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Products and their representation in memory: the impact of shopping channels

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Abstract

Title:

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The growth of online consumption created a trend in the academic literature to study the variants of this topic, for example, the different characteristics sought in each channel, the type of consumers that buy in each channel and the type of products more likely to be bought in each channel. Many researchers found a connection between utilitarianism and online channels and hedonism and offline channels. Knowing this, the aim of this study was to understand if the different channels influenced how products were represented in consumers' minds and which type of attributes of the products are recalled.

Taking into consideration the literature it was expected that when remembering/imagining online shopping experiences consumers would recall more utilitarian attributes of products, while when remembering/imagining offline shopping experiences consumers would recall more hedonic attributes of products.

In terms of methodology, two studies were conducted, one in which participants were asked to imagine a shopping experience, online or offline, in which they were about to buy a jacket (described), and another in which participants recalled their last shopping experience, either online or offline.

From the results it was possible to conclude that this connection exists: online participants recalled more utilitarian attributes of products, and offline more hedonic attributes were recalled. However, despite the channel, participants valued the same type of attributes such as price, and quality.

The conclusions of this study can provide some helpful information for management teams; however, some limitations were encountered so, some recommendations for future research were made.

Key words: Shopping channels, Memory; Utilitarian; Hedonic; online; offline; Clothes

Resumo

Titulo:

Autor; Maria Ferreira do Ó

O crescimento do consumo online criou uma tendência na literatura académica para estudar as variantes deste tópico, por exemplo, as diferentes características procuradas em cada canal, o tipo de consumidores de cada canal e o tipo de produtos comprados em cada canal. Muitos investigadores encontraram uma conexão entre utilitarismo e canais online e hedonismo e canais offline. Tendo isto em consideração, o objetivo deste estudo era entender se os diferentes canais influenciavam a forma como os produtos eram representados nas mentes dos consumidores e que tipo de atributos são recordados.

Tendo em consideração a literatura, esperava-se que, ao lembrar/imaginar experiências de compras online, os consumidores se lembrassem de atributos mais utilitários dos produtos, enquanto que ao lembrar/imaginar experiências offline, os consumidores se lembrassem de atributos hedónicos dos produtos.

Em termos de metodologia, realizaram-se dois estudos, um no qual os participantes foram convidados a imaginar uma experiência de compra, online ou offline, na qual iriam comprar um casaco (descrito), e outro em que os participantes recordaram a última experiência de compra, online ou offline.

A partir dos resultados, foi possível concluir que essa conexão existe: os participantes online lembraram os atributos mais utilitários, enquanto que os atributos mais hedónicos foram mais recordados na condição offline. No entanto, apesar do canal, os participantes valorizam o mesmo tipo de atributos, como preço e qualidade.

As conclusões deste estudo podem fornecer algumas informações úteis para as equipas de gestão. No entanto, algumas limitações foram encontradas. Tendo algumas recomendações para futuras pesquisas sido feitas.

Palavras-chave: Canais de compra, Memória; Utilitário; Hedónico; Online; Offline; Roupas

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1. Introduction

Online shopping is increasing and is becoming a more frequent option for consumers. In 2016 the global revenue from online sales reached 1.18 trillion US dollars (Statista, 2017). The increasing role of online consumption in today's shopping habits of the population, the increasing power and ambition of the so-called e-commerce companies, and the fears and incertitude of the offline incumbent companies, justifies the interest in studying what in fact differentiates the different shopping channels, and what can be used to push and pull buyers in and out of the different channels.

Following this interest, there is a trend in the academic literature and research to study the different aspects of this subject. For instance: how the different channels (online vs offline) work together (eg. Kollmann et al., 2012); the different characteristics sought in each channel throughout the purchasing process (eg. Gensler et al., 2012); the different segments that shop in each channel (eg. Konus et al., 2008); and, the type of products more likely to be bought in each channel (eg. Levin et al., 2003).

Because of the growth of online consumption and the fact that, there are some segments that prefer online shopping, there is a fear of disappearance of the traditional (offline) channels, as studied by Keen et al (2004). However, the authors suggested that this fear is exaggerated. Choudhury and Karahanna (2008) and Gupta el al (2004) corroborate this rational as they state that consumers will only shift away from the traditional channels if the utility or relative advantages of the new channels are higher than those that characterize the offline channels.

Having this in mind, and to understand the future of commerce, and how all these forces will interact, it is crucial to analyse what leads consumers to buy in each channel, what can make them change between channels (online vs offline), and what type of products are more likely to be bought in each channel. Beyond that, it is also relevant to study how the different shopping channels influence consumers' perceptions about the shopping experience and the products. Prior studies that evaluated the relationship between *hedonism*/*utilitarianism* and the selection of shopping channels, were able to reach the conclusion that there's a connection between online channels and *utilitarian* attributes/products and offline channels and *hedonic* attributes/products (eg. Kollmann et al., 2012).

The aim of this study is to understand how the different channels influence the perceptions and representations of products and the shopping experience of consumers. Concretely, the goal is

to try to understand if the different channels influence the representation/memory of the different characteristics/attributes (*hedonic*/*utilitarian*) of the products bought in each channel.

All the above considered the research question created was:

RQ: Do offline channels overcome online channels regarding the *hedonic* experience memory? More specifically do the different shopping channels influence perceptions about products and the shopping experience of consumers?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Consumers

Since an average multichannel customer brings higher monetary value to the companies versus an average single channel customer (Kushwaha and Shankar, 2013) it's important to understand how consumers behave throughout the purchasing process, namely, which type of consumers prefer each channel and what influences consumers' propensity to switch channels.

The traditional channels are still the main channel in the entire purchase process especially for complex products and in the purchase stage (Frambach et al., 2007). The most common path (for most product categories) is known as "ROBO" ("Research online and buy offline" – Martech (2016)[1]), in which consumers use the online platforms to collect information, search and comparison of products (mainly for independence and convenience reasons) and then they opt to switch to the tradition channels in the purchase stage (either to reduce the risk associated with the purchase or to fulfil emotional and social needs) (Levin et al., 2003; Schodera and Zahariab, 2008). When buying complex *hedonic* products and *experience* products consumers tend to prefer the use of traditional channels because of the personalized services while *search*/complex *utilitarian* products tend to be bought online inasmuch consumers seek to purchase efficiently and in a shopping environment with a low level of distractions (Shen et al., 2016; Vorrveld, 2016). Furthermore, Vorrveld (2016) concluded that when consumers buy products for the first time, the offline channels are used to a higher extent than online channels, and that the consistency principle (same channel throughout the purchase process) is more

[1] https://martech.zone/robo-research-online-buy-offline/

common in purchases made offline while the complementarity principle (combine different channels) is more common for purchases made online.

Consumers who use online and traditional channels differ in their characteristics (Deleersnyder, 2002) and so, if companies manage to provide customers with a well presented and positioned channel portfolio there's big possibility of enjoying some synergies from their multichannel strategy (Deleersnyder, 2002; Kollmann et al., 2012). Some researchers have tried to understand witch type of customers buy in each channel and to characterize these groups of customers (or segments). The different segments can vary in terms of innovativeness, loyalty towards the channels and companies/brands, shopping enjoyment, price consciousness (Konus et al., 2008), convenience orientation, physical store orientation, variety seeking, shopping adventure and experience, tendency to plan ahead of purchases or shopping trips (impulsive buying) and time savings (Rohma and Swaminathan, 2004). Konus et al (2008) came up with 3 distinct segments: The *uninvolved consumer*, the *multichannel enthusiast* and the *store-focused consumer*. The first segment, independently of the channel, doesn't appreciate or value shopping. It has a negative association with 'shopping enjoyment' and so, consumers within this segment don't consider shopping a pleasurable experience at all. The *Multichannel enthusiasts* consider shopping an enjoyable experience more than the other two segments. This group of consumers ranks high in innovativeness, and price consciousness. Lastly, the *store-focused consumers* have a higher orientation towards the traditional channels (and lower for alternative channels), ranked low on innovativeness and are more loyal than consumers in the other segments. In some specific product categories, like clothes for example, the *uninvolved segment* is replaced with a group of consumers that searches heavily in stores and catalogues, for all segments the involvement in the purchase is higher, and the *multichannel enthusiasts* become the smallest segment. Other researchers like Rohma and Swaminathan (2004) also came up with different segments: 4 within online consumers and 3 within offline consumers. The online consumers could belong to the *convenience shopper* segment, this group has a higher propensity to shop online, because of the high convenience orientation, and low physical store orientation (low ratings in willingness of immediate possession and social interaction); the *variety seeker*, is a segment characterized by an average convenience orientation, seeks variety of products/brands/options, and has a tendency to plan ahead purchases and shopping trips; the *balanced shopper* is also characterized by an average convenience orientation, but with a higher need for information, and some propensity to plan purchases; finally the *store oriented* segment has the lowest level of convenience orientation and the highest level of physical store

orientation, they value the immediate possession and social interaction. The three segments within offline consumers are: *the time conscious shopper*, who values most of all time savings while still having a high physical store orientation; the *functional shopper*, who has a bigger propensity (compared to the recreational shopper) to switch channels; and the *recreational shopper*, who considers shopping an adventure and an experience.

When buying very frequently multiple categories, consumers tend to purchase from a higher number of channels (Kumar and Venkatesan, 2005).

The frequency of consumption is influenced by the education level of consumers, whether they have a convenience/experiential orientation, the channel knowledge (higher influence), the perceived utility (consumers decide to purchase based on the maximum utility they can achieve from buying the products - Gupta et al., 2004), and perceived accessibility (Li et al., 1999). In turn, the frequency of consumption influences brand loyalty, size loyalty (amount bought) and price sensitiveness - as online consumers increase their shopping frequency they become more brand and size loyal and become less price sensitive (Arce-Urriza et al., 2010).

The more frequent the consumers are, the higher their convenience orientation and consequently the higher their propensity to shop online, while the higher the experiential orientation the smaller the propensity to shop online (Li et al., 1999).

Another aspect affecting online loyalty and the perceived risk associated with this channel is the online brand image which, in turn, is influenced by the previous offline brand image (Kwon and Lennon, 2009), so consumers will feel more confident in their online purchases when buying from a company they trust (Hahn and Kim, 2009) and with which they are satisfied with - being satisfaction and trust influenced by previous brand experiences (Ha et al., 2005).

Consumers using the online channels have a longer average lifetime and a lower likelihood of churn, mainly because of the higher switching costs and higher convenience orientation (Boehm, 2008), however as the experience with internet increases there is a decrease of trust on the online results for both *utilitarian* and *hedonic* products, and offline sources become more relevant for this consumers (Cheema and Papatla, 2010).

2.2. Channels

The differences in channels have been studied for a long time and despite some contradictions, researchers' results are almost always leading in the same direction (there is a connection between online channels and *utilitarian* products/attributes and between traditional channels

and *hedonic* products/attributes. To increase online shopping, firms must provide more *utilitarian* goal oriented attributes in their websites (Bridges and Florsheim, 2008)) since *utilitarian* elements (such as navigation or convenience) are critical factors for web-based stores (Childers et al., 2001). Kollmann et al., 2012 found that convenience is strongly related with the likelihood of searching online (pre-purchase stage) and buying online (purchase stage), while desire for service has a higher impact (in comparison with risk aversion) in attracting consumers to the offline channels. Following the same idea, Overby and Lee (2006) encountered that consumers who shop online, choose that specific channels for convenience, price savings and other *utilitarian* reasons (for example time savings) and Gupta et al (2004) concluded that what influences the probability of changing channels are reasons related with risk perceptions, price- intentions, evaluation efforts and delivery time. Related with the propensity of changing channels the strongest spillover effects usually happen between the search and purchase stage (Gensler et al., 2012).

2.3. Products

Products can be characterized as *hedonic*/*utilitarian* or *experience*/*search* goods. An "*hedonic* category" is a category related with experiences, affection, enjoyment, involvement, intrinsic motivation and aesthetics, while an *utilitarian* category is related with functionality, and an orientation towards practicality, cognition and instrumentality (Shen et al., 2016). On the other hand, *search goods* are defined as products that can be evaluated in terms of quality prior to purchase while *experience goods* can only be evaluated after purchase/use (Gupta et al., 2004). Studies have shown that for *search* products the intention and propensity to shop online is higher than that for *experience* products (Gupta et al., 2004; Chiang and Dholakia, 2003), and so for *hedonic*/*experience* goods the offline channels are preferred in the purchase stage (Balasubrama et al., 2005). This can be explained with the fact that *search* goods were ranked higher, compared to *experience* goods, in the perceived ability to evaluate quality before purchase (Huang et al., 2009) and so there is a higher confidence in evaluating *search*/*utilitarian* products without experiencing it (consistent with online shopping) (Balasubrama et al., 2005). For *hedonic* products the importance of online sources is smaller (Cheema and Papatla, 2010) however communication features of the websites like feedback or reviews are more important (and increase the time spent in a website) so when shopping online for *hedonic* products, consumers tend to buy from the page in which they collected most of the information (Huang et al., 2009).

Despite the category of the product the most important attributes sought by consumers are the price, the variety of products from which they can select what they prefer, speedy delivery and no hassle exchange (products can be returned or changed easily) (Levin et al., 2003). Levin et al (2003) also discovered that for some categories like clothes, books or electronics for example, the shopping experience, the personal service and being able to see and touch the product is especially important.

The traditional channels are a higher touch channel and, so they are especially relevant and preferred for high touch products (Levin et al., 2003) and by consumers with a higher need for touch (Cho and Workman, 2011). For consumers who are concrete thinkers (they value touch when making decisions) the opportunity to touch reduces risk, increases perceived ownership, the purchase intentions and willingness to pay (Liu et al., 2017).

2.4. Representation and Categorization of products and experiences – Memory

Everyone has a way to process and categorize in their memory things that happened in their lives, products they saw or bought or experiences they lived. The way a consumer creates a mental representation of a product, for example, influences, what it's recalled about it, but more importantly which attributes of that product are emphasized in an evaluation – When having a concrete mental representation, consumers will give a higher importance to the details, while consumers who saved an abstract mental representation of the product, emphasized abstract descriptions (Li et al., 2017).

Outside the stores consumers receive and process information, formulate strategies to evaluate attributes and to choose from different alternatives. While inside the stores, consumers also create rules to evaluate attributes and to choose between alternatives. These tasks are fulfilled by, for example, remembering previous stimuli, previous experience, or products bought before (retrieved in memory) with which is possible to make a comparison. So, memory plays a significant role in consumers shopping experiences (Bettman, 1979).

The way consumers "organized" the information in their minds will be essential in the creation of a path of retrieval of memories, which in turn will help in recalling products or its attributes (Childers and Jass, 2002). The order in which the attributes or products are recalled is influenced by the way it was stored in memory but also by the emphasis given to each product/attribute - the most "activated" or important attribute or product is recalled first and the least important is recalled last or not recalled (Poirier et al., 2015).

As it was mentioned before, what consumers remember about previous shopping experiences influences the perceptions about the channels from which they buy but also their trust and their satisfaction on the companies from which they are buying (Ha et al., 2005; Kwon and Lennon, 2009). Therefore, memory and what is recalled about the products purchased and the experience, influences future behavior and future decisions of what and where to buy, and that's the reason why, it is relevant to study whether the different channels influence what is remembered about the products and experiences, and consequently, how the different channels influence the representations and categorizations of products and experiences (in the memory).

3. Hypothesis Formulation

Being the aim of this study to evaluate how the different shopping channels influence consumers' perceptions about products and the shopping experience (and its categorization/representation in consumers memory) and keeping in mind the previous research a set of hypotheses were created.

In the previous section it become clear that there is a distinction between what the different channels offer to consumers, between the consumers that buy in each channel and between the type of products with a higher propensity to be bought in each channel.

As said above, to evaluate the effect of the different channels on consumers' perceptions about products and experiences, it's relevant to understand what consumers remember about the products and their shopping experiences, and how does the memories change according to the channel used to make the purchase. Taking into consideration that consumers usually prefer online channels for more *utilitarian* reasons, such as convenience (Overby and Lee, 2006), and traditional channels for more *hedonic* reasons such as personal experience or desire for service (Kollmann et al., 2012) and the fact that *search*/*utilitarian* products are usually purchased online (Gupta et al., 2004) while *hedonic*/*experience* products are more often bought offline (Balasubrama et al., 2005)) it can be hypothesized that this association of *utilitarian*/online and *hedonic*/offline can influence the representation of the experiences and products bought. Following this idea, if the representation of products/experiences differ, what is retrieved in memory can also differ. And, as what is retained in memory is important in consumer decision making (as it was mentioned above), it is important to test if when consumers imagine themselves buying products online/offline they will remember more *utilitarian*/*hedonic* attributes of the products and experiences. The following hypotheses were created:

H1: Consumers remember more *utilitarian* attributes of the products when they imagine purchases that occur in online channels, than in offline channels

H2: Consumers remember more *hedonic* attributes of the products when they imagine purchases that occur in offline channels, than in online channels

Since the results from imagining a shopping experience and remembering a real shopping experience can differ, and to give some additional support and to complement the results, it was theorized that when remembering a past shopping experience, the results would be consistent. Which means that when remembering a purchase that occurred online, more *utilitarian* attributes of the products/experiences are recalled by the consumers, while, when remembering an experience that occurred in a traditional channel, consumers will remember more *hedonic* attributes. In line with this rational there was assembled the second pair of hypotheses:

H3: When remembering past purchasing experiences in online channels more *utilitarian* characteristics are remembered, than in offline channels.

H4: When remembering past purchasing experiences in offline channels more *hedonic* characteristics are remembered, than in online channels.

Thus, by testing these hypotheses, we will understand, ultimately, the influence of the purchase channel on how people will remember the *hedonism* of products bought. Simply put, we will be able to test whether an offline channel leads to represent a product bought as more *hedonic* than an online channel regardless the attributes of the product.

4. Methodology

4.1. Industry

In was after the second-to-last ice age[2], that the need to protect themselves from the cold, led the primitive men to start to use animal furs and skins to cover themselves, introducing what is currently known as clothes. Therefore, in the beginning, "clothing" served a very *utilitarian* need. As years have passed, clothing has been fulfilling a wide range of distinct functions, from

[2] https://www.seeker.com/humans-first-wore-clothing-170000-years-ago-1765156178.html

gender differentiation to social status differentiation, without losing one of the main reasons for which it was "created": providing comfort to the wearer and protect him/her from the weather and other phenomena of nature. For years, the fashion industry has been evolving and changing the way consumers see and experience clothing items. So, a question of whether apparel is seen as a more *hedonic* or *utilitarian* product appeared. This question is important because it can provide some guidance to companies in the industry of how and where to advertise and sell their products. Despite not being clear how to characterize clothes in terms of *hedonism*/*utilitarianism*, prior research found that traditional channels are preferred by consumers when buying apparel (Cho and Workman, 2011), especially because consumers of clothing items value the personalized service, the shopping experience and being able to see and touch the product before purchasing (Levin et al., 2003). A multichannel consumer of apparel is more commonly a consumer who ranks high in fashion innovativeness and opinion leadership (usually a consumer that sets trends and is a "fashion change agent"), this type of consumers are usually women that use touch to collect information and for pleasure and, so they ranked higher in "need for touch", versus the "fashion followers" (Cho and Workman, 2011). Even when buying online, consumers of apparel seek an experience that will bring them excitement, pleasure or that it will be fun (more *hedonic* attributes) and these types of features influence their evaluation of the online clothing stores (Ha and Stoel, 2012).

Having this in mind and the fact that there is still a lot of research missing regarding this industry and specifically how these products are perceived and how consumers behave when buying these products, the fashion industry not only is an economically important industry as it also provides a particularly good setting for the test of the present hypothesis.

In Portugal, in 2015, 6.44% of the national consumption was on apparel and shoes (Pordata, 2017), while in 2017 the revenue in clothes is expected to reach US$6.028m, being "women's and girls' apparel" the largest segment (Statista, 2017).

4.2. General

To answer the research question by testing the hypotheses two studies were created. In the first study consumers were asked to imagine a shopping scenario while in the second one, consumers recalled a real shopping situation that they experienced. Both studies were created using *Qualtrics* and were shared online, through social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn, direct contacts and by approaching people on the streets and stores (specifically for study 2). Since the scope of analysis are Portuguese consumers both surveys were created in

Portuguese. Participation was voluntary and totally anonymous, and to guarantee the accuracy of results at the end of each study, participants were asked to evaluate whether their responses should be included in the study (based on their attention while answering the questionnaire).

4.3. Study 1 – Imagine a shopping experience

4.3.1. Survey

The first two hypothesis will be tested with the results of the first survey and, so it is expected that after analyzing the results it will possible to understand if, in fact, channels influence what is remembered about products and about the experience consumers imagine in each channel.

The study was divided into three phases: presentation of the product; distracting phase; and recall phase. Each participant went through the three phases. However, participants were randomly assigned to one of the conditions (online or offline – independent variables).

In the first phase, participants were randomly asked to imagine they were about to buy a jacket either in an online store or in an offline shopping context ("store or shopping mall"). A description of the jacket was then presented to the participants. The description was consistent in both conditions and contained an equal number of *utilitarian* and *hedonic* attributes.

The description of the jacket was as follows: "This new model is very elegant, made with good quality materials, and with an excellent price-quality ratio. It is available in a wide selection of colors. The model is very fashion-forward, and the fabric has a very nice texture to the touch. It will keep you warm and protect you from the rain".

The attributes used to describe the jacket were characterized as *utilitarian*/*hedonic* keeping in mind the results from Voss et al (2003). The elegancy, the wide selection of colors, the fact that it is "fashion-forward" and the fact that the fabric has a "nice texture to the touch" were characterized as *hedonic* attributes because they relate with the enjoyment, the delightfulness and the excitement with the product (for example being fashion-forward may make the consumer feel special, and excited for wearing it). On the other hand, the "good quality materials", the "good quality-price ratio", and the fact that it will provide protection from the cold and from the rain were considered *utilitarian* aspects because they are related with effectiveness (for example a jacket should protect the user from the cold), practicality or functionality.

Participants were asked to evaluate on a 7-point Likert scale (being 1-not important at all and 7-extremely important) how important were the 8 attributes used to describe the jacket.

Respondents also rated how desirable was the jacket on a 7-point Likert scale (1-not desirable at all, 7-Extremely desirable).

Besides these questions, participants were asked a question to check whether they see clothes as a more *hedonic* or *utilitarian* product. In this question participants were presented with a 9-point scale with two polos with either a *hedonic* or *utilitarian* description and participants had to select on that scale which sentence better described their attitude when buying clothes. The first polo corresponding to point 1 was the *utilitarian* polo and had the following description "I buy a jacket because it will keep me warm and protected from the rain, it has a good quality-price ratio and its very versatile" while the description of point 9 was the *hedonic* one: "I buy a jacket that is pretty, elegant, fashion forward, and that makes me feel good while complementing my outfits". The first phase ended with a question regarding participants' willingness to pay for the jacket (slider with values between 0€ and 1000€).

The second part of the study was a distracting phase, in which participants answered a few questions about current day situations and their perceptions about them. The aim of this part, was to distract the participants and make them think of other things rather than the jacket presented in the beginning of the questionnaire.

Finally, in the third phase, participants were asked to go back to the shopping experience they were imagining earlier in the study and told to write down all the attributes of the jacket they could remember.

Then participants repeated the questions from the first phase regarding the importance of the attributes, desirability of the product, evaluation of clothes as more *hedonic/utilitarian*, and willingness to pay for the jacket. The aim of this part was to check whether there were differences in these measures before and after the distracting phase.

Finally, participants answered a few more questions about how likely (on a 7-point Likert scale-1-Extremely Improbable, 7-Extremely probable) were they to buy the jacket online/offline (accordingly to the condition in which participants were included), shopping habits (average expenditure on clothes per month; and where participants usually buy clothes) and demographics (age, gender, last completed degree and current professional situation). The questions regarding shopping habits and demographics were used to characterize the sample.

4.3.2. Sample

After removing all the incomplete responses and the ones that participants mentioned that should not be included, the sample had a total of 200 valid responses (98 in the offline condition and 102 in the online condition).

The average age was 39.25 years, with participants ranging from 16 to 65 years. There was a higher percentage of male participants (55.5% vs 44.5% of female participants) and most of the sample is currently working (74.5%) or studying (19%). Participants of the study were highly educated, 47% finished their undergrad studies while 32.5% finished a master degree.

Regarding shopping habits, 79,66% buy clothes in traditional channels (vs 19.49% that buy online - on sites, apps or social media) and 65.4% spends on average between 21€ and 100€ on clothes per month.

When separating the sample into the two conditions, participants of the offline condition had on average 39.42 years, 53.1% were males (vs 46.9% females), 49% finished their undergrad studies, while 31.65% had a master degree, 79.6% is employed and 14.3% are students. Participants in this condition mainly shop offline for clothes (77.12%) and 68.4% of participants spends on average per month between 21€ and 100€.

Lastly participants of the online condition had a mean age of 39.09 years, 57.8% were males, 45.1% had a bachelor degree, and 33.3% a master degree; 69.6% is employed while 23.5% are students. 82.2% of participants buy clothes on traditional channels and 61.8% spends on average between 21€ and 100€ on clothes per month.

4.3.3. Design

Regarding the design of the study, participants were either allocated to the online or offline condition and that was the only manipulation made. It's expected that the participants of different conditions would recall and value different attributes of the products.

4.3.4. Results

The analysis of the data was done in two phases: first each condition was studied separately and then the data was combined to be able to make the comparisons between the online and the offline condition.

Within each condition, some t-test and correlations were made specially to check for differences before and after the distracting phase. In all the analysis the significance level taken in consideration was $\alpha = 5\%$.

4.3.4.1. Online vs Offline analysis

The evaluation of the importance of the attributes of the jacket was the first variable to be studied. Comparing the mean evaluations, before the distracting phase, the only attributes with a significant statistical difference were "Variety of colors/patters" ($M_{online} = 4.9$, $M_{offline} = 4.46$, $t(101) = 2.106$; $p = .038$) and "fashion forward" ($M_{online} = 5.08$ vs $M_{offline} = 4.58$, $t(101) = 2.455$; $p = .016$). After the distracting phase none of the attributes had a statistical significant difference. Regarding the desirability and the willingness to pay (WTP) for the jacket there were no statistical significant differences before and after the distracting phase (Desirability: before: $M_{online} = 5.19$, $M_{offline} = 5.38$, $t(101) = -1.673$; $p = .097$; after: $M_{online} = 5.26$ vs $M_{offline} = 5.42$, $t(101) = -1.192$, $p = .236$; WTP: before: $M_{online} = 201.83€$, $M_{offline} = 185.29€$, $t(101) = .934$, $p = .352$; after: $M_{online} = 202.14€$ vs $M_{offline} = 186.55€$, $t(101) = .858$, $p = .393$).

When comparing the means of the evaluation of clothes as more *utilitarian*/*hedonic*, before and after the distracting phase, there is no significant statistical difference between the online and offline condition (before: $M_{online} = 4.84$, $M_{offline} = 4.97$, $t(101) = -.361$, $p = .719$; after: $M_{online} = 4.89$, $M_{offline} = 4.94$, $t(101) = -.133$, $p = .895$), however looking at the frequencies of the extreme polos (1-*utilitarian*; 9-*hedonic*), there is a tendency of participants of the offline condition to rank clothes as more *hedonic* than participants of the online condition and vice versa (online-*utilitarian*), and so further analysis was conducted. Looking at polo number 1 (*utilitarian*), before the distracting phase, 17.6% of participants of the online condition selected the *utilitarian* description of clothes, while only 14.6% of the offline condition selected point 1. When looking at point 9, a higher percentage of participants of the offline condition selected this point (14.3% vs 7.8% of the online condition). After the distracting phase, this tendency holds: a higher percentage of participants of the offline condition selected the *hedonic* polo (12.2% offline vs 7.8% online), however a higher percentage of participants of the offline condition selected the *utilitarian* polo (16.3% offline vs 15.7% online). To elaborate on this, the frequencies and means of the first and last quartiles were calculated for both the online and offline conditions and a set of paired sampled t-test was conducted. The 4 pairs analyzed were 1: Q1_online_before vs Q1_offline_before; 2: Q4_online_before vs Q4_offline_before; 3: Q1_online_after vs Q1_offline_after; 4: Q4_online_after vs Q4_offline_after. All the pairs had

statistical significant differences - pair 1: *t(32)* = -2.596, *p* = .014; pair 2: *t(31)* = -2.049, *p* = .049; pair 3: *t(31)* = -2.085, *p* = .045; pair 4: *t(32)* = -2.636, *p* = .013.

		Means
Pair 1	Q1_online_before	1,66
	Q1_offline_before	1,91
Pair 2	Q4_online_before	7,82
	Q4_offline_before	8
Pair 3	Q1_online_after	1,62
	Q1_offline_after	1,78
Pair 4	Q4_online_after	7,67
	Q4_offline_after	7,88

Table 1 – Quartiles means

As expected in the online condition the means are inferior for the first quartile and in the offline condition means are higher in the fourth quartile (*hedonic* polo). Which means that, as it can be seen in table 1, when in the online condition participants are more extreme towards the *utilitarian* polo and when in the offline condition participants are more extreme towards the *hedonic* polo.

When comparing the probability of buying in each condition, there is a significant statistical difference (*t(101)* = -10.350, *p* < .01) between the offline (*M* = 5.71) and the online (*M* = 3.52) condition.

Then a mixed Anova was performed, taking into consideration in which conditions participants were included (online or offline – between subjects factor) and the number of *utilitarian* and *hedonic* attributes recorded by each participant (within subjects factor). The average number of *utilitarian* attributes recalled in the online condition (*M* = 2.88) was higher than that in the offline condition (*M* = 2.65), while the average number of *hedonic* attributes recalled in the offline condition (*M* = 2.34) was higher than that in the online condition (*M* = 2.28). However, despite the condition, the *utilitarian* attributes were on average more easily recalled than the *hedonic* attributes. Checking the within-subjects test it's possible to see that the effect of the attributes recalled (*hedonic*/*utilitarian*) is significant (*F* (1, 182) = 12.367, *p* = .001) while the interaction between the condition in which participants were allocated and the attributes is non-significant (*F* (1, 182) = 1.212, *p* =.272). When checking the between subjects test is possible to note that the effect of the condition (online vs offline) is also non-significant (*F* (1, 182) = .677, *p* = .412).

To elaborate on this some comparisons were made. First, the average number of *utilitarian* and *hedonic* attributes recalled in each condition were compared and neither were significantly statistical different (*utilitarian*_online vs *utilitarian*_offline: *t(97)* = 1.532, *p* = .129; *hedonic*_online vs *hedonic*_offline: *t(97)* = -.381, *p* = .704), and then, within the same condition the average number of *utilitarian* attributes recalled was compared with the average number of *hedonic* attributes recalled. Within the online condition, there is a significant statistical

difference between the *utilitarian* and *hedonic* attributes recalled (higher number of *utilitarian* attributes - $t(97) = 4.383$, $p < .01$), while within the offline condition there is no significant statistical difference ($t(97) = 1.559$, $p = .122$).

The same analysis was made but only taking into consideration the "true recalls" (recall of actual attributes of the jacket), and the results were similar. In the within-subjects it's possible to check the significant effect of the attributes recalled (F (1, 179) = 5.525, p =.02) and the non-significance of the interaction (F (1, 179) =.046, p =.831). Again, the effect of the condition (online_or_offline) is also non-significant (F (1, 179) = .003, p = .959). The true recalled *utilitarian* attributes in the online condition (M = 2.42) were not significantly different from the true recalled *utilitarian* attributes in the offline condition (M = 2.40) – $t(94) = .123$, $p = .903$. And the same happened between the true recalled *hedonic* attributes (M_{hed_online} = 2.13, $M_{hed\_offline}$ = 2.16, $t(94) = -.207$, $p = .836$). Within the online condition there is a significant difference between the true attributes recorded ($t(94) = 2.323$, $p = .022$) while in the offline condition there isn't ($t(94) = 1.379$, $p = .171$).

4.3.4.2. Individual analysis

Within the offline condition, the first analysis was made on the question regarding the importance of the attributes of the jacket. The attributes with the highest means, before the distracting phase, were the "good quality-price ratio" (M = 5.95), followed by "good materials" (M = 5.93) and "protect from the cold" (M = 5.92). After the distracting phase, the attributes with the highest means were the same with means equal to M = 6.05, M = 5.98 and M = 5.8 respectively. Comparing the means, the only attributes with a significant statistical difference were "elegance" (M_{before} = 5.91, M_{after} = 5.62; $t(97) = 3.863$, $p < .01$) and "fashion-forward" (M_{before} = 4.58, M_{after} = 4.88; $t(97) = -3.217$, $p = .002$). The desirability of the jacket didn't have a significant statistical difference before and after the distracting phase (M_{before} = 5.38, M_{after} = 5.42; $t(96) = -.601$, $p = .548$). Before the distracting phase the same proportion of people (14.3%) selected point 1 and point 9 of the *utilitarian*/*hedonic* scale, which means that an equal number of respondents considered clothes completely *utilitarian* and *hedonic*. After the distracting phase the percentage of respondents who evaluated clothes as completely *utilitarian* (16.3%) was higher than the respondents who considered clothes completely *hedonic* products, however there is no statistical significant difference between the means (M_{before} = 4.97, M_{after} = 4.94, $t(97) = .376$, $p = .708$). The same can be said about the willingness to pay for the jacket (M_{before} = 185.29€, M_{after} = 186.55€, $t(96) = -1.393$, $p = .167$). To further test the idea that

hedonic features of a product become more relevant for offline shopping than online shopping, a correlation between the probability of buying offline and how much the product was perceived as *hedonic* or *utilitarian* was run. As expected there was a positive and significant correlation between these two variables (r = .256, p = .011). After the distracting phase the correlation between the two variables was also significant (r = .216, p = .033).

In the online condition the same analyses were made. Starting with the evaluation of the importance of the attributes of the jacket, the only ones with a significant statistical difference (before vs after the distracting phase) were "elegance" (M_{before} = 5.86, M_{after} = 5.63, $t(100)$ = 2.822, p = .006), "protect from the cold" (M_{before} = 5.88, M_{after} = 5.74, $t(100)$ = 2.201, p = .030) and "impermeable" (M_{before} = 5.24, M_{after} = 5.44, $t(100)$ = -2.612, p = .010). As in the offline condition the attributes consumers considered the most important (before and after the distracting phase) were "good price-quality ratio" (M_{before} = 6.04, M_{after} = 6.14), "good materials" (M_{before} = 6.10, M_{after} =5.97) and "protect from the cold" (M_{before} = 5.88; M_{after} = 5.74). Also, as in the offline condition the desirability didn't have a significant difference between the means before and after the distracting phase (M_{before} = 5.19, M_{after} = 5.26, $t(101)$ = -1.182, p = .240) neither did the means of the evaluation of clothes as *utilitarian*/*hedonic* (M_{before} = 4.84, M_{after} = 4.89, $t(101)$ = -.429, p = .669). Before the distracting phase 17.6% of respondents considered clothes a completely *utilitarian* product (polo 1) (vs 7.8% who considered a completely *hedonic* product- polo 9), while after the distracting phase 15.7% considered clothes a completely *utilitarian* product (vs the same 7.8% who considered clothes a completely *hedonic* product). Not surprisingly, before the distracting phase, the correlation between the evaluation of clothes in terms of *utilitarianism*/*hedonism* and the probability of buying online was negative but not significant (r = -0.038, p = .704). After the distracting phase, the same correlation is still not significant (r = -.055, p = .582. Although it was expected a higher valuation of the *utilitarian* aspect of a product when buying online, this finding suggests that when considering buying a product using online platforms, participants seem to undervalue the *hedonic* aspect of a product when compared to the same shopping situation in an offline store.

4.3.5. Discussion

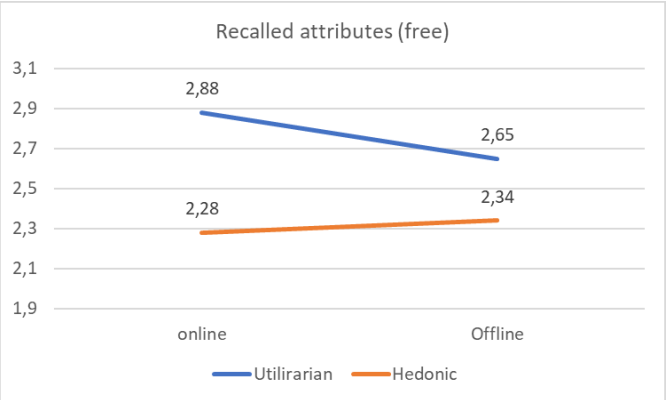
The probability of buying the product described was influenced by how participants evaluated clothes in terms of *utilitarianism*/*hedonism*. As the evaluation of clothes increases towards the *hedonic* polo, the higher the probability of buying offline. Even though the correlation is non-significant the inverse happens in the online condition, as the evaluation increases towards the

hedonic polo the lower the probability of buying online. This is consistent with the idea that *utilitarian* products are more likely to be bought online while *hedonic* products are more likely to be bought offline.

The most important attributes were the same, despite the channel, which might be interpreted as: when buying products like the one described, online or offline, consumers mainly seek the same attributes (price-quality ratio, the quality of the materials and the protection from the cold).

The desirability of the product was higher offline, however, participants showed a higher willingness to pay (WTP) in the online condition. Even though the WTP was higher in participants of the online condition the probability of buying the jacket in that channel was much smaller than the probability of buying offline. In theory, if a product is more desirable, consumers will have a higher WTP, and consequently if the price is smaller or equal to the WTP the probability of buying will be higher. In this case, the condition in which the product was more desirable, was not the one with highest WTP, but was the one where the probability of buying was bigger. It's important to note that from the three variables (desirability, WTP and probability of buying) only the probability of buying had a significant difference, so the desirability and WTP could not be good predictors of the probability of making a purchase in this case.

As mentioned above, participants of the online condition were more oriented towards the *utilitarian* polo (when defining clothes) and participants of the offline condition were more oriented towards the *hedonic* polo. This could mean that when consumers are buying apparel online they buy it as a product to serve a specific need (ex. Jacket-protect from the cold), thinking more of its usefulness, and its *utilitarian* attributes rather than giving it a *hedonic* perspective.



Graph 1 – Recalled attributes (free recall) -Study

As it's possible to see in graph 1, the *utilitarian* attributes were recalled to a higher extent in both conditions. This can be related with the fact that the attributes that participants considered the most important were the *utilitarian* ones, and since they were considered more important, they were more easily recalled.

As expected in the online condition, participants recalled more *utilitarian* attributes ($M_{utilitarian\_online}$ = 2.88; $M_{utilitarian\_offlinr}$ = 2.65) and in the offline condition more *hedonic* attributes ($M_{hedonic\_online}$ = 2.28; $M_{hedonic\_offline}$ = 2.34), however, there is only a significant difference between the *hedonic* and *utilitarian* attributes recalled in the online condition. One reason for this could be related with the fact that in the traditional channels consumers are used to buy everything, and for a multiple of reasons (*utilitarian*/*hedonic*/impulsive), and the online channels are the novelty. So, purchases online can be, in theory, more though through, and consumers can make *utilitarian*/*hedonic* distinctions to a higher extent.

4.4. Study 2 – Remember a shopping experience

4.4.1. Survey

The main goal of study 2 was to verify if the results are consistent if participants remembered past shopping experiences both online and offline instead of imagining shopping experiences that did not occur.

As in the Study 1, participants were randomly assigned to either the online condition or the offline condition. In both conditions, participants were asked to remember the last clothing product they purchased online or offline and to identify from a list of clothing items ("Shirt", "T-shirt/Top/Polo", "Pants/Jeans", "Shorts/Skirts", "Jacket/Overcoat", "Sweatshirt", "Dresses" and "Other") what type of product it was. It was assumed that everyone had already bought clothes offline, however the same cannot be said about the online channels. So, if participants were allocated to the online condition before being asked to remember the last item purchased, participants were presented with a question to check whether they bought clothes online before or not. If participants answered yes, they would proceed in the online condition, if they answered no they would be "transferred" to the offline condition.

After remembering the product, participants had to write down which attributes do they remember about it and to evaluate, on a 7-point Likert scale, the importance of the characteristics/attributes they mentioned on the decision to buy.

Then participants evaluated, on the same 7-point Likert, the importance of a complete list of attributes, similar to the one presented in study 1 (which included "elegance", "impermeable", "materials", "Keep you warm/cool", "price-quality ratio", "variety of colors/patterns", "fabric", "price", "style", "brand" and "shopping channel" ("online" or "store or shopping channel" according to the condition in which participants were allocated). On this scale respondents could also select an option "non-applicable" if the attribute had no correspondence with the

product being remembered (eg. The attribute "impermeable" if the participant is recalling buying a shirt).

A question to evaluate the satisfaction with the product (on a 7-point Likert scale being 1- completely unsatisfied and 7- extremely satisfied) and two questions to check if clothes are characterized as a more *hedonic* or *utilitarian* product were also presented to the participants. The first of these two questions was equivalent to the one in study 1 and just like in study 1, it had two polos and 9-points, being the first one the *utilitarian* polo (1-"I buy pieces of clothing that are versatile, that have good quality-price ratios, and allow me to move around") and the last one the *hedonic* polo (9- "I buy pieces of clothing that are beautiful, elegant, fashion-forward and that will make me feel good"). The second question also had 2 polos and 9 points, but participants were presented with a definition of *utilitarianism* and of *hedonism* and had to characterize the product they bought as more *utilitarian* (point 1) or more *hedonic* (point 9).

In the following section participants were asked to evaluate on a 7-point Likert scale their evaluation of the experience (being 1- Terrible and 7-Excelent), and the importance of some characteristics of the experience, taken from Levin et al (2003), such as: "variety", "being able to see/touch the product", "have the product right away", "Delivery time (if not available right away)", "no hassle exchange/return", "speed of purchasing" and "personalized service" (on a 7-poinrt Likert scale (1-Not important at all, 7- Extremely important). These questions ended up being more related with the evaluation of the experience and general satisfaction instead of directly related with the memory and the representation of the experience (as more *hedonic* or *utilitarian*). And the aim was to evaluate if there are differences in the satisfaction between the two conditions and the relevance of the characteristics of the experience.

Lastly questions regarding participants' motivation to shop online/offline (according to the condition) and whether participants applied the complementarity principle (Vorrveld, 2016), which means whether they used other channels for the pre-purchase stage were presented to participants.

A section of demographics equal to the one in Study 1 closed the survey.

4.4.2. Sample

The second study had a total of 103 valid responses, 64 of which answered to the questions in the offline condition (62.14%), while the online condition had a total of 39 participants (37.86%).

The age of participants varied from 16 to 64 years old, being the mean age 35.72 years old. In this experiment there was a higher number of female participants (65% vs 35% of male participants). Currently, 63.1% of participants are employed and 27.5% are still studying. Just like in study 1, the sample is highly educated: 52,4% finished an undergraduate degree and 11,7% a master degree.

From the 60 participants who answered whether they had bought clothes online before, 65% answered positively.

4.4.3. Results

When looking at the responses of the second study it's important first to see what type of products were remembered by the respondents and then proceed with the analysis. In this study the significance level used was again of $\alpha = 5\%$. Participants who answered the offline condition mostly remembered shopping experiences in which they bought "Pants/Jeans" (26.6%), "Jacket/Overcoat" (18.8%), and "Shirts" (17.2%), while in the online conditions the majority of products bought/remembered were "T-shirt/top/polo" (20.5%), "Jacket/Overcoat" (17.9%), or "Other" (17.9% - on "other" people mainly wrote shoes"). Then a mixed Anova was done with the number of *utilitarian*/*hedonic* attributes recalled by each participant.

More *hedonic* attributes were recalled in the offline condition ($M_{hed\_offline} = 2.02$, $M_{hed\_online} = 1.59$) and more *utilitarian* attributes were remembered in the online condition ($M_{util\_offline} = 1.45$, $M_{util\_online} = 1.49$). In both conditions there was a higher number of *hedonic* attributes recalled. From the results is possible to see that both the attributes (F (1, 99) = 3.791, $p = .054$) and the interaction (attributes*online_or_offline) (F (1, 99) = 1.741, $p = .190$) are non-significant. The effect of the condition (seen in the between-subjects test) is, however, significant (F (1, 99) = 5.230, $p = .024$). Comparing the average number of *utilitarian* attributes recalled in the online and offline condition there is no significant difference ($t(102) = -.404$, $p = .687$), while between the *hedonic* attributes there is a difference ($t(102) = 4.763$, $p < .01$).

Within the same condition, and comparing the *utilitarian* attributes recalled with the *hedonic* attributes, there's only a significant difference in the offline condition ($t_{offline}(102) = -4.422$, $p_{offline} < .01$; $t_{online}(102) = -1.037$, $p_{online} = .302$).

Participants then evaluated the importance of the attributes they recalled on their purchasing decision. The *utilitarian* attributes were evaluated with a higher grade in both conditions ($M_{util\_offline} = 5.74$, $M_{hed\_offline} = 5.22$; $M_{util\_online} = 6.13$, $M_{\text{hed\_online}} = 5.12$). The evaluation of

utilitarian attributes online vs offline was significantly different ($t(98)$ = -5.666, $p < .01$), and the difference in the evaluation of *hedonic* attributes was non-significant ($t(98)$ = .771, p = .443). Online and offline there is a significant difference between the evaluation of the *hedonic* and *utilitarian* attributes ($t_{online}(98)$ = -13.370, $p_{online} < .01$; $t_{offline}(98)$ = -1.990, $p_{offline}$ = .049).

From the complete list of attributes, in both conditions, the most important attributes were the "price-quality ratio" ($M_{offline}$ = 5.89, M_{online} = 6.13), "price" ($M_{offline}$ = 5.81, M_{online} = 6.15), "Elegance" ($M_{offline}$ = 5.67, M_{online} = 5.61) and "Style" ($M_{offline}$ = 5.56, M_{online} = 5.77). However, the only attributes with a significant statistical difference were "Price" ($t(102)$ = -3.184, p = .002), "Price-Quality ratio" ($t(102)$ = -2.290, p = .024) and "Brand" ($M_{offline}$ = 3.55, M_{online} = 4.08, $t(102)$ = -2.882, p = .005). Regarding satisfaction with the product there was no significant difference between the conditions ($M_{offline}$ = 5.92, M_{online} = 5.74, $t(94)$ = 1.566, p =.121) while the evaluation of the experience was significantly different ($M_{offline}$ = 5.19, M_{online} = 5.56, $t(102)$ = -3.416, p = .001). When asked to evaluate the importance of some characteristics of the experience, participants of the offline condition gave a higher importance to being able to see/touch the product ($M_{offline}$ = 6.24), "no hassle exchange/return" ($M_{offline}$ = 6.16), "have the product immediately" ($M_{offline}$ = 5.92), while participants of online condition valued the "no hassle exchange/return" (M_{online} =6.10), the "speed of purchase" (M_{online} = 5.74), "variety" (M_{online} = 5.72) and the "delivery time" (M_{online} = 5.51) as more important. Between the two conditions the attributes with a statistical difference were "Being able to see/touch the product" ($M_{offline}$ = 6.24, M_{online} = 4.77, $t(102)$ = 12.621, $p < .01$), "have the product immediately" ($M_{offline}$ = 5.92, M_{online} = 5.05, $t(102)$ = 7.268, $p < .01$) and "personalized service" ($M_{offline}$ = 5, M_{online} = 4.41, $t(102)$ = 3.341, p = .001).

Just like in the first study participants were asked a question to understand how they evaluated clothes (as more *utilitarian*/*hedonic*). There was a significant difference between these evaluations ($M_{offline}$ = 4.91, M_{online} = 5.77, $t(102)$ = -2.780, p = .006). And then a question to see how they evaluated the product they bought in terms of *utilitarianism*/*hedonism*. In both the conditions "dresses" were evaluated as the more *hedonic* product ($M_{offline}$ = 6, M_{online} = 6.33) followed by the category "others", which included mostly shoes or tie/scarf ($M_{offline}$ = 5, M_{online} = 5.71). The categories considered more *utilitarian* were "Pants/Jeans" ($M_{offline}$ = 2.94, M_{online} = 3.25) and "Sweatshirt" ($M_{offline}$ = 2.67, M_{online} = 3.25).

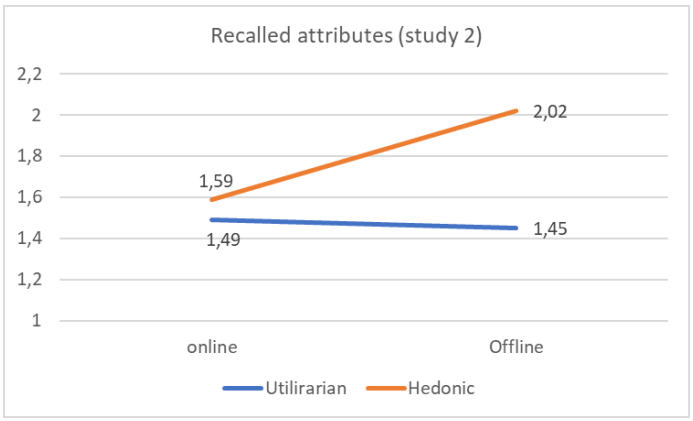
Participants main reason to shop online was related with ease and convenience (39.29%), followed by the variety of options (21.43%) and lack of time to visit a traditional store (16.07%). Being able to try the product (35.56%) as well as see and touch the product (25.19%)

and enjoying shopping (explore and walk around the stores to see what's new) (17.04%) were the main reasons that led participants to shop offline.

Finally, the complementarity principle was higher in purchases made online: participants of the online condition mentioned they visited offline stores before buying online with a higher frequency than participants who buy offline (search online) – M_{online} = 4.49, $M_{offline}$ = 2.94.

4.4.4. Discussion

Again, and as expected, there was a higher number of *utilitarian* attributes recalled in the online condition ($M_{utilitarian\_online}$ = 1.49; $M_{utilitarian\_offline}$ = 1.45) and a higher number of *hedonic* attributes recalled in the offline condition ($M_{hedonic\_online}$ = 1.59; $M_{hedonic\_offline}$ = 2.02 – significant difference). However, contrary to the first study the *hedonic* attributes were more recalled despite the condition. This can be related with the fact that in study 1 the participants were imagining an abstract product (only a description) and so participants mentioned the things they valued the most and attributes they could easily identify (it's easier to understand and visualize "good materials" than "fashion-forward" for example). While in the second study, participants were remembering products they bought, which they already felt, and experienced and as people tend to remember what gave them more pleasure, *hedonic* attributes could be more present in their minds.



Graph 2 – Recalled Attributes-Study 2

There was a significant difference in the offline condition (between the *utilitarian* and *hedonic* attributes).

When evaluating the recalled attributes, participants gave higher grades to the *utilitarian* attributes in the online condition and higher grades to the *hedonic* attributes in the offline condition, and *utilitarian* attributes were evaluated in terms of importance with higher grades despite the condition. A reason for this could be related with the attributes considered the most important by participants ("price-quality ratio" and "price").

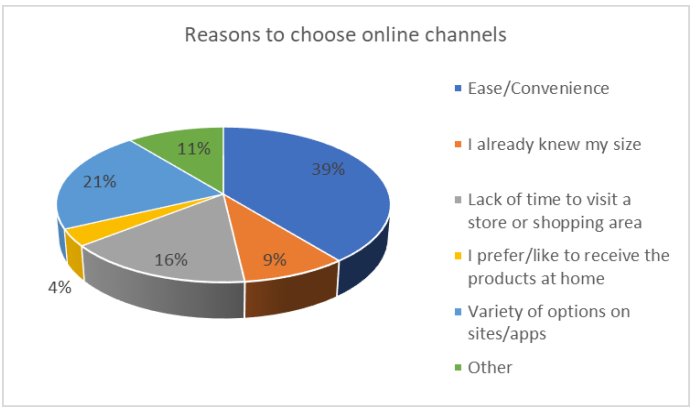
Considering the importance of the complete list of attributes, between the two conditions, the only attributes with a significant difference were "price", "price-quality ratio" and "brand", all

ranked higher in the online condition. “Price” and the “price-quality ratio” have a higher importance online, because of the risk associated with buying something expensive online, as the product might turn out not to be what it was expected or don’t be delivered for example. Consistent with the results from Hahn and Kim (2009) and Arce-Urriza et al (2010), “brand” is more important in online channels and consumers are more brand loyal online, because buying from familiar brands reduces risk, while offline consumers can see/feel and, in some cases, try different products and brands before purchasing which can make them switch between brands more easily.

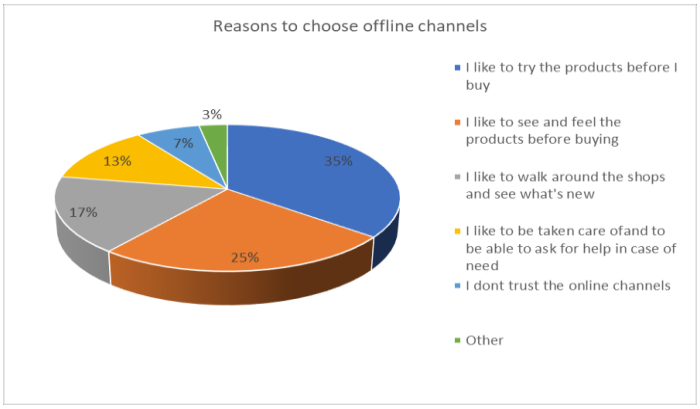
The shopping experience online was evaluated as better than the experience offline, which can be related with the fact that all participants (of both conditions) considered “variety” and “speed of purchase”, for example, as very important (characteristics that normally tend to be more important in the evaluation of online channels). The channel attributes who had a significant difference were “being able to see/touch the product”, “personalized service” and “have the product immediately”, which had, as expected, a higher importance for participants who remembered an experience that happened offline.

Regarding the evaluation of the products bought in a *utilitarian/hedonic* scale. “Pants/Jeans” and “Sweatshirt” were the type of products evaluated as more *utilitarian* (are products that satisfy a very specific need), while “dresses” were evaluated as the more *hedonic* products. Dresses can be products bought/used for special occasions, so its purchase is normally lived in a more intense and *hedonic* way.

In accordance with the results of the question of importance of the attributes of the experience and in line with most of the articles mentioned in the literature review (eg. Overby and Lee, 2006), participants chose online channels for reasons related with ease/convenience, variety and time constrains (Graph 3), while offline channels were mainly chosen because of the



Graph 3 – Reasons to choose online channels



Graph 4 – Reasons to choose offline channels

possibility of experiencing the product (see/touch/try) and the enjoyment of the shopping experience (Graph 4).

Perhaps to reduce risk while maintaining the convenience and advantages of buying online, a lot of consumers go offline to experiment and see the products and then choose the online channels to make the final purchase, while the inverse (researching online and buying offline) is not so common. The latter can happen as a way of, for example, increase efficiency: check online what's available, choose what to buy and then go to the store already with a product in mind.

5. General Discussion

The first two hypothesis stated that when imagining shopping experiences occurring online, consumers would remember more *utilitarian* attributes of products (H1), and when imagining offline shopping experiences, consumers would remember more *hedonic* attributes of products (H2). This would mean that the shopping channel would influence the representation of products in consumers' minds and more specifically, which attributes of the products would consumers remember.

To test these two hypotheses, the Anova and some t-tests were run. As it was mentioned in the previous sections, in fact there is a tendency corroborating this idea: in the online condition participants remembered more *utilitarian* attributes of the product described, while in the offline condition, more *hedonic* attributes were recalled. The differences between channels were non-significant (*utilitarian*_online vs *utilitarian*_offline, *hedonic*_online vs *hedonic*_offline), however, when comparing within each channel the *utilitarian* and *hedonic* attributes recalled, there was a statistically significant difference in the online channel (*utilitarian*_online vs *hedonic*_online) with a higher number of *utilitarian* attributes being recalled, and so Hypothesis1 was accepted. Even though the difference between the *utilitarian* and *hedonic* attributes remembered offline (*utilitarian*_offline vs *hedonic*_offline) was not significant, the tendency is there (a higher average of *hedonic* attributes recalled), and so the second hypothesis was partially accepted.

The third and fourth hypothesis were aligned with the first two, as it was expected that when remembering (instead of imagining) a real shopping experience that happened online, consumers would recall more *utilitarian* attributes (H3), while remembering one that happened offline, more *hedonic* attributes would be recalled (H4).

The same type of analysis and comparisons were made to the data from the second study.

When comparing the type of attributes recalled (*hedonic*/*utilitarian*) in the online condition there was no significant statistical difference, but there was a higher number of *utilitarian* attributes recalled online, so the third hypothesis was partially accepted.

Since there was a significantly higher number of *hedonic* attributes (vs *utilitarian*) recalled in the offline condition, the fourth hypothesis was accepted.

The same tendency is observed in the evaluation of the attributes recalled. In the online condition, participants evaluated the *utilitarian* attributes recalled as more important in their purchasing decisions (significant differences), while in the offline there was no significant statistical difference, but *hedonic* attributes had higher grades.

In both studies participants gave higher importance to the same type of attributes ("price", "quality", "price-quality ratio") despite the condition. Which means that buying, online or offline, consumers give a considerable importance to the price of the products and specially to the relation between quality and price. Regarding the experience, participants of both conditions valued the "speed of purchase" the "variety" and "no hassle exchange/return", however, for participants of the offline condition, having the product right away and "being able to see/touch the product" was especially important. So, when buying, consumers seek a wide array of options, but at the same time they value an efficient service that will save them time. It's extremely important, for participants of both conditions the opportunity to easily return or exchange their products. Companies that facilitate this type of transactions can gain consumers "respect" and loyalty, which in turn can increase sales.

6. Conclusions and Managerial Implications

From the literature review it was possible to conclude that there is an association between *utilitarianism* and online channels and *hedonism* and offline channels, and that memory plays a significant role in consumer decision making, as it can influence purchasing decisions. It was hypothesized that the different shopping channels would influence the representation of products in consumers' minds and what type of attributes consumers would recall.

To understand if in fact this connection exists two studies were created. In both studies participants were either allocated to the online or to the offline conditions and while in study 1, participants were imagining a fictional shopping experience and a fictional product, in study 2 respondents were remembering a real shopping experience and a real product they purchased.

Aligned with what was hypothesized there is a tendency for participants of the offline condition to remember more *hedonic* attributes of the product described/bought and for participants of the online condition to remember more *utilitarian* attributes.

In the results of study 1 (imagining the product described) there was a significant difference in the online condition (*hedonic* vs *utilitarian* attributes) with a higher number of *utilitarian* attributes recalled, while in study 2, when participants were remembering real products participants bought, there was a significant difference in the offline condition (with a higher number of *hedonic* attributes recalled). It's then possible to conclude that, in fact, the representation of products in memory is to some extent influenced by shopping channels.

As it was mentioned in a section above, it makes sense that participants recalled more *utilitarian* attributes of the product overall in study 1, and more *hedonic* attributes in study 2. In study 1 consumers had to imagine an abstract product only taking into consideration it's verbal description and so, it's easier to visualize and recall the *utilitarian* and more functional/tangible attributes, like quality or price. In study 2, it was easier for participants to visualize and remember all types of attributes (including the *hedonic* ones), because they already experienced the product.

All considered, the interpretation of the main conclusions can be summarized as: when participants were imagining themselves buying the product described online, besides being easier to recall the *utilitarian* attributes, they recognize that trough the online channel they don't have access to the more *hedonic* features of the products. Therefore, these types of attributes, which had a lower importance for participants, were not so easily recalled and so there was a significant difference in the online condition. When remembering a real product and experience, participants already experienced the product and it's easier to make a distinction and recall all types of attributes. Furthermore, when asked to remember the last clothing item purchased, participants would remember more likely not necessarily the last item purchased, but the one which is more present in their minds – it had a bigger impact and represented a greater pleasure for them – and so, *hedonic* features are more present in participants' minds as they were more easily recalled.

It can be argued that the second study can provide more insights and allow a more relevant conclusion since it studied an authentic shopping experience in which a real product was bought.

The conclusions of this paper can be of interest to managers as: i) despite the shopping channel, consumers mainly seek the same type of attributes, such as price or quality of the product/materials, and therefore it's important to clearly present and emphasize these types of features in both channels; ii) when shopping online consumers will tend to remember *utilitarian* attributes of the products, while when buying offline consumers will more likely remember *hedonic* attributes of the products. With this information managers can improve the description of products, to meet what consumers are looking for and try to align the campaigns for the different channels with the characteristics and attributes sought and relevant for consumers in each channel; iii) Lastly companies can improve the consumer experience and enhance the relationship with them by making sure the experience meets the desires of consumers. Namely, companies can create easier and more intuitive ways to exchange or return products (especially for products bought online), and find out how to speed the purchasing/payment process (especially in the offline channels - avoiding big lines for example).

Consistent with the conclusions from Vorrveld (2016), the results of the second study show that when buying offline consumers mainly apply the consistency principle (search and purchase in the same channel), while the complementarity principle (search in one channel, buy in another) was adopted to a higher extent by participants who remembered a purchasing moment that happened online (searched offline, and then decided to purchase online). It's relevant to further analyze, why consumers who are already at the store, decide to make the final purchase in a distinct shopping channel, and why the complementarity principle is not that common for purchases made offline (search online; purchase offline).

Participants of study 2 mainly presented as reasons to shop online things related with "ease/convenience", "variety of options", "time savings" and "others" (for example: "it didn't exist in Portugal or at the store" or "to enjoy some special promotion"), while the traditional channels were selected because of the enjoyment of the shopping experience and because consumers value the opportunity to see/touch/feel the product before purchase, even though there are some complaints with the lack of celerity to pay and check-out.

From these information is possible to infer that maybe after seeing and feeling the products consumers may switch to the online channels for convenience reasons, to save time, or simply because, for example, the size/number or specific color weren't available at the store and that's why the complementarity principle is more common – by seeing and choosing the product before purchasing consumers can reduce some of the risk associated with online purchases. Managers can also use this knowledge to improve their offer by offering consumers an easier

way to order the product inside the store even if it's unavailable, and to pay and checkout rapidly, for example by providing the possibility to consumers to deliver the desired clothes to be later paid and delivered in their homes. For online consumers, reduce risk by providing easier and more simple return/exchange processes.

7. Limitations and Future Research

The option of a "Jacket" to be the product selected to conduct the first study, was based on the need to have a clothing item not "specific" for a gender (as for example a dress or a tie), and easier to describe using *hedonic* and *utilitarian* attributes. However, taking into consideration the results from the second study, in which participants evaluated the products in terms of *utilitarianism*/*hedonism*, a jacket can be considered a more *utilitarian* product to begin with because of its utility characteristics (protecting from the cold and/or rain), that may overpower the more *hedonic* attributes – $M_{offline}$ =3.5 (out of 9. 1-*utilitarian*, 9-*hedonic*); M_{online} = 4.14. Therefore, if in fact consumers believe a jacket is a more *utilitarian* product, they could unconsciously evaluate as more important and more easily recall these types of attributes, which would mean that the choice of the product could have influenced the results of the first study. A new study could be performed using other products that might be more dubious in terms of *hedonism*/*utilitarianism*.

In the second study there was a difference between the number of respondents of the offline condition (64 participants) and the online condition (39 participants). This difference may have influenced the results. To check the influence of the sample size, the offline sample was divided into two groups: the first 39 participants, and the last 39 participants. And each group was compared with the 39 participants of the online condition in terms of the *hedonic* and *utilitarian* attributes recalled in each channel. In the first analysis (first 39 offline vs online) there were no significant statistical differences, however in the second analysis (last 39 offline vs online), there was a significant difference in the offline condition just like in the analysis of the entire sample ($M_{utilitarian\_offline}$ = 1.31, $M_{hedonic\_offline}$ = 2.18, $t(38)$ = -3.285, p = .002). Taking this into consideration it would be relevant to run the study with a higher number of participants to corroborate the conclusions and make sure the study has external validity and that the results can be extrapolated and generalized to the population in study – Portuguese consumers.

Lastly, future research could take this study as a starting point and instead of focusing more on the influence of the shopping channels on products' representation in memory, try to understand

the impact and influence the shopping channels have on the representation of the shopping experiences.

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9. Appendices

9.1. Appendix 1 – Survey 1: Imagine a shopping experience

Introdução:

Agradeço a sua colaboração!

O presente estudo está integrado na minha tese de mestrado sobre Marketing estratégico da Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics.

Com este estudo pretendo analisar as experiências nos diferentes canais de venda.

A participação neste estudo é voluntária, e anónima, sendo que as respostas apenas serão usadas no âmbito da minha tese.

O survey tem a duração de aproximadamente 10 min.

Agradeço desde já a sua participação.

Fase 1:

1) De seguida será apresentado um produto e será pedido que responda a algumas questões sobre o mesmo.

Neste estudo pretendemos saber a sua opinião sobre as questões apresentadas sendo que não existem respostas certas ou erradas.

Para mitigar possíveis influências durante o desenrolar do estudo, solicitamos que procure não interromper a resposta ao inquérito.

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2) Imagine que vai fazer uma compra numa **loja online**.

Imagine que vai comprar um casaco e que está em frente do computador/telemóvel e abre o site/app de uma loja de roupa. Abre o separador das "novidades" e vê um casaco que lhe chama a atenção.

O casaco que está a considerar comprar vem acompanhado da seguinte descrição: // Imagine que vai fazer uma compra numa **loja ou zona comercial**.

Imagine que vai comprar um casaco e que está numa rua ou zona comercial e entra numa loja. Dirige-se a uma secção de "novidades" e vê um casaco que lhe chama a atenção.

O casaco que está a considerar comprar vem acompanhado da seguinte descrição:

"Este novo modelo é muito elegante, feito com materiais de boa qualidade, e com uma

excelente relação qualidade preço. Está disponível numa grande variedade de cores. O modelo acompanha as tendências actuais da moda e o tecido tem uma agradável textura ao toque. Irá mantê-lo quente e protegê-lo da chuva."

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3) Imagine durante mais algum tempo o casaco descrito anteriormente.
Imagine a sua forma, os materiais de que é feito, a cor do casaco.
Imagine também em que ocasiões vai usá-lo.

Depois de visualizar o casaco, clique no botão >>, para continuar.

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4) Numa escala de 1 a 7, por favor avalie quão importantes para si são os seguintes atributos do casaco que imaginou.

	Nada importante 1	2	3	4	5	6	Muito importante 7
Elegância	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Bons materiais	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Relação qualidade-preço	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Variedade de cores / padrões	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Acompanha a moda	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Agradável ao toque	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Proteger do frio	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Impermeável (proteger da chuva)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

5) Numa escala de 1 a 7 indique quão desejável é o produto?

	Nada Desejável 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremamente Desejável 7
Desejabilidade	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

6) Num contexto de compra de peças de roupa, por exemplo um casaco, qual das seguintes frases reflecte melhor a sua atitude (1- concordo totalmente com a primeira frase; 9-concordo totalmente com a segunda frase)

7) Qual é o valor máximo que estaria disposto a pagar pelo produto descrito inicialmente?

Fase 2 (Exemplo)

1) Agora pedimos que responda a uma tarefa diferente.

De seguida, vão ser apresentadas breves descrições do quotidiano de várias pessoas. Em cada cenário, pedimos a sua opinião acerca da pessoa descrita.

Nesse sentido, pedimos-lhe que leia com atenção e tente envolver-se ao máximo nos textos que irá ler.

Avance para seguir para o primeiro caso.

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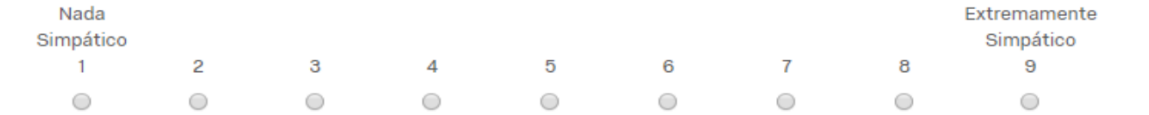
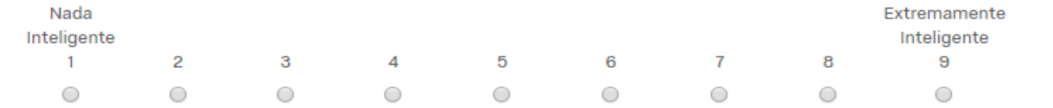
2) **"O Rui caminhou até ao seu trabalho. No caminho, ajudou uma senhora idosa a atravessar a rua."**

Pense nesta informação e responda às seguintes perguntas.

3) Quão simpático acha que é o Rui?



4) Quão inteligente acha que é o Rui?



5) Quão intencional foi o comportamento do Rui (ajudar a senhora a atravessar)?

Fase 3:

1) Agora que já dedicou a sua atenção à tarefa anterior, pedimos que retome a sua experiência de compra.

2) Recorde o casaco descrito no inicio do questionário e escreva no quadro abaixo todos os atributos que se recorda.

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3) Responda novamente às questões que foram apresentadas sobre o produto

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4) Numa escala de 1 a 7, por favor avalie quão importantes para si são os seguintes atributos do casaco que imaginou.

	Nada importante 1	2	3	4	5	6	Muito importante 7
Elegância	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Bons materiais	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Relação qualidade-preço	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Variedade de cores / padrões	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Acompanha a moda	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Agradável ao toque	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Proteger do frio	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Impermeável (proteger da chuva)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

5) Numa escala de 1 a 7 indique quão desejável é o produto?

	Nada Desejável 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremamente Desejável 7
Desejabilidade	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

6) Num contexto de compra de peças de roupa, por exemplo um casaco, qual das seguintes frases reflecte melhor a sua atitude (1- concordo totalmente com a primeira frase; 9-concordo totalmente com a segunda frase)

Eu compro um casaco porque me vai manter quente e protegido/a da chuva, tem uma boa relação qualidade-preço e é muito versátil 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Eu compro um casaco que seja bonito, elegante e que acompanhe as tendências da moda, que me faça sentir bem e seja um bom complemento para os meus outfits 9

7) Qual é o valor máximo que estaria disposto a pagar pelo produto descrito inicialmente?

0€ 1000€

0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000

Preço (€)

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1) Quão provável seria comprar o casaco numa loja online?

	Nada Provável 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremamente provável 7
Probabilidade	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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Dados Demográficos:

1) Em média quanto despende em roupa por mês?

- ○ 0 - 20€
- ○ 21€ - 50€
- ○ 51€ - 100€
- ○ 101€ - 200€
- ○ + 200€

2) Normalmente onde compra roupa? (pode selecionar mais do que uma opção)

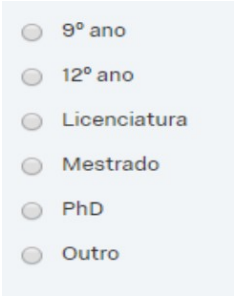
- ☐ Em lojas fisicas (seja em centros comerciais, lojas de rua, ou feiras)
- ☐ Em lojas online (sejam sites ou apps de lojas)
- ☐ Em lojas em redes sociais (no facebbok, Instagram, etc.)
- ☐ Outro

3) Idade: _____

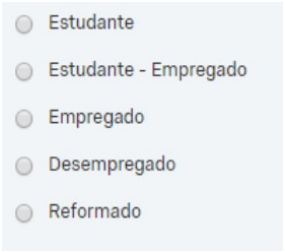
4) Género

- ○ Feminino
- ○ Masculino

5) Qual o último grau de escolaridade concluído?



6) Qual a sua situação actual?



9.2. Appendix 2 – Survey 2: Remember a shopping experience

Introdução:

O presente estudo está integrado na minha tese de mestrado sobre Marketing Estratégico da Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics.

Com este estudo pretendo analisar as experiências nos diferentes canais de venda.

A paricipação neste estudo é voluntária, e anónima, sendo que as respostas apenas serão usadas no âmbito da minha tese.

O survey tem a duração de aproximadamente 5 min

Agradeço desde já a sua participação

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1) Alguma vez comprou roupa online?

Sim Não

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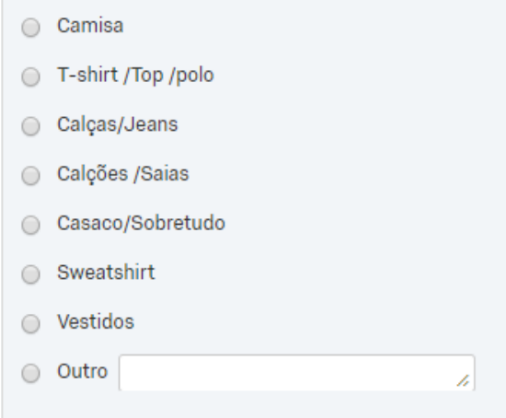
1) Recorde-se, por favor, da última compra de vestuário que fez **numa loja ou zona comercial / numa loja online.**

Que tipo de produto era?



2) Que características recorda acerca do produto comprado?

Escreva entre 3 a 5 características que recorda nos espaços abaixo. Escreva à medida que se for lembrando.

3) Dos atributos que selecionou quão importantes foram esses atributos na decisão de compra? (1- Totalmente Irrelevantes; 7- Extremamente Relevantes)

4) Quão relevantes foram os seguintes atributos na decisão de compra? (se não se aplicar ao produto que comprou selecione "Não aplicável")

	Totalmente irrelevantes 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremamente relevantes 7	Não aplicável
Elegância								
Impermeabilidade (proteger da chuva)								
Materiais								
Aquecer/ser fresco								
Relação qualidade-preço								
Variedade de cores/padrões								
Tecido								
Preço								
Estilo								
Marca								
O canal de compra (em loja ou zona comercial)								

5) Numa escala de 1 a 7 indique quão satisfeito se sente com o produto?

	Extremamente insatisfeito 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremamente satisfeito 7
Satisfação	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

6) Quando pensa em comprar peças de roupa, qual das seguintes frases reflecte melhor a sua atitude (1- concordo totalmente com a primeira frase; 9-concordo totalmente com a segunda frase)

Eu compro peças de roupa que sejam versáteis, tenham boas relações qualidade-preço, e me permitam mexer-me livremente 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Eu compro peças de roupa que sejam bonitas, elegantes, que acompanhem as tendências da moda, me façam sentir bem 9

7) agora, como posicionaria o produto que recordou numa escala entre 1-Utilitário e 9-hedónico.

Utilitário: um produto necessário que permite cumprir uma necessidade básica ou uma tarefa funcional ou prática.

Hedónico: um produto que permite atingir principalmente um desejo de prazer, diversão ou fantasia.

8) de modo geral como avaliaria a experiência de compra? (atendimento, processo de compra, ambiente em loja, disponibilidade dos produtos, etc)

	Péssimo 1	2	3	4	5	6	Excelente 7
Experiência	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

9) Nas suas experiências regulares de compra de vestuário avalie por favor, numa escala de 1 a 7, a importância das seguintes características.

	Nada importante 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremamente importante 7
Variedade de escolha	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Poder ver/tocar no produto	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ter o produto imediatamente	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Tempo de entrega (Quando não disponível imediatamente)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Facilidade de troca/devolução	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Rapidez da compra	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Serviço personalizado	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

10) O que o levou a fazer a compra offline/online (numa loja ou zona comercial)? (pode escolher mais do que uma opção)

- ☐ Gosto de experimentar antes de comprar
- ☐ Gosto de ver e sentir os artigos antes de comprar
- ☐ Gosto de andar pelas lojas e ver as novidades
- ☐ Gosto de ser atendido/a e poder pedir ajuda em caso de necessidade
- ☐ Não confio nas compras pela internet
- ☐ Outro

11) Antes de comprar numa loja offline (loja ou zona comercial) com que frequência visita lojas online (para por exemplo ver a nova colecção e já saber o que procurar)? // Antes de comprar numa loja online com que frequência visita lojas offline (numa zona comercial por exemplo) para, por exemplo ver ou experimentar as peças?

	Nunca 1	2	3	4	5	6	Sempre 7
Frequência	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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Dados Demográficos:

1) Idade: _____

2) Género

- Feminino
- Masculino

3) Qual o último grau de escolaridade concluído?

- 9º ano
- 12º ano
- Licenciatura
- Mestrado
- PhD
- Outro

4) Qual a sua situação actual?

- Estudante
- Estudante - Empregado
- Empregado
- Desempregado
- Reformado