised)	1	16.67	3.0
Filipino and foreign owned	3	50.00	1.0
Total	100	100.00	

The table above shown the profile of the company. It can be seen from the table above that all the fast-food chains were registered under corporation to which some were franchised. According to Schooley (2020), a corporation is an organization recognized by the state as a separate legal body from its members, also known as shareholders. A corporation can be owned by individuals and/or other entities, and ownership is easily transferable via the buying and selling of stock. Since a corporation is its own legal entity, it can enter litigation on its own, protecting its owners from personal liability in the event of legal action.

It can also be observed from the table above that 50.00% of the respondent-fast-food chains were Filipino and foreign owned; 33.33% of them were Filipino owned; and only 16.67% 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. As a matter of fact, a couple of international food chains announced their plans to expand to the country—and Filipinos are happily anticipating the opening of these food brands (Villaluz, 2018).

Table 2. Number of Personnel in the Branch

Fast-food Chain	Number of Personnel
A	40
B	45
C	18
D	30
E	37
F	40

The number of personnel of the different fast-food chains existing in NE Pacific Mall, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija can be observed from the table above. It can be noted that the second fast-food chain has the highest number of personnel and this can be correlated to the demand in the store. It only means that this store has the highest demand that’s why they have to maintain massive number of personnel to cater that demand. According to Escalona (2018), this homegrown fast-food chain has managed to create a place of comfort for Filipinos, so its food has become closely associated with milestones and good times with family and friends. This is also why the company is rapidly expanding in countries abroad where many Filipinos work and live — because it is able to give Filipinos the familiarity of home they so miss.

Table 3. Profile of the Customers

Name of the Fast-food Chain	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
A	17	17.00	3.0
B	29	29.00	1.0
C	18	18.00	2.0
D	12	12.00	5.0
E	11	11.00	6.0
F	13	13.00	4.0
Total	100	100.00	
Sex	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Male	39	39.00	2.0
Female	61	61.00	1.0
Total	100	100.00	
Civil Status	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Single	67	67.00	1.0
Married	31	31.00	2.0
Separated	1	1.00	3.5
Widowed	1	1.00	3.5
Total	100	100.00	
Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Elementary Undergraduate	0	0.00	6.5
Elementary Graduate	3	3.00	5.0
High School Undergraduate	15	15.00	4.0
High School Graduate	21	21.00	3.0
College Undergraduate	34	34.00	1.0
College Graduate	27	27.00	2.0
Unemployed	0	0.00	6.5
Total	100	100.00	
Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Student	41	41.00	1.0
Casual	22	22.00	2.0
Contractual	8	8.00	6.0
Temporary	14	14.00	3.0
Permanent	5	5.00	5.0
Own a business	10	10.00	4.0
Total	365	100.00	

The table above revealed the profile of the customers of the fast-food chains. It can be noticed that fast-food B has the highest number of customers with 29.00%. Some of the customers when asked why they love eating at this fast-food chain mentioned that the fried chicken captures the Philippine palate perfectly: extremely salty with a slight hint of sweet and sour, and the spicy version provides a palpable kick. It's also worth noting that they serve plenty of dishes with a side of rice, as well as more common fast-food fare like burgers and hot dogs (De Leon, 2016). This fast-food is more than just a Filipino restaurant. It's a symbol of the Philippines itself—delightfully cheesy but totally earnest in its beliefs.

It can also be gleaned from the table above that 61.00% of the customers of fast-food chain stores in NE Pacific Mall, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija were female due to the fact that based on population, female is more in number than male. According to Total Food Service (2020), female consumers increasingly prefer fast-food as much as males do. In fact, female favorability of fast-food outgrew fast casual, casual dining, café and bistro, and drinks and specialties over the same period.

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 fast-food chain stores to have their breakfast, lunch, dinner or snacks at fast-food chains instead of going to the market and buy food to prepare. According to Martell (2014), 70% of surveyed married couples actually like to cook together, and those couples who enjoy cooking together are significantly more satisfied in all areas of their lives than couples who don't cook together. For this reason, more single individuals prefer to eat at the fast-food chain stores.

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 NE Pacific Mall, Cabanatuan 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. Good location, accessibility also creates the desire to visit and shop at shopping centers (Pitt and Musa, 2018). The role of the shopping center as a business place is to provide a better place for retailers in terms of attractiveness of the location for its customers, its catchments of population, accessibility, parking facilities and the quality of the shopping environment as a whole (The National Retail Planning Forum, 2000).

Likewise, it can be noticed that 41.00% of the respondent-customers were students due to the reason that Cabanatuan City is a first class component city in the province of Nueva Ecija, Philippines. It is the most populous city in Nueva Ecija and 5th populous in Central Luzon. The city is a major economic, educational, medical, entertainment, shopping, and transportation center in Nueva Ecija and nearby provinces in the region such as Aurora and Bulacan (Edarabia, 2020). As a result, a lot of college students can access the different fast-food chains located inside the abovementioned mall.

Table 4. Promotional Practices of Fast-food Chain Stores according to 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
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 above displayed 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 of the fast-food chain is to get celebrity endorsers or well-known personalities to create strong brand equity and to build market loyal customers. Several studies have indicated that celebrity endorsers can make a positive effect on consumers' buying behavior (Till and Busler, 1998) in which these public figures can serve as a market influencer to maneuver the perceived value of a certain product or brand in the market.

The use of celebrities in promotions is traced back to the nineteenth century and these general promotional practices have revealed a large quantity of intellectual as well as realistic considerations (Randhawa and Khan, 2014). Celebrity endorsement has become a global multi-million-dollar industry. Such celebrities or public figures have an immense impact on the fast-food chains' customer purchasing conduct because these individuals are clout enough to use their appeal to influence the target market and the target audience.

Similarly, the managers strongly agreed that the fast-food chain uses TV Programs as a form of their advertisement. Advertisement is one of the effective tools of integrated brand promotion (IBP) to emotionally and psychologically motivate consumers to buy either goods or services. It is considered to have a strong linkage with entertainment and the proliferation of media has blurred the distinguishing lines between advertisements and entertainment. Advertisement is based on behavioral psychology insights that trigger a consumer to purchase a product not because he needs it for a rational reason, but because he wants it for an emotional reason. Often this approach is more impactful and effective than a knowledge-based awareness-raising campaign (Newson, et al.) Advertisements featuring products like snacks, toys, cookies, confectionaries, and fast-food are specifically targeted at children of all ages, to motivate them to try new brands and buy more.

One of the new techniques of marketing in the 20th century has been the introduction and diffusion of television. Television is the most preferred medium of communication for fast-food retailers because of the effect on viewers. This medium of the advertisement has allowed major food companies like KFC and MC Donald to plant influential images and themes within children's collective consciousness (UK 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, hence this marketing tactic can decrease the margin of profit but can create a greater volume in terms of transaction because of the potential impact of the strategy in the market. Fast-food brands seem to strike the balance between letting customers feel like they're getting a deal while still allowing them to 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 product portfolio and category. Now they're being sold as a bundle, and when that happens it's considered a combo meal (White, 2016). 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 to their menu as one of their promotional practices. The fast-food industry is one of the industries that relies on its food promotion to increase sales. It uses many strategies for this purpose, including sales discounts, coupons, new goods, and various offers to attract its customers. According to Maze (2019), for fast-food chains, pricing and discounts are a balancing act. Quick-service concepts do need some form of low-priced offers to get customers in the door. It is a fact of life for a sector that has a high percentage of younger and lower-income consumers.

By the same token, the managers strongly agreed that the fast-food chain stores utilize the television and internet channels as a 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 5. 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 to implement them successfully (UK 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. According to Suttle (2020), combining each food with a side dish and small drink to create a basic combo meal attracts different consumers' tastes. Children are also an important market targeted by fast-food chain stores 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 to attract new customers and to retain the existing ones (UK Essays, 2018). The customers were attracted to combo and value meals because they feel like they are getting savings through it. Sharpe (2010) found out that consumers place a perceived value on combo meals, even if it costs the same as choosing items a la carte.

Moreover, increasing the customer share of wallet is the primary objective of all marketing propagandas given on all media dynamics through constant persuasion and reiteration of the unique selling proposition on all media of communication to create a strong brand positioning or branding. More so, the perceived value of the customer must always be the highlight of advertising and promotional script for the reason that the effectiveness of promotional endeavors is only measurable in terms of sales and market share.

Table 6. 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 above revealed the promotional problems of fast-food chain stores as perceived by the managers. Managers can be assumed to conclude that workers assigned to the direct marketing program and activities lack the requisite training and expertise as one of the minor problems they faced when enforcing their promotional practices. Since poor direct selling efforts do not increase the sales of certain items, fast-food chain stores have faced direct selling issues. Furthermore, there is a lack of a continuous program to effectively launch direct selling strategies which are believed to be a not so effective strategy in the fast-food chains.

Perhaps, the direct selling strategy is just only a part of the entire Integrated Brand Promotion which is composed of different dimensions in terms of marketing, advertising, and, sales and promotion. Creating good promotional tactics or plans required exceptional skills in identifying the current marketing practices of the direct and indirect competitors by implementing successive courses of competitors' analysis and marketing intelligence to win the market competition. Winning the market simply means capturing the awareness of the target audience through unique captivation, in other words, the prevailing marketing practices of the market cannot be duplicated nor reiterated such as direct selling.

By its technical definition, direct selling means selling with a personal connection, in which, this is the practice of the entire market the reason why the strategy cannot stand out nor capable to catch the attention. The management must also find out how the target market perceives their brand in the marketplace so they can assess the changing market position of competitive brands (Mina, 2020).

Table 7. Proposed Strategic Solution to Solve the Problems

Constraints/Problems	Intervening Strategy	Responsible Unit/Person
Staff assigned to direct selling program and activities lack necessary training and skills	Launch an effective training and seminars in promotion and allot budget to implement developmental programs for sales staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Human Resource Department ✓ Immediate Supervisor
There is a lack of continuous program to effectively launch direct selling strategies	Prepare report forms from sales activities and establish a research group department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Research and Development Department with full intervention and collaboration of the Marketing Department
The company lacks proper communication with the customers in promoting new products	Periodic survey on socio-cultural activities affecting the industry, involvement to local and international events related to the industry to have the opportunity to communicate with other food chain store	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The PR personnel or department ✓ Marketing Department ✓ Market Researcher
Weak direct selling efforts does not improve the sales of many products	Initiate an effective sales meeting and establish a research group department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Research and Development Department ✓ The immediate Supervisor of the employee involved
Direct selling is not consistent with other promotional activities of the company	Launch an effective training and seminars focusing in brand and product promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Resource Speaker/program ✓ The Human Resource Department ✓ The Mall Manager (Management) ✓ The Marketing Department

1. Launch an effective training and seminars in promotion and allot budget to implement developmental programs for sales staff

Plans are written roadmaps to achieve the goals and objectives of a certain organization, however, these plans are useless without proper implementation due to misguided sales staff and low budget allocation for proper implementation. Furthermore, any concept of promotion entails a cost due to technical requirements or resources needed for the program implementation and the human resources for proper program application.

2. Prepare report forms from sales activities and establish a research group department

The gurus of the Total Quality Management engraved in most successful Japanese businesses and industries—the real essence of business evaluation is to find the technical issue and to identify the strategic relevance of the tactics based on the current market situation especially for fast-food chains related businesses because these can be considered as people's business, meaning to say that these industries exist because of the consumers' need—a consumer centered business. For this instance, these require a series of report evaluation for the research and development team (R and D) to unveil the ever-changing consumers' behavior.

3. Periodic survey on socio-cultural activities affecting the industry, involvement to local and international events related to the industry to have the opportunity to communicate with other fast-food chain store

Product and concept innovation are continuous process for growth and development, moreover, building synergy, collaboration and cooperation to other related industries in both local and international will reinforce the strategic formulation of the industry to grow for the reason that the industry per se is part of the macro-environment. Defining and redefining the current market situation by exacting information for other related industries will help the micro-fast-food chain industry in NE Pacific Mall, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija to benchmark with internal local industry practices.

4. Initiate an effective sales meeting and establish a research group department

The core function of the research department is to identify the real cause of the problem and to enhance the current marketing practices by conducting causal researches. However, the output of the research department is not sufficient enough to withstand without proper information dissemination though formal sales meeting with an agenda of inculcating the objectives of the firm together with the discussion plans and courses of action. According to Mina (2020), in evaluating the company's place in the market, this strategic technique is very useful, thereby providing the owner the foundation for working for the best game plan to have its competitive advantage over its rivals.

5. Launch an effective training and seminars focusing in brand and product promotion

All marketing tools and promotional mixes are good, however, it requires an excellent application and implementation with proper consideration in time—the concept of the right strategy at the right time. This is only attainable provided that the involved fast-food institutions will build a network to somehow build a concept of market monopolization in a certain area—your practices are our practices. Increasing brand awareness of the products and services being offered in their target market must be given much attention as well (Mina and Campos, 2018). This is only attainable provided that the involved institution will agree to do so by conducting rigid seminars and collaborative program development.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The fact that selected fast-food chain stores used the same sort of advertisements to advertise their products is among the prominent results of this study. It was also learned by the researchers that direct selling, sales promotion, advertising, and public relations or publicity were some of their existing promotional practices. It can also be concluded that the Television Program and endorsement by well-known personalities are still the most attractive promotional practices, and, broadcast media specifically television is the most commonly used media of communication used by the fast-food chain stores.

Based on the study results, it is recommended that fast-food chain stores should try different advertising tactics to draw the interest of more consumers. Also, the fast-food chain stores should serve the same kind of items to draw more loyal customers, but distinguishably different from each other and can put more advertising across the different media of communication. Into the bargain, the researchers also recommend that they should continue to innovate their product lines by adding certain characteristics that will attract the middle-income community as their clients, especially students. By the same token, to solve problems besetting the managers related to promotional practices, it is suggested that these fast-food chain stores should initiate effective sales meetings and launch incentive programs for their sales people. In this regard, the managers should conduct periodic inventory control and initiate periodic audits to identify which combo meals are the most marketable. Lastly, the researchers suggest following the proposed strategic solutions to solve the problems besetting the stores.

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