An approach to the difference of store environments on customer experience realms and behaviors

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Customer's experiences in the store environment are worth to recognize for the retailers regarding its impact on the relationship between the customer and brand. Previous research mainly argued about the impact of store environment, such as interior designs, lighting, employees, and products, on immediate ROI and satisfaction. However, few researches have done regarding customer experience realms brand type and availability of technology features in the store. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the store environment if the presence of technology and different brand types have significant effect on customer experience realms and behavior intentions.

Retailers today are making positive decisions of accepting and implementing new technological features in stores to reduce costs, and provide convenient and fun shopping environment for the customers. Despite the importance of the store environment, limited researches have done regarding the technology features in the store environment along with the brand types.Pine and Gilmore (1998) argued that experience is "a distinct economic offering" and it is a whole of two dimensions, customer participation (i.e. units customers participation: passive, active) and environmental relationship, (i.e. units customers with the environment: absorb, immerse). Customers would be exposed to four experiences realms (entertainment, escapist, esthetic, and educations) in the retail store environment (Sands, et al., 2015).

Customer acquisition model has been changed from AIDA (attention, interest, desire, and action) to AISAS (attention, interest, search, action, and share) along with the new role of the Internet (Carvão, 2010). Carvão (2010) explained that searching brand evaluation and information is done prior to and after the visit; action includes online shopping and purchasing; and sharing of brand information is no longer limited to the certain group.

A 2 (brand type: luxury, sports) X 2 (technology: present, absent) experiment design with Media Lab software was conducted in a lab. Samples of young consumers were collected from a large Northern university in the US. Participants observed 3D stimuli on a big screen TV, and answered survey questions simultaneously on the screen. Survey questions were adopted from various existing literatures and total of 188 usable data was obtained.

ANOVA results (Table 1) show significant main effects of technology availability on both customer experience realms and behavior intentions. When technology features were present in the store environment, participants are more entertained ($M_{tech-present}$= 4.49 vs. M_{tech-}

absent $= 2.71$), actively immerse in the experience ($M_{tech-present} = 3.39$ vs. $M_{tech-absent} = 2.40$), and willing to involve with the technology in the store ($M_{tech-present} = 3.38$ vs. $M_{tech-absent} = 2.37$). Moreover, participants positively considered to search about the store ($M_{tech-present} = 4.37$ vs. $M_{tech-absent} = 3.44$) and share the information ($M_{tech} = 4.63$ vs. $M_{no-tech} = 3.28$) as technology features were present. For the luxury brand store environment, participants experience strong esthetic ($M_{lux} = 3.94$ vs. $M_{sports} = 3.28$) as they only want to observe the environment rather than involving the store. Customer behavior intentions, such as search, action and share, show marginally significant main effect of the luxury brand store. ANOVA interactions of brand type and technology availability show insignificant effect on both customer experience realms and behavior intentions, which implies the effect of technological component of a store on customer experience is consistent regardless of brand type.

Table1. Two-way ANOVA results

	df	F Entertainment	Escapist	Esthetic	Education	Search $_{AISAS}$	Action $_{AISAS}$	Share $_{AISAS}$
Main Effect								
Brand Type (*Luxury-Sports*)	1	8.377**	14.317***	30.382***	6.366*	9.852**	6.006*	8.060**
Technology (*Present-Absent*)	1	277.803***	54.295***	9.561**	69.993***	15.176***	10.678**	32.493***
Two-Way Interaction								
Brand Type x Technology	1	0.010	0.573	0.339	1.648	0.262	1.392	0.112

**p< 0.01; *p< 0.05

Discussion

This study investigated that if different store environments, both brand types and technology availability, have impacts on customer experiences in the store and the behavior intentions toward the brand. The study provides implication to the retailers in terms of implementing new technology features in stores according with the brand types for positive outcomes. And, the results of this study can be implied to further researches on store management and consumer research.

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