

Consumers' Buying Behavior towards Point-of-Sales Promotion: A PLS-SEM Model

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Abstract: Indian's retail sector in past ten years has witnessed tremendous growth and today it is world's fifth attractive market after USA, UK, China and Japan. The total sales of retail sector in the global market reached \$25.038 trillion in 2019, which showed an increase of 4.5% from the previous year. Point-of-Sales (POS) is the place where a customer makes a payment to the seller in exchange for goods and/or services received. Point-of-Sales promotion tools (Price Discount, BOGO free, In-Store Display, Coupons, Free Samples, Contests, Sales Talk, Loyalty Programs) enable the retailer to augment the sales. The paper aims to study the consumers' buying behavior towards point-of-sales promotion techniques. PLS-SEM was used to analyse the data. The study can be useful to the marketers, retail store owners and manufacturers in designing POS promotion tools that can help accelerate sales and profits.

Keywords: Point-of-Sales Promotion, Buying Behavior

1. Introduction

It has been evaluated that India's retail market will reach \$1.75 trillion by 2026, at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 9-11%, driven by social, demographic and financial factors, for example, urbanization, increase in income, rise in nuclear families. Then again, with rising web access, reduced cost of access to data, increase in the access of smart phones, the Indian E-business industry is anticipated to grow above 1200% to touch \$200 billion by 2026 from \$15 billion in 2016.

As the retail business has been developing exponentially, the retailers/marketers are examining numerous methods and ideas as to how they can anticipate the consumers' behavior. The retail managers need to comprehend how diverse the needs of the buyers are and consumers' conduct while buying products and services. Subsequently, to acquire a competitive edge, retailers should consciously position their brands by creating a flattering image among the buyers, consequently, affecting their buying behavior (Shamsher, 2015). The investigation of buying behavior provides information about how to interpret the consumers' buying behavior and how they use their resources, such as, time, finances and efforts to buy a product (Hanaysha, 2018). Thus, it is vital that the retail managers should have complete information about consumers and their preferences and likings. The study would help the retail managers to develop a competitive edge. Retailers should contemplate to strengthen brand image in the psyche of customers and firmly influence buying behavior by using point-of-sales promotion tools.

Consumer attitude is dynamic and is one of the most important factors while making purchase decisions that draw attention of the marketers and managers to develop new product-design and marketing-mix strategies. Understanding buyer behavior can be strenuous because varied factors influence the consumer behavior while he makes a purchase decision. In certain cases, consumers spend less amount of time to think about purchasing, whether it be a low or a high-value product, because they are of the view that fulfilling their needs is more important (Hanaysha, 2018).

Consumer behavior comprises mental, physical and emotional factors. While making purchase decisions with respect to products and services, individuals prefer those commodities that satisfy their needs and desires (Kotler, 1999). Consumer behavior acts as a reference point for the management and marketing department while formulating and implementing policies. It provides a 360 degree view of clients over time, revealing the dynamic relationship among the trio i.e. company-client-organization. It also facilitates the possibility of forecasting trends by focusing on consumer i.e. discovering the novel needs, products, services or reclaimed experiences.

Solomon, Barnossy, & Askegaard (2002) defines "perception is the process by which an individual selects, organizes and interprets 'stimuli' (our sensory receptors interpret sensations as 'stimuli': light, color, sound or smell coming from abroad) to create a coherent picture of what surrounds it."

Consumers' decision-making process generally comprises five stages and each consumer moves through these stages in a sequential manner - (i) problem recognition (ii) search for alternative solutions or information (iii) evaluation of alternatives (iv)purchase (v) post- purchase behavior. According to this model, there are several steps that a consumer undertakes before purchasing the product and an evaluation phase after the purchase (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

Consumer sales promotion aims to create brand awareness and reaching out to more and more people through product trials, providing cost effective leads for future sales, increasing average purchases, emphasizing novelty, obtaining impulse sales with support of other promotional tools. The most effective strategy of promotion is to provide a constant support to the sale of concrete merchandise, and providing

sufficient information to underpin customers awareness of the certain product (Dubey, Saini, & Umekar, 2016).



Figure 1. 1.: Promotional tools and techniques (Dubey et al., 2016)

The Point-of-Sales (POS) or point of purchase (POP) is the time and place where a retail transaction is undertaken and completed in all aspects. The ownership and usually the possession are transferred from the seller to the buyer, and indirect taxes (such as GST) are paid. The retail point of purchase denotes the time and place at which all the factors of sale, like the consumer, the money, and the product come together. At the point-of-sale, the seller calculates the payment owned by the customer for the product purchased. The seller prepares an invoice for the customer through a cash register printout. The seller also indicates all possible options available to a customer in order to make payment. Hence, POS or POP is the point at which a customer makes the payment to the seller in exchange for goods or provision of services received. After receiving the payment, the seller issues a receipt for the transaction, which is mostly in print and now is increasingly being sent electronically.

At the point-of-purchase (POP), the marketer hopes to influence the consumer’s buying decision by using various communication vehicles consisting of display material, packaging, sales promotions, in-store advertising, and sales force. The Point-of-Sales merchandise tends to focus on impulse items having low money value which can easily be added along with other purchases. This strategy appeals most to impulse customers who aren’t particularly loyal to a brand.

2. Literature Review

Paswan et al. (2010) presented a study focusing on consumers’ motivation for selecting a retail store, and the association between the motivation factor and the shopping patronage. The study was conducted in

Mexico and indicates that consumer's preference for small stores is positively motivated by functional benefits and familiarity with small stores; and negatively associated with the functional benefits offered by large stores. These motivational dimensions are also positively associated with the share of wallet spent at small stores.

El-Adly & Eid (2016) used structural equation modelling (SEM) to investigate the relationships between the shopping environment, customer perceived value, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty in regard to malls in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The results indicate that the mall environment is an antecedent of the customer perceived value of malls and customer satisfaction.

Consumer behavior is the scientific study of how individuals, groups and organizations select, buy, use and dispose of goods, to satisfy their needs and wants (Azevedo, Pereira, Ferreira, & Pedroso, 2011; Kotler & Keller, 2012).

Engel *et. al.* (1990) states the consumer behavior as "those actions directly involved in obtaining, consuming, and disposing of products and services, including the decision processes that precede and follow these actions".

Schiffman & Kanuk (1997) define consumer behavior as: "The behavior that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products, services, and ideas". The study focuses on how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources (time, money, effort) on consumption related items. Behavior occurs either for the individuals or in the context of a group or an organization. It includes the study of what, why, when, where and how often they purchase and how they use the purchased product.

Solomon, *et. al.* (2002) define consumer behavior as "perception is the process by which an individual selects, organizes and interprets 'stimuli' (our sensory receptors interpret sensations as 'stimuli': light, colour, sound or smell coming from abroad) to create a coherent picture of what surrounds it."

There is a widespread recognition that consumer behavior is the key to contemporary marketing success (Hawkins, Best, & Coney, 2003). Consumer behavior has been legitimized in marketing for it provides the conceptual framework and strategic thinking for carrying out successful segmentation of markets (L. G. Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997).

Netemeyer *et. al.* (2004) define the consumer buying behavior as the process of exploring goods and services, purchases it, uses and disposes it off, thereby deriving satisfaction of his needs and wants.

L. Schiffman & Kanuk (2007) take a similar approach in defining consumer behavior: "the behavior that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs".

Watson & Spence (2007) provides an extant review of emotions literature as it pertains to cognitive appraisals and consumption behaviors. The study finds that four appraisals are proffered that appear capable of implicating specific emotions and their effects on consumer behavior. The appraisals advanced are outcome desirability that encompasses pleasantness and goal consistency, agency which includes responsibility and controllability, fairness, and certainty.

Blech & Blech (2008) define consumer behavior as the mechanism and the people's activities engaged in searching, selecting, purchasing, evaluating and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy their needs and desires. Firms can satisfy those needs only to the extent that they understand their customers. The buyers claim to be occupied and want shopping comfort and simplicity of procurement. Customers are frequenting retail chains less and are rather belittling off-value retailers. Along these lines, retailers,

including retail chains, have attempted different systems to support their organizations, for example, more modest stores, experiential shopping, and omni-channel retailing (Close and Kukar-Kinney, 2010; Suri, Cai, Monroe, and Thakor, 2012).

Purchasers have been saving on actual merchandise and more on movement and diversion while investigating for the retail organizes (Ordun, 2015). Numerous retails have been going after for new organization to draw in and hold clients with an essential spotlight on quick item deals (Jiang, Luk, and Cardinali, 2018; Slaton, Testa, Bakhshian, and Fiore, 2020).

Ordun (2015) explores the shopping examples of the recent college grads and their image reliability. The examination investigations the brand dedication of twenty to thirty year olds and its relationship with some other components identified with buying conduct.

The exploration for understanding buyer conduct in different angles is one of the fascinating regions with regards to promoting (Nijssen, Guenzi, and van der Borgh, 2017; Premkumar and Rajan, 2017). Shopper conduct can be to a great extent isolated into three fundamental segments: procurement, utilization, and manner. Be that as it may, most specialists zeroed in on securing and utilization as the two most significant parts of purchaser conduct (Nijssen et al., 2017; Premkumar and Rajan, 2017) and consideration on the third viewpoint, to be specific attitude was given by (Ting, Thaichon, Chuah, and Tan, 2019). The examination discoveries show the significance of administration quality in mien choices of the school going understudies along with their ensuing procurement and utilization practices.

The changing conduct and the buyer inclinations give a chance to the retailers to plan future retail designs (Oxford Institute of Retail Management, 2014; Parker and Wang, 2016; Yeoman, Wheatley, and McMahon-Beattie, 2017). Purchasers are currently more intrigued by decadent advantages that incite joy, delight, and fun from intuitive encounters and diversion; and utilitarian advantages that are "remunerating on the grounds that they assist one with achieving outside points or objectives, for example, social or financial increase" (Parker and Wang, 2016).

Yeoman et al. (2017) recognize client personal conduct standard of patterns, which can affect marking to retail procedure like versatile living, evaluating, enormous information innovation, attendant living, is steadfastness dead, limiting always, overseeing multifaceted nature, and decision and expanding conduct. At last, the examination closes and suggests that the examples are driving specifically, devotion, transitory lastingness, arrangements and worth.

Jiang et al. (2018) directed experimental examination to incorporate the hypothesis of brand touch points and the brand insight to explore the joined impact of pre-utilization and utilization experience on buyer saw esteem.

The discoveries of Slaton et al., (2020) propose that the brand insight of a little, stock free retail arrangement can be viable in encouraging customer based brand value (CBBE), and affects buy expectation and buyer conduct. The examination likewise suggests industry experts in distinguishing systems that appeal to changing inclinations of the present buyer.

3. Method

Data collection was done using a structured questionnaire on various promotional tools and the consumer buying behavior with a total of 67 close-ended questions including questions based on demographic

characteristics of the respondents. The purposive random sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample.

The sample consisted of customers who at least had visited the retail stores once in a month. A total of 830 forms were sent out using online mode (Email and Google forms) from major cities of India Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, and Chennai. Raw data received was entered in a pre-coded excel file. The input data was checked to identify any errors that may have been made at time of entry and also to verify inconsistency and missing data. Valid responses were collected from a total of 795 customers from the selected cities across India with a response rate of around 98 percent. The study has used list wise deletion method as suggested appropriate by Acock (2005) in handling completely random missing data (MCAR) available in SPSS. The cleaned data set was used in the research for further analysis.

The empirical analysis has been done on PLS-SEM using Smart PLS 3.2.8 software. PLS-SEM has become the most popular modelling technique in social and behavioral sciences and is able to answer a set of interrelated research questions using both measurement and structural model. Partial Least Squares (PLS) regression/path analysis as SEM tool is an alternative to OLS regression, based on canonical correlation for analysis of systems of endogenous and exogenous variables developed by (Boardman, Hui, & Wold, (1981). It has the ability to handle both formative and reflective indicators in contrast to other SEM techniques. The advantage of using PLS is that it does not make the assumption of multivariate normality and has ability to handle multi-collinearity among the independents unlike the SEM techniques of LISREL and AMOS. Further, PLS has no limitation on sample size than the other SEM techniques (Chin, Wynne, 1999; Westland, 2007). Model evaluation in PLS-SEM follows a two-step process. First is the assessment and refinement of adequacy of the measurement model and followed by the assessment and evaluation of the structural model. This is to ensure the reliability and validity of the measures prior to the attempt in making and drawing the conclusion on the structural model. This section begins with an evaluation of measurement model, followed by an evaluation of the structural model for testing the hypothesis.

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1. Evaluation of Measurement Model

This model assesses the internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, discriminant validity and convergent validity (Hair et. al., 2017). Cronbach's Alpha is used to "measure the reliability of items in a scale" (George & Mallery, 2003). Higher value of Cronbach's Alpha signifies more reliability and good internal consistency of items in a scale (Luo et al., 2003). In

Table, the Cronbach's Alpha value for all constructs is more than 0.70 which indicates that the items in the scale are reliable (Hair et. al., 2010).

Internal consistency reliability refers "to the extent to which the item measures the construct". Composite reliability is used "to measure internal consistency reliability" (Hair et. al., 2014). Reliability of an indicator was measured through their outer loadings and reliability of a construct was measured with the composite reliability. Table 1 shows the composite reliability exceeds the minimum threshold value of 0.7 of all constructs (Gefen et. al. 2000).

Convergent validity (CV) is defined as “the extent to which a measure correlates positively with the alternative measures of the same construct” (Hair et.al., 2014). CV is decided through average variance explained (AVE) (Hair et al., 2017). All the cases of AVE, in this study, are above the threshold limit of 0.5 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Indicators having outer loading less than 0.4 were removed and whose loading are from 0.4 to 0.7 were taken into consideration for removal where deletion of such indicators results in increase in composite reliability and average variance explained (Hair et al., 2017). As per

Table few indicators BB6 & BB8 (Buying Behavior), C2 (Contest), BOGO2 (Buy-One-Get-One), PD2 (Price Discount), ID3 (In-store Display) were deleted as their outer loadings are below 0.4. Although, the factor loadings of other indicators such as BB9, LP2, CT2, and SS2 (

Table) and LP2, SS2, and SP2 (Table1) are less than the standard limit of 0.708, still these indicators were retained as the AVE of the construct has achieved the desired level of 0.5 (Avkiran, 2018).

Table 1: Results of Measurement Model

Construct	Indicator	Loading	CA	CR	AVE	MEAN
					SD	
Buying Behavior	BB1	0.729	0.862	0.896	0.554	
	BB2	0.845				
	BB3	0.777				
	BB4	0.803				
	BB5	0.714				
	BB6*	< 0.4				
	BB7	0.770				
	BB8*	< 0.4				
	BB9	0.532				
Coupons	C1	0.779	0.877	0.916	0.731	
	C2*	< 0.4				
	C3	0.895				
	C4	0.883				
	C5	0.858				
Free Samples	FS1	0.795	0.813	0.873	0.584	
	FS2	0.533				
	FS3	0.853				
	FS4	0.798				
	FS5	0.799				
Buy-One-Get-One free	BOGO1	0.840	0.886	0.921	0.745	
	BOGO*	< 0.4				
	BOGO3	0.884				
	BOGO4	0.875				
	BOGO5	0.854				

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Price Discount	PD1	0.833	0.883	0.919	0.739
	PD2*	< 0.4			
	PD3	0.889			
	PD4	0.876			
	PD5	0.839			
In-store Display	ID1	0.848	0.787	0.874	0.699
	ID2	0.854			
	ID3*	< 0.4			
	ID4	0.805			
Loyalty Program	LP1	0.750	0.842	0.889	0.620
	LP2	0.598			
	LP3	0.873			
	LP4	0.863			
	LP5	0.819			
Contest	SS1	0.800	0.846	0.887	0.615
	SS2	0.601			
	SS3	0.872			
	SS4	0.814			
	SS5	0.806			
Sales Talk/Sales Person	SP1	0.747	0.834	0.880	0.597
	SP2	0.645			
	SP3	0.848			
	SP4	0.808			
	SP5	0.800			

Notes: CA stands for "Cronbach's Alpha"; CR stands for "Composite Reliability"; AVE stands for "Average Variance Explained"

Source: Author's Calculation

Discriminant validity (DV) means "that a construct is unique and captures phenomena not represented by other constructs in the model" (Hair *et. al.*, 2014). DV is measured through "Fornell and Larcker Criteria", "Cross Loadings" (Hair *et. al.*, 2014) and "Heterotrait- Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)" (Henseler, 2015). As per Fornell and Larcker Criteria, "the square root of AVE of each construct should be higher than its correlation with other construct's" (Vinzi *et. al.*, 2010). It means that the indicator is more associated with its construct than any other construct. The results in 2 depicts that in case of the diagonal values are higher than the values underneath and besides it.

Table 2: Fornell and Larcker Criteria (Buying Behavior)

Construct	BOGO	BB	SS	C	FS	ID	LP	PD	SP
BOGO	0.863								
BB	0.418	0.745							
SS	0.443	0.270	0.784						
C	0.619	0.416	0.464	0.855					

FS	0.629	0.440	0.521	0.689	0.764				
ID	0.391	0.277	0.466	0.365	0.433	0.836			
LP	0.582	0.387	0.616	0.551	0.578	0.530	0.787		
PD	0.698	0.420	0.476	0.615	0.628	0.407	0.587	0.860	
SP	0.482	0.337	0.512	0.444	0.479	0.463	0.531	0.518	0.773

Note: BOGO= Buy-One-Get-One Free; BB = Buying Behavior; SS = Contests/Sweepstakes; C = Coupons; FS= Free Samples; ID = In-Store Display; LP = Loyalty Program; PD = Price Discount; SP = Sales Talk

Source: Author's Calculation

Another method to determine the discriminant validity, Heterotrait- monotrait (HTMT) ratio is also used which is defined as the “mean value of item correlations across constructs relative to the geometric mean of the average correlations for the items measuring the same construct” (Hair *et. al.*, 2014). The maximum permissible value of HTMT ratio is 0.85 (Henseler, 2015). 3 shows all ratios less than 0.85. Hence, it is concluded that there is no problem as far as discriminant validity is concerned.

Table 3: Heterotrait- Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio(Buying Behavior)

Construct	BOGO	BB	SS	C	FS	ID	LP	PD	SP
BOGO									
BB	0.476								
SS	0.500	0.285							
C	0.703	0.474	0.526						
FS	0.742	0.522	0.609	0.812					
ID	0.467	0.323	0.572	0.436	0.541				
LP	0.677	0.440	0.710	0.643	0.700	0.647			
PD	0.791	0.478	0.536	0.696	0.741	0.488	0.684		
SP	0.549	0.368	0.591	0.510	0.574	0.581	0.613	0.591	

Note: BOGO= Buy-One-Get-One Free; BB = Buying Behavior; SS = Contests/Sweepstakes; C = Coupons; FS= Free Samples; ID = In-Store Display; LP = Loyalty Program; PD = Price Discount; SP = Sales Talk

Source: Author's Calculation

4.2. Structural Model

After the assesment of measurement and validity of the construct reliability, structural models are established. Structural model is applied to test the relation among the latent variables (constructs) and determine their preductive capabilities (Hair *et.al.*, 2017). For evaluating structural model, various criteria's including the coefficient of determination (r-square), path coefficient significance (β), predictive relevance (Q^2), and the effect size (f^2).

For determining the slope coefficients significance, relationship among the construct were assessed. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows the outcome of hypothesized relationships of this conceptual model. The study has performed bootstrapping with 5000 samples to verify the significance level and path coefficients of the proposed hypothesis. Incase of buying behavior, the results indicate a positive significant

influence of POS promotional tools like Buy-One-Get-One free (BOGO) ($\beta = 0.078$, t -value = 2.206, $p < 0.05$), Coupons ($\beta = 0.108$, t -value = 2.163, $p < 0.05$), Free Samples ($\beta = 0.171$, t -value = 3.515, $p < 0.01$), Loyalty Program ($\beta = 0.102$, t -value = 2.221, $p < 0.05$), Price Discount ($\beta = 0.103$, t -value = 1.981, $p < 0.05$), and Sales Talk ($\beta = 0.08$, t -value = 2.115, $p < 0.05$) on consumer buying behavior. The results are similar to previous studies (Nakarmi, 2018) and (Nagadeepa & Tamil Selvi, 2015). In contrast contests/sweepstakes and In-store display found to have insignificant impact on the consumer buying behavior.

Table 4: Path Analysis (*Buying Behavior*)

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std. Beta (β)	Standard deviation	t-value	Sig. value	Decision
H _{1a}	Buy one get one free (BOGO) -> Buying Behavior	0.078	0.035	2.206	0.028	Significant
H _{2a}	Contest -> Buying Behavior	0.097	0.054	1.815	0.070	Insignificant
H _{3a}	Coupons -> Buying Behavior	0.108	0.050	2.163	0.031	Significant
H _{4a}	Free Samples -> Buying Behavior	0.171	0.049	3.515	0.000	Significant
H _{5a}	In-store Display -> Buying Behavior	0.028	0.036	0.794	0.427	Insignificant
H _{6a}	Loyalty Program -> Buying Behavior	0.102	0.046	2.221	0.027	Significant
H _{7a}	Price Discount -> Buying Behavior	0.103	0.052	1.981	0.048	Significant
H _{8a}	Sales Talk -> Buying Behavior	0.080	0.038	2.115	0.035	Significant

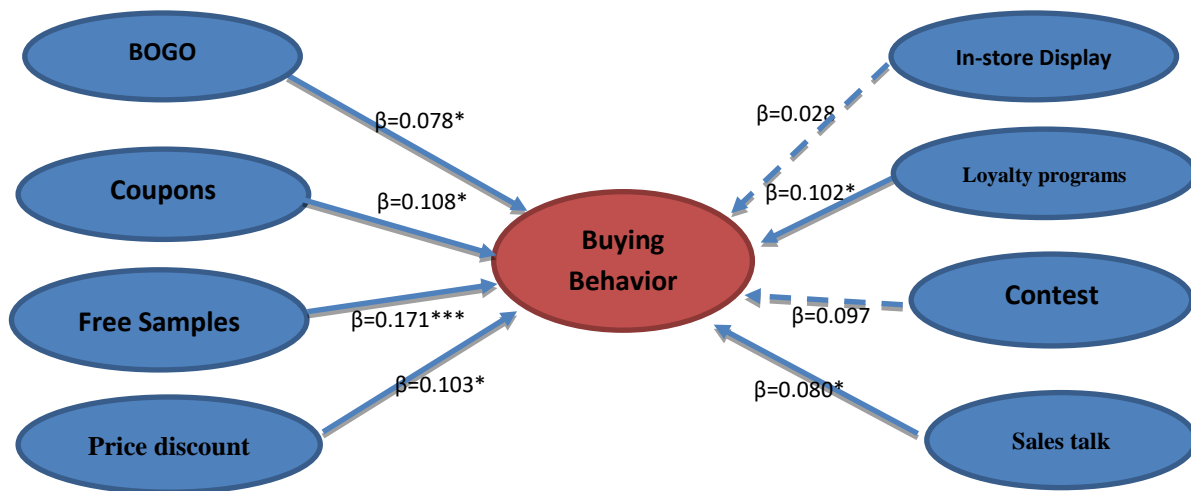


Figure 2: Path Analysis (Buying Behavior)

Note: Broken line shows no degree of influence; solid line shows influence of exogenous construct on endogenous construct. Significant at $p < 0.05^*$, $p < 0.01^{**}$

5. Conclusion

In case of buying behavior, the results indicate a positive significant influence of POS promotional tools like Buy-One-Get-One Free (BOGO) ($\beta = 0.078$, t -value = 2.206, $p < 0.05$), Coupons ($\beta = 0.108$, t -value = 2.163, $p < 0.05$), Free Samples ($\beta = 0.171$, t -value = 3.515, $p < 0.01$), Loyalty Program ($\beta = 0.102$, t -value = 2.221, $p < 0.05$), Price Discount ($\beta = 0.103$, t -value = 1.981, $p < 0.05$), and Sales Talk ($\beta = 0.08$, t -value = 2.115, $p < 0.05$) on Consumer Buying Behavior. The results are consistent with the previous studies Nagadeepa & Tamil Selvi (2015), Nakarmi (2018), Shamout (2016) and Husnain et. al. (2019). According to the findings and the previous work, sales promotion methods are easy to understand for the consumers to take the benefits while purchasing a product in the store. In contrast sweepstakes and In-store display have no significant influence on the consumer buying behavior. In a similar study by Hefer & Cant (2013) shows that majority of research participants informed of no affect of in-store displays in the purchasing decisions. In conclusion, consumers' get influenced by the point-of-sales promotions and confirms that the promotional strategies are effective means for retail managers to plan for increase in their businesses. It shows that the promotional techniques can act as catalyst to the existing business and can be effective to stand the competitors in the market. This research offers an insights and managerial implications to be considered while offering promotions at the retail store. The study can contribute and support the marketers to understand and analyze the factors affecting consumer buying behavior. As the sales promotion strategies influencing the consumers' buying behavior has short term effect to improve sales, the market professionals and retails need to think with better strategies for building long term relationships to retain their customers.

6. Limitations and Future Scope

As with any research, the present study has some limitations of the data and offers opportunities for future research. The study has selected the metropolitan cities of India, which can be extended to more cities of Tier-I & II categories. Increased data size and more participation of the customer can help in understanding more about the consumer attitude and purchasing decisions. The research also focused only on retail stores in India. The study can be broadened to comparing the experiences with online shopping of the same retails. The attempt can also be made to connect social media promotions and advertising to influence the consumer decisions. This study has also limitation of short-term influence of promotions on shopper's behavior and attitude.

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