Beliefs towards sales promotion technique: the perspective of Malaysia emerging market

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to determine the general behavioural and normative beliefs towards preferred sales promotion technique from the perspective of Malaysian consumers. Behavioural and normative beliefs towards preferred sales promotion technique are investigated so as to determine what contributes to attitude and subsequently behavioural intention towards a preferred sales promotion technique. This study utilised a two-stage methodologies, in which the first stage used an exploratory elicitation design and the second stage utilised a quantitative approach using descriptive and partial least square structural equation modelling. The findings from the second stage validate the findings from the earlier exploratory study stage conducted. The findings from this study have expanded the current knowledge and academic studies done on similar areas of research, where this research details the association of behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs of preferred sales promotion technique on consumers’ attitude and behavioural intention towards it. This study suggests to managers in Malaysia that it is crucial to understand their customers’ behavioural and normative beliefs towards preferred sales promotion technique for better market segmentation and targeting. This study is the first of its type where only a minimal number of studies have looked into these issues (behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs of preferred sales promotion technique) from a business perspective. This study therefore articulates the present view of preferred sales promotion technique within an emerging market such as Malaysia, and its implication to academia and business.

Keywords: attitude; behaviour; behavioural beliefs; emerging market; normative beliefs; sales promotion technique.

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Ernest-Cyril de Run is presently a Full Professor at the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). He has taught more than 10 subjects, among others, research methodology, relational marketing, marketing management, strategic marketing, marketing research, entrepreneurship, industrial marketing, export marketing strategy, international marketing, and marketing seminar. Ernest-Cyril de Run has been actively involved in research in the areas of marketing, entrepreneurship and management. Up till now, he has published in various refereed journal articles. He has received several awards in the past few years for all his contributions which include the “Best Researcher Award, UNIMAS, 2nd Place, 2007”, “Anugerah Perkhidmatan Cemerlang, UNIMAS, 2007”, “UNIMAS R&D Expo. Organised by RIMC UNIMAS at CAIS UNIMAS, Gold and Bronze, 2010” and “Outstanding Paper Award Winner at the Literati Network Awards for Excellence 2011; Emerald Literati Network, 2011 Awards for Excellence”.

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1 Introduction

The last decade of retailing in emerging markets such as Malaysia and Singapore has witnessed an increase in marketing budget allocation for sales promotion activities by various retailers (McNeill, 2013; Iranmanesh et al., 2016). Such increments in marketing budget allocated for sales promotion activities are primarily credited to changes in consumers’ purchasing patterns (Ndubisi and Chiew, 2005). This occurred as more and more consumers are becoming more informed on the various promotional activities available in the market, thus creating more promotion savvy and market maven consumers (McNeill, 2013). This phenomenon is evident in growing populations such as Malaysia.

Consumers in such emerging markets are different in their expectations and preferences when it comes to different sales promotion technique offered by retailers (Bridges, Florshiem and Claudette, 1996; Huff and Alden, 1998; Kwok and Uncles, 2005; Steenkamp et al., 2005; Wong and Yazdanifard, 2015; Schultz and Block, 2014). This happens as there are a lot of sales promotion techniques available in the market, but not all are equally preferred over the others (Jee and De Run, 2013; Ndubisi and Chiew, 2006; Ndubisi and Chiew, 2005). In Malaysia, e.g., the general consumers like sales promotion techniques that provide utilitarian benefits as they provide the tangibility they want and match the characteristics of Malaysia’s consumers who are categorised as collectivist (Huff and Alden, 1998). Such preference further capitalises on generic attitudinal and behavioural responses towards particularly sales promotion techniques offered (Ndubisi and Chiew, 2005; Wong and Yazdanifard, 2015), thus strengthening the idea that such sales promotion techniques are the best (Kwok and Uncles, 2005).

Such sales promotion techniques availability had also contributed significantly the growth of private consumption sectors in Malaysia despite the challenging economic environment over the years (Bank Negara Malaysia, 2015). This indicated that sales promotion techniques are necessary for improving the overall domestic demands in Malaysia, particularly within the private consumption sectors. This can be seen from the availability of various sales promotion techniques at various weekend sales, year-end sales, mega sales and festivities sales held in Malaysia (Rizwan et al., 2013). Thus, by looking into the issues highlighted above, it will help marketers and retailers alike to better understand their markets whilst formulating effective sales promotion technique strategies targeted at consumers at large.

These attitudinal and behavioural responses have been considered as the most distinctive concept in social science due to its effects on human activities (Peter and Olson, 1996), particularly in sales promotion studies (Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994; Huff and Alden, 1998; Huff and Alden, 2000; Shimp and Kavas, 1984). While much research has been conducted to investigate the public’s attitude and behavioural responses towards sales promotional activities, studies that seek to unearth consumers’ sales promotion technique preferences and the beliefs associated with such beliefs are of dire attention (Jee and De Run, 2013). Sales promotion technique represents a meaningful and substantial segment of the general integrated marketing communication campaign, and hence it requires continual attention (McNeill, 2013). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the present view of consumers’ sales promotion technique preferences and the beliefs associated with it, highlighting its impact on consumers’ attitudinal and behavioural responses towards it from Malaysian consumers’ perspectives. Malaysia had been chosen as the point of study as it represents a significant conception of a
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fast-growing emerging market (McNeill, 2013). This will provide more insights into consumers’ responses towards discount sales promotion techniques in Malaysia as Malaysian consumers’ beliefs and normative beliefs towards preferred sales promotion technique are expected to be different from what previous study had indicated. Such belief statements about preferred sales promotion technique will enhance the existing knowledge on sales promotion subjects. It also serves as a catalyst to replicate this study on the various sales promotion techniques available in Malaysia while comparing it with findings from other countries. Hence, the understanding of attitudinal and behavioural responses towards preferred sales promotion technique will dictate effective marketing campaign and strategies by various retailers and marketers alike in Malaysia. Furthermore, the success of sales promotion practices in such emerging market (Malaysia) is important as it reflects the overall view of retailing success in Asia (McNeill, 2012; Iranmanesh et al., 2016). This is primarily due to the univocal preference of a localised sales promotion practices to this region which is particularly important in predicting success within Asian markets (Fam, Józsa and Richard, 2010). It is believed that this study will extend knowledge about sales promotion technique preferences and consumers general beliefs towards such preferences in emerging markets such as Malaysia, and thus provide relevant implication.

2 Literature review

2.1 Sales promotion and sales promotion techniques preferences

Sales promotion has grown in importance for both consumers and retailers worldwide (Schultz and Block, 2014). Such a general swing in the importance of sales promotions as a part of the bigger marketing mix applications is primarily driven by few factors which include a rise in advertising clutters and pricing, more respect for sales promotion, increasing influence of retailers, the approach of retailers and practitioners towards micro-marketing, a decrease in planning time horizons of sales promotions, and the snowball effect of modern sales promotion strategy (Dickson and Sawyer, 1990; Lal, 1990; Lee, 2016; Peattie and Peattie, 1995; Quelch, 1983; Toop, 1992; Wong and Yazdanifard, 2015; Huynh, 2016). This latter makes sales promotion an integral part of the larger marketing mix (Ali, Ilyas and Rehman, 2016; Fam, Yang and Tanakinjal, 2008; Huynh, 2016; McNeill, 2006; McNeill, 2012; McNeill, 2013; Yeboah-Asiamah, Quaye and Nimako, 2016).

There were also studies which indicate that sales promotions were ineffective as they influence consumers to be more promotion prone (Ali, Ilyas and Rehman, 2016; Garretson and Burton, 2003). This will ultimately lead sales promotions to immense losses to the market itself in the long run (Ehrenberg, Hammond and Goodhardt, 1994; Totten and Block, 1994) although it is profitable in the short run (Srinivasan and Anderson, 1998). Nevertheless, effective sales promotion strategy and implementation would still lead businesses to a real increase in sales and profit in the long run with intense marketing effort implementation (Dhar and Hoch, 1996). Such conditions would benefit consumers, manufacturers and retailers in the longer run as sales promotions enable consumers to maximise their shopping needs whenever manufacturers and
retailers increased their sales volume over a stipulated time frame (Lee, 2016; Peattie and Peattie, 1995; Peattie, 1998).

Prior studies done also assert that manufacturers are more prone to use value-added sales promotion such as free gifts and premiums (Stewart and Gallen, 1998), whereas retailers and consumers are more prone towards price-based sales promotion such as discounts (Kahn and McAlister, 1997). Such sales promotion technique preferences would generate more desired responses from customers and thus would lead to interest and loyalty amongst consumers (Gilbert and Jackaria, 2002; Mendez et al., 2015). This would later influence repurchasing behaviour and thus mediate the relationship between sales promotions and repurchase (Ndubisi and Chiew, 2005). This will also result in consumers overall purchase intention and word of mouth (Alvarez and Casielles, 2005). Hence, managing sales promotion technique properly and effectively can be an inexpensive way for marketers to increase profitable consumer (Garretson and Burton, 2003) while enabling marketers to reach more new potential buyers in the market (Lee, 2016; McNeill, 2013). At the same time, it can drastically increase consumers’ consumption for the products and/or services (Alvarez and Casielles, 2005; Chandon and Wansink, 1999).

Other related studies done indicate that using sales promotion techniques on a marketing activity would unenviably result in market loses in the long run (Ehrenberg, Hammond and Goodhardt, 1994; Totten and Block, 1994). Such losses will still create promotional-prone consumers in the shorter run while resulting in real gains (Mela, Gupta and Lehmann, 1997; Srinivasan and Anderson, 1998; Steenkamp et al., 2005). However, such losses and gains are inter-related with the type of sales promotion which are perceived differently (preferences) by various clusters of consumers. Studies conducted by Liao, Shen and Chu (2009) suggested that sales promotion techniques that offer instant rewards (such as samples) will result in more reminder/impulse buying than sales promotion techniques which offer delayed rewards (such as competitions and sweepstakes).

Within Southeast Asia region particularly, the most commonly used sales promotion techniques by retailers and manufacturers are coupons, price discounts, free samples and bonus packs (Iranmanesh et al., 2016; McNeill, 2013; Ndubisi and Chiew, 2005; Ndubisi and Chiew, 2006; Fam, Józsa and Richard, 2010). Within the Malaysian context particularly, the commonly available and preferred type of sales promotion techniques are discounts, premiums and rewards (McNeill, 2012; McNeill, 2013; Iranmanesh et al., 2016; Wong and Yazdanifard, 2015). Such preferences or usage of the above-mentioned sales promotion techniques were widely influenced by the monetary benefits in which these sales promotion techniques are induced with (Tellis, 1998). Nevertheless, there are other sub-categories of sales promotion techniques which are affiliated with non-monetary benefits available as well in Malaysia which are as follows: Game, Tie-in and Novelty (Jee and De Run, 2013). These sales promotion techniques are least preferred by most Malaysian consumers due to the hedonic nature of these sales promotion techniques which are highly correlated with the non-monetary benefits that such sales promotion techniques are induced with (Ndubisi and Chiew, 2006). Studies conducted by Zheng and Kivetz (2009) confirmed such notation. The researchers indicated that consumers who find themselves difficult to justify spending money on hedonistic luxuries will be more sensitive to the sales promotions of these types of products, and vice versa.

Studies done on sales promotion in Malaysia also showed that when a sales promotion technique is properly implemented, it would help retailers or manufacturers to
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encourage customers to patronise their stores and to try out the products and services being done (Iranmanesh et al., 2016; Ndubisi and Chiew, 2005; Ndubisi and Chiew, 2006). In return, this would help the retailers and manufacturers achieve their strategic promotional objectives. Such consumer behaviour and purchase patterns also indicate that the most widely implemented and liked sales promotion techniques by retailers and manufacturers in Malaysia were coupons, price discounts, free samples and bonus packs.

Such phenomenon was credited towards Malaysian consumers being less likely to feel embarrassed to enjoy price-based promotional offers (McNeill, 2012). This mainly occurred because they tend to see these promotional offers as a sign of value purchase and an opportunity to get more value offer from retailers. This was rather different compared to countries like Japan where such price-based sales promotion techniques were seen as a sign of losing face although Japan was categorised as collectivist country such as of Malaysia (Kashani and Quelch, 1990; Singelis and Brown, 1995; Singelis and Sharkey, 1995).

2.2 Behavioural and normative beliefs

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by Fishbein and Azjen (1975) is adopted as the basis to investigate the Malaysian consumers’ beliefs towards preferred sales promotion technique. TRA asserts that attitude towards buying and subjective norms are the antecedents of performed behaviour (Ajzen, 2001; Ajzen and Sheikh, 2013; Choong, 1998). According to the theory, these attitudes are the function of beliefs (Lada, Tanakinjal and Amin, 2009). Given the scenario where a person believes that performing a particular behaviour will lead to mostly positive outcomes that will hold a favourable attitude towards performing the behaviour, whereas a person who believes that performing the behaviour will lead to mostly negative outcomes that will hold an unfavourable attitude. These beliefs that underline a person’s attitude towards the behaviour are also termed as behavioural beliefs (i.e. the act of participating in discounts). It thus led to the following preposition:

\[ P1: \text{There will be specific descriptions of behavioural beliefs about preferred sales promotion technique by Malaysian consumers} \]

Subjective norms, on the other hand, represent the normative expectations of others on the performance of the behaviour (Ajzen, 1985). According to the theory, a person’s perception of the social pressure (i.e. friend and family members’ expectations) put on him/her will guide him/her how to perform or not to perform a particular behaviour (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). The theory further asserts that under different circumstances, there are situations where behaviour is simply not under the control of individual attitudes; rather, the expectation of relevant others (i.e. friend and family members’ expectations) which may be a major factor in behavioural performances (Choong, 1998). Thus, these subjective norms are the functions of beliefs that specify individuals or groups to think whether he/she should or should not perform the behaviour. The beliefs underlying a person’s subjective norm are termed as normative beliefs. A person who believes that most referents with whom he is motivated to comply think he should perform the behaviour will receive social pressure to do so. It thus led to the following preposition:
P2: There will be specific descriptions of normative beliefs about preferred sales promotion technique by Malaysian consumers

2.3 Attitude and behaviour

Attitude and behaviour are generally assessed through Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1985). Both theories assert that that belief is likely to determine people’s attitudes, which in turn predict their behaviour. TRA asserts that attitude towards buying and subjective norms are the antecedents of performed behaviour (Ajzen, 2001; Ajzen and Sheikh, 2013; Choong, 1998). This theory was developed to explain how a consumer results in a certain buying behaviour (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). This theory (TRA) has been widely used by marketing managers and practitioners due to the diagnostic direction it provides (Armitage and Conner, 2000). This theory (TRA) was also widely documented in sales promotion studies such as coupon usage (e.g. Shimp and Kavas, 1984), distinguishing between deal-proneness and coupon-proneness (e.g. Lichtenstein, Netemeyer and Burton, 1990) and price reduction promotion (e.g. Chen, Monroe and Lou, 1998). Nevertheless, most of these studies only shown partial support for TRA, hence warrant for more extensive research, or perhaps an extension of TRA with other supportive theories. This is particularly evident within sales promotion vicinity as the usages and/or preferences of a particular sales promotion technique and activity tend to be trifling and humdrum of behaviours at times. TRA posited that personal beliefs and its evaluation (represented as $\sum \text{bie}_i$) are the antecedents of attitude (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Such hypothesis was supported by personal beliefs and its evaluation sub-model by Shimp and Kavas (1984) based on Fishbien and Ajzen (1975) TRA. It thus led to the following hypothesis:

H1: Consumer personal beliefs and its evaluation will have a positive impact on attitude towards sales promotions technique preference.

TRA also posited that consumer normative beliefs and the associated motivations to comply on others’ expectation (represented as $\sum \text{NB}_iMC_i$) will have a direct effect on their subjective norms towards sales promotions technique. Given the validity of normative beliefs and the associated motivations to comply on others’ expectation sub-model by Shimp and Kavas (1984) based on Fishbien and Ajzen’s (1975) TRA, it is posited that consumer normative beliefs and the associated motivations to comply with others’ expectation will have a direct effect on their subjective norms towards sales promotions technique. It thus led to the following hypothesis:

H2: Consumer normative beliefs and the associated motivations to comply with others’ expectation will have a positive impact on their subjective norms towards sales promotions technique preference.

TRA at the other hand denotes that attitude and subjective norm lead to the formation of behavioural intention (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbien and Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen and Fishbien, 1980). These theories posited that as attitude and subjective norm become stronger, they positively accelerate a person’s intention to perform certain behaviour. Hence, this led to the following hypotheses:
**H3**: Consumer attitude towards sales promotions technique will have a positive impact on behavioural intention.

**H4**: Consumer subjective norm towards sales promotion technique will have a positive impact on behavioural intention.

### 2.4 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this study is based on TRA model and hypothesised from the Malaysian consumer perspective. This was done by conceptualising cognitive-attitude-conative multidimensional model which integrates all the aspects on how and why consumers use discount sales promotion technique. It also specifies the link between consumers’ beliefs (behavioural beliefs and its evaluation, and normative beliefs and motivation to comply towards it) with attitude and behavioural intention. Refer to Figure 1.

![Figure 1](attachment:image.png)

**Source**: Adapted from: Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, 1980), Kraft et al. (2005), Shimp and Kavas (1984)

The first part of the conceptual framework consists of one exogenous variable comprising of belief and the evaluation of belief was hypothesised to lead to attitude towards discount sales promotion technique preference. This attitude was later hypothesised to lead to behavioural intention towards discount sales promotion technique preference. The second part of the conceptual framework consists of one exogenous variable (normative belief and its motivation to comply). This exogenous variable was hypothesised to lead to consumer subjective norm. This subjective norm was later hypothesised to lead to behavioural intention towards discount sales promotion technique preference.

### 3 Methodology

This study is a two-phase research design. The first stage deals with exploratory stage of the study. The later stage deals with the main study stage of the study.

#### 3.1 Exploratory stage

A pilot study in the exploratory stage was first carried by a personal interview. In all, 161 respondents between the ages of 21 and 55 years participated in the pilot study, through the uses of self-administered survey questionnaires. A minimum of 10–30 samples are
sufficient in most pilot studies in survey research (Hill, 1998). In total, 31 respondents between the ages of 21 and 55 years participated in the personal interviews. Perry (1998) indicated that a minimum sample of 15 respondents is sufficient for most qualitative research. The respondents in this exploratory study are sourced from different backgrounds and have a range of demographic backgrounds. The respondents from the both exploratory stage were excluded from the main study’s data collection to avoid potential response bias effects caused by prior exposure to the nature of the research (De Run, 2004). The respondents for the exploratory study were sampled through the use of quota sampling (a type of non-probability sampling technique) throughout Malaysia. This sampling technique was selected as there is no way to estimate the probability that each person in a large population had a chance of being included in the sample (Malhotra, 2004; Malhotra and Birks, 2006; Newby-Clark, McGregor and Zanna, 2002). Therefore, such sampling would be more useful in selecting respondents purposefully for their characteristics in order to achieve the aim of this study. This would also enable the researcher to improve the representativeness of the sample against the population on study (Malhotra and Birks, 2006; Zikmund et al., 2012).

The selection of age group of 21–55 years for exploratory stage is done based on the condition where consumers at this age are most likely employed (Lucas, 2007) and have independent means of purchasing power (Hanson, 2005). The population for the age of 21–55 years old was estimated to be 16 million for the year 2016 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2016). The respondents for exploratory stage were sourced from different major cities (Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Malacca, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak, Perlis, Penang, Sabah, Sarawak, Selangor, Terengganu, Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, Federal Territory of Labuan, Federal Territory of Putrajaya) in Malaysia. At the same time, the different consumers were also sourced out from the various ethnic groups in Malaysia to better represent the population as a whole.

The analytical strategy for the pilot study is paired sample t-test. Paired sample t-test is used to compare the means of the two variables (most and least preferred sales promotion techniques). This t-test was used to measure any difference derived from two variables for each case, whether the average difference significantly differs from zero or not (Hair et al., 1998). The findings from the pilot study will serve as a proxy to the later stages of this study, where only the most preferred sales promotion technique will be adopted in the later stage of the study.

The analytical strategy for the personal interview is content analysis (Wilkinson, 2000) by the means of frequency counts of themes derived. The actual interview took place at various localities in some of the major cities in Malaysia. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed word by word. Transcripts were later checked to match against audio records (Kurasaki, 2000). The findings from the personal interviews were later coded through where themes pertaining to belief in the transcripts coded by three coders independently, prior combined to estimate inter-coder agreement (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The findings from the personal interview stage will serve as a proxy to the main study stage of this study.

3.2 Main study stage

For the main study stage, a total number of 357 respondents between the ages of 21–55 years were participated. The criterion commonly recommended is a minimum of 100–200 respondents for a meaningful analysis (Hoyle, 1995). The minimum sample size for the
main study stage is based on the power analysis procedures through the use of G*Power algorithm which are mainly recommended for model testing procedure (Akter, D’Ambra and Ray, 2011). The recommended minimum sample size is calculated at 96 respondents. Similarly, the selection of age group of 21–55 years is done primarily due to the condition where consumers at this age are most likely employed (Lucas, 2007) and have independent means of purchasing power (Hanson, 2005). The sample selected for the second stage of this study was gathered from all states and federal territories within Malaysia (Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Malacca, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak, Perlis, Penang, Sabah, Sarawak, Selangor, Terengganu, Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, Federal Territory of Labuan, Federal Territory of Putrajaya) with census data providing a clear guideline of the appropriateness of the sampling frame. This would enable the data collected to fairly represent the existing geographical distribution of Malaysian society (Cooper and Schindler, 2008). At the same time, the different consumers were also sourced out from the various ethnic groups in Malaysia to better represent the population as a whole.

The main study data were collected using self-administered survey questionnaire. In the main study, the self-administered survey questionnaire was used to capture the underlying constructs in the conceptual framework. These underlying constructs were measured using multiple indicators adopted from the interviews conducted earlier on salient beliefs and referents, and constructs adopted from previous research.

The main study self-administered survey questionnaire consists of three sections. The first section (A) consists of standard demographic information (age, gender, occupation, family size, etc.). Section two (B) consists of items measuring the various antecedents of attitude variables derived from in-depth interviews done earlier, towards discount sales promotion techniques preferences. The last section (C) consists of items measuring on the attitudinal and behavioural variables towards discount sales promotion techniques preferences. The attitudinal and behavioural variables were derived from a series of literature search which are as follows: attitude, behaviour intention and perceived behavioural control. This section also includes items measuring the moderator variable and attitudinal ambivalence. Respondents were asked to respond to 7-point Likert scale, where ‘1’ corresponded to ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘7’ corresponded to ‘strongly agree’. Using Likert-type scale would also result in higher reliability and validity in the findings (Gliem and Gliem, 2003). Table 1 depicts the measurements used which were derived from previous studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>No. of items</th>
<th>No. of variables</th>
<th>Scale range</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Validity</th>
<th>Scale type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>Kraft et al. (2005)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.790–0.830</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7-point bipolar adjective scales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective norm 1</td>
<td>Fishbien and Ajzen (1975)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>7-point Likert scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective norm 2</td>
<td>Shimp and Kavas (1984)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.555</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7-point bipolar adjective scales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural intention</td>
<td>Kraft et al. (2005)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7-point Likert scale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further validity and reliability tests were conducted in the study. Both convergent validity and discriminant validity are used as the discernment validity of the construct in the conceptual framework (Figure 1). Both of these validity measurements were used as the validity indicator of a construct using partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) method (Wong, 2013). Composite reliability, on the other hand, is used to establish the reliability of the latent variables tested in order to complete the examination of the structural model (Wong, 2013).

To examine the casual relationships between different variables proposed in the conceptual framework (Figure 1), partial least square path modelling (PLS-PM) version 2.0 was used. PLS-PM technique solves the structural model blocks algorithm separately, and then estimates the path coefficients in the structural model through the use of coefficient and regression estimates (Hair et al., 2014). In this sense, the PLS-PM was particularly useful in the theoretical knowledge and substantive knowledge pertaining to the antecedents of attitude and behaviour. Hence, this makes PLS-PM technique appropriate for such studies where the theoretical and substantive knowledge is relatively scarce, particularly within a Malaysian context.

Common method variance (CMV) was performed using the Harman’s Single Factor technique (Podsakoff, Mackenzie and Podsakoff, 2012). A substantial common method variance is present, if a single factor emerges or a general factor accounts for most of the total variance explained by the items (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Factor analysis result shows that the largest variance explained by the first factor was 36.64% of the total variance. In addition, no general factor emerged from the factor analysis. Thus, the result indicated that common method bias is not a significant problem for this study.

4 Findings

The findings from pilot study conducted indicate that discount is the most preferred sales promotion technique (Mean = 6.17, SD = 1.15), and game is the least preferred sales promotion technique (Mean = 3.48, SD = 1.78). Both sales promotion techniques were found to be statistically different ($t = 17.291$, $p \leq 0.000$). As such, discount sales promotion technique is adopted in the exploratory stage (personal interviews).

Table 2 present the list of behavioural and normative beliefs using content analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Key themes</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural beliefs</td>
<td>Value for money technique</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An attractive technique</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Induces repeat purchases</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reliable technique</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convenient technique</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retain to a business</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative beliefs</td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colleagues</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relatives</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Beliefs towards sales promotion technique

Six factors were elicited and coded as themes for behavioural beliefs and they are value for money technique, an attractive technique, induces repeat purchases, reliable technique, convenient technique and retain to a business. Five factors were elicited and coded as themes for normative beliefs which are friends, parents, siblings, colleagues and relatives. Examples of statements for each behavioural and normative beliefs theme are presented in Appendix 1.

Details of discount sales promotion technique uses are presented in Table 3.

Table 3  Discount sales promotion technique uses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used discount in previous purchase</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period of last Uses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2 months</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 2 months</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchased product/service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>53.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic devices</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footwear</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmetic</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toiletry</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bag</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household items</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports equipment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car accessory</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food supplement</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The items’ mean and standard deviation score for each variables tested were presented in Table 4.

Table 4  Overall descriptive findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belief</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of belief</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative belief</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to comply</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective norm</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural intention</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This study model consists of two models: the measurement model and the structural model. As multiple reflective items are used in the structural model, the reflective measurement model which shows the relationship between the construct and the items was utilised (Hair et al., 2014). Figure 2 further depicts the final research model for this study. Since all items are reflective, the items that have a factor loading of below 0.40–0.70 and contribute to low average variance extracted (AVE) in the model are deleted from the model. As a result, five items pertaining to perceived behavioural control, and three items pertaining to attitude are deleted.

**Figure 2** Attitudinal ambivalence towards discount sales promotion model

In order to check the convergent validity of all the constructs in measurement model, the requirement of composite reliability (CR) was tested (Hair et al., 2014). CR is tested with a threshold predetermined at 0.50 for each factor loading and AVE (Chin, 1998; Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Wong, 2013). Refer to Table 5.

**Table 5** Measurement model convergent validity and reliability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Loadings</th>
<th>AVE</th>
<th>CR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BE*EVA (Belief x Evaluation)</td>
<td>BE*EVA1</td>
<td>0.854</td>
<td>0.666</td>
<td>0.923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BE*EVA2</td>
<td>0.800</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BE*EVA3</td>
<td>0.850</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BE*EVA4</td>
<td>0.796</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BE*EVA5</td>
<td>0.816</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BE*EVA6</td>
<td>0.783</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NB*MC (Normative Belief x Motivation to Comply)</td>
<td>NB*MC1</td>
<td>0.805</td>
<td>0.681</td>
<td>0.914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NB*MC2</td>
<td>0.844</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NB*MC3</td>
<td>0.820</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NB*MC4</td>
<td>0.837</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NB*MC5</td>
<td>0.821</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATT (Attitude)</td>
<td>ATT1</td>
<td>0.810</td>
<td>0.603</td>
<td>0.883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ATT2</td>
<td>0.723</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ATT3</td>
<td>0.810</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ATT4</td>
<td>0.765</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ATT5</td>
<td>0.772</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5  Measurement model convergent validity and reliability (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Loadings</th>
<th>AVE&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>CR&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SN (Subjective Norms)</td>
<td>SN1</td>
<td>0.782</td>
<td>0.668</td>
<td>0.858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SN2</td>
<td>0.839</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SN3</td>
<td>0.831</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BI (Behavioural Intention)</td>
<td>BI1</td>
<td>0.754</td>
<td>0.641</td>
<td>0.877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BI2</td>
<td>0.774</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BI3</td>
<td>0.856</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BI4</td>
<td>0.814</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Average variance extracted (AVE) = (summation of the square of the factor loadings) / ([summation of the square of the factor loadings] + [summation of the square of the error variances]).

<sup>b</sup>Composite reliability (CR) = (square of the summation of the factor loadings) / ([square of the summation of the factor loadings] + [square of the summation of the error variances]).

Table 6 depicts the results of the discriminant validity of the measurement model. Multicollinearity was not found because the square root of AVE is greater than each correlation coefficient (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 6  Fornell-Larcker criterion analysis for checking discriminant validity for measurement model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Att</th>
<th>ATT</th>
<th>BI</th>
<th>BE*EVA</th>
<th>NB*MC</th>
<th>SN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATT</td>
<td>0.777</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BI</td>
<td>0.726</td>
<td>0.801</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE*EVA</td>
<td>0.644</td>
<td>0.604</td>
<td>0.817</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NB*MC</td>
<td>0.552</td>
<td>0.541</td>
<td>0.700</td>
<td>0.825</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SN</td>
<td>0.554</td>
<td>0.540</td>
<td>0.722</td>
<td>0.772</td>
<td>0.817</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Value bold = Square Root of AVE.

Note: Diagonals represent the square root of the AVE while the off-diagonals represent the correlations.

The relationship between each construct is shown through the structural model after they were all validated in the reflective measurement model (Hair et al., 2014). The model path relationships were further tested using bootstrapping procedure. This was done by generating the *T*-statistics for significant testing through the bootstrapping procedure (Hair et al., 2014; Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2011). This bootstrapping procedure is a non-parametric approach to estimate the precision of the PLS estimates conducted (Chin, 1998; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). A total of 5,000 cases of sub-samples in bootstrapping procedures were drawn to allow the procedure to better estimate the model of each of the sub-sample (Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2011).

Table 7 shows all the beta values, standard error values and t-values for each path relationship in the overall, low and high model. Each specific t-value was designated with a confidence interval of either 90 (significant at 0.10), 95 (significant at 0.05) or 99% (significant at 0.01) to show whether a significant relationship existed or not on each path estimate.
Table 7  Path coefficients (bootstrapping) findings for model estimation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Path relationship</th>
<th>Beta value</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>BE*EVA → ATT</td>
<td>0.330</td>
<td>0.102</td>
<td>3.238***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NB*MC → SN</td>
<td>0.772</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>31.176***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ATT → BI</td>
<td>0.448</td>
<td>0.066</td>
<td>6.802***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SN → BI</td>
<td>0.160</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>2.899***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.10; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01

The findings in Table 7 show the support for all the direct effect tested. In order to assess the predictive capability of the model (also known as predictive relevance), blindfolding procedure was performed on the structural model. This was done through assessing the cross-validated redundancy through Stone-Geisser’s ($Q^2$) estimates performed through blindfolding and $R^2$ values to indicate the levels of predictive accuracy of the model procedure in PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2014). Table 8 depicts the $Q^2$ and $R^2$ findings for the model.

Given the findings of $Q^2$ in Table 8, it is concluded that the model has a predictive quality in explaining the relationships between the constructs in the structural model tested.

Table 8  $R^2$ and cross-validated redundancy (blindfolding)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>CV-Red ($Q^2$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>ATT</td>
<td>0.491</td>
<td>0.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SN</td>
<td>0.596</td>
<td>0.396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BI</td>
<td>0.573</td>
<td>0.367</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5  Discussions

5.1 Behavioural beliefs about discount sales promotion technique

Notwithstanding the wide spread use of the TRA in predicting and explaining the beliefs towards sales promotion technique preferences (Bagozzi, Baumgartner and Yi, 1992; Shimp and Kavas, 1984), these beliefs cannot be wholly construed to that of a specific sales promotion technique (Huff and Alden, 1998; Huff and Alden, 2000), particularly on discount sales promotion techniques. Although some of the beliefs on other sales promotion techniques are found to be similar to discount sales promotion technique, they are not entirely the same. Even when beliefs are generally applied to describe a particular product attribute, belief statements have to be particular to what the specific sales promotion technique is all about.

For instance, inconvenience, encumbrances and rewards are the three beliefs about coupon sales promotion technique (Shimp and Kavas, 1984). However, these three belief constructs were done within a western context and the constructs themselves do not explain discount sales promotion techniques in a Malaysian context. When exploring the beliefs about a discount sales promotion technique, only some of these beliefs were elicited from the interview transcripts and coded as themes in the qualitative phase.
Hence, beliefs about specific sales promotion techniques hinge very much on the type of sales promotion technique which is being used and preferred by consumers. Nevertheless, such eliciting of beliefs about a particular sales promotion technique must be looked at and studied with extra care.

Moreover, such beliefs about a particular sales promotion technique (in this case, discount sales promotion technique) are normally associated with a particular product or brand being purchased (Jee and De Run, 2013). As such, the understanding of beliefs about a particular sales promotion technique can be more intricate than beliefs about sales promotion techniques in general. This explains the significance of looking into the specific beliefs about a particular sales promotion technique in this study. At the same time, various studies done on eliciting specific beliefs which are explicitly about a particular sales promotion technique are comparatively inconsistent in promotion literature (Garretson, Fisher and Burton, 2002; Jee and De Run, 2013; Shimp and Kavas, 1984). Nevertheless, previous studies suggest that such beliefs can be elicited based on the suggestions provided in TRA and TPB, respectively (Ajzen, 2001; Ajzen and Sheikh, 2013). These as sales promotion technique preferences are normally rational, systematic and consist of thoughtful behaviours which are not controlled by unconscious motives (Ndubisi and Chiew, 2005). As such, both TRA and TPB provide a strong framework for the researcher to elicit and conceptualised such beliefs. Both TRA and TPB also suggested that beliefs should be different across context (Ajzen and Sheikh, 2013; Fishbein and Ajzen, 2010).

At the same time, discount sales promotion techniques were also viewed as reliable by most consumers. This was primarily due to the strict regulations imposed by Malaysia Competition Commission (2012) which impedes unfair practice by retailers and marketers on market competition, particularly on unfair discounting practices by retailers and marketers alike.

5.2 Behavioural beliefs and its evaluation on attitude

The findings suggest that consumer salient beliefs and its evaluation (H1) have a positive impact/relationship on their attitude towards discount sales promotion technique. Two inferences can be made from such findings. First, such findings are prevalent in cognitive attitude studies where it supports the previous research done (Bagozzi, 1981; Bagozzi, 1982) which explains such expectancy-value compound of beliefs and its evaluation are necessary to explain attitude (Bagozzi, 1979). This as such perception of expectancy-value compound of beliefs and its evaluation (cognitive structure) have an impact on attitude (affective structure) towards discount sales promotion technique and are tied closely to each other. At the same time, the cognitive structure of such beliefs and its evaluation were predominantly positive, resulting in favourable consequences (read as ‘attitude’ in this study). Hence, this supports the notation where beliefs and its evaluation are the antecedent of attitude towards discount sales promotion technique. Such expectancy-value compounds are necessary to explain attitude towards discount sales promotion technique.

Secondly, previous studies done also indicate that attitude is primarily based on corresponding sets of beliefs and its evaluation (Ajzen, 2001). Such beliefs are predominantly readily accessible in memory, where pilot work is necessary to elicit such beliefs (Fishbein and Ajzen, 2010). As beliefs are relatively intuitive, such elucidation
will enable the researcher to elicit prevalent beliefs which will result in favourable attitude.

5.3 Normative beliefs about discount sales promotion technique

Due to the similarity of some of the sales promotion techniques in this study, five normative beliefs were found and shown in Table 3. Some of these normative beliefs are identical to the normative beliefs of coupon sales promotion technique (Shimp and Kavas, 1984). This indicates that regardless of the type of sales promotion technique, there are some similar constructs of normative beliefs. It is therefore evident that the normative beliefs elicited from the current study are identical to the normative beliefs elicited from previous studies; this provides further justification to apply and use this methodology in relation to discount sales promotion technique studies.

Referent is critically important in shaping behaviours (Hsieh, Rai and Keil, 2008; Taylor and Todd, 1995). Being the source of reference, a referent is strongly believed to be the centre of decision-making by consumers (Taylor and Todd, 1995). This is particularly true within a Malaysian context where the society is known to be collectivists, whereas it accentuates the broader goals of the society over the goals of its individual members (Postill, 2011). Specifically, Malaysians are known to be more concerned about how they can fit into society; hence, they behave in accordance with social norms. Thus, this provides strong justification of eliciting normative beliefs which explain Malaysian consumers behavioural responses towards discount sales promotion technique.

However, despite acknowledging the importance of normative beliefs in accordance to Malaysian societal norms, it is also important to acknowledge that not all referents are similar. In the case of Malaysian consumers, issues such as filial piety governs most of their behaviour and social norms (Zainuddin, Arokiasamy and Poi, 2003), which defines the higher role of parents and household institutions in nurturing such behaviour as compared to peers or friends (Kordi and Baharudin, 2010). This then motivates the researcher to study such normative belief construct in detail. At the same time, the researcher also denotes that before any behaviour happens, the subjectivity of social norms from normative beliefs needs to be properly defined (Ajzen and Sheikh, 2013). This was necessary as discount sales promotion technique preferences are normally rational, systematic and consist of thoughtful behaviour which are not controlled of unconscious motives (Ndubisi and Chiew, 2005). As such, the TRA provides a strong framework for the researcher to elicit and conceptualised such normative beliefs.

5.4 Normative beliefs and motivation to comply on subjective norms

The findings earlier show that consumer normative beliefs and the associated motivation to comply with others’ expectation (H2) have a positive impact on their subjective norms towards sales promotions technique preference. Two inferences can be made from such findings. Firstly, the collectivist orientation of Malaysian consumers is dominant in such normative beliefs and the associated motivations to comply with others’ expectation. The notation of the common goal of many (others) other than individual beliefs governs much of the subjective norms towards a particular event (Ndubisi, 2004; Singelis and Brown, 1995). This will then result in suppression of an individual’s buying behaviour, thus decreasing the likelihood of impulse buying which is associated with individual
orientation (Kacen and Lee, 2002). The annotation of the society at large thus plays a more dominant part opposing individual beliefs and practices, evident in the preference and usage of discount sales promotion techniques.

Not only that, the larger Malaysian society also has a higher tendency towards preferring discount sales promotion techniques which provides them a higher possible tangibility in their purchases (Jamal, Peattie and Peattie, 2012). On a simpler note, when everyone in the market owns certain things, they will impose a similar purchasing pattern on other people surrounding them. This again governs by the collectivist nature of Malaysian consumers which normally follows such a pattern in order not to be excluded from society (Singelis and Brown, 1995). Purchases that are associated with such preferences will ultimately elevate the consumers in society or at least provide them a sense of social closeness. This is evident that consumers’ normative beliefs and the associated motivations to comply with others’ expectation impose a more significant impact on their overall subjective norms for discount sales promotion techniques.

Secondly, most Malaysian consumers tend to purchase products and/or services that are not primarily for themselves, but rather for other people such as their spouse or family members. Such purchasing patterns are closely linked to the issues of filial piety which are essential Asian consumers’ characteristics (Ashley-Cotleur, King and Brazale, 2000). Whenever the purchase of a product and/or service through a particular sales promotion technique deemed as important and is not associated with other views, particularly the views of parents and siblings, such a purchase is normally deemed as necessary and unimportant by society at large. Such practices are largely not encouraged in such collectivist society.

5.5 Attitude and subjective norm on behavioural intention

The findings earlier show that consumer attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control (H3 and H4) have a positive impact on their behavioural intention towards discount sales promotions technique preference. As such, two inferences can be made from such findings. First, issues such as competitive pricing, product quality and store image created by retailers and manufacturers may also have a significant impact on Malaysian consumers’ attitudinal and/or behavioural outcome. This is because lower price, good product quality and store image offered by retailers and manufacturers will attract consumers to purchase from them (Bester and Petrakis, 1995; Grewal et al., 1998). Such factors will then prompt a more positive behavioural intention for a purchase of a product and/or service. The literature is awash with various other factors that affect behavioural intention (Grewal et al., 1998). Such findings are consistent for attitude and subjective norms on behavioural intention.

Secondly, competitive pricing, product quality and store image also offer the tangibility that most Malaysian consumers seek (Asma, 1992; Hamzah, 1991; Rashid and Ho, 2003). Previous studies done indicate that Malaysian consumers value the tangibility associated with their purchases (Ndubisi and Chiew, 2005). Such tangibility offers the experience, touch and feel of the product and/or service these consumers seek for even before they actually buy it. This will then enable these consumers to examine the product through physical contact, giving them a sense of reassurance and confirmation of the quality of the product. It also gives the impression that they have control over what and how they purchase. This will then cultivate a more positive behavioural intention over
time for the purchase of a product and/or service associated with discount sales promotion technique.

5.6 Theoretical and managerial implications

Behavioural belief and normative belief components elucidated within TRA provided a strong basis for inference for what is a western and an eastern context, particularly towards the preferences sales promotion techniques in an emerging market. As past studies delved very little into interpreting such beliefs from an eastern context on sales promotion technique preferences, it provided a strong ground for testing it within an eastern emerging market context. Such findings were also crucial in developing a better segmentation approach to profile the consumers according to their beliefs towards discount sales promotion technique. The production of beliefs and normative beliefs of discount sales promotion techniques utilising TRA further explicates the construction of better prediction and explanation to why and how attitude and behaviour are towards preferred sales promotion. Such lucidity is lacking in past literature on sales promotion studies due to the lack of theoretical and managerial consideration as well.

This study also acknowledged the predictability of TRA adopted to explain attitude and behavioural intention towards sales promotion technique preference. The researcher hence concluded that the results predominantly derived from a Western culture could not be generalised for developing Asian countries such as Malaysia. It is suggested in literature that eliciting the attitudinal and behavioural responses to the most likely preferred sales promotion technique can yield significant insights into the effectiveness of various marketing strategies and activities based on such preferences (Garretson, Fisher and Burton, 2002; Jee and De Run, 2013; McNeill, 2013; Ndubisi and Chiew, 2005; Shimp and Kavas, 1984).

Marketers and retailers alike must also take note of activities such as competitive pricing, store image, good product quality and effective promotional activities effect on such attitudinal and behavioural responses towards discount sales promotion technique preference in an emerging market such as Malaysia. These factors have been shown to be important indicators of consumers’ attitudinal and behavioural responses towards sales promotion activities in the current study, and in previous studies conducted (Jee and De Run, 2013), which are closely linked to the nature of consumers that is more monetary based (Ndubisi and Chiew, 2006). Marketers and retailers, therefore, must be able to carry out effective sales promotional activities that cover all the indicators mentioned. This will enable them to stay competitive in the market while gaining a larger and more profitable market share. Apart from that, it also enables the development of more preferable and positive sales promotion activities with the inclusion suggestions highlighted in earlier.

6 Conclusion

Sales promotion technique preference was studied by noting the various antecedents-to-consequences constructs outcomes on it. The findings showed that there were significant relationships between beliefs and its evaluation on attitude towards discount sales promotion technique. The findings also show significant relationships between attitude and subjective norm on behavioural intention.
6.1 Limitations and future research

Firstly, this study only identified sales promotion techniques that were likely to be the most preferred by consumers (discount). This limits the study to only study the identification of discount sales promotion technique and its effect. This raises the question of whether other preferred sales promotion techniques would yield similar findings; hence, generalisability is an issue here. As such, future studies can also focus on various other sales promotion techniques available in the market (such as coupons and samples), and how the research model can further explain such other sales promotion techniques preferences. Moreover, future studies can also integrate other sales promotion techniques on different product types. All these will enable the researchers in future to create a more holistic and comprehensive guide on the various sales promotion techniques available and preferred in emerging markets.

Secondly, while this study adopted TRA to explain sales promotion technique preference, this method has never been tested in a Malaysia context before. At the same time, the interpretation of behaviours is associated with some level of difficulties in previous studies (Ajzen, 1988; Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen, 2001; Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Ajzen and Madden, 1986; Ajzen and Sheikh, 2013). Having mentioned the above, it is crucial for the researcher to further articulate such design as it is less known in sales promotion studies in emerging markets. Further studies could look more closely at other theories such as Value-Expectancy Theory to better explain the various antecedents-to-consequences constructs components as suggested in this study, and how it will impact the predictive relevancy of such model on sales promotion technique preference.

At the same time, the structural model was tested through the uses of variance-based SEM for this study. Such method of using variance-based SEM such as partial least square (PLS) SEM is limited in predicting model fit, which is normally available in covariance-based SEM such as AMOS-SEM (Wong, 2013). Nevertheless, PLS-SEM is used in this study as the beliefs and normative beliefs constructs were elucidated using a qualitative method; hence, PLS-SEM was more appropriate (Lowry and Gaskin, 2014; Tenenhaus, Mauger and Guinot, 2010). This PLS-SEM is more suitable for such variance-based data to maximise variance for each path tested. At the same time, PLS-SEM also does not take into assumption data normality (which is essential in any covariance-based SEM), but it produces predictive relevance which fits into the objectivity of this study.

References


Beliefs towards sales promotion technique


Beliefs towards sales promotion technique


Beliefs towards sales promotion technique


Appendix 1  Examples of statements to create themes for behavioural and normative beliefs components

Examples of statements to create the theme ‘value for money technique’ in Table 2 as follows:

“I mean if the whatever the price they offer, at the discounted price is normally you spend 10 and now is only 8 ringgit worth then I will buy it... Value of the money la.”
(Respondent 3)

“For this case, depending on what is the item being discounted, either daily items, groceries, clothing, occasionally is good value and worthy.”
(Respondent 5)

Examples of statements to create the theme ‘an attractive technique’ in Table 2 as follows:

“If we go to the hypermarket, we would not ask for discount because usually they have a banner to attract customers and let them know if there is a promotion going on.”
(Respondent 1)

“If I think the thing that I wanted to buy in particular month with a discount, it will attract my attention to it.”
(Respondent 10)

Examples of statements to create the theme ‘induces repeat purchases’ in Table 2 as follows:

“Normally I don’t survey things, I just buy one stuff from one shop. As I go to another shop and I realized it is lesser so next time I would go to that store...”
(Respondent 2)

“...discount...people will rushing there because there is a sale...”
(Respondent 7)

Examples of statements to create the theme ‘reliable technique’ in Table 2 as follows:

“...if the item or product that I’m looking for at the mall has a good quality and can maintain for quite long, I will definitely buy the product.”
(Respondent 12)

“When they offer a discount, I can purchase quality items in reasonable price and I am happy with it.”
(Respondent 14)
Examples of statements to create the theme ‘convenient technique’ in Table 2 as follows:

“Discount? Discount is everywhere, where you get less price when it is offered on normal days.”
(Respondent 2)

“Yes...many, every day and every week got many discount, any type of discount and anywhere.”
(Respondent 17)

Examples of statements to create the theme ‘retain to a business’ in Table 2 as follows:

“...some girls they only use the GUESS brand, so for sure they will know every month they will purchase something from there so it is worth to get a membership and get a discount.”
(Respondent 16)

“Yes... I often buy it from there, like eggs and Milo and detergent, it is very cheap if got promotion or discount.”
(Respondent 17)

Examples of statements to create the theme ‘friends’ in Table 2 as follows:

“Sometimes from my friends, sometimes...”
(Respondent 6)

“My friends, because normally we will have a gathering...”
(Respondent 14)

“...sometimes my friends tell me...”
(Respondent 31)

Examples of statements to create the theme ‘parents’ in Table 2 as follows:

“...from my parents la, when they tell...”
(Respondent 10)

“...known the word discount through my father...”
(Respondent 13)

“I get to know discount from my mother. She love shopping”
(Respondent 14)

Examples of statements to create the theme ‘siblings’ in Table 2 as follows:

“...known the word discount through my ... and brother.”
(Respondent 13)

“...uhm...brothers and sisters...”
(Respondents 18)
Example of statements to create the theme ‘colleagues’ in Table 2 as follows:

“...if there is any discount, my colleague will call me, say there is a discount...”

(Respondent 7)

Example of statements to create the theme ‘relatives’ in Table 2 as follows:

“...so my niece also know....”

(Respondent 11)