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AWAKENING THE INTENT TO VISIT THROUGH RETAIL PROMOTIONS

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1 Introduction

The focus of retailer advertising is on immediate sales stimulation (Karray et al., 2022). Retailer advertising main objective is to provoke consumer rational thinking by directly presenting persuasive and concrete sales-oriented arguments. It seldom mentions specific product features and other dimensions relevant to consumers' decision to visit the store and buy the advertised product (Karray et al., 2022).

This study is concerned with retail efforts to catch buyers who are about to make a purchase, and to do so, they rely on promotions activities such as price-oriented advertising. These efforts are expected to affect purchase intention immediately when they are turned on and off (Hartnett et al., 2021). Companies that sell their products nationwide need target coverage in terms of media, spending a great amount of their marketing budget to develop and deploy a national campaign. The main challenge for retailers marketing managers is to understand if ad really make the difference and lead consumers to positive behavioral intentions.

We consider the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) as the main theoretical foundation that proposes that perceptions precede attitudes and attitudes precede behavioral intentions to affirm our theoretical framework, organized into independent variables - perceptions generated by retail advertising, (Ad credibility ; price perception; likeability and irritation) - mediating variables (attitude towards the advertisement, attitude towards the retailer and visit intention) and dependent variables (purchase intention).

Recent changes in the retail landscape, such as omnichannel environments and augmented reality, have revitalized the interest of academics and retail professionals in the consumer journey. As the touchpoints involved as activities and events related to the delivery of services or products from the customer perspective (Shavitt & Barnes, 2020) customer journey studies usually (but not exclusively) adopt an organization by phases (pré purchase, purchase and pós purchase), although it was shown that journey is fluid (Shavitt & Barnes, 2020). Since in the stage of pré-purchase is usually characterized by consumer search of information (price, prizes, payment conditions) about products and services offered, we understand that intention to visit (to collect information in physical stores or virtual ones) must be stimulated by retailers, and if they succeeded then intention to visit will be relevant in purchase phase as well.

We validated the framework using 98 TV advertisements, collecting data from 15.186 consumers. TV ads selected were focused on retail as a research object, broadcasted by four retailers with national coverage, active in the retail of durable consumer goods. One of the ad campaigns' perspectives that can be chosen by retailers is price-oriented campaigns, which aim to provide concrete data for consumer decision-making and are generally sales-oriented (Karray et al., 2022). This choice was due to a common practice in the retail segment that reveals one of the main strategies adopted by retail retailers: advertisements run for two or three days, after which the products offered are changed. Frequent switching of retailer offers should generate perceptions that lead to positive attitudes and behavioral intentions to visit (store, site, or app) and purchase intention.

At the end of the work, we present at least two theoretical contributions of this study, one related to the importance of price and other perceptions generated by retail advertisements and another related to the mechanisms by which retail advertisements increase consumers' purchase intention. Contributions to practice are also presented.

Next, we present the theoretical foundation of this work, after method are presented, followed by results, discussion, and conclusions.

2 Theoretical Framework: Various perceptions resulting from advertising have been presented by marketing researchers, generally as indicators of emotional and cognitive states stimulated by advertising. In the following subsections, we begin with dependent variable loyalty, then we present the two variables that mediate the relation between attitude toward the ad and loyalty: intention to visit and attitude toward the retailer (Art) and lastly perceptions as independent variables: advertising credibility; low price perception; likeability; and irritation.

2.1 Purchase Intention: While brands and industry should invest on equity advertising (Hartnett et al., 2021), retailers must focus on increase purchase intentions and sales. Purchase intention is the consumer likeability to buy a product from a certain retailer, it refers to the process by which consumers plan to purchase a product, considering the combination of his interest and ability to buy the product (Chin et al., 2020). It is a variable commonly used to identify the ultimate purpose of promotions (Xu et al., 2009), being used to assess promotion effectiveness and impact (Peña-García et al., 2020).

2.2. Attitude: The attitude-behavior relationship is part of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). TPB is an extension of the Theory of Rational Action (TRA) that improved the predictive power of the model by adding perceived behavioral control to the TRA model, the model now consists of three independent variables (attitude towards behavior, social norms and perceived behavioral control). TPB states that the influence of attitude on behavior follows a person's beliefs, attitudes, and intentions. To assess people's intentions (including purchase intention) towards a specific brand or product, TPB has become the established theory to explain beliefs and behaviors (Ajzen, 1991; Chin et al., 2020). It has been adopted in various contexts to examine purchase intention such as organic food (Nagaraj, 2021), green purchase behaviour (Dangelico et al., 2021), tourists decisions (Tajeddini et al., 2021), adoption of sustainable practices (Mak et al., 2018).

Attitude has been widely applied in advertising promotions studies. The main objective of advertising promotions is to influence the consumer's attitude towards the advertised promotion. Sander et al. (2021) states that attitude toward advertising refers to advertisements as a category while attitude toward the ad refers to an stimulus in particular. An attitude towards an ad is formed by the consumer which evaluates the visual and/or verbal content of the statement. Based on this evaluation, judgments are formed, such as ad perception, attitude towards the advertiser, and ad credibility (Sander et al., 2021).

Attitude acts as the basis for an individual's predisposition to evaluate an object positively or negatively (Chin et al., 2020; Maseeh et al., 2021). It has been studied as an antecedent of brand attitude in the context of sustainability advertising (Sander et al., 2021); as part of decision process of tourists (Tajeddini et al., 2021) and also as a mediator of brand credibility and consumer purchase intention (Chin et al., 2020). Retailers use advertisements to publicize their promotions, create positive predispositions in relation to products and ad claims (price, delivery time, payment method, among other marketing "P"s) and if the objective is achieved, then consumers will present greater intention to purchase the products, or more directly:

H1: Attitude toward the ad have positive impact on consumer intention to buy

2.3. Attitude toward retailer: Sander et al. (2021) states that after exposition to ad and the subsequent evaluation about claims consumers forms attitude toward the retailer, which can be stated as the predisposition to evaluate the retailer positively or negatively (Sander et al., 2021), while for Caruana et al. (2006) attitude toward the retailer (Art) represents consumer's

accumulated knowledge and experience about the retailer, based on past interactions (Caruana et al., 2006; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989). The definitions differ about the origins of predisposition – but they agree about what attitude is, and we assume that consumers who have not yet engaged with the retailer will form their predispositions from advertising and others external information sources (word of mouth, complaint sites, related evaluation) while those who had engaged in past will base their evaluations on the experience.

As the objective of this work is to determine the effects of retail efforts to promote products to the widest possible audience, it is understood that the attitude towards the retailer is more positive when the attitude towards advertising is more positive, so we establish our next hypothesis:

H2: Attitude toward the ad have positive impact on attitude toward the retailer

Consumer's attitude towards the retailer will impact the subsequent behavioral intentions, reducing promotion efficacy (Hess et al., 2020) or improving it (Sander et al., 2021). Retailers seek to expand short-term sales opportunities through promotions advertised to the widest possible audience. In doing so, they expect consumers to positively evaluate the promotion's claims, forming an opinion about what is interesting about the product, price, payment method and other conditions disclosed, but they also need the consumer to form positive predispositions about the retailer itself. If it meets immediate consumption expectations and generates a good impression, the consumer is likely to have a positive purchase intention. (Hartnett et al., 2021). So, we state that:

H3: Attitude toward the retailer have positive impact on purchase intention, and mediates attitude toward the ad.

2.4 Intention to visit: As multichannel sales and service strategies have evolved towards providing several channels to consumers, retailers are continually expanding their presence in consumers' lives through physical stores, online stores and in mobile apps (Verhoef et al., 2015). Intention to visit is the customer's assessment of the probability of visiting the store or accessing the website or app after being impacted by a promotion ad, thus expanding the definition offered by Meents et al. (2020).

Several researchers have dedicated their efforts to identify which factors affect the intention to visit the store, site or app - such as factors in choosing which store to visit (Pillai et al., 2020), other studies discuss how consumer psychological traits interact with aspects of retailers' actions and affect the intention to visit the store (or the website/app), for example, Maseeh et al. (2021) in a meta-analysis show that messages of text decrease the attitude towards advertising and the intention to accept and use the message, Henkel & Toporowski (2021) found that consumers with a high need for uniqueness associated with urgent appeals, when used in the dissemination of experimental sites, increases the intention to visit. Meents et al. (2020) in turn found that messages sent to consumers' smartphones when they were close to the physical store provoked a greater intention to visit when the message contained scarcity appeals, and the variety of products is a variable that contributes to increasing the intention to visit the store (Prediger et al., 2019).

When retailers advertise their promotions, they seek to do so by presenting various products and advantages, seeking to create positive attitudes towards what is advertised to seduce and convince the consumer to visit their store, website or app, at least as part of searching phase of decision process, so:

H4: Attitude toward the ad has a positive relationship with intention to visit.

In our theoretical review we look for recent work in retail journals which dedicated attention to intention to visit and the works found have some common aspects: They propose intention to visit as a dependent variable, showing that those intention are relevant for retailers

and researchers; almost none try to linkage retail promotional ads with intention to visit, with one gratefully exception: Timoumi et al. (2022) review 50 published works and states that online advertising has positive effects on offline channel consideration, increasing intentions to visit.

Other common aspect is that almost none of them propose intention to visit as antecedent of purchase intention, and when they do, they fall behind in show the relation with other variables. For example, Wu e Ma (2022) asserts that mobile advertising has no significant association with shop visits, but consumers that received push ads at random spent more time visiting retailers, concluding that randomly pushed mobile marketing information is effective in stimulating shop visits due to impulse, but targeted mobile marketing is more effective in increasing spending amount, having no effect on visiting.

As stated, if retailers can engage consumers in the search phase of their journey, and if consumers agree with the arguments presented in the ad, the consumer is likely to increase their purchase intent when entering in the purchase fase, so:

H5: Intention to visit has a positive effect on purchase intention and mediates the relation between attitude toward the ad and purchase intention.

2.5 Perceptions generated by ad campaigns: The attitude towards retail promotions is formed from the statements contained in the ad that are perceived by consumers who, in turn, form perceptions about the ad. The list of possible claims is enormous, as shown by Hartnett et al. (2016), but grouped by consumers form the basis of relevant perceptions. Below we present a set of perceptions and their relationship with the attitude towards the advertisement.

2.5.1 Low price perception: Retail advertisements are designed to enhance consumer cognition of their offerings (Karray et al., 2022; Okazaki et al., 2010; Xiang et al., 2019) and doing so, increase attitudes, intentions, and behaviors responses. An important contextual cognitive cue is price, representing a critical purchasing factor in retailer marketing strategies (Barone et al., 2020). The objective price of a product (advertised value) only has a meaning if the consumer encodes the information internally. The way price or discount is advertised affects how consumers perceive the ad and the decisions they make afterwards.

The perceived price of a product can be understood as the financial sacrifice to obtain the product can also be an indicator of product quality. In the absence of other cognitive clues that favor the cognitive processing that allows the consumer to infer the quality of the product, such as taste pleasantness after wine tasting (Schmidt et al., 2017), the heuristic processing that associates higher prices with superior quality comes into play. In this case, the price loses the sacrificial characteristic (R. Li et al., 2022; Motyka et al., 2016; Suri & Monroe, 2003).

A variety of factors that include companies' structures affect price (setting minimum prices), maximum willingness-to-pay signed by customers (creating price ceilings), and competitors' actions (which can encourage price matching) increase retailers' challenge to vary price levels as means to generate sales (Barone et al., 2020). In this sense, marketers have been trying new practices, for example, partitioned pricing, which is the practice of dividing the price by the base price, and one or more mandatory surcharges such as taxes or shipping and handling fees, with mixed results (Choi et al., 2020). In their work, Choi et al. (2020) presents that in hedonic context the strategy of price partitioning is effective, but not in utilitarian one, because consumers have a sense of guilting in hedonic context, and partitioned price mitigates the guilt (Choi et al., 2020).

Reference pricing assumes that consumers compare current prices with price expectations developed from previous purchases when making a new purchase. This type of subjective price expectation is called an internal or memory-based reference price. Retailers can benefit from knowledge about consumer response to reference prices for dynamic pricing

strategies, ie, gain-seeking versus loss-aversion (Elshiewy & Peschel, 2021), and there is a certain consensus that the better the low price perception, the greater the behavioral purchase and recommendation intention (Guha et al., 2018; Leung & Tsou, 2019) which demonstrates that the price is related to the consumer's attitude.

Cognitive price cues are abundant in hard-sell advertisements and can affect consumer expectations regarding the consumption of advertised products, and consequently affect consumer attitudes toward the ad. Since price is a cognitive cue offered to the consumer, closely related to retail advertisements, it can be stated that:

H6: Low-price perception of the advertised product has a positive relationship with attitude toward the ad.

2.5.2 Retail Ad credibility: Two main components of credibility are evident in the literature: (1) source credibility – in this case retailer credibility, and (2) advertising credibility (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Petrescu et al., 2019; Visentin et al., 2019). We exclusively address advertising credibility, defined as the extent to which the consumer perceives that the statements made in the ad are true and reliable (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Visentin et al., 2019), and represents the ad effect on consumers' minds in the form of belief or disbelief in the arguments, products, and services presented by the advertisement (Petrescu et al., 2019; Visentin et al., 2019).

The perception of credibility can be affected by several occurrences, some of which are not under the retailer's control, for example, when the consumer believes in fake news about a brand, trust decreases and, consequently, attitudes are also affected (Visentin et al., 2019), other factors, otherwise, are planned by retail marketers, and have already been established as strategies that affect advertising credibility – for example: celebrity endorsement (Andreini et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2022; Schouten et al., 2020); use of photos instead of drawings (Lohse & Rosen, 2001); social and environmental responsibility disclosed through external sources (awards) (Gruber et al., 2017; J.-H. Kim & Song, 2020), use of specific claims, which describe significant benefits through useful and detailed information, is a way to increase the credibility of “green” advertisements (Ganz & Grimes, 2018).

Credible advertisements are more persuasive, as they improve the consumer's attitude towards the advertisement (Cian et al., 2020), being an important cognitive clue that helps the consumer in decision making, encouraging the consumer to believe and use the information provided by the retailer (Kumar & Polonsky, 2019), increases the intention to try new products and pay more for them (Sarofim & Cabano, 2018) and, therefore, this should be a perception that advertisers should pursue, so this work follows inline of previous studies demonstrating that advertising credibility is antecedent to attitude towards the retail ad (Hamouda, 2018), and we state:

H7: Retail ad credibility has a positive relationship with attitude toward the retail ad.

2.5.3 Positive Emotions (Likeability):

The terms affect, mood, and emotion are widely used by marketing researchers. The term affect can be conceived as an umbrella for a set of more specific mental processes, including emotions and moods and (possibly) attitudes. Emotion is a mental state of readiness that arises from cognitive appraisals of events or thoughts. The line between an emotion and a mood state is difficult to draw, but the convention involves the conception that the mood state is longer lasting (from a few hours to days) and of less intensity than an emotion (Bagozzi et al., 1999; Karimi & Liu, 2020).

Several emotions are related to consumption, for example, pride is a positive emotion related to self-awareness that emanates from a sense of accomplishment, aligns with the positive attitude towards the purchase of products as they convey a sense of accomplishment, thus motivating consumers to spend more in the short term (B. Kumar et al., 2021), moral emotions – those which reflect the individual's response to acceptance or rejection of standards and responsibilities - have effect on the attitude towards environmental advertisements (Kao & Du, 2020; B. Kumar et al., 2021), When listening to music in retail environments, consumers can find themselves in emotional states of pleasure and arousal which increases attitudinal responses toward store, in the same way, advertising music (ad music) also generates consumer pleasure and excitement, affecting consumer attitudes towards ad (Pillai et al., 2020; Raja et al., 2019).

Sparks e Lang (2015) showed that positive/negative emotions can be caused by the advertising tone and these emotions must in some extent measure affect consumer attitude towards advertising, and how emotions are related to consumer attitude towards advertising, behavioral intentions and behaviors (Kao & Du, 2020; Karimi & Liu, 2020), positive emotions increase the persuasive power of advertising (Das et al., 2015). Opposite effects can be expected for negative emotions (Karimi & Liu, 2020; Meire et al., 2019). When consumers perceive an advertisement as friendly, they are more likely to see it again (Karimi & Liu, 2020; Smit et al., 2006).

Advertising can cause sympathy in the consumer both for the content and the form of presentation, and regardless of the origin of the sympathy, we propose that advertisements considered sympathetic will promote favorable responses from the consumer. More directly:

H8: The likeability aroused by ad has a positive relationship with the consumer's attitude towards ad.

2.5.4 Negative Emotions (Irritation): Annoying ads are provocative, irritating and cause momentary discontent and impatience, tending to lead the consumer to respond unfavorably to the retailer's ad and avoid the ad in the future. Annoying ads are characterized as those that give irrelevant and overabundant messages (Ko et al., 2019; Maseeh et al., 2021; Niu et al., 2021; Stourm & Bax, 2017), this definition is extremely relevant when considering retail advertising, as retailers often include 5 or 6 offers in 30-second ads, but we find ads with 17 offers in 60-second ads that can be considered (overabundant) and in case the products offered are not of interest to the consumer, the message can be considered irrelevant.

Extreme negative reactions may be more effective than neutral ones because they attract attention, making advertising easier to memorize and may even increase persuasion if their distraction inhibits counterarguments. However, irritation negatively affects consumer's attitude towards the ad, increasing avoidance behavior (Maseeh et al., 2021; Niu et al., 2021) and, decreasing purchase intention (Thota & Biswas, 2009). On the other hand, attitude towards the retailer ad can moderate the negative effect, mitigating the effects of irritation on attitudes and behavioral intentions (Maseeh et al., 2021; Pintado et al., 2017).

It can be discussed whether advertising should intentionally generate irritation, but we can say that advertisements generate irritation at some level in consumers and that as a result, managers should seek to minimize the irritation generated by advertising. When properly chosen, ad claims will draw consumers' attention to what is important for them to process the information they need to decide about the purchase. By generating negative emotions in consumers, advertisements will have a different effect than that what they were created for: to generate positive attitudes in consumers towards the content they care (Kirmani, 1997; Okazaki et al., 2010; Pintado et al., 2017), therefore:

H10: Irritation is negatively related to attitude toward the ad.

3 Method: This section aims to present the methodological options adopted in the empirical phase of this study.

3.1 Scales: Perceptions and attitudes scales were all based on the literature and adapted to the retail context always with 3 statements – only exception was irritation with 5 statements. Advertising credibility were based on the work of MacKenzie e Lutz (1989) with statements such as “The advertising I just watched is very convincing”. Low price perception was adapted from Suri & Monroe (2003) statements as “In the advertising I just watched, the advertised prices were very low”, likeability was based on Smit et al. (2006) with statements like “Watching this advertising made me very excited.” and irritation was adapted from Thota & Biswas (2009) statements was like “The advertising I watched was annoying”. Both Attitude toward the ad (stated as “The advertising I watched is very nice”) and Attitude toward retailer (stated as “In my opinion the retailer is sensational”) scales were adapted from MacKenzie and Lutz (1989), while intention to visit was adapted from Meents et al. (2020) (statements like “I intend to go to this advertiser's physical store to check the advertised products”. Purchase intention was based on Lopes & Veiga (2019) with statements as “I intend to purchase in this store/website/app in the future”. For all variables a 7-point Likert scales, anchored at the extremes (1-strongly disagree, 7-strongly agree) was used. In the end of the survey, two questions were included for attention check (“From which company was the ad you’ve just watched? and “What is the main information in the ad?”).

3.2 Criteria for brands and ads selection: We selected four retailers based on their national presence. Their average sales are 9,000 times bigger than the national sector average (*Stock Exchange Listed Companies* / B3, 2020; *Annual Commerce Survey – PAC / IBGE*, 2020). They also invest heavily on television media, covering all offline TV channels on daily basis (ads are modified 2 or 3 times a week). Brands “A” and “B” are part of the same group of companies and managed by the same team, brands “C” and “D” are independent brands, but direct competitors. All four brands are top 5 on gross sales, considering the retail sector (Audinino, 2021). With the companies defined, we obtained the ads aired every week, provided by an advertising agency that worked in partnership with the researchers. The set consisted of six ads per week (n=98 evaluated). We collected approximately 900 online consumer responses per week. The ads used in this study largely comprise advertisements for TV sets, cell phones, appliances, white goods, furniture, and toys from various manufacturers.

3.3 Questionnaire Flow: The first session of the instrument was composed of a series of profile questions about demographics and purchasing habits that served as filter. Randomly, we presented one (out of four) retail brands to the respondent and asked the participant to indicate their perception about the retailer’s reputation. Next, the selected retailer’s ad was presented, and then we presented the statements regarding the dependent variables (purchase intention, intention to visit). In the sequence, we presented the questions about perceptions (advertising credibility; low price perception; likeability and irritation), and attitudes (Attitude toward the ad and Attitude toward retail). The last session contained the attention check questions. All statements from each block were presented in a full randomization manner as recommended by the literature (Freire et al., 2017; Lopes et al., 2019).

3.4 Number of ads, respondents, and data collection period: Data collection ensured a minimum valid sample of 150 consumer responses for each (of the 98) ad. Respondents were

accessed through a national online consumer panel, managed by a research and consultancy company, comprising over 400,000 consumers.

Each respondent participated only once in data collection, guaranteed by checking and eliminating duplicated IPs. Data treatment was conducted running a series of steps such as attention check, time response, univariate outliers and common-method bias as recommended by (Freire et al., 2017) and Lopes et al. (2019). After the treatments, the final database consisted of 15,186 unique valid consumer responses.

The survey was conducted to ensure national demographic distribution. Data collection was controlled by income, age, and gender, as well as distribution across regions, to reflect the distribution of the chosen retailers' physical stores.

4 Results: The purpose of this section is to present the results obtained from the analysis of the collected data.

4.1 Sample profile: Most of the survey respondents (n=10,732; 70%) are below 41 years old (M=35; SD=11.9), with a balance between married (n=7,041; 46.4%) and single (n=6,990; 46.0%), with (at least) incomplete higher education (n=10,376; 68.3%). There was a balance between gender (men=7,768; 51% and women=7,418; 51.2%), and a slight predominance of the lower-middle class (n=6,543; 43.1%) but with a good presence of the upper-middle class (n=5,777; 38%). There was a relative predominance of the Southeast region (n=10,221; 67.3%), where the presence of the analyzed brands is greater, as well as population concentration and consumption potential are higher. These data indicate that the sample reflects the general population of the country. Most respondents indicated that they intended to buy some product in the segment in the six months following their participation in the survey (n=12,640, 83.2%). Regarding buying habits, only 25.6% (n=3,885) say they prefer to buy in physical stores, while 25.4% (n=3,864) indicate that they prefer to buy online. For the rest (49.0%; n=7,437), there is no preference for a specific channel.

4.2 Framework validation: Using the SmartPLS3 software we conducted convergent validity following Ringle et al. (2014) recommendations. We proceeded with the validation of the measurement model considering factor loadings and average variance extracted above 0.5 ($\lambda > .5$; AVE $> .5$), and Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability above 0.7 ($\alpha > .7$; CR $> .7$) (Hair et al., 2014). All indicators were above the critical limits indicated in the literature. Discriminant validity was assessed through Fornell-Larcker criteria, and it is showed in table 1. All internal correlations of the constructs were higher than its correlation with the other constructs presented in the model. Therefore, the proposed model meets both recommended convergent and discriminant validity criteria.

Table 1 - Discriminant Validity: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Attitude_ad	0.944							
2. AdCredibility	0.870	0.919						
3. Attitude Retailer	0.810	0.790	0.937					
4. Irritation	-0.516	-0.447	-0.423	0.886				
5. Likeability	0.809	0.732	0.737	-0.430	0.947			
6. Low-price	0.619	0.621	0.579	-0.229	0.645	0.902		
7. Purchase Intention	0.701	0.696	0.786	-0.356	0.684	0.551	0.889	
8. Intention_to_visit	0.620	0.589	0.647	-0.303	0.639	0.511	0.800	0.835

Table 2 presents the structural model validation. All hypotheses are confirmed, and the coefficients of determination obtained are considered high ($R^2 > 26\%$), (Cohen, 1988; Ringle et al., 2014).

Table 2- Validation of the structural model

Structural relations	Hypothesis	β	SE	p-value	R^2 adj
Attitude Toward ad -> Purchase intention	H01	0.049	0.009	0.001	
Attitude retailer -> Purchase intention	H03	0.426	0.010	0.001	0.765
Intention visit -> Purchase intention	H05	0.494	0.007	0.001	
Attitude Toward ad -> Intention visit	H04	0.620	0.006	0.001	0.385
Attitude Toward ad -> Attitude Toward retailer	H02	0.810	0.004	0.001	0.656
Low-Price perception -> Attitude Toward ad	H06	0.035	0.006	0.001	
Ad credibility -> Attitude Toward ad	H07	0.554	0.008	0.001	0.832
Likeability -> Attitude Toward ad	H08	0.330	0.008	0.001	
Irritation -> Attitude Toward ad	H09	-0.117	0.004	0.001	

Subtitles: β = Path coefficient; SE = Standard error; R^2 adj = R2 adjusted

Note2: p-value estimated by bootstrapping with 5,000 repetitions

Note3: all VIF lower than 5

The tests reveal that the listed perceptions are relevant for the generation of attitude toward the ad explaining 83,1%, 65,6% of attitude toward retailer. Regarding behavioral intentions, the framework also manages to capture 76,5% of the variance of purchase intention. Regarding intention to visit it captures more than 38,5% of variance. Thus, the model can be considered adequate to represent the attitudes and behavioral intentions generated by ads.

4.3 Mediation Analysis: Table 3 shows mediation analyses VAF (Variance Accounted For). Following the literature criteria when VAF is higher than 80% it is considered that the mediation is full (Hair et al., 2014).

The results confirm our hypotheses H3 and H5 and shows that intention to visit and attitude toward retailer are important results for retailers, although sometimes neglect by researchers. The meaning of these results is discussed in next section.

Table 3 – Mediation Analysis

Effect	β	VAF
Attitude Toward ad -> Purchase intention	0.049	
Attitude Toward ad -> Attitude Toward retailer	0.810	88%
Attitude retailer -> Purchase intention	0.426	
Attitude Toward ad -> Purchase intention	0.049	
Attitude Toward ad -> Intention visit	0.620	86%
Intention visit -> Purchase intention	0.494	

Subtitle: TE = Type of Effect; D = Direct; I = Indirect; TI=Total indirect, and T = Total

Note1: Bootstrapping with 5,000 repetitions

Note2: VAF = Explained Variance of the indirect paths

5 Discussion: The framework preview 4 perceptions as antecedents of Attitude toward retail ad, Low price perception; retail ad credibility; likeability and irritation. Regarding the

perception of (low) price, the result is counterintuitive. If the goal of retail ads is to promote – through concrete arguments (Karray et al., 2022; Okazaki et al., 2010) – products in attractive conditions, then a first view of the result presented in Table 2 leads us to conclude that this goal was not achieved with the magnitude expected by retailers, since it accounts for the lowest regression factor (expressed by column “ β ” in Table 2) . Price perception can be elicited and biased by internal price reference that the consumer has or by price ranges, and since retailers announce products with prices and discounts in a daily basis, it is possible that the consumer has adjusted his price reference to consider the offered price as ‘default’ (Elshiewy & Peschel, 2021; Guha et al., 2018; Leung & Tsou, 2019). The scale we used focuses on the perception that the price is “very low”; “very cheap”, and “really an opportunity”. If the price perception generated by advertising is assumed to be ‘default’, then this scale would not be adequate to capture the essence of low price. The war price that the sector promotes leads retailers to intensify discounts to be perceived as different, in a cycle that seems to be endless, and not very effective, at least from a cognitive perspective.

The most important construct for determining attitude toward advertising is ad credibility. Despite the attention credibility has received from academia, particularly seeking strategies to increase ad credibility (Ganz & Grimes, 2018; J.-H. Kim & Song, 2020; Lee et al., 2022), it seems that the retail sector surveyed doesn’t need to use gimmicks to produce believable advertisements, often running advertisements without even a notorious endorser. Previous studies already showed that well-known companies do not obtain a relevant advantage (concerning credibility and purchase intention) by using celebrity endorsement in their ads. They have power enough to create new celebrities by investing on an aspiring celebrity consistently (Freire et al., 2018; Silva et al., 2015).

Talking about emotions, likeability generated by advertising is the second construct in importance to determine consumer’s attitude toward advertising, confirming prior research stating that eliciting positive emotions should be a concern for retailers (Kao & Du, 2020; Karimi & Liu, 2020). Together with irritation (with negative effect), results show the importance of including positive and negative ad-generated emotions, as they are two sides of the same coin. The inclusion of irritation in the framework allowed us to verify whether retailers produced ads with irrelevant or overabundant messages, to the point of negatively affecting Attitude toward the ad. Results show that the evaluated advertisements arouse some level of irritation, but irritation presents a relatively small negative effect on Attitude toward ad. In a strict sense our results confirm some prior research showing that irritating ads affects negatively consumers attitudes and intentions (Maseeh et al., 2021; Niu et al., 2021), but it also shows that this effect, in magnitude, is smaller than produced by likeability, showing this way a positive balance.

We proposed the intention to visit as a variable dependent on attitudes toward advertising. The relationship was found to be significant (see Table 2) and Attitude toward the ad accounts for 38.5% of the explained variance (R^2) of intention to visit, and intention to visit fully mediates the relation of Attitude toward the ad and purchase intention (Hair et al., 2014). An initial analysis, considering only the direct effect, one could argue that the effect of Attitude toward the ad on purchase intention is too small to be significant and disregard it in the analysis. This may explain the amount of research that disregards consumer attitudes to the detriment of intentions, excluding attitude as a mediator from their studies (Chin et al., 2020; Dangelico et al., 2021; Nagaraj, 2021). It is imperative to consider the total effects of the antecedent variables, not just the direct effect. The path Attitude toward ad->intention to visit -> purchase intention corresponds what we call “communication path”, since it is determined only by retailer communication efforts.

We also proposed the mediation path attitude toward the ad->attitude toward retailer -> purchase intention. Attitude toward the ad accounts for 65.6% of the explained variance (R^2) of attitude toward the retailer, and attitude toward the retailer fully mediates the relation of attitude toward the ad and purchase intention. Considering Table 3, attitude toward the retailer mediate the relationship between Attitude toward the ad and purchase intention, in a relationship of total mediation (Hair et al., 2014). As Sander et al. (2021) shows, attitude toward retailer can be formed by ad claims. The framework shows two ways for retailers to influence consumers and generate positive attitudes towards their campaigns, intensifying the results that will be obtained in terms of behavioral intentions.

6 Conclusions: We proposed and validated a framework to assess the effectiveness of retail ads. The framework has been validated with the participation of over 15,000 consumers' evaluation of 98 hard-sell consumer goods retail ads. The model proved to be consistent, but this study is not free from limitations. The framework does not consider variables that could better explain why price perception did not present a more relevant effect on consumers' attitude. It is possible to predict two situations: (1) the implemented low price perception scale may have assessed consumer's internal reference; perhaps a comparative implementation with other market participants could be more revealing; and (2) retailers included in the survey broadcasted two or three ads per week on television, it possibly triggered perceived similarity among ads; also the promotions presented may already be assimilated by the consumer, and thus be considered as 'default'.

Future research could address these limitations, contributing to the body of knowledge about the mechanisms by which price perception can become more evident to the consumer, as well as test the framework on a scenario where retail competitors present a more differentiated set of ads. Another important contribution future studies should address regards positive/negative emotions.

We highlight the mechanisms by which advertisements generate the effects desired by retailers on consumers through two complementary paths that link attitude towards the advertisement and purchase intention: a path mediated by the intention to visit and the other mediated by the attitude towards to the retailer and the operation. These variables should be present in studies of the effectiveness of retail advertising, as they represent the ways in which retail advertising generates the desired behavioral intentions.

As a final theoretical contribution, we emphasize the indication of the intention to visit as a mediator of the relationship between consumer attitudes and purchase intention. This contribution is of special relevance for researchers who intend to define an outcome variable for advertisements. The intention to visit is added to the list of variables usually used, such as purchase intention (Chin et al., 2020; Peña-García et al., 2020), WOM (Thorbjørnsen et al., 2020), brand search (McGranaghan et al., 2022) and brand attitude (Sander et al., 2021).

The framework is a valid instrument to evaluate the generated perceptions, presenting results beyond common sense, such as the perception of low price having such timid effects for the campaigns of the largest retail operators of consumer durables. According to the results, to be effective, ads must be perceived as credible communication, and retailers must keep a solid operation to maintain positive perceptions and attitudes. No matter how creative an ad is, past experiences will still be crucial in consumers assessment of the ad and, thus, in his/her future intentions regarding the retailer.

We proposed, and the results proved, that attitude toward the ad generate intention to visit (the store, website, or app) and attitude toward retailer – and that the purchase intention is a result of attitude toward the ad mediated by the intention to visit and attitude toward retailer. If the purchase intention is not the best way to measure the result of a campaign, even less is

the purchase (the actual behavior), which is subject to an even wider range of contextual situations that are beyond the reach of the marketing and communication team. It has previously been shown that by finding processes and technologies (whether in the store, website, or app) that impose difficulties or lack usefulness for consumers to complete their purchase, companies temporarily or permanently lose the sale (Shankar et al., 2021).

Throughout this work, we approach a wide spectrum of variables and relationships, with the idea of offering science a rational sequence for evaluating advertisements, with the certainty that the subject could not be exhausted.

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