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**Review of the doctoral dissertation by Sadi Huseynzade, M.A., titled “The Impact of  
Sales Promotion on Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Comparative Analysis from the  
Pandemic to the Post-Pandemic Period,”**  
**written under the supervision of Anna Łaszkiewicz, PhD, Professor at the University of  
Łódź**  
**Doctoral School of Social Sciences, University of Łódź, field: social sciences, discipline:  
management and quality sciences**  
**Łódź 2026**

## 1. Overall Assessment

This review is based on a letter dated July 7, 2026, from Prof. Ewa Walińska, PhD, Chair of the University of Łódź Committee for Academic Degrees in the discipline of management and quality science, as well as a hard copy of the doctoral dissertation in question, along with the accompanying appendices. This doctoral dissertation is being conducted as part of the Doctoral School of Social Sciences at the University of Łódź.

The peer-reviewed doctoral dissertation by Sadi Huseynzade, M.A., titled “The Impact of Sales Promotion on Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Comparative Analysis from the Pandemic to the Post-Pandemic Period,” consists of 222 typed pages. It includes an Introduction that justifies the dissertation topic, identifies the research problems, outlines the dissertation objectives, poses research questions, and formulates research hypotheses. The dissertation also includes seven chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, 31 figures, 48 tables, and 4 appendices. In this doctoral dissertation, the tables and figures are based on several secondary sources. This is a strength of the work and demonstrates the author’s ability to research and develop the text based on a wealth of data and comprehensive information. However, the author incorrectly cites her sources. She labels both tables and figures—whether based on her own empirical data or on external sources—as her own work. Figures and tables compiled from several external sources should cite those sources, even if the author performed the compilation. It is not a mistake to highlight one’s own scholarly contribution, but omitting the source of inspiration should not occur in a doctoral dissertation.

The four appendices include an online survey questionnaire in three languages (Polish, English, and Azerbaijani), as well as an in-depth interview questionnaire.

The listed appendices form part of the research section of the dissertation. In preparing this dissertation, the author drew upon an extensive body of bibliographic sources, totalling 194 entries. The author organised the bibliography alphabetically. The cited bibliographic entries are properly referenced and utilised in the footnotes. The bibliographic sources cover management, marketing, innovation management, and promotion. The dissertation also draws on reports from the World Bank and the World Health Organisation. The bibliography includes online sources.

In evaluating the submitted doctoral dissertation in accordance with the principles outlined in the Act of July 20, 2018, on Higher Education and Science, the reviewer adopted the following evaluation criteria:

- The choice of research subject, the thesis topic, and the innovativeness of the topic addressed.

- Methodological evaluation of the work, including the appropriateness of the selected research methods and the ability to apply them in practice, the soundness of the approach to achieving the work's objectives, and mastery of the conceptual framework for conducting scientific research.
- The degree to which the stated research objective was achieved.

## **2. Chapter One “Introduction”**

### *Selection of the Research Topic, Thesis Topic, and the Novelty of the Topic*

The thesis topic, “The Impact of Sales Promotion on Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Comparative Analysis from the Pandemic to the Post-Pandemic Period,” falls within marketing management, specifically consumer behaviour influenced by a company's promotional activities. The dissertation addresses, in both subject matter and content, changes in consumer behaviour influenced by selected sales promotion tools from the COVID-19 pandemic to the post-pandemic period. The author's academic discourse focuses on consumer habits, economic stability, purchasing decisions, consumption patterns, consumers' perception of risk, their spending priorities, product value assessment, and the dynamic development of digital retail channels.

The author of this study identified a research gap resulting from the absence or insufficient explanation in the literature of the following areas of marketing management: the interrelationships between the effectiveness of sales promotions and consumer behavior during and after the pandemic; the impact of various types of promotional tools on consumer behavior in changing economic conditions; consumer responses to sales promotions in both developed European markets and emerging economies, and the relationships between exposure to promotions and impulse purchases, as well as cross-cultural research on markets at different levels of economic development.

The dissertation topic focuses on research questions that include: what types of changes were observed during the pandemic that influence purchasing decisions, and whether these are short-term adjustments or long-term habits; how consumer perceptions and behaviors toward sales promotions changed from the pandemic period to the post-pandemic period; how the effectiveness of various types of sales promotions has changed; how pandemic- and post-pandemic changes affect consumers' price sensitivity and the frequency of promotional offers; how exposure to sales promotions influences impulse-buying behavior; and what the cross-cultural understanding of consumer preferences for different types of promotional offers is.

The dissertation does not clearly define its main objective. The author emphasises that the six research objectives are important and form the basis for achieving the overall research goal. However, the primary objective is not clearly explained. The six objectives can be considered equally important, correctly setting the direction for the analysis of promotional activities and consumer purchasing behaviour during the pandemic and in the post-pandemic period (pp. 15–16). In the dissertation, the research questions precede the formulation of research hypotheses. The research hypotheses and research questions are thematically linked. The research gap cited earlier provides the rationale for the discussions and research that enable a deeper understanding and evaluation.

Beyond the detailed description of the research gap, the introduction does not sufficiently describe the doctoral dissertation's research design. The development of the research design and the selection of research tools should align with the research problems and questions posed and clarify the significance of the topic addressed in the dissertation. Additionally, the research subject, research problems and questions, and relevant literature cited place this work within the discipline of management and quality science. The literature review was conducted properly, focusing on defining the scope of the analysis and confirming the existence of a research gap. The cited sources confirm that the author conducted a systematic literature review.

### **3. Chapter Two “Sales Promotion: Theoretical Foundations, Promotional Techniques, and Consumer Responses”**

In the second chapter of her dissertation, the author begins by reviewing the existing literature on sales promotion and consumer purchasing behaviour. Sales promotion is correctly linked to its key role in marketing, particularly in the short-term context of consumer decision-making. This chapter analyses various sales promotion objectives, such as stimulating consumer behaviour, engaging consumers in the sales process and encouraging trial, accelerating purchase decisions, and addressing issues related to the market penetration of a product or service. The overview of sales promotion techniques prepared and described in this chapter covers the most important tools of this marketing mix instrument.

In the introduction to Chapter 2, the author noted that, in her dissertation, she drew on insights from previous research on consumer perceptions, behavioural responses, and the effectiveness of promotional activities across various contexts and industries. This issue has been described too narrowly and insufficiently. The identified benefits of sales promotion are general and described in an obvious way. A doctoral dissertation should include the benefits and negative

effects of all (twelve) sales promotion tools discussed, or at least those (six) that appeared in the hypotheses. The author formulated research hypotheses that highlight the role of selected sales promotion tools. On this basis, she should have expanded on the negative effects of sales promotion tools. Next, the author should have weighed the disadvantages against the benefits of using these sales promotion tools. The section on the effectiveness of promotional activities in consumer industries is completely incomprehensible and trivial. When discussing consumer product sectors, the author does not refer to any classification, nor is it clear why the final section of the chapter discusses the hospitality industry.

The purchasing process differs between the FMCG and luxury sectors mentioned above. However, discretionary products also fall between FMCG and luxury product groups. Marketing activities in the discretionary product sector may vary because consumer behaviour can be entirely different. Purchasing and decision-making processes also differ. The author correctly identifies and discusses the impact of sales promotions on brand awareness, consumer perception, and emotion. It would also be more appropriate to provide an in-depth discussion of how sales promotions convey information to consumers and shape their perceptions and emotions, rather than merely briefly noting the tool's usefulness in the tourism sector.

#### **4. Chapter three „Systematic Literature Review on Sales Promotion and Consumer Buying Behaviour During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic“**

In Chapter 3, as the title indicates, the author presents a systematic review of the literature on sales promotion and consumer purchasing behaviour, with particular emphasis on changes observed during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The discussion in Chapter 3 stems from the thesis's topic and objectives, as well as the formulated research questions. The author has correctly utilised the relevant literature. Additionally, based on Chapter 3 of the dissertation, the author has demonstrated general theoretical knowledge in management and quality management, including the broad management of promotional mix instruments. Furthermore, the discussion of how the pandemic and the period immediately following it influenced consumer behaviour in response to sales promotions is worth highlighting. The doctoral candidate has prepared a chapter that is rated significantly higher than the previous one. The reviewer rates the literature review and the discussion of the positive and negative effects of sales promotions on consumer behaviour positively. The favourable reception of the content in Chapter 3 was primarily due to the in-depth analysis of the topic and the multifaceted nature of the discussion. In addition to the positive and negative effects of sales promotions on consumer behaviour, the author presented changes in consumer behaviour during the pandemic, the

influence of the digital environment, changes in payment methods, e-commerce, and impulse purchases.

Impulsive decision-making by consumers is a very significant phenomenon in today's world. However, this phenomenon has not been thoroughly researched or described because it is difficult to define. This issue fits well within the analysis of the impact of sales promotions on consumer behaviour. Chapter 3 concludes with a literature review of sales promotions and consumer behaviour before and after the pandemic. Through the literature review, the author intended to demonstrate the significance of the topic under study before and after the pandemic. The analysis covers 2012–2022. Poland officially declared the pandemic over on July 1, 2023. The post-pandemic period should be extended by at least two years. Ending the analysis in 2022 is too early. The data in Figures 3 (p. 71), 5 (p. 74), and 6 (p. 75) clearly show no need to extend the data collection period back to 2012. Up until 2020, changes in the data add little new information. The number of published articles changes sharply in 2022. The data presented in the aforementioned figures for 2022 merely foreshadow a shift in the trend of publications on sales promotion and consumer behaviour. Therefore, ending the analysis in 2022 is too early and inconsistent with the assumptions outlined in the introduction to the doctoral dissertation. The arguments and conclusions presented in this chapter are, with certain reservations, correct; the analyses are based on the collected data while also serving the objectives of this study and the verification of the research hypotheses.

## **5. Chapter four “The Socio-economic and cultural landscape of Azerbaijan and Poland: A comparative Contextualization”**

The next chapter provides the background for international comparisons and justifies the empirical section of the doctoral dissertation. In this chapter, the author highlights the economic and pandemic-related characteristics of Poland and Azerbaijan. The chapter compares the economic context of both countries under study, changes in consumer behaviour, digital adaptation, product preferences, brand loyalty, and perceptions of value, as well as post-pandemic changes and their long-term consequences. Additionally, the author explores the cultural context of Poland and Azerbaijan based on Geert Hofstede's approach. The doctoral candidate analysed six dimensions for comparing the values cherished by people in individual countries. The comparison is appropriate.

Nevertheless, the author should justify why Hofstede's model for assessing values in the given countries is appropriate for her analysis. Furthermore, Figure 10 (p. 84) was not prepared correctly, as the cited source information is incomplete. The date on which the analysis was

conducted is missing. The provided website name does not allow direct verification of the data source.

The discussions in Chapter 4 stem from the thesis's objectives and the adopted research procedure. The author has correctly utilised the relevant literature.

## **6. Chapter five „Research methodology”**

This chapter outlines the general methodological approach adopted in this doctoral dissertation to achieve the research objectives and test the hypotheses. Primary data were collected using two complementary methods: an online survey and in-depth interviews. The six objectives set were: to examine changes during and after the pandemic in consumers' perceptions and purchasing behaviors regarding sales promotions; to determine how the effectiveness of various types of sales promotions has changed; to assess changes in consumers' sensitivity to the frequency of sales promotions; analyzing the evolution of the relationship between exposure to promotions and impulse-buying behavior; identifying differences between Azerbaijani and Polish consumers regarding their preferred types of promotional offers in specific product categories; and comparing Azerbaijani and Polish consumers in terms of their behavioral responses to sales promotions. The research questions and six hypotheses, presented in Table 12, were formulated to address these objectives.

The research methodology was developed in a manner consistent with the research plan, enabling the doctoral candidate to answer the research questions, and was presented credibly. The planned empirical research is based on a combination of an online survey and in-depth interviews. The research process was not logically structured. First, Chapter 5 discusses the measurement instruments and sample selection, and then characterises the research objectives, poses the research questions, and formulates the hypotheses. The choice of research methods follows from the research problems, objectives, and hypotheses. Formulating hypotheses before selecting the sample is illogical and inappropriate.

Furthermore, this chapter lacks a description of the population, an explanation of the sampling method (snowball sampling), and a justification for the sample size in both the quantitative and qualitative studies. In a qualitative study using a questionnaire for in-depth interviews, a sample size of 12 participants can be justified based on a research experiment with a small control group. In contrast, the sample size (reliability) of a quantitative study using snowball sampling is justified by pointing to its purpose, the specific nature of respondent availability, or time constraints. The author devoted too much space in this chapter to describing and defining the theoretical foundations of quantitative and qualitative research and the types

of measurement scales used, while failing to address the interdependencies among the measurement methods adequately.

The arguments presented in this chapter are, with certain reservations, valid; at the same time, they align with the study's objectives and the verification of the hypotheses. Integrating the research objectives and hypotheses is crucial and has enhanced the logical coherence and methodological soundness of the entire research process. At the end of the chapter, the doctoral candidate correctly summarised the research questions she used to study the target groups, and aligning the hypotheses with the research objectives and questions allowed her to specify how she intended to test the assumptions.

## **7. Chapter Six “Research Findings”**

This chapter presents the results of the research conducted among the study group of Poles and Azerbaijanis. First, the author discussed the qualitative results and formulated three themes for analysis: “Evolution of purchasing behaviour across the pandemic phases,” “The evolving role of promotional offers in decision-making,” and “Cross-cultural differences in promotion sensitivity and preferences.” The results were presented logically and coherently using reflexive thematic analysis. The thematic and reflexive analysis focused on identifying patterns in the experiences, opinions, and perceptions of the 12 respondents from the two countries. The researcher actively interpreted the data in relation to the theoretical assumptions throughout the analysis process. However, the doctoral candidate did not adequately characterise the participants in the in-depth interviews. The lack of information about the respondent groups makes it difficult to evaluate the presented results. The second part of Chapter 6 covers demographic characteristics, key decision-making factors among respondents, and an analysis of the quantitative results comparing respondents from Poland and Azerbaijan, as well as perceptions of promotions and consumer behaviour. In addition to the demographic characteristics of the study sample, the chapter presents shopping frequency, time spent shopping, and factors influencing the decision-making process during the evaluation and purchase of products or services.

The table presenting descriptive data on respondents by age raises some questions. The quantitative and relative data clearly indicate that significantly more respondents from Azerbaijan aged 25–34 participated in the survey than those from Poland. The apparent overrepresentation of respondents from Azerbaijan aged 25–34 was not addressed. In assessing this structure, the author should have referred to actual data on the Polish and Azerbaijani populations.

The doctoral candidate presented further analyses as results from the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. This test was used to verify hypotheses related to consumers' assessments of the attractiveness of sales promotions during the pandemic and in the post-pandemic period, as well as consumers' sensitivity to the frequency of promotions.

The Wilcoxon signed-rank test analyses were conducted correctly. However, the application of the test results to verify the hypotheses is incorrect. The author rejects the hypotheses (H1a, H1b) or accepts them (H1c, H3). This interpretation is incorrect because the test results do not provide absolute certainty. In interpreting the test results, we use the concept that there is no basis for rejecting or accepting a hypothesis. In her analysis of the research results, the doctoral candidate also determined the correlation coefficient with respect to:

- changes in the perceived attractiveness of promotional offers from the pandemic period to the post-pandemic period, as well as purchasing behaviour related to promotions,
- the relationship between advertising exposure and impulse purchases.

Apart from a recurring error in applying the test result—in this case, Spearman's correlation—the reviewer did not identify any other errors and considers the analyses to have been conducted correctly.

Another area of analysis and hypothesis testing concerned differences in the behavioural responses of Azerbaijani and Polish consumers to promotions from the pandemic period to the post-pandemic period. The authors tested hypotheses (H5, H5a, and H5) correctly using the Mann-Whitney U test. The author correctly made an analytical decision regarding the specified hypotheses, committing the same error the reviewer pointed out in previous verifications of the adopted methodology.

To analyse the relationships between perceptions of promotions and consumer behaviour, the doctoral candidate later in this chapter demonstrated how to apply a two-stage cluster analysis to perceptions of promotions. The analysis was conducted twice: once for the pandemic period and once for the post-pandemic period. The Bayesian Information Criterion determined the optimal number of clusters. The cluster analysis identified two clusters and distinct groups based on how attractive various promotional offers were to consumers and how they responded to promotional activities during the pandemic. In contrast, the three additional clusters differ in shopping habits, openness to promotion frequency, and communication preferences. To verify the clusters, the Mann-Whitney U test was subsequently applied to compare cluster compositions for ratings that may not follow a normal distribution.

This test ensured a more reliable comparison and allowed assessment of substantive significance. The author uses terms related to statistical differences, but this is an

overinterpretation given the use of non-probability sampling. With purposive sampling, we do not know the probability of a given unit being included in the sample. This means that statistical differences should not be highlighted. Additionally, in her analysis of the research results, the author used Pearson's chi-square value and Kaiser's criteria.

The chapter concludes with models of the relationship between the perception of promotions and consumer behaviour during and after the pandemic. The interpretation of the results is correct.

## **8. Chapter Seven "Discussion"**

The arguments presented in this chapter are sound. The conclusions are derived from the collected data and are consistent with the study objectives and the verification of the research hypotheses. The author has discussed in detail the conditions under which the research for this dissertation was conducted (both quantitative and qualitative). It is worth noting the detailed description of the conclusions and their documentation in the dissertation text, as well as the consideration of the scientific objectives in the collected and presented data.

The chapter's content confirms the author's ability to design research using various research tools and to conduct scientific work independently. The scientific discourse presented confirms the doctoral candidate's ability to independently design and conduct scientific work, taking into account the empirical aspects of the research. Regarding the appropriateness of the discussion of the conducted research and the identified research problems, the chapter is well prepared. Shortcomings in the research methodology do not significantly affect the assessment of the correctness of the interpretation of the results.

In the "Conclusion," the author briefly addresses the verification of hypotheses, research questions, and the study's objectives. However, the study used non-random sampling methods, namely purposive and snowball sampling. Drawing far-reaching conclusions is not reliable. The author should clearly state that the study was non-probabilistic in nature and that the results apply exclusively to the target group under study.

## **9. Degree of Achievement of the Research Objective**

Through her analysis and the developed and verified research plan titled "The Impact of Sales Promotion on Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Comparative Analysis from the Pandemic to the Post-Pandemic Period," the author achieved the objective of the thesis and verified the research hypotheses. ✓

Through a literature review, quantitative and qualitative research, and analysis of the results, the doctoral candidate demonstrated strong theoretical knowledge in conducting social research in management and quality science. She confirmed her competence and ability to design and conduct scientific research, demonstrating her capacity to carry out independent scholarly work.

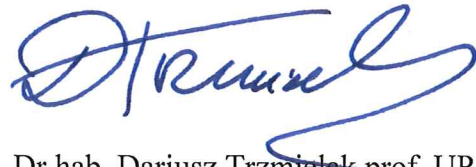
The research, while acknowledging several limitations, offers an original solution to a scientific problem, and its findings can be applied to marketing management and sales promotion tools in businesses and consulting organisations in Poland and beyond. At the same time, the conclusions of this work are practical in nature, as other entities can benefit from the experience gained in analysing the research results as well as from the inferences drawn in this dissertation.

## **10. Concluding Remarks**

The following are considered the main strengths of the reviewed work:

1. The author took a holistic approach to addressing the issue of marketing management and the relationship between sales promotion and consumer behaviour during the pandemic crisis and immediately afterwards. She made extensive use of relevant literature and conducted original research in two countries for her dissertation.
2. The doctoral candidate demonstrated a solid command of research methodology, particularly in conducting analyses based on statistical tests, to a degree that enables her to conduct scientific research independently.
3. The author correctly formulated (in the course of her discussion) research hypotheses derived from the dissertation's objectives and linked them to the research questions.
4. The doctoral candidate addressed issues that are current and important for the science and practice of business operations and marketing management in the areas of consumer behaviour and the design of promotional activities.
5. The author conducted a comparative analysis of consumer behaviour in Poland and Azerbaijan regarding promotional activities, which constitutes an original contribution to the fields of management and quality science.

I hereby certify that this doctoral dissertation, titled **“The Impact of Sales Promotion on Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Comparative Analysis from the Pandemic to the Post-Pandemic Period”** meets the requirements of the Act of July 20, 2018 — the Law on Higher Education and Science, with particular regard to the provisions of Article 187; therefore, I request that it be accepted and admitted to a public defense.



Łódź, 05.08.2026

Dr hab. Dariusz Trzmielak prof. UP