
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Pink Power: The Extent of Awareness, Driving Factors, and Overall Perception of Filipina Youth Consumers in Metro Manila, Philippines on Pink Tax Caused by Pink Marketing Strategy

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| ABSTRACT

One of the features of pink marketing is the usage of the color pink in women's products. However, this marketing strategy often employs pink tax, an extra amount charged to women's products even though the products are similar or equal in benefit to men's; the only difference is the color. In the Philippines, the pink tax is not yet explored. The study aimed to explore the extent of awareness, driving factors, and overall perception of Filipina youth consumers on pink tax caused by the practice of pink marketing. The study employed a qualitative descriptive research design. Thematic analysis revealed personal experiences of the respondents permeated the concept, corroborating previous literature and studies. The study concludes respondent Filipina Youth Consumers are aware of pink tax but only to the extent of definition and practice as observed in different products. They are not willing to buy products with pink tax as caused by the pink marketing strategy; however, the quality and the social and cultural norm with regard to gender schema are the driving factors to purchase. Negative perceptions outweigh the positive ones as it is viewed to be discriminatory, against equality and a way of deceiving and exploiting women consumers by the companies incorporating pink tax into their pink marketing strategy and respondents perceived that the concept should be addressed. The researchers recommend that the policymaking bodies study the matter to promote the value of women as consumers and contributors to the economy. They can use this research for policymaking or reference to review existing consumer and business laws for improvement.

| KEYWORDS

Pink, Pink Tax, Pink Marketing, Filipina Consumers

| ARTICLE DOI: [10.32996/jbms.2022.4.2.22](https://doi.org/10.32996/jbms.2022.4.2.22)

1. Introduction

Product differentiation is one of the most common marketing strategies which help firms identify their market. Once the market is differentiated or segmented, companies distinguish their product or service from others to make it more appealing to the target market (Lafferty, 2019). This process involves strategies like giving distinct characteristics to the product like color and packaging of products. There are various market segmentation strategies, and one of them is through gender, in which the market is divided into men and women.

Eighty-five percent (85%) of direct and indirect purchases in the world are accounted for by women (Rohrer-Vanzo et al., 2016; Berletta, 2003). Berletta (2003) concluded that most firms try to develop various marketing strategies for the women demographic because their market occupies many areas of life. Marketers take into consideration the purchasing decisions of this market because women are influential and interactive in terms of the decision-making about goods and services of other people, such as their family, friends, and colleagues (Massoudi, Jameel, & Ahmad, 2020). The motivation of women in purchasing products and services is different from men's, and this is the reason businesses started to adopt the "pink marketing" strategy. Pink marketing

was defined by Massoudi (2020) as a marketing strategy targeting women and using techniques that are more appealing to women since their psychological nature differs from men. Abdul Fatah (2017) explained that other than advertising that appeals to emotions, one unique characteristic of this tactic is the usage of pink colors to showcase femininity.

In the past, the color pink was not used to portray femininity. In fact, the color has been worn by men. The concept of "pink for women" only started in the post-World War II when the menstrual pad industry began, and the commercialization of other women's products became an opportunity for large corporations to feminize products that were already existing and not gendered. These companies sold these products in a way women would perceive them as something they should have and could not live without (Atkin, 2018). This concept triggered societal expectations of genders even at an early age (Lafferty, 2019). The famous psychologist Kohlberg (1966) suggested that children attempt to find gender-related information from their surroundings, and they try to conform to these gender norms. Kohlberg's view was further improved and supported by the Gender Schema Theory of Sandra Bem (1981, 1983, 1985). This theory states that children learn about gender roles from the culture and environment they grew up and lived in. Children form representations or gender schemas about themselves by getting the knowledge from their environment and incorporating that knowledge into their schemas. With these in their memory, they adjust their behavior to conform to the gender expectation and norms from the earliest stages of social development (Cherry, 2020). Now, pink is perceived to be a women's color.

In marketing, shades of pink became the color of women. According to Small Business Trends (2014), this color is ideal for reaching the female market, and pink helps in advertising products to women as the color showcases femininity. The color, packaging, and design are often changed to accommodate women's tastes. The Joint Economic Committee of the United States of America Congress (2016) sees the pink marketing strategy as a tactic that will increase the cost of production. However, the same report of the Committee discussed that women are paying significantly more than men for similar goods wherein, in most cases, the only difference is the color. This markup is known to be the "pink tax".

Lafferty (2019) defined pink tax not as a mandatory tax imposed by a government but as a practice of charging an extra amount for services and mostly products marketed to women which are similar or equal in benefit to men's and frequently, products are in shades of color pink (Ashford, 2019). This practice is evident in personal care products, toys, clothes, senior or home health care products, haircuts, and dry cleaning services. Elliot (2019) gave razors as an example. Cheap razors in drugstores that do not have moisturizing strips, without rust-free titanium, no other distinct features, just a typical single blade razor; men's are often in blue while women's are in pink, but women's are more expensive than those of men.

A lot of countries such as the United States, United Kingdom and Canada are progressive in studying the issue. However, the Philippines has not yet explored the pink tax. Only a few local articles are available online, and no in-depth analysis was written about the pink tax. Hence, the main objective of this research is to explore the overall perception of Filipina youth consumers on pink tax caused by the practice of pink marketing. Further, this research aimed to discover the extent of awareness of Filipina youth consumers on the existence of pink tax and to analyze the driving factors on the willingness of Filipina youth consumers to pay for pink tax caused by pink marketing ploy.

2. Methodology

The study utilized a qualitative-descriptive design. Thirty (3) respondents participated in the study with the following criteria: a) a Filipina Consumer who has an idea about pink tax, b) 18-30 years of age, c) residing in Metro Manila, Philippines, and d) buys or owns the product in color pink or packaged in pink that has similar or equal in benefit to the counterpart product of men. The study utilized a survey method with semi-structured open-ended questions via Google forms. The researchers presented questions to obtain: (a) demographic information on the participants, (b) the extent of participants' awareness and experiences regarding pink tax, (c) their motivating factors in their willingness to pay for pink tax, and (d) overall perception on pink tax caused by pink marketing. A link was sent to the respective respondents who fit the criteria in order to access the survey form. One researcher kept track of the recorded responses in the Google Sheets. The background of the research and a consent form was present at the start of the survey. After collating and analyzing the data gathered, the researcher discussed and concluded the outcome through the use of thematic analysis. Finally, the researchers validated the data gathered with the preferred technique and checked for inconsistencies or irregularities in the responses and clarified the meaning intended by the respondent.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Extent of Awareness on Pink Tax

To know the origin of their knowledge about pink tax, the researchers asked, "Where did you hear the term Pink Tax? Tell us what you know about it." The table below shows the answers of the respondents portraying the origin of their knowledge about the pink tax.

Table 1. *Origin of Knowledge about Pink Tax*

Origin	Frequency
Social Media	15
School	12
Book / Article	2
Through a friend	1

Fifty percent (50%) or fifteen respondents learned about pink tax from different social media platforms like Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, and Reddit. Twelve (12) respondents learned pink tax from a class in school, more specifically, in marketing classes. Two (2) respondents read about pink tax in books and articles in a magazine or newspaper, and one said that she learned the term from a friend.

All of them pointed out that the pink tax is a price discrepancy in products and services marketed to women, especially those in color pink, making them cost more than identical or nearly identical versions marketed to men (Fontinelle, 2021). For example, R1 wrote, *"I heard in the school setting. It was mentioned in one of our marketing subjects. It is basically giving additional price to pink products even though they have men counterpart which is similar in function"* (R1), while R13 said that she saw the idea of a pink tax on social media, stating, *"I saw it on social media. I know about the fact that feminine products also cost more than those for men despite being very similar to each other"* (R13).

To know what products the respondents often see the application of pink tax, the researchers asked, *"What products do you often see this tactic being applied to?"* The table below summarizes the frequency of each product the respondents mentioned.

Table 2. *Products with Pink Tax*

Products	Frequency
Hygiene/Personal Care Products (skincare, haircare like shampoo and conditioners, razors, shaving cream, soap, deodorant, body wash, facial wash, hair dye)	30
Make-up Products	1
School or Office Supplies	4
Clothing	6
Medicine, vitamins	2
Children Toys	3

Note. Some respondents answered more than one product, making the frequency not equal to the total respondents.

Thirty or one hundred percent of the respondents mentioned that they mostly see the application of pink tax to different hygiene or personal care products, including various skincare products, haircare like shampoos, conditioners, hair dye, razors, shaving cream, soap, deodorant, body wash, and facial wash. R23 shared her experience: *"Based on my personal experience, I've seen that pink colored razors are priced higher than regular colored ones despite that they are of the same brand. Also, the feminine designed tissue boxes, like the pink box of Kleenex, are priced higher than the others"* (R23). Additionally, one respondent, R2, observed a pink tax on make-up products.

Pink tax on hygiene or personal care products such as shampoo, conditioner, razors, lotion, deodorant, body wash and shaving cream were also discussed by Amoros (2019), Ashford (2019), Elliot (2019), Maloney (2016), and Duesterhaus, Grauerholz, Weichsel & Guittar (2011).

On the other hand, four (4) listed that they see the tactic in school or office supplies like notebooks, pens, and even calculators. This observation was also pointed out by Atkin (2018) who discussed the famous pen company, Bic, which produced "Bic for her" pens, a more expensive ballpoint pens which the barrels are in color pastels and different shades of pink, but the material and appearance are the same as those of the regular one. In the case of calculators, R19 explained, "*In calculators, especially the brand Casio and Sharp. They released a pastel pink and a rose gold version of one of the versions of their calculator. The advertisement in social showcases female students and female office workers using the product*" (R19). This was also supported by R21.

Six (6) respondents agreed that pink tax is also being applied to clothing products. R10 elaborated, "*Whenever I shop for clothes, even simply in T-shirts, I usually buy only a few pieces and pay a very high price while my Dad pays less for more pieces of clothing. Women's clothing is much more expensive than men's clothing*" (R10). Meanwhile, three (3) answered that they also encountered a pink tax on children's toys. Amoros (2019), Ashford (2019), Elliot (2019), and Maloney (2016) also included children's toys and clothes in the list of products with pink tax.

Meanwhile, another two (2) respondents mentioned that they see the pink tax on medicines and vitamins. The pink tax is also present in healthcare products (Amoros, 2019; Ashford, 2019; Elliot, 2019).

The findings above showed that the common knowledge of the respondents on pink tax is that it is a price discrepancy in products marketed to women, especially those in color pink, which cost more than products marketed to men even if the service or function intended is the same. They do not know other information about pink tax besides the definition and practice in common products. They learned pink tax from social media, school, literature, peers, and even in academic talks. Respondents often see the pink tax on hygiene or personal care products, make-up, school or office supplies, clothes, healthcare products, and children's toys.

3.2 Driving Factors in Purchasing Pink Products with Pink Tax

To determine if the Filipina youth consumers get persuaded by the tactic of using the color pink, the researchers asked: "Do you get easily induced into purchasing products because they are marketed directly for women using the color pink?"

Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents, which has a total of fifteen (15) participants, affirmed that they get easily induced in acquiring pink products marketed directly towards women, while the other half answered otherwise.

To determine the reason why the Filipina youth consumers answered yes or no in the previous question, the researchers asked the respondents to elaborate on why they answered such. The table below shows the various reasons why they get easily induced into purchasing pink products.

Table 3. Reasons for the inducement into purchasing pink products

Reason	Frequency
Pink is attractive	3
Association of pink to femininity (marketed towards women/ labeled for women)	12

Twelve (12) participants who answered yes to being easily induced into buying products using the pink color said that it is because it is common that the color pink is associated with femininity which is marketed directly towards women, or it is labeled or made for women. One respondent explained, "Yes because I'm used to seeing pink as marketed for girls or women. I see women models in the packaging or ads of these pink products, so I usually think that if it's pink, then it's really made for a girl like me" (21). Another respondent answered, "Essentially because there is an established notion that products using the color pink are for women. Even knowing that such products function the same as those for men, it is customary in a sense for women to buy products labeled "for women" (R12). One respondent elaborated, "I grew up thinking that pink is for women, and I think products are made for women when they are pink because of the models or label "for women". I think the color pink is usually associated with femininity, so consumers would easily identify its target. As a consumer, my attention is grabbed by these (similar) shades on the product packaging for efficiency." (R25)

Three (3) respondents said yes because they classify the color pink as an attractive color or generally their color of preference. Thus, they are willing to continue purchasing pink products.

As for the participants that responded no to the previous question, the table below shows the reasons why the respondents do not get easily induced into buying pink products.

Table 4. Reasons on not being induced into purchasing

Reason	Frequency
Bases on quality/efficiency/ effectiveness	5
Bases on price/ Buys the cheaper option	5
Does not care about the color	5

Five (5) participants emphasized that they were not easily induced into buying products in the pink color because they purchase products based on quality, efficiency, or effectiveness. R13 explained, "The product, being the color pink, doesn't affect me as I know it's only a marketing strategy. I will buy a product based on its safety, effectiveness, and quality" (R13). R15 added, "The color of the product does not really matter to me since I value quality more. If I would [choose] between colored pink and non-colored pink where the non-colored pink performs better, I will buy it" (R15).

Another five (5) respondents answered that they buy products based on the price or purchase the ones that are cheaper. One respondent explained, "I'm usually the type to research on feminine products before buying them to find cheaper alternatives. Also, I'm not the type to easily get attracted to the color pink. What matters is the price. If it is cheaper but functions well, I will gladly buy" (R19).

Another five (5) respondents said that they do not get easily induced into buying products that use the color pink because they do not care about the color, nor do they find the pink color appealing.

To determine the willingness of the Filipina youth consumers after the marketing tactic has been made known to them, the researchers asked, "Are you willing to buy a more expensive product marketed for women than buy the same product of lesser value marketed for men?" This question identified the willingness of the Filipina youth consumers to purchase or to continue to purchase products marketed for women that are the same as for men but priced higher.

As a result, nine (9) participants of the total respondents affirmed that they are willing or are still willing to buy pink products with pink tax marketed for women rather than buy the same products marketed towards men that cost less. Contrastingly, twenty-two (22) participants believed that they are not or are no longer willing to buy a more expensive product marketed for women. The remaining respondent answered it depends, pointing out that she will buy according to necessity.

As for those who answered no to the question, the table below shows the reason of the respondents as to why they are no longer willing or are not willing to purchase women's products for a higher value.

Table 5. Factors on not willing to purchase pink products with pink tax

Reason	Frequency
Cheaper Option	14
Gender Discrimination/ Stereotypical	6

Fourteen (14) respondents declared that they are not willing or are no longer willing to buy higher-priced products marketed for women because they would rather buy the cheaper alternative product instead of the same function, benefit, and purpose regardless if it is for men to save money. R8 said: "If it has the same functions, I'd go for the cheaper option regardless if it's labeled for a specific gender." Similarly, R28 responded, "No. Since they offer the same use and quality, there's no reason to pay more. I will pay what is cheaper."

Six (6) participants answered no because they are not willing or are no longer willing to buy higher-priced products marketed for women and would rather purchase the same product of lesser value marketed for men for the reason that it somehow showcases gender discrimination or stereotype. One respondent said, "If same purpose naman sila, why go for the expensive one. And doesn't this count as gender discrimination at all? May binabayaran or ang mamahal na nga ng mga sanitary products na di naman natin pinili na magkaganon, mas mamahalan pa nila for women." [If the products have the same purpose, why go for the expensive one. And doesn't this count as gender discrimination at all? We already have to pay for expensive sanitary products, which we didn't

even choose to have, and yet they'll increase the costs more for women.] (R3). In relation to this, gender segmentation is one of the types of market segmentation by demographics. Gender dictates color preferences in consonance with the Gender Schema Theory of Sandra Bem (1981, 1983, 1985).

To determine the factors that make the Filipina youth consumers willing to continue to purchase products marketed for women with higher costs, the researchers asked, "If you choose to continue buying women's products for a higher price, what makes you willing to buy them?". This question identifies the possible determinant of the Filipina youth consumers to continue to purchase products marketed for women that are the same as for men but cost more. The table below shows the reason the respondents choose to continue purchasing higher-priced women's products.

Table 6. Factors on their willingness to purchase pink products with pink tax

Reason	Frequency
Social Norm/ Cultural Norm	6
Higher Quality	2

Two (2) respondents explained that the reason they are still willing to procure these products is because of the quality it delivers. One said, "I look for the quality in a product. I will buy a pink product with a pink tax; even if it is more expensive, it is higher in quality. The products for women might have been developed differently than the men's products." (R2). While another expounded: "From time to time, I still buy products that are relatively higher in price because I believe that it may differ in terms of the quality since it is labeled for me, I assume that it is specially made for my needs." (R30).

Six (6) participants responded that they choose to continue purchasing pink products regardless of the pink tax because it is the social norm and/or has been the cultural norm ever since. One respondent said, "It is the social norm / cultural norm I've learned to live with. The color pink is for women, and the color blue is for men. It has always been that way. Besides, the difference in price is immaterial to me." (R24). This proved the point of Cherry (2020), stating that children learn about gender roles from the culture and environment they live in. They adjust their behavior to conform to the gender norms from the earliest stages of social development.

Another expounded: "Society and Culture! I might get bullied if one sees me using products not labeled for women, and I also think that the price discrepancy is not that exaggerated. Also, nakasanayan ko na 'to. I don't have the firm reasons to look for other options." [Society and Culture! I might get bullied if one sees me using products not labeled for women, and I also think that the price discrepancy is not that exaggerated. Also, this is what I got used to. I don't have the firm reasons to look for other options.] (R25). As stated in the study of LoBue and Deloache (2011), one of the typical examples of this is reinforcing gender stereotypes in children where boys dress blue and girls dress pink. They integrate this pink and blue into their schema to differentiate "male" and "female" and feel the need to conform to their gender.

From the six, one (1) respondent explained that since it is already a cultural or societal norm, it makes it easier for women who do not read product descriptions. She said, "I believe there are products that are packaged in pink but are really not using this ploy. Maybe it makes it easier for other women who can't read much to base their purchasing choices on the color of the packaging." (R23).

The accounts above showed that the respondents are not willing to buy pink products marketed through a pink marketing strategy which has a pink tax. The factors that make them not willing to buy products with pink tax are the following: (1) alternatives and (2) pink tax shows discrimination and inequality towards women consumers. On the other hand, the factors that drive Filipina Youth Consumers to purchase such are only the (1) quality and (2) the social and cultural norms embedded in the minds of these consumers.

3.3 Overall Perception on Pink Tax caused by Pink Marketing

The next questions aimed to discover the positive and negative connotations the respondents have on pink tax, as caused by the pink marketing ploy.

3.4 Positive and Negative Conceptions on Pink Tax

This question is focused on the positive conceptions that the pink tax may precede. The researchers asked, "What are the positive views or conceptions you have on pink tax caused by pink marketing ploy?" The table below shows the summary of the positive views Filipina Youth consumers have with regard to the pink tax.

Table 7. Positive Views of Filipina Youth Consumers on Pink Tax

Positive views	Frequency
Advantageous for business owners	8
Recognizes women's purchasing power	7
Easier to identify women's products	3
None	12

Twelve (12) of the 30 respondents (40%) found no positive conceptions or views on pink tax.

Eight (8) respondents believed that the pink tax is only beneficial to the producers, thus only positive to business owners and big corporations that control the market. All pointed out that employing a pink tax on products increases the profit of business owners. One respondent said, "Unless you're a businessman/woman, this is an effective marketing strategy, especially for those that are not educated regarding this ploy or those that don't really care about it. Younger teens especially would prefer this more which will be good for businesses" (30). Also, R42 justified, "Pink tax is a good tactic for companies to attract women and increase their sales. Businesses will do anything to increase their sales even imposing additional price to a differentiated product" (R25).

In relation to being advantageous for business owners, seven (7) respondents related that businesses recognize the purchasing power of women. R7 said, "It's good as it differentiates products for men and women. Businesses impose additional charges on women's products, which is the pink tax. Businesses think that if it is differentiated, women will buy more pink products even though they are more expensive. This only means that businesses think that women are capable of buying; it recognizes that they are powerful consumers." (R7)

This statement was also affirmed by R21, saying, "If it makes women feel happy, it's okay, give people what color they want. They are happy with what they pay for. It recognizes that we are capable that we can buy more expensive products" (R21). One respondent posited, "The positive side of it is it's targeting specific customers and ensuring that their target market would be enticed to buy their product/s. Thus, employing pink tax recognizes the purchasing power of women" (R28)

Meanwhile, three (3) respondents said that even though pink products have pink tax, the pink tax usually helps them identify what products are for women. R17 explained, "Pink tax caused by pink marketing strategy somehow promotes inclusivity because women know immediately what products are for them even though the price is higher" (R17). Additionally, R20 said, "Products with pink tax usually have the label "for women". This is why I know what products are intended for women immediately" (R20). R20 also believed that the higher the pink tax is, the better the quality of the product. R20 emphasized, "These products are marketed well to look like they are well-made, safe to use for women, and somehow gives the idea that they don't have as many harmful ingredients/materials compared to the generic ones offered for men. I always believe that the higher the price of the product is, the better the quality of the product." (R20).

Next is focused on discovering the negative conceptions of Filipina Youth Consumers on pink tax. The researchers asked, "What are the negative views or conceptions you have on pink tax caused by pink marketing ploy?" The table below shows the summary of the negative views Filipina Youth consumers have with regard to the pink tax.

Table 8. Negative Views of Filipina Youth Consumers on Pink Tax

Negative views	Frequency
Inequality, discrimination, unfairness	19
Deceptive/manipulative	10
Promotion of capitalism	1

Nineteen (19) out of thirty (30) respondents noted that the pink tax escalates or promotes different types of inequality, discrimination and unfairness to women. R10 argued, "from the term pink, immediately gives off the gender-based kind of concept which like I mentioned previously, is an act of discrimination and exploitation. It further elevates the economic disparity and economic disadvantage of women. Thus, making everything unfair to women. In a way that they take advantage of the 'social norm' to market and sell products with great differences in prices." this was seconded by R1 by pointing out that, "I believe that this marketing strategy only contributes to the economic inequality between men and women." while R48 questioned "Why do we, women, have to pay more for products which basically function the same only because of our gender? That's inequality."

R2 focused her arguments on the incremental difference in every purchase, which, if looked at as a whole, would be a big amount. She said, "It literally shows inequality. For instance, it's not enough for us women to have to purchase sanitary pads and the like, which are already expensive in themselves. This marketing ploy may seem like a small issue thing, but those couple extra pesos could have been saved had there not been the pink tax that came with products marketed for women. The products may differ in terms of fragrance (which I think many women value), but they simply do the same thing, and the price increase being incremental makes it easier for women to think that it would be worth it to spend a little more." (R2)

One respondent pointed out that the pink tax is discriminatory because it makes women's products stereotypically expensive because it is pink. She said, "It is discriminatory for women in a way that the pink tax on products jeopardizes women in not having other options but to purchase the more expensive product just because it is pink, and intended for women" (R9). Furthermore, R13 added, "In today's setting, I think it is very gender-biased to label or use such a marketing strategy knowing the culture and evolution of the world. It has a negative impact on the rampant and continuous discrimination towards women in society" (R13).

On the other hand, ten (10) respondents emphasized that the pink tax leads to the deception or manipulation of women, leading them to buy a product at a higher price because it is "for women". Using pink marketing to employ pink tax takes advantage of the purchasing decision-making of women. R21 stated that "I think this marketing strategy taps the conformity of women who tend to buy products labeled just for them with more value than the same product for men. It sends the connotation that women are far more vulnerable to this type of strategy than men and that they are easier to manipulate in product value." R22 added, "Pink tax is not necessary, but simply a business strategy manipulates prices and deceives women to increase sales by using women's attraction to aesthetics."

Meanwhile, there was one respondent who stated that the pink tax is a form of capitalism. It is capitalistic in essence, as it is only the business owners that gain from it.

The accounts above showed that the respondent Filipina youth consumers do not have positive conceptions on pink tax except that in the lens of producers, the practice is advantageous for business owners to earn higher profit for they recognize the purchasing power of women, which means that women tend to buy more products which are pink even though they are priced higher. Pink products with pink tax also make it easier for them to recognize what are products marketed for them. Contrarily, they viewed the pink tax as a method that promotes inequality, discrimination and unfairness towards women. They also view the pink tax as a deceptive and manipulative method of business owners.

3.5 Feelings on Pink Tax

To discover the respondents' feelings on the pink tax, the researchers asked: "As a woman, how do you feel after looking at the product prices that seem to be more expensive than men's products which in reality are equal in features and benefits and the only difference is the color?" The table below shows the different feelings Filipina youth consumers gain after encountering pink tax on women's products.

Table 9. Feelings of Filipina Youth Consumers about Pink Tax

Feeling	Frequency
Discouraged	3
Unfair/Unequal/Discriminated	13
Deceived/Taken Advantaged	11
Annoyed/Angry	3

Thirteen (13) respondents emphasized that pink tax caused by pink marketing strategy feels unfair or unequal to men. One respondent wrote, "It feels unfair and somehow seems like a ploy to play women, considering that women are the ones meticulous with the things that they buy and apply to themselves." (R22)

Another respondent answered, "[This shows] Inequality. It isn't new to us how society treats women and men differently. Gender-based pricing shouldn't be tolerated in the marketing field. All products with the same features and benefits shouldn't have a label whether it is for men and women." (R23)

Another respondent explained, "It's ironic how society always perceives women as someone weaker and incapable of executing specific jobs/work but, in reality, charge them higher. The industry knows women are capable of purchasing items that they think are necessary for their well-being, so the prejudice that women are weaker than men should be omitted." (R19)

The accounts above support the arguments of Lafferty (2019) and Osario (2019) that the "pink tax" on products aimed at women, which are priced higher than similar products aimed at men, clearly depicts discrimination, specifically gender-based price discrimination.

Eleven (11) respondents agreed that they feel deceived, cheated or taken advantage of by businesses doing the tactic. One stated, "I feel like the market is somehow trying to fool us women to get higher sales because it's really just the same item with the same features, use, and benefits" (R17).

Meanwhile, R18 posited that "I feel as though they are taking my being a woman as an opportunity to make an extra profit, which makes me think that they believe that women can be easily swayed by simply making a product pink and assume that all women like the color pink" (R18).

Another answered, "I feel exploited. It feels like I'm paying double the price for my own femininity" (R27). In relation to this, one respondent feels that the pink tax caused by the pink marketing strategy is misogynistic, sexist, and demeaning. One of them wrote, "It is demeaning, sexist, and somewhat misogynistic for me as a woman. It is clearly shown that we live in a patriarchal world, and they think they can easily exploit women." (R26).

Three (3) respondents emphasized why they were disappointed or discouraged by the pink tax. One of them explained: [Pink tax is] a bit discouraging because of the thought that "how does this actually differ?" one example is clothing, both are used with cloth, regardless of its texture and type, but the question is, how are they different? Both have the same purpose of clothing one's body, and as for me, it makes me think twice if the product is really worth its price knowing it can be bought at a lower cost" (R10).

On the other hand, three (3) respondents feel offended, annoyed, angry, or mad at businesses implementing this tactic. R30 explained, "[I feel] Mad. Like why are feminine products more expensive when they have the same purpose and quality? It should be sold at the same price" (R30) and R5, on the other hand, said, [This form of] Gender-based pricing is frustrating. Maybe I will feel offended and angry because it shows that women are less price-sensitive than men" (R5).

With these findings, the researchers found out that respondent Filipina youth consumers gain negative feelings after encountering pink tax on women's products. Most feel that this kind of tactic shows inequality, unfairness, and discrimination. Additionally, they feel that they are being deceived, ripped off, and taken advantage of by the companies which incorporate pink tax into their pink marketing, while some feel offended, angry, and discouraged.

Realizations on Pink Tax

To gain the respondents' realizations on pink tax, the researchers asked: "What have you realized about pink tax caused by pink marketing strategy?" The table below shows the summary of the various realizations of Filipina youth consumers towards pink tax caused by the pink marketing strategy.

Table 10. Realizations of Filipina Youth Consumers about Pink Tax

Realization	Frequency
Shows Inequality/Unfairness/Discrimination	10
Take advantage women/exploitive/ deceptive	11
Smart/Effective to women	9

Like what most women answered in the preceding question, ten (10) respondents realized that the pink tax caused by the pink marketing strategy in women's products showcases inequality, unfairness, and discrimination toward women.

R13 emphasized that "It's a form of discrimination to women as we are asked to pay more for the same product when we could save or spend that excess money for something else." The claim of R13 likewise reinforces the existing findings of Lafferty (2019), which were explained before. In addition, R2 said, "This ploy should be put to an end since it is inappropriate for it shows inequality, especially nowadays, that the society is trying to instil in the minds of the people different types of social construct and how it negatively affects how the society thinks. Also, it is inappropriate since more people are becoming aware of this ploy" (R2).

In connection with inequality or unfairness, R3 interpreted the pink tax as a form of gender conformity in society. She said, "I realized that this shows inequality and is very stereotypical. I realized that people tend to buy products that are labeled as their gender, confirming the fact of gender conformity. I buy products even though I see them more expensive than those of men because growing up; I was shown that pink is for girls. Thus, I will buy those products which are pink or labeled for women. I do not conform; many may see me as deviant and judge me." This claim confirms the Gender Schema Theory by Sandra Bem (1981, 1983, 1985) in relation to Color Theory. Also, the account above supports the report of the United States Congress Joint Economic Committee (2016), citing Duesterhaus, Grauerholz, Weichsel and Guittar (2011), the reason women are still buying those products with pink tax is for them to meet the cultural expectations about gender which is evident in products and services for which their use is easily noticed.

Another eleven (11) respondents realized that the pink tax takes advantage of women and is exploitative and deceptive. R11 pointed out that it is already an outdated strategy. She said, "[I realized that it is] disrespectful and insensitive because it takes advantage of women. I find it inappropriate. It is an outdated strategy. They make women feel like the things are "specially" made for them, why would something need to be specially made for women? (R11).

The claims above anchor respondents' realizations of the capacity of businesses in manipulating the purchasing power of women in which they use pink color to attract more customers. Due to the analogy of pink to women (LoBue & Deloache,2011), they use pink tax to gain more profit or increase sales. This explanation is also why the pink tax is smart and effective, as the nine (9) respondents realized. R15 claimed, "For business owners, it is a good business strategy, but for consumers, it is disheartening since they use women's preference to lure them into buying a more expensive product. (R15)

In addition, R19 emphasized that businesses play with the purchasing power of women, but she did not agree that it is still right, saying, "I think that this may be a psychological thing too, and businesses use this purchasing power to drive sales, most especially when women are attracted to colorful and aesthetically pleasing items. Either way, it doesn't sit right with me" (R19). On the other hand, R12 posited that the pink tax is effective because pink for girls is a norm in the society, "It is effective for businesses as the color pink representing femininity is very much embedded in societal norms" (R12).

Meanwhile, R7 said, [I realized] that it is hard to achieve equality when this marketing ploy is advocating [advocated] otherwise, but we can't all blame the marketers or business owners because, since it is affective and effective, it's good for the business. (R7).

The findings above show that the respondent Filipina Youth Consumers take pink tax negatively because it puts women at a disadvantage as consumers, for they find it unfair and manipulative. This affirms the study of Maloney (2016) that concluded not

only do women experience economic disadvantage in earnings, but they also face another obstacle in terms of paying higher for women's products as a consumer. However, many justified that the pink tax is not a problem since it is only a business strategy to drive sales, and therefore, companies are not at fault for it is up to women what to buy and not.

3.6 Response to Pink Tax

To discover how the respondents would respond to the pink tax, the researchers asked: "As the pink tax is not yet recognized in the Philippines, how would you respond to this method?" The table below shows the summary of the various responses of Filipina Youth Consumers.

Table 11. Response of Respondent Filipina Youth Consumers to Pink Tax

Response	Frequency
Educate others/ Bring awareness	15
Be a smart consumer/ Explore other options	8
Will not promote/support/boycott	5
Address to the authorities	2

Fifteen (15) respondents, or half of the total, declared that they would educate or bring awareness to others about what the pink tax is all about.

R10, like most of the explanations of the respondents, explained that even small actions, like educating people, will have an impact because the knowledge will eventually spread by word-of-mouth. She wrote, "despite having only a brief idea, it is good to educate people as early as now on how this matter works and how it can affect the industry-concerned and the whole county as well. all starts from small; spreading the word and knowledge will make people conscious and alert of their buying schemes." (R10)

In addition, R13 recognizes that she will join petitions if there would be and also motivate the people she will educate to join as well. She said, "I will educate others. If there will be a petition to not let the pink tax be recognized in the Philippines, I'd be happier to support it and encourage those who I educated to join the petition to stop it from being implemented" (R13).

Meanwhile, one respondent emphasized that to attain change, one must bring awareness. She suggested, "Being one of the developing countries, we must be the start of change for us to attain change. The profound shift of the world aiming for gender equality and ending all forms of discrimination, especially for women, can be achieved through awareness and a better approach to addressing this issue." (R14)

On the other hand, eight (8) respondents expressed that they would be a better and smart consumers if they explored other options. One respondent said, "Check the products I already have and compare them once I restock or buy them again at stores to see the difference or to be more informed about my purchases" (R12). Meanwhile, R25 said, "I will look now for alternatives that promote equality, and I will read more about pink tax so that I know what I should consider buying" (R25).

Five (5) respondents affirmed that they would not support products that employ pink tax and will boycott those companies who use the tactic. R2 confirmed by saying, "I won't buy products from the brands which employ this kind of marketing strategy" (R3).

Similarly, R8 also stated, "As much as possible, I will try to not buy and support the products that I know are using pink tax in their pink marketing strategy" (R8), and R11 also agrees, saying, "I will not support and try to boycott [companies using pink tax]. I don't think the Philippines needs that pink tax. Filipinos are quite price-sensitive unless you have a lot of money" (R11).

R9 viewed that she would boycott those who employ pink tax, and her reason focused on empathy for women. She said, "Boycott the companies using this strategy because if they cannot consider women, all will be left is a business strategy, and there would be no empathy" (R9).

Two (2) respondents answered that they addressed the matter to the authorities.

The accounts above show that as the pink tax is not yet recognized in the Philippines, most respondent Filipina Youth Consumers will try to respond by educating other people, bringing awareness, being a smarter consumers, and not supporting businesses that

apply pink tax in their pink products. Some respondents believed that they would try to address the matter with the proper authorities.

3.7 Addressing Pink Tax

To discover if respondents think that the pink tax caused by pink marketing should be addressed, the researchers asked: “Do you think that this is a problem that should be addressed? Tell us why or why not.” The table below shows how many agreed, disagreed, and were not sure if it should be addressed.

Table 12. Respondent Filipina Youth Consumers view if Pink Tax should be Addressed

Answer	Frequency
Yes	29
No	1

The table below is the summary of answers of the twenty-nine (29) respondents who agreed that the pink tax should be addressed.

Table 13. Why Pink Tax should be Addressed

Answer	Frequency
Form of gender inequality/ discrimination/ unfairness/	22
Awareness for women	2
Takes advantage of women/ deceives women/	6

More than half, twenty-two (22) respondents, expressed that the pink tax should be addressed because they find a pink tax as a form of gender inequality, discrimination, and unfairness. Most focused their answer on fighting for equal rights.

R7 explained, “Living in a society wherein everybody is fighting for equal rights, we should continue fighting, especially women; the pink tax falls under an aspect in which women are being discriminated against a product that contains the same ingredients for both men and women. Addressing this issue brings more awareness as it is socially inclined to what is happening right now” (R7).

On the same mindset, R9 said, “Because it’s giving a negative impact to the way our society thinks. Since I find it as a form of gender inequality, this pink ploy tax couldn’t just ruin many years of fighting gender inequality, gender color stereotypes and others” (R9).

Four (4) in this set of respondents directed their answer to economic inequality. R8 said, “It’s downright unjust to let women pay more for products that are essentially functioning the same. Women should be treated with fairness and equality. This only proves that aside from income, women are also disadvantaged as a consumer because they pay more unnoticeably” (R8).

R13 added, “All genders should be given the same accessibility of the same price for the products they want to purchase as both genders have needs and needing to pay more for something that all people need is just unfair and unjust” (R13).

Also, R27 claimed, “Although the issue is not yet a hot topic in the country, such issues can subconsciously normalize gender and pay inequality in the society” (R27). Then, R28 said, “It should be addressed because a lot of studies have shown that women are generally paid less than men when it comes to their income; why must they carry the burden of paying more for the exact same product?” (R28).

The responses of R8, R13, R27, and R28 supported the study of Maloney (2016) that aside from the “gender pay gap” (Proctor, Semega & Koolar, 2016), women are at a disadvantage as consumers because they pay pink tax (Maloney, 2016).

The answer of R10, to quote, "first, our generation screams equality and breaking down stereotypes. This kind of concept only allows gender-biases to take place in the industry. Second, this generation also is expensive. All services are expensive, and all access to basic needs is demanding and expensive. If products are also costly just because of gender-based norms, we are just contributing to bringing down our own country's economy, meaning products or any services that are necessary have to be accessible not only to riches but to the masses, by analogy, not only for men, but all must be accessible to women also. Companies lure women to pay more so that it will look like they can afford more. Women pay so that it will look like they can afford more expensive things" (R10) relates to the discussion of Atkin (2018) and Duesterhaus, Grauerholz, Weichsel and Guittar (2011) that socio-economic groupings play a part in pink tax because besides women 'doing gender', they also 'do social class' in which women are paid more for certain products and services to portray a higher social class, and those who cannot afford to pay the pink tax tend to purchase cheaper products and services like haircut services, generic brands, and dry clean.

On the other hand, six (6) respondents reasoned that the pink tax should be addressed because companies take advantage of women, deceive them, and in some cases, exploit them. R20 noted, "I think recognizing this problem is a good response to the market's exploitations. I can also see a potential feminist critique against the market's co-opting of femininity for earning capital. If the people recognize what's wrong with the pink tax, then maybe we won't have to tolerate it any longer. It leads to unnecessarily higher-priced feminine products that take advantage of women as consumers" (R20).

R15 emphasized, "It will open the doors for the business owners to make everything they produce has something to do with preferences based on gender. In the long run, more women will become victims of this practice, and more women will be taken advantage of" (R15).

Meanwhile, two (2) respondents answered that addressing the issue will help bring awareness, especially to women. Awareness will help their decision making as a consumer, and their decision to buy might as well affect the application of pink tax by companies. The following were the claims of the respondents on this:

"Because as a consumer, we cannot eliminate this kind of strategy because of how effective it is. what should be done is to be aware and aware of other women and to be a mindful consumer when it comes to resorting to this kind of decision making." (R19)

"An incremental price increase may not seem like an issue, but when you begin computing the amount you've spent because of the pink tax, you will realize that the companies that use this ploy are practically milking us as much as they can without us realizing it. Addressing this problem can help more women be aware of it or rethink their decision in buying products, as well as producers to know that women should be provided with the products we want or need without the unnecessary additional cost" (R18)

On the contrary, only (1) respondent disagreed that the pink tax should be addressed. The sole reason is that the pink tax is a strategy of companies, and it depends on the consumer if they will fall into buying the products that have it.

The accounts above found that most respondent Filipina Youth Consumers agree that the pink tax needs to be addressed, for they find it as a form of gender inequality, unfairness, and discrimination. Also, the pink tax should be addressed because they find it taking advantage of women, and it is time to bring awareness to women about the matter.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

From the given results, the researchers concluded the following:

1. The respondent Filipina youth consumers who are aware of the pink tax know the common concept and definition of the tactic that, similar to the explanation of Fontinelle (2021), is a price discrepancy in products and services marketed to women, especially those in color pink making them cost more than identical or nearly identical versions marketed to men. They knew the concept from social media, school, peers, or different literature. They have observed the practice being applied to various products such as hygiene products or personal products, which was also discussed by Amoros (2019), Ashford (2019), Elliot (2019), Maloney (2016), and Duesterhaus, Grauerholz, Weichsel & Guittar (2011); in school or office supplies as pointed out by Atkin (2018); in children's toys and clothes which were also analyzed by Amoros (2019), Ashford, (2019), Elliot, (2019), and Maloney, (2016); and in healthcare products (Amoros, 2019; Ashford, 2019; Elliot, 2019).
2. They are no longer willing to purchase pink products with pink tax. An important factor for the respondent Filipina Youth Consumers to procure products that apply the pink tax in their pink marketing strategy is (1) the cultural and social norms that they have been accustomed to, which proves that women are being controlled by societal expectations and different norms on gender (Mcgee & Moore, 2014) and the report of United States Congress Joint Economic Committee (2016) citing Duesterhaus, Grauerholz, Weichsel and Guittar (2011), the pink tax is imposed for women who is meeting the cultural expectations about gender which is evident in

products and services for which their use is easily noticed. Another factor that emerged from this study was(2) the quality of the products. Filipina Youth Consumers believe that the more expensive the product is, the better the quality it has.

3. The respondent Filipina youth consumers do not have positive conceptions of the pink tax itself as purchasers. However, if they place themselves in the perspective of producers or manufacturers, the practice is advantageous for business owners to earn higher profit for they recognize the purchasing power of women, which means that women tend to buy more products that are pink even if they are priced higher. Differently, the negative views outweighed the positive ones in the matter of perception as it is viewed to be discriminatory and against equality for all genders, which supports the arguments of Lafferty (2019) and Osario (2019) that the "pink tax" clearly depicts discrimination, specifically gender-based price discrimination.
4. Filipina youth consumers perceived pink tax as a way of deceiving and exploiting consumers by the companies incorporating pink tax into their pink marketing strategy, thereby making them feel discouraged and taken advantage of. The Filipina youth consumers will respond by educating others, raising awareness, and becoming smarter consumers. They also think that the pink tax needs to be addressed as this may escalate further in the future and because they see it as a way to take advantage of them and as a form of gender inequality and discrimination against women.

The researchers recommend the following:

1. Based on the limitations of the current study, it is evident that further research is needed to fully examine the awareness, driving factors, and overall perception of Filipina Youth Consumers on pink tax caused by pink marketing strategy especially using respondents who do not have an idea at all.
2. Because of time constraints, the current study was unable to address all questions posed by previous literature. Thus, future research should be built from this research and other existing literature to answer and investigate the blind and blank spots of the previous literature. This would allow future researchers to gain a better understanding of the nuances of participants' experiences when buying such products with pink tax. Research on the same matter but involving marketing and production costs, and pink tax on services like laundry and haircut are also recommended.
3. Also, the researchers recommend the following to the different potential beneficiaries: Women should be wise when buying pink products, especially the products that have obvious pink tax. They should be aware by doing some research on how pink tax and pink marketing works. Companies that employ pink tax in their pricing should be aware of how this would affect their consumers, most especially women. At the end of the day, they are the ones that will suffer if this practice continues because if consumers are already aware of the strategy, they will resort to finding alternatives, especially because more than half of the population in the Philippines are middle-class workers and it is easy for them to avoid products that cost too much.
4. The researchers also recommend that the government should also study the matter to promote the value of their women citizens as consumers and contributors to the economy. They can use this research for policymaking or as a reference to review existing laws for improvement.

Funding: The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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