



STUDY ON IMPACT OF SALES PROMOTION ON BRAND LOYALTY OF GENERATION-Z FOR EDIBLE OIL

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ABSTRACT

Indian meals are unimaginable without a liberal to moderate usage of Edible Oil (Cooking oil) which contributes to a sizeable share of Indian household's wallet. Being the largest democracy in the world with multiple religions, the people of India have developed diverse food habits, tastes and preferences due to many cultures & subcultures. The aim of this paper was to examine an impact of sales promotion (which is a subset of one of the marketing stimuli-Promotion), quality, price, and purchase intention on the loyalty of Indian Generation-Z households for edible (cooking) oil; which was based secondary and primary research with sample size of 50 (being the pilot study for PhD dissertation, in order to assess the reliability of the structured questionnaire. This study reveals that quality, price, purchase intention, and sales promotion hold a significant role in developing the customer loyalty among Generation Z for edible oils in India. The study done, adds value to understand the purchase behavior of Generation Z towards consumption of edible oil in the emerging markets like India.

Keywords: *Edible oil, cooking oil, consumer behavior, sales promotion, purchase intention, quality, price, brand loyalty*

Introduction:

Indian cooking and edible oil scenario

Indian meals are unimaginable without a liberal to moderate usage of Edible Oil (Cooking oil) which contributes to a sizeable share of Indian household's wallet. Being the largest democracy in the world with multiple religions, castes, sub-castes, the people of India have developed diverse food habits, tastes and preferences due to many cultures & subcultures. India is the world's second largest consumer of edible oil that is used to fry *pooris*, make *biryani*, make the *tadka/chounk* (tempering with mustard seeds/cumin seeds/curry leaves) to add flavour and aroma to *daal* (lentils curry), and impart necessary texture, mouth-feel and bite to biscuits and cookies.

Role of sales promotion on consumer purchase behavior

Being one of the six variables as depicted by Belch & Belch (2010), sales promotion offers extra value of incentives to the sales force, the intermediaries (like, distributors, stockists, wholesalers, retailers), and the end users (customers), in order to stimulate instantaneous sales. As per Huff et al. (1999); sales promotion comprises a wide variety of promotional tools designed to achieve short-term objectives; although monetary promotions, like, price discounts and coupons, are common methods of sales promotions used by marketers; non-financial promotions, like, free gifts, free samples, sweepstakes and contests, are also popular amongst the consumers (Obeid, 2014) .

Factors affecting the purchase of edible oil

Various factors like, increased disposable income, growing population, urbanization, brand preference/ brand loyalty, health consciousness, flavour/taste-texture-colour of edible oil, family size, low oil prices, disincentive pricing, harvest and post-harvest losses, inefficiency of oil extracting plants etc, affect the purchase and consumption of edible oil, Chaudhry et al., (1998). According to Gavruchenko et.al. (2003), consumer's purchasing behavior was affected by quality, health, packaging and prices etc. (Zaryab Ali & Rasool, 2013). As stated by Drewnowski et al. (1997), edible oil plays a major role in household food expenditures in countries with lowest per capita income. Hence, the impact of variations in

demand, supply of edible oils and its prices, is much greater in low-income countries. As stated by Kirkpatrick (2003), a family head with lesser affordability of purchasing food items, would prefer choosing less nutritious, low quality food; as he/she cannot afford buying better quality products(Zaryab Ali & Rasool, 2013).

Edible oil market in India

The first revolution in edible oils occurred in 1937 in India because of Hindustan Unilever Limited (the then, Lever Brothers) launching *Dalda*; which was essentially a *vanaspati* (hydrogenated vegetable) oil. The purpose behind hydrogenation, that is, adding hydrogen to convert “unsaturated” liquid fats into “saturated” solid fats, was to harden or raise the melting point of the oil, yielding a product mimicking *desi ghee*. Just as *ghee* (clarified butter), its higher melting and smoke point (at which the molecules start breaking down) made *vanaspati* better suited for deep frying than normal vegetable oil. The *samosas* (Indian triangular savoury pastry fried in ghee or oil), *batata-vadas* (India’s Maharashtrian community’s savoury patty filled with mesh potatoes), *pakorras* (mix vegetable slices dipped in gram flour and fried) fried in *vanaspati* were crispier (Damodaran, 2016). In the early to mid-Eighties, India was importing around 1.5 mt of edible oils a year. Till the early seventies, groundnut accounted for almost 60 per cent of India’s edible oil consumption, followed by mustard, cottonseed and other domestically produced oils (coconut, sesame, etc). But in 2014-15, groundnut oil’s share had plunged to hardly 1 per cent and mustard to 10 per cent. Their place has been taken over by palm oil (45 per cent) and soybean (20 per cent), with even sunflower registering a significant jump (Damodaran, 2016).

Regional oil preferences

Soybean oil, for instance, is predominantly consumed in the North and the East, but in both the regions, mustard remains the first choice. Sunflower oil, by contrast, is popular mainly in the South. In the West, sunflower and soybean have become the major oils, yet not eliminated groundnut and cottonseed. It is yet unknown about the consumption of 9.5 mt of palm oil (Nielsen 2014); despite some of it gets sold as palmolein through the public distribution system, especially in the southern India and the north-eastern states like Odisha, Meghalaya.

Statement of problem and need for this paper:

Unlike 70s and 80s, sales promotion techniques in today's digitized world have changed significantly; where, generation Z is exposed to both, brick (offline) and click (online) buying platforms with options of contemporary selling techniques (Dellarocas, 2003). In view of globalization, will *sales promotion* and *Purchase Intention* play a significant role in influencing the loyalty of consumers for edible oils for Generation Z? In view of the globalization and digitization, there existed a need to assess, if *Price* and *Quality* play a significant role on customer loyalty of Generation Z for edible oil? *Therefore, there was a need to examine the impact of sales promotion (subset of one of the marketing stimuli, "Promotion"), price, quality, and purchasing intention of the Indian households, on brand loyalty for edible (cooking) oil, in today's world of "brick & click" which is driven by Generation Z.*

Literature Review

Consumer behaviour toward edible oil consumption

Consumer behavior has been defined by the researchers Arnould, Price, and Zinkhan (2004, p. 9) as, "individuals or groups acquiring, using, and disposing of products, services, ideas, or experiences" (Wong & Mo, 2013). Consumption of edible oil is associated with healthy eating and avoidance of saturated fats amongst the educated households, and also about enhancing the taste of cooked/fried foods, salads; where, in most cases, consumption of the types of oils is discretionary (Thompson, Haziris, & Alekos, 1994). Keshari et al. in their research, they have also stated that the consumer behavior towards purchasing edible oil depending upon the level of involvement, wherein, a highly involved customer will choose a brand carefully vis-à-vis will build a loyalty for a particular brand as against the low loyalty and less carefulness of the customers who have low involvement for buying an edible oil (Keshari et al., 2011).

Factors affecting edible oil consumption

There are many factors which affect the edible oil consumptions. These factors vary from region to region and country-to-country however, there's a paucity of data for emerging markets like India. As per Loudon & Bitta study (2010) several factors play an important role; such as, income, age, gender, education, vis-à-vis the availability. As per Nayga (1996), *household income* has significant and positive effects on consumption of *nutritional foods*,

while as per Frazao & Cleveland, (1994); Nayga & Capps, (1994). As per many researchers, sales promotion has a short-term effect on consumer's purchase behavior, and is also proved to be revenue reducing due to coupons, rebates, refunds and discounts(Shimp, 2007).It is generally believed that monetary promotions enjoy higher patronage than non-monetary promotions(Venugopal, March 2009).Belief, attitude, intention, and behaviour can be can be changed by initiating the exposure to information which produces change in others' beliefs as well as attitudes that bring change in an attitude towards behaviour that can lead to a change in intentions, and such changes in intentions can produce a behavioural change. In 2015-16, decline in commodity prices served as a moderator for FMCG players during the slump in demand. According to the latest data from Broadcast Audience Research Council India, or BARC, between September 24 and September 30 2016. TV commercials of Patanjali products outstripped major FMCG brands. Manufacturers continue to spend a large amount from their communication budget on sales promotion. They allocate around 75 percent of their marketing communication budgets to sales promotion (Low & Mohr, 2000) . Evidences show that few consumers pay attention easily when they see the word 'sales-promotion' or related words such as: free hampers, offers, exchange offer; etc. But monetary benefit, coupon or cash and/or trade discount given by the retailer and other promotional tools like free sample, bonus pack and "buy one get one free" were found to encourage the customer for buying more than their normal requirements (Gilbert & Jackaria, 2002) . Coupons have proven to be more influential for increasing sales, by which consumers' tendency towards a brand increases (Meng & Nascom, 2009) . As per Huff, L.C. & Alden, D.L., in their paper titled, "An investigation of consumer response to sales promotions in developing markets: a three-country analysis", (Journal of Advertising Research; p.p. 47-56, 1998), more price sensitive customers will have more positive attitude towards coupons (Sashikala, 2009) . Most of the marketers carryout a well-planned and controlled promotional program; which is often referred to as "promotional mix" (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012).

Amongst the three methods used by marketers to increase sales, the first one is the promotion which is used to target consumers is referred as, "consumer sales promotion" that typically depicts, Price Deals, Price Pack Deals, Coupons, Samples, Sent of Deals and Loyalty reward programs. The activities involved in consumer oriented sales promotion (also referred to as, 'pull strategy') are: sampling, couponing, premiums, contests and sweepstakes, refunds and rebates, bonus packs, price-offs, frequency programs, and event marketing (Belch; et.al, 2010). As

proposed by Howard and Sheth (1969), the frequently purchased products (commodities), especially low-priced commodities, may get routinized by the households as a part of their brand purchases, by using the same brand repeatedly over the time. Schultz and Robinson (1998) in their book *Sales Promotion Management*, have stated that sales promotion generally works on a direct behavioural basis rather than affecting awareness or attitude.

Identification of Gaps and Variables

This paper aims to examine how sales promotion, purchase intention, price, and quality affect an important brand performance metric - consumer *brand loyalty*. For analysing the gaps, studies done by the researchers in the past on sales promotion, consumer behavior, purchase/buying intention for edible oils were reviewed. For this study, customers' '*brand loyalty*' for edible oil was taken as the '*dependent variable*'; while, *sales promotion, purchase intention, quality, and price*, were taken as '*independent variables*' to test their impact on *brand loyalty*; as shown in Table-1 below:

Table-1:

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
1. Sales promotion	Brand loyalty
2. Purchase intention	
3. Quality	
4. Price	

Development of Research Questions:

Over-all four research questions were developed for this study; as depicted below:

1. ***“Does Consumer-based sales promotion impact on predicting the brand loyalty of Generation-Z customers for edible oils in India?”***

The aim of this study was to examine whether *sales promotion* plays significant role in influencing the *loyalty* of Generation-Z consumers for edible oil. In today's 'me too' markets where, all the players offer similar products and/or services having the POP (*points of parity*) than the POD (*points of differentiation*), with miniscule or no differentiation (e.g. – Sunflower oil offered by Gemini, Sundrop, Sunrise, etc.), and are marketed with heavy *ATL* (*above-the-line*) and *BTL* (*below-the-line*) publicity. This paper made efforts to study, if sales promotion prompts & influences the customers to buy any particular brand of edible oil.

2. The second research question was, “*Does Quality influence brand loyalty of Generation-Z customers for edible oils in India?*”

With increasing literacy ratio among the Indian population, improved levels of health consciousness, and increase in per capita income; Indian households have become more quality conscious. This paper made efforts to assess the connect vis-à-vis the impact of quality of edible on influencing the brand loyalty on Generation Z customers.

3. The third research question was, “*Purchase intention does impact the brand loyalty of Generation-Z customers for edible oils in India?*”

As per Salgado-Beltrán; et. Al (2012), *purchasing intention* is one of the critical elements, as customer’s brand loyalty depends upon his/her intention to purchase the good/service at any given time; which may get influenced by people, price, place and promotion, vis-à-vis their attitude and beliefs toward product or service, derived from *theory of reasoned action (TRA)* (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980).

4. The fourth research question was, “*Does Price impact brand loyalty of Generation-Z customers for edible oils in India?*”

Along with previous three questions, this research question was also equally imperative because of the fluctuation in edible oil prices due to increasing inflation, changes in import policies, prices, regulations, production of oils to be imported, etc. the edible oil prices keep fluctuating, vis-à-vis to attract the customers, as a part of pull strategy, marketers offer various discounts, price-offs for increasing their top-line (Guiomar Martin-Herran, 2010).

The scope of this pilot study was confined to Mumbai, Nagpur, Nasik, and Ahmedabad cities of Western India only.

Research Methodology:

Descriptive research was adopted for this research; which was carried out to analyse the impact of sales promotion, quality, price, and purchase intention on customer loyalty for edible oil.

Research design and Sample design:

The key variables like brand loyalty, Price, Purchase intention, and quality for this study were identified to evaluate the relationship between independent, and dependent variables;

and being of a descriptive nature; it was based on both, secondary and primary research. While secondary data was collected via research papers, journals, books; the primary research was carried out by structured questionnaire, with targeted sample size of 50 ($n=50$) respondents spanning across Mumbai city, rest of Maharashtra and parts of Gujarat, in India.

Rubon & Babbie (2002) have suggested that study of population is the representative of aggregating elements; which the sample actually is selected for the study. This being the pilot study, sample of only 50 respondents was determined, but final responses received were 49 ($n=49$) only, having the target audience of urban households, ranging in the age group of 25-65, primarily women (housewives), as they make purchase decisions for household provisions in the family.

Questionnaire designing and data collection:

Primary data collection was carried out through a structured questionnaire. Respondents were requested to answer the objective type questions comprising of dichotomous, rank order, interval type questions followed by Likert scale to study the impact of sales promotion, price, quality, and purchase intention on customer's loyalty for edible oils.

Data analysis:

The data collected from 49 respondents ($n=49$) was analysed using SPSS, through the statistical techniques of Cronbach test of reliability which inferred that the questionnaire was correctly designed. Further tests, such as, correlation and regression analysis were done to assess the impact factor of the dependent variables on an independent variable. The analysis is depicted hereunder, in detail, with relevant charts:

Results:

Pertaining to research question 1, "*Does Consumer-based sales promotion create an impact on predicting the brand loyalty of Generation-Z customers for edible oils in India?*"; a correlation test was done (Table-2 & 2.1 below) for measuring the correlation between sales promotion and brand loyalty:

Table-2: Correlation test:

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Loyalty	31.45	6.952	49
Sales Promotion	42.78	9.487	49

Table-2.1: Correlation test:

Correlations			
		Loyalty	Sales Promotion
Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	1	.446**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	49	49
Sales Promotion	Pearson Correlation	.446**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	49	49

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

As shown in Table-2 and Table-2.1 above, a positive significant correlation was observed between loyalty and sales promotion; which was followed by regression analysis as per the tables shown below:

Table-2.2: Regression analysis:

Variables Entered/Removed ^a			
Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Sales Promotion ^b		Enter
a. Dependent Variable: Loyalty			
b. All requested variables entered.			

Table-2.3: Regression analysis:

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.446 ^a	.199	.182	6.290
a. Predictors: (Constant), Sales Promotion				

Although a positive correlation found between sales promotion, and brand loyalty, as depicted above; it was also observed that sales promotion had an impact on brand loyalty, but only to the extent of **18.2%**; hence, it can be concluded that *sales promotion* has a very less impact while predicting the *brand loyalty*. Fitzgerald, Katein their article '*Backfiring*

Promos have stated that *promotions* don't foster *brand loyalty* are on the rise, exposing more marketers losing their biggest source of long-term profits: loyal customers (Fitzgerald, 1996).

Pertaining to research question 2, “Does *Quality influence brand loyalty of Generation-Z customers for edible oils in India?*”, a correlation test between quality and brand loyalty was done (Table-3 and Table-3.1 below) for measuring the correlation; which was found to be a positive correlation between quality and brand loyalty. But while predicting the impact of quality on brand loyalty, it is found to be very less, that is, to the extent of **11.5%** only; hence, it can be concluded that product’s quality has a moderating impact on brand loyalty for edible oil.

Table-3: Correlation test:

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	19.115	4.142		4.615	.000
	Quality	3.007	.985	.407	3.054	.004

a. Dependent Variable: Loyalty

Table-3.1: Correlation test:

Variables Entered/Removed ^a			
Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Brand Name ^b	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Loyalty

b. All requested variables entered.

Table-3.2: Regression analysis:

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.365 ^a	.133	.115	6.542

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Name

Table-3.3:

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	384.124	1	384.124	9.325	.004 ^b
	Residual	1935.998	47	41.191		
	Total	2320.122	48			
a. Dependent Variable: Loyalty						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Quality						

For the third research question viz. –“*If purchase intention impacts brand loyalty of Generation-Z customers for edible oils in India?*” Correlation and Regression analysis was carried out, as depicted below in Table-4 and Table-4.1; where, the correlation was found to be a positive between quality and brand loyalty; vis-à-vis, the regression test also depicted a positive impact of *purchase intention* (29.5%), on *brand loyalty*. Hence, it was concluded that *purchase intention impacts brand loyalty*.

Table-4: Correlation test:

Variables Entered/Removed ^a			
Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Purchasing intention ^b		Enter
a. Dependent Variable: Loyalty			
b. All requested variables entered.			

Table-4.1: Correlation test:

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	15.420	3.587		4.299	.000
	Purchasing intention	.394	.086	.557	4.595	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Loyalty						

Table-4.2: Regression analysis:

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.557 ^a	.310	.295	5.836
a. Predictors: (Constant), Purchasing intention				

Table 4.3:

ANOVA ^a						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	719.184	1	719.184	21.114	.000 ^b
	Residual	1600.939	47	34.063		
	Total	2320.122	48			
a. Dependent Variable: Loyalty						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Purchasing intention						

The correlation and regression tests carried out for the fourth research question - “Does Price impact brand loyalty of Generation-Z customers for edible oils in India?” - showed a positive correlation between *price* and *brand loyalty* (Table-5 and Table 5.1 below):

Table-5: Correlation test:

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	19.607	2.813		6.970	.000
	Price	3.496	.792	.541	4.413	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Loyalty						

Table-5.1: Correlation test:

Variables Entered/Removed ^a			
Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Price ^b	.	Enter
a. Dependent Variable: Loyalty			
b. All requested variables entered.			

Table-5.2: Regression analysis:

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.541 ^a	.293	.278	5.908
a. Predictors: (Constant), Price				

Table 5 and 5.1 above shows a positive correlation between price and brand loyalty vis-à-vis while predicting the brand loyalty, it was also observed and hence concluded that price has shown a positive impact on *brand loyalty* to the extent of **27.8%** (Table-5.2 above).

Discussion & Managerial Implications:

Having born in the *digital era*, as per Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research, Generation Z is more focused on financial consequences of their decisions, focused on YouTube, do multi-tasking in five screens, think in 4D, and communicate with images. While the first wave of Gen Z customers are entering the adulthood, they will be more influential in the markets, than their predecessor Millennials. As Goldman Sachs Global Investment research report states, Generation Z is opting for greater online modes to source their needs and wants through various platforms like, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube, Google search, Facebook, Whatsapp, etc. (Marks, 2016).

Hence, with respect to Generation Z, after analysing the impact of the *independent variables* (viz.- *sales promotion, purchase intention, quality, price*) on the *independent variable* (*brand loyalty*), it is inferred hereunder, as:

All the four variables, viz.- *sales promotion, purchase intention, quality, and price* have a positive correlation with *brand loyalty* at varying degrees; nevertheless, there is a fairly good amount of impact of *purchase intention* on *brand loyalty* (@29.5%), as compared to other four variables, whose impact factor has been 27.8% (*price*), 18.2% (*sales promotion*), and 11.5% (*quality*). Thus, it is inferred that both purchase intention followed by price, have an impact on brand loyalty, amongst Generation Z; which in brief, means, that Generation Z is more conscious about price vis-à-vis purchase intention in correlation with the quality of edible oil to be purchased for household usage. It is also inferred that price plays a significant role in forming purchase intention for edible oil, as Generation Z falls under the category of students and/or early job seekers/professionals, hence having a limited purchasing power; either due to the pocket money they get from their parents (if students), or earning less salaries as being newly employed/professionals. In continuation of this study further, *mall intercept data collection* method will be used to gain more realistic landscape on *dependent and independent variables* defined in this research.

One of the major limitations of this study was a small sample size ($n=49$); which depicts that the responses were limited to only 49 respondents. Hence it can be rationally held that an extended study of this topic with large sample (ideally exceeding 300~500), may give substantial, vis-à-vis diverse results, thus leaving ample scope for further study. This research will prove to be significant to product managers, marketing managers, and the *MARCOMM* (marketing communications) department of an organization, thus, in nutshell, enabling *the marketers*, to devise/revise/revitalize their marketing strategies with respect to *Price, Place, and Promotion*.

Limitations of the study:

Since this was only the pilot study carried out with an intention to check the reliability of the questionnaire, major limitation of the study was number of respondents ($n=49$). Further, this was confined only to Mumbai, Pune, Nasik, and Ahmedabad cities of Western India, which does not give a clear picture of usage patterns of PAN Indians.

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