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PREVIEW

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**Retail store image formation and retrieval: A content analysis
including effects of music and mood**

Broekemier, Gregory Mark, Ph.D.

The University of Nebraska - Lincoln, 1993

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PREVIEW

RETAIL STORE IMAGE FORMATION AND RETRIEVAL:
A CONTENT ANALYSIS INCLUDING EFFECTS OF MUSIC AND MOOD

by

Gregory M. Broekemier

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Retail Store Image Formation and Retrieval:

A Content Analysis Including Effects of Music and Mood

BY

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RETAIL STORE IMAGE FORMATION AND RETRIEVAL:
A CONTENT ANALYSIS INCLUDING EFFECTS OF MUSIC AND MOOD

Gregory M. Broekemier

University of Nebraska, 1993

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Based on the premise that there is considerable opportunity for improvement in measuring retail store image, this dissertation uses content analysis to investigate types of information used to both form images of a retail store and retrieve those images from memory at a later time. The impact of mood on forming and retrieving positive or negative store images is also examined, as are the effects of the happy/sad dimensions of music.

The results of the hypotheses suggest that subjects use a greater proportion of attribute-based comments when forming images, but a greater proportion of global comments were elicited when subjects retrieved their store images from memory. Results also indicate that entry mood does have a relationship with whether an image will be positive or negative when formed, and that exit mood has a relationship with whether a positive or negative image is retrieved from memory.

It was found that happy/sad music treatments did not have statistically significant relationships with positive/negative moods, but subjects exposed to happy music did have a greater intention to shop than did those exposed to sad music. However, the perceptions of whether music

heard was happy or sad were strongly related to positive or negative images.

Utilizing the methodology discussed in this study, particularly the use of a videotape stimulus, researchers should be able to more efficiently and accurately measure store image. This should enable retail managers to make more informed decisions about variables which influence image. This dissertation suggests that a consumer's mood is related to images formed, and that retail management must foster positive moods in customers. Happy/sad music perceptions are also shown to be one important controllable variable that can influence whether images formed and retrieved are positive or negative.

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PREVIEW

CHAPTER 1--INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Retail store image is a construct that has been investigated for decades. Traditional retailers employ approximately 20 million people in this country, and this is probably an understated figure since it does not include the several million persons employed by various service firms, seasonal employees, proprietors, and unreported employees in family businesses or partnerships. Retailing also generates large amounts of sales dollars; according to the Department of Commerce, annual retail store sales are approaching \$2 trillion. Overall retail store sales rose by 74 per cent between 1981 and 1990. This increase was far above the level of inflation for the period (Berman and Evans 1992). Retailing is an extremely important component of our economy, and both retailers and researchers are constantly striving to enhance the retail shopping experience for customers. While there are certainly many uncontrollable variables in a retail environment, retailers do have the opportunity to make decisions and implement them for a variety of factors. Many variables that influence retail store image are controllable variables.

Research discussed in Chapter 2 shows retail store image to be a very important element in a retailer's

strategic mix. Inappropriate or indistinct images are undesirable to both retailers and their customers, thus it is critical for retailers to measure image accurately with realistic stimuli.

This paper begins with a review of the relatively recent retail store image research. Store types, attributes, subjects, and methodology are discussed. While several areas of opportunity exist for future research, the apparent lack of understanding, and the disagreement about how images are both formed and retrieved is developed.

Relevant imagery research from the field of Psychology is then introduced. Specifically, Kosslyn's theories on image formation, use, and retrieval are discussed. Several key ideas in this paper are based, at least in part, on this body of work. With ideas taken from both the Marketing and Psychological literature, a study is designed to help explain how subjects form and retrieve retail store images.

Affect is another topic that has been closely linked to retail store image (Zimmer and Golden 1988). To date, research linking affect, music, and image has been somewhat disappointing. However, I feel that these constructs have much to offer in terms of understanding consumers.

As the application of a different methodology in retail store image research resulted in findings differing from past results (Zimmer and Golden 1988), the use of another methodology, content analysis, to investigate affect may

well uncover some richness that has here-to-fore been hidden. A second area to be examined in this research project, then, will be the content analysis of subjects' affective states as they are exposed to the stimulus information.

Affect and music have been closely linked in past literature. Music will be manipulated as an independent variable, and its effect upon mood will be assessed as a third part of the proposed research.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 2 contains a detailed discussion of past retail store image literature and pertinent selections from imagery research in general. These two bodies of literature are then integrated into a discussion of several significant gaps or discrepancies in past research findings.

Emotion has also been closely linked to retail store image. Results from studies linking retail store image, emotion, and music are reviewed.

Based upon this literature review, hypotheses are enumerated. Hypotheses 1 and 2 involve retail store image formation and retrieval, while hypotheses 3 through 6 deal with various aspects of emotion and music.

Chapter 3 contains a discussion of the proposed methodology that will be used to test the hypotheses. A

videotape stimulus will be used to elicit responses from subjects. Content analysis will be used to test the hypotheses, and proposed procedures are presented.

Chapter 4 will consist of research results. Hypothesis tests will be reviewed and actual findings from this study will be presented.

Chapter 5 will summarize the findings and discuss the implications of the study's results. Future directions for both applied and practical research will be presented.

PREVIEW

CHAPTER 2--LITERATURE REVIEW

DEFINITIONS OF IMAGERY AND RETAIL STORE IMAGE

Imagery has been a difficult concept to define. Some years ago Richardson (1969) gave a working definition intended to cover all types of phenomenally-experienced imagery. Richardson's (1969) definition states that "Mental imagery refers to (1) all those quasi-sensory or quasi-perceptual experiences of which (2) we are self-consciously aware and which (3) exist for us in the absence of those stimulus conditions that are known to produce their genuine sensory or perceptual counterparts, and which (4) may be expected to have different consequences from their sensory or perceptual counterparts."

Richardson (1983) believes that, with the exception of the fourth characteristic, this definition is still sound. The reason for denying the fourth characteristic is the increasing evidence that self-initiated thought imagery of a concrete sensory-like kind can have consequences that appear to be indistinguishable from their genuine counterparts.

MacInnis and Price (1987) discuss the meaning of imagery. They quote Fodor (1981), who stated that "imagery is a conceptually distinct way of representing information, a way that is very like picturing and very unlike describing." These authors then offer their own definition

of imagery as (1) a process (not a structure) by which (2) sensory information is represented in working memory.

Horowitz (1983) calls any thought representation that has a sensory quality an image. Images can involve the senses of seeing, touch, smell, taste, and movement. "Image" refers to a specific experience.

A person can describe an image in many ways, including information about contents, vividness, clarity, color, shading, shapes, movement, foreground and background characteristics, and other spatial relationships. Furthermore, a person can often tell how the image entered his/her awareness, its duration, associated emotions, the relationship of the image to objects in the external world, efforts to change or dispel it, and the sequential or simultaneous arrangement of a series of images.

While people can describe image contents, they are usually unaware of all the underlying processes or motives which go into image formation. Psychologists focus on the cognitive use, psychodynamic meaning, and motivational aspects of image formation. Even the word "image" is problematic, because in its root meaning, it means "replica." It is important to remember that images are not merely imitations, but memory fragments, reconstructions, reinterpretations, and symbols that stand for objects, feelings, or ideas (Horowitz 1983).

Hoffman, Denis, and Ziesler (1983) support the notion that images are not holistic units, but rather cognitive representations constructed for specific purposes, which then decay.

More recently Dichter (1985) reinforced the idea that "image" refers to a global or overall impression. Dichter described both what image is and is not:

It describes not individual traits or qualities, but the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others . . . an image is not anchored in just objective data and details. It is the configuration of the whole field of the object (Dichter 1985).

While there still does not appear to be complete agreement in the literature of how mental imagery should be defined, Kosslyn (1980) feels that the absence of a precise definition of "image" hardly constitutes grounds for deciding on the ultimate ontological status of imagery or its role as a theoretical construct. Pylyshyn (1981) expresses concern that different theorists and experimenters operationalize imagery in different ways and that there is no single operation that can uniquely define the existence or functioning of the image. This is common in psychology and far from being undesirable. Most psychologists have become comfortable with the use of "converging operations" in attempts to define entities that are not subject to direct observation (Kosslyn 1983).

Definitions of Retail Store Image

Most retail store image studies begin with a discussion of Martineau's (1958) thoughts about store image. He stated:

The store personality or image is the way the store is defined in the shopper's mind, partly by its functional qualities and partly by an aura of psychological characteristics.

While this definition is not generally disputed, others have conceptualized retail store image in several different ways. Doyle and Fenwick (1974-75) conceptualized store image as the total perception of the store's characteristics. Marks (1976) felt that retail image is more than a sum of parts, it represents interaction among characteristics in the consumer's mind. Marks (1976) also states that an issue of the Journal of Retailing devoted to articles on store image showed much agreement among authors as to what store image is.

Jain and Etgar (1976, p. 61) define store image as "the personality a store presents to the public...it summarizes the information that customers have about the store and its characteristics, their feelings toward it, and any other impressions of the store which they have formed over time as shoppers." James, Durand, and Dreves (1976, p. 25) define store images as a "set of attitudes based upon evaluations of those store attributes deemed important by consumers."

This would seem to be a more behaviorally-oriented definition.

Jenkins and Forsythe (1980) felt that most authors stress that image is complex by nature, and consists of a combination of tangible and intangible factors that a consumer perceives to be present. More recently, Mazursky and Jacoby (1986, p. 147) proposed a definition which more explicitly addresses the process aspect of store image development. According to this definition, image is:

1. a cognition and/or affect (or set of cognitions and/or affects)
2. which is (are) inferred
3. either from a set of ongoing perceptions and/or memory inputs attaching to a phenomenon
4. and which represent(s) what that phenomenon signifies to an individual.

This definition emphasizes two major properties of image. First, in many instances the image is merely cognitive and does not contain an affective component. Second, this definition focuses on the process of image formation.

Tse (1983) concludes that there are three important axes which individuals may use to form a store's image, namely the store dimensions, the departments within a store, and the comparison of the store against others. Other researchers have also advanced the idea that a store's image is formed relative to other stores.

Hirschman (1981, p. 19) offered a definition that began to touch on the process of image development and formation.

According to this definition, store image is "a subjective phenomenon that results from the acquisition of knowledge about the store as it is perceived relative to other stores and in accordance with the consumer's unique cognitive framework."

Lindquist (1980) offered this statement as a view of store image:

The image of a store is a point in multidimensional attribute space. The dimensions of this space are functions of consumer perceived attributes of the store. Stores are placed in the space based on their relative positions along the attribute dimensions. Those stores that are most similar in image will be closer to one another in the space than those with less similar images.

Zimmer and Golden (1988) found that many subjects used prototypes and exemplars to describe their images of retail stores. Both use other stores as anchors in the description of a retail store's image. These images often contain some type of affective connotation (Cohen and Basu 1987). Thus, based upon both definitions and empirical evidence, it appears likely that store images are formed relative to other stores.

Oxenfeldt (1974) described image as an overall impression greater than the sum of its parts:

"An image is more than the sum of its parts...it represents interaction among characteristics and includes extraneous elements...it has some emotional content... a combination of factual and emotional material."

In summary, most definitions seem to echo Martineau's (1958) definition, at least in some derivative sense. We

have seen variations, but the idea of consumer perceptions based on functional and psychological attributes remains. Retail store image formation is a process, which may involve comparisons with other stores.

There is likely to be some affective or mood component involved in the creation of an individual's image of a store (Gardner 1985; Horowitz 1983; Jain and Etgar 1976; Oxenfeldt 1974; Zimmer and Golden 1988). It also seems that many definitions of image, and more specifically, of retail store image, have the common theme of a "global" image (Dichter 1985; Jain and Etgar 1976; Oxenfeldt 1974; Zimmer and Golden 1988). The addition of definitions that address the process of image formation and retrieval in a more global sense, along with affect, is needed.

Attributes

Traditional retail store image research has dealt with a wide array of store attributes. Many discussions of image attributes begin with Lindquist's (1974-75) list of nine dimensions. This list consists of:

1. Merchandise
2. Service
3. Clientele
4. Physical facilities
5. Convenience
6. Promotion
7. Store atmosphere
8. Institutional
9. Post-transaction satisfaction