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A STUDY ON IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES BY BRANDED FAST FOOD INDUSTRY ON CONSUMERS

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ABSTRACT

Food diversity in India is an implicit characteristic of India's diversified culture consisting of different regions and states within. Traditionally, Indians like to have home-cooked meals – a concept supported religiously as well as individually. However, with times due to increasing awareness and influence of western culture, there is a slight shift in food consumption pattern among urban Indian families. The economic reforms brought in innumerable MNC brands in the fast food sector to the Indian market. Today, fast food industry is getting adapted to Indian food requirements and is growing in India. It is gaining acceptance primarily from Indian youth and younger generations and is becoming part of life. This paper reports an empirical test of the claim that sales promotion strategies like high advertisement, combo offers, low priced meals and Indianised menu adopted by these MNC's has changed drastically every aspect of FMCG segment particularly in the food products in special reference to Lucknow.

INTRODUCTION

A **fast food restaurant**, also known as a **quick service restaurant (QSR)** within the industry itself, is a specific type of restaurant characterized both by its fast food cuisine and by minimal table service. Food served in fast food restaurants typically caters to a "meat-sweet diet" and is offered from a limited menu; is cooked in bulk in advance and kept hot; is finished and packaged to order; and is usually available ready to take away, though seating may be provided. Fast food restaurants are usually part of a restaurant chain or franchise operation, which provides standardized ingredients and/or partially prepared foods and supplies to each restaurant through controlled supply channels.

The Modern fast food industry originated in the United States in the 1920s, and developed rapidly and became epidemic all over the world from 1950s. Fast food is one of the world's fastest growing food types. Fast foods are quick, reasonably priced, and readily available alternatives to home cooked food. Fast food is a very fast growing industry in world as well as in India especially in urban areas (small and large cities). The fast food, or QSR, format took off in India about 20 years ago at the backdrop of modernization, globalization and privatization, with the arrival of multinational players such as McDonalds, KFC, Domino's and Pizza Hut. These players initially had a tough time understanding the Indian consumer, as their home-market models did not work well in India. Over the last decade, though, many of these players have got their act together through a better understanding of the Indian market in the form of Indianised menus, low priced meals, sit-and-eat formats and positioning their outlets as destinations for family outings.

FAST FOOD OUTLETS IN INDIA

India is blessed with one of the fastest growing fast food markets in the world. The Indian fast food market is growing at an annual growth rate of 30-35%. Almost all big fast food brands of the world have succeeded in making their presence felt in the country and most of them showing an appreciable growth. The Indian fast food market has been witnessing rapid growth on the back of positive developments and presence of massive investments. Currently, market growth is largely fuelled by the rising young population, working women, hectic schedules, and increasing disposable income of the middle-class households. Some of the unique properties of fast food like quick served, cost advantage, etc are making it highly popular among the masses. Thus, India offers enormous opportunities for both domestic as well as international players. Most of the popular fast food chains have chalked out massive plans for expanding their business and presence throughout the country. Moreover, foreign fast food chains are aggressively expanding their presence in the country.

MC DONALD'S CORPORATION

McDonald's Corporation is the world's largest chain of hamburger fast food restaurants, serving around 68 million customers daily in 119 countries headquartered in the United States. The company began in 1940 as a barbecue restaurant operated by Richard and Maurice McDonald; in 1948 they reorganized their business as a hamburger stand using production line principles. Businessman Ray Kroc joined the company as a franchise agent in 1955. He subsequently purchased the chain from the McDonald brothers and oversaw its worldwide growth. McDonald's made its India debut in 1996 with one outlet in Delhi and at present, it has 211 restaurants of which 105 are in North & East India and 106 in West & South India. Apart from metros, McDonald's is fast reaching rural areas as well, today it operates in 213 outlets, and looking to add up another 250 outlets by 2022.

KFC (KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN)

KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) is a fast food restaurant chain headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky, United States, which specializes in fried chicken. An "American icon", it is the world's second largest restaurant chain overall (as measured by sales) after McDonald's, with over 18,000 outlets in 120 countries and territories as of December 2012. The company is a subsidiary of Yum! Brands, a restaurant company which also owns Pizza Hut and Taco Bell.

KFC was founded by Harland Sanders, who began selling fried chicken from his roadside restaurant in Corbin, Kentucky during the Great Depression. KFC returned to India in 1999, with a new Bangalore outlet. This was the sole KFC in India until 2004, when the chain began to expand. As of now, there are more than 500 KFCs in the Indian market.

DOMINO'S PIZZA

Domino's Pizza is an American restaurant chain and international franchise. Pizza delivery corporation headquartered at the Domino Farms Office Park campus in Ann Arbor Township, Michigan, United States, near Ann Arbor, Michigan. Founded in 1960, Domino's is the second-largest Pizza chain in the United States and the largest worldwide, with more than 10,000 corporate and franchised stores in 70 countries. Domino's Pizza was sold to Bain Capital in 1998 and went public in 2004. Domino's Pizza is present in over 80 countries and the Indian operations are the largest outside of the US. It has more than 1100 outlets in India.

PIZAA HUT

Pizza Hut entered India in June 1996 with its first outlet in Bangalore. Initially, the company operated company-owned outlets and then moved on the franchisee owned restaurants. Currently they have 360 restaurants across 100 cities, and planning to have 700 outlets by 2022. They consider India as the most important market of fast food.

PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY FAST FOOD OUTLETS IN INDIA

Major fast food retailers have already started applying various marketing strategies in popularizing their brands. Furthermore, they are aiming to provide affordable and customized products to suit the needs of people that would ultimately provide necessary boost to the Indian fast food industry.

Various tools of sales promotion adopted by fast food outlets are:

Value Meal Or Combo Offers -A value meal or combo offers is a group of menu items offered together at a lower price than they would cost individually. They are common at fast food restaurants. Value meals are a common merchandising tactic to facilitate bundling, up-selling, and price discrimination.

Price Off-A straight discount off the list price on each product purchased during a stated time period.

High Advertisement- Children and adolescents are now the target of intense and specialized food marketing and advertising efforts. Fast food marketers are interested in youth as consumers because of their spending power, their purchasing influence, and as future consumers. Multiple techniques are used to reach youth; these marketing channels include television advertisement, internet, and brand logos.

Internationalisation- Internationalisation involves customising marketing strategies for different regions of the world according to cultural, regional and national differences to serve specific target markets. Successful internationalization calls for the communication of these marketing strategies amidst environments constrained with varied cultural and competitive influences.

Locational Advantage- Fast food chains have opened their outlets on a variety of locations including highways, malls, airports and metro stations.

- Pizza Hut introduced iPan Pizzas priced at Rs.29, making them affordable and accessible to a larger clientele. Then there are competitively priced combo meals. Pizza Hut offers the Weekday special three-course meals that start from Rs.99. Pizza Hut is known to introduce Indianised version of pizzas to attract the local customer base. They launched products like Karahi Paneer, Teekha Paneer and Karahi Chicken long time ago and it was a complete success.
- Fast food players such as Pizza Hut and McDonald's focused on introducing new food items, such as Veg Wraps to their menus. Keeping in view the strong liking of north Indians towards spicy stuff, McDonald introduce in their menu dishes like McAloo Tikki Burger, Pizza McPuff, McVeggie. They also continued to offer value for money combo deals which were promoted by persuasive advertisements.
- Domino's introduced the Pizza Mania concept in 2008, with pizzas priced at Rs.35 that became an instant hit. Now available for Rs.44, Pizza Mania marked the brand's first attempt at catering to wallet-watchers.
- KFC's Streetwise range starts at Rs.25. KFC bought a range of new vegetarian dishes. Recently it brought "Flaming Crunch Chicken" by using spiced chili ' BhutJolokia' of Assam.
- McDonald is planning to start a breakfast revolution with a branded menu that range from masala dosa burger with molaga podi sauce and anda burji. Even the mayonnaise that McDonald serves in India is eggless.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fast food industry is one of the world's fastest growing sectors in food industry. Over a period of time, with a growth in the number of nuclear families, economic growth and increasing per capita income as well as globalization, fast food culture gained prominence in India. Many research works have been conducted on different aspects of fast food industry.

In study "Modelling repurchase frequency and customer satisfaction for fast food outlets" (Law, Hui, Zhao, 2004) tried to build the relationship between customer satisfactions and repurchase frequency with waiting time and other service quality factors in fast food outlets. The result indicate waiting time and other service quality factors such as staff attitude, environment, seat availability and food quality significantly influence the customers' satisfaction and their return frequency.

The authors (Gilbert, Veloutsou, Goode, Moutinho, 2004) in their study provides a cross-cultural comparison of service satisfaction of fast food establishments in four English-speaking countries. It is based on data collected from customers of five globally-franchised fast-food chains, using a previously developed service satisfaction instrument. The study reveals two empirically derived, cross-cultural fast-food customer satisfaction dimensions: satisfaction with the personal service and satisfaction with the service setting.

"A study on exploring the relationship between customer satisfactions in the fast food industry: with relationship inertia as mediator"(Cheng,Chiu,Hu,Chang 2011) applied structural equation modelling(SEM) to verify the different path relations of the study model. The findings revealed that in the relationship of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, customer relationship inertia plays a key

mediator. Perceived price has negative impact on customer satisfaction and relationship inertia. Convenience will enhance customer satisfaction. Consumption frequency will have positive impact on customer relationship inertia.

Anand (2011) explored the demographic and psychographic factors that have an impact on youth's food choice for fast food in Delhi, India. The key factors that influenced the consumer's choice were found out to be passion for eating out, ambience, socialize, taste of fast food, convenience because of dual-income families in urban India. The findings also gave importance to consumer's health as a key factor for fast food industry to survive for long years to come.

“Why Do Young People Prefer Fast Food Restaurants? An Exploratory Study” is an in-depth study that tried to find the reasons for the choice of young people to choose fast food restaurant, their criteria for choosing such place and reason for their satisfaction with fast food products. In the study, the authors (Untaru and Ispas, 2013) identified three main reasons for the young people to choose were: the taste of the products, their freshness and consistency and the physical environment. Then the conclusion was drawn that fast food restaurants “succeed in adapting to young people's needs and expectations”. Because fast food restaurants offer cheap products, advantageous locations, welcoming atmosphere- so young people enjoy the time spent there to socialize. All these fit well young people's characters, which are usually known as low income, lack of time, convenience and need for socialize

An in depth study was conducted in Nagpur city, India. The authors (Kashyap, Kashyap, Sarada, 2013) tried to find the reason for growth of quick service restaurant even during economic slowdown. They analysed the impact of marketing practices adopted by Quick Service Restaurants and their influence on consumer buying habits. The findings revealed that the consumers are fascinated by the western culture and are attracted by their offerings. Even age and income are the major factors that influence the consumer's adoption of fast foods.

“Consumer Preference and Spending Pattern in Indian Fast Food industry”(Prabhavathi, Kishore 2014) conducted the study that revealed that young consumer lifestyle trend consists of taste, convenience and seeking alternate food items which formed the major reasons for consuming fast food. Analysis on reasons behind eating fast food by the sample respondents revealed that taste (56 per cent) is major reason to consume fast food followed by convenience (15 per cent) and alternate to home food (11 per cent). They also expressed that relaxation and wider variety of menu were the other reasons to consume fast food.

As to family influence that affects people's fast food consumption, a study named “the Influence of Adult Family Members on Children's Fast Food Consumption: A Health Belief” also noted that many parents could not manage their children or their inability to say no to their children when they pestered them to go to fast food restaurant. The reason for children attraction is the fun factor with the kid-friendly packaging, children friendly environment. This study also pointed out that children are fast food companies favourite target, because they “are less attached to traditional fare and develop their dietary preferences at an early age”, providing fast food companies with opportunities to target them. Besides these two reasons,

fast food advertising was also mentioned as a factor that attracts people's fast food consumption. This study agreed with the opinion that fast food advertisers had "unfettered access to make profits at the expense of children's health" (Lee & Lien, 2015, p.185).

"The interrelationships among service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty: Examination of fast food industry"(Lee, Hung 2016) conducted research to develop a conceptual model for improving service quality and enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty by analysing customer's perspectives. The study was conducted in Taiwan and the results indicate that service quality positively influences customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The findings revealed that the managers should try to improve their service quality to build up long term customer relationship.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This literature review has been able to present the view points of former study achievements in the field of fast food. Based on the material collected, most of the studies are based on fast food health complications and identifies the reasons for people to choose fast food and analyzes people's motivations behind their consumption behaviour. Most of the studies conducted so far fail to review the impact of various promotional strategies adopted by the fast food industry on consumer's consumption behaviour.

The objectives of the study are-

- To get an understanding about the current marketing strategies followed by the globalised fast food brands in India.
- To find the impact of promotional strategy adopted by fast food outlets on consumers.

This study is focussed on Lucknow. The mushroom growth of food joints provides ample scope to study the changes in the customer behaviour. Hence it was considered practical to select at random the outlets in Lucknow. In order to analyse the impact of current sales promotion strategy of fast food industry, the focus was narrowed down to the globalised four big brands for doing research:

- McDonald's;
- Domino's;
- Pizza Hut;
- Kentucky Fried Chicken;

Semi structured interviews of four managers were undertaken to get an understanding of the current marketing strategy followed by the fast food restaurants and to find out the presumption of the organisation about the consumer behaviour.

In order to get an understanding about customer's perception and preference, the questionnaire was used to record the responses of the customer visiting fast food outlets. An in-depth analysis of the consumer behavior patterns has been done in Lucknow city by conducting comprehensive primary research and market surveys. For our survey, we targeted the people in the age group of 30 -60 years, which includes professionals, businessmen, and service persons. The non probability sampling techniques - 'Judgment sampling and convenience sampling' are used. When using this survey, one criterion needs to be met in defining the qualified

respondents: Respondents has the habit of eating fast food regularly or occasionally.

The data was collected using a structured questionnaire. Data were collected from the targeted customer while they were in malls or in fast food outlets. Questionnaires were handed over to them with a request for filling at the spot. Due care has been taken to reduce possible biasness in selecting the customers for the purpose of data collection. In such cases many incomplete questionnaires were found by the author. Such questionnaires were not considered worthy for analyses and were rejected.

A survey questionnaire was circulated to 250 customers visiting Shopping Malls, out of which only 214 respondents data were found to be valid. Data collection is carried out after careful consideration of the research ethics and regulations. It is expected to come up with representative results which will help the researcher to make the recommendations to the industry as a whole.

The collected data have been analyzed using different statistical methods. The statistical techniques used include descriptive analysis, ANOVA and Regression Analysis. SPSS was used to conduct these analyses.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE

The demographic characteristics of the sample taken for the study have been summarized in Table1,Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 1: Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	123	57.5	57.5	57.5
Female	91	42.5	42.5	100.0
Total	214	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Age

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
30-40	91	42.5	42.5	42.5
40	83	38.8	38.8	81.3
Above	40	18.7	18.7	100.0
Total	214	100	100	

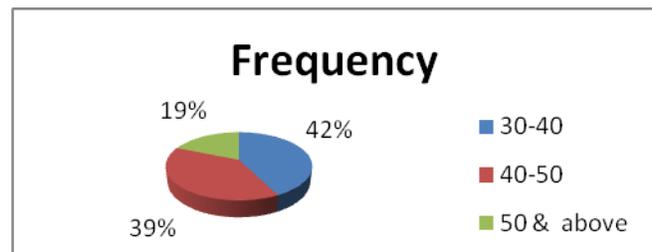


Figure 1

Table 3: Income

Income per month	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Below	54	25.2	25.2	25.2
20,000-	81	37.9	37.9	63.1
40,000-	38	17.8	17.8	80.8
Above	41	19.2	19.2	100.0
Total	214	100	100	

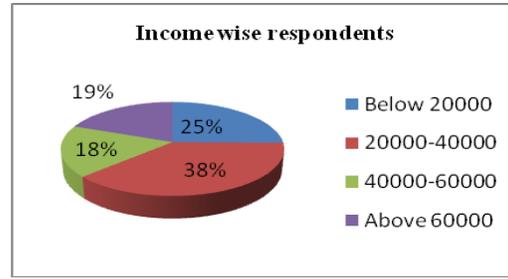


Figure 2

The total customer samples consist of 57.5% male and 42.5% female. 42.5% belong to the age group of 17-30 years, 38.8% are in the age group of 30-40 years and 18.7% are above 40 years of age. The data consist of 25.2% have income per month below Rs 20,000, 37.9% are in 20,000-40,000, 17.8% have income 40,000-60,000 and 19.1% are above 60,000.

Table 4: Preference for fast food outlets

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Mc	90	42.05	42.05	42.05
Pizza Hut	39	18.22	18.22	60.27
Domino	60	28.03	28.03	88.3
KFC	25	11.68	11.68	100.0
	214	100.0	100.0	

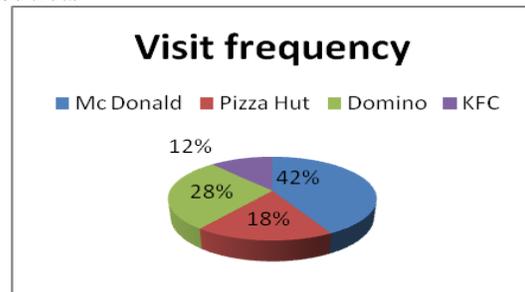


Figure 3

The responses of the customer showed that the most preferred fast food outlet is Mc Donald's with 49.1% giving preference, followed by Domino's and then Pizza Hut and KFC.

Table 5: Attributes of choosing fast food restaurant

	KFC	Mc Donalds	Domino's	Pizza Hut
Preference for taste	3.74	4.25	3.03	3.03
Preference for price	2.03	4.28	3.08	3.00
Preference for quality of ingredients	4.15	4.55	3.14	3.01
Preference for variety of menu	3.4	4.13	3.02	4.64
Preference for service quality	4.27	3.9	3.5	3.01
Mean	3.518	4.262	3.154	3.338

The consumer preference for Mc Donald is relatively better than other fast food outlets. The preference of fast food outlets is evaluated on the basis of preference of taste, price and variety of menu, quality of ingredients and service quality. The mean value (4.262) of consumer preference of Mc Donald is relatively higher than KFC, Pizza Hut and Domino.

Table 6: Combo offer/low price meal awareness

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Advertisement in Print	39	18.2	18.2	18.2
Outlet Brouchure	35	16.4	16.4	34.6
Advertisement in	74	34.6	34.6	69.2

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Advertisement in Print	39	18.2	18.2	18.2
Outlet Brouchure	35	16.4	16.4	34.6
Word mouth	66	30.8	30.8	100.0
	214	100.0	100.0	

The respondent data shows that maximum awareness about offers they get is through electronic media, then through word of mouth, and lastly through advertisement in print media and brochures.

Table 7: Reason for choosing combo offers or low price meal

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Economical	200	93.5	93.5	93.5
Variety of food	14	6.5	6.5	100.0
Total	214	100.0	100.0	

Reason for choosing combo offers or low price meal is that they are economical with 93.5% suggesting the same.

Table 8: Relationship between frequency of Visiting fast food outlets Age & Combo Offers

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Visit frequency	Between Groups	18.904	3	6.301	12.343	.000
	Within Groups	107.208	210	.511		
	Total	126.112	213			
Age	Between Groups	.099	3	.033	.058	.981
	Within Groups	118.747	210	.565		
	Total	118.846	213			

The Combo offers influences the frequency of visiting fast food outlets. In order to test the statistical significance of the relationship between frequency of visiting fast food outlets and combo offers and to test the statistical significance of the relationship between frequency of visiting fast food outlets and age, One Way ANOVA Analysis was conducted. It is found from above table that the relationship between combo offers and visiting frequency is significant while the relationship between age and visiting frequency is statistically not significant.

Table 9: Relationship between frequency of Visiting fast food Outlets and Advertisement Impact

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.577	1	2.577	4.423	.037
Within Groups	123.535	212	.583		
Total	126.112	213			

The advertisement of fast food outlets influences the frequency of visiting the outlets by the respondents. In order to test the statistical significance of the relationship between frequency of visiting fast food outlets and advertisement impact, One Way ANOVA Analysis was conducted. It is found from above table

that the relationship between the advertisement and visiting frequency is statistically significant.

Table 10: Relationship between frequency of Visiting fast food Outlets and frequency of low price meal

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.304	2	5.152	9.387	.000
Within Groups	115.808	211	.549		
Total	126.112	213			

The low price meal offer by fast food outlets is having impact on visiting frequency. In order to test the statistical significance of the relationship between low price meals and frequency of visiting fast food outlets One Way ANOVA Analysis was conducted. It is found from above table that the relationship between the Low price meals offers and visiting frequency is statistically significant.

Table 11: Relationship between income of respondents and frequency of taking low price meal

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.797	2	.398	.358	.700
Within Groups	234.848	211	1.113		
Total	235.645	213			

The income of respondents visiting fast food outlets is having no influences on the frequency of visiting the outlets. In order to test the statistical significance of the relationship between frequency of visiting fast food outlets and income of the respondents, One Way ANOVA Analysis was conducted. It is found from above table that the relationship between the income and visiting frequency is statistically insignificant.

CONCLUSION

The economic progress has recast the social fabric of traditional family into growing nuclear family where both spouses go for work necessitating a change in their life style and depending more on bought food and fast food. Hence they spend a greater percentage of their income on fast food by such existential necessity. Anticipating increase in the family purchasing power, increasing spending on food is easily overlooked.

From the analysis the researcher implies that the consumers visiting the fast food joints belong to all categories of income group. Thus it confirms from the analysis that the income is not a factor influencing the level of satisfaction. The study reveals that age is not a factor influencing the consumer for moving towards the branded fast food joints.

The fast food brand, which once fed consumers belonging almost exclusively to the high-income groups, has seen the profile of its consumers change. The average age of the walk-in consumer has also changed. What used to average at 25-plus has

expanded to include people from 40 and above years of age. Further during the week ends they also lead their children to such joints. Study clearly shows that consumers do not visit these outlets primarily for food but for fun, change and social reasons.

Consumer acceptance of food served by fast food outlets is critically important for the future growth of fast food outlets in any economy. The move to 'localise' the fast food tastes has paid rich dividends and increased brand loyal customer base for the companies. Additionally, fast food's good satiety value and rich taste available at affordable prices continued to attract consumers.

Consumer gave first preference to McDonald among all the fast food outlets. The reason for this is its indianised menu and low price offers. The brand has been growing from strength to strength on the back of its customer friendly pricing and an Indian menu.

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