

IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITY ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION IN FMCG SECTOR IN LAHORE REIGN

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Abstract

This research delves deep into the complex ways in which promotional strategies affect how consumers perceive products in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector. In an arena marked by fierce competition and swift product cycles, grasping the impact of these marketing tactics is vital for a brand's sustained relevance and success. Initially, the study sets the stage by exploring the foundational theories of consumer perception, elucidating the ways it is formed and influenced. Subsequently, it investigates a variety of promotional methods commonly used in the FMCG industry, including advertising, price reductions, loyalty initiatives, and in-store promotions. The study evaluates the effects of these promotional techniques in shaping aspects like consumer awareness, the perceived value of products, brand image, and ultimately, consumer purchasing decisions. The findings reveal that while promotional activities do have a significant effect on how consumers perceive products, the extent of their impact varies depending on factors such as the type of product, the demographic characteristics of the consumer, and how well the promotion aligns with the brand's image and core values. A notable discovery is the potential for a negative reaction when promotions are seen as too aggressive or not in sync with what consumers expect from the brand. Moreover, the research underscores a noticeable shift from traditional to digital promotional methods, emphasizing the increasing significance of online interactions in molding consumer perceptions

Keywords: *Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) Employee Motivation, Job Performance, Salaries, Bonuses, Motivation*

Introduction

The significance of consumer sales promotion within the marketing mix for fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) globally has seen a notable increase. Businesses invest considerable effort in orchestrating these promotions. However, to maximize their effectiveness, it is crucial for manufacturers to grasp how consumers and retailers perceive these promotional endeavors. Investigating these perceptions can uncover their preferences, awareness, and driving motivations. This research primarily focuses on the perspectives of both consumers and retailers concerning sales promotion. Previous studies indicate that promotions can influence a brand's perceived value, offering benefits like cost savings, enhanced quality, and convenience, alongside experiential advantages such as entertainment and self-expression.

In India, the FMCG sector has experienced a surge in sales promotion post-liberalization, yet there's limited research on how these promotions are perceived. This study aims to fill this gap with empirical evidence. In contrast, the U.S. has seen extensive research on consumer perceptions related to deal frequency and pricing. The research also covers how manufacturers, retailers, and consumers differently perceive price promotions and their impact on behaviors like variety seeking and reinforcement.

This exploratory study delves into consumer perceptions in the FMCG sector, guided by definitions of sales promotion from Kotler and Roger Strang, emphasizing short-term incentives to boost product sales. The FMCG market in Pakistan, particularly in major cities like Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad, is rapidly growing, with both international and local players. This blog aims to compile comprehensive data on the FMCG trade nationwide, aiding new entrants and strategy formulation.

FMCG products, characterized by their quick turnover and lower cost, range from toiletries to non-durables like paper products. In Pakistan, the FMCG sector has evolved amidst competition and varying consumer acceptance levels. The success in categories like food and beverages highlights the impact of drivers such as a young population, urbanization, and retail development. Companies like Procter & Gamble have recognized Pakistan's potential, given its large population and consumer base. P&G's commitment to understanding consumer needs and providing value through its products underlines the importance of market familiarity and strategic planning in FMCG.

This study investigates the impact of promotional activities on consumer perceptions in the FMCG sector in Pakistan. It seeks to determine whether these promotions significantly influence consumer perceptions, providing insights valuable for consumers and FMCG producers alike. The research will focus on Unilever products within Lahore.

Literature review

Promotion is a crucial element of the marketing mix, complementing price, product, and place. Its key elements include personal selling, direct marketing, advertising, sales promotion, and public relations. Crafting a promotional strategy entails setting marketing communication objectives, determining the role of each promotional mix component, budget allocation, and strategic development for these components. Sales promotion, as defined by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), involves marketing techniques aimed at making products and services more appealing through additional benefits, either monetary or non-monetary. Boddewyn & Leardi (2006) and Smith (2007) identify three primary categories of sales promotions: consumer promotions (like gifts and contests on cereal boxes), trade promotions (such as point-of-sale materials and free items), and sales force promotions, including incentive schemes. Sales promotions, conceptualized by Kotler (2007), Webster (2008), and Davis (2008), are marketing events focused on directly influencing consumer behavior to boost sales. These can include contests, demonstrations, discounts, and trade shows, among other activities.

One reason for focusing on the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector in this study is the shift in budget allocation towards consumer sales promotions over advertising. Researchers like Mela, Gupta, and Lehmann (2006), and Gomez, Rao, and McLaughlin (2007) note that 70 to 75% of the marketing budget in FMCG is now spent on consumer promotions. This trend is partly due to manufacturers avoiding price reductions to maintain brand image and reference price, as price cuts can impact future purchases and lower brand equity, as argued by Blattberg, Briesch, and Fox (2006). Despite some comparative studies between advertising and sales promotion, a comprehensive research covering psychological and economic aspects of consumer behavior in the FMCG sector is lacking. This sector is unique as consumers frequently spend a significant portion of their budget and make many purchase decisions at the point of sale, making advertising and sales promotions highly effective communication tools.

Jim Riley (2012) outlines the three promotional tools: advertising (paid, non-personal communication in various media), direct marketing (creating a direct, individual relationship between customer and business), and personal selling (oral communication with potential buyers to make a sale). Public relations,

meanwhile, involve unpaid media placement to communicate about a product, brand, or business. Currim and Schneider (2008) observed that sales promotions, being easy to implement, can significantly and unexpectedly impact sales volumes. Ailawadi and Neslin (2009) found that consumer promotions encourage larger and faster consumption, boosting sales and profitability. Our research corroborates this, showing increased profitability in sample companies through financial analysis of their annual and monthly sales data. Pwaels, Silva-Risso, and Hanssens (2010) suggest that while sales promotions positively impact short-term revenue and income, they may negatively affect long-term performance and firm value. Koen Pauwels (2010) further explored the transient impact of sales promotions, finding that their effects are short-lived, lasting typically two to eight weeks, regardless of product perishability.

Kotler and Armstrong (2002) describe consumer promotion as a category of sales promotion that includes free samples and contests, aimed at boosting final consumer sales. Rizvi & Sadia (2003) focus on the impact of sales promotions on organizational profitability and consumer perceptions in Pakistan, exploring the relationship between sales promotion strategies and firm profitability, as well as consumer perceptions and brand loyalty. Alvarez (2011) notes that effective sales promotion implementation often leads to a short-term increase in sales. However, the effectiveness varies based on the attractiveness of the brand involved. Blattberg and Neslin (2010) highlight that sales promotions act as demand boosters and can mitigate risks associated with new products.

In summary, this comprehensive examination of sales promotion within the marketing mix, particularly in the FMCG sector, underscores its significant role in influencing consumer purchasing behavior and its impact on both short-term sales and long-term brand value. This study aims to deepen the understanding of sales promotion strategies and their effects on organizational profitability and consumer perceptions, thereby offering valuable insights for marketers and businesses in effectively designing and implementing promotional activities.

This study explores the multifaceted ways in which consumers evaluate products, focusing on the perception of quality and value in the context of service industries. It delves into various models and theories that elucidate how consumers discern and judge product quality. Products are assessed at multiple levels, starting with their basic characteristics inherent to their generic form. These fundamental traits provide the primary advantages to customers. Distinctiveness in generic products is achieved by infusing additional value, such as enhancements in quality or performance. Shapiro (2009) introduced a groundbreaking model categorizing the key variables in quality perception and outlining their interrelations. This model also sheds light on the role of perceived quality in consumer decision-making. However, Steenkamp (2008) critiques this model for its lack of conceptual and operational utility, noting its limited adoption in subsequent studies. He aligns Shapiro's tangible, visible attributes with Olson's (2009) basic quality cues.

Wimmer (2009) presented a model from an information processing perspective, suggesting that quality judgments by consumers are cognitively made by integrating new information with pre-existing knowledge. This process is influenced by motives and attitudes pertinent to quality perception. For instance, a health-conscious consumer will prioritize information about the nutritional value in their quality assessment. Kupsch et al. (2010) proposed a combined model drawing from information processing theory and multi-attribute models. They hypothesize that quality judgment formation commences with problem recognition, leading to an information search. The model suggests a positive correlation between perceived quality risk and the extent of information sought, with the acquired data being stored in consumer memory.

Steenkamp (2011) advanced Olson's (2009) work by distinguishing between quality cues and attributes, specifically between extrinsic and intrinsic cues, and experience and credibility quality attributes. The model emphasizes the role of past experience in processing information, stating that more knowledgeable consumers tend to process quality-related information more deeply and make quicker quality judgments.

Philipp E. Boksberger (2011) considered sensory perception and keepability as experiential dimensions since they are ascertainable upon consumption whereas aspects like the wholesomeness of food, which have health-related consequences only evident after prolonged consumption, fall into the credence dimension. The primary objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive literature review on the current state-of-the-art concepts and methodologies in perceived value research, particularly in the service industry. It aims to provide a systematic overview of the research on perceived value, including common definitions, conceptual frameworks, measurement approaches, and its strong association with vital service industry components such as service quality.

This study not only outlines the foundational theories and organizes the various research streams but also addresses unresolved issues in the domain of perceived value. It concludes by offering recommendations for future research and practical applications of perceived value, underscoring its relevance in the service industry context. The investigation into these diverse models and theories enriches our understanding of how consumers perceive and evaluate product quality and value, providing invaluable insights for the service industry.

Research Methodology

We employed a deductive approach in this study as it addresses perceptions that are inherently dynamic and subject to change. This methodology allows for a more flexible structure, capable of adapting and incorporating new developments as the research unfolds. In order to conduct the current research will use 'Description approach because it is valuable means of finding our is happening, to see the new insights, to ask questions and to analyses phenomena in a new light It also helps to clarify and understand the research problem. *The consumers of different FMCG products using products from 6-8 years with in Lahore* I have selected different 100 consumers of Fmcg products from different markets within Lahore. The most of respondents are male. This particular population was selected due to the delimitation of the study and purposive & convenient sampling technique to be applied.

Convincing sampling is used for data collection. Convenience sampling technique is used for data collection means one by one. Out of hundred only 82 give the response and the response rate is 82%.

For this study we will use a sample size 100, to complete questionnaires will use to study including both male and female respondents. In this study we used the questionnaire as research instrument.

To check the level of consumer perception, a questionnaire was employed as instrument of the study. The tool was consisted of two factors with 17 questions. The instrument was developed on 5- point likert scale with response categories, strongly disagree to strongly agree.

It was based on factors.

1. Promotional activities measure.
2. Consumer perception.

The answer of each question to be given by respondent was shown against each item. It was developed in English. The researcher personally visited the markets to meet the consumers. In order to find respondents for perception of consumers about different Fmcg products. Researcher gave the rationale of the study to

different consumers and asks them to fill the questionnaires. Researchers gave 8 days to the respondents, to give their views or to respond on items of questionnaires. After 8 days researcher again visited markets, to collect questionnaire from respondents. All the questionnaires were received back in given period of time .i.e. 8 days.

H1: There is not strong relationship between promotional activities and consumer perception.

This data can be collected from observation and questionnaires. The data collected through questionnaires and analyzed in SPSS and interpreted with the help of anal standard deviation, percentages and mean and regression, correlation. Through SPSS software check and analyzed the accurate statistical reliability of the variables to know the perception of consumer about restaurant industry in effective way.

There are two types of variables of my study one is independent and other is dependent. The independent variable is promotional activities and dependent variable is consumer perception. It means that consumer perception is influence by the promotional activities and can be change by effective promotion if done in proper way and also by proper channel.

A: Advertising.

B: direct marketing.

C: personal selling.

Consumer perception:

A. Buy products.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Gender

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	57	69.5
	Female	25	30.5
	Total	82	100.0

Table no 1 show that out of 82 respondents 57 (69.5%) are male and 25 (30.5%) are female

Table 2: Qualification

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Matric	10	12.2
	Inter	12	14.6
	Graduation	36	43.9
	Masters	17	20.7
	Other	7	8.5
	Total	82	100.0

Table no 2 shows that out of 82 frequency 10 (12.2%) are matric, 12 frequency (14.6%) are inter, frequency 36 (43.9%) are graduate, frequency 17 (20.7%) are masters and 7 (8.5%) have others qualification.

Table 3: Age

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	20-25	21	25.6
	26-30	25	30.5
	31-35	20	24.4
	36-40	7	8.5
	41-45	3	3.7
	46-50	3	3.7
	51-Above	3	3.7
	Total	82	100.0

Table 3 shows that frequency 21 (25.6%) are age of 20-25 years, frequency 25 (30.5%) are age of 26-30 years, frequency 21 (24.4%) are age of 31-35 years frequency 7 (8.5%) are age of 36-40 years, frequency 3 (3.7%) are age of 41-45 years, frequency 3 (3.7%) are age of 46-50 years and 3 frequency (3.7%) have age 51 Or above.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender	82	1.00	2.00	1.3049	.46319
Qualification	82	1.00	5.00	2.9878	1.09425
Age	82	1.00	7.00	2.5976	1.53043
I can get all types of information through promotional activities.	82	1.00	5.00	3.6951	1.07369
Promotional activities are most efficient way for introducing people about brands and products.	82	1.00	5.00	3.9512	.88753
The products which I buy after its promotion are really worthy.	82	1.00	5.00	3.5976	1.04065
Interactions between customer and advertiser become increasingly rapid and easy due to promotional activities.	82	1.00	5.00	3.6098	.88549
Consumer's response towards promotional activities & their perception changes.	82	1.00	5.00	3.5610	.94409
You ever changed your perception towards a commodity because of promotion activities.	82	2.00	5.00	3.6463	.77574

I trust the product and buy if it is in the market because of promotional activities.	82	1.00	5.00	3.3171	1.04087
I came to know about various brands available only through promotional activities.	82	2.00	5.00	3.5976	.82939
Response of customers against electronic advertisement is positive.	82	1.00	5.00	3.8780	.89429
Promotional activities make sense among people what to select.	82	1.00	5.00	3.5854	.87420
Promotional activities have good impact on consumer mind are valuable and change their buying behaviour.	82	1.00	5.00	3.8171	.94448
Promotional activities almost help the customer to change their perception to buy products.	82	1.00	5.00	3.7805	.86101
Without promotional activities consumer cannot make purchase decision easily if he/she not get message from promotional activities.	82	1.00	5.00	3.1098	1.10001
I consider price as the most important criteria to change consumer perception.	82	1.00	5.00	3.6098	1.03942
For buying Fmcg products, I rely mostly rely on promotional activities.	82	1.00	5.00	3.3415	1.21939
Consumers mostly come to buy products when companies sold in promotion time.	82	2.00	5.00	3.7927	.81252
I came to know through promotional activities the various price offers and gifts/coupons extended in purchasing a product.	82	1.00	5.00	4.1098	.83157
Valid N (listwise)	82				

in descriptive analysis we analyze the mean and standard deviation of data.

Findings:

Demographics:

- Most of the respondents are male followed by female.
- Most of the respondents are graduate followed by masters.
- Most of the respondents are between the age of 26-30 years followed by 20-25 years.

Promotional activities and consumer perception:

- Most of the respondents are agree with the statement I can get all types of information through promotional activities followed by strongly agree which means respondents are satisfied with the statement I can get all types of information through promotional activities.
- Most of the respondents are agree with the statement Promotional activities are most efficient way for introducing people about brands and products followed by strongly agree which means respondents are satisfied with the statement Promotional activities are most efficient way for introducing people about brands and products.
- Most of the respondents are agree with the statement The products which I buy after its promotion are really worthy followed by partially agree which means respondents are satisfied with the statement The products which I buy after its promotion are really worthy.
- Most of the respondents are agree with the statement Interactions between customer and advertiser become increasingly rapid and easy due to promotional activities followed by partially agree which means respondents are satisfied with the statement Interactions between customer and advertiser become increasingly rapid and easy due to promotional activities.
- Most of the respondents are agree with the statement Consumer's response towards promotional activities & their perception changes followed by partially agree which means respondents are satisfied with the statement Consumer's response towards promotional activities & their perception changes.
- Most of the respondents are agree with the statement You ever changed your perception towards a commodity because of promotion activities followed by partially agree which means respondents are satisfied with the statement You ever changed your perception towards a commodity because of promotion activities.
- Most of the respondents are agree with the statement I trust the product and buy if it is in the market because of promotional activities followed by partially agree which means respondents are satisfied with the statement I trust the product and buy if it is in the market because of promotional activities.
- Most of the respondents are agree with the statement I came to know about various brands available only through promotional activities followed by partially agree which means respondents are satisfied with the statement I came to know about various brands available only through promotional activities.
- Most of the respondents are agree with the statement Response of customers against electronic advertisement is positive followed by partially agree which means respondents are satisfied with the statement Response of customers against electronic advertisement is positive.
- Most of the respondents are agree with the statement activities make sense among people what to select followed by partially agree which means respondents are satisfied with the statement activities make sense among people what to select.
- Most of the respondents are agree with the statement Promotional activities have good impact on consumer mind are valuable and change their buying behavior followed by strongly agree which

means respondents are satisfied with the statement Promotional activities have good impact on consumer mind are valuable and change their buying behavior.

- Most of the respondents are agree with the statement Promotional activities almost help the customer to change their perception to buy products followed by partially agree which means respondents are satisfied with the statement activities Promotional activities almost help the customer to change their perception to buy products.
- Most of the respondents are agree with the statement without promotional activities consumer cannot make purchase decision easily if he/she not get message from promotional activities followed by disagree which means respondents are satisfied with the statement without promotional activities consumer cannot make purchase decision easily if he/she not get message from promotional activities.
- Most of the respondents are agree with the statement I consider price as the most important criteria to change consumer perception followed by partially agree which means respondents are satisfied with the statement consider price as the most important criteria to change consumer perception.
- Most of the respondents are agree with the statement For buying Fmcg products, I rely mostly rely on promotional activities. Followed by disagree which means respondents are satisfied with the statement For buying Fmcg products, I rely mostly rely on promotional activities.
- Most of the respondents are agree with the statement Consumers mostly come to buy products when companies sold in promotion time followed by partially agree which means respondents are satisfied with the statement Consumers mostly come to buy products when companies sold in promotion time.
- Most of the respondents are agree with the statement I came to know through promotional activities the various price offers and gifts/coupons extended in purchasing a product. Followed by strongly agree which means respondents are satisfied with the statement I came to know through promotional activities the various price offers and gifts/coupons extended in purchasing a product.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the potential uses and consumer perceptions of the Fmcg sector and impact of promotional activities. The results show the promotional tools effect the perception of consumer in buying the FMCG products and how the different strategies of marketing influence the sale products. Consumers want to be known with products and their effectiveness and also demand timely information regarding the products which they use in daily life routine.

The analysis of the 17 questions items comprising various aspects of consumer perception and promotional tools in FMCG sector and future intention in FMCG, suggest that all these factors advertisement, public relations and perceived usefulness are extremely important. Respondents also recommend their preferred products to other people such as friends, family members etc. An online advertising system in FMCG sector is an effective positive change which may improves consumer perception in good way. But they should provide any change in technology as per the convenience of their customers. Industry should understand the needs of the customer and provide quality products efficiently in catering such needs. Customers normally prefer products which have broad product lines, quality offerings at reasonable prices and convenient location. Therefore, managers should have keen focus at these factors. Mostly customers can get all type of information related products by promotional activities.it is also an efficient way to introduce new brands and products. Promotional activities also help customers to change their perception regarding buying products.

Recommendations

Marketing managers of FMCG sector must learn to discover the origin of demands from special use of products or service. Given the variety of their lifestyles, consumers have different patterns of use of products or service. Therefore, different situations will inevitably lead to different needs and demands for specific products. Understanding these situations will help managers to realize that under what circumstances their products or service is most likely to be needed by consumers. FMCG marketing managers must apply “comprehensive management”, which uses precise measurement, analytical skills and strategic plans to deal with new pressures and complicated matters. Managers must repeatedly review the effects of their marketing strategies and influence consumers and staff into following their strategies. FMCG sector’s marketing managers should develop specific strategies to increase the chance of having consumers accept their information and products.

There are three ways to achieve this goal: enhance dissemination, maximize the chance of dissemination, and keep disseminating. Managers should disseminate their information to their surroundings to increase the chance of approaching appropriate targets. They also need to cautiously select good media mixes, such as magazines, billboards, and TV, so that consumers are more likely to accept their advertisements. To escalate their sales, FMCG products sellers should provide more beneficial and convenient facilities to consumers and improve their service based on consumers’ needs. The marketers should pay high attention on service quality. Electronic media is a big source for information. Marketers can identify and classify their market segment so they should post only related information on the basis of classification on gender, age, income etc. People become more attracted if they think it is beneficial information for them. People should not feel that they waste their time on Electronic Media. Different schemes and incentives are best strategies to attract the customer. Marketers would send free sample users. These samples are very important tool to enhance the sales or development of the product. If customer really likes the product then he buys it again and again. This technique is useful for that company where small cost is associated with this type of promotion. This promotional scheme is useful for company it creates the value of brand in the mind of customer in the long run.

Conclusion

The study reveals that in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector, the interplay between promotional tools and consumer perceptions concerning product features and services is crucial in driving customer satisfaction and their likelihood of repeat purchases or embracing new services. This finding substantiates the notion that customer contentment is a precursor to long-term loyalty towards a product. Our research model, focusing on promotional tools and consumer perceptions in the FMCG sector, is robust and paves the way for further exploration by incorporating a variety of variables.

While demographic data provides some insights, it alone falls short in the current competitive market landscape. For devising optimal strategies, companies need comprehensive information to understand consumer attitudes and feelings towards their products and services. Both consumers and staff hold positive views on the relevance of this study for the FMCG industry. They agree that valuing consumer benefits through high-quality products, convenient access, excellent facilities, reasonable pricing, and efficient services is pivotal.

Interestingly, staff members tend to have higher perceptions than consumers regarding the product, price, and distribution aspects of FMCG marketing strategies. However, there is a consensus between consumers and staff on promotional strategies. Both groups identify advertising and personal selling as the most impactful marketing tools in the FMCG sector.

Additionally, the success of the FMCG industry is attributed not just to marketing strategies but also to factors like standardized processes, limited menus, and value enhancements, along with swift and efficient service delivery. These elements act as catalysts, enhancing the effectiveness of FMCG product promotions and contributing to the sector's overall success.

Future Research

FMCG sector is very important sector of any country. Mostly researchers research on the FMCG sector related topics because there are many changes which take place in FMCG sector according to needs of consumers. That's why whichever has related topic can take help from my research.

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