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Research Article

CUSTOMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS SUPERMARKETS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN CUDDALORE TOWN

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Abstract

By providing incentives like discounts, cashback, coupons, and special offers, sales promotion plays a crucial role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Promotional activities are now crucial for drawing customers and boosting sales in today's cutthroat retail climate. The purpose of the study is to investigate how sales promotions affect Cuddalore customers' purchasing decisions. Additionally, it looks at how price reductions, special offers, impulsive purchases, and customer buying habits are related. The study was conducted among 100 respondents using a structured questionnaire and descriptive research design. The results revealed significant positive relationships between price discounts and buying behaviour ($r = 0.475$, $p < .05$), promotional offers and buying behaviour ($r = 0.563$, $p < .05$), and impulse buying behaviour and buying behaviour ($r = 0.752$, $p < .05$). Among the variables, impulse buying behaviour exhibited the strongest influence on consumer purchase decisions. Seasonal sales, cashback offers, coupons, and buy-one-get-one offers were found to be highly effective in encouraging purchases. The findings confirm that sales promotion significantly influences consumer buying behaviour and purchase intentions. Effective promotional strategies can enhance customer engagement, increase sales performance, and strengthen competitive advantage for businesses.

Keywords: Sales Promotion, Customer Buying Behaviour, Price Discounts, Promotional Offers, Impulse Buying, Consumer Perception.

Introduction

Due to globalisation, technical improvements, and shifting consumer expectations, corporate competition has become much more intense in today's business climate. Companies are constantly looking for efficient marketing techniques to draw in new clients, hold on to current ones, and grow their market share. Sales promotion has become one of the most effective marketing communication techniques for influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Short-term incentives like discounts, coupons, cashback offers, exchange programs, free gifts, loyalty rewards, holiday sales, and time-limited deals are all part of sales promotion, which aims to persuade customers to buy goods or services. Modern consumers are highly price-sensitive and increasingly seek value-driven purchasing opportunities. The expansion of organized retailing and e-commerce platforms has further intensified promotional competition among businesses. Consumers today are exposed to a wide range of promotional offers through online platforms, supermarkets, shopping malls, social media advertisements, and mobile applications. These promotional activities create excitement, urgency, affordability, and emotional appeal, thereby influencing consumer purchase decisions.

The process by which people determine their wants, weigh their options, decide what to buy, and assess their level of satisfaction thereafter is referred to as consumer buying behaviour. Psychological, social, cultural, economic, and individual aspects all have an impact on consumer behaviour. Sales promotion acts as an external stimulus capable of influencing these behavioural responses. Discounts and promotional offers often reduce consumers' perceived financial risk and increase perceived value, leading to higher purchase intention and impulse buying behaviour.

Recent studies indicate that promotional strategies significantly affect consumer decision-making across different industries, including FMCG, apparel, electronics, online retailing, food delivery, cosmetics, and supermarkets. Sharma and Sharma (2024) reported that promotional incentives strongly influence customer purchase decisions and improve sales performance. Puri et al. (2024) observed that discounts and promotional schemes encourage consumers to switch brands and increase purchase frequency. Mishra et al. (2024) found that promotional offers positively affect clothing purchase behaviour by enhancing perceived value and affordability. Similarly, Nair et al. (2024) identified that cashback offers and promotional pricing significantly influence online shopping behaviour.

The increasing popularity of digital commerce has further strengthened the importance of sales promotion strategies. E-commerce platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, Swiggy, and Zomato extensively use flash sales, promotional coupons, cashback rewards, and limited-time offers to attract customers. These promotional activities influence both planned and impulsive buying behaviour.

Impulse buying refers to spontaneous and unplanned purchasing behaviour triggered by emotional excitement, urgency, and attractive promotional stimuli.

In Cuddalore, promotional activities play a major role in influencing consumer buying patterns, particularly during festive seasons such as Pongal, Deepavali, and New Year sales. Retail stores, textile showrooms, supermarkets, and online shopping platforms frequently offer discounts and promotional schemes to attract consumers. Price-sensitive consumers in Cuddalore often compare promotional offers before making purchase decisions.

The present study examines the effect of sales promotion on customer buying behaviour in Cuddalore. Specifically, the study focuses on three important promotional dimensions: price discounts, promotional offers, and impulse buying behaviour. The study investigates how these variables influence consumer purchase decisions and overall buying patterns.

Review of Literature

Sales promotion has attracted considerable attention from researchers due to its strong influence on consumer buying behaviour. Several studies have examined the relationship between promotional strategies and consumer purchase decisions across various industries and retail environments.

Yadav and Agrawal (2024) examined the influence of sales promotions on customer purchasing behaviour in the garment sector. The study found that discounts, coupons, and promotional schemes significantly increase impulsive buying and customer retention. Raj and Iyer (2024) investigated the effect of promotional offers on brand switching behaviour and concluded that higher discount rates significantly encourage consumers to switch brands.

Johnson and Peter (2024) studied the impact of promotional pricing on customer loyalty in online retailing. The findings revealed that consistent promotional pricing improves customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty. Natarajan and Reddy (2024) identified that cashback offers significantly increase purchase frequency among online shoppers.

Murthy and Rani (2024) analyzed the influence of price discounts on impulse buying behaviour in supermarkets. The study concluded that limited-time discounts strongly influence spontaneous purchase decisions. Karthik and Sandhya (2024) observed that promotional coupons significantly increase online food delivery purchases and basket value.

Patel and Mehta (2023) examined the impact of promotional offers on online consumer behaviour. Their findings revealed that cashback offers, coupons, and flash sales significantly increase online purchase frequency. Ahmed and Khan (2023) reported that app-based discounts and push-notification offers strongly influence mobile shopping behaviour.

Rao and Kulkarni (2023) analyzed the effect of discounts on impulse buying behaviour in shopping malls and found that seasonal discounts significantly increase spontaneous purchases. Reddy and Prakash (2023) identified that bulk discounts and seasonal offers strongly influence grocery shopping behaviour.

Gupta and Sharma (2022) studied the impact of discount pricing on consumer buying behaviour in retail stores. The study concluded that seasonal discounts and festival offers significantly improve purchase intention and customer satisfaction. Nair and Menon (2022) found that promotional pricing improves customer loyalty in online retailing.

Kumar and Devi (2021) examined the effect of discounts and promotional offers on online shopping behaviour and concluded that attractive promotional schemes significantly motivate consumers to purchase more frequently. Ramesh and Priya (2021) reported that flash sales, cashback offers, and limited-time discounts strongly influence impulse buying behaviour among youth consumers.

Das and Chatterjee (2021) observed that frequent discount offers significantly increase online purchase frequency. Mehta and Shah (2021) identified that seasonal discounts and festival offers positively affect purchase intention in organized retail stores.

The existing literature clearly indicates that sales promotion significantly influences consumer buying behaviour by affecting purchase intention, customer satisfaction, loyalty, impulse buying, and brand switching behaviour. However, limited studies have specifically scrutinized the influence of sales promotion on customer buying behaviour in Cuddalore. Therefore, the present study attempts to address this research gap.

Research Gap

Although several studies have examined sales promotion and customer buying behaviour, most previous research focused on urban markets, online shopping environments, supermarkets, and organized retail sectors. Limited research has been conducted specifically in Cuddalore regarding the influence of discounts and promotional offers on consumer buying behaviour.

Furthermore, many earlier studies focused on isolated promotional variables such as discounts or cashback offers without comprehensively examining price discounts, promotional offers, and impulse buying behaviour together. The present study attempts to fill this gap by examining the combined influence of these promotional dimensions on customer buying behaviour in Cuddalore.

Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of the study are:

- To examine the impact of price discounts on consumer buying patterns.
- To analyze how promotional offers affect consumer buying behaviour.
- To study the role of impulse buying behaviour in shaping consumer purchasing patterns.

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

$H0_1$: There is no significant relationship between price discounts and consumer buying patterns.
$H0_2$: There is no significant relationship between

promotional offers and consumer buying patterns. **$H0_3$:** There is no significant relationship between impulse buying behaviour and consumer buying patterns.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

- Price Discounts
- Promotional Offers
- Impulse Buying Behaviour

Dependent Variable

- Consumer Buying Behaviour

The framework assumes that sales promotional activities influence consumer perception, emotional responses, affordability perception, and urgency, thereby affecting purchase intention and buying patterns.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design. Descriptive research helps in systematically describing the characteristics, attitudes, and behavioural patterns of respondents.

Data Collection

Primary Data

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed among consumers in Cuddalore.

Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected from journals, books, articles, websites, and previous research studies.

Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling technique was used for selecting respondents.

Sample Size

The study included 100 respondents.

Statistical Tools Used

- Percentage Analysis
- Correlation Analysis

Period of Study

The study was conducted from January 2026 to March 2026.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Gender Distribution

The study revealed that 51% of respondents were female and 49% were male. Female consumers slightly dominated the sample population.

Age Distribution

The majority of respondents belonged to the age group of 21–30 years (40%), followed by 31–40 years (37%). This indicates that young adults formed the major portion of the respondents.

Consumer Perception Toward Sales Promotion

The study examined various consumer perceptions regarding discounts and promotional offers.

Price Discount Factors

The findings revealed that:

- 40% agreed that price discounts strongly influence purchase decisions.
- 41% preferred products offering percentage discounts.
- 41% agreed that higher discounts increase willingness to buy.
- 39% compared discount rates before purchasing.
- 39% agreed that discounts make products seem more affordable.

These findings indicate that price discounts significantly affect consumer perception and buying behaviour.

Promotional Offer Factors

The study found that:

- 36% agreed that buy-one-get-one offers attract them more than direct discounts.
- 41% agreed that cashback offers encourage more shopping.
- 38% agreed that coupons increase purchase intention.
- 38% agreed that free gifts motivate them to try new products.
- 31% agreed that limited-time offers create urgency to buy.

These findings demonstrate that promotional offers create emotional excitement and urgency among consumers.

Impulse Buying Factors

The findings revealed that:

- 40% agreed that they often buy products impulsively during sales.
- 40% agreed that they purchase items they did not initially plan to buy.
- 34% agreed that promotional advertisements trigger impulse buying.
- 45% agreed that seasonal sales increase unplanned purchases.
- 38% agreed that flash sales influence quick buying decisions.

These findings indicate that promotional activities strongly influence impulse buying behaviour.

Purchase Quantity Behaviour

The study observed that:

- 47% agreed that they purchase products in larger quantities when promotional deals are offered.

This finding suggests that promotional deals encourage bulk purchasing behaviour.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between sales promotion variables and customer buying behaviour.

Relationship Between Price Discounts and Consumer Buying Patterns

The correlation coefficient between price discounts and consumer buying patterns was found to be r = 0.475 with a p-value of 0.000.

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Table 1

Variable	r value	P value	Result
Price Discounts and Consumer Buying Patterns	0.475	0.000	Significant Relationship Positive

The result indicates a moderate positive relationship between price discounts and consumer buying behaviour.

Relationship Between Promotional Offers and Consumer Buying Patterns

The correlation coefficient between promotional offers and consumer buying patterns was found to be r = 0.563 with a p-value of 0.000.

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Table 2

Variable	r value	P value	Result
Promotional Offers and Consumer Buying Patterns	0.563	0.000	Significant Relationship Positive

The result indicates a moderate positive relationship between promotional offers and consumer buying behaviour.

Relationship Between Impulse Buying Behaviour and Consumer Buying Patterns

The correlation coefficient between impulse buying behaviour and consumer buying patterns was found to be r = 0.752 with a p-value of 0.000.

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Table 3

Variable	r value	P value	Result
Impulse Buying Behaviour and Consumer Buying Patterns	0.752	0.000	Significant Relationship Positive

The result indicates a strong positive relationship between impulse buying behaviour and consumer buying patterns.

Discussion

The findings of the study confirm that sales promotion significantly influences customer buying behaviour. Price discounts, promotional offers, and impulse buying behaviour were all found to have statistically significant positive relationships with customer buying patterns.

Among the three promotional variables, impulse buying behaviour exhibited the strongest relationship with customer buying patterns. This suggests that consumers are highly influenced by emotional excitement, urgency, and spontaneous purchasing opportunities created through promotional activities. Limited-time offers, flash sales, cashback rewards, and seasonal promotions trigger impulsive buying decisions.

Promotional offers also showed a positive relationship with buying behaviour. Cashback offers, coupons, free gifts, and buy-one-get-one schemes encourage consumers to purchase more frequently and in larger quantities. These promotional activities create perceived savings and increase customer satisfaction.

Price discounts similarly influence buying behaviour by reducing perceived financial risk and improving affordability. Consumers often compare discounts before making purchase decisions and prefer products offering higher perceived value.

The findings support previous studies conducted by Yadav and Agrawal (2024), Gupta and Sharma (2022), Patel and Mehta (2023), Ramesh and Priya (2021), and Murthy and Rani (2024), which identified sales promotion as a major determinant of customer buying behaviour.

The study also reveals that promotional strategies influence brand switching behaviour. Consumers are willing to switch brands when attractive discounts and offers are available. This finding aligns with earlier studies conducted by Raj and Iyer (2024) and Chatterjee and Das (2021).

Overall, the findings emphasize that sales promotion is not merely a short-term sales strategy but a powerful marketing communication tool capable of influencing consumer perception, purchase intention, and long-term buying behaviour.

Findings of the Study

The major findings of the study are summarized below:

- Female respondents constituted the majority of the sample population.
- Most respondents belonged to the age group of 21–30 years.
- Price discounts strongly influence consumer purchase decisions.

- Consumers prefer products offering percentage discounts.
- Higher discounts increase willingness to buy.
- Cashback offers encourage consumers to shop more frequently.
- Coupons and free gifts increase purchase intention.
- Limited-time offers create urgency among consumers.
- Seasonal sales significantly increase unplanned purchases.
- Promotional advertisements trigger impulse buying behaviour.
- Consumers tend to buy products in larger quantities during promotional deals.
- Price discounts have a significant positive relationship with consumer buying behaviour.
- Promotional offers have a significant positive relationship with consumer buying behaviour.
- Impulse buying behaviour has a strong positive relationship with consumer buying behaviour.
- Impulse buying behaviour emerged as the strongest influencing factor affecting customer buying patterns.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are offered:

- Retailers should create more attractive and visible limited-time promotional offers.
- Businesses should improve promotional advertisements through social media and digital marketing.
- Companies should introduce innovative promotional strategies such as combo offers and cashback schemes.
- Retailers should clearly highlight discounts and offers both online and offline.
- Loyalty programs and exclusive discounts should be provided to retain customers.
- Seasonal and festival promotions should be strategically designed to increase customer engagement.
- Personalized promotional notifications may improve impulse buying behaviour.
- Businesses should balance promotional pricing with product quality to avoid negative perceptions.
- E-commerce platforms should use flash sales and reward-based promotions to increase purchase frequency.
- Companies should regularly conduct consumer research to understand changing promotional preferences.

Implications of the Study

Managerial Implications

The study provides valuable insights for marketers, retailers, and businesses regarding consumer responses toward promotional strategies. Effective sales promotion strategies can improve sales volume, customer satisfaction, customer retention, and competitive advantage.

Academic Implications

The study contributes to the literature on consumer buying behaviour and sales promotion by empirically examining the relationships between promotional variables and buying behaviour in Cuddalore.

Social Implications

The study highlights the importance of transparent, ethical, and consumer-oriented promotional practices in influencing responsible purchase behaviour.

Limitations of the Study

The study has certain limitations:

- The study was limited to 100 respondents.
- Convenience sampling technique may limit generalizability.
- The findings are based on consumer perceptions and self-reported responses.
- The study focused only on selected sales promotion variables.
- The research was confined to Cuddalore.

Scope for Future Research

Future researchers may:

- Conduct studies with larger sample sizes.
- Compare urban and rural consumer responses toward promotional offers.
- Examine the influence of digital marketing promotions on online buying behaviour.
- Explore demographic differences in promotional preferences.
- Use advanced statistical techniques such as regression analysis, SEM, and factor analysis.
- Investigate long-term customer loyalty toward promotional strategies.

Conclusion

The present study scrutinized the effect of sales promotion on customer buying behaviour in Cuddalore. The findings clearly indicate that sales promotion significantly influences consumer purchase decisions. Price discounts, promotional offers, and impulse buying behaviour were all found to positively affect customer buying patterns.

Among the various promotional variables, impulse buying behaviour emerged as the strongest influencing factor. Consumers are highly influenced by emotional excitement, urgency, seasonal sales, flash offers, cashback rewards, and limited-time promotional campaigns.

Promotional activities encourage consumers to make unplanned purchases, buy larger quantities, and switch brands.

The study further identified that discounts and promotional offers increase perceived affordability and customer satisfaction. Consumers increasingly rely on promotional schemes while making purchase decisions in both online and offline shopping environments.

The findings emphasize that sales promotion is not merely a short-term sales tool but an important marketing communication strategy capable of shaping consumer perception, purchase intention, and buying behaviour. Effective promotional strategies can improve sales performance, customer satisfaction, and competitive advantage.

Therefore, businesses should invest in innovative, customer-oriented, and value-driven promotional approaches to fortify customer relationships and achieve sustainable growth.

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