

The Impact of Sales Promotions on Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Comparative Analysis from the Pandemic to the Post-Pandemic Period

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic represented a significant turning point in consumer behaviour, altering purchasing priorities, shopping habits, and responses to marketing activities across industries and markets. As businesses increasingly relied on sales promotions to maintain consumer engagement and stimulate demand during periods of uncertainty, understanding how promotional activities influence consumer buying behaviour became an important area of academic and managerial interest. Although sales promotions have been extensively examined in the marketing literature, limited attention has been given to how their effectiveness evolved during the transition from the pandemic to the post-pandemic period. Furthermore, existing research provides limited evidence regarding the extent to which consumer responses to promotional activities differ across national contexts. This dissertation addresses these issues by investigating the impact of sales promotions on consumer buying behaviour from the pandemic to the post-pandemic period through a comparative analysis of consumers in Azerbaijan and Poland.

The dissertation begins by establishing the theoretical foundations of sales promotions and consumer buying behaviour. It reviews major theories and concepts related to promotional effectiveness, consumer decision-making, and purchasing behaviour, while examining how the pandemic reshaped consumer attitudes and shopping patterns. Through a systematic review of the literature, the study identifies research gaps concerning post-pandemic consumer behaviour, promotional attractiveness, promotional exposure, promotional frequency, impulse purchasing, and cross-cultural differences in promotional preferences. These gaps provide the foundation for the conceptual framework, research questions, and hypotheses.

To address the identified objectives, the dissertation adopts a mixed-methods research design integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component examines relationships between sales promotions and consumer buying behaviour, changes in promotional responses between the pandemic and post-pandemic periods, and differences between Azerbaijani and Polish consumers. The qualitative component provides deeper insights into consumer

perceptions, motivations, and experiences associated with promotional activities. The integration of both approaches enables a comprehensive understanding of consumer responses under changing market conditions.

The empirical chapters investigate perceived promotional attractiveness, promotional buying behaviour, promotional exposure, promotional frequency, impulse purchasing, and preferred promotional deal types. The study further explores differences across product categories and cultural contexts, as well as changes in consumer evaluations of promotional activities following the pandemic. The discussion chapter integrates quantitative and qualitative evidence and considers the implications of the findings for consumer behaviour and sales promotion literature.

The dissertation concludes by outlining its theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions to the fields of consumer behaviour and marketing. It also acknowledges the limitations of the study, including its focus on two national contexts and reliance on self-reported consumer data, and proposes directions for future research concerning the evolving role of sales promotions in dynamic market environments. Overall, the study contributes to a broader understanding of how consumers evaluate and respond to promotional activities during periods of market disruption and recovery and provides insights into the changing role of sales promotions in contemporary consumer markets.

Keywords: Sales Promotion · Consumer Buying Behaviour · Pandemic · Post-Pandemic