Investigation and Prioritization of Promotion among Retailers by AHP method

Case study: Ice cream industry

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Abstract

This study investigates the most effective method to promote the products among food retailers and supermarket owners. Owing to the wide variety of brands and the aggressive competition among food producers, it is essential that we choose an appropriate method to promote the products that enter stores. We intend to determine the most effective promotion mix among trailers through prioritizing three main promotion methods: personal selling, selling promotion, and joint advertisement between the producer and the retailer in the store. This act of prioritization of the three methods is performed regarding criteria of hierarchy model of decision making to purchase the product. Finally, AIDA, creation of awareness and attention, delight, and persuasion in the addressees to do the final purchase, proved to be the most efficient promotion mix among retailers. Moreover, a few elements of each promotion method were also selected and prioritized. This essay is a field study whose objectives are applied. The statistical society of the study was the entire food retailers of Shiraz which Ramak (Bita) ice-cream company intends to affect. The sample group of our study consisted of 250 retailers that existed in five regions of Shiraz. The data obtained from every region was analyzed separately using AHP method Expert Choice software. The findings of this essay indicated that promotion method was the first priority, and joint advertisement and personal selling were placed after.

Key words: Product promotion, Promotion mix, ice cream manufacturing industry, retailers, AIDA, AHP

Introduction

In each economic agency, the marketing section is supposed to establish an efficient communication between consumers and the target community particularly by means of IMC (Integrated Marketing Communication) in the promotion mix form (Rezaei, 2009). The IMC model that involves a certain combination of elements like impersonal advertisement, factors of sale promotion, public relations, and personal selling enables the agency to accomplish its marketing and advertisement goals (Kotler, 2003). In other words, decision variables provide a framework in the shape of different IMC models through which the agency develops programs for its promotion activities in the market (Duncan, 2002). Therefore, we assume two functions for the application of promotion mix: first is deciding about positioning the goods and new services of the market, and the other is evaluation of the existing promotion strategies (D’Esopo, 2007).

The instruments used to promote the position of goods and services in target markets for different consumers are diverse, and each meets particular goals better (Vlancevi, A, 2009). These tools are divisible into four categories: 1) impersonal advertisement 2) personal selling 3) sale promotion and 4) public relations (Sabbir, 2010). These categories include other specific tools including media advertisement, gifts with sales, point of sale advertisement, special advertisement, commercial and guild exhibition, free gifts, discounts, coupons, trade credit cards, financial support, direct marketing, and etc (Raghubir, 1999). Marketing of dairy products is more complicated and problematic mainly because of their high decay potential, being seasonal, and bulk. This article intends to provide an account of modern and traditional promotion methods in dairy industry especially ice-cream. In this study, we are supposed to concentrate on trailers’ promotion methods and determine the strategies and policies through which our company can gain an acceptable position among trailers and occupy more space of the stores in such intensive competitive atmosphere governing the dairy production in particular ice-cream.

Materials:

Since customers and consumers’ behaviors are obviously affected by promotion actions, it is vital that an appropriate and efficient communication model be chosen to guide the consumers following both long-term and short-term marketing objectives (Hosseini, 2009). Marketing communication system must be in the shape of an enhancing combination that is proportionate to the position of the product, product line, and even the agency and its lifetime in order to determine the position of the product in the target market by identifying major and minor features of the product least erroneously, and offer an effective and helpful message (Rezaei, 2009). Consolidated marketing communications will, in fact, lead to more complete knowledge about consumers. Therefore, we will be able to introduce the agency, its products and services, the brand, and the purposes behind the agency’s plans, which will, in turn, inform, encourage, and affect the target consumers. All phases of this process have to be defined precisely with their features and priorities. Eventually, an adequate promotion mix has to be developed to enlighten all the addressees (Hsu, T-h, 2009).

The achievements of economic agencies in sale and marketing reside in understanding each promotion variable concerning ambiguity features and environment complexity, getting rid of traditional ideas and restrictions, boosting the existing equipment
when they encounter the wide range of environment changes (Mason 2007). As each industry works in a particular market, and has its own particular target consumers, it seems essential that consumers’ attitude and behavior be analyzed primarily at each stage of promotion of the products in this chaos of various costly promotion methods, and we choose the most efficient methods by accurate analysis and investigation of consumers. Food industry is not an exception either, and due to its wide and various target market, it is crucial that this market be investigated meticulously, best advertising and informing methods be picked to inspire the target consumers and raise investments. Nowadays, there is a very aggressive competition in dairy industry especially ice-cream in our country especially in Fars province owing to some well-known dairy production factories located in this area.

Ramak is one of the oldest dairy factories, which has founded an ice-cream production line with the brand name of Bita two years ago. This factory is not reputed enough in ice-cream production and cannot easily attract trailers, in comparison with huge rivals like Daiti and Mihan. Trailers, the most important commercial customers of this industry, have lots of choices to fill their shelves with colorful products especially ice-cream. The effect of promotion becomes much more significant because of this intensive competition, hence different kinds of promotion methods can help us fascinate trailers. Therefore, in this study, we aim not only to identify all modern and traditional promotion methods to attract trailers’ attention in ice-cream production industry but also to rank these methods and recognize the most successful ones in order to expand the share of our products among trailers working in Shiraz. The main objective of this study is to investigate the promotion methods and rank them based on their effectiveness on the addressees’ attitude (knowledge, feeling, and behavior) in ice-cream industry. The addressees of this study are trailers of Rama (Bita) ice-cream target market. In line with our main objective, this essay will follow these more specific objectives:

To identify the best promotion method to provide information and attract the addressees’ attention to our products.
To identify the most efficient promotion method to create consumers’ interest in our products.
To identify the most efficient promotion method to inspire and encourage potential consumers to prefer our products among other similar products and buy them.
The most common definition of marketing mix for adequate positioning is appropriate product offer in an appropriate place at an appropriate price with appropriate promotion (Kotler P™, 2003).

Modern marketing is beyond production of good products, proper pricing, and consumers’ easy accessibility. Promotion is a marketing mix element through which the company communicates with the consumers, and provokes them to buy the product with the help of advertisement, promotion, personal selling, and public relations (Kotler, 2009).

The following table illustrates the differences between modern and traditional world concerning the different promotion methods to be applied:

## Table 1. Differences between today’s and yesterday’s world

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Today’s world</th>
<th>Yesterday’s world</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>extraordinary products</td>
<td>-ordinary products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advertisement for the first receivers</td>
<td>-advertisement for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-fear of fear(riskiness)</td>
<td>-fear of failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-short cycle of products</td>
<td>-long cycle of products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-big changes</td>
<td>-small changes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Gadin 2009)

Efficient and appropriate promotion mix has a crucial role in achieving the marketing goals of the agency (Banerjee, 2009). The marketing section of each agency is to create effective communication with the consumers and the target community in an economic agency. What enables us to realize this objective is using Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) models in the form of promotion mix.

A suitable IMC model including a definite combination of elements like impersonal advertisement, promotion factors, public relations, and personal selling can help the economic agency accomplish its advertisement and marketing goals (Bleich, 2006).

### Marketing Mix

Nil Boden was the first person who asserted the term “marketing mix” in 1949. However, the most common variables of marketing mix in the formulation of this concept (i.e. product, price, promotion, and place) were first suggested by Mccarthy in 2001. These four variables were later known as 4 P’s. There has hardly been a change in the definition of marketing mix since then, and many resources still propose 4P’s as the core of the concept in regard to which most other aspects of marketing are set (Kotler, 2009).

Nevertheless, adequacy of the traditional mix has been questioned despite its widespread use, even to the extent that some critics have totally denied it (Banerjee, 2009). Therefore, eight other P’s have been added to Mccarthy’s suggested model to compensate for any probable incompleteness, and at the present, twelve factors are considered as effective factors on marketing decisions. Albert Fry also divides marketing into two groups of variables; suggested variables (product, service, packaging, brand, and price) and process Variables (advertisement, promotion, personal selling, distribution networks, market research, and
Besides, Bernard Boom and Marry Bitner (1981) proposed a 7P model that consisted of factors like cooperation, physical evidence, and process as well as price, product, publishing, and promotion (Rezaei, 2009).

As indicated in the following picture, all researchers have acknowledged Mccarthy’s 4P model as marketing mix.

![Figure 1: marketing mix (Rahmani, 2009)](image1)

A review of the literature on marketing shows that previously marketing mix was often designed concentrating on one element, so that gradually smaller mixes such as product mix, price mix, and promotion mix (Tsai & Chiang, 2009). In spite of the variety observed in marketing mix models, all include promotion as an essential and constant element.

Promotion Mix
According to Heerd and Neslin (2008), promotion is facilitating direct or indirect communication with individuals, groups, and organizations to inform and encourage them to purchase the products or services of the company or agency. In general, the goals of promotion strategy are attained by combining factors like increase of sale, preserving and improving the market share, founding a new brand or improving the existing ones, creating a suitable atmosphere for future sale, informing the market, developing a competitive superiority to other products in the market, and eventually improving feasibility of promotion (Mccarthy, 2001).

Every promotion method will receive a special response from target consumers. The target consumers are divided into three groups in promotion methods: sales forces, distributors, and customers. The aim of promotion to encourage each of these groups might differ, but the final general objective is to increase the sale. Picture 2 demonstrates stages of promotion with different groups of consumers.

![Figure 2: stage of promotion with different group of consumer (Peatties, 2009)](image2)
Promotion Methods:

There are different methods of promotion: advertisement, public relations, personal selling, and promotion.

Advertisement

According to Kotler, economic advertisement specifically means charged communicating and introducing the product or service impersonally through different conveyers for profit and non-profit organizations or the individuals somehow involved in the message (Vlacvei.A, 2009).

Advertisement constitutes all informing activities that inspire the intended response in a consumer and ultimately enhance the demand for the advertised product after a communication cycle and conveying features, qualities, superiorities, and etc. of the product (Sabbir, 2010). Advertisement has a better identified situation among elements of Integrated Marketing Communication for positioning the product, because consumers are informed of the new products by advertisement. In addition, advertisement minimizes the barriers between consumers and the agency (Blech, 2006).

Cooperative Advertising

In this promotion method, the producer and the mediator share the advertisement costs. Cooperative advertising methods are categorized into three:

Horizontal Cooperative Advertising

This kind of advertising is performed by a group of retailers or companies that provide similar products. For instance, car sellers that are located in the same street pay for their advertisement activities cooperatively. The budget of advertisement is allocated to introducing that street as the centre of car sale, so that consumers will go there for the availability of plenty automobile shops (Yue, 2006).

b) Ingredient Sponsored Cooperative Advertising

Producers of raw materials may apply this method in order to acquaint consumers with the final products made of the raw materials that they use.

c) Vertical Cooperative Advertising

In this method, the producer has to pay a portion of the budget that the mediator has spent on advertisement. Retailers and producers commonly share the advertising costs on a definite basis (usually 50/50) (Mennati, 2004).

Some producers have inclined toward cooperative advertising rather than paying for advertising on local media, as they believe this method can be more effective on local markets (Yue, 2006).

Personal Selling

Another promotion method is personal selling that is oral presentation and face to face negotiation with one or several probable buyers (Rezaei, 2009).

The results of new studies indicate that the number of times a seller visits the shops, their high public relations, and their ability in delivering the amount of goods requested by the trailers all influence loyalty to the brand and positive attitude toward it. Consequently, the three previously mentioned qualities in sellers change the trailers into some constant, loyal consumers of the company, which is the best advertisement.

Public Relations

Public relations act as an instrument to achieve promotion that provides and improves a positive mental image of the company and its products. American Public Relations Institute has defined public relations;"evaluated, programmed, supportive attempts to create and maintain mutual understanding between the organization and the public.

When advertisement, personal selling, and even promotion are not successful, we have to resort to public relations, MRP (Marketing public relations). The responsibility of public relations section is more than creating a good image for the organization. What we expect this section to do is:

To help introduce new products
To help find a new position for old products
To create interest in a product
To support the difficult products
To affect a certain group in the market

Promotion

Promotion is application of instruments that motivates the consumers’ market and industrial market to buy the products or services in a short time. Many commercials are incapable of affecting the sale because they rush. Although advertising mostly affects the humans’ mind rather than their behavior, when a customer finds out about special sales, buying two items at the cost of one, or winning gifts, they cannot wait (Samnejad, 2005).

In impersonal advertising it is said “Buy our product.” However, in promotion it is said “Buy our product now.” (Rezaei, 2009).

The proportion of advertisement to promotion programs has been 60 to 40 in the last ten years. One of the reasons for the raise in the budget of promotion activities in comparison with advertisement budget is power transition from producers to trailers and mediators. Other reasons that may have encouraged companies and organizations to utilize promotion methods can be lower consumers’ loyalty to producers’ brands, variety of brands available in the market, various markets, companies’ emphasis on short-term profit making, more competition among producers, and more new products (Rahmani, 2008).

How to build a promotion mix

Since consumers’ behavior is obviously affected by promotion actions, selection of an adequate, adoptive, and appropriate promotion mix model that will guide consumers and customers, and facilitate realization of long-term and short-term marketing objectives is extremely important. Promotion mix model is a combination influenced by position of the product, product line, and even the company which differ with the lifetime of the good. It should be able to determine the position of the products by identifying major and minor elements of the goods in the target market with the least error, and communicate a notable and balanced message (Raghubir, 1999).
Items that influence arrangement of an optimum promotion mix model are:
1) Budget
   It is a tough issue for companies to decide the budget to dedicate to promotion advertising. Different companies exploit several methods to decide on the promotion budget:
   a) Percentage of sale
   b) Equality with the competitors
   c) Affordability
   d) Objectives and duties

2) Consumer type
   Any decision concerning promotion mix is dependent on the type of consumers who must be the addressees of promotion message. Companies deal with three types of consumers depending on the kind of their product: household consumers, industrial buyers, and commercial distributors. Industrial buyers and members of distribution channels usually have more information about the product they purchase, and the price and services that come with the product are substantial. Personal communications that personal sellers make can satisfy the needs of these groups of consumers. In addition, since these consumers are fewer than household consumers, it seems economically more possible. Nonetheless, household consumers are often accessed by a mixture of advertisement, promotion, and personal selling. The large number of potential buyers in this group justifies choice of advertisement, and consumers’ tendency to compare purchase in some categories of products reinforces the role of sales forces (Samadi, 2009).

3) Geographic distribution of consumers
   We have to consider two issues in this regard: 1) market centralization 2) market vastness. It is more beneficial to apply personal selling in more geographically centralized markets; however, advertisement must be used in more diffuse areas. The company may exploit different promotion mixes depending on its local, regional, or national market. Wider territories demand more emphasis on advertisement. Local retailers frequently use local media that cover limited areas for their advertising (Haghparast, 2009).

4) Competition
   Even though companies should not copy one another’s promotion mixes, we cannot overlook our competitors’ strategies in selecting their promotion mix. But in most industries competitors choose similar promotion mixes. Even so, a strategic maneuver performed by one company may get other competitors to follow. For instance, when a competitor severely concentrates on advertisement abruptly in an economic market, other companies will have to obey and follow similar methods. We must be aware of our competitors’ strategies all the time, but with mere following, the company will always be considered second in choosing strategy. Hence, it is essential that we choose the promotion strategies aware of competitors’ strategies and based on needs of the product and the market. The company can have a more creative and efficient promotion by trying to respond to the market (Rezaei, 2009).

5) Product type
   One important factor that we must consider while choosing promotion mix is the type of the product. Consumables are some products which are bought frequently and are distinguished by different brands. Such products are distributed in the market based on demographic and geographic factors. For better sale of these products, we have to focus on advertisement and promotion. In contrast, durables require more emphasis on personal selling because they are more expensive and complicated. Consumers compare them, and make judgments about the product in the place (the store). What matters regarding the deluxe products is their brand, which reduces the effect of promotion (Banerjee, 2009).
   There are some products which the consumer does not look for besides all previously mentioned types of products. They include the products about which consumers do not know yet, or do not demand yet. For the promotion of such products, memorable advertisement and personal selling must be used (Ranjbariyan, 1999).
   In each promotion mix, companies and organizations have to follow particular processes to achieve the final process i.e. product presentation. This procedure is known as hierarchy of reaction and has several models.

Hierarchy of Reaction
   Many of the hierarchy models were developed in the early 60’s. In the following model, it is assumed that, consumers who choose a product, purchase it according to the hierarchy of information, knowledge, interest, preference, and reassurance. This model has three distinct stages:
   - recognition
   - effectiveness
   - behavior
   All the people subjected to promotion activities such as personal selling may achieve the recognition stage, but few get to effectiveness, and fewer attain the third stage (Bleich, 2006).

AIDA model
   In this model presentation of products begins with efforts to attract potential buyers’ attention. The seller tries to consider the customers’ interest, inspires him, and then attempts to complete the sale process and sell the product. Throughout this procedure, the seller must be prepared to confront potential customers’ implicit or explicit disagreements (Samnejad, 2005).

Status of Ramak Company
   Ramak dairy products company is of the greatest factories that produce dairy products in Iran which was inaugurated in 1995. It started with production of white cheese and has been able to set up different production lines for various products so far. Today Ramak products are different kinds of yoghurt, breakfast cream, chocolate cream, honey cream, carrot jam, confectionary cream, shallot yoghurt, all kinds of cream cheese, pizza cheese, cheese
Research Method

The principle objective of this study is prioritization of promotion methods of Ramak ice-cream using AHP method. Concerning the topic of the study, we have tried to observe the factors and parameters that affect promotion of the product among supermarkets after examining the studies conducted in this area. The research method that we choose depends on the objectives, the nature, and the subject of the study as well as its administrative facilities. Based on its objective, the present essay is an applied and descriptive study whose content and surface validity has been confirmed by handing out questionnaires among supermarket owners and retailers. The statistical society of the study includes all supermarkets and food trailers in Shiraz that Ramak Company would like to influence. The members of this society deal with plenty of goods and various brands every day, and all producers do their best to maximize portion of their products in their stores. Therefore, each producer is expected to know the best and most efficient promotion method in these people’s opinions, and also to know which promotion method can encourage them to buy and position their products in the stores. Dairy products especially ice-cream necessitate a particular environment like special freezers to be kept in. Because of some powerful competitors’ presence in this industry such as Daiti, Mihan, and Kalleh, and their strong influence on stores, most of the limited space of the supermarkets have been dedicated to the freezers of these competitors. Producers like Ramak will not be given their desired space. The instrument used in this study is an expert approved questionnaire that has been given to the sample retailers. The results of the questionnaire has been analyzed by expert choice software. In order to have the most impact and recognize the most adequate promotion method for ice-cream, trailers and supermarket owners were chosen as the statistical society. The total population of the statistical society of this study was 1000 supermarkets, 278 of which represented the sample society according to Grecy and Morgan’s table. The supermarkets in the sample group were selected regionally. In other words, Ramak marketing experts determined that 83 questionnaires should be given to region 1, 83 to region 4, and the rest of the questionnaires i.e. 37 should be distributed in regions 2, 3, and 5. On the whole 278 questionnaires were given to be completed.

Primary concepts of AHP

Models of Analysis Hierarchy Program (AHP) that provide the most famous methods of multi-purpose decision making were innovate by an Iraqi named Thomas L. Saati in the 1970’s (Saati, 2000). This decision making methodology can be used if we encounter several competitors or decision criteria. The relevant criteria could be quantitative or qualitative. This decision making model is on the basis of pair comparisons. The decision maker begins with a decision hierarchy tree that demonstrates the factors being compared and the competition cases being evaluated. Afterwards, some pair comparisons will be performed, and several criteria are used to identify the best option simultaneously through Multiple Criteria Decision Making (MCDM) (Nuttavuthisit, 2010). Application of this method requires four steps:

Step 1) Modeling/Simulating
First, the subject and objective of decision making is converted into a hierarchy of associated elements of decision. Elements of decision consist of the index of decision and the options of decision. We place the main objective of the study as the first level of the hierarchy which is to find the most effective promotion mix among retailers. On the next level, there are three indexes: creation of awareness and attraction of attention, creation of delight, and persuasion to purchase. The third level contains decision options (suggested methods to achieve the best promotion mix) which are represented in the form of joint advertisement methods between the retailer and the producer, promotion, and personal selling. Ultimately, the final research model is indicated in figure 3.
After making a model of hierarchy of decision, the decision maker has to compare elements at each level with their equivalents at the higher level in pairs and calculate their volume. The three methods were first compared based on the index of creation of awareness, and attraction of attention in addressees in pairs; joint advertisement was compared with personal selling, joint advertisement with promotion, and promotion with personal selling. Other indexes were compared in the same way as well.

Step 3) calculation of relative volumes
The next step of AHP is to do necessary calculations for prioritization of every decision element using pair matrixes. The relative volume of each method in the five regions under study is displayed in the following table 4.

Step 4) Combination of relative volumes and calculation of the final volume
We have to multiply relative volume of each element and the volume of the higher element together in order to obtain the final volume and prioritize options of the decision. Following this procedure for each option, the final volume will be calculated. Table 5 indicates the final volume of the methods under investigation in each region.

Consistency Ratio (CR) of the system
Almost all calculations of AHP are done based on the decision maker’s primary judgment that will affect and deviate the last result of calculations in the process of comparison and prioritization. In addition to the importance of AHP in the combination of different levels of decision hierarchy and considering various factors, it is so significant in estimation of Consistency Ratio. It has been proved that the consistency of comparisons is acceptable if CR is lower than 0.1. Otherwise, comparisons must be done again (34). In this study, the CR of all comparisons was lower than 0.1.

Result
According to Figure 3, in this paper we prioritized sales promotion techniques separately according to the AIDA model. We conclude that With regard to the attention factor the highest priority is personal selling and as follow Sales promotion and joint advertisements are in future priorities.

| Table2 - Relative volume of methods regarding awareness and attraction of attention |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
|                                   | Personal selling | Sale promotion | Joint advertisement |
| Section 1                         | 0.229            | 0.507           | 0.264               |
| Section 2                         | 0.341            | 0.363           | 0.297               |
| Section 3                         | 0.425            | 0.256           | 0.320               |
| Section 4                         | 0.354            | 0.313           | 0.313               |
| Section 5                         | 0.547            | 0.238           | 0.215               |
| Average                           | 0.379            | 0.339           | 0.281               |
| prioritization                    | 1                | 2               | 3                   |
Other factor that has been studied is interest and delight. In order to this item, joint advertisement is in the first place and the follow items are sales promotions and personal selling. The last item is act that we find, sales promotion is in the first step and joint ad and personal selling are in follows. In the next step we compare the items of AIDA models with the regard of promotion. Attention gets the highest grade and interest and act are the second and third items. Finally Investigation of all regions in Shiraz indicated that sales promotion methods proved to be the most efficient, and they can contribute to the presence of Ramak ice-cream in the stores. What follows is joint advertisement that can persuade retailers to purchase the product. Promotion method of personal selling is the last efficient method. The seller of Ramak Company can pay frequent visits to the stores, gain enough information about products, gives awareness to the retailers who lack information about the products of Ramak, and guide them to the next stage of decision making.

Discussion

The results of the present study indicate that promotion has the most powerful effect on acceptance of the product by retailers. Furthermore, this group of consumers adds a product to their stores that brings the highest profit, because their market is completely based on profit and loss. But we have to notice that this promotion method is founded on all standards of the model i.e. creation of awareness, attention, and delight and persuasion to purchase the product. The study suggest that Ramak company first decide at which level of decision making the consumers are, then respond accordingly to the gained information. In fact, with a simple survey, we can find out whether retailers know about Ramak ice-cream, and if they do, whether they are at the stage of attention and delight or not. Then we can determine the most adequate method for each region. The most efficient method in five regions of Shiraz is personal selling as Table 3 illustrates.

Table 3- Relative volume of methods regarding creation of tendency and interest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Relative volume of methods regarding creation of tendency and interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal selling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td>0.332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td>0.341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3</td>
<td>0.253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>0.299</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, when the consumers are not well informed about the product, we have to enhance their awareness by personal selling, so that we can guide the consumers through to the next stage (i.e. creation of delight and attention). According to table 4, at this stage the best method is joint advertisement in the store.

Table 4- Relative volume of methods regarding persuasion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Relative volume of methods regarding persuasion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal selling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td>0.197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td>0.380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3</td>
<td>0.237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 4</td>
<td>0.269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 5</td>
<td>0.271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td><strong>0.270</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritization</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Afterwards, it’s time we achieved our last goal (retailers’ purchase). Now, the owner of the store has been informed of all products through personal selling, and joint advertisement has persuaded him/her to buy the product. In these circumstances, the last shot will be promotion as in Table 5.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promotion method</th>
<th>Combination of relative volumes and calculation of the final volume</th>
<th>average</th>
<th>Prioritization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section 5</td>
<td>Section 4</td>
<td>Section 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint advertisement</td>
<td>0.362</td>
<td>0.310</td>
<td>0.335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal selling</td>
<td>0.335</td>
<td>0.306</td>
<td>0.321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale promotion</td>
<td>0.303</td>
<td>0.384</td>
<td>0.344</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The consumer will prefer this brand of ice-cream (Bita) to other brands that are less profiting. It is worthy of attention that application of each of these methods will benefit us if the stimulus amount, cooperation conditions, and time have been measured accurately. The golden key to the accomplishment of promotion methods among trailers is that we simultaneously concentrate on other consumer groups of the market, final customers and inner consumers of the company, who make other channels of distribution. We need some promotion methods out of the stores for final customers, so that we can persuade them to purchase our products although there are some well-known products like Mihan, Kalleh, and Daiti

**Implications and Restrictions**

A very important restriction of this study was the fact that we did not know the exact stage of decision making that retailers of each region were at, and we had to give the entire sample group the same questionnaires. Moreover, we did not investigate all kinds, of promotion methods among retailers, and focused merely on a few identified ones. In this study, several methods of promotion were evaluated regarding each option; we have not focused on each method in relation with each option separately. Another restriction was that criteria and standards of every method were not identified.

With the restrictions mentioned above, the following suggestions have been offered to eliminate them:

- Investigation of retailers’ level in decision hierarchy about the product
- Full inspection of standards of stimulus amount, cooperation conditions, and the time of the plan for each promotion method
- Determination of the best promotion method for final customers in ice-cream industry
- Investigation of Ramak ice-cream position among retailers in comparison with other competitors
- Evaluation of effectiveness of a wide range of joint advertisement in the stores separately
- Evaluation of effectiveness of different promotion methods on retailers separately
- Investigation of various methods of public relations in ice-cream industry to attract retailers’ attention
- Investigation of prioritization of promotion methods in marketing industry and services

**Difficulties of the study**

This essay is one of the first studies that attempts to prioritize promotion methods in a particular industry among retailers. Therefore, the researcher has confronted many problems such as:

- Lack of enough information on promotion methods and consequently facing problems in providing the literature of the study
- Preparing questionnaires in the form of hierarchy program that can prioritize methods and standards
- Basic routine difficulties of field studies including the necessity of explaining the content of questionnaires to the retailers, and the long time spent on this process due to the dispersion of stores throughout Shiraz
- Natural inadequacy of research methods based on questionnaires that can affect generalizing the results
- Lack of potential respond to the questionnaires which may lead to limitations in generalization of the results
References


