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IMPACT OF SALES PROMOTION ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR: A CASE OF MODERN TRADE, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Rapidly changing market conditions and the competitiveness of market players is forcing the "all what you need one roof retail concept" businesses to look for various tactics to attract as well as retain customers through a number of sale promotion strategies. For that matter, this study tests the impact of various sale promotion strategies and its impact of consumer buying behavior. In order to do so, a quantitative research strategy has been followed, where the sample of 297 was collected by selecting walk-in customers at 25 supermarkets/hypermarkets in Lahore (Pakistan). Novelty of this study is the fact that, Modern Trade (MT) segment is being targeted only, MT refers to those retail stores who have an area of at least 1 Kannal (5445 sqft), have their own electronic billing system and trolley system. MT is further categorized in to Local Modern Trade (LMT) and International Modern Trade (IMT). Analysis through correlation and regression

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modeling help to conclude that buy one get one free, price discounts and coupons are positively related with consumer buying behavior, whereas, free samples and bonus packs are not significantly related with the dependent variable.

Keywords: Sales Promotion, Consumer Buying Behavior, Modern Trade, Price Discounts, Marketing.

Introduction

The concept of globalization and global markets has created rivalry among competitors who are using various tactics to boost their sales. Sales promotion has become one of the most powerful tools for marketers to change the perception of buyers towards a brand and to stimulate purchase interest. As market competition increases, marketers have to adopt various strategic techniques to make their products stand out as well as to attract more customers. According to Quelch (1989), in this era of globalization, marketers extensively use various form of sales promotions to make their place in the market because it is seen that sales promotion has a significant impact on consumer's buying decision (Blattberg, Eppen, and Lie-berman2010; Kinberg, Rao, and Shakun 1974).

Although sales promotion strategy is relatively old tactic adopted by marketers but still it is considered to be one of the competitive strategies that help marketers to grab the attention of masses in less time, making people aware of their brands, quickly increase sales as well as market share (Bemmaor & Mouchoux, 1992). Mostly it is observed that when customers see promotions, they buy more than the demand because the promotion encourages them to believe that they could gain more value than before. A study by Lau et al. (2006) has shown that buying behavior of brand switchers is influenced the most due to sales promotion. Some studies have also shown that sales promotion not only has a quick impact for a short period but also it is likely that consumers repeat purchases if they are satisfied with the brand that is being promoted; on the other hand, even after the promotion is over, there are some customers who are brand conscious and believe that products sold on promotion are usually low in quality and hence they stick to their old brand showing loyalty to towards it (Peattie & Peattie, 2009).

Modern trade (MT) is the term that is commonly used in sales and marketing field and it refers to supermarkets and hypermarkets that trade Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG). The need of MTwas developed when people thought to have large variety of products and services under one roof that would be easily accessible to them and they would not have to go to different markets to buy different types of products.MT covers two types of trades i.e. Local Modern Trade (LMT) and International Modern Trade (IMT). LMT means those supermarkets that could have many chains of stores in a single city situated in different areas and its head office is located in the same country where the supermarket is located. In terms of area, LMT should cover an area of at

least 1 Kanal=5445 sq. ft, it has a trolley system for consumers and electronic billing system. Some common LMTs in Pakistan are Al-Fatah, Euro store and HKB. IMT on the other hand are same as LMTs but are international chains. Some famous IMTs in Pakistan are Hyperstar and Metro.

MT today has created more competition among different brands and therefore new strategies are adopted by brands frequently to make their place in the market. Sales promotion is frequently used marketing tool by marketers such as buy one get one free, price reductions, coupon or rebate and others like free samples & bonus pack (Shamout, 2016). According to Kotler (2008), it has now become a challenge for marketers to manage their own and their stake holder's investments wisely so that they gain maximum profit as well as increased market share because it has become hard for them to decide that either they should focus and invest on long term benefits such as customer loyalty or they should focus on short term benefits e.g. drastic increase in sales and increase in customers for a shorter period of time by giving sales promotions and not gaining much profit.

The increasingly harsh challenges of market have made it immense difficult for the organizations to give sales promotions and at the same time maintain profitability and a satisfactory return on investment to their stakeholders. This study aims to identify how strongly different types of sales promotion influence consumers buying decision and could be profitable for the marketers in super markets of Pakistan.

Study Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to identify the impact of various types of sales promotion on consumer buying behavior in MT super markets of Pakistan.

- To identify the impact of price reduction on consumer buying behavior in super markets of Pakistan
- To examine if "Buy One Get One Free" (BOGOF) offer has influence on consumer buying behavior in super markets of Pakistan
- To determine the impact of coupons on consumer buying behavior in super markets of Pakistan
- To find out the influence of free samples on consumer buying behavior in super markets of Pakistan
- To identify the impact of bonus pack on consumer buying behavior in super markets of Pakistan
- To identify which of the aforementioned strategies influences consumer buying behavior the most

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Significance

The focus of this research is on various types of sales promotion tools that are being used in connection with consumer buying behavior in the MT super markets of Pakistan. The study, addresses how people perceive different sales promotions and react to them by taking impulsive decisions and whether or not it changes their views about the promoted brand. Furthermore, this research also intends to find out what sales strategy marketers must adopt not only to grab customer's attention and for the promotion of their brand but to gain maximum profit and increase sales. The study is first of its kind in the area of MT in the specific context of Pakistani supermarkets. This study introduces to the literature the terminology used in the Pakistani context to refer to a certain type of market. Lastly, it also helps in identifying the techniques that may affect the consumer buying behavior more.

Referring to the theoretical underpinnings of this research, there are several theories that find basis of the variables in this study, some of the relevant have been discussed. Firstly, Theory of Reasoned Action (Weddle & Bettman, 1974), posit that consumers are rational beings, whose actions are based on self-interests whereas, Sawyer and Dickson (1984) discuss a theory of promotion as "non-cognitive theories of induced behavior." Researchers termed this theory as "operant conditioning" Peter and Nord (1982) viewed promotions as remunerations or fortifications. Promotions have been perceived as rewards for some purchase. Under operant conditioning theory, non-monetary promotions can be the best tool to alter or positively affect the consumer's behavior.

Furthermore, Tobacyk and Sharma (2015) referring to Psychoanalytical Theory (Freud, 1953), strengthen the view of sales promotion with the fact that decision makers consciously hit the unconsciousness of people which in turn forces them to act in line with decision makers, same happens in case of sale promotions when retailers introduce several discounts in order to either increase sale revenues or liquidation of redundant stock.

Literature Review

Sales promotion is one of the essential parts of a promotional mix, and promotion is one of the main components of "marketing mix". According to Kotler et al. (2013), sales promotion is core component in market arena, contains motivational tools, generally for a short period of time, designed to stimulate faster or excessive purchase of certain products or services by consumers or the trade. This leads to consumer's impulse decision to buy that product or service. Muruganantham and Bhakat (2013) defined the impulse purchase as "consumer buying a product with little or no planning after the effect of an unexpected, influential urge". Sales promotion is classified as one of the marketing tools that are used in appealing the consideration of the customer (Bhandari, 2014). Retail promotions are used by retailers in modern trade to increase sales to consumers such as displays and momentary price reductions. Promotions enhance

purchase and immense percentage of retail sales are made due to promotions (Gedenk et al., 2006).

Promotion inspires buying decisions of customers and has a direct impact on their behavior. According to Ramaya and Ali (2016), consumer observes the prices of commodities and takes the decision about the commodities that whether it should be consumed. Every now and then, consumers need to be motivated to buy now rather than in future, to remind them to prefer particular product over competitor's product, and to buy more rather than less (Abdul, 2007). Sales promotion techniques can be categorized into two components i.e. price and non-price based but usually impact of price-based promotions is seen on the consumer buying behavior. Some of the price-based promotions are coupons, reimbursements, rebate, and temporary price discounts (Nagadeepa et al., 2015).

It is seen that marketers are spending more of their promotional spending on consumer and trade promotions rather than spending on mass media promotion because they have observed that these types of promotions directly impact consumer buying behavior and influence them to take impulsive decisions to buy more than they need (Belch and Belch, 2013). Retailers in present times finance most of their marketing budget into "sales promotion" because its effect is felt instantly, hence helping in achieving the temporary targets (Syeda and Sadia, 2011).

According to Samand Buabeng (2011), mostly sales promotion is done to introduce new product, to attract new customers, persuade existing customers to buy more, to make greater sales even in the off season or to remain competitive among others. Chandon, Wansink and Laurent (2000) defined six different types of benefits that customers experience due to sales promotions: "money saving, test quality, ease to buy, entertainment, value expression and exploration". Consideration about buyer's value in sales promotions helps to recognize their purchase intents (Nema, Nagar & Shah, 2012).

Free Samples is a technique to present small amount of goods to the people without any charges, to reinforce purchase decision so the customers can be able to test or try the product and to convince them to become familiar with that product rather than being un aware of it, hence it can affect consumer's buying behavior sooner or later (Kardes,1999; Pramataris, 2001). Clow and Baack (2007) explained "free sample" technique as a procedure to encourage consumers to experience new products that have been recently launched and which they haven't tried yet. Ndubisi and Chiew (2006) acknowledged that consumer buying behavior is prominently influenced by free samples technique. Objective of giving free samples is to stimulate consumer's trial (Kotler etal., 2013).

Blattberg and Scott (1990) elaborated that "coupon" offers a permit that provides a lessen price during purchase of the product. Coupons are one of the most used tools by retailers to arouse consumers by giving them a ticket or receipt that will allow the customer to buy the products in future at a discounted price, for example, some percentage of reduction from the retail price like

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\$ 10 per pack (Fill, 2002; Ndubisi & Chew, 2006).In another study, Gilbert and Jackaria's (2002) stated that "coupon promotions" have insignificant impact on product' volume a consumer purchased. Coupons are used by retailers and manufactures to encourage consumers in the form of discounts/incentives to escalate sales (Ndubisi & Chew, 2006).

As per Fill (2002), "discounts" or price reduction is a tactic where goods or services are offered in a lesser price to the consumers, usually applied in supermarkets. "Price discount" is the reduced price for a quantity of the product that had higher price earlier or increase the quantity of the product by keeping price same, thereby increasing value and creating a monetary benefit to buy at low price (Raghubir & Corfman, 1999). Another study concluded that customers are more fascinated to price discount promotions. Other studies found that discounts in prices of product (cut off prices) plays an important role in inspiring new customers' behaviors and urging them to try it (Brandweek, 1994; Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2001;Fill, 2002; Shimp, 2003). People who are occasional buyers look forward for some discounted price products or buy the same brand when it is sold on the seasonal discounted price rather than buying them during the season on the original price (Ehrenberg et al., 1994). Other studies quoted that price discount is related with some other promotion tools in a way that they are influencing each other pursuing consumers to purchase the product, such as samples and coupons (Krishna & Zhang, 1999; Huff & Alden, 1998; Gilbert & Jackaria, 2002; Mela et al., 1997).

As stated by Li, Sun & Wang (2007) that "buy one get one free" sales promotion assists retailers to liquidate floor stocks more quickly. Apart from that, this strategy is used by supermarkets due to many reasons to clear stocks before it reaches its expiry on the basis of first in first out (FIFO) to increase sales, to make a place of a new product in the minds of consumers, to maintain customer's loyalty, to make consumers to switch from their previous brand and try a new one offered in less price or greater in value. Moreover, Sinha and Smith (2000) described "buy one get one free" as one of the often used sales promotion tools, which means if a customer purchases a product, he or she will get another similar product for no price, customers value such offers more as they think that they will get another product for free which makes them to think they are getting greater value as compared to the price they are paying for it. Therefore, customers make impulse decisions to buy such deals.

"Bonus packs" are also a common form of sales promotion that offers extra quantity of product with no rise in the price of product for example "30% extra free". Although it is a very common sales technique used by the retailers to promote their products however it is found that when consumers are offered extra quantity aggressively e.g. "70% extra" and no increase in the price, the customer doubt products credibility and are less attracted towards such promotions.

As consumer behavior is the behavior of consumer towards making a purchase decision to fulfill their needs and wants (Khaniwale, 2015). This behavior involves how a consumer chooses any products and services, and their perceptions and decision towards a purchase (Wai & Osman,

2017). Nagadeepa et al. (2015) stated that sales promotion has a great impact on consumer buying behavior which reinforces them to make an impulse purchase resulting in greater sales of the product; this can lead to brand switching consumer's behavior.

Brand loyalty is the trustworthiness of consumers towards the brand they use. They regard their brand and think that it provides them high quality and maximum value according to its worth.

Brand loyalty is further categorized into three components regarding behavioral aspect including "primary behavior, secondary level behavior and re-buy intention". Primary behavior is the behavior to purchase a product again or service in future, whereas "secondary level behavior" is related to other positive behaviors such as word of mouth advocacy and loyalty; however, "rebuy intention" exhibits consumer willingness to buy or not to buy the product or service in upcoming time (Jones & Sasser, 1995; Chen, Chen & Hsieh, 2007; Dick, Alan & Basu, 1994).

Based on literature review, researchers have developed the following hypotheses to study the impact and significance of sale promotional tools on Consumer Buying Behavior (CBB);

*H*₁: BOGOF has a positive influence on CBB during sales promotions

H₂: Price Discounts have a positive influence on CBB during sales promotions

H₃: Coupons have a positive influence on CBB during sales promotions

H₄: Free samples have a positive influence on CBB during sales promotions

 H_5 : Bonus packs have a positive influence on CBB during sales promotions

Methodology

The aim of this research is to study the relation between different types of sales promotions and the buying behavior of consumers. This research is descriptive in nature and follows a quantitative research strategy in order to collect data and test the hypotheses developed on the basis on literature reviewed. Dependent variable for this research is the Consumer Buying Behavior whereas the independent variables include "buy-one get-one free, price discounts, coupons, free samples and bonus packs".

The questionnaire was developed by researchers in the light of available instruments and the study objectives. It was divided into three parts; the first part consisted of the demographical information of respondents, the second part contained dependent variable "Consumer Buying Behavior" was evaluated consisting of 5 items (Bloch et al., 1986).

In the third part all the independent variables i.e. "BOGOF (Gilbert & Jackaria, 2002), Price Discounts (Gilbert & Jackaria, 2002), Coupons (Gilbert & Jackaria, 2002), Free Samples (Heilman et al., 2011) and Bonus Packs (Waani & Tumbuan, 2015)" were measured, where each of these variables consisted of 5 items, whereas Bonus Packs was measured using 4 items. All

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the variables including dependent and independent variables were evaluated on a Likert scale (five-points) ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Moreover, the study is done in a non-contrived environment where individuals are the units of the analysis and the study follows a cross sectional survey research design.

The population of this study includes various international modern trade and local modern trade walk-in adult customers within Lahore zone. Out of this population a sample of 350 walk-in customers was selected. Out of 350 respondents the effective response rate was found to be 300 after omission of questionnaires that either had missing values or were not correctly filled.

In order to analyze data and test the hypotheses, SPSS was used to apply the relevant statistical techniques that are discussed in the next section of this article.

Data Analysis and Findings

This study aims to find relationship between CBB and different types of sales promotions. The structured questionnaires were distributed among 350 walk-in customers of four different international modern trade and local modern trade stores in Lahore and were used for the requirement of collecting primary data.

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach Alpha α value was evaluated for each variable and the following results are found. A Cronbach's α i.e. more than 0.6 is acceptable, which infers that the reliability of the questionnaire is in a satisfactory range (Yang et al., 2011).Value of cronbach's alpha for all variables in this study were within the acceptable range as show in the table given below.

Variable	Cronbach's	Alpha	No. of Items
	Value		
CBB	.611		5
BOGOF	.669		5
PRICE DISC.	.542		5
COUPON	.815		5
FREE SAMPLES	.717		5
BONUS PACKS	.718		4

Table 1. *Reliability Statistic*

Hypothesis Testing

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is used to understand the nature, direction and strength of relationships between two individual variables. If there is correlation between two variables it means that with change in one variable, the other variable also changes.

Table 2

Variable	Consumer Buying Behavior	P-Value			
Buy One Get One Free	0.144**	0.007			
Price Discounts	0.548^{**}	0.001			
Coupons	0.353**	0.000			
Free Samples	0.075	0.100			
Bonus Packs	-0.116	0.460			
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).					

Correlation Analysis for Hypotheses Testing

The correlation coefficient for the first relation in this table is 0.144 which means that buy one get one free has a weak positive relation with consumer buying behavior. This further shows that consumers who shop from modern trade in Pakistan are less but positively influenced when there is buy one get one free promotion on the products. Also, p-value is 0.007 that is less than significance value i.e. 0.05 which means the relationship is statistically significant. Hence, we reject $H_o(r=.144, P=.007)$.

Referring to the second hypothesis, the value of correlation coefficient in table 2 for price discounts and CBB is calculated to be .548 with significance level of 0.01. This shows that a moderate positive relation exists between both variables. This further show that consumers that buy from modern trade of Pakistan are much inclined towards price discounts. The p-value is 0.001which is less than significance (alpha) value i.e. 0.05 which means the relationship is statically significant. Hence we reject $H_o(r=.548, P=.001)$.

The third correlation hypothesis is about Coupons and Consumer Buying Behavior. Table 2 shows that a moderate and positive relation between coupon and consumer buying behavior with r =0.353. These results show that buying behavior of consumers of Pakistan is moderately impacted when they are offered coupons while buying from modern trade. As the p-value is .000 that is less than the significance value i.e. 0.05 we can say that the relation between the two variables is statically significant, hence we reject $H_o(r=.353, P=.000)$

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Moving on to the fourth hypotheses, the value of r for this relation is .075 which means that free samples has almost no relation with consumer buying behavior i.e. consumers who shop from modern trade in Pakistan are least likely to be influenced when there are free samples offered with the products as a promotion. As, p-value is 0.100that is greater than significance value i.e. 0.05 which means the relationship is statically significant. Hence, we accept $H_o(r=.075, P=.100)$.

The correlation coefficient for the last hypothesis tested using correlation is negative, showing a weak and negative relationship of bonus packs with consumer buying behavior. It means that consumers of Pakistan have a negative impact of bonus packs while buying from modern trade. As p-value is 0.460 that is greater than the significance value i.e. 0.05 it means that the relation between bonus packs and consumer buying behavior is statistically insignificant, hence H_0 is accepted.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is done to study the prediction of independent variables towards dependent variable. Here in table 3, the value of R square =.129 shows how much independent variables (i.e. BOGOF, price discounts, coupons and free samples) are influencing the dependent variable i.e. consumer buying behavior. As from the table 3, all the independent variables of this study have influence of only 12.9 % on the dependent variable (consumer buying behavior).

Table 3							
Model Sum	ımary						
Model	R	R	Adjusted R	Std.	Error	of	the
		Square	Square	Estim	ate		
1	.359 ^a	.129	.113	.559			

As per table 4, ANOVA in this research represents that value of significance of the model is .000 which is less than the level of significance that is 0.05. This represents, that the overall model of regression is statistically significant and is a good fit for the data.

Table 4 ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of	Df	Mean	F	Sig.
		Squares		Square		
1	Regressio	12.646	5	2.529	8.086	$.000^{b}$
	n					
	Residual	85.710	274	.313		
	Total	98.357	279			
a. "Dependent Variable: Consumer_Buying_Behavior"						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Bonus_Packs, Coupon, Price_Discount, Free_Samples, BOGOF						

Та	able 5				
Ca	pefficients				
Model		Unstandardi	ized	Standardized	
		Coefficients		Coefficients	
		В	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	1.557*	.196		
	BOGOF	.005*	.055	.006	
	Price	.106*	.048	.143	
	Discount				
	Coupon	.211*	.043	.296	
	Free Samples	.004	.051	.005	
	Bonus Packs	056	.055	069	

*B statistically significant

In table 4, the significance values for each independent variable determines its impacton the dependent variable i.e. CBB. The independent variables are represented for example; BOGOF as X_1 , price discounts as X_2 , Coupons as X_3 , free samples as X_4 and bonus packs as X_5 . Researchers considered only statistically significant variables while developing the regression equation. Regression equation that is developed is shown as:

$Y{=}1.557{+}0.005X_1{+}0.106X_2{+}0.211X_3$

Discussion and Conclusion

This study is conducted in Local Modern Trade and International Modern trade segment of Lahore, Pakistan to observe the behavior of buyers in connection with various sale promotion techniques. Both male and female are the respondents of the research and the sample size of 350 is taken to collect the data for primary research, however, an effective response rate of 85% was attained.

According to the demographic information collected by the researchers, it is found that most of the respondents were young people falling in the age bracket of 20 to 24 years. Therefore, the retailers should not ignore the young consumer preferences and should focus more on their purchase behaviors. The family income range of most of the respondents was between PKR 30,000 to 60,000 this means that most of the customers that buy from LMT and IMT of Lahore fall in the middle class range. The study also revealed that all of the discussed promotional tools play an important role in motivating consumers to purchase the product during sales promotion except for bonus packs and free samples.

Apparently, a negative perception is associated with bonus packs, as consumers may sometimes perceive that the product being offered has a compromised quality. Consumers also think that

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retailers give bonus pack offering on the products that are not highly demanded and when strong competitors are there to offer the same kind of the product in better quality.

This study also shows that these five types of sale promotions that are the independent variables are influencing the consumer buying behavior which is the dependent variable to up to 12.9% and this influence on buying behavior of the consumer is mainly because of price discounts that is about 10.6% and then because of coupons as they contribute about 21.1% in influencing consumers behavior, lastly, BOGOF plays a 0.5% role or variation in CBB. This shows that people of Pakistan are attracted when price discounts are offered to them. This could be because they think they are getting a good value for money as they save the money by purchasing discounted products. This promotional technique could also be helpful to retain the loyal customers and attract the new customers for the retailers. It has been seen in many cases that price discounts significantly affects consumer buying behavior and has shown strong positive relationship leaving all other sale promotions behind (Shamout, 2016). Moreover, coupons have also been positively associated in many studies as highlighted in literature and been placed second as far as significant positive relation with consumer buying behavior is concerned (Yin-Fah et al., 2011).

In a nutshell, it has been concluded that it is not necessary that every sales promotion technique influences the customers in a positive way and not all the promotional tools influence the customers equally. Some consumers consider sales promotion as an opportunity that they should avail while others may think it as a low-quality product that is being sold by offering promotions. One thing should be kept in mind that these findings are applicable on Modern Trade stores only and has nothing to do with other retailers.

Limitations

As this research paper provides important understanding about sales promotional tools and its impact on consumer buying behavior in retail sector, however, it also has some limitations. Current study emphasized only on high business retail sector that are LMT and IMT of Lahore, Pakistan to check the relation of sales promotion on CBB. The sample drawn from the population represented the behavior of the people of Lahore and not the other cities or areas of the country where standard of living would be different, also consumer's awareness towards brand can be different in other areas. Moreover, sample size can be increased and demographics based comparative study can be conducted in future.

Managerial Implications

The results of the study show that by choosing the appropriate blend of promotional techniques, retailers can increase the sales of the company. Retailers should know their customer preferences and purchase behavior before offering any type of sales promotion by conducting a research in

their targeted area. This will result in gaining loyalty of customers and help retailers to gain maximum short-term and long-term profits. Besides that, retailers should focus more on those promotional tools that have greater positive influence on the consumers as this study shows that price discounts and coupons have the greatest impact on consumer buying behavior as compared to any other promotional technique.

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