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Marketing Stimulation: Students' Impulsive buying Behavior of Fast Food on Social Networks

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Abstract

The student target group is often a group of potential customers of the fast-food market on social networks. However, after a long period of facing the COVID-19 epidemic, spending money has decreased significantly. This may influence impulsive fast-food behavior on social media, where there is a need to be more thoughtful about spending and prioritize essential needs. Marketing stimuli influence consumers' purchasing decisions by creating appeal and stimulating demand and the desire to purchase. The first element, marketing incentives, involves the product, price, distribution, and promotion mix elements. The research focuses on evaluating and analyzing marketing stimuli such as product, price, distribution, and promotion mix that fast

food restaurants often use to attract customers. This study was conducted with the aim of identifying, analyzing, and measuring marketing stimulation for students' impulsive buying behavior of fast food on social networks by using qualitative and quantitative research methods. Quantitative research methods were carried out with SPSS software, including Cronbach's alpha analysis. On the basis of an overview of previous studies and after interviewing experts, the study identified and analyzed five scales (component attributes) of marketing stimulation. Based on the research results, we propose some recommendations for fast food firms to improve the quality of fast food for students.

Keywords: Marketing Stimulation, Fast Food, Business Administration, Economics

JEL Codes: M31, M10, M20

1. Introduction

The research topic of consumer behavior is one of the key topics, contributing significantly to the development of the business activities of enterprises. Before building a strategy, firms need to learn and research carefully about this topic to find a solution and propose an effective strategy.

Stimuli enter the consumer's black box, and from there arise reactions. The stimuli here are marketing stimuli, including strategic activities related to products, services, prices, distribution, marketing mix strategies, promotions, and other factors such as economics, politics, culture, society, science, and technology.

The black box of consciousness represents the consumer's perceptions, thoughts, and judgments that are affected by the above-mentioned stimulating factors. These stimuli reach the consumer's black box of consciousness and then translate into a series of reactions that others can observe, including: Choices about brands, products, suppliers, deciding where to buy, quantity to buy, and time to buy.

The student target group is often a group of potential customers of the fast-food market on social networks. However, after a long period of facing the COVID-19 epidemic, spending money has decreased significantly. This may influence impulsive fast-food behavior on social media, where there is a need to be more thoughtful about spending and prioritize essential needs.

Marketing stimuli influence consumers' purchasing decisions by creating appeal and stimulating demand and the desire to purchase. The first element, marketing incentives, involves the product, price, distribution, and promotion mix elements.

Marketing activities for a firm's products must exploit stimuli from the customer's environment or conditions, thereby designing these stimuli to suit customer needs.

2. Literature Review

Marketing stimuli in the online environment are extremely diverse. However, it can be grouped into four groups according to McCharty (1964) [14] marketing mix perspective: Product, price, distribution, and promotion mix. According to Chen and Huang (2016) [2], marketing stimulation is a tool for businesses to use to attract consumers to buy products. Dholakia (2000) [4] examined the impact of different marketing tools on impulsive buying behavior and showed that: Goods that are creative, unique, different, and bring excitement can stimulate the impulsive buying behavior of consumers; price is more likely to influence impulsive buying behavior than other external factors; low prices, promotions, and discounts can also stimulate customers to buy impulsively (Xu, 2014) [18].

Dawson and Kim (2010) [5] and Mohan *et al.* (2013) [15] also showed that the influence of various marketing stimuli contained in websites affects consumers' impulse buying behavior.

Product-related factors such as product portfolio (Liu *et al.*, 2013; Park *et al.*, 2012) [13, 16] product availability (Liu *et al.*, 2013; Handayani *et al.*, 2018) [13, 9]; product scarcity (Farivar *et al.*, 2017; Leong *et al.*, 2017) [6, 12]; and product distinctiveness and aesthetics (Chen, 2019) [1]. Factors related to price (Ridgway & Kukar-Kinney, 2012; Park *et al.*, 2012) [11, 16] and communication activities (Park *et al.*, 2018). For distribution activities, the social commerce environment is convenient for customers to quickly access different Fanpages to shop without leaving their favorite social network (Wu & Li, 2017) [17]. This makes customers shop for the products they need here more conveniently and happily (Wu & Li, 2017) [17]. Like the advantages of other online shopping platforms, customers can shop anytime, anywhere, have goods delivered to their homes, and interact easily with other customers to exchange information about their experiences with product and service testing (Wu & Li, 2017) [17].

There are two groups of stimuli affecting consumers: Marketing stimuli and environmental stimuli. After consideration, consumers may or may not have a demand-forming response to the product. Marketers need to grasp which stimuli from the environment and which stimuli from firms' marketing activities have a major impact on the formation of consumer demand. Recognizing a need is the first step in the purchasing decision process and initiates the other steps of the process. Marketers need to identify the stimuli that lead to the formation of consumer needs, from which to develop marketing strategies.

Inheriting the results of the above studies and through expert interviews, we built a marketing stimulation scale (see Table 1).

Table 1: Marketing stimulation scale

Description	Code
Marketing stimulation (MAK)	
I was attracted to the production on social networks.	MAK1
I am attracted by product prices on social networks.	MAK2
I'm attracted to promotions on social networks.	MAK3
I am influenced by product introduction techniques on social networks (videos, livestreams, images, and articles).	MAK4
When shopping on social networks, the home delivery policy brings convenience to me.	MAK5

Sources: Chen and Zhang (2015) [3]

3. Research methods and research context

Research context

Recently, the food business in general and fast food in particular has become one of the most rapidly growing businesses. However, besides successful and profitable firms and individuals, there are also many firms and individuals that are at a loss and unsuccessful in this field.

Food businesses in general and fast-food businesses in particular can face challenges such as: (i) Food quality: Food quality is very important to attract customers, requiring businesses and individuals to invest a large amount of money to buy food and equipment to ensure food quality is always guaranteed. (ii) High costs: Initial capital, fluctuating raw material costs, equipment costs, tools, labor costs, etc. (iii) There are many competitors: The food market today is very competitive, with the advent of many restaurants, eateries, convenience stores, and online food ordering applications. Therefore, firms and individuals should have smart business and product marketing strategies to compete in the market.

However, the food business in general and fast food in particular also have many opportunities: (i) The food business has the potential to bring high profits when businesses or individuals have a business strategy and effective product marketing. If the products are unique, of good quality, and reasonably priced, customers will easily be satisfied and return them. (ii) The food business is a field with great development potential. With the development of technology and culinary trends, the food business will further develop in the future. (iii) The current food market has a diversity of business types and a variety of dishes. This allows firms and individuals to choose products that suit the preferences and needs of each customer.

Research Methods

Convenience was the deciding factor in the study sample selection. We administered the poll both in-person and online using Google Docs after creating the questionnaire. After being cleaned, 322 of the gathered questionnaires were left for analysis (see Table 2).

Table 2: Respondents by personal spending

		Description	Frequency	Percent
Control variable	Personal spending	Under 3 million VND	58	18
		From 3 million to 6 million VND	141	43.8
		From 6 million to 10 million VND	107	33.2
		10 million VND or higher	16	5
		Total	322	100

It can be seen that the group of people spending 3–6 million VND accounts for the highest rate of 43.8%, with 141 people. The group of people spending between 6 and 10 million VND accounts for 33.2% of the total, with 107 people. Accounting for 18% is the group of people who spend less than 3 million VND. The group of people with spending of 10 million VND or more has 16 people, accounting for 5%. Thus, it can be seen that in the survey sample, the proportion of students with high spending is low.

4. Results

The results of Table 3 show that the Cronbach alpha for marketing stimulation is 0.724. All observed variables have a Cronbach's alpha coefficient if Item Deleted is smaller than the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the total variable. The total variable correlation coefficients are all greater than 0.3. Thus, this is a good, closely correlated scale to measure marketing stimulation (Hair *et al.*, 2009; Hair *et al.*, 2014; Hoang & Trong, 2008) ^[11, 12, 14].

Table 3: Cronbach' alpha

Code	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Marketing stimulation: Cronbach Alpha = 0.724		
KTM1	0.440	0.696
KTM2	0.410	0.709
KTM3	0.553	0.651
KTM4	0.545	0.657
KTM5	0.495	0.672

5. Discussion and implications

The research focuses on evaluating and analyzing marketing stimuli such as product, price, distribution, and promotion mix that fast food restaurants often use to attract customers.

Regarding marketing stimulation factors related to the impulsive buying behavior of fast food on social networks of students at public universities in the inner city of Hanoi, firms can apply to create a favorable environment and motivation for impulsive buying behavior, such as:

Product factors: Fast food products need to ensure quality, clarity, and public origin. Firms need to prepare ingredients and have food storage cabinets to ensure quick processing. They need to manage the system closely, ensuring full information for customers about available product types, quantities of goods, locations in stock, and times of availability. Firms should manage according to electronic and Internet management systems so that customers can make appropriate purchasing decisions.

Price factor: The system needs to be transparent throughout. Firms need to coordinate price and product quality, brand positioning, and reasonable prices. Consumers have a basis for comparison and have a reasonable level of satisfaction with product quality and price. To attract students and customers who do not want to spend randomly, we can apply discounts and promotions. Discounts will make the purchasing decision easier. However, to achieve the highest efficiency, the appropriate discount should be between 20 and 35%. If the discount is higher than 35% without a reasonable reason, customers may think that the product is of poor quality or not good. Meanwhile, if the discount is below 20%, we can only stimulate customers to try the product or retain old customers.

Distribution factor: Expand the distribution channel system; although mainly selling through social networks, location is also a big obstacle to bringing products to customers. Fast food needs to be more efficient in terms of quick response. In markets with high sales and a large number of customers, it is advisable to open a number of direct distribution or franchising facilities to promptly respond to fast demand.

Mixed promotion elements: To effectively mix promotion, businesses need to have communication and consulting programs suitable for young customers, especially student groups. In particular, communication activities must ensure eye-catching features and change promptly with the trends

of young people. Firms and stores need to communicate the truth and should not use media images that are far from reality. Use marketing through KOLs and KOCs to make it known to many student customers, suitable for young people.

It is the responsibility of market researchers to observe and research how stimulus factors will be transformed and changed when received into the consumer's black box. Why do consumers make such changes?

Customers also form purchasing needs when influenced by marketing stimuli from the company and competitors. Customers will shop more when there are discount programs. Discount programs have a significant impact on forming consumer demand for fast food. It is extremely important to promptly inform customers about these programs, especially through company fan pages, phone messages, emails, or Zalo, so they can update information quickly.

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