

# Promotional Strategies and Consumers' Purchase Intention on Garment Bazaar Retailers

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## Abstract

This study aims to determine the relationship between the level of effectiveness of promotional strategies used by garment bazaar retailers in the National Capital Region (NCR), Philippines since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consumers' attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, and purchase intention. An online survey was administered to 510 respondents coming from the 16 cities and 1 municipality of NCR, Philips. The results show a low to moderate relationship between the level of effectiveness of promotional strategies and the consumers' attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, and purchase intention. Differences in consumers' purchase intention among different age groups were also identified. The consumers' perceived level of effectiveness of promotional strategies was treated as antecedents of consumers' attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, and purchase intention. Purchase intention was categorized based on selling platforms—physical store, virtual store, company website, and social media. The study would help garment bazaar retailers to fit their promotional strategies during the COVID and post-COVID periods. Garment bazaar retailers may remodel their promotional strategies based on the selling platforms.

## Keywords

Clothing and Apparel, Fashion Products, Garment Bazaar Retailers, Garment Industry, Philippines, Promotional Strategies, Purchase Intention

## 1. Introduction

Purchase intention refers to the degree to which the customer is likely to manifest a predictable behavior leading to making a final decision of buying goods or

services (Morwitz, 2014). It is considered a predictor of consumer behavior and thus serves as the basis for marketers in making plans that affect not only their market segmentation strategies but their overall marketing mix (Peña-García et al., 2020). There are different factors that affect a customer's purchase intention such as their product perception, shopping experiences, customer service, and the risk associated with a purchase (Sohn & Kim, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a magnanimous impact on various sectors and industries. In the June 2020 Global Economic Prospects released by the World Bank (2020), COVID-19 is expected to plunge the global economy into the worst recession since World War II. Based on IMF World Economic Outlook October 2020 and World Bank Povcal data, Kharas (2020) projected that the poverty incidence of 183 countries will increase from 8% to 9.9%. COVID-19 triggered worldwide lockdowns affecting the world economy in general and the lives of people. Based on the report of the International Labor Organization (2021) in January, some 8.8% of global working hours were lost relative to the fourth quarter of 2019, equivalent to 255 million full-time jobs.

In the Philippines, the unemployment rate was estimated at 8.7% which accounts for about 3.8 million unemployed Filipinos who are 15 years old and over. Though the figure showed remarkable improvement from the April 2020 figure of 17.7%, it is still above the 4.6% reported rate of unemployment in October 2019 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020c). The changes brought about by COVID-19 are said to have caused paradigm shifts in consumer behavior and purchase intention (Mehta et al., 2020). These shifts are expected to impact the way businesses in different industries do their marketing and promotion efforts. The promotional strategies used by companies in different industries are expected to take on the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic, due to the compelling changes brought by the current market environment (DiResta et al., 2020).

The Philippine garment industry, for example, is gravely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It cuts export by almost 40 percent and places the livelihood of more than 600,000 Filipino workers at risk (Philippine News Agency, 2020). The micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the garment industry are deemed to be most vulnerable since most of the businesses in the Philippines fall under the MSMEs classification (Conosa, 2020). Furthermore, though there is quite several research undertaken to correlate the individual element in the promotion mix, there are very few who investigated all the elements of the promotion mix vis-à-vis consumer purchase intention not to mention the present situation if already existing promotional strategies are still effective in a business climate under the pandemic.

Premised on the foregoing discussions, the researcher sought to determine the effect of the level of effectiveness of promotional strategies of garment bazaar retailers on consumers' attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, and purchase intention at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic since going back to the "old normal" seems to very far from the present horizon thus the need for

companies to come up with revitalized business models that would work in the “new normal”, particularly the vulnerable members of the industry, the micro-enterprises where the garment bazaars belong.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. The Garment Industry in the Philippines

According to Colovic (2012), the garment industry is divided into two main categories: the production of clothes and fashion products. Its focus is to achieve the best results that concern supplies, preparation, product, and distribution of fashion products. The industry is known for the creation of fashion trends, and brands, development of distributive networks and stores, and the optimization of logistics from the point of production to the retail stores. The technical-technological development in the last 40 years allowed the garment industry to utilize new methods and procedures thus increasing its productivity while using textiles and knitting. This allows the industry to stay attuned to the growing complexity of the demands of consumers and world fashion trends. Moreover, the garment industry all throughout the world shares the same plight: large supplies of finished products cannot find their customers. The industry of highly and less-developed countries faces many crises and constant fall in production, loss of markets, workers being redundant, closing-up factories, and moving production into countries with cheap manpower. Developed countries were forced to intensify research of automatic systems of technology processes, thus, leading to progress in the field of mechatronics, automation, and robotics and investment in new so-called intelligent sewing machines.

After World War II, garment exports from developing countries increased gradually. The first comers were the East Asian countries that flourished in the 1970s and 1980s, followed by Southeast Asian and Latin American countries in 1982 and by China in the 1990s and afterward. In the late 1990s, exports from low-income countries increased steadily, and they become top exporters in the 2000s. As reported in the UN Comtrade, the Top 15 low-income countries increased gradually, and six low-income countries ranked in 2008, including Vietnam, Indonesia, Bangladesh, India, Cambodia, and Pakistan. The Philippines, although not categorized as a low-income country in the Top 15 garment exporters in the US as defined by World Bank in 2000, had consistently been part of the Top 15 in the years shown in the review (i.e. 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2004). However, the Philippine ranking showed a declining trend from being in the Top 6 in 1970 and 1980; Top 5 in 1990; Top 12 in 2000; and Top 13 in 2004. And finally losing grip in the Top 15 from the 2008 list. The trend for export in the garment industry has faced a steady decline from 2005 to 2016, that is, a drop from US\$2287 million to US\$226 million worth of garments respectively. This was primarily associated with the termination of the Multi-Fiber Agreement, allowing preferential tariffs on Philippine exports of garments and textiles. It was re-

placed by the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing in 1995 which lifted the existing quota allocations under Multi-Fiber Agreement (MFA). The removal of quotas opened the textile trade for developed countries, thus heavily affecting young producing countries like the Philippines (Fukunishi & Yamagata, 2014).

Since the MFA was concluded, the country's garments exports dropped. From being one of the top exporters of garments, the fifth in the world in 1995, it lagged other Asian exporting countries like Bangladesh, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, and China. In the early 1990s, the garments industry had over 300,000 factories and nearly 700,000 workers, including embroidery and piece-rated subcontracted laborers. In 2010 only 100,000 workers were left to produce for the industry (Rosales, 2018). As regards the whole picture of the garment industry in the Philippines, in 1995, it reached 850,000 employees in the sector. After the expiration of the MFA in 2005, it dropped significantly with an estimated job loss for 150,000 workers. Despite these changes, however, the industry is still considered as a top employer, contributing to 20% to 30% of employment in the manufacturing sector. Moreover, from 2010 to 2014, the total employment had a little improvement from 549,000 to 569,000 for the garment and textile industry (DTI, cited in BOI, 2018).

The decline in the export market of the Philippine garment industry does not only impact the Philippine economy but also local garment and text producers in the country. These locally made textiles are fabrics that have great potential not only in the international market but also in the local market. In Cebu for example, Piña fabric, Abaca, and Jusi are more sustainable than cotton (Chenzi, 2019). Some textiles and fabrics, however, are not given much appreciation, the Inabel fabric of Ilocos region for example, which is well known and much loved for its softness, beautiful designs, and strength (Del Mundo, 2017).

With the removal of the MFA, one issue that the country had to contend with was the cheaper cost of importing textiles outside of the Philippines. The cheap textiles are largely imported from China and India and are being sold to one of the renowned places in the Philippines for cheap products—the Divisoria (CNN Philippines Life Staff, 2019). Baclaran and Tatay are also known places where cheap textile products can be bought.

However, given the foregoing challenges in the garment industry, the Taytay garment industry is thriving. The garments and textile industry in Taytay can be traced back to the 1950s to 1960s when remnant or aged textiles from New York were imported through the effort of the then Municipal Mayor. Since then, the industry gradually flourished. Garment manufacturing is considered one of the “silong” industries in Tatay with about 190 registered garment manufacturers, 52 remnant clothes sellers, 29 registered ready-to-wear (RTW) retailers, and 4000 flea market sellers according to Tatay Business License Processing Office. Furthermore, the Taytay Tiangge Night Market which is flocked by thousands of buyers and resellers has about nine associations of garments producers and traders operated in the Taytay Tiangge namely BAGPI (400 - 1000 stalls), Mu-

municipal Tiangge (800 stalls), Octagon (150 stalls), IGPAI (300 - 400 stalls), Maswerte (250 stalls), My Seoul (100 - 200 stalls), Freedom (200 stalls), Club Manila East (600 - 700 stalls), and Eugene (30 stalls). This is the reason why the Bureau of Investments has had a roundtable discussion with the Baclaran Association of Garment Producers Inc. (BAGPI) and I Love Taytay Garments Producers Inc. (IGPAI) as they formulate the Garments and Textile Industry Roadmap ([Department of Trade and Industry, 2018](#)).

The [Board of Investments \(2018\)](#) reported that at present, the Philippine garments and textile industry is gearing up for a jumpstart to reclaim its reputation of competitive a competitive player in both domestic and international arenas. This was sought to be achieved through the different strategic initiatives, projects, and partnerships conducted by the government with key manufacturers and stakeholders of the industry. It is reviving its initiatives in lifting the industry once again through the Manufacturing Resurgence Program (MRP). The Board of Investment is giving more attention in guaranteeing market access to key export markets such as the United States, Europe, and Japan to Free Trade Agreements and Preferential Trade Arrangements including the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), and the GSP+. The BOI is also building a Roadmap for the Garments and Textile Industry that is designed in laying down the foundations of the garment and textile industry's growth based on the present situation and by identifying the sector barriers.

When everything seems to fall in the proper place in revving up the Philippine garment industry through the Philippine Roadmap for Textile Garment Industry 2020-2029, an unexpected turn happened, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The article written by [Ibañez \(2020\)](#) on the Business World titled "From riches to rags: Coronavirus brings Philippines' garment industry to its knees" gave the extent of the initial impact of COVID-19 on the Philippine garment industry. At the onset of the pandemic, in mid-March alone, around 6000 stalls had shut down in the Luzon-wide lockdown. Home-based sewing businesses were also affected. Though quarantine restrictions had been eased when the status had been changed from extreme community quarantine to general community quarantine or even modified general community quarantine in most areas, few customers are still visiting stores that started to reopen.

The Philippine garment had undeniably been affected, in great severity, by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Philippine exports were cut by almost 40% by its major buyer countries. Moreover, more than 600,000 workers' employment and livelihoods at considered to be at risk. In a general context, Asia's textile manufacturers had reportedly experienced a steep fall in terms of their sales, factories had been shut down because the pandemic caused wages to drop. The pandemic is expected to affect 65 million workers, around 75% of all the textile workers worldwide, in the textile industry from the region's 10 major textile-producing nations that include the Philippines, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Pa-

kistan, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. It is also worrisome that, at the going vaccination rate, life is expected to return to normal only after 7 years based on Bloomberg's calculator (Randall, 2021).

## 2.2. Effect of Promotional Strategies on Consumer Purchase Intention

### Advertising and Consumer Purchase Intention

Zooming into the different promotional strategies, Simpson and Kurtz (2017) highlighted one critical factor in the success of any advertisement or promotional activity. That is, the psychology of people, the consumers, to whom these activities are targeted to. Their psychology should be understood and present the product to them based on the marketer's understanding. What appeals to the consumers, what captures their attention, what motivates them to make a buying decision, and things that should be done to finally convince them to make the purchase should all be accounted regarded. Elci and Sert (2017) found out that subliminal advertising has the potential to influence a person's brand or product choice, judgments, and decisions without them knowing that they are being exposed to subliminal advertising. The advertising method had been found to influence their conscious processing.

Consequently, the importance of endorsers was highlighted in the study of Chi (2011) on the influences of perceived value on consumer purchase intention: the moderating effect of advertising endorsers since it is one of the more common strategies used by advisers. They found out that advertising endorsers significantly affected purchase intention. Moreover, advertising endorser has no moderation effect between perceived value and purchase intention. Their findings were supported by the study of Wang et al. (2012) on the effect of celebrity endorsements on consumer purchase intentions: advertising effect and advertising appeal as mediators. They found a significant positive effect between celebrity endorsements, advertising appeal, and advertising effect and consumer purchase intentions. In addition, the advertising appeal and advertising effect exert a partial mediating effect on the relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention.

In addition, Osei-Frimpong et al. (2019) investigated how celebrity endorsement affects consumer purchase intention. They also investigated the moderating effect of negative publicity on consumer purchase intention or attitudes. The findings of their study revealed that a celebrity endorser who possesses personal attributes such as attractiveness, trustworthiness, and familiarity has a positive influence on purchase intentions, not to mention its effect on consumers' perception of quality and brand loyalty. However, a celebrity endorser's negative publicity had been found to have no moderation effect on consumer purchase intention.

In a different perspective, Chetioui et al. (2020) investigated if fashion influencers can contribute to consumers' purchase intention. The findings of their

study reveal that attitudes toward fashion influencers positively affect brand attitude and consumer purchase intention. Furthermore, they found out that perceived credibility, trust, perceived behavioral control, perceived subjective norms, perceived expertise and perceived congruence likewise positively affect attitudes toward fashion influencers. The result of their study could help marketers and advertisers, particularly in the fashion industry, to understand how influencer marketing impact consumer purchase intention. They are also expected to understand factors explaining attitudes toward fashion influencers.

With respect to online behavioral advertising and its effect on consumer purchase intention, [Barnard \(2014\)](#) found that behaviorally targeted online ads have a significant positive effect on purchase intention. However, its effect is said to be reduced by the “creepiness factor” where marketers can watch, track, follow, assess, and capitalize on a person’s online activities and personal information.

#### **Personal Selling and Consumer Purchase Intention**

A study by [Babin et al. \(1999\)](#) as cited in [Fowler and Bridges \(2012\)](#) revealed that attitude has a significant direct influence on purchase intentions whereas the effect of the former toward the salesperson is mediated by their attitude towards the retailer. The findings suggest that from the perspective of the retailer, appropriate and proper behavior of the salesperson can be a critical success factor because of its independent relationship with consumer attitudes towards the product. Similarly, [Tsai et al. \(2010\)](#) as cited in [Abbes and Goudey \(2015\)](#) found that the consumer’s attitude, subjective norms, and the salesperson’s expertise are instrumental in the consumer’s purchase intention.

In contemporary times, the presence of online vendors is geared towards using virtual sales assistants (VSA). The virtual sales assistants may be an animated picture or a photograph of a real person that helps provide product-related information to consumers. Though impersonal, the VSAs that are used in an online web shop register a positive impact on consumers’ trust and purchase intention ([Beldad et al., 2016](#)).

Promotional strategies have their pros and cons depending on the target consumers of the business entity. Showrooms, for one, are perceived by others to have a negative effect. In this regard, a salesperson’s tactics are deemed necessary to convert showrooms to actual buyers. Based on the result of the study by [Fassnacht et al. \(2019\)](#), through high-quality interactions, salespeople can influence showrooms to purchase in the store. They also found out that the quality of interaction between the salespersons and consumers can influence the latter’s purchase intention.

#### **Sales Promotion and Consumer Purchase Intention**

It is a known fact that sales promotion may vary in form depending on who takes the role of the buyer or seller. [Fam et al. \(2013\)](#) investigated the effect of consumers’ personal values and sales promotion preferences on behavioral intention and purchase satisfaction for consumer products. The findings of their suggest that sales promotion technique preferences, regardless of product type,

have a significant effect on consumers' behavioral intention and purchase satisfaction. However, consumers' purchase satisfaction and behavioral intention have no significant effect on personal value for all the product types studied. To further establish the relationship between sales promotion and price discount with the consumer purchase intention, [Bhatti \(2018\)](#) made an investigation as regards the aforementioned variables while considering the moderating role of social media. The findings reveal that sales promotion and social media had an undeniable and positive influence on consumers' purchase intention. However, no significant relationship was established between discount and consumer purchase intention. Moreover, social media moderated the relationship between sales promotion and consumer purchase intention.

Similarly, [Gorji and Siami \(2020\)](#) conducted a study with the intent of examining the impact of sales promotion display on customer purchase and repurchase intentions, focusing on the moderating roles of price fairness and perceived product quality. The results revealed that sales promotion display has a positive effect on the purchase and repurchase intentions of consumers. The results also highlight the moderating role of price fairness and perceived product quality on customer shopping intentions. Finally, the significant relationship between sales promotion displays and purchase and repurchase intentions of the consumers with the joint moderating effects of price fairness and perceived product quality. The findings of the study could help managers in driving consumer purchase and repurchase intentions using appropriate visual objects in sales promotion and their proper placement in-store.

Aside from sale promotion display, one common tool used in sales promotion is by using discounts. [Santini et al. \(2015\)](#) made an investigation the effect of discount sales promotion on the purchase intention of consumers and the moderating effects of attractiveness in the relationship between the given variables and impulsiveness, hedonic perception, and financial risk. The results validated the positive influence of impulsivity and hedonic perception of consumers on purchasing the products offered at discounts. Furthermore, a negative relationship between the intention of purchasing discounted products and the perception of financial risk was identified. However, the moderating effects were not confirmed of attractiveness in the relationship between discount sales promotion and purchase intention was not confirmed.

It is compelling in contemporary times that sales promotion strategies adapt to technology. With reference to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), [Ye and Zhang \(2014\)](#) investigated the impact of sales promotion on consumer purchase intention in the online setting from a consumer-to-consumer (C2C) marketplace perspective. The results suggest that with an increased perception of consumers of the ease of use and their decreased perceived consumer risks, online sales promotion is deemed to have a significant effect on their purchasing intention.

Similarly, [Huang and Cheng \(2013\)](#) investigated the effect of online sales



promotion strategies such as price discounts, coupons, and free shipping on consumers' perceived quality and purchase intention. The results revealed that there is a significant relationship between sales promotion and brand awareness on the perceived quality of the consumers. Price-discount proved to have a greater impact on consumers' perceived quality as compared with coupon promotions. Furthermore, a well-known brand has been established to have a moderating role in the relationship between sales promotions and consumer responses. It was also noted that the promotional strategies of brands that are known to consumers are like to yield more favorable responses. The findings of their study sought to provide valuable knowledge to online sellers in choosing the most suited sales promotion tools to successfully steer up the purchase intentions of consumers.

### **Public Relations and Consumer Purchase Intention**

Oftentimes, good publicity is expected to contribute to the company's good image. To determine the influence of its counterpart, that is, negative publicity, [Yu et al. \(2018\)](#) sought to determine the influence of negative publicity on brand image, brand attitude, and brand purchase intention. They found out that brand blame has a negative relationship with attitudes and purchase intentions, but not the brand image. On the other hand, information severity has a negative relationship with brand image, but not attitudes or intentions. Furthermore, the associations between brand image and brand attitudes and intentions are dependent on the level of information severity. In the condition classified under mild severity, there is a positive impact between brand image and attitudes and intentions. It is the opposite when consumers are exposed to the high severity condition.

Since one of the main goals of public relations and publicity is building a good corporate reputation and image, it is necessary on looking into the effect of public relations and publicity in terms of its output and its relationship with consumer purchase intention. [Jung and Seock \(2016\)](#) explored the effects of the negative corporate CEO and corporate social responsibility reputations on the changes in consumers' brand attitudes and purchase intentions. The findings reveal the significant impact of brand awareness and perceived quality on brand attitude and purchase intention. In addition, consumers' brand attitudes and purchase intentions decreased after they are provided with enough information about the negative corporate reputation.

On the other hand, the precursor of negative publicity is the product-harm crisis which ultimately affects consumer purchase intention. [Lin et al. \(2011\)](#) examined the purchase intention and its antecedents, the perceived negative publicity, during product-harm crises while moderating the perceived corporate ability (CA) and corporate social responsibility (CSR). The results of their study revealed the negative relationship between purchase intention and perceived corporate ability, negative publicity, and corporate social responsibility by moderating trust and affective identification. The effect of perceived negative public-

ity on trust and affective identification is moderated by corporate social responsibility. The moderating effect of the corporate ability, on the other hand, was not established.

Based on the foregoing study, corporate social responsibility plays a big role in strengthening the company's public relations and publicity efforts. [Chung and Lee \(2019\)](#) tested a dual-process model of corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication. They examined how the statements that are included about a company's CSR fit and CSR history in terms of apology statements can influence purchase intention and negative word of mouth. The perceived integrity, and the consumers' attitude toward the apology statement and toward the company are deemed as mediators that would correspondingly affect the consumer purchase intention and negative word of mouth. The findings of their study show that corporate social responsibility fit has a positive effect on purchase intention and negative effect on negative word of mouth due to increased perceived integrity and attitude toward the apology statement, thus positively affecting the consumers' attitude toward the firm. The results also reveal that corporate social responsibility history has a positive influence on consumer purchase intention and a negative influence on negative word of mouth through increased perceived integrity and attitude toward the apology statement, thereby positively affecting the consumers' attitude towards the firm.

The foregoing finding is in congruence with that of the findings of [Lee and Shin \(2010\)](#) as cited in [Fatma and Rahman \(2015\)](#) and that there exists a significant positive relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities corporate social contribution and local community contribution and consumers' purchase intention. The same association between corporate social responsibility activities and consumer purchase intention was proven true in the study of [Dodd and Supa \(2011\)](#) on general consumers from a variety of backgrounds, ages, ethnicities, education, and income levels or representative of U.S. consumers in the Midwest region. In 2015, [Dodd and Supa \(2015\)](#) further investigated on the viability of corporate social advocacy as a predictor of purchase intention. They sought to examine whether corporate social advocacy serves as a measurable and viable indicator of the financial outcomes for organizations' public relations efforts. In their experiment, they found that corporate social advocacy has a positive influence on consumer purchase intention.

#### **Direct Marketing and Consumer Purchase Intention**

[Dong et al. \(2018\)](#) conducted an online experiment on how online media synergy influences consumers' purchase intention. The findings of their study revealed greater source credibility, cognitive responses which include brand credibility and positive thoughts about the brand, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intention were observed to participants who were exposed to message stimuli of online media synergy. In online single media repetition, source credibility was found to have a significant effect on the attitude towards the brand through brand credibility. In online multimedia, the credibility of the source

was also significant in influencing attitudes toward the brand through positive thoughts about the brand and the brand's credibility.

Another study examined the impact of social media marketing on purchase intention. This time brand loyalty was added as a dependent variable. The study of [Laksamana \(2018\)](#) explored the effect of social media marketing on purchase intention and brand loyalty in retail banking in Indonesia. He found out social media marketing is a good predictor leading to consumer purchase intention and brand loyalty. Thus, brand loyalty is also affected by purchase intention. [Ahmed and Zahid \(2014\)](#) also made an investigation the impact of social media marketing on brand equity and customer relationship management in terms of purchase intention. They found out that customer relationship management is the most significant factor that influences purchase intention. Furthermore, they concluded social media marketing has a positive effect on customer relationships and brand equity.

Another study by [Almohaimmeed \(2019\)](#) explored the effects of the antecedents of social media marketing, brand loyalty, and purchase intention. It further investigated the effect of social media marketing on brand loyalty and purchase intention and sought to identify the effect of brand loyalty on purchase intention. The findings reveal that social media antecedents significantly influence social media marketing, brand loyalty, and customer purchase intention. Social media marketing had been found to have a positive effect on both brand loyalty and customer purchase intention. Lastly, the results revealed that brand loyalty also has a positive effect on customer purchase intention. With the foregoing findings, organizations are encouraged to pay more attention to the antecedents of social media marketing since it can influence social media marketing application, brand loyalty, and customer purchase intention.

More particularly, social media is utilized by marketers as a communication channel and one of the more renowned social media platforms is Facebook. [Richard and Guppy \(2014\)](#) made an investigation the influence of Facebook on consumer purchase intention. Based on their findings, Facebook was found to have played an important role in consumers' purchase intention. The "friends like" in a Facebook application and their activity was the most influential on consumer purchase intention. Consequently, although the likes construct on Facebook was not confined to current respondents' friends, since these "likes" could come from anyone in the world, yet, it still has the second highest influence on consumer purchase intention. In context, their study pointed out the significant influence of "friends like", "check-in" and "sharing" activities on purchase decision-making which validated the fact that consumers put their trust more in their friends and family members as regards sourcing information about products and services ([Harris & Dennis, 2011](#)).

In the context of mobile marketing, [Gazley, Hunt, and McLaren \(2015\)](#) analyzed the effects of mobile phone location-based advertising (MLBA) services such as customization, permission, and intrusiveness on attitudes and purchase

intentions with reference to the theory of interactive advertising. They also assessed the moderating effect of receiving such messages at the point of purchase (POP). They found out that customization, permission, and intrusiveness all have a significant effect on consumer attitudes toward MLBA messages and ultimately affect their purchase intention. Moreover, the messages received at the POP increases the relationships between intrusiveness and attitudes but reduce the effect of customization on attitudes.

With reference to the foregoing findings, [Hongyan and Zhankui \(2017\)](#), undertook a moderated mediation analysis on the effects of mobile text advertising on consumer purchase intention. The study also made use of the variables of the theory of planned behavior (TPB) as the predictors of the consumers' purchase intention. They found that the attitudes of consumers, their subjective norms, and perceived behavioral controls have an influence on their purchase intention. Furthermore, the study revealed that subjective norms have an indirect impact on the consumers' purchase intention through their attitudes toward mobile text advertising.

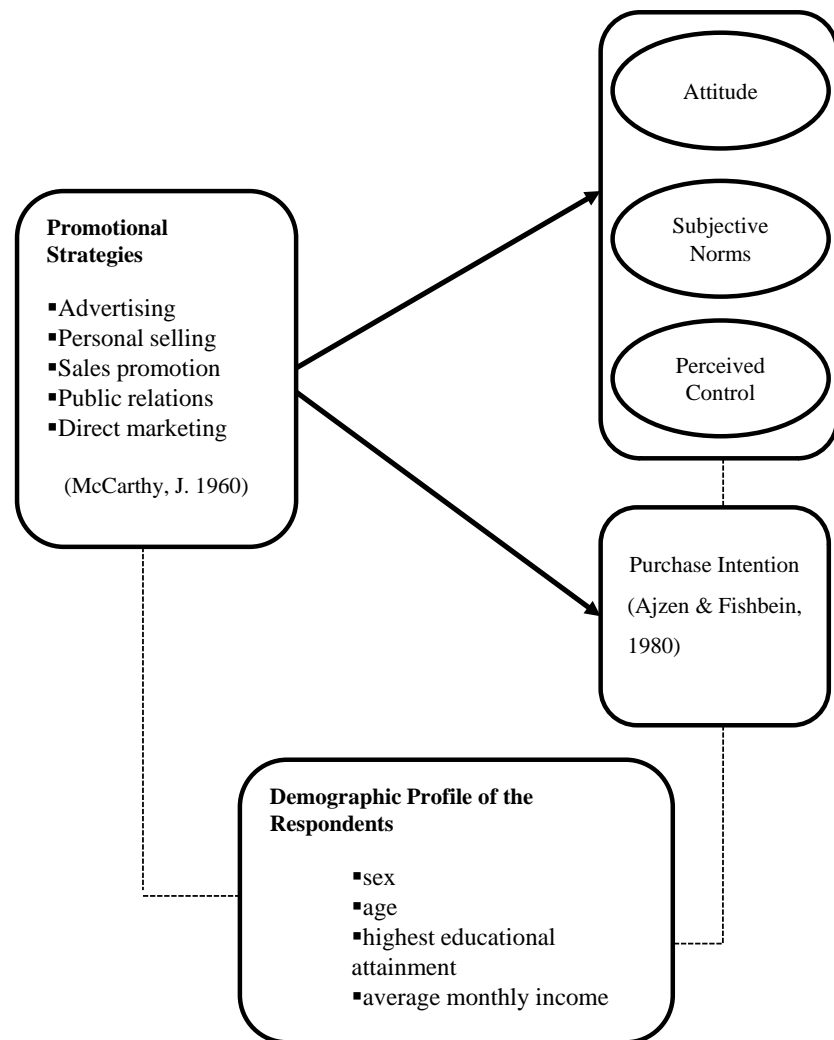
Like the foregoing study, [Hashim et al. \(2018\)](#) made inquiries whether the attitude of consumers toward mobile advertising affects their intention to purchase the products or services being advertised. Their findings reveal that the one that has the largest impact on consumer attitude in mobile advertising is the advertising message content itself. They also proved the link between the attitudes of consumers towards mobile advertising and their purchase intention. Considering their findings, they recommended that marketing managers using mobile advertising should give focus on marketing communication and they should continuously improve the said form of advertising to increase its attractiveness to consumers thus leading to consumers' intention to purchase.

### **2.3. Theoretical Framework**

The study is anchored on the Theory of Planned Behavior which was an enhanced model of the Theory of Reasoned Action. The two models assume that individuals make reasoned or logical decisions to engage in a particular behavior through the evaluation of the information that is available to them.

As seen in [Figure 1](#), the promotional strategies which consist of the five promotional mix strategies such as advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, and direct marketing ([McCarthy, 1960](#)) were treated as the independent variables. Consequently, the individual's decision which is determined by their intention to perform the behavior based on their attitude, subjective norm, and perceived control were treated as dependent variables. The relationship between the level of effectiveness of promotional strategies used by garment bazaar retailers as perceived by the consumers themselves and their attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, and purchase intention will be verified, thus the hypothesis:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between the respondents' assessments of



**Figure 1.** Conceptual paradigm.

the level of effectiveness of promotional strategies of garment bazaar retailers and their attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, and purchase intention.

The study explores the various selling platforms relative to consumers' purchase intention such as the consumers' intention to purchase clothing and fashion products at garment bazaar retailers from physical stores, virtual stores, company websites, and social media platforms. Moreover, since the behavioral beliefs, evaluations of behavioral outcomes, normative beliefs, motivation to comply, control beliefs, and perceived power are deemed to get influenced by external variables such as the individual's demographic profile, attitudes towards targets, personality traits, and other individual variables (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), the differences between the purchase intentions of consumers when they are grouped according to their demographic profile would be measured, thus the hypothesis:

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant difference in the respondents' purchase intention when grouped according to their demographic profile.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design

The researcher utilized the Descriptive-Correlational research design. The assessment of the level of effectiveness of promotional strategies of garment bazaar retailers was treated as the independent variables which include advertising, personal selling, sales promotion public relations, and direct marketing. The consumers' attitudes, subjective norms, purchase intention, and purchase intention was treated as the dependent variables in the study.

#### 3.2. Population, Sample size, and Sampling

From a population of over 12 million, the National Capital Region (NCR) based on the Labor Force Survey of 2019 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020a), the researcher gathered the responses of 510 respondents as samples of the study. The number of respondents was set a little over the computed sample size using Cochran's formula. To have equal representation in the 16 cities and 1 municipality in NCR, quota sampling was employed, thus thirty (30) respondents from each locality were selected as respondents of the study.

#### 3.3. Research Instrument

The online survey questionnaire, administered via Google Forms, was used as the primary source of data in the study. It is a researcher-made questionnaire where the indicators for the promotional strategies were derived from McCarthy (1960) and Perreault and McCarthy (2006) while the indicators for the purchase intention were based on the Theory of Planned Behavior by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980). The questionnaire solicits information relative to the demographic profile of the respondents, their assessment of the level of effectiveness of the advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, and direct marketing strategies of garment bazaar industries, and their attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, and purchase intention. To test for the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was used. The coefficient of the test returned Cronbach's alpha of 0.946 for promotional strategies and 0.871 for the attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, and purchase intention, which of the customers.

#### 3.4. Data Analysis

Kendall's Tau-b was used to test for the relationship between the level of effectiveness of promotional strategies and the consumers' attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, and purchase intention. Moreover, Mann-Whitney U-test and Kruskal-Wallis H-test were used to test the difference in the assessment of the consumers on the level of effectiveness of promotional strategies when they are grouped according to their demographic profile. Consequently, Bonferroni's Post Hoc test was also used for significant findings in the test of difference.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Respondents' Demographic Profile

Out of the 510 respondents of the study, the majority, or 70 percent are female while the male respondents account for 30 percent of the total number of samples. The findings reveal that more than half of the respondents of the study belong to the female population. The findings agree with the most recent figures reported by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) in its 2010 Household Population by Age Group and Sex by City/Municipality (PSA, 2010) that women (51 percent) have a slight advantage over men (49%) in terms of number in the National Capital Region (NCR).

As regards the age of the respondents, the age group that got the highest representation is 26 to 35 years old with 30.8 percent. It is followed by those who are 36 to 45 years old which account for 28.2 percent of the respondent. Consequently, those who are below 26 years old account for 25.1 percent, 46 to 55 years old with 12.5 percent, and those above 55 years old with 3.3 percent. The figures reveal that most of the respondents, 84.1 percent of them, are 45 years old or younger. The aforesaid percentage is quite close to the actual percentage of residents in the National Capital Region who are 18 to 45 years old, that is about 77.1 percent based on the 2010 Household Population by Age Group and Sex by City/Municipality (PSA, 2010). (Table 1)

For the highest educational attainment, almost half of the respondents, or 45.7 percent are either bachelor's degree holders or are currently taking their master's degree, 20 percent are either high school graduates, junior high school completers, or currently, at senior high school, 19.6 percent are either holders of master's degree or currently taking their doctorate, 11.6 percent are either graduates of the vocational course, 2-year course, or currently at college, and finally, 3.1 percent are doctorate degree holders. As observed, most of the respondents had at least acquired a bachelor's or higher academic degree which accounts for 68.4 percent of the total number of respondents. The findings may be attributed to the fact that the National Capital Region has the highest number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), that is 344 government and private HEIs including satellite campuses (Commission on Higher Education, 2020). These institutions offer to the least, Bachelor's degree programs and/ or Graduate education.

In terms of average monthly income, over a quarter of the respondents earn between ₱20,001 to ₱30,000 or 32.9 percent. Those who earn ₱10,000 and below follow with 22.9 percent. It is succeeded by those earning ₱10,001 to ₱20,000 or 20.6 percent. Consequently, those who are ₱30,001 to ₱40,000 account for 10.4 percent, 6.7 percent for those who earn between ₱40,001 to ₱50,000, and 6.5 percent for those earning ₱50,001 or higher. From the given figure, the average monthly income can be estimated to be at around ₱32,667 which is very close to the 2018 Family Income and Expenditure Survey by the Philippine Statistics Authority (2020b) of ₱35,000 for the National Capital Region.

**Table 1.** Respondents' demographic profile.

Demographic	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	153	30.0
	Female	357	70.0
Age	<26	128	25.1
	26 - 35	157	30.8
	36 - 45	144	28.2
	46 - 55	64	12.5
	>55	17	3.3
Highest Educational Attainment	High School Graduate/JHS Completer/SHS level	102	20.0
	Vocational/2-year Course Graduate/College level	59	11.6
	Bachelor's Degree/with Master's Units	233	45.7
	Master's Degree/with Doctorate Units	100	19.6
	Doctorate Degree	16	3.1
Average monthly income	<₱10,001	117	22.9
	₱10,001 - ₱20,000	105	20.6
	₱20,001 - ₱30,000	168	32.9
	₱30,001 - ₱40,000	53	10.4
	₱40,001 - ₱50,000	34	6.7
	>₱50,000	33	6.5

#### 4.2. Effectiveness of Promotional Strategies of Garment Bazaar Retailers

The perceived effectiveness of promotional strategies of garment bazaar retailers during the COVID-19 pandemic was assessed by the respondents. In terms of advertising, the use of display signs/point of purchase displays (mean = 3.41), posters or tarpaulins (mean = 3.39), print media like newspapers and magazines (mean = 3.16), brochures, leaflets, or pamphlets (mean = 3.14), and packaging inserts (mean = 2.99) were deemed as moderately effective by the respondents. It can be deduced from the findings that the traditional advertising strategies are still deemed by the respondents as effective, particularly with the use of point-of-purchase displays and poster or tarpaulin displays which occupied the highest mean scores. These two strategies which are visual in nature are deemed to pose no health risks since one of the possible ways of getting infected by COVID-19 is by touching surfaces as reported by the [World Health Organization \(2020a\)](#). In addition, print media, particularly newspapers play a crucial role particularly in these trying times as consumers view these sources as their resource for credible and reliable information amid growing concerns about the



magnanimous presence of false information and fake news online ([Graphic Papers Europe, 2020](#)). On the other end, surprisingly, the use of brochures, leaflets, or pamphlets is still deemed effective by the respondents in the time of the pandemic. This, however, is no surprise to [Brown \(2021\)](#) that wrote an online article titled “Are Brochures Effective for Marketing in 2021?” In his article, he mentioned that brochures are still as effective now as they are 10 years ago. He gave facts-based evidence about his claim by saying that brochures that are delivered through door-drop marketing can stay in a consumer’s house for about 38 days, and 23 percent of it gets circulated around family members. He also cited the data from Bentley University saying that 85 percent of people who read brochures learn about new businesses and 61% of people buy products once they see them in brochures. Finally, he gave the seven reasons why brochures are still effective in 2020. It describes brochures that are budget-friendly, close to the audience, within the audience’s reach, describe the brand in greater detail, utilize multiple channels of distribution, can be kept by customers for later reference, and establish brand authority.

As to personal selling, administering incentive programs (mean = 3.95), using reference selling or use of satisfied customers & their experiences (mean = 3.67), and conducting virtual sales presentations, demonstrations, and meetings (mean = 3.54) were perceived by the respondents as effective while the conduct of sales presentation (mean = 3.38) and fairs and trade shows (mean = 3.17) were assessed as moderately effective. The pandemic posed challenges in carrying out the traditional personal selling strategies utilized by businesses due to restrictions on travel and the observance of physical distancing. This resulted in a compelling transition from the substantial part of the sales process to virtual selling ([Sharma, 2021](#)). The third-ranked indicator (i.e., Conducting virtual sales presentations, demonstrations, and meetings) becomes too compelling where other personal selling activities as above-mentioned had been carried out using online platforms. But just the same, they are still viewed by the respondents as effective regardless, if whether they are done face-to-face or online. ([Table 2](#))

For sales promotion, offering consumer refunds or rebates (mean = 3.89), giving of coupons either traditional or digital, loyalty, reward or patronage reward (mean = 3.84), premiums and gifts (mean = 3.82), and price packs or cent-off deals (mean = 3.82) were perceived to be effective by the consumers. The conduct of contests or games (mean = 3.41), however, was regarded as moderately effective. Pandemic or not, sales promotions are always appealing to Filipinos as reported in 2013 the online survey conducted by Nielson to 29,000 internet respondents in 58 countries. In their study, they found out that 76% of Filipinos are more likely to buy products that come with free gifts. During the time of the pandemic, although consumers are deemed to be less caring about the price of items that they buy, offering price discounts and promotions is considered to help build better goodwill between the buyer and the seller ([Murillo-Vargas, 2020](#)).

**Table 2.** Effectiveness of promotional strategies.

Promotional Strategies	Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Advertising	Using print media (e.g., newspapers, magazines)	3.16	Moderately Effective
	Using packaging inserts	2.99	Moderately Effective
	Using brochures, leaflets, or pamphlets	3.14	Moderately Effective
	Using posters or tarpaulins	3.39	Moderately Effective
	Using display signs/point of purchase displays	3.41	Moderately Effective
Personal Selling	Conducting sales presentations	3.38	Moderately Effective
	Administering incentive programs	3.95	Effective
	Conducting fairs and trade shows	3.17	Moderately Effective
	Using reference selling (i.e., use of satisfied customers & their experiences)	3.67	Effective
	Conducting virtual sales presentations, demonstrations, and meetings	3.54	Effective
Sales Promotion	Conducting contests or games	3.41	Moderately Effective
	Giving of premiums and gifts	3.82	Effective
	Giving of coupons (traditional or digital), loyalty reward system/patronage reward	3.84	Effective
	Offering consumer refunds or rebates	3.89	Effective
	Giving of price packs or cent-off deals	3.82	Effective
Public Relations	Holding company virtual events such as conferences, webinars, trade shows, exhibits, contests, and competitions	2.97	Moderately Effective
	Holding charitable activities	3.60	Effective
	Making charitable donations	3.61	Effective
	Making news releases about the company and its products	3.44	Moderately Effective
	Participating in community activities	3.79	Effective
Direct Marketing	Providing catalogs for consumers	3.45	Moderately Effective
	Selling products through broadcast channels (e-commerce websites, blogs, YouTube, TV shopping)	3.68	Effective
	Selling through social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	4.10	Effective
	Selling through virtual stores (e.g., Facebook Marketplace, Lazada, Shopee, etc.)	4.12	Effective
	Sending text messages to consumers for product updates and offers	3.50	Moderately Effective

Note: “Not Effective (1.00 - 1.50)”, “Slightly Effective (1.51 - 2.50)”, “Moderately Effective (2.51 - 3.50)”, “Effective (3.51 - 4.50)”, “Very Effective (4.51 - 5.00)”.

Consequently, for public relations, participating in community activities (mean = 3.79), making charitable donations (mean = 3.61), and holding charitable activities (mean = 3.60) were perceived as effective by the consumers. Meanwhile, making news releases about the company and its products (mean = 3.44) and holding company virtual events such as conferences, webinars, trade shows, exhibits, contests, and competitions (mean = 2.97) were assessed as

moderately effective. It can be inferred from the given result that consumers do not only want to know the businesses better but expect them to be responsive in the present situation (i.e. COVID-19 situation). Being relevant at the present time and offering solutions or actions that would mitigate the burden on society are important public relations benchmarks in the time of the pandemic (Stern, 2020). Thus, it was no surprise that consumers gave a higher assessment to businesses that participate in community activities, hold charitable activities, and give donations.

Finally, for direct marketing, selling through virtual stores such as Facebook Marketplace, Lazada, Shopee, etc. (mean = 4.12), social media accounts such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram (mean = 4.10), and broadcast channels such as e-commerce websites, blogs, YouTube, TV shopping (mean = 3.68) were deemed as effective by the consumers. On the other hand, sending text messages to consumers for product updates and offers (mean = 3.50) and providing catalogs for consumers (mean = 3.45) were assessed to be as moderately effective. From the foregoing discussions, it can be inferred that the mobile and digital marketing components of direct marketing are deemed to be more effective as compared to traditional direct marketing activities. It is expected that the pandemic is said to have brought a paradigm shift not only to businesses but also to almost all facets of life. In fact, mobile marketing has proven to be effective and resistant to COVID-19 (WARC, 2020). Social media also become a common place for retail purchases during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consumers are more influenced to shop on social media platforms compared to years before the pandemic. The social media platform has seen faster sales growth than the more established Pinterest (+356 percent), Instagram (+189 percent), and Facebook (+160 percent), according to a Bazaarvoice Influencer study (Rigby, 2021). This proved that the pandemic has indeed accelerated the shift toward a more digital world (UNCTAD, 2020).

### **4.3. Consumers' Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Control and Purchase Intention**

Consumers' attitude, subjective norms, and perceived control are considered antecedents of consumers' purchase intention thus it is important to understand the aforesaid variables as they ultimately predict consumers' purchases. In terms of the attitude of consumers of garment bazaar retailers, they all agree that they buy clothing and fashion that are valuable to them (mean = 4.10), favorable to them (mean = 4.00), and appealing to them (mean = 3.85). Also, they buy clothing and fashion products that make them feel good (mean = 3.67) and look good (mean = 3.63). The findings reveal that the attitude of consumers towards making a purchase of clothing or fashion products has become more value-laden. They are regarding the value and their benefits more. According to Heuritech (2020), the leading market intelligence platform empowering fashion brands to forecast products, consumers are buying fewer luxury items thus they are getting

more creative with what they already own and are dressing more comfortably and acting more eco-consciously in their purchasing habits.

As regards subjective norms, the respondents moderately agree that they buy clothing and fashion products that are recommended by experts such as fashion gurus (mean = 3.21), friends and colleagues (mean = 3.20), family members (mean = 3.19), celebrities, and social media influencers (mean = 3.01), and people in the community (mean = 2.82). It can be deduced from the findings that trustworthiness is a big factor that is considered by buyers of clothing and fashion products. As revealed in the study of [Fanoberova and Kuczkowska \(2016\)](#), the credibility of the source influences the accuracy of information thereby affecting the purchase intention of consumers of apparel products and the same can be said during the pandemic period. (**Table 3**)

**Table 3.** Effectiveness of promotional strategies.

Variables	Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Attitude	Buying clothing and fashion products make me feel good	3.67	Agree
	Buying clothing and fashion products make me look good	3.63	Agree
	I buy clothing and fashion products that appeal to me	3.85	Agree
	I buy clothing and fashion products that are valuable to me	4.10	Agree
	I buy clothing and fashion products that are favorable to me	4.00	Agree
Subjective Norms	I buy clothing and fashion products that are recommended by family members	3.19	Moderately Agree
	I buy clothing and fashion products that are recommended by my friends and colleagues	3.20	Moderately Agree
	I buy clothing and fashion products that are recommended by the people in my community	2.82	Moderately Agree
	I buy clothing and fashion products that are recommended by experts (i.e., fashion gurus and the like)	3.21	Moderately Agree
	I buy clothing and fashion products that are recommended by celebrities and social media influencers	3.01	Moderately Agree
Perceived Control	I buy clothing and fashion products that I am very knowledgeable of (e.g., functionality, usability, quality, etc.)	4.09	Agree
	I buy clothing and fashion products that are within my buying capability or purchasing power	4.17	Agree
	I buy clothing and fashion products that come from reputable sources or from reputable brands	3.67	Agree
	I buy clothing and fashion products that offers flexible options in terms of payment	3.74	Agree
	I buy clothing and fashion products that are sold in different selling platforms	3.68	Agree
Purchase Intention	I am likely to purchase clothing and fashion products sold on physical stores (malls, bazaar, etc.)	3.85	Agree
	I am likely to purchase clothing and fashion products sold on virtual stores (Facebook Marketplace, Lazada, Shopee, etc.)	3.43	Moderately Agree

**Continued**

I am likely to purchase clothing and fashion products sold directly on company websites	3.20	Moderately Agree
I am likely to purchase clothing and fashion products sold thru “live selling (FB live, etc.)”	2.88	Moderately Agree

Note: “Strongly Disagree (1.00 - 1.50)”, “Disagree (1.51 - 2.50)”, “Moderately Agree (2.51 - 3.50)”, “Agree (3.51 - 4.50)”, “Strongly Agree (4.51 - 5.00)”.

Consequently, for perceived control, the respondents agreed that they buy clothing and fashion products that are within their buying capability or purchasing power (mean = 4.17), they have much knowledge about (mean = 4.09), offer flexible options in terms of payment (mean = 3.74), sold in different selling platforms (mean = 3.68), and come from reputable sources or brands (mean = 3.67). The findings suggest that the perceived control of the consumers is primarily influenced by their knowledge and purchasing power. This validates the findings of [Han and Stoel \(2016\)](#) about the important role of knowledge, both objective and subjective, in the purchase process, and ultimately in making a product purchase. In addition, purchasing power, often attributed to the income of the consumers, is a key factor influencing purchase decisions and intention ([Eze & Bello, 2016](#)).

Finally, as to the purchase intention, consumers are still more likely to purchase clothing and fashion products sold in physical stores (mean = 3.85). In addition, they moderately agree about their likelihood of purchasing clothing and fashion products that are being sold in virtual stores such as Facebook Marketplace, Lazada, or Shopee (mean = 3.43), directly on company websites (mean = 3.20), and live selling platforms such as Facebook (mean = 2.88). The findings validated the most recent report “International Omni-Channel Retail Report 2021” that surveyed people what their shopping preference is – online versus in-store. Though it is undeniable that the COVID-19 pandemic cut people from doing in-store shopping, the latest research revealed their strong desire to go back to brick-and-mortar retail. In fact, more than half of the respondents surveyed expressed their excitement about going back to physical stores ([Nguyen, 2021](#)).

#### **4.4. Relationship between Promotional Strategies and Consumers’ Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Control, and Purchase Intention**

The researcher carried out the test of the relationship between the level of effectiveness of the different promotional strategies of garment bazaar retailers vis-à-vis the consumers’ attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, and purchase intention. Generally, the findings supported H1, that is, a weak to strong relationship among variables was identified.

The relationship between the level of effectiveness of advertising strategies the

attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, and purchase intention is all supported. Attitude ( $\tau b = 0.220, p < 0.05$ ), perceived control ( $\tau b = 0.229, p < 0.05$ ), and purchase intention ( $\tau b = 0.213, p < 0.05$ ) were found to have a moderate relationship with the level of effectiveness of advertising strategies. On the other hand, subjective norms ( $\tau b = 0.174, p < 0.05$ ) translated to a weak relationship. The findings reveal that the advertising strategies used by garment bazaar retailers have minimal effect on the consumers' subjective norms while it has a moderate effect on consumers' attitude, perceived control, and purchase intention. The findings of the study validate the positive effect of advertising and promotional activities not only on attitude, subjective norms, and perceived control of the consumers but ultimately on their purchase intention (Simpson & Kurtz, 2017; Barnard, 2014). (Table 4)

As regards the relationship between the level of effectiveness of personal selling strategies the attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, and purchase intention, the hypothesis is supported. Among the four dependent variables, three

**Table 4.** Test of relationship.

Independent Variable	Dependent Variables	$\tau b$	$p$ -value	Interpretation	Decision
Advertising	Attitude	0.220	0.000	Moderate Relationship	Supported
	Subjective Norms	0.174	0.000	Weak Relationship	Supported
	Perceived Control	0.229	0.000	Moderate Relationship	Supported
	Purchase Intention	0.213	0.000	Moderate Relationship	Supported
Personal Selling	Attitude	0.274	0.000	Moderate Relationship	Supported
	Subjective Norms	0.186	0.000	Weak Relationship	Supported
	Perceived Control	0.288	0.000	Moderate Relationship	Supported
	Purchase Intention	0.270	0.000	Moderate Relationship	Supported
Sales Promotion	Attitude	0.349	0.000	Strong Relationship	Supported
	Subjective Norms	0.189	0.000	Weak Relationship	Supported
	Perceived Control	0.369	0.000	Strong Relationship	Supported
	Purchase Intention	0.275	0.000	Moderate Relationship	Supported
Public Relations	Attitude	0.264	0.000	Moderate Relationship	Supported
	Subjective Norms	0.153	0.000	Weak Relationship	Supported
	Perceived Control	0.303	0.000	Strong Relationship	Supported
	Purchase Intention	0.260	0.000	Moderate Relationship	Supported
Direct Marketing	Attitude	0.350	0.000	Strong Relationship	Supported
	Subjective Norms	0.229	0.000	Moderate Relationship	Supported
	Perceived Control	0.374	0.000	Strong Relationship	Supported
	Purchase Intention	0.317	0.000	Strong Relationship	Supported

Note: "Very Weak Relationship ( $< \pm 0.10$ )", "Weak Relationship ( $\pm 0.10 - \pm 0.19$ )", "Moderate Relationship ( $\pm 0.20 - \pm 0.29$ )", "Strongly Relationship ( $> \pm 0.30$ )"; Significance at  $p < 0.05$ .

were found to have a moderate relationship, that is, attitude ( $\tau_b = 0.274$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), perceived control ( $\tau_b = 0.288$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and purchase intention ( $\tau_b = 0.270$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). On the other hand, subjective norms ( $\tau_b = 0.186$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) got a weak relationship to the level of effectiveness of personal selling strategies. Since the time of pandemic limited the activities of personal selling, the strategy had shifted from the traditional personal selling approaches to that of using online platforms. The findings of the study were in congruence with that of Villamor and Arguelles (2014), stating how personal selling contributes to consumer buying intention. In addition, social media as a platform had been found to have a greater effect in developing consumer purchase intention as compared to traditional platforms of personal selling.

In terms of the relationship between sales promotion strategies to attitude, subjective norms perceived control, and purchase intention, the test yielded support for the hypothesis. The consumers' attitude ( $\tau_b = 0.349$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and perceived control ( $\tau_b = 0.369$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) were found to have a strong relationship with the level of effectiveness of sales promotion strategies while purchase intention ( $\tau_b = 0.275$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) has moderately relationship with the effectiveness of sales promotion strategies. Finally, subjective norms ( $\tau_b = 0.189$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) yielded a weak relationship with the level of effectiveness of sales promotion strategies. The findings of the study were supported by Chang (2017) that established a clear influence of sales promotion strategy and consumer purchase intention and since social media had been widely used as a platform in carrying various marketing strategies, social media when considered as a mediating variable in sales promotion also rendered significant relationship with purchase intention (Bhatti, 2018).

Consequently, the test of the relationship between public relations strategies to the attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, and purchase intention were all supported. Among the given variables, perceived control ( $\tau_b = 0.303$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) translated to a strong relationship. Attitude ( $\tau_b = 0.264$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and purchase intention ( $\tau_b = 0.260$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) showed a moderate relationship with the effectiveness of public relations strategies. Finally, subjective norms ( $\tau_b = 0.153$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) yielded a weak relationship with the level of effectiveness of public relations strategies. This shows the public relations activities undertaken by garment bazaar retailers during the COVID-19 pandemic have weak to strong positive influences on the attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, and purchase intention of the consumers in the garment industry. This was in congruence with the study of Maslikhan (2019) who found that there exists a positive relationship between public relations and brand attitude and that brand attitude influences purchase intention.

Finally, the relationship between digital marketing strategies to attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, and purchase intention all translated in support of the hypothesis. Attitude ( $\tau_b = 0.350$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), perceived control ( $\tau_b = 0.374$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and purchase intention ( $\tau_b = 0.317$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) yielded a strong rela-

tionship to the level of effectiveness of digital marketing strategies. Subjective norms ( $\tau_b = 0.229, p < 0.05$ ), on the other hand, yielded a moderate relationship. This shows the direct marketing strategies done by bazaar garment retailers during the COVID-19 pandemic have moderate to strong positive effects on the attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, and purchase intention of the consumers. It is important to note, however, that the relationship may predominantly be influenced by the platform being used by the marketing. The positive relationship between direct marketing when social media is used (Poturak & Softic, 2019) or mobile marketing used (Chinomona & Sandada, 2013) to consumer purchase intention is indeed undeniable.

#### 4.5. Difference in Consumers' Purchase Intention Based on Respondents' Demographic

As to sex ( $U = 27285.0, p = 0.985$ ), the test of difference was not supported. This means that the purchase intention of male and female consumers is the same. Since one of the heavily felt effects of COVID-19 is in the world of work (WHO, 2020b), that is, people losing their jobs or source of livelihood. It is expected that they would think twice before making purchases of non-essential items. Clothes being one of the men's basic needs may give way to more essential items. Although women not only purchase more items than men but have more frequent purchases of apparel (Stuart, 2019), their purchases were indeed hampered by the pandemic. (Table 5)

As regards consumers' age ( $H = 14.36, p < 0.05$ ), the test translated to significant findings thus the hypothesis is supported. The findings reveal that there exists a difference in the purchase intention of consumers across various age groups. The findings support the study of Kumar (2017) that determined age as a factor that plays a significant impact on their purchase intention towards fashion apparel products.

Consequently, the test of difference in respondents' highest educational attainment ( $H = 3.71, p = 0.592$ ), is not supported. This means that the consumers' purchase intention is the same at any level of their educational attainment. The absence of difference in the purchase intention of consumers on clothing and fashion products based on their level of education may be due to the fact that the consumers' intention to purchase is influenced by their level of knowledge or the amount of information that they have about the product and buyers nowadays, particularly during the time of the pandemic, tend to read product information over the Internet and share the same to other users (Napompech, 2014).

Finally, the test of difference for the respondents' average monthly income ( $H = 6.41, p = 0.170$ ), is not supported. This means that the consumers' purchase intention is similar at any level of the consumers' income. Consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic had become more careful in terms of spending. In fact, consumers are less likely to spend more, since many are expecting that their household income would continue to fall in the coming months (Jones, 2020). (Table 6)



**Table 5.** Test of difference.

Demographic	Test Statistic	<i>p</i> -value	Decision
Sex	27285.0*	0.985	Not supported
Age	14.36**	0.006	Supported
Highest educational attainment	3.71**	0.592	Not supported
Average monthly income	6.41**	0.170	Not supported

Note: \*Mann-Whitney U-test, significance at  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*Kruskal-Wallis H-test, significance at  $p < 0.05$ .

**Table 6.** Pairwise comparison across age groups.

Purchase Intention	Age Group	Test Statistic	<i>p</i> -value
I am likely to purchase clothing and fashion products sold on virtual stores (Facebook Marketplace, Lazada, Shopee, etc.)	25 & below vs. 26 to 35	24.689	0.139
	25 & below vs. 36 to 45	24.056	0.158
	25 & below vs. 46 to 55	78.977	0.000
	25 & below vs. 56 & above	66.125	0.068
	26 to 35 vs. 36 to 45	-0.633	0.969
	26 to 35 vs. 46 to 55	54.287	0.009
	26 to 35 vs. 56 & above	41.436	0.247
	36 to 45 vs. 46 to 55	54.920	0.009
	36 to 45 vs. 56 & above	42.069	0.242
	46 to 55 vs. 56 & above	-12.851	0.737
I am likely to purchase clothing and fashion products sold directly on company websites	25 & below vs. 26 to 35	-30.892	0.065
	25 & below vs. 36 to 45	-45.824	0.007
	25 & below vs. 46 to 55	23.543	0.273
	25 & below vs. 56 & above	17.288	0.633
	26 to 35 vs. 36 to 45	-14.932	0.357
	26 to 35 vs. 46 to 55	54.435	0.009
	26 to 35 vs. 56 & above	48.180	0.179
	36 to 45 vs. 46 to 55	69.367	0.001
36 to 45 vs. 56 & above	63.112	0.080	
46 to 55 vs. 56 & above	-6.255	0.870	

Note: Significance at  $p < 0.05$ .

A pairwise comparison between the consumers' purchase intention when respondents are grouped according to age using Bonferroni's post hoc test for Kruskal-Wallis H-Test was administered to further investigate where the differences lie.

For the indicator "I am likely to purchase clothing and fashion products sold on virtual stores (Facebook Marketplace, Lazada, Shopee, etc.)" the difference

can be found between the age groups of 25 & below vs. 46 to 55 (t-stat = 78.977,  $p < 0.05$ ), 26 to 35 vs. 46 to 55 (t-stat = 54.287,  $p < 0.05$ ) and 36 to 45 vs. 46 to 55 (t-stat = 54.920,  $p = p < 0.05$ ). Consequently, for the indicator “I am likely to purchase clothing and fashion products sold directly on company websites”, the difference lies between age groups like 25 & below vs. 36 to 45 (t-stat =  $-45.824$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), 26 to 35 vs. 46 to 55 (t-stat = 54.435,  $p < 0.05$ ), and 36 to 45 vs. 46 to 55 (t-stat = 69.367,  $p < 0.05$ ). The findings reveal that the difference can be seen between four types of generations in the given age groups—Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Gen Z.

The findings of the study agreed with the report made by the National Retail Federation as cited in [Square \(2017\)](#), an online shopping platform, which surveyed consumers from four different generations as regards the effect of generational influences on consumer purchases. The report revealed that consumers from all generations are making more purchases on smartphones and tablets through browsers and mobile applications though younger generations make up the bulk of online shoppers.

## 5. Conclusion

The Philippines have had a fair share of international success in the textile garment industry. When everything seems to fall into proper place through the initiative of the Department of Trade and Industry and Bureau of Investments to rev up the Philippine garment industry through the Philippine Roadmap for Textile Garment Industry 2020-2029, an unexpected turn had happened, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study aims to determine the relationship between the level of effectiveness of promotional strategies employed by garment bazaar retailers during the COVID-19 pandemic and the consumers' attitude, subjective norms, perceived control, and purchase intention. It also attempts to determine differences in consumers' purchase intentions for clothing and fashion products based on their demographics.

The results of the study revealed that traditional promotional strategies in advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, and direct marketing are still deemed moderately effective or effective by consumers of garment bazaar retailers. It is important to note, however, that mobile marketing (i.e., selling through virtual stores like Facebook Marketplace, Lazada, Shopee, etc.) and social media marketing (i.e., selling through social media accounts like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) were deemed as most effective among the indicators used promotional strategies. The respondents further agree that their attitude, subjective norms, and perceived control influence their decision in buying clothing and fashion products from garment bazaar retailers. Furthermore, consumers of garment and fashion products still have the intent of purchasing products from garment bazaar retailers despite the current pandemic situation. Moreover, customers still prefer acquiring garment products from physical stores followed by virtual stores, company websites, and live streaming plat-

forms.

The researchers also found out that sales promotion strategies have a strong influence on consumers' attitude but only have a moderate influence on consumers' purchase intention. On the other hand, direct marketing strategies have strong influences on consumers' attitudes and perceived control, and purchase intention. All other promotional strategies—advertising, personal selling, and public relations have been found to have a moderate impact on consumers' purchase intention. Moreover, the baby boomers or the senior citizens were key factors in the differences among age groups who are most likely to purchase clothing and fashion products from garment bazaar retailers that are being sold from virtual stores or company websites.

Finally, since the study was conducted at the height of the pandemic when moderate to strict lockdowns were imposed, it is also necessary to look at the shift in consumers' purchase intention and garment bazaar retailers' promotional strategies as restrictions were eased. This would allow garment bazaar retailers to the short and long-term effects of the pandemic not only on consumers' purchase intention but also their buying behavior.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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