

Focus groups essay

[Business](#), [Company](#)



Mc Donald's has definitely emerged as one of the major food giants in Hong Kong, and the success matters a lot, considering the fact that the food culture and traditional eating habits in China were very different a few decades ago and therefore it was quite hard to imagine a company like Mc Donald's becoming successful with its extremely westernized menu. In actual fact, the hypothesis developed by Mc Donald's marketing would have been quite different from the actual consumer response which is received, and although in the land of Dim-Sums and Manchurians it would have been difficult to adjust the product, but effective marketing and globalization really helped to change the perception and demand for consumers, more than changing their dietary habits, which can be understood by the fact that " Seven of the world's ten busiest McDonald's restaurants are located in Hong Kong".

The Hong Kong fast food industry came up with multiple options for people in the past couple of decades like mobile shops that delivered (noodles, dumplings, soups, grilled items) etc., and apart from that there were many other new entries like cold sandwiches and salads (which are not acceptable in Hong Kong's fast food culture). The above options were either not able to provide a differentiated menu which is interesting and Globalized or the service quality and availability was not as consistent as for Mc Donald's. The basic idea is to target the customer, looking for extremely quick, quality service and a hot serving. Another important factor that helped to enhance Mc Donald's market share is the sudden boom of Hong Kong from a " light industrial outpost" to an extremely industrialized local financial hub, due to which there was a major requirement for food service providers to cater to

office going crowds.

Our focus of research will remained the sample size, that we have considered while taking the interviews and it is important to analyze them to understand the reason behind them, for choosing Mc Donald's, the most common ones that came out during our research were convenience, reasonable price, acceptable taste, efficient processes, good environment, souvenirs and taste, however it will be important to further drill down to the level where this can be effectively analyzed. It is also important at the same time to evaluate the Perception of McDonald's menu and its image as unhealthy, low nutrition value, too much condiment, lack of choices for drinks. The above evaluations will help to determine the results that could help to generate opinions on McDonald's menu improvement and whether they should stop to offer souvenirs in order to bush up the sales, should improve cooking method, should put lesser condiment, should improve the nutrition facts of the product, should add more vegetable and should launch fresh juice.

Analysis and Discussion

Co-relation: Age, Gender, Occupation, Dining Habit, Perception and Opinions
If we look at the basic consumer type for Mc Donald's, it will be interesting to see that first of all almost 2/3rd of the population is between the age 20-40 which tells us that youth and the middle aged people are more attracted towards the Mc Donald's fast food offerings. Moreover, gender wise, the male consumers are almost double of the female consumers and this clarifies that Males are more likely to select Mc Donald's as their preferred eating joint. Similarly, Students and Executives of multinational and local

corporations constitute sixty three percent crowd that visits Mc Donald's and the income range is relatively low, which means that the major chunk of customers are those who earn below 20K, considering the low prices of the products that are served at the outlets.

The attitude and trend of the customers on make McDonald's product healthier . . .

It is important to understand that 51% people of Hong Kong believe that they like healthy eating habits and therefore there was a section of questionnaire that gauges the customer's perception of food products that could be made healthier. An analysis of the response reveals that almost 56% respondents agreed on the fact that there is a need to decrease the amount of salt in their food and 57% believed the same about sugar. Whooping, 73% consumers agreed with use of less oil as a method to make food healthier but using meat with lower fat dint seem to be feasible option to everyone. The use of cheese was questioned and not too many people favored lowering down the usage of cheese, moreover again 73% customers laid stress on increasing the amount of vegetables in the food products. Most of the customers were neutral about the question of change in ingredients and those who gave opinion on this were equally into agreement and disagreement, which tells us that not many of then believe that change ingredients will make any difference to the attractiveness of the food. The most important question was price range and if rightly said, almost 70% consumers agreed that it the prices of Mc Donald's products is increased by 5-10%, then the same could be made healthier and better.

Actions attempt to ensure healthy food distribution in the past and related recommendations . . .

Mc Donald's staffing and operations technique mostly focuses on providing quick service to its customers and revenue generation with cost management are the primary targets. Although, the company attempts to provide the same quality and ingredients of products worldwide, it is important to understand that the impact also then remains the same every where. Luisa Tam of the environmental pressure group Greenpeace says that " They have 29, 000 restaurants in 120 countries, they have a work force of 1. 5 million - that's the equivalent to the population of Brussels," she explains that a company of that size has a lot of responsibilities and they must attempt to provide a healthier future to people. Mc Donald's has usually not been seen making any changes to the products in order to improve the health benefits however they must take some basic steps like reducing the salt, sugar and oil content, add more vegetables to the products, low temperature cooking and use of low fat ingredients including the meat.

Impact on Hong Kong and Health

With the amount of study that we have done one fact is clear that the, primary aim of the company is to provide good taste, quickly at very low prices and therefore the Health factor does not come any where in between. Mc Donald's has faced criticism for providing low nutrition, high cholesterol and trans fat food since a long time and even when in 2000 it was ranked as a number one company for social responsibility, there were many organizations that were working against the unhealthy troop of items being

served by them.

Hong Kong has experienced a major change in the food habits in the last decade and Mc Donald's has a great contribution to the same, the impact being positive or negative is not being discussed here, but as a result of the study which is conducted and as per the available data, mc Donald's accounts to almost 158 restaurant outlets of the total 10000 fast food chains in Hong Kong, but the crowd that goes everyday in Mc Donald's is almost half a million, which is almost 40% of the total fast food consumption that happens within the country. There are lot of advocates who talk about the Americanization and Global Homogeneity with mc Donald's covering the market however there is an equally strong criticism about the revenue model and long term impact of the product on the health of people.

The intensity of health damage can be understood by the fact that Morgan Spurlock, conducted a study by eating only Mc Donald's food for 30 days and his weight grew by 25 pounds, including a major increase in his cholesterol, trans fat and fatty acids, this was made as a documentary and there were various views that came on the same.

C-Sat. . . . an important demand of consumers today

In the literature review section we had already seen the impact of the products on customer satisfaction, and although there are lot of consumers who may not look at the health side while visiting the restaurant outlet, however in the long run the health impact will put an adverse impact, as from the analysis and the questionnaire responses it was proved that customers are not appreciative about the high fats being served. Hence it becomes important for the company to ensure that they immediately take

some steps in order to review and update the quantity of ingredients such as salt, sugar and oil of existing products so that it may prove less harmful. Secondly, electronic cooking at high temperature is harmful and similarly many other processes that help to shorten the cooking period may be harmful and the company needs to strictly review the cooking method of existing products. One of the major issues that came out from the responses was about the meat and vegetable ratio of existing products and most of the people suggested that an increase in healthy ingredients will lead to an improved product which is healthy and tasty at the same time. Lastly, it is important to review the existing policy of souvenir offering ride on the consumption of McDonald's product, as that is uselessly luring the consumers and is pulling them towards an unhealthy future. Considering the above recommendations will help Mc Donald's to improve its perception and will also ensure that they get more customers without guilt of developing bad health.

If we talk about the revamp that Mc Donald's can do, it will be important to discuss about their attempt to launch some healthier meal sets for children and to restrict certain food items for children if they are not appropriate for their health. The chains must consider the option of launching the fresh vegetable juice, diet meal, vegetarian meal set so that all the consumers who are coming to the restaurant may have a choice to take healthy foods, the restaurant may continue to sell the other products for people who are willing to buy them after a statutory warning.

If we consider the above factors, another concern may be the impact if the same on the sale however this can be avoided by designing the right set of

7Ps for the company, the new products will prove a great addition as the health conscious crowd would also be willing to try the same and at the same time the critics will also appreciate the effort. Secondly, place will remain the same where both the new and old products will be available so there is no possibility of losing customers who are willing to buy the previous products, the price can be a little high for the new products and the health conscious consumers will be easily willing to pay a little more than usual for it. The promotion must include the new products so that the consumers know about it and would like to give them a try, the processes must be updated according to the new plan however the use of more raw and healthy vegetables will enable deliver in short time, people would be able to develop positive perception about the products and the company as a whole which will grow the company into a new dimension. The company has already done quite well on corporate social responsibility and it is time now that they concentrate on improving their image and to ensure that they give their critics and government a chance to evaluate and give an honest feedback about the changes that get implemented.

Conclusion

Mc Donald's has really done well, to acquire a great market share through its food chains based in Hong Kong, and the literature studies and interviews suggest that people love the food that gets served at Mc Donald's however they are equally conscious about the adverse impact of the same on health and therefore it is important for Mc Donald's to take the recommended steps in order to move into a new zone where the consumers will be able to enjoy their services without any guilt of bad health.

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