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The impact of an exciting store environment on consumer pleasure and shopping intentions

Jonas Holmqvist*
Renaud Lunardo**

* Assistant Professor of Marketing, Kedge Business School, 680 cours de la libération, 33405 Talence Cedex, France, Phone: +33 5 56 84 55 19, Mail: jonas.holmqvist@kedgebs.com (corresponding author)

** Professor of Marketing, Kedge Business School, 680 cours de la libération, 33405 Talence Cedex, France, Phone: +33 5 56 84 55 19, Mail: renaud.lunardo@kedgebs.com

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
First received in 28 October 2014 and was under review for 1 month.
Replication Editor: Donald R. Lehmann
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Abstract
In this paper, we reinvestigate whether a stimulating store environment is beneficial or whether it could have a negative effect on consumers. Consistent with previous studies we find that the answer lies in the consumer’s motivational orientation: a stimulating in-store experience has a positive effect on pleasantness and shopping intentions for consumers with a recreational motive while at the same time having a negative effect on both pleasantness and shopping intentions for task-oriented consumers.
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1. Introduction

Several previous studies have argued for the advantages of a stimulating store environment, as it may lead to positive emotional and behavioral consumer responses (for a review, see Turley and Milliman, 2000). However, does a stimulating store environment always please consumers, or might it instead backfire and lead to consumers being less pleased and less willing to shop in the store? Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006) suggested that consumer motivational orientation may answer this question. Distinguishing between consumers with either a recreational or a task-oriented motivation (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994), Kaltcheva and Weitz showed that high arousal stemming from a stimulating store environment has a positive effect on pleasantness and shopping intentions for consumers with a recreational motivational orientation. However, they further show how the same stimulating environment has a negative influence on task-oriented consumers. As managers often use stimulating store environments in attempts to create differential advantages (Turley and Chebat, 2002), understanding in which conditions these attempts could backfire is crucial for marketing practitioners.

This paper replicates Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006). In line with their article, we analyze whether a stimulating store environment increases pleasantness and shopping intentions for recreational consumers while at the same time decreasing pleasantness and shopping intentions for task-oriented consumers.

2. Study

2.1 Design
Following the procedure of Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006) we conducted a 2 (motivational orientation: task-oriented versus recreational) × 2 (arousal: high versus low) between-subjects experiment with 197 French respondents aged 17 to 57, 52% women.

Participants were induced to adopt either a recreational motivational orientation or a task-oriented motivational orientation following the procedures of Kaltcheva and Weitz. As in the original article, we manipulated arousal by manipulating the complexity of the environment, varying color warmth, and varying color saturation. Participants in the high-arousal condition were exposed to nine pictures of a store environment of high complexity, and warm and high-saturated colors, while participants in the low-arousal condition were exposed to nine pictures of a store environment of low complexity, and cool, low-saturated colors.

We measured shopping intentions using four items from Kaltcheva and Weitz. Participants indicated their pleasure (α = .91) and arousal (α = .78) using scales from Mehrabian and Russell (1974), measured on the 7-points version of the same scale in French validated in several previous studies in France.

For manipulation checks, we used the four-item scale by Kaltcheva and Weitz to measure recreational motivation (α = .80) and task-oriented motivation (α = .83). Participants in the task-oriented condition were more task-oriented (MTO = 5.77) than participants in the recreational condition (MRO = 3.52, F(1, 196) = 133.95, p < .001), who in turn were significantly more recreationally-oriented (MRO = 5.31, MTO = 2.63, F(1, 220) = 204.20, p < .001). The motivational orientations are significantly and negatively correlated (r = -.621; p < .01). Scores for arousal are moderate in both conditions, but participants visiting the high-arousing store rated arousal as significantly higher (Mhigh = 4.49) than participants in the low-arousing store (Mlow = 3.26, F(1, 220) = 115.26, p < .001).

2.2 Results
In line with Kaltcheva and Weitz, we found motivational orientation moderating the effect of arousal on pleasantness, producing a significant interaction between arousal and motivation (F(1, 193) = 4.92, p = .028). While they did not find a main effect on pleasantness for either motivational orientation or arousal, we found a main effect of motivational orientation (F(1, 193) = 74.29, p < .001) as recreational consumers exhibit more pleasure than task-oriented consumers (M_{Recreational} = 4.78, M_{Task} = 3.59, t = 8.62, p < .001). Like the replicated article, we found no significant main effect of arousal (F(1, 193) = .016, p > .90). Table 1 provides an overview of the results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kaltcheva and Weitz, Study 1 (2006)</th>
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<th>Our study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 166, US sample)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 197, French sample)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Arousal</td>
<td>RO 6.59  TO 6.75  Δ -.162</td>
<td>RO 6.41  TO 3.73  Δ -0.88</td>
<td>RO 4.93  TO 3.44  Δ -1.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Arousal</td>
<td>RO 6.75  TO 5.13  Δ -1.62</td>
<td>RO 4.75  TO 3.74  Δ -0.88</td>
<td>RO 3.45  TO 3.72  Δ -0.76</td>
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</table>

**Note:** RO: Recreational-oriented motivation; TO: Task-oriented motivation; Δ = Difference between task-oriented and recreational-oriented consumers.

While Kaltcheva and Weitz found a crossover interaction effect for shopping orientation and arousal, we found that arousal has an effect on pleasantness only for task-oriented individuals. Unlike the replicated study, participants in our recreational condition did not find the high-arousal environment significantly more pleasant (M_{High Arousal} = 4.93, M_{Low Arousal} = 4.61, t = -1.38, p > .15). However, our results conform with the replicated article in finding that participants in the task-oriented condition found the low-arousal environment marginally more pleasant (M_{High Arousal} = 3.44, M_{Low Arousal} = 3.73, t = 1.87, p = .06).

We find the same pattern for shopping intentions. A significant interaction between arousal and motivation on shopping intentions (F(1, 193) = 3.79, p = .05) was observed whereby arousal has no effect for recreational consumers (M_{High Arousal} = 4.48, M_{Low Arousal} = 4.41, t = -.27, p > .70) but a negative effect for task-oriented consumers (M_{High Arousal} = 3.72,
Like Kaltcheva and Weitz, we found no main effect of arousal (F(1, 193) = 2.34, p > .10) but again a main effect of motivational orientation (F(1, 193) = 7.05, p < .01) whereby recreational consumers exhibit higher shopping intentions than task-oriented consumers (M_{Recreational} = 4.45, M_{Task} = 4.01, t = 2.64, p < .01).

We furthermore tested whether pleasantness mediates the interactive effect between arousal and motivation on shopping intentions by estimating two regression models:

1. Shopping intentions = β₀ + β₁ × motivational orientation + β₂ × arousal + β₃ × motivational orientation × arousal.

2. Shopping intentions = β₀ + β₁ × motivational orientation + β₂ × arousal + β₃ × motivational orientation × arousal + β₄ × pleasure.

Corresponding to their results, the interaction between arousal and motivation was statistically significant in model 1 (β₃ = -.64, t = -1.95, p = .053) but not in model 2 (β₃ = -.52, t = -1.57, p = .11), which might suggest that pleasantness mediates the effect of the arousal × motivational orientation interaction on shopping intentions. However, a test of the difference between β₃ in model 1 and β₃ in model 2 revealed that these coefficients did not significantly differ (Z = .25, p > .10). Further, the change in R when adding pleasure in model 2 was not significant (p = .11). We thus conclude, in contrast to Kaltcheva and Weitz, that pleasantness did not mediate the effect of the arousal × motivational orientation interaction on shopping intentions.

3. Conclusion

Replicating Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006), motivational orientation and arousal in the form of a stimulating store environment have an interactive effect on pleasantness and shopping intentions. We also replicate their finding that arousal has no main effect on pleasantness or shopping intentions.
However, we identify two differences. First, we do not find a crossover effect; rather, we find that arousal has a negative effect for task-oriented consumers but no effect for recreational-oriented consumers. Motivational orientation in our research is found to exert a main effect on pleasantness and shopping intentions as recreational consumers display more pleasure and more shopping intentions than task-oriented consumers. Second, while we replicate the mediating effect of pleasantness using the same criteria as Kaltcheva and Weitz, additional tests suggest that pleasantness did not mediate the interactive effect of arousal and motivation.

Kaltcheva and Weitz concluded that consumers’ motivational orientation explains why a stimulating store environment has a positive influence on recreational consumers while task-oriented consumers react negatively. We find that task-oriented motivation explains why exciting store environments lead to less pleasantness and shopping intentions. Culture could explain some of the differences between the original article and our replication; store environments in France are often different from stores in the US. French stores, to a larger extent, tend to be small specialty stores, and French customers are more likely to visit a butcher or a baker with a clear task-oriented purpose. Furthermore, arousing store environments would seem more widespread in the US. If French respondents in our recreational condition were less used to arousing store environments, the newness of the situation may help explain some of the differences. In addition to culture, demographic differences may also explain why our results are partially different; Kaltcheva and Weitz used a student sample while we have an adult sample. Adult customers are generally more task-oriented (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003); thus the newness of the situation might again explain why adult customers more used to daily grocery shopping displayed stronger pleasure and shopping intentions when in a recreational mode. A possible limitation both in the original
article and in our replication is that the design could confound complexity and color warmth, which might affect mood.

In conclusion, our findings thus largely replicate Kaltcheva and Weitz but also identify some differences that could be explained by both cultural and demographic aspects.

References


