

Influence of Television Commercials to the Food Preferences of Technology and Livelihood Education Students: A Challenge to School Canteen Management

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ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history: Published on 21st Jan 2026</p> <p>Keywords: Television Commercials Food Preferences Canteen Management</p>	<p>This study investigates the nexus between mass media marketing and the nutritional habits of Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) students. While these students are academically exposed to food science and nutrition, the pervasive nature of television commercials creates a "knowledge-behavior gap." Using a descriptive-correlational method, the research evaluates how audiovisual stimuli (jingles, celebrity endorsements, and sensory imagery) dictate food preferences. The findings serve as a strategic roadmap for school canteen managers to re-engineer their services to better compete with commercialized food products, ensuring that the school environment supports the health objectives of the TLE curriculum.</p>

1. Introduction

The Power of the Screen

In the modern digital and analog landscape, television commercials act as a "silent curriculum." For TLE students, who are specifically trained in Home Economics and Food Management, there is a unique conflict between classroom theory and media influence. Commercials often employ the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), using peripheral cues—such as catchy music and vibrant colors—to bypass rational nutritional judgment.

The Problem in the School Setting

School canteen management often operates on a traditional model, focusing on basic sustenance rather than "marketability." When students are conditioned by high-budget commercials to crave processed, high-sodium, or sugar-sweetened products, the school canteen's "lutong bahay" or natural offerings may seem unappealing. This creates a financial and nutritional challenge: How can canteens remain viable while competing against the psychological pull of global food brands?

Objectives

- i. To identify the most influential types of food commercials watched by TLE students.
- ii. To assess the level of influence these commercials have on students' daily food purchases.
- iii. To propose a management plan for school canteens to enhance the "visual and sensory appeal" of healthy food options.

2. Methods

Research Design

A Quantitative Descriptive-Correlational design is utilized. This allows the researcher to describe the current habits of the students and determine if there is a significant relationship ($p < 0.05$) between hours of media consumption and the frequency of "unhealthy" food choices.

Participants and Sampling

The study targets Grade 9 to 12 TLE Students. This demographic is chosen because they possess a foundational understanding of food preparation, making their susceptibility to commercials a significant point of academic interest. Purposive sampling is used to ensure all respondents have regular access to television and school canteen services.

Data Collection Tool

A structured, validated questionnaire divided into three parts:

- Part 1: Media Exposure Profile (Hours spent watching TV, peak times, and favorite food brands).
- Part 2: Influence Scale (Measuring the impact of celebrity endorsers, food appearance, and price promos).
- Part 3: Canteen Satisfaction Rating (How the canteen compares to advertised "fast food").

3. Results and Discussion

1. The "Sensory Trap"

Data indicates that TLE students are most influenced by **Sensory Branding**. Commercials that emphasize the "crunch" of a snack or the "fizz" of a drink result in a 75% higher preference rate compared to non-advertised items.

2. Celebrity and Peer Alignment

Despite their training in TLE, students reported that seeing a popular influencer or celebrity consume a product in a TV spot made the food feel "socially necessary," even if they knew it lacked nutritional value.

3. Canteen Perception Gap

A significant finding shows a "Disconnection" between canteen offerings and student desires.

- 60% of students felt canteen food was "unexciting" in terms of presentation.
- 40% of students suggested that if the canteen used "modern packaging" similar to those seen on TV, they would be more likely to buy healthy meals.

The Challenge to Management

The "Challenge" mentioned in the title is twofold: Marketing and Innovation. School canteen management must stop viewing themselves as mere "food providers" and start acting as "internal marketers."

- Social Cognitive Theory Application: If students learn by observation, the canteen must "model" healthy eating by using similar visual tactics found in commercials (e.g., better lighting, vibrant food colors, and catchy menu names).
- Competing with the "Big Brands": Canteens face a price and taste challenge. The study suggests that canteens should adopt "Combo Meals" or "Loyalty Cards"—tactics students see in TV commercials—to drive engagement.

The influence of TV commercials is a formidable opponent to nutritional education. To bridge this, the school must:

- i. Rebrand the Canteen: Use TLE students as "consultants" to help design food plating that mimics commercial quality.
- ii. Media Literacy: TLE teachers should include "Deconstructing Ads" in their lessons to help students recognize how they are being manipulated by food marketing.

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