

The Study of Fashion Retail Design in the Context of Consumer Wellbeing

Mağaza Tasarımının Müşteri Refahı Bağlamında İncelenmesi

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Abstract

For many years, individuals have been to certain spaces for purchasing their needs such as clothes, food, cosmetics, and medications and so on. These retail spaces which started with bazaars, khans, covered bazaars and shops have been replaced by consumption spaces using the latest possibilities of the global world. In recent years, there have been a lot of creative and architectural ideas regarding retail space design for increasing sales. Visual equipment, reusable materials, in-store scent, creative display units, are among the many new types of innovations that are being studied. Brands that understand that retail spaces cannot succeed only with product or price orientation are starting to create places where their customers will feel good and shop in a pleasant atmosphere. In order to create these opportunities, it is necessary to first understand the connection of consumer wellbeing with the in-store atmosphere. This paper analyzes fashion retail store designs in the context of consumer wellbeing. During the study, a survey was conducted on the way millennial shoppers perceive the interior elements that create the atmosphere. As a result of the study, the positive effects of the interior as a whole, rather than the individual effects of the elements are striking.

Keywords: *Consumer wellbeing, atmospherics, retail space design.*

Özet

İnsanlar uzun yıllardan beri kıyafet, kozmetik, ilaç vb ihtiyaçlarını satın almak için belirli perakende mekanlarına gitmişlerdir. Çarşılar, hanlar, pazar yerleri ve dükkanlar ile başlayan bu perakende mekanları yerlerini, global dünyanın tüm güncel olanakların kullanıldığı tüketim mekanlarına bırakmışlardır. Son yıllarda, özellikle satış etkinliklerini artırmak amacıyla perakende mekân tasarımı ile ilgili birçok yenilikçi ve mimari fikir ortaya çıkmıştır. Görsel ekipmanlar, yeniden kullanılabilir malzemeler, koku, yaratıcı sergileme üniteleri, hala üzerinde çalışılan ve gelişmekte olan yeniliklerden yalnızca birkaçıdır. Perakende mekanlarının yalnızca ürün kapasitesi veya fiyat performansı ile başarılı olamayacağını anlayan markalar, müşterilerinin kendilerini iyi hissedecekleri ve keyifli bir atmosfer içerisinde alışveriş eylemini gerçekleştirebilecekleri mekanlar yaratma çabası içerisine girmişlerdir. Bu fırsatları yaratmak için ise öncelikle iç mekân atmosferi ve müşteri refahı arasındaki ilişkiyi kavramak gerekmektedir. Bu çalışmada, moda perakende mağaza tasarımlarının müşteri refahı bağlamında incelemesi yapılmaktadır. Çalışma yapılırken milenyum müşterilerinin atmosferi yaratan iç mekan unsurlarını algılayış biçimlerine yönelik anket çalışması gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışma sonucunda, unsurların ayrı ayrı etkilerinden önce, iç mekânın bir bütün olarak pozitif yöndeki etkileri dikkat çekicidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Müşteri refahı, atmosfer, perakende mağaza tasarımı*

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1. Introduction

As in all interior spaces, the atmosphere created in retail spaces has an important place in terms of individuals to establish a relationship with the space. When consumers go to a store, they are affected by the atmosphere in different ways. In general, atmosphere as a term is used as the air surrounding a space, but in this paper it will be defined as the quality of surroundings. There are two different types of atmospheres in retail stores, namely the intended atmosphere and the perceived atmosphere. Intended atmosphere is the atmosphere that is created by designers and retailers taking into account many features such as brand perception, customer type and product. On the other hand, perceived atmosphere is one that is perceived by consumers, which is influenced by a customer's socioeconomic status, income, and lifestyle. Both atmosphere types have similar features such as the location of the store, interior design elements of the store - color and lightning of the store-, scents and store display units. In this article, the latter type of atmosphere, namely the perceived atmosphere will be analyzed in the context of consumer wellbeing and customers' purchase behavior.

Fashion stores will be the focus in the study and participants will consist of millennial shoppers who were born between 1980 and 2000. A questionnaire of forty questions will be presented to subjects and their responses will be analyzed to understand how perceived atmosphere influences customers' shopping behavior. The survey study, which includes fifty-eight participants, is composed of three sections. The first section is related to shopping habits and lifestyles of the participants, the second section consists of the effects of architectural elements of the shop interior on the participants and the last section is the effect of the atmospherics on consumer behavior. The findings obtained from the questionnaire study are detailed in the discussion and conclusion part of the study where the connection between atmosphere, wellbeing and purchase preferences are established. In this study, special attention was paid to include all kinds of interior elements in the questionnaire in order to understand the relationship between the interior elements used while creating a perceived atmosphere with the consumers.

2. Comprehensive Overview of Shopping as an Activity

Individuals may be categorized according to their varying identities due to different needs throughout their lives. Being a customer is also a concept arising from the need to shop. There are five types of customers which has been expanded upon in marketing literature. These are loyal customer, discount customer, impulsive customer, potential customer, new customer (Firuta, 2016). Each one of these customers has different aims, socioeconomic statuses and lifestyles, but what connects all of them is that shopping is a basic necessity for them. So, how is shopping a necessity? Do consumers shop because they really need it?

In this part of the study, the reasons why individuals go shopping is studied through the existing literature. In this sense, individuals shop to acquire goods and services to satisfy their personal and family needs. One line of thinking in past research is that shopping contributes to the wellbeing of individuals by creating a "hedonic sense of enjoyment and satisfaction of self-expressive needs" (Ekici et al., 2018). Specifically, retail scholars have argued that shopping is linked to hedonic value (Arnold &

Reynolds, 2012), excitement and delight (Oliver et al., 1997), and enjoyment (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998). Furthermore, shopping activities have been described as a form of recreation (Backstrom, 2006), entertainment (Moss, 2007) and an activity that leads to emotional arousal and joy (Jin & Sternquist, 2004). Additionally, researchers over the past decade have explored the idea that marketplace activities help individuals express their beings in a unique way (Singh et al., 2014). As a result, it can be argued that shopping activities are not only hedonically enjoyable but also in a way self-expressive by which individuals express a part of their personal identity through shopping activities. This expression in turn may help actualize an individual's potential in meeting a specific role expectation such as being a good parent or a spouse. (Ekici et al., 2018).

3. Wellbeing in Retail Spaces

The second part of this study consists of the feeling of wellbeing in retail spaces. "Wellbeing is the state of being healthy, happy, and free of want" (Zimmerman, 1995). This definition suggests that wellbeing means doing well physically, mentally, financially, and also psychologically and in this context, it is utilized as a synonym for quality of life. Consumer wellbeing, which is the subject of this study, has been defined in many ways nowadays. "Several models measure consumer wellbeing at different stages of the consumption process and each one actually shares the idea that consumer wellbeing is best informed by the economic based notion of consumer sovereignty" (Nelson, 1970). There are four types of consumer wellbeing which are called "process-based consumer wellbeing, community-based consumer wellbeing, product-based consumer wellbeing and consumption-based consumer wellbeing" (Xiao, 2015). In addition to consumer wellbeing's association with economic situations, consumer behavior, economic, social and educational status that influence people's shopping patterns are all significant parts of the shopping process.

There is a relationship between the retail space design where shopping takes place and customer behavior. Many methods are used to increase sales in retail stores. Although price, advertisement, personal selling, public relations are a few of them, the most effective way to influence the customer is the atmospherics. Although, atmosphere is technically termed as "the air surrounding a space", in this paper it will essentially be "defined as the quality of surroundings" (Kotler, 1974). Therefore, when somebody says that a retail store has an atmosphere, what it essentially means is that the retail store gives a pleasant feeling to the customer. In many marketing studies, the concept of atmospherics has been explored. In this study, the term atmospherics will be used to describe the conscious designing of a space to create a certain effect in potential customers. And in this regard, the principal effort of atmospherics is to build and design surroundings in order to produce explicit emotional affects in the buyer that augment a person's purchase probability. This concept explores the idea that a space, more specifically the atmosphere of a space, is more influential than the product itself whether or not a customer makes a transaction. One can even state that, in some cases, "the atmosphere is the primary product" (Kotler, 1974).

An atmospheric assessment of a space encompasses different qualities of retail spaces. The atmosphere of a space involves three main factors. The first is the factor of store

ambient such as; the visual attributes (color, illumination, dimension and form of the store), aural (the loudness/quietness and pitch), olfactory (scent and smells in the space) and tactile (smoothness, softness/hardness and hotness/coldness of the space). The second is the store design factor such as; layouts, decorative aspects, interior and exterior of the store and things such as shop window displays. Finally, the last factor is the social factor that consists of salespersons, managers and customers. All senses except taste are a part of the atmosphere in a store. When atmosphere is being planned, some questions need to be clarified, such as “who is the target audience, what is the target audience seeking from the buying experience, what atmospheric variables can fortify the beliefs and emotional reactions the buyers are seeking and lastly will the resulting atmosphere compete effectively with competitors’ atmospheres” (Kotler, 1974)?

There are two types of atmospheres that are called intended atmosphere and perceived atmosphere. The intended atmosphere is the set of sensory qualities that the designer seeks to permeate the space with. The perceived atmosphere may vary for different customers and it consists of one’s reactions to colors, sounds, level of brightness, smells and temperatures, which are partly learned and partly hereditary (Pilditch, 1970). Although retailers and designers try to create an intended atmosphere, there is always the perceived atmosphere for the customer, which is the main influence in the way the customer engages with the store. Furthermore, each culture has a different color perception, and different perceptions of the shapes and spaces, part of a myriad of cultural factors that sway customers’ perceived atmospheres. So, are the previously outlined factors sufficient to delineate consumer wellbeing in the atmospherics or are there further factors at play?

4. Assessment of Fashion Stores

In recent years, many brands are still trying to expand their sales potential with brand identity, price and product focus. Research shows that consumer wellbeing is as important as all of these variables. In its core, consumer wellbeing can be associated with product, price, quality, brand identity, or location. The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between consumer wellbeing and atmospherics and demonstrate the effects of consumer wellbeing on customer purchasing preferences. There are two types of atmosphere that are called intended atmosphere and perceived atmosphere. The intended atmosphere is the atmosphere created according to the brand identity that designers and retailers partake in. The perceived atmosphere is the atmosphere that by which its perception varies according to cultures, lifestyles, socioeconomic status of the consumers. In this study; the perceived atmosphere will be studied which was the basis for the questions included in the questionnaire study.

4.1. Material

A case study was prepared regarding the effect of atmospheric features in fashion stores on consumer wellbeing and their purchase preferences. The questionnaire study was conducted in Turkey and it was sent online to the participants. Participants were millennial shoppers born between 1980-2000, from different socioeconomic classes and professions. , there are a lot of innovations in retail space design. Millennial shoppers

who follow these developments closely is thought to be the right group for this research study. There was no focus on a specific fashion brand for this case study. Since there was no upper limit for income in the questionnaire, participants answered questions according to the brands in their price ranges.

4.2. Methodology

The method will entail a questionnaire of forty questions (App.1). The questions were composed of three sections that queried shopping habits and lifestyles of the participants, the effect of the shop interior architectural elements on the participants and the effect of the atmospherics on consumer behavior. The sample in this study consisted of fifty-eight frequent fashion store shoppers who will be evaluated on their shopping experience.

The questionnaire study aims to establish a link between the perceived atmosphere of the participants and their purchase preferences. In the study, the first eleven questions are multiple choice, while other questions are on a Likert scale. In the questionnaire study, related previous research were used such as “Effect of Atmosphere on Consumer Purchase Intention” (Mazhar & Riaz, 2015), “The Effect of Store Environment on Consumer Evaluations and Behavior towards Single-Brand Apparel Retailers” (Kumar, 2010), and different questions that were thought to contribute to the study were added from these two studies. The questionnaire study started in the second week of May 2020 and it was completed in three weeks. The questionnaire was compiled in the form of a Google Survey and was sent online to the participants.

4.3. Findings

Women born between 1980 and 1985 constituted the majority of those who participated in the online questionnaire study. Participants’ income levels generally varied between 4900 TL and 14000 TL. A few of them were unemployed, 36.8% were academics and the rest were working in a private company. Although the frequency of shopping of the participants is evenly distributed, most of the participants stated that they go shopping once a week or more. Most of the participants also said that they go shopping during sales promotions and prefer to shop in a shopping center rather than a street store. In the survey study, we see that consumers go to buy necessary products for themselves rather than passing leisure time with shopping in general.

The following findings indicate that the atmospherics of a store both influence comfort and wellbeing of the consumer and also affect her/his purchasing preferences (Table 1). More than half of the participants pay attention to display units within the store and most of the participants were motivated to make a purchase by the creative and systematic arrangements of products in fashion stores. In addition, a large number of participants also stated that the visual materials in the store interior influence their shopping activity. It is noteworthy that all of the participants who believed in the importance of visual materials in the interior of the fashion store also stated that the shop window design was influential in their decision to enter a store. Participants were generally interested in low background music as this is relaxing to them and increases their wellbeing, comfort and motivates them to make purchases. Furthermore, more than half of the participants feel comfortable due to the scent inside the store and this

inspires almost half of the participants to make purchases. In general, almost all of the participants agree that fashion store interior design has an impact on both their comfort, wellbeing and their purchase decisions.

Table 1: Store atmospheric features that affect both consumer wellbeing and purchase preference

Store Atmospheric Features	Consumer Wellbeing	Purchase Preference	Preferences by Consumers (% Wellbeing)	Preferences by Consumers (% Purchase Preference)
Display Units	Positive Effect	Positive Effect	% 54,3	% 54,3
Creative and Systematic Product Arrangement	Positive Effect	Positive Effect	% 63,1	% 65,5
Visual Materials	Positive Effect	Positive Effect	% 54	% 62
Background Music	Positive Effect	Positive Effect	% 60,3	% 34,4
Scent	Positive Effect	Positive Effect	% 62	% 49
Interior Design	Positive Effect	Positive Effect	% 86	% 86

On the other hand, some of the findings demonstrate that atmospherics have a significant impact on consumer wellbeing, but not an effect on the purchase preferences. For instance, the shop window design (especially thematic shop window design) encourages a person to enter a fashion store and feel well, but it doesn't affect her/his purchase decisions. Since it helps a majority of participants better evaluate the quality of the products, well illuminated stores were preferred as 82.7% of the participants stated that they spend more time in well illuminated fashion stores. Also, almost half of the participants felt more comfortable in fashion stores designed with neutral colors. In this part of the study, it is noteworthy that all those born between 1980 and 1990 chose neutral colors in fashion stores. The number of consumers from different age cohorts seemed to prefer warm or dark colors instead. 93.1% of the participants stated that sufficient clearance for spatial circulation in a fashion store increased their wellbeing, comfort and almost all of them rated as an important factor in their decision to spend more time in a store. One of the other most important issues for the participants was store ventilation as 89.6% of the participants felt comfortable in well-ventilated stores and they spent more time in there. Furthermore, store location was of great significance to 75.8% of the participants. As discussed earlier, while all of the aforementioned factors were definitely important in a potential customer's wellbeing and comfort, they didn't necessarily affect their purchase decisions.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

During the recent years, many fashion stores are trying various innovations to increase their sales. While doing this, they aim to strengthen their brand perception even more by working with designers. As mentioned earlier, the atmosphere that they want to create is the intended atmosphere. In this study, perceived atmosphere which is the other type of atmosphere and which depends on factors such as one's culture, lifestyle, and income level was studied.

Considering the research topic and considering the number of participants, it can be argued that shopping activity attracts the attention of women more. In the questionnaire study, the majority of participants stated that they usually go shopping to get their necessary needs. The case study included many of the fashion store's atmospheric features, some of which had an impact on both consumer wellbeing and purchasing preference, while others did not play an effective role in a purchase decision.

Creative display units and systematic arrangements of products in the fashion store seem to be important for the participants. Similarly, visual materials used in the store are also an important factor for both wellbeing and purchase preferences. Although, it is not one of the design elements, music and scent, which are factors in a store's atmosphere, are also among the most important features for consumers. At the same time, the shop window design, especially a thematic one, plays a major role in a consumer's decision to enter a store or not even though it does not have an effect on purchase preference. In general, almost all participants are influenced by the interior design of fashion stores. While this affects almost all of the participants' wellbeing, for some it also affects their purchase preferences.

It can be concluded that the effect of a creatively designed interior on wellbeing and purchasing preference is at the forefront of all atmospheric features. Lighting features and use of color (especially neutral colors) in fashion stores have an important effect on consumers' comfort and wellbeing of the participants. Likewise, ventilation, circulation areas and store location all positively affect the wellbeing of the consumers though there is no specific results for their purchase preferences. So customers pay attention to visual atmospheric features that appeal to the sense of sight in general and because sight seems to be so important it can be stated that innovative and creative display materials and in-store visual elements are vital to being a successful brand.

In the retail world, brands use many different strategies to clarify their place in the market. One of the most important factors that make up the identity of a fashion store is store atmosphere. The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between consumer wellbeing and atmospherics and show the effects of consumer wellbeing on customer purchasing preference. With the help of a questionnaire, store atmospheric factors that influence consumer wellbeing, purchase preferences or both were examined in detail. As this study was only associated with perceived atmosphere, future studies that look at the combination of intended and perceived atmosphere factors in the context of consumer wellbeing and their purchase preferences may prove useful.

Author Contributions

No	Full name	ORCID	Contribute*
1	Naz GÜMÜŞELİ	0000-0003-1978-8611	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
*In the Contribution section, wrote the number(s) corresponding to the related explanation.			
1. Designing the study 2. Data collection 3. Analysis and interpretation of data 4. Writing the manuscript 5. Critical revision			

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire Study

The aim of this study is to understand the relationship between consumer wellbeing and atmospherics and show the effects of consumer wellbeing on customer purchasing preference. The study was prepared based on the atmospherics (retail space design) concept. There are 40 questions, and these questions are composed of three sections as the lifestyles and shopping habits of participants, the effect of the shop interior architectural elements on the participants and the effect of the atmospherics on the consumer behavior. Thank you for your time and voluntary participation.

Anket Çalışması

Bu çalışmanın amacı; tüketicilerin iyi hissetme hali / refahı ile atmosfer arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırmak ve bu ilişkinin, tüketici satın alma tercihine etkilerini göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma; atmosfer (mağaza tasarımı) esas alınarak hazırlanmıştır. 40 sorudan oluşan anket çalışması, üç temel başlıktan oluşmaktadır. Bunlar; katılımcıların gündelik yaşamları ve alışveriş alışkanlıkları, mağaza iç mekan tasarımının katılımcılar üzerindeki etkisi ve atmosferin tüketici davranışlarına etkisi olarak sıralanmaktadır. Zaman ayırdığınız ve gönüllü katılımınız için teşekkür ederim.

1. Gender

- A. Female
- B. Male
- C. Other

2. Date of birth

- A. 1980-1985
- B. 1985-1990
- C.1990-1995
- D.1995-2000

3. Income class

- A. 2800 TL - 4900 TL
- B. 4900 TL - 7000 TL
- C. 7000TL – 14000 TL
- D. 14000TL +

4. Educational background

- A. High School
- B. Bachelor Degree

C. Master Degree

D. PHD Degree

5. Occupation

A. Self-employment

B. Working in a company or organization

C. Academic

D. Unemployed

6. How many people live in your home?

A. 1

B. 2

C. 3

D. 4 or more

7. How often do you go shopping?

A. A few times a week or more

B. Once a week

C. Once every two weeks

D. Once a month or less

8. How would you describe your motivation for going to a shop?

A. Passing time/Leisure

B. Looking at new products

C. Making casual purchases

D. Making only necessary purchases

9. Which customer type would you use to describe yourself?

A. Loyal customer

B. Discount customer

C. Impulsive customer

D. Potential customer

10. How much of your income do you spend on clothes?

A. Less than 10%

B. Between %10- %25

C. More than %25

11. Do you prefer a shopping mall or a street store?

A. Shopping mall

B. Street Store

On a scale of 1 – 5 please answer the following questions.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

12. Shop window design influences me to enter a fashion store

1	2	3	4	5
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13. Thematic shop window design in a fashion store makes me feel pleasant

1	2	3	4	5
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14. The shelves and visual materials of the fashion store encourages me to purchase more

1	2	3	4	5
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15. The choice of music in a fashion store motivates me to buy more

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

16. Low music in a fashion store makes me pleasant

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

17. The existence of a background music increases my well-being and comfort

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

18. Listening to music creates a relaxed atmosphere while shopping

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

19. Scent in a fashion store encourages me to purchase more

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

20. Scent in a fashion store creates a relaxed atmosphere while shopping

1	2	3	4	5
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21. Fully air conditioned environment makes me comfortable while shopping

1	2	3	4	5
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22. The quality of the air conditioning in a fashion store makes my presence in the store comfortable

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

23. The lighting in a fashion store is pleasing to the eyes and makes me stay more

1	2	3	4	5
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24. The lighting in a fashion stores makes things more visible and attractive to me

1	2	3	4	5
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25. The lighting in the area of products allows me to evaluate the quality of a product

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

26. Vivid light makes me comfortable while shopping

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

27. Dim light makes me comfortable while shopping

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

28. Warm colors in a fashion store make a positive impression in my mind (red, orange, yellow etc...)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

29. Dark colors in a fashion store make a positive perception in my mind (black, brown, navy blue etc...)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

30. Neutral colors in a fashion store make a positive perception in my mind (white, beige, gray etc...)

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

31. I tend to buy more when I come across attractive and impressive displays in fashion stores

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

32. The creative and systematic arrangement of products in a fashion store encourages me to purchase more

1	2	3	4	5
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33. Visual materials in a fashion store attracts me while shopping

1	2	3	4	5
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34. The interior design of a fashion store makes me feel pleasant

1	2	3	4	5
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35. Sufficient clearance for circulation in a fashion store increase the feeling of well-being and comfort

1	2	3	4	5
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36. I feel anxious in a narrow and untidy fashion store

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

37. It is important for me that the cashier desk is visible in a fashion store

1	2	3	4	5
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38. I spend more time in a well-circulating fashion store

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

39. Specifically designed display units encourages me to buy more in a fashion store

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

40. The location of a fashion store influences me to enter

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---