



<http://www.ijmp.jor.br>
ISSN: 2236-269X
DOI: 10.14807/ijmp.v9i2.713

v. 9, n. 2, April - June 2018

THE INFLUENCE OF THE SELLER'S PERFORMANCE ON THE CONSUMER PURCHASE OF CLOTHES AND PERSONAL CARE, TOILETRIES AND COSMETICS PRODUCTS

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Submission: 26/07/2017
Accept: 06/03/2018

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of a survey about the influence of the seller's performance on the consumer purchase of clothes and personal care, toiletries and cosmetics (HPPC) and to compare their results. This study has an exploratory, quantitative and descriptive nature. The samples surveyed were made up of students enrolled in engineering courses of a university located in the State of São Paulo, Brazil. In the case of clothes market, a survey with a sample of 329 respondents was performed through a structured questionnaire. Regarding PHPC, the number of respondents was 317. We used descriptive statistics to describe the basic features of the data and the nonparametric Mann-Whitney test to compare the two sample results (significance level of 5%). The results indicate that, in both sectors, the majority of respondents go to specific stores to carry their purchases. Price, seller's performance, style and brands are the main factors influencing the consumers' decision about which store to buy.



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It was also found that the seller's performance influences the costumers' buying decision process and loyalty. Aspects of credibility, interest in customer needs, product knowledge, courtesy and attention were aspects of seller's performance considered the most important by respondents in both sectors.

Keywords: seller's performance; buying decision; personal care; toiletries and cosmetics (HPPC) retail; apparel retail; salesperson attributes

1. INTRODUCTION

The last decade of the Brazilian economy has been marked by a significant breakthrough in the retail sector. According to the Brazilian Retail Development Institute (IDV), over the last years, retail has ceased to be a minor collaborator to national economy to become the main driver. While the Brazilian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 44% between 2003 and 2013, the retail sector grew by 106.2%. The institute says that retail '[...] has been, in the recent years, the most remarkable player in economic development' (IDV, 2014).

However, in 2015, the sales volume index in the retail sector dropped by 4.3% YoY, amidst an overwhelming scenario of economic recession (downturn of 3.8% of the Brazilian GDP in relation to 2014). In 2016, with recession still lingering, the Brazilian retail trade achieved the worst sales result in 16 years. 'The national trade movement measured by the searches for credit sales, with debit, credit card and check dropped by 6.6% in relation to 2015, according to Serasa Experian Trade Activity Indicator ' (AGÊNCIA ESTADO, 2017, p. 1).

Despite the current conjuncture, the retail industry has been responsible, in the recent years, for more than 10% of the Brazilian GDP and for nearly 19% of the labor in the country (DIEESE, 2016), which shows the relevance of such sector for the Brazilian economy. This is a scenario quite similar to that seen in other developing and developed countries.

As a way to keep operating in highly competitive retail markets, the companies from such sector started to recognize the importance of understanding the consumers' needs and behavior so they may meet them when offering their products and services. In this regard, in addition to the product or service itself being traded, the internal and external environment of the stores, salesperson performance is recognized as one of the main factors that foster retail sales (CHOI; CHOO, 2016).



The salesperson's role is to identify the customers' needs and meet them (REDAY; MARSHALL; PARASURAMAN, 2009).

There are plenty of works on salesperson performance, regarding the industrial (*business-to-business*) and retail trade (CHOI; CHOO, 2016; DARIAN; WIMAN; TUCCI, 2005; DARLEYA; LUETHGEB; THATTEC, 2008; HAWES; RAO; BAKER, 1993; REDAY; MARSHALL; PARASURAMAN, 2009)

In general, the surveys on what main attributes a salesperson should have in order to achieve success in their role comprise: friendliness, good communication, honesty, concern for the customer's needs, courtesy, readiness, knowledge of the products and services being sold and credibility. However, one cannot know the relative importance of such salesperson attributes in different market segments.

There are no studies assessing whether a same audience takes into account the importance of such attributes in a different way in distinguished segments in which they are customers. Such analyses help providing an even more accurate view on the competences of a salesperson that should be valued in the salesperson-customer relationship in specific segments.

In view of the foregoing, the general goal of this article is to identify the impact of salesperson performance on the purchase decision by the customers in the apparel and accessories, personal care, toiletries and cosmetics retail market (HPPC), as well as establishing a comparison of such impact in both sectors.

Regarding the selection of the segments being analyzed, the reason lies in the importance of the apparel and accessory and personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics segment in the Brazilian retail sector.

Brazil is the fourth largest consumption market for personal care products, cosmetics and toiletries, behind China, USA, and Japan. The national personal care, toiletries and cosmetics industry, in the last 19 years, achieved a net income of R\$ 43.2 billion in 2014 up from R\$ 4.9 billion in 1996 (ABIHPEC, 2015). In 2015, the sales shrank by 8% and the net income was of R\$ 42.6 billion. Today, the Brazilian cosmetics industry represents more than 1.8% of the national GDP (GONZALES, 2016).

Regarding the apparel and accessories segment, Brazil ranks fifth among the largest global consumption markets. Currently, this highly spread segment consists

of [...] 780 thousand apparel, footwear and accessories stores: 318 thousand individual microentrepreneurs, in addition to 383 thousand microcompanies and 79 thousand small companies (MENEZES, 2015, p. 6). In 2015, the apparel and accessories segment reached a sales volume of R\$ 93 billion and represented 2.54% of the GDP for services in the country (O SETOR..., 2016).

According to the goal proposed in this article, it is structured as follows: section 2 shows the attributes of the sales professional being considered in several studies on such subject and the work hypotheses; section 3 describes the research method; section 4 shows the analyses performed and the results obtained; lastly, section 5 shows the conclusions of this work.

2. CONCEPTUALIZATION AND HYPOTHESES

The works in the literature examining the customer-salesperson in retailing and trading among companies are numberless and based on different approaches. Specifically regarding the influence of salesperson attributes in the customer's purchase behavior, the works show different groups of numbers and types of attributes. However, one can notice a trend of aspects to be considered.

In Table 1, in addition to the pioneering work by Hawes, Rao and Baker (1993) on salesperson performance in the traditional retail purchase of durable goods, other examples of studies are shown, which collectively summarize the attributes that are the most addressed in surveys on the subject, both in intercompany trade and direct retail to consumers. See below the description of the core ideas of such works.

Hawes, Rao and Baker (1993) initially examined 25 items and, through the exploratory factor analysis, they identified as relevant the following salesperson traits in the retail purchase of durable goods: friendly relationship, patient buying assistance product, competence, trustworthiness, quick service, personable style and enthusiastic solutions. Trustworthiness was identified in the study as the most important attribute.

Marshalla, Goebelb, and Moncrief (2003) investigated, with 215 sales managers from several manufacturing and service companies, 60 aspects of the salesperson related to their success.

Table 1: Salesperson attributes

Hawes, Rao and Baker (1993)	Durable goods retail sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concern and Friendliness: salesperson's concern for the customers' needs; pleasant conversation; customer identification by the salesperson after the end of the sale; - Patience: non-intimidation of the customer by the salesperson, pushing them to make the purchase, to make a decision quickly and buy the most expensive items; - Knowledge: knowledge of the products being sold; - Credibility: credibility in the information transmitted to the customer; - Responsiveness: readiness in customer service, during and after making the purchase, if some problem occurs; smooth and calm service; - Personal style: courtesy, good personal presentation and congeniality; - Enthusiasm: initiative, assistance to the customer in the decision-making process whenever requested.
Marshalla, Goebelb, and Moncrief (2003)*	Intercompany trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowing to listen; - Knowing to follow up the order (Follow-up skills); - Ability to adapt from situation to situation - Tenacity and perseverance with the task; - Being well organized; - Adequate verbal communication - Interacting with personnel from all organization-customer levels; - Ability to overcome obstacles throughout the sale; - Visual appearance; - Time planning; - Interacting with personnel from all levels of their organization; - Knowing how to negotiate; - Empathy towards the customer; <p>*Main attributes obtained from the survey among 60 attributes surveyed.</p>
Darian, Wiman and Tucci (2005)	Electronics retail sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respect towards the consumer; - Knowledge of the products being sold; - Congeniality and Friendliness; - Responsiveness: readiness in customer service, during and after making the purchase, if some problem occurs; smooth and calm service.
Darleya; Luethgeb; Thattec (2008)	Automotive retail sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Courtesy; - Sincerity; - Honesty; - Proactive behavior; - Easy of doing business; - Knowledge of the products being sold; - Congeniality and friendliness; - Concern by the salesperson for the customers' needs.
Reday, Marshall and Parasuraman (2009)	Intercompany trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tact towards the customers: perception of what is convenient to say or do when dealing with the customer; pleasant conversation, patience, good personal appearance; - Persuasion: power to convince; - Competitive drive; - Confidence: confidence in their own salesperson's skills. - Opinion leadership: reference, reliable source of information to the customer, mainly in situations where the technological features of the product being sold are beyond the customer's knowledge domain;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Geocentrism: capacity to work with people of several races, cultures, and religious beliefs when requested to do it; - Responsibility: responsibility, carefulness when giving advice to someone; - Attention to the innovations: knowledge of the technological novelties of the area where they work in.
Guenzi and Georges (2010)	Financial service companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge - Congeniality - Customer orientation - Sales orientation
Rutherford (2012)	Intercompany retail and trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trust - Commitment with the salesperson-customer relationship
Echchakoui (2015)	Banks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge - Trust
Choi, Huang and Sternquist (2015)	Intercompany trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizational commitment - Willingness to innovate
Choi and Choo (2016)	Fashion retail sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agility - Fashion orientation ability - Likability attributes implied in the functional and social benefits from the salesperson-customer relationship studied by the authors)

Source: Prepared by the authors (2017).

The aspects deemed the most important by the respondents were: follow-up skills, ability to adapt sales style from situation to situation, tenacity-sticking with a task, well-organized, verbal communication skills, proficiency in interacting with people at all levels of a customer's organization.

Darian, Wiman and Tucci (2005) analyzed the relative importance of product price and the following salesperson attributes for the consumer when buying electronics and home appliances: respect for customer; friendliness, product knowledge and responsiveness. According to the survey results, all salesperson attributes and price are important for the consumer. Among them, respect for the customer and price were found to be of the greatest and equal importance. These are followed by salesperson's friendliness, salesperson's knowledge and salesperson's responsiveness.

Darley; Luethgeb; Thattec (2008) investigated correlations between perceived automotive salesperson attributes and customer satisfaction behavior in the automotive purchase and his/her intentions to recommend to another person to the patronage of a service.

The salesperson attributes considered in the survey were: courtesy, sincerity, honesty, attitude of the salesperson, ease of doing business with the salesperson,

knowledge of the dealer's products, how the salesperson greeted the subject, concern for subject's needs, dealer sells foreign cars, and dealer sells domestic cars.

Reday, Marshall and Parasuraman (2009) assessed the influence of sales skills persuasion and tact, the interpersonal competences and also the technical competences of the salespersons in sales performance, within a high-technology company-to-company context. The skills and competences considered in the study were: innovativeness, geocentrism, accountability, persuasion, tact competitiveness and confidence.

The survey carried out by Guenzi and Georges (2010) had its focus placed on the salesperson-customer relationship at financial service companies. The salesperson attributes analyzed were: knowledge, congeniality, customer orientation and sales orientation. The results showed that knowledge and customer orientation positively impact the consumer's trust in salespeople. However, congeniality did not show to have any influence while sales orientation showed to have a negative influence.

Rutherford (2012) examined the economic satisfaction, non-specific satisfaction, the conflict, the confidence and commitment in the salesperson-customer relationship, in several sectors, the two last aspects being those related to salesperson performance. The author emphasizes in his study the importance of examining the salesperson-customer relationship based on economic and non-economic aspects.

Echchakoui (2015) empirically assessed the relationship between the salesperson attributes (knowledge and confidence), the value added by the salesperson (pleasant interaction and perceived risk) and the consumer's response (loyalty and equality) at five companies from the bank sector. The results disclosed that the two value dimensions added by the salesperson partially mediate the relation between salesperson attributes and the consumer's response.

Choi, Huang and Sternquist (2015) analyzed the salesperson's role in the development and maintenance of the consumer-dealer relationship at manufacturing companies in Japan. The authors found that organizational commitment and willingness to innovate are salesperson attributes that favorably contribute to long-term relationships between consumer and dealer.



Lastly, we present the last work comprising Chart 1, where Choi and Choo (2016) analyzed the effects of the benefits from the consumer-salesperson relationship on consumer satisfaction and purchase behavior. Based on a survey with 300 Chinese consumers, the results show that both the social and functional benefits positively influence consumer satisfaction in relation to salesperson performance and the consumer's satisfaction positively affects their decision to buy. The functional benefits are fashion orientation, customer convenience, quick service and good purchasing. And the social benefits refer to the pleasure of relating with the salesperson, enjoying a pleasant companion during the process of doing business.

One can see, from such works, as already discussed in the introduction, that there is a convergence in relation to the salesperson attributes to be considered in a survey, mainly, when we analyze them separately, within the retail context and the intercompany trade context.

Thus, given the convergence shown in the literature of those that would be the main attributes a salesperson should have in order to achieve success in their role and given the importance of the apparel and personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics segment in the retail sales in Brazil, the questions guiding this research are: Is the importance of such sales professional attributes the same as in purchasing in both sectors? Is the influence of salesperson performance in purchasing and customer loyalty equal in these two sectors? When selecting the stores, is there a significant difference in relation to the importance of the aspects of salesperson performance, brands, style, location, layout and price in both sectors?

Based on such questions and considering that the purchase of a piece of fashion apparel or accessory is less deterministic than the purchase of personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics, as the latter are generally used on a daily basis, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H₁: There is a significant difference in relation to the importance of the characteristic aspects of the sales professional's performance (enthusiasm/initiative, communicability, personality, concern, product knowledge and credibility in the information transmitted, courtesy, personal appearance and attention offered/patience) in purchasing in both sectors, i.e., apparel and personal care products, toiletries, cosmetics.

H₂: The influence of salesperson performance in purchasing is higher for the apparel segment than for the personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics segment.

H₃: The influence of salesperson performance in gaining consumer loyalty is higher for the apparel segment than for the personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics segment.

H₄: There is a significant difference in relation to the importance of aspects brands, style, location, layout, salesperson performance and price for selecting the stores in both sectors, i.e., apparel and personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics.

3. STUDY METHOD

This research is of exploratory, quantitative, descriptive nature, and used, to achieve its goals, the survey sampling approach. That is, from a methodological perspective, according to several ways of classification shown in Cauchick Miguel (2007), this work can be understood as:

- Regarding the goal: of exploratory nature, since the goal is obtaining an initial comparative view on the influence of salesperson performance in the retail segments selected for the research;
- Regarding the nature of the variables researched: quantitative;
- Regarding the nature of the relationship between the variables: descriptive;
- Regarding the intensity of control capable to be exercised over the variables being studied: field experimental nature;
- Regarding the research scope, in terms of thoroughness and extent: survey sampling.

3.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire used for conducting the survey consists of closed-ended questions (5-point Likert scale), through which the following was assessed: the fashion of selecting apparel and personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics stores; the importance of some aspects in store selection, including the influence of salesperson performance; the influence of salesperson performance in purchasing

and customer loyalty; and the influence of some attributes of the sales professional in purchasing.

The selection of the attributes researched was based on such data in Darian, Wiman and Tucci (2005), Darleya, Luethgeb and Thattec (2008), Guenzi and Georges (2010) and Choi and Choo (2016), considering that such works are focused on analyzing the salesperson attributes specifically in the retail sector. The attributes selected were: enthusiasm/initiative, communicability, courtesy, personality, personal appearance, attention offered/patience, concern for the consumer's needs, product knowledge and credibility in the information/guidance provided.

3.2. Data Collection Procedures and Sample

For this exploratory survey, young university students belonging to the low social class were defined as target population. The university audience was selected since they are critical people, taking into consideration the existing education level. In this regard, the sample surveyed was made up by students from a university located in the ABC Region, in the State of São Paulo. The questionnaires were applied in June and August 2015.

The application pilot test was carried out with 50 people in each sector being analyzed. In total, 317 valid questionnaires were obtained for the apparel retail sector and 317 for the personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics retail sector (answered by the same respondents). The questionnaires were delivered to the respondents and explained before the completion, always accompanied by one of the authors in order to settle any eventual doubts.

For the data analysis in each sector, descriptive statistics was used. In order to establish a comparison of the results for both sectors, the Mann-Whitney nonparametric test was used, with 5% significance level.

Regarding the sample surveyed, it is mostly composed of women (64%). In relation to age bracket, the respondents are from 18 and 25 years old. Regarding family income, the respondents have 4 to 10 minimum wages, i.e., they belong to the low class in Brazil, according to the minimum wage range criterion (IBGE).

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Prior to specifically considering the salesperson attributes, other analyses were carried out.

The survey questionnaire started with the following examination: before purchasing apparel/personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics, people search for prices in different stores or have already decided in which stores they will make their purchases. There was no difference in consumer behavior for the two segments analyzed ($U = 47661$, $p = 0.29$) in this respect, and most respondents go to specific stores to make their purchases Table 2.

Table 2. Selection of the apparel and personal care, toiletries and cosmetics (HPPC) retail stores

When you are willing to purchase apparel/HPPC, you generally:	Search for prices in different stores	Go to a specific store(s)	Total
Apparel	33%	67%	100%
HPPC	41%	59%	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors (2015)

Then, the respondents who buy in specific stores assessed the importance of the aspects contained in Table 3, when selecting the apparel/personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics stores.

Table 3: Importance of some aspects in the selection of apparel, personal care, toiletries and cosmetics (HPPC) stores already frequented by the customers

Aspects	Retail	Level of Importance					Total
		Not at all important	Low important	Neutral	Very Important	Extremely important	
Brands	Apparel	5%	13%	28%	41%	12%	99%
	HPPC	2%	4%	14%	48%	32%	100%
Style	Apparel	0%	1%	9%	53%	36%	99%
	HPPC	5%	9%	40%	32%	14%	100%
Price	Apparel	0%	1%	6%	41%	50%	99%
	HPPC	1%	2%	12%	41%	45%	100%
Location	Apparel	4%	11%	37%	35%	12%	99%
	HPPC	3%	6%	37%	39%	15%	100%
Layout	Apparel	6%	14%	34%	33%	12%	99%
	HPPC	5%	5%	32%	38%	20%	100%
Salesperson performance	Apparel	3%	5%	17%	41%	33%	99%
	HPPC	4%	6%	23%	42%	25%	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors (2015)

As outlined in Table 3, for the apparel sector, the aspects that most influence the selection of stores by the consumers surveyed are price, style, and salesperson

performance, considered as important or very important by more than 74% of the respondents.

For the personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics, prices (for 86% of the respondents), and salesperson performance (67%) are also among the most important aspects together with the brands offered (80%).

Regarding the comparison between the two consumer groups (Hypothesis 1), some statistically significant differences were found, according to the Mann-Whitney test, in relation to the aspects analyzed: brands ($U = 33835$, $p = 0.000$), style ($U = 27002$, $p = 0.000$), location ($U = 46492$, $p = 0.028$), layout ($U = 42958$, $p = 0.000$) and salesperson performance ($U = 45329$, $p = 0.004$). Only for prices ($U = 47410$, $p = 0.060$), where no significant statistical difference was found at a level of 0.05, such aspect being highly influential in the selection of stores for both segments. Therefore, only in relation to aspect price Hypothesis 1 was not validated.

It is found, based on the data shown, that although most of the respondents, for both sectors, go to specific stores to make their purchases rather than searching for prices, price is indeed a determining factor when selecting stores. Thus, one can conclude that, first of all, when a consumer decides on the store or the subset of stores that are effectively considered in the purchase, among all those existing in the market and known by the consumers, the price analysis takes place.

The major statistic differences refer to the influence of the brands offered and styles in the selection of the stores where the consumers will make their purchases. The brands offered influence more the consumers of personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics. Style, in its turn, influences more the consumers of apparel, according to the data shown in Table 3.

These results show to be coherent when one reflects on the fact that the use of personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics may pose a risk to the consumer's health, leading them to choose well-known brands already assessed or proven to be quality products. Regarding apparel, style is a key factor, as it is related to the taste, preference and identity of each consumer.

In relation to the influence of salesperson performance, not for the selection of possible stores, but rather for purchasing ($U = 45501$, $p = 0.006$) and for becoming a loyal customer ($U = 47402$, $p = 0.042$), some significant statistical differences were

found as well, and such influences are greater for the apparel segment, which corroborates Hypotheses 2 and 3. The data concerning the two sectors for these questions is shown in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4: Quality in the service provided by the salesperson in the apparel and personal care, toiletries and cosmetics (HPPC) retail

Does the quality of the service provided by the salesperson influence your decision to purchase clothes / personal care, toiletries and cosmetics?	Level of Influence					
	Not at all influential	Slightly influential	Somewhat influential	Very influential	Extremely influential	Total
Apparel	8%	18%	17%	35%	22%	100%
HPPC	13%	14%	27%	33%	12%	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors (2015)

Table 5: Importance of salesperson performance for customer loyalty in the apparel and personal care, toiletries and cosmetics (HPPC) retail

How important is the salesperson performance for customer loyalty in the apparel and personal care, toiletries and cosmetics (HPPC) retail?	Level of Importance					Total
	Not at all important	Low important	Neutral	Very Important	Extremely important	
Apparel	4%	8%	21%	43%	23%	99%
HPPC	8%	9%	25%	39%	20%	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors (2015)

Such lesser influence (although important) of the quality in the service by the salesperson in purchasing in the personal care, toiletries and cosmetics sector makes sense since there are many HPPC products of daily use by the consumers, as previously considered. In contrast to the above, in the apparel sector, although there are styles already conceived by each consumer, among these, there is always the search for something different, and such type of purchase is therefore more influential and less deterministic.

Regarding the importance of salesperson performance for them to become frequent customers, the results agree with those shown in Table 3 as to the influence of salesperson performance in the selection of the store. Most of the customers, for both segments, with an emphasis placed on the apparel sector, come back to the stores because of the salesperson's performance and many of them become loyal customers.

Offering a satisfactory purchase experience to the customer is one of the most important factors in creating a positive image of the company among them. The data

shown above corroborates such statement. The data shows how important is salesperson performance in the making of a purchase. This is when the company is tested by the consumer and where a trust relationship is established, which may lead to customer loyalty.

The results above (Table 4 and 5) also show that, if the salesperson's service is an important factor in the making of the purchase, it is even more so for creating a good image for a company in the market and for the customers to become loyal to the stores. A good service, according to most respondents, makes them to come back to the stores for new purchases, increasing the chances of a company's profitability over time.

Lastly, an assessment was carried out on the influence of some characteristic aspects of the sales professional performance (Table 6) in the making of purchase of apparel and personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics (when the salesperson performance actually contributes to the making of the purchase) for the analysis of Hypothesis 4.

No statistically significant differences were found in the comparison between the two consumer groups (Mann-Whitney test), regarding aspects enthusiasm/initiative ($U = 48506$, $p = 0.128$), communicability ($U = 49905$, $p = 0.348$), personality ($U = 51349$, $p = 0.830$), concern ($U = 50316$, $p = 0.539$), product knowledge ($U = 49473$, $p = 0.352$) and credibility in the information transmitted ($U = 50691$, $p = 0.609$), which refuted Hypothesis 4 in relation to such aspects.

Aspects enthusiasm/initiative, communicability and personality were considered by most respondents with medium or high influence and credibility in the information transmitted, with high or very high influence. Regarding aspects concern for the customer's needs and product knowledge, there was balanced results for medium/high or high/very high.

However, the results of the Mann-Whitney test showed significant differences as to the influence of characteristics courtesy ($U = 43684$, $p = 0.000$), personal appearance ($U = 46462$, $p = 0.021$) and attention offered/patience ($U = 46149$, $p = 0.015$) in the making of purchase of apparel and personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics. Courtesy and attention offered have greater influence in the making of purchase of apparel, and personal appearance in the making of purchase of

personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics, according to the data shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Aspects of salesperson performance in the apparel and personal care, toiletries and cosmetics (HPPC) retail

Aspects	Retail	Level of Influence					Total
		Not at all influential	Slightly influential	Somewhat influential	Very influential	Extremely influential	
Enthusiasm/initiative	Apparel	6%	16%	51%	22%	4%	99%
	HPPC	5%	14%	49%	27%	5%	100%
Communicability	Apparel	2%	8%	33%	44%	12%	99%
	HPPC	3%	9%	35%	41%	11%	100%
Courtesy	Apparel	1%	2%	15%	36%	45%	100%
	HPPC	1%	4%	20%	45%	30%	100%
Personality	Apparel	5%	17%	40%	29%	9%	100%
	HPPC	5%	15%	43%	29%	8%	100%
Personal appearance	Apparel	12%	17%	37%	23%	10%	99%
	HPPC	7%	14%	38%	29%	12%	100%
Attention offered/patience	Apparel	2%	5%	19%	46%	29%	99%
	HPPC	2%	3%	27%	47%	21%	100%
Concern for the customers' needs	Apparel	5%	6%	19%	44%	26%	99%
	HPPC	2%	4%	24%	49%	21%	100%
Product knowledge	Apparel	3%	4%	23%	46%	22%	99%
	HPPC	2%	4%	22%	48%	24%	100%
Credibility in the information transmitted	Apparel	3%	4%	20%	40%	32%	99%
	HPPC	3%	3%	20%	40%	34%	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors (2015)

Such greater influence of personal appearance in the making of purchase in the HPPC sector than in the apparel sector shows that the fact of the salesperson being clean and tidy in appearance, with a neat make-up, good scent etc. is an aspect having more impact on the customer's perception as to quality and the potential benefit of the product they are after.

Most personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics stores have their salespeople using the same products being sold, which can explain the greater influence in this case. However, such aspect does not outdo the importance of factors such as courtesy, credibility, product knowledge, concern and attention offered to the customer in the personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics stores, which are also the most important aspects in the apparel sector.

5. CONCLUSION

From this research, it was found that, both for the apparel sector and the personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics sector, most respondents go to specific stores to make their purchases. For both sectors, the aspects that most influence the selection of the stores by the consumers surveyed are price and salesperson performance, together with style, in the case of apparel retail, and brands offered, in the case of HPPC retail.

Such results show to be coherent since the use of personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics are related to greater levels of perception of physical risk (consumer's health), leading them to choose well-known brand products. Regarding apparel, style is related to the taste and preferences of the consumer.

In relation to the influence of salesperson performance for making the purchase and for customer loyalty, such influence was found to be high for both sectors and greater in the case of the apparel segment. This can be justified by the fact that there are many HPPC products of daily use by the consumers, unlike apparel, where the purchase of something new, although within a certain style, is more influential.

Lastly, an analysis was carried out on the influence of some attributes of the sales professional in the making of a purchase. It was found that aspects credibility, concern for the customer's needs, product knowledge, courtesy and attention were considered the most important for both sectors.

By comparing the results, some significant differences were obtained as to the influence of aspects courtesy, personal appearance and attention offered in the purchasing of apparel and personal care products, toiletries and cosmetics. Courtesy and attention offered have greater influence in the making of purchase of apparel, while personal appearance influences most in the making of purchase of HPPC products.

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