NORWEGIAN SALMON:
A STUDY OF IN-STORE PROMOTIONS IN CHINA

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This paper is done as a part of the undergraduate program at
BI Norwegian Business School. This does not entail that
BI Norwegian Business School has cleared the methods applied,
the results presented, or the conclusions drawn.
This thesis has been written in cooperation with Norwegian Seafood Council.

Throughout this period the authors have gained extensive knowledge and insight concerning in-store promotions and the average urban Chinese consumer’s shopping patterns. The authors have learned how to construct an observational quasi-experiment in addition to gaining a broader understanding of consumer psychology and purchase behavior.

The authors are exceptionally grateful for the opportunity to assist Norwegian Seafood Council with gaining more knowledge of Chinese consumers' behavior and reactions concerning in-store promotions.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This thesis focuses primarily on two in-store promotions currently used as a marketing strategy by Norwegian Seafood Council to spread the awareness of Norwegian salmon. Due to the uncertainty of the effects of these promotions on the average Chinese consumers’ purchase behavior and attention, the authors have decided to conduct a research to find out which of these are the most cost-efficient, and how Norwegian Seafood Council may improve their in-store promotions in order to reach a greater audience.

The core structure of this thesis (the data collection) is based on the Model of Consumer Behavior, which represents the factors influencing the consumer purchase behavior. Through the information collected and the results of the research it is clear that the in-store promotions do not support the sales of salmon, as previously believed by Norwegian Seafood Council. One of the reasons may be the noise in the communication process and the lack of differentiation from other promotional activities. Additionally, most of the purchase decisions are made prior to purchase, so that the promotion on Point-of-Sale may continue to be unrewarded. Due to this statement, Norwegian Seafood Council needs to focus on reaching the potential salmon consumers prior to their shopping trip, and use the Point-of-Sale activities to enhance the learning process for the consumer, thus increasing brand awareness. This will allow Norwegian salmon to become a part of the consumer’s evoked set. Furthermore, the activity's design needs to be in accordance with Norwegian Seafood Council’s desired activity results in order for the message to come across clearly.
ABBREVIATIONS AND EXPLANATION OF WORDS

ABBREVIATIONS

CNNIC: China Internet Network Information Center
CPI: Consumer Price Index
DDMA: Data Driven Marketing Asia
NBS: National Bureau of Statistics
NSC: Norwegian Seafood Council
OCG: One-Child Generation
OCP: One-Child Policy
RMB: Ren Min Bi (Currency of the People's Republic of China)

EXPLANATION OF WORDS

Attention Rate: The number of individuals showing attention towards a promotion, compared to the number of individuals not showing attention.

Biased: Cause to feel or show inclination or prejudice for or against someone or something¹.

Confucian Values: The ideas of Confucius, emphasizing such values as family, tradition, and mutual respect².

¹ Oxford Dictionaries 2012.
² UCLA 2005.
Cost-Efficiency: The relative balance of effectively meeting reach and frequency goals at the lowest price\(^3\).

In-Store Promotion/Point-of-Sale/Point-of-Purchase Advertising: Signs, displays, and other techniques of attracting attention and promoting products at their location of sale \(^4\).

Joint Market Activity: When two (or more) companies are working together towards their own complementary, but separate, set of goals\(^5\).

Luxury Item: An item that is not necessary for living, but is deemed as highly-desired within a culture or society\(^6\).

Public Relations: The business of generating goodwill toward an individual, cause, company, or product\(^6\).

Saving Rate: Is the amount a population saves divided by its disposable income, expressed as a percentage\(^7\).

Taste Palate: Sense of taste

Word-of-Mouth Marketing: People-to-people oral, written, or electronic communications that relate to the merits of experiences of purchasing or using products or services\(^8\).

\(^3\) Lake 2012. 
\(^4\) Motto 2002. 
\(^5\) Griffith 2010. 
\(^6\) Investopedia 2012. 
\(^7\) InvestorWords 2012. 
\(^8\) Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.
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1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis is written as a final part of the Bachelor program in International Marketing at the BI Norwegian School of Management on behalf of Norwegian Seafood Council (also referred to as NSC). It presents the findings from a research on effectiveness of in-store promotions and of the Chinese consumers buying behavior towards Norwegian salmon. The thesis provides an analysis on how Norwegian Seafood Council can improve their strategy to achieve a higher sales rate of Norwegian salmon in China.

The authors of this thesis have in cooperation with Norwegian Seafood Council and their supervisor decided on the research aim. The planning, designing and conducting of the primary research have been constructed in cooperation with Company X. Through the analysis of primary and secondary data the authors provide some critical success factors and a strategic recommendation for Norwegian Seafood Council. Originally, the authors wanted to conduct a research on which of the two in-store promotions; chef and promoter, or just a promoter, generated the most attention towards the salmon counter. However, it would be equally essential to identify steps in the consumer purchase behavior that NSC can improve and use as a competitive advantage in their marketing strategy of Norwegian salmon in China. Thus, making this thesis rather unique in its design. It consist of one research aim concerning the attention rate and cost-efficiency of the current in-store promotions, and one extended research aim concerning the identification of areas of improvement in the consumer behavior process in order to generate more sales of Norwegian salmon.
2. NORWEGIAN SEAFOOD COUNCIL

2.1. COMPANY INTRODUCTION

Norwegian Seafood Council (NSC) is a private company owned by the Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs. Their head office is located in Tromsø in the northern parts of Norway. Currently, NSC has 12 representative offices that are present in various different markets located around the world. According to their own website\(^9\), NSC is the industry’s main source of statistics and trade information regarding seafood, and is continually monitoring trends and developments in the global seafood sales, with the main focus on Norwegian seafood. In addition, NSC possesses updated information on import quotas, tariff rates and trade conditions in various markets. The general vision and objective of NSC are the following;

**General vision:** Norwegian Seafood Council shall win the world over to Norwegian seafood – people from all over the world shall be aware of and choose seafood from Norway.

**General objective:** Through its marketing activities, Norwegian Seafood Council shall strengthen the value of Norwegian seafood.

Their activities are financed by the seafood industry through market fees levied on all exports of Norwegian seafood. At the moment Norway is the world's second largest exporter of seafood, only surpassed by China\(^10\). The message NSC is trying to deliver to people throughout the globe is the belief that the best seafood in the world comes from Norway. In order to convince consumers, they promote Norwegian seafood in all of their major seafood markets and support marketing activities in many of the more than 140 countries that import Norwegian seafood.

\(^9\) www.seafood.no

An important part of NSC's activities is to secure a good reputation for Norwegian seafood by engaging in marketing efforts worldwide. Their activities are focused on three main areas: (1) joint marketing, (2) market information and (3) communication and reputational risk management.

The marketing work carried out by NSC is aimed at further increasing demand for Norwegian seafood. Their marketing activities serve to support the exporters' own sales efforts, and NSC is often involved in joint market activities together with partners within the Norwegian seafood industry. By increasing the awareness, along with the preference for Norwegian seafood, these activities help establish a good foundation when the individual exporters are promoting their products to consumers all around the world. On a yearly basis, NSC implements some 500 marketing projects in 25 different countries. These marketing projects are all aimed at increasing demand for and consumption of Norwegian seafood.

NSC’s corporate communication, press grants, press travels and PR activities are all aimed at increasing market awareness of Norwegian seafood and providing stakeholders with sufficient information. Simultaneously, NSC assists in increasing awareness among the public with the importance of Norwegian seafood exports and knowledge of seafood originating in Norway.

Reputational risk management with regards to the seafood products is an important part of NSC’s organizational image. They are always ready to contribute to social debate with accurate, updated information about their seafood products, the organization itself and the Norwegian seafood industry.
2.3. **Norwegian Salmon in China**

Norwegian seafood has been sold in the Chinese market for over 20 years. In the information received from Sigmund Bjørgo, it is stated that seafood exports from Norway to Mainland China have gradually increased from 51,872 ton in 2001 to 152,071 ton in 2010. In 2011 export of Norwegian salmon to China was 4,160 ton, still it only was equivalent to a minor 2.4 percent of the total amount of seafood exported\(^\text{11}\). One of NSC's twelve representative offices is located in Beijing, China. China is their 6th largest export market (including Hong Kong), and is among the group of countries that is expected to have a great potential for further growth.

\(^{11}\) Information collected directly from NSC
China's economy is gradually transforming into an economy driven by demands. The increase of Chinese consumers' purchasing power, together with an increased distribution of salmon in hypermarkets and restaurants is creating a higher demand for Norwegian seafood, particularly salmon\textsuperscript{12}.

The elevating disposable income and appreciation of the Chinese currency have resulted in a sharp increase in imports. The demand for imported salmon will continue to rise due to the limited domestic supply from over-exploited fisheries, income growth and improved food related health awareness\textsuperscript{12}.

\textbf{2.4. \hspace{0.25cm} Marketing Activities in China}

As earlier stated NSC primarily work with promotion of Norwegian seafood worldwide. With China being one of the largest markets for seafood\textsuperscript{13}, NSC uses various marketing activities to increase the awareness, and in turn sales of seafood. Their main marketing investments have been Public Relations (PR) and Point-of-Sale (POS) promotions. The PR mainly consists of event drives such as restaurant campaigns, arrival of the 10th million salmon to China, etc. The usual POS-activities conducted in store consist of chefs, promoters and promotional brochures. NSC has also provided training for the respective retail staff in separate programs, and assisted the education of chef students\textsuperscript{14}.

\textsuperscript{12} Luan 2011.
\textsuperscript{13} Information collected directly from NSC
\textsuperscript{14} Interview with Sigmund Bjørgo
2.5. **Competitors**

Salmon export plays an important role in the total Norwegian seafood export. In 2011, 62 percent of all Atlantic salmon was produced in Norway, which means that Norway is currently the largest exporter of Atlantic salmon in the world\(^\text{15}\).

With regards to exports of salmon to China, NSC identifies four direct competitors on the Chinese market for sales of salmon; the Faroe Island (Denmark), Scotland, Chile (on frozen salmon), and Tasmania (Australia)\(^\text{16}\).

\(^{15}\) Information collected directly from NSC.
\(^{16}\) Interview with Sigmund Bjørgo.
3. BACKGROUND TO RESEARCH

The Norwegian Seafood Council has throughout the years tried to raise its sales by experimenting with different types of stimuli in various convenient stores. Today they mainly use three different types of in-store promotions in order to gain customer attention. However, they would like to know how they can use a more cost-efficient model and still be able to have the same amount of attention generated towards the salmon counter. Thus, they have asked us to conduct an in-store research in order to compare the attention rate to different in-store promotions.

3.1. IN-STORE PROMOTIONS

Last year NSC conducted approximately 667 promotions evenly spread throughout the year. Each promotion lasted from Friday to Sunday, which totals a number of roughly 2,000 days of in-store promotions in Mainland China. The majority of stores had two in-store promotions. When targeting stores, NSC had their primary focus on new stores and stores with potential growth\textsuperscript{17}.

In addition, NSC conducted in-store promotions in cooperation with various exporters, where they shared up to 50 percent of the cost. The number of joint promotions was approximately 2,500\textsuperscript{17}.

\textsuperscript{17} Interview with Sigmund Bjørgo.
3.1.1. **Explanation of In-Store Promotions**

**Promotional Brochures**

In periods when there are no promotional activities arranged by NSC in the store, the salmon counter is decorated with brochures with information on Norwegian salmon. Additionally, the products are decorated with the Norwegian flag.

**Promoter**

A promoter’s task is to create attention and communicate the message to the consumers through the use of verbal communication. In addition, they are in charge of handing out brochures.

According to Sigmund Bjørgo, one promoter with a stand and point-of-purchase material is sufficient enough to get attention, and communicate the heritage and values of Norwegian seafood.

**Promoter and Chef**

When there's both a chef and a promoter, the chef's task is to filet the salmon, create attention, and make the promotion look professional. The promoter's role is to communicate with consumers verbally and hand out brochures and taste samples.
3.2. **Research Aim**

NSC uses various in-store promotions to attract Chinese consumers to the salmon counter. At the moment, they lack the knowledge of the effects of these in-store promotions with regards to sales volume and the perception of Norwegian salmon. The aim of this research paper is to test the different in-store promotions in order to find out which of the in-store promotions that proves to deliver the highest value-for-money for NSC.

3.3. **Strategic Problem Definition**

*What would be the changes in attention rate and sales of Norwegian salmon in China if NSC decided to focus on cost-efficiency of their in-store promotions?*

3.4. **Extended Research Aim and Strategic Problem Definition**

The original research aim and strategic problem definition are tools to identify which of the two in-store promotions generate the most attention towards the salmon counter. However, the authors believe that it would additionally be important to fully understand the Chinese consumers' behavioral patterns with regards to in-store promotions.

Therefore, the use of the Model of Consumer Behavior can assist the authors in identifying where NSC can excel in order to make their in-store promotions more effective.

Based on this, the extended strategic problem definition will be the following:

*Where in the consumer behavior process should NSC improve with regard to their in-store promotions in order to generate more sales in the future?*
3.5. **Research Questions**

To further explain our problem we have come up with the following research questions:

1. To what extent do the different in-store promotions chosen for this research affect the consumer attention rate?
2. In what ways do external factors as political, economical, socio-cultural and technological issues influence the consumers' buying behavior?
3. How does consumer psychology affect buying behavior toward Norwegian salmon?
4. What are the main characteristics of those purchasing salmon?
5. Do the in-store promotions have impact on the Chinese consumers’ buying process?
6. Are there any general elements in the purchase decision that may affect the sales of Norwegian salmon?

3.6. **Research Collaboration Company**

A large part of the primary research is conducted in cooperation with Company X. According to their website, Company X is one of the leading seafood companies in the world. They offer farmed salmon and processed seafood to customers numerous places worldwide. Although their main product is salmon, they additionally offer a wide range of value added products such as coated seafood, ready-to-eat meals, finger food and smoked seafood.

The authors’ task will be to design the observational research and make sure that Company X initiates it and provides us with their promotional material as well as research data.

The authors would like to emphasize that NSC and Company X are not affiliates.
4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This thesis will construct the research design based on the literature “Business Research Methods” by Bryman and Bell (2010) and “Metode og dataanalyse” by Gripsrud, Silkoset and Olsson (2009).

4.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Due to the nature of the research questions, exploratory research design and causal research design will be applied. Exploratory research design is used when the researchers have limited knowledge of the field they are researching and when they want to obtain knowledge in an unfamiliar field. Causal design is used when the researchers want to explore the correlation, connection, or relationship between two events\textsuperscript{18}.

4.2.1. EXPLORATORY DESIGN

In order to initiate the research and reach a greater understanding of the desired subject, the authors find that the use of explorative design is vital. This means that the authors will be collecting and studying secondary data provided by NSC along with Company X, in addition to searching for complementary literature and web sources.

\textsuperscript{18} Bryman and Bell 2011.
4.2.2. **Causal Design**

The authors would like to include causal design in their research. Causal design is often used when one wants to check whether an action (X), is the consequence of another action (Y), within the limitations of certain boundary conditions set by the researchers\(^{19}\). This design will mainly be used to obtain primary data. The research outline will consist of counting grocery shoppers as they pass by the salmon counter, show attention to the counter or make a purchase decision.

The authors have decided to use a quasi-experiment with two different in-store promotions. A quasi-experiment is similar to a classical experimental design, but do not fulfill all the internal validity requirements\(^{19}\).

The two different in-store promotions will consist of the following:

I. Promotional Brochures, Promoter
II. Promotional Brochures, Promoter and Chef

The quasi-experiment will be conducted in a natural environment, which in this case will consist of two general supermarket arenas in Shanghai. It may however, be challenging to isolate the effect of the placed stimulus from other stimulus. As a result of the collection of data observed from the quasi-experiment the authors hope to find outcomes that are easily transferable to similar situations.

\(^{19}\) Bryman and Bell 2011.
4.3. **DATA COLLECTION**

4.3.1. **SECONDARY DATA**

The exploratory design will focus on qualitative secondary data. The advantage of this data is the savings on the time and cost aspect as the data used\(^\text{20}\). The secondary data will be obtained from internal sources provided by NSC and Company X as well as other external sources such as literature, articles and web publications.

4.3.2. **PRIMARY DATA**

The quantitative primary data will be gathered through the use of observation on how many customers pass by the counter, how many of these generate attention towards the counter, and sales figures for each day.

The population sample will consist of regular customers in a Chinese supermarket. The choice of stores has been made with valuable insight from the authors’ supervisor in Company X. The demographics have been taken into account and are normally distributed in the customer base in both of the supermarkets chosen. Due to the time limitations the authors have to consider the sample size in regards to a cumulative effect that may arise from the presence of stimuli portrayed through the in-store promotions. As salmon is not an everyday commodity for Chinese consumers and most of the consumption and sales of salmon occur during the weekends\(^\text{21}\), the data will be collected from Friday to Sunday for four weeks in order to not only obtain a sufficient sample, but also reduce the mentioned effect that will become higher by added presence in store. By cumulative effect the authors mean that the results from

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\(^{20}\) Gripsrud, Silkoset and Olsson 2009.

\(^{21}\) Interview with Sigmund Bjørgo.
the second week may be based on the result from the first week. Due to limited access to all the supermarkets in Shanghai, the data collected may be a non-probability sample. The consequences of a non-probability sample are the sample error that may occur between the population and the sample obtained. This refers to the samples reflection of the population. In theory, all customers in the store have the same probability of being included in the sample.

4.4. Validity

It is important to consider that the data provided by NSC and Company X may be biased. Therefore, it is essential for the authors to take validity of the data into account. Validity concerns the results drawn from the research conducted, put in another way, it is vital that the data measures what it is intended to measure. When conducting the causal design it is imperative that the main focus is on the internal validity of the conclusion. This means that the authors have to prove that the relationship between two variables is in fact present, and that the change is not affected by any other variable that was not foreseen.

4.5. Reliability

Reliability is concerned with the repetitiveness of the result achieved. In designing the experiment, the authors will be able to review the secondary data that has been collected from NSC and Company X.

22 Bryman and Bell 2011.
4.6. Potential Sampling Errors

There are three potential areas of sampling errors that the authors believe may occur during the research.

The first one is mentioned above; the cumulative effects that may arise from the presence of stimuli portrayed through our in-store promotions.

Secondly, there is a possibility for human errors. Since the observants are estimating the age of the respondents, subjective opinions may arise. This could affect the Norwegian salmons actual target group. Distractions such as noise, incoming calls, and customers blocking the observants' sight etc., could all create possible sampling errors.

Thirdly, the sample may not reflect the entire population, as the research is only conducted on the three busiest days during the week.

The authors believe that the following actions will help reduce the possibility of sampling errors;

- Keeping the sampling on three days a week
- Counting each unit (customers)
- Using two separate stores
5. THEORY

5.1. THE MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

There are numerous theories on the communication process, but due to the nature of this thesis the authors will focus on Kotler, Keller and Lu’s\(^23\) macro model of the communication process. Their model represents nine elements in which the sender and receiver are the two major parties. The main communication tools are represented as the message and the media. The main communication functions are represented as encoding, decoding, response and feedback. To further elaborate, encoding is the process of using language and symbols to design a message. The message design can include cultural context information and non-verbal communication. In contrast, decoding is the process of interpreting the message\(^24\).

There are several important steps in the development of effective communication. The authors will limit the steps to the first three due to the nature of this thesis. The first step is to identify one’s target, or who the receiver of the message is\(^23\). According to Munter\(^25\), the more one knows about the receiver of the intended message, such as who they are, what they do, how they feel and how they can be persuaded, the more likely one is able to achieve the desired goal of changing the receiver’s behavior.

The second step consists of determining the communications objectives\(^23\). One needs to plan what the message should entail. When marketers have gained enough information about the target consumer in the first step, then the second step assists them in combining the drives of purchase intention such as for example category need, with the message intention.

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\(^{23}\) Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.  
\(^{24}\) Kleindl 2007.  
\(^{25}\) Munter 2009.
The third step is to design an effective message strategy\textsuperscript{26}. The main goals of communication are to inform, persuade, motivate and build a mutual understanding\textsuperscript{27}. Thus, making it important that the message design is efficient. According to Munter\textsuperscript{28}, effective persuasion of target audience is possible if the sender emphasize on customer benefits of the product, and has credibility in the consumer’s mind. It is also vital that the structure and organization of the message is logical to the consumer. Furthermore, if one wants to make sure that the audience learns something from the message then one should use a Tell and Sell communication style\textsuperscript{28}. This style does require some audience involvement in the communication process in order for the learning to be effective.

Regardless of an effective developed message structure, certain noise levels will always surround the communication process. The definition of noise level is according to Hill\textsuperscript{29} the amount of other messages competing for a potential consumer’s attention. There are several types of noise levels consisting of both external and internal elements surrounding the sender and receiver. One type of internal noise may be the receiver’s interest level of the message being sent out. If the interest level is low one should try to involve the receiver in the communication process\textsuperscript{28}. An example of an external noise level is the environment itself, such as location, shouting, bad odor etc. Ideally, the communication process should first be tested through marketing research before the message is sent to the target audience\textsuperscript{30}.

\textsuperscript{26} Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.
\textsuperscript{27} Seitel 2007.
\textsuperscript{28} Munter 2009.
\textsuperscript{29} Hill 2009.
\textsuperscript{30} Kleindl 2007.
5.2. **PEST-Analysis**

PEST is an acronym for Political, Economical, Socio-Cultural and Technological factors. A PEST-analysis scrutinizes the external business macro-environment and is a useful strategic tool for understanding the environment as a whole in which a company or organization operates. The PEST-analysis is frequently used when conducting a strategic analysis or when market research is conducted\(^{31}\).

Additionally, PEST-analysis is in effect an audit of an organization’s environmental influences with the purpose of using this information to guide strategic decision-making. The assumption is that if the organization is able to audit its current environment and assess potential changes, it will be better placed than its competitors to respond to changes. In other words, changes in the external environment enables companies to take advantage of the opportunities and minimize the threats faced by their business activities\(^{32}\).

The authors have decided that they will use the PEST-analysis as a tool to see how the macro factors might influence the consumer behavior directly or indirectly through forced changes on the company. By recognizing the changes in the consumer behavior that occurs as a result of external factors, the company can better understand the attitudes and perceptions towards Norwegian salmon or NSC.

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\(^{31}\) PEST-Analysis 2012.

\(^{32}\) CIPD 2010.
5.2.1. **Political Factors**

Political factors refer to government policy such as the degree of intervention in the economy\(^3\). It is important for a company to understand how political changes may affect peoples’ consumption behavior in order to gain a competitive advantage. Some factors can stimulate change for the consumer through e.g. legal restrictions forced on the company that in turn will affect the consumer, while some legal restrictions will directly force the consumers to change their routines e.g. by limiting total allowed working hours.

5.2.2. **Economical Factors**

By analyzing the economical factors, companies can determine their costs and estimate the spending patterns of a country. However, economical analysis is also useful for determining how consumers may change their way of life due to economical changes in the environment, for example by looking at spending patterns, increase and decrease in income, availability of credit etc. All of these elements can result in changed consumer behavior as the consumer is adjusting to a different reality.

\(^{33}\) Gillespie 2007.
5.2.3. **Socio-Cultural Factors**

By studying socio-cultural factors, companies can better understand how a society operates and how they can expect to fit in with this society in realistic terms. The socio-cultural environments where the consumers operate have a considerable effect on the behavior. Factors such as demographics, educational levels, living standards etc. all create a framework for the consumer that a company has to consider to create the greatest amount of revenue on their products. In China the differences between the Traditional Generation and the One-Child Generation have been considerable in terms of demands for goods and services.

5.2.4. **Technological Factors**

Technology can reduce costs, improve quality and lead to innovation. It can also benefit consumers as well as the organizations providing the products. Today, technology has become essential for competitive advantage, and is a major driver of globalization\(^\text{34}\). Technology has a great impact on how consumption occurs, from the use of cash to credit cards and from in-store shopping to online shopping, but also how the technology has made it possible to search for information on products and adopt trends from other parts of the world.

\(^{34}\) Gillespie 2007.
5.3. **Motivation**

Motivation is the driving force within a human being that impels them to action. This driving force is produced by a type of tension, which exists as the result of an unfulfilled need. Individuals strive both consciously and subconsciously to reduce this tension through behavior that they anticipate will fulfill their needs and thus relieve them of the stress they feel. The specific goals they select and the patterns of action they undertake to achieve their goals are the results of individual thinking and learning. Consequently, motivation becomes the force that induces consumption and, through consumption experiences, the process of consumer learning.

Furthermore, every type of behavior is goal oriented. Goals are the sought-after results of motivated behavior. The form or direction that behavior takes is a result of thinking process (cognition) and previous learning. One can divide goals into two elements, generic goals and product-specific goals. A generic goal is a general category of goal that may fulfill a certain need. A product-specific goal is a specifically branded or labeled product that the individual sees as a way to fulfill a need.

For any kind of need, there are many different and appropriate goals. Thus, the specific goal selected depends on the individual’s experiences, physical capacity, prevailing cultural norms and values, and the goal’s accessibility in the physical and social environment.

Needs and goals are interdependent and change in response to the individual’s physical condition, environment, interaction with other people, and experiences. When a need has been satisfied, new and higher-order needs emerge that must be fulfilled.

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5.3.1. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Dr. Abraham Maslow, a clinical psychologist, arranged human needs in a hierarchy of importance: Physiological needs, Safety needs, Social needs, Esteem needs and self-actualization. This theory is based on the assumption that a person’s behavior is directed at satisfying needs and that some of these needs will take precedence over others when the individual is faced with choices as to which needs to satisfy. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs postulates that individuals seek to satisfy lower-level needs before higher-level needs emerge.

5.4. Perception

Motivation makes a consumer ready to act. However, what does actually influence the act itself? According to Kotler, Keller and Lu the consumer’s perception of a situation is the underlying element influencing the act. Perception can be defined as the process by which an individual selects, organizes and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture.

5.4.1. Selection of Stimuli

Every day consumers are met with numerous stimuli that can determine how they perceive a product or service. For example can one judge the quality of a product based on the variety of informational cues associated with the products. Either by the physical characteristics of the product itself or by the

36 Mooij 2004.
38 Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.
39 Schiffman and Kanuk 2004, 158.
external elements related to the product such as packaging, pricing, advertisement, the country of origin etc. According to Schiffman and Kanuk\textsuperscript{40} consumers’ selection of stimuli is usually based on the interaction of their expectations and motives with the stimulus itself. In addition, they state that most stimuli are perceived through subliminal perception, which is perception above the actual level of conscious awareness. Furthermore, Schiffman and Kanuk\textsuperscript{40} argues that although there is evidence that subliminal stimuli may influence affective reactions, there is no evidence that it may influence consumption motives or actions. There still continues to be a difference between perception and actual persuasion.

A more in depth understanding of consumer psychology can be done through studying the three different aspects of consumer perception. According to Schiffman and Kanuk\textsuperscript{40}, the three aspects consist of selection, organization and interpretation of stimuli.

**STIMULI INFLUENCE ON CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY**

As earlier stated, consumers are faced with numerous stimuli every day. There are many factors that can contribute to how stimuli can influence the consumer, among these one can find (1) the nature of the stimuli itself, (2) the expectations and (3) motives of a consumer, and (4) selective perception\textsuperscript{40}.

Firstly, the stimuli itself contains many variables that can influence consumer perception. These variables can consist of for example the nature of the product, the packaging, the advertisement etc. In fact, the most attention-compelling attribute of a stimulus is actually contrast.

Secondly, the expectations of a consumer play an essential role in determining the level of stimuli influence. Often consumers tend to see what they want to see based on previous experience and expectations.

\textsuperscript{40} Schiffman and Kanuk 2004.
Thirdly, people often tend to perceive the things they need or want. The stronger the consumer needs or wants are, the easier it is for the consumer to ignore irrelevant stimuli. Fourthly, there are several categories as to how a consumer usually selects what stimuli are relevant or irrelevant. One of the categories consists of selective exposure, where the consumer actively seeks out positive messages and avoids all negative messages. Another category is selective attention, where the consumer has high awareness of stimuli that meets their needs and interest, and vice versa.

Perceptual defense is another category that explains how psychologically threatening stimulus will be ignored by the consumer subconsciously, even though exposure of stimuli already has occurred. Usually a consumer distorts information that is not consistent with their values, needs and beliefs. The last category to be mentioned is perceptual blocking, that consists of the consumer’s ability to physically block stimuli by for example making himself unavailable for a certain type of stimuli exposure.\(^{41}\)

### 5.4.2. Organization of Stimuli

According to Schiffman and Kanuk\(^{41}\) consumers tend to organize stimuli instead of perceiving it as one single stimulus. As a result of grouping different parts of information and stimuli, the memory and recall processes become more simplified. Additionally the organization of stimuli has to have a closure, thus leaving the consumer with a complete picture.

\(^{41}\) Schiffman and Kanuk 2004.
5.4.3. **INTERPRETATION OF STIMULI**

According to Schiffman and Kanuk\(^42\) some stimuli are often too weak. This can be due to factors such as poor visibility, brief exposure, high noise level, or constant fluctuation. Even stimuli that are strong tend to fluctuate dramatically because of such factors as different angels of viewing, varying distances, and changing levels of illuminations. Moreover factors such as physical appearance, stereotypes, first impressions, jumping to conclusions and halo effects are influences that tend to distort consumer perception.

5.5. **LEARNING**

In order to understand consumer behavior, learning is an essential topic to take into account.

One may state that marketing communications can be considered to be concerned with teaching consumers about various marketing offerings. Hence, marketing itself can benefit from knowing about how consumers learn about things. According to Kotler et al.\(^43\), learning theory can teach marketers how to build up demand for a product by combining it with strong drives, motivating cues, and positive reinforcement.

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\(^42\) Schiffman and Kanuk 2004.  
\(^43\) Kotler et al. 2003.
5.5.1. Learning Process

According to Perreault Jr. and McCarthy\textsuperscript{44} the learning process consists of three main elements; Drive, Cues and Response. A drive is a strong internal stimulus impelling action\textsuperscript{45}. A response is an effort to satisfy a drive. In terms of repeating a purchase of the same product, a response will occur if there is a strong positive reinforcement. Usually a specific response chosen by consumers is dependable on the cues and the consumer’s past experience\textsuperscript{44}. Cues are defined as minor stimuli that determine when, where, and how a person responds\textsuperscript{45}.

5.5.2. Learning Theories

There are various types of learning theories. However, due to the nature of this thesis, the authors have chosen to arrange some of the theories into two main categories; behavior learning theory and the cognitive learning theory.

Behavior Learning

According to Evans, Jamal and Foxall\textsuperscript{46}, behavior learning is known as the stimulus-response model. This model explains how learning involves behavior change because of external, environmental events. There are two main approaches to learning in the behavior learning theory. The approaches consist of the following; (1) associationist learning and (2) instrumental learning.

\textsuperscript{44} Perreault Jr. and McCarthy 2002.
\textsuperscript{45} Kotler et al.2003.
\textsuperscript{46} Evans, Jamal and Foxall 2009.
ASSOCIATIONIST LEARNING

Associationist learning is also known as Classic Conditioning\(^47\). Classic Conditioning is according to Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn\(^48\) a form of learning through association that involves the manipulation of stimuli in order to influence behavior. This theory can assist on explaining how consumers might behave the way a marketer would like them to behave by regularly exposing them to manipulated stimuli such as ads, in-store promotions, tastings etc.

It is vital to note that if one as a marketer can understand a target consumer’s frame of reference such as for example status appeals or benefits, in addition to repeatedly present the relevant appeal to the consumer, the consumer is likely to respond positively towards the appeal itself. Moreover, if a brand is to be presented repeatedly at the same time as the appeal, the consumer is able to learn to associate the brand with that particular appeal or benefit\(^47\).

INSTRUMENTAL LEARNING

Instrumental learning is equivalent to operant learning theory, which is the process of controlling behavior by manipulating its consequences\(^48\). This theory assists in explaining how behavior is modified by the consequences of the outcome of the behavior itself. According to Greenberg and Baron\(^49\) the foundation of instrumental learning consist of the Law of Effect. This law explains that the actions that are satisfied or enjoyed will most likely be repeated. Hence, the theory of reinforcement is closely linked as well as habitual buying might be enforced.

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\(^{47}\) Evans, Jamal and Foxall 2009.  
\(^{49}\) Greenberg and Baron 2003.
Another learning theory that should be taken into account is the cognitive learning theory. According to Shermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn\textsuperscript{50} this theory explains how learning can be achieved by thinking about the perceived relationship between events, individual goals and expectations. Furthermore, the learning itself involves several mental processes. The mind is perceived as a black box of information processing, where stimulus is the input and a response is the output\textsuperscript{51}. There are several cognitive processes, however, this thesis will focus on (1) reasoning, (2) passive learning, and (3) observational learning.

**Reasoning**

When consumers encounter some information in their lives such as for example brand information, they can choose to construct their own conclusions based on the information’s suitability, relevance and importance to them\textsuperscript{51}.

**Passive Learning**

Passive learning often occurs when there is a lack of a person’s personal involvement. According to Evans, Jamal and Foxall\textsuperscript{51} consumers process very little of the information received in the low-involvement mode. However, if exposures of information are repeated, a basic perceptual structure leading to low-involvement learning occurs.

\textsuperscript{50} Shermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn 1994.
\textsuperscript{51} Evans, Jamal and Foxall 2009.
OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING

Observational learning theory is actually equivalent to social learning theory. Basically this theory explains that learning is achieved through the reciprocal interaction between people and their environments\textsuperscript{52}. In summary, people learn from observing others.

5.5.3. Stimulus Generalization and Discrimination

When a consumer has already been able to learn something about for example a certain brand, they can extend their response to other products or services with the same brand name. This is an example of stimulus generalization\textsuperscript{53}.

Consumers can often learn to make different responses to similar stimuli. For example when the consumer is faced with two similar products such as Coca Cola and Pepsi, they may be able to distinguish between these two. This is an example of stimulus discrimination\textsuperscript{53}.

5.6. Memory

Consumers continuously learn new information, which can be stored in their memory. Although learning and memory are to different concepts they are in a way interrelated. The difference between the two concepts is that learning deals with how we acquire new information whereas memory is the internal recording of information or experiences and is closely related to a person’s ability to store, retain and recall information. As a result marketers would want

\textsuperscript{52} Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn 1994.
\textsuperscript{53} Evans, Jamal and Foxall 2009.
to increase the rate at which learning takes place and to reduce the rate at which consumers’ memory decays\textsuperscript{54}.

According to Kotler, Keller and Lu\textsuperscript{55} memory is considered to be a constructive process, due to the fact that individuals only remember parts of some event or information. In order to remember an entire picture of the event or information, people often tend to fill in the blanks with information they already have stored in their memory. Thus a consumer being exposed to a certain amount of stimuli for example through a brand advertisement, will go through a process of linking the brand itself to the consumer’s already existing brand-related feelings, perceptions, images, experiences, beliefs, attitudes etc.

### 5.6.1. Sensory Memory

Sensory memory is a very short representation of information while being processed by our sensory system. It is only a temporary storage of information\textsuperscript{54}.

### 5.6.2. Short-Term Memory

Short-term memory (STM) is known as the working memory. It has a limited capacity and short-lived storage possibility. It has been proven that the storage of information is restricted to only 30 seconds\textsuperscript{54}. As an example, when shopping for groceries, it is usually difficult to remember something that is just temporary information. Therefore, consumers might find it more convenient to carry a shopping list.

\textsuperscript{54} Evans, Jamal and Foxall 2009.
\textsuperscript{55} Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.
**5.6.3. Long-Term Memory**

Long-term memory (LTM) can store information for a longer period of time compared to the STM. According to Kotler Keller and Lu\(^{56}\), the LTM consists of a set of nodes and links that create a network of information stored in the human brain. Certain information is processed as well as linked to other associations already stored in the memory. It is vital to mention that the quantity and quality of consumer information processing also determines the strength of an association of a product.

Kotler, Keller and Lu\(^{56}\) mentions that the information entering the human mind is defined as memory encoding, while information leaving is defined as memory retrieval. Additionally, the LTM organizes and stores new piece of information and ties it up with other bits of information that already exists\(^{57}\).

**Memory Encoding**

According to Evans, Jamal and Foxall\(^{57}\), the memory process of encoding controls the movement of information from STM to LTM. Moreover, the more attention is placed on the meaning of the information during the encoding process, the stronger the resulting associations in the memory will be\(^{56}\).

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\(^{56}\) Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.

\(^{57}\) Evans, Jamal and Foxall 2009.
MEMORY RETRIEVAL

According to Evans, Jamal and Foxall\(^{58}\), the retrieval process controls the flow of information from LTM to STM as and when information needs to be recalled. It is vital to mention that there are three factors particularly important to successful consumer recall of brand information. Firstly, brand information can be overlooked or confused due to interference effects from already existing information stored on that particular brand or product. Secondly, a brand or product association may be weakened the longer the time since last exposure. Thirdly, information that is already stored may not be available because the right cues are not there to trigger the association to the brand or product\(^{59}\).

5.7. ATTITUDES

Attitudes are evaluations of people, objects and ideas. They are learned over time thus vary from person to person\(^{60}\). One may state that learning is one of the foundations of attitude formation. This is because as one acts and learns from the act, one is able to acquire a belief or an attitude\(^{61}\). Attitudes are either explicit (conscious) or implicit (subconscious) and both types have the ability to affect the way consumers view a product\(^{60}\). Furthermore, all attitudes have affective, cognitive and behavioral components, which will be explained in more detail in the paragraphs below.

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\(^{58}\) Evans, Jamal and Foxall 2009.

\(^{59}\) Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.

\(^{60}\) Jansson-Boyd 2010.

\(^{61}\) Kotler et al. 2003.
5.7.1. **Cognitively Based Attitude**

Cognitively based attitude is mainly constructed of facts. The cognitive attitudes classify the pros and cons of any given object so that it rapidly can be organized into products that we wish to use and associated with. Moreover, by putting some actual thought into the different aspects of a product or service, may lead to attitude formation\(^62\).

5.7.2. **Affectively Based Attitude**

Affectively based attitude is constructed of our feelings of the elements around us. This is an emotion driven attitude form that can be the result of different sources such as people’s values, religious and moral beliefs. In comparison to cognitive based attitudes, affectively based attitudes are the result of more extensive thought processing\(^63\).

5.7.3. **Behaviorally Based Attitudes**

Behaviorally based attitudes come from people’s observations of how they behave toward a person or a particular stimulus. Jansson-Boyd\(^63\) mentions that the self-perception theory can help explain behaviorally based attitudes. The theory states that in some situations, individuals may be unaware of how they feel until they see how they behave. However, people usually tend to gather their attitudes from their behavior under certain conditions such as situation (1)

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\(^62\) Kotler et al. 2003.  
\(^63\) Jansson-Boyd 2010.
if the initial attitude is weak, and situation (2) that there are no other plausible explanations for their behavior\(^6^4\).

### 5.7.4. Prediction of Consumer Attitudes

According to Jansson-Boyd\(^6^4\) not all attitudes can predict behavior. However, if the attitude is strong, easily accessible or is the result of direct experience attitude prediction is more achievable. Although attitude alone may not predict behavior, it is still a powerful concept in marketing. Often marketers are very interested in changing consumer attitudes. If they are successful in doing so, then they can directly impact sales\(^6^5\).

### 5.8. Expectancy-Value Model

The expectancy-value model also proposes that attitudes can be developed as the result of trying to reach a particular goal\(^6^4\). For example a consumer may evaluate all the alternative brands in order to decide which brand is mostly linked with the image he wishes to have of himself.

### 5.9. Theories of Attitude Change

There are several theories explaining how marketers may change consumer attitudes. This thesis will shortly describe (1) functional theories, (2) cognitive dissonance theory, and (3) the heuristic-systematic model.

\(^{6^4}\) Jansson-Boyd 2010.
\(^{6^5}\) Noel 2009.
5.9.1. **FUNCTIONAL THEORIES**

Functional theories explain how attitudes are changed in order to serve a specific purpose. According to Jahnsson-Boyd\(^{66}\) there are four functions to consider. The first function, the knowledge function, helps the consumer to understand the world around him or her and to organize information that he or she has encountered. The second function, the utilitarian function, shows that attitudes can assist the consumer in achieving goals as well as avoid punishment.

The third function, the value-expressive function, explains that attitudes themselves can create a statement of who the consumer is. The fourth function, being the ego-defensive function; states that consumers tend to hold attitudes towards certain objects in hope of hiding their original attitudes from others. This is because they want to protect their own self-esteem.

5.9.2. **COGNITIVE DISSONANCE THEORY**

According to this theory, attitudes may change as a result of trying to maintain consistency between actual behavior and attitudes. Cognitive dissonance theory additionally explains that changes in attitude will consist of a certain felling of unease for the person changing the attitude\(^{67}\). For example a person may know that smoking is bad for your health while still smoking about 20 cigarettes a day. If the person wants to change his or hers attitude towards smoking they need to choose to do so on their own accord.

\(^{66}\) Noel 2009.
\(^{67}\) Jansson-Boyd 2010.
5.9.3. **THE HEURISTIC-SYSTEMATIC MODEL**

The heuristic-systematic model explains that persuasive messages are the underlying factor to attitude change\(^6^8\). Therefore, marketers should focus on creating effective messages in their advertising in order to influence consumer attitude.

5.10. **CONSUMER CHARACTERISTICS**

In a capitalist society, we all buy things. We need food and clothing in order to survive, and most people also choose to buy other, less necessary items to improve their quality of life. Whenever someone buys something a series of factors help lead to that decision\(^6^9\). One of the most important tasks for a marketer to understand is what happens in the consumer's consciousness between the arrival of outside stimuli and the ultimate purchase decision. A consumer's buying behavior is influenced by cultural, social, and personal factors, where cultural factors exert the most extensive and profound influence\(^7^0\).

5.10.1. **CULTURAL FACTORS**

Culture, subculture, and social class are particularly important influences on consumer buying behavior\(^7^0\). The Business Dictionary\(^7^1\) broadly defines culture as a social heritage of a group (organized community or society). It is a pattern of responses discovered, developed, or invented during the group's history of

\(^6^8\) Jansson-Boyd 2010.
\(^6^9\) Booth 2012.
\(^7^0\) Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.
\(^7^1\) Business Dictionary 2012A.
handling problems, which arise from interactions among its members, and between them and their environment. These responses are considered the correct way to perceive, feel, think, and act, and are passed on to the new members through immersion and teaching. Culture determines what is acceptable or unacceptable, important or unimportant, right or wrong, workable or unworkable. It encompasses all learned and shared, explicit or tacit, assumptions, beliefs, knowledge, norms, and values, as well as attitudes, behavior, dress, and language. This means that cultural factors include shared values that inherently affect large groups of people. When it comes to consumer behavior, the culture influences what a person values to be important and worth buying.72

Every culture has smaller subcultures that provide more specific identification and socialization for their members to differentiate them from the larger culture to which they belong. These include nationality, religion, racial group and geographic region. When subcultures grow large and affluent enough, many companies seek to design specialized marketing programs in order to serve them.73

Social classes are relatively homogenous and enduring divisions in a society. They are hierarchically ordered and their members share similar values, interests, and behavior. Social classes are roughly divided into lower class, working class, middle class and upper class. In each class people behave more alike than persons from other social classes. Individuals can move up or down the social-class ladder at different periods of time during their life.73

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72 Booth 2012.
73 Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.
5.10.2. **Social Factors**

In addition to cultural factors, a consumer's behavior may be influenced by social factors, such as reference groups, family, social roles and statuses.

**Reference Groups**

Reference groups consist of all the groups that have direct (face-to-face) or indirect influence on a person's attitudes or behavior. Some primary groups are family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers – people the individual interact fairly continuously and informally with. Secondary groups, such as professional and trade union groups, tend to be more formal and require less continuous interaction. Reference groups expose people to new behaviors and lifestyles, influence attitudes and self-concept, and create pressures for conformity that may affect product and brand choices\(^\text{74}\).

Individuals can be influenced by certain groups that they are not a part of. Aspirational groups are those that the person hopes to join; dissociative groups are those whose values or behavior an individual rejects\(^\text{74}\). Manufacturers of products and brands where group influence is strong, should try to reach and influence the opinion leaders within these reference groups. An opinion leader is the person in informal, product-related communications who offers advice or information about a specific product or product category\(^\text{74}\).

\(^\text{74}\) Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.
FAMILY
One's family is the most important consumer buying organization in society, and family members form the most influential primary reference group. The family of orientation consists of parents and siblings. For a marketer, knowledge associated to the roles and relative influence of family members when a purchase decision is made, is of great interest.

ROLES AND STATUSES
A person participates in many groups, such as family, clubs and organizations. The person's position in each group can be defined in terms of role and status. A role consists of the activities a person is expected to perform. Each role carries a status. People choose products that communicate their role and status in society.

5.10.3. PERSONAL FACTORS
Consumer buying decisions are also influenced by personal characteristics, including the buyer's age, stage in the life cycle, occupation, economic circumstances, personality and self-concept, and lifestyle and values.

AGE AND STAGE IN THE LIFE CYCLE
People buy different goods and services during their lifetime. Choice and preference of food, clothes, furniture and recreation are age related. Which is why marketers should be attentive to the influence of age. Consumption is also shaped by the family lifecycle, age, gender and the number of people in the household. Additionally, research has identified psychological life-cycle stages indicating that adults experience certain "passages" or "transformations" in life.

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75 Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.
For a marketer to succeed, critical life events or transitions, such as marriage, childbirth, and illness needs to be considered.

**OCCUPATION AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES**

Occupation is another personal factor that may affect an individual's pattern of consumption. Marketers are constantly trying to identify the occupational groups that have above-average interest in their offerings, and sometimes tailor their products for certain occupations in order to reach the consumer.

Product choice is greatly affected by a consumer's economic circumstances, including spendable income, savings and assets, debts, borrowing power, and attitude toward spending and saving.

**PERSONALITY AND SELF-CONCEPT**

Each person has a set of personality characteristics that may influence buying behavior. Personality refers to the distinguishing psychological traits that lead to relatively consistent and enduring responses to environmental stimuli. Kotler, Keller and Lu state that personality often is described in terms of traits such as self-confidence, dominance, autonomy, deference, sociability, defensiveness, and adaptability. An individual's personality can be useful in analyzing consumer behavior. The idea is that brands also possess personalities and that consumers are likely to choose brands whose personalities match their own.

Consumers often choose and use brands that have a brand personality consistent with their own actual self-concept (how we view ourselves), although it could be based on the consumer's ideal self-concept (how we want others to view ourselves) or even on others' self-concept (how we believe

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76 Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.
others see us). These effects may be more pronounced for publicly consumed products as compared to privately consumed goods.

**Lifestyle and Values**

Even though people could come from the same subculture, social class, and occupation they might have completely different lifestyles. A lifestyle is a person's pattern of living as expressed in activities, interests, and opinions. An individual's lifestyle represents the "whole person" interacting with his or her environment. A marketer should struggle to aim his brand more clearly at the achiever's lifestyle.

Consumer decisions are also influenced by core values, the belief systems that underlie consumer attitudes and behaviors. Core values go much deeper than behavior or attitude and determine, at a basic level, people's choices and desires over the long term. Marketers who target consumers on the basis of their values believe that by appealing to people's inner selves, it is possible to influence their outer selves – their purchase behavior.

**5.11. The Buying-Decision Process: The Five Stage Model**

The buying decision process model is a five-stage model that can assist marketers in understanding every stage of the consumer buying decision process. The model implies that consumers pass sequentially through all the five stages when purchasing a product, and that sometime they may skip or reverse some of the stages. The model provides a good frame of reference as it captures the full range of considerations that arise when a consumer faces a highly involving new purchase.

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77 Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.
5.11.1. **Problem Recognition**

The buying process begins when the buyer recognizes a problem or need, triggered by internal stimuli (such as hunger or thirst) or external stimuli (such as seeing an ad), that then becomes a drive. Furthermore, by gathering information from a number of consumers, marketers can identify the circumstances that trigger a particular need. They can then develop marketing strategies that trigger consumer interest and lead to the second stage in the buying process.  

5.11.2. **Information Search**

A clear-sighted person will be inclined to search for more information. There are two levels of arousal that we can distinguish between. Firstly, at the milder search state of heightened attention, where a person simply becomes more receptive to information about a product. Secondly, at the active information search level where a person converses with friends, browses the net, or visits stores to learn about the product.

There exist four groups of information sources: Personal sources (family, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances), Commercial sources (advertising, websites, salespersons, dealers, packaging, and displays), Public sources (mass media, consumer-rating organizations) and Experiential sources (handling, examining, using the product).

The consumer normally receives the most information from commercial sources, although the most influential information comes from personal sources or public sources that are independent authorities.

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78 Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.
5.11.3. Evaluation of Alternatives

There are numbers of different evaluation processes on how the consumer process competitive brand information and makes a final decision. The most current models view the process as being cognitively oriented, meaning that consumers form judgments largely on a conscious and rational basis.79

Some elementary concepts underlie consumer evaluation processes. Firstly, the consumer is trying to satisfy a need. Secondly, the consumer is looking for certain benefits from the product solution. Thirdly, each product is viewed as a bundle of attributes with varying abilities for delivering the benefits to satisfy this need. However, the attributes of interest to buyers vary by product.

Furthermore, consumers vary as to which product attributes they see as most relevant and the importance they attach to each attribute. Evaluation often reflects beliefs and attitudes that consumers acquire through experience and learning. These in turn influence buying behavior.79

According to Kotler, Keller and Lu,79 a belief is a descriptive thought that a person holds about something. He also claims that attitudes are just as important as beliefs. An attitude is a person’s enduring favorable or unfavorable evaluation, emotional feeling, and action tendencies toward some object or idea.

79 Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.
The consumer forms preferences among brands in the choice set and may also form an intention to buy the most preferred brand. There are two factors that can intervene between the purchase intention and decision. Factor number one is the attitudes of others. The extent to which another person’s attitude reduces one’s preferred alternative depends on two things – (1) the intensity of the other person’s negative attitude toward the consumer’s preferred alternative, and (2) the consumer’s motivation to comply with the other person’s wishes. The more intense the other person’s negativism and the closer the other person are to the consumer, the more the consumer will adjust his or her purchase intention. On the contrary, a buyer’s preference for a brand will increase if someone respected favors that brand strongly.\footnote{Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.}

Factor number two is unanticipated situational factors that may erupt to change the purchase intention. For example, a consumer could lose his job, some other purchase might become more important and urgent, or sales personnel may offend him, which is why preferences and purchase intentions are not completely reliable predictors of purchase behavior.\footnote{Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.}

Perceived risk heavily influence a consumer’s decisions to modify, postpone, or avoid a purchase decision. The amount of perceived risk varies with the amounts of money at stake, attribute uncertainty, and consumer self-confidence. Consumers develop routines for reducing risk, such as decision avoidance, information gathered from friends, and preference for national brand names and warranties.\footnote{Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.}
When the purchase is done, the consumer might experience dissonance stemming from noticing certain disquieting features or hearing favorable things about other brands, and will be alert to information that supports his or her decision. Hence, it is crucial for marketers to monitor post-purchase satisfaction, post-purchase actions, and post-purchase product uses.

The buyer’s satisfaction with a purchase is a function of the closeness between the buyer’s expectations and the product’s perceived performance. If performance falls short of expectations, the consumer will be disappointed, if it meets expectations, the customer will be satisfied, and if it exceeds expectations, the customer will be delighted. These feelings influence whether the customer buys the product again and talks favorably about it to others. The importance of post-purchase satisfaction suggests that product claims must truthfully represent the product’s likely performance. Some sellers might even understate performance levels so consumers experience higher-than-expected satisfaction.

Furthermore, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a product will influence subsequent behavior. Satisfied customers will be more likely to buy the product again. Dissatisfied customers may abandon or return the product. They could also take public action by complaining to the company, going to a lawyer, or complaining to government agencies and other groups, or take private actions such as not buying the product or warning friends.

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81 Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.
5.12. AIDA-MODEL: PURCHASE DECISION

As the world of advertising becomes more and more competitive, advertising becomes more and more sophisticated. Yet the basic principles behind advertising remain – that it must attract attention and persuade someone to take action. The AIDA-model, a well-known marketing communication model, is an integrated approach generally adopted by advertisers to stimulate a purchase decision in the minds of the consumers through a linear progression of steps. These steps are (1) Attention, (2) Interest, (3) Desire and (4) Action, all aimed at fulfilling the promotional objectives of the advertiser. Advertising has a considerable effect on the consumers' behavior and thus marketers rely on this sequential process to increase their customer base.

Attention, the first step of the AIDA-model aims towards spreading awareness about the product or service among targeted customers. The next step in this model is to create interest in the minds of the consumers through different strategic marketing efforts. Marketers should also satisfy the emotional and higher needs (Esteem and Self-Actualization needs of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs) of the consumers to develop a strong desire in their minds to purchase the product or service.

Developing desire is followed by the action step, where the consumers have all related information about the product and have reasons to claim the product or service. Advertisers should, however, develop some motivation for the consumers to go for the final step of purchasing.

Lately, an "S" has been added to the AIDA-model that denotes Satisfaction, which is vital for ensuring customer retention. An understanding of the AIDA-model gives the marketer the ability to know how consumers react to different marketing efforts. By being in possession of such important data, the

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82 Mindtools 2012.
83 Chakraborty 2009.
marketer is able to design a product or service which will match consumers' requirements\textsuperscript{84}.

5.13. **The Cumulative Effect of Marketing and Advertising**

Marketers use advertising as a tool to help their customers become aware of a product, and aims to build preference for that product, when compared to its competitors. If the advertisement succeeds in those two tasks, that specific product or service will be chosen when the customer makes his or her next purchase. However, building awareness and preference through advertising is a cumulative process\textsuperscript{85}.

It is widely accepted among advertising experts that one major benefit of advertising is the cumulative effect of the message on consumers. This effect occurs as consumers are repeatedly exposed to advertising which may not have an immediate impact, but becomes familiar and remains in their memory. This message will be recalled when the need arises for the service which was advertised. Because of the cumulative effects of advertising, the consumer will already be familiar with the business' name, as well as the image that it has cultivated through its advertising campaigns. For example, a consumer has heard a carpet cleaning company's ads for months, but until the need arises to have his or her carpets cleaned, there is no reason to contact the company. When that need does arise, however, he or she will already know the name of the company and feel familiar enough with it to engage its services\textsuperscript{86}.

\textsuperscript{84} Kam 2010.
\textsuperscript{85} Linton 2012.
\textsuperscript{86} Answers.com 2012.
5.14. **Tracking Advertising's Effectiveness**

Before the advertiser decides to stick to one advertising plan for the next several years, he or she wants to be sure that the advertising is having some effect. However, the cumulative effects of advertising can sometimes make it difficult to determine the isolated impact on the consumer from that specific advertisement\(^{87}\).

Our research is conducted continuously throughout several weekends in a row. This means that it is a possibility that the outcome is a result of cumulative effects.

5.15. **Impulsive Buying Behavior**

Tendai and Crispen\(^{88}\) states that in-store promotions are designed to persuade the consumer at the point-of-purchase and thus creating impulsive shopping and spending more money. This is, opposed to former mentioned responses, creating an spur-of-the-moment action where the long-term results for the marketer may not be the focus. Evans, Jamal and Foxall\(^{89}\) explain that the actions taken to encourage impulse buying are somewhat depended upon “some level of prior understanding and involvement in the product or service”.

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\(^{87}\) Answers.com 2012.  
\(^{88}\) Tendai and Crispen 2009.  
\(^{89}\) Evans, Jamal and Foxall 2009.
6. COLLECTION OF DATA

For the analysis the authors will use the stimulus response model, also called “Model of Consumer Behavior”\(^{90}\). It shows the process of stimuli arrival (in this case the promotional activities) to the purchase of an item or service (in this case salmon).

The elements that influence the consumer can be sorted in the following categories; marketing stimuli, other stimulus, the consumer’s psychology and characteristics. These elements are all grouped in the mind of the consumer when the buying decision process is initiated. Below you can find an illustrative representation of the Model of Consumer Behavior together with the chosen SPD and the Research Question for this thesis. For simplicity purpose, the authors have divided the model in various steps for their respective research questions.

\(^{90}\) Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.
The model will act as a framework throughout this chapter and the theories presented in chapter 5 will together with the findings be utilized to conduct an analysis. The analysis will show the strengths and weaknesses for NSC in each step. Below each step the authors aim to understand the influences before and during the purchase decision, and by this achieve a coherent picture of the consumers mind. In step 3A the authors have decided to supplement with “Attitudes” which have been included in former versions of the model.

The respective Research Questions for each of the steps in numerical order:

1. To what extent do the different in-store promotions chosen for this research affect the consumer attention rate?
2. In what ways do external factors as political, economical, socio-cultural and technological issues influence the consumers' buying behavior?
3. How does consumer psychology affect buying behavior toward Norwegian salmon?
4. What are the main characteristics of those purchasing salmon?
5. Do the in-store promotions have impact on the Chinese consumers’ buying process?
6. Are there any general elements in the purchase decision that may affect the sales of Norwegian salmon?
6.1. **STEP 1: MARKETING STIMULI**

6.1.1. **FINDINGS**

The average attention rate for both stores; E-Mart Cao Bao and E-Mart Yangtze, throughout the whole period were 21.4 percent. It has been calculated by dividing the number of people showing attention to the counter to the total amount of people that passes by the counter. The table shown below shows the average attention rate for each of the weeks. In E-Mart Cao Bao the authors witnessed a clear decline on approximately 28 percent from the first week to the second; E-Mart Yangtze had a decline on less than 3 percent. While E-Mart Cao Bao had and increase the third week with almost 4 percent, E-Mart Yangtze had a decline at just over 2 percent. For the fourth and last week there was an opposite trend where E-Mart Cao Bao had a decline in attention at 1.5 percent while E-Mart Yangtze enjoyed an increase at over 2 percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>E-Mart Cao Bao</th>
<th>E-Mart Yangtze</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attention percentage</td>
<td>Attention percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st week</td>
<td>42.95%</td>
<td>18.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd week</td>
<td>15.67%</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd week</td>
<td>19.55%</td>
<td>13.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th week</td>
<td>18.09%</td>
<td>15.95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4: Average Attention Rate; E-Mart Cao Bao and Yangtze*
6.1.2. **Analysis**

The primary research conducted reveals that the different in-store promotions had a low impact on changes in consumer attention rate towards the salmon-counter. There were no significant positive changes in the attention rate throughout the entire research process. Even though we see changes in the attention rate from week to week there is no consistency in the data collected from both stores. The changes in one store are not the same as the changes in the other, which makes it difficult to draw a conclusion of which in-store promotion that could generate the most attention towards the salmon-counter.

The theory implies that one of the reasons for the message not getting through to the consumer could be noise occurring in the communication process. Elements perceived as communication noise could consist of internal barriers such as consumer fatigue, poor listening skills, attitude toward the sender and the information provided. The external noise barriers the consumer might be exposed to includes physical noise and distractions such as other promotions going on at the same time, people talking and shouting, the time of the day, how the sender of the message articulate him or herself. Other important external noise barriers might be the environment around the in-store promotions itself, such as whether the store is cluttered or not, there is a bad odor making the salmon counter unattractive, or simply a bad location of the salmon counter itself. However, the authors of this thesis believe that the main noise barrier in NSC’s place, are the other in-store promotions being performed at the same time. In addition, as people are drawn to contrasts, Chinese customers might exclude the salmon counter from their attention because the in-store promotions have become a regular part of the weekend shopping experience.
6.2. **Step 2: Other Stimuli**

6.2.1. **Findings**

**Political Factors**

**A New Quarantine Regime.**

On February 2011 a new inspection regime was introduced in China. This regime states that farmed salmon are prohibited from entry into Mainland China unless a quarantine license for animals and plants has been applied for and obtained in advance\(^{91}\). There is evidence that shows that this has resulted in some salmon gone rotten as well as decreased the average shelf life\(^{91}\).

**Economic Factors**

**Consumer Income**

Between 2005 and 2009 the average urban income increased more than 21 percent\(^{92}\). Furthermore, National Bureau of Statistics of China\(^{93}\) states in their third quarter report from 2011 on the income of urban households on a national basis that the average household consists of 2.87 people. Additionally, the average monthly total income per capita is 17,886 RMB, while the average monthly disposable income per capita is 16,301 RMB.

\(^{91}\) Luan 2011.

\(^{92}\) Wang 2011.

INFLATION
According to NBS food prices went up by 7.5 percent year-on-year in March 2012, affecting nearly 2.39 percentage point increase in the overall price level. Simultaneously the price on aquatic products increased with 1.3 percent. On March 2012, the consumer price index (CPI) went up by 3.6 percent year-on-year. Basic food ingredients consumption rate is expected to grow 7.2 percent year on year.

SPENDING RATE
According to NBS fourth quarter findings from 2010 that are found as an attachment in Nielsen the average monthly spending rate on food per household in urban areas is at 4,804.7 RMB.

According to an article written by David Shairp named "Talking point: A hard landing for China?" in the Investors Fresh News in May 2012, 1.3bn people spend approximately 35-45 percent of their earnings on food.

SAVINGS
According to Nielsen's report on saving rates in China from 2010, there is a high propensity to save, especially in two specific stages of life. The first stage consists of younger households between the age of 20-34 that needs to build homes and purchase durables. The second stage consists of the elderly population above the age of 40 that need to save for their children’s education and their own retirements. The report further states that the population above 50 years of age does not concern itself with savings.

95 Atsmon, Magni, Li and Liao 2012.
96 Nielsen 2011B.
97 Nielsen 2011A.
**Socio-Cultural Factors**

**Demand for Goods and Services**

According to the McKinsey Annual Report from 2010\(^ {98}\), there is increasing numbers of shoppers that are purchasing for health reasons. Overall, 58 percent of middle aged parents or retirees were buyers of health food supplements, compared to 25 percent of consumers generally. As income rate is increasing, dining out is expected to grow by 10.2 percent a year in the coming decade\(^ {99}\).

**One Child Generation**

In 1979 the government of China began to implement the "one couple, one child" policy. This has resulted in a "one-child" population numbering 100 millions in 2001 – a number that is constantly growing\(^ {100}\). The first batch of the one-child generation turned 25 years old in 2004, and has begun to enter their peak consumption period\(^ {100}\).

**An Aging Population vs. Lower Birth Rate**

According to the article “Too few children as city's population keeps growing” written by Cai Wenjun in Shanghai Daily May 5, 2012 there is a growing concern for the decreasing birth ratio compared to the growing elderly population. The population’s total birth rate was registered to be at 0.9 last year, further stating that on average there would be 9 children for every 10 women in China.

\(^{98}\) McKinsey & Company 2010  
\(^{99}\) Atsmon, Magni, Li and Liao 2012.  
\(^{100}\) Kotler, Keller and Lu 2009.
TECHNOLOGY

ONLINE SHOPPING

As of March 2012 the figure in China for online grocery shopping was only accounted for less than 1 percent of the total\textsuperscript{101}. However, McKinsey\textsuperscript{102} predicts that by 2020 online grocery shopping in China will increase to a significant number. The main reason for the rise of e-commerce is the evolving lifestyles in densely populated cities that are strengthening shoppers’ demands for convenience\textsuperscript{101}.

According to the Statistical Report on Internet Development in China July published by China Internet Network Information Center\textsuperscript{103}, the popularity rate of Internet has climbed up to 31.8 percent in 2010. That is an increase of 2.9 percent compared to the previous year.

The proportion of people surfing the Internet at home was registered to be at 88.4 percent at the end of 2010. The weekly online time of people surfing the Internet was registered to be at 19.8 hours a day. The age ratio for people using the Internet has been registered to be above the age of 30, which is an increase of 2.4 percent from 2009 to 2010\textsuperscript{103}.

In addition, the growth rate of users for online payments, web shopping and e-banking was approximately around 30 percent by the end of 2010\textsuperscript{103}.

\textsuperscript{101}Atsmon et al. 2012.
\textsuperscript{102}McKinsey & Company 2010.
\textsuperscript{103}China Internet Network Information Center 2010.
From a political perspective, the new inspection regime that was introduced in 2011 and resulted in a decrease in shelf life could be a relevant factor impacting consumer behavior. If the grocery store is inefficient with the rotations of goods, consumer reluctance to purchase fish may increase if they frequently see inferior fish products.

From an economical perspective, there are various current indicators that can influence consumer behavior. The increasing income rate of urban household indicates that consumers will have more financial resources to purchase goods and services. Additionally, the rise in CPI indicates that the financial resources of the average urban household spent on living expenses are increasing. Thus, creating the possibility for purchase of high-end products. It is important to take into account that although Chinese households have more financial resources, it does not necessarily mean that they will spend it on better quality food.

There is evidence that many people in China depending on what stage of life they are at would rather save money for future investments or retirements than spend it on goods and services they do not require. Moreover, there is a steady increase in food prices and many households are already spending a large part of their income on food consumption. If the consumers purchasing food are highly price sensitive, then they may be reluctant to buy high-end products such as Norwegian salmon.

From a socio-cultural perspective, the Chinese consumers are becoming more and more health aware regarding food consumption. This means that people will most likely spend money on a product that will keep them in good health rather than consume products without the health benefactor.

The One Child Generation (OCG) that was introduced in 1979 has its effects on the market of goods and services in China. The OCG has led to an increase in an aging population and a low birth rate. As a result, the average household
size has decreased leaving changes in how a household will manage their living expenses.

From a technological perspective, there is an increase in the use of online shopping. As it may be convenient for Chinese consumers to purchase their groceries online, they may change their patterns of regular consumer behavior and rather perform the entire process of food consumption at home.
6.3. **STEP 3A: CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY**

6.3.1. **FINDINGS**

**McKinsey – Wooing the Fickle Chinese Consumer**

McKinsey & Company\(^{104}\) states in an article that it is possible to build a loyal following around taste palate. The article further states that Chinese consumers focused only on a brand’s functional aspects such as how safe it was and what is a reasonable price one could get it for. Additionally, the article states that this is changing, and that Chinese consumers are more interested in products that make them feel good, special or stand out of the crowd. The second reason for the shift in purely practical driving force to an emotional is the rising urban income. McKinsey & Company\(^{104}\) further mention that rising incomes are often correlated with brand loyalty.

**Research Conducted by DDMA on Behalf of NSC**

DDMA Market Research & Consulting\(^{105}\) has conducted a research on behalf of Nordic Seafood Council. The next section will address some of the key findings regarding origin, familiarity and perception of Norwegian salmon, as well as core drivers and barriers of salmon consumption.

**Perceived Country of Origin**

The research study shows that 34 percent of all consumers buying salmon don't know that the salmon actually comes from Norway. In contrast, 21 percent believe that the salmon coming from Norway is of top quality and among the best in the world. However, 25 percent of the respondents state that the quality of Norwegian salmon is just above average.

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\(^{105}\) DDMA Market Research & Consulting 2011.
Japan is the most mentioned country of origin. Due to the close association of sashimi with Japan, and the relative popularity of salmon, about 45 percent of the respondents are convinced that most of the salmon in China comes from Japan. According to the research, Norway is the second most mentioned country by approximately 14 percent of the total respondents.

**AWARENESS, FAMILIARITY AND PERCEPTIONS OF NORWAY**

70 percent of the correspondents do not know about Norway. On the contrary, 2 percent state that they know a lot about the country, and 28 percent state that they know where Norway is located, but not much more.

**CORE DRIVERS OF SALMON CONSUMPTION**

The average Chinese consumer of salmon perceives Norwegian salmon as a product with great taste and nutritional value. The research revealed that the fact that Norwegian salmon origins from a clean and unpolluted environment surrounded by green forests and glaciers is one of the main reasons for salmon consumption. It did also state that many consumers believe that salmon is most suitable for special occasions, or for consumption in the weekends.

**CORE BARRIERS OF SALMON CONSUMPTION**

Among non-consumers of Norwegian salmon there were five distinctive reasons to not eat salmon;

1. Reluctance to consume raw fish.
2. Concerns about safety.
3. Dislike of the taste.
5. Lack of knowledge on how to prepare salmon for consumption.

Additionally, nearly 20 percent of non-salmon users in the survey considered salmon to be too expensive.
THE PRAGMATIC CONSUMER

McKinsey\textsuperscript{106}, state in their report from 2010, that the average Chinese consumer is known to be pragmatic. The Chinese are conservative spenders and give a great deal of thought to the actual purchase. The report state that before Chinese consumers decides on what to buy they have often already fixed a budget, identified what product features are important to them and identified the location in which they might get the best value for their money. This type of behavior and attitude is highly influenced by culture, especially by the traditional Confucian values. Thus, impulsive shopping behavior is rarely seen.

THE URBAN CHINESE CONSUMERS' FOOD HABITS

To the Chinese food plays an important part of their culture. According to a market analysis report conducted by the International Market Bureau\textsuperscript{107}, the Chinese belief is based on the idea of balance, which is highly reflected in their cuisine. In these days Chinese consumers stress the great importance of the freshness and quality of ingredients, which are often purchased in close proximity to one's residence from a variety of farmers' markets, wet markets, street vendors, and grocery stores.

The report states that the urban Chinese consumer believes that even the most basic of dishes may be improved by the use of higher quality ingredients that are not normally consumed throughout the year. Meals are usually consumed with family members, where all the dishes are placed in the middle of the table so that everyone can help themselves. Most of the cooking is still done with fresh food purchased on the same day it is to be consumed. Many of the Chinese dishes are spicy, making steamed rice an important addition as it can

\textsuperscript{106} McKinsey & Company 2010.
\textsuperscript{107} International Market Bureau 2010.
help absorb the flavorful sauces\textsuperscript{108}.

Furthermore, the report states that one of the most important factors influencing Chinese cuisine is the health factor. Some of the Chinese cooking is following the theory of Chinese medicine, categorizing most of the food as therapeutic food. For example the use of Chicken soup as a remedy to treat a cold is a perfect illustration of this fact\textsuperscript{108}.

Additionally, the report state that as Chinese consumers tend to consume food with specific health and wellness objectives in mind, it is fairly easy to identify some of the common health objectives linked to food. Some of Shanghainese women mentioned in this report believe that the following health objectives are closely linked to food consumption; good skin through cleaning and detoxification, good digestion, overall appearance, and hormonal cycles\textsuperscript{108}.

\textsuperscript{108} International Market Bureau 2010.
MOTIVATION TO BUY LUXURIOUS PRODUCTS IN CHINA

Norwegian salmon is perceived as a luxurious item for consumption, and hence, motivation behind every purchase is driven by various factors.

George Heinemann\textsuperscript{109} has identified eight different reasons for Chinese consumers to purchase luxurious products. The following paragraph will address the individual causes.

1. Luxury products are consumed based on the motivation to create and affirm status.
2. Status implied from a luxurious product can sway respect from other individuals, thus improving the family's "face".
3. Convey social status (especially relevant for middle-class consumers).
4. Indicate superior taste – which reflects upon the individuals' personality, instead of status.
5. Be in the belief that luxurious products make them more attractive.
6. Motivated to buy products that make them easily identifiable with other Chinese consumers.
7. Chinese consumers constantly seek the best offers, but don't mind paying a premium price for luxurious products.
8. Motivation based on the desire to give gifts that conveys success.

\textsuperscript{109} Heinemann 2008.
The Chinese consumer is exposed for a number of different stimuli every single day, which affects how they will perceive the product or service. The stimuli itself, expectations, motives and selective perception are all factors that could influence how the consumer get affected by the different stimuli.

As the taste palate of Chinese consumers is becoming more sophisticated as well as there is a great focus on healthy and nutritious food, one can see that there should be a high demand for products such as Norwegian salmon in the urban areas of China. According to Sigmund Bjørgo, NSC conducted in-store promotions approximately for 8-10 years with the goal of trying to inform the Chinese consumers that Norwegian salmon is healthy, safe and of the best quality worldwide. However, based on our findings it seems that there is still a very low amount of consumers that are actually aware of these facts, or even aware that Norway exists. By looking at the learning theory and memory processing theory, one can conclude that there may be some flaws with the in-store promotions themselves. By using the in-store promotions for awareness purposes and teaching the Chinese consumers about Norway, a frequency of such promotions should be consistent. In order for consumers to learn and store information, they have to be exposed to similar information repeatedly.

The authors have found that there is different motivation as the basis for purchasing salmon, while consumption driven by taste and nutritional value is to fulfill a generic goal, consumption during the weekends or for special occasions is fulfilling a product-specific goal. For Chinese consumers there is a high focus on spending amount and their motivation is to keep within the budget. Since salmon is perceived as an expensive product, the need for pre-purchase research is of great importance. To change the consumers' attitudes one must ensure that they are capable of attaining the necessary knowledge, in order to collect and organize the information in the best way possible.
6.4. **STEP 3B: CONSUMER CHARACTERISTICS**

6.4.1. **FINDINGS**

**WHO IS THE SALMON CONSUMER?**

Within the research conducted by DDMA Market Research & Consulting\(^{110}\) on behalf of NSC there are several interesting findings that may create a greater picture of the characteristics of those purchasing or not purchasing salmon in China. The research findings clearly state that Shanghai is one of the cities in China with most salmon consumption. It was has found that Shanghai is the most developed market for salmon, and that the reason for this is; the increasing income rate, the increase of demand for Japanese themed dining concepts, and the high level of development within the hypermarket retail channel.

Furthermore, DDMA Market Research & Consulting\(^{110}\) found that salmon consumption is closely related to household income, which means that the main salmon consumers are from higher income groups. Additionally, salmon is not more popular among the younger generation, and not so popular among the elderly generation.

**WHO GENERATES THE MOST ATTENTION?**

As you may see in the figure below there is a clear indication that there are more females generating attention towards the in-store promotion in comparison to men in both the Yangtze and the Cao Bao store.

Regarding the average observed age rate, the people generating the most attention toward the in-store promotion are between the ages of 30-40 in the Cao Bao store, and between the ages of 20-30 in the Yangtze store. This is also illustrated in the figure below.
McKinsey has published a report on the future Chinese consumer and how some changes are happening to the different life stages in China. In accordance with the report, higher income rate is correlated to people having higher expectations regarding other aspects of life. They base their facts on the statistics showing that the rate of high school students enrolling into colleges will increase from approximately 25 percent to 40 percent by 2020.

Additionally the report states that in order for young people in China to obtain a good education and a good job, some are actually willing to postpone marriage and family planning. The marrying age continues to increase, and will by 2020 in accordance with McKinsey’s predictions be close to 30 among women in China. This age is equivalent to the marrying age of many developed countries.

As young people tend to spend more time with education and bachelorhood, they will have more time for recreation, entertainment and travel. Thus, more time for friends and other people outside the family circle leading to a higher peer-to-peer influence on what may or may not be consumed in China. According to the McKinsey report changes in Shanghai are already visible, as the average size of households has fallen from 2.8 people to 2.5 between 2000 and 2010. More and more households consist of only one-generation and not three as it used to be many years ago. This is a factor clearly indicating that money is spent elsewhere than just within the family circle.

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Atsmon et al.\textsuperscript{112} states that there is evidence that the one-child policy in China has created a gender imbalance due to the high focus of only having a son. According to their report, there will be 13 million more men than women between the age of 25 and 34 in China, which may create a future problem for the society in general.

However, women do play an important role in the economy. Atsmon et al.\textsuperscript{112} have found that the presence of Chinese women participating in the workforce is relatively higher than in India, Japan, Hong Kong and the US. They claim through their report that the one-child policy has made women more independent as their relevance of workforce participation is increasing. Therefore the income gap between men and women may diminish as well as the role of women in their family may be strengthened as they also can finance their family’s purchases.

Although these changes are happening and the economic situation of increasing purchasing power continues, Chinese women are still becoming more self-aware of their shopping habits. According to the market research conducted by the International Market Bureau\textsuperscript{113}, Chinese women are cutting back on their impulse purchases, and do more product research prior to the shopping trip.

\textsuperscript{112} Atsmon et al. 2012.
\textsuperscript{113} International Market Bureau 2010.
AGING POPULATION

As the average size of households fall and more women are becoming more independent, birth rates will be affected. According to the McKinsey report\textsuperscript{114} birth rates will fall, and assuming that the one-child policy holds, the median age in China will rise from 34 to 37 by 2020.

GEOGRAPHICAL DIFFERENCES

According to the McKinsey report\textsuperscript{114} there is a huge variation in the economic profiles of different cities. So-called city clusters are emerging and creates a difference in spending power among Chinese consumers. Strong differences in tastes and attitudes between these different clusters will not disappear so quickly, and in accordance with McKinsey’s findings, regional companies, especially in food and beverages are likely to continue dominating locally.

THE FUTURE MAINSTREAM CONSUMER

According to the McKinsey report\textsuperscript{114} they predict that the future mainstream urban consumer in China will continue to be pragmatic despite the growing wealth rate. The consumer will set greater emphasis on product’s appeal to their sense of individuality and a high increase of brand-loyalty is expected to occur. The prediction additionally entails that the way the future consumer shops will change as they will spend less time in physical stores and rather embrace the use of new channels such as for example the internet.

\textsuperscript{114} McKinsey & Company 2010.
As earlier stated in this thesis, culture is the biggest factor that has the most profound influence on consumer behavior. After the introduction of the one-child policy and a change to market economy there has become a cultural gap between the Traditional Generation and the OCG. At this time the first batch of the OCG is in their mid-thirties and there is evidence stating that they display a high attention towards promotions.

Additionally, the OCG displays other needs and wants compared to the Traditional Generation. As the elderly generation focuses on traditional family values and dining at home, the OCG are more individual focused and prefer to dine outside with their peers. The increase in popularity for Japanese themed dining concepts implies that the OCG has sushi on their demand list. It is essential to mention that this gap has resulted in a change within the different reference groups for the Chinese consumers. In today’s market, the young generation’s purchasing decisions are more likely to be peer-too-peer influenced rather than by their family members. Secondary data findings showed that the city in which salmon is consumed the most is Shanghai. Here, as well as in other urban cities in China, the size of the average household is decreasing. Thus, indicating changes in how money is spent from a more collective spending to a more individually focused spending highly peer to peer influenced.

Furthermore, the OCP has created a gender imbalance, where women are becoming a bigger part of the workforce in China. As Chinese women are gaining a greater role in financing their family purchases, they become an important group of consumers. Additionally they tend to search for more information prior to their shopping trips, do purchase based on status objectives, and prefer healthy and nutritious food types.

According to our primary findings, with the exception of one day in one of the stores, the attention towards the promotion and salmon counter was in majority generated by women between the 20-40 years of age. Hence, showing that
women between 20 and 40 years of age are an important group to take into account when conveying a message through in-store promotions regarding Norwegian salmon.
6.5. **STEP 4: BUYING DECISION PROCESS**

6.5.1. **FINDINGS**

**CHINESE CONSUMER STUDY – PLANNED BEHAVIOR**

According to McKinsey, Insights China provides businesses with the data, analytics and rapid, customized problem-solving and decision-making support to help build robust strategies for China’s rapidly changing marketplace. The data and analysis combine results from McKinsey’s annual Chinese consumer studies with proprietary macroeconomic and demographic data and analysis from the McKinsey Global Institute (MGI).

The authors want to emphasize that some parts of the material used in this section is McKinsey's own formulations, and only rendered for the purpose of providing the reader with a clear picture of their findings in order to answer our research question.

**DEMANDING AND PRAGMATIC BEHAVIOR**

Retail spending in China continues to grow, and as consumers become increasingly sophisticated, they demand more, and are willing to pay more, for better products. In addition, the dramatic increase in pre-purchase research (driven by growing internet use and numerous product safety scandals) holds true.

However, one of the clearest messages to have emerged from McKinsey's survey in 2010 is that Chinese consumers are starting to develop a very unique identity. Not only do they have very individual tastes and priorities, they also have their unique ways of choosing and buying products. As these patterns evolve, companies will need to come to terms with the dynamics of Chinese consumer behavior if they are to best position themselves in the market\(^{115}\).

FEWER TRIPS, BIGGER BASKETS

Historically, Chinese consumers have shopped about five times more than their counterparts in the US, but their basket sizes have been only about a quarter the American equivalent. Today however, a decline in shopping frequency goes hand in hand with growing basket size. Overall, McKinsey identified that shopping frequency across China's home and personal care category declined from 0.6 purchasing trips per week in 2008, to 0.5 trips in 2010, while average basket size increased from RMB 18.42 in 2008 to RMB 24.10 in 2010\textsuperscript{116}.

There is one unusual aspect of evolving consumption patterns in China; the enduring enthusiasm local consumers have shown for the concept of "retailtainment", whereby families transform their shopping trip into a fun day out at the mall or hypermarket with their kids (perhaps unsurprising given the shortage of alternative public entertainment and green spaces in most Chinese cities). In McKinsey's survey\textsuperscript{116}, 73 percent said they regarded shopping as a leisure activity, 45 percent identified it as one of their favorite pursuits (opposed to 25 percent in the US and 17 percent in France), and just over half said it was one of the best ways of spending time with their families\textsuperscript{116}.

As such, Chinese consumers are often "shopping" without any specific intention to buy. Sometimes they are simply window shopping or comparing prices. Other times, they may be indulging in shopping as a sport, competing with friends to measure their ability to find the best deals\textsuperscript{116}.

\textsuperscript{116} McKinsey & Company 2010.
MORE THAN BASIC FUNCTIONALITY

Chinese buyers have always regarded a product's basic functional attributes (i.e., does it work well/taste good?) as the most important key buying factor. Even though this remains the case today, McKinsey recorded a gradual shift in attitudes towards more sophisticated decision criteria. Flat panel TV buyers, for example, are no longer concerned with just picture quality, but also focused on issues as aesthetic appeal or innovative features. As in other parts of the world, this reflects a transition to an environment where consumers are able to demand more than just basic product functionality, and where individual tastes are becoming increasingly differentiated\(^{117}\).

On the other hand, purchase decisions among mainland shoppers are often framed by a uniquely Chinese perspective. Local consumers have become progressively more health conscious, in the last few years. This issue, of course, is increasingly important globally, but the experience in China has also been shaped by several product safety scandals. Concerns over possible contamination has in turn driven a broader awareness of the relative nutritional merits of different food products. This has probably contributed to the growing number of local consumers who cite "health" as a key buying factor\(^{117}\).

Another area where Chinese shoppers are picking up on global trends is the way in which their purchase decisions are now gradually more influenced by "emotional" considerations. The speed and enthusiasm in which Chinese shoppers have adopted emotional elements as key-purchasing factors has been remarkable\(^{117}\).

In particular, the importance of the "status" value of any given purchase has grown strongly since 2008, especially for aspiring or lower-middle class, for whom the appearance of success is most significant\(^{117}\).

Another way in which standard consumer behavior patterns are subject to variation in the Chinese market is reflected in the very methodical way local shoppers decide what they are going to buy. One longstanding tenet of Chinese retailing is that consumers are extremely brand conscious, with some 45 percent believing that higher pricing corresponds directly to better quality (compared to just 16 percent in the US and 8 percent in Japan). In the same way, far more Chinese consumers are willing to buy more expensive branded products than their counterparts in the rest of the world. While this impression is gradually becoming less pervasive, it remains a core belief and explains why less known brands continue to be less successful in China. It also explains why manufacturers can sometimes boost market share by raising their prices.\[118\]

However, consumers’ final purchasing decisions are based on more than just branding alone. Indeed, the fact that Chinese consumers are very brand conscious does not necessarily mean they are brand loyal. While consumers tend generally to gravitate towards the biggest brands, the final purchasing choice is very often made on the basis of their assessment of the relative value offered by a handful of competing products. McKinsey's survey showed that 23 percent of shoppers in China would go out of their way to buy from stores that offered the best prices, compared to 19 percent in the UK and just 12 percent in Japan. Chinese shoppers will first budget for their purchase, then compile a short-list featuring a handful of specific brands, and finally hold a beauty contest to decide what the most appealing option is. This will often involve significant research, perhaps conducted as part of their leisure-time window shopping.\[118\]

These very characteristic behavior patterns typify the growing complexity of the modern-day Chinese consumer. Fundamentally, this complexity relates to the lengths to which shoppers will go to identify which product to buy and where they will buy it. While quality remains a critical consideration, at the

end of the day value remains the most important criteria, with many consumers willing to go well out of their way to look for the best deals. That said shoppers generally only finalize purchase decisions in-store. This means that in-store promotions and ads continue to be effective techniques to tip the balance towards a particular brand. In addition, promotions often lead shoppers to make impulse purchases as they seek to maximize value by stocking up on perishables for future use.\footnote{McKinsey & Company 2010.}

**SMARTER SHOPPING AND WORD-OF-MOUTH**

As they assess the relative merits of different products before making a purchase, Chinese consumers adopt a number of techniques to help with their decision. Given rocketing Internet usage in China, online product reviews are becoming increasingly important research tools, especially in higher-value categories, and for younger audiences. The impact of this trend in China has significantly increased recently as more and more consumers perceive the Internet as a trustworthy source of information. In McKinsey's 2010 survey, some 56 percent of consumers said they regarded online advertising as credible, up from just 29 percent in 2009. Similarly, 70 percent of Chinese shoppers said they found retailer websites credible, with 67 percent saying the same about manufacturers’ sites. This contrasts strongly with Western practice, where consumers generally prefer to source product information from third party sites. The fact that online information is held in such high regard in China makes the internet an extremely important medium for shaping consumer opinion. On average, some 25 percent of mainland shoppers said they used the internet for product research vs. 12-16 percent in the US.\footnote{McKinsey & Company 2010.}
Chinese consumers are willing to go much further in researching purchases than the average consumer in the West. Word-of-mouth has therefore grown strongly in recent years as a source of consumer information, helping buyers decide either what to buy or where to buy it. This can involve sounding out family and friends for their views, but it can also include sourcing person-to-person information online (i.e., through chat forums). Compared to other parts of the world, instant messaging is wildly popular in China. With some 384 million mainland users by the end of 2009 – more than the entire population of the United States and Canada combined – the Chinese internet provides fertile ground for opinions of all shades. In fact, although television advertising continues to dominate in China, word-of-mouth is now by far the next most popular source of information about brands and products, with 64 percent of respondents in 2010 saying it influenced their purchasing decisions, compared to 56 percent in 2008\textsuperscript{120}.

Word-of-mouth has become such an important channel for consumer information in part because so few brands in China have been around long enough to inspire loyalty among consumers, and in part because many products themselves are also relatively new to the market. In addition, consumers are often seeking more expensive brands for the first time, and so have little experience of what to expect. Finally, it may also reflect the fact that the very best deals are often hard to find given the growing number of products in China in recent years\textsuperscript{120}.

\textsuperscript{120} McKinsey & Company 2010.
SALES RATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>E-Mart Cao Bao</th>
<th>E-Mart Yangtze</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales percentage</td>
<td>9.29%</td>
<td>1.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st week</td>
<td>2.19%</td>
<td>1.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd week</td>
<td>3.07%</td>
<td>1.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd week</td>
<td>3.29%</td>
<td>1.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 7: Sales Rate; E-Mart Cao Bao and Yangtze*

*Figure 8: Sales Rate Compared to the Total Number of Consumers Passing By*
The authors have already uncovered the fact that Chinese consumer are very pragmatic. However, the average Chinese consumer are getting more aware of product quality, and are willing to spend more money than in previous years.

As Chinese consumers' shopping trips are declining, the need to search information and plan every purchase is becoming more important. The amount of pre-purchase research through word-of-mouth, internet reviews and so on, is growing rapidly.

The secondary data findings state that a trip to the store not necessarily correlates with needs that have to be satisfied. In some occasions the Chinese consumers are "shopping" without any intention to buy, instead they actively seek for specific offers.

The research did also reveal that Chinese consumers are becoming more aware of aesthetic attributes and not only the basic functionality of the respective product. This entails that qualities such as freshness, color and packaging are given more attention, when making a purchase decision. In turn, some decisions have to be based on feelings and perception, as a substitute for the actual facts.

A factor that speaks in favor of improved sales of salmon is the Chinese consumers' focus on health.

Although, the Chinese consumer believes that price is an indication of quality, the actual decision among competing products is often made on the basis of their relative perception of value. This means that the consumer would buy whatever would reflect the best value for their money. In this context it is worth mentioning that salmon is usually perceived as a luxurious product, and could therefore have an impact on their decision making process in terms of reflecting status.
Based on this information, in-store promotions should initially be effective means to trigger the consumer to finalize their decision. On the contrary, our primary findings show otherwise. The sales of Norwegian salmon had its peak in the first week, in both stores, and had an even distribution the following weeks. This indicates that the in-store promotion had little effect on the consumers, and a cumulative effect was absent.
6.6. **STEP 5: PURCHASE DECISION**

6.6.1. **FINDINGS**

**PURCHASE TIMING AND AMOUNT**

One clear finding from our data is the decreased attention between 12:00 and 15:00. This is despite the increased number of people that passes by the salmon counter. In the Cao Bao store the percentage for attention, which is between 27-47%, is remarkably higher than in the Yangtze store, whereas it is between 15-23%. There is though a higher amount of fluctuations in the attention rate at the Cao Bao store.

The higher attention at the Cao Bao store compared to the Yangtze store can be explained by the information previously received from Company X where they state that Cao Bao is the store with the best sales amount. We knowingly chose this store to get a satisfactory number of customers to test the two stimuli. Yangtze store was added to validate the results, as the demographics of the customers at the two stores should both have customers with normally distributed income, age etc.

![Figure 9: Attention Sorted on Time (In Percentages)](image-url)
The average sales value per customer is rather even, though with the exception of the 13th of April (Friday, fourth week, no stimuli) Yangtze store have a faintly higher sales value per customer. Taking into account the previous viewed data, though Yangtze has a higher sales value, Cao Bao enjoys a higher attention rate from their customers.

Figure 10: Average Daily Sales Value per Customer
6.6.2. **Analysis**

There are basically two general elements in the purchase decision that could possibly affect the sales of Norwegian salmon; purchase timing and purchase amount.

The primary data findings show that the attention rate had a drastic decline between 12:00 and 15:00 in both stores, despite an increase in number of persons passing by the counter. One can only speculate why, but this may imply that the use of promotions between the aforementioned times is not effective.

As mentioned in **Step 3B: Consumer Characteristics** under "The Urban Chinese Consumers Food Habits", most of the cooking is still done with fresh food purchased on the same day it is to be consumed. Our findings indicate that consumption is evenly distributed throughout the weekend, which means none of the days differ significantly from each other.
7. SUMMARY

In order to summarize the findings and analyzes provided, the authors have arranged the information into strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Thus, making information that may be valuable to NSC more visible.

7.1. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

7.1.1. STRENGTHS

➢ **Perceived Quality:** Chinese consumers tend to choose between competing products on the basis of relative perceived value. In DDMA Market Research & Consulting’s\(^{121}\) survey on behalf of NSC it was revealed that 21 percent of the participants found Norwegian salmon to be of top quality and an additional 25 percent believed the quality was above average. Top quality is in turn defined as being of some of the best quality in the world.

➢ **Motivation to buy healthy products:** Our research uncovered two very distinctive motivations for consumers to buy fish. The main drivers identified are taste and nutritional value.

➢ **Presence in Shanghai:** Salmon consumption is most profound in Shanghai, which is closely linked to urban consumers’ escalating income. Because NSC is present in the aforementioned market, it is an apparent strength.

\(^{121}\) DDMA Market Research & Consulting 2011.
7.1.2. **Weaknesses**

- **Point-of-Sale Promotion:** The Point-of-Sale promotions tested and currently used by NSC did not result in higher sales or attention. There are a high number of in-store promotions every day in a store that the consumer is exposed to, it is important for NSC to create a clear Point-of-Difference in their promotion that separates them from the crowd.

- **Low Brand Awareness:** Most Chinese salmon consumers are unaware that the salmon they are purchasing is Norwegian, also many of the customers do not know where or what Norway is. The lack of brand awareness hinders Norwegian salmon to be specifically chosen for its features.

- **“Window”-shopping:** Using their “shopping” trips as a way to gather information, the consumers are reluctant to buy anything but uses the situation solely to do pre-purchase research for their next *real* shopping trip.

- **Pre-purchase Research:** As the consumers are planning their shopping trips more extensively, the P-o-S promotions will have a lesser effect. Also, since salmon is regarded as a high-end product, impulsive shopping is unlikely to occur. NSC needs to influence the consumers in their research-phase, this will also enable them to build brand awareness thus, making it a possible future opportunity.
7.1.3. **Opportunities**

- **Growing Health Awareness:** Due to the growing health awareness among Chinese consumers, NSC has an opportunity to market Norwegian salmon as a healthy product in the consumers’ mind. The increase in demand relies heavily on the Chinese consumers’ ability to connect the perceptions of healthy and nutritious with Norwegian salmon.

- **Sophisticated Taste Palate:** The younger generation is changing their food consumption from the traditional Chinese cuisine to a more international based cuisine.

- **Increase in Japanese Themed Dining Concepts:** There is also a rise in the demand for Japanese themed dining concepts in the urban areas of China. This creates a great opportunity for Norwegian Salmon in other areas than just in the supermarkets.

- **Pre-Purchase Online Research:** Another trend that is rapidly increasing in China is the trend of pre-purchase research online. This may be an opportunity for NSC to educate and inform the Chinese consumers about Norwegian salmon.

- **Female Spenders:** Women from 20 to 40 years of age are becoming greater spenders and it is vital to consider them as an important consumer group. Our research showed that the majority of people generating attention towards the salmon counter were women between 20 and 40 years of age, which indicates that there is an opportunity to increase awareness of Norwegian salmon within this particular customer group.
More focus on product quality: In general, Chinese consumers are seen to be very pragmatic, more aware of product quality and aesthetic attributes such as freshness, color and packaging. They are willing to spend more money on a product if the product quality is good. With this in mind, there is a great opportunity for the increase of Norwegian salmon demand, as it is a product of great quality and a relatively high price.

7.1.4. Threats

New Inspection Regime: In political terms, due to the new inspection regime which makes the transportation time from sea to table longer, the salmon is more likely to rotten. Since Chinese consumers already are reluctant to buy salmon because of potentially bad quality, the new regime may strengthen their negative attitude towards salmon.

Saving Culture: Today’s trend shows that many Chinese would rather save money than spend money, and especially on high-end products. However, as people have more money, the price on food is also increasing and households being highly price sensitive may be reluctant to buy high-end products such as Norwegian salmon.
7.2. **Strategic Problem Definition**

What would be the changes in attention rate and sales of Norwegian salmon in China if NSC decided to focus on cost-efficiency of their in-store promotions?

If NSC decided to focus cost-efficiency of their in-store promotions there would be no significant changes in attention rate. The primary data as exposed in Figure 11 shows that there were no significant differences with regard to attention rate between the two in-store promotions as well as the use of promotional brochures. Based on this, it would be more cost-efficient for NSC to just use promotional brochures.

*Figure 11: The Relations Between The Total Number Of Consumers Passing By, Showing Attention And Making A Purchase Decision*
Where in the consumer behavior process should NSC improve with regard to their in-store promotions in order to generate more sales in the future?

The authors have based on the findings and analyzes identified that there are some weaknesses in the Consumer Behavior Process.

With regards to marketing stimuli, the current in-store promotions are not efficient enough in communicating the awareness of Norwegian salmon to Chinese consumers. From the data collected the reason for this might be that there is a high level of noise when the consumer is decoding the actual message. The authors have mentioned several examples of what the noise may consist of, but the strongest noise element is the other in-store promotions performed at the same time. The Chinese consumers are so used to in-store promotions that they may subliminally block the in-store promotion portraying Norwegian salmon.

As Consumer Psychology and Consumer Characteristics are intertwined, the authors will present the areas of improvements from both of the steps simultaneously. The findings in Consumer Characteristics show that there are many possibilities of an increase in demand of Norwegian salmon in China. However, the in-store promotions are not effective enough in positioning Norwegian salmon as a high quality, healthy and nutritious product. The current in-store promotion are not designed well enough to teach the consumer, but rather designed to generate attention towards the salmon counter. It is essential to note that attention and positioning Norwegian salmon as a high quality, healthy and nutritious product alone will not necessarily generate sales.

The area of improvement in the Purchasing Behavior step is the area in which Chinese consumers seek for information. Data findings show that they seek information and plan a budget prior to their shopping trip. The possibility of impulsive consumption is therefore fairly low regardless if in-store promotions are present or not.
8. STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATION

8.1. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The online Business Dictionary\textsuperscript{122} define critical success factors as limited number of characteristics, conditions, or variables that have a direct and serious impact on the effectiveness, efficiency, and viability of an organization, program or project.

In accordance with the research aim the authors have identified four critical success factors NSC can consider in their strategic development of future in-store promotions and other promotional areas;

- Differentiate from other in-store promotions
- Design the in-store promotion in accordance with goal
- Reach Chinese consumers prior to shopping
- Reach women of 20 to 40 years of age

\textsuperscript{122} Business Dictionary 2012B.
8.2. **Strategic Recommendations**

The authors will base their strategic recommendations on the four critical success factors.

**8.2.1. Differentiate from other in-store promotions**

The noise level identified as the greatest concern is the other in-store promotions being conducted at the same time. NSC should try to identify what generates the target salmon consumers’ attention toward an in-store promotion, and then use this information in designing a more diversified in-store promotion. When the in-store promotions are tailored in accordance with Chinese consumers' appeal and preference, other noise levels should be reduced as well.

**8.2.2. Design the in-store promotion in accordance with goal**

If the main objective for the in-store promotion is to position Norwegian salmon in Chinese consumers' minds as a product of high quality, health beneficial and of high nutritious value, then according to the communication theory, the in-store promotion should be designed in such a way that consumers can participate. Although food tastings are a form of participation, they alone may not be sufficient stimuli to learning. It is also important to note that most consumers learn and store information when exposed to it repeatedly.
8.2.3. **REACH CHINESE CONSUMERS PRIOR TO SHOPPING**

It is important to note that this key success factor can generate a higher sales rate and is not composed to increase awareness of Norwegian salmon.

As the majority of Chinese consumers plan and research prior to their shopping trips, the possibility for impulsive purchase behavior of Norwegian salmon in store is fairly low. NSC should try to reach the Chinese consumers when they are doing their product information search.

8.2.4. **REACH WOMEN OF 20 TO 40 YEARS OF AGE**

Chinese women of 20 to 40 years of age in urban areas are a purchase-strong consumer group with regards to food consumption. Thus, making them the most important group to persuade to purchase Norwegian salmon.
8.3. RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There are many areas with regards to Chinese consumers' psychological purchasing patterns where NSC lacks information. The authors have identified several research areas that NSC should focus on in the nearest future.

8.3.1. IN-STORE PROMOTION RESEARCH

- Identify what drives the target group towards the in-store promotion.
- Identify how the consumer perceives an in-store promotion.
- Identify the weaknesses of the current in-store promotions.
- Identify noise levels around the in-store promotion and the possibilities of reducing them.

8.3.2. CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY

Conduct qualitative research on how one can teach Chinese Consumers to perceive Norwegian salmon as a product of high quality, with a high health benefactor and of great nutritious value.

8.3.3. INFORMATION SOURCES

Conduct research on where target customer group performs its product information search prior to their shopping trip. Then conduct research on how to make Norwegian salmon a part of that information search.
8.4. **Evaluation of Thesis**

During the construction of this thesis, the authors came across several challenges. The original idea was to test which of the two in-store promotions currently used by NSC generated the most attention towards the salmon counter so that one could consult on whether to choose one or the other. However, the authors found that they would like to provide NSC with more insight on which areas within the consumer behavior process they lacked sufficient information about their consumers in order to create an effective marketing strategy for Norwegian salmon in China. Thus, the extended research aim and extended problem definition were created.

One of the challenges met was how to perform the observational research in store. The concern for contaminating data sampling due to Chinese grocery shoppers’ reactions to Norwegian students observing them was quite high. After some consulting with Company X, the conclusion became that in order to gain the most reliable data, Chinese students should be the ones conducting the observations.

When analyzing the primary data conducted, the authors identified that there was no significant difference between the two in-store promotions. The answers from the data collected were not what the authors had originally expected. Hence, making the primary findings very interesting. Instead of testing difference in attention rate, one should possibly have conducted a research on which factors around and regarding the in-store promotions themselves made the promotion effective or ineffective.

Overall, the authors are pleased with the outcome of this thesis. Especially with the originality of the design this thesis portrays.
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Newspaper article taken from the online edition:

10. APPENDIX

10.1. **Detailed Quasi-Experiment Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Shops</th>
<th>Store-design</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>March 23 – March 25</td>
<td>10:00 – 20:00</td>
<td>E-Mart Chang Jiang</td>
<td>Pre-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 23 – March 25</td>
<td>10:00 – 20:00</td>
<td>E-Mart Cao Bao</td>
<td>Pre-test</td>
</tr>
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<td>March 30 – April 1</td>
<td>10:00 – 20:00</td>
<td>E-Mart Chang Jiang</td>
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</tr>
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<td>March 30 – April 1</td>
<td>10:00 – 20:00</td>
<td>E-Mart Cao Bao</td>
<td>Promotional Brochures, Promoter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6 – April 8</td>
<td>10:00 – 20:00</td>
<td>E-Mart Chang Jiang</td>
<td>Promotional Brochures, Promoter, Chef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6 – April 8</td>
<td>10:00 – 20:00</td>
<td>E-Mart Cao Bao</td>
<td>Promotional Brochures, Promoter, Chef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 13 – April 15</td>
<td>10:00 – 20:00</td>
<td>E-Mart Chang Jiang</td>
<td>Post-Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 13 – April 15</td>
<td>10:00 – 20:00</td>
<td>E-Mart Cao Bao</td>
<td>Post-Test</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
10.2. **Example of Promotional Brochures**
### 10.3. Primary Data Gathered at E-Mart Yangtze

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day of the week</th>
<th>The first week of the traffic survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>28.03.2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Cloudy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>18°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total daily sales - everything</td>
<td>781,47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total daily filet sales</td>
<td>238,752</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of people passing</td>
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<td>Average weight per package (grams)</td>
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<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
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<td>50+</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>50+</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>50+</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>40-50</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average price per package</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average weight per package (grams)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Temperature</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>F</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
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<td>30-40</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>50+</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>50+</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>40-50</td>
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<td>Promoter</td>
<td>Promoter</td>
<td>Promoter</td>
<td>Promoter</td>
<td>Promoter</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average price per package</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average weight per package (grams)</td>
<td>52,65</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Average weight per package (gram)

| Gender | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| 10-00 11-00 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 11 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 5 | 15 |
| 11-00 12-00 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 12 | 5 | 4 | 15 |
| 12-00 13-00 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 12 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 7 | 5 | 3 |
| 13-00 14-00 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 15 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 10 | 15 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 7 |
| 14-00 15-00 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 12 | 7 | 6 | 10 | 11 | 6 | 5 | 10 | 14 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 8 |
| 15-00 16-00 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 12 | 17 | 9 | 7 | 16 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 10 | 11 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 9 | 10 |
| 16-00 17-00 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| 17-00 18-00 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| 18-00 19-00 | 10 | 11 | 10 | 11 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 11 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 8 |
| 19-00 20-00 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 3 |

The third week of the traffic survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Cloudy</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Little rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>17°C</td>
<td>23°C</td>
<td>15°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotions</td>
<td>Chef + Promoter</td>
<td>Chef + Promoter</td>
<td>chef + Promoter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total daily sales - everything</td>
<td>1188,59</td>
<td>1807,9</td>
<td>2285,19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total daily filet sales</td>
<td>1013,47</td>
<td>1699,9</td>
<td>2185,05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people buying</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average price per package</td>
<td>35,07</td>
<td>51,12</td>
<td>56,05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average weight per package (grams)</td>
<td>214,00</td>
<td>245,00</td>
<td>259,00</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The fourth week of the traffic survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Rain</td>
<td>Cloudy</td>
<td>Cloudy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>10°C</td>
<td>15°C</td>
<td>17°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotions</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total daily sales - everything</td>
<td>1496,04</td>
<td>1797,29</td>
<td>1660,81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total daily filet sales</td>
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<td>1682,88</td>
<td>1515,45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people buying</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average price per package</td>
<td>53,20</td>
<td>49,49</td>
<td>52,26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average weight per package (grams)</td>
<td>246,00</td>
<td>229,00</td>
<td>241,00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The third week of the traffic survey

<table>
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<th>Day</th>
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<th>2012-04-07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>Cloudy</td>
<td>Cloudy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>17°C</td>
<td>19°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotions</td>
<td>Chef + Promoter</td>
<td>Promoter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total daily sales - everything</td>
<td>225,00</td>
<td>241,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total daily filet sales</td>
<td>123,00</td>
<td>137,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people buying</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average price per package</td>
<td>55,00</td>
<td>53,50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average weight per package (grams)</td>
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<td>229,00</td>
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The fourth week of the traffic survey

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<th>2012-04-14</th>
</tr>
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<td>Cloudy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>17°C</td>
<td>19°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotions</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Chef + Promoter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total daily sales - everything</td>
<td>1188,59</td>
<td>1807,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total daily filet sales</td>
<td>1013,47</td>
<td>1699,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people buying</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average price per package</td>
<td>35,07</td>
<td>51,12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average weight per package (grams)</td>
<td>214,00</td>
<td>245,00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consumers Passing By | 157 | 231 | 273 | 313 | 274 | 361 | 321 | 135 | 219 | 295 | 342 | 330 | 360 | 292 | 312 | 160 | 228 | 299 | 338 | 326 | 331 | 261 | 297 | 103
### 10.4. Primary Data Collected at E-Mart Cao Bao

#### The first week of the traffic survey

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<th>23.03.2012</th>
<th>24.03.2012</th>
<th>25.03.2012</th>
<th>26.03.2012</th>
<th>28.03.2012</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day</strong></td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weather</strong></td>
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<td>Cloudy</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Cloudy</td>
<td>Clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temperature</strong></td>
<td>15°C</td>
<td>16°C</td>
<td>15°C</td>
<td>16°C</td>
<td>15°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promotions</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1547,85</td>
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<td>1106,35</td>
<td>1547,45</td>
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<td>34</td>
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<td><strong>Average price per package</strong></td>
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<td>42,56</td>
<td>45,51</td>
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#### The second week of the traffic survey

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day</strong></td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weather</strong></td>
<td>Cloudy</td>
<td>Cloudy</td>
<td>Clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temperature</strong></td>
<td>15°C</td>
<td>15°C</td>
<td>15°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promotions</strong></td>
<td>Promoter</td>
<td>Promoter</td>
<td>Promoter</td>
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<td>1488,38</td>
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<td>1285,5</td>
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<td>44,33</td>
<td>205,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>187,00</td>
<td>205,00</td>
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#### Gender Distribution

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-00-11 00</td>
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<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-00-12 00</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
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<td>11-00-12 00</td>
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<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-00-20 00</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Consumers Passing By</strong></td>
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<td>184</td>
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#### Gender Distribution

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<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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#### Gender Distribution

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### E-Mart Gao Ruo
#### The third week of the traffic survey

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Average weight per package (gram) | 188,00 | 193,00 | 195,00 |

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Attention | 10 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |

Consumers Passing By | 27 | 27 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 |

### E-Mart Gao Ruo
#### The fourth week of the traffic survey

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Average weight per package (grams) | 188,00 | 193,00 | 195,00 |

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Attention | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 |