

Effect of Price and Non-Price Initiatives Promotion towards Healthy Food Selection

Masmira Kurniawati^{a*}, Tanti Handriana^b, Indrianawati Usman^c,
^{a,b,c}Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia,
Email: ^{a*}masmira-k@feb.unair.ac.id

It is the task of marketers to pay attention to the welfare of their consumers. Unfortunately, today's consumer prefers fast food that does not have a balanced nutritional content. As a result, many Indonesians today are overweight. Marketers can influence this purchasing pattern through promotional activities so that consumers will prefer healthy food. Marketers can use various promotional methods to influence consumer purchasing decisions. This study uses priming, price discounts, and behavioural rewards. Utilising an experimental method, this study uses 240 participants. An ANOVA test is used to analyse the data. The analysis shows that consumers would prefer to buy healthy food products provided with a price discount compared to a behavioural reward; there are differences in the consumer response exposed to an ad with text that indicates priming compared to consumers who do not receive priming; and consumers will prefer to buy healthy food after seeing posters containing price promotions compared to priming posters.

Keywords: *Healthy food, priming, discount, behavioural reward.*

Introduction

Today's modern life makes people undergo an instant lifestyle, as well as the pattern of food selection in everyday life. The demands of work and very high activity makes people often decide to eat fast food, even though these foods generally contain high calories, fat, sugar, and sodium (Na) but are low in fibre. This also occurs in Indonesia. With a population of around 260 million in 2016, the data of the National Health Research shows that the adult population suffers from obesity at a rate of 20.7 per cent, even though obesity can cause diseases such as diabetes or heart disease. Therefore, it is important for the community to choose healthy foods in their daily lives.

One way to make people choose healthy food is through promotional activities. Promotional activities are important because in making purchasing decisions, consumers not only do it based on habits, but also these purchases are often impulsive actions that are influenced by situational factors (Dijksterhuis et al., 2005), like point-of-purchase promotions. When consumers decide to purchase food products, often this decision is based on the habit or subconscious desire and often without considering the nutritional content contained in it. To overcome this, a healthy food promotion strategy must be able to attract the attention of consumers to think about the food they will buy.

The promotional activities that are carried out by companies can be completed in various forms and objectives. In one of them, promotion can be done with the aim to activate consumer motivation in consuming a certain product. This activation is based on the assumption that consumers have several main goals in their lives, such as health, responsibility, or status, which will then influence the choice of products triggered by the environmental situational conditions. Thus, when consumers are exposed to visual clues, the visual clues will become priming on the main objectives of consumers (Sihvonen & Luomala, 2017). The visual clues in this study are posters designed to describe the main goals of consumer life; namely health, responsibility, or status. On the other hand, price discounts, as a form of sales promotion, is one of marketing strategies that are often used to generate impulsive activities in product purchases. This is because the purpose of sales promotion (such as discount price) is intended to encourage consumers to immediately decide on a purchase in the short term (Kotler & Keller, 2017). Another marketing incentive that is also widely used by marketers is behavioural reward. In contrast to sales promotions, incentives received by new consumers will be accepted in the future.

Thus, based on the above discussion, this study aims to evaluate whether promotional activities in the form of goal priming can affect consumers in choosing healthy foods, and whether different promotional activities (price versus non-price initiatives) will produce different behaviours in consumers in choosing healthy foods. This study contributes to the consumer behaviour literature, especially in choosing healthy foods in the form of goal priming promotions that can motivate consumers to choose healthy food, and that different promotional activities will produce different effectiveness for consumer behaviour, i.e. consumers will respond differently on price versus non-price promotion techniques.

Literature Review

Promotion: Sales Promotion and Behavioural Rewards

Sales promotion is an important element in marketing activities. Sales promotion comprises a collection of incentives that are mostly short term oriented, designed to encourage more or an

immediate purchase of certain products or services. If advertising offers reasons, sales promotions offer incentives to buy (Kotler & Keller, 2017).

Sales promotion is a form of direct persuasion through the use of various incentives that can be arranged to stimulate immediate product purchases or increase the amount of goods purchased by consumers. The purpose of sales promotions is very diverse. Through sales promotion the company can attract new customers, influence its customers to try new products, encourage customers to buy more products, attack competitors' promotional activities, increase impulse buying, or seek closer cooperation with retailers. The properties contained in sales promotions include communication, incentives, and invitations. The nature of communication means that sales promotions are able to attract attention and provide information that introduces customers to new products. The nature of incentives is to provide privileges and valuable stimuli for customers, while the nature of the invitation is to invite the audience to buy right away (Semenik, 2002). One of sales promotion strategies addressed to the consumer is price-offs or discounts. Price-offs comprise a product price reduction given to consumers but that is only temporary. The price-off is physically marked on the product or on the label of the products or is listed on the display, sign, or shelf.

Price promotions, such as discounts, are one of the marketing strategies often used by marketers. By using sales promotion, a company can effectively influence its consumers in the short term and buying behaviour in the long term (Bring & Shoemaker, 2004; Lammers, 1991). In the short term, price promotions like discounts will help increase sales through purchase acceleration (Blattberg, Eppen, & Lieberman, 1981; Jain & Vilcassim, 1991), brand and/or shop switching (Heerde, Gupta, & Wittink, 2003; Kumar & Leone, 1988) or consumption additions (Ailawadi & Neslin, 1998; Nijs et al., 2001).

Clow and Baack (2012) defined *price-off* (discount) as a temporary product price reduction given to consumers. Today, consumers are not only different in terms of their knowledge but also, at some point, their price sensitivity. One of the most important goals from this action is to increase sales, and more importantly, to increase the sellers' profits. It is not surprising that price reduction can cause a higher demand for a product. Anderson and Simester (2003) showed that demand can increase more than 50 per cent through only one additional word, "*sale*", next to the price.

However, in using a discount strategy on products, marketers also must pay attention to the right time and frequency because discount strategies can also have a negative impact. One of the negative impacts caused by the discount strategy is the discount trap. If the discount is done for a long period of time, adjacent frequency of administration, and at the wrong time,

then it can have a negative effect that is affecting the emergence of negative consumer perceptions about the product.

One other marketing incentive that is widely used by marketers is behavioural rewards (Henderson, Beck, & Palmatier, 2011). In contrast to the price discounts aimed at encouraging consumers to make immediate buying decisions, behavioural rewards provide incentives to consumers in the future. An example of a behavioural reward is when a consumer gets a coupon at each purchase and after a certain number of coupons are collected, consumers will receive incentives from marketers. Because of the time difference in receiving incentives, consumers tend to prefer incentives that are immediate compared to the incentives they will receive in the future. Thus, hypothesis one:

H1: Consumers will prefer to buy healthy food products that are given promotions in the form of discounts compared to behavioural rewards.

Mental Simulation

Mental simulations are often used by marketers as tactics to attract attention, encourage engagement, and change behaviour. Previous research showed that exposure to products or product images automatically triggers mental simulations which then influence preferences and attitudes (Beilock & Holt, 2007; Eelen et al., 2013). In this study, it was assumed that visual presentations in the form of posters could facilitate processes and outcomes of mental simulations (Xie, Minton, & Kahle, 2016). Mental simulation is an imitative representation of an event in the minds of consumers (Taylor & Schneider, 1989). One of the main studies in the field of mental simulation uses verbal or textual instruction to generate mental simulations (e.g. text in advertisements that ask consumers to imagine situations in which consumers use their products). The studies also identified two types of mental simulations: process focussed, and outcome focussed. Process focussed simulation involves imagination of the process step by step, while the outcome focussed simulation involves imagination about the end result. Escalas (2004) found that the text on advertisements that lead to the process focussed is effective in increasing consumer purchases. Whereas, Hoeffler (2003) found that similar advertisements can reduce the rejection rate of new products. Meanwhile, the outcome focussed simulation facilitates consumers in determining choices among various alternatives. In conjunction with Sihvonen and Luomala's study (2017), which states that the primary purpose of human life can be health, responsibilities, and status, this study used a marketing communication method with different text in accordance with the purpose of the consumers' life.

Priming is the activation of mental representations by external cues, thus affecting information processing and behaviour (Bargh & Chartrand, 2000). Goal priming refers to the

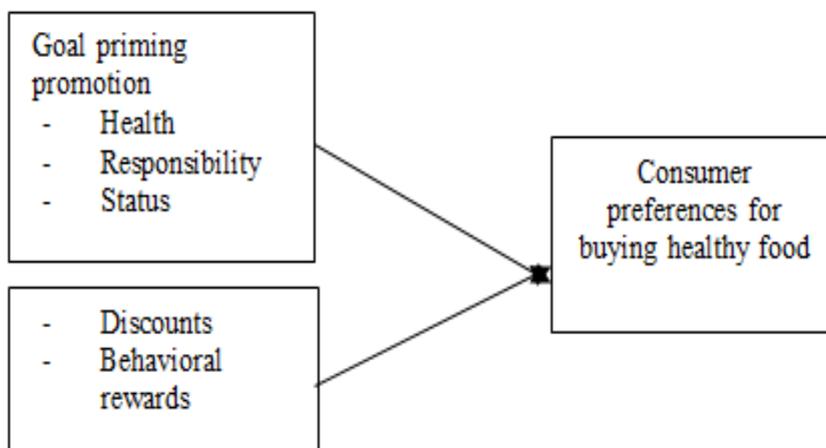
case in which the concept powered by external cues is the goal, and the prime influence behaviour is an effort to pursue these goals (Custers & Aarts, 2005, 2010). The goal is defined as a condition or behaviour that has a positive value and therefore motivates someone to pursue it. In short, goal priming can translate existing motivation into behaviour through the nonconscious processes of self-regulation (Papies, 2016). Thus, hypothesis two:

H2: There are differences in consumer responses that are exposed to ads with text that show priming compared to consumers who do not receive priming.

In this study, it is also suspected that consumers will respond differently to price versus non-price promotions. This is because price discounts are one form of sales promotion that aims to attract immediate purchases in the short term; consumers will make purchases immediately after seeing price discounts compared to seeing posters containing priming. Therefore, hypothesis three:

H3: Consumers will prefer to buy healthy food after seeing a poster containing price promotions rather than a priming poster.

Figure 1. Research Model



Methods

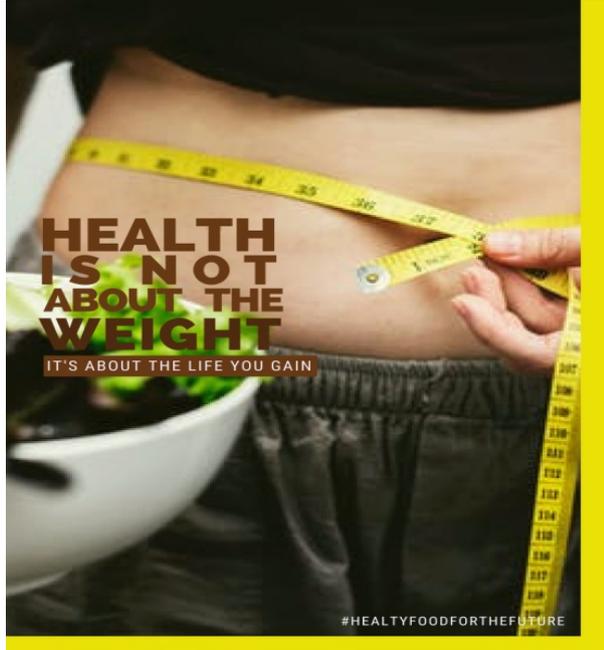
This research is a causal research, namely research that aims to show the influence of a variable on other variables (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2002) and is a cross section. Namely, research whose data collection activities are only done once, in order to answer research questions (Malhotra, 2010). The data used is primary data and was obtained through experimental research so that the independent variables in this study will be manipulated to test the hypothesis of its influence on the dependent variable.

There are six groups in this study consisting of three groups to test the effect of goal priming promotion on healthy food choices, two groups to test the effect of price promotion and behavioural rewards for healthy food choices, and one control group between subjects. There were 40 participants in each group, totalling 240 study participants. The participants are business school students who participated to obtain additional credits.

The variables used in the study are independent variables of goal priming promotion, sales promotion, and behavioural reward, and the dependent variable of consumer buying preference. To measure the goal priming promotion variable, the treatment given is in the form of delivering a healthy food promotion poster with additional text that shows goals in the context of health, responsibility, and status (Figure 2). For sales promotion, the treatment will be given in the form of delivering a poster with information on price reductions. Meanwhile, for behavioural reward, information on the poster states that each consumer will receive healthy food for free after their third purchase. The healthy food used in this study is Javanese salad. The preference for healthy food is measured by asking respondents about their desire to buy it. An ANOVA test is used to analyse the data.

Figure 2. Priming Poster

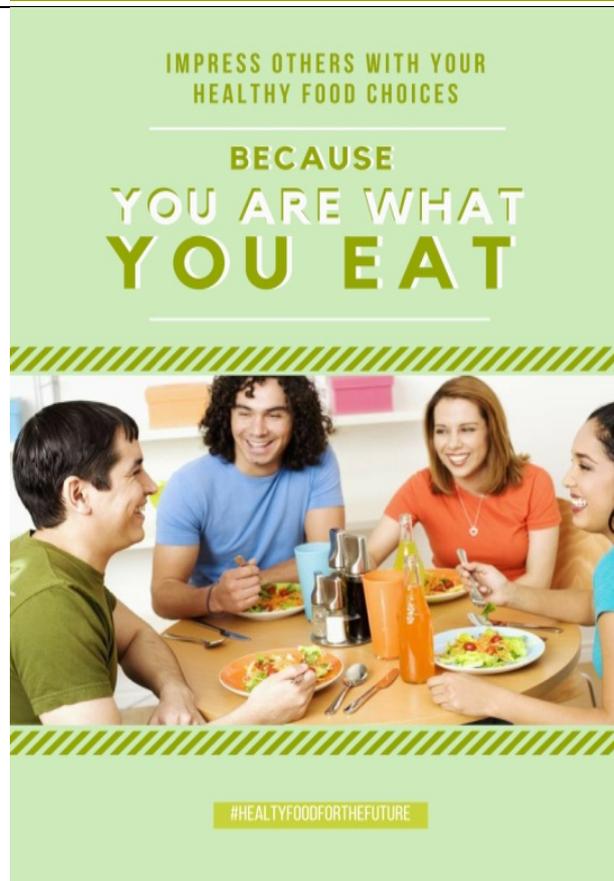
Poster		Stimulus
Discount		

<p>Behavioural Reward Promotion</p>		 <p>THE HEALTYFOOD YOUR DAILY FOOD</p> <p>GET 1 FREE AFTER 3RD PURCHASE</p> <p>For more information, visit www.thehealtyfood.com</p>
<p>Primed Goal – Health</p>		 <p>HEALTH IS NOT ABOUT THE WEIGHT IT'S ABOUT THE LIFE YOU GAIN</p> <p>#HEALTHYFOODFORTHEFUTURE</p>

**Primed Goal –
Responsibility**



**Primed Goal –
Status**



Results and Discussion

This study conducted an experiment to 240 participants who are business school students with various ages ($M = 20.64$; $SD = 1.24$) and gender ($F = 62\%$). To the participants, it was conveyed that this study was concerned with the pattern of consumption of healthy food in the younger generation.

Study One Results

Study one was conducted to test hypothesis one. Eighty participants were divided into two groups. A poster was presented to the first group showing a discount program for purchasing healthy food. Meanwhile, the poster in the second group showed a promotional program in the form of a free product after the third purchase. The food products displayed are the same, namely Javanese salad with a small amount of peanut sauce. After seeing the poster, the respondents were asked to state how likely they will buy the product (1 being very unlikely to 5 being very likely).

An ANOVA test was used to compare participants' buying intentions in the two experimental groups. The results of the study indicate that hypothesis one is supported. The participants' intention to buy healthy food products in the group issued a sales promotion treatment differed significantly from the group given a behavioural reward treatment ($Mean_{discount} = 4.40$; $Mean_{behavioral} = 3.98$; $F = 0.501$; $Sig. = 0.003$). Study one supports the argument that consumers would prefer to buy healthy food products when they are given promotions in the form of discounts compared to behavioural rewards.

A reward given later (not immediately) to consumers will be worth less than the reward that is immediately given to consumers, to the effect that a different response will happen. At the delayed reward, irrelevant behaviour would probably occur in the period between the desired behaviour and the reward. The idea of delayed rewards can be explained by using the concept of primary versus secondary reinforcement. Primary reinforcement has an intrinsic utility (product), while secondary reinforcement (coupon for example) does not have such a utility and must be converted. For example, when coupons are given as reinforcements, consumers will get a delayed reward. When they have to collect coupons before redemption, it is very likely that the potential success of the promotion will be even more eroded (Rotschild & Gaidis, 1981).

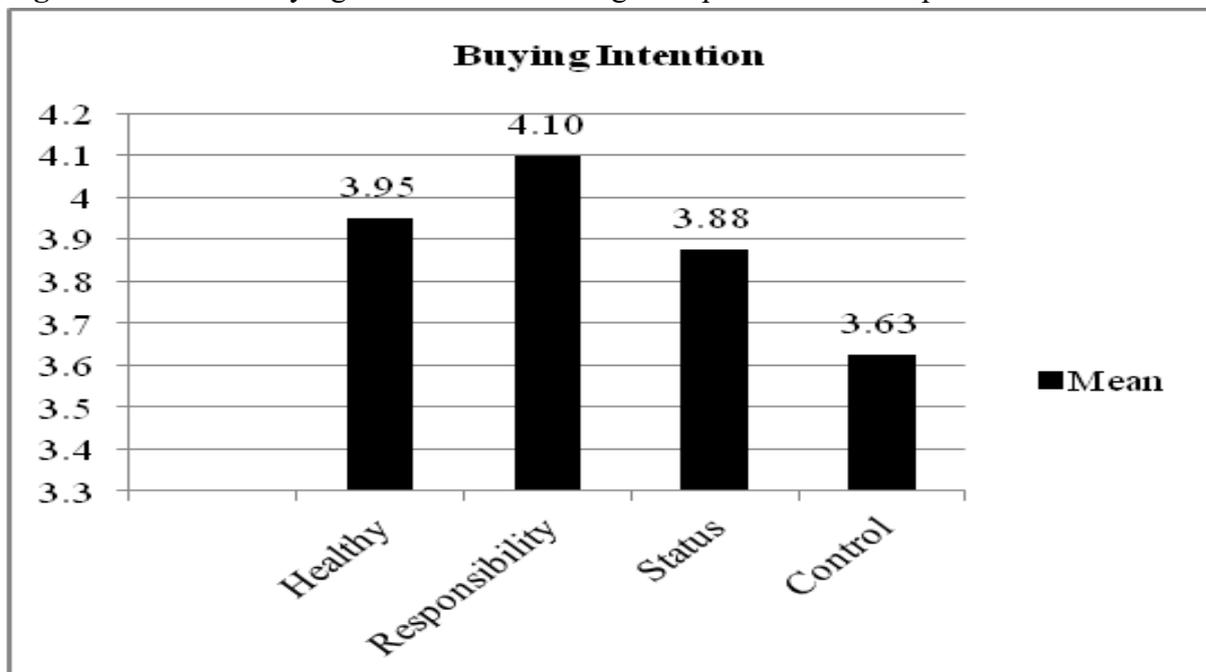
Study Two Results

Study two was conducted to test hypothesis two. One hundred and sixty participants were divided into four groups. A poster was presented to the first group priming health. The

second group was shown a poster priming responsibility. The third group was presented with a poster priming status. As a cover story, it was stated that the poster was a promotion from a restaurant that would be opened and participants were asked to rate the poster. This activity is intended to activate the motivation for consumption unconsciously. After seeing the posters, the participants are told that a restaurant will open soon with special products for healthy food. The participants were then asked how likely they will be to buy the food. In the control group, the poster was not shown. They were just asked how likely they will be to buy at a restaurant that specifically sells healthy food.

An ANOVA test was used to compare the participants' purchase intentions in the group that received priming and the control group. The results of the study indicate that hypothesis two is supported. The participants' intention to buy healthy food in the group given priming differed significantly from the control group ($F = 3.024$; $Sig. = 0.031$). Study two supports the argument that there is a difference in the response of consumers exposed to advertisements with text that show priming compared to consumers who do not receive priming. However, further tests showed that consumers' purchase intention in each priming group does not show a significant differentiation ($F = 0.993$; $Sig. = 0.374$). These results indicate that priming is effective in influencing consumer purchase intentions (Figure 3), but the difference in goal priming, shown on the poster, did not produce a different response in the consumers.

Figure 3. Mean of Buying Intention vs. Priming Group's Control Group



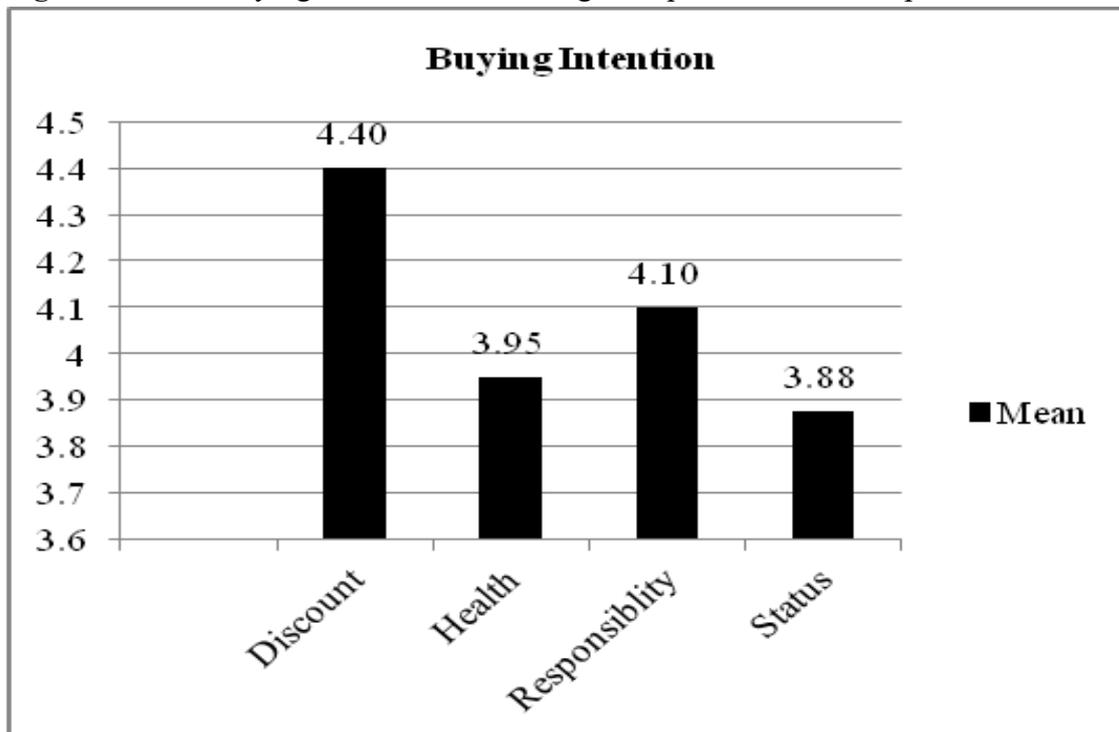
Cues from the environment have been shown to influence behaviour because these signals can activate habits (Wood & Neal, 2007) or trigger goals (Papies & Aarts, 2016; Papies & Barsalou, 2015; Stroebe, van Koningsbruggen, Papies, & Aarts, 2013). Indirectly, these signals will activate the cognitive structure that has been formed by previous experience in the same situation, and which in turn affects behaviour (Papies & Barsalou, 2015; Strack & Deutsch, 2004).

Study Three Results

To find out whether the participants will respond differently to the price and non-price strategy initiatives, a different test of the participant's response to the price promotion poster versus the poster priming was conducted.

An ANOVA test was used to compare the participants' buying intentions in the two experimental groups. The results of the study show that hypothesis three is supported. The participants' intention to buy healthy food products in the group given a sales promotion treatment differed significantly from the group given a priming treatment ($F = 4,706$; $Sig. = 0.004$). Study three supports the argument that consumers would prefer to buy healthy foods after seeing a poster containing promotional prices compared to a priming poster. These results indicate that the sale price is very effective in influencing consumers' purchase intentions in the short term (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Mean Buying Intention vs. Priming Group's Discount Group



Priming will only affect individual behaviour if the prime contains relevant goals so that individuals will be motivated to pursue that goal. Research shows that thirsty people (compared to people who are not thirsty) are more likely to drink a beverage and evaluate thirst-quencher drinks more positively after they are given priming that activates their cognition. Thus, these findings indicate that priming will affect a person's behaviour, especially if the prime is relevant to the individual's goal. Whereas, Aydinli, Bertini, and Lambrecht (2014) argue that price promotion decreases consumer motivation in making decisions. The result is a faster and more spontaneous consumer response. For companies, the more effective a strategy is in triggering purchases, the better, because an increase in purchases equals an increase in income (Reynolds et al., 2012). Therefore, effective discount strategies do have a direct and immediate effect on consumer responses compared to priming processes.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that sales promotions in the form of discounts can motivate consumers to immediately purchase healthy food compared to other promotional programs in the form of behavioural rewards and priming tactics. Discounts are intended to trigger purchases by consumers in the short term. It is expected that with these purchases, consumers will make a repurchase after the purchase. Although behavioural rewards are not as effective as discounts, this method is still used by marketers because this method is expected to generate habits within consumers. Thus, this habit will lead consumers to purchase products more often. In this case, healthy food.

Priming is widely used by marketers to activate goals that will motivate them to do the expected behaviour. In the instance of a healthy food campaign, priming is expected to activate the goals in consumers to lead a healthy lifestyle so that the behaviour of choosing healthy foods will be firmly embedded in consumers, even though priming is not available later.

Although priming has proven to be less effective than price promotion in influencing consumers' buying intentions in the short term, these two strategies can be used together in campaigning for healthy food consumption in the community. In this case, intense cooperation and integration between restaurant owners and the government is needed. The government must play an active role in campaigning for a healthy lifestyle for the community, which will affect the quality and welfare of a country's human resources. Whereas, business owners in the short term will be helped by price promotion strategies. In the medium term they will be helped by promotion in the form of behavioural rewards, and in the long run, they will be helped by cooperation with the government in



changing people's healthy behaviour through various priming posters intensified by the government.

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