

# EXPERIENCES OF CONSUMPTION PROCESS AND THE EXPERIENCE OF HAPPINESS

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## ABSTRACT

Some studies have already analyzed what makes individuals achieve happiness. In the consumer behavior perspective, experiential consumption, which refers to the interaction between the consumer and the product or service during the purchase or consumption, is more closely related to the welfare and happiness than material consumption – the later related to good's possession. However, there have been few studies analyzing the relationship between shopping or consumption experiences and happiness. In this sense, the general objective of this paper is to analyze the happiness in the experiences of purchase and consumption. In order to achieve that, two quantitative studies were conducted based on a survey and an experimental design. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and ANOVA were used to analyze data. Results indicate that the hedonic values drive the individual experience of purchasing and consuming towards happiness. In addition, they show that extraordinary experiences lead the individual to higher levels of happiness than ordinary ones.

**Keywords:** Happiness; Purchase Experience; Consumption Experience.

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## RESUMO

*Estudos têm analisado o que faz o indivíduo alcançar a felicidade. Na perspectiva do comportamento do consumidor, sabe-se que o consumo experiencial, que se refere à interação entre o consumidor e o produto ou serviço durante a compra ou consumo, está mais fortemente relacionado ao bem-estar e à felicidade do que o consumo material, referente à posse de bens. No entanto, são poucos os trabalhos que analisam a relação entre as experiências de compra ou consumo e a felicidade. Neste sentido, o objetivo geral desse artigo é analisar a diferença na felicidade em experiências de compra e de consumo dos indivíduos. Foram realizados dois estudos com aplicação de survey e experimento. Para análise dos resultados, utilizou-se a análise fatorial confirmatória, modelagem de equações estruturais e ANOVA. Os resultados obtidos indicam que os valores hedônicos de fato orientam o indivíduo a experiências de felicidade de compra e de consumo. Igualmente, evidenciam que uma experiência extraordinária conduz o indivíduo a níveis mais altos de felicidade do que experiências ordinárias.*

**Palavras-chave:** Felicidade; Experiência de Compra; Experiência de Consumo.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of happiness has long been the great goal of the human path (BAUDRILLARD, 2011). All actions carried out by man, sometimes even deleterious, converge directly or indirectly to its attainment. Although it may be associated with several concepts and ideas, depending on the discipline or the theoretical perspective, happiness is particularly associated with consumption (LIPOVETSKY, 2007; BAUDRILLARD, 2011). According to Lipovetsky (2007), the hyperconsumption society, as he classifies the great human community today, would be organized in the name of the pursuit of a happiness of consumption (e.g. the productive system, the mass communication, the entertainment industry).

Although the two concepts are largely examined in philosophy and social sciences (DUNN; GILBERT; WILSON, 2011), the relationship between consumption and happiness does not yet have a consistent archetype under the theoretical lens of marketing. In this way, research in other disciplines has sought to analyze the subordination of the concept of happiness to social institutions (LIPOVETSKY, 2007; BAUDRILLARD, 2011). However, the concept of happiness has hardly been analyzed through the consumers' perspective, emphasizing the meanings derived from their experiences.

Approaching this context, the works of Van Boven and Gilovich (2003), Mogilner, Aaker, and Kamvar (2012), and Bhattacharjee and Mogilner (2014) have analyzed happiness beyond material perspective, associating it with the positive result of a set of experiences in individual's life. Such researchers, however, do not directly associate happiness with situations present in the process of consumption. Similarly, research on emotions has shown that a consumption experience, rather than the material possession of products, would lead the individual to feel higher levels of happiness (VAN BOVEN, GILOVICH, 2003; DUNN; GILBERT; WILSON, 2011). Other works point out that not only the consumption experience but also the purchasing experience would be able to influence consumer happiness (LIPOVETSKY, 2007; BAUDRILLARD, 2011). Moreover, it seems that it is the experience that leaves the consumer feeling happier and not the acquired product (NICOLAO; IRWIN; GOODMAN, 2009; BHATTACHARJEE; MOGILNER, 2014; GILOVICH; KUMAR; JAMPOL, 2014).

However, studies in which experiences are examined so far do not differentiate the concepts of purchase and consumption; treating them indistinctly under the term consumption process. Although they are not normally approached in a different way, the concepts of purchase and consumption can differ not only in the moment they occur along the consumption process but also in fundamental epistemological characteristics (cf. COOPER, 1976).

Based on these controversies, this study aims to analyze the happiness in the experiences of purchase and consumption. This general objective will be operationalized through two studies which aim to (i) analyze the relation of happiness with the hedonic and utilitarian purchase and consumption values, examined at times of purchasing and consumption; and (ii) examine the influence of ordinary and extraordinary experiences on the attainment of happiness associated with the experience of purchasing and consumption.

This study is divided into four sections. Initially, we present the main theoretical elements that support the research. Further, we draw the design and research methods that allow the achievement of the objectives. Then, the data collected by the empirical research is analyzed, relating the findings with the theoretical archetype emerged from the literature. In the end, the final considerations of the study are reported.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The main theoretical aspects related to the research objectives addressed in the study are discussed below.

### 2.1 The Experiencing of Happiness in the Consumption Process

According to the Priberam Dictionary (2015), happiness is the context of circumstances that cause a fortune, a joyful status or good success. Baudrillard (2011) approaches this concept by treating happiness as an emotion resulting from fortuitous circumstances that must be measurable by visible parameters, *i.e.*, goods and qualities that condition and demonstrate a relationship of comfort and well-being. This author states that the market would be able to create an ideological system that links happiness exclusively to consumption. Thus, consumption would be a simulacrum of happiness, a mechanism by which the individual can emulate a situation of excitement and pleasure to simulate the sacred state of happiness. It would be a limited archetype conceived by consumers themselves as a way of achieving an ephemeral happiness.

This ephemeral happiness is treated by Tondato (2011) as something cyclical that begins with the buying process, which is mediated by consumption and results, all together, in happiness. Perez (2004) affirms that happiness presents itself as something ephemeral and fleeting because, at the end of consumption, individual always returns to the condition of dissatisfaction – ending with a happy feeling. Therefore, the individual should search for happiness again by activating a new purchase, restarting a new search cycle.

This happiness search cycle, also defined as hedonic consumption logic (BABIN; DARDEN; GRIFFIN, 1994; JONES; REYNOLDS; ARNOLD, 2006), is highlighted by Belk (2001) as a void that exists inside individuals. This void is the consequence of a recurring restlessness in believing that acquiring money and certain material goods will result in happiness. In this perspective, there is a continuous search for happiness through material goods acquisition, since things manifestation, as a reason for happiness, became an essential condition for the achievement of individuals' goals.

Masi and Toscani (2012) consider happiness as one of the deepest human obsessions, highlighting leisure, knowledge, and idleness as some of the fundamental concepts to achieve it. In this scenario, a positive physical and emotional dimension is created around the search for happiness. According to Onusic (2013), a state full of happiness suggests a satisfying and happy life, filled with positive pleasures and emotions. Therefore, there is great similitude between happiness, satisfaction and life and well-being. According to the author, income influences the

probability of the individual to declare him/herself more or less happy, since wealth is responsible for imprint a remarkable social distinction.

## **2.2 Experiential Consumption**

Faced with a conception of happiness related to well-being, several researchers have obtained relevant findings by pointing out this emotion as a product of experiential realization. In this perspective, happiness is closely related to experiential consumption, that is, consumption motivated by individuals' experiences (VAN BOVEN; GILOVICH, 2003; NICOLAO; IRWIN; GOODMAN, 2009; BHATTACHARJEE; MOGILNER, 2014; GILOVICH; KUMAR; JAMPOL, 2014).

The interaction between the consumer's perception and different elements of a market-based scenario characterizes a consumption experience. Each individual can react in a unique way to this interaction. This context also highlights the relevance of a better understanding of the nuances of happiness. Van Boven and Gilovich (2003) sought to analyze what type of purchase people are happier. Their findings indicated that experiential purchases, *i.e.*, those primarily concerned with getting life experience, have resulted in more happiness for consumers than material purchases. This occurs mainly because consumers face more positive feelings after an experiential purchase than after a material one. Moreover, experiences are a more significant part of their own identity, leaving individuals more prone to positive reinterpretations and contributing to successful social relationships.

In line with previous studies, Gilovich, Kumar, and Jampol (2014) argue that experiential shopping does provide greater happiness than material purchases. According to them, experiential purchases reinforce social relationships more than material goods. They are also part of the individual's identity, are better evaluated by consumers, and bring fewer social comparisons than material purchases. They argue that experiential consumption may result in a greater social well-being because it is encompassed by hedonic sensations.

Nicolao, Irwin, and Goodman (2009), on the other hand, have demonstrated that experiences may not always have a positive result. According to the authors, it depends on the valence resulting from the interaction in this type of purchase. In other words, positive experiential purchases lead to greater happiness than the material purchases made, while negative experiences will not result in greater happiness than purchases of material goods. In fact, it is the interaction in the experiences that will determine if they will make people happier or not.

## **2.3 Buying and Consumption**

In the literature, experiences related to buying and consuming have been treated within a single conceptual archetype, named consumption process. Although it does not always have a linear development, the consumption process has a beginning, with the experience of acquiring a good or a service, its use, and its discard.

In order to fulfill the purpose of this study, it is necessary to raise the differences between the concepts of purchase and consumption for the analysis of the constructs 'purchase happiness' and 'happiness of consumption'. Based on a multidisciplinary perspective of consumer behavior research, the purchase is the aspect related to the initial step of consumption process; while consumption refers to the actual use, concrete or symbolic, of the acquired object (BELK, 1984).

Similarly, buying differs from consumption because it is performed under pre-programmed circumstances; since it relates the individual to a disposition of practices and objects designed for the accomplishment of an activity, following an instrumental logic (COOPER, 1976).

Thus, buying, in general, is characterized as a teleologically oriented action, while consumption is defined by its free expression and contingency (CERTEAU, 1998). It is in the consumption experience, outside the formal contact with a firm, where the consumer can act autonomously. In the purchase experience, the consumer has its actions restricted by the insistent and suggestive business address oriented to the sale and the profit.

Teleologic aspects do not prevent purchase acts from provoking rewarding experiences (BATRA; AHTOLA, 1991; BABIN; DARDEN; GRIFFIN, 1994). Walking through shopping malls, searching for products in store windows, experiencing the desired item, and purchasing itself are some examples of gratifying experiences. All of them can be pointed out as material linkages that arouse sensations capable of transforming the act of buying into one of the most rewarding experiences in today's urban societies (LIPOVETSKY, 2007; BAUDRILLARD, 2011). The naturalization of buying activity has transformed the shopping experience into a strongly desired phenomenon. The simple feeling part of that landscape of consumption is capable of arousing unique emotions and feelings, such as happiness and pleasure (HOLBROOK; HIRSCHMAN 1982; BAUDRILLARD, 2011).

Consumption is characterized as an expressive activity by nature, without the presumption of inviolable *a priori* assumptions (cf. COOPER, 1976). There are no organized schemas or structures to decode the relationships between the subject and the consumed object (CERTEAU, 1998; BOURDIEU, 2007). In fact, they are constructed and rebuilt indefinitely – undermining the assumption of the existence of any prior structures. Consumption is a concept of building experiences, decoded in form of sensations, desires, emotions, memories, and symbols (BELK, 2001; CERTEAU, 1998; HOLBROOK; HIRSCHMAN, 1982; BOURDIEU, 2007). Thus, consumption overcomes by the purely economic bias, entering into the symbolic and phenomenological dimensions of building experiences.

Although through Husserl's (1992) phenomenological perspective, man is generally guided by a rational action. This author does not enclose human action in the idea of a single and sovereign reason. According to him, the reason is not characterized as a legislative entity that dominates their actions, but as a flexible concept that fits individuals' singularities. In fact, it would not be the rationality that would explain the human.

Considering that consumption originates from contingent dispositions, and not from a dominant reason, it has no restrictions of action. According to Certeau (1998), consumption would be an art of non-standard use. Thus, despite attempts by social institutions to create mass consumption models, this would be experienced in a unique way by each individual; characterized as a practice of deviating from market strategies (CERTEAU, 1998). Interestingly, Bourdieu (2007) contradicts the consecrated approach of class consumption and points out social distinction as a consequence of the way of using and experiencing goods. According to him, how to consume goods – measured in terms of the symbolic capitals of the individual – would be more important than the possession of goods or than how much it is consumed.

## **2.4 Hedonic and Utilitarian Purchase and Consumption Values and Happiness in the Consumption Process**

The hedonic and utilitarian purchase values are related to the way in which individuals experience the moment of purchase. Individuals with a salient utilitarian attitude seek to make their purchases by following the logic of maximizing cost-effectiveness and reducing the waste of time (BABIN; DARDEN; GRIFFIN, 1994). On the one hand, the utilitarian purchase value would lead the individual to experience an unpleasant moment of purchase – resulting in a negative experience and, consequently, lower levels of happiness (NICOLAO; IRWIN; GOODMAN, 2009).

On the other hand, the hedonic purchase value indicates that the individual is oriented by aspects related to the search for buying efficiency (HOLBROOK; HIRSCHMAN, 1982, BATRA; AHTOLA, 1991). The activity is generally experienced in a pleasant way, seeking for fun and leisure rather than price and time optimization. Thus, individuals with a predominantly hedonic purchase attitude would seek the satisfaction of their desires and fantasies through purchase experiences (HOLBROOK; HIRSCHMAN, 1982, BABA; DIFFEN, 1994, JONES; REYNOLDS; ARNOLD, 2006). Due to its positive valence, this experience would be able to bring to the consumer high levels of happiness (NICOLAO; IRWIN; GOODMAN, 2009).

Based on the theoretical concepts presented, the following hypotheses are constructed:

*H1a: The greater the hedonic purchase attitude of the individual, the greater the happiness with a purchase experience.*

*H1b: The greater the utilitarian purchase attitude of the individual, the less happiness occurs with a consumption experience.*

The same specific properties assigned to purchase values are expected to consumption values. Attitudes of consumption would mirror the buying attitudes of individuals. Indeed, the utilitarian consumption values would lead individuals to an efficient consumption experience, *i.e.*, least effort and wasted time. Differently, the hedonic consumption value has as main objective to reach pleasure in consumption circumstances. When the hedonic value is expressed strongly, individuals usually seek more intense experiences of consumption. In general, hedonic values are permeated by emotions that lead individuals to their desire's satisfaction. In this way, the following hypotheses are put forward.

*H2a: The greater the hedonic consumption attitude of the individual, the greater the happiness with the experience of consuming.*

*H2b: The greater the utilitarian consumption attitude of the individual, the less happiness occurs with the experience of consuming.*

It should be noted, however, that the literature predicts the existence of purchase and consumption experiences that do not stimulate emotional responses (BAGOZZI; GOPINATH; NYER, 1999; ZAMPETAKIS, 2014). Since emotions are understood as mental states derived from the judgments of individuals (BAGOZZI; GOPINATH; NYER, 1999), this perspective of emotional absence seems to be related to more rational judgments from the lived experiences. Utilitarian purchase and consumption values have a strong theoretical relationship with the concept of rationality. As a result, they could bias the individuals' emotional responses, leading them to exhibit no emotion after an experience of purchase or consumption.

Other studies point out that more rational attitudes do have a direct relation to emotional responses. Among them, pride is highlighted by indicating the achievement of a successful activity through personal efforts (MCFERRAN; AQUINO; TRACY, 2014) – a similar definition to utilitarian value constructs. The studies of Louro, Pieters, and Zeelenberg (2005) and Kim and Johnson (2014) actually attach more rational attitudes, associated with the search for efficiency, as responsible for originating pride as an emotional response.

## **2.5 Ordinary and Extraordinary Experiences and Happiness in the Consumption Process**

Although the consumption process is experienced differently among consumers, the experiences of buying and consuming are associated with the emergence of some similar emotions among individuals. These emotions are, simultaneously, cause and consequence of these experiences. Bhattacharjee and Mogilner (2014) indicate that the experience of an extraordinary situation usually brings higher levels of happiness to individuals. Some findings indicate that hap-

piness is also a consequence of the experiences lived by individuals. Based on these theoretical considerations, the following hypotheses are established:

*H3a: An extraordinary purchase experience results in greater purchase happiness than an ordinary shopping experience.*

*H3b: An extraordinary consumption experience results in a happiness of consumption greater than an experience of ordinary consumption.*

Mogilner, Aaker, and Kamvar (2012) demonstrate how different perspectives of happiness can lead to different behaviors and decisions. Working with happiness approaches related to calm and excitement, authors indicate that the individual's emotional perspective would guide their experience. Thus, the individual may be pleased with the situation experienced according to her/his personal characteristics.

In this way, happiness would be associated with each individual's own values. While for some individuals the shopping experience could be assessed as more rewarding than the consumption experience, for others, the consumption experience would bring a more positive evaluation of happiness. In this sense, it is reasonable to consider that extraordinary consumption experiences would go beyond the level of happiness achieved in purchase experiences. Indeed, in the case of day-to-day experiences, one would observe the inverse situation: the ordinary buying experience would bring greater happiness than ordinary consumer experiences.

Anchored on the theoretical concepts raised above, we built the following hypothesis:

*H4a: The happiness of consumption associated with extraordinary consumption is significantly greater than the happiness of purchase associated with the extraordinary purchase.*

*H4b: The purchase happiness associated with the ordinary purchase is significantly greater than the happiness of consumption associated with ordinary consumption.*

### 3 DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODS

In order to achieve the research objectives, two quantitative studies were carried out. In the first one, we analyzed the relationship between the purchase and consumption values with the purchase of happiness and happiness of consumption. In the second study, we examined the influence of ordinary and extraordinary experiences on the attainment of happiness associated with purchase and consumption.

#### 3.1 Study 1

To test hypotheses H1a, H1b, H2a, and H2b, four scales related to hedonic and utilitarian purchase value and hedonic and utilitarian consumption value were used. Variables that compose such constructs were formed using items of the Batra and Ahtola (1991) and Babin, Darden and Griffin's (1994) scales as inspiration. The authors punctuate the binomials efficiency versus fun, speed versus leisure and utility versus desire as some of the most important elements for access to hedonic and utilitarian attitudes of the consumer.

Two new scales were developed for the measurement of the happiness constructs associated with the purchase and consumption experiences. Although such scales were originally designed for this research, they were based on the emerging theoretical meanings raised from the literature. Thus, we tried to use words and expressions present in studies related to happiness, as well as to experiences of purchase and consumption (Table 1).

**Table 1** – Variables, constructs, and authors of the research instrument

Nº	Variables	Authors	
<b>Hedonic Purchase Value</b>			
1	I have fun purchasing	Based on Batra and Ahtola (1991) and Babin, Darden, and Griffin (1994)	
2	Being in the purchasing environment is a very nice time out		
3	Purchasing is a distraction for me		
4	The search for the product I'm looking for gives me great pleasure		
<b>Hedonic Consumption Value</b>			
5	I have fun using the products I like		
6	The experience of using products that I like gives me pleasure		
7	I forget my problems while I'm using products I like		
<b>Utilitarian Purchase Value</b>			
8	I am efficient when I am making a purchase		
9	I shop quickly		
10	I spend the planned budget when I am making a purchase		
<b>Utilitarian Consumption Value</b>			
11	I do not spend a lot of time using a product I like		
11	I only use the functions I really need for a product I like		
12	Comparing with other things I could do, using a product I like does not give me so much pleasure		
<b>Purchase Happiness</b>			
13	I feel good looking for an item I would like to buy	Authors	
14	The idea of purchasing an item that I like makes me happy		
15	Going through stores and environments where the product I want is for sale is an activity that enjoys me		
16	I feel happy when I'm trying out or testing a product I want to buy		
17	I feel good buying the product I like		
<b>Happiness of Consumption</b>			
18	I feel good using a product I like		
19	I feel excited about the possibility to use a product I like		
20	I feel happy to use a product that I like again		
21	The moment I'm using the product I like usually makes me happy		

Source: Authors.

For the operationalization of some variables and constructs, it was necessary to encourage the consumers to be involved with some products in order to reach the experiences. In addition to the aforementioned variables, questions were elaborated to detail the purchase and consumption experiences of the respondents. Sociodemographic variables were also included in the research instrument. A pre-test was applied to 20 individuals, who reported slight difficulties in completing the questionnaire, which was promptly corrected.

After the elaboration of the research instrument and the application of the pre-test, a survey was applied to a non-probabilistic sample of 201 individuals. To obtain the respondents, an intentional sampling technique of an incidental character was used, in which, although a specific population group was selected by researchers' choice, the subjects interviewed in the survey were randomly selected (AAKER; KUMAR; DAY, 1995). The questionnaires were applied over several weekends.

Afterward, a scale validation process was carried out. Initially, the translation validity, composed by content and face validities, was checked. A qualitative analysis of the indicators that compose the research instrument was carried out, observing how well the variables represent

the main aspects of the constructs (HAIR; BUSH; ORTINAU, 2000). The instrument was submitted to three experts in the area and then a pre-test was applied to 20 respondents.

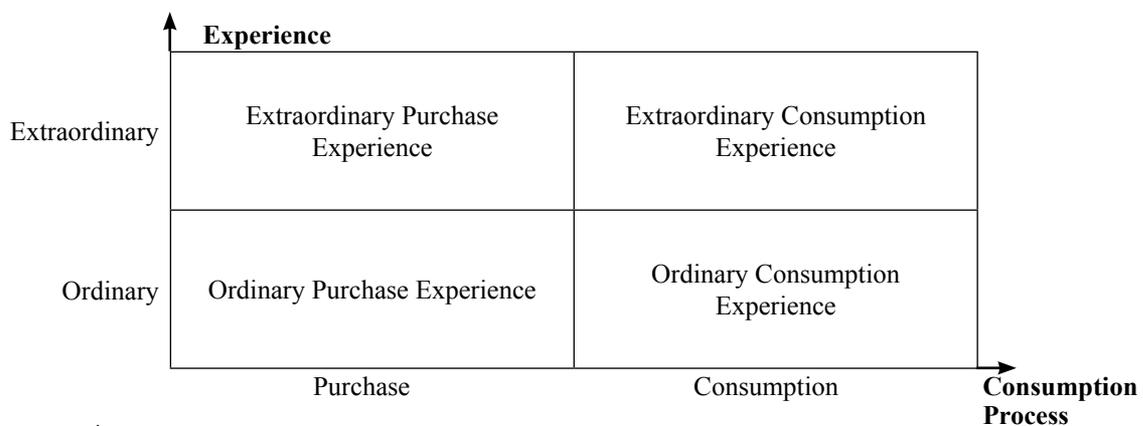
Regarding the data analysis, two main techniques were used. Besides the descriptive statistics, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to analyze convergent and discriminant validity and Structural Equation Modeling were carried out in order to test the research hypotheses through diagrams of structural paths (HAIR et al., 2005; BYRNE, 2009). For the accomplishment of the analyzes, the technique of estimation of maximum likelihood parameters was used (HAIR *et al.*, 2005). In order to define the data entry matrix, the covariance matrix was chosen (CUDECK, 1989; HAIR et al., 2005; KLINE, 2005; BYRNE, 2009). Regarding the adequacy indicators, the following measures were used: absolute adjustment – RMSEA (Root mean square error of approximation) and GFI (Goodness-of-fit); incremental adjustment – CFI (Comparative Fit Index), IFI (Incremental Fit Index) and TLI (Tucker-Lewis Coefficient); and the parsimonious adjustment of the model – CMIN/DF ( $\chi^2/df$ ) (HAIR *et al.*, 2005; BYRNE, 2009). In addition, a one-way ANOVA technique was also applied for additional analysis. The data collected were analyzed with the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) v. 23.0 and AMOS v. 7.0.

### 3.2 Study 2

In order to test the hypotheses H3a, H3b, H4a, and H4b, an experimental study was carried out. The individuals were inserted in different purchase and consumption experiences. For such purpose, two small stories with distinct contexts were developed. The first context reproduced the purchase and consumption of a luxury car, representing an extraordinary experience. The second context recreated an everyday situation that starts with going to a supermarket.

At this stage, the constructs purchase happiness and happiness of consumption were used with similar variables to those in Study 1. However, their items were adapted to the contexts in which the individuals were inserted (*e.g.* the idea of having bought this car made me happy, the idea of having bought these products made me happy, I am excited about the possibility of using my new car, I am excited about the possibility of using the products I bought). This change was necessary to accurately measure the respondent’s emotional response according to the circumstance in which she/he was submitted. The experimental design containing the variables analyzed in the study is presented in Table 2. For the accomplishment of this study, descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA were used. Data were analyzed using the *Statistical Package for Social Sciences* (SPSS) v. 23.0.

**Chart 1** – Experimental Design - Study 2



Source: Authors.

## 4 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

This section presents the main analysis carried with the empirical data gathered in the research.

### 4.1 Study 1

In total, 201 questionnaires were applied – 113 men and 88 women. The average age of participants is 22 years, with a household income of 5.3 minimum monthly salaries, on average. The marital status of 90% of the participants is single. Similarly, about 90% of the individuals indicated that had incomplete higher education and did not have a paid activity.

Regarding the questions detailing the purchase and consumption experiences of the respondents, around 60% of them indicated that they go out shopping between one and three times a month. In addition, while about 14% never go out shopping, 26% usually shop at least once a week. Regarding shopping in shopping malls, about 50% of respondents do it once a month and 20% of respondents attend it between two and five times a month. Nevertheless, about 19% do not attend it. On average, consumers typically spend about 2 hours and 20 minutes in these environments. In out-of-shopping malls stores, this amount remains practically the same: 20% of respondents indicated they used not go shopping in these environments. Fewer respondents indicated buying only once a month in stores outside malls (32%); while about 40% purchase two to five times a month. The average time spent in these stores is 1.6h.

Similarly, around 53% indicated to go between two and five times a month to supermarket and grocery stores. 22% of the individuals reported attending such settings more than five times a month. Only 8% do not attend them, while about 17% shop once a month at these locations. Consumers spend 1.4h, on average, at these locations.

Regarding the consumers' preference products, technology-related items such as mobiles and computers were the most cited ones – around 30%. Clothing-related products figure next with about 26%. Hygiene products (12%) and perfume (9.8%) complete the list of the most cited items. In addition, 80% of respondents indicated to use the product they cited at least once a day.

Next, the steps regarding the analysis of construct validity, composed by convergent and discriminant validity, were performed. A confirmatory factorial analysis was carried out aiming to construct a measurement model relating to the constructs of the research (CHURCHILL, 1979; HAIR et al., 2009). The composite reliability (CR) of the constructs developed in this study, *i.e.*, purchase happiness and happiness of consumption, reached satisfactory indexes, above 0.7 (0.82 and 0.91 respectively). Likewise, satisfactory results were obtained by analyzing the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of the scales, reaching values higher or close to 50% (47% and 73% respectively). These results demonstrate an internal convergence between the observable variables, indicating that the items that make up a certain latent variable are highly related (GARVER; MENTZER, 1999).

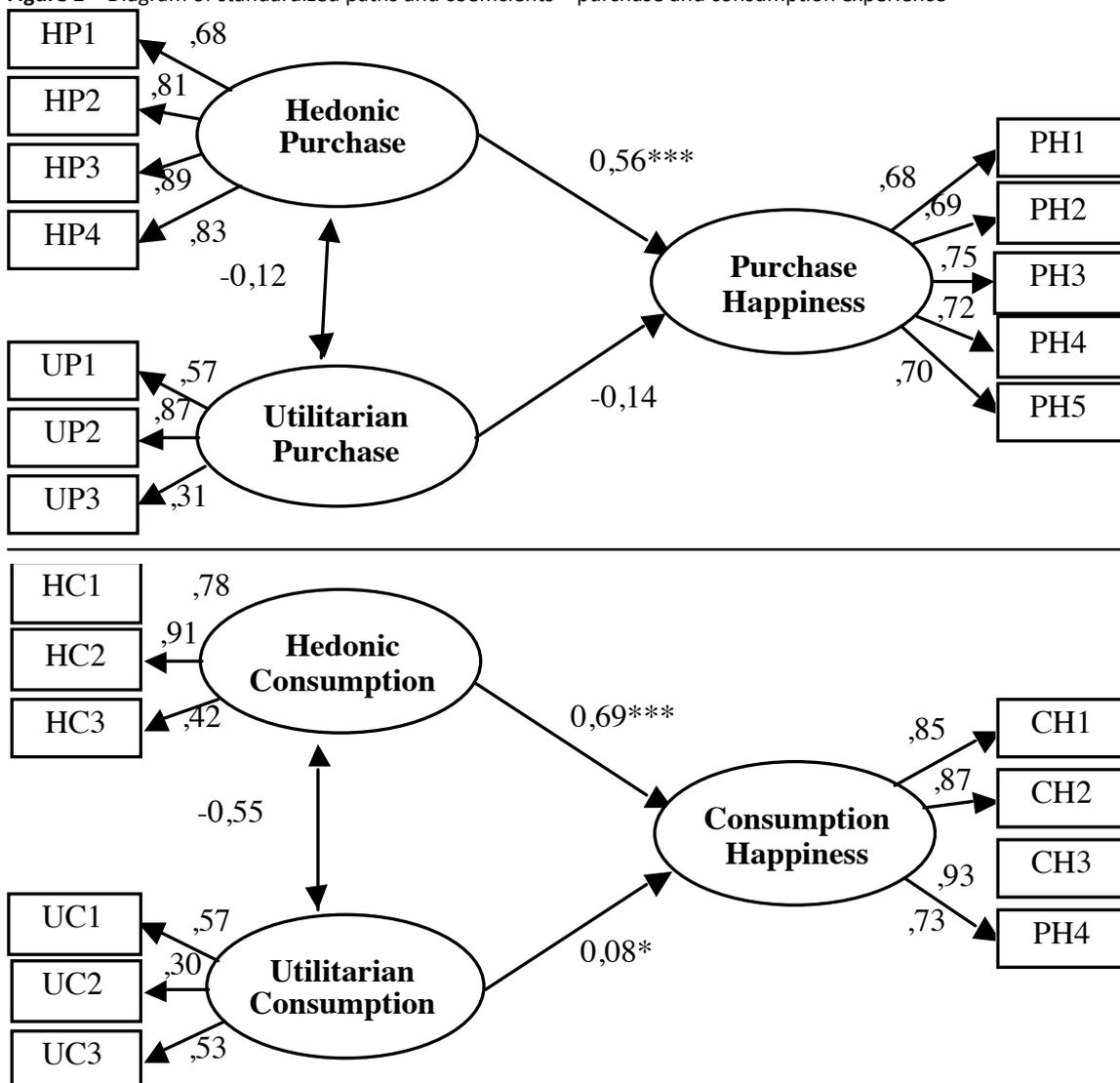
As for the other constructs, based on Batra and Ahtola (1991) and Babin, Darden and Griffin's (1994) scales, the latent variables related to hedonic purchase and consumption values reached satisfactory indexes for internal convergence. The composite reliability of the constructs presented satisfactory indices (hedonic purchase value – 0.81; hedonic consumption value – 0.71). Regarding the AVE, the variables also reached satisfactory indexes or very close to 50%: hedonic purchase value – 55%; hedonic consumption value – 46% (GARVER; MENTZER, 1999).

On the other hand, the constructs built to access the utilitarian characteristics of the respondents did not achieve good adjustment measures. Analyzing the composite reliability, the constructs purchase and utilitarian consumption values did not reach satisfactory indexes (0.64

and 0.45 respectively). Likewise, the average variance extracted of the constructs did not exceed the minimum rate of 50% (38% and 22% respectively). Previously, it is possible to establish that there is a poor suitability of the constructs to the theoretical archetype of the research. The utilitarian spectrum of the constructs differs to a great extent from the others. Despite the poor internal consistency of the constructs, it was decided not to exclude them from the study. Besides being of central theoretical importance in the research, the analysis of the indicators of original variables should be performed with greater flexibility (HAIR et al., 2009).

Then, we started the procedures for the analysis of the hypotheses H1 (a-b) and H2 (c-d). The variables related to the purchase and consumption experiences were related through the modeling technique in structural modeling equations. Two path diagrams for the analysis of the relations between the consumers' experience constructs are evidenced in Figure 1.

**Figure 1** – Diagram of standardized paths and coefficients – purchase and consumption experience



\* Significant at 10%;  
 \*\*\* Significant at 1%;  
 Source: Authors.

The coefficients of adjustment of the first model, referring to the purchase experience, presented satisfactory indexes above 0.8: GFI - 0.889; CFI - 0.892; IFI - 0.894; TLI - 0.854 (COTE, 2008). The CMIN/DF (3.080) and RMSEA (0.0107) indicators also obtained adequate or very close to ideal values, especially when considering studies that bring original research variables (KLINE, 1998). Regarding the model of consumption experience, all the adjustment indicators presented values above the appropriate index of 0.9: GFI - 0.956; CFI - 0.987; IFI - 0.987; TLI - 0.982 (HAIR et al., 2005; BYRNE, 2009). Likewise, the CMIN/DF and RMSEA indexes reached adequate values: 1.323 and 0.042 respectively. Attested to the suitability of the theoretical models, the relationships between the constructs were analyzed in order to test the hypotheses of Study 1. The results of the structural paths are presented in the TAB. 3.

Table 3 – Structural paths, coefficients, and results of the research hypotheses

Hi	Structural Paths	Non-Standardized Coefficients	Error	Standardized Coefficients	P	Results
H1a	Hedonic Purchase Value ‡ Purchase Happiness	0,404	0,065	0,579	0,000***	Accepted
H1b	Utilitarian Purchase Value ‡ Purchase Happiness	-0,264	0,155	-0,155	0,088*	Refuted
H2a	Hedonic Consumption Value ‡ Happiness of Consumption	0,743	0,120	0,689	0,000***	Accepted
H2b	Utilitarian Consumption Values ‡ Happiness of Consumption	0,079	0,112	0,076	0,541	Refuted

\*\*\* Significant at 1%;

\* Significant at 10%;

Source: Authors.

Data presented in Table 3 show that the relationships between the hedonic purchase value and purchase happiness ( $p < 0.01$ ) as well as hedonic consumption value and consumption happiness ( $p < 0.01$ ) were significant; corroborating the hypotheses H1a and H2a. Nonetheless, the hypotheses H1b and H2b have not been proven, demonstrating that the utility value has no influence on purchase happiness. Although the relationship between utilitarian purchase and purchase happiness presented marginal statistical significance ( $p < 0.10$ ), it was not enough to prove the H2a hypothesis.

In a complementary way, an ANOVA test was performed aiming to verify the variation of the purchase and consumption happiness according to the level of the hedonic and utilitarian values of the individuals. The purpose of this procedure is to further detail the analyzes performed earlier.

Respondents were joined into three groups, according to the mean values reached in the hedonic purchase value construct. Subjects in group 1 ( $n = 69$ ,  $M = 2.78$ ) had the lowest mean, whereas the respondents in group 2 ( $n = 54$ ,  $M = 4.56$ ) reached a reasonable mean and those from group 3 ( $n = 60$ ,  $M = 5.93$ ) reached the highest sample mean. The mean differences of the individuals were analyzed by establishing the purchase happiness construct as a dependent variable. The results of the test were significant ( $F(2, 180) = 30.001$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), demonstrating that there were differences of variance between the groups. The Bonferroni *post hoc* test showed a difference of variance between all groups ( $p < 0.01$ ). The averages of purchase happiness of the groups were, respectively: 4.66, 5.15, 5.90. Similarly, the Brown-Forsythe test of mean homogeneity achieved a significant result ( $p < 0.01$ ).

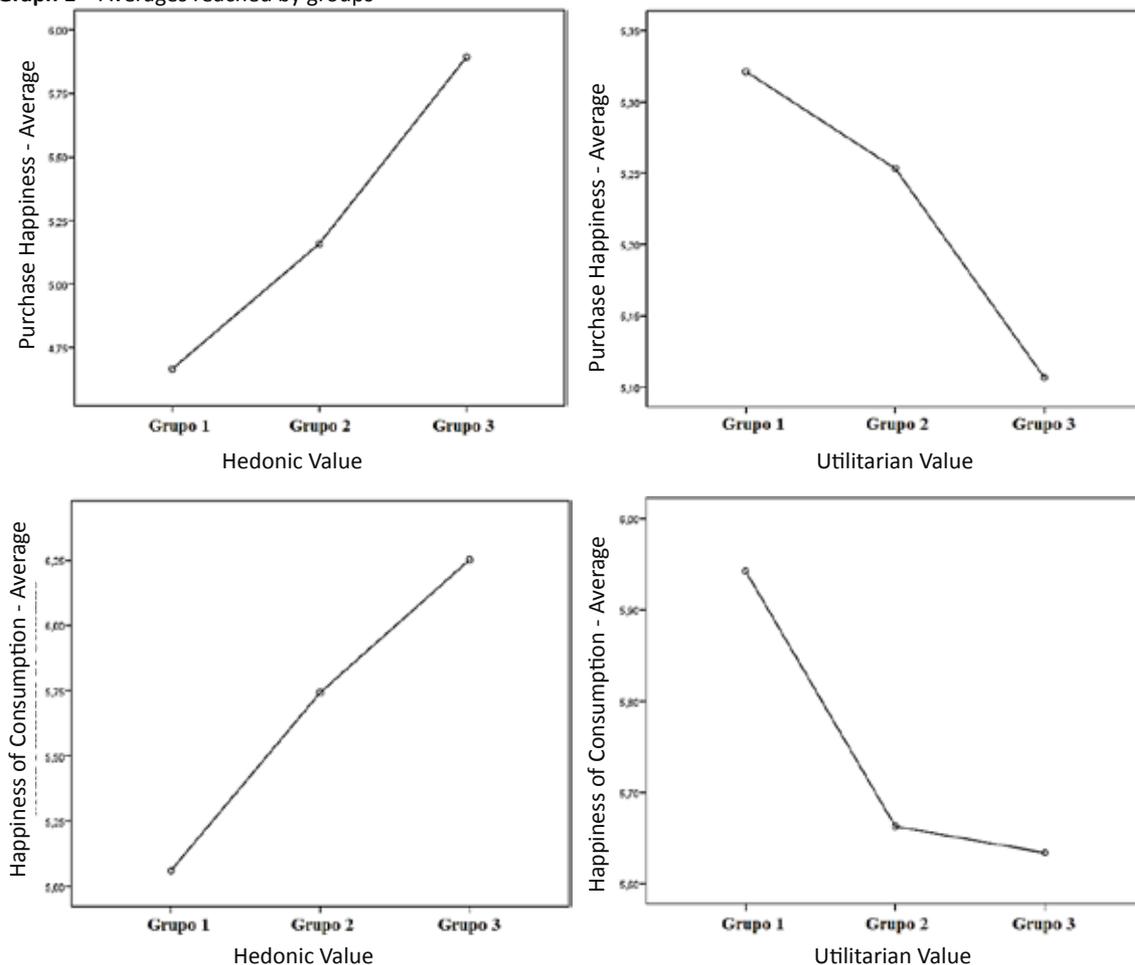
The same procedures were performed for the utilitarian purchase value construct – separating them into three groups: group 1 ( $n = 61$ ,  $M = 3.30$ ); group 2 ( $n = 45$ ,  $M = 4.68$ ); group 3 ( $n = 77$ ,  $M = 5.97$ ). However, the results of the test were not significant ( $F(2, 180) = 0.777$ ,  $p = 0.46$ ),

indicating no differences in variance between the groups. The *post hoc* test also did not show differences of variance ( $p > 0.05$ ). As for the averages of the purchase happiness, the groups had the following values: 5.32, 5.25, 5.10.

Afterward, we analyzed the happiness of consumption with individuals of different hedonic and utilitarian values. In the same way, the individuals were divided according to their hedonic consumption values in three groups: group 1 ( $n = 48$ ;  $M = 3.93$ ); group 2 ( $n = 68$ ,  $M = 4.96$ ); group 3 ( $n = 67$ ,  $M = 6.20$ ). Therefore, a variance analysis was performed in order to observe if there were a mean difference between groups. In fact, the F test presented significance ( $F(2, 180) = 27.332$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); corroborated by the Brown-Forsythe test ( $p < 0.01$ ). The *post hoc* test also revealed differences between groups ( $p < 0.01$ ). The groups presented the following averages of happiness of consumption: 5.06, 5.74, 6.25.

Additionally, a F test was carried out in order to analyze the relation between utilitarian consumption value and happiness of consumption. The test revealed no mean difference between groups ( $F(2, 182) = 1,931$ ,  $p = 0.148$ ); group 1 ( $n = 63$ ,  $M = 2.74$ ); group 2 ( $n = 63$ ,  $M = 3.95$ ); group 3 ( $n = 57$ ,  $M = 5.17$ ). Likewise, the *post hoc* test did not reveal any significant difference ( $p > 0.240$ ). The means of happiness of consumption of the groups were, respectively: 5.94, 5.66, 5.63. The following graphs show the results of the ANOVA tests (Graph 1).

**Graph 1 – Averages reached by groups**



**Source:** Authors.

Although utilitarian purchase and consumption values presented the expected decreasing response pattern, the mean difference between of the groups did not present significance. Differently, the groups based on the hedonic values presented a significant divergence of variance and upward response pattern. Additionally, one-way ANOVA, ANCOVA and linear regression tests were performed with the purpose of verifying the influence of gender, income, age, marital status, among others, on individuals' happiness. However, no significant relationship was found.

#### 4.2 Discussion Study 1

The results obtained in Study 1 indicate that the hedonic values, in fact, lead the individuals to experience purchase happiness and happiness of consumption, confirming the hypotheses H1a and H2a. This relationship was theoretically expected since the hedonic purchasing and consumption value constructs have conceptual elements that bring them closer to the definition of happiness (HOLBROOK; HIRSCHMAN, 1982, BABIN; DARDEN; GRIFFIN, 1994; JONES, REYNOLDS; ARNOLD, 2006). Thus, the results show that individuals who are driven by a hedonic value in the consumption process reach higher rates of happiness. As noted in the literature review, such individuals are able to link a personal state of well-being, satisfaction and positive emotions to the processes of purchase and consumption, transforming the market into a powerful interposition in the pursuit of happiness (VAN BOVEN; GILOVICH, 2003; NICOLAO; IRWIN; GOODMAN, 2009; BHATTACHARJEE; MOGILNER, 2014; GILOVICH; KUMAR; JAMPOL, 2014).

However, utilitarian values are not able to predict the levels of happiness achieved by individuals. Although some authors defend the existence of experiences that do not excite emotions to some consumers (ZAMPETAKIS, 2014), utilitarian values are probably related to other emotional responses. According to Louro, Pieters, and Zeelenberg (2005), efficiency in the shopping experience, as well as success in avoiding an unnecessary purchase, can lead the individual to experience a strong sense of pride. Similarly, experiments carried out by Kim and Johnson (2014) show that financial saves, related to a rational consumption perspective, is also a factor that guides the individual to experience pride after the purchase.

Thus, hedonic and utilitarian values, associated with both purchase and consumption experiences, cannot be considered antipodal of happiness attainment (BABIN; DARDEN; GRIFFIN, 1994). Although individuals with higher hedonic values obtained higher rates of happiness, those individuals driven by higher utilitarian value may or may not achieve happiness in the consumption process, since there is no significant relationship between the variables. In addition, happiness constructs reached above-average values (3.5 points) even among individuals with high utilitarian value.

Non-significant relationships between utilitarian values and happiness can be explained by the absence of scenarios that lead individuals to experience a consumption process closer to their own real circumstances. In such contexts, the respondent could be guided in a less generalist way and be based on personal schemes and values that would help her/him to deal with specific situations. It is worth noting that the utilitarian purchase value was only marginally significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) with purchase happiness. Such a relationship can be examined in more detail by developing research with distinct methodological elements. In this sense, an experimental study was conducted to deepen the themes discussed in Study 1. The purpose was to approach the constructs and relations analyzed under a new perspective, seeking to isolate strange variables and empirically contextualize the respondents.

### 4.3 Study 2

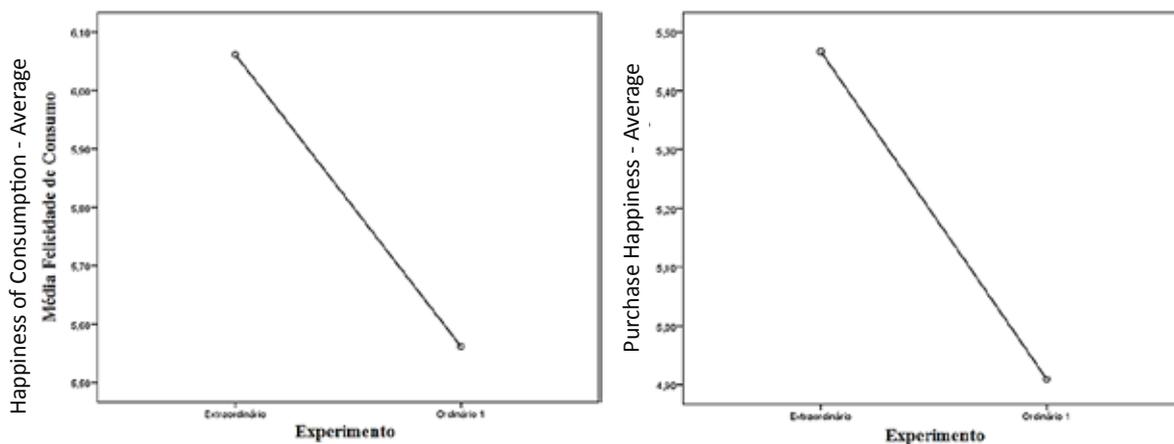
For the analysis of the hypotheses H3a, H3b, H4a and H4b, an experiment was carried out with two distinct purchasing and consumption situations: one related to an extraordinary experience and another to a conventional experience. In total, 135 individuals were approached: 57 in an extraordinary scenario and 78 in a conventional scenario. Among them, 67 respondents were male and 68 females, with a mean age of around 23 years. Monthly family income was around 5.3 minimum wages.

An initial ANOVA test was performed aiming to observe whether the experiments were characterized as extraordinary and ordinary situations for individuals. The results of the manipulation check (OPPENHEIMER; MEYVIS; DAVIDENKO, 2009) indicated that respondents undergoing an ordinary shopping experience ( $n = 78$ ,  $M = 3.95$ ) considered it to be closer to a conventional situation than those submitted to an extraordinary scenario ( $n = 57$ ,  $M = 4.58$ ) ( $F(1, 133) = 4.049$ ,  $p = 0.046$ ).

Analyzing the mean difference between the purchase happiness of individuals submitted to extraordinary ( $n = 57$ ,  $M = 5.46$ ) and ordinary ( $n = 76$ ,  $M = 4.90$ ) purchase scenarios, a significant divergence was observed ( $F(1, 131) = 9.987$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The Brown-Forsythe mean homogeneity test also presented significance ( $p < 0.01$ ). The results of this analysis confirmed the hypothesis H3a since an extraordinary purchase experience raises higher levels of happiness than an ordinary purchase experience.

The same procedure was performed in order to observe the mean differences between the groups submitted to extraordinary ( $n = 57$ ,  $M = 6.06$ ) and ordinary ( $n = 77$ ,  $M = 5.56$ ) consumption experiences. In fact, the F test revealed a significant difference between the experiments ( $F(1, 132) = 7.600$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), corroborating the hypothesis H3b. Likewise, the Brown-Forsythe homogeneity test was significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). The graphs below show the results of the ANOVA tests (Graph 2).

**Graph 2** – Averages obtained in the ordinary and extraordinary experiments



Source: Authors.

Regarding the analysis of the hypotheses H4a and H4b, new ANOVA tests were performed. Initially, we analyzed the mean difference between purchase happiness ( $n = 57$ ,  $M = 5.46$ ) and happiness of consumption ( $n = 57$ ,  $M = 6.06$ ) in an extraordinary context scenario. The results showed that there is a significant divergence between the two forms of happiness ( $F(1, 112) = 11.903$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), demonstrating that, in an unusual situation, consuming an extraordinary product brings more happiness than buying it. The Brown-Forsythe test also presented significance ( $p < 0.01$ ). Based on these results, the hypothesis H4a was confirmed.

Concerning the analysis of the purchase happiness ( $n = 77$ ,  $M = 4.90$ ) and happiness of consumption ( $n = 76$ ,  $M = 5.56$ ) of ordinary experience, ANOVA test results also presented significance ( $F(1, 151) = 13.662$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Similarly, the Brown-Forsythe test was significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). Although the results obtained reveal the difference between the purchase happiness and happiness of consumption in ordinary experiences, the hypothesis H4b was not proven, as the values achieved by the happiness of consumption were superior. Table 2 discriminates the hypothesis tests of Study 2.

**Table 2** – Structural paths, coefficients, and results of the research hypotheses

Hi	Hypothesis	F	P	Results
H3a	<i>An extraordinary purchase experience results in greater purchase happiness than an ordinary shopping experience</i>	9,987	0,000***	Accepted
H3b	<i>An extraordinary consumption experience results in a happiness of consumption greater than an experience of ordinary consumption</i>	7,600	0,000***	Accepted
H4a	<i>The happiness of consumption associated with extraordinary consumption is significantly greater than the happiness of purchase associated with the extraordinary purchase</i>	11,903	0,000***	Accepted
H4b	<i>The purchase happiness associated with the ordinary purchase is significantly greater than the happiness of consumption associated with ordinary consumption</i>	13,662	0,000***	Refuted

Source: Authors.

Together, these results demonstrate that, in general, the experience of consuming causes greater emotional responses of happiness than the experience of purchase; regardless of whether such experience is ordinary or extraordinary. In addition, tests were performed to verify the mean differences between purchase happiness from extraordinary ( $n = 57$ ,  $M = 5.46$ ) and ordinary experience ( $n = 77$ ,  $M = 5.56$ ). No significant differences were found ( $F(1, 132) = 0.252$ ,  $p = 0.617$ ).

The same procedure was carried out observing the values achieved by purchase happiness from ordinary experience ( $n = 76$ ,  $M = 4.90$ ) and happiness of consumption from the extraordinary experience ( $n = 57$ ,  $M = 6.06$ ). The results revealed a significant mean difference in the F test ( $F(1, 131) = 47.309$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) as well as in the Brown-Forsythe test ( $p < 0.01$ ).

#### 4.4 Discussion Study 2

The results revealed in Study 2 that an extraordinary shopping experience leads the individual to higher levels of happiness than ordinary shopping experiences. In the same way, an extraordinary consumption experience gives the individual greater happiness in consumption than ordinary experience. In fact, situations that promote unusual experiences can create greater happiness for consumers. The involvement of the individual in positive unusual situations is capable of provoking positive valence emotions – such as happiness (BHATTACHARJEE; MOGILNER, 2014).

Another important finding indicates that, in all the tests, the happiness of consumption presented higher averages in both the extraordinary and ordinary consumption. These results clearly indicate the importance that people give to their own consumer practices. Guided by *sui generis* reasons, people freely manipulate the objects consumed without determinant restrictions (HOLBROOK; HIRSCHMAN 1982; CERTEAU, 1998; BOURDIEU, 2007). The art of consuming is performed in an open and expressive way, free from the instrumentality of buying activities.

However, an extraordinary purchase experience raises levels of happiness as high as the experience of ordinary consumption; indicating that, in fact, companies can emotionally influence the consumer by providing situations that go beyond the conventional. It is possible that

this level of happiness achieved by extraordinary purchases occurs because they are configured as experiential situations, involving a wide range of remarkable situations for the individual (VAN BOVEN; GILOVICH, 2003). In the same way, they can result in moments that promote not only material gains but also relational ones.

The extraordinary character of the purchase and consumption moments treated in this research have a closer relation to the hedonic values. Unlike the ordinary experiences in the consumption process, it is usually viewed in a more pragmatic, moderate, and rational way, extraordinary experiences are guided by less programmed and utilitarian aspects, allowing the emergence of intense emotional responses. More than triggers for happiness, these characteristics of extraordinary experiences are clues that can help consumers to increase their intention to repurchase.

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

For the purpose of analyzing happiness in experiences of purchase and consumption, two different studies were carried out to analyze the relationship between the hedonic and utilitarian values of individuals. Similarly, we examined the influence of ordinary and extraordinary experiences of purchase and consumption on the achievement of happiness.

Based on the findings, it is possible to state that the experiences of purchase and consumption are indeed divergent. Although the consumption process is generally treated in a homogeneous way, the distinct situations in which consumers are confronted in this process give them different interpretations; significantly influencing their emotional responses. The experience of specific situations, such as buying and consuming circumstances, guides the consumer to different levels of happiness. These situations are interpreted through the mediation of consumers' personal factors. Hedonic value has been shown to be a variable with a high predictive power of the individuals' levels of happiness.

In addition to the aforementioned theoretical contributions, the results indicate that happiness in the consumption process is related to surprise and contingency. Obviously, in order to achieve happiness, this experience must preserve a positive valence for the individual. Happiness is the consumer's response to positive and unexpected experiences. It can be achieved in both purchasing and consumption experiences. Consumption situations, once they are characterized as a free and irreprehensible practice, promote greater happiness, even in situations usually present in the individual's daily life.

As managerial implications, results highlight the importance of the creativity and the insertion of innovative elements throughout the contact with the customer. The store environment must acquire a dynamic and procedural character, seeking to differentiate itself from the conventional, offering an experience that gets away from the usual pragmatic standards. These standardized relationships pasteurize the customer relationship, hampering consumers' positive emotional responses.

The construction of a store environment that allows a free expression of individuals' hedonic values should also be encouraged. Thus, servicescapes must also encompass hedonic aspects in order to directly influence happiness levels achieved by individuals in shopping experiences. Another important point is to suggest a pre-consumption experience to the consumer. Inducing the individual to experience, a situation of consumption even before purchasing a particular product or service is an interesting strategy to increase individual's levels of happiness. Although this proposition has not been tested, prompting future studies, providing a consumption experience before purchasing may increase the intent to purchase it. The experience

of consumption permeates the whole consumption process, entering the sphere delimited by purchase experiences as well. Allowing an *ex-ante* possibility of consuming must be provided to the consumer, in order to increase not only the levels of purchase happiness but also the overall happiness in the consumption process.

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### Contribution of authors

Contribution	[Author 1]	[Author 2]	[Author 3]	[Author 4]
1. Definition of research problem	√	√	√	√
2. Development of hypotheses or research questions (empirical studies)	√	√	√	√
3. Development of theoretical propositions (theoretical work)	√	√	√	√
4. Theoretical foundation / Literature review	√	√		√
5. Definition of methodological procedures	√	√	√	
6. Data collection	√	√		
7. Statistical analysis	√	√	√	
8. Analysis and interpretation of data	√	√	√	√
9. Critical revision of the manuscript			√	√
10. Manuscript writing	√	√		
11. Other (please specify)				