

Suggestions on consumer sales promotional techniques for Vietnamese restaurants in the Helsinki area.

Abstract

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| Author(s) Le, Hoang Minh Thu | Publication type Thesis, UAS | Completion year 2021 |
| | Number of pages 55 | |
| Title of the thesis Suggestions on consumer sales promotional techniques for Vietnamese restaurants in the Helsinki area. | | |
| Degree Bachelor of International Business | | |
| Abstract <p>In the background of severe competition among various Vietnamese restaurants and the diverse dining cuisines in Helsinki's food and beverage sector, this thesis proposes a number of consumer promotion techniques to help Vietnamese restaurants in Finnish Helsinki region to increase their brand awareness and sales revenues. Furthermore, the thesis intends to assist Vietnamese restaurant owners in learning more about an important type of strategic advertising known as sales promotions.</p> <p>To underlie this entire investigation, a theoretical framework was constructed. The author will describe and discuss the marketing mix, sales promotion, promotion and promotion tactics used in the restaurant industry, as well as how sales promotion affects a company's marketing strategy in terms of sales, brand recognition, and consumer purchasing behaviour.</p> <p>The qualitative research approach was adopted to perform the research of this study. The author conducted interviews with two Vietnamese restaurant owners in the Helsinki region using qualitative approaches. The information obtained from the interviews is extremely useful and thorough.</p> <p>According to the findings, there are five promotional techniques for Vietnamese restaurants that may be implemented, including price packs, discounts, sample meals, and customer loyalty stamp cards. These techniques have been carefully explained based on the study materials in the literature section and the data gathered from the interviews. There are also several other things to keep in mind while running promotional campaigns for restaurants in Finland, which are noted in the discussion session.</p> | | |
| Keywords Promotion, Sales Promotions, Consumer Promotion, Vietnamese Restaurants. | | |

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1 Introduction

Income in the restaurant service industry is often considered an unreliable source as it is largely dependent on the economy, market demand, and attractive location. Especially during this time of the pandemic, the risk has become more profound with the decreasing number of restaurant goers. This put restaurant owners under great pressure to up-level their marketing game and promotion strategies to stay in business.

Regarding Vietnamese restaurants in a foreign market, the challenges are even bigger. According to Nguyen (2017a, 24-25), Vietnamese cuisine might not be as easy to promote as that of China or Thailand. This is due to the limited reputation, which poses an obstacle for any start-up to attract new customers and cultivate brand loyalty. However, the small number of Vietnamese restaurants in the foreign market means that the competition is less intense, and each restaurant has a better chance of promoting its services. In addition, there are promising signs for developing Vietnamese food culture in the Helsinki region of Finland. As the author showed in his research, the popularity of Vietnamese cuisine in Helsinki had increased noticeably between the years 2012 – 2016. Particularly in 2016, there were 9990 Google search results for places to eat Vietnamese dishes in the capital areas of Finland. Another author Nguyen (2017b, 37) also pointed out that it was profitable to open a Southern Vietnamese restaurant chain in Finland, especially in the highly populated cities such as Helsinki, Espoo, and Vantaa.

With the experience of working part-time in the Helsinki restaurant industry for nearly three years, along with the desire to popularize the Vietnamese cuisine in the foreign market, the author decides to compile a comprehensive list of sales promotion techniques for Vietnamese restaurants in the Helsinki area to increase their brand awareness and revenues.

1.1 Research background

When it comes to the beautiful country of Vietnam, cuisine is always a fascinating subject. Vietnamese cuisine is more than just dishes and recipes; it is also a way of life. They are known as harmony, variety, and low fat; strong flavour with a mixture of several different ingredients and spices to enhance the flavour and appeal of every dish. Vietnam was listed in CNN's top ten culinary hotspots in the world. The American multinational news-based pay television channel stated that the spectrum of Vietnamese dishes is surprisingly refined and diverse for such a small country. Each city -- even each village -- may have its own list of unique local specialties. Even common national dishes vary dramatically in the way that each community prepares and serves them (CNN staff 2015). To explain the global coverage of Vietnamese cuisine, the website of the Vietnamese embassy in Germany published

an article about Vietnamese dishes being famous, considered as being tasty, nutritious, and healthier because there are tons of fresh vegetables, herbs, and less fat, so Vietnamese restaurants are sprouting up everywhere like mushrooms after the rain (Vietnam Ministry of Foreign Affairs, author's translation.)

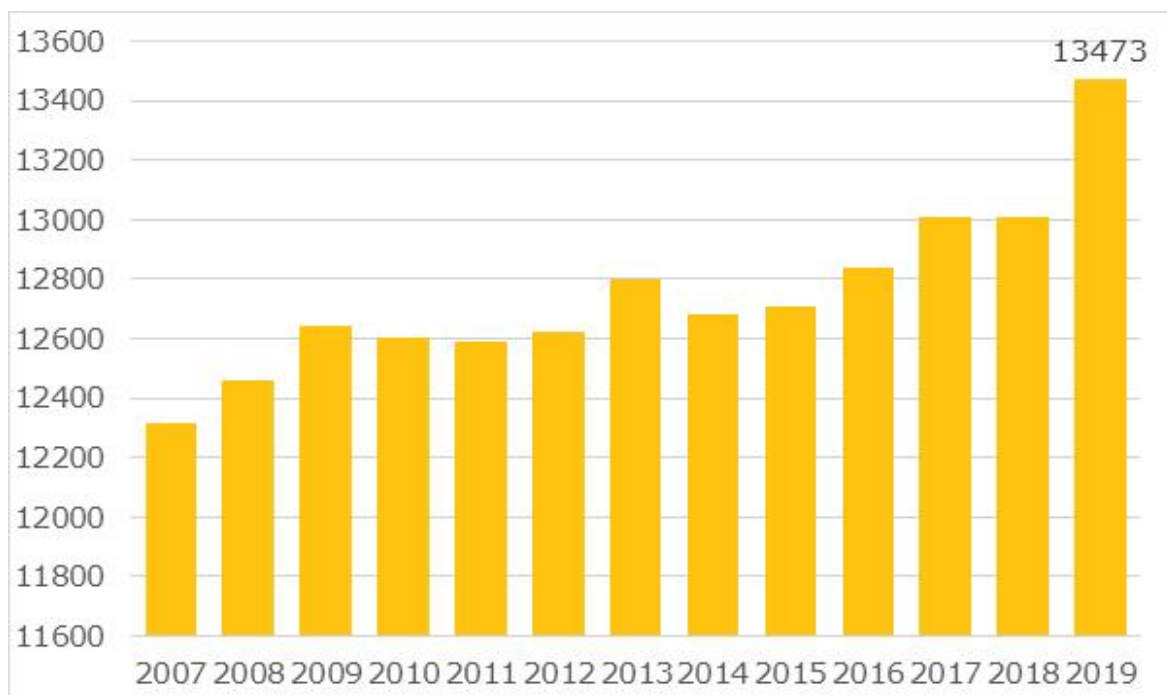


Figure 1 Number of restaurant establishments in Finland 2007-2019 (Mara 2021)

According to the Figure 1, between 2007 and 2019, the number of restaurants in Finland experienced a steady growth, with a slight surge in the last year of the period (Mara 2021). Undoubtedly, there was a vibrant and diverse expansion of the restaurant business in the country. Yet, this also means competition in the catering sector has become more intense. Restaurants must focus more on the quality and diversity of their menu, as well as cultivate an efficient advertising plan to maintain a steady stream of income.

According to Kotler et al. (2013, 491), an average American consumer goods company spends 74% of their marketing expenditures on sales promotion. In Europe, companies spend as much money on sales promotion as higher-profile media advertising. In Finnish culinary services, both techniques are utilized to attract customers and increase sales revenues. In terms of social media, only a small percentage of Finnish restaurants use social network platforms on a daily basis to engage with their customers. Most businesses cited using it a few times when necessary, and Facebook is the most common platform for online advertising, followed by Instagram (Gauli 2021).

Sales promotion tools, on the other hand, are key to raising customer interest and ensure the success of advertising. According to Retail Me Not (2017), 80% of diners are likely to

try a restaurant if a deal is available. On average, coupon-users visit restaurants seven times per month, compared to non-coupon users who dined out only 4.8 times per month. Specifically, 77% of consumers said they preferred to use coupons at restaurants. It is clear that today's diners are hungry for savings and more likely to visit brick-and-mortar locations if incentives are available (Businesswire 2019). Coupon is a form of sales promotion tool that encourage the purchase or sales of a product (Kotler et al. 2013, 419). Not only coupon but there are also many other forms of sales promotion that could help restaurants in increasing their revenue. Hence, appropriate planning for promotional campaigns, using and distinguishing different promotional means in sales promotion will contribute to generating sales traffic, and improve brand loyalty.

1.2 Objectives and research questions

The main objective of the thesis is to explain and suggest applicable consumer promotional techniques for Vietnamese restaurants in the Helsinki area. First, the thesis will provide readers with the definition of sales promotion and the benefits that consumer promotions could bring to a restaurant business. It will next explore the major tools for promoting services in the restaurant industry. Finally, by studying the relationships between sales promotions and customer purchasing behavior, the author will explain how sales promotions may affect consumers' decisions.

The main research question of the thesis is: **“Which consumer promotion techniques can be applied for Vietnamese restaurants?”**.

This is broken down into three sub-questions:

- What is sales promotion and how can it benefit the restaurant?
- Which sales promotion techniques are commonly preferred to use in the restaurant business field?
- Relations between sales promotional techniques and diners' buying behavior?

1.3 Delimitations

The sample size, geographical area, or context in which the study takes place, demographic features, and other factors that restrict the scope and specify the limits of the study are examples of delimitations (2019 Editage Insights.) Despite the fact that it is possible to explain the whole promotion mix and marketing strategy involving sales promotion tools, the study will focus on explaining the concepts of sales promotion tool used in the promotion mix, which is one of the “Ps” in the 4Ps so-called Marketing mix, as well as how these sale

promotion tools influence consumer behavior. This means other marketing-related concepts such as marketing processes and customer-driven strategies will be excluded from the literature review.

Moreover, there are different sales promotion types such as consumer promotions, trade promotions, and business promotions, each targeting different consumer groups. Since restaurants mostly sell products and services directly to the everyday consumers, the study would go into greater detail on consumer promotions than other types of sales promotion.

Regarding geographical delimitation, Vietnamese restaurants can be operated in different places where there will be different results in promotional techniques to be applied, the study is confined to the Helsinki area, which is the most densely populated area in Finland according to Figure 2, thus the sample will represent a better defined and constrained population for the research.

Main Cities by Population in Finland

(includes boroughs, districts, urban agglomerations, etc.)

| # | CITY NAME | POPULATION |
|----|---------------------|------------|
| 1 | Helsinki | 558,457 |
| 2 | Espoo | 256,760 |
| 3 | Tampere | 202,687 |
| 4 | Vantaa | 190,058 |
| 5 | Turku | 175,945 |
| 6 | Oulu | 128,618 |
| 7 | Lahti | 98,826 |
| 8 | Kuopio | 89,104 |
| 9 | Jyväskylä | 85,026 |
| 10 | Pori | 76,772 |
| 11 | Lappeenranta | 59,276 |
| 12 | Vaasa | 57,014 |
| 13 | Kotka | 54,616 |
| 14 | Joensuu | 53,388 |

Figure 2 Main Cities by Population in Finland (Worldometer 2019).

Furthermore, the main type of restaurant for this research is Vietnamese restaurants, the reason for this is to support Vietnamese businesses in Finland and enhance their knowledge about promotional tools. Concerning the research methodology, the author decided to practice qualitative research, which generates more descriptive results and makes it easier to draw inferences from the data obtained, in an attempt to gain an in-depth understanding of the topic through open-ended interview question.

1.4 Theoretical framework

Given that the research's primary goal is to provide recommendations for applicable consumer sales promotion techniques for Vietnamese restaurants in Helsinki, the thesis' theoretical framework will be divided into three main parts, each of which will be listed below, along with the main contents and key references for each part. Other supplementary sources will be included in the thesis but will not be mentioned here.

Table 1 Theoretical framework.

| Main section | Content | Literature sources |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Marketing Mix | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing mix in general • Definition and application of Product element • Definition and application of Price element • Definition and application of Place element • Definition and application of Promotion element and Promotion Mix | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation of Marketing written by Jonathan Groucutt - a Senior Lecturer at Oxford Brookes University Business School, UK. • Basic marketing: A managerial approach written by Edmund Jerome McCathy - an American marketing professor at Michigan State University and others such as the University of Notre Dame. • Marketing Planning Workbook by Sally Dibb, Lyndon Simkin and John Bradley. |
| Sales Promotion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of sales promotion • Objectives of Sales promotion • Consumer promotion • Trade promotion • Business promotion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles of Marketing written in 2013, 6th European edition, by Philip Kotler, Gary Armstrong, Lloyd C. Harris, and Nigel Piercy. • The Marketing of Services in 1993 by Donald W. Cowell. |

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common consumer Promotional tools • Effectiveness of sales promotions on sales income and brand recognition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer behaviour: buying, having, and being written by Michael R. Solomon -professor of marketing in the Haub School of Business at Saint Joseph's University and he resides in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. • Integrated Advertising, Promotion, and Marketing Communication 2016 by Kenneth E.Clow & Donald Baack. • Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. 2016. Research methods for business students. Seventh Edition. Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited |
| Consumer buying behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship of sales promotion towards consumer buying behaviour | |

The author will discuss the marketing mix in the first section, which covers the major factors involved in marketing an item or service and how they interact with one another, as well as a thorough description of the Promotion factor. Secondly, the thesis will discuss the concept of sales promotion, the different sorts of sales promotion tools, and how sales promotion affects a company's marketing strategy in terms of sales income and brand recognition. In addition, this section discusses consumer promotional techniques and specifies those are broadly applied in the restaurant industry, which is the focus of this study. The study's third section will describe the idea of consumer buying behaviour and how it relates to the previously discussed consumer promotional tools.

1.5 Structure of the study

The thesis will be divided into five main parts: introduction, research methodology, literature review, research results, and conclusion. They are laid out in 7 chapters. The first chapter is the Introduction part which will describe the background of the thesis, the reason for

choosing the topic, objectives of the research, the theoretical framework, and the delimitations of the study. Following the Introduction of the thesis, the author will demonstrate the chosen research methodology in chapter 2. The chapter will cover the method and strategy of the research, the way to approach theory, data collection technique as well as the research design.

The literature review will be the next part. It comprises three chapters 4, 5, and 6. They will consecutively illustrate the definition of Marketing Mix to cover the key elements of marketing, Sales Promotions, and Consumer Buying Behaviour relation to Sales Promotions. Meanwhile, the theory of Sales Promotions will clarify its nature, aims, types of Promotions and its effectiveness on sales income and brand recognition. These three chapters serve as the knowledge basis for the empirical investigation in the research methodology section.

Following next is the sixth chapter where empirical data and results will be revealed. Finally, there will be a conclusion part in order to point out the main findings by answering the research questions and the study's limitation.

2 Research method

2.1 Research approach

Qualitative research is multimethod in nature and takes an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its topic. Qualitative researchers investigate phenomena in their natural surroundings, attempting to understand or interpret events in terms of the meaning individuals assign to them (Denzin & Lincoln 1994, 2). The contrasting method of qualitative research method is quantitative research which is defined as a systematic investigation of a phenomenon through quantifiable data, quantitative research collects information using sampling, online surveys, polls, or questionnaires. The results of this are often depicted in the numerical form. (QuestionPro 2021.)

In contrast to quantitative survey-based methods, qualitative interviews seek a more comprehensive and nuanced response. They also recognize that no one-size-fits-all solution exists, particularly when asking someone to remember a personal story about their experiences. Instead of following a rigid study procedure that asks each respondent the identical question, most interviews use a more flexible approach. However, it is still necessary to verify that the same broad categories of information are obtained from each respondent. This method is more focused than conversing, yet it still allows for some flexibility and adaptation in obtaining responses from the participants. (Turner 2016.)

The study's objective is to compile a list of sales promotion methods that will help Vietnamese restaurant owners improve their understanding of these approaches. After careful consideration, the author decided the best technique for the analysis will be qualitative research, which “produces more descriptive results and allows conclusions to be formed more easily from the data collected” (QuestionPro 2021).

While in-depth interviews are the most common way to gather stories, other approaches may be utilized to capture them as they happen (e.g., participant observation in the research setting). Narrative inquiry may be done in a variety of ways. However, it works best with a small group of participants (three or fewer) who are chosen for their typical characteristics of a much broader cultural-sharing community (Chase 2011). The rigorous and time-consuming nature of narrative inquiry also contributes to the selection of a limited and purposive sample. While interview transcripts and observational notes can yield a significant quantity of data, the narratives may not emerge in an easy-to-use structured and cohesive manner (Gabriel and Griffiths 2004). By adopting narrative inquiry for this research, the author wants to explore the unique perspectives and gain a deeper understanding of different promotion types in restaurant services.

2.2 Theory development approach

According to Saunders and his colleagues (2016, 144-145), there are three approaches to theory development: *deductive approach*, *inductive approach*, and *abductive approach*. In the deduction approach, the researcher begins with a hypothesis, which is frequently based on his reading of academic literature, and then devises a research method to test the idea. Induction, on the other hand, begins with the collection of evidence about an event and concludes with a generalized theory that may be used to explain future situations (often in the form of a conceptual framework). The abductive method entails gathering data to investigate a phenomenon, then finding themes and patterns to develop a new hypothesis or alter an existing one. The figure 3 below provides more insight into these approaches.

The ***deductive approach*** will be chosen for this study as sales promotion is an already established concept that has been covered by many authors. However, the concept still needs to be updated to fit the current setting, especially in the restaurant industry. By adopting the deductive approach for the research, the author hopes to examine the existing concepts and coming up with the practices for Vietnamese restaurants in Helsinki area to upgrade their promotional strategies. The theoretical framework of the thesis will be constructed on existing data, then tested through the empirical data collection.

Table 4.4 Deduction, induction and abduction: from reason to research

| | Deduction | Induction | Abduction |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|
| Logic | In a deductive inference, when the premises are true, the conclusion must also be true | In an inductive inference, known premises are used to generate untested conclusions | In an abductive inference, known premises are used to generate testable conclusions |
| Generalisability | Generalising from the general to the specific | Generalising from the specific to the general | Generalising from the interactions between the specific and the general |
| Use of data | Data collection is used to evaluate propositions or hypotheses related to an existing theory | Data collection is used to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns and create a conceptual framework | Data collection is used to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns, locate these in a conceptual framework and test this through subsequent data collection and so forth |
| Theory | Theory falsification or verification | Theory generation and building | Theory generation or modification; incorporating existing theory where appropriate, to build new theory or modify existing theory |

Figure 3 Deduction, induction, and abduction: from reason to research. (Saunders et al. 2016, 145)

2.3 Data collection type

There are two types of data: **secondary data** and **primary data**. Secondary data refers to both raw data and published summaries, which were originally gathered by different researchers for different purposes. Once obtained, these data are analysed to provide additional knowledge, interpretations, or conclusions. (Bulmer et al. 2009.) On the other hand, primary data are new data gathered during the research and used solely for the research's objective (Saunders et al. 2016, 316). In this study, the two types of data will be adopted to construct the literature review and draw conclusions. Secondary data in this study is gathered from specialized books, research articles, and the internet. Meanwhile, primary data will be collected by interviews.

The research interview is a purposeful conversation between two or more people. It requires the interviewer to establish rapport with the interviewee by asking concise and un-ambiguous questions, to which the interviewee will listen attentively and provide an answer. There are three main types of interviews based on the purpose of research and research strategy: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured or in-depth interviews. In this research, the data will be collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with five Vietnamese restaurant owners.

Semi-structured interview consists of questions that the author has prepared in advance and is particularly useful when the researcher lacks experience. Yet, the interviewer still retains a degree of freedom and flexibility in expressing her own view. The interviewee is also able to respond in language natural to them (O'Gorman & MacIntosh 2014, 119.)

Interviews will be performed in two ways: online and offline, and the findings will be preserved via taking notes and recording talks during face-to-face interviews. In order to save the outcomes of the online interviews, the audio of the interview will be recorded in real time through live video, such as Zoom screen records. Authenticity will be ensured by reporting all data in the most precise manner possible.

As for interview content, the researcher has prepared a list of themes and important questions to be covered in semi-structured interviews. However, their usage may vary from interview to interview. That is, given a specific organizational context related to the study topic, the researcher may omit or add some questions. Depending on the flow of the conversation, the order of the questions may also be changed

2.4 Research design

According to Turner (2016), the interview questions should address the research topics and include information that participants are eager to discuss. The questions should be casual and jargon-free, as well as open-ended meaning that they should not be answered simply by saying a simple yes or no. In addition, respondents are not pressured to react. The questions should be written in such a way that they complement the researcher's suggested technique of analysis.

The interview framework will be separated into four topics, following the guidance on how to construct a semi-structured interview for qualitative interviews. The themes are defined based on the research questions which are to find out common promotional tools adopted by business and their relationship with customer behaviour.

- ❖ **Theme 1: Introduction.** The first part of the interview allows the author to get familiar with the business in terms of size, year of establishment, and target customers. The author will also find out if the current sales promotion tools are effective for their business or not.
- ❖ **Theme 2: Restaurant owner's knowledge about sales promotion.** The next part of the interview will focus on the restaurant owners' subjective view on sales promotion and what they expect from them in terms of brand awareness and revenues.
- ❖ **Theme 3: Customer behaviour to the sales promotion tools.** The third part of the interview dives deeper into the performance of sales promotion tools in the interviewee's business (only ask if the restaurant owner adopts sales promotions). These questions are designed to understand the relationship between sales promotion and customer behaviour.
- ❖ **Theme 4: Figuring out challenges of sales promotion.** In final part of interview, the author will enquire about difficulties that restaurant owners experience in applying sales promotion tools and how they hope to resolve them.

2.5 Interview plan

Owners or decision-makers in the marketing of Vietnamese restaurants in Helsinki will be the selected interviewees. The author will concentrate on those that are well-known in the Helsinki area or have been in operation for a long time, i.e., restaurants with a lot of experience and lengthy history in the market. Because they will be able to have access to additional information regarding the phenomena under research. Although there are numerous Vietnamese eateries in this area, the author will only contact 10 of them, believing that they

will provide the greatest interview results. The number of participants is expected to be 5 restaurants.

The researcher will contact the restaurant owners personally or issue an email invitation to participate in the interview. The email will provide extensive information regarding the interview, such as the study's goal, the interview's expectations, confidentiality, and the recording of the interviews (Appendix 1). Interviews will take place either online (through video call) or offline (face-to-face meeting). The interview will be led by the researcher and will be based on the list of questions produced in appendix 2 to explore the themes listed above (page 11).

3 Marketing Mix

Businesses should have a solid understanding of the Marketing Mix in order to comprehend the function of sales promotion tools. In this section, the author will discuss sales promotion tactics as part of the marketing mix, a set of marketing instruments developed to conduct marketing activities within an organization. There are four primary factors in the marketing mix: Product, Price, Location and Promotion (Groucutt 2005, 156-164).

McCarthy (1964) defines the term marketing mix as a foundation model for businesses, centred around product, price, place, and promotion. The marketing mix refers to the group of decisions which helps with the implementation of marketing strategies and the creation of brand awareness and customer satisfaction (Dibb et al 2001, 114.)

In restaurant business, the marketing mix illustrates the link between the restaurant and the business environment, the customers, and its rivals. It consists of tactics tailored to the target market, with the cost considerations. The four key elements are demonstrated as the image below.

Companies utilize the 4 Ps to figure out what their customers want from them, how their product or service fulfils or fails to satisfy those requirements, how their product or service is seen in the world, how they differentiate themselves from their rivals, and how they connect with their customers. (Twin 2021).

3.1 Product

Product is something that can be sold to a market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption that also satisfies a want or need. Products include more than just tangible objects like cars, computers, or mobile phones. In a broader context, 'products' include services, events, persons, places, organisations or ideas, or a mixture of these entities.

A market offering's most important component is its products. Building a value-added service for target consumers is the first step in marketing mix planning. This service serves as the foundation for the company's lucrative client connections. (Kotler et al 2013, 238-239). As a result, choosing the right product mix to satisfy the needs of clients is crucial. The product chosen must be appropriate for the target markets, with ongoing research and improvement (Dibb et al 2001, 117.)

In Figure 5, the three levels of product are demonstrated. Products are perceived by consumers as complicated bundles of advantages that meet their requirements. Marketers must first determine the core customer value that consumers desire from items while pro-

ducing them. They must then create the actual product and find ways to augment it to maximize the consumer value and provide a more satisfying experience (Kotler et al 2013, 240.)

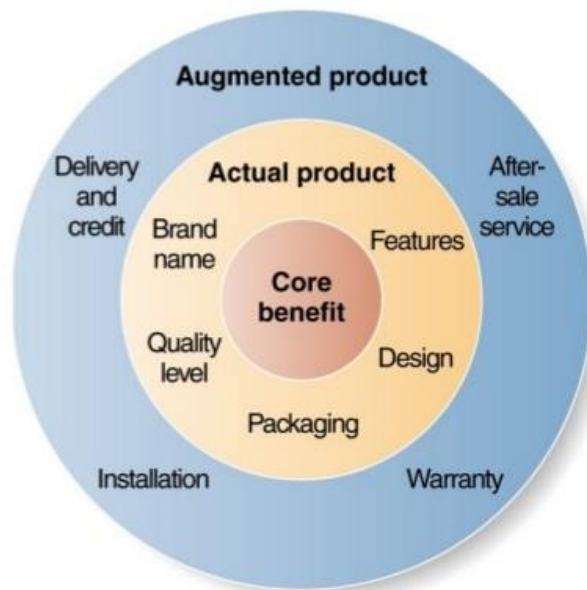


Figure 4 The three levels of product (Claessens 2015.)

In terms of restaurants, product is more than the simple food and drinks. It includes all other elements that accompany the restaurant's meals, such as their appearance, how they are served, dining room staff, parking, lighting, music, decor, restrooms, and even hours of operation. The goal is to make the restaurant's offerings unique, attractive, and welcoming so diners can enjoy a positive experience (Danh 2020).

3.2 Price

It is the entire number of values that buyers are prepared to sacrifice in order to obtain a product or service. The only component of the marketing mix that produces revenue for the company is price; the other three Ps are all expenses. It is also one of the most adaptable aspects, as prices may fluctuate based on demand. A small increase in price might result in a big gain in profit. Price plays an important role in establishing customer value and building customer connections as part of a company's total value offer (Kotler et al 2013, 305.)

Pricing is always a difficult process, which requires finding a balance between the customers' ability to pay and earning revenues as well. For example, setting lower prices than the consumers are eager to pay may lead to the unprofitability of the company. On the other hand, overpricing will aside potential buyers to competitors (Dibb et al 2001, 130.)

For daily products, businesses frequently utilize penetration pricing to attract a wide number of customers. When introducing new items to the market, they establish a very low price,

then raise it over time, and eventually revert to the basic price. Meanwhile, for items that are only occasionally released, skimming pricing will be used. Businesses will set high pricing for the goods at first in order to maximize income, then lower the price when the product becomes less popular (Blythe 2012, 157-164).

According to Kotler (2013, 306-313), there are three major pricing strategies: customer value-based pricing, cost-based pricing, and competition-based pricing. Customer value-based pricing bases pricing on the buyers' perceptions of value rather than the seller's cost. Value-based pricing implies that a marketer cannot create a product and marketing strategy before deciding on a price. Before deciding on a marketing strategy, all other marketing mix factors are examined. Cost-based pricing entails determining prices based on the product's production, distribution, and sale expenses, as well as a reasonable rate of return for its work and risk. A company's costs may be an important element in its pricing strategy. Setting prices based on rivals' tactics, costs, prices, and market offers is known as competition-based pricing. Consumers will base their assessments of a product's worth on the prices charged by rivals for similar goods. When determining pricing, the firm must take into account the prices of its rivals. Regardless of the price it charges - high, low, or in the middle - the firm must ensure that customers receive greater value for that amount.

Price in the food and beverage industry starts with deciding how much to charge for items, but it also includes deciding whether to alter prices based on certain situations, such as happy hours, early-bird discounts, or daily specials. Discounts can also be utilized to boost sales during traditionally slow periods. (Danh 2020.)

3.3 Place

In the marketing mix 4Ps, placing is a crucial stage. It aids in the circulation of the product, allowing it to reach the consumer. At the same time, the distribution intermediary policy will have an impact on business profitability. It is important for retailers to select locations that are both accessible to the target market and consistent with their positioning (Kotler et al 2013, 316). Since premise costs are the largest part of total costs, the incorrect location may lead to unprofitability (Cowell 1993, 199).

The term "place" refers to the many locations where a product may be purchased, it is also known as distribution channels. A product can be sold at a number of various places, including retailers, wholesalers, and intermediates. Any physical store, as well as virtual retailers on the Internet, might be included. Place helps to support the product supply chain from producer to consumer, improves the efficiency of the product distribution process, and meets the expectations of different client groups. Furthermore, location has an impact on

logistics planning, such as transporting supplies and commodities to the point of manufacture and from warehouse to warehouse. Convenient location makes transit easier, quicker, and less expensive for businesses. (Blythe 2012, 192.)

In the food and beverage industry, "place" refers to meals served in a dining room as well as a variety of other options like pick-up/delivery, cart or kiosk, food trucks, or even catering services. The most essential aspect in terms of location is to make ordering simple for customers, to ensure correct ordering, and to aim for expediency (Danh 2020).

3.4 Promotion

More than simply producing an excellent product, pricing it attractively, and making it available to target clients is required to build successful customer relationships. Customers must be informed about companies' value propositions, and what they are informed about should not be left to chance. All communications must be planned and blended into carefully integrated programmes. Just as good communication is important in building and maintaining any kind of relationship, it is a crucial element in a company's efforts to build profitable customer relationships (Kotler et al. 2013, 418). When it comes to marketing, promotion is the first term that comes to mind. Promotion helps to speed up and strengthen purchasing and selling operations, as well as establish and reinforce a company's position in the market. Specifically, its major objective is to raise awareness, generate interest in the product or service, differentiate it from rivals' offerings, enhance reputation and image, persuade consumers, and encourage them to buy. Promotional concepts are quite similar including both products and services. In many firms, the product and its performance are intimately connected. (Cowell 1993, pp. 162-179.)

Promotion Mix

As Kotler, Armstrong, Harris, and Piercy (2013) stated the promotion mix, also known as the marketing communications mix, is a combination of advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion, and direct-marketing techniques that a company use to convey its value and create customer relationships. The following are the five primary promotion tools:

- **Advertising:** Any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor (Kotler et al 2013, 418). It refers to a means of communication with the users of a product or service. Advertisements are messages paid for by those who send them and are intended to inform or influence people who receive them. In today's world, advertising uses every possible media to get its message through. It does this via television, print (newspapers, magazines,

journals etc.), radio, press, internet, direct selling, hoardings, mailers, contests, sponsorships, posters, clothes, events, colors, sounds, visuals and even people to bring endorsements. (The Economic Times n.d)

- **Sales Promotion:** Short-term incentives to encourage the purchase or sale of a product or a service (Kotler et al 2013, 418). This tool is often used on special occasions or for items with little revenue or old. It helps to eliminate the inventory but still increases purchasing from customers (Blythe 2012, 203-206). Sales promotion tools are used by most organisations, including manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and not-for-profit institutions. There are several kinds of promotions depending on its target customers. *Consumer promotions* targets towards final buyers, whereas *Trade promotions* aim at retailers and wholesalers, and *Business promotions* are aimed at business customers. (Kotler et al 2013, 491). These types of sales promotions techniques and other factors of Sales Promotion will be covered more detail in the next section.
- **Personal Selling:** Personal presentation by the firm's sales force for the purpose of making sales and building customer relationships (Kotler et al 2013, 418). Personal selling offers a face-to-face opportunity to build relationships with consumers. It takes place in both consumer and business-to-business transactions. Personal selling may result in the acquisition of new customers in addition to influencing current customers to increase levels of purchase ing relationships. The goal of personal selling should not be limited to making sales. Developing longer-term relationships with customers represents a second key objective. Relationship selling seeks to create a customer for life, not for a single transaction. (Clow & Baack 2016, 344.)
- **Public Relation:** Building good relations with the company's various publics by obtaining favourable publicity; building up a good corporate image; and handling or heading off unfavourable rumours, stories, and events (Kotler et al 2013, 418). Public relations employees utilize a number of tools, including company newsletters, internal messages, public relations releases, correspondences with stockholders, annual reports, and various special events. Unlike marketing department, instead of concentrating on customers, the public relations department focuses on a variety of internal and external stakeholders, including employees, stockholders, public interest groups, the government, and society as a whole. (Clow & Baack 2016, 387.)
- **Direct Marketing:** Direct connections with carefully targeted individual consumers to both obtain an immediate response and cultivate lasting customer relationships (Kotler et al 2013, 418)

4 Sales Promotion

This chapter is the central theory part of the thesis. It will examine the nature of sales promotion and its objectives, the three key sales promotion instruments (especially consumer promotions), the past research on popular promotion tactics in the restaurant industry, and lastly sales promotion limitations.

As mentioned above, sales promotion consists of short-term incentives encourage purchase or sales of a product or service. While advertising offers reasons to buy a product or service, sales promotion offers reasons to buy now. Sales promotion tools are used by most organisations, including manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and not-for-profit institutions. They are targeted toward final buyers (consumer promotions), retailers and wholesalers (trade promotions), business customers (business promotions) and of the sales force (sales force promotions). (Kotler et al 2013, 491.)

The Finnish Competition and Consumer Authority (2020) stated that Marketing practices that apply to discount sales, clearance sales, and special offers can be used for various products parallel with one another, or consecutively, as long as marketing does not become such that it misleads consumers. Furthermore, there are some requirements need to be considered while doing promotion activities in Finland such as followings:

- The discount sale lasts no more than 2 months consecutively.
- The discount sale lasts no more than 3 months over the entire calendar year.
- The special offer on the product will be valid for at most a period of one month.
- Special offers for the same product are not repeated in succession.
- The product is available, or the special offer can be utilised throughout the special offer period.
- Any restrictions related to the special offer must be clearly stated.
- The discount has been calculated from the price previously charged at the place of sale or offered benefit is otherwise justified.

4.1 Nature of Sales promotion

To qualify as a sales promotion, someone must be given something that is above and beyond the core product or service, rather than something that is an everyday element of commerce. Sales promotion includes all promotional actions and materials, except for personal selling, advertising, and publicity, and is aimed only at making immediate profits. Sales promotion methods are often used to increase the impact of advertisements by including visuals, symbols, and messages in the design. (Nakarmi 2018, 11.)

According to Prachi (2020), actions in sales promotion are typically **irregular and non-recurring**. It benefits customers, industrial users, and intermediaries by acting as a link between advertising and personal selling while enhancing and integrating efforts in both sectors. Customers' displeasure with specific products from a certain producer is eradicated through dynamic sales promotion programs. While advertising media may quickly be repressed once they reach a customer, sales promotional tools can remind or motivate the customer to make a purchase right away, which is considered as being a type of **incentive**.

Because sales promotion differs from advertising and publicity while simultaneously include them in the overall promotion mix, it is sometimes referred to as a non-media activity. It's highly adaptable. The various sorts of sales promotion may be utilized with diverse groups and are meant to accomplish varied outcomes. It can also be utilized at any point in the product's life cycle (Scoopskiller 2018).

4.2 Objectives of Sales promotion

According to Kotler et al (2013, 491), the goals of a sales campaign might be very different. Consumer promotions can be used by sellers to encourage short-term client purchases or increase customer brand connection. Getting retailers to carry new things and stock more merchandise, buy ahead, or promote the company's products and give them greater shelf space are all goals of trade promotions. Getting greater sales force support for current or new goods, as well as getting salespeople to sign up new clients, are some of the goals for the sales force. Advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, and other promotion mix techniques are frequently used in conjunction with sales promotions. Promotions for consumers must typically be promoted, and they may add excitement and pull power to advertisements. The firm's personal selling approach is aided by trade and sales force marketing.

Nakarmi (2018, 18) listed some objectives of Sales promotion as the followings:

- i. To present new items to consumers or to persuade them to purchase new products for resale.
- ii. To engage customers or to enhance their overall reaction.
- iii. To persuade current customers to make more purchases.
- iv. To compete in the market by providing more and better shelf space and displays.
- v. Even during off-seasons, maintain or improve sales volume.
- vi. To encourage merchants to stock a wider range of products in order to increase sales volume.

- vii. To maintain or regulate the erratic sales trend.
- viii. To introduce users to a new brand or an established brand.
- ix. To increase the loyalty of the consumers.
- x. Trade loading; increasing dealer's inventories in the views of competitors by:
 - a. Create talking points for salesforce.
 - b. Maintain customers' patronage and brand loyalty.
 - c. Distrust existing buying patterns.
 - d. Break the bonds of brand loyalty.
 - e. Promote greater consumer awareness of prices.
 - f. Reward loyal customers. Increase repurchases rates of occasional users

“When the economy sours and sales lag, it's tempting to offer deep promotional discounts to spur consumer spending. In general, however, rather than creating short-term sales or temporary brand switching, sales promotions should help to reinforce the product's position and build long- term customer relationships. If properly designed, every sales promotion tool has the potential to build both short-term excitement and long-term consumer relationships. Marketers should avoid quick fix, price-only promotions in favour of promotions that are de-signed to build brand equity.” (Kotler et al 2013, 492.)

4.3 Consumer promotions

Kotler et al (2013, 492) defined consumer promotions as sales promotion tools to improve short-term purchases and develop long-term relationship with the customers. These include different tools to accomplish sales promotion objectives, which will be clarified as follows:

4.3.1 Samples

Samples are a small amount of a particular product offered to the customer for testing. While sampling is most effective for introducing a new product, it is costly to implement as most samples are given free. There are many ways to distribute a sample, including sending directly to the customer or via a shop, connecting with another product, or enclosing in an advertisement or e-mail. Samples are also combined to create sample packs to promote other products and services. (Kotler et al. 2013, 492.)

According to a survey, out of 1,800 consumers given the sample, more than one-third of the testers bought the product during the shopping trip. Fifty-eight per cent considered repurchasing the product. Nearly one-fourth admitted changing their mind to purchase the sample product instead of the brand they intended to buy. Without a doubt, “sampling is an efficient way to persuade people to try and buy a certain brand”. In addition, product sampling can help with introducing a new product, sparking interest, and collecting customer data. For example, customers are more likely to try a product if it is given as a free sample. In other cases, samples can be used to introduce an existing product to a new group of customers. The key is to target the right product to the right audience at the right location and the right time. Sampling is also grouped into mass sampling and targeted sampling. (Clow & Baack 2016, 364-366.)

Pinsker (2014) believed free samples are most effective in persuading customers to purchase a product. In one research, it is shown that samples have generated 2000% more sales at supermarkets like Mash and Costco. Jeff Van Dyke, the managing partner of Brix Wood Fired Pizza with locations in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee, also advocates for sampling, stating it as a valuable to establish goodwill and gather feedback for market research at a minimal cost. (Owens 2015).

4.3.2 Coupons

Coupons are vouchers used by the customers to buy certain items at a lower price. This form of promotion is most effective at encouraging testing for a new product or boosting sales for an existing one. Coupons are more widely used in the United States than in Europe. However, in recent years, the redemption rates in the US have also dropped due to the coupon clutter. This means businesses are giving out fewer coupons which are more targeted. (Kotler et al 2013, 492)

Coupons give the customers a discount to a product they purchase. The discount can be a percentage off such as 25% or 40% off, or a fixed sum deduction, like 50 cents or €1. There are three main ways to deliver coupons: at retail establishments, digitally, through the internet, or in person. Another type of immediate redemption is when a firm is sponsored by the supermarket to prepare a food product which is then sent out as samples along with coupons. Customers may not be able to redeem coupons right away as they are put included in packaging. This encourages the customers to buy from the same brand again and again to acquire coupons. These are known as **bounce-back coupons**. Coupons given at the check-out counter are called **scanner-delivered coupons**. Manufacturers also provide **cross-ruffing coupons**. These are the coupons recouped from one item but may be used on another. For example, a coupon for French onion dip is found inside a box of potato

chips. Products containing cross-ruffing coupons often go together and are consumed at the same time. (Clow & Baack 2016, 358-359.)

The Figure 5 below is an example of a coupon of a global fast-food restaurant – McDonald's. The coupon offers discount prices for selected meals of McDonald, it also clearly mentioned the terms and conditions to redeem the coupon, which is an important factor when generating a coupon campaign



Figure 5 McDonald's coupons at Causeway Point. (GDS Editorial Team 2019.)

4.3.3 Cash refunds

Cash refunds (also known as rebates or payback) are the same as coupons; the only difference is that the reduction takes place after the purchase rather than at the store. The consumer shows the proof of purchase and then sent back a portion of the price they have paid. To take an example, Lowrance is a global firm marketing high-quality sportfishing sonar and global positioning system mapping devices. The company adopts the Spring Rebate scheme in Europe to give their consumers cash back on each item purchased. This also qualifies them for extra payback on subsequent purchases. (Kotler et al 2013, 493.)

Cash refunds are quite successful given that they are relatively new strategies. Yet, to be truly effective, they must aim to change the consumer behaviour, either “driving a more rapid purchase or by encouraging the consumer to switch brands”. (Clow & Baack 2016, 364.)

4.3.4 Price packs (also called money-off deals)

Customers also save money by purchasing in packs. Instead of selling single items, producers sell a package of two or more items at a discount price. There are two types of price packs: single packages (for example, two for the price of one) and two related items packages (such as a toothbrush and toothpaste). Price packs are far more effective than coupons in boosting short-term sales. The most common example of this kind of promotion in Europe is the BOGOF offer (buy one, get one free). (Kotler et al 2013, 493.)

Bonus packs means providing free products to gain customer loyalty. While the customers may be using the product from a different brand, bonus packs can result in a brand switching. The justification is that people will choose the product with better quality at the same or lower price. Both merchants and customers benefit from the bonus packs. Retailers increase their customer base while the customers are satisfied because they are receiving the “free things”. The main advantages of the bonus pack are to increase brand loyalty while decreasing the cost of switching brands in a competitive market. However, bonus packs seldomly attract new customers. (Clow & Baack 2016, 366-367.)

A prime example of price packs is a bundle offer or a package meal. Many restaurants offer a combo deal for a workday lunch or a Sunday night to attract more customers. Bundling menu items also gives every item in a restaurant a chance to shine. It may be included in the bundle an item people would not often order to increase the sales of that item while giving the customers a reason to return to the restaurant to explore all the flavours. (Nidhi 2016.)

4.3.5 Premiums

Premiums are “*goods offered either free or at low cost as an incentive to buy a product*”. These offerings range from toys to phone cards and DVDs and may be included inside a package (in-pack), outside the package (on-pack) or come via post. (Kotler et al 2013, 493.)

According to Clow & Baack (2016, 360) premiums are “prizes, gifts, or other special offers consumers receive when purchasing products”. Typically, the customer will receive a premium or something free when paying full price for a certain product. In other cases, they may get an additional item at a discount price, for example, “buy one, get two”. **In- or on-package premiums** tend to be small gifts like toys in cereal boxes. These gifts are often disguised or packaged so the consumer must buy the product to discover them. At other times, the gift comes along with the package, e.g., a package of blades with the purchase

of a razor. **Store or manufacturer premiums** are gifts given by the retail store or the manufacturer to the customer. For example, fast-food restaurants can give children free toys when their parents buy them a meal. Finally, a **self-liquidating premium**, refers to the “almost” free item that the consumer is required to pay a small amount of money to get.

4.3.6 Promotional products (or Advertising specialities)

Advertising specialities, also known as promotional products, are articles with the imprints of a company’s name, logo, or message. Typical items include “T-shirts, pens, coffee mugs, calendars, key rings, mousepads, matches, sports bags, memory sticks, golf balls and caps”. In the US, €14 billion was spent on promotional merchandise in 2012 whereas, in the UK, the expenditure amounts to €1 billion. These free gifts prove to be highly effective. “The best of them stick around for months, subtly burning a brand name into a user’s brain, notes a promotional products expert.” (Kotler et al 2013, 494.)

One major benefit of advertising specialities is the **ongoing brand exposure**. Customers may use the promotional product with brand imprints on it for weeks, months, or even years. But not only consumers are exposed to the product, but their friends and acquaintances are also exposed to it as well. Specialties also help the company to build rapport and establish a **relationship** with the customers. Finally, advertising specialties are highly cost-efficient compared to other forms of advertising. Items such as pens, pencils and mugs are relatively cheap, yet may provide a significant return on investment. (Chron 2020.)

4.3.7 Point of Sales (POS)

Point-of-sales (POS) promotions consists of displays and demonstrations at the point of sale. Some examples include “aisle displays, promotional signs, 'shelf talkers', or demonstrators offering free tastes of featured food products”. Unfortunately, this strategy is disapproved by many retailers who have to handle multiple displays, signs, and posters from the manufacturers each year. In some countries in Europe, retailers can refuse to display POS materials at all on the ground that they ruin the image of their store. (Kotler et al 2013, 494.)

4.3.8 Contests, sweepstakes, and games

Contests, sweepstakes, and games allow customers to win free cash, trips, or goods by luck or little effort. A **contest** asks consumers to submit a jingle, guess or suggestion which is then judged by a panel to select a winner. A **sweepstake** lets the customer submit their names for a draw. A **game** can take many forms. One example is that customers are given bingo numbers or missing letters every time they buy something, the combination of these

finds can help them win or not win a prize. Promotions in form of a contest, sweepstake or a game can cultivate a significant brand awareness and consumer involvement. However, many countries in Europe strictly forbid certain games such as lotteries (contests where no skill is required of participants) and illegal gaming. Thus, extra care is needed in creating consumer contests so as not to violate the law. (Kotler et al 2013, 494.)

While contests and sweepstakes can increase customer traffic, they may or may not improve sales. However, marketers do agree that intrinsic rewards can encourage customers to repeat purchases. (Clow & Baack 2016, 364.)

In terms boosting a restaurant awareness, running an online promotion is a highly effective way to generate excitement around a large audience. The owner can run a contest on their social media pages to direct people to the restaurant's landing page. In this case, the contest is used as a lead magnet. Each time someone participates in the contest, the site owner can capture their details and remarket to them. This is a great example of how to turn a contest entry into a customer. Figure 9 below shows an example for a sweepstake conducted by a café, the winner was randomly chosen and if she/he followed the two steps mentioned in the caption.



Figure 6 Instagram competition for gift cards. (Cactus Club café n.d.)

4.3.9 Event marketing (or event sponsorship)

Another effective way for promotion is event marketing (or event sponsorships). The event can be held by the brand themselves or by other individuals or organizations that the brand sponsors. Some popular examples include mobile brand tours, festivals, reunions, marathons, concerts, or other sponsored gatherings. Event marketing is considered the fastest-growing area of promotion, which even thrives in tough economic times. It is also a less costly alternative to TV commercials. (Kotler et al 2013, 494.)

As mentioned above, event marketing can be external events or in-house events. External events for restaurants include food festivals, pop-up stores, or festival markets. They can attract many customers, gather social attention, as well as collect feedback, and industry knowledge. As for in-house events, there are the opportunities to hold event based on themes and ideas aligning with the restaurant's target group. For example, if the restaurant caters for a younger audience, it may want to organize events like open mics and comedy nights. In case of an older target group is older, the cooking classes or pop-up markets might work better. (Clow & Baack 2016, 364.)

4.4 Trade promotions

Trade promotions are sales promotion tools used to persuade resellers to “carry a brand, give it shelf space, promote it in advertising and push it to consumers” (Kotler et al 2013, 495). According to Clow & Baack (2016, 370), trade promotions are incentives designed by members of one trade channel to entice another member to purchase and resell a good. This form of promotion is aimed at retailers, distributors, wholesalers, brokers, or agents rather than the end consumers. Typically, a manufacturer will use trade promotions to convince other members of the sales channel to carry its goods. These can be wholesalers, distributors, brokers, or agents. These parties then persuade retailers to purchase products for eventual resale.

Trade promotion is a marketing technique aiming to boost the demand for a certain product in retail stores. In a trade promotion, wholesalers and retailers are often given a special discount price or are subsidized for free display of goods in their establishment. Since it is more targeted at the bulk purchasers than the average consumer, this promotion method will not be examined in a great detail by the author as a way to improve restaurant service's performance. (Clow & Baack 2016, 370.)

4.5 Business promotions

Business promotions include tools to create business leads, encourage purchases, reward customers, and motivate salespeople. Many of these tools are the same as consumer or trade promotions. There are two main categories of business promotion tools: conventions and trade shows and sales contests. Trade shows are conferences or exhibitions prepared by firms to showcase their products to potential buyers. Benefits of trade shows include generating new sales leads, getting contacts of customers, introducing new products, selling, and educating the customers with publications and audio-visual materials. Trade shows also allow the company to reach many prospective customers without a lot of sales force. Meanwhile, a sales contest is a contest for salespeople or dealers to inspire them to improve their sales performance. The major reason for a sales contest is to motivate and recognise well-performing firms who may receive the reward of free travel, cash, or other prizes. Sales contests are most effective when tied to a measurable and achievable sales objective. (Kotler et al 2013, 495-496.)

Like trade promotion, business promotion is more targeted at business customers and thus might not be an effective promotional tool at the restaurant level.

4.6 Common consumer promotional tools

According to Yin-Fah, Osman and Foon (2011, 78-88), Tinne (2011, 209-220), Banerjee and Saha (2012, 1-21), Nagadeepa, Selvi and Pushpa (2015, 116-124) consumers are more likely to make impulsive purchases when discounts are offered. The urge to save is the explanation behind this. Discounts, in particular, give the customer a temporary price decrease and therefore instant value, and so constitute an unequivocal inducement to buy (Jobber and Fahy 2006). Osman et al. (2011, 78-88) claimed that the most effective methods for influencing impulsive consumer behaviour are discounts and free samples, while according to Tinne (2011, 209-220) these are discounts and bonus packs. On the other hand, Nagadeepa et al. (2015, 116-124) found that discounts and loyalty cards are two strategies that have a big impact on motivating customers to purchase ahead of time, but coupons, incentives, and bonus packs do not.

According to Alimpic, Peric, Mamula (2020, 49-50) "there is a statistically significant effect of sales promotion methods on impulsive consumer behaviour, discounts are a sales promotion method that has the greatest impact on impulsive consumer behaviour, overall, the methods that have the most effect are those that create value for the consumer or save money. On the other hand, all other factors have been shown to have no significant effect

on impulsive consumer behaviour, which is a surprise. Certainly, loyalty cards come first. They are the least contributing factor in explaining the dependent variable.”

4.7 Effectiveness of sales promotion on ‘sales income and brand recognition

Wong and Yazdanifard (2015, 3) agreed that other than increasing consumers’ purchasing behaviour, the firms’ profits, the popularity of the brand, and sales promotion have also served to influence the cognitive thinking of consumers. Besides increasing the purchasing behaviour, sales promotion is effective in affecting the brand switching behaviour of the consumers.” (Chandon et al. 2000, 65-81; Omotayo et al. 2011.)

Another important aspect of sales promotion is the brand's popularity and the pleasant in-store atmosphere in which a positive customer crowd is effectively generated. Furthermore, a new customer is inclined to follow the lead of current customers and purchase new items during a sales promotion. Sales promotion is not limited to increasing the sales profit of the company but also serves to improve the environment of the retail store by creating a positive customer experience. In other words, through word of mouth, the marketers are more likely to achieve a higher ranking within the competitive marketplace. (Wong & Yazdanifard 2015, 4)

Sales promotions have a significant impact on the sales and profit of the organization. Moreover, sales promotion has a greater impact on organizational performance as it stimulates and encourages the consumer to purchase a product in large quantity, provides an opportunity for organizations to generate trials of the product for non-users, stimulate the retailers to stock a greater number of items, motivate buyers to make purchases during off-seasons and establishing the brand loyalty. If the sales promotions are effectively implemented, it can give new life to a failing product and enhance its sales. Sales promotion benefits the organization at all stages of a product's lifecycle, especially its initial and growth stage. The study further points out there is a correlation between the effective implementation of sales promotion and organizational sales which results in more profitability. (Odunlami & Ogunsiiji 2011, 9-13.)

5 Consumer buying behaviour

Consumer behaviour is the act of selecting, purchasing, using, and disposing a product or service by an individual or group of buyers. It is an ongoing process that happens before, during, and after the purchase.

There is a mutual relationship between consumer behaviour and marketing. On the one hand, consumer behaviour shapes the marketing strategy. By conducting customer research, marketers can better understand the customer's needs and create offers that matches their needs and wants. Consumer behaviour is also the ultimate test of whether the marketing campaign is effective or not. On the other hand, marketing can influence consumer behaviour. Consumer views can be shaped by the marketers or the popular culture. For example, music, book, celebrity, and different forms of entertainment can influence a person's decision to make a purchase. User generated content such as blog comments and reviews on websites or social media can motivate a buyer's behaviour. In addition, advertising and marketing are necessary for communicating the product availability and manipulate the masses to tune in a certain product. While customer need is already there, it is the marketer's job to help the consumers realize and meet their needs. (Solomon 2015, 35-38.)

Consumer behaviour is also associated with risks. Risk is considered to be painful and can produce anxiety. Typically, there are two kinds of risks: uncertainty about the outcome and uncertainty about the consequence. Uncertainty about the outcome can be minimized through information acquisition and processes. Meanwhile, uncertainty about the consequence is tackled by being limited by the amount at stake or postponing making the choice. In many cases, risks are seen as losses - social or economic loss (Taylor 1974, 54-60). For marketers, the most important task is to reduce the risk perceived by customers when doing business with their firm.

Schiffman et al (2010) also suggested three stages that a consumer go through when making a purchase: need recognition pre-purchase search and alternative evaluation. Need recognition occurs when people experience a significant problem at the lack of a product or service. Once the need is realized, people begin to search for information to reduce the uncertainty. Social networks play an important role in this phase as people constantly go online to search for relevant information. As a result, "a virtual collective mind" is formed -- people not only create and share information but also influence/benefit/harm each other's behaviour (Song and Yoo 2016, 84-99). Finally, the consumer analyses the options pre-

mented to them based on a set of criteria, of which trust is a crucial element. After the purchase, customer will determine whether the product fulfils his needs and consider repeating the transaction. This is known as post-purchase evaluation. (Solomon 2012.)

5.1 Relationship of sales promotion towards consumer behaviour

Some studies have shown that charging a product less than the regular price and raising the price afterwards would lead to an adverse effect on subsequent sales. This is because consumers come to adopt the low introductory price as a reference and consider the regular price to be unacceptably greater than the price they expect to pay (Doob et al. 1969, 90). Other researchers have pointed out that sales promotions have a huge impact on consumers' buying behaviour such as purchase time, product brand choice, quantity and brand switching (Nijis et al. 2001, 1-22). Moreover, consumer purchase decisions are sometimes based on the price sensitivity, individuals are more attracted to promoted products (Bridges et al. 2006, 295-307).

When the cognitive thinking of the consumers is influenced during the sales promotion, the consumers may feel personally attracted to the products and subconsciously become loyal to a brand. For example, the improvement in self-satisfaction level contributes enormously to the repurchase intention of the consumers. Also, consumers are more likely to recognize a product they like or feel good about. Once recognizing the product, the consumer will continue looking for similar products in the future in order to generate the same pleasurable and satisfying feeling. (Wong & Yazdanifard 2015, 3.)

By focusing on the promotional occasion, Blattberg and Neslin (1990) agreed that sales promotion had an influence on customer buying behaviour. Schultz (1998) went on to say that sales promotions have a direct impact on consumer behaviour. Pramataris (2001) also mentioned sampling is a great way to acquire customers since it is both cheap and effective. Past studies have indicated that consumers' mental satisfaction tends to be increased through the purchasing behaviour during sales promotion (Chandon et al. 2000). Other works demonstrate even the role of consumers' satisfaction in developing purchasing behaviour in the long run (Jones & Suh 2000).

Besides financial benefits, consumers' mental well-being is also improved thanks to sales promotion. For example, customers may think they save money through sales promotion, which increases their level of satisfaction. Moreover, the consumers will feel safe to buy from the brand that receives good feedback from other consumers. Therefore, they have become wiser to purchase more during sales promotion periods, which in turn assist the marketer to achieve the agenda of the sales promotion. (Wong & Yazdanifard 2015, 4.)

6 Empirical collection and analysis

6.1 Interview results

Only two interviews were successfully completed to acquire the data in the end. Both interviews, however, were quite in-depth and provided a wealth of material for the research. Separate interviews were conducted with the two business owners. They both consented to have their responses recorded for the purpose of analysis. Restaurant 1 was founded in 2014 and Restaurant 2 established in 2019. They are both specialized in Vietnamese food. Restaurant 1 is a Finnish limited company, it has five locations, four of which are in Helsinki and one in Tampere. The average monthly sale is roughly 200,000 euros, with approximately 412 customers served each day. The interviewee is the managing director of all five branches. Having 20 years of experiences in managing restaurant business, she is the one who gives decisions on the restaurant's advertising and promotions activities, as well as the one with the greatest knowledge about the restaurant's revenues.

Restaurant 2 is a private owned company, residing in the Helsinki city centre with the capacity of serving 120 customers per day. The average monthly sale is around eighty thousand euros. The interviewee is a restaurant director who completed both her bachelor's and master's degrees in Finland and has lived and worked in the nation for over 10 years.

6.2 Empirical analysis

Restaurants' target customers and common sales promotion tools are being used.

Restaurant 1's target customers are Finnish people of all ages who are interested in Vietnamese cuisine. The foods are prepared and altered so that they bring Vietnamese flavour to the customer as well as being tasty and suitable with the Western taste. The interviewee stated that it was constructed with a friendly and informal Vietnamese restaurant concept, so that any customer may walk in and dine while enjoying the pleasant ambiance. The restaurant serves foods that are suitable for regular consumption, so guests do not need to save this restaurant for a particular event. Previously, restaurant 1 employed some sort of consumer promotion tool. She mentions ***promotional products, pricing packs, and coupons***. Each strategy has varied outcomes, but the most clear and evident result is the acquisition of new consumers.

For a more detailed description, the restaurant has handed out a complimentary teacup with its brand name printed on it to customers who dine at the restaurant and pay a bill of more than 50 euros. This campaign lasted one month during which the corona virus was not present. As a result, sales jumped by 10% in that month compared to the previous month,

and some customers came to dine after seeing the shop's name on a teacup at a friend's house. Some people return to eat with their friends more frequently, prompting interviewee to consider the impact of **promotional products** in creating and strengthening customer relationships. On a well-known e-commerce food delivery platform in Finland, the restaurant offered **a price bundle** including its most popular dish - as a main course on the menu, together with a fixed appetizer, and a dessert. The special pricing for this combo is just three-quarters of the regular price of the three items, implying that if the consumer gets the combo, the appetizer is nearly free. This campaign lasted for 2 months when the whole Helsinki area implemented the highest level of social distancing, to encourage take-away orders. The result was that even though the restaurant wasn't permitted to let customers dine in, the month's earnings was sufficient to meet the minimum basic operation expenses. In addition, after the lockdown period is over, the restaurant will be able to attract more potential consumers. During the period of locking down the whole city of Helsinki, there were many health workers who worked hard, sacrificing their time, efforts, and health to protect the city from the pandemic. In order to express gratitude, the restaurant gave away 500 **coupons** worth 30 euros each to those medical staffs of a public hospital in the city centre. The campaign then received a large amount of interaction on social networking sites, all of which were positive comments about the restaurant. As a result, the brand's image has become more well-known, and the restaurant's brand value has been enhanced.

Vietnamese young people who live and work in Helsinki and office workers around the close area are Restaurant 2's target clients. In addition, the director stated that they hope to attract more food enthusiasts in the future. Their foods have a similar flavour to those found in Vietnam, with the scents of each dish being more prominent, spices being seasoned more intensely, and ingredients such as traditional Vietnamese vegetables being used. The restaurant was designed with a simple concept in mind and is adorned with Vietnamese artwork and interiors to allow guests to experience a serene Vietnam right in the heart of Helsinki. **Price bundles, sample meals, coupons, and a very new technique customer loyalty stamp cards** were mentioned as promotional techniques by the interviewee.

Restaurant 2 had a small pop-up kiosk at a shopping centre about two weeks before opening, giving free **samples** of the restaurant's small items such as salads, spring rolls, fried spring rolls, fried noodles, fried rice, and even some soups for customers to taste on the spot or take home to try. Most of them are free, and each sample box comes with a tiny card introducing the restaurant's details, which will be on sale in the following two weeks. The meals were warmly welcomed on the day of the pop-up, and consumers who sampled them on the spot gave excellent comments. Consumers were able to ask questions about the restaurant's offerings, and the restaurant was able to form relationships with potential

customers. On the day the restaurant officially opened, a number of customers came in with their friends to dine, and when ordering, they expressed their desire to return to taste the restaurant's meals in bigger amounts, citing the excellent samples they had received two weeks prior.

During the beginning stages of operation, the restaurant executed a number of promotional activities across several platforms in attempt to attract as many new customers as possible. The applications selected were either well-known or recently launched, and their functioning scope was limited to Finland, namely the Helsinki area. They are mostly **coupons** offering a certain amount of discount on the restaurant's meals. As a result, 90 percent of coupons are redeemed at the restaurant, and the number of customers that visit at this time remains consistent. However, because it is a small business with a modest capital, the cost of ingredients in Finland is fairly expensive, therefore these discounts are more beneficial in terms of building reputation and attracting new customers to the restaurant than in terms of increasing earnings. A few months after opening, **price packs** are offered. Every weekend, the restaurant will serve a special meal that is not on the regular menu, they are more well-known in the Vietnamese community than in the rest of the world, thus it is difficult to source their ingredients in Finland, as well as a traditional Vietnamese dessert, is included in the meal. The meals picked for the combination must not only be delicious but also perform well together. This combination will cost three-quarters of the normal price of the two dishes when purchased separately. As a result, the restaurant is frequently completely booked every weekend when these price packs are available, the director realises by using this technique the customer purchasing size will be extended.

Restaurant 2 also draw more walk-in guests who perceive the restaurant to be packed and assume that the food would be good. Not only does the restaurant have the chance to ensure monthly revenue, but it also has the ability to explore new dishes and receive feedback from customers, which can be used to alter the restaurant's main menu to meet market demands in the future. Restaurant 2 has continued to run a weekend price pack campaign till present. This, according to the restaurant owner, is the most effective method of all the promotions the business has ever run. Since the restaurant does not need to spend a lot of money to make a favourable impression on consumers, it simply has to focus on the product and the quality of its food. Furthermore, they are more profitable than anticipated; the price packs all contribute to increased restaurant revenue, and even on non-promotional days, customers return to the restaurant and are willing to pay the normal meal price.

Restaurant 2 implemented a **customer loyalty stamp card** campaign after more than a year in business. They do so by printing hard paper cards with 11 blank boxes on which

customers can print the number of stamps equal to the number of dishes they order, and if the customer has 10 stamps, they will receive a free meal worth 30 euros from the restaurant. Despite the fact that this is a new promotion technique, it has achieved unanticipated results. Customers appreciate the small cards and consider them prizes. Many office workers keep coming back to have lunch at the restaurant as they will receive a “reward” after purchasing. They even invite relatives and friends to have more orders at one time and pay the whole bill so they can get additional stamps. In the author’s point of view Restaurant 2 implements price packs on a larger scale, dividing purchases at different times so that customers can return to the shop many times. Instead of combining orders in one time (short-term) to get a reward (e.g., buy 1 get 2), Restaurant 2 implements price packs on a larger scale, dividing purchases at different times so that customers can return to the shop many times.

Definition of a restaurant sales promotion.

Restaurant promotions are defined by the Restaurant 1's chief managing director as a limited time means of promoting the consumption of a restaurant's products with the goal of establishing new relationships with potential customers as well as strengthening existing relationships with loyal customers. When it comes to promotion, revenue will not be the restaurant's primary aim because there are many other actions that can drive sales more successfully than conducting promotional campaigns. The respondent had a strong belief that "*Promotion is a smart way for a restaurant to strengthen its advertising initiatives, resulting in increased income. Instead of offering great exposure and pervasiveness like advertising, promotion is a way to make it easier for consumers to get closer to the restaurant's advertising medium.*" Restaurant 1's CEO thinks that by putting up promotional campaigns, they will be able to attract more potential customers and improve their general response to the restaurant's food. The restaurant can still pay the operating and maintenance bills throughout the pandemic thanks to the promotional campaigns. Finally, the director wishes to deepen the relationship between the business and its loyal customers.

On the other hand, Restaurant 2's marketing director illustrated "*sales promotions are incentives that restaurants offer for their customers, they are either extra amount of food or special discounts and customers must be the one getting the benefits from the offer*". Meaning that customers must be able to perceive how purchasing the restaurant's meal offers would benefit them. When it comes to promotion efforts, Restaurant 2 and Restaurant 1 have one thing in common: they both want to attract more new potential customers. However, because Restaurant 2's promotion budget is limited, they constantly strive for a modest loss in promotion expenditures and place a greater emphasis on generating a profit. The

restaurant's marketing director also emphasized the necessity of adapting to market demands, and that determining the direction in which the restaurant's dishes/services would be changed in the future is an essential role in their promotion campaigns.

Customer behaviour to the sales promotion tools and its benefit to the restaurants.

On the business director perspective, Restaurant 1 noticed that consumers who purchased offers during the promotion were happy and satisfied, and the number of dishes purchased once for a table, or a single order increased greatly. This may be because the coupon reduced their total payment and they received additional dishes, or because if their bill was over 50 euros, they would receive a "reward" of a glass with the restaurant's name. The outcomes of the promotional activities are thought to have met the director's objectives. During their time there, they have definitely brought in huge income for the restaurant, as well as a large number of new clients through referrals from existing customers. They are also a way to keep sales volume up during lockdown by pushing user purchases.

Restaurant 2 believes it has the ability to influence diners' consumption behaviour; for example, they will be willing to spend more on the restaurant's pricing packs rather than buying a main dish as is usual, thus customers' purchasing size increases significantly while promotions being offered. On weekdays, customers who are familiar with their stamp card visit the restaurant more often for lunch during their lunch break. On weekends, more people visit the restaurant's website to check what specials are available and to reserve a table for a customer's weekend supper. Furthermore, many guests appear to be looking forward to and thrilled for each weekend at the restaurant since they have the option to try a new dish every week. Customers who took part in the promotion campaigns frequently return to the restaurant to eat at regular costs. This demonstrates that the restaurant's popularity has improved as a result of promotions, and that restaurant 2 is progressively building brand value and developing intimate relationships with its consumers.

Challenges of restaurant sales promotion.

According to Restaurant 1, the promotional effort was not without its difficulties. For example, they had considerable trouble locating a manufacturer that could produce their promotional product and printing at reasonable prices and with high-quality items for the giveaway cup campaign. Some product degradation has occurred as a result of transporting cups from suppliers to restaurants. As a result, when obtaining promotional materials from a third-party manufacturer, business owners must be aware of the warranty, exchange, and return policies to ensure that the promotion campaign runs properly. Furthermore, during promotions, the number of orders grows dramatically, and faults in the preparation of meals occur, giving customers the impression that their dishes are not as focused as they were

when there was no food promotion. As a result, during the promotion, the quality of the food should be ensured and checked more thoroughly. It may be feasible to mobilize extra employees in a shift to ensure the quality of the meals for customers.

According to Restaurant 2, the issue that might be faced while executing a promotional campaign is determining the campaign's aim and implementing just the techniques that are focused on achieving the campaign's goal. If the restaurant does not define at the stage of identifying the campaign's aim, there is a danger of selecting the incorrect way of execution, resulting in the campaign's failure to meet its objectives. Another issue that Restaurant 2 had while executing the promotion was the inability to cover the costs of operating the campaign and locating adequate food sources for the specialties. The ingredients for these recipes are difficult to come by if you are not conducting business in Vietnam. The price of a meal will rise due to a scarcity of ingredients, and it will be difficult to maintain them in the future. As a restaurant promoter, you must be willing to carefully assess and give the fairest pricing to customers while still making a profit for the restaurant.

Moreover, while running promotion campaigns on food delivery applications, it is hard to reach it is difficult to plan exactly and communicate effectively with account managers who will assist businesses in implementing their promotional efforts on such platforms. Using applications to offer promotions has its own set of challenges. For example, restaurants must determine who their key consumers are on such platforms and whether they are the group they want to target. Because launching promotional campaigns with third-party applications will be highly expensive and unlikely to be profitable, restaurants should consider choosing application platforms with users who are similar to the people they want to target to minimize financial loss.

The next challenge in implementing Restaurant 2's promotional campaigns is the competition from other restaurants' promotional initiatives. Because customers will not hesitate to choose another restaurant if they find a promotion deal elsewhere that is better than ours, when implementing promotional campaigns, it is necessary to consider competitors' products as well as the timing of this promotion is reasonable for the restaurant; if they overlap with other competitors, how do we compete with them? Finally, restaurant 2 noted that the frequency of promotions should be considered; if they appear too constantly, consumers will assume that the restaurant must always be running a promotion, implying that they will not be willing to pay the full menu price for meals.

7 Conclusion

As previously stated, the empirical analysis data will be utilized to answer the research questions presented at the beginning of the study. The author will answer to the sub-questions and then compile a list of recommendations for adopting consumer promotion techniques for Vietnamese restaurants in the Helsinki area as answering the main research question.

7.1 Main findings and discussion

Sub-question 1: *What is sales promotion and how can it benefit the business?*

Although the general concept of promotions is short-term incentives to encourage the purchase or sale of a product or service, the author discovered that restaurants' offers must in some way provide tangible benefits to the customers. For example, they can get a free meal or discount after spending more than a certain amount. Moreover, since the basis of the restaurant business is to offer products directly to the end client, most sales promotions used in the restaurant sector are consumer promotions (e.g. coupons, discounts, loyalty cards, bonus packs).

Promotions not only strengthen the restaurant's relationship with existing customers and are also vital to attracting new consumers. In the long run, promotional campaigns will significantly improve the business's visibility and brand awareness. However, in the short run, restaurants may not see a tangible increase in profit due to the high cost of ingredients to produce meals. Another benefit of promotional offers is that they can aid other restaurant's marketing efforts. Restaurants could use promotion techniques to create a stir before implementing the actual advertising campaigns to boost income. Finally, from conducting various promotions, restaurants can determine which promotion technique is best for their business in the long run. In some cases, sales promotions can help the owners identify their target customers. This makes the overall marketing strategy controllable and adjustable to suit the nature of the restaurant and the end objective that the business wants to achieve after the campaign.

Sub-question 2: *Which sales promotion techniques are commonly preferred to use in the restaurant business field?*

According to the findings of the study, **price packs** and **coupons** appear to be the two most popular promotional strategies used by Vietnamese restaurants. The methods in which these strategies function are similar, but the restaurant can design them differently based on the objective, consumer target, and budget size.

When it comes to **coupons**, the majority of them are in the form of a money or percentage reduction off the total amount on the customer's payment. Coupons have the ability to build close relationships between restaurants and new customers, making them ideal for occasions such as the opening or re-opening of a restaurant after a period of closure. Customers' decisions are influenced by them both throughout the restaurant selection process and during the ordering process. Coupons give the impression that diners will eat more and pay less than usual; it is the reason why customers want to visit the restaurant to enjoy their food, as well as the reason why customers order more dishes, as they believe that by using a coupon at that specific restaurant, they will be able to save money on their food costs. Customers will be more inclined to return to a restaurant if they have a positive opinion of the food as well as the whole experience at the establishment. In addition, there are a variety of ways to distribute these discounts, including e-commerce platform apps and email marketing. Each promotion will have its own target audience and objective, so when launching a coupon campaign, restaurant owners must first assess the proper clients and then devise the most efficient means to contact them in order to get the best possible results. Coupons, if not well designed, may result in a loss of income for the restaurant because if they do not target the correct consumers, it will be difficult for the restaurant to build loyal customers after the campaign.

Regarding **price packs**, they are normally created by presenting a variety of foods, but when they are combined, they become quite harmonic. For example, most Vietnamese restaurants mix appetizers, main course, and dessert to keep customers pleased. Unlike coupons, consumers who purchase price packs will receive a specific amount of food servings in the same amount as usual, but at a lower cost than if they ordered each item separately. Customers' purchasing power is boosted by price packs because instead of ordering one main dish when they come to dine, they may try more of the restaurant's dishes for less money. In general, price packs are regarded an efficient promotional technique for preserving connections with regular clients, strengthening the restaurant's brand image value, and eventually boosting sales. They will be very effective if restaurants know how to properly design them, such as mixing new appetizers or desserts with a popular main meal or vice versa. This is one of the most efficient forms of promotion since the implementation costs are little and the restaurant can still make a lot of money; also, guests have a positive experience with the restaurant during this sort of promotion.

Sub-question 3: ***Relations between sales promotional techniques and consumer buying behaviour?***

Aspects that promotional methods might impact diners include pleasure, fulfilment, and purchasing power. By using the study data, the author discovered that sales promotion techniques have a direct impact on customers' consuming behaviour in terms of purchasing power, frequency of restaurant visits, and restaurant preferences. First, customers tend to spend more in one order (buy additional dishes) if they are offered a discount or "rewards" when the total price exceeds a certain amount. Promotion also has a positive effect on customer's satisfaction, which results in positive reviews and free word-of-mouth marketing for the restaurants. In addition, it is observed that those participating in the promotional campaign will actively seek for special offers by the restaurant and return as regular eaters. Restaurant owners in the interviews have reported an increase in brand value and intimate relationships with the customers as the result of sales promotion. Other positive outcomes from effective promotional campaigns include an increase in the number of new restaurant diners as well as social media interaction with good feedback. This further aids the restaurant in its growth and expansion.

Main research question: Which consumer promotion techniques can be applied for Vietnamese restaurants?

To address the thesis's major topic, the author will compile a list of consumer promotion techniques that may be implemented to Vietnamese restaurants based on information gathered from interviews and other scholarly sources. Suggestions for restaurant promotional methods are accompanied by descriptions and analyses of those tactics to assist readers in selecting the best appropriate strategy for their establishment.

- **Price packs:** Instead of letting customers order meals separately from the menu, restaurants can provide meal packages, such as two meals for the price of one, or more commonly, related dishes, such as a starter and main course combination. These items should perform well together in order to provide customers with an optimum set of meal combinations and enhance their dining experience. Price packages are regarded as the most successful approach for increasing sales in the restaurant industry since the ingredient costs are difficult to change to lower the cost of the product. Price packs not only assist restaurants in retaining income but also allow for the introduction of additional unpopular menu items. As an alternative, the restaurant may provide dishes that are not on the menu to test how consumers react to them. If properly planned, this technique can provide numerous benefits to the restaurant such as increasing the diners' purchasing power, strengthening the brand image with positive reviews, and maintaining relationships with existing customers while attracting new ones.

- **Coupons:** Coupons are vouchers used by customers to pay restaurant bills at a lesser price; they provide customers with a discount in percentage or an amount of money. Restaurants can print coupons and hand them out to customers on special occasions, or they can give them online through e-commerce platforms or send gratitude emails to regular customers. The restaurant may choose to use this sort of promotion on different occasions. Coupons, for example, are most effective at attracting new consumers for the grand opening. Restaurants can also create bounce-back coupon programs to encourage customers to return, resulting in stronger customer connections. In general, coupons have the impact of increasing consumer purchasing power, which translates into higher sales for the restaurant, while motivating them to visit the restaurant more often. To get better results, restaurants should choose the right audience to target when implementing coupon campaigns. They should target people who have a high probability of becoming loyal customers after trying the restaurant's food since most people will not return when they are no longer able to get a discount.
- **Sample food:** Samples are small portions of restaurant food given to customers for the sole purpose of testing. Samples are the most efficient approach to promote a restaurant's new dishes, but they may also be used to introduce a restaurant before it opens. Diners will have a delightful experience with little portions of food. They will feel as if they have been given a present, and the restaurant will receive genuine feedback at a relatively low cost for the campaign by introducing the restaurant's meals through samples. Making samples to present the restaurant's new cuisine is the most common method for this type of business. However, providing samples of the meals on the restaurant's menu prior to the opening is a novel approach that based on the research results it will be quite beneficial for restaurants.
- **Promotional products:** Promotional products are items bearing the restaurant's name that are given for free after customers have tried the restaurant's services. Cups, t-shirts, bags, and food boxes with the restaurant's emblem printed on them are examples of promotional merchandise. These goods have the impact of building a relationship with clients by making them feel appreciated. Promotional items can give continuous brand awareness to not just customers who have visited the restaurant and received a promotional item, but also to their friends who may become future customers. One disadvantage of this strategy is that it will be quite costly for the restaurant to run them, which results in lower profits. As a result, promotional gifts must be properly researched and planned with careful consideration of financial resources.

- **Customer loyalty stamp cards:** This is one of the most novel methods of promotion discovered during the data collection interview process. Restaurants utilize customer loyalty cards to encourage customers to return. Customers will be marked on their loyalty cards for each purchase they make. The consumer will receive a special promotion or discount after collecting a particular number of stamps defined by the establishment. This motivates customers to keep coming back to the restaurant in order to take advantage of the promotion. Loyalty cards are a particularly effective form of restaurant promotion since they only allow customers to collect incentives once they have spent a specific amount of money with the establishment. These cards can come in the form of paper cards, plastic cards, or electronic cards maintained with accompanying apps. A loyalty card program can boost the frequency of sales by encouraging consumers to return through enticing offers, exclusive discounts, or appealing prizes. By recruiting new customers, it also expands the restaurant's brand reach and awareness. The benefit of free rewards and exclusive bargains is enticing, especially for something a customer would buy anyhow, in this case, food.

Finally, several observations should be made while developing promotional efforts in restaurants based on the study's empirical data. To begin with, the frequency of campaigns should be limited, as it is possible that they will gradually make customers reliant on specials rather than willing to pay the regular menu price. The possible limitation for restaurants is that, according to the Finnish Competition and Consumer Authority, discounts or special deals will be available for only a limited time which was listed in detail in chapter 4. Following that, restaurants must carefully prepare information about the many types of promotion from which to choose and organize their campaigns in detail in order to avoid financial risks while maximizing their advantages.

7.2 Limitation and recommendation for future research

The term limitation refers to the research's shortcomings. It highlights the things that should have been done in the research but were not because of potential restrictions. Limitation is not under the researcher's control but is influenced by other variables.

Concerning the chosen research methodology, which is a qualitative method, the resulting sales promotional techniques are listed with limited data since participants are businesses operating in the same locality. Hence, the results may not be applicable for all similar cases where a wider range of data will be needed. Furthermore, there is the challenge of selecting suitable interviewees as business owners are difficult to contact and make an appointment

with. As a result, the author had to conduct an analysis with only a few restaurant owners, which could have influenced the final outcomes.

In order to suggest future potential research directions in this topic, the author has made some implications as the followings. Firstly, a mixed methodology approach that includes qualitative and quantitative research may be used to update new promotion methods used by restaurant owners and learn more about customer behaviour while receiving such offers by conducting consumer surveys. The research findings will become more precise as a result. Furthermore, research on detailing how to properly conduct promotional campaigns for restaurants may be carried out, since this will assist more establishments in determining the most appropriate techniques of promotion for them to utilize.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Details about the interview

The detail of the interview was designed to inform the interviewees before the interview occurred.

Study's goals

The goal of my research is to explain and suggest applicable consumer promotional techniques for Vietnamese restaurants in the Helsinki area of Finland by combining literature reviews and qualitative interviews with the restaurant owners.

This study was inspired by the fact that there are numerous Vietnamese restaurants in the Helsinki area, Vietnamese cuisine is not as well-known as that of other Asian nations. The author believes that with appropriate way of promoting their products, Vietnamese restaurants will draw better attention and grow faster in the food and beverage market.

Interview expectation

The interviewee is supposed to freely answer questions based on his or her expertise and experience obtained throughout a promotion effort that took place under his or her direction. Because there is no correct or incorrect answer, interviewees can respond with whatever comes to mind when they receive the question. If the respondents are comfortable sharing, a multitude of perspectives from experienced individuals will be highly useful to the researcher's study.

The interview would last around 30 minutes to one hour. The interviewee, on the other hand, has the right to end the interview if necessary.

Confidentiality and recording of interviews

With the interviewee's consent, the interview will be audio recorded for analytical purposes only. The identity of the respondent will be kept private in the research report.

Appendix 2 – Interview themes and questions

Theme 1: Introduction

- When was the restaurant established?
- What are your target customers?
- Are you currently using any kind of promotion tools such as price-packs, samples, coupons, etc.? If yes, how did you carry out the campaign?

Theme 2: Business owner's knowledge about sales promotion

- How do you define sales promotions?
- In your point of view, what do you expect from sales promotions in terms of brand awareness and revenues?

Theme 3: Customer behaviour to the sales promotion tools.

- How did the promotion campaign benefit your business?
- How did the promotion campaign affect your customers behaviour and your sales?

Theme 4: Challenges of sales promotion

- What difficulties have you encountered when operating you promotion campaign?