THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF A STORE ENVIRONMENT: DEFINITION AND RELEVANCE FOR RETAILERS

ASPECTS NÉGATIFS DE L’ENVIRONNEMENT D’UN MAGASIN: DÉFINITION ET PERTINENCE POUR LES DÉTAILLANTS

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ABSTRACT

Despite the importance accorded to stores (Mohan and al, 2012; Vieira, 2012; Lunardo, 2011), interest to environmental stimuli that elicit negative reactions from customers during their shopping experience is still in its infancy. Especially as, the practitioners today are aware of the importance of the impact of environmental factors on their customers reactions and consequently they adopt appropriate strategies to create enjoyable shopping experiences. However, many theories like attribution theory, information overload, emphasize the importance of negative experiences, because they are more resented by customers than positive episodes (Oliver, 1997) and managerial implications are even more important. Therefore, this article defines and emphasizes the importance of the negative perception of a store environment highlighting the managerial and research implications.

KEY-WORDS: negative perception, retail environment,

1. INTRODUCTION

At a moment when perceived differences of traditional attributes like price, quality, and brands are less important, it seems that a different presentation of a retail space may play on customers’ loyalty. Manipulation of environmental variables like light, music, and colours may allow creating emotional states in shoppers, emotions that are likely to raise the retailer’s turnover (Kotler, 1974) and be a “strategic positioning tool” for retailers (Lunardo, 2011). Despite the increasing importance accorded to stores, and recently to service companies, interest in environmental stimuli that induce negative reactions in customers during their shopping experience is still in its infancy. Indeed, even if today practitioners are aware of the importance of the impact of environmental factors on emotional, cognitive and conative reactions of their customers and they adopt as a consequence appropriate strategies to create enjoyable shopping experiences, authors like D’Astous (2000) pointed to the importance of considering the “dark side” of this shopping experience.

The literature highlights scarcity of research addressing the negative perception of a retail environment. Only some studies (Llosa, 1996; D’Astous, 2000; Lichtlé and al, 2002; Helme-Guizon, 2002; Machleit and al, 2005; Arnold and al, 2005) provided some answers, though they did not provide an integrative framework. These studies, mostly qualitative in nature, stopped at identifying environmental factors that were perceived negatively, without testing their effects on customers’ behaviour. However, many theories like attribution theory stress the importance of negative experiences, because they are more resented by customers than positive episodes (Oliver, 1997). In this regard, different studies indicate that information overload that may result from negative characteristics of a retail
environment has an adverse effect on customers by inducing avoidance behaviour (Siberil, 1994). Similarly, satisfaction research assume that environmental variables do not contribute equally to customer satisfaction (Llosa, 1996; Lichte and al, 2002) and that dissatisfaction is even a more important process because it generates unequally important two responses from individuals (Hirshman, 1970). Indeed, dissatisfied customers develop either complaining or defection behaviors (they decide to leave). The latter being the most feared by retailers as customers may switch to competitors. Therefore, the aim of this article is to highlight the importance of considering the negative perception of a retail environment both academically as understanding better this phenomenon would enrich comprehension of consumers shopping behaviour and on a managerial level to provide courses of action, particularly in terms of positioning strategies for retailers.

2. THE RETAIL ENVIRONMENT: DEFINITION

2.1 The environment of a retail store: a polysemic concept

Whether physical, ecological, sociological, or psychological, environment takes a different meaning. In marketing, this polysemy occurs through the use of different terminologies to describe this environment. Thus, to identify environment researchers use concepts like "environment design", "atmosphere", "atmospherics", "physical surroundings", "environment cues," "designed space", "servicescape" "physical setting", "physical facilities" and "physical evidence".

Although there are several concepts that describe physical environment, there are conceptual differences between some concepts commonly used to describe environment, in particular environment, situation and atmosphere.

2.1.1 The concept of situation

A situation is recognized by most researchers as a point in time and space (Belk, 1975). Belk (1975), who was one of the first to focus on the concept of situation, defines situation as "all factors specific to a place and a period of observation that does not derive from personal knowledge (intra-individual) or reactions to a stimulus and has a systematic and demonstrable effect on the normal behaviour of the consumer." From this definition, Belk (1975) was able to establish a taxonomy of situational variables to describe an objective situation.

1 /The physical environment: it consists of observable features of the situation such as geographical location, setting, sound, odour, light, temperature.
2 /The social environment: it relates to interpersonal interactions, other persons present, their appearance and their role.
3 /The temporal perspective: it includes time of day, season of the year, time elapsed since the last purchase.
4 /The definition of roles: this dimension includes on the one hand intention to obtain information about a particular purchase, and on the other hand, the role performed by the consumer (eg does the customer buy a product to offer it or to use it by him/herself).
5 /Previous states: they concern the current states of individuals such as anxiety, excitement, fatigue.

In addition, Belk took over the SOR paradigm of Mehrabian and Russell (1974) and isolates situation from other stimuli. Thus, a clear distinction is made between people, objects and situations as behaviour-influencing source.

In sum, despite the difficulty of defining environment, there is nevertheless a recognition to assimilate situations as subsets of an environment since "... situation and environment (...) represent sources of a distinct influence on consumer behaviour and they should not be used as synonyms. Environment corresponds to a larger conception and represents a general behavioural environment, while situation is more like a momentary concept." (Belk, 1974). The definition presented above gives a strictly objective conception of situation. All items cited are purely descriptive and do not in any way take into account consumer perception of the situation.

Lutz and Kakkar (1975), prefer to speak of subjective or perceived status because the way a situation is perceived, interpreted and evaluated by the consumer may count like, if not more than, the situation itself as purely objective reality. They define situation as: "all internal responses of individuals or their interpretations of factors specific to a place or a period of observation that are not stable individual characteristics or stable environmental features and which have a demonstrable and systematic effect on the psychological processes of the individual or his/her observable behaviour."

Lutz and Kakkar (1975), conceived a theory around the impact of situation on behaviour. This impact is translated into responses resulting in three types of reactions. First a cognitive reaction that relates to all the features that a
consumer perceives in relation to a set of conditions and which generate a response like "I know and I am or am not aware". Second, an emotional reaction that results in the statement "I like" or "I do not like" and finally a behavioural response "I act" or "I do not act". Both authors therefore take into account the interpretation of the individual on the objective situation. As emphasized by Dubois (1994), these two approaches are not mutually exclusive: "... it all depends on the objective. If you are primarily interested in predicting the expected outcome in a particular situation, the objective approach is probably sufficient. If one seeks to explain the impact process, the perception of the situation may matter more than the situation itself".

If the concept of situation helps explain consumer behaviour, its operationalization is more limited. Indeed, it is only through a better management of the atmosphere of the place of purchase that it will be operationalised. The concept of atmosphere seems more action-oriented because it may affect consumer behaviour (Daucé, 2000).

2.1.2 The concept of store atmosphere
During the same era of Belk, Kotler (1974), was one of the first to look at atmosphere as a marketing tool. In fact, according to him marketers should use the aesthetic space as skilfully as they do with price, advertising and public relations. Thus, he defines atmosphere as "the conscious design of space to create certain effects in buyers. More specifically, the atmosphere is the effort to design purchasing environments in order for the buyer to produce specific emotional effects that enhance his/her purchase probability". Unlike situation, atmosphere is an organization of the shopping environment. Thus, different from the conception of Belk, it is not about describing a state to explain consumer behaviour, but to develop this state to encourage certain behaviours. Therefore, atmosphere is the result of the different perceived elements of the environment. Derbaix (1987), underlines more explicitly that atmosphere is an "affective-oriented organization of space since it aims at creating impressions of well-being, welcome, joy, discount ...". All this interest in atmosphere is justified by the fact that a store atmosphere is, in some situations, more influential than the product itself of the purchase decision, if not the main product in some cases (Kotler, 1974).

As we speak of objective and subjective situation, we should also speak of objective and subjective atmosphere. The Objective or designed atmosphere relates to "different sensorial qualities that the retailer seeks to assign to his/her artificial environment" (Kotler, 1974). Then, if we attach this to the previous definition, it is the retailer’s task to organize various atmospheric factors to elicit emotional reactions. Atmosphere management has thus the twofold objective; the one of facilitating the interface with the customer and the one to provide a medium to communicate on his/her positioning. The Subjective or perceived atmosphere "relates to all internal responses (cognitive, affective and physiological) of the individual to the atmosphere in which he/she is located" (Daucé, 2000). Therefore, it seems important for a retailer to know about this perception insofar the customer’s perceived atmosphere may not match that of the manager of the retail store (Kotler, 1974). In conclusion, while situation corresponds to a point in time and in space (Belk, 1975), atmosphere (from Greek atmos "vapour" and sphaira "sphere") is "the place in terms of impressions it produces on us, the influence it has on us" (Webster, 1979). Therefore, contrary to environment which may have tangible characteristics (natural or artificial) atmosphere is mostly intangible (Tenessek-Behi, 2009) since it evokes the "quality of what surrounds us" (Kotler, 1974). Thus, like situation, atmosphere is apprehended by the researchers (Chebat and Michon, 2003) as a subset of environment research current.

2.2 The environment of a retail store: a multi-faceted concept
In general, environment is defined as "The set of natural conditions (physical, chemical, biological) and cultural (sociological) that act on living organisms and human activities" (Le Petit Robert, 1979). Within environmental psychology, environment is "all set physical locations, configured spaces that offer constructed stimuli. The physical is what is constructed." (Fisher, 1996). Physical environment of a retail store refers to any element, whether physical (music, smells, colours, architectural elements) of a store that can be controlled in order to enhance or limit behaviour of its occupants, both consumers and employees (Eroglu and Machleit, 1993). The complex and dynamic nature of environment becomes clearer when this conceptualization is broader and includes not only physical structure but also the atmosphere created by the presence of other individuals (customers, employees). Thus, Bitner (1992), who became interested in the influence of atmosphere on both customers and employees, defines physical environment as "a complex set of different environmental attributes such as the distribution and functionality of displayers, the layout of the retail space, signs, symbols, and elements of the store atmosphere like temperature, light, music and scents that affect senses of individuals". However, care should be taken regarding controllability of

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environmental factors. Indeed, if retailers are able to control physical environment it is not quite the case for social environment (e.g. manage customers flow during peak hours) (Daucé and Rieunier, 2002).

2.2.1 The different typologies of environmental variables

The typologies having most often been used in the study of the influence of environment on consumer behaviour are those of Kotler (1974) and Baker (1986). Kotler (1974), was one of the first researchers to focus on the concept of atmosphere, its influence and its components. According to Kotler’s typology (1974), atmosphere is apprehended through the senses and described in terms of sensory elements (e.g. the typical atmosphere of a nightclub is bright and noisy). However, the fifth sense, taste, does not relate directly to atmosphere. Indeed, atmosphere is seen, heard, felt, touched but not tasted. Although Kotler’s classification (1974) has not been used as a general framework for the construction of the theory, it nevertheless stimulated and guided research on the impact of environmental factors on consumer behaviour (Areni and Kim 1994; Donovan and al, 1994). The Baker’s typology (1986) differs from that proposed by Kotler (1974), as it takes into consideration the social factor as an element in itself of physical environment. Indeed, taking into account the social factor seems very important to be ignored in understanding the influence of environment because of its crucial role in creating emotions such as excitement or frustration among customers (like in queues). Thus, the author divides environment into three components: ambient factors, design factors and social factors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>FEATURES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambient factors</td>
<td>Background conditions that exist below the level of our immediate awareness</td>
<td>Air quality</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>temperature</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>humidity</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>circulation/ventilation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Noise (level, pitch)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Scent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cleanliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design factors</td>
<td>Stimuli that exist at the forefront of our awareness</td>
<td>Aesthetic</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Architecture</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Color</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Scale</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Materials</td>
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<td>Texture, pattern</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Accessories</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Functional</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Layout</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comfort</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Signage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social factors</td>
<td>People in the environment</td>
<td>Other customers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Number</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Appearance</td>
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<td>Behavior</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Service personnel</td>
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<td>Number</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Appearance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Behavior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 1: The Baker’s Typology: Components of the Physical Environment  
Source : Baker (1986)
This review of the literature, that we do not claim exhaustive, highlights the importance of considering contextualisation of a retailing environment for each retailer, which makes it an elusive concept as shown in table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERMINOLOGY</th>
<th>DIMENSIONS</th>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ATMOSPHERICS | – Ambients cues  
– Social cues  
| SERVQUAL | - Reliability  
- Assurance  
- Tangibles  
- Empathy  
- Responsiveness | Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1988) |
| SERVICESCAPE | – Ambient conditions  
– Space / Function  
– Signs, Symbols and Artifacts | Bitner (1992) |
| ATMOSPHERICS | - External variables  
- General interior variables  
- Layout and design variables  
- Point of purchase and decoration variables | Berman & Evans (1995) |
| DINESERV | - Reliability  
- Responsiveness  
- Empathy  
- Assurance  
- Tangibles | Stevens, Knutson, & Patton (1995) |
| ATMOSPHERICS | - External variables  
- General interior variables  
- Layout and design variables  
- Point of purchase and decoration variables  
- Human variables | Turley & Milliman (2000) |
| DINESCAPE | - Facility aesthetic  
- Ambient conditions  
- Layout  
- Lighting  
- Table setting  
- Service staff | Ryu et Jang, 2007 |

TABLE 2: The different conceptualizations of the physical environment
3. The negative perception of a retail environment: definition and interest

3.1 Definition

Little research has focused on the environmental elements that are perceived negatively in a shopping experience. Only a few studies, like those of D’Astous and al (1996, 2000) on irritating environment and Aylott and Mitchell (1998) on shopping stressors brought some insights into this topic. Moreover, D’Astous and al (1996, 2000) proposed a typology of these irritants. This typology is the result of a study on the irritating factors of a purchase environment. Categorization of the 18 identified factors was performed on the basis of Baker’s typology (1986). This typology is different from previous classifications as it positions environmental factors from a negative side. D’Astous (2000) therefore insists on retailers’ priority efforts to be geared towards aspects negatively evaluated by customers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambient</th>
<th>Bad smell in the store</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Store is not clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Too hot inside the store or the shopping center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music inside the store is too loud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Unable to find what one needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arrangement of store items has been changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Store is too small</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Directions within the store are inadequate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No mirror in the dressing room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finding his/her way in a large shopping center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Crowding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turbulent kids around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being deceived by a salesperson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indifference of sales personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High-pressure selling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative attitude of sales personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sales personnel not listening to client’s needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unavailability of sales personnel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 3: D’Astous typology of the Shopping Irritants**


In view of what has been discussed above, we propose the following definition: A retail store environment, negatively perceived, consists of a set of physical and social attributes perceived negatively, which can be controlled wholly or partly by both retailers and customers, and which generate negative emotional, physiological, cognitive reactions and avoidance behaviour among individuals present in this space.

3.2 Why is it important for retailers to consider this negative perception of a retail environment?

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3.2.1 Disproportionate influence of negative information
As of the 1950s, research started investigating the role of negative information on customers’ decision processes. Thus, Menzel and Katz (1955) or Rogers (1962) noted that negative information may delay the adoption process for new products. Other researchers (Amrd, 1967; Darden and Reynolds, 1972) show that consumers are significantly more sensitive to negative information and therefore decline from purchasing the product. Moreover, it seems that the influence of unfavourable information is greater in evaluating services (Weinberger and al, 1980), in forming impressions of individuals (Anderson, 1965) and in generating more strong emotional reactions (Mizerski, 1982). However, this influence is moderated by information source (Weinberger and al, 1980). This disproportionate influence can be explained by the concept of surprise. In fact, according to information theory, negative information is by definition more shocking and surprising. Consequently, it would have more influence on forming evaluations (Mizerski, 1982).

In our case, environment is a source of information during an evaluation, made by the customer, of a product quality or price, (Bitner, 1992). Indeed, the type of equipment used, the intensity of the light, and the design are elements that provide information about the store and its members and therefore they contribute to environment interpretation (Davis, 1984). Because these elements are subject to multiple interpretations and perceptions, therefore it is important to know about negative perceptions. Indeed, taking into account any negative information is important as it plays a more important role than positive information in forming judgments because of higher cognitive processing (Mizerski, 1982) and that “the impact of negative reactions on overall satisfaction is strongly more negative than the positive impact of positive reactions” (Mano and Oliver, 1993).

3.2.2 Environment overload and avoidance behaviour
Milgram (1970) defines overload as "a situation in which the amount of environment stimuli exceeds the capacity that can be supported". In marketing, authors like Jacoby and al (1974) have highlighted the notion of "information overload." According to these researchers when the consumer receives an amount of information that exceeds his/her analysis ability, the quality of his/her decision weakens (Sibéril, 1994). Therefore, it is important to consider the negative characteristics of the store atmosphere because the resulting information overload has an adverse effect on the customer by encouraging avoidance behaviour (Sibéril, 1994). In the context of a study on density, Harrell and Hutt (1976) highlighted that customers under crowd effects, considered an "information overload", tend to reduce the time dedicated to shopping and limit conversations with employees and engage in a shorter and less evaluative decision-making process.

3.2.3 Contribution of asymmetric theory of satisfaction
Satisfaction can be defined as "an immediate post-purchase evaluative judgment or an emotional response to the transaction with the most recent firm" (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999). Despite the numerous studies on satisfaction given retailers’ objectives (loyalty ...) dissatisfaction is even more important to "treat" as it generates two unequally important responses from individuals (Hirshman, 1970). Either customers develop complaining behaviours or they decide to leave (defection). This second strategy is the dominant response in a dissatisfaction response and is the most serious for the company as customers switch to competitors.

The three-class model
Llosa (1996) became interested in the weight of the factors contributing to satisfaction. Her model incorporates two logical components that contribute to satisfaction; factors whose weight is fluctuating (asymmetric or nonlinear) and factors that remain stable (symmetric or linear). Therefore, she highlighted four elements:

- Basic Elements which poorly contribute to satisfaction when evaluated favourably by consumers and strongly when assessed unfavourably.
- Additional Elements which highly contribute to satisfaction when evaluated favourably by consumers and marginally when evaluated unfavourably.
- Key elements which strongly contribute to satisfaction regardless of their assessment by the consumer.
- Secondary elements which whatever their evaluation have no crucial role in satisfaction.

In sum, retailers should focus their efforts on improving the basic elements and maintaining key elements. On the other hand, it seems that minimizing dissatisfaction attitudes is more important than maximizing satisfaction due to their uneven effects on their image and market share.

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4. Managerial Implications
Retailers try continuously to find new strategies enabling them to challenge competition by developing a competitive advantage and this in view of increasing and maintaining the most number of customers. Traditionally, there are many techniques used: promotions, animations, events … Nevertheless, it is important for retailers to consider customers’ perception inside their outlets because they may benefit to reach their objectives and score a competitive advantage. Then, retailers have two options: either reduce or eliminate sources of negative reactions. The ideal would be to eliminate, however it is important to remember that environment consists of partially controllable elements. Thus, retailers do not have absolute control over mainly the social factor, both staff and customers. Then, at this level, strategies to reduce their negative impact are possible. However, for the other elements, the retailer may either reduce or eliminate them.

The main strategy to adopt is to reduce sources of negative emotions to promote positive emotions. Indeed, Mehrabian (1976) points out that when an environment is unpleasant, it is necessary to improve purchasing behaviour by reducing stimulations caused by this environment. However, we believe it is important to address all of these negatively perceived attributes. Retailers should bear in mind that, as pointed out by Solomon (1985), environment dimensions taken as a whole may be compared to packaging. Indeed, similar to packaging of a product, environment dimensions are able to convey a comprehensive picture and to suggest the potential use and quality of a service.

5. Research Possibilities
The review of the literature reveals the scarcity as well as importance of a negative perception of a retail environment. Indeed, the different theories underline the interest in better understanding the origin and consequences of this negative perception experienced by consumers during their shopping experiences. Accordingly, several research possibilities seem plausible.

5.1 Exploring the Negative Perception of a Retail Environment as an Established Concept in Itself
Previous studies stood behind in identifying the different forms of atmospheric variables that induce a positive emotional state and consequently generate an engaging behaviour towards the outlet. Negative reactions have been only studied by simple opposition. Against these assumptions, negative perception of a retail environment should be object of much research in order to better use it in understanding customers. Indeed, taking into account negative perception as an independent variable is justified by its great influence on behaviours. Research pointed to predominance of a negative perception (compared to positive perception) of a retail environment on forming evaluations (Mizersky, 1982). Moreover, it seems that negative experiences are often the most emotional and they are easily and frequently remembered than positive experiences (Folkes, 1988).

5.2 Adoption of the Evaluative Approach
Researchers have often adopted the atomised approach. Then, they applied it to identify the influence of each environmental stimulus on affective, cognitive and behavioural reactions (Bellizi, and al, 1983; Spangenberg and al, 1996; Eroglu and Machleit, 1993; Sibéral 1994; Dion-Le Mee, 1999; Daucé, 2000; Rieunier, 2000). More often, these researchers fall behind in studying the influence of the different attributes of the stimulus under investigation on affective states, in particular pleasure and stimulation. Moreover, these authors tried to understand customers’ behaviour in terms of their real behaviour like number of items purchased, amount spent, time spent and coping strategies. Then, there was, despite contribution of atomised research, a limitation to overcome. Indeed, studying one environmental variable does not allow for considering a customer’s behaviour in one outlet because his/her environment perception is done in a holistic manner. Subsequently, many studies are trying to simultaneously identify the influence of environmental factors. However, handling of all atmospheric factors is very difficult to implement and research has mostly adopted a joint approach (Karray, 2000; Chebat and Michon, 2004, Spangenberg and al, 2005). However, some researchers (Daucé and Rieunier, 2002; Lemoine, 2003) emphasize the need to consider environment in a holistic manner to replicate most reality.
However, the definition of a negative perception of a retailing environment we proposed joins the approach which considers perception of an environment is done in a holistic manner. Then, a retail environment is considered as a “whole” whose elements may not be disassociated from analysing the influence of the environment on customers’ behaviour as suggested by some researchers (Baker and al, 2002; Lemoine, 2003). Then, it is with this perspective that the evaluative approach seems to be relevant to bring about additional information that helps us understand customers’ behaviour inside a store. Remember that even if most research use the term “holistic approach”, we prefer like Bonnin and Goudey (2012) to use the term “evaluative approach” which seems to us the closest to the reality experienced by consumers. Indeed, the term “holistic” supposes considering all environmental elements, yet it seems difficult to apprehend all present stimuli.

5.3 Testing the "Avoidance" Model Proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974)

Despite interest in the study of environment in a holistic manner, it seems that these studies (Baker and al, 2002; Lemoine, 2003) do not address customer-environment interaction using the SOR model as developed by these authors (Ryu, 2005), even if it is the starting point in their research. On the one hand, they do not study the influence of the different emotions proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) and on the other hand, they do not consider avoidance behaviour. Then, few studies have integrated dominance in their conceptual models, considering it as insufficient to explain approach/avoidance behaviour (Rieunier, 2000; Lemoine, 2003). However, Yani-de-Soriano and Foxall (2006) show through their study that dominance is an emotion to take into account when evaluating affective states because it allows explaining approach/avoidance behaviour. Moreover, Mehrabian (1996) insist on the three-dimensional structure of emotions as this structure allows for, better than the bidimensional structure, better considering diversity of emotions felt by individuals. Furthermore, this conceptualisation enables distinguishing between close emotions like sadness and anger. In the same line of thinking, Havlena and al (1989) show also that the PAD scale compared to Plutchik typology (1980) is able to better explain and capture diversity of affective responses during a consumption experience and that it is recommended when control perceived by consumers in an environment is studied (Machleit and Eroglu, 2000).

5.4 Designing a Measurement Instrument

One of the problems of sensorial marketing is lack of a retail environment taxonomy, explained by a contextualisation problem. Thus, the diversity of existing scales on this topic: Atmospherics (Baker, 1987), SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988) Servicescape (Bitner, 1992) Store atmospherics (Baker, Grewal, and Parasuraman, 1994), Atmospherics (Berman and Evans, 1995) DINESERV (Stevens, Knutson, and Patton, 1995) Servicescape (Wakefield and Beldgett, 1996) Atmospherics (Turley and Milliman, 2000) TANGSERV (Raajpoot, 2002) DINESCAPE (Ryu and Jang, 2007).Therefore, it seems important to develop a tool tailored to measure the negative perception of a retail environment.

6. Conclusion

Lack of research on the influence of an unpleasant environment may be explained by the fact that the aim of any retailer is to increase profits. It is then clear that no retailer like to have a negative environment in his/her outlet. However, there remains an important fact. As noted by Bitner (1992): "One of the challenges in defining environment rests on the fact of developing the approach behaviour of individuals and encouraging positive social interactions while taking into account the fact that the optimal design for an individual or a group may not be optimal for others". This implies that the notion of perception is crucial. As we previously reported, there is a difference between objective and perceived atmosphere. Therefore, even if a retailer thinks intuitively to manage the store atmosphere by diffusing an odour or music, it remains a fact that the atmosphere may be negatively perceived by customers. Instead of getting an approach behaviour, customers adopt an avoidance behaviour.

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