

Understanding the Impact of Targeted Advertising on Consumer Behaviour in Bengaluru

Shrey S. Shah

Student, Harrow International School Bengaluru

Abstract—The research illustrates how targeted advertisements impact consumer buying behaviour among students aged 11 to 18 in a self-contained boarding school environment. The research conducted a field experiment to analyze purchasing patterns before and after the implementation of 4 printed media advertisements (PMA). Specific factors investigated include the effectiveness of PMA, consumer perception on pricing, and daily and weekly purchasing frequency. The sample for the experiment consisted of 131 participants, 81 male and 50 female. With over 430,000 advertising agencies globally [1], understanding consumer behaviour for creating effective advertisements is important. Theoretical frameworks including Pavlovian conditioning, Veblen's conspicuous consumption, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and other related theories and models, serves as a foundation for understanding mechanisms that influence consumer decisions. These frameworks were also the basis of the 4 advertisements placed in the tuck shop. Results indicate a significant increase in sales of advertised products, products with higher prices are more popular and consumers often purchase products after repeatedly viewing the same advertisements. The research offers insights on advertising effectiveness in school settings which emphasizes how market strategies need to be tailored to specific consumer segments.

I. INTRODUCTION

Consumer behaviour in advertising, refers to the study of how a consumer engages with a brand during the purchasing process. This involves various decision-making processes like a consumer's initial reaction, feelings and emotional response before and after encountering an advertisement, and how this may affect their choices [2]. With over 430,000 advertising agencies worldwide [1], advertisements have been a key influence to our daily lives and an increasing number of people are exposed to them. Hence, it is important to understand how advertisements impact the buying behaviour of consumers.

Although consumer demographics vary by socioeconomic status, cultural background, age,

gender, personal experiences and various other factors. The behaviour of consumers is relatively similar as it predominantly depends on the layout, message and appeal of an advertisement [2]. The goal of this study is to examine the behaviour of students in a controlled boarding school environment, as their buying decisions are less likely to be hampered by external factors such as parental involvement, allowing an accurate assessment for an advertisement's effectiveness. The presence of a tuck shop in this school builds a self-contained market that is beneficial because buying behaviour is easier to track.

1.1 Research Question

To what extent does targeted advertisement in a tuck shop within an International School in Bengaluru affect the buying behaviour of students (from ages 11 to 18)?

1.2 Research Objectives

- Assess the purchasing frequency of specific products in the tuck shop.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of advertisements in increasing the revenue of purchased products.
- Analyse the success of printed media advertisements.
- Enhance the tuck shop offerings based on the research data.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theories and Models

Pavlov (1897) the pavlovian model is a customer-centric theory based on classical conditioning. It argues that individuals have pre-existing stimuli that explains their purchasing decisions. Hence, it could mean that consumers have a strong internal sensation for taking action. An example is when people hear the word "sale" it can represent consumer urge and drive

to purchase an item even if it's deemed unnecessary. Reward systems is also a notable marketing and sales strategy relating to the pavlovian model. In summary, this also means the model suggests that students may have developed conditioned responses to promotional media, hence, by placing printed media advertisements (PMA) in habitual places—such as outside the cafeteria—can allow the reinforcement of buying behaviour [8].

Veblen (1899) established the theory of leisure class claiming that people purchase goods to show wealth and status. The demand for high-priced products will increase if the product is known for its prestige and luxury. This was derived through his economical observations in capitalist societies and called it “conspicuous consumption”. By purchasing non-essential items Veblen believed it to be a visible sign of wealth distinguishing the working class and the upper class [11].

Maslow (1943) hierarchy of needs is a theory based on a person's 5 main requirements—physiological, security, belonging, self-esteem and self-actualization. Maslow found that the lower priorities need to be fulfilled before the higher priority, as lower priorities are basic needs that ensure survival, while higher priorities are more personally associated. In the context of consumer psychology, this could show how brands that address or frame their products as basic needs can create a sense of obligation among consumers altering consumers' buying behaviour by making them feel motivated to purchase a certain product or service [5].

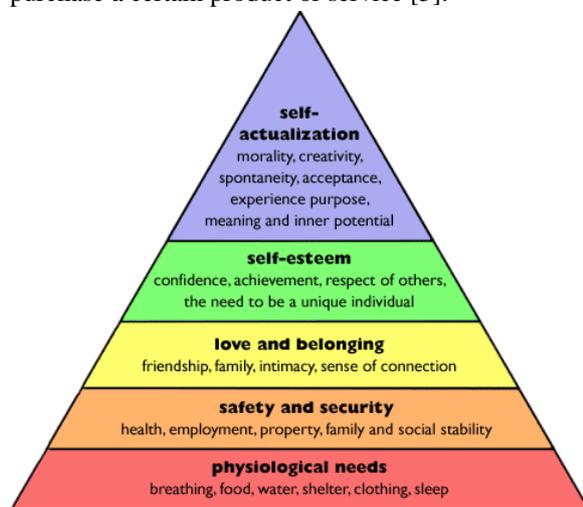


Figure 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs [5]

Hawkins Stern (1962) impulse buying theory claims that consumers will always make rational, systematic

and informative decisions. However, external forces can introduce impulsive buying behaviours among consumers. He further claimed that marketers can persuade consumers to purchase excessively. Hawkin's study also categorised the different types of impulsive buying. Pure impulse is the buying behaviour when a consumer purchases something unusual (not considered a routine item) and visuals play a role in convincing consumers to employ pure impulsive behaviour. Reminder impulse is when individuals have prior knowledge of a product, however, have no intent to purchase it but they buy it anyway mainly because of promotion as an appeal. Finally, planned impulse is extensive purchasing when one intends to buy a product but is unsure about certain specifications. Many health conscious students in our school may engage in planned impulse if nutritional information on the packaging is unclear allowing themselves to buy the product anyway [6].

Engel et al. (1968) the Engel Kollat Blackwell Model of Consumer Behaviour is a model based on consumer behaviour consisting of 4 stages. The 4 stages include information input stage, information processing stage, decision process stage and variables influencing the decision process. The information input stage is when a consumer receives information about products from advertisement, marketing and other mediums. However, if a consumer is facing cognitive dissonance, they, themselves will find external sources of information to help them with the decision-making process. At times, consumers have already made certain purchasing decisions but may employ confirmation bias while scouting external sources for reassurance. The information processing stage is when the consumer first encounters the message, makes way for the information, understands the stimuli and then transfers the message to the long-term memory. The decision process stage is when consumers form perceptions and attitudes toward a product that influences their purchasing intention. Finally, there are many other variables influencing the decision process that includes motives, values, lifestyle, culture, etc. Hence, the model explains how consumers remember to buy certain products based on how it's marketed, specifically the way the product's message is conveyed [9].

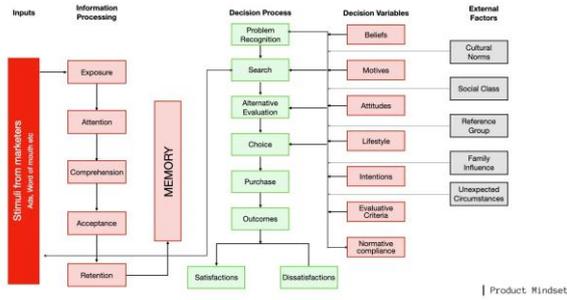


Figure 2: Engel Kollat Blackwell Model of Consumer Behaviour [9].

Petty et al. (2011) theorised the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) which explains how individuals are persuaded. They found that individuals are persuaded if they have the right amount of motivation, interaction and positive thought processes. The theory is also supported with evidence as studies have shown deeper thinking and increased persistence makes individuals more resistant to change. This depicts the importance of engagement and appeal to improve persuasion in marketing, especially advertisements [17].

2.2 Cognitive Research

Sunderaraj found that advertisements play an important role in influencing buying behaviour among consumers. However, companies shouldn't be reliant on just advertisements for changing the perception of consumers and they should investigate other mediums for increasing sales. This study conducted questionnaires to explore consumer's perspectives towards advertisements. Respondents believed the 2 main influencing reasons when viewing an advertisement was the usage of "multimedia presentations" and "attraction". Finally, findings from the study also show that age differences between a sample of young adults doesn't have extensive effects on how consumers view advertisements [3].

Chaudhry et al. (2017) is a study that investigated the appeal of PMA through a questionnaire with a sample of 161 consumers. The study concluded that PMA highly affects consumer behaviour in regards to strengthening brand image awareness. The study also recommended that PMA are more effective for attracting new customers rather than for repeat customers. Since printed ads are more effective for new customers, we expect first-time buyers in the tuck shop to be influenced more because it's visually-

appealing and individuals will be inclined to planned impulse purchasing [10].

Soti (2022) discovered how there is a positive correlation between advertisement exposure and consumer behaviour. The study found that emotional appeals is a notable strategy that motivated consumer buying behaviour and changed their perceptions on certain products and services. Also, storytelling in advertisements can capture a targeted audience's attention and initiate interest. Finally, to attract a wider audience using omnichannel marketing, in traditional and digital forms can influence a diverse consumer base and sustain brand loyalty [7].

Vrtana and Krizanova (2023) much like the previous studies, this study investigated the emotion appeal (negative, neutral or positive) of Dove advertisements with a sample of 417 Slovakian consumers. Vrtana and Krizanova proved how emotional appeals strengthen advertisements and have a significant impact on consumers, especially Generation Z. The research has shown how advertisements can impact perceptions of products. Finally, the study also proved how irrationality can affect purchasing decisions amongst consumers. Although there are key cultural differences between Slovaks and this study's target audience who are Indians, both Slovaks and Indians respond well to advertisements with strong emotional appeal [4].

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Experimental Design and Sampling Method

This study is a field experiment conducted in the natural setting of a tuck shop in an International School in Bengaluru. However, the variables are manipulated indicating a correlational study with the independent variable (IV) being the presence of advertisements (no advertisement and printed media advertisements), the PMA will be strategically placed in the school. This experiment utilizes a convenience sample of 131 student boarders, with 50 girls and 81 boys in total. Finally, the experimental design adopts random selection for the products in the tuck shop that are going to be examined.

3.2 Procedure

Understanding consumer buying behaviour is essential for embracing successful marketing

strategies and assisting businesses with enhanced decision-making when it comes to accommodating a specific target demographic. By means of this field experiment, marketers can determine natural interactions between the buyers and sellers, as well as uncover purchasing patterns and behaviours. Hence, experiment construct consist of 2 phases for a duration of 2 weeks:

Phase 1: Preliminary Week

- Duration: 1 week
- Procedure:
 1. Selected 4 products from each price range
 2. A chart was given to the tuck shop owner to record the sales frequency for each product.

Advertisements were implemented between phase 1 and phase 2.

Phase 2: Advertising Week

- Duration: 1 week
- Procedure:
 1. The tuck shop owner continued to record the sales frequency of all 4 products.
 2. Compared the data from the preliminary week with the data collected in the advertisement week.

This experiment will focus on food items primarily, since school supplies are not really popular and needed amongst students. The 4 products will be fruit juices (Mogu Mogu), chips (Lays), cold coffee (Cavin’s), and chocolate (Snickers).

3.3 Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H₀) - There’s no significant relationship between the price of the products and the sales frequency.

The hypothesis is opposed by Veblen’s Theory of Leisure Class (1899) as it suggests that higher prices increase demand, especially in a boarding school where students want to boast about their familial wealth to their peers as a “feel good” factor by buying expensive and better quality products from the tuck shop [11]. However, personal preferences is an individually driven factor which will prove how price has no effects on product purchases.

Alternative Hypothesis I (H₁) - The sales of advertised products will increase during the advertising week.

The hypothesis is supported by the study from Sunderaraj as it proved that advertisements play a role in influencing buying behaviour because of their attractive nature and serves as a reminder for customers. Nevertheless, the study also suggests that businesses should not be dependent on just advertising as they may need to employ other marketing strategies like promotion to attract potential customers [3].

Alternative Hypothesis II (H₂) - The sales of products will be greater at the start of the week (Monday and Tuesday) compared to the end of the week (Thursday and Friday).

The hypothesis is supported by Hawkin Stern’s Impulse Buying Behaviour (1962) as boarders may have weekly or monthly allowances to spend, with this financial flexibility they are more likely to indulge in impulse buying at the start and as the week progresses they would be more cautious with funds gradually diminishing [6]. Furthermore, with the limited stock in the tuck shop for each item, students are more likely to stock up as early as possible showing how the hypothesis is also supported by Engel Kollat Blackwell Model of Consumer Behaviour (1968) which emphasizes how buying behaviour is affected by external factors. Some other external factors can be the presence of weekly boarders that don’t really need food when they go back home but only need it during the week. Hence, they would be eager to purchase from the tuck shop initially as they know they will have a long week ahead of them with 5 days in school [9].

IV. FINDINGS

4.1 Preliminary Week Analysis

No. of Units Sold	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Total Quantity
Fruit Juice (Mogu Mogu)	14	10	14	8	15	61
Chips (Lays)	5	13	10	9	Sold Out	37
Cold Coffee (Cavin’s)	14	24	1	Sold Out	Sold Out	39
Chocolate (Snickers)	4	6	5	5	5	25

Total Quantity	37	53	30	22	20	162
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Figure 3: Table showing the sales trend of each product (preliminary week).

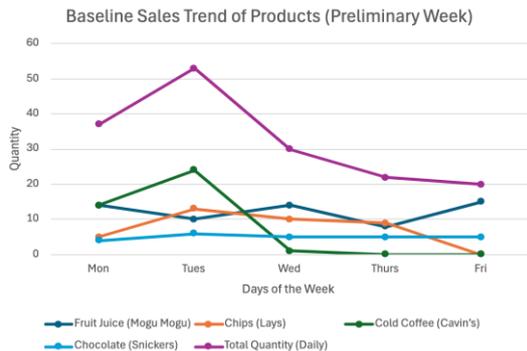


Figure 4: Line graph showing the sales trend (Preliminary week).

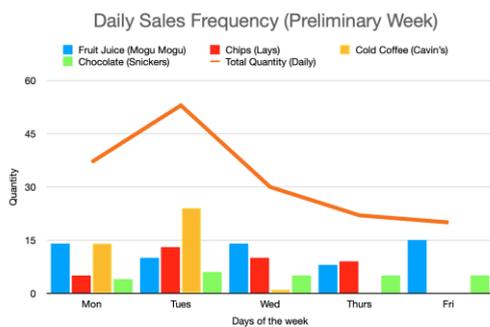


Figure 5: Combination chart showing the daily sales of each product (Preliminary Week).

4.2 Advertisement Week Analysis

No. of Units Sold	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Total Quantity
Fruit Juice (Mogu Mogu)	15	21	14	28	19	97
Chips (Lays)	8	20	40	28	17	113
Cold Coffee (Cavin's)	8	19	6	20	Sold Out	53
Chocolate (Snickers)	12	20	6	15	11	64
Total Quantity	43	80	66	91	47	327

Figure 6: Table showing the sales trends of each product (advertising week).

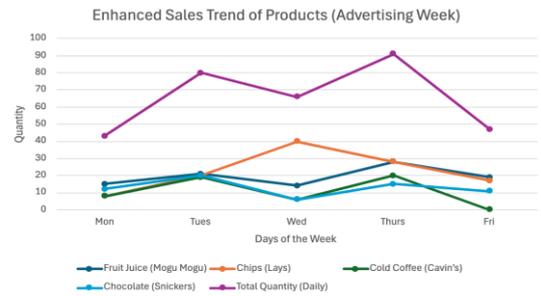


Figure 7: Line graph showing the sales trend (Advertising Week).

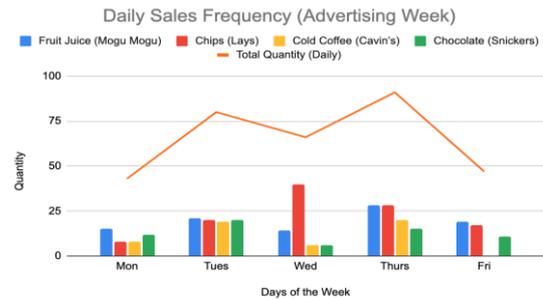


Figure 8: Combination chart showing the daily sales frequency of each product (Advertising Week).

4.3 Cost Analysis

The following are the randomly selected products, these products are also regularly restocked making it easier to identify purchasing patterns. The products are split into 3 price ranges, affordable, mid-range and high-end:

Products	Price (Indian Rupees)	Price Range	Sales Frequency (2 weeks)
Fruit Juice (Mogu Mogu)	70	High-End	158
Chips (Lays)	50	Mid-Range	150
Cold Coffee (Cavin's)	40	Mid-Range	92
Chocolate (Snickers)	20	Affordable	89

Figure 9: Table showing the cost-quantity trend of products.

Previous data shows the sales frequency of each product in the preliminary week and advertising week (see fig. 3 and fig. 6). The above table (see fig. 9) shows the cost of each product and the overall sales frequency.

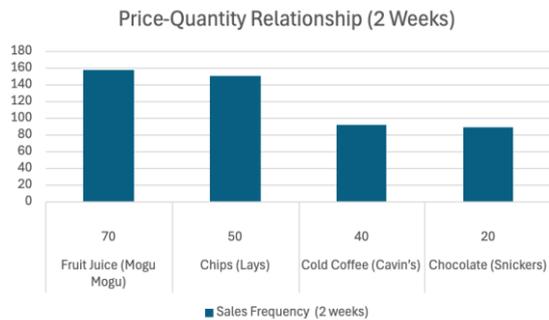


Figure 10: Bar graph showing the relationship between price and sales frequency.

4.4 Statistical Analysis

	Mean Sales in Preliminary Week (Units/Day)	Mean Sales in Advertising Week (Units/Day)	Standard Deviation in Preliminary Week	Standard Deviation in Advertising Week
Fruit Juice (Mogu Mogu)	12.20	19.40	2.71	5.00
Chips (Lays)	9.25	22.60	2.86	10.80
Cold Coffee (Cavin's)	13.0	13.25	9.42	6.33
Chocolate (Snickers)	5.00	12.80	0.63	4.62

Figure 11: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis

The research conducted studies on 4 products. Based on the data analyzed from the preliminary and advertising week, the mean (average) sales per product sold and the standard deviation, representing sales variability, were examined.

To determine the impact of advertising, the average daily sales from the advertising week were subtracted from those of the preliminary week (see fig. 11). The results indicate the sales of fruit juices increased by 7.20 units per day on average, while chips had a higher increase of 13.35 units per day. In contrast, cold coffee had a minimal increase of 0.20 units per day and chocolate had a significant rise of 7.80 units

per day. This suggests advertisements can drive buying behaviour amongst young individuals (11-18 years).

The study also compared the standard deviation of each week. To determine the impact of advertisement on sales variability, the standard deviation of the preliminary week is compared with the advertising week (see fig. 11). The standard deviation of fruit juice increased by 2.29, chips significantly increased by 7.94, cold coffee decreased by 3.09 and chocolate increased significantly by 3.99. In summary, for the products fruit juices, chips and chocolate saw a higher variability in sales after advertising. While, for the product cold coffee had a decrease in sales variability after advertising. This suggests that most advertisements can drive fluctuating sales, whereas in some cases, advertisements can stabilise sales of products.

4.5 Advertisements and Theoretical Links

PMA was made for all the products in the second week of data collection, the following are the 4 advertisement for each of the 4 products which will be placed in the tuck shop:

The first advertisement is for the fruit juice (Mogu Mogu). This advertisement follows the Engel Kollat Blackwell Model of Consumer Behaviour (1968) that emphasizes how consumer behaviour consists of 4 stages that drive purchasing decisions [9].



Figure 13: 1st Advertisement: Mogu Mogu - Fruit Juices [12].

The second advertisement is for the chips (Lays). The advertisement is based on Hawkin Stern's Impulse Buying Behaviour (1962) theory that explains how consumers will always make rational decisions unless external forces like recognition can introduce excessive buying behaviour [6].



Figure 14: 2nd Advertisement: Lays - Chips [13].

The third advertisement is for the cold coffee (Cavin's). The advertisement is based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) that is a pyramid of priorities for consumers, the lower priorities need to be fulfilled to reach the higher priorities [6].

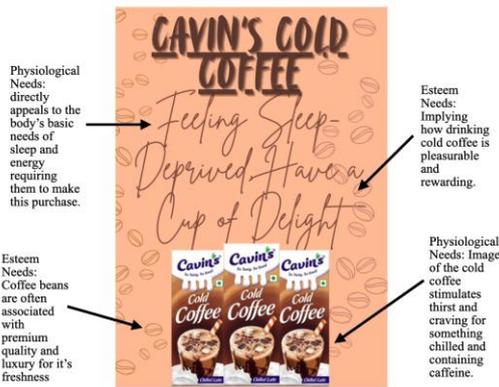


Figure 15: 3rd Advertisement: Cavin's - Cold Coffee [14].

The fourth advertisement is for chocolate (Snickers). The advertisement follows The Pavlovian Model (1897) exploring how consumers have pre-existing stimuli that justify their purchases [8].



Figure 16: 4th Advertisement: Snickers - Chocolate Bar [15].

V. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to investigate the impact of printed media advertising and pricing on consumer buying behaviour, especially amongst the Generation Z population between the ages 11 and 18. The findings also provided clarity and insights on all 3 hypotheses.

Regarding the null hypothesis (H_0), which states there's no significant relationship between the price and sales frequency, the findings (see figure 9 and 10) suggest otherwise. The data reveals an inverse relationship between price and sales frequency which contradicts with standard expectations, the more affordable products have the lowest sales frequency, while the high-end products were sold more frequently.

The findings are supported by Veblen's Theory of Leisure Class (1899) as it signals status. In the context of the school tuck shop, students will want to impress their peers by purchasing more sophisticated and expensive snacks from the tuck shop, demonstrating how social influence is a factor in influencing buying behaviour [11].

Similarly, in the real world, this phenomenon is evident in the food and beverage industry as individuals are more likely to visit upmarket, trusted bars and restaurants. An example being Starbucks' strong appeal despite the competitive pricing of local coffee shops. The tendency to opt for premium products shows how students strive for quality, reputation and trend-based buying behaviour.

Since, the observed data shows a pattern between price and sales frequency, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. This suggests how a product's brand value and student's perceived status outweighs affordability.

Concerning the alternative hypothesis I (H_1), which states the sales of advertised products will increase after the preliminary week, the findings (see figure 3, 4, 6 and 7) validates the claim. The data reveals an increase in sales when PMA were placed around the tuck shop.

Out of the 4 advertisements, the second advertisement (see fig. 14) was the most effective of the four, sales of chips (Lays) rose from 37 to 113 units after the preliminary week. This marks an increase of an additional 76 units sold during the advertising week and exemplifies how advertisements following Hawkin Stern's Impulse Buying Behaviour (1962) are impactful because younger audiences are more emotionally responsive and may be encouraged to act irrationally based on the appeal to advertisements [6]. Furthermore, peer

validation can also affect impulse buying behaviour and a boarding school is usually where peer interactions are at its peak. Conversely, the least effective was the third advertisement (see fig. 15), sales of cold coffee only grew from 39 to 53. This marks an increase of an additional 14 units sold during the advertising week and showcases how advertisements following Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) are unsuccessful amongst younger audiences as they care more about personal wants over basic needs [5].

Furthermore, the total sales frequency in the advertising week is more than the preliminary week. In the preliminary week 162 units were sold and in the advertising week 327 units were sold. The advertising week saw more than double the sales frequency of the preliminary week.

Moreover, the percentage of increase (in sales frequency) from the preliminary week to the advertising week for the all 4 products is relatively high. This is calculated by taking the difference in total sales frequency between the advertisement week and the preliminary week, dividing it by the sales frequency in the preliminary week, and then multiplying by 100. The highest percentage of increase is chips (Lays) increasing by 205%, followed by chocolate (Snickers) by 156%. Fruit juices (Mogu Mogu) increased by 59% percentage and the least increase is cold coffee (Cavin's) by 36%.

Since, the observed data shows a trend where the sales frequency of the advertising week was greater than the preliminary week, the hypothesis is correct proving how advertisements can increase consumer buying behaviour and positively impact a business.

Considering alternative hypothesis II (H_2), which states the sales of products will be greater at the start of the week (Monday and Tuesday) compared to the end of the week (Thursday and Friday). The findings (see fig. 5 and 8) verifies the claim to a certain extent. The data reveals during the preliminary week, the sales frequency at the start of the week was more than at the end of the week. However, during the advertisement week the sales frequency was similar at the start and end of the week. Disregarding the products that were sold out later on during the week. The combined sales frequency from Monday and Tuesday was 34 units, while on Thursday and Friday 33 units were sold during the preliminary week. Hence, students purchased more at the beginning of the week. During the advertisement week, students purchased 123 at the start and 138 at the end

quantities are relatively similar, though slightly higher at the end of the week.

The findings are supported by both Hawkin Stern's Impulse Buying Behaviour (1962) and Engel Kollat Blackwell Model of Consumer Behaviour (1968) as mentioned before but also follows Hermann Ebbinghaus's Serial Positioning Effect (1885) introducing the concepts of primacy and recency that may explain buying behaviour of students. The primacy effect refers to how information presented earlier is more likely to be remembered and shape choices. The higher sales at the start of the preliminary week can be attributed to the primacy effect—students are possibly more attentive towards purchasing cues at the beginning, when they have increased motivation. As later on during the week, they will lack concentration because of work stress. On the other hand, during the advertising week, the visibility of promotions possibly triggered the recency effect, advertisements reinforced buying behaviour constantly and students will be repeatedly exposed to them by the end of the week. This implies how marketing strategies can override common behavioural tendencies and advertisements can ensure a consistent, balanced buying behaviour across the week [16].

Although the data given from the preliminary week differs from the advertising week, the overall trend shows there is no significant trend between the day of the week and the sales frequency. Hence, the hypothesis is incorrect, but there are subtle signs that primacy affect shape consumer buying behaviour.

VI. EVALUATION

6.1 Strengths

- **Deterministic Relationship:** the study demonstrates a clear causal relationship between the placement of advertisements (independent variable) and the sales frequency (dependent variable).
- **High Ecological Validity:** a field experiment occurring in the natural setting of a tuck shop. Hence, real-life interactions between the buyer and seller can be examined.
- **Experimental Design:** Random selection of products to avoid selection bias.
- **Cultural Relativism:** study took place in an internationally-recognised school, the sample doesn't employ culture-bias (ethnocentrism) as there are students coming from different nations.

- Practical Relevance: findings can be applied to retail marketing strategies, making it not only applicable in academic settings but commercially as well.
- Other Considerations: the study considered other factors like pricing and occurrence of sales (start or end), providing a holistic analysis of consumer buying behaviour.

6.2 Weaknesses

- Limited Generalisability: although the study was conducted in an international school, the findings are specific to a single boarding school, so it cannot be generalisable to a broader population across different cultures, age groups, socioeconomic status, etc.
- Narrow Product Categories: the study was conducted in a single outlet/tuck shop with limited products. Primarily, food categories were examined, specifically 2 snacks and 2 drinks. Hence, consumer behaviour for purchasing other types of products is uncertain.
- Uncontrolled/Extraneous Variables: there were many other factors that may have affected the sales frequency of each of the products like personal preferences, peer influence, packaging appeal, brand loyalty, etc.
- Fluctuating Stock/Inventory: the availability of each of the 4 products in the tuck shop weren't consistent in the preliminary and advertising week. Hence, during the preliminary week products like cold coffee and chips were sold out easily. The difference in product availability is also an extraneous variable which may have motivated students to purchase more during the advertisement week.
- Lack of Time Management: the advertisements were placed on Tuesday instead of Monday due to delays. As a result, data collected on Monday can be considered invalid.
- Gender-Biased: the study is androcentric as the sample consists of more male than female students.
- Short Duration: data collection was done over a limited time span of 2 weeks.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Siddharth Bathla and Ms. Kavita Ujjal, my Psychology teachers at Harrow, for their unwavering

guidance and support throughout the process of writing this research paper. Their invaluable feedback were instrumental to constructing and refining my work.

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