

The Consumer's Experience Concept in Fashion Retail Outlet: Proposal for a Measurement Scale

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Abstract

This paper aims to open the "black box" of the shopping experience concept by identifying its structural dimensions via the construction of a measurement scale. An initial decontextualised structure of the consumer's experience concept in the retail outlet is obtained. To confirm this structure, we tested it in stores specializing in the sale of clothing products and accessories. We obtained a second-order global construct encompassing three dimensions: pleasure, sensory stimulation and immersion. Reliability and construct validity has been verified. Predictive validity has also been verified by testing the impact of in-store lived experience on impulses buying and re-experience need.

Keywords

shopping experience, experience concept, scale construction, atmospheric variables, retail outlet

1. Introduction

Whether the consumer is in the ordinary (hypermarkets, hard discount stores) or extraordinary (themed stores), actual (in the aisle of a store) or virtual commercial sphere (in front of a computer screen), he goes through different types of experiences due to the actions put in place by the retail industry. In a commercial context, retail outlet managers combine marketing mix variables with atmospheric variables (Kotler, 1973) to put in place an experiential environment where consumers will immerse themselves (Carù & Cova, 2003) and create their own experience (Carù & Cova, 2007).

Retail outlet management has evolved from a functional style to a style more focused on the intangible and hedonic values (Filser, 2002). Several publications have addressed techniques likely to be deployed by the retailers to transform traditional retail outlets into experience production sites (Bouchet, 2004). Hence, the terms store dramatisation and showcasing (Carù & Cova, 2006), experiential platform (Carù & Cova, 2007) and value of experience (Holbrook, 1999; Fernandez et al., 2009). However, the diverse forms of the consumer's experiences in the retail outlet have not yet been highlighted (Bonnin, 2002; Spence et al., 2014). Only the traces of the consumer's experience are perceptible and quantifiable, that's why experience is studied in terms of its consequences, adopting a value approach (Holbrook,

1999; Aurier et al., 2004; Mencarelli, 2008; Fernandez et al., 2009; Filser, 2009), referred to as a “black box” (Roederer, 2008). Several authors have looked at the shopping experience concept without however identifying its structural dimensions (Ladwein, 2004; Carù & Cova, 2006; Badot & Filser, 2007). In Line with Arnould et al. (2002) several researchers support also the importance of multisensory atmospherics in shaping consumer experience and their effects on purchase behaviour and commercial performance of companies (Spence et al., 2014; Ballantine et al., 2015). By multisensory cues, firms can cultivate a distinctive customer experience and achieve a competitive advantage (Rainforest Café or Starbucks) via the creation of a more sensory customer experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Spence et al., 2014; Ballantine et al., 2015).

Thus, the objective of this research is to attempt to open the “black box” of the shopping experience concept by identifying its structural dimensions via the construction of a measurement scale specific to shopping experiences in fashion retail outlet.

The paper is structured as follows: in section 2 we review the literature on the shopping experience. In section 3, we explain the method of the scale development. Section 4 is dedicated to testing the impact of the shopping experience content on impulses buying and re-experience need in order to verify the predictive validity of the scale. The results, followed by conclusion, future directions and research limitations are respectively discussed in sections 5 and 6.

2. Literature Review

There are two distinct stages in the conceptualization of the shopping experience: the context of the experience and the consumer’s perception of the experience (Carù & Cova, 2006).

The context of the experience put in place has been presented by these authors as a “combination of a stimulus (the product) and stimuli (environment, activities) with a view to creating an experience”. The most extreme sense of the experiential context produced by the company is the notion of company-driven experience as identified by Carù and Cova’s typology (2007). They distinguish between three types of experience: company-driven experience, experience co-driven by the consumer and the company, and consumer-driven experience.

Company-driven experience as part of a shopping experience is consistent with the steering of the experience by retail outlet managers. They plot their services and accessorize their goods to create memorable events for the consumer (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). By combining marketing mix variables and atmospheric variables (Kotler, 1973), this type of store intends to provide “turnkey” life experiences or ready to live experiences (Filser, 2002). Companies only implement an experiential context in which it hopes consumers will immerse themselves (Carù & Cova, 2003). Therefore, the consumer remains “the producer of his own experience” (Kozinets, 2002; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Roederer, 2008). The experience occurs within an environment which is out of the company’s control (e.g., at home as part of an Internet purchase), which is far from being the case for all shopping experiences. Consequently, we choose to take a position in the middle of these two continuums

(company-driven experience and consumer-driven experience) and accept that consumption experiences are jointly produced by the consumer and the company. Thus, we can consider the context of the experience put in place by the retail industry as a simple platform allowing consumers to create their own experience (Carù & Cova, 2007). In the same vein, Spence et al. (2014) also made a focus on the impact of sensory cues on cognitive and affective consumer behaviour that strongly influence his shopping experience. Sensory cues also affect the utilitarian and hedonic values experienced by consumers like entertaining, escape and self-gratification (Chebat et al., 2014; Ballantine et al., 2015) highlighted how the holistic atmospheric cues encountered in a retail environment contribute to the creation of a retail experience. The way of how consumers perceive multisensory stimulation is critical to understanding and explaining customer experience (Krishna, 2012).

Going beyond the one-dimensional perspective of experience economy pioneers (Filser, 2002) is becoming crucial for gaining a perspective which takes into account the interaction between the consumer and his environment (Ladwein, 2002; Ballantine et al., 2015). Consumers are, in fact immersed in an economy experience setting where they are looking for superior experiences when they buy products. To achieve superior experiences companies should find ways to offer more hedonic than utilitarian values (Blazquez, 2014).

The key issue is no longer the emotion induced but rather how consumers appropriate the space and immerse themselves in an experience, which can be qualified as absorbing (Carù & Cova, 2003; Chebat et al., 2014).

As part of this research, we consider the shopping experience as part of a phenomenological approach (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982) so as to identify its structural dimensions through the construction of a measurement scale.

3. Method

To build this scale, we follow the steps of Churchill's paradigm (1979), updated by Roehrich (1993), while taking into account the main recommendations of Rossiter (2002) (see Table 1 below). We consider our construct as a second-order abstract attribute which can be associated with a trait (Rossiter, 2002).

Table 1. Procedure for the Creation of a Scale Measuring the Shopping Experience Concept (Churchill's, 1979)

Stages	Title	Descriptions
1st stage	Construct definition	Literature review
		Semi-structured in-depth interviews
2nd stage	Item generation	Literature review, semi-structured in-depth interviews

	1st data collection	1st sample of 208 students
3rd stage	Measurement structure verification and sorting	Exploratory factor analysis Cronbach's Alpha
	2nd data collection	2nd sample of 250 students
4th stage	Measurement structure verification and sorting	Exploratory factor analysis, Cronbach's Alpha
		Confirmatory factor analysis
		Joreskog's Rho coefficient
		Fornell & Larcker's procedure
5th stage	3rd data collection	3rd sample of 178 shoppers
	Measurement structure verification and sorting	Exploratory factor analysis, Cronbach's Alpha
	4th data collection	4 th sample of 373 shoppers
6th stage	Measurement structure verification and sorting	Exploratory factor analysis, Cronbach's Alpha
		Confirmatory factor analysis
		Joreskog's Rho coefficient
		Fornell & Larcker's procedure

3.1 Definition of the Construct Domain

The consumption experience is the result of the interaction between a person and a consumption object in a given situation (Punj & Stewart, 1983). Roederer (2008) identifies three phases of a generic experience: pre-experience, the core experience and post-experience. These three phases are reminiscent of Arnould et al. (2002) conceptualization of the four-stage experiential consumption generation process: the anticipated experience, the purchasing experience (choice, payment and services), the experience itself or core experience (sensation, satisfaction, flow) and the memory experience (memories, images).

It should be noted that, as part of this research, we exclusively focus on conceptualizing the concept (core) of the shopping experience.

Based on Heilbrunn's research (2005), Roederer (2008, 2012) proposes conceptualizing the concept (core) of a decontextualised experience. She identified three dimensions of the experience concept: a physical or sensory dimension, a praxeological dimension and a rhetorical dimension. These three dimensions will be used to theorize the structural dimensions of the shopping experience concept.

3.1.1 The Physical and Sensory Dimension

Roederer (2008) defines experience as "a sort of combination of actions and thoughts with a physical dimension which covers all sensory aspects involved in an interaction between a subject and a consumer object in a given context, resulting in the symbolic or actual consumption of a product or

service, within the commercial or non-commercial sphere of consumption”. Individuals respond to their surrounding environment via these senses. The individual’s sensations and perceptions lead to affective and cognitive responses and affect their emotional states (Roederer, 2008). The physical dimension also concerns how the individual relates to space. This is referred to as the appropriation of space, the location of the experience (Bonnin, 2002). Those memories of past experiences (sensory memory) also interact with sensations and perceptions to form the physical dimension of the experience (Roederer, 2008).

3.1.2 The Praxeological Dimension or “Action” of the Experience

Roederer (2008) uses the term “praxeological” to refer to the consumer’s action on space and their role as an active builder of their own experience. The consumer’s experiences are developed through actions (Ladwein, 2002) and are best expressed in so-called optimal, “flow-state” experiences (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Three types of action have been identified: action on the object (object of the experience), action on the time of the experience and interaction with other persons (Roederer, 2008).

3.1.3 The Rhetorical Dimension of Experience

This dimension relates to the meaning given to the experience (production of meaning) (Roederer, 2008). The individual is constantly interacting with his/her environment, attempting, via a symbolic interpretation phenomenon, to attribute some meaning to it (Le Breton, 2004). The actual or fictitious consumption experience is interpreted by the consumer to attribute meaning via a sign system. This sign system can make a simple experience extraordinary or distinctive and containing a symbolic meaning (metaphorical meaning) which exceeds its usage value.

3.2 Generation of a Sample of Statements

To identify the shopping experience concept and to generate a list of items, we conducted two types of interviews:

- 1) In-depth interviews of 50 minutes were conducted outside the retail outlet, targeting seven individuals with different profiles (4 women and 3 men aged between 20 and 60). We asked them to recall the last visit to a fashion store which they particularly appreciated (object of the experience). They also had to describe their emotions and thoughts.
- 2) Semi-structured interviews in the retail outlet, of 20 minutes, amongst a sample of 23 interviewees’ representative of the area’s population (shopping area with a concentration of all kinds of fashion stores).

A list of 75 items is obtained. This list is enhanced by literature and the researcher’s feedback (Note 1). We ultimately obtained an exhaustive list of 105 items.

To identify the structural dimensions of the shopping experience concept, we have asked to two experts in consumer behaviour to distinguish components of sense. Five consensual dimensions had been identified.

Sensory dimension: Sensory responses include basic responses relating to the movements and

attractions of music for example. As part of the shopping experience, this sensory response manifests itself through touch (touching the product), smell (the smell of the store, products or materials like perfume or leather), sight, hearing (background music) and taste for certain product categories such as food products.

Imaginative dimension: The notion of images fits into various marketing situations. It relates to the recollection of objects, sounds, flavours, fragrances, characters, events triggered by marketing stimuli such as advertisements, packaging or the atmosphere of retail outlets (Gavard-Perret & Helme-Guizon, 2003). As part of the shopping experience, the imaginative response concerns all the images associated with the location, product or overall experience. These images can relate to the memories of similar products or experiences, or fictitious images inspired by the experience (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982).

Emotional dimension: According to Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), emotional responses represent a motivational phenomenon with expressive and experiential neuro-physiological characteristics. According to these authors, the search for emotion can be a stimulus for the consumption of the experiential product. Others talk about emotions felt by the consumer when visiting the store. They emphasize the role of the store's atmosphere in the creation of a feeling of pleasure and enjoyment for the customer (Russel & Mehrabian, 1976; Lemoine, 2003; Lichtlé & Plichon, 2004, 2009).

Analytical dimension: As part of a shopping experience, the analytical response relates to all the consumer's potential analysis and reflection efforts to understand the hidden meaning behind certain actions undertaken by the retail industry. This analysis effort is similar to an entertaining, experience-creating activity.

Experiential dimension: The experiential response is qualified by Hirschman (1983) as "projective behaviour" as it allows the projection of an individual in a particular role or a character via playful activities. Carù and Cova (2003) talk about immersion as a way to access to the experience. They emphasize the concept of appropriation (of space or the experience) as a prerequisite for the immersion. To refine our list of items, items were submitted to other marketing experts. Four experts specialized in consumer behaviour assessed each item of the obtained list. For that purpose a three-point scale (Clearly representative of the construct/More or less representative/Absolutely not representative) was used (Zaichkowsky, 1985). An item is only retained when it collected at least 2 positive or moderate reactions. After deleting some redundant, complex or leading to confusion items, a list of 37 items was ultimately selected. Retained will be the object of the first data collection.

3.3 First Data Collection

Before submitting the measurement scale to a sample of consumers on a retail outlet, we have chosen to test it among students. In fact, this young population (19-24 years) represents almost 50% of a population attend the boutiques of clothing and accessories (Note 2). During the first collection and based on Peter's recommendations (1981) we administered our questionnaire, consisting of 37 items, to a sample of 208 management science students (100 males and 108 females). Our objective being to

obtain a first decontextualized structure without taking into consideration the type of fashion retail outlet (specialized shops, section in a hypermarket...). The responses were given on a 5-point Lickert scale, ranging from “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree”.

Measurement refinement: To refine our scale, we conducted Exploratory Factorial Analysis (EFA) using SPSS 16 software. We obtained a KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) equal to 0.776. Its value is deemed good. We conducted a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with an oblique rotation, by deciding to only keep the items contributing more than 50% to the formation of an axis, while taking into account the communality criterion. We therefore obtained five factors: emotional-pleasure (4 items), emotional-dominance (2 items), sensory (4 items), immersion (3 items) and analytical (3 items). The examination of total explained variance reveals that these five factors account for 65% of the information. The values of Cronbach’s Alpha relative to each factor are deemed acceptable, and are respectively 0.78 for the pleasure dimension, 0.66 for the dominance dimension, 0.79 for the sensory dimension, 0.67 for the immersion dimension and 0.66 for the analytical dimension. In light of the results, we found that PCA fails to highlight the imaginative dimension and the stimulation component of the emotional dimension. Furthermore, the five dimensions of our scale do not feature a sufficient number of items to support a second sorting process during the confirmatory phase. Consequently, inspired by Roehrich’s procedure (1993), we decided to enhance our refined scale with the items of our initial list before the refinement of experts. This new list of 53 items will be the object of a second data collection.

3.4 Second Data Collection

Second collection is carried out amongst a new sample of 259 students, from the same original population as that of the first collection.

Measurement refinement: Having ensured that the data is suitable for factor analysis (KMO = 0.8), we conducted a PCA. As expected, we obtained seven factors, each corresponding with the seven theoretical dimensions of the shopping experience concept. These seven factors account for nearly 60% of the information variance contained in all the items of the questionnaire. Cronbach’s Alpha values relative to each factor are deemed acceptable, with values of approximately 0.75 for the emotional-stimulation dimension, 0.73 for the analysis dimension, 0.78 for the sensory dimension, 0.67 for the immersion dimension, 0.65 for the imaginative dimension, 0.75 for the emotional-pleasure dimension and 0.69 for the emotional-dominance dimensions.

However, the fifth (imaginative) and seventh dimension (dominance), each made up of four items, can be removed from the structure of our scale as the value of their Cronbach’s Alpha is less than 0.7 (respectively 0.65 and 0.69). The fourth dimension (immersion), made up only of three items and for which Cronbach’s Alpha is less than the acceptability threshold (0.67), can be retained at this stage of the analysis, as this reliability indicator is fairly sensitive to the number of items (Peterson, 1995).

Measurement confirmation: To confirm the factor structure of our scale, we conducted a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using the AMOS 16 software. CFA takes into account random errors and

measurement errors by supposing they are independent. We used the Maximum Likelihood method as an estimation method. This procedure is based, however, on the assumption that the data used is multinormal. Therefore we initially verified data normality (Mardia's Criterion) and detected a multinormality problem. We used the bootstrap procedure to solve this problem (Note 3).

CFA reveals the existence of five dimensions for the shopping experience concept: the emotional-pleasure (2 items), emotional-stimulation (2 items), immersion (2 items), sensory (3 items) and analytical dimensions (2 items). The link between each dimension and its component items is significantly different from zero (as attested by the T-tests associated with the standardised factor scores which are higher than 1.96). The values of Joreskog's Rho coefficient relative to each dimension are good and guarantee the reliability of the five dimensions (respectively 0.7, 0.72, 0.73, 0.78 and 0.67).

To evaluate convergent and discriminant validity, we adopted Fornell and Larcker's procedure (1981). Convergent validity is verified if the items of the same dimension account for more than 50% of the variance. In this case, convergent validity is established for all five dimensions (respectively 0.53, 0.57, 0.59, 0.55 and 0.52).

Discriminant validity is verified if each dimension shares more variance with its indicators than with another dimension (the squared correlation between two dimensions is less than the convergent validity of each dimension), which is the case in our study.

The quality of the model's suitability for the data is verified by examining overall adjustment indicators. The values of the adjustment indicators relating to our model are acceptable ($X^2 = 43.42$; $P = 0.35$; $X^2/dl = 1.27$; $GFI = 0.97$; $TLI = 0.97$; $RMR = 0.057$; $RMSEA = 0.033$) and attest to the fact that the scale is well suited to the data.

After these two data collections we can conclude that the shopping experience concept consists of five dimensions: emotional-pleasure, emotional-stimulation, sensory, immersion and analytical. However, we notice that the structure of this scale is not entirely satisfactory, as it includes a limited number of items for each of these five factors (two items per factor).

To obtain the most suitable measurement, we asked two experts in the retail industry and in consumer behaviour to classify the initial list of items prior to the sorting process, in accordance with the five dimensions obtained in response to the results of this initial exploratory phase. Only the items on which these two experts reached a consensus were selected. We finally obtained a list of 35 items representative of the five dimensions of the consumer's experience concept in the retail outlet. This list will be subject to a third data collection amongst a sample of consumers in the retail outlet.

3.5 Third Data Collection

The objective of the third data collection is to refine this new list of items. It was conducted amongst a sample of 178 shoppers in Tunis's Géant Casino shopping centre, Tunisia (40% men, 60% women, 55% aged 20 to 29, 35% students). This shopping centre features more than 40 national (Dexit, Blue Island, Sasio, etc.) and international chains (Zara women, men and children, Mango, Guess, Etam, Gap,

Aldo, Motivi, Benetton, Sebago, Geox, etc.), specializing in the sale of clothing and accessories. The consumers were interviewed as they left the store. The responses were given on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”.

Measurement refinement: A PCA with oblique rotation (factor dependency assumption) is conducted to identify the dimensionality of the construct of our study. The results of Bartlett’s test (Chi-square = 1210; sign = 0.000) and the KMO indicator (0.813) are satisfactory, consequently data is suitable factor analysis. To identify the structural dimensions of our construct, we relied on Kaiser’s criterion, which consists of only selecting the dimensions with specific values greater than one. The communality criterion was respected. Similarly, the items causing a drop in the value of Cronbach’s Alpha were deleted; this was not detrimental to the validity of the scale concept (Rossiter, 2002).

A fairly solid structure of four dimensions finally emerged: a pleasure dimension, a sensory-stimulation dimension, an immersion dimension which evokes escapism, and an analytical dimension. These four factors obtained account for more than 62% of the explained variance (Table 2).

Table 2. Results of PCA (3rd Collection)

Items	Component*				Communality
	1	2	3	4	
You felt serene in this store (rested)	.81				0,57
You felt good in this store	.80				0,66
You were content in this store	.74				0,63
You were happy in this store	.70				0,61
You felt pleasure in this store	.65				0,66
You were trying to understand the store layout (sections, aisles, product arrangement, presentation and showcasing)		.83			0.70
You were trying to understand the reasons why this store adopted certain types of action in terms of sales force (number, attitude and style of salespersons, coordination, etc.)		.82			0.67
You were wondering about the store’s functionality (access to products, circulation, display, signage)		.80			0.65
You were trying to understand the reasons why this store put in place this particular type of atmosphere (light, temperature, music, cosiness, etc.)		.72			0.58
You were disconnected from reality	.90				0.57
You felt like you were travelling	.76				0.66

You entered a new world	.74			0.63
You lost yourself in this store	.73			0.61
It was as if you were mesmerised by everything in this store	.60			0.66
You felt stimulated in this store	.50			0.69
You wanted to look at most of the products displayed			-.88	0.69
You wanted to touch most of the products displayed			-.77	0.60
You were attracted by everything in this store			-.66	0.51
You were transported by the atmosphere of this store			-.51	0.52
You were amazed by everything around you in this store			-.47	0.60
KMO	0.813			
Bartlett's test	0.000			
% of explained variance	9.2	13.3	32.3	7.2
Internal consistency: Cronbach's Alpha	0.84	0.81	0.85	0.79

* 1. pleasure, 2. analysis, 3. immersion, 4. sensory stimulation.

3.6 Fourth Data Collection

To confirm the factor structure of our scale, a fourth data collection is conducted amongst a new sample of 373 consumers (47% women and 53% men, 55% aged 18 to 24 and 18% aged 25 to 34, 50% students), from the same original population as that of the third collection. Customers were interviewed as they left the store.

Measurement refinement: An EFA (principal component analysis and reliability analysis) helped us identify the same factor structure as that obtained during our previous analysis (Table 3).

Table 3. Results of PCA (4th Collection)

Items	Component*				Communality
	1	2	3	4	
You felt serene in this store (rested)	.907				0.70
You were content in this store	.832				0.75
You felt good in this store	.806				0.68
You were happy in this store	.780				0.71
You felt pleasure in this store	.757				0.70
You were trying to understand the store layout (sections, aisles, product arrangement, presentation and showcasing)		.887			0.70

You were wondering about the store's functionality (access to products, circulation, display, signage)	.842	0.71		
You were trying to understand the reasons why this store put in place this particular type of atmosphere (light, temperature, music, cosiness)	.834	0.77		
You were trying to understand the reasons why this store adopted certain types of action in terms of sales force (number, attitude and style of salespersons, coordination, etc.)	.801	0.65		
You were disconnected from reality	-.890	0.74		
You felt like you were travelling	-.830	0.71		
You entered a new world	-.793	0.70		
You were attracted by everything in this store	-.920	0.84		
You were amazed by everything around you in this store	-.890	0.83		
KMO	0.838			
Bartlett's test	0.000			
% of explained variance: 73%	33.9	20.3	11	7.8
Internal consistency: Cronbach's Alpha	0.89	0.86	0.80	0.83

* 1. pleasure, 2. analysis, 3. immersion, 4. sensory stimulation.

Measurement confirmation: A CFA is conducted. We have chosen the maximum likelihood method as an estimation method, further to a bootstrap process. Three models designed to measure the shopping experience concept were put to the test: a first independent model, a second model where the dimensions are correlated with one another and a third model where the dimensions represent indicators of a higher order concept (2nd order model). These three models will be compared using a CFA to choose the model best suited to the data. It should however be pointed out that the use of the second-order model is conditional upon a number of conditions (Roussel et al., 2002) which we reiterate:

- The literature highlights the multidimensionality of the studied construct;
- The average correlation between first-order dimensions must be around 0.6;
- The structural links between the different first-order dimensions and the second-order concept must be greater than 0.5.

For the measurement of the shopping experience concept inside a fashion retail outlet, as the first condition has been already verified in the part related to the construct definition, we proceed to the verification of the second condition (Table 4).

Table 4. Correlations between First-Order Dimensions

	Pleasure	Sensory-stimulation	Immersion	Analysis
Pleasure	1			
Sensory-stimulation	0.55	1		
Immersion	0.43	0.44	1	
Analysis	0.09	0.16	0.23	1

Only the correlation between pleasure, sensory-stimulation and immersion dimensions comes near 0.5, with an average of around 0.47. The correlations with the analyzed dimension are relatively weak, which leads us to believe that only the pleasure, sensory-stimulation and immersion dimensions could be indicators of the shopping experience concept (second-order concept). Even though the average correlation between these three first-order dimensions is lower than the 0.6 threshold (Roussel et al., 2002), it can be considered sufficient insofar as, “to date, no threshold has been scientifically debated” (Roussel et al., 2002). The 0.6 threshold is only a proposal made by these authors.

Consequently, to guarantee the existence of a second-order structure, we examine the structural links between the four first-order dimensions (pleasure, sensory-stimulation, immersion and analysis) and the second-order concept (shopping experience concept) (Table 5).

Table 5. Results of the CFA of the Scale of the Shopping Experience Concept

Explained variances	1 st order constructs	2 nd order constructs	Factor loadings
0.50	Pleasure		0.71
0.59	Sensory-stimulation	Shopping experience concept	0.77
0.36	Immersion		0.60
0.04	Analysis		0.21

The factor contribution of first-order constructs to the formation of the second-order construct exceeds 0.5 and its explained variance values are fairly significant, with the exception of the analysis construct. In light of the results obtained, we choose to remove the fourth analysis dimension. This decision can be justified by the limited factor contribution of the analysis dimension (0.21) to the formation of the second-order construct, and weak explained variance (R^2) (0.04).

Thus, we can conclude that the shopping experience concept is a second-order construct made up of three dimensions: pleasure, sensory stimulation and immersion.

Comparing the indicators of the suitability of the three dimension model for the data supports this result ($X^2 = 37.07$, $ddl = 24$, $GFI = 0.98$, $AGFI = 0.96$, $RMSEA = 0.038$, $CFI = 0.99$, $X^2/ddl = 1.54$).

The explained variance percentages (R^2) relating to first-order factors are fairly satisfactory. They are equal to 0.53 for pleasure, 0.58 for sensory-stimulation and 0.34 for immersion. Reliability levels are

also satisfactory, with all Joreskog's Rho values greater than 0.8 and an overall value of 0.73. The internal consistency of the second-order construct is therefore verified.

To evaluate convergent validity, we adopted Fornell and Lacker's procedure (1981). Convergent validity is established for each of the three dimensions of the experience concept, with very satisfactory values of more than 0.5.

The values of the factor contributions measuring the second-order construct exceed 0.6 (pleasure dimension 0.73 and sensory-stimulation dimension 0.76), with the exception of those relating to the immersion dimension, the value of which, albeit less than 0.6, is a very close 0.59. This value explains Joreskog's Rho overall value of the convergent validity of the second-order factor (0.49) which is lower than the 0.5 threshold (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Given that all factor contributions of the variables measuring the second-order construct are significant (Student's test > 1.96), we can conclude that the overall convergent validity of the measurement of the shopping experience concept is moderately strong (Roussel et al., 2002) (Table 6).

Table 6. Results of the CFA Relating to the Second-Order Measurement Model of the Shopping Experience Concept

Items	Standardised scores*			factor T-test
	1	2	3	
You felt serene in this store (rested)	0.69			—
You were content in this store	0.85			14.85
You were happy in this store	0.84			14.67
You felt pleasure in this store	0.77			13.70
You felt like you were travelling		0.75		—
You entered a new world		0.77		12.34
You were disconnected from reality		0.74		12.41
You were attracted by everything in this store			0.80	—
You were amazed by everything around you in this store			0.86	11.82
Factor contributions	0.73	0.58	0.76	
Internal consistency (Jöreskog's Rho)	0.86	0.80	0.81	
Overall construct internal consistency	0.734			
Convergent Validity (Rhô CV)	0.62	0.55	0.69	
Overall construct convergent validity	0.49			

* 1. pleasure, 2. immersion, 3. sensory stimulation.

4. Predictive Validity

To assess the predictive validity of the measure we decided to test the impact of in-store lived experience on two outcomes: impulses buying and re-experience need.

According to the theory of “self control”, Shiv and Fedorikhin (1999) have demonstrated that when the individual is distracted (e.g., lived experience), he will not have enough cognitive resources to evaluate the reality of things. He will be more vulnerable and will be easily overwhelmed and consequently will become an easy prey to impulses buying. In fact, the theory of impulse actions (Hoch & Loewenstein, 1991; Ortony et al., 1990), the theory of motivations and the theory of needs assert that impulses buying largely depend on situational variables (Loewenstein, 1996). The more a customer project himself in a buying or consumption experience the more he’s likely to experience impulses buying (Hoch & Loewenstein, 1991; Ortony et al., 1990). The projection of an individual would not come true only if he will arrive to appropriate the retail outlet and immerse in a consumption experience (Filser, 2002; Carù & Cova, 2003, 2006). Thus we propose the hypothesis **H1**: The concept of in-store lived experience has a positive influence on impulses buying.

A consumer may wish to return in a shop without the intention to buy and only to renew the lived experience. Hoch and Loewenstein (1991) talk about “memorized pleasure”. In fact, whether the consumer will buy or no, he will wish to return to renew its visit because it was associated to a rich, emotionalizing and unforgettable experience. The “experience itself” with all sensations, emotions and impulses that would be generated creates a “memory experience” (Arnould et al., 2002). A positive “memory experience” will lead to behavioral intentions like intentions to revisit. Consequently we suggest **H2**: the consumer in-store lived experience has a positive influence on the re-experience need.

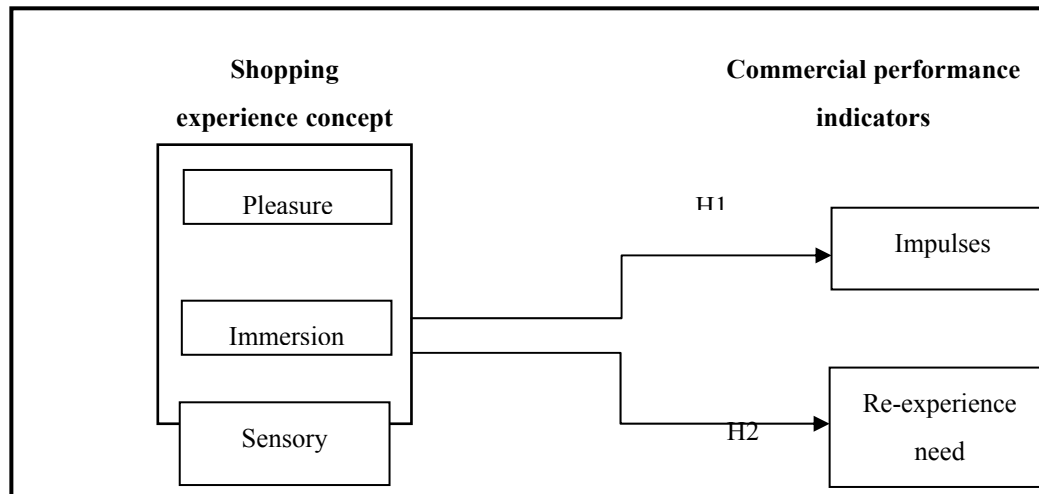


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

To measure impulses buying, we have been inspired by the scale of Beatty and Ferrell (1998). It is a multidimensional five items scale. To measure the re-experience need, we have been inspired by the scale of Lombart et al. (2006) of future behavioural intentions toward the retail outlet. Thus, we have used a mono-item probabilistic measure toward the intention de return to the already visited retail outlet.

We applied this measurement to our third sample of consumers in the retail outlet (178 customers of the clothing and accessories stores) with a view to sorting it. Once sorted, the measurement scales of the retail outlet's atmosphere perception, purchase impulses and re-experience need were applied to our fourth sample (376 customers of the clothing and accessories) for validation purposes.

4.1 Sorting the Measurement Scale of Impulses Buying

For the scale of impulses buying a first EFA was made. The KMO's indicator value is acceptable (0,63). The Bartlett's test is significant and assesses the existence of a link between the items of the scale (and these items could be summarized in factors). The examination of MSA in the diagonal in the anti-image matrix shows that values are superior to 0,5 except the value of the second item which is of about 0,3. So we can consider that the items of the buying impulses scale fit very well except the second item "during this visit, you don't plan de buy" which forms a unique factor. We decided, then, to delete this item and remake the PCA. The elimination of this item allows a light improvement of the KMO's value reaching 0,64. We also obtained a one-dimensional structure of impulses buying scale. The total explained variance move from 0,59 to 0,49 and the Cronbach's Alpha is about 0,62. These values could be improved if we delete item 5 which has a weak communality of about 0, 33. Furthermore, the elimination of item 3 would improve the percentage of total explained variance which will be of about 0,76 and the value of Cronbach's Alpha which will be of about 0,7. However, at this stage of analysis we decide to keep these items and examine the results of the second data collection.

In fact the PCA of the data collected through the second collection enabled us to obtain a

multidimensional impulses buying scale. This measurement scale encompasses three items and summarizes 67% of information. The Alpha Cronbach's value was improved in comparison to the first one (Table 7).

Table 7. Results of EFA of Impulses Buying Measurement Scale

Items	1 st collection		2 nd collection	
	Components*	Communalities	Components*	Communalities
During this visit, you experienced a number of sudden impulses that make to you to purchase things	0,78	0,61	0,81	0,65
During this visit, you have a number of items that you wanted to purchase although they were not on your shopping list	0,75	0,56		
During this visit, you didn't experience any strong impulses that make you do a non planned purchase (reversed item)	0,67	0,45	0,86	0,74
During this visit, you felt a sudden impulse that makes you purchase something	0,57	0,33	0,79	0,62
KMO	0,64		0,67	
Bartlett's test	0,000		0,000	
Variance %	49		67	
Internal consistency: Cronbach's Alpha	0,62		0,65	

4.2 Confirmation of Impulses Buying Measure

PCA generates a one-dimensional factor structure encompassing three items. The CFA associated to that measure produced satisfactory results. In fact the estimated parameters of the model are significant (Student test). The percentage of explained variance for each observed variable is superior or equal to 0,4. The factor contribution exceeds the threshold of 0,6. The percentage of extracted variance (convergent validity) is superior to the threshold of 0,5 and the level of reliability measured by Jöreskog's ρ exceeds the threshold of 0,7 (Table 8).

Table 8. Results of the CFA of Impulses Buying Measurement Scale

Items	Standardised	factor T
	loadings	Test
	1	
During this visit, you experienced a number of sudden impulses that make you purchase things	0,672	-
During this visit, you didn't experience any strong impulses that make you do a non planned purchase (reversed item)	0,839	9,56
During this visit, you felt a sudden impulse that makes you purchase something	0,631	9,84
Internal consistency (Jöreskog's ρ)	0,76	
Convergent validity	0,52	

The construct validity is confirmed for the measure of impulses buying. However, we have to notice that a minimum of four items is needed to define a latent variable. So the fit indicators could not be calculated in this case.

4.3 Test of the Explaining Model of the Role of in-Store Lived Experience on Commercial Performance of Fashion Retail Outlets

We used structural equations method to test the measurement model and structural model explaining the influence of in-store lived experience on commercial performance. To be sure about the stability of the results, we also used the bootstrap method (500 replications).

After ensuring the good fit of our model and after verifying the discriminant validity of the overall measurement model (Table 9), we proceed with the testing of structural relationships.

Table 9. Evaluation of Discriminant Validity of Measurement Model Constructs

	Experience concept	Impulses buying
Experience concept	0,49*	
Purchase impulses	0,17**	0,52*

* Convergent validity for each dimension;

** Squared correlation between the two dimensions.

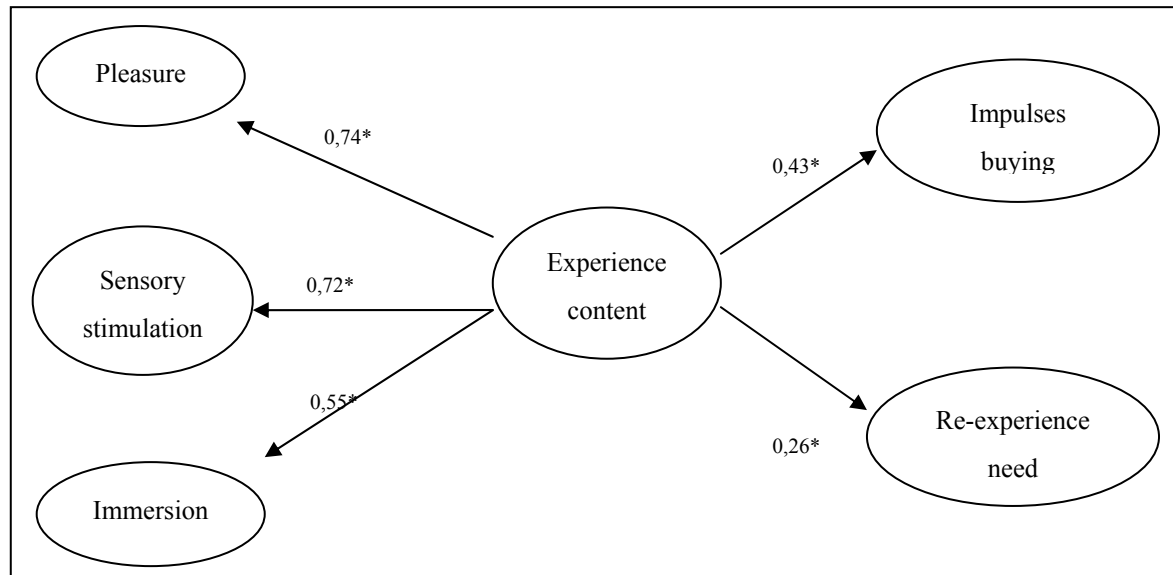


Figure 2. Structural Model

Fit indicators:

$X^2 = 90,321$, $ddl = 61$, $p(\text{bootstrap}) = 0,086$, $RMSEA = 0,036$, $TLI = 0,98$, $CFI = 0,98$,

$X^2/ddl = 1,48$ * $p < 0,01$.

The examination of the results of our structural model above (Figure 2) shows that:

The shopping experience concept in a fashion retail outlet has a positive influence on impulses purchase ($\lambda = 0,43$; $p < 0,01$), supporting then hypothesis H1.

The shopping experience concept in a fashion retail outlet has a positive influence on re-experience need ($\lambda = 0,26$; $p < 0,01$), supporting then hypothesis H2.

Validating the two hypotheses H1 and H2 enable us to confirm the predictive validity of the measurement scale of the shopping experience concept in fashion retail outlet.

5. Discussions and Implications

This research is the first attempt to create a measurement scale of the consumer's experience concept in a retail outlet and more specifically fashion retail outlet. All previous researches focused on the shopping experience without highlighting the fashion sector. The previous researches were also interested to the perspective of the consumer's recollection (value-based approach), or on part of this experience through the measurement of the consumer's affective states in the retail outlet (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Derbaix, 1993; Lichtlé & Plichon, 2010).

The structural dimensions of the consumer's experience concept in the fashion retail outlet were highlighted and confirmed the consumer's participatory role in the development of their own experience. A higher order global construct made up of three dimensions was obtained: pleasure dimension, sensory-stimulation dimension and immersion dimension, resulting from the interaction between the consumer and the experiential context put in place by the store. The contexts or

“platforms” put in place by the retail industry so that consumers can interact and create their own rich and fairly diverse experience. These are experiential processes initiated by the company, which consist of showcasing, conceptualizing and dramatizing a standard commercial offer to transform it into a different, notable and memorable experience offer (Filser, 2002). We can cite the example of Apartment 32 in New York City a new retail concept from apparel and outerwear manufacturer Weatherproof. The store is designed to be like a chic Manhattan apartment, where shoppers or “guests” are invited to enjoy the comfort of a modern home. The space is outfitted like a city apartment, with a couch, kitchen counter, suspended bicycle and other unexpected accents. In keeping with the residential theme, the sales associates are referred to as “residents” and the shoppers as “house guests”. Shoppers can relax on a couch and sip a cup of espresso and chat with other shoppers (Note 4). We can also take the example of Abercrombie & Fitch stores appealing to senses: loud music, dim lighting, attractive staff and scent applied as liberally as if it were a teenage boy. Perfect for the A & F brand and their adolescent target market (Note 5).

Albeit different, these examples all possess the capacity to make the most of the time spent by the consumer in the confined space of a shop, the wider space of a gallery or the infinite space of the Internet.

Whatever is the used strategy, the objective remains the same: acquire a defendable advantage of differentiation through experience with a view to reinforcing its strategic positioning in the consumers’ mind in relation to the competition. The development of this kind of measurement instrument could be considered an efficient tool for controlling the level of consumer interactivity with the experiential contexts put in place by the stores, and an indicator of the effectiveness of their commercial strategies.

We were able to verify the influence of shopping experience concept on purchase impulses (H1) and on re-experience need (H2). A consumer could have the desire to return to the shop only to renew his in-store lived experience without the aim to purchase. The satisfaction obtained through the in-store lived experience could largely compensate the dissatisfaction due to product consumption. In that vein Vanhamme (2001) highlights the effect of the pleasure kept in memory and its influence on consumer satisfaction. So the importance of the lived experience is not limited to the only fact of triggering impulses buying but also in driving stimulation and re-experience need. In fact, whether the consumer purchased or not, he will wish to return to the shop for the experience since it was a source of pleasure, sensory stimulation and immersion. Today’s customer is looking for real and original experience beyond a simple or staged ready to live experience. He wants to interact with its shopping environment to build its own experience. Even for the most “infraordinary” (e.g., all daily purchases) experiences, the human plays an important role (Barth & Bobot, 2010).

6. Conclusion and Future Research Directions

This research enabled us to identify the structural dimensions of the consumer’s experience concept in fashion retail outlets. A second-order global construct made up of three dimensions was obtained:

pleasure, sensory-stimulation and immersion. It appears that this experience, built by the consumer from these different facets, results from their interaction with the experiential platform put in place by the retail industry.

Our results have theoretical contributions in understanding the shopping experience and also for the researches on experiential marketing in the field of fashion. On the managerial side, fashion retail chains could significantly influence the purchase wishes of their customers and their intentions to return by enhancing their pleasure; sensory stimulation and immersion (escape) during the shopping experience. The development of this measurement scale could be assimilated as a tool for monitoring the level of interactivity of consumers with the experiential schemes set up by fashion retail chains. It could be also useful as an indicator of the effectiveness of experience differentiation strategies.

It should be pointed out that, while this measurement proposes very good psychometric properties, the decision to test it in stores specializing in clothing products and accessories in Tunisia can be detrimental to its external validity. In fact, the Tunisian environment may present specific cultural characteristics compared with other environments according to the individualistic/collectivist (Hofstede, 1994) nature of the culture, which can therefore influence the consumer's experience in the retail outlet (*Consumer Culture Theory (CCT)*, Arnould & Thompson, 2005). This is why we recommend, in future research, verifying the stability of our results in other types of location and commercial context (textile sectors of hypermarket: the case of ordinary shopping and virtual store: the case of Internet purchases (Eroglu, Machleit, & Davis, 2003)), as well as in other types of environment and culture (Europe, Asia, America). To ensure that our measurement scale is adapted to other cultures, notably English-speaking cultures, we sought to achieve a close cross-cultural lexical equivalence by neutralizing translation bias. To do this, we used the "blind parallel translation technique", as recommended by Usunier (1992) (Note 6). It would be also interesting to test the measurement scale in an interactive shopping experience setting that is enhanced by the use information technologies (Blazquez, 2014). The consumer experience is deemed to be optimal when store owners combine technology co-creation activities (Abbes & Hallem, 2015; Neuhofer et al., 2013). The use of mobile technologies is also deemed to be a strong value generator; it enhances consumer experience by supporting values like escape, appropriation and entertaining (Abbes & Hallem, 2015).

This validation effort would be justified by the strategic relevance of our measurement of the shopping experience concept. Being short (9 items) for such a complex construct, easily operationalized and administered in the field, this measurement could be used by fashion retail chains to assess the effectiveness of their differentiation through experience strategies.

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Notes

Note 1. Participant observation made by the researcher by pretending to be a salesperson of a retail outlet of luxury watches interested by the notion of experience.

Note 2. This percentage was also verified during the third and fourth data collected carried out among consumers on a retail outlet.

Note 3. This procedure consists of randomly creating, with replacements, a number of sub-samples based on the core sample. Repeated calculations on a fairly large number of samples can help achieve estimations which roughly follow the normal distribution law (quasi-normality) (Byrne, 2001).

Note 4. <http://www.chainstoreage.com/article/apartment-32-new-york-city>

Note 5. <http://www.theguardian.com/media-network/media-network-blog/2013/aug/21/multi-sensory-retail-high-street>

Note 6. The blind parallel translation technique consists of asking every translator (several translators) to independently provide a translation from the source language (French) to the target language (English). The different versions are then compared and a final version is prepared (Usunier, 1992)