

Investigating the Contribution of Customers' Positive and Negative Feelings to Their Perception of the Store Environment in Shiraz

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Abstract

Objective: In recent years, many researchers in the field of marketing and consumer behavior have attracted to the phenomenon of instant and diverse purchases of the customers. Because these types of purchases can be profitable for vendors and retailers, and they can bring victory over competitors by identifying incentives for such purchases and investments to attract customers who are willing to have instant and diverse purchases. The purpose of this research is to examine the contribution of customers' positive and negative feelings to their perception of the store environment. **Method:** This study is an applied research as regards aims and purposes and is a correlational, descriptive study as regards data collection. Our population consisted of all customers in northern shopping centers of Shiraz. For data collection, we designed three questionnaires including Questionnaire of Store Environment Perception, Questionnaire of Positive Attitude, and Questionnaire of Negative Attitude. As the size of the sample was unlimited, and we could not count them, we selected 384 respondents by using Morgan's Table. Then, we distributed 450 questionnaires of which we received 384 answered questionnaires. Their content validity was assessed by top 15 MA and Ph.D. Students. Their reliability was evaluated by Cronbach's alpha. The calculated value was 0.7 indicating an adequate level of reliability. To analyze the data, the correlation coefficient and the linear regression coefficient test were used with SPSS software. **Findings:** The research results showed that the perception of the store environment affects the positive and negative feelings of the customers. **Conclusion:** Managers should not divert their attention from store environment perception and customers' attitudes especially their positive attitudes. They should pay heed to customers' negative attitude as much as their attention focuses on a positive attitude.

Keywords: Store Environment Perception (SEP), Positive Attitude, Negative Attitude

1.Introduction

In the last forty years, marketing researchers have been struggling to understand and conceive the instant purchasing behavior of consumers. The main reason for this behavior of consumers is usually recognized in the lack of planning the purchasing process and the determination of need from the consumer [5]. This concept has created a development in the marketing sciences because the consumer who was thought to purchase with a full rationality and a predetermined plan, it becomes clear that he was involved with emotions in the decision making the process of purchasing, and in most cases he purchases with undetermined and an instant plan [17]. In various studies, the role of various factors such as culture, lifestyle, gender, environmental factors, such as store environments, psychological characteristics, like motivation and perception, etc., have been identified in the process of instant and diverse purchasing [14].

Ghaffari et al. (2013) conducted a study entitled "Investigating Effective Factors on the instant purchasing of Cosmetics." The results of the research showed that the store environment, purchasing pleasure and product engagement have a positive effect on the instant purchase of cosmetics. Also, visiting market indirectly, and with the effect on purchasing pleasure, boosts purchases [7].

Nazari and Baghdadi (2013) conducted a study entitled "Identifying and Investigating Effective Factors on Online Instant Purchases in Group Discount Stores in Iran." The results showed that the factors associated with the goods and individual characteristics have a significant effect on a number of online instant purchases; instead, the effect of environmental and situational characteristics and methods for advancing instant purchases has not been confirmed [12].

Floh and Madl Berger (2013) conducted a study entitled "The effect of the store environment on a variety of diverse behaviors." The results showed that the store environment, the optimal level of stimulation and the willingness to exchange, have a positive effect on diversity. This article expands the studies on examining the understanding of the store environment on diversity. The research has suggested that retailers should invest in store environment components to increase diversity. Regarding method, this model has used Schmid-Leiman factor to illustrate the constraints presented by reflexive models [6].

Mohan et al. (2012) conducted a study entitled "The Role of Environmental Signs in Online Shopping, Without Planning." The results support the validity of the S-O-R model in the context of instant online shopping behavior and show a positive significant effect from the two dimensions of virtual environment signs, namely design and planning [11].

Music produces powerful, a substantial effect upon the environment of stores as often indicated by many scholars [4]. Soft music makes a positive impact [8]. Music can produce images for brands, provide pleasure, and heighten the previous impression about brands. Additionally, satisfactory lighting arrangement mounts striking display in stores in a way that selling aims come into customers' focus of attention. And, incentives are created [15].

Providing splendid arrays and displaying sufficient signs (layout) cause customers to gain good experience because they can find their intended products with convenience [16]. Furthermore, splendid arrays pleasure shopping and clear up the confusion [2]. Good behavior of staffs is the other determinant having influence in customers' reactions

[3]. Skills in interaction with customers such as smiling and quick response even in moments often create a positive attitude [10].

Conversely, loud music brings about the undesirable effect upon the shopping. It may cause mental distress and create a negative attitude [3]. Moreover, the unsatisfactory light arrangement may affect customers' visual sensation severely and distract their attention from products [1]. Disorganized shelves and small passages add to their confusion [16]. Unskilled staffs and inappropriate salesmanship are other determinants of negative attitudes in customers [9].

By the above-mentioned perspectives, we discuss the following hypotheses:

H1: Store environment perception (SEP) bears a significant direct relationship with customers' positive attitude.

H2: SEP bears a significant inverse relationship with customers' negative attitude.

2. Method

This study is an applied research as regards aims and purposes and is a correlation, descriptive study as regards data collection. Our population consisted of all customers in northern shopping centers of Shiraz.

For data collection, we designed three questionnaires including Questionnaire of Store Environment Perception, Questionnaire of Positive Attitude, and Questionnaire of Negative Attitude. As the size of the sample was unlimited, and we could not count them, we selected 384 respondents by using Morgan's Table. Then, we distributed 450 questionnaires of which we received 384 answered questionnaires. Their content validity was assessed by top 15 MA and Ph.D. Students. Their reliability was evaluated by Cronbach's alpha. The calculated value was 0.7 indicating the adequate level of reliability.

To analyze the data, correlation coefficient and linear regression coefficient test were used with SPSS software.

3. Findings

Table 1. Correlation Coefficients of Constructs

	SEP	Positive Attitude	Negative Attitude
Environmental Perception	1		
Positive Attitude	0.61 13.40	1	
Negative Attitude	-43.50 -11.2	-44.50 -13.34	1

✱ Store Environment Perception (SEP):

Table 2. T Statistics of Store Environment Perception (SEP)

	Standard Coefficients	T Statistics	Coefficient of Determination	Error
Music	0.33	7.07	0.15	0.048
Lighting	0.41	8.99	0.25	0.038
Employee	0.59	13.69	0.32	0.039
Layout	0.62	14.55	0.4	0.037

As shown in Table 2, T-statistics for all components of SEP is greater than 1.96, meaning SEP is affected by all these components.

✖ **Positive Attitude (PA):**

Table 3. T Statistics of Positive Attitude (PA)

Items	Standard Coefficients	T Statistics	Coefficient of Determination	Error
Q13	0.77	19.63	0.68	0.043
Q14	0.87	17.58	0.75	0.039
Q15	0.69	14.27	0.49	0.042

Again, T statistics of PA items is greater than 1.96. To put it differently, they exert the significant impact upon positive significance.

✖ **Negative Attitude (NA):**

Table 4. T Statistics of Negative Attitude (NA)

Items	Standard Coefficients	T Statistics	Coefficient of Determination	Error
Q16	0.69	18.1	0.52	0.041
Q17	0.79	23.96	0.67	0.037
Q18	0.69	19.34	0.42	0.034

Similarly, T statistics in Table 5 is greater than 1.96. Therefore, negative attitude is affected by Q16, Q17, and Q18.

First Hypothesis:

H0: SEP does not bear the significantly direct relationship with customers' positive attitude.

H1. SEP bears the significantly direct relationship with customers' positive attitude.

In the case that absolute value is smaller than 1.96, H0 is accepted. Otherwise, H1 is accepted.

Table 4. Test of First Hypothesis

T-Statistics	Value of Table	Conclusion	Extent of Impact
13.64	1.96	Relationship	0.57

As the absolute value of T statistics is 10.64 and is greater than 1.96, H1 is accepted. Therefore, SEP exerts significant direct impact (0.67) upon positive attitude.

Second Hypothesis:

H0. Store environment perception does not bear significantly inverse relationship with customers' negative attitude.

H1. Store environment perception bears the significantly inverse relationship with customers' negative attitude.

In the case that absolute value is smaller than 1.96, H0 is accepted. Otherwise, H1 is accepted.

Table 5. Test of First Hypothesis

T-Statistics	Value of Table	Conclusion	Extent of Impact
-10.09	1.96	Relationship	-0.65

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Since the absolute value of T-statistics is 10.09 and greater than 1.96, H1 is accepted. In other words, store environment perception bears a significant inverse relationship with a negative attitude.

4. Discussion and conclusions

Our findings demonstrated SEP draws influence upon negative-positive attitudes of customers, thus exerting an impact upon their satisfaction and loyalty. Among all components of stores' environment, employees and layout affect their perception more greatly than other components. Music creates the most limited impact on their attitudes. These findings are in contradiction with stores' recent focus of attention on an enormous quantity of products leading to customers' limited access to their required goods. Nevertheless, some changes in recent years have occurred, making Iran's shopping centers take modern retail including supermarkets and hypermarkets into consideration. Therefore, managers are required to exercise care and attention to the layout of stores in a way that customers spend much more time in stores and do shopping with pleasure. Additionally, managers should not disregard employees because customers make a judgment about stores' environment by employees' behavior patterns. In case of the tight budget, their attention may focus first on layout and second to employees.

Managers should not divert their attention from store environment perception and customers' attitudes especially their positive attitudes. They should pay heed to customers' negative attitude as much as their attention focuses on a positive attitude. Indeed, there is an inverse relationship between stores' support from customers, customers' negative attitude, their loyalty and. Hence, managers are required to feel sure that their strategies do not create negative attitudes in customers.

Since the peripheral elements of the store, namely the parameters of light, music, and fragrances, have been effective factors in increasing the pleasure of purchasing, therefore, it is suggested that sales managers and sales force responsible for various departments of the stores should plan and improve lighting, Play music and share pleasing aromas, to increase the purchasing pleasure of their customers.

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