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Weekend Sales Promotion Techniques and Buying Behavior of Omani Citizens in Muscat City

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ABSTRACT: Nowadays weekend sales promotion techniques are one of the main tactics which marketers resort to in order for reaping instant improvement in sales. Sales promotion is one of the components of promotion mix and promotion mix is one of the Ps of marketing mix. It is one of the most important forms of communication from seller to buyers. Sales promotion is done to the prospective buyers to choose and buy products. These are marketing tactics that are carried out by a commercial establishment in order to induce people to buy a particular brand. The study attempted to find out how the weekend sales promotion techniques affected the buying behavior of Omani citizens in Muscat city. An extensive literature review was carried out to find out the research gap that such a study was not done especially in the geographic confines of Oman. 100 samples of Omani citizens were taken using convenient random sampling method and analysed using the percentage methods. The major retail outlets functioning in Muscat city were the target centers for the sample customers.

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The global retail industry continues to grow and maintain its momentum. It is driven by economic and social developments and population growth. The key factors of growth in retail industry are robust economic growth, rising population, changing consumer trends and rising purchasing power.

Major retail companies in the world: Wal-Mart is the largest retail company in the world with \$187 billion of market turnover. The company is situated in New York city. Wal-Mart has 476 retail outlets in the world. The USA stands first in terms of most number of Wal-Mart branches. Home Depot, another global retail giant, is the world's largest home improvement specialty retailer, with more than 2,200 retail stores in the United States, Canada, Mexico and China. Target is another retail giant that serves its guests at 1,765 stores across the United States and at Target.com. Since 1946, Target has given a percent of its income as community grants and programs and today that reached more than \$ 3 million a week. Best Buy is a global consumer-electronics retailer based in the United States of America having operations in Canada as well. Inditex is one of the world's largest fashion retailers, welcoming shoppers at its eight store formats, Zara, Pull & Bear, Massimo Dutti, Bershka, Stradivarius, Oysho, Zara Home and Uterqüe, boasting 7,200 stores in 93 countries. Costco, an American multinational retailer, currently operates 601 warehouses, including 434 in the United States and Puerto Rico, 82 in Canada, 32 in Mexico and 22 in the United Kingdom. Aeon is a retail group of 180 companies. The Group operates lifestyle-enhancing retail and a variety of other services, from general merchandise stores and supermarkets, to fashion-conscious specialty stores, financial services and amusement facilities. PPR group empowers a coherent ensemble of luxury and sport & lifestyle premium brands, specializing in apparel and accessories operating in more than 120 countries.

Retail industry in Oman: a local perspective: Retail trade in Oman is mainly concentrated in the hands of a few major independent retail companies. It has a few regional and international retailers. While consumers are looking for a healthy shopping experience with entertainment, the country's retail market is turning to accommodate large shopping and entertainment complexes. The supply of retail space has gained strength in the past a few years and has seen the addition of large shopping malls in Oman.

Top ten retail companies in Oman: Lulu Hypermarket is an Indian businessman owned hypermarket chain and retail company headquartered in Abu Dhabi. It was founded in 2000 by Yusuff Ali M.A. who hails from Nattika, Thrissur district of Kerala in India. Lulu Hypermarket is one of the divisions of Indian multinational conglomerate Lulu Group



International. LuLu has over 40,000 employees of various nationalities. *Carrefour* is a multinational retail company headquartered in Massy, France with worldwide operations in more than 30 countries. The company has a chain of outlets in Oman as well. *Mars* is an Omani retail chain owned by VT Vinodan, who is also from Kerala, India. His principle is that *everyone needs a place where cheap goodies are*. The company strives to achieve this vision by providing the best possible comfort, value, range and quality to its customers who serve them every time. *Al Meera* was established in 2005 and was a natural development for cooperatives established in the past 30 years to meet the diverse needs of Qatari society. The company plays a leading role in the retail trade of consumer goods in the country. Today, Al Meera is the largest supermarket chain in Qatar. Al Meera has always been committed to providing the best shopping experience. *Nesto* has about 147 shops, restaurants and cafes. *Zamzam* is one of the largest shopping centers in the Sultanate of Oman, especially in Muscat, the capital city, with many shops for jewelry, children's shops and clothing. *There is also a great restaurant corner. It is indeed a great shopping center. Al Qurum City Center* is one of the most important landmarks in the city of Qurum which is easily accessible for the general traffic. The shopping center has a large amount of recreational facilities such as children's games, food courts etc. *Al Masa Mall* is located near the private beach in the city of Crimea and is distinguished by its magnificent location. It is truly a unique and wonderful place. *Al Harthy Complex* is another shopping mall that is characterized by the availability of electronics shops, international chocolate shops, musical instruments, children's shops etc. *Commercial Capital Center* is located in Crimea. It also has international shops selling carpets, electronics and clothes. There is also a souvenir shop for tourists.

Need for the study: Retail sector has high competition. Many large retail companies compete each other to increase their market share Increase in market share depends on customer satisfaction and retention. Customer satisfaction and retention in retail sector rely on the volume of benefits given to customers. These benefits are primarily through various sales promotional efforts. Generally, large retail companies give weekend sales promotional offers to hook customers. Research in the area of weekend sales promotion and its impact on buyer behavior is rare, especially in the Omani context. Therefore, there is a need for such a study to fill the gap and to give marketing input to marketing strategists to make quality marketing decisions.

Research questions

1. What is the frequency of Omani citizens' visit to retail shops in a week in Muscat city?
2. What is the Omani customer preference to retail shops in Muscat city?
3. What is the sales promotion technique preference as per its potential influence on customers in choosing retail shop of their choice for their weekend purchases?
4. What is the effect of weekend sales promotion techniques on buyer behavior of Omani citizens in Muscat city?
5. What is the most effective weekend sales promotion technique that results in impulsive buying behavior of customers?

Research objectives

1. To find out the frequency of Omani citizens' visit to retail shops in a week in Muscat city
2. To find out the Omani customer preference to retail shops in Muscat city
3. To find out the sales promotion offer preferences as per its potential influence on customers in choosing retail shop of their choice for their weekend purchases
4. To find out the effect of weekend sales promotion techniques on buyer behavior of Omani citizens in Muscat city
5. To find out the most effective weekend sales promotion technique that results in impulsive buying behavior of Omani customers

Scope of the study: Consumer satisfaction is determined by the quality of service provided by the retail companies and the methods of measuring the satisfaction of customers to determine the degree of satisfaction with the services and finding the methods to improve the quality of services. Some companies are studying the field to analyze the contribution of the process of assessing the quality of services in achieving customer satisfaction. Customers want a good treatment and hate dealing with companies that focus on the service is not enough to provide quality service and price without providing good customer treatment. The study is carried out in Muscat city among Omani retail shop owners



II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sales promotion is one of the most important motivational techniques to influence the purchasing decision of consumers. In recent years, practitioners and researchers confirm that the advertising and promotion are the most important promotional activities of companies to increase market share. According to Antunes et al. (2022), advertising and promotion affect market share of a company and influences the organizational decision to allocate the company's products. Kelesbayev et al. (2017) state that the promotion can develop the relationship between the company and customers. It was also explained that the reduction in prices would change attitude of consumers in terms of buying a particular commodity and a commodity of a particular quality. In addition, it can also be stated that a consumer is not only affected by the advertisements, but also influenced by the product prices (Chen et al., 2023). Furthermore, as Niju et al. (2024) state that the companies spend nearly 75 percent on sales promotion and 25 percent on advertising of the total promotional budget. Otherwise, promotion is one of the important strategies that marketers focus these days. Furthermore, it is one of the most important techniques in the 4P's of marketing mix. Sales promotions are growing day by day due to cut-throat competition and extra developments that are taken place in the world as technological advancements and globalization. In addition, it is one of the most excellent tools that supports advertising effort (Ripamonti, 2023). Adjagbodjou (2015) states that promotion aims at changing consumer attitudes, build brand awareness and influence buying decisions. But Jiang and Ma (2018) state that the personal attitude in the direction of the promotion plays key role effecting the brand equity scope. On the other hand, promotion has one more objective, which encourages consumers to purchase specific product.

Sales promotion is a technique that is used by marketers in order to persuade customers to purchase a specific product for a certain period. It becomes very important for sellers and consumers. There are several sources and definitions about promotion that are given by researchers in the field. Kotler (2012) states that promotion is an activity carried out within the framework of marketing efforts and involves the persuasive communication process. Perovic et al. (2024) define sales promotion as a set of tools that can be used to move and stir the desire and interest in the purchase process through contact made between the seller and the customer. Furthermore, Mussol (2019) states that sales promotion is that the customer saw before making the purchase of a brand and affect the process of customer buying decision. Shaan (2023) states that sales promotion is the appearance of any connection is not personal, to display and promote ideas or goods or services by the well-known and at his own expense. In addition, sales promotion has effects on a range of phases of customer's buying decisions for instant purchase, quantity, brand switching and brand choice (Saulite and Sceulovs, 2022). Dunković and Knezevic (2023) states that in spite of an extensive attention in the relationship between sales promotion and buying decision, the majority of the studies of this type focus on the effect of sales promotions on selection at the time they are provided. Moreover, sales promotion is the process of convincing a prospective buyer to purchase a product. It is considered to be used as a short-range tactic to advance sales. It is not truly considered to build long-term consumer loyalty (Svrakic and Arslanagic-Kalajdzic, 2023). To add, sales promotion can be in two forms which are monetary and non-monetary. These forms offer utilitarian benefits to the customers. Utilitarian benefits indicate saving time, cost and efforts, convenience in shopping and quality (Musasa and Tlapana, 2023). Also it is mentioned that monetary promotions are based on transactional in nature and incentive and offer utilitarian benefits and instant rewards to the consumers. Utilitarian benefits refer to exploration, self-esteem, entertainment and phrase value. On the other hand, non-monetary promotion offers utilitarian benefits. There are many studies that mention the different effects of sales promotion on customer decisions. For instance, Wardhana and Pradana (2023) state that value promotion excites temporary changes in brand choices and quantity purchased. According to Elsayed (2023), changes are for the reason that market brands are linked with high-status brands with low level of risks, high point of reliability, and better concerns for consumer needs and stronger utilitarian benefits. From the previous discussions the researcher observed that sales promotion had effect on customer decisions depending on the customer level of obligation. Sales promotion usually happens for period of time to help build a sense of urgency. There are many examples of sales promotion which include free trial periods, coupons and discounts. Also sales promotion provides a diversity of advantages to small businesses.

Terms used: *Customer Preference* is what type of product an individual customer likes or dislikes. *Retailing* is the process of selling consumer goods or services to customers through multiple channels of distribution to earn a profit. *Sales Promotion* is stimulation of sales achieved through contests, demonstrations, discounts, exhibitions or trade shows, games, giveaways, point-of-sale displays and merchandising, special offers, and similar activities. *Buying Behavior* is the process by which individuals search for, select, purchase, use, and dispose of goods and services, in satisfaction of their needs and wants. *Sales Promotion Techniques* are a marketing technique that is used to entice customers to purchase a product. *Impulsive Buying* is buying commodities in large quantities.



Research gap: Primary research shows that there are many studies on sales promotion techniques and its impact on buying behavior. But a study on weekend sales promotion and its impact on buyer behavior in Sultanate of Oman is rarely found. The present study is expected fill the gap.

III. METHODOLOGY

The methodology usually includes how data are to be collected, what instruments are employed, how the instruments will be used and the intended means for analyzing the data collected. *Data Collection:* Two sources of data were used in the study. They were primary and secondary sources. The researcher in this study used close and open ended questions to collect the primary data by doing nine closed questions and one open ended question to the customers. Primary sources were Omani citizens who made weekend purchases from hyper markets in the city of Muscat. Secondary data were collected from secondary sources journals, magazines, books and electronic sources. *Primary Data:* Primary data are the data collected from the primary sources. Primary sources are the sample population chosen for the study. The sample population was the Omani customers of retail shops in Muscat city. Primary data were collected from 100 Omani citizens. *Secondary data:* Secondary sources of data were also used for the study. Electronic sources, journals, magazines, books and newspapers were also used as secondary sources of information. *Ethical declaration:* The data collected from the respondents were used only for the study. All the respondents were given written assurance on the same that the information given by the respondents were used only for the particular research work and will not be used for any other purpose. *Sample design:* Sample design is a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a give population. It refers to the technique or the procedure the research would adopt in the selection of the sample. Sampling is the process of selecting a sufficient number of respondents from the population. A study of the sample and an understanding of its properties or characteristics would make it possible for the researcher to generalize such properties or characteristics to the whole population. *Sampling techniques:* Convenience random sampling technique was used to collect the primary data from the targeted respondents. *Study area:* The study area of the research is Muscat city, which is the capital city of the Sultanate of Oman. Muscat city is presently having population of 1.48 million. *Questionnaire design:* Perhaps the most important part of the survey process is the formulation of its questions that accurately measure the opinions, experiences and behaviors of the public. Random sampling and high response rates will be wasted if the information gathered is built on a shaky foundation of ambiguity or biased questions. *Tools for Data Analysis and the Rationale:* The collected data were analyzed using the statistical tools of simple frequencies and percentages. Tables and graphs were used for analytical presentation of the data. Microsoft Excel was used as the data analytical software to analysis of the primary data.

Limitations of the Study: The following are the limitations that the researcher encountered while carrying out the study: *Time Constraint:* Time allocated for the study was not adequate and to carry out the research in a broader way. *Issue of Confidentiality:* There were some respondents who feared sharing their information due to fear of being exposed. However, the researcher assured the respondents of the confidentiality of the information that they provided.

Anticipated contributions: There are many studies in the area of the factors influencing buyer behavior. But the studies on the factors affecting buyer behavior with special reference to the weekend sales promotional offers and its impact on buying behavior of Omani citizens were rare. Therefore, the present study makes it as the first one on the chosen topic especially in the sultanate of Oman. The contribution of the present research is two folded. One is its contribution to the body of knowledge by filling the research gap with its findings. Another contribution is that the retail companies of Oman may utilize the findings of the research for better decision making in the area of marketing to attract more customers during weekends offering more attractive and profitable sales promotion techniques.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of the collected data from the population of Omani citizens with regard to the effect of weekend sales promotion techniques on buying behavior of Omani citizens in Muscat city with a randomly chosen sample of 100 was done for the study. All the 100 distributed questionnaires were collected back and subjected to its analysis and interpretation.

Descriptive profile: Customers' demographic profile gives an account of their age, gender and education, which has a strong influence on their perception towards various sales promotion offers and its appeal. *Gender:* The sample chosen from the population was a mix of males and females. The analysis shows that the sample of 100 is constituted by 37



percent of males and 63 percent of females. *Education profile*: The sample customers were classified into high school, diploma, bachelors and masters. Out of the 100 customers chosen for the study, majority of the customers (40 percent) were bachelor's, 35 percent of the customers were diploma holders and 15 percent and 10 percent of the remaining customers were those who have completed their high school and who had master degrees respectively. *Age Profile*: The lower age of the respondents was chosen as 18 years with an assumption that a person becomes adult at the age of 18. So the age of the customer respondents was profiled using the age categorization of 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, and above 55. The data shows that 50 percent of the total customer respondents surveyed fall in the age group of 26-35 years. 25 percent of the total respondents fall in the age group of 36-45. 15 percent fall in the age group of 18-25 while 7 percent fall in the age group of 4 -55 and 3 percent fall in the age group of 55 and above.

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Frequency of visit to retail shops in a week: Out of 100 respondents, 24 percent visited once a week. 14 percent visited twice a week. 54 percent thrice and 8 percent more than three times a week. ***Customer preference to retail shops for the weekend purchase***: A total of 37 percent of the overall respondents preferred to have weekend purchase from Lulu Hypermarket while 20 present preferred to visit Nesto, 17 percent to Carrefour, 15 percent to Zamzam, five percent to Mars, three percent to KM Trading and another three percent to Al Khauthar. ***Sales promotion techniques and its potential influence***: Out of 100 respondents, 42 percent of them responded that the sales promotion technique of 'discount' influenced them to pay a visit to a particular retail shop to buy their favorite products during the weekends. Four percent was influenced by samples given by the shops, 12 percent of the respondents revealed that rebates influenced them and another 12 percent was influenced by coupons and 30 percent said that 'free goods' influenced them for the weekend visits to a particular retail shop. ***Effect of weekend sales promotion techniques on buying behavior of Omani citizens in Muscat city***: Out of the 100 respondents surveyed, majority of them, 72 percent, (60 percent agree and 12 percent strongly agree) agree that there is an effect of the weekend sales promotion techniques on their buying behavior. Just eight percent (three present strongly disagree and five percent disagree) disagree to the statement. 20 percent stand neutral to the statement that there is an effect of the weekend sales promotion techniques on their buying behavior. ***Most effective weekend sales promotion technique that results in impulsive buying behavior***: 30 percent of the total respondents confirm that 'discount' is the most effective weekend sales promotion technique that results in their impulsive buying behavior. Another 30 percent of the total respondents confirm that 'freebies' as their most effective weekend sales promotion technique that results in their impulsive buying behavior. 25 percent agree that 'coupons' take them to impulsive buying behavior. 10 percent and five percent agree that 'samples' and 'rebates' are the most effective weekend sales promotion technique that results in their impulsive buying behavior.

V. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Findings: Generally, most of the Omani citizens like to visit retail shops for two or more than two times a week. 78 percent represents the case. Majority of the citizens prefer Lulu Hypermarket as their favorite retail outlet for their weekend purchases and shopping. 37 percent agree to it. 'Discount' stands as the most influential sales promotion technique that boosts the weekend shop traffic. 42 percent confirms the technique. Most of the Omani citizens agree that there is an effect of the weekend sales promotion techniques on their buying behavior. 72 percent supports the argument. 'Discounts' and 'freebies' are the two most attractive and effective weekend sales promotion techniques that result in impulsive buying behavior. 30 percent each corroborates the same.

Conclusion: The study concludes with an emphasis on the weekend sales promotion techniques and its influence on the Omani citizens' buying behavior. The findings encourage the retail players to strategize their weekend promotional offers and operationalize it in such a way that they get more shop traffic during the weekends that may ultimately result in sales.

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