

**THE TRAINING IS GOING TO BE HARD! THE ROLES OF FUNCTIONALITY,  
SYMBOLISM, AND QUALITY ON PURCHASE INTENTIONS FOR SPORTS FOOTWEAR**

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### **Introdução**

In recent years, discussions about the benefits of sports on human health have increased, highlighting their potential in combating diseases such as obesity, diabetes, depression, and anxiety. Social networks, especially through the rise of digital influencers in the fitness area, have helped popularize the discourse on the importance of engaging in physical activities for aesthetic or health purposes. This scenario has led to an increased consumption of fitness products, including sports footwear, which are seen as essential tools for improving sports performance and as symbols.

### **Problema de Pesquisa e Objetivo**

Previous research in countries like South Africa and Malaysia has shown positive influences of variables such as product price, endorsement, promotion, brand equity, self-image congruence, brand loyalty, and perceived brand fit on the intention to purchase sports footwear. However, there is a lack of studies focusing on the design configuration of products and their symbolic or performance potential. This research investigates the influence of brand/product symbolism and functionality on perceived quality and purchase intentions of sports footwear in Brazil.

### **Fundamentação Teórica**

Industrial design products are based on three primary functions: technical, aesthetic, and symbolic. These functions influence the intention to purchase products differently based on users' needs and desires. Vázquez Rio and Iglesias (2002) proposed a scale measuring consumer values related to functional and symbolic utility products. Perceived quality, a central factor in shaping consumer perceptions and decisions, is influenced by tangible product characteristics and intangible aspects such as reliability and brand reputation.

### **Metodologia**

This descriptive research involved a survey of 246 sports footwear consumers using previously validated scales. The questionnaire included 37 questions covering respondent profiles and constructs related to product and brand utility, perceived quality, and purchase intention. Data was collected via Google Forms and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in R software to evaluate the direct and indirect relationships between the variables in the conceptual model.

### **Análise dos Resultados**

The sample consisted of 246 valid respondents, predominantly female (72.4%) and aged 19-29 years (66.7%). Statistical analysis showed that the constructs had adequate internal consistency and convergent validity. The structural model evaluation revealed significant positive influences of brand name and product utilities on perceived quality and purchase intentions, partially confirming the proposed hypotheses.

### **Conclusão**

The study highlights the significant roles of functionality and symbolism in the perceived quality and purchase intentions of sports footwear among Brazilian consumers. The findings suggest that both the functional and symbolic utilities of brands and products positively influence consumer perceptions and decisions.

## **Referências Bibliográficas**

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