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EFFECTS OF SALES MANAGEMENT OF CONSUMERS' BEHAVIOURS IN SOME SELECTED BUSINESSES IN ADAMAWA STATE

Dr. SANUSI BELLO

Department Of Business Administration
Adamawa State University Mubi,
Nigeria
drsanusibello@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine the effects of sales management on consumers behaviours in some selected businesses in Adamawa State. The basic purpose of this it is to find out how such factors are behind, the success of consumers behaviours, attitudes, acceptance and perception of products offered to the market by the businesses. The sales management is the most important factor. The consumer buying behavior is dependent on the 'sales management and on its features. Both these are important mediums utilised by practitioners to influence buying behaviour and to increase sales. One of the implications of this research is that while consumers might be more attentive to a sales-management activity, such as a promotional pamphlet distribution, the attitudes to this spec activity might not be as positive as other activities that are often less notable. Due to increasing self-service and changing consumers' lifestyle the interest in marketing strategies as a tool of sales promotion and stimulator 'of impulsive buying behavior is growing increasingly. So package performs an important. role in marketing communications, especially in the point, of sale and could be treated as one of the most important factors influencing consumer's purchase decision.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Sales management.

1. INTRODUCTION

In daily life, a layman deals with different transaction in terms of selling and purchasing of goods and services. In these transactions the second one persuades the first person. Therefore, selling may 'be defined as persuading people to satisfy the want of first one. The person, who does this act, is called as the salesman, the result of this action as sales, while these activities of the person, are supervised and controlled by sales-management In the present scenario sales executives are professionals. 'They plan, build and maintain effective organisations and design and utilize efficient control procedures. The professionals approach requires thorough analysis, market-efficient qualitative and quantitative personal-selling strategy. It calls for skilful. application of organisational principles to the conduct of sales operations In addition, the professional approach demands the ability to install, operate, and use control procedures appropriate to the firm's situation and its objectives. Executives capable of applying the professional approach to sales management are in high demand today. The quality of selling is referred to as salesmanship. Originally, the term 'sales management' referred to the direction of sales force personnel. But, it has gained a significant position in the today's world. Now, the sales management meant management of all marketing activities, including advertising sale promotion, marketing research, physical distribution, pricing, and product merchandising.

The American marketers association (AMA's) definition, takes into consideration a number of these viewpoints Its definitions runs like the planning, direction, and control of the personnel, selling activities of a business unit including recruiting, selecting, training, assigning, rating, supervising, paying, motivating, as all these tasks apply to the personnel sales force.

In nowadays competitive environment the role of sales management has changed due to increasing self-Service and changing consumers' lifestyle. Firms' interest in sales management as a tool of sales promotion is growing increasingly According to Rundh (2005) adequate sales management attracts consumer's attention to particular brand, enhances its image, and influences consumer's perceptions about product Also sales management imparts unique value to products (Silayoi and Speece, 2004), works as a tool for differentiation, i.e. helps consumers to choose the product from wide range of similar products, stimulates customers buying behavior (Wells., Farley & Armstrong, 2007). Thus, sales management performs an important role in marketing communications and could be treated as one of the most important factors influencing consumer's purchase decision.

Consumer behavior is stated as the behavior that consumer display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products, services and ideas that, they, expect . will satisfy their needs. The study of consumer behavior is concerned not only with what consumers buy, but also with why they buy it, when and how they buy it, and how often they buy it. It is concerned with learning the specific meanings that products hold .for consumers. Consumer research takes places at every phase of 'consumption process, before the' purchase, during the purchase and after the purchase Kotler (2006) defined consumer behavior as "all psychological, social and physical behavior of potential customers as they become aware of evaluate, purchase, consume and tell other' about products and services".

The scope of consumer behavior includes not only the actual buyer and his act of buying but also various roles played by different individuals and the influence they exert on the final purchase decision .Individual consumer behavior is influenced by economic, social, cultural, psychological, and personal factors (Vani, Babu, and Panchanatham 2010).

A number of studies on the inflitence of sales promotion on consumers' buyer behaviour have been published during the past decade, such as the impact of in store displays on product. trial and the repurchase behaviour of customers in Malaysia (Ndubisi & Moi, 2005); the influence 'of free samples on consumer trial and purchasing behaviour in the United States (Heilman, Lakishyk & Radas, 2011); the attitudes of consumers in the United States towards in-store promotional activities (Schultz & Block, 2009), the impact of in-store events on consumers' attitudes towards retail brands in Germany (Leishnig, Schwertfeger & Geigenmueller, 2011); and the effects of in-store' promotional activities on consumers' 'store decisions in Australia (Sands, Opperwal & Beverland, 2009). However, very little research on the influence of sales-promotion techniques on buying behaviour has been conducted in emerging markets, such as South Africa.

Previous studies suggest that different market segments and consumer profiles react differently towards sales promotion. Several reasons for .the variations in effectiveness •were suggested, including demographic, cultural and ethnic differences, the value and timing of promotional offerings, as well as the type of product or service promoted (Heilman, Lakishyk & Radas, 2011).

Furthermore, research also found that consumers react differently towards different sales promotion techniques Weng and de Run (2013) found that sales promotion preferences, have a significant impact on consumers' behavioural intention and purchase satisfaction for all the product types included in their study Liao, Shen and Chu (2009) suggest that sales-promotion techniques offering instant rewards (such as free samples and buy-one-get-one-free deals) resulted in more reminder impulse buying than did sales-promotion techniques, offering delayed rewards (such as loyalty rewards, competitions and sweepstakes) Zheng and Kivetz (2009) indicated that consumers find it more difficult to justify spending money on ,hedonistic luxuries for themselves; and therefore, they have a stronger need for, and are more sensitive to sales management for these types of products.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The major objective of this study is to examine the effects of sales management on consumer behavior in selected business in Adamawa State. The specific objectives are to:

- I. Investigate the influence of sales-management techniques on consumers' behavior in some selected businesses in Adamawa State,
- II. identify statistically significant differences between the various demographic groups as regards their buying behaviour patterns.

3. HYPOTHESES FORMULATION.

The following null hypotheses were formulated

- Ho_i : Investigate the influence of sales-management techniques on consumers' behavior in some selected businesses in Adamawa State,
- Ho_{ii}: Identify statistically significant differences between the various demographic groups as regards their buying behaviour patterns.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Sales management involved group-effort' in the pursuit of common goals or objectives, which are predetermined. Co-ordination is its key, though, no doubt, it is a system of authority, but the emphasis is- on harmony and not conflict. Consumer Buying Behaviour refers to the buying behaviour of the ultimate consumer. Many factors,' specificities and characteristics influence the individual in what he is and the consumer in his decision making process, shopping habits, purchasing behavior, the brands he buys, or the retailers he goes. Therefore, to synchronize the two variables has become a great challenge to business in Adamawa State.

Most of the businesses in Adamawa State were not so Much conversant with sales management technique which have a significant effects of consumers' behaviours. However, despite several efforts .of other researchers to conduct a study on sales management and consumers.' behaviour, none was able to looked at the grassroots level" of Adamawa State Therefore, this study found it very imperative to look at the influence of sales management technique on the consumers' behaviours in some selected businesses in Adamawa State.

5. METHODOLOGY

A. quantitative strategy of inquiry in the form of survey research was used. Personal interviews, in conjunction with a structured questionnaire, formed part of the data-collection process. While being both costly and time-consuming, personal interviews allowed for better control over the data-gathering process, thereby improving the quality of the data. The selection of an appropriate sampling method was largely dependent on the objectives of the study, the financial resources available, the time limitations, as well as the nature of the problem under investigation: For these reasons, a quota-sample method was specified for the study, in order to include all language and ethnic groups in the region. Since disposable income evidently impacts consumers' ability to react to sales promotions, the population targeted for this study focused specifically on middle and: upper class consumers: Quotas, were, therefore, set that were based on income, living standards and ethnicity In developing the data-gathering instrument, an extensive literature review was conducted, including a review of several empirical studies on sales-promotion effectiveness In order to address the research objectives, an instrument consisting of opinion-and-attribute questions was developed. The instrument 'was adapted for the 'South African consumer market; and this was done based on the input of an expert in sales promotion from a leading promotional company in South Africa. A pilot test of the questionnaire was done amongst a convenience sample of 50 respondents with similar characteristics to those consumers that were targeted in the main part of the study. The pilot .study allowed for consideration of the length of the questionnaire, clarity of instructions, layout and the flow of questions. IBM. SPSS (Version 20) was: used as the data analysis tool.

6. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Elements of Sales Management

There are the four basic elements of sales management, discussed below:

A. Planning: a business cannot be. taken as a chance. Every salespeople or person concerned have to see for the future, in a planned way like what must be done? .And who will do it? The plan must be based on extensive market research, and the facts must be verified at every stage. The plan should also be evaluated, after investigating the total-market, for a particular type of product. Flexibility must be provided by. establishing a specialists production line, to allow for variation in production The plan should also be subject to continued review. The details of the plan should be discussed, with all the departmental heads, concerned, and their sub-ordinates, who bear responsibility for fulfilling their parts of the plan

B. Co-ordination: Co-ordination is all pervasive and permeates every function of the management-process. For example, ill planning, departmental-plans are integrated into a master. Plan, ensuring adequate co-ordination. Similarly, organizing starts by co-ordination wholly, partially inter departmental and inter-personnel matters Co-ordination also helps in maximum utilisation of human-effort by the exercise of effective leadership, guidance, motivation, supervision, communication etc. The control-system also needs coordination. Co-ordination does not have any special techniques.

Nevertheless, there are sound principles, on which to develop skills It has a special need to help the staff, to see the total picture and co-ordinate their activities, with the rest of the team The sales manager has to encourage direct personal-contact, within the organisation, particularly where there is lateral-leadership. Harmony, and not discord, should be the guiding mantra. In addition, one has to ensure free flow of information that is selective to the objectives of the business No personal problems, arising from business operations are to be ignored, but solved through a free exchange of ideas. This is especially true in the case of the sales-force of any organisation.

C. Controlling: the sales manager has to. check regularly, that the sales activities are moving in the right direction or not He guides, leads, and motivates the subordinates, so as to achieve the goals planned for the business He has to take steps to ensure that the activities of the people conform to the plans • and objectives of the organisation. The controlling system should be such that one can study the past, note the pitfalls and take corrective measures, so that similar problems may not occur in the future.

The controller has to ensure that the set targets, budgets and schedules are attained or followed in letter and spirit. There must be procedures to bring to light the failure to attain a target. The control-system has to (i) prepare sales and market forecasts; (ii) determine the level of sales-budget; (iii) determine the sales-quotas for each salesman, (iv) determine, review and select distribution-channels, (v) organise an efficient sales force, (vi) establish a system of sales-reporting; (vii) establish a system of statistical sales-credit; (viii) establish stock control system(s); (ix) review of performance of the sales force, and (x) establish periodical testing programmes. In a big organisation, each salesman is assigned a territory (not so big that it cannot be adequately covered). Each salesman has a target, set for specific 'period. From the weekly and monthly sales-reports, the control system is established, that will prepare records whether a particular salesman is working efficiently or not.

D. Motivating: Motivation is essentially a human resource concept. It aims to weld together distinctive personalities into an efficient team. For this, knowledge of human psychology is needed, as a means of understanding behaviour patterns. This is especially important in the case of the sales-force only motivated sales-persons can achieve company's goals.

7. OBJECTIVES OF SALES MANAGEMENT

Every business firm has certain objectives to achieve. These objectives may be very explicit and definitive or they may be implicit or general. Although, firms have different mixes of objectives, and they do place differing emphasis, on individual ones, the typical objectives according to Kundu, (2016) include (i) profitability, (ii) sales-volume, (iii) market share, (iv) growth, and (v) corporate image. While all these objectives are important to a business firm, the objectives, relating to sales-volume, market share and, profitability, are greatly affected by the effectiveness and efficiency, with which the sales-function is managed. Business firms, have, in fact, found that it is the most effective management objective of the firm; that must emanate out of its overall 'business' or corporate objectives. The sales-management objectives of a business firm, generally relate to the areas of (i) achieving sufficient sales-volume, (ii) providing, sufficient profit, and (iii) experiencing continuing growth.

Generally, objectives of sales-management have to cover various sales-functions, in an integrated manner. These objectives are to be expressed, as far as possible, 'in measurable and quantitative terms, and should also be realistic and achievable. Since, there are more than one objective, these should 'be put, on a 'hierarchical manner (most important, down to the least important). To ensure their flawless realisation, they must be congruent, i.e., they must fit together, and not be in conflict with each other. For example, suppose you ask a salesman to cut his travelling expenses, and ask him to spend more time, in the field. To make these two requirements, more meaningful, they must be linked with specific time-element.

The setting of objectives should not be based only on the judgment of the top-management. Rather, it should be formulated and finalised, with the involvement of the sales-force, at the grass-roots level. In addition, the process of setting of sales-objectives should begin, only after the company has conducted benchmark studies, to find out, as to where it stands in terms of product, brand and market sales and market share trends (all in measurable terms) (Kundu, 2016).

Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior has been always of great interest to marketers. The knowledge of consumer behavior helps the marketer to understand how consumers think, feel and . select from alternatives like products. Brands and the like and how the consumers are influenced by their environment, the reference groups, family, and salespersons and so on. A consumer's buying behavior is influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. Most of these factors are uncontrollable and beyond the hands .of marketers but they have to be considered while trying to understand the complex behavior of the consumers. In this study, the researcher emphasizes the importance of lifestyle and its impact on the buyer behaviour.

Consumer Personality Factors

There are two factors mainly influencing the consumers for decision making: Risk aversion and innovativeness. Risk aversion is a measure of how much consumers need to be certain and sure of what they are purchasing (Donthu and Gilliland, 1996). Highly risk adverse consumers need to be very certain about what they are buying. Whereas less risk adverse consumers can tolerate some risk and uncertainty in their purchases. The second variable, innovativeness, is a global measure which captures the degree to which consumers are willing to take chances and experiment with new ways of doing things (Donthu and Gilliland, 1996). The shopping motivation literature is abound with various measures of individual characteristics (e.g., innovative, venturesome, cosmopolitan, variety seeking), therefore, innovativeness and risk aversion were included in this study to capture several of these trait. Measures by Donthu and Gilliland (1996) were used to measure innovativeness and risk aversion.

Stages of the Consumer Buying Process

Six Stages to the Consumer Buying Decision Process (For complex decisions) Actual purchasing is only one stage of the process. Not all decision processes lead to a purchase. All consumer decisions do not always include all 6 stages, determined by the degree of complexity. The 6 stages as given by Rina (2014) are:

- A. Problem Recognition** (awareness of need) difference between the desired state and the actual' condition. Deficit in assortment of products. Hunger Food Hunger stimulates your need to eat
- B. Information search**
- Internal search, memory
 - External search if you need more information. Friends and relatives (word of mouth). Marketer dominated sources; comparison shopping; public sources etc A successful information search leaves a buyer with possible alternatives, the evoked set. Hungry, want to go out and eat, evoked set is:
 - Chinese food
 - Indian food
 - Burger king
 - Kiondike kates. etc.
- C. Evaluation of Alternatives:** need to establish criteria for evaluation, features the buyer wants or does not want. Rank/weight alternatives or resume search May decide that you want to eat something spicy, Indian gets highest rank etc.
- D. Purchase decision:** Choose buying alternative, includes product, package, store, method of purchase etc.
- E. Purchase:** May differ from decision, time lapse between 4 & 5, product availability.
- F. Post-Purchase Evaluation:** outcome Satisfaction or Dissatisfaction Cognitive Dissonance, have you made the right decision. This can be reduced by warranties, after sales communication etc. After eating an Indian meal, may think that really you wanted a Chinese meal instead (Rani, 2014)

Types of Consumer Buying Behavior

According to Rani (2014), the four types of consumer buying behavior are;

- a) Routine Response/Programmed Behavior low involvement frequently purchased low cost items; need very little search and decision effort; purchased almost automatically. Examples include soft drinks, snack foods, milk etc.
- b) Limited Decision Making—buying product occasionally. When you need to obtain information about unfamiliar brand in a familiar product category, perhaps. Requires a moderate amount of time for information gathering. Examples include Clothes—know product class but not the brand
- c) Extensive Decision Making/Complex high involvement, unfamiliar, expensive and/or infrequently bought products. High degree of economic/performance/psychological risk. Examples include cars, homes, computers, education. Spend a lot of time seeking information and deciding. Information from the companies MM, friends and relatives, store personnel etc. Go through all six stages of the buying process.
- d) Impulse buying, no conscious planning.

8. RESULTS, DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS

The main results and findings are presented below:

Awareness and attitudes towards sales-promotion techniques

Respondents' level of awareness and attitudes towards sales-promotion techniques were assessed — in order to determine which types, of activities were most noted, as well as most popular (see Table 1). An analysis of the respondents' awareness towards sales-promotion techniques revealed that they were most attentive to pamphlet distribution with promotional offers (75,8%), and buy-one-get-one free/premium price pack (75,1%) Other sales-promotion techniques that were also reasonably well noticed by the respondents included coupons/vouchers (70,0%), promotions at point-of-sales in shopping malls (64,6%), free samples (61,6%), and loyalty rewards/patronage (59,6%) The awareness of live shows and industrial theatre were lowest amongst the respondents in the sample group (34,1%).

The popularity of buy-one-get-one-free, premium and price packs, where buyers receive a saving or money back when they purchase a specified product, were notable amongst respondents with more than 80% expressing a positive attitude towards these sales promotion techniques (and obtaining an overall mean score of 4.19 out of 5).

This was followed by a preference for free samples (73.8% and 4.07 overall mean), offering consumers a small amount of a product for trial, and coupons/vouchers (70.0% and 3.81), where buyers get a saving or money back when they purchased a product. In contrast, the respondents were less favourable towards pamphlets or leaflets handed out at intersections or shops, with the majority (45 3%) disliking it This implies that sales-promotion techniques should offer consumers tangible and monetary value, rather than mere dissemination of information;

Further analysis focused on the testing of several hypotheses, as these related to identifying significant differences between the various demographic groups:

- 83.4% of the respondents, earning less than N40 000 per month liked buy one-get-one-free/premium/price pack deals compared to a significant lower proportion (54.2%) of the respondents earning in excess of N40 000 per month (p= 0 037) This difference was evident, since consumers with less disposable income would surely appreciate extra goods and lower prices offered to them by companies employing sales-promotion techniques.
- 37.2% .of the respondents, who were 35 years and younger, felt positive towards competitions/sweepstakes, compared to only 17.4% of the respondents who were older than 50 years (p = 0 008).
- 68 0% of the female respondents enjoyed loyalty rewards/patronage, compared to 57 of male respondents (p = 0.049). Female consumers seemed to value points, miles, or credits for purchases offered by loyalty programmes; whereas male consumers seemed to prefer promotions that offered instant gratification.
- 33 0% of 26- to 50-year olds favoured pamphlets, compared to 21 7% of 50+ year olds, and 19.2% of 18 to 25-year olds (p = 0.003). Older consumers found pamphlets even less appealing than did younger consumers.

Table 1: Overall Level of Awareness and Attitudes Towards Sales- Management Activities

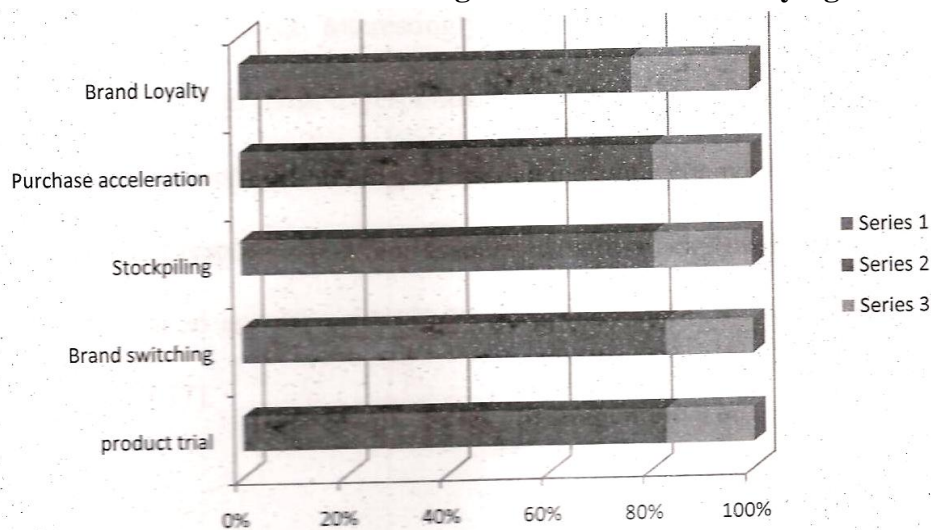
Sales Management Activities	Noted in the past 3 months		Attitudes			
	Yes	No	Dislike it very much/Dislike it	Neutral	Like it/like it very much	Mean (out of 5)
Coupons/Vouchers	70.0%	30.0%	5.6%	24.4%	70.0%	3.81
Buy-one-get-one-free/Premium/Price pack	75.1%	24.9%	4.2%	14.3%	81.6%	4.19
Competitions/Sweepstakes	55.8%	44.2%	22.2%	42.2%	35.6%	3.19
Free samples	61.6%	38.4%	7.0%	19.1%	73.8%	4.07
Live shows/industrial theatre	34.1%	65.9%	17.9%	40.3%	41.9%	3.38
Loyalty rewards/patronage	59.6%	40.4%	7.0%	29.2%	63.7%	3.84
Promotions at point-of-sale/shopping malls	64.6%	35.4%	12.5%	39.0%	48.6%	3.45
Promotional Pamphlets Distribution	75.8%	24.2%	45.3%	26.5%	28.2%	2.73

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The impact of sales promotion technique on consumers’ buying behavior

The second objective of this study was to examine the influence of sales promotions on the buying behaviour of consumers. While most respondents agreed to some extent that sales promotions usually influence them, buying behaviour seemed to be most, associated with product trials, with 61.4% of the respondents agreeing with the statement. This means that sales promotions can influence a consumer to buy a product, which they have never tried before. ‘Sales promotions also seem to be associated strongly with brand-switching (57 0%) and purchase acceleration (56.7%). Although still associated with changes in behaviour, sales promotions are to a lesser, extent associated with stockpiling (52.7%) and brand loyalty (48 0%)

Figure 1: The influence of sales management on consumer buying behaviour



The following significant differences between demographic groups were identified:

- I. 52.8% of respondents older than 25 years agreed that sales promotions influenced their 'brand loyalty, compared to 35 of those respondents younger than 25 years ($p = 0.004$). This suggests that the, application of suitable sales-promotion instruments, together with above-the-line advertising can actually result in increased brand loyalty when targeting consumers older than 25 years.
- II. 63.7% of respondents between the ages of 26 to 35 indicated that sales promotions could influence them to buy more quantities of the same product (stockpiling), while older respondents aged between 36 to 50 and those older than 50 years seemed to be less convinced, with 54 of 45.7% agreeing with the statement. Interestingly, respondents younger than 25 had similar reservations to those of respondents older than 50 years (40.4%) ($p = 0.001$).
- III. Sales promotions leading to product trials seemed to be less effective amongst respondents 'older than 50 years (than amongst respondents between 36 and 50 years (58.2%) and those younger than 35 years (65.1%) ($p = 0.037$).

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study new light has 'been cast on consumer differences with regard to the effectiveness of various sales-promotion techniques used in Adamawa State, as well as preferred communication methods for sales-management campaigns. The research results have important implications for marketing practitioners dealing with, sales-management activities, in particular where the focus falls on the Adamawa State consumer market. While advertising aims to influence consumers' reasons for buying, sales-promotion activities, on the other hand, aim to stimulate sales by presenting incentives to buy.

Both these are important mediums utilised by practitioners to influence buying behaviour and to increase sales. One of the implications of this research is that while consumers might be more attentive to a sales-management activity, such as a promotional pamphlet distribution, the attitudes to this specific activity might not be as positive as other activities that are often less notable.

Marketing practitioners need to gain an understanding of the specific market segments that are targeted, and those promotional tools that are more effective in stimulating sales within these segments. A market-segmentation study of the broader SoUth African consumer market might, therefore, be valuable in furthering an understanding of the sales-management techniques that are most effective in changing 'or increasing sales.

It is recommended therefore that, marketing practitioners, should take cognisance of the fact that sales promotions can influence a consumer to buy a product, which they have never tried before, or alternatively to motivate brand switching of the consumers. Lastly, differences evident in levels of awareness, attitudes towards sales-promotion activities, as well influence on buying behaviour amongst demographic groups remain a strong argument for further research, in particular market segmentation , studies.. The challenge is, however, to gain a real understanding of what drives consumer behaviour, and not merely to be satisfied to identify any differences, based on demographic variables alone.

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