
Effect of Sales Promotion on Customer Perception of Mobile Telecommunication Network Products in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria

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Abstract: Past studies have observed that sales promotion influences organisational performance. However, some aspect of Sales promotion such as contest, premium, and price deals in relation to customer perception have received little scholarly attention. This study specifically examined the effect of sales promotion on customer perception of Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN) Product in Maiduguri Metropolis. A sample of three hundred and ninety-nine registered customers of MTN was obtained from the total population of one hundred and eighty-nine thousand eight hundred and fourteen registered customers of MTN in Maiduguri Metropolis as at 2021. Survey method was used to obtain data from the customers of Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN) within Maiduguri Metropolis. Multiple regression analysis was used to analyse the data obtained from the customers of MTN within Maiduguri Metropolis with the aid of statistical package for social sciences version 2.0. The study found that contest, premium and price deals have a significant effect on customer perception of MTN products. In particular, premium has a significant positive (P-value of 0.019) effect on customer perception of MTN products. So also contest and price, with a P-value of 0.000 which is less than $p < 0.05$. The study concluded that all the three aspects of promotion (contest, premium and price) is a significant effect of deal on customer perception of MTN products in Maiduguri Metropolis. The study recommended that mobile telecommunication network should try as much as possible to organize contest on regular intervals in order to influence customer perception of their product in Maiduguri Metropolis.

Keywords: Sales, Promotion, Customer, Perception, Multiple Regression

Introduction

Marketing exist to finding and satisfying the need of existing and prospective customers in a society. These needs are fulfilled by the production of specific product and service. The pricing, promotion and distribution of these products and services determine who will be willing and able to buy them. Thus, marketing is the process of communicating the value of a product or service (Azubuiké, 2014). Some people see Marketing as the art of selling products (Wamoni, 2011); however, selling is only a small fraction of marketing. It is a general believe that marketing includes all the various activities involved in production, pricing, distribution and promotion of products and services. Promotion is an important component of marketing; it has got a very significant impact on the demand managing activity of the company. The key components of promotion includes personal selling, direct marketing, advertising, sales promotion, and public relations. Promotion objectives are so vital because they determine the role of each components of the promotion mix in the marketing objectives of the organisation.

Promotion is part of integrated marketing communication which recognizes the advantages of having a complete plan to find better ways of understanding and connecting with consumers (Eric Quarshie, 2010).

Organisations have to test various strategies to find the one suitable for them in increasing their sales and market share. Sales promotion is an important aspect of promotion strategies used by organizations. Sales promotion refers to communication strategies designed to act as a direct inducement, an added value, or incentive to customers. (Azubuike,2014), In many organizations sales promotion efforts are designed in such a way that it always compliments all other promotional activities. It therefore comprises a wide variety of tactical promotion tools of a short-term incentive nature designed to stimulate earlier and a stronger target market response (Azubuike,2014). Therefore, this involves some type of inducement that provides an extra incentive to buy, which is usually the key element in a promotional programme, it may be a coupon or price reduction, the opportunity to enter a contest or sweep stakes, a money back refund or rebate, or an extra amount of a product.

To ensure that there is increase patronage of customers, Mobile Telecommunication industries employed the use of sales promotion tools to the point that many consumers switched among the network providers within the industry as a result of the extra value they get. sales promotion offers attempt to add some value to the product or service.

Research on promotional tools is certainly vital to recognise the most influencing promotion tools for competition in the telecommunication industry. With the help of this information, the marketer and retailers could well plan their sales promotion activities towards increasing market share. Marketers will be conscious of the consumer buying behavior, so that they can make use of the right and the most successful promotion techniques to catch the attention of the customer. Although the usual promotion tool includes samples, buy-one-get-one-free, Coupons, in-pack premiums, price offs and so on, but this study will discuss the effect of sweepstakes, contest, price deals and premium on the consumer perception. Therefore the purpose of this study is to examine “the effect of sales promotion tools on consumer perception of Mobile Telecommunication Network Products.

Customers serve as the life blood of every organisation and as a result, the existence and growth of every firm depends on its ability to attract and retain customers. In this regard, marketers within competitive and saturated industry like that of the telecommunication industry often employ sales promotion as a possible tool that can trigger demand for their goods and services. This is in view of the fact that customers in the industry are perceived to be sensitive to price changes and other incentives they consider ‘free’. Base on this, the MTN network utilizes sales promotion to a great extent with the intention of capturing and retaining its consumers.

Many studies reported the effect of sales promotion in a variety of ways. Some see it as mere burden, raising the cost of operation and products. Some even see it as helping by positioning of products, while others see it as competitive strength to gain, maintain or sustain market share. On this note scholars like Zubairu, Idaomi and Azubuike (2014), Wamoni (2011), Quarshie (2010), Oyedapo, Akinlabi and Sufian (2012) have indeed examined the link between sales promotion and volume, Sales performance, and Revenue Generation respectively. However the link

between sales promotion tools and customers perception of Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN) Product has not been widely documented in the available literature, leaving a wide research gap. As reasonable as these specifics are, it essentially lacks empirical documentation; particularly the literature on the perception of customers on MTN Products in Borno State is relatively silent.

Hence, the researcher is intrigued to find out the effectiveness of sales promotion on customers perception of MTN products.

The main objective of the study is to assess the effect of sales promotion on customer perception of Mobile Telecommunication Network products in Maiduguri Metropolis. The paper specifically intend to examine the effect of Contest on customer perception of Mobile Telecommunication Network Products, the effect of premium on customer perception of Mobile Telecommunication Network Products and the effect of price deals on customer perception of Mobile Telecommunication Network Products in Maiduguri Metropolis.

Review of related Literature

Conceptual Issues

Sales Promotion

Increased competition in the telecom industry has made prices of products and services more transparent and has also increased the use of different promotional mix to inform their loyal consumers and also help entice more consumers to their network. The situation has made promotion in the telecom industry a normal activity for these companies in the industry if they want to maintain their market share. This was however confirmed with what Peattie and Peattie (1995) claimed about promotions becoming so common that firms are almost obliged to follow or risk losing market share.

Sales promotion is therefore a direct inducement that offers an extra value or incentive for the product to the sales force, distributors or the ultimate consumer with the primary objective of creating an immediate sale (Simon & Mark, 2005). Sales promotion can best be described as a specific, usually short term promotion tool that is over and above what would normally be provided to the customer (e.g. buy one get one free). Sales promotion is a way of attracting new customers. Sales promotion when implemented effectively often results in an increase in short term sales figure.

Perception

According to Mowen & Minor, (2006) Perception is the process through which individuals are exposed to information, attend to the information, and comprehend the information. Similarly, Harrell, (1986) described Perception as a process whereby an individual receives stimuli, selects, organizes and interprets the message.

Perception is one of the important psychological factors which influence the consumer's behaviour. In simple words perception can be described as 'how we see things around us'. Every individual every now and then are receiving messages and information through our five sensing organs, these information and messages are called stimuli (Williams, 1982). Perception varies from individual to individual each individual selects, recognise, organise, interprets these stimuli

in his own way based on his values and expectations so the perception varies from person to person (Williams,1982). According to Bridgeman and Hoover, (2008) Perception is the way information is picked up to influence behavior while Neslin (1995) added that it is unique to individuals.

Relationship between Sales Promotion and Customer Perception

According to Foxall (1980), Sales Promotion and Perception are linked together by marketing communication, hence, Perception is always an after effect of promotional communication.

The effects of sales promotion can be evaluated by observing the Customer's response or perception towards the marketing activity. Customer's response to marketing activity is a stage wise process like Exposure, attention, perception; learning, attitude, action and post purchase these sequences cannot be necessarily followed by all consumers in all situations, it varies depending on the situations. AIDA (attention-interest-desire-action) this is another sequential model (Tosdal, 1925: St Elmo Lewis, Circa 1900). Hierarchy of effects model. This model includes the following stages: awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase, there are also stages starts from awareness to adoption (Robertson, 1971).

A well established, although somewhat simplistic model used to describe the role of advertising has been used by Peattie and Peattie (1995) and Gupta et al. (1997) to describe the impact of sales promotion. Both set of authors relate sales promotional activity to the attention, interest, desire and action (AIDA) model of marketing communications. They suggest that promotions work effectively against each stage of the somewhat simplistic model. Peattie and Peattie (1995) assert that sales promotions are specifically designed to be attention grabbing. They are designed to help products stand out in today's competitive retail environment.

Sales Promotion on Customers' Perception

Due to the competitive world market, retailers have implemented a variety of sales promotion techniques and advertisements in order to stand out among competitors. However, De Pechpeyrou, & Odou, (2012) stated that over time, consumers have started to become sensitive and skeptical towards the stimuli from sales promotion. Simonson (1994) suggested that some consumers might feel embarrassed when purchasing a product on sales promotion. In others words, inappropriate sales promotion may lead to the opposite desired outcome, such as a decrease in the purchasing behavior of the consumers.

On the other hand, past research, indicated that the brand with sales promotion is more likely to increase the consumers' preferences and purchasing than the brand without sales promotion (Schultz & Block, 2014). Furthermore, a rational consumer is more likely to make a comparison between the price and the quality of the products before making the purchasing (Raghubir & Corfman, 1995). Thus, According to Chandon, (2000) consumers are more likely to purchase the high-equity brand during sales promotion. This is because saving money has always been the crucial factor in attracting the consumer to purchase the product at the specific moment.

Effect of Price Deals on Consumer Perception

Price offs: Service products require a systematic scheme of setting the price off in order to avert from possible negative consequences in the long run, for example brand switching. Shi, Cheung, and Prendergast (2005) opined that price discounts have a short term effect on sales promotion which can be elaborated by a "sale bump", both brand-loyal and non-loyal buyers responds to a discount promotion.

Bonus packs can also be an effective defensive maneuver against a competitor's promotion or introduction of a new brand. By loading current users with large amounts of its product, a marketer can often remove these consumers from the market and make them less susceptible to a competitor's promotional efforts. Bonus packs may result in larger purchase orders and favorable display space in the store if relationships with retailers are good this eventually increase the sales turnover of the company (Jha-Dang & Banerjee, 2005)

Empirical Studies

Gorji, M. and Siami, S. (2020), examine the impact of sales promotion display on customer intentions to purchase and repurchase, focusing on the moderating roles of perceived product quality and price fairness. This study employs a descriptive, quantitative, non-experimental research method using a cross-sectional design with a self-administered questionnaire.

The results indicated that sales promotion display significantly affects the purchase and repurchase intentions. The findings also highlight the moderating role of perceived product quality and price fairness on customer shopping intentions. Lastly, it is confirmed that the joint moderating effects of perceived product quality and price fairness in the relationship between sales promotion display, purchase and repurchase intentions are significant.

Ibrahim O. B. (2020) examines the effect of sales promotion and relationship marketing on customers' retention in the telecommunication industry in Accra, Ghana. Convenience sampling technique was used to gather data form a sample of 150 customers of telecommunication firms in Accra, Ghana, using structured interview guide and data analyses carried out using SPSS version 22. The findings of the study showed bonuses as the most favourably, sweepstakes and contest as favorable, price discounts as less favorable and sample as the least favorable sales promotion method(s) used by telecommunication firms in Accra, Ghana, to retain customers. Also, the study revealed a moderate but significant relationship between sales promotion and customers' retention. Based on these findings, it was recommended that the use of bonuses, sweepstakes and contest as methods of sales promotion should be encouraged since its potency in influencing retention is high whilst reducing the use of price discount and avoiding the use of sample since its retention capability is not realized in the industry.

The study conducted by Zubairu, Idaomi and Azubuike (2014). On the Impact of sales promotion strategies on product patronage: study of Chuppet Supermarket. The study examined the sales promotion strategies as a force that inevitably associates with other aspect of promotion applicable to the activities of any organisation. The uses both primary and secondary sources of data collection. Based on the findings, the researcher discovered that the supermarket kept and maintained its customers over the years because of its sale promotion activities coupled with quality products and personalized services which have led to increase in sales and profitability. The researcher recommended that improvement should be made on research and development because of the high importance of the growth of any firm to adequately know how to compete favourably with its competitors and also to know the need and want of customers.

Conclusively sales promotion can be beneficial for products or services that are complicated or are unfamiliar to consumers. Price plays a crucial role in the consumers' decision to purchase a particular product or service. Thus consumers will only choose products with the best offer.

Sales promotion attracts new buyers, thereby encouraging them to buy due to the extra benefit. Sales promotion also encourages the existing customers to buy and use more products than usual. Sales promotion if well managed can attract a huge sum of sales, attract new customers and sustain old customers.

Theoretical Framework

Sales promotion in companies including telecommunication companies cannot be overemphasized as they all have bearings in theoretical foundations. They are: The Theory of Planned Reasoned Action and Social Judgment Theory

Theory of Reasoned Action

The theory of reasoned action was formulated by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975 and 1980). The theory explains behavioral intentions, spanning prediction of attitude and prediction of behavior. TRA was developed to evaluate individual behavior by examining their attitudes, beliefs and behavioral intentions coupled with observed/expressed acts. Also, the theory suggest that most determinant of person's behavior is his/her behavioral intentions, which involves the negative or positive feeling leading to "perform or not to perform" that particular action (Asemah, 2014).

Social Judgment Theory

This is a self-persuasion theory proposed by Carolyn et al, (1965). It's seen as the perception and evaluation of an idea by comparing it with current attitudes. The central tenet of social judgment theory is that attitude change is mediated by judgmental processes and effects; that is, messages produce attitude change through judgmental processes and effects. More specifically, the claim is that the effect of a persuasive communication depends upon the way in which the receiver evaluates the position it advocates.

Hence attitude change is seen as a two-step process: First, the receiver makes an assessment of what position is being advocated by the message. Then attitude change occurs after this judgment—with the amount and direction of change dependent on that judgment. The plausibility of this general approach should be apparent: individuals' reaction to a particular persuasive communication will depend (at least in part) on that individual's thinking of—how favorable they are toward—the point of view that it advocates. But this suggests that, in order to understand a message recipient's reaction to a given message, it is important to understand how the receiver assesses the various positions on that issue (that is, the different stands that a message might advocate).

Materials and Methods

Sources of Data

Data for the study was obtained from primary source. This was generated through responses from registered customers of (MTN) in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council Borno State.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the study is 399. This size was arrived at using the Taro Yamani formula. The study employed purposive sampling technique to select MTN subscribers within Maiduguri Metropolitan Council.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

Survey method was used to collect data from the customers of MTN in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council. Five point likert scale questionnaire was used to measure responses on the scale hand anchors from 1, Strongly Disagree (SD) to 5, Strongly Agree (SA).

The study employed descriptive and inferential statistics tools to analyse the data collected. These involves the use of mean, standard deviation and maximum and minimum. Simple percentage and use of table presentation with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences

(SPSS) Version 10 and STATA was used. Multiple regression analysis was used to test hypothesis formulated. Data was also screened for skewness and normality.

Model Specification

The multiple regression models is specified as:

$$\text{Multiple regression } B_n X_n + e$$

The regression model is specified as:

$$\gamma = B_0 + B_1 X_1 + B_2 X_2 + B_3 X_3 + e$$

Where γ = Customer Perception

B_0 = Constant term

B_x = Coefficient to be estimated

X_1 = Contest

X_2 = Price deals

X_3 = Premium

$b_1 + b_2$ = Regression Coefficient

Analysis and Discussion

The data obtained from the respondents were collated and presented using frequency distribution table. A total of 399 questionnaires were distributed out of which 382 were retrieved for analysis. The analysis was done on the basis of the valid questionnaire as data retrieved were computed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version ten and STATA. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the three hypotheses formulated. The decisions for significant relationship were based on 0.05 alpha level and the results were presented on tables, while the variable addressing each hypothesis were also indicated.

Table 1 Questionnaire Administration in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council

Number of Questionnaires Distributed	399	100%
Number of Questionnaires Retrieved	382	97%
Number of Questionnaire not Retrieved	17	3%

Source: Field Survey, (2022)

Three hundred and eighty-two (382) questionnaires were retrieved from the customers of MTN within Maiduguri Metropolitan Council for analysis.

Table 2: Model Summary: Descriptive Statistics of Customer Perception

Percentiles	Smallest			
1%	3	3		
5%	3	3		
10%	3	3	Obs	382
25%	3	3	Sum of Wgt.	382
50%	3		Mean	3.052356
		Largest	Std. Dev.	.2756661
75%	3	5		
90%	3	5	Variance	.0759918
95%	3	5	Skewness	5.695436
99%	5	5	Kurtosis	36.46226

Source: Field Survey, (2022)

Table 2 Statistically describes the variable in terms of mean, standard deviation, variance, maximum and minimum values. It also shows the normality of the data in of the variable in terms of skewness and kurtosis (Customer Perception) has a mean value of $3.052 \pm .2756$ this indicates that the data is normally distributed.

Table 3: Model Summary of Correlation Analysis

	x1	x2	x3	Y1
x1	1.0000			
x2	0.2966	1.0000		
x3	0.3223	0.5669	1.0000	
Y1	0.1409	0.1048	0.0048	1.0000

Source: Field Survey, (2022)

The four variables were subjected to reliability test where Alpha of 0.6668 was obtained which shows the relationship between X_1, X_2, X_3 and Y_1 . Subsequent relationship between individual variables (independent and dependent variable) reveals that X_1, Y_1 $r=0.5669$, $X_2 Y_1$ $r=0.1048$, and $X_3 Y_1$, $r = 0.0048$ hence this validates that there is a relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Table 4: Model Summary, Multiple Regression on Contest, Premium and Price Deals

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs = 382		
				F(3, 379)= 1660.14		
Model	3334.2692	3	1111.42307	prob> = 0.0000		
Residual	253.730803	379	.66942	R-squared = 0.6293		
				Adj R-sq = 0.9287		
Total	3588	382	9.39267	Root MSE = .81821		
Y1	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
x1	.1992144	.0146146	13.63	0.000	.1704786	.2279503
x2	.0417269	.0177577	2.35	0.019	.006811	.0766427
x3	.1213093	.0171805	7.06	0.000	.0875283	.1550902

Source: Field Survey, (2022)

Table 4 shows a multiple regression analysis of X_1, X_2 and X_3 against Y . The table shows an $R_{X_1} = .1992144$ which is = 19.9% $X_2 = 0.0417269$ and $X_3 = 0.1213093$ as the variables representing the fit of the model and $R_2 = 0.6293$ which is 62.93% which indicates that the variable has effect in predicting the linearity of the model. A P- value of 0.000, 0.019 and 0.000 which is highly less than $P < 0.05$ significant. This result suggests that all the three variables, Contest, Premium and Price Deals has significant effect in predicting customer perception

Discussions of Findings

The study assesses the effect of sales promotion on customer perception of MTN product in Maiduguri Metropolis and it was that there is a significant effect contest on customer perception of MTN product in Maiduguri Metropolis this in agreement with the study by Wamoni (2011), on Promotion Activities and Sales Volume in Telecommunication Industry: A Case Study of MTN (U) Limited. The study was specifically designed to examine the relationship between promotional activities and sales volume with reference to MTN Uganda. The findings show that

MTN widely used advertising and personal selling as the main promotion activities to stimulate their sales volume, promotion activities had really increased sales volume for MTN (U) for the last 3 years, and there is a very strong positive relationship between sale promotion activities and sale volume.

It was also found in this study that there is a significant effect of premium on customer perception of MTN product in Maiduguri Metropolis and this study collaborate with the study on the Impact of sales promotion strategies on product patronage by Zubairu, Idaomi and Azubuike (2014). The study examined the sales promotion strategies as a force that inevitably associates with other aspect of promotion applicable to the activities of any organisation it was found that sales promotion activities coupled with quality products and personalized services have led to increase in sales and profitability.

It was also found in this study that there is a significant effect of price deal on customer perception of MTN product in Maiduguri Metropolis, this finding is in relation to finding of a study by Quarshie (2010), on the Role of Sales Promotion in Increasing Revenue: in the Telephony Industry in Kumasi Metropolis. The research focused on the roles of sales promotion in increasing profits in the telephony industry in Kumasi Metropolis. Based on the findings, it was revealed that the telephony industry in Kumasi frequently used sales promotion to draw attention of customers to their new products, it has encouraged sales of slow moving items, reduced piled up stocks, stimulated off-peak sales of selected items and increased profits. On the part of management, it was also realized that they were always willing to provide the needed funds for sales promotion since it has helped them to maximize profits, stay in active business and to penetrate into the challenging and competitive market.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendation

This study was carried out in Maiduguri Metropolis on the effect of sales promotion on customer perception of MNT product in Maiduguri Metropolis. The study addresses the issue of contest, premium and price deal on customer perception of MTN product in Maiduguri Metropolis. Literature were reviewed on sales promotion and customer perception and as well as contest, premium, and price deals.

From the study findings it was found that contest is highly significant in predicting Customer's perception of MTN product in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council and is explained by Persistent promotion by way of organizing contest, promotion inform of contest, raffle draw, and General promotion to buy more of company's product.; it was also found in this study that premium has significant effect on customer perception of MTN products in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council and Goods are offered for free or at low cost, Premium such as buy one get one free, Voucher/recharge card doubling encourages customers to increase purchase of MTN product and reward creates influences customers to say good things about the company's offering explained the influence of sales promotion on customer perception of MTN product in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council.; reduced price deals usually creates the perception for customers to try the product for the first time, Lower prices motivates already existing customers to increase their purchase of the product, price discount affect customer's perception in building brand loyalty, and reduced price deals encourages customers purchase MTN products in bulk explains customer perception of MTN product in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council.

Based on the study findings the following recommendations were made;

- i. The service providers should try as much as possible to organize contest on regular intervals in order to influence customer perception of their product in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council.
- ii. Mobile telecommunication network service providers should offer premium to customers in form of goods they buy one and get one free, Voucher/recharge card doubling encourages customers to increase purchase of MTN product and reward creates influences customers to say good things about the company's offering explained the influence of sales promotion on customer perception of MTN product in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council.
- iii. Mobile telecommunication network service provider should offer price deals, lower prices that motivates already existing customers to increase their purchase of the product, and influence customer's perception in building brand loyalty of MTN product in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council.

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