Antecedents and Consequences of Attitude Towards Sales

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In February 2008, 80% of the French population had perceived a reduction in their buying power over the space of the previous year (IFOPa, 2008)[1]. This had become their primary preoccupation, ahead of employment (IFOPb, 2008)[2]. "Consumers have been thrown into utter confusion over the evolution of buying power" (Lecompte and D'Erceville, 2008, pg. 10). They tend to prefer low prices, are buying cheaper brands and take advantage of seasonal sales and promotions to find bargains (Maussion and Revault d'Allonnes, 2005). Thus, a third of the French population buy from hard discounters specialized in textiles and another third do most of their shopping for textiles during the sales (Picard, 2005; Garnier, 2005).

An almost magical rendez-vous that few consumers can walk away from, the sales are a major commercial operation for many brands. Indeed, the first three days of the January and July sales alone represent 10% of the annual turnover for the big Paris department stores (Koning, 2006). This phenomenon also impacts on the mass distribution sector: sales increase by 35% in hypermarkets during the first week of the sales in comparison to the average of the previous month (Picard, 2005). They also generate an increase in traffic, certain brands sometimes achieving as many as five times more hits during the first few days (Koning, 2006), which ultimately benefits all products. This means that, in hypermarkets, even the products that don't offer discounts see their sales increase during this period, by 22% for toys for example (Picard, 2005). For this research we have focused on the clothing and fashion sectors which are, according to Delpal *et al.* (2006), the most concerned by sales.

According to the DGCCRF, "sales are considered to be the sale of stock accompanied or preceded by advertising and announcements with the aim of clearing merchandise in stock more quickly by reducing the price. These sales may only be carried out during two periods of the calendar year for a maximum duration of six weeks, the dates of which are set in each geographical department by the prefect according to the terms set by the decree provided for in the article L310-7 and may only apply to merchandise offered for sale and paid for at least one month prior to the start date of the sales period in question" (article 28, first paragraph of the law of the 5th July 1995, modified in 2001 by article L.310-3I of the Code of Commerce). Sales are therefore distinguished from promotions primarily in their objective (to clear items in stock) and their time-frame (twice annually)[3].

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[1] IFOP survey for *L'Humanité* February 2008
[2] IFOP survey for *La Croix* February 2008
[3] New regulations, which come into effect in January 2009, were adopted in July 2008. We present these in the conclusion.

Sales attract consumers to the point of sale, act on the conversion rate and frequency of visits (point-of-sale marketing) and increase turnover by clearing both on sale (destocking) and non-discounted (new collection) items (exit marketing) (Volle, 1996; Desmet, 2002; Delpal *et al*, 2006).

Sales allow brands to practice a skimming policy by offering products with "high prices at the beginning of the season for clients who are very sensitive to fashion" and to manage the uncertainty of the demand by reducing stocks to make way for the new collection (Desmet, 2002). Delpal *et al.* (2006) observe a comparative slowing down in the practice of sales since 1994. They speak of a "lassitude in the face of the frantic rush in the shops", a rejection of consumer society and the significant increase of hard discounters. It therefore seems essential to isolate the costs and benefits associated with sales in order to make this period, vital for many brands, more attractive.

In 2005, women's spending on clothing came to 528 euros per household and to 320 euros for men (Mermet, 2006). Men are however becoming more and more involved in fashion: clothes are important for 66% of them (Interdeco, 2006). Moreover, half of them consider shopping to be a pleasure, as opposed to 78% of women (Ipsos, 2007). They represent a fully fledged target for brands and "more and more are buying the products they consume", even though "the influential and helping role played by women remains significant". Men also seek low prices and prefer to "renew their wardrobes during the sales" (Mermet, 2006). There are differences however as women tend to accord more importance to price and men to quality (Ipsos, 2007). Brands such as Zara, H&M and even the department stores, who target both men and women, must understand the differences between the sexes in terms of behavior and attitude in regards to sales so as to offer both a differentiated marketing policy. It must be said that little research has been devoted to the specific purchasing behavior of men or to the differences between men and women in terms of shopping and bargain hunting (Tissier-Desbordes and Kimmel, 2002).

The objective of this article is to make a contribution to the literature on promotional operations and shopping by studying a phenomenon rarely explored in an academic framework: sales. This article:

1) examines the antecedents of attitude towards sales in order to better understand the behavior of the consumer during this period;

2) studies the differences between men and women in terms of their perceptions and behavior during the sales in order to inform brands' policies: which benefits to emphasize, which costs to reduce, and this according to the sex of the consumers targeted.

In an approach similar to that adopted by Arnold and Reynolds (2003) in their research on hedonic motivations in shopping, we first present the framework of our research along with the hypotheses, the methodology used and lastly, the results.

Attitude towards sales

Attitude is defined as "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor" (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993, pg. 1). In this context we adopt a one-dimensional interpretation of the term and consider it a recapitulative evaluation (I like or I don't like) associated with an attitudinal object; in this case, sales (Fazio, Powell and Williams, 1989; Dabholkar, 1994; Fazio and Powell, 1997; Ajzen, 2001; Fazio, Eiser and Shook, 2004; Fazio, 2007). This approach was also used in recent studies on consumer behavior (de Barnier, 2002; Aurier and Fort, 2005; Bergkvist and Rossiter, 2007). Verhallen and Van Raaij (1986) stress that the attitude towards an object or act results from a comparison of the social, physical, psychological and temporal costs and benefits associated with it. We will study the impact of the attitude on consumer behavior during the sales: number of days spent participating in the sales, number and type of shops visited, number of products bought and amount spent (for a review of the literature see Rieunier, 2000).

Costs and benefits associated with sales

The benefits related to consumption experiences (Aurier, Evrard and N'Goala, 2004), shopping (Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994) and bargain hunting (Chandon, Wansink and Laurent, 2000) have all been studied in several research projects. On the other hand, little research has been carried out on the costs associated with purchasing experiences or bargain hunting.

Costs and benefits associated with shopping experiences

Patronage is determined by objectives in terms of acquiring products and effectiveness (Seiders, Berry and Gresham, 2000; Filser, Plichon and Anteblian-Lambrey, 2003). Shopping also provides the consumer with an escape through their interaction with the point of sale, the

personnel and the other consumers, and allows them to experience sensory stimulation (Rieunier and Daucé, 2002).

Certain researchers have worked on the costs associated with the consumption experience (Zeithaml, 1988). Bender (1964) noted that the store choice is determined by primary costs (price of the product) and secondary costs, which are either monetary (parking), temporal (waiting time, trip there and back) and psychological (conflicts that are either internal or with others, the temperature, the ambiance, the store layout, etc.).

According to d'Astous (2000), there are four dimensions to psychological cost: contact with employees (sales pressure, negative attitude or unavailability of sales staff), nature of the selection (unavailability of products on sale or particular sizes), organization of the store (no mirrors, prices not marked, etc.) and the physical environment (heat, loud music, unpleasant smell, etc.). The purchasing environment plays a role in determining internal costs (see Rieunier, 2000 for a review of the literature).

Costs and benefits associated with bargain hunting

Bargains are first and foremost utilitarian because they provide savings and the possibility of buying more products or products of better quality (Chandon, Wansink and Laurent, 2000; Ailawadi, Neslin and Gedenk, 2001). They also draw attention to the product at the sale location or in advertising material and therefore facilitate shopping.

Prices can be the cause of negative (if the price paid is considered too high compared to the reference price) or positive emotions (if the opposite is true). In this way, obtaining a low price or an item on sale can lead the purchaser to feel a certain pride, an impression of intelligence or skill, either by feeling they have "beaten" a large company or being satisfied that they possess the expertise to be able to help others (Schindler, 1989; Honea and Dahl, 2005).

According to Chandon, Wansink and Laurent (2000), promotions allow the purchaser to "gain certain social recognition" as a smart shopper. Since they are constantly being changed and renewed, promotions also fulfill the need for exploration and variety and stimulate curiosity (Chandon, Wansink and Laurent, 2000; Ailawadi, Neslin and Gedenk, 2001). Lastly, the consumer may find it enjoyable to participate in promotions such as games or competitions.

Costs and benefits associated with sales: qualitative study

In order to isolate the costs and benefits associated with sales, we conducted eighteen semi-directive interviews with women aged between 24 and 54. These were followed by a literature review. This methodology has already been employed in previous studies (Chandon, Wansink and Laurent, 2000; Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). During this phase, no men were questioned, which limits the procedure's external validity: we cannot affirm with certainty that a qualitative study conducted on men would not have revealed other dimensions.

Figure 1 presents the methodology utilized.

Insert Figure 1

Four benefits associated with sales arise in consumers' discourse.

- *The opportunity to buy at a reduced price.* The consumer enjoys buying a product at a lower price during the sales. According to Raghubir, Inman and Grande (2004), obtaining the same "quantity" at a lower price is part of the economic benefits of promotions. Schindler (1989) or Honea and Dahl (2005) note that price reductions provoke positive emotions. Bargain hunting and haggling are also among the hedonic motivations behind shopping (Tauber, 1972; Arnold and Reynolds, 2003).

- *The opportunity to buy more.* According to Raghubir *et al.* (2004), promotions enable consumers to increase the volume they purchase for the same amount of money. The same is true for sales: 21% of individuals questioned by Delpal *et al.* (2006) say they shop during the sales in order to buy more articles. According to Chandon, Wansink and Laurent (2000), the monetary economy associated with promotions results from reducing the unitary price of the product and providing the opportunity to buy more for the same amount of money or buy the same quantity more cheaply. In our research, to buy something more cheaply and to buy more are two distinct dimensions. In effect, clothes are goods "which survive several utilizations" (Kotler, Dubois and Manceau, 2004) but which can become obsolete in terms of fashion (Warnier and Lecocq, 2003). Although certain consumers take advantage of low prices to stock clothing for future use (Betts and McGoldrick, 1996), buying more can also be assimilated with the search for variety or the desire to "keep up with the fashions", as Delpal *et al.* (2006) point out. The chance to buy more is thus perceived to be a gain rather than a monetary economy (satisfying a need at a lower cost).

- *The opportunity to buy better quality products*. This means purchasing a product of superior

objective ("objective characteristics of the product and capacity to fulfill its functions") or subjective ("the degree to which its characteristics meet the expectations justifiably held by the customer") quality (Lendrevie, Lévy and Lindon, 2003, pp. 908-910). It can also be a question of buying a more prestigious brand symbolizing a degree of functional, relational, ethical, social, emotional or aesthetic quality (Heilbrunn, 2003). For many, the sales represent the only time of the year when certain brands are affordable. Delpal *et al.* (2006) confirm that sales enable to customer to benefit from increased "quality – whether it be objective (valuable material) or subjective (major brand) – in the products purchased". Chandon, Wansink and Laurent (2000) also affirm that one of the benefits associated with promotions is the opportunity to buy better quality products. According to a study conducted by Betts and McGoldrick (1996), one of the attractions of sales is that they enable consumers to "obtain better quality goods" than those they would normally buy.

- *Removing the guilt attached to spending*. According to Prelec and Loewenstein (1998), spending provokes negative emotions which reduce the pleasure of consuming. Buying something at a lower price than the reference price can give the impression of saving money and reduces the negative emotions associated with paying (Chandon, Wansink and Laurent, 2000). Betts and McGoldrick (1996) also note that getting a good deal reduces the amount of guilt surrounding the purchase and liberates certain consumers from their "habitual inhibitions" in this regard. Delpal *et al.* (2006) observe that sales are "also a guilt-relieving factor in terms of purchases which are in principle too costly for the consumer's standard of living". Certain consumers are motivated as much by the purchasing act itself as by the product. They cheer themselves up and "treat themselves" by spending money (Kacen, 1994) or by buying little presents for themselves (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003) without feeling guilty because they feel like they have gotten a good deal.

Seven factors appear as costs associated with sales.

- *Fear of being ripped off*. Sales clearly generate a lack of trust, certain consumers doubting the integrity of stockists. The terms "distrust" and "rip-off" appear repeatedly in interviews. Doubts as to the authenticity of price reductions are also sometimes expressed.

- *Doubts as to the quality of the products*. The evaluation of the products plays a role in the evaluation of the purchasing experience (satisfaction with regards to visiting the store) (Westbrook, 1981). Furthermore, Arnold *et al.* (2005) confirm that a lack of technical quality with regards to the products produces a "terrible" purchasing experience.

- *Difficulty in finding the right product*. Products disappear so quickly during the sales that many consumers have difficulty in finding the ones they want. Difficulty in finding

products, stock outages and certain sizes or items on sale being unavailable are among the irritations associated with shopping (d'Astous, 2000; Machleit, Meyer and Eroglu, 2005; Arnold *et al*, 2005).

- *Deterioration of the atmosphere in shops*, which corresponds to the "effort" dimension of purchasing convenience (Berry, Seiders and Grewal, 2002). Modifications in the purchasing environment provoke negative emotions and reduce the consumer's ability to find products and analyze information when making their decision (Rieunier, 2000). This increase in the emotional, physical and cognitive efforts required to take advantage of the sales causes the convenience of purchasing to be greatly reduced. The larger numbers of people are one factor that contributes to a deterioration of the atmosphere, respondents citing the words "jostling" and "crowds". Other factors have also been identified by d'Astous (2000), Machleit, Meyer and Eroglu (2005) and Arnold *et al.* (2005) such as the organization of the store, contact with the sales personnel and the behavior of the other shoppers.

- *Time investment.* This concerns the "time" dimension of purchasing convenience (Berry, Seiders and Grewal, 2002). For certain consumers, it is necessary to prepare for the sales by locating products in the shops beforehand. Due to crowds, disarray in the store and a more limited selection, consumers can experience difficulties in finding and choosing products (Dion, 2000; Seiders, Berry and Gresham, 2000). Due to long waits at the checkouts, they can also have difficulty in acquiring them.

- *The need to be different.* Chandon, Wansink and Laurent (2000, pg. 68) affirm that sales enable consumers to "achieve certain social recognition". However, according to Ailawadi, Neslin and Gedenk (2001), the motivation to conform to others' expectations has a negative impact on the use of coupons and leaflets. Here, the need to be unique, to be different from others (Burns and Warren, 1995; Simonson and Nowalis, 2000) provokes a rejection of sales. When the consumer feels extremely similar to others, the need to feel different emerges and prompts them to distinguish themselves in order to reduce their negative emotions and improve their self-esteem (Tian, Bearden and Hunter, 2001). The need to be unique is expressed in the acquisition, utilization and possession of consumer goods (Tian, Bearden and Hunter, 2001), but also in a person's shopping choices (Burns and Warren, 1995). In the context of sales, the need to be different, activated by the crowds in the shops and the media pressure surrounding the sales (phenomena which are less present with promotions), is manifested by rejecting similarity and popular practices.

- *Fear of unnecessary spending.* The excitement generated by the sales as well as the pressure exercised by the media can lead certain consumers to make purchases they later regret.

Differences between men and women

Several concepts have been used during the study of differences between men and women (Table 1): sex, gender and sexual identity (Tissier-Desbordes and Kimmel, 2002). In our case, it is the sex that we are concerned with. Indeed, according to Stern (1987) or Palan (2001), sex is the best variable to explain consumer behavior: perception and utilization of the product, brand choice, media use, etc. In fact, sex is often used as a criterion for segmentation, particularly for clothing and cosmetics (Putrevu, 2001; Kotler, Dubois and Manceau, 2004). According to these authors, a segmentation based on this variable is effective for three reasons: (1) it is easy to know which segment an individual belongs to, (2) segments defined in this way are "large enough to be profitable" and (3) the company can "direct its commercial efforts" towards men or women.

Insert Table 1

According to Otnes and McGrath (2001), as a result of the evolution of men and women's place in society, some men are able to go beyond traditional gender-biased roles and when necessary adopt feminine behaviors, such as shopping. Shopping does however remain a largely utilitarian activity for men, its value being the means to achieve an objective: status, power and control of the use of female products, seduction by buying a gift, etc. In terms of the drivers of store patronage, Noble, Griffith and Adjei (2006) show that men's primary motivations are of a utilitarian nature (to gather information or as a convenient means of purchasing), whilst women's are hedonic (originality of products, social interaction, etc.). Men and women do not evaluate a point of sale the same way. The atmosphere of the store and its location, for example, have a greater impact on satisfaction for women (Anselmsson, 2006), who are more often irritated by crowds, the unpleasant behavior of sales personnel, the temperature or being unable to find the product they're looking for (d'Astous, 2000; Machleit, Meyer and Eroglu, 2005).

Research hypotheses

In order to meet our research objectives, we developed the following model[4] (Figure 2). Given the scarcity of studies on sales, we did not specify any hypotheses on the intensity of the links between an attitude and its antecedents. To be more precise, we feel it is difficult to formulate hypotheses on the differences between men and women in relation to this or that antecedent. In that sense, a part of our research takes on an exploratory aspect (see Chun and Davies, 2006, for a similar approach). However, the literature on shopping and advertising has enabled us to formulate hypotheses on the differences between men and women in terms of behavior during sales.

Many studies (Ipsos, 2007; Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Noble, Griffith and Adjei, 2006) show that women have a more favorable attitude towards shopping than men and that they get hedonic gratification out of this activity. Moreover, they devote more time to shopping than men do, whether it be when buying something for themselves (Ipsos, 2007) or for others (Cleveland *et al*, 2003). They also invest more financial resources in buying clothes (Mermet, 2006). This behavior should gain in magnitude during the sales, being an event which is greatly hyped up by the media: women should frequent shops more than men and buy more. Consequently:

H1: There are significant differences between men and women in terms of purchasing behavior and frequenting points of sale during the sales. Compared to men, women:

  H1a : spend more days shopping at the sales;

  H1b : visit more shops during the sales;

  H1c : frequent more distribution networks during the sales;

  H1d : buy more products during the sales;

  H1e : spend more money during the sales.

Among the stereotypical objectives associated with women, we find the terms "emotional", "dependent", "empathetic", and among those associated with men, "independent" and "self-assured" (Tissier-Desbordes and Kimmel, 2002). Beyond these

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[4] "Model" in this context should be understood in the statistics sense of the term (*i.e.* 'structural equation model'), and therefore an ensemble of variables whose links we wish to test, rather than in the 'marketing' sense of the term (*i.e.*, a representation of reality; Lehu, 2004).

stereotypes, research on the personality proves that women have high scores on socio-emotional, expressive and people-oriented dimensions, and men on instrumental and goal-oriented dimensions (Putrevu, 2001). Indeed, women value social interaction during shopping activities more highly than men (Noble, Griffith and Adjei, 2006). For some consumers, going shopping is an opportunity to catch up with friends and spend time with them, and thus constitutes one of the hedonic motivations for shopping, which are much stronger in women (Prus, 1993; Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Peretz, 2005). We may therefore believe that, in the context of sales, women will have a greater tendency than men to shop at the sales in the company of their friends and family in order to spend time with them. This results in hypothesis H2:

H2: Compared to men, women are more likely to shop at the sales with friends or family.

Insert Figure 2

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

We first examined the links between the attitude towards sales, its antecedents and its consequences in terms of behavior. The differences between men and women were also examined. We next concentrated on the January 2007 sales and studied more closely the differences between men and women in terms of purchasing behavior and frequenting points of sale, but also in terms of social interaction. Before presenting the results of this study, we will take a look at the measurements used.

Measurement of costs and benefits associated with sales

We conducted several quantitative studies. The objectives of these studies and the primary characteristics of the samples are shown in Figure 1. None of the samples is representative of the French population, which may limit the external validity of the results. Following the qualitative study, we drew up a list of 66 items (on 7-point Likert scales) each measuring one of the constructs previously identified, i.e. the attitude and its antecedents.

The first survey was administered on line using 295 students. We conducted exploratory factor analyses using Statistica 6: several principal component analyses with Varimax rotation

were carried out, each time removing those items which indicated a problem (saturation for several or else no axis). Our aim was to retain two items per construct, so as to not overload the next questionnaires. Where necessary, we eliminated those items that were saturating their factorial axis as little as possible and presenting an average correlation lower than the other items in their dimension.

A second survey was then carried out. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to two samples (387 students and 225 adults respectively). The objective was to test the previously obtained results via a confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS 5 in order to evaluate, in particular, the psychometric qualities of the measurement scales (Figure 1 and Table 2). The results of the confirmatory factor analysis were satisfactory[5].

A final data collection was then undertaken over the Internet using a convenience sample of 536 adults. The structure of this sample is presented in Table 3. The aim of this data collection was firstly, to revalidate the psychometric qualities of the measurements and secondly, to test the links between the constructs presented in Figure 2. This test made it possible to evaluate the predictive validity of the measurement for the attitude and the costs and benefits associated with sales, and to gain a better understanding of these concepts in a broader context.

Insert le Table 2

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis on the final sample are very satisfactory (n = 536; Chi-square = 304.11 (ddl = 186, p = 0), RMSEA = 0.034, SRMR = 0.031 and CFI = 0.979), as were the reliability and validity tests (Tables 4 and 5; the names of the items appear in Appendix A1). The discriminant validity is thus demonstrated, given that the 12 variables identified are empirically distinct: the square roots of the ρVC of each construct are markedly higher than the correlations shared with the other constructs.

Insert Tablex 3, 4 et 5

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[5]   The complete results of these analyses can be obtained directly from the authors.

The links between the constructs presented in Figure 2 can be tested. For this we proceeded to a covariance structure analysis with AMOS 5, using multi-group modeling (men and women[6]). This approach allowed us to find out if the parameters tested are the same for both sexes and therefore whether or not "belonging to a group changes the relationships specified in the model" (Kline, 2005, pg. 289).

Measurements

The measurements are presented in Appendix A2. The measurement for behavior is declarative, which constitutes one of the limitations of this research. Nonetheless, every precaution has been taken to obtain the best possible responses (see Korchia, 2001, for a summary of frequency reports).

Results

In order to test the specified relationships between the constructs, we followed Kline's (2005; see Table 2) recommendations. The non constrained multi-group model gives very satisfactory results (Table 6) and can therefore be compared to the invariance model of the measurements. The difference test gives χ^2 [16] = 22.3, p = 13.4%: deterioration of the Chi-square is not significant; therefore the constructs have the same significance for men and women. Contrarily, the Chi-square deteriorates significantly if the invariance of the structural links is added to the invariance model of the measurements: χ^2 [11] = 22.6, p = 0.2%. Sex therefore does indeed have a moderating effect.

A series of additional tests allowed us to evaluate the levels of differences between men and women (first three column of Table 7). These reveal that the dimensions *buy at a reduced price*, *buy more* and *doubts as to the quality of the products* do not have the same effects on attitude for men and women (p < 5%). We can also cite the dimension *the need to be different*

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[6]   Certain variables being strongly non normal, we proceeded to carry out *bootstrap* sampling (n = 1000), which returned results very similar to those presented here. It was not possible to use the ADF method of estimation due to the size of the sample; therefore the method selected was maximum likelihood.

(p < 8%). The final model therefore doesn't change in terms of measurements, i.e. the non standardized links between the items and their respective constructs are the same for the two groups, which ensures the concepts have the same significance for men and women. Seven of the antecedents of attitude have equal effects for men and women, whilst the effects of the four remaining antecedents vary significantly according to sex (six last columns in Table 7).

The Chi-square tests indicate that this model presents an adjustment index which is as good as the invariance model of the measurements ($\chi^2[7] = 3.9$, p = 79.1%) and significantly better than the constrained model (structural and measurement links; $\chi^2[4] = 18.7$, p = 0.1%).

<mark>Insert Tablex 6 & 7</mark>

The attitude held towards sales significantly influences the behavior of both men and women: the SMCs (equivalent to R^2) for behavior are 0.38 and 0.35 respectively. This result is even more interesting since the two concepts were measured using two different scales (Likert *vs.* open numerical questions), which reduces the potential halo effect. The attitude itself is indeed predicted by its antecedents (SMC = 0.62 for men and 0.58 for women). Furthermore, two thirds of the antecedents have similar effects on men and on women. It can also be noted that both men and women present very close or equal averages for the vast majority of items; the main difference being the items measuring the attitude towards sales, higher for women.

The opportunity to purchase better quality products has a positive impact on the attitude. Not surprisingly, we find results similar to those of Chandon, Wansink and Laurent (2000) in regards to promotions. The sales allow shoppers access to prestigious or "better" brands that are otherwise inaccessible the rest of the year, which represents a strong motivation.

As Arnold *et al.* (2005) and d'Astous (2000) suggest in their work *re* the "irritating" or "terrible" aspects of shopping, difficulty in finding the right product has a negative impact on the attitude.

Relieving the guilt associated with spending money has a positive effect on the attitude towards sales. For some consumers, spending money is a mood booster and is part of the hedonic motivation for shopping (Hsieh and Costa, 2001). The purchasing process is not valued solely for the goals it allows one to achieve, such as finding the perfect product and receiving a discount; it represents an end in itself. The sale context helps to reduce negative emotions associated with the payment.

Two elements (fear of being ripped off and fear of spending money unnecessarily), considered to be costs as a result of the qualitative study, have a positive impact on the attitude. We can venture two possible explanations for this initially surprising result. Firstly, one must be very familiar with the sales to be conscious of the risk of spending too much, or of any potential rip-offs; for certain consumers who are used to the sales and like them, these two risks can be part of the fun. Similarly, avoiding being ripped off and unnecessary spending may represent a challenge for some shoppers and therefore have a positive impact on the hedonic value of shopping during the sales. It would be necessary to verify this interpretation by studying the notion of challenge and immersion in the context of shopping and sales in particular.

Elements related to deterioration of the atmosphere or time investment which irritate the client (d'Astous, 2000; Machleit, Meyer and Eroglu, 2005; Arnold *et al*, 2005) do not have a significant influence on the attitude towards sales for men or women. It is possible that consumers consider these problems inevitable and inseparable from sales. Some may even acknowledge the necessity to make an effort and invest time in order to achieve a satisfactory result[7]. It is also possible that these phenomena do not get in the way of achieving certain goals in shopping (sensory stimulation, bargain hunting, etc.), which would explain the lack of influence on attitude.

Several antecedents have different effects according to gender: the opportunity to spend less money has a positive impact on the attitude of men (the 2nd greatest absolute value) and is non significant for women. According to an Ipsos study (2007), the determining criterion when choosing an item of clothing is quality for men and price for women. We then put forward the idea that women, who are often expert shoppers (Higie, Feick and Price, 1987), know how to get low prices all year round by taking advantage of promotions and going to hard discounters or cut-price unlabelled designer outlets (Feick and Price, 1987). This means that the opportunity to buy at a reduced price is not a feature distinctive to the sales and therefore does not have a significant impact on the attitude. At the same time it is possible that men, who tend to be more utilitarian shoppers, are receptive to the opportunity to buy their usual brands more cheaply whilst also reducing the cognitive and time resources invested during shopping activities (Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994; Bakewell and Mitchell, 2006).

On the other hand, the opportunity to buy more has a positive impact on the attitude of women but is not significant for men. It is possible that this result is the consequence of

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[7] The authors wish to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for this suggestion.

women being more involved in fashion (O'Cass, 2001), because they value the opportunity sales afford them to buy more and "keep up with the fashions" (Delpal *et al,* 2006). It was also revealed during the qualitative phase that some women like sales because they represent an opportunity to buy products for the rest of their family, particularly large quantities of clothing for their children (even stocking clothes for the years to come).

The need to be different has a negative influence on attitude for both women and men (this is the variable which has the strongest impact), but the link is stronger with the latter. Psychological reactance is defined as "a state of motivation following a threat of restriction on freedom and is manifested by resistance to the influence" (Guéguen and Fisher-Lokou, 2003, pg. 3). It is possible that pressure exerted by the media and one's entourage during the sales be perceived as a restriction on individual freedom by both men and women, but that this provokes a more intense negative reaction in men, perhaps even more so because, for some men, sales may be associated with a female activity they wish to distinguish themselves from. It would be interesting to validate this interpretation in future research.

Finally, doubts as to the quality of the products has a negative impact on the attitude towards sales for women, but this link is not significant for men. Women are more involved in fashion (O'Cass, 2001), which is manifested by higher standards and a more developed propensity to look for the best performances (Strazzieri, 1993), which could explain why they consider the quality of clothing more important.

Tests of hypotheses: differences between men and women

Test of H1. H1 postulates that there are significant differences between men and women in terms of purchasing behavior and frequenting points of sale during the sales. H1a, H1b, H1c, H1d and H1e specify that, compared to men, women spend more days shopping at the sales, visit more shops, frequent more distribution networks, buy more products and spend more money. The procedure proposed by Kline (2005) was selected to test H1. This consisted in fixing the coefficient of the variable to be analyzed at 0, in this case behavior, for one of the two groups. We obtained a difference greater than 0.291 ($p < 1\%$) for women. H1 is validated. A series of ANOVA on each of the five measurements of behavior were also carried out; all results were significantly ($p < 5\%$) higher for women (Table 8). H1a, H1b, H1c, H1d and H1e are validated.

Women, in accordance with the studies already cited (Cleveland _et al_, 2003; Ipsos, 2007), display more intense purchasing and patronage behavior than men (H1 validated). This phenomenon can in part be explained by the fact that women tend to seek a hedonic gratification in shopping and that the financial and time resources invested have a positive impact on the hedonic value (Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994).

Test of H2. According to H2, compared to men, women have a greater tendency to shop at the sales with other people. Three questions were asked about shopping at the sales in the company of friends or family (see Appendix A2). This hypothesis was tested on individuals who had shopped at the sales in January 2007. The test was carried out using AMOS, because using 3 items constitutes a more statistically robust test than a classic ANOVA analysis. We therefore conducted a multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (men _vs_. women) on the scale, making sure to validate the invariance of the measurements. The model presents excellent results (^{2} [2] = 1.10; p = 0.58; CFI = 1; RMSEA = 0; SRMR = 0.01) and it was found that the average for women was significantly higher than that of men, by 0.38 (p < 1 %). H2 is therefore validated (an analysis conducted with all respondents, and not only with those who had shopped at the sales in 2007, gave the same results). More so than men, women shop at the sales with their friends and family.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND AREAS FOR FUTHER RESEARCH

The suggested relationships that exist between the attitude towards sales, its antecedents and its consequences as well as the hypotheses formulated on the differences between men and women in terms of behavior during the sales are, generally speaking, validated.

Managerial implications

We can see several managerial implications arising from this research. Some are quite general while others are specific to the gender targeted by the brand.

First of all, atmosphere and time investment do not have an impact on the attitude towards sales. We are therefore led to believe that brands do not need to go to excessive lengths to improve the perception of these aspects. Difficulty in finding the right product sometimes has a negative influence on the attitude. Although this particular point usually concerns certain sizes or colors being unavailable, shops should lay out their aisles in such a way that shoppers can find the products they're looking for within a reasonable amount of time. It therefore seems important to opt for clear signage and effective categorization of products by size and/or color.

Lessoning guilt associated with spending money has a relatively limited positive effect on attitude. It would be worthwhile to research whether or not clients of brands positioned on price are less subject to this argument than clients of brands more focused on ostentatious aspects. The advertising discourse could then be adjusted according to the positioning of the brand.

Shopping centers and large department stores could create a charter for consumers, in which they would apply several basic principles: observation of regulations (particularly in regards to prices and the age of products) and commitment to quality. Two other points may also be accorded some importance, at least for the first week of the sales: a greater number of checkouts and longer opening hours. These two arguments are all the more important because the need to be different is the variable which has the greatest effect on attitude, particularly for men. From this point of view we feel it would be useful to show consumers that there are other ways of experiencing the sales, without getting lost in the crowds. In this respect, sales on the Internet also seem to be a good solution. The most loyal consumers could, for example, benefit from preferential access to a certain number of products on sale or additional discounts on the store's website.

Contrarily to women, men are first and foremost attracted by the idea of being able to buy products from their favorite brands more cheaply. Brands that target men should therefore place their emphasis on price reductions in their communications. On the other hand, those brands targeting women should place their emphasis on the possibility and the pleasure of buying more. The opportunity to buy at a reduced price cannot be totally eliminated in this case as this aspect seems to be a necessary but insufficient condition.

Although both men and women are receptive to the idea of being able to purchase more prestigious brands during the sales, we do not believe that stores commercializing these brands should communicate on this point. A top-of-the-range brand emphasizing this argument becomes effectively banal and loses its prestige. Only discount points of sale selling upmarket brands may, to our thinking, play on the opportunity to "buy even better" during the sales.

Limitations and areas for further research

To our knowledge this research constitutes the first attempt to understand the consumer's behavior during the sales. It contains certain limitations: a qualitative study conducted on an entirely female sample (which may have limited the number of updated dimensions), using convenience samples which are not representative of the French population, measurement of behavior based on statements and a scales purification process which may have eliminated pertinent items (Rossiter, 2002). In addition, this work is yet to be completed. It does in fact examine the connections between the attitude towards sales, its antecedents and its consequences. In order to better understand consumer behavior during sales, it would be necessary to take into account other socio-demographic variables (such as revenue), general individual characteristics (for example, perceived financial wellbeing) or individual differences specific to the domain (such as the tendency to compare prices) (Mittal, 1994). One can imagine that a consumer who doesn't like sales (out of a need to be different, for example) still feels required to shop at them for financial reasons or in order to comply with social norms (to accompany friends, etc.). Taking the hedonic and utilitarian values of sales into account would also help to gain a greater understanding of the links between the costs and benefits associated with sales, the attitude, and purchasing and patronage behaviors. This approach was adopted by de Pechpeyrou *et al.* (2006) in a study on attitude towards promotions. Other research avenues may be explored in order to further these results and rectify the limitations of this research.

Time investment and deterioration of the atmosphere, often cited as being costs during qualitative studies, do not have a significant impact on attitude. It would be interesting to study the impact of the purchasing environment on the cognitive and emotional responses of the consumer. The question could be asked if the increased time and effort required to do the

shopping doesn't contribute to the hedonic value of the sales. The deterioration of the atmosphere turns shopping into an adventure or "treasure hunt" (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003); spending time looking for the products justifies the reward gained, i.e. a better price or a better quality/price ratio[8]. We could also ask consumers to comment on photos taken at points of sale and/or to take photos showing the atmosphere in these locations during the sales (Holbrook *et al,* 2001; Dion and Ladwein, 2005). This methodology should allow us to gain a better understanding of the effects and significance of the purchasing environment during the sales.

At the same time, as was mentioned during the discussion of the results, it would also be necessary to analyze the nature of the consumer's personal experience during the sales. It would be worthwhile to study the sales from the optimal experience angle, which Csikszentmihalyi (1990, pg. 105) defines as "the engagement in a precise task (a challenge) that provides an immediate retroactive effect, which requires appropriate abilities, a control of one's actions and an intense concentration which leaves no room for distractions or preoccupations about oneself and which is (generally) accompanied by an altered perception of time". Under which conditions do consumers find themselves in an optimal experience situation during the sales? What are the consequences in terms of interaction with others or behavior in the sales location? Are there any differences between men and women?

The fact that the need to be different is so important poses the question of social pressure and its consequences in terms of attitude and behavior during the sales. The model of Ajzen and Fishbein's theory of planned behavior would make for a pertinent theoretical framework for understanding these phenomena. Moreover, the notion of reactance, presented in marketing by Clee and Wicklund (1980), Darpy and Prim-Allaz (2006), and Algesheimer, Dholakia and Herrmann (2005) could provide an insight into how individuals react to social pressure. According to the latter, in a brand community the reactance induced by perceiving a strong social pressure to interact and cooperate has a negative impact on the intention to remain a member of that community.

One could attempt to further develop the analysis initiated in this research by concentrating more specifically on the nature of interactions (with family and friends but also with sales staff and other customers) and their consequences in terms of purchasing and patronage behavior. According to Prus (1994), companions make the purchasing experience more pleasurable but also sometimes more complex, due to interference in the purchasing

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[8]   The authors would like to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for this suggestion.

process and attempting to influence the buyer. Traditional techniques should also be contemplated, such as interviews and observation, but also other methods which are not as frequently used in marketing, such as visual anthropology (films or photographs) (Dion, 2007).

The opportunity to buy more has a positive impact on attitude towards sales for women, and relieving the guilt of spending money has a positive impact for both men and women. It seems that women's purchasing behavior is more impulsive and/or compulsive than men's (Dittmar, Beattie and Friese, 1996; Roberts, 1998; Dittmar, 2005). Are sales the time to succumb remorselessly to these tendencies which are reinforced by the excitement induced by the media coverage, the crowds and the fact that you are accompanied by others (Giraud, 2002)? In order to answer this question, it would seem necessary to compare shopping behavior during and outside the sales period.

In the context of the law for modernizing the economy adopted on the 23rd July 2008 by the parliament, the regulation concerning sales was modified on several points (Article 98, Chapter IV "Development of trade", Law N°2008-776 of the 4th August 2008 on modernizing the economy, *Journal Officiel de la République Française*, 5th August 2008). The sales are now defined as "sales which, firstly, are accompanied or preceded by advertising and are announced as designed to clear merchandise in stock more quickly by reducing prices and secondly, which take place during the defined periods of the calendar year as follows: (1) two periods of five weeks each […] (2) one period of a maximum duration of two weeks or two periods of a maximum duration of one week each, the dates of which are freely chosen by the retailer/wholesaler". A decree will set the dates of the sales at a national level and will allow for special dates to accommodate local particularities. Retailers and wholesalers will also dispose of two additional weeks of "free" sales which can be split into two periods. This new definition of sales gives traders the opportunity to announce price reductions to clear stock outside sales periods, without being able to resell at a loss. The objective of these modifications (which will be applicable as from 1st January 2009) is to give traders more flexibility in managing their stock and especially to put pressure on prices so that consumers may take advantage of price reductions all year round. It would be interesting to study the impact of these regulations on consumers' behavior during and outside the sales periods. Perhaps multiplying price reductions in this way will help facilitate frequenting points of sale during these periods, which may prompt individuals discouraged by the crowds to benefit from them. This could however also make sales banal, which would limit the magical aspect that they take on in the eyes of some, and would therefore reduce the hedonic value associated

with this period. What will be the impact of these new regulations on the attitude towards sales and its antecedents (costs and benefits, hedonic and utilitarian value of the sales)? One could also study the influence of these new regulations on pricing psychology, particularly on the interest in prices and the perception and evaluation of prices[9] (Diller and Ivens, 2000). Won't these measurements reinforce the place of the price even further in the purchase decision? What impact will they have on price perception and price evaluation?

Finally, it would be worthwhile to establish a comparison with other forms of bargain hunting: frequenting factory and cut-price unlabelled designer outlets or hard textile discounters, private sales over the Internet, buying second-hand goods or participating in distributers' promotional offers. What are the costs and benefits associated with each form of bargain hunting? What are the strategies used to find bargains? Are there any differences between men and women?

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[9]   Diller and Ivens (2000, pp.30-32) define these concepts as follows: interest in prices as "the need to find information on the price and to take this into account when making the purchase decision", perception of price as "the subjective impression that a consumer acquires of a price" and finally the judgement of price as "a completely cognitive judgement process. Prices are subjected to an examination in order to determine whether or not they are advantageous or at least acceptable. In this context, the consumer's knowledge of prices serves as a reference".

Appendices

A1 – Measurement of attitude towards sales and of associated costs and benefits

Attitude
I like sales
I love doing the sales

Opportunity to buy at a reduced price
Sales are so that you can buy the same brands you buy the rest of the year more cheaply
During the sales, you can buy the clothes you wear the rest of the year for better prices

Opportunity to buy better quality products
Sales enable me to buy products which are too expensive the rest of the year
Because of the sales, I can buy products which are not usually affordable

Opportunity to buy more
During the sales I buy more products for the same amount of money
I take advantage of the sales to buy more with the same amount of money

Relieving the guilt of spending money
During the sales you can go shopping without feeling guilty
During the sales you can give in to your whims without worrying about your bank account

Fear of being ripped off
Shops use the sales to sell off old products
Sales allow shops to clear their old stock

Doubts as to the quality of products
Clothing bought on sale is rarely very good quality
The products sold during the sales are bad quality

Difficulty in finding the right product
It's difficult to find what you want during the sales
During the sales it's hard to find what I need

Deterioration of the atmosphere
During the sales the shops are disorganized
Shops are in a shambles during the sales

Time investment
If you want to do the sales well, you shouldn't be in a hurry
You need time to do the sales well

Need to be different
Regular sales-shoppers are real sheep
Doing the sales is getting lost in the crowd

Fear of unnecessary spending
During the sales there's a risk of buying products you don't need
During the sales you tend to buy unnecessary products

A2 – Other measurement scales used in the research

Scale used	Source	Structure	Items
Behavior during the sales	*ad hoc* scale	one-dimensional (α = 0.94)	Number of days spent shopping at the sales Number of shops visited Number of different distribution networks Number of products purchased Total amount spent
Social interaction with friends and family	Scale adapted from Arnold and Reynolds (2003)	one-dimensional (α = 0.90)	I do the sales with my friends or family for the pleasure of their company Doing the sales with friends or family is a way of seeing them Doing the sales with friends or family lets me spend time with them *(7-point Likert)*

Note: Cronbach's alpha (α) obtained on the final sample (N=536; the same values were obtained on samples of men and women taken separately). In regards to behavior during the sales, logarithms of the variables were used (see Korchia, 2001, for a summary).

Table 1: Concepts related to gender (adapted from Tissier-Desbordes, 2002 and Palan, 2001)

Concept	Definition
Gender	"Gender refers to **the ensemble of characteristics and behaviors that a given society distinctly associates with and expects from men and women**. It's our notion of femininity and masculinity". "The gender is fashioned, created by the individual inserted into a particular culture, which itself influences the individual's conception of gender. It is through this permanent interaction that gender is constructed." (Tissier-Desbordes and Kimmel, 2002, pg. 56) Gender "is the cultural definition of behavior defined as appropriate to the sexes in a given society at a given time. **Gender is a set of cultural roles**" (Palan, 2001, pg. 4)
Sex	"Sex is a **biological difference between man and woman**, whilst gender allows social and cultural distinction between masculine and feminine. Sex is based on physical characteristics, whilst gender implies studying the meanings societies and individuals give to the masculine/feminine categories." (Tissier-Desbordes and Kimmel, 2002, pg. 56)
Gender Identity	"Psycho-sociological phenomenon by which **the individual defines or recognises themselves as masculine or feminine**" (Tissier-Desbordes and Kimmel, 2002, pg. 57) "The extent to which an individual identifies or thinks of himself-or herself as masculine or feminine" (Palan, 2001, pg. 4)

Table 2: Data processing methodology

Evaluation of the psychometric qualities of the measurement scales

Based on Jöreskog's (1993) recommendations, we acknowledge three stages for this evaluation:

1. Checking that there are no aberrant results, such as correlations greater than 1 or non significant parameters;
2. Examining adjustment indices, which allows the overall quality of the model to be evaluated, and which must reach certain threshold values;
3. Parameters internal to the model such as the λ (comparable with standardized regression coefficients) of the items as well as the reliability indicators must also reach certain threshold values.

In addition to the Chi-square test, which indicates the data's capacity to reproduce the theoretical model, the adjustment indices selected are the RMSEA and the CFI, in accordance with the advice of Hoyle and Panter (1995). Hu and Bentler (1999) also recommended using the SRMR.

Analysis of the reliability and validity of the scales

Reliability is measured by Jöreskog's ρ, a useful alternative to Cronbach's *alpha*, as it is less sensitive to the number of items analyzed. The validity indicates the degree to which a measurement instrument is able to measure the concept it relates to (Bagozzi, 1981). We account for four forms of validity: validity of content, which has no formal statistical indicator, face validity (made up of the convergent and discriminant validities), predictive validity (which involves testing if a construct can be empirically linked to an antecedent or consequence which it is linked to theoretically) and finally, nomological validity, which involves linking the construct to an ensemble of antecedents and/or consequences in a complex model.

Multi-group analysis and chi-square tests on the final model

Firstly, it is necessary to simultaneously estimate the model in each of the two groups (non constrained model). The second step consists of verifying the measurement's invariance (the non standardized links between the latent variables – LV – and their items must be the same for the two groups), which implies that the LV have the same signification for the members of these groups. We may then test the structural invariance, which involves establishing whether or not, in addition to the measurement's invariance, all the non standardized parameters linking the LV are the same for the two groups. If this is the case, sex does not have a moderating effect; otherwise, a series of tests is used to check which structural parameters are invariant and which are influenced by sex. These analyses are carried out by means of Chi-square difference tests (Kline, 2005).

Note – Meaning of indices:
RMSEA: *Root Mean Square Error of Approximation*, CFI: *Comparative Fit Index*, SRMR: *Standardized Root Mean Square Residual*

Table 3 - Structure of final sample (n = 536)

Average age	Average = 34.2 years	Min = 18	Max = 74	Standard deviation = 10.4		
No. dependent children	Average = 0.7	Min = 0	Max = 5	Standard deviation = 1		
Sex	Men = 39.9%	Women = 59.7%	No response = 0.4%			
Profession	Executive and professional, higher intellectual = 50.4%	Employee = 18.7%	Student = 8.2%	Intermediate professional = 5.8%	Job seeker = 5.4%	Other = 11.5%
Monthly revenue	< 1200€ = 13.4%	1200-1800€ = 12.9%	1800-3600€ = 38.8%	3600-5400€ = 16.6%	> 5400€ = 9%	No response = 10.8%
Level education	< bac[10] = 5.2%	bac = 7.8%	bac + 2 years = 14.0%	bac + 4 years = 10.6%	> = bac + 5 years = 61.4%	No response = 0.9%
Family situation	Single = 39.9%	De facto = 29.3%	Married = 30.2%	No response = 0.6%		

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[10] Translator's note: Baccaleuréat: Final exam at end of secondary schooling in France

Table 4 - Evaluation of reliability and convergent validity

	Reliability	Convergent validity		
	Jöreskog's ρ	No. of non sig. λ at 5%	No. of SMC less than 0.5	ρVC
Opportunity to buy better quality products	0.81	0	0	0.68
Opportunity to buy at a reduced price	0.76	0	0	0.61
Opportunity to buy more	0.83	0	0	0.71
Fear of being ripped off	0.86	0	0	0.75
Deterioration of atmosphere	0.91	0	0	0.84
Attitude	0.83	0	0	0.71
Difficulty finding the right product	0.83	0	0	0.71
Doubts as to the quality of products	0.84	0	0	0.72
Time investment	0.82	0	0	0.70
Fear of unnecessary spending	0.83	0	0	0.71
Relief from guilt of spending	0.77	0	0	0.63
Need to be different	0.76	0	0	0.62

Table 5 - Evaluation of discriminant validity and correlations between constructs

	Buy better quality products	Buy more cheaply	Buy more	Fear of being ripped off	Deterioration of atmosphere	Attitude	Difficulty finding right product	Doubts about quality of products	Time investment	Fear of unnecessary spending	Relief from guilt of spending	Need to be different
Buy better quality products	0.82											
Buy more cheaply	0.42	0.78										
Buy more	0.39	0.37	0.84									
Fear of being ripped off	-0.03	0.03	0.00	0.87								
Deterioration of atmosphere	-0.10	0.01	0.08	0.27	0.92							
Attitude	0.57	0.40	0.42	0.03	-0.11	0.84						
Difficulty finding right product	-0.33	-0.15	-0.19	0.31	0.41	-0.39	0.84					
Doubts about quality of products	-0.34	-0.34	-0.11	0.12	0.14	-0.34	0.33	0.85				
Time investment	0.12	0.05	0.07	0.22	0.20	-0.02	0.35	0.02	0.84			
Fear of unnecessary spending	-0.10	-0.15	0.15	0.38	0.36	-0.04	0.37	0.21	0.26	0.84		
Relief from guilt of spending	0.46	0.31	0.44	0.05	0.13	0.45	-0.15	-0.12	0.09	0.12	0.79	
Need to be different	-0.42	-0.23	-0.21	0.26	0.30	-0.56	0.45	0.39	0.14	0.31	-0.23	0.79

Note. The square roots of the AVEs appear on the diagonals; the other values correspond to correlations between constructs. Results from the final study (n=531)

Table 6 – Results of multi-group analyses linking the attitude to its 11 antecedents and to behavior

Model	Chi-square	Degrees of freedom; p	RMSEA	RMSEA: confidence interval at 90%	SRMR	CFI
Non constrained	821.00	618; 0	0.025	0.020; 0.029	0.042	0. 975
Invariance of measurement	843.29	634; 0	0.025	0.020; 0.029	0.042	0. 974
Structural invariance	865.87	645; 0	0.025	0.021; 0.030	0.044	0. 973
Final model (structural and measurement's invariance, except 4 different structural links)	847.19	641; 0	0.025	0.021; 0.030	0.043	0.974

Table 7 - **Tests of equality of structural links between men and women and standardized structural links of final model**

	χ^2 (1 degree of freedom)	p	men (non standardized coeffs)	men (standardized coeffs)	p	women (non standardized coeffs)	women (standardized coeffs)	p
Opportunity to buy at a reduced price attitude	14.57	**	0.48	0.31	**	-0.03	0.03	NS
Opportunity to buy better quality products attitude	0.15	NS	0.23	0.22	**	0.23	0.20	**
Opportunity to buy more attitude	4.55	*	-0.11	-0.12	NS	0.17	0.17	**
Relief from guilt of spending attitude	0.65	NS	0.13	0.14	*	0.13	0.14	*
Fear of being ripped off attitude	1	NS	0.14	0.13	**	0.14	0.14	**
Doubts about quality of products attitude	5.46	*	0.16	0.14	NS	-0.20	-0.14	*
Difficulty finding right product attitude	0.87	NS	-0.18	-0.19	**	-0.18	-0.19	**
Deterioration of atmosphere attitude	0.02	NS	-0.01	-0.01	NS	-0.01	-0.01	NS
Time investment attitude	0.072	NS	-0.03	-0.02	NS	-0.03	-0.02	NS
Need to be different attitude	3.10	†	-0.50	-0.51	**	-0.30	-0.32	**
Fear of unnecessary spending Attitude	0.22	NS	0.11	0.12	*	0.11	0.12	*
Attitude Behavior	-	-	0.48	0.62	**	0.40	0.59	**

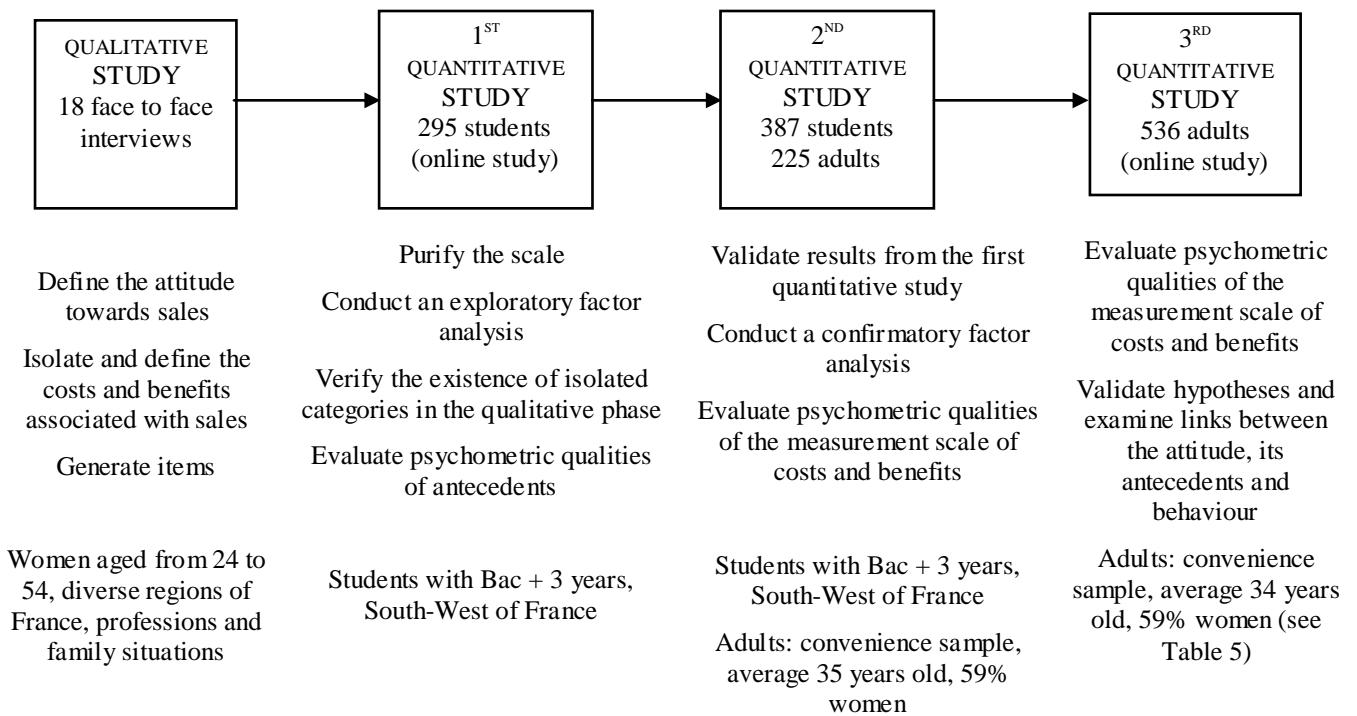Note – Significance level: † = $p < 8\%$; * = $p < 5\%$; ** = $p < 1\%$; NS corresponds to non significant links ($p > 10\%$). The non standardized values shaded in grey are identical for both groups; the links on a white background are statistically different for men and women. The standardized coefficients enable the effects of the different variables on each other to be compared: for example, an increase of one unit on the scale "buy more" for men, increases the level of the attitude by 0.31 of a unit.

Table 8 – Differences between men and women in terms of behavior during the sales

SEX	No. days shopping at the sales	No. products bought	Total amount spent (in €)	No. shops visited	No. different distribution networks
men	1.4	2.3	172.3	2.7	1.4
women	2.1	4.5	183.8	3.1	1.6

Note – all results are significantly higher for women ($p < 5\%$).

Figure 1 – Methodology of the study

QUALITATIVE STUDY 18 face to face interviews	1ST QUANTITATIVE STUDY 295 students (online study)	2ND QUANTITATIVE STUDY 387 students 225 adults	3RD QUANTITATIVE STUDY 536 adults (online study)

Define the attitude towards sales

Isolate and define the costs and benefits associated with sales

Generate items

Purify the scale

Conduct an exploratory factor analysis

Verify the existence of isolated categories in the qualitative phase

Evaluate psychometric qualities of antecedents

Validate results from the first quantitative study

Conduct a confirmatory factor analysis

Evaluate psychometric qualities of the measurement scale of costs and benefits

Evaluate psychometric qualities of the measurement scale of costs and benefits

Validate hypotheses and examine links between the attitude, its antecedents and behaviour

Women aged from 24 to 54, diverse regions of France, professions and family situations

Students with Bac + 3 years, South-West of France

Students with Bac + 3 years, South-West of France

Adults: convenience sample, average 35 years old, 59% women

Adults: convenience sample, average 34 years old, 59% women (see Table 5)

Note - this figure was adapted from a diagram used by Arnold and Reynolds (2003) to present their methodology.

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Figure 2 – Antecedents and consequences of attitude towards sales
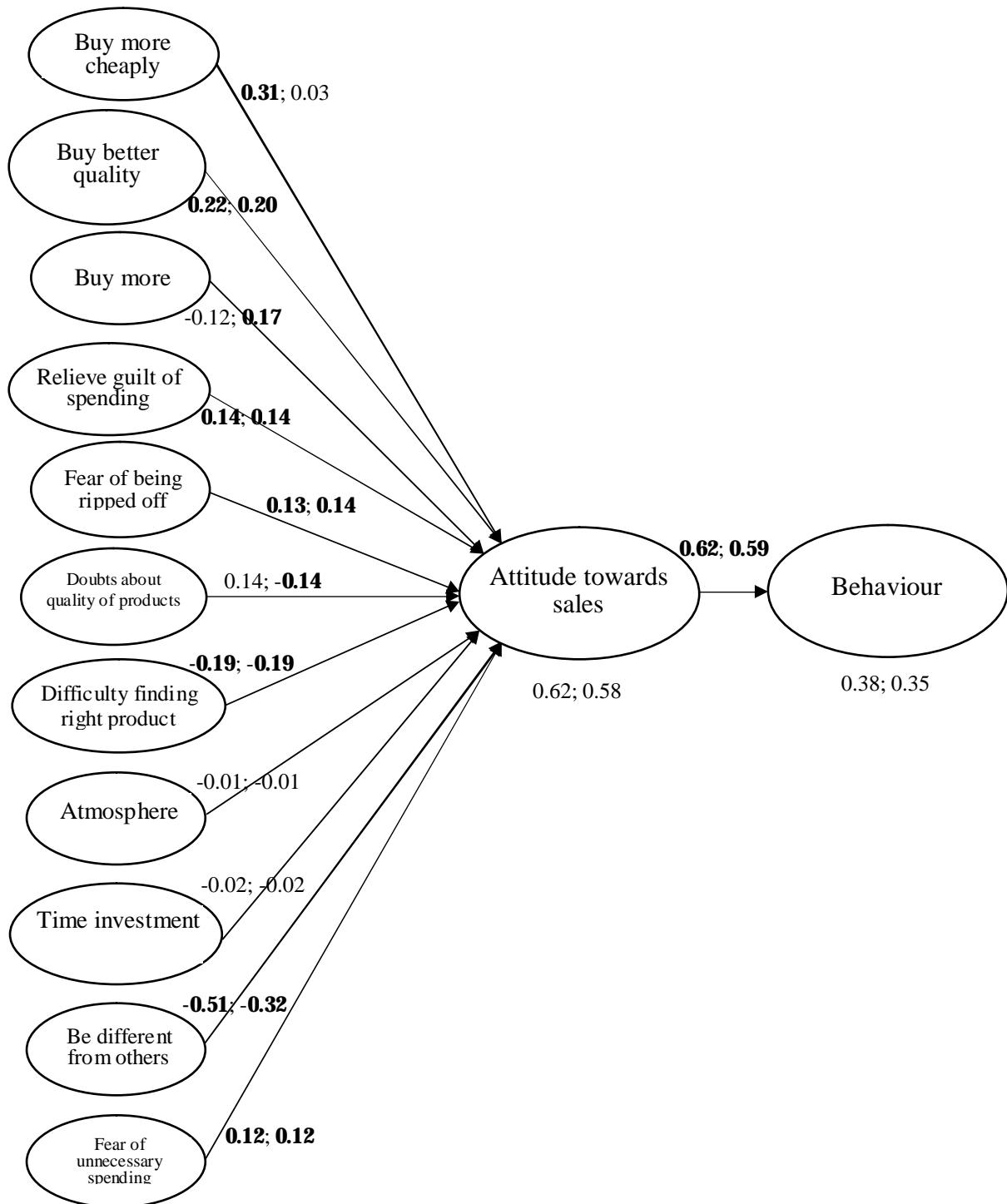
Note – in the interest of legibility, the correlations between the 11 antecedents of attitude (55 correlations in total) are not shown in this figure.

The values next to the arrows correspond to the standardized coefficients for men and women respectively. These are in bold if the coefficients are significant at 5% and in normal lettering if they are not. The values underneath the endogenous variables (attitude and behavior) correspond to the SMCs.