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**The influence of sales promotion on consumer purchase decision: an empirical study of  
customers in the retail market in China**

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for the Bachelor of Science in Marketing

by

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## ABSTRACT

With the Chinese retail market booming, a great number of companies has tried to cater more customers through different promotional activities. Still, the exact impact of promotions on consumer behavior for Chinese retailers remains to be seen. This paper aims to assess the influence of sales promotion tools on the purchase decisions made by Chinese consumers in the retail industry, and also this paper tries to identify which sales promotional tool is more effective so that it can encourage purchases. The effects of price discounts, coupons, free samples, BOGO and insurance premiums on buying decisions of Chinese retail consumers were examined. The results show that all the independent variables have a positive and significant impact on purchasing decisions, while BOGO has the greatest impact on China's retail market.

**Keywords:** Consumer Behavior; Retail Market; Sales Promotion; Purchase Decision; Consumer Purchase Decision-making; China

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# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the study

Under the circumstance of globalization, the consumer has turned into the king controlling the open market. It is not anymore the “seller's market”; instead, it becomes the “buyer's market” evidently (Das and Kumar, 2009). With the flourishing development of the retail industry in China, many firms are coming into the market with various retail modes, where exists the fierce and intense competition. Therefore, considering sales promotion as a vital component of the promotional mix, business organizations often deploy various promotional strategies in influencing the consumer purchase decision to increase sales and sustain competitive advantage (Agbi *et al.*, 2019).

Sales promotion is the process of persuading potential consumers to buy a brand or product, providing them with a better opportunity to promote any business, which provides added value and incentives for consumers. Promotional tools are critical factors in the success of any business to more effectively grow and maintain market share with different tools, such as sales promotion, which affect consumers' behavior or way of thinking about shopping (Shamout, 2016). Promotion means that emotion gives an additional incentive to purchase, which is in addition to the basic benefits of the product or brand (Schultz and Robinson, 1982). The study found that when consumers enter a retail store or outlet, their choice of products changes when they encounter promotions. Promotion activities have a significant influence on consumers' purchasing decisions; therefore, it is reliable for retailers to do their work and promote the brand in an effective way (Krishna *et al.*, 1991). However, it remains to be seen how retail sales promotion makes a difference in decision-making.

This research is based on the real perception of the sale promotion tools and provides the perspectives of retail sales promotions in consumers' minds. A hypothesis is proposed in this paper that there is a relationship between sales promotion and consumer purchase decisions, and these promotion tools can influence purchase decisions.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

The shopping behavior of consumers has changed because different promotion tools play a vital role in the Chinese retail market. For instance, Vishnu and Raheem (2013) suggested that when Chinese buyers see promotions offered by retail stores, they are more likely to purchase. Due to fierce market competition in today's market, every single firm spares no effort to attract more customers via diverse sales promotion activities for the reason that the vast majority of Chinese consumers are sensitive to the price (Ismail and Siddiqui, 2019). Furthermore, retailers use such promotions to build their brands and gain loyal customers while making short-term profits.

Though some prior studies have already been published about the effect of sales promotion on purchase decisions, most of them concentrate on the scenarios in the researchers' nations only; that is to say, there is a lack of related research observing in the Chinese retail market. This paper steps into the breach by examining the influence of sales promotion in retailing on consumer purchase behavior in China. Besides, the results of the study can be considered as indicators that reflect the Chinese consumers' perception of sales promotion in retail stores so that marketers and retailers can adjust the promotion strategy to gain more profits.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

This paper tries to find out which promotion tool is more effective and can stimulate consumers' buying behavior. In this paper, promotional tools are taken as independent variables influencing consumers' purchasing decisions and as dependent variables. Another purpose of this study is to highlight the critical relationship between consumer purchase decisions and promotional approaches in the current Chinese retail market. Gain insight into customers' thoughts and evaluate their preferences during promotions.

Understand the situation, analyze which promotional strategies are profitable and efficiency, and encourage consumers to make purchases in retail stores. The following sub-problems are explicitly considered to seek a more precise answer:

(1) To find out the influence of retail sales promotion on buying decisions made by Chinese consumers, especially the consumer purchase decision-making process.

(2) To identify how significant is the influence of different retail sales promotion tools on the final purchase decision made by consumers.

(3) To determine which sales promotion tool affects purchasing decisions most positively (stimulates more purchases).

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 Retail Market in China

The development of global retail industry has prompted international retailers to seek to take advantage of potential markets around the world, and the internationalization of retail industry is particularly rapid in Asia (Dawson *et al.*, 2004). According to Hingley *et al.* (2009), China has become one of the most attractive markets in the world, with retail sales of more than \$628 billion and an annual growth rate of more than 9%. Over the past two decades, retail sales in the Chinese market have grown by nearly 15% a year, making it the world's third-largest market (Samiee *et al.*, 2004). Retail industry in China is also undergoing modernization and economic transformation, but despite the tremendous changes, Chinese retailers are still affected by the planned economy (Dawson *et al.*, 2004).

As a matter of fact, consumers in China consider shopping as a type of leisure pursuit owing to the relatively poor living environment (Hingley *et al.*, 2009). Moreover, Chinese consumers tend to go to several different stores in search of the cheapest goods, making it difficult for companies to build customer loyalty (Lo *et al.*, 2001). Under the circumstances, the form of retail stores characterized by convenience, comfort and low price is booming in the Chinese market (Wang, 2003).

### 2.2 Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action - AIDA Model

AIDA model, which is an acronym for what promotional campaigns shoot for gaining from consumers: attention or awareness, interest, desire, and action, to explain how to set up and achieve promotion goals (Strong, 1925). AIDA model is widely used in marketing and advertising to describe the various stages from consumers' first awareness of the product or brand to consumers' trial of the product or purchase decision (Jallow and Dastane, 2016). Understanding the market objectives is the primary goal of many promotions, given that consumer awareness of the product is crucial before making the final purchase decisions (Ferrell and Hartline, 2011). Once the customers are aware of the subsequent steps in the AIDA model, their awareness pops up in the product by representing its features, benefits, and usages (Strong, 1925). Therefore, the "desire" in the product should be stimulated by demonstrating product control and the product's ability to identify requirements (Jallow and Dastane, 2016). The final stage of the AIDA model is the final act of the customer to purchase the product (Ferrell and Hartline, 2008).

Social scientists develop many complex theories of consumer behavior, and they give different theoretical models to explain the order in which behavior participates in purchasing decisions (Bové and Arens, 1986; Agbi *et al.*, 2019). As for how the consumers make choices in products, they begin by recognizing their needs at first; next, seek for information, and then, identify and evaluate the alternative products, and eventually, make the final purchase decision (Kerin *et al.*, 2002). According to Cummins (1998), consumers are influenced by the AIDA model to take action after having a perception of the product and getting attention and desire in the inspired product. The complexity of this process varies by product and purchasing situation (Kotteaku *et al.*, 1995).



## 2.3 Antecedents of AIDI Model

On the Basis of the prior studies on consumer decision-making process influenced by retail sales promotion tools, they revealed that some variables probably affect Chinese consumers' purchase decisions in the retail stores. Five independent variables are chosen as the most influential sales promotion tools. The first independent variable is price discounts (Ismail and Siddiqui, 2019; Jallow and Dastane, 2016; Suresh *et al.*, 2015). The second independent variable is coupons (Suresh *et al.*, 2015). The third independent variable is free samples (Jallow and Dastane, 2016; Shamout, 2016; Suresh *et al.*, 2015). The fourth independent variable is BOGO (buy-one-get-one-free) (Ismail and Siddiqui, 2019; Shamout, 2016; Suresh *et al.*, 2015). The fifth independent variable is premiums (Agbi *et al.*, 2019). The following sections will further illustrate the importance of the series of independent variables and their influence on consumer purchase decisions in the retail market.

## 2.4 Sales Promotion

Blattberg and Neslin (1990) submit to the view that a sales promotion is an action-oriented marketing campaign is designed to directly influences the behavior and attitudes of consumers. Marketing stimuli, as well as physical stimuli in the store environment, are probably making a huge difference to consumer buying behavior (Bawa *et al.*, 1989). Sales promotion contributes to improving the sensitivity of consumers, triggering the switch among brands, and increasing customer in-store traffic, which can show and strengthen the retailer image to further enhance the brand awareness, and finally, improve relations with customer and maintain their loyalty as a result (Steenkamp *et al.*, 2005). In most cases, sales promotion usually lowers the price of the large purchased quantity products. In this way, it increases the consumer's perceived value of the product price, which leads to the initiative of the purchase decision (Inman *et al.*, 1990). On the basis of the concepts of sales promotion, Blattberg and Neslin (1990) have categorized the typical kinds of promotional strategies of retailers to maximize current sales, such as coupons, free in-store samples, and buy one get one free. It is found that retail promotional activities account for a high percentage of the marketing activities to attract consumers to buy, which can bring in a major part of the revenue of the products (Alvaraz and Casielles, 2005).

According to previous studies, sales promotion represents a set of essential strategies used to motivate the purchase of an item or brand (Krishna *et al.*, 1991). Sales promotion provides consumers with instant satisfaction that enables them to buy fairly and then act out their desires (Blattberg and Neslin, 1990). All these short-term promotions stimulate the impulse to buy and ultimately generate sales (Ismail and Siddiqui, 2019). In previous studies, sales promotion measures are intended to have an immediate effect on consumers' final decisions of purchasing at the time of shopping, which gives an insight into consumer's attitudes towards retail sales promotional tools (Heilman *et al.*, 2011). Nevertheless, they must be combined with other means in the pursuit of higher profits (Jia *et al.*, 2018).

### 2.4.1 Price Discounts

Based on the words from Fill (2002), price discounts are a value evaluation method, which refers to that products are provided to consumers at a favorable purchase price, which seems to reduce the cost of consumers. Price discount is regarded as cut off prices, to be more specific, reducing the price of a given amount or increasing the amount available at the same price increases the value and playing a crucial role in stimulating consumer behavior to purchase the offered products (Raghubir and Corfman, 1999).

It is observed that the consumer responses generated by price discounts far higher than the economic value of the money saved (Dholakia and Kimes, 2011). Price discount is considered as an effective instrument by retail stores (Das and Kumar, 2009) for the sake of encouraging in-store traffic by offering significant benefits to making the consumer pay less. Other studies display that lower prices can stimulate them to purchase a cheaper product (Schindler, 1998). Based on the research done by Jallow and Dastane (2016), consumers are more likely to be glad to purchase products because price discounts are one of the most influential factors in the retail market.

*H1: Price discounts have a positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior.*

### **2.4.2 Coupons**

A coupon is defined as a piece of printed paper, which allows consumers to pay less money than usual for a product (Das and Kumar, 2009). Coupons are issued at the occasion coupons can be used as money saved by coupon holders while products are sold at the original price (Ismail and Siddiqui, 2019).

A coupon, which is regarded as a strategic tool of sales promotion, can affect consumer buying behavior (Laroche *et al.*, 2005). Moreover, the fact has been revealed with abundant proof in prior studies that coupons have a positive influence on consumers' purchase decisions (Fill, 2002). When consumers receive the coupons and discounts of the same value in the meantime, coupons are more likely to be accepted and more effective in shifting consumers' buying intentions towards the product (Ismail and Siddiqui, 2019). There are several benefits of coupons for marketers and manufacturers; for example, coupons can promote sales in a short period by stimulating consumers to switch to other products (Ndubisi and Moi, 2005). On the other hand, Das and Kumar (2009) indicated that retail sales promotion plays a limited role in consumer buying behavior as the conclusion of their study. Despite the price-cutting brought by coupons, researchers deemed that coupons were not an effective means of sales promotion because a steady diet of price-off lowers the esteem in which the consumer holds the product (Silva-Risso and Bucklin, 2004; Gilbert and Jackaria, 2002).

*H2: Coupons have a positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior.*

### **2.4.3 Free Samples**

Free samples include a bunch of methods used to deliver an actual or trial scale product to consumers (Agbi *et al.*, 2019). A free sample can be sent directly to the customers by mail or attach the sample to another type of products, so they are able to have a try and evaluate the product, which can create awareness of the product and affect their purchasing behavior soon as well (Kardes and Steckel, 2002). According to Clow and Baack (2010), the free sample technique is defined as a method of tempting consumers to try new lunch products. Based on the previous research, conclusions have drawn that free samples are useful and helpful ways to build a positive relationship with consumers (Shamout, 2016).

The results show that free samples can affect consumer purchase decisions and positively influence purchasing behavior made by consumers in a fast-selling procedure (Fill, 2002). Additionally, the strategy has an essential reference value for improving the sales speed related to sales promotions (Li *et al.*, 2007). As a matter of fact, free in-store samples have a short-term effect, which improves the probability of consumers spontaneously purchasing goods after getting the sample and increase sales for that day (Heilman *et al.*, 2011). It is also found that in-store sampling promotes the trial of new products (Bawa *et al.*, 1989). Nevertheless, some researchers

disagree with this positive relationship between free samples and consumer purchase decisions, which can be varied among different products and diverse periods (Gilbert and Jackaria, 2002).

*H3: Free in-store samples have a positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior.*

#### **2.4.4 Buy 1 Get 1**

Buy-one-get-one-free is one of the categories of bonus packs consumers are provided with the additional product without requiring additional fees, which consumers perceive of having a higher value ((Li *et al.*, 2007). Buy one get one is defined as a great deal that gets another similar item presented free when consumers buy one item. Such transactions are usually made by manufacturers and marketers to liquidate inventories (Ismail and Siddiqui, 2019). In light of Sinha and Smith's research (2000), buy one get one free, which is served as one of the sales promotion tools in everyday use, cannot be ignored because consumers would be easily convinced to get one extra product at the normal price.

Obviously, it is displayed that the buy-one-get-one deal has a positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior, which is conducive to attracting consumers effectively through visibility on the shelves, motivating them to make the final purchase decision straightaway (Genchev and Todorova, 2017). Consumers would prefer to get buy-one-get-one deals instead of purchasing over the price discounts, even if the net value is equal (Li *et al.*, 2007).

*H4: Buy-one-get-one deal has a positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior.*

#### **2.4.5 Premiums**

An increasing number of manufacturers and marketers are using premiums as one of their sales promotion strategies, which may suggest that the premiums occupy a more dominate position (Shamout, 2016). Premiums are items that can be given free or at a reduced price with the purchase of a product or service, which are often product-related promotional items, such as games, collections, memorabilia, and household items that often require box covers, coupons, or proof of purchase (Lamb *et al.*, 2009).

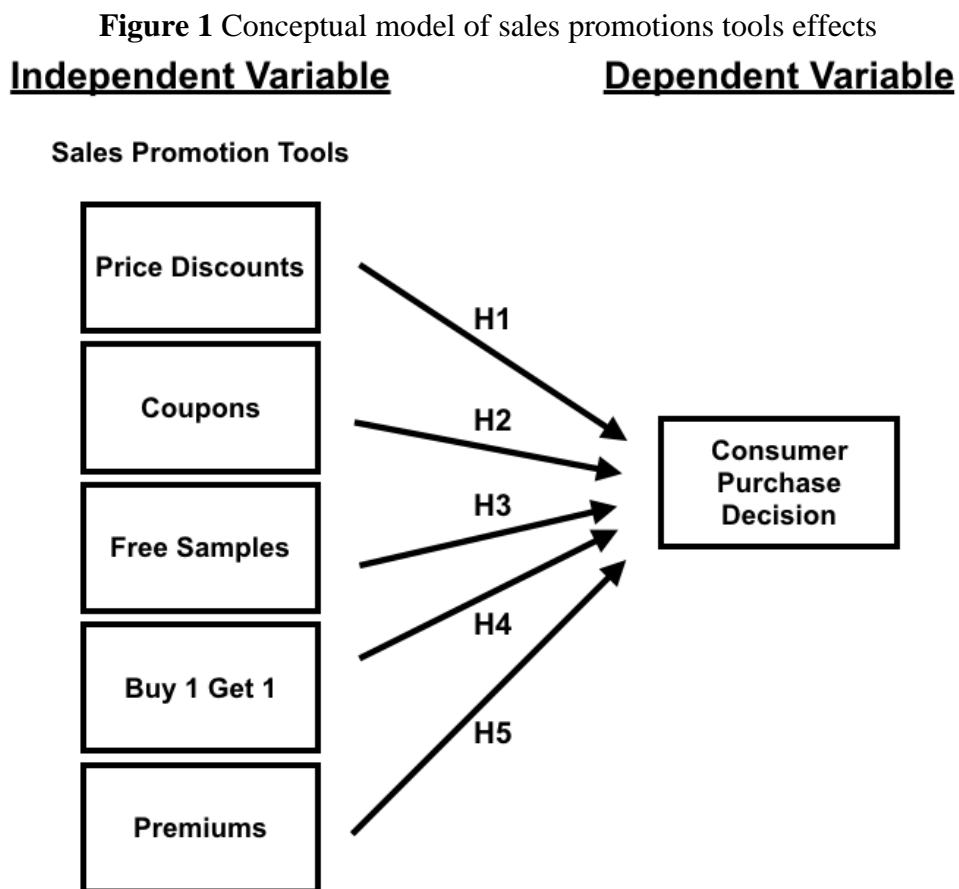
According to the previous research, it is found that sales promotion tools play a key role in consumer purchasing decisions in the retail market, especially premiums (D' Astous and Jacob, 2002). Promotional tools and techniques are used in these marketing activities, for instance, the company gives some premium money back offers, which have a direct effect on consumers to make up their minds quickly and to finalize the purchasing process (Neha and Manoj, 2013). The issue of how valid the premium promotion is can be seen as an await deep research field needs further investigation (Palazon and Delgado-Ballester, 2009). Non-price promotions, like premiums, add excitement and value to brands and may encourage brand loyalty to influence consumer purchase decision (Suresh *et al.*, 2015).

*H5: Premiums have a positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior.*

## 2.5 Research Framework

After deliberating on the past pieces of literature (Suresh *et al.*, 2015; 12 Agbi *et al.*, 2019), the following conceptual model (shown in Figure 1) is defined to illustrate the relationship between promotional tools and consumer purchase decisions. The consumer purchase decision is a dependent variable, while sales promotion tools are the independent variables. To be more specific, there are five sub-independent variables are selected because these factors are the most influential, which are price discounts, coupons, free samples, buy one get one, and premiums.

The independent variables are the factors that control the research, whereas the dependent variable will be changed in response to each unique sub-independent variable. Also, each sub-independent variable is supposed to have a distinctive impact on the dependent variable in various degrees.



## METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Data Collection and Sample Characteristics

The method of simple random sampling is adopted in this study because every respondent has an equal chance to be selected. The study will be conducted in the fall semester of 2019 at Wenzhou-Kean University, which is a Chinese American jointly established a university in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, People's Republic of China. The subjects of this study were undergraduate students from four-year levels in Wenzhou-Kean University in the academic year 2019. Data were collected from students of Wenzhou-Kean University through online media (in the form of questionnaires). Due to time constraints and cost-effectiveness, the survey was conducted electronically to obtain more efficient access to participants.

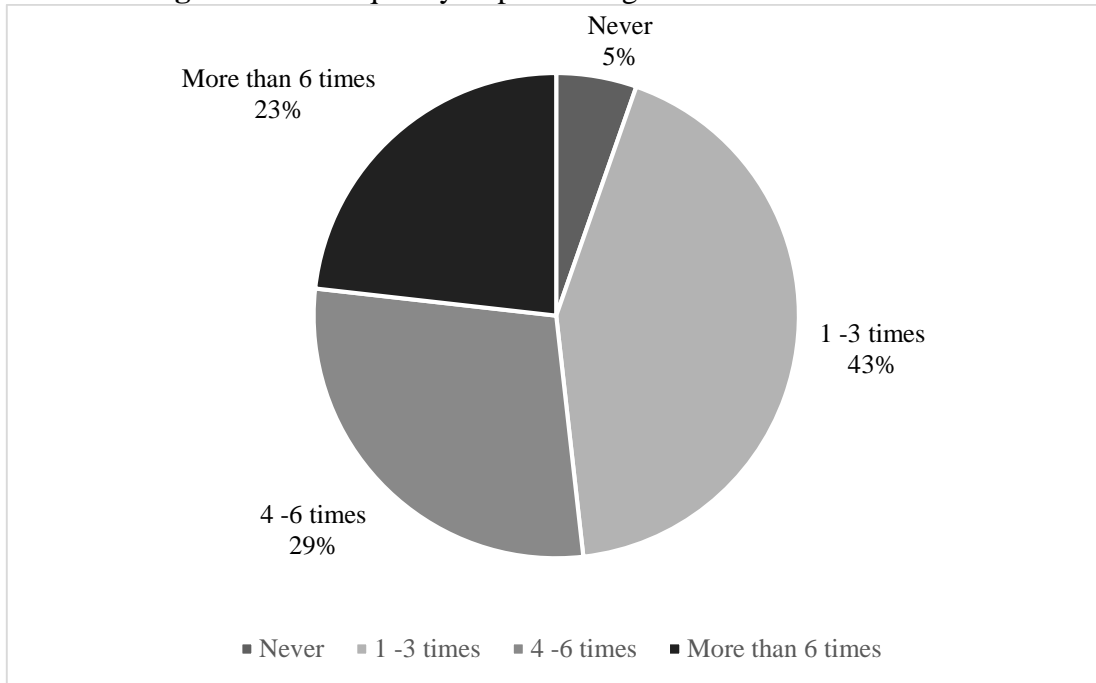
The questionnaire mainly concentrated on six variables in this study. Also, gender, year level and monthly income were listed to obtain more accurate results. Table 1 contains detailed demographic information on the composition of the population. The total number of people who filled in the questionnaire was 58, after eliminating the invalid questionnaire (2 participants were not WKU students), 56 questionnaires require further analysis. To be more precise, the respondents included 25 men and 31 women. About half of the respondents were senior students, while most of them get more than 1,500 RMB per month.

**Table 1** Demographic information of the respondents

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Scale Measures</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	25	44.64%
	Female	31	55.36%
<b>Year Level</b>	Freshman	5	8.93%
	Sophomore	11	19.64%
	Junior	12	21.43%
	Senior	28	50%
<b>Monthly Income</b>	0 - 1,500 RMB	11	19.64%
	1,501-3,000 RMB	33	58.93%
	3,001-4,500 RMB	9	16.07%
	Above 4,501RMB	3	5.36%

As for the frequency of purchasing in a retail store in a week displayed in Figure 2, merely a tiny portion of people never shop at a retail store in a week. At the meantime, nearly three out of four people buy at a retail store between one and six times per week, what is more, even more than one-fifth of people purchase in a retail store more than six times a week.

**Figure 2** The frequency of purchasing in a retail store in a week



### 3.2 Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha is a frequently cited statistic to prove that the tests and scales that have been established or adopted for the study project are fit for purpose (Taber, 2018). Cronbach's Alpha is usually regarded as a measure of reliability (Cronbach, 1951). Cronbach's Alpha is a test reliability technique that requires only one test management to provide an individual reliability assessment for a given test (Gliem and Gliem, 2003).

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test is exhibited in Table 2 in the following context. Cronbach's Alpha for each of the variables, namely, price discounts, coupons, free samples, Buy 1 Get 1, premiums and consumer purchase decision were 0.917, 0.950, 0.959, 0.947, 0.968 and 0.955, respectively, each above the normally-accepted cut-off of 0.70 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). George and Mallery (2003) provided the following rules of thumb:  $\alpha \geq 0.9$  - Excellent,  $\alpha \geq 0.8$  - Good,  $\alpha \geq 0.7$  - Acceptable,  $\alpha \geq 0.6$  - Questionable,  $\alpha \geq 0.5$  - Poor, and  $\alpha < 0.5$  - Unacceptable. All the Cronbach's Alpha of six variables were above 0.9, which indicates excellent internal consistency of the items in the scale.

**Table 2** Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Price Discounts	0.917
Coupons	0.950
Free Samples	0.959
Buy 1 Get 1	0.947
Premiums	0.968
Consumer Purchase Decision	0.955

### 3.3 Correlation Test and Linear Regression Analysis

Bewick *et al.* (2003) submitted to the view that the most common-used techniques for investigating the relationship between two variables are correlation test and linear regression analysis. Correlation Analysis will be used as an indication of whether there is a relationship between two factors, and Regression Analysis will also be regarded as a method of statistical modelling that analyzes the impact of one or more independent variables on a dependent variable.

Linear regression, an essential tool for statistical analysis, a wide range of usages of which includes relationship description, estimation, and prediction, involving determining the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables (Schneider *et al.*, 2010). The results of linear regression analysis showed in Table 3 aim to interpret the relationship between each tool of the sales promotion activities and consumer behavior.

Pearson's correlation coefficient is a statistical measure of the strength of a linear relationship between paired data, which is denoted by  $r$  constrained as  $1 \geq r \geq -1$  (Khamis, 2008). According to Evans (1996), the strength of correlating is suggested as followed:  $r < 0.19$  - Very weak,  $0.20 < r < 0.39$  - Weak,  $0.40 < r < 0.59$  - Moderate,  $0.60 < r < 0.79$  - Strong, and  $0.80 < r < 1.0$  - Very strong. Correlation Matrix is showed in Table 4 as below. These five promotional tools are closely related to consumers' purchasing decisions and stimulate differentiation with high correlation coefficients. All the variables' correlation coefficients are in the range of 0.6 - 0.79, which indicates a correlation of strong degree. Among the chosen five promotional tools, BOGO, coupons, and price discounts connect closer with consumer purchase decision comparing to free samples and premiums.

**Table 3** Linear Regression Analysis

	$\beta$	T Statistics	P Values
<i>Path coefficients of direct effect</i>			
PD-> CPD	0.700	7.197	0.000
COU -> CPD	0.707	7.353	0.000
FS -> CPD	0.653	6.334	0.000
BOGO -> CPD	0.719	7.610	0.000
PRE -> CPD	0.600	5.509	0.000

*Notes: PD= Price discounts; COU=Coupons; FS= Free samples; BOGO= Buy one get one; PRE= Premiums; CPD=Consumer Purchase Decision.*

**Table 4** Correlation Matrix

CORRELATION MATRIX								
Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Price Discounts	5.342	1.175	1					
	(1) Sig.		-					
Coupons	5.426	1.214	.791**	1				
	(2) Sig.		.000	-				
Free Samples	5.255	1.328	.815**	.864**	1			
	(3) Sig.		.000	.000	-			
Buy 1 Get 1	5.541	1.169	.907**	.826**	.862**	1		
	(4) Sig.		.000	.000	.000	-		
Premiums	5.332	1.368	.828**	.875**	.850**	.886**	1	
	(5) Sig.		.000	.000	.000	.000	-	
Consumer Purchase Decision	5.436	1.217	.700**	.707**	.653**	.719**	.600**	1
	(6) Sig.		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	-

*\*\*Pearson Correlation method is used for this test. All the significant is at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*



### 3.4 Statistical Method

This paper will adopt the AIDA model, which is an acronym for what promotional campaigns shoot for gaining from consumers: attention, interest, desire, and action, to explain how to set up and achieve promotion goals (Strong, 1925). The conceptual model for this study was combined two existing models promoted by Suresh *et al.* (2015) and Agbi *et al.* (2019). Moreover, online questionnaires will be organized for the sake of collecting real-time data, and the data collected will be analyzed by using SPSS to examine the research hypotheses.

All measurements were based on prior research of promotional tools and consumer purchase decisions used in the retail market to increase reliability and validity. Hence, the sales promotion tools are selected as price discounts (Dholakia and Kimes, 2011; Ismail and Siddiqui, 2019; Ashraf *et al.*, 2014; Shamout, 2016; Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003; Heilman *et al.*, 2011), coupons (Dholakia and Kimes, 2011; Ismail and Siddiqui, 2019; Shamout, 2016; Heilman *et al.*, 2011), free samples (Dholakia and Kimes, 2011; Ismail and Siddiqui, 2019; Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003; Heilman *et al.*, 2011), BOGO (Dholakia and Kimes, 2011; Ismail and Siddiqui, 2019; Heilman *et al.*, 2011), and premiums (Dholakia and Kimes, 2011; Ismail and Siddiqui, 2019; Heilman *et al.*, 2011; Shamout, 2016; Ismail and Siddiqui, 2019) that are dependent variables. As for the independent variable, consumer purchase behavior is also provided with theoretic support (Ismail and Siddiqui, 2019; Ashraf *et al.*, 2014; Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003).

For respondents to show their attitudes towards sales promotion tools, a seven-point Likert scale is applied to reflect diverse degrees of an attitude, rating from Strongly Disagree to Strong Agree (Norman, 2010). To ensure that the questionnaire may be adjusted in the future, there are several questions for each item. Some insights into the sales promotion and strategies used by researchers in their papers have been obtained from different literature. All data are selected through appropriate channels to maximize the probability of samples and to conduct a correct analysis based on the collected answers.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Hypotheses Testing

The results of the hypothesis test, based on the analysis among the variables of all available and valid values, are displayed in Table 5. It was assumed that the significance level was generally ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). However, if the significance level is  $< 0.01$ , the hypothesis is rejected, and if the significance level is  $> .01$ , the hypothesis is accepted (Jallow and Dastane, 2016).

**Table 5** Hypotheses Testing

No.	Hypothesis	Results
1	Price discounts have a positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior.	A
2	Coupons have a positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior.	A
3	Free samples have a positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior.	A
4	Buy-one-get-one deal has a positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior.	A
5	Premiums have a positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior.	A
<i>Notes: A = Accepted; R = Rejected</i>		

### 4.2 Discussions

In this section, the results of the study are discussed and illustrated through the hypothesis measure. This study proposes five hypotheses to demonstrate the relationship between variables. The results of this study show that consumers' purchasing decisions are changed due to large-scale promotional activities. Thus, it is proved that every means of promotion can influence the purchasing behavior of consumers to reflect their attitude. SPSS software was used for relevant tests and linear regression analysis to obtain interpretation results supporting or rejecting the null hypothesis (Alvaraz and Casielles, 2005). For simple linear regression with orthogonal predictors, the standardized coefficient (beta coefficients) equals the correlation between the independent and dependent variables (Urbach, 1992). A correlation coefficient is a numerical measure of a correlation, representing the statistical relationship between two variables (Khamis, 2008). Moreover, the interpretation of the tested hypothesis is described as follows:

*H1: Price discounts have a positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior.*

In the first hypothesis, there is a positive correlation between price discounts and consumers' purchasing decisions. In this study, it is found that the price discount is a useful tool to increase customer flow and improve sales performance. The correlation matrix of price discount (as shown in table 4) and the regression analysis (as shown in table 3) estimated the positive correlation between price discount and consumer purchasing behavior variables to be 0.7 greater than alpha 0.01 as well as significant at 7.197 t-value and  $p < 0.01$ . Hence, H1 is accepted here.

*H2: Coupons have a positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior.*

In the second hypothesis, the correlation matrix (as shown in table 4) and the regression analysis (as shown in table 3) showed a positive relationship among coupons and consumer purchasing behavior with result 0.707 which is at 0.01 and significant at t-value 7.353 and  $p < 0.01$ . According to the above result, it obviously reveals that coupons positively influence consumer purchase decision. Hence, H2 is accepted here.

*H3: Free samples have a positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior.*

In the third hypothesis, the test results show that there is a positive correlation. Correlation matrix (as shown in table 4) and regression analysis (as shown in table 3) show a positive relationship between free samples and consumer buying behavior has a value of 0.653 which is greater than 0.01 and significant at t-value 6.334 and  $p < 0.01$ . It indicates that consumers are motivated when they are free to try new products, it can be seen as a kind of method, persuade them to buy new products. Hence, H3 is accepted.

*H4: Buy-one-get-one deal has a positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior.*

In the fourth hypothesis, buy one get one free is a variable that is popular with consumers who want to purchase products that offer a buy1get1 offer because it allows them to save money. In the correlation matrix (as shown in table 4) and regression analysis (as shown in table 3), there is a positive correlation between buy one get one free and consumer buying behavior, and the Beta-value of buy-one-get-one deal is 0.719, which is greater than 0.01 and significant at t-value 7.610 and  $p < 0.01$ . Hence, H4 is accepted.

*H5: Premiums have a positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior.*

In the fifth hypothesis, the correlation matrix (as shown in table 4) and the regression analysis (as shown in table 3) showed a positive relationship among coupons and consumer purchasing behavior. As its Beta-value is at 0.6 which is greater than 0.01 significant level of accepted hypothesis at t-value of 5.509 and  $p < 0.01$ , it indicates that premiums influence consumers upon the particular situation and sometimes encourage them to buy a specific product. Hence, H5 is accepted.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusions

In this world of choice, a big sale can bring shoppers to a halt, which in this case can affect the pre-purchase decision stage. Sharma *et al.* (2010) described that, as previously thought, it is the characteristics of the retail market and the company's action marketing, rather than just promotion, that determine whether promotion contributes to building brand equity. There are so many choices for shoppers when they go shopping. Consumers look for more in the brands of products they tend to buy. In this case, the promotion brings novelty, humor and excitement to the purchase, and consumers will respond.

This study explains that regardless of gender, monthly income and other factors, customers are more likely to take advantage of promotional offers and find them very convenient because they save money and time. Now, Chinese consumers are more aware of these deals and want to make their shopping experience more valuable by visiting these retail stores. This study concludes that there is a positive correlation between sales promotion tools and consumer purchase decision, while buy-one-get-one offers are the most influential factors for the Chinese market. As a result, this fact indicates that promotional activities are the changing trend of China's retail market.

### 5.2 Managerial Implications

The results of this study have a significant impact on each of the selected variables. This study explores the relationship between promotional tools and consumer buying behavior and explores the effect of promotion on retailer sales and its benefits to consumers. The study will help China's retail sector because it focuses on critical areas of the retail market where consumers benefit, increasing foot traffic and retailers pull their inventory out to boost sales. It has also helped Wenzhou's retail market because it has the latest data sets and the newest work in selected areas. Gaining better insights into consumers' minds and evaluating their preferences during sales promotion can help marketers to understand and analyze the actual scenario to create a more practical promotion strategy engages consumers by attracting them to the worthiest offer.

Furthermore, retailers can cater more customers and gain exceptional profit by knowing the impacts of sales promotion on consumer purchase decisions to create competitive advantages in the fierce competition. This will help local retailers and manufacturers better understand the consumer market and improve their work by analyzing consumer tool availability and needs. In this world of choice, a big sale can bring shoppers to a halt, which in this case can affect the pre-purchase decision stage. Sharma *et al.* (2010) described that, as previously thought, it is the characteristics of the retail market and the company's action marketing, rather than just promotion, that determine whether promotion contributes to building brand equity. There are so many choices for shoppers when they go shopping. Consumers look for more in the brands of products they tend to buy. In this case, the promotion brings novelty, humor and excitement to the purchase, and consumers will respond.

### 5.3 Limitations and Future Research

In this study, due to time constraints, the collected data are limited to Wenzhou-Kean University, and it is recommended to research more universities or cities in China. The increased data size can be used for future research, and more participation can be used to analyze large data sets. The scope of this study is limited to the retail industry. Also, it is recommended to research in other fields, such as the fast-food industry and the fashion industry. This study is only limited

to the Chinese retail market and has nothing to do with other international retail market studies. China's retail market is not representative because of the development of the current retail industry and the cultural differences of other countries. This paper focuses only on the short-term impact of sales promotion on consumer behavior and attitudes, so the research topic perhaps can be moved onto long-term influence of sales promotion on consumer purchase decision in the future study.

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## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire

#### Part 1: Profile

**1. Are you a student of Wenzhou-Kean University?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**2. Gender**

- a. Male
- b. Female

**3. Year Level**

- a. Freshman
- b. Sophomore
- c. Junior
- d. Senior

**4. Income**

- a. 0- ¥1,500 per month
- b. ¥1,501- ¥3,000 per month
- c. ¥3,001- ¥4,500 per month
- d. ¥4,501 per month and above

**5. How often will you purchase in a retail store in a week?**

- a. Never
- b. 1 – 3 times
- c. 4 – 6 times
- d. More than 6 times

#### Part 2: Likert Scale

In this section, I would like to know about your opinion toward the sales promotion tools. Your reply is measured on the scales from 1 to 7, where 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree) and 3 indicates neutral.

A. Price Discounts	Rating from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strong Agree (7)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. I am more likely to purchase in a retail store which I have price discounts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. If a retail store offers price discount that could be a reason for me to buy it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. When I buy in a retail store that offers price discounts, I feel I am getting a good buy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I feel I am getting a good purchase, if I buy something on price discounts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I look forward to receiving price discounts when I am shopping in the retail store.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I choose my retail stores based on the price discounts they provide.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I do my shopping in retail stores when I know there will be price discounts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>B. Coupons</b>	<b>Rating from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strong Agree (7)</b>						
1. I am more likely to purchase in a retail store which I have coupons.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. When I purchase in a retail store that offers coupons, I feel I am getting a good purchase.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. A coupon offer could be a reason for me to purchase in the retail store.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I feel I am getting a good purchase, if I buy something on coupons.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I look forward to receiving coupons when I am shopping in the retail store.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I choose my retail stores based on the coupons they provide.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I do my shopping in retail stores when I know there will be coupons.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>C. Free Samples</b>	<b>Rating from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strong Agree (7)</b>						
1. I am more likely to purchase in a retail store which I have free samples.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. When I purchase in a retail store that offers free samples, I feel I am getting a good purchase.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. If a retail store offers free sample that could be a reason for me to buy it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. When I buy in retail store that offers free samples, I feel I am getting a good buy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I look forward to receiving free samples when I am shopping in the retail store.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I choose my retail stores based on the free samples they provide.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I do my shopping in retail stores when I know there will be free samples.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>D. Buy 1 Get 1</b>	<b>Rating from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strong Agree (7)</b>						
1. I am more likely to purchase in a retail store which I have a buy-one-get-one free sale.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. When I purchase in a retail store that gives buy-one-get-one offers, I feel I am getting a good purchase.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Buy one get one has made me purchase in a retail store.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. A retail store that offers buy-one-get-one free makes me feel I am getting a good purchase.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I look forward to receiving buy-one-get-one free when I am shopping in the retail store.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I choose my retail stores based on the buy-one-get-one free sales they provide.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I do my shopping in retail stores when I know there will be buy-one-get-one free.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>E. Premiums</b>	<b>Rating from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strong Agree (7)</b>						
1. I am more likely to purchase in a retail store which I can get premiums.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. When I purchase in a retail store that gives premiums, I feel I am getting a good purchase.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I feel I am getting a good purchase, if I buy something on premiums.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Premiums have made me purchase in a retail store.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. A retail store that offers premiums makes me feel I am getting a good purchase.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I look forward to receiving premiums when I am shopping in the retail store.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I choose my retail stores based on the premiums they provide.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>F. Consumer Purchase Decision</b>	<b>Rating from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strong Agree (7)</b>						
1. Once I find the product I like, I will buy it regularly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Once I find the product I like, I will buy it frequently.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Once I find the product I like, I will buy it repeatedly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Once I find the product I like, I will buy it continuously.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Once I find the product I like, I will buy it routinely.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Once I find the product I like, I will usually buy it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Once I find the product I like, I will often buy it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### Part 3: Ranking

Please rank the following sales promotion tools from 1-5, where the number 1 indicates the first rank and the number 5 indicates the lowest rank. (Please put the number 1-5 in order in front of the choice you select)

\_\_\_\_\_ Price Discounts      \_\_\_\_\_ Free Samples  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Premiums      \_\_\_\_\_ Buy 1 Get 1      \_\_\_\_\_ Coupons