



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jretconser

The impact of “e-atmospherics” on physical stores

Ingrid Poncin^{a,*}, Mohamed Slim Ben Mimoun^b^a Université Catholique de Louvain, LSM, UCL, 151, Chaussée de Binche, 7000 Mons, Belgium^b SKEMA-Univ Lille Nord de France, SKEMA, Avenue W. Brandt, 59777 Euralille, France

ARTICLE INFO

Available online 2 April 2014

Keywords:

Atmospherics
e-Atmospherics
In-store technologies
Augmented reality
Shopping value

ABSTRACT

Marketing literature abounds with discussions of the importance of environmental and atmospheric variables for determining the consumer shopping experience. Through a field study conducted in a toy brand flagship store, this research studies the effects of using two technologies in a physical toy store (magic mirror with augmented reality, interactive game terminals) on holistic perceptions of store atmospherics, affective reactions, and perceived shopping values, which should have consequences for satisfaction and patronage intentions. These results offer an initial exploration of the effect of new technologies on shopping experiences in physical stores; they confirm that digital in-store technologies and generalized multichannel consumer behaviors reduce boundaries between classical in-store atmospherics and e-atmospherics.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Nearly 40 years after Kotler (1973) noted the importance of the retail atmosphere for purchase decisions, marketing literature has affirmed the importance of a range of environmental and atmospheric variables. Atmospherics can induce an environment that attracts customers to a particular location and enhance their purchase behaviors (Bitner, 1992). Turley and Milliman (2000) and Baker et al. (2002) together listed more than 60 empirical studies that established this relationship between store atmospherics and consumer behavior. In reference to environmental psychology work by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), most researchers assume that shoppers' emotional states mediate the link between the store atmospherics and consumer behavior. In addition, Dailey (2004) highlights the importance of e-atmospherics for online purchases and demonstrates that the conditions Kotler (1973) proposes also apply to e-atmospherics. In Eroglu et al. (2003) model, e-atmospherics affect online store consumer behaviors, similar to the effect of offline atmospherics.

As noted in the call for this special issue (Pantano, 2013), the past decade has seen increasing interest in the application of innovative technologies in retail domains to improve physical points of sale. Experiential aspects of new digital technologies in the store may attract more customers to visit the point-of-sales and eventually increasing sales. Bodhani (2013) observed that

leading retailers are turning to these technologies to drive sales, customer relationship and to improve the shopping experience. Moreover recent developments in the form of technologies (e.g., interactive terminals, augmented reality, and smartphone applications) and cross-channel marketing strategies seem to have reduced the boundaries between physical atmospherics and e-atmospherics (Krafft and Mantrala, 2010; Shankar et al., 2011). Pantano and Viassone (2014, p. 44) observed “a huge deal of effort in the development of the best technology for improving the traditional points of sale such as interactive displays and smart mirrors.” Hence, shopper marketing, and especially the embracing of technology innovations, emerges as a key managerial practice (Shankar et al., 2011). Bodhani (2012) investigated how digital technologies can reinvent the retail shopping and concluded that stores will become a place for brand and consumer experience and new technologies. Previous researches tested the effect of some of these technologies in retailing contexts (Pantano and Naccarato, 2010; Pantano and Servidio, 2012; Clodfelter, 2010) but not with an atmospherics perspective.

Thus a pertinent question arises: how can new technologies be integrated into physical store atmospherics? To address this question, we consider the effects of two technologies, adopted by a brick-and-mortar toy store (i.e., a magic mirror with augmented reality and interactive game terminals), on consumers' holistic perceptions of the store's atmospherics. We also investigate their affective reactions and perceived shopping values, which enables us to delineate the consequences for satisfaction and patronage intentions.

Our results show that new technologies such as a magic mirror with augmented reality and an interactive game terminals impact on store atmosphere perceptions and on shopping experiences

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +3265323490.

E-mail addresses: ingrid.poncin@uclouvain-mons.be (I. Poncin), m.slim_benmimoun@skema.edu (M.S. Ben Mimoun).

and on positive affective reactions. In particular, a magic mirror with augmented reality offers strong positive benefits in terms of satisfaction and patronage intentions. The findings of the present confirm that digital in-store technologies reduce boundaries between classical in-store atmospherics and e-atmospherics and yield important insights and implications for marketers and retailers.

2. Background

2.1. Store atmospherics and e-atmospherics

Store atmospherics are essential for any retailing strategy, because they help create a buying context that encourages consumer purchase behaviors. Along with several contemporary pioneers (Kotzan and Evanson, 1969; Cox, 1970; Curhan, 1972), Kotler (1973) initiated research into store atmospherics and their impact on the consumer behavior. He introduced the term “atmospherics,” to refer to variables that characterized the store atmosphere (Turley and Milliman, 2000). Specifically, Kotler (1973, p. 48) defines atmospherics as “the conscious designing of space to create certain effect in buyers” and “the effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhance his purchase probability.” Milliman and Fugate (1993, p. 68) adjust this definition to refer to an atmospheric variable as “any component within an individual’s perceptual field which stimulates one’s senses and thus affects the total experience of being in a given place at a given time,” such as ambient smell, background music, color, and crowding. Baker (1986) proposes a three-dimensional classification of store atmospherics. In turn, building on an extensive review of atmospherics literature, Turley and Milliman (2000) instead suggest five broad categories (see Fig. 1).

Compared with Baker’s (1986) classification, this five-part categorization adds external variables. It also subdivides ambience factors into external and general internal variables.

Following a research tradition devoted to offline store atmospherics, Dailey (2004, p. 796) defines web atmospherics as the “conscious designing of web environments to create positive affect and/or cognitions in surfers in order to develop positive consumer responses.” Different models have sought to adapt store atmospherics to the web environment (Eroglu et al., 2003; Dailey, 2004). As in research on brick-and-mortar atmospherics, most models predict that web atmospherics variables determine online consumers’ behavior by affecting their emotional reactions and cognitions. In addition, by establishing a parallel of Baker’s (1986)

three dimensions of offline atmospherics with the characteristics of websites, Gharbi et al. (2002) measured web atmospherics on four dimensions: telepresence, vividness, technical interactivity, and social interactivity. Allagui and Msaad (2006) adopted similar approaches; their conceptual frameworks include taxonomies of web atmospheric cues. They establish a parallelism between Baker’s (1986) classification of offline atmospherics and digital or web atmospherics.

We take an opposite track and introduce digital technology as a potentially influential element of offline atmospherics. In reference to Turley and Milliman’s (2000) classification of store atmospherics, we consider digital technology a point-of-purchase and decoration variable. In this line, Pantano and Di Pietro (2012) argued that technology based innovation can in fact make traditional stores more attractive and esthetically appealing, thus influencing consumer’s shopping behavior. Bodhani (2012) observed that recent developments in advanced interactive technology are changing shoppers’ behavior and expectations. These technologies are used to enhance the customer shopping experience in-store and reflect what shoppers will see in the future.

With this research, we accordingly focus on how digital technology might affect shopping experiences in terms of both value and affective reactions and thus how it can determine satisfaction and patronage intentions.

2.2. Shopping values

Since the introduction of the concept of experiential value in marketing literature by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), this idea has attracted substantial attention from marketers. Some researchers highlight the usefulness of measuring the perceived value experienced from a complete shopping experience, because of the important role it plays in predicting purchase behavior and achieving sustainable competitive advantages. Holbrook’s (1999) typology of experiential perceived values features three axes: (1) intrinsic or extrinsic, (2) self- or other-oriented, and (3) active or reactive.

Babin et al. (1994) further summarize the extrinsic–intrinsic dichotomy of perceived values with two dimensions: utilitarian and hedonic. First, utilitarian value is created extrinsically and directed toward a task or product. The search for utility implies that an objective that is external to the interaction between consumer and product, such as increasing task performance (Van der Heijden, 2004). In our study context, utilitarian shopping value implies that the consumer regards the store as one in which he or she can find essential items or obtain a specific outcome, quickly

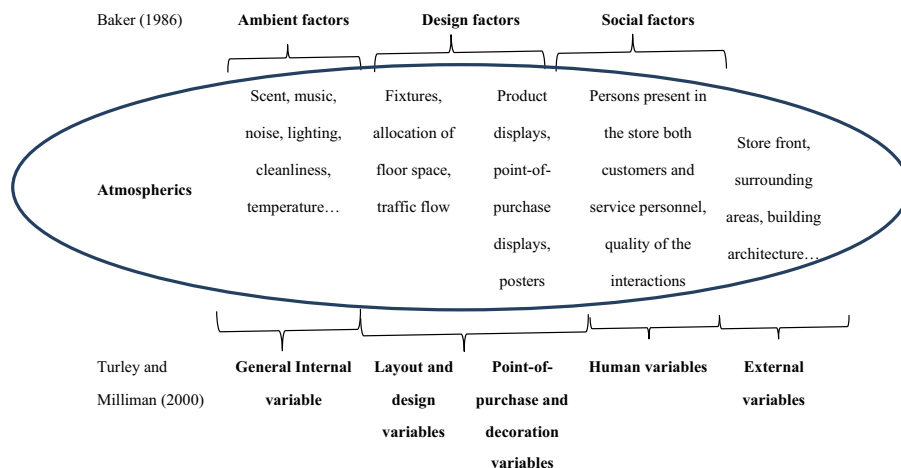


Fig. 1. Atmospherics classification.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1029016>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1029016>

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