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Review of the doctoral dissertation

presented by Sadi Huseynzade,

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

written under scientific supervision of dr hab. Anna Łaskiewicz, prof. UŁ

University of Lodz,

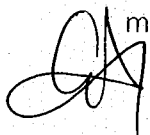
Lodz, 2026

The basis for the review was a letter from prof. Ewa Walińska, dated July 6th, 2026. A necessary documentation concerning the preparation of the review of the doctoral dissertation of Sadi Huseynzade titled: „*The Impact of Sales Promotions on Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Comparative Analysis from the Pandemic to the Post-Pandemic Period*” was attached to this letter. The doctoral dissertation was written in English.

The assessment of the doctoral dissertation was prepared in accordance with the Act of July 20th, 2018 on Law on Higher Education and Science (Dz.U., 2024, item 1571).

The review of this doctoral dissertation was prepared based on criteria that allow determining compliance with the requirements in the context of the original solution of a scientific problem, the general theoretical knowledge of the PhD student in the discipline of management studies, as well as his ability to conduct independently scientific work.

In my review, I focused on assessing especially the way of formulating the research problem and the topic of the dissertation, research objectives, hypotheses, research methodology, the layout of the content presented, as well as the substantive content and formal structure of the dissertation. The above elements became the basis for the formulation of final opinion. The attached documentation indicates that this PhD thesis is positioned in the discipline of management and quality studies.



I. Topic, statement of the research problem and presentation of the aims and objectives

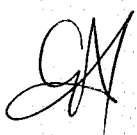
The research problem addressed by the doctoral candidate concerns the impact of sales promotions on consumer buying behaviour during the transition from the COVID-19 pandemic to the post-pandemic period, with particular emphasis on a comparative analysis of two distinct cultural contexts, namely Poland and Azerbaijan. It should be emphasized that this is a timely and relevant research topic, significant from both theoretical and managerial perspectives, while also offering substantial cognitive and scientific value. The selection of the research problem and dissertation topic can be assessed positively. The issues addressed in the dissertation are closely aligned with the contemporary challenges faced by organizations operating in highly competitive markets. Consequently, the topic is timely, scientifically well justified, possesses both theoretical and practical value, and fits well within the scope of the discipline of management and quality sciences.

II. The assessment of the scientific content of the dissertation

According to the applicable regulations, a doctoral dissertation should demonstrate the candidate's general theoretical knowledge within a given scientific discipline as well as the ability to conduct independent scientific research. Based on my analysis of the dissertation, I conclude that the Candidate demonstrates a good command of the subject matter and possesses a solid understanding of the issues addressed in the study.

The first chapter of the dissertation, entitled *Introduction*, presents the justification of the research problem, research gaps, research objectives, research questions, and hypotheses in a clear and logical manner. The Candidate convincingly explains the relevance of the research topic. However, this introductory chapter is predominantly descriptive rather than critical in nature. Although the Candidate demonstrates familiarity with the relevant literature, the review lacks a sufficiently critical analysis of the current state of knowledge.

Furthermore, the theoretical foundations of the study are not adequately established. The Candidate discusses several important constructs, including consumer behaviour, perceived value, impulse buying, promotional attractiveness, promotional exposure, and promotional frequency. However, no overarching theoretical framework is identified to underpin the proposed research model. The dissertation neither refers to a specific behavioural theory such as the Theory of Planned Behavior, the Consumer Decision Model, or the Stimulus-Organism-



Response (S-O-R) framework-nor explains why these particular constructs were selected. In my opinion, this section lacks a clear theoretical grounding of the research model in a coherent theory of consumer behaviour. Although the Candidate draws upon a number of constructs commonly used to explain consumer purchasing behaviour, no overarching theoretical perspective is provided to justify the proposed conceptual model.

Another concern relates to the formulation of the identified research gaps. They are presented largely as declarative statements rather than being systematically derived from and supported by previous empirical research. For example, in justifying the second research gap concerning the temporal dimension of consumer behaviour, the Candidate states that only a limited number of studies have examined whether behavioural changes persist, diminish, or transform in the post-pandemic environment. However, no specific studies are cited to justify this claim. Similarly, the Candidate argues that little research has investigated how the frequency of sales promotions shapes consumer responses over time, particularly whether repeated promotional exposure continues to influence purchasing behaviour or instead leads to reduced responsiveness. Once again, this assertion is not supported by evidence from the literature. Similar shortcomings can be observed in the formulation of the remaining research gaps.

Identifying research gaps requires more than simply stating that "there is limited research" or that "little is known." A rigorous literature review should first summarize the findings of previous studies, critically evaluate their contributions and limitations, identify unresolved issues or inconsistencies, and only then formulate the research gap. In the reviewed dissertation, a more in-depth and critical analysis of previous research is missing-one that would clearly demonstrate which aspects remain insufficiently explored.

The analysis of the research objectives also leads to several observations. First, the objective of a doctoral dissertation cannot simply be "to analyse" (objective 4). Analysis is a research method employed to achieve a scientific objective rather than an objective itself. Second, the proposed objectives are not consistent in terms of their level of specificity. For instance, objective 1 is formulated at a very general level, whereas objective 5 is considerably more detailed. Third, the Candidate does not clearly distinguish between the cognitive and practical objectives of the study. Scientific objectives should specify what new knowledge the research seeks to generate rather than indicate who may benefit from its findings. Finally, the research objectives should be fully aligned with the research questions. In the present dissertation, however, this consistency is not always maintained. For example, the first objective concerns

examining consumers' perceptions and behaviours towards sales promotions during the COVID-19 pandemic and the post-pandemic period. Nevertheless, no research question explicitly addresses consumer perceptions. Instead, the first research question focuses on the attractiveness of sales promotion tools. These concepts are not synonymous, as promotional attractiveness represents only one aspect of consumers' broader perceptions.

A particularly significant weakness of this part of the dissertation concerns the formulation of the research hypotheses. It should be acknowledged that the hypotheses are generally linked to the research objectives, which is a positive aspect of the study. Nevertheless, research hypotheses should be derived directly from the existing body of literature and supported by previous empirical findings. In the present dissertation, the rationale underlying many of the hypotheses is not sufficiently explained. It remains unclear which theoretical arguments or empirical studies led the Candidate to formulate the proposed assumptions. Consequently, the hypotheses appear to be based primarily on the Candidate's subjective expectations rather than on a systematic synthesis of prior research.

Moreover, several hypotheses are formulated in a descriptive rather than explanatory manner and therefore lack sufficient scientific value. For example, Hypothesis 1 assumes that the attractiveness of sales promotion tools differs between the two analysed periods. Such a statement is largely self-evident and quite obvious. Instead, the hypothesis should specify the expected direction of the relationship or identify the factors responsible for the anticipated differences. In general, research hypotheses should possess stronger explanatory power rather than merely predict the existence of differences.

Some hypotheses also lack sufficient precision. For example, Hypothesis 6 assumes that Azerbaijani and Polish consumers differ in their preferences for specific types of promotional offers across various product categories. However, in the detailed hypotheses (H6a and H6b), the Candidate does not specify which product categories are being considered. This omission makes the hypotheses less precise and more difficult to verify empirically.

Another important limitation of the introductory chapter is the absence of a clear justification for the selection of the variables included in the research. The Candidate focuses on constructs such as promotional attractiveness, promotional frequency, and promotional exposure, yet does not explain why these variables were selected instead of other constructs widely recognised in the literature, such as price consciousness, trust, perceived risk, or deal

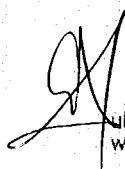
proneness. The theoretical rationale for the inclusion of the selected variables is not sufficiently developed, which weakens the conceptual foundations of the research.

In my opinion, the Candidate's justification for selecting the two countries for comparison is insufficient and lacks precision. The rationale provided is limited primarily to economic differences, such as market maturity, the retail environment, and consumer expenditure during the pandemic and post-pandemic periods. However, a more comprehensive justification should also incorporate the cultural context, particularly given that one of the aims of the dissertation (objectives 5 and 6) is to identify and explain cross-cultural differences in consumer behaviour. Without a stronger theoretical and contextual justification, the selection of these two countries appears only partially substantiated.

The second chapter provides the theoretical background for the issues of sales promotion and consumer purchasing behaviour. The Candidate focuses on organising the fundamental concepts related to sales promotion, presenting the main promotional techniques, and discussing the mechanisms through which sales promotion influences consumer behaviour. In the first part of the chapter, the Candidate appropriately presents various definitions of sales promotion. Contemporary approaches to conceptualising this construct are discussed; however, the chapter lacks the Candidate's own critical contribution. In particular, there is no discussion of the common elements shared by the presented definitions, nor are the key differences between the approaches adopted by the cited authors critically examined. In other words, the chapter does not contain a critical discussion of the various ways in which this key concept is defined in the literature.

Furthermore, the Candidate does not specify how the concept of sales promotion will be understood throughout the remainder of the dissertation. It remains unclear whether one of the existing definitions has been adopted as the conceptual foundation of the study or whether the Candidate intends to develop an original interpretation based on the reviewed literature. Addressing these issues would demonstrate greater scientific maturity and considerably strengthen the theoretical argumentation presented in the chapter.

The subsequent part of the chapter discusses the instruments of sales promotion and their influence on consumer behaviour. The content presented in this section is substantively correct and demonstrates a sound understanding of the topic. Nevertheless, it appears that the Candidate identified the sales promotion instruments largely *a priori*, based on a subjective

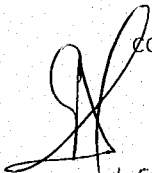


selection. Unfortunately, the proposed classification of promotional instruments does not appear to be derived from a systematic review of the literature or from a critical analysis of alternative classification frameworks proposed by previous researchers. Consequently, the chapter lacks a literature-based justification for the adopted classification of sales promotion instruments, which would have strengthened both the theoretical foundations and the methodological consistency of the study. The Candidate also fails to justify why, in Table 2 (p. 34), only six out of the eleven sales promotion instruments previously discussed are included in the summary. Below the table, the Candidate states that it *"provides a conceptual foundation for the selection of the sales promotion techniques adopted in the present study,"* yet no explanation is provided as to why these particular promotional instruments were selected.

The Candidate further argues that: *"Although the literature discusses a wide variety of promotional tools, the present study focuses specifically on price discounts, bundling, Buy One Get One Free (BOGO), loyalty programs, coupons or vouchers, and free trials or demos due to their consistent relevance within previous research and their strong association with consumer behavioural responses."* However, no evidence is provided to support this conclusion. On what basis does the Candidate claim that these specific promotional instruments are consistently regarded in the literature as being of particular importance or as exerting a stronger influence on consumer behaviour than other promotional techniques?

This constitutes a significant weakness of the dissertation and once again demonstrates that the Candidate formulates conclusions and research assumptions largely on the basis of subjective judgement rather than systematic evidence derived from the literature. Conclusions are presented without adequate theoretical or empirical justification. Throughout chapter two, the Candidate repeatedly refers to *"previous studies," "existing literature,"* or *"reviewed literature,"* yet frequently fails to identify the specific studies or provide the relevant references supporting these claims. These shortcomings represent serious methodological deficiencies in the preparation of a scientific dissertation.

An important strength of this chapter is the well-executed discussion of the benefits that consumers derive from sales promotion techniques, as well as the analysis of the behavioural effects of promotional activities, particularly with regard to their influence on brand knowledge, consumer perceptions, and emotional responses. However, this section lacks conceptual coherence.

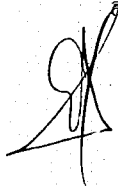


At the beginning of section 2.3, the Candidate states that this part of the dissertation *"examines the broader influence of sales promotions on consumer perceptions, emotional responses, brand-related outcomes, and purchasing behaviour."* However, the subsequent subsections discuss only the effects of sales promotion on consumer perceptions and emotional responses, while largely omitting its influence on brand-related outcomes and purchasing behaviour. Although these issues are briefly mentioned in section 2.1, devoted to the benefits of sales promotion, they are not systematically analysed. Consequently, neither the structure of chapter two nor the content presented clearly and explicitly addresses the impact of sales promotion on the four dimensions identified by the Candidate. This inconsistency weakens the logical organisation of the chapter and reduces the clarity of the theoretical framework.

In summary, chapter two demonstrates that the Candidate has drawn upon a broad range of relevant literature and has made a genuine effort to present different research perspectives on sales promotion. The individual topics are presented in a clear and well-structured manner, making it easier for the reader to understand the issues that form the basis for the subsequent empirical analysis. The Candidate demonstrates a good familiarity with the subject literature and a sound understanding of the fundamental marketing concepts related to sales promotion. At the same time, it should be noted that the chapter is predominantly descriptive and compilatory in nature. The literature is presented primarily through a sequential review of the different authors' approaches, while considerably less attention is devoted to their critical evaluation, comparison, or synthesis. The chapter lacks a discussion of the similarities and differences between the presented concepts, as well as a justification of which theoretical perspectives constitute the foundation for the subsequent research. Likewise, the Candidate does not offer any original conceptualisations, definitions, classifications, or theoretical interpretations of the discussed issues.

Equally importantly, the chapter does not culminate in the development of a coherent theoretical model that could subsequently serve as the foundation for the research hypotheses and the relationships examined in the empirical part of the dissertation.

Overall, chapter two constitutes a substantively sound compilation of knowledge on sales promotion. However, due to its predominantly descriptive character, limited critical analysis, and insufficient theoretical integration, its scientific contribution remains relatively modest.



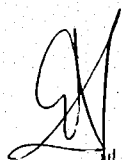
Chapter Three presents a systematic literature review examining the impact of sales promotion on consumer purchasing behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic and the post-pandemic period. Its stated objective is to analyse the current state of knowledge regarding the influence of sales promotion on consumers' purchasing decisions during this unique period and to identify changes in consumer behaviour triggered by the pandemic.

The first part of the chapter presents the process of searching, selecting, and screening scientific publications, with the review being conducted in accordance with the PRISMA framework. This section, however, raises serious concerns regarding the time frame adopted for the systematic literature review. It remains unclear why the Candidate limited the review to publications covering the period from 2012 to 2022. Unfortunately, no justification for this decision is provided and, in my opinion, the selected time frame is not appropriate.

The very title of the dissertation indicates that its purpose is to examine consumer behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the post-pandemic period. According to the World Health Organization, the COVID-19 pandemic was officially declared in March 2020. Subsequently, in May 2023, the WHO announced the end of the Public Health Emergency of International Concern, a date that is widely regarded as marking the beginning of the post-pandemic period. This raises the question of why, when aiming to analyse consumer behaviour from the pandemic through the post-pandemic period, the Candidate selected 2012 (eight years before the outbreak of the pandemic) as the starting point and 2022 (one year before the official end of the pandemic) as the end point of the review.

In my opinion, the adoption of this time frame is methodologically unjustified. Analysing studies published between 2012 and 2020 provides little insight into consumer behaviour during the pandemic itself, while limiting the review to studies published up to 2022 does not allow for meaningful conclusions regarding consumer behaviour in the post-pandemic period. Consequently, the inappropriate selection of the review period presents a distorted picture of consumer behaviour in the analysed context and undermines the validity of the analyses presented throughout chapter three.

The subsequent sections review the literature concerning both the positive and negative effects of sales promotion instruments, highlighting their role in enhancing brand attitudes and purchase decisions while also acknowledging their potential to generate consumer discomfort or raise concerns about brand quality. The Candidate also analyses changes in consumer



purchasing behaviour by discussing developments in digital consumer behaviour across different sectors, payment methods, and electronic commerce.

One aspect that raises some concern is the title of Section 3.3.4. According to its title, this subsection is intended to examine changes in consumer behaviour during the pandemic in the context of impulse buying. However, the content of this section contains virtually no discussion of impulse buying itself. Instead, it focuses on geographical differences in consumer behaviour, shifts in product categories purchased during the pandemic, and related issues. Impulse buying refers to unplanned and spontaneous purchasing behaviour resulting from a sudden urge to buy, typically characterised by limited cognitive deliberation and driven primarily by emotional and situational factors. This perspective is largely absent from the discussion presented in this part of the dissertation.

A noteworthy strength of the chapter is the concise tabular summaries presented at the end of each subsection. These tables effectively synthesise the findings of previous studies while also providing brief information about the research methods and statistical techniques employed in the reviewed publications, thereby enhancing the clarity and readability of the literature review.

The chapter concludes with a bibliometric analysis covering trends in publication output, the journals publishing most frequently on the topic, the geographical distribution of research, as well as the distribution of research methods and research instruments used in previous studies. The Candidate deserves recognition for undertaking a systematic literature review, a methodology that has become increasingly important in management and quality sciences. The chapter presents the publication selection procedure and organises previous research findings into clearly defined thematic areas. As a result, it provides a structured overview of changes in consumer behaviour associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nevertheless, the chapter also raises several important methodological concerns. The first relates to the inappropriate time frame adopted for the review. The second concerns the insufficient adherence to the methodological rigour required for conducting a systematic literature review. The description of the review procedure remains relatively general and does not include all the elements required by widely accepted reporting standards such as PRISMA. In particular, the chapter lacks a detailed justification for the choice of databases, a comprehensive search strategy, clearly specified quality assessment criteria for the included studies, and a more transparent description of the article screening and selection process.

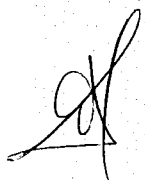
Consequently, the presented review resembles a conventional literature review rather than a systematic literature review in the full methodological sense of the term.

Similarly to Chapter Two, the Candidate presents the findings of previous studies in a clear and organised manner. However, considerably less attention is devoted to critical discussion, comparing different approaches, and interpreting these findings. The bibliometric analysis, although informative and interesting, remains primarily descriptive and does not lead to more profound conclusions regarding either the evolution of this research field or the development of research methodologies applied within it.

Chapter Four focuses on the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the two countries selected for the empirical investigation, namely Poland and Azerbaijan. The Candidate assumes that consumers' responses to sales promotion instruments may be influenced by these contextual factors. Accordingly, the chapter discusses the economic context of the pandemic period in both countries, the dynamics of digital transformation, and the characteristics of consumer behaviour following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the Candidate compares the two countries from a cultural perspective using Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the existence of significant differences between the selected countries that may contribute to variations in consumer behaviour and to provide an interpretative context for the empirical findings presented in the subsequent chapters of the dissertation.

The Candidate has made a successful attempt to place the planned empirical research within a broader socio-economic context. The chapter makes good use of up-to-date statistical data obtained from reliable international sources, such as the World Bank, and presents these data clearly through well-designed figures and statistical tables.

However, it is not clear why the Candidate adopted a different time frame for the analyses presented in this chapter than the one used in chapter three. It should be noted that the time frame employed in chapter four offers considerably greater potential for capturing differences in consumer behaviour during the pandemic and the post-pandemic period. The only issue that might be reconsidered is the inclusion of a relatively long five-year pre-pandemic period, given that the dissertation is primarily concerned with consumer behaviour during and after the pandemic.



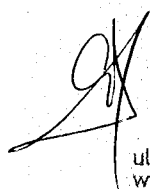
Unfortunately, a further analysis of the chapter confirms that the Candidate does not consistently define what is considered as the pandemic period and what time frame constitutes the post-pandemic period. Consequently, several of the contextual analyses, particularly those concerning economic conditions, lose much of their analytical value.

A good example is the discussion of GDP trends in the two countries. On page 77, the Candidate analyses the period from 2015 to 2019, which appears to be treated as the pre-pandemic period. The year 2020 is then identified as representing the pandemic period. However, the subsequent analysis of GDP for the years 2020-2024 is described as covering the post-pandemic period. This implies that the year 2020 is simultaneously classified as both part of the pandemic and the post-pandemic period, which is conceptually inconsistent.

Given the title of the dissertation and its stated research objectives, this represents a significant methodological shortcoming. A clear and consistent operationalisation of the pandemic and post-pandemic periods is fundamental to the validity of the analyses and conclusions presented throughout the dissertation. The lack of such consistency weakens the reliability of the Candidate's interpretation of the empirical evidence and raises concerns regarding the soundness of the subsequent inferences.

Chapter V is devoted to the presentation of the research methodology adopted to verify the proposed research hypotheses and achieve the stated research objectives. This part of the dissertation serves as a bridge between the theoretical considerations presented in the preceding chapters and the empirical findings discussed later. The author employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative findings derived from a survey with qualitative insights obtained through in-depth interviews.

In the first part of the chapter, the Author seeks to explain the process of data collection. However, this section is largely devoted to a theoretical discussion on mixed-methods research and the rationale for conducting quantitative research using an online questionnaire, particularly in light of the dynamic development of the Internet in Poland and Azerbaijan. Relatively little information is provided about the actual empirical study itself, apart from the fact that a structured questionnaire was used to collect standardized and comparable data on demographic characteristics, shopping frequency, decision-making factors, and perceptions of various sales promotion tools (e.g., price discounts, free trials, bundling, coupons, loyalty cards, and "buy one, get one free" offers). The Author also states that the qualitative data provided



interpretative insights into how and why consumers responded differently to promotional activities across the pandemic timeline and within different cultural contexts.

A particularly valuable aspect of this chapter is the clear presentation of the structure of the survey questionnaire used in the quantitative study, as well as the interview guide employed in the qualitative phase of the research.

Nevertheless, the chapter lacks several important methodological details. First, the Author does not present a conceptual model presenting relations he intends to analyze. Second, he does not justify neither the sampling procedure nor the sample size. Why were exactly 300 respondents selected, with 150 participants from each country? Third, no information is provided regarding the pilot study. It remains unclear whether a pilot study was conducted at all and, if so, what its outcomes were. Fourth, the chapter does not explain how the measurement scales were developed or adapted. Did the Author employ measurement scales previously validated in the literature? If so, whose conceptualization was adopted? Alternatively, if original measurement scales were developed, what procedure was followed in their construction? Fifth, there is no discussion of the reliability assessment or validation of the research instrument. Sixth, although the Author identifies the statistical techniques used in the analysis, the rationale for selecting these particular methods is not explained. It would be beneficial to justify why these analytical techniques were considered the most appropriate for addressing the research questions and testing the hypotheses.

Finally, given that the study was conducted in two different countries, ensuring the translational equivalence of the research instrument is of fundamental importance. This requires not only the accurate translation of the measurement scales but also the careful adaptation of the terminology and expressions used in the questionnaire. High-quality translation is essential to ensure that respondents in different linguistic contexts interpret the questions consistently, thereby enhancing the reliability, validity, and comparability of the findings. However, the dissertation provides no information on this issue. How did the Author ensure the translational equivalence of the research instrument?

In summary, chapter V presents a coherent research design and demonstrates that the Author selected an appropriate overall research strategy. Nevertheless, from the perspective of the methodological rigor expected in a doctoral dissertation, the chapter would benefit from a more comprehensive description of several key methodological aspects, particularly those concerning sampling, instrument development and validation, pilot testing, statistical

justification, and cross-cultural measurement equivalence. The research instruments used in the study should be also included as appendixes.

Chapter six constitutes the empirical part of the dissertation and presents the findings of both the qualitative and quantitative studies. Based on these results, the Candidate proceeds to verify the research hypotheses formulated in the dissertation.

The chapter begins with the presentation of the qualitative findings, which were analysed using Reflective Thematic Analysis (RTA) to identify, analyse, and interpret patterns of shared meaning across the qualitative dataset. The Candidate identified three overarching themes. The first concerns the evolution of purchasing behaviour across the different phases of the pandemic, the second relates to the changing role of promotional offers in consumers' decision-making processes, and the third addresses cultural differences in promotional sensitivity and consumer preferences.

One issue that raises concerns is that the classification of the product categories analysed in the study is introduced only at the stage of presenting the empirical findings. Given that the research objectives, research questions, and hypotheses had already indicated that different product categories would be examined, the methodological chapter should have provided a clear justification for selecting specifically these product categories. Explaining why these product groups were chosen, rather than alternative classifications available in the literature, would have strengthened the methodological rigour of the study.

The subsequent part of the chapter presents the results of the quantitative study conducted to verify the research hypotheses. Having reviewed this section, I have serious reservations regarding the scientific value of the respondents' retrospective assessments. The quantitative survey was conducted between June 2024 and December 2025. This raises the question of whether respondents were still able to accurately recall their detailed purchasing behaviours during the pandemic period (2020-2023, according to WHO classifications) as well as during the post-pandemic period. More specifically, can it reasonably be assumed that respondents were capable of reliably evaluating the attractiveness of six different sales promotion instruments separately for each of these periods and accurately assessing the extent to which each of these instruments influenced their purchasing habits?

In my opinion, if the Candidate intended to compare consumers' attitudes and such detailed purchasing behaviours across two distinct periods-the pandemic (2020-2023) and the post-



pandemic period (2023-2025), the study should have adopted a longitudinal research design, with data collected during both periods. Such an approach would have substantially increased the reliability and validity of the findings.

Another major concern relates to the way in which the Candidate verifies the research hypotheses. First, there is an inconsistency in the wording of several hypotheses, including H1a. In the *Introduction* and the methodological chapter (Chapter Five), H1a is formulated as follows: *"Consumers' evaluations of the attractiveness of price discount deals differed significantly between the pandemic and post-pandemic periods."* However, in chapter six (p. 126), the Candidate states that Hypothesis 1a assumes that: *"Price discount deals have a significantly stronger influence on consumers' buying habits..."*. These two formulations are not equivalent. The original hypothesis concerns differences in the perceived attractiveness of promotional instruments, whereas the latter refers to their influence on consumer buying habits.

Second, according to the questionnaire (see, for example, Table 21), respondents were asked only to evaluate the attractiveness of the various sales promotion instruments. They were not asked to assess the influence of these instruments on their buying habits. Nevertheless, based solely on respondents' evaluations of attractiveness, the Candidate proceeds to verify hypotheses concerning the influence of these promotional instruments on consumer habits. It is not clear how such conclusions can be formulated? On what basis does the Candidate infer the existence or strength of behavioural influence from measures of perceived attractiveness? The fact that respondents perceive a particular promotional instrument as attractive does not necessarily imply that it affects their buying habits. These are conceptually distinct constructs and should not be treated interchangeably.

It should be emphasised once again that the hypotheses formulated in both the *Introduction* and the methodological chapter concern differences in the evaluation of promotional attractiveness rather than causal relationships between promotional instruments and consumer behaviour. The interpretation adopted in chapter six therefore represents a conceptual shift that is neither explained nor methodologically justified. The same observation applies to several other hypotheses, including H1b.

A further concern relates to the verification of hypotheses 6a and 6b. Earlier in this review, while discussing the qualitative study, I pointed out that the methodological chapter failed to justify the selection of the product categories used in the analyses. Setting this issue aside, I accepted that the Candidate classified the products into five categories: daily products,

consumer electronics, style and fashion, home appliances, and health and wellness (pp. 115-116). It is therefore difficult to understand why, in the quantitative part of the study devoted to testing Hypotheses 6a and 6b, an entirely different classification of product categories is adopted. The inconsistency exists not only between the qualitative and quantitative studies but also within the quantitative study itself. Specifically, one classification of product categories is used to verify hypothesis 6a (Table 34), while another is employed to test hypothesis 6b (Table 35). This inconsistency is difficult to justify methodologically and significantly undermines the coherence of the empirical analyses.

Furthermore, it is not clear what the Candidate intended to achieve by presenting the analyses included in section 6.2.3. This subsection does not appear to correspond to any of the research hypotheses, nor is it clearly linked to any of the research objectives or research questions. The notion of "promotion perception and consumer behaviour" discussed in this section is not sufficiently defined. The Candidate proposes two conceptual models describing relationships between promotion perception and consumer behaviour. Although the analyses themselves appear to be technically correct, I do not see how this part of the chapter relates to the research assumptions adopted in the dissertation. Consequently, the purpose of the models presented in Figures 31 and 32 remains unclear.

It should also be noted that chapter six is exceptionally extensive, partly because of the large number of research hypotheses. As a result, it becomes difficult for the reader to identify the most important findings of the study. The chapter would benefit considerably from concise summary tables presenting the verification status of each hypothesis, thereby improving both clarity and readability.

The final chapter presents the discussion of the research findings. I appreciate the Candidate's effort to integrate the quantitative and qualitative results. Combining evidence from both parts of the study undoubtedly contributes to a more comprehensive interpretation of the observed phenomena. Nevertheless, the Candidate continues to misinterpret several of the empirical findings. For example, when discussing the verification of hypothesis H1c, the Candidate repeatedly states that the Buy One Get One Free (BOGO) promotion exerted a stronger influence during the pandemic period. Leaving aside the imprecise wording of this statement - since any discussion of "influence" should clearly specify the causal relationship involved - it should be emphasised that the hypothesis itself did not concern the influence of

BOGO promotions on consumer behaviour. Rather, it referred solely to differences in respondents' evaluations of the attractiveness of this promotional instrument. The same criticism applies to the interpretation of the findings concerning the remaining promotional techniques.

Finally, both this chapter and the concluding section of the dissertation lack a systematic discussion of the extent to which the research objectives were achieved and the research questions answered. Such a synthesis would have provided a more coherent conclusion to the dissertation and strengthened the logical connection between the theoretical assumptions, the empirical findings, and the final conclusions.

Final conclusion

Having evaluated the overall content of the doctoral dissertation submitted by **Sadi Huseynzade**, entitled: *The Impact of Sales Promotions on Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Comparative Analysis from the Pandemic to the Post-Pandemic Period*, I conclude that although its scientific contribution is substantially limited by a number of methodological shortcomings and deficiencies identified throughout this review it meets the requirements of a doctoral dissertation to a minimum extend. The dissertation addresses an important and timely research topic, the Candidate conducted an independent literature review, demonstrated general knowledge in the discipline of management and quality sciences, and independently carried out both qualitative and quantitative research.

I therefore request Scientific Committee of the Management and Quality Discipline of University of Lodz to admit the doctoral dissertation authored by Mr. Sadi Huseynzade, under the supervision of dr hab. Anna Łaskiewicz, prof. UŁ.

