

# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRODUCT SAMPLING COMMUNICATION BY PRIMAGAMA SURABAYA

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## ABSTRACT

This study is aimed to analyze the effectiveness of product sampling as a one of sales promotion tools in tutoring agency from communication perspective. Product sampling in education agency has become a favorite method to introduce their services to customers, including Primagama. The effectiveness is measured based on communicative objectives, they are attention, understanding, persuasion, and purchase intention. Scoring is used by implementing likert scale. The result shows that product sampling is effective in three communication factors (understanding, persuasion, and purchase intention) but less effective in one communication factor (attention).

*Keywords: product sampling, sales promotion tool, primagama*

## INTRODUCTION

Now days, the existence of tutoring agency has been increased significantly. Based on the Surabaya's Government data, there are more than thousand tutoring agencies in this city. Most of the tutoring agencies use the same sales promotion tool, namely product sampling, to persuade customers and demonstrate their services. Primagama, as the oldest tutoring agency also uses this method to attract customers. Primagama is a well known tutoring agency and was the market leader in this business field. But it happened five years ago, right now Primagama seems to lost in competition, it can be shown from the its website that the number of branches has already decreased in last five years.

This phenomenon makes the author interested to do a research, especially the method used by Primagama. Based on observation and interview, product sampling is the most used tool by Primagama as one of its marketing communication strategy. Off course, the effectiveness is seen from communication perspective in order to differentiate it with sales objective since the effectiveness of marketing communication is not only based on sales point. Based on the explanation above, the research question for this study is "how effective is product sampling communication held by Primagama Surabaya?"

## PRODUCT SAMPLING

Product sampling is one of the sales promotion tools that used by many marketers. A review of the published literature (McGuinness, 1988) found claims that in-store sampling in the USA frequently resulted in sales five to 10 times higher than before promotions. Although several claims have been made about the effectiveness of product sampling as a sales promotion technique, there is relatively little published research in support of these claims, especially for service based business like tutoring agency and from communication perspective.

Belch (2004:530) said that product sampling has various forms where the customers are offered to try the product freely. Generally, product sampling is used to introduce new product, although it is possible to introduce existed product. Manufacturers of packaged-goods products such as food, health care items, cosmetics, and toiletries are heavy users of sampling since their products meet the three criteria for an effective sampling program:

1. The products are of relatively low unit value, so samples do not cost too much.
2. The products are divisible, which means they can be broken into small sample sizes that are adequate for demonstrating the brand's features and benefits to the user.
3. The purchase cycle is relatively short, so the consumer will consider an immediate purchase or will not forget about the brand before the next purchase occasion.

According to Belch (2004), sample is one of the most effective tools in sales promotion since it can encourage customer to try the product which is offered with a risk-free. This is proven by a major study conducted by the Promotion Marketing Association in 2002 found that the vast majority of consumers receiving a sample either use it right away or save it to use sometime later.

Product sampling can be distributed by using several kinds for distribution methods (Belch, 2004:527), they are *door-to-door sampling*, *sampling through the mail*, *in-store sampling*, *on-package sampling* and *event sampling*. Besides those five methods, there are also other methods that can be used for distributing sampling such as using magazine to insert the product sampling, using third party distribution, internet etc. Distribution method is important not only in terms of costs, but also because it influences the type of consumer who receives the sample. For tutoring agency, the distribution method mostly used is off course *event sampling*.

This type of distribution method is suitable for firms which focus on service, like Primagama as tutoring agency. Besides that, event sampling has become the fast-growing and most popular way of distributing samples. Event sampling can take place in stores as well as at a variety of other venues such as concerts, sporting events and other places. Primagama, which is the research object of this study, uses event sampling by cooperating with the schools around its branches (deep interview, 2017).

### **SALES PROMOTION EFFECTIVENESS FROM COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK**

Measuring the effectiveness of marketing communication remains one of the fundamental, interesting, and challenging jobs that a manager and researcher face. There are many forms of measurement the effectiveness of sales promotion and most of them are done by using sales objective. This method is indeed the intention of any company but it can be improved by understanding the effect from communication point of view. One of the tool used to measure the effectiveness of sales promotion is offered by Elizabeth Gardner & Minakshi Trivedi (1998).

They develop a framework borrowed from advertising communication goal by using concepts of communication and communication paradigms. The framework then can be used for any tool of sales promotion, including product sampling. This framework measures the effectiveness based on attention, understanding, persuasion, and purchase intention.

The first level, which is attention, represents the ability of sales promotion tool to gain the consumer's attention and create an impact in his or her mind. The next level is understanding/knowledge which indicates the ability of sales promotion to relate the message in an easy-follow and straight forward manner that can be clearly interpreted by consumer. These two factor above then lead up the third component, persuasive capability, which represents the ability of sales promotion to persuade customer regarding the benefits or special characteristics of the product. The final level measures purchase intent, which is the ability of the sales promotion to produce a favorable impact in purchase behavior.

Gardner & Trivedi (1998) said in their study that each tool of sales promotion can be measured respectively by using the communication framework above, including product sampling as this study discussed. If a marketer can successfully communicate the promotion at each level of communication paradigm, then the possibility to change purchase behavior can be easily increased.

## METHODOLOGY

This research uses a survey method to students who have already gotten product sampling message by Primagama in their schools. The schools are taken from four random Primagama branches in Surabaya based on the interview with each head office in each branch, the schools are SMA Negeri 1 Surabaya, SMA Negeri 11 Surabaya, SMA Negeri 13 Surabaya and SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Surabaya. The sample is calculated by using Slovin technique from the population and generates 100 samples so the author takes 25 samples from every school. Each of effectiveness dimensions is derived to two indicators.

Intention, as the first dimension, is derived to “consumer pays attention to the product sampling held by Primagama” and “consumer gets a memorable moment from product sampling”. The next dimension, understanding, is derived to “consumer understands the messages easily” and “consumer can interpret the message”. Persuasion as third dimension is derived to “consumer understands and agrees about the benefits from the product offered” and “consumers understands and agrees about the added values from the product offered”. The last dimension (purchase intention) is derived to “consumer has an intention to purchase the product through product sampling” and “consumer plans to do repeat order if the product is expired”.

## RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Sections, sub-sections and sub-subsections are numbered in Arabic. Use double spacing before all section headings, and single spacing after section headings. Flush left all paragraphs that follow after section headings. List may be presented with each item marked by bullets and numbers.

This chapter shows the findings from the survey held by the author. All of the respondents are the students who have already gotten product sampling from Primagama and member of SMA Negeri 1, SMA Negeri 11, SMA Negeri 13 and SMA Muhammadiyah 2. The respondents are also the students who don't buy Primagama product even though they have already gotten the product sampling promotion.

**Table 1.1 Sample Based on Gender**

No.	Gender	Quantity	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Boys	41	41%
2.	Girls	59	59%
Total		100	100%

Source: Author

The effectiveness of each communication objective dimension of product sampling is classified as two kinds, they are effective and ineffective. This classification is based on the range which is measured by using the following formula:

$$\text{Range} = \frac{\text{highest score} - \text{lowest score}}{\text{expected range}}$$

$$\text{Range} = \frac{(\text{number of statements} \times \text{highest value}) - (\text{number of statements} \times \text{lowest value})}{2}$$

$$\text{Range} = \frac{(2 \times 4) - (2 \times 1)}{2}$$

$$\text{Range} = 3$$

From the formula above, the total value of each respondent will be derived to two categories as follows:

1. Ineffective if the scores is in the range of 2 – 4,99
2. Effective if the score is in the range of 5 - 8

**Table 1.2.1 Product Sampling Can Attract Consumer’s Attention**

No.	Product Sampling (Attention)	Quantity	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Strongly Disagree	19	19%
2.	Disagree	44	44%
3.	Agree	25	25%
4.	Strongly Agree	12	12%
Total		100	100%

Source: Questionnaire Statement Number 1

**Table 1.2.2 Product Sampling Can Create an Impact on Consumer’s Mind**

No.	Product Sampling (Attention)	Quantity	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Strongly Disagree	10	10%
2.	Disagree	79	79%
3.	Agree	8	8%
4.	Strongly Agree	3	3%
Total		100	100%

Source: Questionnaire Statement Number 2

**Table 1.2.3 Consumer Understands the Message of Product Sampling Easily**

No.	Product Sampling (Understanding)	Quantity	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Strongly Disagree	1	1%
2.	Disagree	4	4%
3.	Agree	84	84%
4.	Strongly Agree	11	11%
Total		100	100%

Source: Questionnaire Statement Number 3

**Table 1.2.4 Consumer Can Interpret the Message of Product Sampling Properly**

No.	Product Sampling (Understanding)	Quantity	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Strongly Disagree	7	7%
2.	Disagree	15	15%
3.	Agree	69	69%
4.	Strongly Agree	9	9%
Total		100	100%

Source: Questionnaire Statement Number 4

**Table 1.2.5 Consumer Understands and Agrees about the Benefits of the Product**

No.	Product Sampling (Persuasion)	Quantity	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Strongly Disagree	12	12%
2.	Disagree	25	25%
3.	Agree	49	49%
4.	Strongly Agree	14	14%
Total		100	100%

Source: Questionnaire Statement Number 5

**Table 1.2.6 Consumer Understands and Agrees about the Unique Value of the Product**

No.	Product Sampling (Persuasion)	Quantity	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Strongly Disagree	18	18%
2.	Disagree	20	20%
3.	Agree	41	41%
4.	Strongly Agree	21	21%
Total		100	100%

Source: Questionnaire Statement Number 6

**Table 1.2.7 Consumer Has Intention to Purchase the Product through Product Sampling**

No.	Product Sampling (Purchase Intention)	Quantity	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Strongly Disagree	15	15%
2.	Disagree	31	31%
3.	Agree	35	35%
4.	Strongly Agree	19	19%
Total		100	100%

Source: Questionnaire Statement Number 7

**Table 1.2.8 Consumer Plans to Do Repeat Order If the Product is Expired**

No.	Product Sampling (Purchase Intention)	Quantity	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Strongly Disagree	12	12%
2.	Disagree	29	29%
3.	Agree	36	36%
4.	Strongly Agree	23	23%
Total		100	100%

Source: Questionnaire Statement Number 8

### CONCLUSION

From the data above, it can be interpreted that product sampling is still effective relatively, but if it is broken down to more details communication objective, there is one communication objective that can be considered as ineffective, it is the ability of product sampling to gain consumer's attention.

It consists of your finding analysis and results. It could conclude some figures and tables to support your statements.

These findings can be caused by many factors, but from the observation, the author finds that there are two main factors which makes *attention* becomes ineffective. The first factor is the fact that before Primagama, there are some other tutoring agencies which have already given the product sampling to the students. They tend to think that additional class or sampling which is given by Primagama is something usual and has no interesting things at all.

The second factor is off course the routine that the students face every day in the school. Since they have already spent hours for studying with various subjects, they tend to be lazy to join the additional class provided by Primagama although it is a mandatory program from the school. This makes the product sampling held by Primagama is less interesting for them.

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