Research Article

The Study on The Relationship Between Promotional Strategies to Freshmen Students' Perceptions and Needs in A Higher Educational Institution in Iligan City

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the impact of promotional strategies on the perceptions and needs of freshmen students in higher education institutions. Its primary objective is to scrutinize the connection between promotional strategies, customer perception, and customer needs, with the goal of formulating precise and efficient marketing tactics. Conducted at a higher education institution in Iligan City, Philippines, the research encompasses participants from various colleges, ensuring a well-rounded sample. Employing a descriptive-correlational research design, data was gathered through an online survey questionnaire and subjected to analysis through descriptive statistics and Pearson correlataion analysis. The outcomes reveal a substantial positive correlation between promotional strategies and both customer perception and customer needs. Promotional strategies that are personalized, convenient, and sustainable are shown to enhance customer experience, customer value, and brand loyalty. This study offers valuable insights for both marketers and scholars, advocating for educational institutions to implement marketing programs with a focus on promotional strategies. Future research should explore the efficacy of promotional strategies across different contexts and diverse demographic groups to ensure all-encompassing and impactful marketing strategies. By comprehending the influence of promotional strategies on customer perception and needs, businesses and educational institutions can

craft tailored marketing campaigns to attract and retain customers in today's fiercely competitive market landscape.

***Keywords**: Higher educational institution, Promotional strategies, Student perception*

Introduction

Promotional strategies have become a critical aspect of marketing in the modern business world, as they enable organizations to create awareness of their products and services and influence customers' perceptions of their brand (Kotler et al., 2019). Using promotional strategies has become particularly important in education as universities and colleges seek to attract and retain students in an increasingly competitive environment (Abaidoo et al., 2019). The effectiveness of promotional strategies in influencing customers' perceptions and needs has yet to be fully explored, particularly among freshmen students (Wu & Wu, 2020). Customers' needs are at the core of any successful business, representing the foundation of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Marketing scholars have explored various promotional strategies, such as personal selling, advertising, sales promotions, and public relations, to increase customer engagement in the educational sector (Chaudhary, 2020). Understanding the relationship between promotional strategies, customer perception, and customer needs among freshmen students is essential for universities and colleges to develop more targeted and effective marketing strategies. The objectives of this study are: (1) to analyze the effectiveness of different promotional strategies in creating positive customers perception among freshmen students in an HEI in Iligan City, (2) to examine the influence of customers perception on their needs and preferences for products or services (3) to identify the most effective promotional strategy that can be used to attract and retain customers among freshmen students in a higher educational institution in Iligan City.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design, which is a method to determine if a relationship exists between independent and dependent variables. By combining descriptive and correlational approaches, the study seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of how promotional strategies, customer perceptions, and customer needs intersect among freshmen students in an HEI, which can inform the development of effective marketing strategies. The research took place at an HEI situated in Iligan City. The institution is surrounded by both residential and commercial areas, including restaurants, lodging facilities, and other businesses. To prevent bias, a random sampling method was employed, ensuring that each student had an equal chance of being selected. Data collection was performed using an online survey questionnaire. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with a value of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable. A four-point Likert scale was used in the survey to measure attitudes and opinions. Data gathering adhered to COVID-19 safety protocols and college guidelines, with confidentiality measures in place. Statistical treatment included calculating the mean and standard deviation to describe central tendency and spread and Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation to measure the strength and direction of linear relationships between variables. These analyses aimed to determine significant correlations between promotional strategies, customer perceptions, and customer needs among freshmen students, with findings guiding future strategies and programs.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Indicators rates for the variable promotional strategies

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description
Content Marketing	3.21	0.58	*Agree*
Influencer Marketing	3.36	0.57	*Strongly Agree*
Social Media Advertising	3.38	0.54	*Strongly Agree*
Average	*3.32*	*0.56*	*Strongly Agree*

The table displays the rates for various promotional strategies, and the findings indicate that respondents strongly endorsed these strategies, with an average mean of 3.32 on the established scale. It suggests that the respondents held strong agreement regarding promotional approaches such as content marketing (mean = 3.21), influencer marketing (mean = 3.36), and social media advertising (mean = 3.38). Lee and Hong (2018) highlight content marketing's effectiveness in engaging customers and building brand awareness, while influencer marketing is recognized for its ability to reach new audiences and create excitement. Social media advertising, as noted by Gupta and Pirsch (2018), excels at targeting specific audiences and enhancing brand recognition. It aligns with existing literature emphasizing the significance of promotional strategies in contemporary marketing, with Table 5 reinforcing this notion.

Table 2 Indicators rates for the variable customers' perceptions

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description
Brand Loyalty	3.24	0.52	*Agree*
Customer Experience	3.28	0.60	*Strongly Agree*
Customer Value	3.27	0.55	*Strongly Agree*
Average	*3.26*	*0.57*	*Strongly Agree*

The tables display the ratings for the customer value variable, revealing that respondents strongly endorsed these aspects, with an average mean of 3.26 on the applied scale. It indicates a strong consensus among respondents regarding customers' perceptions, including brand loyalty (mean = 3.24), customer experience (mean = 3.28), and customer value (mean = 3.37). Research by Nguyen and Nguyen (2021) underscores the pivotal role of customer value in driving satisfaction and loyalty, with higher perceived value leading to increased loyalty and willingness to pay premium prices. Brand loyalty's significance in shaping customer behavior and long-term profitability is acknowledged (Aslam et al., 2018; Alwi et al., 2019). Additionally, customer experience is recognized as a crucial determinant of satisfaction and loyalty, with positive experiences enhancing loyalty, advocacy, and revenue (Kumar et al., 2018). These findings reinforce the importance of customer value, brand loyalty, and customer experience in shaping perceptions, as supported by the table above.

Table 3. Respondents' evaluation of customers' needs

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description
Convenience	3.30	0.54	*Strongly Agree*
Personalization	3.14	0.57	*Agree*
Sustainability	3.29	0.47	*Strongly Agree*
Average	*3.24*	*0.53*	*Agree*

The table presents the ratings for the customers' needs variable, demonstrating that respondents agreed, with an average mean of 3.24 on the applied scale. It suggests a consensus among respondents regarding customer values such as convenience (mean = 3.30), personalization (mean = 3.14), and sustainability (mean = 3.39). Research by Duan, Gu, and Whinston (2019) highlights the pivotal role of convenience in shaping customer behavior, while Khamitov and Boeckenholt (2020) reveal that personalization can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. The literature underscores the importance of understanding and addressing customers' needs for marketing success, and the above findings further substantiate this perspective.

Table 4. Relationship between the variables of promotional strategies and customer perceptions

	Decision-Making Capabilities		
	Correlation Coefficient	**p-value**	**Interpretation**
Promotional Strategies	0.446	0.000	*Significant*
Customers' Perceptions	0.446	0.000	*Significant*

The table presents the correlation between promotional strategies and customers' perceptions, assessed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The results indicate that the p-value falls below the 0.05 significance level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Consequently, a significant relationship between promotional strategies and customers' perceptions is confirmed. Lin and Lekhawipat (2018) discovered that promotional strategies like sales promotions and advertising positively impact customers' brand perceptions, leading to heightened purchase intentions. Similarly, Wang and Sun (2020) identified a positive link between promotional strategies such as social media and word-of-mouth marketing and customers' brand perception. They advocated for the use of multiple promotional strategies to bolster brand perception and foster brand loyalty. These findings underscore the pivotal role of promotional strategies in shaping brand perception and achieving favorable outcomes like increased sales and customer loyalty.

Table 5. Relationship between the variables of promotion strategies and customers' need

	Decision-Making Capabilities		
	Correlation Coefficient	**p-value**	**Interpretation**
Promotional Strategies	0.630	0.000	*Significant*
Customers' Need	0.630	0.000	*Significant*

The table presents the correlation between promotional strategies and customers' needs, assessed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The results indicate that the p-value falls below the 0.05 significance level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Consequently, a significant relationship between promotional strategies and customers' needs is confirmed. As indicated by a study conducted by Majeed et al. (2021), promotional strategies have a positive and substantial impact on customers' needs within the retail sector. Additionally, findings from Islam et al. (2019) reveal that promotional strategies have a favorable effect on customer satisfaction and loyalty, two integral components of customers' needs. These results highlight the ability of promotional strategies to effectively address customers' needs and enhance overall satisfaction with a brand or company.

Conclusion

The study's conclusions are rooted in its findings, which shed light on several vital aspects. Firstly, respondents held a favorable view of promotional strategies, with an average mean score of 3.32, signifying a positive evaluation. Specifically, they strongly endorsed the effectiveness of content marketing,

influencer marketing, and social media advertising. Furthermore, the study revealed a strong consensus among respondents concerning customers' perceptions, particularly in terms of brand loyalty, customer experience, and customer value, with an average mean of 3.26. The promotional strategies implemented by companies wield a substantial influence over how customers perceive them. Concerning customer needs, the respondents placed significant importance on convenience, personalization, and sustainability, with an average mean score of 3.24. It underscores the significance of aligning marketing strategies with these aspects to meet customer expectations effectively. The study's critical discovery was a significant relationship between promotional strategies and customer needs, indicating that these strategies directly impact customers' requirements.

Additionally, the study affirmed the influence of promotional strategies on the variable of customer perception, particularly among freshmen students. To capitalize on these findings, the HEI can develop and execute marketing initiatives aimed at enhancing customer experience, augmenting customer value, and cultivating brand loyalty. The HEI should also explore avenues for providing personalized and convenient services that align with customers' sustainability values. The study's statistical analysis revealed a noteworthy relationship between promotional strategies and customers' perceptions and needs, supported by a p-value below 0.05, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. It underscores the robust link between promotional strategies and these critical dimensions of consumer behavior.

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