



Edutainment experiences for children in retail stores, from a child's perspective



Florence Feenstra^{a,*}, Laurent Muzellec^b, Brigitte de Faultrier^a, Jacques Boulay^a

^a ESSCA, School of Management - 01, Rue Lakanal - BP40348, 49003 Angers cedex 01, France

^b UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School, University College Dublin, Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co., Dublin, Ireland

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 27 January 2015

Received in revised form

10 April 2015

Accepted 7 May 2015

Available online 28 May 2015

Keywords:

Shopping experience value

Edutainment

Consumer-retailer relationship

Children

ABSTRACT

To build family traffic in-store and develop spending, retailers offer educational workshops and events targeted at children. Understanding how to create value for children in order to create retail patronage intentions is necessary, but has barely been studied. This paper aims to explore the nature and benefits of these edutainment experiences for children and their potential effects on the child-retailer relationship through ethnographic investigation. The study provides evidence that children enjoy acquiring consumer knowledge and consumer attitudes autonomously by taking on an active role as consumers. Edutainment experiences endorse a positive vision of "fun power", as a new type of child influence on adult purchasing. They determine long-term orientation in child-retailer relationships.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Educational workshops and events in retail stores targeted at children aged 6–12 years have in the last decade become a widespread marketing practice (Moses, 2005; Vosburgh, 2010). By enabling "playtail" (Wiener, 2004) for the child in-store, retailers organize activities that entice children to play with products, interact with other children and stimulate their minds. In line with the logic of edutainment, designed both to educate and entertain, (Creighton, 1994; Barrey et al., 2010), these educational experiences are designed to help children become good consumers through play (Creighton, 1994; Vinken 2010). This is part of entertainment retailing, an increased focus in the retail sector literature which aims to create a leisure and recreational environment to improve the consumer's in-store shopping trip and produce emotionally engaging experiences (Kim, 2001; Bäckström and Johansson, 2006; Jones, 1999). Entertaining shopping experiences are known to be an appropriate lever to reach children, the target audience, at the point of sale (Guichard and Damay, 2011; Wiener, 2004; Ville (de La), 2009). Guichard and Damay (2011) suggest that commercial events and workshops may fulfill some children's emotional and social expectations in an ideal store. However, whereas the focus on experiential retailing is wide-spread in practice as well as in theory, knowledge about the child's opinion on these experiences from an educational viewpoint is rarer. The literature emphasizes the importance of

experience-based consumption for retailers as a source of competitive advantage, but analyzes workshops and commercial events through the prism of experience production (Wiener, 2004) and from an adult's point of view (Creighton, 1994; Humeau-Feenstra, 2010). The lack of a precise definition of the nature of educational experiences (as opposed to schooling) for children and the need for a specific understanding of what creates retail value from the child's point of view both call for closer investigation.

The potential of edutainment for children as an effective retailing tactic is well known by managers and researchers. Edutainment includes building family traffic in-store, encouraging more time to be spent in-store, increasing spending, retaining young consumers and developing parent loyalty (Creighton, 1994; Ville (de La), 2009; Cook, 2004). As observed by Creighton (1994), stores aim first to appeal to mothers by presenting their products as educational, but struggle to make them playful, pleasant and fun for children in the hope that the children will look forward to a trip to the store. This raises the question of the role of edutainment experiences in the development of child retail patronage intentions, but the child-retailer relationship building process remains unspecified. The experiential approach allows the inclusion of service consumption in an interactive framework, which combines with the current relational research field of loyalty (Gronroos, 1996; Fournier, 1998). Each transaction is a component in the long-term relationship, which is based on creating value and cumulative customer satisfaction, developing a favorable attitude toward the brand, increasing trust and mutual commitment and attachment (Evrard and Aurier, 1996; Ganesan, 1994; Garbarino and Johnson, 1999). These results might suggest that children's

* Corresponding author. Fax: +330141860487.

E-mail address: Florence.Feenstra@essca.fr (F. Feenstra).

edutainment experiences could play a causal role in the long term relationship with the future adult shopper.

The purpose of this study is to explore the key aspects of child edutainment experiences in retail stores from a child's perspective. Therefore, the aims are to:

- Define the features of children's edutainment experiences,
- Reach a deeper-seated understanding of what creates value for the child,
- Analyze their potential influence on the long-term child-retailer relationship.

This article is divided into three parts. After a review of the literature on children's consumer experience and educational experiences in retail stores, we present the methodology of our ethnographic investigations. We then analyze and discuss the data, examining both the theoretical and managerial implications. In this section, we will first emphasize the importance of considering the different sources of value around the common active dimension of experiential value, taking into account both mental activity and physical activity. Second, we attempt to define the pillars for successful edutainment experiences and highlight the key determinants of the child-retailer long term relationship. The limitations of the study and future research possibilities conclude the paper.

2. Literature review

2.1. The child consumer experience

Experiential marketing is particularly relevant for analyzing child consumers, for several reasons. First, the experiential paradigm is based on the model highlighting affective processes (Imaginary \Rightarrow emotions \Rightarrow pleasure). It maximizes the role of sensory variables and emotional states in consumer situations (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). The emotional register is predominant in understanding children's behavior. When consuming, children primarily seek emotional rather than utilitarian benefits (Derbaix, 1982) – when they shop, children expect pleasure, fun, surprise and fear and need to use their imagination to explore and communicate with their peers (Guichard and Damay, 2011).

Second, the consumer experience includes a social dimension. As children spend more time with their peers now than they did in the past, respect for social norms nowadays exerts strong pressure in the development of the behavior and preferences of children (Dotson and Hyatt, 2005). In particular, events and workshops conducted in-store provide an opportunity for interaction and comparison with peers. Being able to relate to sales staff is also expected by children as an important element in point of sale experiences. Accuracy, respect, friendliness, reliability and care are children's expectations concerning the retailer (Guichard and Damay, 2011).

Third, experience involves self-transformation and experimentation. Derived from the Latin word *experientia*, from *experiri* (i.e. "to test"), experience can be defined as a sensation; practical, experienced events; or cumulative knowledge. Experience is a learning process. The experiential learning theories of Dewey (1958) and Piaget (1969) emphasize this learning process as a cycle of interaction between the individual and their environment, comprising experience and concepts, observation and action (Kolb, 1984). Children cannot be considered full-fledged consumers. Most contemporary research sees children as gathering knowledge and meaning, and a particular category of social and active actors as "consumers in progress" (Ironico, 2012; Cook, 2009). Activities related to consumption can be seen as a source of

knowledge. Beyond the media, children receive product information from packaging, advice from peers and family, and learn about product characteristics from their own consumer experiences. Children also spend more time in retail spaces and their shopping experiences have a growing influence on their socialization (Dotson and Hyatt, 2005). Research on children shows that direct experience with the product creates safer beliefs and attitudes than television advertising for both younger children (6–8) and "tweens" (10–12) (Moore and Lutz, 2000). Works concerned with event-knowledge acquisition underscore young children's learning deficits. In fact, a good number of retail experiences are simply inaccessible to children, either physically (parental permission) or intellectually (limited capacities for encoding information). Young children also tend to rely more on their own experience in a familiar environment to develop learning strategies (Peracchio, 1992).

2.2. Child edutainment experiences in retail stores

2.2.1. Theory

"Edutainment" is where education and entertainment meet, traditionally used for video games or commercial CD ROMs with educational outcomes that are designed to help children learn through play (Creighton, 1994; Barrey et al., 2010). The recent and quick spread of the term in consumer research is explained by the advent of new technology (Addis, 2005), and the genesis of consumer cultures conveying ideologies of education and socialization through consumption (Creighton, 1994). As it is consistent with previous studies on entertainment and in-store consumer experience (Kolb, 1984; Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Bäckström and Johansson, 2006), it is reasonable to assume as Creighton (1994) suggested in her analysis of Japanese society that this interpretation can be applied to children's educational experiences in-store.

In the retail sector, many retailers emphasize the importance of education and creating pleasurable in-store experiences for consumers (Bäckström and Johansson, 2006). French retailers provide three broad categories of programs for the target child (Fig. 1), all oriented to either educational or entertainment purposes:

(1) workshops, (2) birthday services, (3) commercial events with national brands.

Direct experiences with products satisfy children's need to play, touch and test products (Guichard and Damay, 2011). By enabling them to acquire knowledge of brands, products and their use, they satisfy their desire to be independent (Vezin, 1994), and help them to grow. Initial trials provide children with product insights that could lead to added value, positive effects and product attachment (Lakshmanan and Krishnan, 2011). Moreover, the events and workshops in a retail setting allow children to develop social and cognitive skills by generating opportunities for interaction with brands or people (adults or other children). These retail activities offer them a playground that can help them to integrate socially and learn to be consumers. In fact, children learn how to cope with consumer situations by modeling the behaviors they observe in others (Neeley and Coffey, 2007). Thus, child educational experiences contribute to the socialization of the child consumer, as with all processes by which "young people acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their functioning as consumers in the market place" (Ward, 1974 p2).

As well as shopping activities, these experiences in-store can be seen as vectors of learning for the child consumer through several mechanisms: environmental influence when interacting with products, communication tools or point of purchase displays (McNeal, 2007), vicarious learning by observing sales staff or other children, positive or negative reinforcement with carrying out tasks themselves, or shaping social interactions with peers or adults (Bandura, 2003).

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1028852>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1028852>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)