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The effect of motivational orientation over arousal-shopping response relationship[☆]

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ABSTRACT

This paper enlarges extant theory on environmental retail by providing evidence that motivational orientation moderates the relationship between arousal and response. Our conceptual model focuses on the phenomenon of motivational orientation as moderator on the relationship between arousal and shopping intention. We extend Kaltcheva and Weitz model, since their focus was on the association between arousal and pleasure. We measured shopping behavior, as consequence variable in the framework, in six different formats (e.g. satisfaction, loyalty, money \$, minutes, products). We did four studies in a 2 × 3 design with motivational orientation (hedonic vs. utilitarian) and arousal (high vs. moderate vs. low levels). After the procedures, the questionnaire listed the scales. The four studies did provide enough evidence that motivational orientation moderates the relationships proposed by Mehrabian and Russell's theoretical framework and those ones proposed by our model.

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1. Introduction

Mehrabian and Russel (1974) projected that sensory variables in the environment, information rate of the environment and individual differences in emotional experience influence the affective responses to the environment (arousal, pleasure and dominance), which, in turn, induces persons to approach or avoid the environment, which is shopping response variables.

Environmental Theory proposes that environmental factors affect consumer arousal, which subsequently affects pleasure and consumer shopping behaviours (e.g. buying intention). Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006) assumed that an important situational variable – consumer motivational orientation in the store – moderates the effect of arousal on pleasure. The moderating effect means that when consumers have a hedonic motivational orientation, arousal has a positive effect on pleasure. On the other hand, when

consumers have a utilitarian motivational orientation, arousal has a negative effect on pleasure. Fig. 1 presents the framework.

Initially, Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006, p. 108) “justified research on arousal-response relationship, but empirically tested arousal-pleasure association”. The authors used the Cunha-Jr. et al. (2003) argument as justification to investigate the moderation hypothesis on the association between arousal and pleasure. According to Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006, p. 108), “since there is need for more evidence, we cannot conclude that prior empirical research reported an inconsistent relationship between the levels of arousal produced by a shopping environment and consumer feelings of pleasure in the environment”.

Furthermore, based on Fig. 1, we can elaborate other additional question: Does the motivational orientation moderate the relationship between pleasure and response? Consequently, the paper contributes with retail atmosphere literature showing that motivational orientation moderates other non-researched association. We focus on this specific point, expanding Mehrabian and Russel (1974) framework.

According to literature review, the effects of arousal on shopping behaviour are inconsistent, making empirical generalizations difficult. These mixed results justify research in specific points of the framework. In particular, the literature review presents evidences of the positive (Dubé et al., 1995; Donovan and Rossiter, 1982; Sherman et al., 1997; Babin and Darden, 1995; Wang et al., 2007; Milliman, 1982), negative (Donovan et al., 1994; Holbrook and Gardner, 1998; Milliman, 1982; Mano and Oliver, 1993) or even

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non-significant (Ridgway et al., 1990; Smith and Curnow, 1966; Sweeney and Wyber, 2002; Wirtz and Bateson, 1999) associations between arousal and response. Consequently, the overall pattern of results suggests that the impact of arousal on response varies across studies (in addition to the impact of arousal over pleasure). In that sense, motivational orientation might also moderate varied effects of arousal on shopping behaviour.

Based on these concerns, the literature review seems to play an important role in the subsequent development of the research hypothesis, since some gaps were not researched. In that sense, we enlarge extant theory by providing evidence that motivational orientation moderates the arousal-response association. The next section reviews research that investigates the impact of arousal over shopping behaviour. Then, we propose a theoretical framework that focuses on the moderating effect of motivational orientation and resolves some of the inconsistent findings. We describe four experiments that test our theoretical framework. The article concludes with a discussion of the limitations of our research and its managerial implications.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Mehrabian and Russell's conceptualization of the environmental impact on behaviour

The seminal conceptualization of store environment suggested by Mehrabian and Russel (1974) is the foundation of most marketing research studying the impact of store environmental on shopping behaviour (Dubé et al., 1995; Donovan and Rossiter, 1982; Sherman et al., 1997; Babin and Darden, 1995, Wang et al., 2007; Milliman, 1982). Kaltcheva and Weitz (2003, 2006) commented that in the Mehrabian and Russell framework, the sensory variables in the environment, the information rate of the environment (a construct that reflects the level of overall uncertainty in the environment), and individual differences in emotional experience influence the affective responses to the environment, which, in turn, induce individuals to approach or avoid the environment.

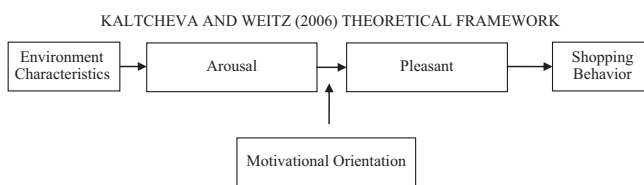


Fig. 1. Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006) Theoretical framework. Source: Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006, p. 109).

Research relies on the S-O-R paradigm to explain and present evidence pertaining to numerous environmental cues (e.g., colour, lighting, sound, crowding and fragrance) and their related effects on buyers' internal states and external responses. Despite numerous studies on store environment, their findings are not enough to provide a detailed understanding of the specific atmospheres' cues that influence shopping behaviour. Specifically, the literature review indicates positive, negative and even null results in the S-O-R model, producing doubts about its generalization capacity in the retail field. Based on this concern, we look to fulfill this gap by conducting a meta-analysis of empirical results on the predictors and consequences of the S-O-R framework.

Mehrabian and Russel (1974) identify three dimensions of affective response: pleasure, arousal, and dominance. However, subsequent research has found that pleasure and arousal explain most of the variance in affect and behaviour, and thus research has focused on these two variables (Russell and Pratt, 1980). Fig. 2 presents Mehrabian and Russel's (1974) theoretical framework.

2.1.1. Arousal-shopping behaviour inconsistency

According to the literature review, the effects of arousal on shopping behaviour are inconsistent, making empirical generalizations complicated. For instance, the literature review illustrates evidence that arousal has a positive impact on money spent (Babin and Darden, 1995), hedonic value (Wang et al., 2007), utilitarian value (Babin and Darden, 1995), flow (Wang et al., 2007), time inside store, products, money spent (Sherman et al., 1997), sales (Milliman, 1982), behavioural intention (Mattila and Wirtz, 2001; Baker et al., 1992), positive and negative affect (Mano and Oliver, 1993), interaction and store exploration (Ridgway et al., 1990).

In contrast to the positive effect, arousal has no impact on pleasure, unplanned spending, and unplanned extension of the visit, satisfaction and attitude (Donovan et al., 1994). Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006) also reported that arousal did not influence shopping behaviour. Wang et al. (2007) found that arousal and utilitarian value were not associated. Sherman et al. (1997) reported that arousal did not influence liking. Wirtz et al. (2000), Wirtz and Bateson (1999) and Mattila and Wirtz (2001) found null results of arousal on satisfaction. Donovan and Rossiter (1982) found that arousal did not affect approach-avoidance; specifically affect, time, affiliation and money spend. On the other hand, some researchers found that arousal had negative association with time listening to music (Holbrook and Gardner, 1998), store peace (Milliman, 1982), unplanned spending (Donovan et al., 1994) and satisfaction (Wirtz et al., 2007). In order to examine these dissimilar results, we hypothesized that motivational orientation moderates these relationships, explaining arousal and shopping behaviour (Ang et al., 1997).

S-O-R FRAMEWORK PROPOSED BY MEHRABIAN AND RUSSELL (1974)

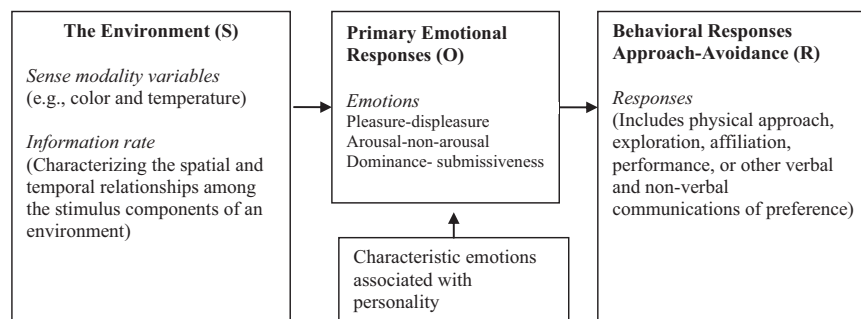


Fig. 2. S-O-R framework proposed by Mehrabian and Russel (1974). Source: Mehrabian and Russell (1974, p. 8).

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