



AFFECT OF SALES PROMOTION TOOLS AT THE TIME OF PURCHASING MOBILE SIM CARDS: A STUDY CONDUCTED IN RURAL WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS:

Sales promotion, Discounts, Free samples, Contests, Purchase decision, Ruralites

Sales promotion is the marketing process of lifting sales of an organization by influencing the customers through attractive benefits such as discounts, free samples, bonus packs, contests, free gifts to trigger the buying decision of the customer. Through sales promotion the company can maximize their sales, introduce new products and services to the customers, clear out inventories etc. The sales promotion is generally made on temporary basis either within a given period of time or till stocks available. The paper describes different methods and techniques of sales promotion. The paper aims in analyzing different tools of sales promotion and determines their degree of effectiveness at the time of making rural customers' buying decision towards mobile SIM cards. The area chosen for the study is West Bengal, which is having several prominent rural areas, which comprises five subdivisions and from there the researcher has selected five towns namely Rampurhat, Islampur, Tufangunj, Tehatta and Egra. The areas have been selected due to the rural prominence. The Convenience sampling method has been used to find out the responses from the various respondents and accordingly 180 respondents have been selected on this purpose. The respondents opinion has been recorded with the help of a close ended questionnaire. The researcher has used 5 point likert scale to assess the responses properly from the selected respondents. Correlation analysis & multiple regression analysis have been used as statistical tools to find out the most important sales promotional tools.

PRELUDE

“Providing connectivity to villages is an urgent need to bridge the rural-urban divide, generate employment and enhance rural prosperity. The integrated method which will bring prosperity to rural India is through PURA (Providing Urban Facilities to Rural Areas).”

*-Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam
Former President of India*

According to the census 2011, presently 121 crores of people staying in India, out of which 83.3 crores are people only in rural areas. Around 70% of people in India are staying in rural only. The size & vastness of this market speaks only about its potential. The Indian urban market is already saturated. All the companies from various sectors have been targeted the urban market & that is why all the corners of urban market have been tapped. Rural areas are largely untapped & it is having the huge potential. Today most of the rural market is connected with small towns & small towns are connected with cities, so the urban orientation has gone inside to the rural culture & behavior of rural market has been drastically changed in last few years. Due to several poverty

alleviation & skill development program by Government & private organizations nowadays rural people have more money in their hand as well as their education level has also increased. In rural market there is an increasing rate of demand in the sectors like FMCG, FMCD, agri- inputs, mobile phones & allied services, two wheelers etc.

The concept of consumer behavior is of prime importance in marketing and has evolved over the years. It is important to understand consumer buying behavior as it plays a vital role in creating an impact on purchase of products/ services. The telecom industry is one of the fastest growing industries. India has nearly 1058.86 million telephone lines making it the largest network in the world after China. Indian telecom industry is having 19.96% (CAGR) growth rate in the world. The numbers of cell phone users in India are rapidly growing. In coming few years, India may surpass countries like America, China etc in number of consumers using cellular services. India is the biggest market for telecom service provider. Because of huge competition, large no of options are available for customer for selecting or choosing the service provider. Also frequency of changing the service provider has increased.

Every human being is a consumer of different products and services. If there is no consumer, there is no business. Therefore, it is vital to know consumer buying behaviour towards selecting service provider. To satisfy the customer, it is required to learn which factor attracts more. The human needs are unlimited and always expect more and more. Mobile service provider products are no exception to this behavior. This leads to constant modifications of Mobile service provider today. Lots of service providers are coming into the market practically every year. In this book findings show a through insight of consumer behaviour towards mobile service provider and consumers consider various parameters while buying the services of an operator. Factors such as better connectivity, attractive tariff and low entry cost play an important role in influencing a customer for opting any network.

There is a huge upsurge in the current telecommunication market in India due to several reasons. Urban market is almost penetrated by all the national & international players but still the rural market is not yet pierced as compare to urban market. The 70% of population in India are staying in rural India only. So, naturally all the marketers will try to enter the market & want to grasp it as soon as possible.

EXISTING REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Ahmed S. A. et al., (2015) said motivating the consumers in selecting brands or insisting the consumers to buy more items is a difficult task. Promotional benefit is advantageous to stimulate the consumers to evaluate their affordability over different brands and make positive selection. To hike up the sales, different promotional schemes such as reduction in price, discount offers and coupons, bonus packs, distribution of free samples are offered to encourage the consumers' preference to buy product. The research study reveals that the consumers' purchase decisions are motivated by the promotional strategies undertaken by the business entities such as offering price discounts, gift coupons, free samples, bonus packs etc. Hsu T. et al., (2009) propounded that although various promotional tools are available, subject to the budget constraint, it not possible for a company to invest on all such tools to convey information to convince the customers. Sales promotion is an important short-term technique designed to influence the purchasing behavior of the customer to make impulsive purchase and business goals are achieved at minimum cost. Akbar et al. (2009) explained in their article that how the service quality, trust & customer satisfaction, these three factors are having an impact on customer loyalty or not. To analyze this from 304 customers the data has been collected in Bangladesh & Structure Equation Model has been used to find out the analysis. The result reveals that the trust & customer satisfaction both are having significant correlation with customer loyalty. Customer satisfaction is working as a mediator between customer loyalty & service quality. If the company will improve their service quality then automatically the customers will get satisfied. Satisfied customers will be the most loyal to the company as well as trustworthy. Hanif et al. (2010) explained that which are the factors mainly influencing the customer satisfaction in the context of different telecom brands. The research has been conducted in Pakistan with few service providers namely Ufone, Telenor, Mobilink etc. The study has been revealed that the most important factors which are influencing the customer satisfaction are affordable price & customer services

provided by the various service providers. The result also reveals that though both the factors are having an impact on customer satisfaction still price factor has somewhat more impact compare to customer services. Haque et al. (2010) elaborated that the study mainly finds out which are the key factor when customers are choosing a particular service provider. The study has been conducted in Bangladesh & Structure Equation Modeling has been used to find out the result with the help of AMOS software. Price, quality of the service, promotion, availability etc has been chosen as factors which are influencing to choose. The result reveals that Price is the most important factor which affecting the consumers more at the time of choosing a service provider. Findings of the study will definitely help the Bangladeshi companies to work more on innovative marketing strategies & promotion. Khan (2010) explained that the study has been conducted to find out the service quality providing by various telecom operators to the subscribers in Pakistan. 800 consumers have been selected with a well structured questionnaire & convenience sampling method is also used to find out the desired number. The statistical analysis has been done with the Confirmatory Factor Analysis & Multiple Regression Analysis to find out the result. The study reveals that convenience & quality of the network are the most important aspects which are affecting the perception of mobile phone users in terms of service quality whereas reliability did not have a significant impact. Bansal et al. (2011) depicted that the study has an aim to understand the customer satisfaction level on various mobile companies, awareness of 3G services & mobile number portability. The study has been conducted in Bhatinda with the help of both structured & unstructured questionnaires. The result has been analyzed with the help of bar diagram & pie charts. The study revealed that customers are mostly satisfied by the services providing by various companies in Bhatinda study. It has also came out from the study that 3G network is having a huge potential in the market, so if the consumers are aware about the 3G services then definitely they will go for it. Apparently it can also be said that there is a stiff competition is going on into the telecom market & if any company failed to deliver what they promises then they will lose the customer in no time. Soni N. et al., (2013) proposed that among the various promotional strategies used for influencing the customers' purchase decision, sales promotion is the optimum promotional mix mostly used to maximize sales and invoke the customer purchase decision. The study reveals that among various techniques of sales promotion, special offers, premiums and contests are the most convincing techniques for customers' purchase decision and deserving for the enterprise. Shamout M.D. (2016) stated in order to sustain competitive position in terms of profit and market share, retailers employ the effective tools of sales promotions to motivate the consumer towards purchasing. The study reveals that considering the aspects – brand switching and customer loyalty, the consumer will be positively driven toward buying a product or a service if various promotional tools such as price discount, free samples, and buy one get one free, are used. Nagadeepa C. et al., (2015) conducted a study which explores that sales promotion is a powerful element of promotional mix which is widely used to increase the sales by influencing the customers' buying decision. In this study the important sales promotion techniques – rebate/discount offers, bonus packs, coupons, loyalty schemes, and contests were identified and it was revealed that rebates/discount offers and loyalty schemes trigger the customers towards impulsive purchase.

From the literature reviews these are the hypotheses have been developed.

- Cash refunds are having a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision.
- Free SIM cards are having a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision.
- Discount offers are having a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision.
- Complementary packs are having a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision.
- Coupons are having a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision.
- Reduced price packs are having a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision.
- Group schemes are having a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision.
- Scratch and win offer are having a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision.
- Money back offer are having a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- To study the affect of various promotional tools at the time of purchasing mobile SIM cards in rural West Bengal.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Descriptive Research has been used to conduct the study and the type of research design is Cross-sectional. The primary data has been collected for the study through a pre-tested questionnaire whereas all the secondary data has been collected from doctoral theses, magazines, research articles, credible sources etc. In this study researcher has collected the samples from rural areas of West Bengal. The areas chosen for the study has been selected due to the rural prominence and these are Rampurhat, Islampur, Tufangunj, Tehatta and Egra. The data for present study is collected from 180 consumers via structured questionnaires distributed among the consumers of rural areas of West Bengal. To rate the questions researcher has used 5 point Likert scale in questionnaire. In the questionnaire, respondents are requested to indicate, on five-point Likert scale, ranging from "highly important" to "highly unimportant", a statement explaining the degree of their perceived importance of a factor. For overall data analysis the researcher has used SPSS 21. Convenience sampling method has been used to collect various perceptions of subscribers of different mobile service providers in West Bengal. Correlation and Multiple regression method has been used to conduct the study.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATIONS:

Reliability & Validity Testing:

Reliability Statistics of Rural Consumers	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.897	10

The reliability analysis on reasons for shifting data has got the Cronbach's Alpha result of .897. From the table, we've depicted that this Cronbach's Alpha result acceptable & accordingly the researcher have conducted the further analysis.

Cronbach's alpha has been used to measure internal consistency of questionnaires and found to be strong and reliable. The reliability score for questionnaire is 0.897 for rural consumers. Though the value is well above, 0.70 so from the above table, researcher can conclude that the Cronbach's Alpha result is acceptable & accordingly the researcher can proceed the further analysis.

In order to be certain about the research instrument as well as the data collected, validity is checked. For this study, face validity, content validity, discriminant and convergent validity were checked for confirmation of the instrument. In face validity researchers determine whether or not their instrument is valid enough to measure what is

intended to measure and this is done by taking the validity of the instrument at face value. In order to validate the instrument, academicians, professionals and potential respondents were shown the questionnaire to thoroughly review and analyze the content. Content that was unfit and may have caused issues in the future was deleted or modified. In content validity the content of the questionnaire was thoroughly checked and matched with the theoretical framework. Three questions were deleted after analyzing the content so as to make sure that the instrument is valid. So, here both face & content validity has been checked. The construct validity contains convergent & discriminant validity. Here between the various variables of the factors is having the strong co-relation coefficient & most of the co-relation coefficients values are in higher ranges. So, here it proves that the convergent validity exists. Though there are high co-relation coefficients between the variables of a particular factor, there are very weak correlation also exists between the one factor's variable to another factor's variable. Here it also proves that the discriminant validity exists.

Correlations											
		CPD	CR	FSC	DO	CP	CS	RPP	GS	SWO	MBO
CP D	Pearson Correlation	1	.765**	.695**	.679**	-.095	-.018	.726**	.192**	.167*	.198**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.202	.807	.002	.010	.025	.008
	N	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180
CR	Pearson Correlation	.765**	1	.697**	.620**	-.157*	-.012	-.009	.269**	.241**	.256**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.035	.869	.904	.000	.001	.001
	N	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180
FSC	Pearson Correlation	.695**	.697**	1	.705**	-.040	-.020	.059	.149*	.107	.116
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.598	.790	.429	.046	.151	.122
	N	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180
DO	Pearson Correlation	.679**	.620**	.705**	1	.035	.037	.097	.100	.191*	.075
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.640	.624	.194	.183	.010	.314
	N	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180
CP	Pearson Correlation	-.095	-.157*	-.040	.035	1	.691**	.793**	.041	-.139	.037
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.202	.035	.598	.640		.000	.000	.580	.062	.622
	N	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180
CS	Pearson Correlation	-.018	-.012	-.020	.037	.691**	1	.803**	.198**	-.023	.165*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.807	.869	.790	.624	.000		.000	.008	.756	.027
	N	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180
RP P	Pearson Correlation	.726**	-.009	.059	.097	.793**	.803**	1	.124	-.090	.120
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.904	.429	.194	.000	.000		.097	.229	.110
	N	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180
GS	Pearson Correlation	.192**	.269**	.149*	.100	.041	.198**	.124	1	.490**	.634**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.000	.046	.183	.580	.008	.097		.000	.000
	N	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180
SW O	Pearson Correlation	.167*	.241**	.107	.191*	-.139	-.023	-.090	.490**	1	.495**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.025	.001	.151	.010	.062	.756	.229	.000		.000
	N	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180
MB O	Pearson Correlation	.198**	.256**	.116	.075	.037	.165*	.120	.634**	.495**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.001	.122	.314	.622	.027	.110	.000	.000	
	N	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In this particular section it has been shown that the correlation between consumers' purchase decision and other independent variables namely Cash refunds, Free SIM cards, Discount offers, Complementary pack, Coupons, Reduced price packs, Group schemes, Scratch and win offer, Money back offer and these are statistically significant or not. The Karl Pearson's correlation technique has been used to conduct the survey on finding the influence of various sales promotion tools on rural consumers' purchase decision. In this particular analysis it has been shown that all the independent variables are not statistically significant with rural consumers' purchase decision and all of them are not having positive influence. Complementary packs and Coupons

are having negative correlation with customer purchase decision which means the drop in Complementary packs and Coupons will increase the customer purchase decision but for others like Cash refunds, Free SIM cards, Discount offers, Reduced price packs, Group schemes, Scratch and win offer and Money back offer it is just the opposite. The rest of the variables are having positive influence so all these are affecting the customer purchase decision. Complementary packs and Coupons are also statistically insignificant and it shows that there is no impact of these two factors on consumers' purchase decision. Cash refunds, Free SIM cards, Discount offers and Reduced price packs is having a strong positive correlation with rural consumers purchase decision whereas Group

schemes, Scratch and win offer and Money back offer is having a low correlation with the dependent variable. Now to find out the impact or influence of various independent variables

on the independent variable and to develop a model the researcher have used the multiple regression analysis.

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.819 ^a	.671	.653	.758	1.992
a. Predictors: (Constant), Group schemes, Discount offers, Cash refunds, Complementary pack, Coupons, Reduced price packs, Free SIM cards, Scratch and win offer, Money back offer					
b. Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchase Decision					

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	199.201	9	22.133	38.476	.000 ^b
	Residual	97.793	170	.575		
	Total	296.994	179			

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchase Decision

b. Predictors: (Constant), Group schemes, Discount offers, Cash refunds, Complementary pack, Coupons, Reduced price packs, Free SIM cards, Scratch and win offer, Money back offer

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.476	.367		1.296	.000		
	Cash refunds	.481	.071	.464	6.780	.000	.413	1.421
	Free SIM cards	.173	.073	.170	2.383	.017	.380	1.632
	Discount offers	.264	.064	.274	4.117	.000	.436	1.291
	Complementary pack	-.032	.051	-.047	-.621	.535	.333	1.001
	Coupons	-.028	.056	-.038	-.492	.624	.327	1.053
	Reduced price packs	.035	.066	.048	.535	.003	.237	1.217
	Group schemes	.003	.048	.003	.056	.006	.530	1.887
	Scratch and win offer	.045	.047	.052	.944	.023	.638	1.568
	Money back offer	.056	.053	.064	1.065	.008	.535	1.870

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchase Decision

Group schemes, Discount offers, Cash refunds, Complementary pack, Coupons, Reduced price packs, Free SIM cards, Scratch and win offer and Money back offers are the independent variables which are mainly affecting the rural consumers to buy the SIM card of various service providers. These sales promotional tools will try to attract the rural consumers' to various brands.

To test the multiple regression, at first, the researcher have found out 0.819 is the Correlation coefficient (R) for Model 1, it emphasizes an amount of correlation between the independent variables and dependent variable (brand loyalty). The R square value explains the 0.671 or 67.1% which is quite significant. The Durbin-Watson is mainly explaining that there is no auto-correlation though the value is quite close to 2.

The ANOVA table shows that the F value is 38.476 with degree of freedom 9 and here the significance value is .000 which is less than .05 and it means it is quite acceptable.

Multi-collinearity has been checked through Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) which needs to be less than 3 for acceptability range. Here all VIF values are in acceptable range in & it concludes that the variables are free from multi-collinearity.

From the coefficient table the researcher has found that cash refunds are having highest un-standardized B value

of .481 as well as t value is also high. So it is the most influencing factor on rural consumer's purchase decision. After that the second highest will be discount offers with the B value of .264. The other independent variables like Free SIM cards, Money back offer, Scratch and win offer, Reduced price packs, Group schemes, Coupons and Complementary pack are following after that.

It is interpreted from the result that rural consumers are somewhat price sensitive and that is why most of the sales promotional tools are attracting them. But out of these two variables namely complementary pack and coupons are not attracting the customers at the time of purchasing the SIM cards. Complementary pack and Coupons both are statistically insignificant as well as there is a negative influence of these two factors have been observed on consumer purchase decision. So from the study it has been found out that Cash refunds, Free SIM cards and Discount offers are the most influencing factors when consumers are thinking of buying a SIM card. Reduced price packs, Group schemes, Scratch and win offer and Money back offers are having a positive & significant influence on purchase behavior but not so strong compare to the other three factors. It has been also found out that seven out of nine factors are quite significant in 1% & 5% significance level.

So, here the multiple regression equation can be expressed as,

$$\text{Rural Consumers Purchase Decision} = .476 + (.481) X_1 + (.173) X_2 + (.264) X_3 + (-.032) X_4 + (-.028) X_5 + (.035) X_6 + (.003) X_7 + (.045) X_8 + (.056) X_9$$

[Cash refunds = X_1 , Free SIM cards = X_2 , Discount offers = X_3 , Complementary pack = X_4 , Coupons = X_5 , Reduced price packs = X_6 , Group schemes = X_7 , Scratch and win offer = X_8 , Money back offer = X_9]

FINDINGS & CONCLUSION

The result reveals that seven out of nine variables are having a positive & significant impact on rural consumers' purchase decision. Two factors namely complementary packs

and coupons are having negative & insignificant impact on dependent variable. The rural consumers are not trusting complementary packs and coupons due to several reasons. Rural consumers are still having some old school of thoughts and cultural barriers and due to this they are not so much interested or get attracted by these kind promotional tools. On the contrary they are very much aware and attracted towards Cash refunds, Free SIM cards and Discount offers. Might be the word of mouth has been passes through various sources that these are most reliable sales promotional tools and people are getting attracted to these kind of tools.

Factors	Hypothesis	Rural
Cash refunds	Cash refunds are having a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision.	Accepted
Free SIM cards	Free SIM cards are having a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision.	Accepted
Discount offers	Discount offers are having a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision.	Accepted
Complementary packs	Complementary packs are having a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision.	Rejected
Coupons	Coupons are having a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision.	Rejected
Reduced price packs	Reduced price packs are having a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision.	Accepted
Group schemes	Group schemes are having a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision.	Accepted
Scratch and win offer	Scratch and win offer are having a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision.	Accepted
Money back offer	Money back offer are having a significant impact on consumers' purchase decision.	Accepted

From findings of the study it can be said that the promotional tools are having significant impact on customers purchase decision. It has been observed that cash refunds are the most influencing factor and can be considered as the active tool of sales promotion that influences making of customer buying decision.

The rural sector, with 70 percent of the total population, has a significant role to play in the overall growth of the country. Rural India is now undergoing few changes due to the various activities undertaken by the Government & private companies for overall development of villages. Today the villagers have increased their knowledge of fertilizers, water resources, pesticides, better quality seeds, modern farm equipments and overall the methods of farming have changed drastically due to advent of new technologies in market & it made the villages far better. The per capita income of the farmers has increased and the mode of spending their disposable income has also changed. There is a clear indication of increasing prosperity in rural India. Due to the prosperity in the rural areas it also created new dimensions & opportunities. It leads to definite increase in the demand for services provided by different mobile network operators. The rural market is not passive. It is vibrant and improving at a faster pace. It will soon outperform the urban market if this pace of development continues.

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