

SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE

Between flowers and loves: the profile and behavior of the consumer with the purpose of seduction

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Abstract

Since the fifth century B.C., flowers have been associated with seduction, however, no studies were found that could reveal how flowers are bought with this intention. In order to investigate the profile and behavior of consumers of flowers with the purpose of seduction, a descriptive exploratory study was carried out with 108 consumers at the time they purchased flowers with the intention of seduction. The study revealed that among people who bought flowers for this purpose, the frequency was on average of 1.7 times a year, with 64.7% of these consumers defining themselves as male people. No statistical variation was observed between heterosexual, bisexual and homosexual groups. Single and married people had higher purchase rates, with roses being the preferred flowers. Tropical flowers may represent a trend to be explored in market segmentation. The purchase of flowers for seduction was mostly associated with affective relationships such as boyfriends/girlfriends or spouses and the use of flowers in the search for new relationships or even fortuitous cases was also evidenced. Most respondents who reported that have received flowers described that it was a positive influence and contributed to feeling seduced. Finally, it is possible to consider market segmentation, however, it is urgent that the sector be organized in order to elaborate a diagnosis of potential consumption, elaborate consumer acceptance tests, define groups to be segmented, establish targeted marketing campaigns and create evaluation programs for consumer loyalty.

Keywords: advertising, conquest, eroticism, floriculture, retail.

Resumo

Entre flores e amores: o perfil e o comportamento do consumidor com o objetivo de sedução

As flores desde o século V a.C são associadas a sedução, no entanto não foram encontrados estudos que pudessem revelar de que forma ocorre a compra de flores com essa intenção. Visando investigar o perfil e o comportamento do consumidor de flores com o objetivo de sedução, foi realizado estudo exploratório descritivo junto a 108 consumidores no momento que procederam a aquisição com o objetivo de sedução. O estudo revelou que entre as pessoas que compraram flores com este propósito a frequência foi em média 1,7 vezes ao ano, sendo que 64,7% dos compradores se definiam como pessoas masculinas. Não foi observado variação estatística entre os grupos de heterossexuais, bissexuais e homossexuais. As pessoas solteiras e casadas apresentaram maiores índice de compra, sendo as rosas as flores preferidas. As flores tropicais podem representar uma tendência a ser explorada na segmentação de mercado. A compra de flores para sedução em sua maioria estava associada a relacionamentos afetivos como namorados (as) ou cônjuges, também foi evidenciado o uso das flores na busca por novos relacionamentos ou ainda casos fortuitos. A maioria dos entrevistados que relataram que ter recebido flores descreveram que foi uma influência positiva e contribuiu para que se sentisse uma pessoa seduzida. Finalmente, é possível considerar a segmentação do mercado, no entanto urge que o setor se organize no sentido de elaborar diagnóstico de consumo potencial, elaborar testes de aceitação dos consumidores, definir grupos a ser segmentados, estabelecer campanhas de marketing direcionado e criar programas avaliação para fidelização do consumo.

Palavras-chave: conquista, erotismo, floricultura, publicidade, varejo.

Introduction

The flower market in Brazil has been consolidating (Reis et al., 2020; Vidal et al., 2021; Hummel and Silva, 2020) and according to Oliveira et al. (2021) moves approximately

BRL 8.5 billion annually in a production chain that involves around 8,300 producers, 60 wholesale centers, 680 wholesalers and more than 20,000 retail establishments, with Brazil being the 8th largest producer of flowers and ornamental plants in the world. In this regard Anacleto et

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al. (2017), Paiva et al. (2020) and Orozco (2021) report that the retail market in Brazil has an essential role in linking the producer and wholesale chains to the final consumer.

The flower trade in Brazil according to Oliveira et al. (2021) in the last decade has had a growth rate above 7%, a value classified as excellent when compared to the national GDP, which has struggled to maintain growth above 1%. In Brazil, according to Guimarães et al. (2023) flower retail trade is made up of a diverse set of business formats and enterprises present in almost all cities, and although it is classified as an economic activity, this type of trade is also strongly associated with human relations since flowers have different uses and meanings, this statement is corroborated by Aguiar et al. (2022) who affirm that the periods of greatest flower trade in Brazil coincide with special dates such as Mother's Day and Valentine's Day, when love is represented by offering flowers as a gift.

Oliveira et al. (2021) and Darras (2021) highlight the need for dynamism in the flower trade, which constantly requires innovative actions in products and services in order to better meet the market demand for novelties, according to Junqueira and Peetz (2018) Brazilian floriculture market has been presented as an innovative segment and which seeks to meet the demands of consumers. Anacleto et al. (2017) points out that the flower trade, in addition to the constant demand for innovation and new products it is always related to the use of flowers as a way to present other people, whether family, friends, people from work or even with the aim of seduction.

The use of flowers as the purpose of seduction is ancient, Kei (2015) reveals that in the 5th and 6th centuries B.C. there are dozens of images in which the gesture of offering a flower to someone is presented in the expression of affection, the flower being considered a gift that clearly seduces in all its declinations: charm, generosity and pleasure, since it is explicit and recurrent the use of images of flowers in ceramics that portray scenes of erotic courtship, seduction and persuasion. Gomes (2017) affirms that great poets such as Camões in 1860 already described strategic forms of persuasive rhetoric, where flowers were used related to an ingenious game of amorous seduction between the lovers, which greatly contributed to expanding the power and the use of flowers as a way to reveal desires to other people.

The use of flowers as seduction in modern times was enormously popularized by the North American movies industry, where flowers were part of the scenes, expanding their representation as the ultimate symbol of what seduction meant (Aki and Perosa, 2002), in this context Marques (2005) and Vieira and Vitelli, (2021) describes that cinema created new habits and introduced profound changes in the customs of thousands of people inside and outside the United States of America, including Brazil.

Currently, many researchers have reported the use of flowers associated with love seduction (Aki and Perosa, 2002; Cozer et al., 2008; Anacleto et al., 2017; Paiva et al., 2020), however, despite numerous citations about this theme the studies that present in-depth data and the impacts of this consumer behavior on the flower trade are rare.

Anacleto et al. (2017) suggest that in-depth marketing

studies on the association of flowers with the amorous seduction process could guide the production and trade of flowers, making the production chain more efficient. The proposition is corroborated by Reis et al. (2020) and Guimarães et al. (2023) who report the importance of preparing sectoral studies and overviews given that the consumption profile of flowers tends to change over the years, therefore it must be constantly updated and revised.

Material and Methods

This study was carried out in three stages:

Step 1

A descriptive exploratory study was carried out with flower consumers using semi-structured questionnaires (Vidal et al., 2021), directed at people who purchased flowers at this stage, 1280 consumers were contacted of which 108 people (8.4%) responded to the survey and reported that they purchased flowers not in seasonal periods (Women's Day and Valentine's Day) for the purpose of seduction.

The interviews were concentrated on flower shop customers in a region in Southern Brazil, this region in accordance with what was described by Anacleto et al. (2017) and Aguiar et al. (2022), the coast of Paraná State has potential for the commercialization of flowers associated with a growing increase in per capita income, it is a region with population above 250,000 inhabitants and annually it receives around two million summer tourists with potential for this kind of consumption. Also, according to the authors the region described has financial revenue classified as a medium-sized city, with per capita conditions similar to other 160 municipalities in Brazil, in addition to consumption habits similar to other developing countries.

The cluster sampling included consumers present in 16 flower shops, identified through internet consultation in the municipalities of Guaratuba, Matinhos, Morretes, Antonina and Pontal do Paraná, which make up the coastal region of Paraná. In each one of these establishments, similarly to what was proposed by Anacleto et al. (2017) consumers were monitored during store visits and after confirming the questioning of the specific reason for the purchase associated with seduction. All registered visitors were interviewed, except when they did not agree to participate in the research.

In order to define the profile of these consumers, information on gender, age, marital status, education, economic status was collected (Anacleto et al., 2017).

The age classification was carried out according to Aguiar (2022) and the interviewee's economic classification was carried out according to Critério Brasil (Abep, 2023).

The correlation between the consumption and influences variables arising from gender, education, marital status and economic status was evaluated by applying non-parametric Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis tests, followed by Dunn's multiple comparison test of averages at a significance level of 5% ($p < 0.05$).

The existence of a correlation between consumption and the analyzed variables (age, sexuality and schooling) was verified using Spearman's correlation coefficient (Anacleto et al., 2017).

Step 2

The second stage of data collection was directed at people who received flowers and who realized that the gift received was intended to be seductive. In this phase a cloud of words was organized with the help of Word art Create® that would best define the feelings of receiving flowers for this purpose. Through social medias, a discussion forum was opened aimed at people who had this experience, a total of 142 people answered the questions about what types of feelings they had with the attitude of another person directed at them.

Similarly, to what was proposed by Vilela et al. (2021), the responses obtained in this step were condensed into a cloud of words explained in the form of graphic resources that show the frequencies of terms in hypertexts. Word clouds are representations of citations, that is, the more a term is cited, the greater its size in the figure and its importance in the searched context.

Step 3

In this stage, websites of 200 retail companies that sold flowers were randomly visited. The objective of this step

was to assess whether seduction was a sales argument in the marketing mix of the retail companies.

Results

The survey results revealed the average number of flower purchases per year was 3.9 times a year, however, in the sample analyzed, purchases with the aim of seduction presented an average of 1.7 times a year.

Most people in terms of gender expression were male (64.7%) whose annual acquisition with the aim of seduction had a higher average than the group of people who identified themselves as female, being the difference statistically significant (Table 1.)

Consumption in relation to sexuality showed that heterosexuals were the majority who purchased flowers with the aim of seduction (84.4%) followed by bisexual people (11.7%) and homosexual people (3.9%), however, regarding the annual purchase frequency, there was no statistically significant variation among the three groups analyzed by Spearman's Correlation Coefficient at a significance value of 0.05 (Figure 1).

Table 1. Characterization of the population sample in relation to gender in annual frequency of buying flowers with the aim of seduction

Gender expression	% Interviewed people	Annual frequency of buying flowers with the aim of seduction
Female	64.7	1.54 ^a
Male	35.3	2.11 ^b
Mann-Whitney Test <i>p</i> – significance value		<i>p</i> = 0.498

Averages followed by the same letter are not statistically different from each other

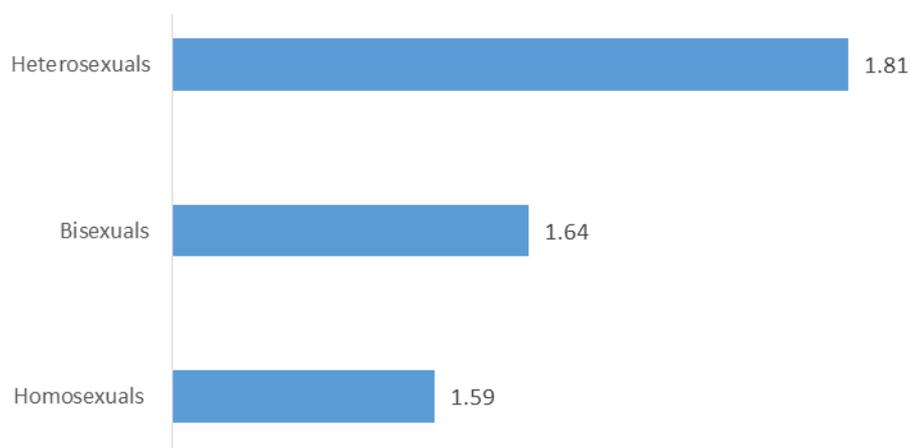


Figure 1. Characterization of the population sample in relation to self-perception in relation to sexuality and the frequency of buying flowers with the aim of seduction per year

The study revealed that the purchase of flowers with the aim of seduction was mostly practiced by people already in affective relationships such as boyfriends/girlfriends or spouses, however the use of flowers in the search for new relationships or even fortuitous cases was also evidenced (Table 4).

With regard to products that substitute flowers with the aim of seduction, chocolate was the most relevant product cited by 39% of respondents followed by perfumes, clothes and underwear were the products most sought after by consumers when they could not find the desired flower (Figure 3).

Table 4. Type of seduction intended with the purchase of flowers

Person to be seduced	%
Spouses	24.1
Boyfriends/girlfriends	18.5
Facilitate the beginning of an affective relationship	11.4
Having sex with someone you have never had	9.3
Please extramarital affair	5.7
People who have uncommitted sexual relation	3.8
Apology	1.9
Hierarchically superior person at work	1.9

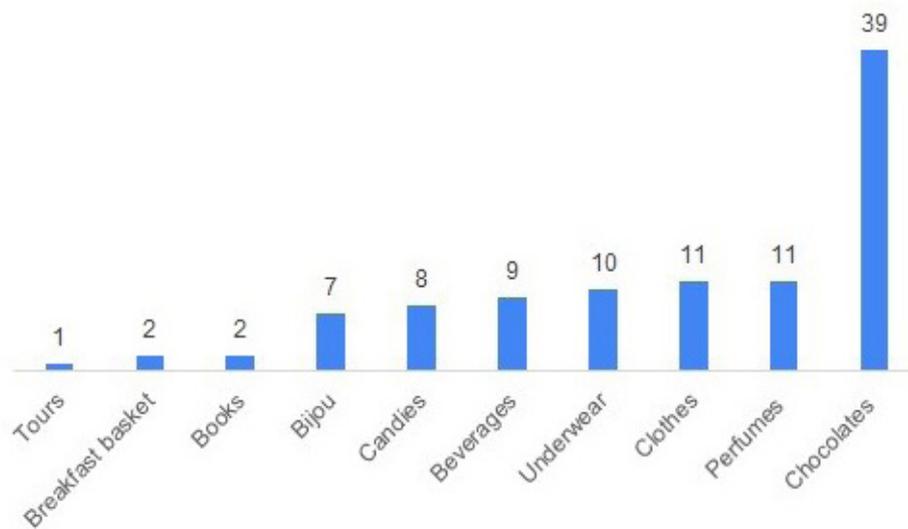


Figure 3. Main substitute products when consumers had difficulties to buy the desired flower (%)

The study revealed that most flower shops associate flowers with affection and love, however, only 2% of the companies that had their website visited present proposals in the marketing mix evidencing the use of flowers in the seduction process, in these cases were observed the use of flowers with other gifts such as cachepots, beverages, chocolates and books.

Discussion

The first factor to be considered in this study is the fact that seduction only occurs by decision of the one who is the object of seduction, ultimately seduction is innocuous even in the face of all the tricks of the seducer if the adult person to be seduced rejects the process will not be affected

in any way. Not uncommonly, seduction has a pejorative description and is associated with deceiving, but it also has a description in the positive sense, it can be referred to as the gift of attracting or being attracted, typical of certain people who exert fascination, magnetism or enchantment that holds the attention being an attraction that is difficult to resist. Lisboa (1986) describes that all people are seducers and that seducing and being seduced, in everyday life, is healthy and necessary, so the bad impression that the word seduction awakens in many people must be undone.

Seduction has a historical record since the period before Christ (Kei, 2015), later poets, singers and other artists emphasized seduction as an existing and everyday fact in various parts of the world. Freitas (2005) analyzing other social issues points out that firstly, it is necessary to

intersubjectively recognize that the social phenomenon exists regardless of what it is, and questions that more relevant than investigating the causes is the need to investigate the way in which social phenomena occur and under what circumstances it occurs.

The seduction associated with the use of flowers revealed that 8.4% of the survey respondents purchased flowers out of seasonal periods with the aim of seduction, apparently the rates are small, however this market share proves to be important in comparison to the volume of the floriculture business of 8.5 billion reais per year in Brazil. However, with marketing campaigns despite the variable growth, but in a general context, projections proposed by Kotler (2021) indicate that annual growth between 5 and 20% is possible, regardless of the production sector, which in the case of the flower trade with the aim of seduction reveals an important market segmentation to be considered.

The sale of flowers with the aim of seduction cannot yet be considered a market segment, given that the number of retail companies that offer some type of product related to the theme is very small, as revealed by the research. The relation between flowers and seduction is centuries old and it can be considered as surprising that sales segmentation based on the trend of buying flowers with use in seduction did not occur.

In relation to gender expression, the male group showed greater attendance at flower shops, this factor contrasts with that described by Anacleto et al. (2017) which reveals that women bought more flowers than men, however the study suggested that men made acquisitions with the aim of giving as gifts, which was confirmed in the present study. Anacleto et al. (2017) suggested marketing campaigns with the aim of expanding the purchase of flowers by the male public relating the purchase to seduction, and the present study showed that the female also uses this artifice for seduction. The 20th century was marked by countless advances and victories, especially in the representations of being a woman in society, when new spaces and rights were decisively conquered, the ideal pattern of femininity indicated in the past that women should get good husbands and be committed with the home functions and motherhood are currently only valid if the woman wishes, as reported by Siqueira et al. (2021). Still according to the authors, the search for equal rights and equality between the sexes boosted movements and this new scenario there is also the woman who seduces and allows freedom of choice in defining her needs, even if male domination is still present in the modern society, the presence of the woman who seduces grows.

The context of the woman who also seduces reveals a question, that is, how the sector related to floriculture dialogues with this new public profile, as is the case of women, homosexuals and bisexual people who promote the acquisition of flowers in a similar quantity to heterosexual people.

The set of information in this study allows us to state that the flower trade has not yet promoted the segmentation of this market, since the great majority of retail shops despise seduction as a selling argument. However, people who seek flowers for seduction want to be satisfied with the product

they have purchased to make the seduction process easier. Satisfaction according to Scheuer et al. (2020) is the feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing the performance expected by the product in relation to the person's expectations, it is relevant to highlight the wide range of substitute products for flowers in the seduction process reported by the people interviewed.

Since the main purpose of marketing, which is consumer satisfaction, it is not achieved, the strength of substitute products arises and repurchasing becomes more difficult due to the difficulty encountered in the purchase and the perception that the person has of himself/herself and the relationship in which this person lives, as well as his/her actions aimed at seduction. According to Kotler (2021) customer perception is a process by which the person attributes value to what they feel influenced by the sensory impressions of the gift based on past experiences. Perception, as well as seduction, allows a sense of completeness and continuity of himself/herself and what he/she wants, comes from the stimulus and memories of previous events that involved the same mental stimulus that affect the interpretation of the sensation from fragmentary stimuli collected by the organs of the senses such as smell and sight, as well as by the brain where memories and feelings are built.

The cloud of words obtained in the present study confirms the previously described assumption, since among the most cited words in addition to those associated with seduction such as romanticism, desire, passion, surprise and pleasure, characteristic phrases in relationships already built were also cited, such as affection, kindness, happiness and love. Seduction in already built relationships is also a factor that deserves further analysis by the flower market, Lisboa (1986) describes that in various aspects of our daily life, we accomplish things, assume attitudes, defend ideas, which for other people that live with us have inclinations and desires that we feed in our conscience, so the greater the fascination unleashed by the seducers, the seduced person dares to finally accomplish what he/she wanted, but is inspired by the seducer, in this way this group of people is concerned with the art of seduction making it more sophisticated and considers that the person who seduces with art turns the seduction process into an act of beauty, perfection and balance that is hardly reprehensible.

The seduction relationship according to Kotler (2021) is valid among people and also between people and organizations that seek to meet the needs and especially the desires of consumers, so the commercial seduction process also occurs daily in virtually all production segments that are organized for it. However, the segmentation in relation to seduction apparently is far from being consolidated, in this aspect it is urgent to be considered the market trends associated to the wide range of products offered by the floriculture market.

The creation of a segment in general, according to Kotler (2021) follows similar initial procedures regardless of the productive sector and specifically with regard to the floriculture market, it may increase consumption levels in Brazil, but for this proposition to be successful some steps must be built:

i) The sector must prepare prospect related to consumption in order to guide the producer and the various spheres of commerce.

ii) Conduct studies of products and consumer acceptance before to market launch (concept test).

iii) Define each segmented group based on financial, cultural, social, geographic, demographic or other issues and also define the positioning, strategies and types of flowers for each target segment.

iv) Establish marketing campaigns targeted at the segment or subgroups.

v) Create post-consumer monitoring and evaluation programs in order to build consumer loyalty in retail.

The flowers identified in the present study as used in the seduction process are practically concentrated in a single common species in flower shops, in this context it is necessary that products other than traditional ones be offered to consumers in a procedure of experimentation and demand creation. Tropical flowers can represent an important selling argument in the context of seduction, Carrera-Alvarado et al. (2021) describe this group of flowers as exotic and different and that, due to these characteristics, have growing market potential and another factor to be considered is the varied, strong, bright colors and shapes different from other flowers that are attractive to consumption, so considering that one of the arguments of the seduction process is the unexpected and surprising as described by Lisboa (1986) tropical flowers can represent a strong trend in the context of seduction.

Scheuer et al. (2020) describe that the trends for the coming years for the flower trade in Brazil is that there is a productive decentralization and a greater diversification of consumption and in order to face these challenges, the managers of flower shops in Brazil will have to guide production in the field to the new market conditions and requirements, as well as adding value to the products and services, investing in professionalization and in promotion and marketing actions with the aim of focusing on satisfying customers by anticipating their desires and needs, as well as understanding the totality of the productive chain and the importance of each one of its links in the collaborative processes. The segmentation of the flower market with the purpose of seduction presents a condition similar to that described, and therefore must establish organizational flows of the segment similar to the one proposed.

Finally, regarding the use of flowers in the context of seduction and the expansion of commercial levels, similarly to what already was reported by Lipovetsky (2000), advertising, seduction and commerce, contrary to what critics indicate, do not represent the pillars of spoliation neoliberalism of naive consumers, neither is the question responsible for the evils of contemporary capitalism, that is, the consumer seduced by the action of marketing is not deceived, but enchanted because ultimately, if the seduced person is an adult the seduction only occurs because of his/her desire to be seduced as also reported by Lisboa (1986).

Conclusions

The results revealed in the sample analyzed that among people who bought flowers with the aim of seduction, the frequency was on average 1.7 times per year, with 64.7% of people in terms of gender expression being male.

The consumption in relation to sexuality did not show a statistically significant variation among heterosexual, bisexual and homosexual groups, however with regard to marital status, the group of single and married people had the highest rate of purchases with the aim of seduction, the variation being statistically significant when compared with the other evaluated classes.

Roses were the preferred flowers and represented 59% of the species used in the seduction process, it was observed that there are few variations in this regard. It is considered that tropical flowers, given their exotic and multicolored character, can represent a tendency to be explored in this market segmentation.

The study revealed that the purchase of flowers with the aim of seduction was mostly practiced by people already in affective relationships such as boyfriends/girlfriends or spouses, however the use of flowers in the search for new relationships or even fortuitous cases was also evidenced.

Related to people who received flowers and who perceived that the purpose of the gift was the intention of seduction, the vast majority (99%) reported having had good feelings such as affection, being a desired and loved person, joy and happiness and even with regard to the effectiveness of the seduction process, the majority of respondents (n = 69.11%) reported that having received flowers was one of several factors of positive influence evaluated in their decisions in the relationship, and contributed in feeling like a seduced person.

Finally, it is possible to consider the segmentation of the market in relation to the use of flowers as a form of seduction, however it is urgent the organization of the sector in the sense of elaborating a diagnosis of potential consumption, elaborating tests of consumers acceptance before launching in the market, defining the groups to be segmented, establish marketing campaigns directed to the segment or subgroups and finally create post-consumer monitoring and evaluation programs for consumer loyalty.

Author Contribution

AA and LS: adviser of work, research idea, elaboration of field questionnaire, field interviews, analysis and interpretation of data, critical review of the article, preparation and writing of the article, approval of the final version of the article.

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