

THE INFLUENCE OF ADVERTISING AT THE POINT-OF- PURCHASE ON SHOPPERS AND BRANDS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN CONVENIENCE STORES

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ABSTRACT:

The main purpose of this research is to understand the influence of shopper marketing and visual brand advertising at the point-of-purchase (PoP) on shopper behaviour and on the retailers-manufacturers relationship, particularly at small retail stores. Two related studies were conducted, with an integrated mixed methods approach. The first, qualitative in nature, used several samples with different purposes. Firstly, a sample of shopper marketing experts, aiming to characterise the shopper marketing approach and the strategic role of PoP advertising. This phase served as the main input for the subsequent phases of the study. The next sample was composed of retailers and manufacturers, with the purpose of understanding their perspectives on the role of brands' visual advertising at convenience stores. The following study had a similar purpose but utilised a quantitative methodology, with 300 face-to-face interviews with shoppers at convenience stores. Globally, it was found that brands' visual advertising at the PoP is a way for manufacturers to add value to their relationship with retailers, as well as a tool to increase sales for both parties. It was also found that only the brands' primary visual advertisements at the PoP influence (some) elements of shopping experience, increase brand awareness and unplanned purchases. This research analyses different actors and samples on the shopper marketing field, thereby extending previous research. Another novelty of the research is that it was focused on convenience stores and was not directed to a single product or category, providing findings from a real shopping environment and on a type of store other than large supermarkets.

KEY WORDS:

advertising, brand, convenience store, point of purchase, retail communication, shopper, shopper marketing

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1 Introduction

The formal and holistic approach of shopper marketing emerged, and has been coined in literature, at the beginning of this century as an evolution of category management in the fast-moving consumer-goods sector.¹ Simply stated, shopper marketing is the combination of all influences a marketer can bring to bear on one's target shopper as they decide what, when and where to purchase.² Detailing, it is "the planning and execution of all marketing activities that influence a shopper along, and beyond, the entire path-to-purchase, from the point at which the motivation to shop first emerges through purchase, consumption, repurchase, and recommendation".³ Therefore, shopper marketing is not opposed to traditional marketing⁴ but adopts a holistic perspective of the entire path-to-purchase, aiming to create triggers in the shopping cycle. Shopper marketing and advertising actions at the point-of-purchase (PoP) are becoming particularly important and attracting increased investment both from retailers and manufacturers.⁵ Due to the evolving retailing landscape and digitalisation, nowadays shopper marketing and advertising at the PoP is even more challenging and important, because of the urge of delivering the right message to the right shopper at the right time.⁶ Moreover, managing advertising at the PoP is rather specific,⁷ since the shopper 'audience' is different from other audiences – the shopper is not oriented toward the in-store medium; there are ubiquitous, non-linear and parallel messages in the store environment; and the shoppers' exposures occur very quickly.⁸ Even more, in today's retail highly competitive landscape, understanding shoppers' behaviour is of one of the keys to success for retailers⁹ and there is the need for research to investigate how the shopping momentum effect is influenced by the driver item,¹⁰ into which in-store advertising fits. Because of that, this research aims to understand how to better manage marketing actions at the PoP, based on the analysis of the effects that in-store visual advertising might have in the shoppers and brand equity.

1 See: GMA/DELOITTE: *Shopper Marketing: Capturing a Shopper's Heart, Mind and Wallet*. Washington : The Grocery Manufacturers Association, 2007; FMI/DELOITTE: *From Category Management to Shopper-Centric Retailing*. Washington : Food Marketing Institute, 2015.

2 FLINT, D. et al.: *Shopper Marketing Session Handout*. Paper presented at AMA/ACRA Triennial Retail Conference. Seattle, presented on 20th April 2012.

3 SHANKAR, V. et al.: Innovations in Shopper Marketing: Current Insights and Future Research Issues. In *Journal of Retailing*, 2011, Vol. 87, No. 1, p. 29.

4 GAVILAN, D., AVELLO, M., ABRIL, C.: Shopper Marketing: A New Challenge for Spanish Community Pharmacies. In *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*, 2014, Vol. 10, No. 6, p. 125-136.

5 See: SHANKAR, V. et al.: Innovations in Shopper Marketing: Current Insights and Future Research Issues. In *Journal of Retailing*, 2011, Vol. 87, No. 1, p. 29-42; SPAETH, J.: Post-Promotion Evaluation. In LILJENWALL, R., MASKULKA, J. (eds.): *Marketing's Powerful Weapon: Power of Point-of-Purchase Advertising*. Washington : Point-of-Purchase Advertising International, 2002, p. 57-72; KESSLER, C.: Editorial: Branding in Store – Marketing in the 21st Century. In *Journal of Brand Management*, 2004, Vol. 11, No. 4, p. 261-264; GMA/DELOITTE: *Shopper Marketing: Capturing a Shopper's Heart, Mind and Wallet*. Washington : The Grocery Manufacturers Association, 2007; GMA/DELOITTE: *Delivering the Promise of Shopper Marketing: Mastering Execution for Competitive Advantage*. Washington : The Grocery Manufacturers Association, 2008; ZILJANI, C., IEVA, M.: Retail Shopper Marketing: The Future of Promotional Flyers. In *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 2015, Vol. 43, No. 6, p. 488-502; SHANKAR, V. et al.: Mobile Shopper Marketing: Key Issues, Current Insights, and Future Research Avenues. In *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 2016, Vol. 34, p. 37-48; LAMEY, L. et al.: New Product Success in the Consumer Packaged Goods Industry: A Shopper Marketing Approach. In *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 2018, Vol. 35, No. 3, p. 432-452; BONFRER, A. et al.: Retail Store Formats, Competition and Shopper Behavior: A Systematic Review. In *Journal of Retailing*, 2022, Vol. 98, No. 1, p. 71-91; COBB-WALGREN, C. J. et al.: Segmenting the Market of In-Store Decision Makers: Implications for Shopper Marketing. In *Marketing Management Journal*, 2022, Vol. 32, No. 1, p. 1-16.

6 GREWAL, D. et al.: The Future of In-Store Technology. In *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 2020, Vol. 48, No. 1, p. 96-113; COBB-WALGREN, C. J. et al.: Segmenting the Market of In-Store Decision Makers: Implications for Shopper Marketing. In *Marketing Management Journal*, 2022, Vol. 32, No. 1, p. 1-16; WILLEMS, K. et al.: In-Store Proximity Marketing: Experimenting with Digital Point-of-Sales Communication. In *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 2017, Vol. 45, No. 7-8, p. 910-927; VILLANOVA, D. et al.: Retailer Marketing Communications in the Digital Age: Getting the Right Message to the Right Shopper at the Right Time. In *Journal of Retailing*, 2021, Vol. 97, No. 1, p. 116-132.

7 LAMEY, L. et al.: New Product Success in the Consumer Packaged Goods Industry: A Shopper Marketing Approach. In *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 2018, Vol. 35, No. 3, p. 432-452.

8 SORENSEN, H. et al.: Fundamental Patterns of In-Store Shopper Behavior. In *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 2017, Vol. 37, p. 182-194.

9 See: GREWAL, D. et al.: Roles of Retailer Tactics and Customer-Specific Factors in Shopper Marketing: Substantive, Methodological, and Conceptual Issues. In *Journal of Business Research*, 2016, Vol. 69, No. 3, p. 1009-1013; PAOLANTI, M. et al.: Deep Understanding of Shopper Behaviours and Interactions Using RGB-D Vision. In *Machine Vision and Applications*, 2020, Vol. 31, No. 7, p. 1-21.

10 STANKEVICH, A.: Explaining the Consumer Decision-Making Process: Critical Literature Review. In *Journal of International Business Research and Marketing*, 2017, Vol. 2, No. 6, p. 7-14.

Although shopper marketing has been gaining attention, research is sparse and existing consumer research does not fully address it.¹¹ Apart from a few studies,¹² most of the literature with a comprehensive perspective on shopper marketing originates from commercial or consultancy sources, is based on managers' opinions and refers to very large supermarket retailers and manufacturers. Taking this into account, the present research goes beyond managers' opinions, and is not focused on large supermarkets chains.

Other studies related to shopper marketing were found in the literature, but with a narrower focus. Some of these studies propose frameworks of shopper behaviour and analyse the influence of specific variables on sales or on shopper behaviours.¹³ Most of these studies have analysed data from only one specific sample (e.g., shoppers or retailers), and many of the studies used convenience samples (e.g., sample of students), limiting the generalisation of results. Some of the studies were performed in a laboratory environment, which might not replicate all the complexity of in-store stimuli interaction and decision making. Hence, it might be relevant to have a more comprehensive perspective, which led us to design a mixed method research, integrating information from experts, retailers, manufacturers, and shoppers. Moreover, the present research was implemented in a real shopping context with actual shoppers.

This research makes two major theoretical contributions. First, to our knowledge, this is one of the first researches to examine several effects of advertising at the PoP, other than the effect of inducing purchases, namely, advertising at the PoP implications on the brand equity and shopping experience constructs. By doing so, an initial foundation for future studies to deepen this theme and to validate the conclusions on a bigger scale and different business environments is provided. Second, most previous related studies have been conducted in large supermarkets and have been focused on specific products, which does not fully represent the complexity of in-store shopping decisions. Recognising this limitation, the present research analyses the reality of smaller stores and examines shopper behaviour in a real shopping situation and store, without any artificial element or condition. Furthermore, the majority of previous works have not analysed data from different actors, not taking advantage of combining a diversity of sources. Therefore, we hope that the present research findings might provide a useful basis for researchers to draw from, and build upon, when exploring the impact of shopper marketing advertising strategies and actions in different retail settings.

The study is organised as follows. The next section is the basis for the deduction of the hypothesis to be analysed in the empirical studies, presenting a literature review on shopper marketing possible implications on shopping experience, purchases and brand equity. Following this, the Methods section describes the data sources, sampling methods and data collection procedures for each of the three studies conducted. This section is followed by the description and analysis of the results. In the final section, we conclude with the main findings, suggestions for future research, and managerial implications.

11 SHANKAR, V. et al.: Mobile Shopper Marketing: Key Issues, Current Insights, and Future Research Avenues. In *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 2016, Vol. 34, p. 37-48.

12 For example: CHANDON, P. et al.: *Unseen Is Unsold: Assessing Visual Equity with Commercial Eye-Tracking Data 2002/85/MKT*. Fontainebleau : In-Store, 2002; ARNOLD, M. J., REYNOLDS, K.: Hedonic Shopping Motivations. In *Journal of Retailing*, 2003, Vol. 79, No. 2, p. 77-95; SHANKAR, V. et al.: Innovations in Shopper Marketing: Current Insights and Future Research Issues. In *Journal of Retailing*, 2011, Vol. 87, No. 1, p. 29-42; SHANKAR, V. et al.: Mobile Shopper Marketing: Key Issues, Current Insights, and Future Research Avenues. In *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 2016, Vol. 34, p. 37-48.

13 For example: TURLEY, L. W., MILLIMAN, R.: Atmospheric Effects on Shopping Behavior: A Review of the Experimental Evidence. In *Journal of Business Research*, 2000, Vol. 49, No. 29, p. 193-211; INMAN, J. et al.: *Where the Rubber Meets the Road: A Model of In-Store Consumer Decision-Making*. New York : Marketing Science Institute, 2004; PUCCINELLI, N. et al.: Customer Experience Management in Retailing: Understanding the Buying Process. In *Journal of Retailing*, 2009, Vol. 85, No. 19, p. 15-30; INMAN, J. et al.: The Interplay Among Category Characteristics, Customer Characteristics, and Customer Activities on In-Store Decision Making. In *Journal of Marketing*, 2009, Vol. 73, No. 5, p. 19-29; ECR EUROPE: *The Consumer and Shopper Journey Framework*. Brussels : ECR Europe, 2011.

2 Conceptual Background

The understanding of the shopper is crucial,¹⁴ and the limited understanding of the behavioural differences between consumer and shopper require that both academicians and managers focus on the shopper to better define and understand those differences.¹⁵ In this context, merchandising and advertising at the PoP play a big role in shopping journeys.¹⁶ More specifically, advertising at the PoP might have effects on sales, on shopping satisfaction and make the brands stand out.¹⁷ In a broader way, it means that is expected that shopper marketing activities might have implications on the shopping experience, purchases and brand equity. The following conceptual background is built upon these three issues.

The in-store shopping experience is an important element in shopper marketing, since the visit to the store might be a 'moment of truth'.¹⁸ This shopping experience may satisfy not only functional needs but also non-functional wants.¹⁹ Therefore, the visit to the store is an experience that is relevant to the management of shopper marketing activities²⁰ and there are several variables within the store environment that might influence each specific component of the shopping experience,²¹ including visual communication and advertising at the PoP.²² In this context, given that visual brand salience is "the ability of a brand to visually stand out from its competitors",²³ a first hypothesis to be tested on the present research is:

H1: Visual salience of brands at the PoP positively influences components of shopping experience.

Given that shoppers do not behave in a totally rational way, and are influenced by situational factors, impulse/unplanned decisions and purchases play an important part in shopping behaviour analysis, it is often referred by the business community that in-store advertising increases sales and around 70% of purchases are impulse purchases.²⁴ This 'dogma' seems to be a fallacy due to the scarcity of credible information, lack

of studies and imprecise use of concepts,²⁵ i.e., using impulse purchase to indistinctively express different purchase-planning degrees. In a more scientific approach than the business community common-sense, five possible purchase-planning degrees might be identified: product and brand planned; product planned and brand unplanned; only product class planned; recognised need; and unrecognised need.²⁶ There are other well-accepted classifications: specifically planned purchases; generally planned purchases; remembered purchases (the need or desire to purchase was recalled by some influence inside the store); switch/substitution purchases; and totally unplanned purchases.

Related to the complexity of purchase planning-degrees is the fact that, within a shopping journey, shoppers can make multiple 'unplanned' purchases, with different motivations.²⁷ Furthermore, several times, purchases are triggered by the shopper seeing the product or in-store ads and relating it to promotional messages to which they were previously exposed to.²⁸ Although is not always straightforward that visual stimuli at the PoP cause an increase in sales of the featured brand, the literature usually reveals an association between the in-store stimuli in large supermarkets and less planned purchases.²⁹ Based on these findings, a second hypothesis to be analysed is:

H2: Visual salience of brands at the PoP has a positive influence on the incidence of purchases with lower planning levels.

Well accepted conceptual model of customer-based brand equity stresses that brand knowledge is composed of brand awareness and brand image.³⁰ Focusing on awareness, one of the functions of visual advertising in the store is to increase brand awareness.³¹ However, not many empirical studies have tested that, or conclude that brand awareness is indeed higher in brands visually salient at the PoP. Given that salience of brands is reflected in the propensity for the brand to be noticed or considered by the shopper in a specific moment or situation,³² such as a purchase, it is possible to expect that the visual salience of a brand might have effects on shopper behaviour, cognition, affect and experience, which, in turn, might influence brand equity. Accordingly, it can be hypothesised that the visual salience of brands at the PoP affects the degree of activation in memory of the advertised brand, enhancing awareness. This leads to the formulation of a third hypothesis:

H3: Brands' visual advertising at the PoP positively influences brand awareness.

Focusing on brand image, since several years ago it is widely accepted that it is affected by marketing

14 See: LEE, L. et al.: From Browsing to Buying and Beyond: The Needs-Adaptive Shopper Journey Model. In *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, 2018, Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 277-293.

15 Compare to: JONES, R. P., RUNYAN, C.: Conceptualizing a Path-to-Purchase Framework and Exploring Its Role in Shopper Segmentation. In *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 2016, Vol. 44, No. 8, p. 776-798; SORENSEN, H. et al.: Fundamental Patterns of In-Store Shopper Behavior. In *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 2017, Vol. 37, p. 182-194.

16 COBB-WALGREN, C. J. et al.: Segmenting the Market of In-Store Decision Makers: Implications for Shopper Marketing. In *Marketing Management Journal*, 2022, Vol. 32, No. 1, p. 1-16.

17 See: KESSLER, C.: Editorial: Branding in Store – Marketing in the 21st Century. In *Journal of Brand Management*, 2004, Vol. 11, No. 4, p. 261-264; SPAETH, J.: Post-Promotion Evaluation. In LILJENWALL, R., MASKULKA, J. (eds.): *Marketing's Powerful Weapon: Power of Point-of-Purchase Advertising*. Washington : Point-of-Purchase Advertising International, 2002, p. 57-72; GMA/DELOITTE: *Shopper Marketing: Capturing a Shopper's Heart, Mind and Wallet*. Washington : The Grocery Manufacturers Association, 2007; GMA/DELOITTE: *Delivering the Promise of Shopper Marketing: Mastering Execution for Competitive Advantage*. Washington : The Grocery Manufacturers Association, 2008.

18 See: INMAN, J. et al.: *Where the Rubber Meets the Road: A Model of In-Store Consumer Decision-Making*. New York : Marketing Science Institute, 2004; UNYAL, D., SINHA, P.: *Point of Purchase Communication: Role of Information Search, Store Benefit and Shopping Involvement*. Ahmedabad : Indian Institute of Management, 2009; HUI, S. et al.: Deconstructing the First Moment of Truth: Understanding Unplanned Consideration and Purchase Conversion Using In-Store Video Tracking. In *Journal of Marketing Research*, 2013, Vol. 50, No. 4, p. 1-51; HUI, S. et al.: The Effect of In-Store Travel Distance on Unplanned Spending: Applications to Mobile Promotion Strategies. In *Journal of Marketing*, 2013, Vol. 77, No. 2, p. 1-16; WILLEMS, K. et al.: In-Store Proximity Marketing: Experimenting with Digital Point-of-Sales Communication. In *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 2017, Vol. 45, No. 7-8, p. 910-927.

19 JONES, R. P., RUNYAN, C.: Conceptualizing a Path-to-Purchase Framework and Exploring Its Role in Shopper Segmentation. In *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 2016, Vol. 44, No. 8, p. 776-798.

20 See: GAVILAN, D., AVELLO, M., ABRIL, C.: Shopper Marketing: A New Challenge for Spanish Community Pharmacies. In *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*, 2014, Vol. 10, No. 6, p. 125-136.

21 See: TURLEY, L. W., MILLIMAN, R.: Atmospheric Effects on Shopping Behavior: A Review of the Experimental Evidence. In *Journal of Business Research*, 2000, Vol. 49, No. 29, p. 193-211.

22 See: KESSLER, C.: Editorial: Branding in Store – Marketing in the 21st Century. In *Journal of Brand Management*, 2004, Vol. 11, No. 4, p. 261-264; SPAETH, J.: Post-Promotion Evaluation. In LILJENWALL, R., MASKULKA, J. (eds.): *Marketing's Powerful Weapon: Power of Point-of-Purchase Advertising*. Washington : Point-of-Purchase Advertising International, 2002, p. 57-72; PUCCINELLI, N. et al.: Customer Experience Management in Retailing: Understanding the Buying Process. In *Journal of Retailing*, 2009, Vol. 85, No. 19, p. 15-30; UNYAL, D.: An Experimental Study on the Role of Store Benefit and Information Search by Shoppers Towards In-Store Communication. In *Journal for Global Business Advancement*, 2011, Vol. 4, No. 3, p. 242-259.

23 See: VAN DER LANS, R. et al.: Competitive Brand Salience. In *Marketing Science*, 2008, Vol. 27, No. 5, p. 922.

24 BELL, D. et al.: The Power of Planned Uncertainty. In *International Commerce Review*, 2008, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 56-64.

25 BELL, D. et al.: The Power of Planned Uncertainty. In *International Commerce Review*, 2008, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 56-64.

26 See: KOLLAT, D., WILLET, R.: Customer Impulse Purchasing Behavior. In *Journal of Marketing Research*, 1967, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 21-31.

27 See: SUHER, J., HOYER, W. D.: The Moderating Effect of Buying Impulsivity on the Dynamics of Unplanned Purchasing Motivations. In *Journal of Marketing Research*, 2020, Vol. 57, No. 3, p. 548-564.

28 ATTRI, R., JAIN, V.: A Study of Factors Affecting Customer Shopping Behavior. In *IUP Journal of Marketing Management*, 2018, Vol. 17, No. 1, p. 38-52.

29 For example: KOLLAT, D., WILLET, R.: Customer Impulse Purchasing Behavior. In *Journal of Marketing Research*, 1967, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 21-31; BUCKLIN, R., LATTIN, J.: A Two-State Model of Purchase Incidence and Brand Choice. In *Marketing Science*, 1991, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 24-39; CHANDON, P. et al.: *Unseen Is Unsold: Assessing Visual Equity with Commercial Eye-Tracking Data 2002/85/MKT*. Fontainebleau : Instead, 2002; INMAN, J. et al.: *Where the Rubber Meets the Road: A Model of In-Store Consumer Decision-Making*. New York : Marketing Science Institute, 2004; TENDAI, M., CRISPEN, C.: In-Store Shopping Environment and Impulsive Buying. In *African Journal of Marketing Management*, 2009, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 102-108; FAM, K. S. et al.: In-Store Marketing: A Strategic Perspective. In *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 2011, Vol. 23, No. 2, p. 165-176; ATTRI, R., JAIN, V.: A Study of Factors Affecting Customer Shopping Behavior. In *IUP Journal of Marketing Management*, 2018, Vol. 17, No. 1, p. 38-52; MOHAN, G. et al.: Impact of Store Environment on Impulse Buying Behavior. In *European Journal of Marketing*, 2013, Vol. 47, No. 10, p. 1711-1732.

30 KELLER, K.: Brand Equity Management in a Multichannel, Multimedia Retail Environment. In *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 2010, Vol. 24, No. 2, p. 58-70.

31 KESSLER, C.: Editorial: Branding in Store – Marketing in the 21st Century. In *Journal of Brand Management*, 2004, Vol. 11, No. 4, p. 261-264; SPAETH, J.: Post-Promotion Evaluation. In LILJENWALL, R., MASKULKA, J. (eds.): *Marketing's Powerful Weapon: Power of Point-of-Purchase Advertising*. Washington : Point-of-Purchase Advertising International, 2002, p. 57-72.

32 ROMANIUK, J., SHARP, B.: Conceptualising and Measuring Brand Salience. In *Marketing Theory*, 2004, Vol. 4, No. 4, p. 327-342.

activities,³³ which is accomplished through the congruence between positioning and brand advertising,³⁴ by seeking to establish the intended and differentiated brand associations.³⁵ Focusing on advertising at the PoP, its ability to influence brand image was reported by managers in GMA/Deloitte studies,³⁶ but it has not been empirically validated with real shoppers.³⁷ Thus, the fourth hypothesis to be tested is:

H4: Visual brand advertising at the PoP positively influences its positioning through the fit of PoP advertisement with the previous brand image.

All the hypotheses established take place in a context where retailers and manufacturers might play cooperative roles in a shopper marketing approach.³⁸ So, summarising, this research uses the conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1 to analyse to what extent shopper marketing and visual brand advertising at the PoP might influence the shopper and the relationship between retailers and manufacturers.

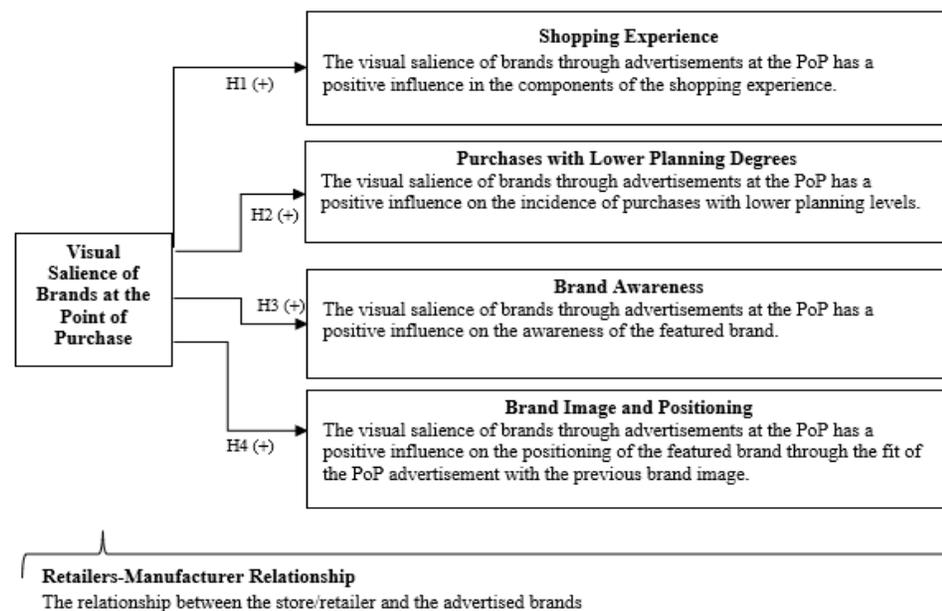


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Source: Own processing

33 Compare to: COBB-WALGREN, C. J. et al.: Brand Equity, Brand Preference, and Purchase Intent. In *Journal of Advertising*, 1995, Vol. 24, No. 3, p. 25-40; MEENAGHAN, T.: The Role of Advertising in Brand Image Development. In *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 1995, Vol. 4, No. 4, p. 23-34; DOBNI, D., ZINKHAN, G. M.: In Search of Brand Image: A Foundation Analysis. In GOLDBERG, E., GORN, G., POLLAY, R. (eds.): *Advances in Consumer Research*. 17th Edition. Marvin, Provo: Association for Consumer Research, 1990, p. 110-119.

34 See: BLANKSON, C., KALAFATIS, S.: Congruence between Positioning and Brand Advertising. In *Journal of Advertising Research*, 2007, Vol. 47, No. 1, p. 79-94.

35 See also: FUCHS, C., DIAMANTOPOULOS, A.: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Brand-Positioning Strategies from a Consumer Perspective. In *European Journal of Marketing*, 2010, Vol. 44, No. 11, p. 1763-1786.

36 Compare to: GMA/DELOITTE: *Shopper Marketing: Capturing a Shopper's Heart, Mind and Wallet*. Washington: The Grocery Manufacturers Association, 2007; GMA/DELOITTE: *Delivering the Promise of Shopper Marketing: Mastering Execution for Competitive Advantage*. Washington: The Grocery Manufacturers Association, 2008.

37 For example: DONOVAN, R. J. et al.: Tobacco Point of Sale Advertising Increases Positive Brand User Imagery. In *Tobacco Control*, 2002, Vol. 11, No. 3, p. 191-194.

38 GREWAL, D. et al.: Roles of Retailer Tactics and Customer-Specific Factors in Shopper Marketing: Substantive, Methodological, and Conceptual Issues. In *Journal of Business Research*, 2016, Vol. 69, No. 3, p. 1009-1013.

3 Materials and Methods

The present research was conducted in Portugal, using a multi-method approach with two different studies: shopper marketing experts' opinions and retailers' and manufacturers' perspectives (qualitative first study); and shoppers' behaviours and perceptions (quantitative second study). A multi-method research involves integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to generate new knowledge³⁹ and the research option to use it was made with the purpose of obtaining a more complete picture of the phenomenon, thus being able to better hasten or understand it, either to enlighten, complement and/or provide clues to the 'major' approach.⁴⁰ Moreover, multi-method approaches have already been used with benefit in previous studies related to shopper marketing themes.⁴¹

Qualitative Study on Experts', Retailers', and Manufacturers' Perspectives

This first study had a first phase with the aim to evaluate experts' opinions and perceptions of shopper marketing status and roles, creating inputs to the following phase and for the quantitative study. This study was qualitative and exploratory, implemented with face-to-face semi-structured interviews with 13 experts. Therefore, the research target group/sample were shopper marketing experts, and, on its first stage, the sampling technique used was judgmental sampling, by identifying experts to be contacted via POPAI association and lists of speakers in conferences and published books/reports. This type of sampling (judgmental sampling) is a technique in which specific participants are selected deliberately, using the researcher knowledge and experience, to provide important information that cannot be obtained from other choices, being appropriate for exploratory research design.⁴² After that, the snowball sampling technique was used, by asking the interviewed experts to identify other experts in the field. The snowball sampling is a technique that encourages other participants to take part in the study and is adequate for small populations that are difficult to access,⁴³ which is the case of shopper marketing experts. The data was audio-recorded, transcribed, and analysed using thematic content analysis, sorting it according to semantic similarities, identifying themes, categories, subcategories, units of meaning, and relations.

After interviewing the experts, a second exploratory phase was followed, also qualitative, in which the target group was a sample of convenience stores' commercial executive officers and manufacturers' trade marketing managers. This phase aimed to understand their perspective on the capacity of visual brand advertising at the PoP to influence shoppers and the retailers' and manufacturers' relationship. Three face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with retailers (among four possible retailers on the selected market) and three interviews were conducted with manufacturers, corresponding to at least nine brands. The sample of manufacturers was proposed by the retailers during the interviews, considering PoP advertising best practices. Again, the data was audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed using thematic content analysis.

39 See: MORSE, J. M.: Principles of Mixed Methods and Multimethod Research Design. In TEDDLIE, C., TASHAKKORI, A. (eds): *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2003, p. 189-208.

40 STANGE, K. C. et al.: Publishing Multimethod Research. In *The Annals of Family Medicine*, 2006, Vol. 4, No. 4, p. 292-294.

41 For example: HAUSMAN, A.: A Multi Method Investigation of Consumer Motivations in Impulse Buying Behavior. In *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 2000, Vol. 17, No. 5, p. 403-419.

42 See: TAHERDOOST, H.: Sampling Methods in Research Methodology: How to Choose a Sampling Technique for Research. In *International Journal of Academic Research in Management*, 2016, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 18-27.

43 See: TAHERDOOST, H.: Sampling Methods in Research Methodology: How to Choose a Sampling Technique for Research. In *International Journal of Academic Research in Management*, 2016, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 18-27.

Quantitative Study on Shoppers' Perceptions

The second study was quantitative, being designed towards the aim of testing on site the ability of visual brand advertising at the PoP to influence the shoppers. The research target group/sample defined were real/actual convenience store shoppers, obtaining a sample of 300 participants. The data was collected inside a selected store, in real shopping situations, since in shopper marketing studies it is considered very important to gather data as near to the purchase site as possible.⁴⁴ The data was gathered using structured face-to-face interviews and observation of behaviours.

The study design was defined with the help of an interview with the selected retailer manager. The retailer identified two visual advertising methods with different levels of salience, frequently used in convenience stores: primary and secondary visual advertisements. Both are planned with the marketing goal of increasing the brands' visual salience at the PoP, but the primary visual advertisements are supposed to be more effective for that purpose. For each of those methods, different product categories were included (water, juices, chocolates, isotonic drinks, drops/candy), as well as different places of exposure (shelves, stoppers on shelves, counter, entrance, floor display).

These procedures did not interfere with the operations in the store, nor introduced any artificial element into the shopping experience. Unlike most of the existing studies, this research did not focus on a specific category of products, but on the brands that were visually salient at the store. In order to obtain a representative sample of shoppers, convenience samples and non-real shopping situations were avoided. Therefore, a semi-random sampling technique was used with shoppers in a real shopping situation – scheduled selection of individuals in a store. To test the hypothesis, the sample was divided into three groups:

Group 1 (G1): shoppers who reported having seen the brand at a primary advertising spot.

Group 2 (G2): shoppers who reported having seen the brand at a secondary advertising spot.

Group 3(G3): shoppers who did not mention having seen the brand advertised.

The interviews were made after payment by professional interviewers, using a structured questionnaire that included demographic data, generic shopping behaviour questions/observations, and specific questions to provide data to test the hypotheses. To analyse H1, the items for measuring attitudes towards PoP communication were adapted from a previous study⁴⁵ (using a five-point Likert scale) and are listed later in Table 2. To test H2, the questions and variables were based on the purchase-planning levels classifications previously described.⁴⁶ Brand awareness (to analyse H3) was measured through the open question “Which brands of ___ (product category) do you remember, even if only by name?” registering the order in which each brand was referred to. This option of measuring brand awareness studies the accessibility of the brand in memory, and it can be analysed through brand recall or brand recognition.⁴⁷ Regarding brand image (to analyse H4), since there was no existing list of brand associations (because there were several possible brands in analysis, since the study was conducted in a real shopping situation/store), it was assessed by measuring the strength of associations.⁴⁸ Therefore, we measured the perceived image fit/coherence of each advertised brand to that same brand previous image. This was made using a five-point Likert scale with six items adapted from two previous commercial market research studies on fast food and mobile telecommunications.

44 COBB-WALGREN, C. J. et al.: Segmenting the Market of In-Store Decision Makers: Implications for Shopper Marketing. In *Marketing Management Journal*, 2022, Vol. 32, No. 1, p. 1-16.

45 See: UNİYAL, D., SINHA, P.: *Point of Purchase Communication: Role of Information Search, Store Benefit and Shopping Involvement*. Ahmedabad: Indian Institute of Management, 2009.

46 See: KOLLAT, D., WILLET, R.: Customer Impulse Purchasing Behavior. In *Journal of Marketing Research*, 1967, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 21-31; OGDEN, J.: Retailing and Consumer Behavior. In LILJENWALL, R., MASKULKA, J. (eds.): *Marketing's Powerful Weapon: Power of Point-of-Purchase Advertising*. Washington: Point-of-Purchase Advertising International, 2002, p. 15-28; INMAN, J. et al.: *Where the Rubber Meets the Road: A Model of In-Store Consumer Decision-Making*. New York: Marketing Science Institute, 2004.

47 See: CHANDON, P.: *Note on Measuring Brand Awareness, Brand Image, Brand Equity and Brand Value*. Fontainebleau: In-Store, 2003.

48 See: CHANDON, P.: *Note on Measuring Brand Awareness, Brand Image, Brand Equity and Brand Value*. Fontainebleau: In-Store, 2003.

4 Results and Discussion

In this section, the results are analysed combining data from the two studies, since they are complementary to each other. A discussion is also provided, by commenting and relating the results with previous studies.

Strategic and Operational Shopper Marketing Communication at the PoP

Integrating the content analysis of the experts' opinions, retailers' perspectives and manufacturers' viewpoints, the content analysis led to the creation of the following categories, summarised in Table 1: “Roles of visual communication of brands at the PoP”, “Difficulties on managing visual communication at PoP”, and “Critical issues on the management of visual communication at PoP”. Some of the respective subcategories were mentioned only by retailers (e.g., shopping missions), by manufacturers (e.g., obtain the category captain position), or by shopper marketing experts (e.g., PoP communication are frequently short-run tactical marketing and promotion actions). Other subcategories were mentioned by all groups (e.g., visual communication at the PoP serves as a strong call to action) or by shopper marketing experts and manufacturers (e.g., importance of the brand key-visuals). In all thematic categories there were no contradictory views; rather, complementary perspectives were found among the groups and individuals interviewed.

All the retailers reported that they manage the product categories differently (category roles identified: impulse, suggestion, destination, emergency) and recognise different shopping missions with different needs to be addressed. Both these facts reflect strategic issues on shopper marketing management that have implications on managing communications at the PoP, evidencing coherence with previous studies⁴⁹ on the importance of recognising the specific mindset of shoppers and understanding their behaviours, to provide assertive solutions to their needs, which is concurrent with recent studies.⁵⁰ From Table 1 it is possible to deduce that visual communication at convenience stores can fulfil several relevant roles in a shopper marketing approach, influencing both the shopper and the relationship between retailers and manufacturers. In fact, several interviewees stated that visual communication at the PoP might help engender a more positive relationship between manufacturers and retailers, improve the shopping experience, induce unplanned purchases and enhance brand awareness. Most of the positive direct influences on the shoppers were justified by the opportunity to act on a ‘moment of truth’, which is already referred in the previous studies.⁵¹

However, the interviews with retailers, manufacturers and shopper marketing experts revealed several difficulties to put in practice a successful management of the visual communication at the PoP and that consequent critical issues needed to be addressed, which were not previously mentioned in academic literature. The interviews suggest that the most difficult aspects to be managed relate to the brand positioning coherence (i.e., consistency with other stores/channels and the resonance between out-of-store and in-store communication), the lack of resources/skills, and the clutter and overutilisation of PoP communications without enough strategic rationale:

49 Compare to: GUHA, A. et al.: An Empirical Analysis of the Joint Effects of Shoppers' Goals and Attribute Display on Shoppers' Evaluations. In *Journal of Marketing*, 2018, Vol. 82, No. 3, p. 142-156; SOKOL, O., HOLÝ, V.: The Role of Shopping Mission in Retail Customer Segmentation. In *International Journal of Market Research*, 2021, Vol. 63, No. 4, p. 454-470.

50 THOMAS, A. M. et al.: Consumer Responses to Shopper Solutions in Service Settings. In *Journal of Services Marketing*, 2020, Vol. 35, No. 2, p. 237-247.

51 See: INMAN, J. et al.: *Where the Rubber Meets the Road: A Model of In-Store Consumer Decision-Making*. New York: Marketing Science Institute, 2004; UNİYAL, D., SINHA, P.: *Point of Purchase Communication: Role of Information Search, Store Benefit and Shopping Involvement*. Ahmedabad: Indian Institute of Management, 2009; HUI, S. et al.: Deconstructing the First Moment of Truth: Understanding Unplanned Consideration and Purchase Conversion Using In-Store Video Tracking. In *Journal of Marketing Research*, 2013, Vol. 50, No. 4, p. 1-51; HUI, S. et al.: The Effect of In-Store Travel Distance on Unplanned Spending: Applications to Mobile Promotion Strategies. In *Journal of Marketing*, 2013, Vol. 77, No. 2, p. 1-16; WILLEMS, K. et al.: The Path-to-Purchase Is Paved with Digital Opportunities: An Inventory of Shopper-Oriented Retail Technologies. In *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 2017, Vol. 124, p. 228-242.

"(...) more integrated into a holistic brand, category and product plan. There is a need to be consistent with the building of the brand and positioning (...) for the message at the PoP can provide benefits not only in the short term. There must be a balance between the sell-out and a more strategic vision."

"More and more companies wanting to do more activities at the point of sale. Again and again the same thing (...) increasingly polluted/cluttered."

"There is too much advertising at the stores but, most of all, a lack of quality."

"The problem is that the shopper does not let to be known (...) but wants to have everything at the same time (...) wants to be surprised, wants to be seduced."

Another critical aspect identified in the interviews was the need for uniqueness of the brands' key-visuals and their consistency in all communications, in-store and out-of-store. Several interviewees referred to them as crucial and that they should be present in every marketing communication activity, to avoid the mentioned problems ("Our colours, logo and slogan have to be present in our ads in the store, so that we can increase the awareness and image of the brand"). Such consistency of brand communications along the entire path-to-purchase in today's multi-channel retail environment is mentioned by previous studies,⁵² and that fact highlights the importance of developing a close relationship with the retailers.

Table 1: Qualitative categories and subcategories on the theme "Strategic and operational visual communication at the PoP"

Categories	Subcategories	Sample Source
Roles of visual communication of brands at the PoP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deepen the relationship with the retailer - Contribute to the development of the retailer's business - Additional source of revenue for the retailer - Obtain the position of preferred supplier or category captain - Act as a call to action - Contribute to brand awareness - Contribute to brand image - Ease the shopping process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ret. and Manuf. - Ret. and Manuf. - Manuf. - Manuf. - Ret., Manuf. and SME
Difficulties on managing visual communication at PoP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of shopper marketing skills and data - Difficulty of brand image consistency with other stores - Frequent dissonance between out-of-store and in-store communication - PoP communication too frequently addressed to "me-too" urgent actions, solely directed to short-run tactics - Communication of products that do not contribute positively to the intended effect - Difficulty of measuring the effects of communication at the PoP - Lack of control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ret., Manuf. and SME - SME - SME - SME - Manuf. - Manuf.
Critical issues on the management of visual communication at PoP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operational alignment between stores and staff - Timely availability of visual communication materials/equip. - Avoiding out-of-stock situations of the advertised products - Resources needed (financial and human) - Articulation with out-of-store positioning and communication - Relevance of the brand key-visual elements/cues - Mobile IT opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ret. and Manuf. - Ret. and Manuf. - Ret. and Manuf. - Ret. and Manuf. - Manuf. and SME - Manuf. and SME - Manuf. and SME

Notes: Ret.=Retailers, Manuf.=Manufacturers, SME=Shopper Marketing Experts

Source: Own processing

Shopping Experience

Shopper marketing experts, retailers and manufacturers stated that advertisements at the PoP could ease the shopping process; act as a call to action, inducing purchases with reduced planning; and enhance the image and awareness of the brand (selected transcriptions are presented in Table 2). In the quantitative study, a first general result that also revealed the potential of in-store advertising to influence the shopper was the high percentage of shoppers that recalled having seen the visual advertising of brands that were prominent in that shopping journey – 70% of the shoppers remembered the brands under study when a clue (the product category) was provided and 23% reported it without any clue.

Both the qualitative and quantitative results showed that visual communication of brands at the PoP can positively influence several components of the shopping experience (Table 2). The shopping experience measures showed good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha=0.775) and almost all items were significantly different between experimental groups (only the item "PoP displays/ads that were in this store and its environment made me select this store" showed no significant differences). These differences are an indicator of the effective role that visual advertising of brands at the PoP might have on the shopping experience, supporting H1. This is consistent with the retailers' and manufacturers' perspectives, as shown on the transcriptions presented in Table 2 that illustrate the qualitative subcategory "Roles of visual advertising of brands at the PoP".

Table 2: Qualitative and quantitative data for the shopping experience by group

Item ^a	Retailers'/Manufacturers' Qualitative Transcriptions	G1		G2		G3		Test χ^2_{KW}	Sig.
		\bar{x}	S	\bar{x}	S	\bar{x}	S		
PoP display and environment made me select this store (n=292)	"The exterior signs help the consumer to know that right there is that type of store, that merchant" (Retailer)	1.11	0.520	1.00	1.000	1.00	0.000	5.63	0.060
PoP display made me buy more quantity of product (n=297)	"(...) stimulates impulse purchases" (Retailer and Manufacturer)	2.49	1.938	1.11	0.616	1.12	0.692	63.037	0.000*
PoP display in the store was informative (n=296)	"(...) provide information that makes life easier for the shopper and induces the purchase" (Retailer)	4.30	1.283	1.42	1.158	1.71	1.404	116.118	0.000*
PoP display in the store attracted my attention (n=297)	"PoP ads and promotions must stand out and be relevant to who is in the store" (Manufacturer)	4.18	1.443	1.49	1.264	1.60	1.245	114.001	0.000*
PoP display in the store reminded me of buying something I did not plan (n=297)	"Can act as reminders of something that was on the mental list or something they've seen advertised outside the store" (Manufacturer)	2.16	1.818	1.31	1.074	1.07	0.539	41.827	0.000*
PoP display at the store made me feel the benefit of a product's usage (n=297)	"Help to reinforce and convey what the brand or product is about" (Manufacturer)	1.28	0.897	1.06	0.496	1.05	0.382	9.537	0.008*
PoP display at the store has made me buy unnecessary things (n=297)	"(...) stimulates impulse purchases" (Retailer)	1.23	0.844	1.12	0.696	1.05	0.442	7.044	0.030*
PoP display has made the merchandise look expensive (n=296)	not mentioned	1.34	1.109	1.00	0.000	1.14	0.728	10.383	0.006*
PoP display made me switch from one brand to another (n=296)	"Brands must differentiate at the PoP and show their value to the consumer" (Manufacturer)	1.13	0.645	1.00	0.000	1.02	0.313	7.221	0.027*
PoP display made me aware of a particular product while passing through the aisle (n=296)	"(...) have to stand out and capture the interest" (Manufacturer)	2.85	1.982	1.06	0.496	1.02	0.313	114.278	0.000*
PoP display helped me finding the product/brand (n=296)	"The signs and the exposure of the product/ads should ease the purchase process" (Retailer)	1.84	1.551	1.06	0.496	1.07	0.491	37.900	0.000*

^a items measured on a five-point Likert scale ("1 Totally Disagree", "2 Partially Disagree", "3 Neither Agree nor Disagree", "4 Partially Agree", "5 Totally Agree")

* null hypothesis rejection of equal distributions, for p-value <0.05

Source: Own processing

52 See: KELLER, K.: Brand Equity Management in a Multichannel, Multimedia Retail Environment. In *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 2010, Vol. 24, No. 2, p. 58-70.

Primary visual advertisements, rather than secondary advertisements, positively influenced the shopping experience. In fact, comparing G1 and G2, there are significant differences between them in all items, while there are no significant differences between G2 and G3 (Table 3). The higher effectiveness of primary advertisements might be explained by the fact that the visual clutter surrounding the brand affects attention and the advertisement's relative salience.⁵³ In fact, the shopper marketing experts interviewed stated that visual clutter is quite common in retail stores.

From Tables 2 and 3 it can be seen that the components of the shopping experience on which primary visual advertisements had a significant impact were the abilities to be informative and to attract attention. A second set of components on which the primary advertisements had impact, but not so strong, were the ability to make the shopper notice a specific product when passing through the aisles; and the ability on leading the shopper to buy more products than planned.

Table 3: Multiple comparisons tests of the shopping experience between groups

Item	G1 vs G2		G1 vs G3		G3 vs G2	
	H test	sig.	H test	sig.	H test	sig.
PoP display made me buy more quantity of product.	50.715	0.000**	51.102	0.000**	-0.387	1.000
PoP display in the store was informative.	106.719	0.000**	118.899	0.000**	-12.180	0.706
PoP display in the store attracted my attention.	105.521	0.000**	114.924	0.000**	-9.403	1.000
PoP display in the store reminded me of buying something I did not plan.	40.356	0.000**	32.251	0.000**	8.104	0.535
PoP display at the store made me feel the benefit of a product's usage.	11.683	0.010**	12.159	0.029**	-0.476	1.000
PoP display at the store has made me buy unnecessary things.	10.072	0.024**	7.531	0.274	2.541	1.000
PoP display has made the merchandise look expensive.	11.328	0.037**	16.710	0.005**	-5.382	0.650
PoP display made me switch from one brand to another.	6.242	0.043**	7.145	0.051	-0.903	1.000
PoP display made me aware of a particular product while passing through the aisle.	70.683	0.000**	69.389	0.000**	1.294	1.000
PoP display helped me to find the desired product/brand.	32.339	0.000**	33.635	0.000**	-1.296	1.000

* adjusted asymptotic significance

** null hypothesis rejection for bilateral significance p -value <0.05

Source: Own processing

Our results support the results of previous studies⁵⁴ by corroborating the ability of PoP visual communication to influence in-store decisions.⁵⁵ More precisely, the qualitative and quantitative results support P1, but a finding that was not yet referred in previous studies is that primary communications at the PoP are the most relevant to contribute to enhancing the shopping experience, by the abilities to be informative and to attract attention.

53 See: PIETERS, R. et al.: The Stopping Power of Advertising: Measures and Effects of Visual Complexity. In *Journal of Marketing*, 2010, Vol. 74, No. 5, p. 48-60.

54 See: PUCCINELLI, N. et al.: Customer Experience Management in Retailing: Understanding the Buying Process. In *Journal of Retailing*, 2009, Vol. 85, No. 19, p. 15-30; UNİYAL, D., SINHA, P.: *Point of Purchase Communication: Role of Information Search, Store Benefit and Shopping Involvement*. Ahmedabad : Indian Institute of Management, 2009; UNİYAL, D.: An Experimental Study on the Role of Store Benefit and Information Search by Shoppers Towards In-Store Communication. In *Journal for Global Business Advancement*, 2011, Vol. 4, No. 3, p. 242-259; TOLDOS, M. P. et al.: Exploring International Atmospherics: The Impact on Shopping Behaviors Based on the Language of the Lyrics of Music Played in Global Apparel Retailers' Stores. In *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 2019, Vol. 47, No. 4, p. 368-383.

55 See: KESSLER, C.: Editorial: Branding in Store – Marketing in the 21st Century. In *Journal of Brand Management*, 2004, Vol. 11, No. 4, p. 261-264.

Purchase Planning

Considering H2, it was found that the number of totally planned purchases was higher than the number of totally unplanned purchases (29% vs. 18%). However, for a considerable part of the sample (53%), only the product class was planned, which means that the final decision about the brand and the specific type of product was made inside the store in 71% of the observations (Table 4). This result is in line with recent studies when they concluded that brands' visual salience can affect not only brand consideration but also choice,⁵⁶ and the result is another indicator of the potential of visual advertising at the PoP to influence shoppers' choices at the moment of the purchase decision. These results are also consistent with the qualitative data gathered from shopper marketing experts, retailers and manufacturers:

"PoP advertising stimulates impulse purchase."

"(...) they serve as strong call to actions, many times intended to clearly boost the sell-out."

"(...) act as reminders of something that was on the mental list (...) inducing the purchasing behaviour."

Regarding purchase intention, only 1.7% of shoppers stated that they had planned purchases that were not fulfilled, and only 0.3% made purchases involving a substitution of the planned brand. Additionally, the in-store decision rate – the sum of purchases of unrecognised need, recognised need, planned product class, and purchases with brand replacement⁵⁷ – was 83%, and it is another indicator that the PoP is a place with potential to influence shopper buying decisions. This rate is significantly different ($Z=2.608$, $p=0.005$, $n=299$) from the one found in supermarkets (76%),⁵⁸ which shows the importance of studying samples of stores besides large supermarkets.

Table 4: Types of purchase

Purchase-Planning Level	No. of Products Bought (Horizontal %)			Vertical %
	#1	#2	#3	
Totally unplanned (n=70)	85%	14%	14%	18%
Recognised need (n=2)	100%	0%	0%	0.5%
Product class planned (n=211)	80%	20%	0%	53%
Product and brand planned (n=115)	78%	19%	3%	29%
Total (n=398)	80%	19%	1%	-

Source: Own processing

Both our qualitative and quantitative results are coherent with the literature on the ability of managing shopper marketing and visual advertising to influence less planned purchases,⁵⁹ thus validating H2. The quantitative study provided more detailed results on H2 (Table 5), since an association between primary visual

56 See: KAHN, B. E.: Using Visual Design to Improve Customer Perceptions of Online Assortments. In *Journal of Retailing*, 2017, Vol. 93, No. 1, p. 29-42.

57 See: POPAI: *The 1986 POPAI Consumer Buying Habits Study*. Montclair : Point-of-Purchase Advertising Institute Europe, 1986; POPAI: *The 1995 POPAI Europe Consumer Buying Habits Study: Measuring the In-store Decision Making of Supermarket Shoppers*. Paris : Point-of-Purchase Advertising Institute, 1995; POPAI: *2012 Shopper Engagement Study*. Montclair : Point-of-Purchase Advertising Institute, 2012.

58 Compare to: POPAI: *2012 Shopper Engagement Study*. Montclair : Point-of-Purchase Advertising Institute, 2012.

59 For example: BUCKLIN, R., LATTIN, J.: A Two-State Model of Purchase Incidence and Brand Choice. In *Marketing Science*, 1991, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 24-39; CHANDON, P. et al.: *Unseen Is Unsold: Assessing Visual Equity with Commercial Eye-Tracking Data 2002/85/MKT*. Fontainebleau : Instead, 2002; MOHAN, G. et al.: Impact of Store Environment on Impulse Buying Behavior. In *European Journal of Marketing*, 2013, Vol. 47, No. 10, p. 1711-1732.

advertisements of brands and totally unplanned purchases was found. It should be noted that this association was not identified for secondary advertisements. Consequently, it might be stated that not all visual advertising at the PoP contributes to a higher incidence of less planned purchases. Moreover, since G1 and G formed a statistical 'set of groups', is also possible to consider that there are other influences at the PoP that might contribute to stimulate less planned purchases. Nevertheless, the standardised residuals reveal a stronger affinity between G1 and totally unplanned purchases, and between G3 and specifically planned purchases.

Table 5: Purchase-planning levels by group

Purchase-Planning Level	Total Sample	G1	G2	G3
Totally unplanned	n=59	a* (Z test)	b* (Z test)	a* (Z test)
% horizontal	-	38	25%	37%
% vertical	20%	36	9%	32%
% total	-	7	5%	7%
Standardised residuals	-	2.8	-3.1	2.2
Product class planned	n=185	a* (Z test)	b* (Z test)	a* (Z test)
% horizontal	-	14	73%	13%
% vertical	63%	41	82%	35%
% total	-	8	46%	8%
Standardised residuals	-	-2.1	3.2	-2.9
Product and brand planned	n=52	a* (Z test)	b* (Z test)	a* (Z test)
% horizontal	-	27	29%	44%
% vertical	17%	23	9%	33%
% total	-	5	5%	8%
Standardised residuals	-	1.0	-2.6	3.1
Total	n=296	n=61	n=166	n=69

* identical letters indicate sets of groups among which the proportions of the columns do not differ with 5% significance

Source: Own processing

In conclusion, our studies partially support H2, since managing visual advertising at the PoP, namely primary visual advertisements, showed an influence on totally unplanned purchases.

Brand Equity

Considering the influence of visual advertising on brand equity, both our qualitative and quantitative results seem to indicate that managing visual advertising of brands at the PoP may contribute to strengthening the awareness of the advertised brand (H3). This was an aspect referred to by retailers and manufacturers:

"It creates brand awareness, recognition, it builds brand (...) will reverberate into sales."

"Our colours, logo and slogan must be present in our ads at the store in order to increase brand awareness and image."

As can be seen in Table 6, the mean awareness level of the first advertised brand mentioned by all the shoppers ($\bar{x}=4.34$, $s=1.311$) was significantly different ($t(299)=2.252$; $p=0.025$) and higher ($p=0.0125$) than the level of awareness of the first non-advertised brand ($\bar{x}=4.09$, $s=1.011$). These results suggest that the visual advertisement of brands at the PoP can positively contribute to brand awareness.

Table 6: Mean and standard deviation for brand awareness

	Total sample		G1		G2		G3	
	\bar{x}	S	\bar{x}	S	\bar{x}	S	\bar{x}	S
Spontaneous awareness level of the first advertised brand mentioned*	4.34	1.311	4.58	0.967	4.71	0.771	3.22	1.893
Spontaneous awareness level of the first non-advertised brand mentioned*	4.09	1.011	3.76	1.399	4.05	0.777	4.48	1.009
Total	n=297		n=62		n=166		n=69	

* 5 = first brand mentioned to 1 = fifth brand

Source: Own processing

Besides Table 6, Table 7 also presents tests for H3, but comparing the groups' means. In G1, the advertised brands had a significantly higher degree of spontaneous awareness than the non-advertised brands ($\bar{S}^+=30.44$; $\bar{S}^- = 31.87$; $Z = -3.645$; $p = 0.000$; $n = 62$). The same occurring in G2 ($\bar{S}^+ = 103.14$; $\bar{S}^- = 79.34$; $Z = -7.001$; $p = 0.000$; $n = 166$). However, the inverse occurs in the control group G3 ($\bar{S}^+ = 39.31$; $\bar{S}^- = 25.09$; $Z = -3.703$; $p = 0.000$; $n = 69$). These results reinforce the hypothesis that managing visual communication of brands at the PoP with the aim of obtaining visual salience positively influences the awareness of the featured brand. Given that no earlier empirical studies were dedicated to test if communication at the PoP influences brand awareness, the current finding that that visual communication of brands at the PoP can positively contribute to brand awareness is a novelty. Thus, it cannot be contrasted with equivalent literature, but is coherent with previous literature.⁶⁰ The finding is also consistent with traditional advertising theory, and, therefore, it is important to underline that awareness is developed continuously and does not result from a single moment of communication in the store.

Table 7: Multiple comparisons of brand awareness between groups

	G1 vs G2		G1 vs G3		G3 vs G2	
	H test	Sig.*	H test	Sig.*	H test	Sig.*
Spontaneous awareness level of the first advertised brand mentioned* (n=300)	11.893	0.763	65.789	0.000**	77.682	0.000**
Spontaneous awareness level of the first non-advertised brand mentioned*(n=300)	2.163	1.00	65.262	0.000**	-63.099	0.000**

* adjusted asymptotic significance

** null hypothesis rejection for p -value < 0.05

Source: Own processing

Analysing H4, the results obtained are not totally conclusive for two reasons. First, the scale of measurement did not have a strong internal consistency and, therefore, it was chosen to analyse only the differences between groups in the two items that were more directly related to the construct that was intended to be measured: *"The ad changed the opinion you have about that brand"* and *"The ad made your opinion of this brand remain the same."* Testing the differences between groups, the null hypothesis of equality between them was not rejected on both items $\chi^2_{KW}(2) = 0.564$; $p = 0.754$; $n = 295$ | $\chi^2_{KW}(2) = 0.860$; $p = 0.651$; $n = 293$. Second, contradictorily to the quantitative data, the interviews with manufacturers and shopper marketing experts pointed out that such influence does exist and is positive:

60 See: KESSLER, C.: Editorial: Branding in Store – Marketing in the 21st Century. In *Journal of Brand Management*, 2004, Vol. 11, No. 4, p. 261-264.

“We try to create PoP ads different from the usual, to be spoken [about] by the shoppers.”

“(…) we want to cause surprise and impact, to be noticed and spoken [about] at the point of sale (…) to be seen as different brands and doing surprising things.”

However, these interviews also indicated that the image of the brands can also be hampered by visual advertising at the PoP:

“Our sales force may arrive at the store and in our fridge are exposed competitor brands.”

To avoid these problems, the coherence and uniqueness of key brand visuals are crucial and should be present in every marketing communication action:

“Our colours, logo and slogan have to be in our ads in the store, so that we can increase the awareness and image of the brand.”

Such relevance of the brand equity consistency in today’s multi-channel retail environment is mentioned by previous studies⁶¹ and that fact highlights the importance of developing a close relationship with the retailer and the relevance of co-creation processes. Overall, discussing the brand image results, several preceding academic studies on traditional advertising concluded that brand image is indeed affected by marketing activities.⁶² Nonetheless, the existing specific literature about the ability of communication at the PoP to positively influence brand image was not found in academic literature but only in consultancy reports.⁶³ The present findings do not validate or reject those reports, due to the contradictory results already mentioned.

6 Conclusions and Implications

This research aimed to understand how to better manage shopper marketing activities, by analysing the effects of in-store visual brand advertising. Our main findings are that visual advertising of brands at the PoP might influence shoppers on (some) components of the shopping experience, brand awareness, and unplanned purchases, but only through primary advertisements. Moreover, we found that visual advertising of brands at the PoP might also contribute to the relation between retailer and manufacturer, but that requires a careful selection of the strategic retailers and manufacturers to work with.

In fact, making an overall analysis of the effects of visual advertising of brands at the PoP on shoppers, its effectiveness was essentially verified for the primary visual advertisements for brands. The main implication of those conclusions is that it is important for in-store visual advertising of brands to be clearly noticed by shoppers. So, considering the visual clutter in many stores, it is necessary a selective and careful management of the advertising inside the stores and the creation of clearly noticeable and distinguishable visual “spots”. Thus, shopper marketing actions should aim to reduce clutter and disorder and, in so doing, the primary advertisements will become more visible and, hence, more effective.

Is also important to note that both the qualitative and quantitative studies revealed that visual advertising of brands at the PoP can induce purchases, especially purchases with lower levels of planning. It was concluded that this role is more noticeable in totally unplanned purchases, being achieved essentially through primary

61 See: KELLER, K.: Brand Equity Management in a Multichannel, Multimedia Retail Environment. In *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 2010, Vol. 24, No. 2, p. 58-70; GIROTTI, M., MORO, M., IRURITA, A. M. A.: Roles and Implications of Marketing Communications in Retail Settings: A Systematic Review. In *Advances in National Brand and Private Label Marketing*, 2022, p. 173-199.

62 For example: COBB-WALGREN, C. J. et al.: Brand Equity, Brand Preference, and Purchase Intent. In *Journal of Advertising*, 1995, Vol. 24, No. 3, p. 25-40.

63 See: GMA/DELOITTE: *Shopper Marketing: Capturing a Shopper’s Heart, Mind and Wallet*. Washington : The Grocery Manufacturers Association, 2007; GMA/DELOITTE: *Delivering the Promise of Shopper Marketing: Mastering Execution for Competitive Advantage*. Washington : The Grocery Manufacturers Association, 2008.

visual advertisements for brands. The studies also found evidence that visual advertising of brands at the PoP might contribute positively to the shopping experience, again, essentially, through primary advertisements of brands. The components of the shopping experience in which this influence was most significant were the ability to attract attention and to inform the shoppers.

Both the qualitative and quantitative results show that primary visual advertising of brands at the PoP can also contribute to brand awareness, in particular brand saliency in shoppers’ mind. Although raising brand awareness is a long-term process, communication at the PoP seems to improve this component of brand equity. However, it was not possible to find clear evidence of the influence of PoP advertising on the strengthening of brand positioning, since qualitative and quantitative data pointed to different conclusions.

In addition to the effects on shoppers, it was found that the retailers and manufacturers relationship might benefit from the advertising of brands at the PoP. In fact, manufacturers might explore the advertising at the PoP to understand retailer’s preferences (e.g., designing, in partnership, long-term activities that drive sales for both parties). Further, retailers might benefit because in-store visual advertising can help to equip, decorate, and maintain stores. In addition, both parties can profit from the potential of in-store advertising of brands to improve sales. These findings have implications for shopper marketing, namely that manufacturers should increasingly seek to adapt their PoP advertising to the needs and specificities of the retailer and its stores. This, in turn, will add value for retailers and, therefore, enable the development of long-term relationships. However, since the manufacturers’ resources are limited, this solution implies that they must be very careful and selective in the choice of retailers with whom to establish these strategic relationships.

Some limitations of this research result from research options, such as the options of conducting qualitative interviews (with possible subjective bias) or collecting quantitative data in a real shopping/store environment. The fact that data collection was carried out at only one period is a limitation, since the brands considered by the shopper vary with the occasions and stimuli. However, that option allowed the study of an actual shopping experience on a context that captured all the complexity of real stimuli during the shopping journey. The data collection methodology used in the quantitative study aimed to study elements of which the shoppers had some degree of consciousness. Since a significant part of human behaviour is not conscious, there might be advantages in complementing the present results with data collect with techniques that allow for better exploration of less conscious components of human visual processing (e.g., eye-tracking and fMRI). Data collection for the third study took place inside the store, but only after payment. This research option allowed the measurement of effective behaviours, instead of intentions. However, studying the variables analysed at different times, comparing results before and after entering the store might bring new knowledge to the topic. This research also has limitations related to the population, the industries and brands analysed. Therefore, it might be extended to include other samples, and types of stores in order to validate the general conclusion of the present research, i.e., to test if visual advertising of brands at the PoP influences retailers, manufacturers, and shoppers.

Notwithstanding the limitations, this research found that the management of marketing and visual advertising at the PoP might help engender a more positive relationship between manufacturers and retailers, as well as influencing the quality of the shopping experience, unplanned purchases and brand awareness, mainly through primary advertisements.

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