

**Factors Influencing Consumer Intentions to Purchase  
Seasonally Discounted Athletic Footwear in Thailand**

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## **Abstract**

Sales promotions are a key promotional strategy that companies worldwide have used to stimulate consumers' behavioral responses. A more detailed understanding of the influence that both demographic and psychographic consumer characteristics along with normative influencing factors have on responses to sales promotion is needed at both the product category and the individual brand level in order to better develop effective sales promotional programs. This study examines how these factors influence consumer intentions to purchase seasonally discounted athletic footwear in the Thai market. It was found that demographics were not significant as either direct or mediating variables in the purchase intentions of buyers, whilst five specific psychographic and normative influencing characteristics were found to be significant. These were: deal proneness; value consciousness, price consciousness; quality consciousness and attitudes of reference groups.

## **Introduction**

Sales promotion is a key element of the marketing mix for many consumer products worldwide in an attempt to stimulate consumer purchases (Schultz, Robinson & Petrison 1998). The increasing use of sales promotions has influenced consumers to become more deal prone, and this in turn has forced marketers to rely more on sales promotions in order to respond to this trend, and to keep their consumers from competitors' products (Lichtenstein & Burton 1997; Stafford & Stafford 2000).

In Thailand, sales promotion is a key marketing activity used to maintain sales volumes during economic fluctuation periods (Thai Farmers Research Center 2003). As a result, Thai consumers have become very price conscious (U.S. Embassy in Thailand 2000) and the retail sector in Thailand has increasingly become very competitive. Leading retail businesses in Thailand generally use discounting campaigns in conjunction with other sales promotional strategies, such as marketing events, store renovations (Jitpleecheep 2001), and extensions of opening hours (Jitpleecheep 2003; Thai Farmers Research Center 2003) to maintain their sales volumes (Thai Farmers Research Center 2000).

To be able to develop and target an appropriate sales promotional program, a company needs to identify its target audience and understand why they respond to sales promotions (Schultz et al. 1998; Wakefield & Bush 1998). Thus an understanding of consumer characteristics and how these characteristics influence consumer responses to products promoted through sales promotional programs is needed at both the product category and the individual brand levels (Schultz et al. 1998).

This research was conducted in Thailand attempting to develop a better understanding of the influence of key consumer characteristics on consumer intentions to purchase seasonally discounted Reebok athletic footwear. The findings of this research will help Thai companies to better understand how consumer characteristics impact purchase intentions and in particular will assist those manufacturers of athletic shoes in this regard.

## **Literature review**

Sales promotions are generally designed to provoke consumers' behavioral responses, especially their immediate product interest and product purchase (Kotler 2000; Pelsmacker et al. 2001; Schultz et al. 1998). In particular, sales promotional techniques are short-term incentives that companies use to stimulate intermediaries or consumers to buy their products (Kotler 2000; Pelsmacker et al. 2001; Schultz et al. 1998). Since this research focuses on sales promotions targeted to end consumers, the term 'sales promotion' will relate only to consumer-oriented sales promotion.

As consumers respond to sales promotions differently (Schultz et al. 1998), it is important that companies can accurately identify their target consumers and in turn, develop the best sales promotional program to persuade those consumers to favorably react, for example, by buying the product. This process may be done through an analysis of consumer characteristics and the influences those factors have on consumer responses to products promoted through sales promotional programs.

The direct influence of demographic factors on consumer responses to products promoted through sales promotions have been the focus of early studies in this area and include; income; employment status; family (household size or presence of children); age; gender; and education. Although these early studies attempted to examine the influence of demographic characteristics in explaining consumer responses to sales promotions, their findings signaled that emphasizing demographic characteristics alone could not achieve consistent research results. This suggests that demographic factors by themselves may not be particularly powerful in explaining consumer responses to sales promotions (Ailawadi et al. 2001; Blattberg & Neslin 1990; Mittal 1994).

As a result more recent studies have shifted their investigations to other potential factors, such as psychographic characteristics (Ailawadi et al. 2001; Mittal 1994), and normative influencing factors (Ailawadi et al. 2001; Huff & Alden 1998). These factors have been found to play a more consistent role in explaining consumer responses to sales promotions (Ailawadi et al. 2001; Huff & Alden 1998; Mittal 1994). Table 1 summarizes the more common factors examined in these studies, and indicates the degree to which they have consistently been shown to be key influencing factors. Further this table highlights that whilst useful in understanding and explaining consumer responses to Sales Promotions, demographics have been shown to have more of a mediating effect on consumer responses through psychographic and normative influencing characteristics, whilst psychographic and normative influences were found to have a direct effect on consumer responses to sales promotions (Ailawadi et al. 2001; Mittal 1994).

Finally, this summary of current research in this area also highlights that the majority of this research has been undertaken within the contexts of western countries and in relation to grocery products mainly promoted through coupon sales promotions. For marketers of other product categories, particularly those involving more consumer decision making and possibly brand loyalty (athletic shoes) these findings have limited applicability. In addition, many researchers are now finding that research results from Western based samples, particularly consumer research findings, do not necessarily hold for Eastern cultures.

This study will therefore extend the current body of knowledge in the area of Consumer based Sales Promotions by examining the influencing factors in an Asian culture (Thai)

and through application to a shopping good with medium levels of consumer involvement (athletic shoes). This study will ultimately answer the question, ‘What is the relationship between demographic, normative influencing and psychographic factors in a consumer’s response to sales promotion techniques: the case of seasonally discounted athletic footwear in Thailand?’.

**Table 1- Factors found to be influential in explaining consumer responses to sales promotions**

Empirical studies*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	The degree to which this factors is consistently suggested as influential across studies (S,M,W,N)**
<b>Antecedent factors</b>															
<b>Demographics</b>															
Age									•					•	M
Gender		•				•					•			•	S
Income	•	•	•	•		•					•	•			S
Employment						•									W
Family (household) size	•					•									M
Presence of children		•	•								•				S
Education			•	•		•			•		•			•	S
Type of residence														•	W
Location of residence				•											W
<b>Psychographics</b>															
Price consciousness	•				•					•		•			S
Value consciousness					•										W
Quality consciousness					•										W
Market mavenism													•	•	M
Brand loyalty				•		•		•				•		•	S
Store loyalty						•								•	M
Identification												•			W
Variety seeking	•							•							M
Time pressure						•									W
Shopping plan														•	W
Shopping enjoyment														•	W
Impulsiveness														•	W
Need for cognition														•	W
Deal proneness	•				•		•	•							S
Perceived inventory space														•	W
<b>Reference groups</b>															
Motivation to conform to the expectations of reference groups														•	W
Attitudes of reference groups towards discounted products										•					W
<b>Key response variables</b>															
Consumer attitudes						•				•	•	•			S
Actual purchase behaviors			•		•	•	•			•				•	S
Purchase intentions								•			•				M

\*Empirical studies:

1. McCann (1974), 2. Blattberg et al (1978), 3. Narasimhan (1984a), 4. Bawa & Shoemaker (1987a), 5. Lichtenstein & Ridgway (1993), 6. Mittal (1994), 7. Lichtenstein, Netemeyer & Burton (1995), 8. Wakefield & Barnes (1996), 9. Lichtenstein & Burton (1997), 10. Huff & Alden (1998), 11. Cho & Kang (1998), 12. Wakefield & Bush (1998), 13. Raghurir & Cofman (1999), and 14. Ailawadi, Neslin & Gegenk (2001)

\*\* S= strong (when that variable is consistently suggested as influential by at least three empirical studies)

M= moderate (when that variable is consistently suggested as influential by two empirical studies)

W= weak (when that variable is consistently suggested as influential by an empirical study)

N= none (when that variable is not suggested as influential by any studies)

Source: developed for this paper

From this literature and in order to address the research question, a number of variables were included in this study. The dependant variable in this study was purchase intentions for seasonally discounted athletic footwear (the case of Reebok shoes was used specifically) and the independent variables used in the study are shown in table 2.

**Table 2 Independent variables included in this study**

<i>Demographic variables</i>	<i>Psychographic variables</i>	<i>Normative Influencing variables</i>
Age	Price consciousness	Motivation to conform to the expectations of reference groups  Attitudes of reference groups toward seasonally discounted athletic footwear
Gender	Value consciousness	
Income	Quality consciousness	
Employment	Market mavenism	
Managerial position	Brand loyalty	
Family size	Variety seeking	
Marital status	Need for cognition	
Education	Deal proneness	
	Innovativeness	

Hypotheses predicting the relationship between antecedent consumer characteristics and purchase intentions were developed for testing based on the findings of the previous research summarized in table 1 and they listed in table 3. The first of these hypotheses will test the influence of the demographic variables on the psychographic and normative influencing variables (H1A: H10C). Next the influence of psychographic and normative influencing variables on the purchase intention variables were tested (H11A: H11K), and finally the influence of all of these antecedent consumer characteristics on purchase intentions were examined (H12).

In general, demographic variables are predicted to have an indirect influence on a range of psychographic or normative influencing variables (see H1A to H10C, Table 2). For example, income is expected to have a negative influence on price consciousness. This is because those who have higher incomes are expected to perceive themselves to be financially well off (Mittal 1994), and thus less likely to be financially constrained (Ailawadi et al. 2001). Due to this perception, they are less likely to become price conscious and they will engage in less extensive search for promotional information through a variety of media.

**Table 3- Summary of hypotheses, key justifications, and testing results**

<b>Propositions and key justifications</b>	<b>Results of this research</b>
<b>The relationship between demographic variables and psychographic and normative influencing variables</b>	
H1A: Income will negatively influence price consciousness, and	✓
H1B: Family size will positively influence price consciousness, and	✗
H1C: There is a difference in price consciousness across marital status.	✗
H2: Female consumers are more likely than male to be deal prone.	✗
H3: Education will positively influence need for cognition	✗
H4: Education will positively influence variety seeking.	✗
H5: Education will positively influence quality consciousness.	✗
H6: Age will positively influence market (price) mavenism.	✓
H7A: Age will positively influence value consciousness, and	✗
H7B: There is a difference in value consciousness across marital status.	✗
H8: Age will negatively influence brand loyalty to other athletic footwear brands.	✗
H9A: Education will positively influence innovativeness, and	✓
H9B: Age will negatively influence innovativeness	✗

H10A: There is a difference in the level of motivation to conform to the expectations of reference groups across employment status, and	✓
H10B: Age will negatively influence motivation to conform to the expectations of reference groups, and	✗
H10C: Managerial position will positively influence motivation to conform to expectations of reference groups.	✗
<b>The relationship between psychographic and normative influencing variables and purchase intentions</b>	
H11A: Price consciousness will positively influence purchase intentions,	✓
H11B: Deal proneness will positively influence purchase intentions,	✓
H11C: Need for cognition will negatively influence purchase intentions,	✗
H11D: Market (price) mavenism will positively influence purchase intentions,	✗
H11E: Quality consciousness will negatively influence purchase intentions,	✓
H11F: Value consciousness will positively influence purchase intentions,	✓
H11G: Loyalty to other athletic footwear brands will negatively influence purchase intentions,	✗
H11H: Variety seeking will positively influence purchase intentions,	✗
H11I: Innovativeness will negatively influence purchase intentions,	✓
H11J: 'Attitudes of reference groups' will positively influence purchase intentions, and	✓
H11K: 'Motivation to conform' will negatively influence purchase intentions.	✗
<b>The relationship between all antecedent consumer characteristics and purchase intentions</b>	
H12: There will be no influence of all investigated antecedent demographic, psychographic, and normative influencing characteristics on purchase intentions	
Price consciousness, Deal proneness, Quality consciousness, Value consciousness, and Attitudes of reference groups	✓
Other investigated demographic, psychographic, and normative influencing variables	✗

Remarks: ✓ = supported by this research, ✗ = not supported by this research  
Source: Developed for this paper from this research findings

Education is predicted to have a positive influence on need for cognition as more educated consumers have been found to engage in more extensive information processing (Ailawadi et al. 2001) whilst less educated consumers are more likely to take short cuts or rely more on their feelings and more positively react to a less complicated or short messages (Hoyer & MacInnis 1997).

In addition, psychographic and normative influencing variables are also expected to influence purchase intentions (see H11A to H11K, Table 3). For instance, price consciousness is expected to have a positive influence on purchase intentions where consumers who seek monetary savings are expected to be price conscious (Ailawadi et al. 2001; Mittal 1994) and buying a discounted product is likely to satisfy price conscious consumers because they can receive immediate price savings from this purchase (Ailawadi et al. 2001). Thus the more consumers become price conscious, the more they are likely to seek and purchase the seasonally discounted athletic footwear.

Further, deal proneness is also predicted to have a positive influence on purchase intentions. Deal prone consumers are expected to have an increased propensity to respond to a purchase offer because a deal in the form of purchase offer positively influences purchase evaluations (Thaler 1983). Deal prone consumers may define value in terms of the existence of sales promotions and think of sale promotions as indicators of good deals without actually comparing a reduced price of the discounted brand with that of other brands (Zeithaml 1988). In these cases, a price discount could help deal prone consumers to minimize their decision costs by providing them with an easier decision heuristic for a product purchase (Ailawadi et al. 2001; Wansink et al. 1998). Deal prone consumers are therefore likely to make their choices based on the availability of sales promotions offered by various brands and are likely to shift their consumption behavior to take advantage of the temporary incentive (Wakefield & Barnes 1996).

Similarly, value consciousness is posited to have a positive influence on purchase intentions as these consumers are expected to be concerned with the ratio of the quality received to the price paid in a purchase transaction (Lichtenstein et al. 1990; Tellis & Gaeth 1990; Lichtenstein et al. 1990). A price promotion program will not only lead these types of conscious consumers to perceive additional value for their money (higher ratio of quality received to price paid), but also it would also enable these consumers to relax

their budget constraints, and to possibly upgrade to a better product (Chandon et al. 2000).

In contrast, quality consciousness is predicted to have a negative effect on purchase intentions with those consumers who pay attention to the product quality, perceiving that the level of the price is positively related to the level of product quality (Erickson & Johansson 1985; Lichtenstein & Ridgway 1993). This would mean that the more quality conscious a consumer is, the less they will be inclined to purchase seasonally discounted athletic footwear.

Whilst attitudes of reference groups is expected to have a positive influence on purchase intentions, 'motivation to conform' is expected to negatively influence consumers' purchase intentions. These hypotheses are proposed to test the effect of normative influencing factors on purchase intentions. Reference groups could also influence how a consumer responds to marketing messages (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975). A group influence is likely to be strong for athletic footwear products because the use of this product is highly visible to reference groups (Hawkins et al. 1998). Consumers may evaluate whether they gain or lose their sense of being a part of their reference group when purchasing the seasonally discounted athletic footwear (Chandon et al. 2000).

Finally, the last hypothesis (H12) proposes to test the effect of all consumer characteristics on purchase intentions by including all of the antecedent consumer characteristics simultaneously. All antecedent factors will be examined in order to identify key consumer characteristics that influence purchase intentions and to examine the relative importance of these factors when they are incorporated together to explain the variance of the purchase intention variable. The discussion now turns to the methodology.

### **Methodology**

Due to insufficient knowledge about factors that influence consumer intentions to purchase the seasonally discounted athletic footwear, specifically in Thailand, a two-step methodology was taken in this research. The first stage was exploratory research, conducted to gain a better understanding about the research area being studied. The second stage was a descriptive survey, which gathered data for testing the research hypotheses. Each will be overviewed here.

**Exploratory research.** Exploratory research by means of in depth interviews was used initially to gain fundamental information to assist in identifying consumer characteristics most relevant to the context being studied in this research and to gain insights into their relationships to the consumer response variables (Churchill 1995; Zikmund 1997). Respondents selected for this stage of research included three executives from the marketing and sales department of a large multinational athletic shoe company, and one from the merchandising department of one of the largest retail chains of athletic products in the Thai market. Data collected were manually coded and analyzed using content analysis. Findings of this exploratory research identified several consumer characteristics that were subsequently included as potential antecedent influential factors in this research.

**Descriptive research.** After conducting exploratory research, quantitative data were collected to test the proposed hypotheses. A self-completion questionnaire was developed based on the questions adopted by previous studies. A mail survey approach was employed in this study as it allowed the researcher to cost effectively collect a large amount of information used to test the hypotheses (Burns & Bush 1995; Hair et al. 2000).

Samples were drawn using simple random sampling technique from the sampling frame consisting of members of one of the largest retail chains of athletic products in Thailand who had purchased athletic footwear from these outlets during the past five years. Free gifts (athletic socks) were given to respondents in exchange for their cooperation. The final sample size was 554 responses representing a response rate of 34.62 percent of the total 1600 questionnaires. Data collected were analyzed using multiple and stepwise regression methods. Discussion will now present the results of the research.

### **Results**

In this sample most respondents were males (56.7%), between 21-40 years of age (62.1%), with a Bachelor's degree (53.3%). In relation to employment status, most were fulltime employees (47.5%) or self-employed with their own employees (21.0%). For the respondents who are employed, there was a fairly even distribution across all groups of managerial positions or levels. Regarding marital status, the respondents were divided almost equally between two groups, namely: single (51.2%); and married (45.5%). The family size of most respondents ranged between three to five persons (66.3%), while monthly family income of the two major respondent groups being 10,000-30,000 Baht (29.7%) and, 30,001-50,000 Baht (22.9%) respectively.

The results of the regression analyses are summarized in the last column of Table 3. Of the first sixteen hypotheses proposing the relationship of demographic and psychographic variables, only four of them (H1A, H6, H9A, and H10A) were supported by the regression analysis. Income was found to have a significant but weak negative influence on price consciousness (Beta = -0.236,  $p < 0.01$ ). Age was shown to have a significant but weak influence on market (price) mavenism (Beta = 0.085,  $p < 0.05$ ). Education was found to have a significant but weak negative relationship with innovativeness (Beta = -0.123,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Employment status was seen to have a significant but weak influence on 'motivation to conform' (Beta = -0.145,  $p < 0.05$ ). In addition to the weak relationships found between these demographic and psychographic variables, it is important to note, however, that all four demographic variables explained very little (not greater than 5 percent) of the total variability in the relevant psychographic variables. Based on these findings, it could be concluded that these demographic variables did not have a significant influence on the psychographic variables in this study. This is somewhat inconsistent with the findings of previous studies and the hypotheses proposed.

Next, all hypotheses (H 11A to H11 K) proposing the effect of psychographic and normative influencing variables on purchase intentions were tested using multiple regression analysis. The results indicated that 65.80% of the variance in purchase intentions could be explained by these psychographic and normative influencing variables, however they were not all significant in this explanation. Only six psychographic and normative influencing variables were seen to significantly influence

purchase intentions and they were: deal proneness; value consciousness; price consciousness; ‘attitudes of reference groups’; quality consciousness; and innovativeness.

Deal proneness has been shown to be the most important factor that positively influenced purchase intentions (Beta = 0.418,  $p < 0.01$ ), followed by value consciousness (Beta = 0.254,  $p < 0.01$ ) and price consciousness (Beta = 0.248,  $p < 0.01$ ) respectively. The direction of the correlation between these three variables and purchase intentions was as proposed in the relevant hypotheses. That is a positive influence.

The influence of the other psychographic variables on purchase intentions found in this analysis were also as predicted. These include the positive effect of ‘attitudes of reference groups’ on purchase intentions (Beta = 0.182,  $p < 0.01$ ) and the negative impact of quality consciousness, and innovativeness on purchase intentions (Beta = -0.128,  $p < 0.01$ ; and Beta = -0.124,  $p < 0.01$ , respectively). However, need for cognition, market (price) mavenism, loyalty to other athletic footwear brands, variety seeking, and ‘motivation to conform’ were not found to have a significant influence on purchase intentions, and these findings do not support the relevant propositions.

Finally, stepwise regression analysis was conducted to: 1) test the last hypothesis (H12), which proposed to examine the effect of all demographic, psychographic, and normative influencing variables on purchase intentions; and 2) to compare the relative importance of the significant antecedent variables when these variables were taken into account into the regression model. To perform the stepwise regression analysis, antecedent variables were entered into the model one by one and the order of entry of antecedent variables was arranged based on the highest absolute value of partial correlation (Hair et al. 1998), and the highest absolute value of ‘Beta In’ with a significant  $t$  value ( $p$  value) not exceeding the entry criterion (Field 2000; Norusis 2000). For this research, the observed significance  $t$  value ( $p$  value) of 0.05 and 0.10 was set as the entry and the removal criterion, respectively.

The results are summarized in Table 4 and they support those indicated in the previous hypothesis testing section. That is, psychographic and normative influencing variables play a key role in explaining purchase intentions. Particularly, deal proneness, value consciousness, price consciousness, and ‘attitudes of reference groups’ were found to have a positive influence on purchase intentions, whereas quality consciousness was seen to have a negative impact on this dependent variable. In contrast, innovativeness, need for cognition, market (price) mavenism, loyalty to other athletic footwear brands, variety seeking, and ‘motivation to conform’ were not seen to be related with purchase intentions.

**Table 4- The results of stepwise regression analysis**

Variables inputted in the stepwise regression models	Partial Correlation value with purchase intentions	Beta In value	P value	Significant Beta value	P value	Total % explaining purchase intentions by variables inputted
<b>1<sup>st</sup> estimation:</b> Deal proneness	<b>0.452</b>	<b>0.408</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.665</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>43.90</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> estimation:</b> Deal proneness Value consciousness	<b>0.454</b>	<b>0.344</b>	<b>0.000</b>	0.607 <b>0.344</b>	0.000 <b>0.000</b>	<b>55.30</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> estimation:</b> Deal proneness Value consciousness Price consciousness	<b>0.337</b>	<b>0.248</b>	<b>0.000</b>	0.507 0.323 <b>0.248</b>	0.000 0.000 <b>0.000</b>	<b>60.20</b>

<b>4th estimation:</b>						
Deal proneness				0.436	0.000	
Value consciousness				0.292	0.000	
Price consciousness				0.266	0.000	
<b>Attitudes of reference groups</b>	<b>0.193</b>	<b>0.143</b>	<b>0.004</b>	<b>0.143</b>	<b>0.004</b>	<b>61.50</b>
<b>5<sup>th</sup> estimation:</b>						
Deal proneness				0.443	0.000	
Value consciousness				0.294	0.000	
Price consciousness				0.253	0.000	
Attitudes of reference groups				0.141	0.004	
<b>Quality consciousness</b>	<b>-0.193</b>	<b>-0.119</b>	<b>0.005</b>	<b>-0.119</b>	<b>0.005</b>	<b>62.80</b>
<b>6<sup>th</sup> estimation:</b>						
Innovativeness	-0.133	-0.085	0.052			

Source: developed for this paper from the analysis of survey research

In terms of the relative importance of the significant antecedent variables, deal proneness was seen to be the most important antecedent variable based on its strongest influence (highest standardized correlation value; 0.665) on purchase intentions, and this antecedent variable was followed by value consciousness (0.344), price consciousness (0.248), ‘attitudes of reference groups’ (0.143), and quality consciousness (-0.119). On the other hand, *demographic variables* were shown not to have a significant effect on purchase intentions in this sample.

### Discussion and conclusion

In summary, the findings of this research have satisfied the research problem proposed by firstly identifying key consumer characteristics that could have an impact on consumer intentions to purchase the seasonally discounted athletic footwear, and secondly, determining how these characteristics influence purchase intentions. In general, *demographics* did not have a significant relationship with either *psychographics* or *normative influencing characteristics* and purchase intentions. Although this finding differs from some studies where *demographics* were noted to be an influential factor that could effect purchase behaviors (for instance Ailawadi et al. 2001; Mittal 1994), other studies have also noted this same result. (for example in clothing products promoted through coupon promotions Cho & Kang 1998). These mixed results may be due to the differences in the product context investigated by these studies. That is, this research and Cho & Kang’s 1998 study focused on non-grocery products (athletic footwear and clothes respectively) whilst others have (Ailawadi et al. 2001; Mittal 1994) concentrated on grocery products.

In further support of these findings, others have suggested that consumers may react dissimilarly to different products (Chandon et al. 2000), and they may also respond differently to various types of sales promotional programs (Schultz et al. 1998). As a result, consumer characteristics that were indicated to be significantly related with consumer responses to grocery products promoted through other sales promotions appear not to explain how consumers respond to non-grocery products (specifically athletic footwear) that are promoted through seasonal price- discounting programs.

Further, *psychographic* and *normative influencing characteristics* were shown to have a significant relationship with purchase intentions with all excluding quality consciousness, having a positive influence on purchase intentions. Quality consciousness was the only key *psychographic characteristic* that had a negative impact on purchase intentions. It can therefore be concluded that *psychographics* and *normative influencing characteristics* are much more influential than *demographics* in explaining the variance in purchase intentions for the seasonally discounted athletic footwear, which is likely to support findings of recent studies (for example: Ailawadi et al. 2001; Mittal 1994).

In terms of the region in which the previous studies were conducted, most were undertaken in Western countries attempting to investigate Western consumers and their responses to products promoted through sales promotions. However, research models developed in Western regions might not be completely used to depict consumer behavior in non-Western societies (Huff & Alden 1998). As this research was conducted in Thailand it is likely that different responses will be noted (Peter & Olson 2002).

This study has provided valuable contributions to both sales promotion academics and sales promotion practitioners. Academically, this research has incorporated all possible consumer characteristics that could explain consumer intentions to purchase the seasonally discounted athletic footwear in the Thai market. This research context has not been explored by previous studies. As a result, a more comprehensive set of all possible consumer characteristics (eight *demographics*, eleven *psychographic* and *normative influencing characteristics*) expected to be key factors that could influence consumer responses to discounting promotions has been incorporated in this research.

This in turn has enabled the researcher to develop a more complete understanding of how consumer characteristics affect consumer responses to discounting programs. Secondly, these results address the gap in the existing body of knowledge regarding the influence of consumer characteristics on consumer responses to products promoted through sales promotions. The findings of this research provide a contribution to the body of knowledge in relation to this research topic by suggesting that *demographics* are not in themselves influential in the prediction of purchase intentions and possibly should be excluded from a research model that will be developed to depict the influence of consumer characteristics on consumer responses to sales promotions in order to make the research model parsimonious. *Demographic characteristics* should possibly only be used for the purpose of consumer identification.

The first issue of practical implications is that athletic shoe retailers can use the findings of this research to understand how specific consumer characteristics (deal proneness, value consciousness, price consciousness, quality consciousness, and ‘attitudes of reference groups’) are likely to influence purchase intentions and they can conduct additional research to identify consumers who have these characteristics. This extended knowledge enables athletic shoe companies (Thailand) to target their discounting programs more effectively.

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