

# An analysis of the influence of discount sales promotion in consumer buying intent and the moderating effects of attractiveness

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## RESUMO

### Uma análise da influência da promoção de vendas de desconto na intenção de compra do consumidor e os efeitos moderadores da atratividade

O objetivo neste trabalho foi analisar a influência da promoção de vendas de desconto na intenção de compra e os efeitos moderadores da atratividade nas relações entre intenção de compra de um produto em desconto e a impulsividade, percepção hedônica e de risco financeiro. Para isso, um experimento com a participação de 613 estudantes foi realizado. As hipóteses previam que um produto com promoção de desconto se relacionaria positivamente com a impulsividade e com a percepção hedônica sobre o bem ofertado, e ainda, negativamente, com a percepção de risco financeiro associado ao produto em desconto. Esperava-se uma moderação positiva da percepção da atratividade da promoção de desconto divulgada sobre as intenções dos comportamentos. Os resultados confirmaram as hipóteses, indicando efeitos positivos da impulsividade e percepção hedônica com a compra do produto em desconto, além do vínculo negativo existente entre a intenção de compra do produto em desconto e a percepção de risco financeiro. Os efeitos moderadores não foram confirmados. As considerações finais encerram o trabalho.

**Palavras-chave:** *marketing*, comportamento do consumidor, promoção de vendas, promoção monetária de desconto, atratividade da promoção.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sales promotion techniques are instruments that seek to increase sales of products and brands, usually in a short time (Wierenga & Soethoudt, 2010), because they act in the consumer's mind as a benefit to him, creating thus consumer behavior (Yusuf, 2010). The effectiveness and the importance of sales promotion in the market can be viewed when presenting the segment numbers. According to Teunter (2002), over 20% of sales of products of some food branches occur through sales promotion activities. In a report quoted by Wierenga and Soethoudt (2010), over 75% of spending on communication in nondurable consumer goods segment between 1997 and 2004 in the United States were driven by sales promotion activities, while 25% were applied in other communication activities.

In addition to market fundamentals, the importance is attested in the scientific field, whose studies have been conducted for several decades. In 1978, Preston, Dwyer, and Rudelius already demonstrated the effect of sales promotion to convince consumers to open a bank account. In that study, it was found that 50% of the increase in number of accounts in a bank searched occurred during a promotional campaign. More recently, D'Astous and Jacob (2002) demonstrate the efficiency of this promotional tool to influence the computer purchase, while Boschetti (2012) confirmed the positive linkages, promoting the behavior of purchase of financial services.

As stressed by some authors (D'Astous & Landreville, 2003; Haans & Gijbrecchts, 2011; Jones, 2008) there is still academic and managerial deficiencies on the deeper knowledge of the relationship of sales promotion with consumer behavior and their effectiveness for the companies. Given this context, this study has two main purposes:

- to analyze the effects of sales promotion discounts on consumer purchase intent, assessing the behaviors of impulsivity (Puri, 1996; Ramanathan & Menon, 2006; Rook, 1987; Rook & Fisher, 1995), hedonic perception of the product (Batra & Ahtola, 1990; Hirschman & Holdbrook, 1982) and financial risk (Alvarez & Casielles, 2005; Bawa & Shoemaker, 1987; Lattin & Bucklin, 1989; Blattberg & Neslin, 1990);
- to examine the moderating effect of attractiveness of the promotion, since studies (Boschetti, 2012; D'Astous & Landreville, 2003; Liao, 2006; Santini, Sampaio, & Perin, 2011; Simonson, Carmon, & O'Curry, 1994) warn of the fact that this perception enhances positive relationships with the intention of buying a product sales promotion.

To achieve the proposed objectives, this work was based on a laboratory experiment.

## 2. THEORETICAL BASIS AND ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

According to the studies of Campbell and Diamond (1990), D'Astous and Landreville (2003) and Alvarez and Casielles

(2005), sales promotions are distributed into two groups: price or monetary promotions (i.e. discounts, coupons, rebates); non-monetary promotions or not geared to price (i.e. free samples, distribution of promotional prizes, gifts, contests and loyalty programs).

Sales promotion techniques are instruments that seek to increase sales of products and brands, usually in a short time (Wierenga & Soethoudt, 2010), because they act in the consumer's mind as a benefit to it, thus generating a consumer behavior (Yusuf, 2010). Therefore, it is believed that sales promotion has a positive influence on the purchase intention. Nevertheless, studies such as those conducted by Cotton and Babb (1978), Lattin and Bucklin (1989) and, more recently, Alvarez and Casielles (2005) have demonstrated the effectiveness of sales promotions in the responses and buyers' attitudes, both monetary as non-monetary, over the past decades. For this reason, it is believed that:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The discount promotion positively influences consumer purchase intent.

Another assumption is the relationship between impulsivity and intention to buy a product on discount. Impulsivity is associated with emotional and hedonic components of personality (Rook 1987; Rook & Fisher, 1995; Weinberg & Gottwald, 1982; Youn, 2000). In the present research, it is assumed that consumer impulsiveness will influence the intention of buying discounted products, since we detected a relationship between short-term satisfaction of impulsive consumers (Dholakia, 2000; Youn & Faber, 2000) and the benefits provided to consumers who purchase products under the effects of monetary promotions – case of discount campaigns, which have immediate impact, i.e. also a short-term effect (Alvarez & Casielles, 2005; Blattberg & Neslin, 1990). Therefore, the following hypothesis arises:

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Consumer impulsiveness positively influences the intention of buying a product on discount.

The next hypothesis suggests a relationship between hedonic perception of the offered product and purchase intent with discount. Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) introduced the concept of hedonic consumption and related it to the multi-sensorial and emotional involvement, which, in turn, is linked to the experiences of consumers and products. The size of hedonic consumption can be derived from the exclusivity of the good, its symbolic meaning, the emotional excitement and imaginary evocation (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Spangenberg, Voss, & Crowley, 1997). The hedonic dimension is more subjective and personal than the utilitarian one (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994). The motivation of hedonic consumption derives from a need for pleasure and excitement that can be provided by these products (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000). The pleasure pathways

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