

## Developing a Model of Factors Affecting the Sales Development of Kalleh's FMCG Products with a Shopper Marketing Approach

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop a model of factors influencing the sales development of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) for Kalleh Company, employing a shopper marketing approach. The research is exploratory in nature and utilizes qualitative data. It adopts an applied-developmental approach in terms of its objective and employs a qualitative methodology, using thematic analysis as its strategy. The participant population for the qualitative phase includes theoretical experts (experienced academic faculty in management and marketing) and practical experts (managers and consultants at Kalleh Dairy Company). A combination of purposive and snowball sampling methods was used to select participants. The sample size in the qualitative phase was determined based on theoretical saturation, achieved after conducting semi-structured interviews with 15 experts. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. In the qualitative phase, the identification of primary and secondary themes for model development was performed using thematic analysis with MAXQDA 2020 software. The results indicate that the main themes of the model for factors affecting the sales development of FMCG products with a shopper marketing approach comprise five key dimensions: shopper behavior and insights, in-store marketing strategies, supply chain and distribution management, brand and marketing communications, and brand sales strategy. These findings provide a comprehensive framework for enhancing the sales performance of Kalleh's FMCG products through a shopper-centric approach.

**KEYWORDS:** Sales Development, Fast-Moving Consumer Goods, Kalleh Company, Shopper Marketing, Thematic Analysis

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## 1. Introduction

Increasing product sales is the primary goal in the retail industry. Achieving higher sales depends not only on the quality of the product but also on its packaging and presentation. In the retail environment, the arrangement of a product can significantly influence whether it is purchased or not (Hendrasukma & Harnanti, 2023). Many purchase decisions are made at the point of sale, making professional shopper marketing a powerful tool for significantly boosting sales (Gropel & Klein, 2006). Approximately half of the touchpoints occur during the purchase stage, with the other half occurring in the pre-purchase and post-purchase stages. Research indicates that over time, the percentage of decisions made by shoppers at the point of sale has significantly increased (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016). According to studies by the reputable POPAI institute, in-store purchase decisions have risen sharply in recent years, with only 24% of purchase decisions made before entering the store, while 76% are made or altered at the point of sale. This highlights the critical role of retailers and manufacturers in influencing shoppers (Bakhshi et al., 2023).

Shopper marketing is defined as a "field of marketing that focuses on the customer experience and the customer journey within the store." It centers on the consumer's path to purchasing a product, from initial exposure to attention and final purchase, and is distinct from retail marketing, which primarily focuses on attracting customers to the store (Shankar, 2014). Shopper marketing is not limited to in-store marketing activities; it is part of a broader integrated marketing approach that considers the specific needs and desires of a "shopper" to drive consumption. Shopper insights collected by marketers include considerations of shoppers' needs, preferred retail environments, and in-store behaviors. These insights focus on the process from the moment a consumer first considers purchasing a product to the selection of that product (Matusovicova & Stankova, 2022).

The concept of shopper marketing and its various tools has garnered significant attention in recent years. Shopper marketing is a broad concept, and many studies have delved deeply into specific aspects of it. However, in the real world, customers encounter a multitude of these tools within the store environment. The success or failure of products today often hinges on what happens on the shop floor (Underhill, 2009). There has been a notable increase in shopper stimuli, such as in-store floor advertisements and dedicated television channels, as seen in retailers like Walmart and Target. These efforts are considered effective because they influence the final stage of the selection process, known as the point of sale. Procter & Gamble refers to this as the "FMOT" or "First Moment of Truth" (Nelson & Ellison, 2005).

Manufacturers and retailers spend millions of dollars annually on in-store shopper communications. In Iran, while the number of retail businesses is substantial, the history of professional retailing is relatively short, and there is a significant need for operational knowledge in this field. According to the head of the Center for Guilds and Merchants Affairs of the Ministry of Industry, Mine, and Trade, there are currently 3 million commercial units and 8,000 trade unions in the country. With an estimated employment rate of 2.5 people per commercial unit, over 6 million individuals are employed in this sector. The sheer number of people employed in this field—approximately 6 million—underscores the immense importance of addressing scientific and modern approaches to foster further growth in this industry. Given the significance of shopper marketing, it can be considered one of the most critical areas of study within Iran's retail sector (Bakhshi et al., 2023).

As Kalleh Company is a key player in Iran's dairy industry, a vital subset of the food and processing industries, and given that dairy consumption is essential for public health, a decline in dairy product consumption could raise concerns about health issues such as osteoporosis, tooth decay, and diabetes. Due to the critical role of dairy products in nutrition and public health, their production and consumption have consistently been a focus for policymakers and planners in the country. This study seeks to answer the following research question: What is the model of factors influencing the development of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) products of Kalleh Company using a shopper marketing approach?

## **2. Theoretical Foundations and Research Background**

### **Shopper Marketing**

Shopper marketing is a marketing approach that focuses on consumer behavior and decision-making at the point of purchase. This strategy aims to influence shoppers at the moment they make purchase decisions, whether in physical or online stores. Unlike traditional marketing, which emphasizes brand awareness and loyalty, shopper marketing concentrates on the shopping experience, in-store interactions, and converting visitors into actual buyers. Shopper marketing is defined as "a field of marketing that focuses on the customer experience and the customer journey within the store." It centers on the consumer's path to purchasing a product, from initial exposure to attention and final purchase, and is distinct from retail marketing, which primarily focuses on attracting customers to the store (Shankar, 2014).

### **Point of Purchase**

The purchase decision is a cognitive process that guides the consumer from identifying a need, generating options, and selecting a specific product or brand, influencing buyer behavior. As customers are considered the "kings of the market" with high expectations, needs, and behaviors, their satisfaction is crucial for store profitability (Kansal, 2021; Dunablan et al., 2018). The point of purchase is the area where marketers and retailers plan promotional activities around consumer products. It involves product promotion or display in an appealing manner to influence customer purchasing decisions at the point of sale (Bialkova et al., 2020).

### **Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG)**

Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) refer to products that sell quickly, in large volumes, and typically at relatively low prices. These products are often non-durable and consumed rapidly, such as packaged food, beverages, hygiene products, detergents, over-the-counter medications, and certain consumer electronics. Their key characteristics include high inventory turnover and a short shelf life due to consistent consumer demand and daily needs. Profitability for FMCG products is derived from high sales volumes rather than high profit margins.

### **Literature Review**

Mah Avarpour et al. (2023) in a study titled *Identifying Shopper Behavior Characteristics and Purchase Decision-Making Based on Augmented Reality Marketing* identified 92 selective codes

and five sub-themes—problem recognition, information search, information evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior—categorized into three main themes: pre-purchase decision-making, during-purchase decision-making, and post-purchase behavior. The use of augmented reality technology enables a more precise and comprehensive identification of shopper behavior and purchase decision-making processes through advanced and reliable marketing methods.

Bakhshi et al. (2023) in a study titled *In-Store Marketing: Framework, Tools, and Applications* defined concepts related to in-store marketing, including promotion, merchandising, visual merchandising, displays, atmospherics, and signage, and explored their research domains. The study highlighted the overlaps and commonalities between these concepts and in-store marketing, and introduced the most commonly used in-store marketing tools. In-store marketing is a broad concept encompassing various tools, and understanding its dimensions is critical for researchers and practitioners in the retail sector. The effective use of these tools, given their significant impact on sales and customer experience, can enhance retail business performance.

Veli Pouri et al. (2022) in a study titled *Designing a Sensory Marketing Model, Antecedents, and Strategies in the FMCG Industry* found that the final research model consists of six main categories: intervening conditions (organizational and brand factors), contextual factors (economic, socio-cultural, and technological factors), causal conditions (organizational, customer, and competitive environment factors), core phenomenon (sensory aspects: taste, smell, sight, touch, and hearing), strategies (sensory marketing campaigns, brand equity, customer knowledge), and consequences (financial, competitive, customer, and branding outcomes). The model also identified specific sub-categories and indicators relevant to the dairy industry.

Kantawoang et al. (2024) in a study titled *Factors Affecting Online Fashion Shoppers' Purchase Attractiveness in Thailand: A Shopper Marketing Approach* examined factors influencing purchase attractiveness among university students. The independent variables included functional value, personal innovation, the usefulness of online reviews, and fashion trends. Using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis, the study found that only the usefulness of online reviews and personal innovation had a positive impact on purchase attractiveness, with a significance level of 0.01.

Hendrasukma and Harnanti (2023) in a study titled *Analysis of the Application of Design Principles in Point-of-Purchase (POP) Displays as an Effort to Attract Consumer Attention in Retail Spaces* stated that increasing product sales is a primary goal in retail. Sales depend not only on product quality but also on packaging and presentation. In a retail environment, product arrangement can significantly influence sales outcomes.

Bleasdale et al. (2021) conducted a study titled *Examining Taste Testing and Point-of-Purchase Prompting as Strategies for Promoting Healthy Food Choices*. Data on loyalty program implementation showed that all food trucks followed manual procedures. Approximately one-third of surveyed customers accepted a healthy sample, with the majority rating it positively. However, the effect size indicated consistent changes between individual time points, increasing from baseline to intervention and sustained post-intervention. The change from baseline to post-intervention corresponded to a medium effect size.

### 3. Research Methodology

The present study is exploratory in nature and employs qualitative data. The objective of this research is to propose a model of factors influencing the sales development of fast-moving consumer goods of Kaleh Company, adopting a buyer marketing approach. The participant

population for the qualitative section consists of theoretical experts (including distinguished university faculty members in management and marketing) and experiential experts (managers and consultants of Kalleh Dairy Company). The criterion for selecting the qualitative statistical population includes faculty members with a doctoral degree who specialize and teach in the field of marketing. The sampling method utilized in this section follows a qualitative approach, specifically the "snowball sampling" technique. This method entails each interviewee recommending one or more additional knowledgeable specialists or experts in the research area to the researcher. The sample size is determined by achieving theoretical saturation, meaning that interviews with theoretical and experiential experts continued until theoretical saturation was reached. This was attained after conducting semi-structured interviews with 15 experts. The data collection method employed was semi-structured interviews. To design the model, the identification of primary and secondary themes was conducted using the theme analysis technique with the Maxqda2020 software.

#### 4. Findings

The data analysis was conducted based on 15 interview files. Subsequently, through three stages of coding—open coding, sub-theme coding, and main theme coding—the main and sub-themes were extracted. These three stages are precisely illustrated in Figure 1. Ultimately, for the present study, a model titled "Factors Influencing the Sales Development of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods with a Buyer Marketing Approach" is proposed. The coding stages are as follows:

1. **Open Coding:** At this stage, the interview files were collected and categorized by the researcher. It is noteworthy that in this study, 15 interview files were collected and coded.
2. **Sub-Themes:** Sub-theme coding is performed when the researcher assigns a code to a paragraph or section of the text after reviewing it. At this stage, multiple codes may be assigned to a single section or paragraph of the text.
3. **Main Themes:** At this stage, the extracted codes are displayed in the Code System section, allowing for the categorization and merging of codes. This window represents the selective coding (main themes), where codes can be categorized, grouped, and organized to create a structured diagram.

The main themes (initial organizing themes or dimensions) of the model for factors influencing the sales development of fast-moving consumer goods with a buyer marketing approach are as follows:

- **Main Theme 1:** Shopper Behavior and Insights
- **Main Theme 2:** In-Store Marketing Strategies
- **Main Theme 3:** Supply Chain and Distribution
- **Main Theme 4:** Brand and Marketing Communications
- **Main Theme 5:** Brand Sales Strategy

Thus, the thematic network of the model for factors influencing the sales development of fast-moving consumer goods with a buyer marketing approach is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1** - Thematic Network of the Model for Factors Influencing the Sales Development of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods with a Buyer Marketing Approach

One of the reliability indicators in qualitative research is the evaluation of two or more documents in terms of their reference to a specific indicator. The Maxqda software is equipped with such a capability. The reliability coefficient can be calculated using one or more tests, and these tests can be applied at a single point in time or across multiple instances.

Therefore, for each of the selected themes in the present study, the level of agreement among the interviewees is specified in Table 4-8, with an acceptable threshold of over 60%. Specifically, the intersection of the row and column for each interviewee with themselves naturally yields a value of 1. However, the column of a given interviewee must be compared with those of other interviewees. For example, Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 2 have a value of 0.67 (67%) for the selected theme. This indicates that Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 2 share 67% agreement on the selected theme. The same approach can be applied to interpret other rows and columns. Given that the level of agreement among interviewees exceeds 60%, it can be concluded that theoretical saturation has been achieved.

Table 1 - Correlation Matrix of Interviewees for Themes

Interviewees	Res0 1	Res0 2	Res0 3	Res0 4	Res0 5	Res0 6	Res0 7	Res0 8	Res0 9	Res1 0	Res1 1	Res1 2	Res1 3	Res1 4	Res1 5
Res01	1.00	0.67	0.67	0.65	0.66	0.65	0.83	0.65	0.69	0.62	0.63	0.73	0.74	0.65	0.69
Res02	0.67	1.00	0.60	0.66	0.63	0.68	0.61	0.68	0.68	0.63	0.79	0.69	0.87	0.71	0.77
Res03	0.67	0.60	1.00	0.69	0.82	0.73	0.68	0.69	0.60	0.61	0.69	0.82	0.62	0.69	0.66
Res04	0.65	0.66	0.69	1.00	0.65	0.65	0.76	0.66	0.66	0.65	0.60	0.65	0.60	0.65	0.68
Res05	0.66	0.63	0.82	0.65	1.00	0.65	0.69	0.61	0.69	0.62	0.66	0.83	0.63	0.62	0.68
Res06	0.65	0.68	0.73	0.65	0.65	1.00	0.69	0.66	0.62	0.69	0.68	0.61	0.68	0.77	0.73
Res07	0.83	0.61	0.68	0.76	0.69	0.69	1.00	0.72	0.63	0.68	0.72	0.66	0.67	0.65	0.67
Res08	0.65	0.68	0.69	0.66	0.61	0.66	0.72	1.00	0.62	0.69	0.85	0.68	0.68	0.89	0.73
Res09	0.69	0.68	0.60	0.66	0.69	0.62	0.63	0.62	1.00	0.61	0.64	0.63	0.60	0.62	0.68
Res10	0.62	0.63	0.61	0.65	0.62	0.69	0.68	0.69	0.61	1.00	0.67	0.68	0.61	0.69	0.63
Res11	0.63	0.79	0.69	0.60	0.66	0.68	0.72	0.85	0.64	0.67	1.00	0.68	0.79	0.85	0.79
Res12	0.73	0.69	0.82	0.65	0.83	0.61	0.66	0.68	0.63	0.68	0.68	1.00	0.69	0.68	0.65
Res13	0.74	0.87	0.62	0.60	0.63	0.68	0.67	0.68	0.60	0.61	0.79	0.69	1.00	0.75	0.85
Res14	0.65	0.71	0.69	0.65	0.62	0.77	0.65	0.89	0.62	0.69	0.85	0.68	0.75	1.00	0.77
Res15	0.69	0.77	0.66	0.68	0.68	0.73	0.67	0.73	0.68	0.63	0.79	0.65	0.85	0.77	1.00

Additionally, the extracted codes for two files, Respon15 and Respon13, were reported. Based on the findings, a Two Cases Model diagram was drawn for Interviewees 13 and 15. According to the diagram, the codes positioned in the center, connected by bidirectional arrows, represent codes that are common between the two aforementioned interviewees, with both having referred to these codes. Codes located on the right side are those mentioned solely by Interviewee 15 and not by Interviewee 13, and vice versa for Interviewee 13. Furthermore, each arrow is accompanied by a value reported by the software, indicating the frequency of that code among the coded segments. According to the model, Interviewee 15 agrees with Interviewee 13 on 85% of the codes, thus indicating that theoretical saturation has been achieved.

In the present study, five main themes were identified within the framework of the model for factors influencing the sales development of fast-moving consumer goods with a buyer marketing approach, as reported in the aforementioned figure. Based on the findings, among the extracted codes, the highest frequency pertains to the purchase frequency of dairy products (daily, weekly), the percentage of purchases due to discounts and promotions, the impact of health claims (e.g., "low-fat," "organic"), the percentage of sales for each product category (milk, yogurt, cheese), the acceptance rate of new products, and price sensitivity among different buyer groups. The purchase frequency of dairy products (daily, weekly) forms the core of the pyramid, while the acceptance rate of new products and price sensitivity among different buyer groups are positioned at the apex. The percentage of sales for each product category (milk, yogurt, cheese) lies at the base of the pyramid, and the percentage of purchases due to discounts and promotions, as well as the impact of health claims (e.g., "low-fat," "organic"), are situated on the faces of the pyramid within the model for factors influencing the sales development of fast-moving consumer goods with a buyer marketing approach.

## 5. Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The results of this study have identified five main themes (initial organizing dimensions) as key factors influencing the sales development of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) with a buyer marketing approach: Shopper Behavior and Insights, In-Store Marketing Strategies, Supply Chain and Distribution Management, Brand and Marketing Communications, and Brand Sales Strategy. These themes operate in an integrated manner, providing a comprehensive framework for enhancing FMCG sales. Each theme is discussed below, drawing on existing literature and the study's findings.

**Shopper Behavior and Insights** was identified as one of the most critical factors in FMCG sales development. This theme emphasizes the importance of a deep understanding of buyers' needs, preferences, and behavioral patterns at points of sale. The findings align with Shaw et al. (2020), who demonstrated that precise insights into shopper behavior, including motivational and decision-making factors at the moment of purchase, can enhance the effectiveness of marketing strategies. For instance, analyzing shopper data through digital technologies, such as online or offline behavior analysis, enables companies to offer personalized recommendations. However, challenges such as the complexity of shopper behavior and cultural diversity across markets may complicate the design of these strategies.

**In-Store Marketing Strategies**, such as product placement, in-store advertising, and instant discounts, play a pivotal role in attracting shoppers' attention and boosting sales. This finding is consistent with Kotler and Keller (2016), who highlighted the importance of designing the shopping experience at the point of sale. FMCG companies and startups adopting a buyer marketing approach that leverage innovative technologies, such as digital displays or augmented reality-based promotions, can enhance the shopping experience. However, implementing these strategies requires investment in store infrastructure and coordination with retail partners, which may pose challenges for smaller companies.

**Supply Chain and Distribution Management** was identified as a critical factor in ensuring timely product availability for shoppers. This aligns with Chopra and Meindl (2018), who showed that an efficient supply chain can increase shopper satisfaction and improve sales. In the FMCG industry with a buyer marketing approach, where products have a short shelf life and high demand, optimizing the supply chain—such as reducing delivery times and managing inventory—is essential. However, limitations such as logistical costs and market volatility may disrupt this process.

**Brand and Marketing Communications**, including targeted advertising and brand storytelling, play a significant role in creating differentiation and building shopper trust. This finding is consistent with Aaker (2019), who emphasized the importance of brand identity in fostering loyalty. FMCG companies adopting a buyer marketing approach that utilize integrated marketing communications (IMC) can deliver cohesive messages to shoppers, enhancing their impact. However, intense competition in the FMCG market and the diversity of communication channels may complicate the design of these strategies.

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**Brand Sales Strategy**, encompassing competitive pricing, loyalty programs, and sales promotions, was identified as a key factor in sales development. This aligns with Kumar and Singh (2021), who demonstrated that targeted sales strategies can increase conversion rates and customer retention. In the FMCG industry with a buyer marketing approach, offering targeted discounts and data-driven loyalty programs can lead to increased sales. However, balancing price reductions with profitability remains a key challenge in this domain.

These themes operate in an integrated manner, and the success of FMCG sales development depends on their coordination. Limitations such as limited financial resources, technological complexities, and diverse shopper behaviors may hinder the effective implementation of these strategies. Nevertheless, the use of digital technologies and data analytics can help overcome these challenges.

**Conclusion:** In summary, this study identified five key themes as critical factors influencing FMCG sales development with a buyer marketing approach: Shopper Behavior and Insights, In-Store Marketing Strategies, Supply Chain and Distribution Management, Brand and Marketing Communications, and Brand Sales Strategy. These themes provide a comprehensive framework for designing effective marketing strategies in the FMCG industry with a buyer marketing approach. The findings suggest that FMCG companies, particularly startups, can enhance their sales by focusing on deep shopper insights, optimizing supply chains, strengthening brand identity, and leveraging digital technologies. This study contributes to the buyer marketing literature and offers a practical model for sales development in the FMCG industry. The results underscore the importance of integrated marketing strategies and the use of shopper data to enhance competitiveness.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that FMCG companies with a buyer marketing approach utilize data analytics tools, such as artificial intelligence and customer behavior analysis, to gain deeper insights into shoppers' needs and preferences and offer personalized recommendations. Investment in digital technologies, such as interactive displays and location-based advertising, is advised to enhance the shopping experience at points of sale. Companies should optimize supply chain processes to ensure timely product availability and reduce logistical costs. The use of integrated marketing communications to deliver cohesive messages and strengthen brand identity is recommended. Implementing data-driven loyalty programs and targeted discounts to increase conversion rates and customer retention is also advised.

### **Future Research**

Future studies could explore the impact of contextual variables, such as company size, product type, and market cultural characteristics, on FMCG sales development with a buyer marketing approach. Investigating the role of emerging technologies, such as generative artificial intelligence and blockchain, in improving buyer marketing strategies is recommended. Examining the mediating role of variables such as customer satisfaction or loyalty in the relationship between identified factors and sales development could provide deeper insights into this domain.

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**ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

Authenticity of the texts, honesty and fidelity has been observed.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Author/s confirmed no conflict of interest.