

South African Consumers' Views and Responses to Sales Promotions

Amarentia Thérèse Roux

Tshwane University of Technology, Faculty of Management Science, Department Marketing, Logistics and Sport Management, Staatsartillerie Road, Pretoria Campus, Bldg 30: 4-32, South Africa

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ABSTRACT The decrease in the effectiveness of traditional advertising media to create brand differentiation and changes in consumers' buying behaviour has resulted in greater attention being paid to sales promotion. However, there has been limited prior research on sales promotions – from an emerging consumer perspective. Consequently, the present study seeks to acquire insight into the perceived value and response towards sales promotions – by conducting a survey amongst a sample of 600 South African consumers. The results have revealed that utilitarian benefits are regarded as being relatively less important than the hedonic benefits enjoyed. Within the utilitarian dimension, the value offered is regarded as most important; while value expression is considered to be more important within the hedonic dimension. Consumers prefer to be offered sales promotions in the following categories: food/groceries, personal care products/toiletries, and alcoholic beverages. Traditional advertising media, outdoor advertising and mall-media advertising are still preferred as communication methods for sales promotions, rather than online-media and social media. A significant proportion of the respondents believe that sales promotions frequently influence their decision-making. Different sales-promotion techniques are associated with specific buying behaviours. Stockpiling is associated with bonus offerings; while brand switching is associated with coupons, free samples and point-of-sale displays. Product trials seem to be most associated with point-of-sale displays and free samples. The empirical results provide insights into the development of sales-promotion strategies to successfully enhance consumers' perceived value, and to induce a positive response.

INTRODUCTION

The increased use of alternative media, including sales promotions across the globe, is more than just a passing trend. A decade ago, Tustin (2004) had already reported on the rapid increase in the expenditure on promotions, relative to traditional advertising in all sectors in South Africa. In the United States of America, the total promotional expenditure across all product categories has exceeded the spending on traditional media expenditure for the past five years (Promotion Marketing Association of the USA 2014). Most of the companies in Australia have by now allocated between 20-30% of their marketing budgets to promotional techniques, with more than 20% of them devoting almost

half of their annual marketing budget to these areas (Australian Promotional Marketing Association 2014). The present paper focuses on consumer-oriented sales promotions, which are incentives that are offered directly to final consumers, in order to assist them to accelerate their decision-making processes.

Given the wide spread use of sales promotions, and the huge amount of money spent on them, marketers and academics have a great interest in understanding how consumers react to such promotions. Some researchers have explored what consumers regard as important, when assessing the value of sales-promotion activities (Chandon et al. 2000; Liao et al. 2009; Crespo-Almendros and Del Barrio-García 2014; Kchaou and Amara 2014; Yin and Jin-Song 2014).

Over the past decade, studies on consumers' responses to different types of sales-promotion techniques have been conducted in countries across the globe, such as the United States (Heilman et al. 2011; Kim 2013); the United Kingdom (Gilbert and Jackaria 2002; Heilman et al. 2011; Aydinli et al. 2014); China (Zheng and Kivetz 2009) and Malaysia (Ndubisi and Moi, 2005; Weng and de Run 2013). Nevertheless,

Address for correspondence:
Prof. Amarentia Thérèse Roux,
Associate Professor,
Tshwane University of Technology
Private Bag X68, Pretoria, 0001
Republic of South Africa
Telephone: (+2712) 382 4761
Mobile: +27828262737
Fax: (+2712) 382 5824
E-mail: rouxat@tut.ac.za, rouxat@gmail.com

there is a serious paucity of research on consumers' responses to different sales-promotion techniques and consumers' valuation of sales promotion, from an emerging market context. This study will seek to fill this gap by revealing customers' valuation and responses to the six sales-promotion techniques commonly used in South Africa.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows. Firstly, relevant concepts are discussed in the literature review, in order to contextualise the study. Then, the methodology, the key measures, and the results of the study are described. Next, the findings, limitations and implications for theory and practice are presented.

Consumers' Views on Sales Promotion

The value of sales promotion from the consumers' perspective can be classified as utilitarian or hedonic benefits (Chandon et al. 2000; Liao et al. 2009). When sales promotion helps consumers to increase their acquisition utility (the perceived quality and psychological benefit minus the purchase price), transaction utility (the expected price minus the purchase price) of a purchase, or to enhance the efficiency of the shopping experience, it is regarded as a utilitarian promotion.

Monetary sales-promotion techniques (such as price discounts, coupons, and refund offers) are primarily related to utilitarian benefits (cost-saving, increased quality and convenience), which have an instrumental, functional and cognitive nature. Similarly, when they offer intrinsic stimulation, entertainment, fun and self-satisfaction, sales promotions are regarded as being hedonic.

Non-monetary sales promotion techniques (such as sweepstakes, free gifts and competitions) are related to the hedonic benefits of a non-instrumental, experiential and affective nature; because they are intrinsically rewarding, and are related to experiential emotions, pleasure and self-esteem. Based on this distinction between sales-promotion benefits and the various types of sales-promotion techniques, Chandon et al. (2000) found that monetary promotions provide more utilitarian benefits (savings, higher quality products and improved shopping experiences); whilst non-monetary promotions provide more hedonic benefits (opportunities for value expression, entertainment and exploration). Thus, monetary saving is not the only rea-

son for consumers' responses to sales promotion; but such non-monetary benefits offered by promotions are also important. It is necessary to use both the hedonic benefits and the utilitarian benefits of sales promotion – in order to attract different types of consumers to the point-of-purchase, where products are sold, or to influence their impulses or inclinations towards brands in the stores.

Recently, the focus of research has expanded to include online sales-promotion techniques. Crespo-Almendros and Del Barrio-García (2014) examined the effect of online-sales promotion on brand awareness, by measuring the recall of the product category, the brand and the online promotion itself. They reported that non-monetary online-sales promotion (free gifts) generated the highest level of joint brand and product recall; but monetary promotions (price discounts) achieved a better level of product recall. It was also revealed that when the sales promotion offered sufficient value to attract the consumers' attention to click on the promotional banner, then it resulted in a higher brand recall compared to when the banner was not clicked. Yin and Jin-Song (2014) compared the effects of price discounts and bonus packs on online-impulse buying. Contrary to previous research, it was found that price discounts resulted in a greater impulse to buying intention for hedonic products; while bonus packs were found to be more effective for utilitarian products.

Thus, monetary saving is not the only reason for consumer response to sales promotion; but the non-monetary benefits offered by promotions are also important. It is necessary to use both the hedonic benefits and the utilitarian benefits of sales promotion, in order to attract different types of consumers to the point-of-purchase, where products are sold, or to influence their impulses or inclinations towards brands offered online, or at stores.

Sales Promotion Effects on Consumers' Buying Behaviour

Several international studies have focused on consumers' responses to different types of sales-promotion techniques, and the factors associated with their behavioural intentions. Kchaou and Amara (2014) explored the role of sales promotion to induce specifically pure impulse purchases at hypermarkets in the Republic of

Tunisia in North Africa. Pure impulsive buying, also known as classical impulsive buying, refers to a purchase that intervenes the normal planned shopping pattern of a consumer, because of the desire to escape monotony, or to experience novelty. The consumer does not look for the specific product, but s/he feels a strong emotional desire to buy something immediately.

Liao et al. (2009) compared the different types of sales promotions, in order to determine whether the immediate-reward promotions or delayed-reward promotions evoke different responses to stimulate impulse buying. Reminder-impulsive buying occurs when a trigger, such as a sales promotion, suddenly reminds the consumer that s/he needs a product. There already exists a need for the product; but the sales promotion influences the consumer to seize the opportunity to purchase the product, because they are out of stock back home, or they might need it in the future.

The study reveals that sales-promotion techniques offering instant rewards (such as free samples and bonus packs) result in more reminder-impulse buying or stockpiling, than those offering delayed rewards (such as loyalty rewards, competitions and sweepstakes). Furthermore, hedonic consumers favoured non-monetary-based promotions, rather than monetary-based promotions. However, there was no significant difference between the two types of sales promotions for the more prudent or practical consumers.

Hardesty and Bearden (2003) employed three experimental studies to investigate the effects of promotion-price discounts relative to those of bonus packs across promotional benefit levels. The results suggest that price discounts and bonus packs are valued similarly for both low and moderate promotional benefit levels; but price discounts are preferred to bonus packs, when promotional benefit levels are high. Aydinli et al. (2014) employed the field data from a large daily deal company and four experimental studies, in order to examine the emotional impact of price promotions. The results suggest that price promotions do more than just enticing consumers to accept offers, which they might not otherwise have considered.

It can also lower consumers' motivation to exert mental effort, in which case, purchase decisions are guided less by extensive information processing and more by affective conditioning.

Another experimental study by Zheng and Kivetz (2009) investigated the differential promotion effectiveness on hedonic versus utilitarian products (DVD movies versus ink cartridges; LCD televisions versus desktop computers; Time-Out New York magazine versus Time magazine). The study revealed that consumers find it more difficult to justify spending money on self-indulgent luxuries for themselves; and therefore, they have a stronger need for, and are more sensitive to, sales promotions for these types of products.

In contrast, for utilitarian products, there were no significant differential effects of sales promotion on the likelihood of purchasing the utilitarian product – when this was purchased for oneself, compared with when it was purchased as a gift for others.

Studies investigating consumers' responses to various types of sales promotion suggest that consumers react differently towards different types of sale-promotion techniques. Yang, Cheung et al. (2010) considered the sales-promotion techniques employed by cosmetic- and toiletry retailers in Hong Kong. It was observed that consumers preferred sales-promotion techniques offering instant awards, such as price-packs and premiums or bonus packs. They suggested that this was a result of the contemporary trend of consumers, who have less time and inclination to wait longer for delayed-reward sales-promotion techniques, such as contests and competitions. Surprisingly, younger and singles consumer segments were more prepared to accept delayed-reward sales-promotion techniques than were older or married consumers, who preferred instant-reward sales-promotion techniques. Lower-income and family-oriented consumers also preferred sales-promotion techniques that offered them instant gratification.

Kim (2013) explored how the relative effectiveness of immediate- versus delayed-reward sales-promotion techniques are influenced by variety-seeking versus inertial tendencies. The findings demonstrated how a variety-seeking environment, where the consumer is not highly involved with the purchase, and there are significant brand differences, activates the risk-taking consumers, which, in turn, render a delayed promotion relatively more attractive.

Weng and de Run (2013) explored the effects of Malaysian consumers' sales-promotion preferences on their overall behavioural intention

and purchase satisfaction. They found that sales-promotion preferences have a significant impact on consumers' behavioural intentions and purchase satisfaction – for all the different types of consumer products (convenience, shopping, specialty/luxury and unsought product) included in their study.

Ndubisi and Moi (2005) assessed the impact of five different sales-promotion techniques on consumer-purchase behaviour in Malaysia: coupons, discounts, samples, bonus packs, and in-store displays. They found that free samples, price discounts, in-store displays, and bonus packs are associated with product trials; while coupons do not have any significant effect on product trials. It was also confirmed that trials determine repurchase behaviour; and they mediate in the relationship between sales promotions and repurchasing.

Heilman et al. (2011) confirmed the efficacy of free samples in their study on the impact of in-store sample promotions of food products on consumer trials and purchasing behaviour. Their findings suggest that sampling is very effective in inducing trial and brand switching, especially amongst less-educated consumers. Interactions with promoters distributing the sample and other consumers participating in the sales-promotion techniques appear to further increase purchases after sampling.

Contrary to the above study, there is the study of Gilbert and Jackaria (2002) on the relationship between four specific sales promotion-techniques (samples, coupons, price discounts and buy-one-get-one-free offers) and respondents' reported buying behaviour. Here, only price-discount promotions proved to be statistically significant in consumers' reported buying behaviour. Purchase acceleration and product trials were found to be the two most influential variables related to a price discount. It was suggested that coupons could be perceived as a nuisance, due to the time and efforts required to redeem them; while samples might prevent any future purchasing. The study demonstrated that sales promotion can facilitate brand recognition and brand recall for future purchases, without showing any significantly negative influence on brands.

The Research Objectives

The main objective of this paper is to explore South African customers' responses and valuation of sales promotions.

This objective is reached by means of the following secondary objectives:

- ♦ To explore what consumers regard as important, when assessing the value of sales promotions;
- ♦ To establish which type of products or services would consumers prefer to be promoted;
- ♦ To explore which marketing communication methods consumers prefer to be used, for sales-promotion messages;
- ♦ To compare how six commonly used sales-promotion techniques influence consumers buying behaviour.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative strategy of inquiry, in the form of a survey research, was used for this study. The measurement instrument was a structured questionnaire, containing three sections. In section one; the value dimensions of sales promotion, based on the scale developed by Chandon et al. (2000), were measured. Section two dealt with the effect of sales promotion on consumers' buying behaviour, as adopted from the scale developed by Gilbert and Jackaria (2002). It included the following levels: Brand loyalty (attitudes towards brands that consumers are loyal towards); Brand switching (buying of alternatives brands); Purchase acceleration (increased buying earlier than planned); Stockpiling (increasing the quantity bought); Product trial (enticing testing of new product).

The questions in both sections were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The third section contained questions on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as gender, age, highest educational qualification, household income and home language. The questionnaire was adapted for the South African consumer market; and this was done, based on the input of two industrial experts on sales promotion from leading-brand activation companies. They also suggested that the specific sales-promotion techniques used in South Africa be included; these comprised specifically: Live events, Competitions, Coupons, Free samples, Point-of-sales displays, and Bonus packs.

The selection of an appropriate sampling method was largely dependent on the objectives of the study, the financial resources available, the time limitations, as well as the nature of the problem under investigation. For these reasons,

a quota sample was specified for the study. Since disposable income evidently impacts on consumers' ability to react to sales promotions, the population targeted for this study focused specifically on middle- and upper class consumers. The quotas were, therefore, set on the basis of income, living standards and ethnicity.

The sample was targeted *via* the use of a mall intercept and interviewer-administered personal interviews at five large shopping malls across Gauteng. A realized sample size of 600 was obtained from a target sample size of 650, with 100% of these questionnaires being usable. This could be attributed to the use of personal interviews as a data-collection method. A pilot test of the questionnaire was done with a convenience sample of 30 respondents, allowing for consideration of the length of the questionnaire, clarity of instructions, lay-out and flow of questions. The main data collection was done after the pilot phase; and this was completed over a period of five weeks, at five different malls across Gauteng. The completed questionnaires were checked and coded, before being captured in a database for statistical analysis.

The study adopted Cronbach's alpha to analyse the reliability of the measures; and the results showed that all the scales had good Cronbach's alpha reliability scores (value dimensions of sales promotion: Cronbach's alpha = 0.824; the effect of sales promotions on consumers' buying behaviour: Cronbach's alpha = 0.819). The main results and findings are, henceforth, presented.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The overall respondent profile was as follows: Of the 600 respondents, the majority were females (56.67%). The ages of the respondents were more or less equally distributed across three groups: 18-25 years (28.5%); 26-35 years (30.17%); 36-50 years (33.17%), with less than 10% being older than 50 years. Most of the respondents (70%) indicated that they speak an African language at home; while the rest were English-speaking (18%), or Afrikaans-speaking (12%). Most of the respondents were Black Africans (75%), divided into four major ethnic groups, namely: Nguni, Sotho, Shangaan-Tsonga, and Venda. Nearly 65% of the respondents reported a monthly income of between R5 000

and R20 000 (475USD – 1903USD); while the remaining earned in excess of R20 000(1903USD) per month. Most of the respondents (63.83%) worked on a full-time basis; and 48.5% had obtained a tertiary qualification. This sample clearly met the requirements of the quotas set for the sample.

The respondents' expectations from the value dimensions of sales promotion are presented in Table 1. Overall utilitarian benefits (4.42) were regarded as being less important than the hedonic benefits (4.02); although both these dimensions were regarded as being relatively important. Thus, monetary saving is not the only reason for consumers' response to sales promotion (Chandon et al. 2000; Liao et al. 2009; Al-mendros and Del Barrio-García 2014).

Within the utilitarian dimension, "value" was regarded as being the most important (4.51) issue, followed by "quality" (4.47), and lastly, "convenience" (4.28). With regard to value, the respondents felt that sales promotions should save them money (4.69), and offer a good deal (4.66). Quality should be addressed by providing a higher quality product at the same price (4.64), and allowing consumers to afford a better than usual product (4.53). The convenience factor is associated with the fast and easy use (4.51), and guidance of consumers on selecting the best brands (4.45).

Within the hedonic dimension, "value expression" was regarded as being the most important (4.29), followed by "exploration" (3.91), and lastly, "entertainment" (3.86). "Value expression" is concerned with customer satisfaction (4.49), and feeling pleased about the purchase decision (4.2); while "exploration" is associated with the experience of stimulus, and guidance on which brands or products to consider. With regard to "entertainment", the respondents felt that sales promotions should be fun to participate in (4.23), as well as promising (4.02). This verifies the findings by Kchaou and Amara (2014) who suggested that offering consumers hedonic or emotional benefits, such as pleasure seeking, variety, and expression of values could indeed influence buying behaviour.

Further analysis focused on the testing of several hypotheses, as these related to identifying significant differences between the various demographic groups with regard to the benefits expected from a sales promotion:

Table 1: Benefits expected by consumers from sales promotion

	Frequency					Mean
	Not important at all			Very important		
	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	
<i>Utilitarian Benefits Value</i>						4.42
Really saved me money	0.90	0.90	3.32	17.69	77.19	4.69
Offers me a good deal	0.90	1.81	4.04	16.89	76.36	4.66
Offers me something that is important/relevant to me	1.26	1.81	4.84	18.09	74.00	4.62
Offers me something for free	3.61	6.68	13.64	31.29	44.78	4.07
<i>Quality</i>						4.47
Allows me to have a higher quality product at the same price	1.08	1.44	5.96	15.88	75.63	4.64
Allows me to afford a better than usual product	1.44	1.81	6.86	22.56	67.33	4.53
Allows me to upgrade to a better brand	1.81	2.71	7.22	23.10	65.16	4.47
Offers me a choice of rewards	2.17	7.22	10.65	25.45	54.51	4.23
<i>Convenience</i>						4.28
Be fast and easy to use	2.71	3.61	4.33	18.77	70.58	4.51
Helps me to choose the best brand	1.81	4.87	6.48	20.55	66.29	4.45
Gives me immediate rewards	6.86	5.42	11.73	18.05	57.94	4.15
Reminds me about the brand	8.66	5.42	10.60	26.73	48.59	4.01
<i>Hedonic Benefits Value Expression</i>						4.02
Makes me feel content	1.81	4.33	5.72	19.41	68.73	4.49
Makes me feel proud of my purchase	5.42	5.78	8.52	23.61	56.68	4.20
Makes me feel that I'm a smart shopper	4.33	5.42	9.16	24.57	56.52	4.19
<i>Exploration</i>						3.91
Offers me stimulation	2.53	6.14	10.47	37.36	43.50	4.13
Presents me with new ideas on what to buy	6.14	5.78	10.11	38.27	39.71	4.00
Offers me variations. so I don't have to always buy the same brands	9.75	10.11	18.05	34.30	27.80	3.60
<i>Entertainment</i>						3.86
Fun to participate in /watch	2.53	4.33	10.47	32.49	50.18	4.23
Enjoyable	6.14	5.78	10.11	36.10	41.88	4.02
Interesting	9.75	10.11	36.10	27.08	16.97	3.31

- ♦ The respondents earning less than R20 000 (953USD) per month regarded utilitarian benefits as more important than did those respondents earning in excess of R20 000 (953USD) per month ($p=0.037$).
- ♦ Respondents, who were 25 years and younger, felt more positive towards hedonic promotions, compared to the respondents who were older than 25 years ($p=0.008$).
- ♦ Respondents with African home languages were more partial to "value" offered, than were those respondents with English or Afrikaans as their home language ($p=0.000$).
- ♦ Respondents with African home languages appeared to be more positive towards promotions requiring active participation, compared with English or Afrikaans consumers ($p=0.024$).
- ♦ Female respondents felt more positive towards "exploration", compared to the male respondents ($p=0.049$).

The respondents were also asked to indicate their preference for those products and services that they would like to see being offered on a sales promotion. The results are presented in the Table 2. The top-three products selected were food/groceries (72.9%), personal care products/toiletries (66.2%) and alcoholic beverages (61.4%). Services, such as banking, financial services, and investments (37.2%), and health and medicine (34.7%) were less preferred. It seems that sales promotions are more appropriate for low involvement or convenience goods than they are for the greater involvement of goods or services.

The analysis also showed that products, such as automotive parts and electronic goods, were preferred more by males than females. Conversely, females tended to focus on the promotions for products, such as clothing and footwear, food/groceries, leisure and entertainment,

personal-care products/toiletries, furniture and household cleaning products. Promotion for furniture was, as expected, preferred more by respondents who were working full time; while the promotion of clothing and footwear were significantly preferred to a greater extent by younger respondents. Thus, the sales promotion preference of consumers differs when compared with demographical and ethnic profiles. This is aligned with the findings of Zheng and Kivetz (2009).

Table 2: Preferred products and services to be promoted

Types of products/services	%
Alcoholic beverages	61.4
Automotive and parts	48.7
Banking, financial services and investments	37.2
Clothing and footwear	57.8
Confectionary and snacks	57.2
Electronics goods and appliances	54.5
Food groceries	72.9
Furniture	47.5
Health and medicine	34.7
Household cleaning products	60.6
Leisure and entertainment	54.0
Personal-care products/ toiletries	66.2
Telecommunication/ Cell phones and data	56.1

The media-preferred sales promotions are listed in Table 3. Most of the respondents preferred to be informed about sales promotion *via* traditional broadcast and print media – television (82.5%), newspapers (66.4%), magazines (65.9%), radio (63.4%), outdoor advertising (59.7%), and mall-media (56.3%), rather than *via* online-media (46.0%) and *via* the social media (42.8%).

Differences in preferences were in particular evident amongst gender and ethnic groups. Males preferred newspapers significantly more than females did; while females' preferences lay with magazines and malls. Respondents, with African home languages preferred television as their medium of choice slightly more than the

Afrikaans and English respondents did. As expected, African respondents also selected transit media and taxis, as their preferred options, compared with Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking respondents.

Table 3: Preferred communication methods for sales promotion

Communication method	%
<i>Traditional Mass Media</i>	
Advertised on television	82.5
Advertised on the radio	63.4
Advertised in newspapers	66.4
Advertised in magazines	65.9
<i>Out-of-home Media and Promotions</i>	
Advertised on billboards/ Posters	59.7
Advertised on transit advertising	27.4
Promoted at taxi ranks/trains stations/bus stops	23.6
Promoted at shop malls/ store	56.3
Promoted at event/events	32.9
<i>Online and Social Media</i>	
Advertised on websites	46.0
Promoted by social media	42.8
Send/ referred to me by my friends	39.9

The perceived efficacy of sales-promotion techniques on buying behaviour is illustrated in Table 4. While most respondents agreed that sales promotions usually influence them, buying behaviour seems to be mostly associated with product trials, with 61.4% of the respondents agreeing with the statement. This supports the notion that sales promotion can effectively be used to influence consumers to buy a product that they have never tried before (Aydinli et al. 2014). Sales promotions also seem to be associated strongly with brand switching (57.0%) and purchase acceleration (56.7%). Although still associated with changes in behaviour, sales promotions are to a lesser extent associated with stockpiling (52.7%) and brand loyalty (48.0%).

The following significant differences between the demographic groups, in terms of the

Table 4: Perceived impact of sales promotions on buying behaviour

Consumer buying behaviour	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)
<i>Product Trial</i> - Can influence me to buy a product, which I have never tried before	16.8	21.8	61.4
<i>Brand Switching</i> - Can influence me to buy another brand, which I do not regularly buy	17.1	25.8	57.0
<i>Purchase Acceleration</i> - Can influence me to buy a product earlier than planned	19.1	24.2	56.7
<i>Stockpiling</i> - Can influence me to buy more quantities of the same product	19.3	28.0	52.7
<i>Brand Loyalty</i> - Promotions of other brands influence my attitudes towards brands that I'm loyal to	22.7	29.2	48.0

perceived impact of sales-promotion techniques on buying behaviour, were identified:

- ♦ Most (52.8%) of the respondents younger than 25 years agreed that sales promotions influenced their brand loyalty, compared with 35.9% of those respondents older than 25 years ($p = 0.004$). This suggests that the application of suitable sales-promotion techniques can actually result in increased brand loyalty, when targeting younger consumers.
- ♦ The majority of the respondents (63.7%) between the ages of 26 to 35 indicated that sales promotions could influence them to buy more quantities of the same product (stockpiling); while older respondents aged between 36 to 50, and those older than 50 years, seemed to be increasingly less convinced – with, respectively, 54.9% and 45.7% agreeing with the statement. Interestingly, respondents younger than 25 had similar reservations, as did those respondents older than 50 years (40.4%) ($p = 0.001$).
- ♦ Sales promotions, leading to product trials, seemed to be less effective amongst respondents older than 50 years (47.8%), than they did amongst respondents between 36 and 50 years (58.2%), and with those younger than 35 years (65.1%) ($p = 0.037$).

It would appear that consumers from different demographic and ethnic groups react differently to sales promotions. The findings of pre-

vious studies revealed similar demographic and ethnic differences (Liao et al. 2009; Yang et al. 2010).

Respondents were also probed further to investigate which sales promotion techniques are more associated with the specific buying behaviours. The results can be seen in Figure 1. Inspection of the figure reveals that stock piling and brand loyalty are associated with bonus packs. The impact of bonus packs on reminder-impulsive buying or stockpiling – to meet future needs – is in line with the findings of Liao et al. (2009) and Yin and Jin-Song (2014).

Brand switching is associated with coupons, free samples and point-of-sale displays. Product trials seemed to be most associated with point-of-sale displays and free samples, thereby corroborating the results of Ndubisi and Moi (2005) and Heilman et al. (2011). Although these issues were not as strongly significant for purchase acceleration accomplished *via* competitions and live events.

CONCLUSION

In the present study, new light has been cast on consumers' views and their responses to sales promotion. The research results have important implications for marketers planning consumer-oriented sale-promotion strategies, in particular where the focus falls on emerging markets. Overall, the utilitarian benefits were regarded as being less important than the hedonic benefits; although both of these dimensions were regarded as relatively important. Besides, it is observed that different demographic and ethnic profiles differ in their expectations from sale promotions. When considering the effect of sales promotion on consumers' buying behaviour, it was clear that the different sales-promotion techniques resulted in different responses from different consumers. When comparing the demographic profiles, significant differences in consumers' responses and their valuation of sales promotion, preferences with regard to products and the services promoted, and the marketing communication methods used for promotional messages, were revealed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Marketers need to gain an understanding of the specific market segments that are targeted, and of those promotional tools that are more effective in stimulating sales in these segments

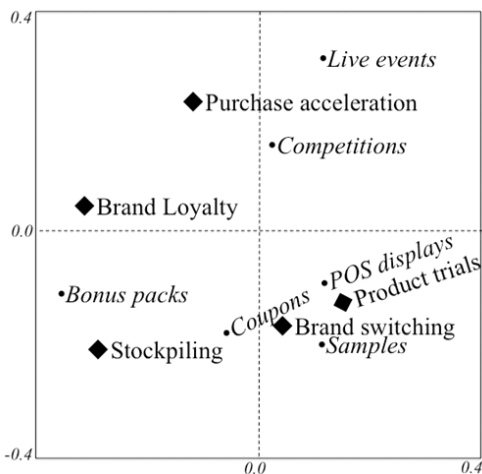


Fig. 1. Correspondence map of the sales-promotion techniques and the related behavioural impact

in order to achieve the desired response. African consumers would be more drawn to the engagement offered to them by promotion techniques requiring active participation, such as live events, contests, demonstrations and road shows; while consumers from other ethnic groups might be less influenced by these types of promotion.

Marketers should select the most appropriate techniques – depending on the required response. If the object is to influence consumers to try a new product, sampling should be used; while loyalty rewards and bonus packs might be more successful in getting consumers to buy more quantities of the same product. Coupons, free samples and point-of-sale displays can be used to induce brand switching; while competitions and live events might influence consumers to buy a product sooner than they had intended.

The study includes only six typical sales-promotion techniques; but, with the increased variety of contemporary sale-promotion options available, future research on other sale-promotional techniques is suggested. In the light of the substantial growth in this type of alternative media, it would also be valuable to examine sales-promotion techniques in more depth – not only from the consumer's perspective, but also to look at different types of trade promotion from the viewpoint of the manufacturers and the retailers.

Other factors, such as the type of product promoted, the level of involvement and experience of the consumer, and the timing of the reward offered, also invite further exploration.

Other worthwhile future research agendas would be to investigate how the types of sales-promotion techniques match the value dimensions, or the benefits expected, or to explore the reasons behind the preferences of the marketing communication methods used to deliver promotional messages, products, and the services for sales-promotion techniques.

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