Stage 2 Research Project B – 2019

**External Assessment Cover Sheet**

Assessment Type 3: Evaluation

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **8** | **1** | **2** | **6** | **8** | **6** |  | **L** |

**SACE Registration Number:**

**Research Question:** What are the most effective marketing techniques utilised by Australian supermarkets and to what extent are they utilised to increase profit?

**word count 1464**

(written evaluation 1500 max, summary 150 max)

This **evaluation** is assessed using the following specific features:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Synthesis** | **Evaluation** |
| S3 | E1 |
|  | E2 |
|  | E3 |

**Question: What are the most effective marketing techniques utilised by Australian supermarkets and to what extent are they utilised to increase profit?**

## Summary

The topic which sparked my curiosity was the marketing techniques utilised by supermarkets to influence their customers purchases. By using numerous primary and secondary resources, I uncovered the potential effect of marketing techniques on customers, particularly how they are utilised to increase profit. This led to the formation and refinement of my question, “What are the most effective marketing techniques utilised by the Australian supermarkets and to what extent are they utilised to increase profit.”

My research involved a number of processes, such as;

* Accessing websites
* Reading online scientific journals
* Emailing experts
* Examining videos
* Conducting interviews

These findings were curated and synthesised, enabling me to present my findings logically in essay form, using the three marketing techniques as sub-headings. I concluded that these 3 techniques influences a customer’s behaviour and purchase decisions, however, the extent of this depends on the age and gender and mood of the customer.

Word count 148

### Internet Sources

Searching the Internet uncovered multiple source types, including podcasts, websites, and videos which were primarily utilised throughout my preliminary research. By searching for keywords, useful information was easily located, adding detail and often expounding specific aspects of my research question. However, the reliability of these sources varied due to a lack of certified authors, meaning it was important to cross reference and substantiate the information with valid sources. For example, one website entitled *How human emotion influences buying behaviour* provided great insight into the connection between emotions and purchase decisions. However, I was unsure if the information was trustworthy, so I cross referenced this source to a journal article, which further clarified how emotion affects purchases and thus, validated the article. Websites were also utilised to find contact details of potential interviewees who were reputable and had experience conducting research on my topic. Overall, this research process was valuable, enabling me to quickly gain an overall understanding of the topic and a foundation to build my research on.

Interviews

Interviews were the most useful process as specific questions could be asked to gain a greater understanding and to find leads. They helped the research as experts could give current and relatively reliable information. Disadvantages of interviews were that they were potentially biased and unreliable. However, the interviews were sent to experts in the field with either much experience, such as Vijay Paugel, or a lot of tertiary education in the behavioural psychology field, such as Professor Christopher donkin. As Vijay Paugel has worked as a marketing analysist for about twenty years, his response helped my research by giving key findings specific to all three aspects of my question but mainly the effect of product location . He gave good tips and suggestions but also personal examples or trends that he has observed over his life. In summary, this process was the most useful for the research as it gave a lot of information, it filled in gaps in the research which were otherwise difficult to fill, and it opened up pathways and leads for my research and my question.

Journal articles and PDFs added highly reliable, peer reviewed key findings to the research. The State Library database gave access to many different documents meaning highly relevant articles could be found. These sources also introduced new vocabulary and opened up leads in the research. One article gave deeper suggestions to why layout of products psychologically affects out purchasing decisions, and another suggested the best methods for utilising it. Disadvantages of the journal articles was the technical language used which targeted a higher educated audience meaning further research was required to understand. Overall, journal articles increased the technicality of my key findings by providing a higher level of information.

## E2 Evaluation of Decisions Made in Response to Challenges/Opportunities

The quality of my outcome was influenced by my response to the various challenges and opportunities I encountered. The existence of bias in secondary sources was a challenge I frequently encountered. For example, one source entitled *How Stores Manipulate Your Senses So You Spend More Money* contained pertinent information, however after examining the author’s credentials, I decided I required another source to substantiate the information. As a result, I cross-referenced the website’s information to a psychology journal entitled The Influence of Background Music on Shopping Behavior: Classical Versus Top-Forty Music in a Wine Store*,* which verified the information in the source. This decision was significant because if I had extensively used unreliable sources, my outcome would have been tainted with bias and viewed as unreliable. A lack of credible, valid sources meant I needed to conduct my own research, such as emailed interviews and case studies. This had a beneficial impact on my research as it provided me with useful statistics whilst also enabling me to deepen my knowledge and understanding of the topic.

Another decision I made was to send the interview questions to a broad range of people relating to my questions answer. Sending it to psychologists, behavioural and marketing analysists, meant that they gave good evidence for their answers from their experiences in their field. Christopher Donkins gave answers specifically regarding the phycological effect of music which were more relevant to the music aspect of my question. I also sent the interviews to people studying marketing or psychology in University or graduates, such as Tomas Luke. They helped the research by giving reliable, detailed descriptions as to the marketing and phycological side of my research and by giving technical language to further my vocabulary and to increase the formality of my research. In summary, this decision beneficial as I gained information on the same topics but from various points of view, adding depth to my research.

An opportunity arose when Vijay Paugael , a marketing analyst for Woolworths , responded to my emailed requesting an interview. He suggested that the interview be conducted over a period of a month. This allowed me to evaluate and improve my questions as well as following up any leads as my research progressed. This was extremely helpful as any questions that didn’t evoke the answer I was intending could be changed and edited to receive a more relevant answer to my research question. As a relationship had been established between me and Vijay, he decided that I would be allowed access to various qualitative documents, detailing to what extent the techniques increase store profit. However due to the sensitive nature of these document I was required to sign a confidentiality document stating that any figures or data seen in the documents would not be recorded or used in my research project. However, the ideas and concepts that the documents illustrated would be allowed to be published in my folio and outcome. This limited my answer to the second part of my question, but gave insight into the detailed workings of the first part of my question.

## E3 Evaluation of the Research Outcome

The purpose of the research was to determine what the most effective marketing techniques used by Australian supermarkets and to what extent are they utilised to increase profit. By utilising a variety of research processes, my research findings addressed each aspect of my question. A limitation of my research was the inadequate amount of quantitative data and studies. A strength in my research findings was the extremely wide range of sources utilised in order to address the various aspects of my question, as books, case studies, journal articles and interviews were employed to validate my unreliable biased secondary sources. Another weakness of my research findings was its limited depth, however, for my intended purpose and audience my research findings covered the topic sufficiently.

The research question itself was answered reasonably well overall although the depth of detail was basic due to limited understanding and experience in the area. To be able to answer the first part of my question in full, it would require a large amount of knowledge on the different marketing techniques, their effect and the way in which they are utilised. A large amount of experience with analysing company data was needed to be able to answer the second part of my question completely, although this can never be fully answered, as the effect of these marketing techniques vary from day to day affecting store profit.

Overall, the research was good, although some areas of the question were unanswered or only explored lightly. Specifically, the effect colour has on the perception of a product was discovered in detail, but not “to what extent does it increase profit”.

As my research findings were based on secondary sources, they would be of little value to society. Thus, I believe the greatest value of my research findings was for the development of my knowledge and refinement of my skills such as cross-referencing, asking relevant questions, finding reliable information and conducting case studies. Overall, my research findings illustrated that supermarkets to increase profit should understand and utilise the various marketing techniques that influence customers.