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Consumer Psychology

Physical environment → North et al.
Psychological environment → Robson et al.

- Physical Environment
* Retail store design
~~to create or specific~~

Stimulus - organism - response (SOR) : examines how physical aspects of the store (stimulus) affect consumers' responses and potential purchases.
PAD model : three dimension of consumers' emotions:
Pleasantness, Arousal, Dominance

Approach behaviour: positive responses, desire to stay and explore
Avoidance behaviour: negative responses, wanting to leave

→ Types of store Exterior :

i) Storefronts (entrance, exit, building, parking)
- creating an appealing ~~for~~ storefront to create a positive first impression
- imp when brand names are unfamiliar

ii) Window displays
- attractive window display provides a quick, cost-effective way to change the overall look of the shop
- matching displays to the self-image of target customer
- products displayed along with accessories (seasonal holidays, local themes)

iii) Landscaping (plants or any vegetation)
- plants create positive emotional responses improving mood and quality of life
- sales and distance travelled is greater for shops that include trees. Customers spend longer and more money in shops with landscaping.
- quality of products rated higher in stores with flowers, plants or trees

Mower et al.

Aim: investigate the influence of window display and landscaping on pleasure, arousal, liking and patronage intention. (clothing boutique)
- Independent measures
- Four descriptions differing in presence or absence of window display and landscaping
- Quantitative data collected using questionnaire

Result: Presence of landscape / window display increased the liking of external environment and patronage intention.
Pleasure, Arousal, liking positively correlated with patronage intention

Conclusion: Landscaping and window display are important determinants of positive consumer behaviour.
Higher liking of store exterior, higher patronage intentions

Strength: Quantitative data (mean, sd used to make comparisons)
weakness: lack ecological validity as it was a fictional shopping trip described online

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→ Interior store Design

Layout refers to the way that shop floor is organised, arrangement of stock and the routes that customer take around the store.

i) Grid Layout
- rectangular arrangement
- long parallel aisles
- supermarkets

ii) Racetrack layout
- a loop that customers take through the store
- individual themed areas

iii) Freeform layout
- large stores
- asymmetric manner
- displays are of diff styles, sizes, shapes
- shoppers spend longer in stores with freeform than grid or racetrack.

Vrechopolous et al.

Aim: to investigate the effects of 3 different virtual store layouts on consumer behaviour. (grocery)

~~Aim~~ Hypothesis: grid → most useful
freeform → earliest and longest shopping time
racetrack → most entertaining

IV: 3 layouts
DV: usefulness, ease of use, entertainment
- laboratory, independent measures
- 120 participants from Greece and US

- each participant was given £20 budget
- whatever was purchased was later delivered

Results: freeform was most useful and entertaining
grid easiest to use, racetrack hardest
greatest time spent in racetrack

Evaluation: high ecological validity
generalisability ↑ (2 countries)
only quantitative data collected
self-reports

Evaluation of store interior:
reductionist, only considers situational variables (layout)
individual differences, cultural differences and
nature of product will also affect

* Sound and Consumer behaviour

North et al. (key study)
Aim: to explore whether playing classical music would lead to higher customer spending than compared to pop music.
- Field experiment, Independent measures
- restaurant in a small town in UK
- ~~Study took place~~ data collected by a waitress (Feb and March 2002)
- 393 customers (equal male Female ratio)
not aware they were a part of the study

IV: type of background music (classical, pop, no music/control)
DV: mean spend per person for each course, overall bill, and total spend
(total bill divided by number of people)

Procedure: · pop vs classical music played at a consistent volume, order counterbalanced
· situational variables controlled
· recorded the total time spent at the restaurant

Results: classical music increased mean spend per person for starters and coffee.

Conclusion: using classical music can increase customer spending

3 reasons:- it enhanced other aspects of the restaurant
- customers preferred classical music so pleasure transferred to ordering more
- classical music associated with an 'upmarket' experience preparing customers to pay more

Evaluation:
- situational variables controlled (same lighting, menu, waitress) hence validity ↑
- ecological validity high due to the naturalistic setting (real diners spending their own money in a real à la carte restaurant)
- low generalisability as high socioeconomic status of the area
- no knowledge about customers' music preferences (weakens the validity) as increased spending could be due to liking of music
- different cultured need to be considered
- privacy was not invaded (consent not need in public areas)
- dining experience not disrupted
- Application: for upmarket restaurants to play classical music for higher profits
- reductionist (size of group, purpose of meal need to be considered)

Background noise and taste

Crispiness: increasing volume of crunch → ~~increased~~ improved perception of freshness
decreasing volume → increased perception of staleness

Sweetness: Ps liked sweet when exposed to background noise (stressful noise → increased sugar cravings)

Why sound affects taste perception:
- brain structures for processing sensory info are activated by more than one type of sensory info
- brain uses info from more than one sensory modality when making judgements
- noise distracts attention from taste making it less intense

Woods et al.

Aim: to investigate whether non-sound related gustatory food cues are reported to be less intense in noisy conditions vs quiet conditions
- also to investigate whether the effect is only observed with crunchy/hard foods

- Laboratory, repeated measures, 48 students
IV: background noise (quiet, loud, baseline)
hardness of food (soft/hard)

- Ps wore headphones with background noise, rated saltiness, sweetness and liking. sipped water between each trial. blindly-tasted

Results: -Sweetness and saltiness were rated less intense in loud compared to the quiet condition
- foods were liked more in the quiet condition
- no diff between hard and soft

Conclusions: -Background noise reduces the intensity of sweetness and saltiness, regardless of hardness.
- taste is experienced in a quiet vs noisy environment

Evaluation:
- repeated measures hence removed participant variables
- baseline and dummy stimulus (biscuit) as control
- Standardisation ~~allowing for~~ making the study replicable
- Lacks ecological validity

* Retail atmospherics
- Consumer decisions and behaviour are influenced by their emotional states
- atmospherics shape the ambience of the setting and influence our emotions, cognition, behaviour

PAD model - by Mehrabian and Russell (1974)
- to explain how aspects of the environment can affect consumers' emotional response and behaviour.

P - Pleasure
- 'valence' - positive or negative feelings
- pleasure - displeasure: happiness and satisfaction or unhappiness and dissatisfaction
- Approach behaviour - enter and stay longer
- Avoidance behaviour - no desire to stay

A - arousal
- how alert, energised and excited the consumer is
- low arousal (calm, sleepy) → disengaged
- too high levels of arousal could be overwhelming

D - dominance
- the extent to which the consumer feels in control
- if consumer feels restricted and uncomfortable, they are less likely to stay
- feeling in control increases consumer's positive affe
- impact of this is affected by individual differences

→ Ambience is affected by PAD of customers

Effects of odour

Scent marketing: strategy used to increase sales and encourage brand loyalty
- it increases sales by creating a positive mood shift, increasing feelings of pleasure and arousal
Pleasant scent → Approach behaviour
Unpleasant scent → Avoidance behaviour

Chebat and Michon

Aim: to explore whether scents affects consumer behaviour by improving mood (PAD) or by creating a favourable evaluation of the store. (emotion or cognition)

- Field experiment, opportunity sample

IV: presence or absence of citrus fragrance

DV: self-reported perception of product quality, environment, pleasure, arousal, total spending

- Fragrance sprayed for 3 seconds every 6th minute (orange, lemon, grape)

Results: Ambient scent improved perception of environment and product quality.

Conclusion: scent leads to increased spending.
- increased arousal and pleasure

Evaluation:

- natural settings, real shoppers, ecological validity ↑
- controlled situational variables (identical weeks chosen eg: in terms of sales)
- control of other scents in the environment, validity ↑
- only quantitative data collected (no details recorded which would be useful to highligh role of cognitive factors)
- diff scents create diff perceptions and mood depending on the season
- individual differences

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Effects of crowding

- PAD suggests that responses to our environment are shaped by how the environment makes us feel

→ Social crowding: psychological state experienced when shoppers demand for personal space exceeds the available space
→ Spatial crowding: discomfort experienced when a shopper's freedom to move around the store is restricted

- Crowding decreases customer satisfaction
- it reduces pleasure and increases stress with a perceived lack of control → less dominance
- also increases arousal and tension (personality differences)

Machleit et al.

Aim: to investigate the relationship between perceived crowding and satisfaction, mediated by positive / negative emotions and arousal.
- to explore how expectation, tolerance of crowd and type of shop affected the relationship

Volunteer sample given self-report questionnaire about their next shopping trip. (where they shopped and what)
Included rating scales to measure emotional response, perceived crowding, tolerance and expectation

Results: Greater the perceived crowding, lesser the pleasure
- negative correlation between crowding and arousal
- Perceived crowding positively correlated with negative emotions
- Perceived social and spatial crowding negatively correlated with satisfaction
- satisfaction lower when shops were more crowded than expected
- individual differences for tolerance
- social crowding unrelated to satisfaction in discount stores

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Conclusion: relationship between perceived crowding is affected by factors such as type of store, individual differences, expectations and tolerance.

Evaluation:

- Field study, natural behaviour
- mundane realism increases the ecological validity
- limited sample (only uni students) → participant bias,
- students were studying marketing not generalisable hence result may lack validity
- crowding may affect consumer behaviour differently in diff cultures