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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SALES PROMOTION TOOLS: CUSTOMERS' PERSPECTIVE

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of sales promotion tools in creating responses in consumer behavior. In line with this objective, data analysis is performed using two statistical/econometric methods: ANOVA and the T-test. The research shows that discounts and bonus packs are the most effective sales promotion tools in the creation of most responses in consumer behavior, while coupons are the most inefficient.

Keywords: discounts; bonus package; free product sample; coupons; loyalty card; product trial.

Стефан Алімпіч

ЕФЕКТИВНІСТЬ ІНСТРУМЕНТІВ ПРОСУВАННЯ ПРОДАЖУ З ТОЧКИ ЗОРУ СПОЖИВАЧА

У статті проведено оцінювання різноманітних інструментів просування продажу з точки зору його впливу на поведінку споживача. Для аналізу даних використано два методи – ANOVA та Т-тест. Результати дослідження виявили, що знижки та система бонусів є найбільш ефективними інструментами у формуванні споживчого відгуку, а купони є найменш ефективним інструментом.

Ключові слова: знижки; бонуси; безкоштовний пробний зразок продукту; купони; картка лояльного клієнта; промо-акції у місці продажу.

Табл. 1. Літ. 30.

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ЭФФЕКТИВНОСТЬ ИНСТРУМЕНТОВ ПРОДВИЖЕНИЯ ПРОДАЖ С ТОЧКИ ЗРЕНИЯ ПОТРЕБИТЕЛЯ

В статье проведена оценка различных инструментов продвижения продаж с точки зрения их влияния на поведение потребителей. Для анализа данных использованы два метода – ANOVA и Т-тест. Результаты исследования показали, что скидки и система бонусов являются наиболее эффективными инструментами в формировании потребительского отклика, а купоны – наименее эффективным инструментом.

Ключевые слова: скидки; бонусы; бесплатный пробный образец продукта; купоны; карточка лояльного клиента; промо-акции на месте продажи.

Introduction. Promoting products and services is one of the key instruments in marketing activity of any company. Companies now have at their disposal a large number of promotion techniques, therefore they need to carefully fit the elements of promotional mix (advertising, sales promotion, publicity, sponsorship, direct marketing, Internet marketing and personal sales), in order to announce a clear, consistent and credible message at a market (Jobber and Fahy, 2006). However, according to a large number of authors, the key element of promotional mix is sales promotion (Blattberg and Neslin, 1990; Oyedapo, Akinlabi and Sufian, 2012; Palmer, 2004). This is the reason why the necessity of exploring the importance and effectiveness of sales promotion is set as an imperative.

The academic literature offers several definitions of sales promotion. Some of them describe sales promotion as "activity that complements advertising activities and personal selling, coordinates with them and makes them more successful.

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Improvement activities include incentives which contribute to higher value of revenues and which increase the interest of sales staff, traders and consumers for product" (Senic, 2003). For others, sales promotion is defined as a key element in marketing campaigns which help the organization to achieve its long-term goals, primarily through attracting new customers and creating loyalty with existing ones (Oyedapo, Akinlabi and Sufian, 2012). However, according to the most comprehensive definition, sales promotion includes series of stimulus funds (mostly short-term) designed to stimulate quicker or greater purchase of particular products or services by consumers or business customers (Blattberg and Neslin, 1990). In other words, sales promotion is considered to be the most stimulating promotional technique which helps sales directly, but in a short term, i.e., which has an influence on purchasing decision of consumers or business customers. Precisely, while advertising offers reasons to buy, sales promotion offers an additional incentive to purchase (Palmer, 2004).

Sales promotion as a key component in marketing campaigns, includes *activities of sales promotion both to consumers and business customers, as well as activities to improve business operations and sales force* (Kotler and Keller, 2006). And although each of the types of sales promotion deserves special attention, *the subject of this research* will be the methods of sales promotion directed at consumers.

Hence, this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of sales promotion tools in creating responses in consumer behavior, which include: brand switching, purchase acceleration, stockpiling, product trial and spending more.

The contribution of this paper is that, thanks to this study, marketers and traders will be able to understand consumer behavior better and thus use the most effective methods of sales promotion. In this way, marketers and traders will have the opportunity to improve their competitive positions and to make more profit. This study will reveal consumer attitudes towards sales promotion and thereby will raise consumer awareness about their behavior, which is influenced by different sales promotion tools.

When we talk about *the originality of this paper*, it lies in the fact that for achieving the defined objective, a set of different statistical methods were used.

Literature review. Sales promotion directed at consumers includes a variety of short-term promotional techniques (methods), designed to encourage consumers to buy manufacturer's products instead of competitors' (Kotler and Armstrong, 1994). More specifically, the intent is to motivate consumers to buy the product immediately and/or in large quantities, by lowering price or adding value (Srinivasan and Anderson, 1998). In other words, the main goal is to encourage certain responses in consumers' behavior, such as: *brand switching (purchase of competing products)*, *purchase acceleration (the purchase ahead of schedule)*, *stockpiling (the purchase of large quantities ahead of schedule)*, *product trial (trial of products that have not been purchased so far)* and *spending more (spending more money than planned)* (Shi, Cheung and Prendergast, 2005).

The continuation of this paper will include a brief overview of basic methods of sales promotion directed at consumers, which also served as the variables in this study. Also, this section of the paper will describe the results of the previous studies analyzing the effectiveness of all these methods.

Discounts. Sales promotion through discounts offers customer a temporary price reduction (sometimes even below costs) and thus an immediate value, so it represents an unambiguous incentive to purchase (Zmyslony, 2012). It has been proven through numerous studies (Percy et al., 2001; Banks and Moorthy, 1999; Kopalle and Mela, 1999; Smith and Sinha, 2000) that it encourages short-term increase in sales. Precisely, according to (Blackwell, Miniard and Engel, 2001; Gilbert and Jackaria, 2002; Osman and Chan Yin Fah, 2011) only discounts have a significant impact on consumer behavior when buying and they are particularly effective in encouraging purchase acceleration and product trial (especially in the case of new or redesigned products). This will indirectly attract new customers who have never tried that product, as well as those customers who have purchased a competitive product. These results were partially confirmed by Y.Z. Shi, K.M. Cheung and G. Prendergast (2005) and M.Y. Obeid (2014), according to which discounts are the most effective in inducing purchase acceleration, stockpiling, spending more and attracting competitive buyers. The only drawbacks of discounts are: competitors can easily follow them and they can devalue the brand image, if they are often applied (Zmyslony, 2012).

Bonus pack ("buy two – get the third one free"). Bonus packs provide additional value by giving customers an additional quantity at the same price, but in improved packaging. The advantage of this method of sales promotion is reflected in the fact that consumers will be easily convinced to make a purchase of certain products, because there is no extra cost (Smith and Sinha, 2000). According to Y.Z. Shi, K.M. Cheung and G. Prendergast (2005) this method is the most effective to induce stockpiling and purchase acceleration. Also, since the price is not lower, this kind of sales promotion carries a lower risk of devaluing brand image. Among other things, this method is suitable for attracting competitive consumers (Osman and Chan Yin Fah, 2011; Obeid, 2014). The only drawback of this type of sales promotion is that the stockpiling of additional products can be a problem for consumers who do not have enough space for storage, hence they give up of buying that product, despite the existence of this incentive (Gilbert and Jackaria, 2002).

Premiums. They apply to goods that are offered for free or at low cost, as an incentive to buy a particular product (d'Astous and Landreville, 2003). There are 3 types of premiums: *free gifts* (go with the product inside the packaging or on the packaging); *free postage premiums* (consumers will get them if they submit a proof of purchase) and *self-liquidating premiums* (manufacturer or seller sells the product to consumer at a price much lower than regular, i.e., at a price that is at the level of costs of production or procurement). Main tasks of premiums are: encouraging existing and competitive consumers to purchase and maintenance of market share (Jobber and Fahy, 2006; Kotler and Keller, 2006). Among other things, premiums are used to stimulate the more often purchases or purchases that are larger than regular ones (Rotimosho, 2003; Obeid 2014). In addition, they can also be used for testing new products. According to previous research results, premiums are becoming increasingly important method of sales promotion (Raghubir, 2004; Banerjee, 2009; Palazon and Delgado, 2009).

Free product samples. They include small amounts of free product which can be delivered door to door, sent by mail, shared in shops, packaged with another product (Kotler and Keller, 2006). They are used in motivating customers to try a new or an

improved product, and then to conduct a test purchase and to become a permanent customer of that product (Ndubisi and Chiew, 2006; Rizwan et al., 2013). In other words, free samples are useful to induce purchase acceleration (Osman and Chan Yin Fah, 2011). For new brands or brand extensions, this is an effective, albeit sometimes expensive way for motivating consumers to try them (Jobber and Fahy, 2006). Also, this method of sales promotion is useful to attract competitive buyers. T.A. Shimp (2003) found that free samples have impact on consumer behavior when buying, i.e., they contribute in increasing purchase, while D.C. Gilbert and N. Jackaria (2002) and S. Osman and B. Chan Yin Fah (2011) showed the opposite result.

Coupons. According to J.F. Engel et al. (1994), a coupon is a certificate, which entitles consumers achieve certain savings when purchasing a product. Coupons can be delivered door to door, they appear on the Internet, in magazines, newspapers or on packaging. This type of sales promotion is usually less effective than discount in raising the initial sale, because it does not provide any immediate savings and attracts only existing customers (Davidson, 1998). Precisely, according to the survey Y.Z. Shi, K.M. Cheung and G. Prendergast (2005) coupons are generally only effective in encouraging consumers on stockpiling and purchase acceleration. This is supported by: D.C. Gilbert and N. Jackaria (2002); N.O. Ndubisi and T.M. Chew (2006) and S. Osman and B. Chan Yin Fah (2011), according to which coupons do not have a significant effect on increasing purchases, i.e., consumers see them as the most inefficient method of sales promotion.

Awards. They are designed to provoke attention of potential customers, especially those who have never used certain product. Precisely, they are designed with the aim that consumers perceive them as a form of entertainment. There are 3 main types of awards: competitions, lotteries and sweepstakes (Jobber and Fahy, 2006). Competitions require from participants to demonstrate a certain level of skills and knowledge and participation usually depends on purchases, i.e., participants are required to show a proof of purchase. Lotteries do not require any skills or knowledge, but their outcome depends solely on luck. Sweepstakes are offered to customers each time when they buy something, and if they participate in them, they can win prizes. According to Y.Z. Shi, K.M. Cheung and G. Prendergast (2005) and M.Y. Obeid (2014), awards are relatively ineffective in creating any kind of consumer responses.

Loyalty cards (programs of frequent purchases). Loyalty cards are kind of reward for loyal customers. Precisely, it is about programs with the help of which consumers are rewarded due to their frequent purchases of company's products and services (Kotler and Keller, 2006). In other words, the goal is to attract customers to revisit the store and make purchase in it, with the intention of increasing purchase. Among other things, loyalty cards are a great source of information about customers, which can be used in campaigns of direct marketing (Jobber and Fahy, 2006). Lately, loyalty cards are becoming an increasingly important method of sales promotion, particularly among airlines, travel agencies and hotel chains.

Demonstrations and product trials. *Product demonstrations* include displaying products to interested people at the point of sale, with the aim of provoking impulsive buying. Precisely, it is about displaying expensive products which cannot be shared as free samples (Kotler and Keller, 2006). They are usually implemented in stores, at fairs, exhibitions etc., even though they can also be implemented door to door and on

the Internet. According to Y.Z. Shi, K.M. Cheung and G. Prendergast (2005), this method is mostly effective in encouraging consumers to test products. Unfortunately, this is a very expensive form of promotion because customers are encouraged by giving gifts, organizing cocktails and short artistic programs, bringing celebrities etc. On the other hand, *free product trial* involves calling potential customers to try the product for free, in the hope they will buy it. As well as a demonstration of the product, this method of sales promotion is usually carried out in stores, where potential buyers have the opportunity to try new, expensive product which they have not been used and then to make purchase of the same.

Methodology. *The basic method of research* was the anonymous survey, which was completed online by respondents, during July 2014. This technique was chosen because it is the cheapest one and it represents an easy and simple way to reach a large number of data, which can easily and accurately be compared. The survey was conducted on the *simple sample* of 170 elementary units. Out of this number, 34% of the respondents were male and 66% – female; the age of respondents ranged from 19 to 60 years; 74% of the respondents have university degrees, 21% have secondary education, and 5% have college degrees. About 45% of the respondents said they make purchases at supermarkets once a week, 29% of the respondents – every day, 10% of them – once in two weeks, 9% – once a month, 5% – less than once a month, while the rest once in 3 weeks. From all this it can be concluded that the sample is representative. When we talk about *measuring instrument*, the survey included 5 statements which were defined for each of the considered methods of sales promotion and which reflect respondents' behavioral responses to each of the observed methods. In other words, the survey covered the total of 40 statements. The respondents expressed the level of agreement with these statements on the five-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – partially agree, 4 – agree, 5 – strongly agree). These statements were selected based on the review of relevant literature in the field of sales promotion directed at consumers (Gilbert and Jackaria, 2002; Shi, Cheung and Prendergast, 2005; Osman and Chan Yin Fah, 2011 and Obeid, 2014). In this way the basis for analysis of the respondents' behavioral response to each of the observed methods and also for assessing the effectiveness of each specific method in inducing each of 5 behavioral responses was created. All collected data were stored in the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science for Windows, version 19.0) database. The analysis of statistical data was done by using this software, i.e., by using two *statistical methods*. Precisely, the first *repeated measures ANOVA* was carried out to compare 5 different buying behaviors in response to each of the observed methods. On this way, the effectiveness of each specific tool in inducing each of the 5 behaviors was established. Then, the same statistical technique was used for comparison of the established effectiveness of the 5 promotional tools in inducing individual buying behavior. This was done to find the one which is the most effective in inducing one specific behavior. It is important to note that if this test indicated a significant differences among the observed variables, the second step was to conduct the *paired sample t-test*, to isolate the source of difference. To determine the statistical relevance in this study, the level of trust $\alpha = 0.05$ was used.

Research results.

Discounts. Repeated measures ANOVA showed significant differences between the 5 buying behaviors in response to discounts (Wilks' lambda = 0.750, $p < 0.05$).

Thus, the paired sample t-test was used to compare the means of the 5 responses. From Table 1 it can be seen that the 5 behaviors induced by discounts can be divided into two groups. The first group includes purchase acceleration (mean = 3.59), stockpiling (mean = 3.34) and spending more (mean = 3.34). On the other hand, the second group includes brand switching (mean = 2.98) and product trial (mean = 2.90). This indicates that customers feel that discounts are more effective in inducing the behaviors of the first group than those of the second group.

Demonstrations and product trials. The same tests were conducted for this sales promotion tool directed at consumers. The results were again statistically significant (Wilks' lambda = 0.673, $p < 0.05$). By conducting paired sample t-test, it was found that consumers do not consider demonstrations and product trials as a very effective method in inducing the 5 buying behaviors (Table 1). More precisely, this method of sales promotion was described as relatively more effective in inducing product trial (mean = 2.83), less effective in terms of brand switching (mean = 2.56), purchase acceleration (mean = 2.42) or spending more (mean = 2.22), and the least effective in inducing stockpiling (mean = 2.12).

Coupons. Repeated measures ANOVA showed there were no significant differences among the 5 buying behaviors in response to this method of sales promotion (Wilks' lambda = 0.979, $p > 0.05$). In other words, the means of these responses differ slightly (Table 1) and according to the respondents, coupons do not lead to the creation of any kind of response in their behavior. Therefore, it can be said that coupons are considered to be the least efficient method of sales promotion directed at consumers.

Bonus pack. By conducting repeated measures ANOVA it was shown that there were significant differences among the 5 buying behaviors in response to bonus packs (Wilks' lambda = 0.719, $p < 0.05$). Hence, the paired sample t-tests were conducted to compare the means of these responses. The results of this test (Table 1) showed that bonus packs are most effective in inducing stockpiling (mean = 3.37) and purchase acceleration (mean = 3.30), less effective in inducing additional spending (mean = 3.04), and the least effective in promoting product trial (mean = 2.69) and brand switching (mean = 2.85).

Free product samples. The same tests were conducted for this method of sales promotion. The results were again statistically significant (Wilks' lambda = 0.765, $p < 0.05$). By comparing the means of responses in respondents' behavior, it was found that the 5 behaviors induced by free product samples can be divided into two groups. The first group includes product trial (mean = 2.59), brand switching (mean = 2.54) and purchase acceleration (mean = 2.46). On the other hand, the second group includes stockpiling (mean = 2.19) and spending more (mean = 2.18). This indicates that customers feel that free product samples are more effective in inducing the behaviors of the first group than those of the second group.

Awards. Repeated measures ANOVA showed no significant differences among the 5 buying behaviors in response to awards (Wilks' lambda = 0.956, $p > 0.05$). In other words, the means of these responses differ slightly (Table 1). Based on the obtained results, it can be concluded that awards are relatively more effective in inducing purchase acceleration (mean = 2.44) and brand switching (mean = 2.40), than product trial (mean = 2.32), stockpiling and spending more (mean = 2.31).

Loyalty cards. As with awards, repeated measures ANOVA showed no significant differences among the 5 buying behaviors in response to loyalty cards, because the value of Wilks' lambda was close to 1 (Wilks' lambda = 0.960, $p > 0.05$). In other words, the means of these responses differ slightly (Table 1), therefore it can be concluded that loyalty cards are relatively more effective in inducing spending more (mean = 2.42), stockpiling (mean = 2.39) and purchase acceleration (mean = 2.36), than brand switching (mean = 2.33) and product trial (mean = 2.26).

Premiums. By conducting the repeated measures ANOVA it was shown that there were significant differences among the 5 buying behaviors in response to premiums (Wilks' lambda = 0.871, $p < 0.05$). Hence, the paired sample t-tests were conducted to compare the means of these responses. The results of this test (Table 1) showed that premiums are the most effective in inducing purchase acceleration (mean = 2.96), stockpiling (mean = 2.95) and brand switching (mean = 2.86), while they are less effective in inducing product trial (mean = 2.68) and spending more (mean = 2.66).

Brand switching. Repeated measures ANOVA was applied to the data given in Table 1 to investigate the brand switching induced by the 5 promotional tools. The results show significant differences among the impacts of the observed methods to brand switching (Wilks' lambda = 0.625, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the paired sample t-tests were carried out to compare the different brand switching effects induced by the 5 tools. According to the results of this test, impacts of each of the observed methods to brand switching can be divided into 3 groups. The first group consists of the impacts of discount (mean = 2.98), premiums (mean = 2.86) and bonus packs (mean = 2.85), the second group of the impacts of demonstrations and product trials (mean = 2.56) and free samples (mean = 2.54), while the third group of the impacts of awards (mean = 2.40), loyalty cards (mean = 2.33) and coupons (mean = 2.22).

Purchase acceleration. Repeated measures ANOVA showed significant differences among the impacts of the observed methods to purchase acceleration (Wilks' lambda = 0.404, $p < 0.05$). Hence, based on the paired sample t-tests, it was concluded that discounts (mean = 3.59) and bonus packs (mean = 3.30) are the most effective in inducing purchase acceleration, unlike other methods of sales promotion (Table 1).

Stockpiling. The same tests were conducted for this type of behavior response. Results were again statistically significant (Wilks' lambda = 0.360, $p < 0.05$). The obtained results make possible to conclude that bonus packs (mean = 3.37) and discounts (mean = 3.34) are the most influential for stockpiling, unlike other methods of sales promotion (Table 1).

Product trial. The results of the repeated measures ANOVA demonstrate that there were significant differences among the impacts of the observed methods to product trial (Wilks' lambda = 0.644, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the paired sample t-tests were carried out to compare the different product trial effects induced by the 5 tools. According to the results of this test, impacts of each of the observed methods to product trial can be divided into 3 groups. The first group consists of the impacts of discount (mean = 2.90) and demonstrations and product trials (mean = 2.83), the second group of the impacts of bonus packs (mean = 2.69), premiums (mean = 2.68) and free samples (mean = 2.59), while the third group of the impacts of awards (mean = 2.32), loyalty cards (mean = 2.26) and coupons (mean = 2.18).

Spending more. Repeated measures ANOVA showed significant differences among the impacts of the observed methods to spending more (Wilks' lambda = 0.432, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, basing on the paired sample t-tests, it was concluded that discounts (mean = 3.34) and bonus packs (mean = 3.04) are the most influential to spending more, unlike other methods of sales promotion, in which the means of their influence to spending more are significantly less (Table 1).

Based on these results, it can be concluded which of sales promotion tools is the most effective in creating certain response in consumer behavior when buying. Hence, by looking at the last row of Table 1, it can be seen that discounts (the overall mean = 3.23) were considered to be the most effective promotional tool in creating most responses in consumer behavior. They are followed by bonus packs, as the second most effective method (the overall mean = 3.05). Premiums were ranked third (the overall mean = 2.82). Although this overall mean is less than 3, premiums are effective in creating 3 responses in consumer behavior. Demonstrations and product trials were ranked fourth most effective tool, effective mainly in inducing product trial. The fifth most effective methods are: free product samples and loyalty cards (the overall mean = 2.39), while awards are on the sixth place (the overall mean = 2.36). Coupons (the overall mean = 2.22) were considered the least effective in inducing all 5 buying behaviors.

Table 1. The means of responses in consumer behavior to observed methods and the means of effects of the observed methods to responses in consumer behavior

	Discounts	Demonstrations and product trials	Coupons	Bonus pack	Free product samples	Awards	Loyalty cards	Premiums
Brand switching	2.98	2.56	2.22	2.85	2.54	2.40	2.53	2.86
Purchase acceleration	3.59	2.42	2.28	3.30	2.46	2.44	2.36	2.96
Stockpiling	3.34	2.12	2.26	3.37	2.19	2.31	2.39	2.95
Product trial	2.90	2.83	2.18	2.69	2.59	2.32	2.26	2.68
Spending more	3.34	2.22	2.16	3.04	2.18	2.31	2.42	2.66
Sum	16.15	12.15	11.10	15.25	11.96	11.78	11.96	14.11
Prosek	3.23	2.43	2.22	3.05	2.39	2.36	2.39	2.82

Note: 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

Conclusion. This research has investigated the effectiveness of 5 promotional tools in creating response in consumer behavior.

The findings show that according to consumers discounts, bonus packs and premiums are the most effective methods in creating the majority of responses in consumer behavior. This may be because these methods of sales promotion are relatively easy to understand and based on them consumers can clearly assess the benefits, which they get by purchasing. In this way, the results of previous studies (Gilbert and Jackaria, 2002; Osman and Chan Yin Fah, 2011; Shi, Cheung and Prendergast, 2005; Rotimoshio, 2003 and Obeid, 2014) were confirmed.

On the other hand, other methods of sales promotion were perceived to be less effective or ineffective in creating responses in consumer behavior. By looking separately, demonstrations and product trials (as the fourth most efficient method) are

useful for promoting new products or brands, as well as to encourage customers to product trial. In this way, the results of (Shi, Cheung and Prendergast, 2005) were confirmed. Free samples and loyalty cards were ranked as the fifth most effective methods. While free samples were the most effective in inducing consumers to product trial, brand switching and purchase acceleration, loyalty cards were the most effective in creating the rest of responses in consumer behavior. When we talk about awards, it is not surprising that respondents consider them to be less effective in creating all 5 responses in their behavior. The same results were obtained by (Shi, Cheung and Prendergast, 2005; Obeid, 2014). Finally, coupons were considered to be the least efficient in creating all 5 responses in consumer behavior, among all sales promotion tools. This also confirms the results of previous researches (Gilbert and Jackaria, 2002; Ndubisi and Chew, 2006; Osman and Chan Yin Fah, 2011). The reason for such claim may lie in the fact that consumers must first perform the minimum purchase of a certain product, which they may not need at a given time, in order to take advantage of the benefits that coupon brings.

When we talk about the importance of this work, it will certainly have a contribution for both marketers and traders, as well as for consumers and further researches. Precisely, marketers and traders will be able to understand consumer behavior and thus use the most effective methods of sales promotion. In this way, marketers and traders will have the opportunity to improve their competitive position, minimize costs and make more profit. From the consumer perspective, this study reveals consumer attitudes to sales promotion and thereby raise consumer awareness about their behavior, which is influenced by different sales promotion tools. Finally, it should be noted that this work will be of benefit also for other researchers, because it will provide them with adequate guidelines and recommendations for further research on the same topic.

Limitations and future researches. This research has three limitations. First of all, the sample is maybe smaller than it should be for some more detailed analyses. Second, this research does not investigate store switching behavior. Given the fact that products sold in different supermarkets are basically the same, the existence of a large number of methods of sales promotion within a supermarket can easily attract competitive customers. In this way, they often make purchases in that supermarket and at the end (in most cases) become its permanent customers. The third limitation is that this research assumes that supermarkets use sales promotion tools only for the purpose of achieving a behavioral response. It is possible, however, that sales promotion tools are also used in communication purposes, such as reinforcing brand image or awareness building. Therefore, future research is required not only to confirm the results found here, but also to overcome the limitations previously mentioned. In addition, future researches should use interviews directly in places where consumers make purchases, in order to gather information on their behavior, which will be used for evaluating the effectiveness of each sales promotion tools. Also, in future researches, a comparative analysis of all promotional techniques should be conducted, with the aim to verify whether sales promotion is the most effective of them. Finally, future researches should also include a comparative analysis of the effectiveness of sales promotion tools directed at consumers both in our country, as well as in neighboring countries.

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