

# Determinant of Promotion Mix on Customer Retention of Melcom Products in Accra: Mediating role of Customer Satisfaction and Trust

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**Abstract:** *The study investigates the determinants of promotion mix on customer retention of Melcom products in Accra with a mediation of customer satisfaction and trust. The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting 260 customers of three Melcom Ghana branches i.e. Weija, Lapaz and Kaneshie in Accra. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used in analyzing the data. The study revealed a significant association of sales promotion, advertising, public relation, direct marketing and customer satisfaction and trust. However, direct marketing was moderately found to be associated with customer satisfaction and trust. Also, customer satisfaction and trust was found to be significantly moderating promotional mix elements such as sales promotion, advertising, public relation, direct marketing and customer retention. Managerial implication was presented.*

**Keywords:** promotion mix, customer satisfaction, trust customer retention

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## INTRODUCTION

In the era of heightened competition coupled with continuous changing needs of consumers, adopting effective strategic marketing communication practices have become indispensable. Given that so many organizations are communicating at the same time (Ofosu-Boateng, 2020), the consumer is exposed to tons of messages on daily basis (Kotler, 2007). Kotler & Keller (2012) define marketing communication as “a means by which firms can establish dialogue and build relationships with customers”. It is argued that regardless of the quality of the product, communication is vital in driving the product to consumers, however, effective communication has been emphasised to have effective outcome (Asekome, 2020). Hence, the adoption of promotion mix as an effective marketing communication tool to accentuate product attributes by

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organizations in recent times cannot be taken as fluke. In the consumer goods industry in Ghana, which is characterized by fierce competition, the firms exert great efforts in communicating with consumers by the use of promotion mix. One of such firms is Melcom Ghana, which arguably, is a household name. A critical observation of the firm's marketing communication strategy confirms the use of the promotion mix: sales promotion (coupons, vouchers, buy-one-get-one) advertising, publicity, public relations, among others, to attract and retain existing customers. Defined as "the coordination of a variety of promotional methods by marketers to stimulate and encourage patronise of the offerings of organizations (Maxwell, 2017), Kotler & Armstrong (2018) refer to promotion mix as "marketing communications mix" which consists of advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion and direct marketing. Previous studies show a positive relationship between promotion mix elements such as sales promotion, advertising, public relations and customer retention (Erigbe, 2020; Fidele, 2018; Fortenberry & McGoldrick, 2020; Ofosu-Boateng & Agyei, 2020). However, others show otherwise (Pinanggih et al., 2022)

As a result of the variation in the extant literature, there was the need to incorporate mediating variables which are customer satisfaction and trust. Satisfied customers are likely to trust a brand leading to long term relationships, resulting in retention (Widiyanto, 2007). This is evident in the study of Barusman & Rullian (2020) whose findings revealed a significant impact between customer satisfaction and retention. Also, the study of Chigozie (2021) revealed a significant impact of customer satisfaction on customer retention. However, the study of Almohaimmeed (2019) entitled: "Pillars of customer retention: An empirical study on the influence of customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and customer profitability on customer retention, customer satisfaction was found to have no significant relationship with customer retention. Interestingly, studies show that customer retention is as a result of a combination of variables. However, there appears to be dearth of studies in this regard. On the bases of the aforementioned problems from extant literature, a new conceptual model was developed to incorporate mediating variables: customer satisfaction and trust to explain their roles in mediating the effects of promotion mix elements on customer retention.

### **Significance of the Study**

The outcome of the study is expected to expose the management of Melcom Ghana to those promotion mix elements capable of influencing satisfaction, trust and retention. The findings will as well bring to the fore, the effective retention strategies to be adopted as well as the recognition of customer satisfaction and trust as a predictor of customer retention

### **Delimitation and Scope of the study**

The study is restricted to only three branches of Melcom Ghana in Accra i.e. Weija, Lapaz and Kaneshie as extending it to all the branches in Accra can be involving and demanding. The extant literature will also focus on customer satisfaction, trust, retention and only four of the promotion mix elements, i.e. social media, publicity, sales promotion, and advertising

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Promotion Mix Elements

The promotion mix is also referred to as “the marketing mix” (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). According to the authors, this consists of advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion, and direct marketing.

**Advertising:** It is a form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by a certain sponsor that requires payment (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

**Sales promotion:** It consists of a collection of various incentive tools, most of which are short term, designed to encourage the purchase of a particular product/service more quickly and/or more by consumers or traders (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

**Public relations:** It refers to the various programs designed to promote or protect the image of a company or its individual products (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

### Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has been described as “the feeling of a customer’s happiness and disappointment after comparing expectations with the performance results of the product (Priansa, 2017). It simply measures the level of expectation of the organization’s product and the customer’s expectation. Previous studies showed a positive impact of customer satisfaction on the organization and its products (Copley, 2017) in that a satisfactory purchase experience is required for repeat purchase (Eid, 2015). Since satisfaction is measured by how well the customer expectations are met, organisations are entreated to meet customers’ expectations

### Promotion Mix, Customer Satisfaction Trust and Customer Retention

The importance of promotion mix cannot be overemphasized given the fragment nature of the media landscape (Ofosu-Boateng, 2020). The use of promotion mix thus becomes indispensable in modern business (Armstrong & Kotler, 2015). Previous studies showed a positive relationship between promotion mix elements such as sales promotion, advertising, public relations, direct marketing and customer retention (Erigbe, 2020; Fidele, 2018; Ydava *et al.*, 2022; Hanaysha, 2018).

In the study of Samosir *et al.* (2021), it was revealed that promotion mix has a positive effect on customer satisfaction as satisfaction engenders customers’ trust to have a positive effect on retention. According to El-Adly & Eid (2016), satisfaction is measured through the pre-expectation and post-purchase experience. Thus, satisfaction becomes a predictor of customer retention (Alkitbi *et al.*, 2020; Nugroho *et al.*, 2020)

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A myriad of studies have showed significant impact of customer satisfaction and trust on customer retention in different industries (Daneshfar et al., 2016; Nguyen et al., 2018), and the attendant increase in customer retention (Alkitbi *et al.*, 2020). For instance, in the study of (Liung & Liung (2017) and Lv et al. (2018), customer satisfaction was recognized essentials for organizations' reputation which intend leads to trust and customer retention (Ofosu-Boateng, 2020). Hence, customer satisfaction is seen as the antecedent of customer retention (Copley, 2017). In the study of Nusrat (2018), a positive relationship was found between customer satisfaction, trust and customer retention. On the basis of the extant literature, the study posits the following hypotheses:

*H1: There is a significant positive relationship between sales promotion and customer satisfaction and trust*

*H2: There is a significant positive relationship between advertising, customer satisfaction and trust*

*H3: There is a significant positive relationship between public relations, customer satisfaction and trust*

*H4: There is a significant positive relationship between direct marketing, customer satisfaction and trust*

*H5: Customer satisfaction and trust will mediate promotion mix elements and retention*

### **Empirical Review**

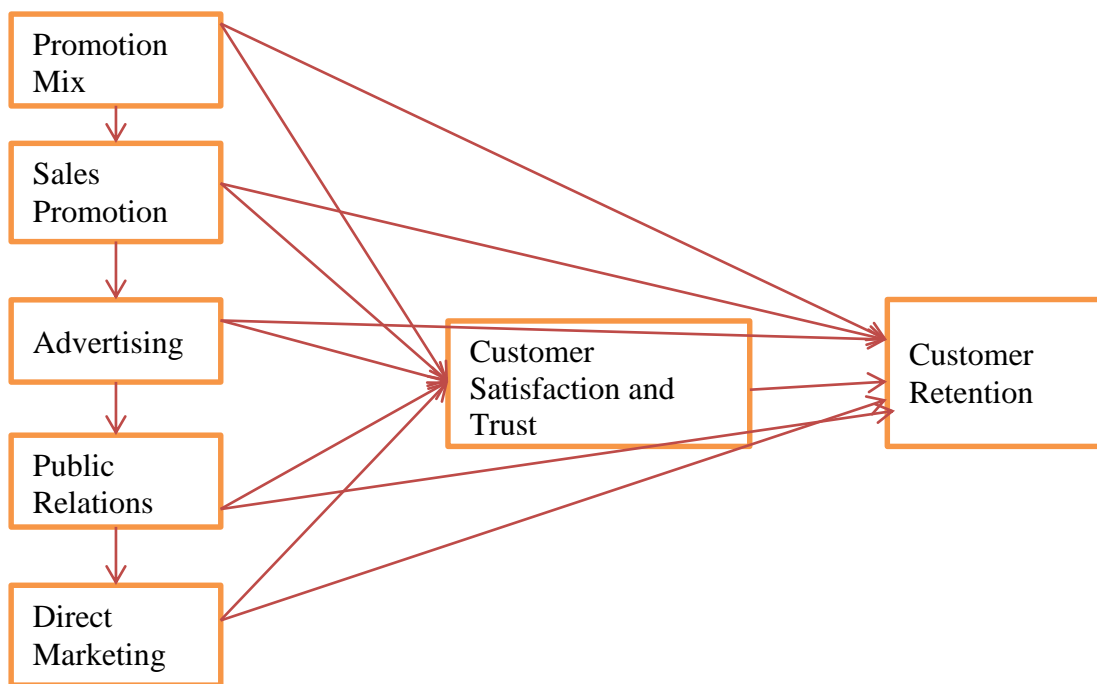
Lugoye (2017) examine promotional mix influence towards customers' Satisfaction, loyalty and retention in mobile telecommunication in Tanzania. The respondents were customers of AirTel communication firm in Ilala, kinondon and temeke district in Dar-es- Salaam region. Questionnaires were mailed to Airtel customers randomly in Dar-es-Salaam. and 60 questionnaires were responded and returned back. Data analysis used the soft science model i.e IBM SPSS 21 version and simple percentage model for data analysis. The study was subjective, descriptive, holistic, exprolatory and qualitative. The study has features of validity, reliability, transferability, dependability, credibility and transferibility. The hypotheses were formulated and tested. The contingency tables of variables of interest were generated and analysis made. The chi-square test was used to test the three (3) hypothesis of the study at 95% confidence level (error probability, P=0.05) and df 4 values. The study involved independent variables namely Advertisement, sales promotions, public relation, personal selling and direct marketing. The study was concluded that promotional mix influences customers' satisfaction, loyalty and retention in mobile communication.

Chen et al. (2017) reveal that the attributes of price and discount, personal selling and customer relationship have significant impact on likelihood of customer retention, satisfactory price and discounts are a necessary attribute to support the likelihood of customer retention, and satisfactory personal selling is the most important attribute for increasing the likelihood of customer retention.

**Conceptual Framework**

The study’s construct was developed to test the stated hypotheses, i.e. the relationship between promotion mix elements, i.e. sales promotion, advertising, public relations and direct marketing (independent variables) and customer satisfaction and trust (dependent variable) as well as the mediation of customer satisfaction and trust. Figure 1 presents the construct.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**



**Author’s Construct, 2024**

**Methodology**

**Research Design**

Research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The descriptive design was used in the study to determine the relationship between promotion mix elements such as sales promotion, advertising, public relations and direct marketing (independent variables) and customer retention (dependent variable) as well as the mediation of customer satisfaction and trust. Descriptive design makes it possible to test the study’s hypotheses (Saunders *et al.*, 2009), hence the usage.

### **Population of the Study**

Define as “a well-defined group of people or object which share common characteristics (Cox, 2008), the study’s population was made up of customers of Melcom Ghana branches in Weija, Lapaz and Kaneshie.

### **Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

In this study, the purposive sampling technique was used in selecting customers of three Melcom Ghana branches i.e. Weija, Lapaz and Kaneshie. The main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable one to answer the stated research questions (Lund Research, 2012). Purposive sampling was used because the study area was zoned and it is only customers who patronize from the three branches were selected. At the end of the exercise, 260 respondents who were willing to participate in the study were interviewed.

### **Instruments for Data Collection**

Questionnaires were the main instruments for the data collection with the data source being primary, hence the use of field survey.

### **Distribution of Questionnaires**

A week was devoted to each of the three branches to solicit data from the respondents. The interview was over after three weeks as it took fifteen minutes to interview each respondent

### **Data Analysis**

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used to carry out the data analysis and the findings presented in tables for easy reading and interpretation. It is also accompanied by short commentaries

### **Pre-Testing of Instruments and Reliability**

The instrument was pre-tested using 20 customers Shoprite customers at Weija for the simple reason that the characteristics of the respondents were similar to those in the study area. The interview guide was modified. Also, to test the reliability, the Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) was used. Reliability refers to the stability of the measuring instrument used and its consistency over time

### **Ethical Consideration**

The study adhered to ethical principles as the purpose of the study was explained and participants were encouraged to participate at their own will. The study was free from deception and harm and this gave room for higher response rate.

### **Overview of Melcom Ghana**

Melcom is a supermarket chain of 65 shops spread across all over Ghana. It was started in 1989 by Indian magnate Bhagwan Khubchandani. His late father, Ramchand Khubchandani, had

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development UK arrived in the then Gold Coast in 1929 as a 14-year-old to work as a store boy. Melcom Group of Companies is a family business. The Melcom Group of Companies consists of six separate entities: Melcom Limited, Century Industries Limited, Crownstar Electronic Industries Limited, Melcom Hospitality, Melcom Travels, and Melcom Care. Aside from conquering an extensive retail market share with a network of 42 retail outlets spread all over Ghana (Melcom Limited), the Group is well-diversified into other businesses.

Melcom Group is best known for its shopping mall, Melcom Limited. As Ghana’s largest chain of retail department stores, Melcom offers thousands of products and hundreds of well-known brands.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Background Characteristics of f Respondents

From the study, the dominance of male customers in the courier and parcel industry in Accra, Ghana, is apparent as male customers accounted for 72.3% as against 27.3% of women.

The results of the study showed that the age groups 50-59(85) and 40-49(70) were the majority representing 38.7% and 31.8% respectively. This was followed by age group 30-39(50). The least age group is 20-29(15). It can be concluded that majority of customers in the courier and parcel industry in Accra, Ghana, are in the age group 50-59 and 40-49 respectively. The result is a departure of the notion held prior to the study

The findings of the study showed that master degree holders (36.4%) were fairly the majority followed by bachelor degree (29.5%). Professional certificate holders accounted for (6.0%) whilst those with other certificate recorded (6.8%). The findings are admission that all the customers of the courier and parcel industry in Accra, Ghana, are educated but at varied levels.

### Research Methodology

#### Reliability

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R2	Adjusted R2	Std. Error and Estimate
1	.785	.762	.722	.420

- Predictors: (Constant), sales promotion, advertising, public relations and direct marketing (independent variables), customer satisfaction and trust and retention (dependent variable)
- Dependent variable: customer satisfaction and trust and retention

From table 1, the statistics showed that the R value is .785 which implies that the independent variables are 78.5% correlating with dependent variable. The R2 value is .762 meaning that

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 independent variables explain 76.2% variation of the dependent variable whilst the adjusted R2 variable is .722

Table 2: ANOVA

Models		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	13.181	7	6.110	16.488	.000b
	Residual	11.678	78	.170		
	Total	24.859	85			

- a. Predictors: (Constant), sales promotion, advertising, public relations and direct marketing (independent variables) customer satisfaction and trust and retention (dependent variable)
- b. Dependent variable: customer satisfaction and trust and retention

From table 2, the statistics showed f-value to be 16.488 which is greater than mean value 6.110 as the p-value is 0.000 given the statistical model as 99%

Table 3: Coefficients

1	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	Constants	.724	.864		3.247	.002
	Sales promotion	.654	.824	.662	3.462	.000
	Advertising	.654	.722	.482	2.467	.165
	Public relation	.676.	.788	.424	1.462	.145
	Direct marketing	.648	.624	.364	1.568	.128
	Sales promotion, advertising, public relations and direct marketing	.688	.742	.744	1.209	.000

- c. Predictors: (Constant), sales promotion, advertising, public relations and direct marketing (independent variables) customer satisfaction and trust, and retention (dependent variable)
- d. Dependent variable: customer satisfaction and trust and retention

**Hypothesis 1: There is a significant positive relationship between sales promotion and customer satisfaction and trust**

The independent variable sales promotion beta value is .662 implying that the independent variable sales promotion explains 66.2% of the dependent variable customer satisfaction and trust. The p-value is .000, which demonstrates significant association of sales promotion and customer satisfaction and trust. Hence the first hypothesis *H1: There is a significant positive relationship between sales promotion and customer satisfaction and trust* was accepted. The findings are in consonance with extant literature (Prabowo & Sitio, 2020). In their study, Prabowo & Sitio (2020)



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found that, sales promotion had significant positive impact on customer satisfaction. Organizations gain the trust of satisfied customers as satisfied customers hardly respond to overtures from competitors

**Hypothesis 2: There is a significant positive relationship between advertising, customer satisfaction and trust**

The beta value for the independent variable advertising is .482 depicting that the independent variable advertising explains 48.2% of the dependent variable customer satisfaction and trust. The p-value is .165, which shows significant association of advertising and customer satisfaction and trust. As a result, the study's second hypothesis *H2: There is a significant positive relationship between advertising, customer satisfaction and trust* was accepted. However, the findings are in variance with the study of Almoalad (2024) but support the findings of Azmi et al. (2022). It is obvious that in order to stay in the competitive world, organizations are forced to extol products/service attributes to convince customers and this is done through advertisements. If the product/service meets expectations, satisfaction is assured leading to the customer trusting the organization and its brand

**Hypothesis 3: There is a significant positive relationship between public relations, customer satisfaction and trust**

The independent variable public relations beta value is .424 implying that public relations explain 42.4% of the dependent variable customer satisfaction and trust. The p-value is .145, which demonstrates significant association of sales promotion and customer satisfaction and trust. Therefore, the study's hypothesis *H3: There is a significant positive relationship between public relations, customer satisfaction and trust* was accepted. Public relation is not limited to simply increasing awareness about an organization brand or product but can be used a tool to satisfy the customer and build trust through effective communication. The study however do not support other findings (Kwakye, 2018)

**Hypothesis 4: There is a significant positive relationship between direct marketing, customer satisfaction and trust**

The beta value for the independent variable direct marketing is .364 depicting that direct marketing as an independent variable explains 36.4% of the dependent variable customer satisfaction and trust. The p-value is .128, which shows moderate significant association of direct marketing and customer satisfaction and trust. From the findings, we can accept the study's hypothesis *H4: There is a significant positive relationship between direct marketing, customer satisfaction and trust* was accepted. The findings of other studies are in tandem with the study (Jones, 2020; Williams, 2018). Direct marketing set sights on establishing and maintaining long term, structural, direct relationships with customers. Such relationships are good to build trust which enhances satisfaction

### **H5: Customer satisfaction and trust will mediate promotion mix elements and retention**

The beta value for the mediating variables customer satisfaction and trust is .688 depicting that customer satisfaction and trust mediates 68.8% of the independent variables such as sales promotion, advertising, public relations, direct marketing and the dependent variable customer retention. The p-value is .000, which demonstrates a positive and significant mediation of customer satisfaction and trust and customer retention. Hence, the study's hypothesis *H5: Customer satisfaction and trust will mediate promotion mix elements and retention* was accepted. The study of Ofoosu-Boateng (2020) found promotional mix elements to engender customer satisfaction and trust which intends lead to retention. Other studies (Oppong, 2021; Kyei, 2020) found customer satisfaction and trust as antecedents of retention.

### **Managerial Implication**

Satisfying the customer has become so imperative and indispensable considering the debilitating competition among firms in the business environment. The 21st century customer should not be simply seen by managers as buyers of goods and services to be exploited for profit. Rather, managers must ensure that customers become strategic business partners. The use of promotional mix elements such as sales promotion, advertising and public relations must be applied by management when necessary not only to ensure customer satisfaction but also retention

Since customer satisfaction and trust mediate promotion mix and customer retention, managers should focus on customer satisfaction to build cognitive expectation of customers to enhance retention. Trust abounds in customer satisfaction by which it is a significant bond between a firm's brand and the customers. As a consequence, consumer who has trust in a brand and/or a company is more satisfied and more willing to be retained

### **Future Studies**

The study investigates the determinants of promotion mix on customer retention of Melcom products in Accra with a mediation of customer satisfaction and trust. Future studies could focus on other mediation factors and how they influence retention. Again, the study's population covered only three branches of Melcom Ghana. Future studies could adopt larger sample size.

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