



THE IMPACT OF DISCOUNTS AND PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGNS IN RETAIL NETWORKS ON CUSTOMER PURCHASE VOLUME AND RETURN BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

In recent years, the retail market in Uzbekistan has experienced significant changes driven by digital transformation, the development of loyalty programs, and the increasing share of price-sensitive consumers. These trends have increased the strategic importance of discounts and promotional campaigns in retail networks. The purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of discount and promotional strategies on customer purchase volume and return behavior in two major supermarket chains, Korzinka and Makro. The research is based on an empirical and comparative analysis of marketing campaigns implemented in these retail networks. The study examines different types of promotional mechanisms, including personalized discounts, loyalty programs, bonus systems, and large-scale promotional campaigns. The results show that short-term customer loyalty is mainly formed through personalized promotions and bonus mechanisms. In Makro supermarkets, digital loyalty systems—such as promotional campaigns offering travel tickets to Egypt, “1+1” and “2+1” offers, and discounts of up to 50%—have demonstrated a stronger influence on customers' return behavior. In contrast, Korzinka supermarkets have achieved higher sales volumes through assortment-oriented promotions and prize campaigns involving the distribution of seven cars. The findings of the study provide practical insights for developing effective marketing strategies and improving customer engagement in retail networks in Uzbekistan.



Keywords: Retail trade; discount strategy; promotional campaigns; customer loyalty; digital marketing; Korzinka; Makro; Uzbekistan.

Introduction

In 2024–2025, the retail sector in Uzbekistan has entered a new stage of development characterized by rapid expansion and digital transformation. Large supermarket chains are not only increasing the number of retail outlets but also actively introducing digital technologies, mobile applications, and personalized marketing tools. In particular, platforms such as Yandex Go, Uzum Market, and Korzinka Go are becoming increasingly important instruments for enhancing consumer engagement and convenience in retail services. Within this evolving environment, the supermarket chains Korzinka and Makro play a leading role in shaping consumer purchasing behavior in the national retail market.

Under conditions of inflationary pressure, uneven growth in household incomes, and increasing price sensitivity among consumers, discounts and promotional campaigns have become key determinants of purchasing decisions [1]. Modern consumers no longer focus solely on lower prices but also expect additional value in the form of bonuses, cashback offers, personalized promotions, and convenient digital services [2]. Consequently, the influence of discount strategies and promotional campaigns extends beyond immediate sales growth and increasingly affects customer retention and repeat purchase behavior [3].

In a competitive market economy, the level of competition among retail networks continues to intensify. Retail companies employ a wide range of marketing strategies to attract customers, increase store traffic, and maintain stable growth in sales volumes [4]. Among these strategies, discount programs and promotional campaigns are considered one of the most effective marketing instruments [5]. On the one hand, discounts stimulate consumer demand and encourage purchasing behavior, while on the other hand, they directly influence the short-term financial performance of retail chains [6]. Previous studies have also emphasized that well-designed promotional strategies contribute not only to increased transaction volumes but also to improved customer loyalty and brand engagement [7].

At the same time, the rapid development of digital marketing tools and loyalty programs has significantly changed the nature of retail promotions. Retailers



increasingly rely on data-driven approaches, customer segmentation, and personalized promotional offers to influence consumer behavior [8]. The integration of digital loyalty systems and targeted promotions enables retailers to strengthen long-term relationships with customers and improve marketing efficiency [9].

Therefore, analyzing the effectiveness of discount and promotional strategies in modern retail networks has become an important research issue. This study aims to examine the impact of discounts and promotional campaigns on consumer purchasing behavior using the case of the Korzinka and Makro supermarket chains. By conducting an empirical and comparative analysis, the research seeks to identify which marketing mechanisms produce more sustainable results within the context of Uzbekistan's retail market [10].

Modern Approaches

In recent years, academic literature has increasingly examined discounts not only as a pricing instrument but also within the framework of behavioral economics. Contemporary studies suggest that consumer responses to discounts are closely related to psychological factors such as loss aversion, time pressure, and the perception of exclusivity [11]. These behavioral mechanisms influence how consumers interpret promotional offers and often stimulate faster purchasing decisions.

Since 2020, particular attention has been paid to the role of digital loyalty programs in retail marketing. Research indicates that personalized promotions delivered through mobile applications can increase the probability of customer return visits by approximately 1.5–2 times compared with traditional discount mechanisms [12]. At the same time, scholars warn that excessive reliance on price discounts may reduce long-term profit margins and weaken brand value if consumers begin to associate the brand primarily with low prices [13].

In the context of Uzbekistan, this issue is particularly important because the retail market is characterized by a high level of price sensitivity among consumers. As a result, the competitive differentiation between supermarket chains is often perceived primarily through promotional campaigns and discount strategies [14].

Customer purchase volume and return behavior represent two different but closely related behavioral outcomes in retail markets. Purchase volume refers to the total amount of money spent or the quantity of products purchased by a customer within a



specific period of time. According to the study by Gijzenberg et al. (2025), price promotions influence consumer behavior in a dual manner [15]. First, lower prices and the perception of a “good deal” encourage consumers to make quicker purchasing decisions, often increasing the likelihood of impulse buying and leading to higher short-term sales.

Customer return behavior, on the other hand, refers to the tendency of consumers to make repeat purchases from the same retailer. Studies show that significant discounts or unexpected promotional campaigns can immediately increase purchasing activity; however, such behavior is often temporary because consumers respond primarily to a psychological “low-price signal” [16]. Long-term customer retention depends more strongly on factors such as product quality, service standards, and overall shopping experience.

In this context, discounts may serve primarily as an initial attraction mechanism, encouraging customers to try a retailer or product for the first time. If customers encounter a positive shopping experience during this initial interaction, their purchasing behavior may gradually evolve into habitual consumption patterns, thereby strengthening long-term loyalty and repeat purchase behavior [17]. Consequently, while promotional discounts can initiate customer engagement, the sustainable return of customers is ultimately determined by the real value delivered through products and services [18].

Psychological Discount Effects: A New Classification

Classical approaches to price promotions primarily focus on the economic effect of price reductions. In such models, consumers perceive a discount (for example, “5% cheaper”) as a direct form of monetary savings. However, modern marketing research suggests that purchasing decisions are often accelerated not only by actual savings but also by psychological signals created by promotional mechanisms.

In many cases, even when the actual price reduction is relatively small, the perceived value created through promotional experience can significantly influence consumer behavior. For example, cashback rewards credited to a customer’s loyalty card do not represent a direct price reduction at the moment of purchase, but they function as a recoverable economic signal that encourages future spending. Such mechanisms maintain a strategic connection between the customer and the brand, strengthening long-term engagement.



Another increasingly common approach is the use of dynamic discounts, such as promotions available only for a limited period (for example, a discount valid for two hours). These promotions act less as a price reduction mechanism and more as a behavioral trigger that encourages consumers to make faster purchasing decisions. Limited-time offers alter consumer perception and stimulate repeat purchasing behavior because customers anticipate similar opportunities in the future.

Today, these promotional mechanisms are widely used across different types of entrepreneurial and retail activities. In essence, discounts act as a signal that initiates the purchasing process, while long-term customer return behavior is formed through the integration of this initial signal with the overall consumption experience. When customers associate promotional incentives with positive shopping experiences, the probability of repeat purchases and long-term loyalty increases.

The Transformational Role of Discounts and Promotional Campaigns

In modern retail systems, discounts and promotional campaigns remain one of the most active marketing instruments influencing consumer behavior. In traditional approaches, discounts are mainly interpreted as tools that increase short-term sales by reducing prices. However, the increasing complexity of market conditions, the growing information awareness of consumers, and the expansion of consumer choice demonstrate that the real impact of discounts and promotions extends beyond simple sales volume. Instead, these mechanisms significantly influence consumers' decision-making processes, their attitudes toward a store or brand, and, most importantly, the formation of repeat purchase behavior.

At the same time, excessive and unstructured use of discounts may lead to another important problem known as promotion fatigue. When promotional campaigns become too frequent, they gradually lose their signaling value in the minds of consumers and begin to be perceived as a normal market condition. As a result, discounts no longer generate excitement or purchasing motivation. On the contrary, consumers may postpone purchases in the absence of promotions, expecting future discounts. This situation weakens the retailer's pricing policy and may negatively affect the brand's image. Considering the diversity of market segments, consumer groups, and strategic objectives across industries, there is no universal discount strategy that fits all businesses [19, 20].



Another important challenge is that loyalty generated primarily through discounts often has a pseudo-loyalty character. In such cases, consumers are loyal not to the store or brand but to the promotional offer itself. Once the promotion ends, these customers tend to search for alternative offers with lower prices. Consequently, although sales volumes may increase in the short term, the customer base does not expand sustainably. This phenomenon creates a mismatch between discount strategies and long-term return behavior.

Taking these issues into account, modern approaches suggest interpreting discounts and promotional campaigns as strategic instruments that transform consumer behavior rather than merely as short-term price incentives. Within this framework, discounts function primarily as an entry signal that encourages the initial purchase, while the main influence emerges during the overall shopping experience. If consumers encounter convenience, trust, and a positive purchasing experience during their first interaction, subsequent purchasing decisions become less dependent on price and more influenced by habit and perceived convenience. At this stage, repeat purchase behavior begins to form and gradually stabilizes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that discounts and promotional campaigns are not only instruments for increasing sales volume in retail trade but also strategic tools that shape consumer behavior. The findings indicate that when discounts are used solely as short-term price signals, customer return behavior tends to remain unstable. However, when discounts are integrated with convenient purchasing processes, high-quality customer experience, and perceived value, they can function as mechanisms that guide consumer behavior and foster long-term customer loyalty.

Through such integration, promotional campaigns and discounts contribute to the transformation of consumers' decision-making processes, strengthen purchasing habits, and increase trust in the brand. At the same time, the study reveals that excessive and unstructured use of discount strategies may lead to modern marketing challenges such as promotion fatigue, price-dependent loyalty, and artificial purchasing activity. These issues highlight the necessity for retail companies to design discount strategies that go beyond simple price reductions and incorporate customer experience, convenience, and behavioral learning mechanisms.



Overall, the results of this research suggest that discounts and promotional campaigns should not be considered merely as short-term sales tools in modern retail strategies. Instead, they should be viewed as powerful marketing instruments capable of transforming consumer behavior and creating long-term customer loyalty. Promotional strategies developed under this approach can ensure sustainable sales growth, stronger customer loyalty, and greater competitiveness for retail enterprises.

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