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# CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	<b>INNOVATION AS A SECRET FOR ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS: A LITERATURE REVIEW BASED ON INNOVATION IN ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT</b> <i>IMALI N. FERNANDO &amp; T. C. WIJESINGHE</i>	1
2.	<b>THE IMPACT OF SMALL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT ON PRODUCT QUALITY, PRODUCT FEATURES AND PRODUCT POSITIONING IN IBADAN METROPOLITAN, OYO STATE, NIGERIA</b> <i>DR. HALIRU BALA</i>	5
3.	<b>OWNERSHIP MIX AND FIRM'S RISK TAKING BEHAVIOR: EVIDENCE FROM PAKISTANI CAPITAL MARKET</b> <i>SHAHAB-UD-DIN, DR. UMARA NOREEN &amp; GIRMA TILAHUN</i>	10
4.	<b>THE IMPACT OF STUDENTS' DIVERSITY ON GROUP WORK IN BAHIR DAR UNIVERSITY AND GONDER UNIVERSITY</b> <i>GIRMA TILAHUN</i>	15
5.	<b>A STUDY ON MOTIVES AND AWARENESS LEVELS OF STOCK MARKET INVESTORS – A CASE STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO ANANTAPUR DISTRICT IN A.P.</b> <i>DR. P.BASIAH &amp; K. TEJA PRIYANKA YADAV</i>	22
6.	<b>SERVICE QUALITY AND PATIENT'S SATISFACTION TOWARDS PRIVATE HEALTH CARE INDUSTRIES IN INDIA</b> <i>DR. A. P SINGH &amp; SATENDRA THAKUR</i>	31
7.	<b>IPO'S PERFORMANCE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH QIB SUBSCRIPTIONS AND GRADE</b> <i>DR. R DURAI PANDIAN &amp; SURESH A.S</i>	35
8.	<b>ECONOMICS OF FISHERMEN IN AKOLA DISTRICT</b> <i>DR. ANILKUMAR RATHOD</i>	39
9.	<b>CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT IN INSURANCE SECTOR - A STUDY OF PERCEPTIONS OF CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES IN VISAKHAPATNAM CITY</b> <i>DR. MVS.SRINIVASA RAO</i>	41
10.	<b>AN INNOVATIVE CRITICAL APPROACH TOWARDS ETHICAL BRVING AND CORPORATE REPUTATION IN BUSINESS WORLD</b> <i>DR. SURENDRA KUMAR &amp; ARUSHI BHASIN</i>	45
11.	<b>IMPACT OF AGGRESSIVE WORKING CAPITAL MANAGEMENT POLICY ON FIRMS' PROFITABILITY</b> <i>A. PALANI &amp; DR. A. PEER MOHIDEEN</i>	49
12.	<b>ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYEES – A STUDY ON BBK LEATHERS PRIVATE LTD.</b> <i>A. SEEMA &amp; DR. S. SUJATHA</i>	54
13.	<b>PERCEPTION AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS PRIVATE LABELS AT RETAIL OUTLET IN CHENNAI CITY – AN EMPIRICAL VIEW</b> <i>V.VARATHARAJ, S. VASANTHA &amp; DR. R.SANTHI</i>	60
14.	<b>THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON HOTEL PERFORMANCE</b> <i>DR. HAITHAM M. A. NAKHLEH., NISHA V. PATEL &amp; DR. UMESH R. DANGARWALA</i>	64
15.	<b>ROLE OF RISK AND RETURN IN INVESTMENT DECISIONS AMONG AUTOMOBILE AND BANK STOCKS AND PORTFOLIO SELECTION</b> <i>S.PRAVEENA &amp; DR. K. MAHENDRAN</i>	70
16.	<b>STAKEHOLDERS' ROLE IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF NORTH EAST AND LADAKH</b> <i>VIVEK SHARMA &amp; JEET DOGRA</i>	76
17.	<b>STRESS MANAGEMENT FACTORS AND ITS INTERRELATIONSHIP WITH JOB SATISFACTION</b> <i>ANIL KUMAR &amp; NEELAM RATHEE</i>	80
18.	<b>LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR EXCELLENCE: A REVIEW</b> <i>SHRADDHA KULKARNI</i>	86
19.	<b>IMPACT OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IN PRODUCTIVITY MANAGEMENT– A STUDY</b> <i>VENUKUMAR G</i>	90
20.	<b>DEMAND ESTIMATION UNDER PUSH MARKETING STRATEGY: TOOL TO MITIGATE BULLWHIP EFFECT</b> <i>SACHIN GUPTA</i>	93
21.	<b>THE IMPACT OF WORKING CAPITAL MANAGEMENT ON PROFITABILITY AND LIQUIDITY</b> <i>REKHA RAHEJA, RAJESH BHARDWAJ &amp; PRIYANKA</i>	99
22.	<b>MANAGING EMPLOYEE RETENTION AND TURNOVER IN THE RETAIL SECTOR</b> <i>RASHMI KODIKAL, DR. P PAKKEERAPPA &amp; NIDA AHMED</i>	103
23.	<b>A STUDY ON AWARENESS OF ADVERTISING – WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO STUDENTS OF ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGES AFFILIATED TO MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY, TIRUNELVELI</b> <i>S. JEYARADHA, DR. K. KAMALAKANNAN &amp; V. SANGEETHA</i>	108
24.	<b>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AS EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVENESS IN THE AIRPORT AUTHORITY OF INDIA</b> <i>DR. KAMESHWAR PANDIT &amp; PREETI RAINA</i>	111
25.	<b>SALES: A LUCRATIVE BASKET FOR CONSUMERS AND SHOPKEEPERS</b> <i>PREETI SODHI &amp; PRATIBHA THAPA</i>	117
26.	<b>CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF BRANDED PETROL IN NAVI MUMBAI</b> <i>DR. ELIZABETH MATHEWS &amp; SANGEETA TANAJI KAMBLE</i>	123
27.	<b>STRESS MANAGEMENT- A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SELECTED PUBLIC &amp; PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATION IN CHHATTISGARH</b> <i>RUCHI SINHA</i>	126
28.	<b>QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AMONG LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS IN HARYANA STATE</b> <i>SOMVIR &amp; SUDHA KAUSHIK</i>	131
29.	<b>STUDY ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS ON CONSUMERS PURCHASING PATTERNS IN KOLKATA CITY</b> <i>HINDOL ROY</i>	135
30.	<b>INVESTORS ATTITUDE TOWARDS INVESTMENT OPTION IN NELLORE REGION</b> <i>V. G. MURUGAN</i>	139
	<b>REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK</b>	144

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- Sharma T., Kwatra, G. (2008) Effectiveness of Social Advertising: A Study of Selected Campaigns, Corporate Social Responsibility, Edited by David Crowther & Nicholas Capaldi, Ashgate Research Companion to Corporate Social Responsibility, Chapter 15, pp 287-303.

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**SALES: A LUCRATIVE BASKET FOR CONSUMERS AND SHOPKEEPERS**

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**ABSTRACT**

*In the past decade manufacturers and retailers have been gradually switching from the line mass media advertising to a variety of the line sales promotions. Although sales promotions take up a very large share of total marketing expenditure, they remain an area of less strategic consideration or attention than any other aspect of the promotion mix. The potential benefits of using sales promotions could range from giving immediacy and encouraging purchase of a product or service by changing the perceived value for- money equation. Despite the growth in sales promotions, there is a scarcity of literature devoted to the use of sales promotion techniques within a particular Asian city over a period of time. The present paper take an inside tour in Sales promotion techniques. Vivid Endeavour has been made by the authors to jot down the viewpoints of the consumers and shopkeepers of Chandigarh regarding sales. At the end few recommendations are listed as to overcome hurdles. Authors acted as catalyst as to fill the gap between consumers and shopkeepers by implementing.*

**KEYWORDS**

Sales, Consumers, Shopkeepers, Results, Recommendations, Implications.

**INTRODUCTION**

**P**rofit in business comes from repeat customers, customers that boast about your project or service, and that bring friends with them”

-W. Edwards Deming<sup>4</sup>

The decade of 1990's is one of great promise and great opportunities lie before us. Eastern Europe is emerging as a promising market and Asian economies continue to expand their internal markets and global market share. The Supreme irony is that the underdeveloped world has a crying need for food, clothing, shelter and other basic goods but lacks purchasing power. The developed world has enormous industrial capacity to satisfy these needs but will sell only those with purchasing power. The last decade taught a humbling lesson to business firms everywhere. Modern marketing calls for more than developing a good product, pursuing it attractively and making it accessible to target customer. Sales promotion is an initiative undertaken by organizations to promote increase in sales, usage or trial of a product or services. Sales promotion is an important component of an organizations overall marketing strategy along with advertising, public relations, and personal selling. Sales promotion techniques like Rebates, gifts, samples, exhibitions, contests, games etc. advertising also plays an important role in increasing the sales now days.<sup>10</sup> Sale promotion acts as a competitive weapon by providing an extra incentive for the target audience to purchase or support one brand over another. The effect of using sales promotions are as follow:

- Encouraging purchase of large size unit: Sales promotion consists of diverse collection of incentive tools, mostly short term designed to stimulate quicker or greater purchase of products or service by consumer.
- Generating trials among non-users: Trials among non-users of a product is generated through invitation of prospective purchasers to try the product without cost or little cost with the hope that they will buy the product
- Persuading retailers to carry new items and higher level of inventory: Sales promotion encourages retailers to give shelf space to new products. Manufacturers provide retailers with financial incentives to stock new products.
- Encouraging off season buying: Sales promotion has also encouraged off season buying especially during the festive periods, people tend to buy more of a particular product because of the added value, compared to normal season.
- Building brand loyalty: Sales promotion helps to build brand loyalty by giving the seller the opportunity to attract a loyal and profitable set of customers which provides sellers some protections from competition and greater control in planning their marketing mix.<sup>1</sup>

Thus usage of sales promotion activities has a direct impact on behaviour as it motivates a consumer to buy now rather than in future, enhances value of an offer temporarily till the promotion period, encourages switching, reinforce or reward loyalty etc. Traffic building is achieved by special event promotions like Diwali, Rakshabandhan promotions; inventory reduction through end of season sale; creation and building store image through feature advertising and displays and joint promotions and price image by highlighting the discounts.<sup>5</sup>

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER**

The present paper was planned with the following aims and objectives:

1. To identify the influence of sales on selected consumers i.e. college going girls.
2. To find out the genuineness of the sales.
3. To recognize the benefits related sales to shopkeepers as well consumers.
4. To find out the problems faced by the shopkeepers as well as consumers during sales.

**LIMITATIONS OF THE PAPER**

The present paper has following limitations:

1. The paper was conducted in Chandigarh only.
2. The sample size was limited to fifty college going girls only.
3. Only ten shopkeepers dealing with ladies readymade apparels were taken as sample.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

An attempt has been made to present the review of various studies carried out with regard to see the effect of sales on the buying habits of the consumer. A brief overview is presented below:

- Weng & Run (2010) investigated on “The influence of personal values on sales promotional techniques for convenience products” which shows that sales promotion techniques preferences do have an impact towards consumers purchase satisfaction and behavioral intention.<sup>9</sup>

- A study carried out by Patel Vipul "Impact of Demographic Factors on Consumer Response to Sales Promotions: An Empirical Study" in (2010). In this study, five demographic factors i.e. gender, age, income, education and household size were considered to have impact on consumer responses to sales promotion. 518 active mall shoppers were surveyed with the help of structured questionnaire in shopping malls located in the four cities of Gujarat. T-test and ANOVA were applied to test the null hypothesis. This study may provide refined insights in and understanding of the influence of sales promotions on consumer purchase behavior. The results of this study may help the marketing managers of retail stores to identify their target consumers and in turn, to develop appropriate sales promotional programs to persuade those consumers to purchase readymade garment.<sup>7</sup>
- "Innovative sales promotion techniques among Hong Kong advertisers – a content analysis" by Kim, Yang & Geoffrey (2008) reveals the alliance between the promotion techniques and the environment is important and underlines the marketing practitioners with a new perspective that would encourage them to more strategically manage the sales promotion with the consideration of the environmental dynamics along with the time line.<sup>3</sup>
- Vyas, Preeta H. in 2007 carried out "Sales Promotion Practices in Apparel Retail Sector and Challenges Ahead." investigates sales promotion activities of six apparel stores in Ahmedabad market and compares them on various dimensions. It presents major findings and provides insights on consumer behaviour. Lifestyle, for instance, has a loyalty programme called 'The Inner Circle', while Pantaloons offers a 'Green Card' Rewards programmes, Westside has 'Club West' to woo the customers. Managerial challenges are posed in planning and implementing such activities.<sup>8</sup>
- A study carried out by Liu, Yuping (2007) found out the "Long-Term Impact of Loyalty Programs on Consumer Purchase Behavior and Loyalty." Using longitudinal data from a convenience store franchise, the study found out that consumers who were heavy buyers at the beginning of a loyalty program were most likely to claim their qualified rewards, but the program did not prompt them to change their purchase behavior. In contrast, consumers whose initial patronage levels were low or moderate gradually purchased more and became more loyal to the firm. For light buyers, the loyalty program broadened their relationship with the firm into other business areas. Thus there is a need to consider patronage to decide rewards for loyalty programmes.<sup>6</sup>
- A study carried out by Aguirregabiria, Victor (2002) on "Sales promotions in supermarkets: Estimating their effects on profits and consumer welfare". This paper studies empirically the welfare implications of this type of policies. We present a model of dynamic price competition among retailers who sell several varieties of a differentiated storable good. In this model, firms use sales promotions as a mechanism to discriminate intertemporally among heterogeneous consumers. The model is estimated using scanner data from the food retailers of a US town. The estimated model is used to compute counterfactual equilibria under different restrictions on the use of sales promotions. We compare consumer surplus and the profitability of small and large retailers under the factual and the counterfactual equilibria.<sup>2</sup>

**METHODOLOGY**

For the present paper, the sample consisted of fifty college going girls and ten shopkeepers dealing with ladies readymade apparel from Chandigarh were selected. Proportionate stratified random sampling was used to select ten shopkeepers as Chandigarh was divided into five zones– north, south, east, west and centre. From each stratum two shops were taken. Stratified Randomized sampling technique was used to select the fifty college going girls were selected as sample who was visiting these shops for sales. Survey method along with questionnaire cum interview schedule was considered to be most suitable. Two individual questionnaires were prepared for consumers and shopkeepers.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The investigators visited shops offering sales and questionnaires were filled by the respondents. Then the responses were tabulated and percentage was calculated. These are as follow:

**I- RESULT OF SELECTED CONSUMERS**

**FIGURE 1: PREFERENCE OF SALES/ EXHIBITION/ SECONDS' SALES**

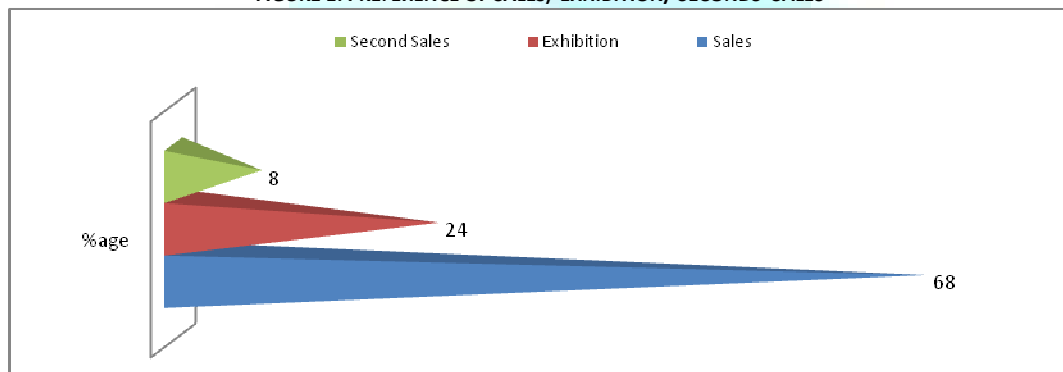
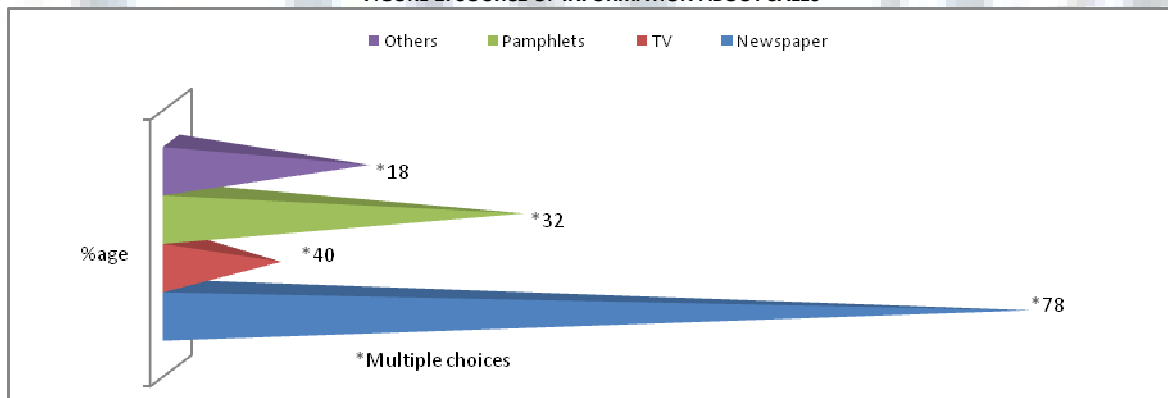


Figure 1 show that most of the respondents preferred sales as they found them genuine, quality of the product and satisfied with the image of the brand as well as shop. On the other hand some of the respondents prefer exhibition in terms of variety and comparatively low prices. Rest of the lot responded and voted seconds' sales as minor irregularities in garment could be ignored if they are getting heavy discount on branded garments.

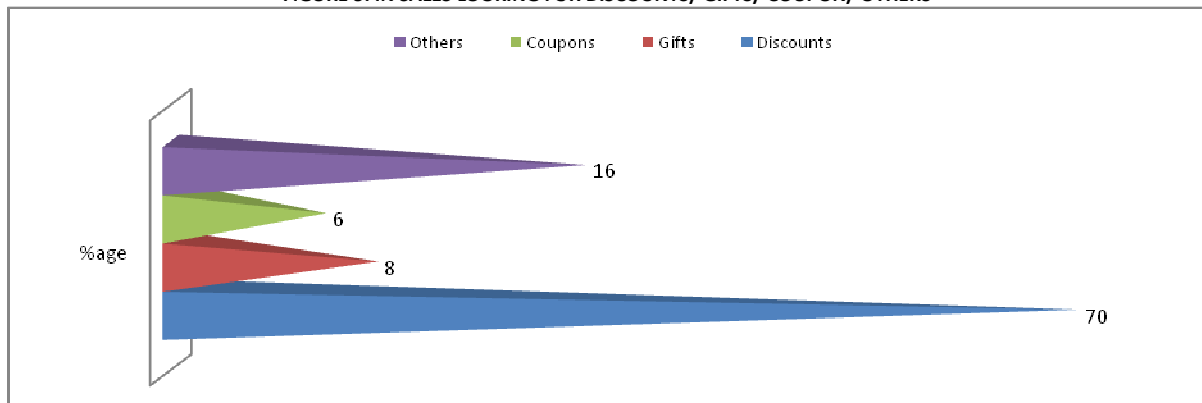
**FIGURE 2: SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT SALES**



In this category as illustrated by figure 2 newspapers won the award to be more informative regarding sales, where as pamphlets came out to be the second runners up and others sources like from friends, relatives, etc following them on third position. Very few of them receive information from TV.

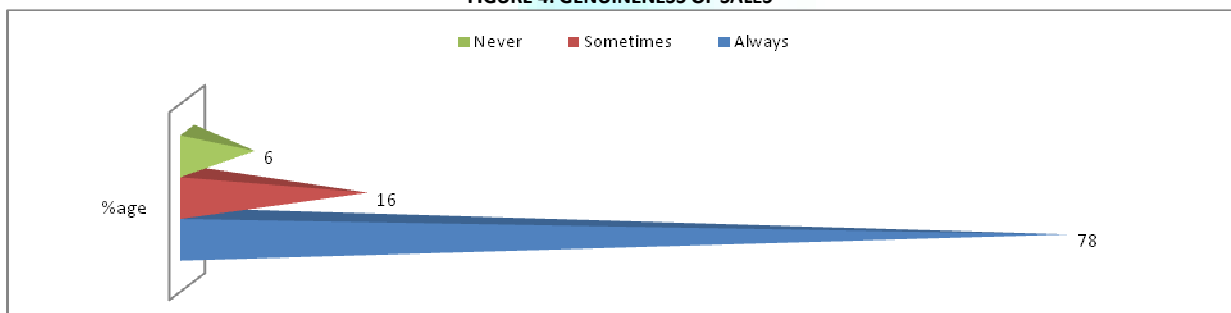


FIGURE 3: IN SALES LOOKING FOR DISCOUNTS/ GIFTS/ COUPON/ OTHERS



Mostly respondents look for discounts in the sales which can be seen through figure 3 whereas some respondents look for offers like buy one get one free schemes, price packs etc. On the other side, gifts and coupons managed to grab attention of few respondents.

FIGURE 4: GENUINENESS OF SALES



As shown in figure 4 most of the respondents say that these sales are genuine as these sales help them to buy expensive and branded goods at fewer prices.

FIGURE 5: PREFERENCE OF BRAND NAMES

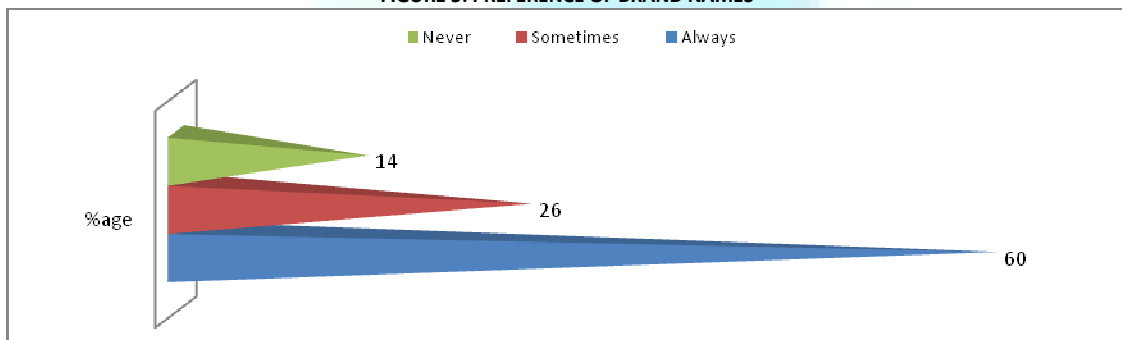


Figure 5 depicts Brand names are the lookout for most of the respondents in sales as they are quality conscious. To turn the coin it was seen one-fourth of the sample goes occasionally for brands and few of the respondents never went for brands.

FIGURE 6: INCREASE OF SALES IN OFF SEASON

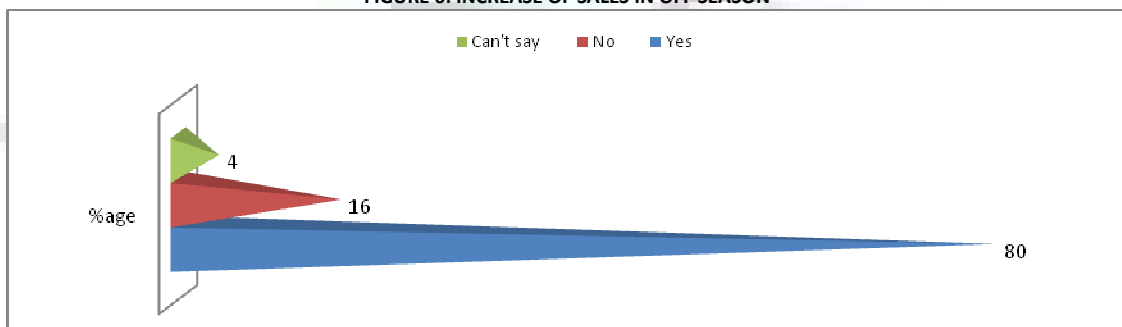
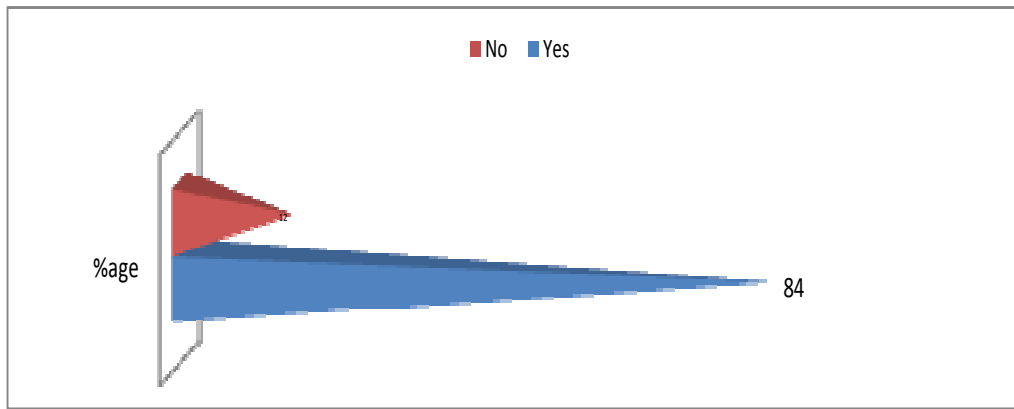


Figure 6 depicts that a big lot of respondents agreed to the inclination of sales in off-season as it time for shopkeepers to clear their stock and gain profits.

FIGURE 7: SALES BENEFICIAL TO CONSUMERS OR NOT



As shown in figure 7 respondents in bulk found these sales to be beneficial to consumers as they get good quality and branded items at low prices. Whereas other respondents faced few problems while shopping like -they were not allowed to try, could not return a wrong purchase and did not get a correct size sometimes.

FIGURE 8: SALES SHOULD BE HELD SELDOM/OFTEN

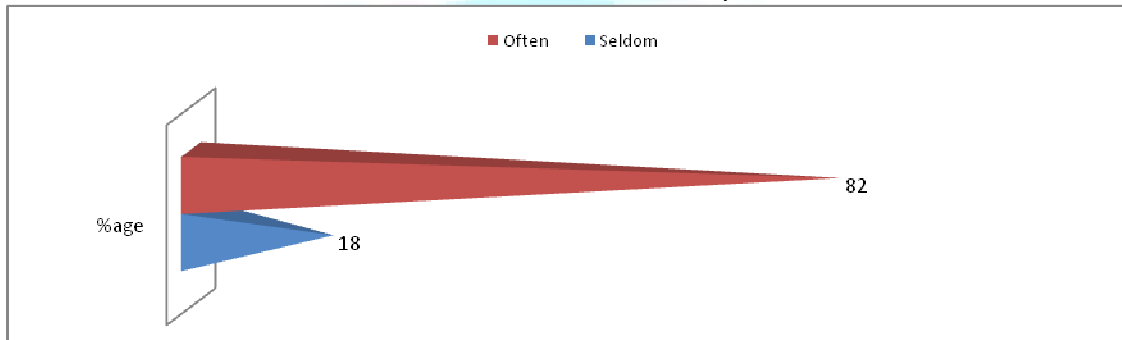
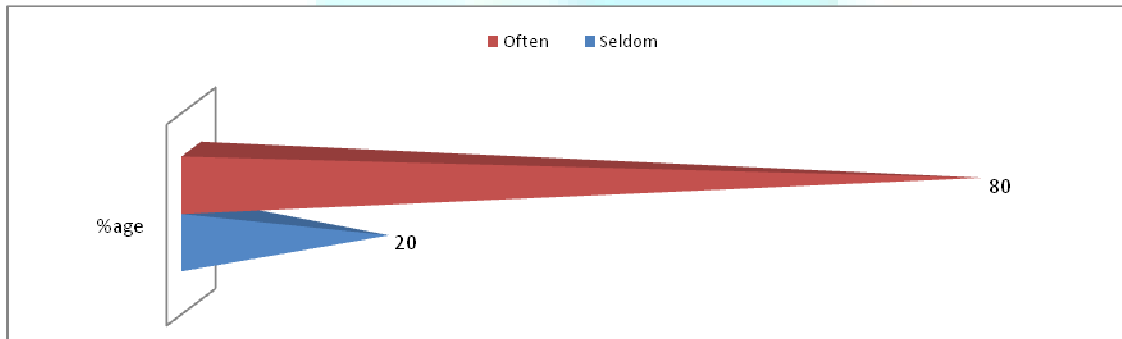


Figure 8 depicts that most of the respondents think that these sales should be held frequently as it is beneficial to consumers.

II- RESULT OF SHOPKEEPERS

FIGURE 9: INCREASE IN SALES VOLUME DUE TO OFFERS



From figure 9 it is concluded that shopkeepers found that offers like discounts, price packs, free gifts etc increase the selling aspect.

FIGURE 10: SALES SHOULD BE HELD SELDOM/OFTEN

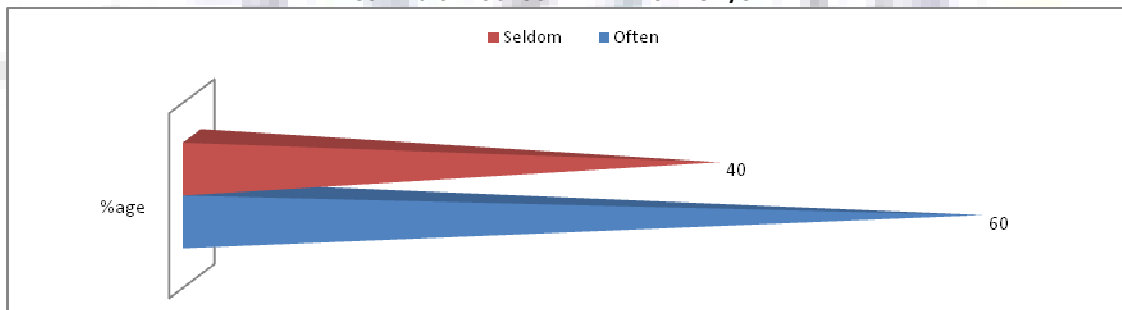


Figure 10 shows most of the shopkeepers approved that these sales should be held frequently as it increases selling but rest of the shopkeepers think that sales should be held rarely because then customer will prefer buying from discount counter, not from fresh stock.

FIGURE 11: SALES ARE BENEFICIAL TO SHOPKEEPERS OR NOT

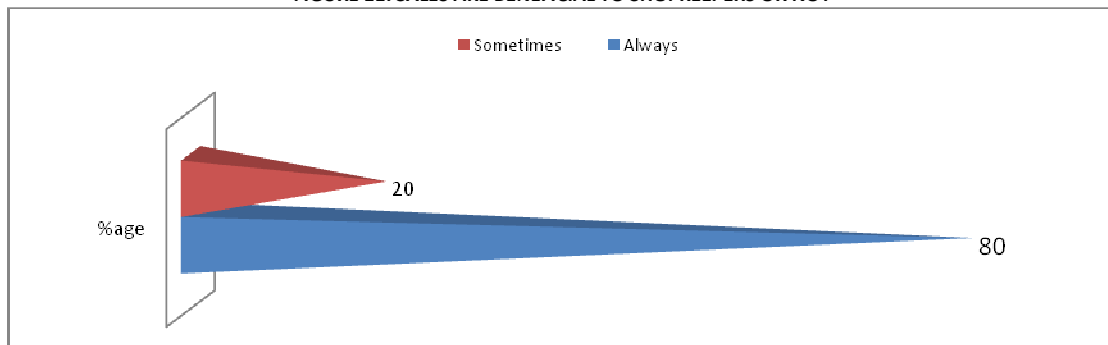
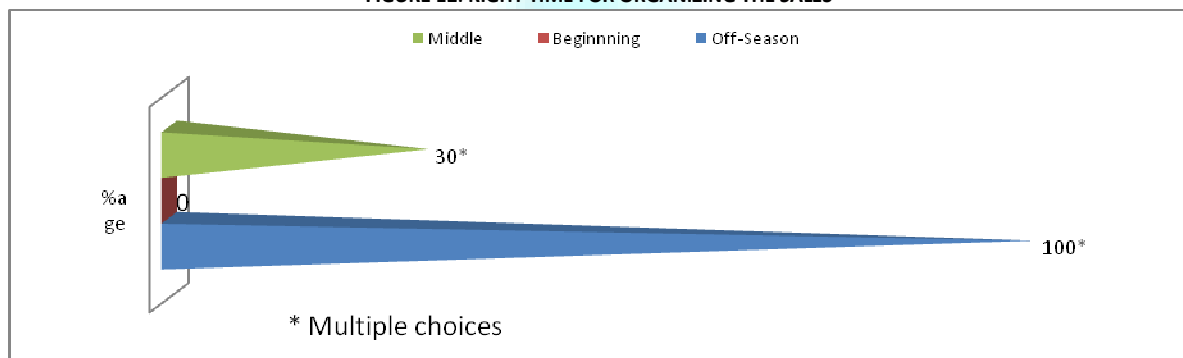


Figure 11 indicates that most of shopkeepers declare that they always get benefits from sales as due to offers there is increase in sales; this also help them to clear out there old stock and help in the publicity of the shop, but rest of respondents utter, in order to clear the stock prices have to decline. On the same platform extra manpower has to be engaged and extra expenditure to be incurred.

FIGURE 12: RIGHT TIME FOR ORGANIZING THE SALES



As shown in figure 12 that all Shopkeepers organize the sales in off season as to clear the stock and preparation for next season stocks. Some of respondents also organize the sales in the mid-season as they think it increases the sale volume and add publicity of the shop.

## SUMMARY

We can say that sales promotion covers a wide variety of short term incentive tools designed to stimulate consumer market and the trade. Taking this into consideration present paper "SALES: A LUCRATIVE BASKET FOR CONSUMERS AND SHOPKEEPERS" was undertaken. The major findings are:

**Responses of consumers i.e. college going girls:** Most of the respondents prefer sales as they think sales are more genuine and they are sure about the quality and image of the shop. Newspapers are the richest source of information about sales. Most of the respondents look for discounts in the sales and prefer buying brand names from well known shop because of quality consciousness in addition of getting them at lower prices. But some respondents says that they faced problems as they were not allowed to try, could not return a wrong purchase and unavailability of the correct size.

**Responses of Shopkeepers:** Huge number of shopkeepers agreed to the sales offers as they increase the selling aspect. Shopkeepers organize these sales in off season as to clear the stocks and preparation for next season stock. On the other side, some of respondents discovered these sales not as beneficial as they have to decline their prices, extra manpower to be engaged and extra expenditure to be incurred.

## CONCLUSION

From the present paper we conclude that shopkeepers organize sales mainly to clear out the old stocks which become outdated the next season. The main incentives given by shopkeepers are discounted price, free gifts, coupons etc. These sales are beneficial to shopkeepers in the publicity of the shop along with a package of problems in terms of extra expenditure in terms of advertisement and engaging extra manpower. Consumers often talk about sales; they glance through sales and buy only when they like something. They are attracted by discounts and prefer buying brand names from well known shops because of quality consciousness. Consumers sense these sales are authentic, genuine and advantageous to them as they get good eminence and branded items at low prices. As every coin has two sides, we came across with the consumers who are not fascinated by sales due to problems of not getting the right size, not allowed to get trial affair etc.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the researchers hereby make the following recommendations:

- The shopkeepers should be aware of the effective use of sales promotions
- The shopkeepers should publicize their sales offers more largely as to have larger number of consumers.
- Develop a system to tap novice sales ideas from time to time for both at shopkeeper as well as consumer level for planning future sales promotional activities.
- Repetitive use of the same promotional schemes for a prolonged period may have negative effect on the loyal customers. So, retailers must view to developing more promotional strategy in line with the company's objectives.

## IMPLICATIONS

For the present study researchers made efforts not only to collect the viewpoints of consumers and shopkeepers. But at the same platform they conveyed the problems faced by consumers while shopping. Vivid Endeavour was made as to act as catalyst between consumers and shopkeepers for smooth and happy shopping.

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