

Antecedents of attitude toward temporary sales: an exploratory study in the French retailing context

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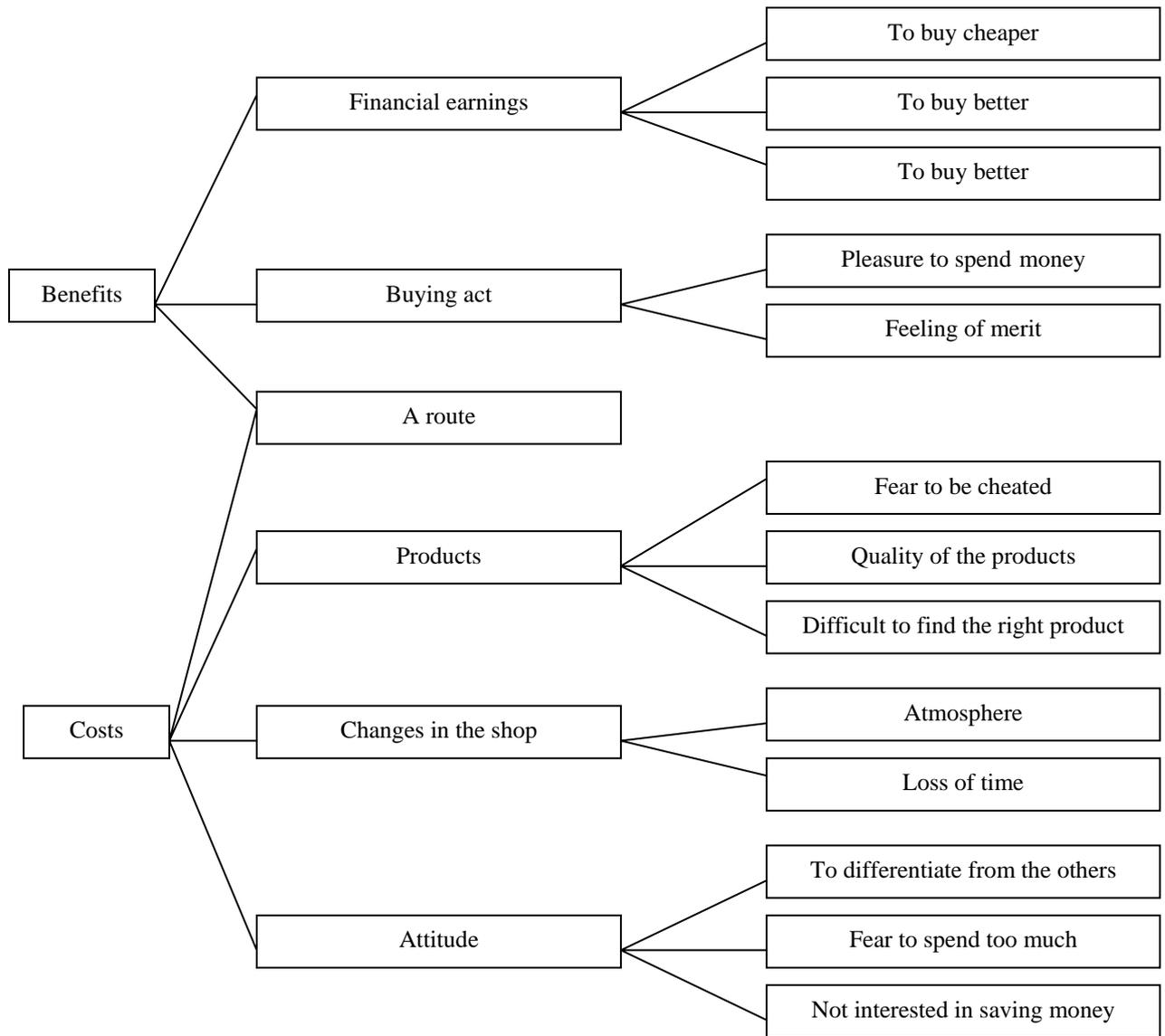
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Eight French out of ten use temporary sales to make deals (Belot, 2001). In France, temporary sales and promotions represented in 2000 26% of the sales from the department stores in the textile sector (La Tribune, 2002). The Parisian store of "Le Printemps", which carries out 25% of its annual during spring and summer temporary sales, planned to pass from 40 000 visits per day in normal period to 100 000 visits per day during 2002 summer sales (Belot and Lauer, 2002). As a matter of fact, in France- as in other European countries- temporary sales are defined and regulated precisely: "are regarded as temporary sales the sales accompanied or preceded by advertising and announced as tending, by a reduction in price, to the accelerated flow of goods out of stock. These sales can only be carried out in the course of two periods per calendar year with a maximum duration of six weeks whose dates are fixed in each department by the regional civil authority [...] and they can only be related to goods [...] paid for at least a month before at the beginning of the period" Despite its managerial importance, few research studies the shopping experience during sales. The goal of this exploratory study is to identify the antecedents of consumer attitudes toward sales. Literature on promotions and on shopping has been analyzed in order to understand the costs and benefits associated with sales.

Previous research showed the importance of the hedonic and utilitarian aspects of the consumption, service or shopping experience (Schindler, 1989; Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994; Holbrook, 1999;). For example, Holbrook (1999) isolated eight types of customer value: efficiency, play, excellence, aesthetics, status, ethics, esteem and spirituality. Similarly, according to Chandon et al. (2001), monetary and non-monetary promotions provide consumers with different levels of hedonic (value expression, entertainment, and exploration) and utilitarian benefits (savings, higher product quality, and improved shopping convenience). Previous research also isolated the costs associated with shopping and buying on promotions (Bender, 1964; Zeithaml, 1988; Eroglu and Machleit, 1990; D'Astous, Roy and Simard, 1995). Based on this literature, potential costs associated with temporal sales can be isolated: monetary sacrifices (parking), temporal (searching, waiting), psychological (problems linked with store atmosphere, relationships with salesperson and other clients), storage and opportunity costs (buying a less preferred brand).

To provide further insight into temporary sales, 18 interviews with women from 24 to 54 years old have been realized. Content analysis showed the existence of 14 determinants of consumer attitude toward sales. Some costs or benefits are shared by all interviewees (for example, a negative perception of the crowd), while some other are only identified by a minority (such as feeling of merit). These costs and benefits can be classified as follows:



Managerial and theoretical implications are discussed.