

# INFLUENCE OF SALES PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FRIESLAND AND PROMASIDOR COMPANIES' PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

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## Abstract

**T**his study titled, *Influence of Sales Promotional Activities on Consumer Behaviour: A Comparative Study of Friesland and Promasidor Companies' Promotional Activities*, set out to measure how sales promotion influences consumer behaviour and to empirically test this on peak and cowbell milk which are products of the two companies under investigation. To achieve this, the survey method was utilized, while questionnaire was used to elicit information from residents of Makurdi metropolis. The study established that the two companies actually embark on sales promotional activities; and majority of the respondents were influenced by the promotional activities on peak and cowbell milk, while a few others were swayed by factors such as income, habits and the quality of the products. More findings showed that most consumers patronize peak milk more than cowbell milk because the decrease in price due to sales promotional activities does not affect its quality. Further findings showed that increase in sales is the most reason why peak and cowbell milk embark on promotions; and the fact that majority of consumers become brand loyalists even after the promotion. The study therefore concludes that promotional activities and sales promotion specifically is a stronghold for the two companies studied especially Friesland. Also, the media to an extent have been very instrumental in promoting peak and cowbell milk. The study therefore recommends that Friesland and Promasidor Companies, the producers of peak milk and cowbell milk should make extensive use of sales promotion as a marketing strategy especially Promasidor hence findings showed that its promotional activities are low compared to Friesland. This is in order to make huge sales and profits among other recommendations.

**Keywords:** Sales Promotion, Activities, Influence, Consumer Behaviour

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## INTRODUCTION

Sales promotion plays a key role in the marketing process. That is the more reason why companies and organizations rely heavily on it in order to aid the sale of their products and services both in local and foreign markets. It is therefore a strategy which marketers who can afford it employ in order to boost sales of products. To this end, Arens (2006, p. 31) rightly states that, "The aim of sales promotion is to stimulate market response and can be used to increase sales of products especially at those times when sales are sluggish. It can be used periodically to clear goods in a store before inventory taking." This implies that this strategy is used periodically but serves so many purposes hence, temporal. But the value it adds to a product is great.

Concerning its origin, Belch (1998, p. 470), states that "Sales promotion has been used for a long time and its role and importance in manufacturers' marketing programmes have increased dramatically. Belch adds that, marketers have come to realize that advertising alone is not always enough to move products off store shelves and into the hands of consumers.

It is therefore clear that many strategies including sales promotion can be pulled together to influence consumers into buying more as nothing matters more than selling in the realm of business. The following are few objectives of sales promotion according to Wall Street Mojo Team (2023) which include to get more customers/clients and make them regular users, particularly for new or improved products; introduce new products and expand the scope of distribution; reinforce brands and build products awareness and manage market competition.

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that apart from influencing consumer behaviour, sales promotion serves an array of purposes. Belch and Belch (2001, p. 17) opine that "Sales promotion is generally broken down into two major categories: Consumer oriented and trade oriented activities, with the former targeted at the ultimate user of a product or service. This includes couponing, sampling, premiums, rebates, sweepstakes, contests and various points of purchase materials". These promotional tools however encourage consumers to make immediate purchases and stimulate short-term sales.

Belch and Belch further explain that trade oriented sales promotion is targeted at marketing intermediaries like wholesalers, distributors and retailers. Promotional and merchandizing allowances, price deals, sales contests and trade shows are some of the tools used to encourage the trade to stock and promote a company's product. Hence, sales promotion plays a no mean role in a company's effort to market its products to customers. hence, companies, indulge in the promotion of their products, ideas and services. It is an established fact that these two companies have dominated the dairy industry yet; their products are heavily advertised and promoted. According to information on the companies' websites at [www.frieslandfoods.ng.com](http://www.frieslandfoods.ng.com) and [www.promasidorng.com](http://www.promasidorng.com), the promotions create an aura of excitement around the products; and consumers patronize the products with lots of excitement. It is also noted that consumers do so with the aim of either partaking in the competitions or winning a gift or whatever the promotions offer.

Modern (1991, p. 21) rightly observes that, "In executing the sales promo strategy, marketers must ensure to coordinate the strategy with other elements of the marketing mix. The sales person needs to know the promotion technique being used, the duration and timing and so forth so that they can tie sales messages into it.

In line with the above assertion, sales promos produce a much greater effect if they are coordinated than if they are carried out independently. Furthermore, to determine the relative importance of sales promotion in the overall marketing mix, an organization has to consider its marketing budgets, the stage of the product life cycle, the nature of competition in the market, and the target of the promo and the nature of the product. Based on this overview, this study aimed to examine the use, extent and the overall effect of sales promotional activities of the two companies which are the focus of this research.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

This section looks at conceptual clarification. The main concepts for this study are sales promotion and consumer behavior.

### **Sales Promotion**

Sales promotion as earlier noted is an essential marketing strategy aimed at reaching the consumer and boosting sales. Baker (1996, p. 3) quotes the Institute of Sales Promotions as follows: "Sales promotion is a facet of marketing which is adds value, usually of a temporary nature, to a product or service in order to persuade the end-user to purchase that particular product."

Baker (1996) further states that the purpose of sales promotion is to supplement and coordinate advertising

and personal selling while advertising helps build brand image and long term value, sales promotion builds sales volume. Promotions are an effective way to spur sales, but because they involve discounts, couponing and contests with valuable prizes, they are also expensive and reduce profits as a result.

The bottom line here is that, in as much as promos are crucial to marketing they take away huge sums of money but in the long run, sales are enhanced while now customers are also trapped.

Moreso, Belch and Belch (2001, p. 471) affirm that, "marketers have come to recognize that advertising alone is not always enough to move their products off shelves and into the hands of consumers. Companies use sales promotion methods targeted at consumers, wholesalers, and retailers that distribute their products to stimulate demand."

Sales promotion therefore, induces trial and increase patronage and usage. Trial refers to the customers' initial purchase and use of the product. Trial-oriented sales promotions are aimed at two market segments: New users (those who have never tried the product) and frequent brand switchers (those who have tried the product but would be willing to switch from their present preferred brand). Sampling, couponing and off-price are trial inducing promotion techniques.

Similarly, Belch and Belch (2001) further point out that such promotion tend to be more effective with brand switchers and with people who are already using other brands. Later in the product life cycle marketers want to increase repeat purchase by previous and occasional users who can be induced to use the brand more frequently. Generally,

gaining greater usage attention by present users requires finding new users for the product.

In addition, Eric (2000) states that there are two strategies that enable the movement of products through the distribution channel from the manufacturer to the consumer. These are push and pull strategies. The push strategy is meant to secure the cooperation of retailers, gain shelf space, and marketers may also use trade advertising (advertising in publication read by members of the trade) as a push strategy. On the other hand, the pull strategy is to attract customers and increase demand for the product. Consumer advertising and sales promotions are examples of pull strategy because they are designed to induce customers, to seek out or ask for the product in effect, pulling the product through the pipeline. The consumer is the focus here. It is often said that 'the consumer is a king.' Thus, understanding his wants, needs, urges, and drives and striving to meet them should be the vital concern of all producers and marketers of goods and services.

### **Consumer Behaviour**

Consumer behavior simply means customers' attitudes or habits of buying. Adediran (1992, p. 11) states that, "Consumer behaviour has become a major area of study in advertising in recent times. Consumer behaviour could mean the study of individuals, groups, and organizations and the processes they employ in selecting, using and disposing products, goods, services, ideas or expenses to satisfy needs and wants and the impact that these processes have on the consumer."

The work of psychologist Kurt Lewin provides a useful classification scheme for influencing consumer buying

behaviour. Lewin's proposition is a  $B=F(P, \Sigma)$ . This means that behavior (B) is a function (F) of the interactions of personal influences (P) and pressures exerted by external environment forces ( $\Sigma$ ). This statement is usually rewritten to apply to consumer behavior as follows:  $B = F(I, P)$  which means that consumer behavior is a function of the interactions of interpersonal influences (I) such as attitudes, learning, perception, and pressure exerted by outside forces. In other words, input from others and an individual psychological make-up both affect his or her purchasing behavior.

Moreso, Engel et al. cited in Baker (1996, p. 416), state that "Consumers do not purchase any product without certain considerations. First of all, there must be recognition of a problem, followed by information search, evaluation search, choice and finally post purchase experience."

However, the next question that comes to mind is what exactly influence purchases? There are two major factors viz: psychological influences and social influences. The complex nature of consumer behaviour complicates the advertiser's goal of influencing what the consumer will do. For example, a person could change because of some psychological or environmental factors such as perception, habit, learning, etc. All advertisers therefore face a perennial problem of how to present their product effectively especially through the media.

From the foregoing, therefore, the concepts of sales promotion and consumer behavior facilitate the marketing process and are dependent on each other as far as product marketing is concerned.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Sales promotion is commonly seen as an important strategy for producing quick short term positive results. It is not a cure for a bad product, poor advertising or an inferior sales tool (Business Encyclopedia, 2009). When a consumer uses a coupon for instance for an initial purchase of a product, the product takes over and convinces the buyer to become a repeat buyer. This is what sales promotion is generally believed to have influenced.

Marketing literature indicates that sales promotion has been in use for a long time and its role and importance in manufacturers' marketing programmes have increased dramatically, and marketers have come to realize that advertising alone is not always enough to move products off store shelves and into the hands of consumers. It is therefore clear that many strategies including sales promotion can be pulled together to influence consumers into buying more as nothing matters more than selling in the realm of business.

Hence, sales promotion is not a cure for bad products or poor advertising, there is the need to assess its relationship and consumer behavior using these two brands of milk. Certain questions therefore arise as to the extent which Promasidor and Friesland, producers of peak and cowbell milk embark on sales promotional activities, the motivations for sales promotion and the tools used. How effective are these promotional activities? The study also seeks to measure whether sales promotion leads to brand loyalty. All these are what have propelled this investigation.

### Objectives of the Study

The study therefore seeks to:

1. ascertain whether Friesland and Promasidor, producers of peak

and cowbell milk embark on sales promotional activities.

2. find out why Friesland and Promasidor companies employ sales promotion.
3. assess the extent which Friesland and Promasidor companies enhance brand loyalty through promotional activities.
4. evaluate the effectiveness of the companies' promotional activities.
5. find out the sales promotional tools which the two companies use.

### Research Questions

Given the rationale for embarking on this investigation, the paper poses the following questions:

1. Do Friesland and Promasidor companies, producers of peak and cowbell milk embark on sales promotional activities?
2. Why do Friesland and Promasidor companies employ sales promotion strategy?
3. To what extent do sales promotional activities of Friesland and Promasidor companies enhance brand loyalty?
4. How effective are the sales promotional activities used?
5. What are the sales promotional tools used?

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This section dwells on related literature to this subject under different sub headings.

#### Overview of Marketing/Sales Activities

Proponents of marketing activities who measure the activities in terms of communication objectives include Russell (1991) who suggests in his popular work "Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Results" that, short term range marketing activities are

specified as to time and degree and should be distinguished from long range marketing goals. In this school of thought are experts like Philip Kotler, Charles Scheme, Bovee and Arens and John Wright amongst others. These writers are of the view that marketing objectives which must be specific, measurable and attainable within a given time, should form the basis for measuring the effectiveness of marketing under which sales promotion is domiciled.

On the other hand, critics of this school feel that it uses short term evaluation where long term effect of marketing on a product's fortune would have been more appropriate. Some scholars such as Manendra Mohan, James Engel and David Nylen are among opinions in support of using sales effect in measuring the results of advertising efforts. Nylen cited in Iortim (2004) states that, "If the purpose of promotion is to generate profitable sales, then it seems reasonable that the most valid measure of its effectiveness is the sales (or profit) generated by the marketing activity to be evaluated." This leads us to a few sales related post testing procedures during or after the promotion. The purpose is to understand the overall response to an integrated and executed campaign.

Major post-test aspects are audience exposure and product usage. A possible way in which sales effectiveness of promotional dollar (naira) might be measured include direct questioning of buyers, experiment design and mini-market test.

Sales promotion as a marketing tool adds temporal value to a product, service or idea with the end result of boosting sales through gift items and other things, the value still drops at the stipulated time that the promotional activity lasts.

Belch and Belch (2001, p. 17) explain that sales promotion is generally divided into two: consumer oriented and trade oriented activities. The former type is targeted to the ultimate user of a product or service and includes couponing, sweepstakes, contests, sampling, premiums, rebates and various points of purchase materials. These promotional tools encourage immediate purchase and boosts short term sales.

Trade oriented sales promotion targets marketing intermediaries such as wholesalers, retailers and distributors. Promotional and merchandizing allowances, price deals, sales contests, and trade shows are some of the promotional tools used to encourage the trade to stock and promote a company's product.

Other sales promotion objectives have been advanced as to:

- (a) reinforce the brand and build product awareness.
- (b) influence stock levels which may be too high or too low.
- (c) cushion the effect of a price increase'
- (d) create new interests in an established product and improve results from instant displays.

Despite the relevance of sales promotion in the marketing process, criticisms have also been leveled against it that it only adds temporal value to products and services, because consumers purchase goods for the value and the satisfaction therein.

Sales promotion is also criticized for making consumers to sometimes buy what they ordinarily would not want to buy. For example, some people buy cowbell milk during promotional activity because of the free gift items attached to buying the milk and the give-

away price, the same thing applies to peak milk.

### **Empirical Review**

Iortim (2004) investigated the Role of Advertising in Determining the Buying Behaviour of Consumers in Nigeria using the survey research design and Pavlov model as theoretical framework. Findings showed that advertising plays a major role in influencing the buying behavior of consumers, thereby boosting sales and revenue base of many companies. Advertising is more effective when it is truthful, and given the right identity and quality of products and services as well as the right prices of products as being reasonable for the type of product and quality. The conclusion reached was that advertising is a potent tool in influencing buyer behavior and sales. Recommendations were that marketers and advertisers should critically consider the conditions under which advertising can create the desired impact. Creativity, appeals should also be used to drive interest and motivation of customers. The reviewed study is related to this work in the sense that both focus on the relationship between marketing strategies and consumer attitudes.

Christopher (2006) studied Evaluation of the Influence of Advertising Messages on Consumers using the survey method and the Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and consumer models as theoretical framework. The study found that advertising is a powerful marketing tool that influences consumer buying decisions. Another finding was that advertisers do not carry out research to ascertain consumer needs and wants before packaging the messages on products and services and concludes that, advertising achieves the objectives of persuading and convincing consumers for patronage. The study

recommended that effective marketing and advertising should be guided by consumer behaviour principles. This also relates to the current study as both focus on consumer behavior after contact with marketing promotions.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The paper is anchored on the social learning theory of 1963. Proponents of the theory include Albert Bandura and Richard Walters. According to the propounders, learning is a process through which an individual acquires a permanent change in attitude or behaviour.

Solomon (1996, p. 87) states that learning refers to a relatively permanent change in behaviour which is caused by experience. Solomon (1996) explains that, we can vicariously observe events that affect others. From the above, it is obvious that change in the life of an individual occurs through a learning process.

Therefore, learning is an important aspect of consumer behaviour because we have to interpret new information to the context of what we already know of the world. This explains why a copy writer has to understand his prospects so that he can relate the information in advertisements to what they already know about the world (that is learned experiences) in such a way as to achieve communication credibility.

The relevance of this theory is that due to exposure and imitation, people tend to make their choices of purchase based on their discoveries (learned experiences) that certain products satisfy their needs and this conclusion is usually drawn from information given about such products in advertisements, and other marketing activities and the learned

experience from the consumption of the product.

**Methodology**

The study employs the survey method. The population of this study is Makurdi metropolis which is 500,797 people according to the National Population Commission (NPC). For the purpose of this study the cluster random sampling was used. The areas were splitted into seven clusters namely: North Bank in which Mission Street, Federal Low Cost, Hudco Quarters and Old Lafia road were selected. In Wurukum, Amokachi Lane, Shuluwa road, Awe Street, Iyorchia Ayu road were selected. In High level, Iorkyaa Ako Street, David Mark By-Pass, Vandeikya and Katsina-Ala streets were selected. In Wadata, Kaduna, Ibadan, Benue Crescent and Madikpo Streets were selected. In Modern market, Ankpa quarters, Akure close, Sam Orun Street and Low Cost quarters were selected. In Judges quarters, Baver Dzeremo, Mzenda Ihyo, Joyce Allagh and Ashaver Streets were selected. Finally, in Air Force Base, Lane 1, 2, 3 and 4 were randomly selected.

From each of the streets, four houses were again randomly selected. One person was purposively selected per house equals to four persons and multiplied by 28 streets equal to 112 respondents on the whole. They were served with the questionnaire that elicited their experiences, behaviour, opinions, values, feelings and knowledge of the influence of sales promotional activities on consumer behaviour.

The instrument used for data analysis was descriptive statistics. Thus, the population and sample is described quantitatively in tabular form and the frequencies are converted to percentages and used for analysis. The data in the tables were used and interpreted to answer the research questions.

**Data Presentation/Discussion**

This section of the paper deals with the presentation of analysis and interpretation of data collected from the field. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to a hundred and twelve respondents and all retrieved. The tables below show the presentation and analysis of the data.

**Table I:** Friesland and Promasidor companies' sales promotional activities

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Peak	13	29.4
Cowbell	16	14.3
Both	63	53.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Data in Table I shows that 53.3% of the respondents said the two companies carryout sales promotion activities, 29.4% of the respondents said peak milk carries out promotional activity and 14.3% respondents said cowbell does same.

It can be observed from the table that in as much as majority of the respondents representing 53.3% said the two companies embark on sales promotional activities, 29.4% of the respondents said peak milk engages in sales promotional activities more than cowbell milk which represents 14.3% of the respondents.



**Table II:** Friesland and Promasidor's reason for sales promotion

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Increase sales	63	56.3
Increase Profit	12	10.7
Call attention	12	10.7
Stimulate Demand	25	22.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The question in table II sought to know the reason why peak and cowbell milk employ sales promotional strategy in promoting their goods. Majority of the respondents representing 56.3 percent were of the opinion that increase in sales is the reason why peak and cowbell milk employ sales promotional activity. Also,

22.3 percent said the reason is to stimulate demand, while 10.7 percent went for both increase in profit and creation of interest. Going by the data in the table, it clearly shows that increase in sales is the reason why peak and cowbell milk employ sales promotional activities.

**Table III:** Extent of sales promotional activities of Friesland and Promasidor in the enhancement of brand loyalty

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very large extent	92	82.1
Large Extent	10	8.9
No extent	6	5.4
Neutral	4	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Data in Table III indicates 82.1 percent of respondents went for very large extent, 8.9 percent went for large extent, 5.4 percent went for no extent and 3.6 percent were neutral in decision. This

implies that promotional activities are deployed to a very great extent and most customers patronize the brand even after the promotional activity, meaning they become loyal to the brand.

**Table IV:** Effectiveness of sales promotional activities of Friesland and Promasidor

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Highly effective	91	81.2
Effective	13	11.6
Not Effective	3	2.7
Neutral	5	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Data in Table IV shows that 81.2% respondents attested to the fact that sales promotional activities of peak and cowbell milk are highly effective while 11.6% respondents said sales promotional activities of peak and

cowbell milk are effective, 2.7% said not effective and 4.5% were neutral. The data therefore shows that majority of the respondents have a positive view about the effectiveness of peak and cowbell milk promotional activities.

**Table V:** Sales promotional tools used by Friesland and Promasidor

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Free Samples	39	34.8
Competition	68	60.7
Off price labels	5	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Data in Table V shows that peak and cowbell milk use free samples as observed by 34.8% respondents, 60.7% were for competitions and 4.5% respondents were for off price labels as promotional tools used.

Going by the data in the table, it is clear that competition and free samples of products are mostly used during promotions compared to off price labels.

### Discussion of Findings

Going by this analysis, it was found that the two companies engage in sales promotional activities, and sales promotional activities have influence on the way consumers purchase the two brands of milk.

Findings showed that increase in sales is the more reason Friesland and Promasidor companies employ sales strategies to promote their products. Secondly, sales promotional activities are engaged to stimulate demand and to increase profit margins. Iortim (2004) in his study on the role of advertising in determining the buying behavior of consumers in Nigeria found that advertising plays a major role in influencing the buying behavior of consumers, thereby boosting sales and revenue base of many companies. This connects with the finding here.

In ascertaining the effectiveness of the promotional activities, of the two companies, results showed by a large percentage of responses that the sales promotional activities are usually effective in influencing buying behavior.

Christopher (2006) in his study found that advertising is a powerful marketing tool that influences consumer buying decisions, and this supports this finding.

On the extent which sales promotional activities of the two companies enhance brand loyalty, findings also showed that it helps to keep the patronage at a higher level even after the promotional activities, this means that the consumers become more of brand loyalists especially for peak milk, and especially because of the quality. It was also revealed that Friesland company does more promotion than Promasidor. Overall, the influence was found to be more on the purchase of peak milk as a result of the activities and other factors. It was also found that the price of peak milk is usually higher than cowbell milk because of the difference in the quality and taste.

The tools used for the promotion were found to be competitions, giving of free samples of the products and off-price labels respectively.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, this study concludes as follows: the two companies actually use promotional strategies including sales promotion. It shows that sales promotion is an important tool of marketing by the companies under studied.

In addition, majority of the consumers are influenced by sales promotional activities and become loyal customers to a very large extent, and most of the consumers were of the opinion that

Friesland, peak milk producer carries out a lot of promotional activities compared to Promasidor of cowbell milk.

Despite the role of the media in influencing marketing activities, the research also shows that the media does not have absolute power in determining consumer behaviour, but other factors such as income, level of education, habits and most importantly the quality of products.

Based on the findings, and conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

a. Companies should use sales promotion extensively as a marketing strategy in order to increase sales of their products. Promasidor Company, producers of cowbell milk should also increase its promotional activities as the study revealed that its promotions are low compared to Friesland.

b. Companies should make good use of the mass media for marketing activities. This is because, the media is effective especially due to the fact that it does not only inform about the availability of products, but also educates about products, made possible through advertising.

c. Adequate knowledge about a product life cycle will help the marketer to adopt a particular marketing strategy at each product stage. It is also important to know that sales promotion is instrumental at the maturity stage of the product life cycle when advertising and public relations have been used in the introductory stage to create awareness of the product.

d. The promotional activities of peak and cowbell milk should not influence the price of the product negatively. In terms of increasing the initial price to a higher one because of the promotion activity as this will lead to a product switch.

f. Companies should carryout research on the reasons why consumers buy certain products so that they would be able to set their marketing goals and strive towards satisfying consumers and at the same time achieve organizational objectives.

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