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DOES STORE ATMOSPHERE AFFECT SHOPPING BEHAVIOR?

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This study takes an environmental psychology approach to store atmosphere and studies how the atmosphere affects consumer purchasing behavior within the store. The study tests the Mehrabian-Russell environmental psychology model in retail settings. This model proposes that an environment produces an emotional state in an individual which then mediates approach-avoidance behaviors. These behaviors may be appropriate for describing shopping behaviors in a retail environment. Thus, the main purpose of this analysis is to determine the extent to which subjects' approach-avoidance responses can be predicted from retail environments. This information may then be used to predict the effects of in-store changes on shopping behavior.

In addition, this study compares and contrasts the intended shopping behavior of college students with various educational backgrounds to determine if majors have an effect on the degree of approach-avoidance behavior exhibited in retail settings. It also compares and contrasts the intended shopping behavior of women and men.

To test the Mehrabian-Russell model, I instructed 55 Wesleyan students to visit two retail stores during various shopping times. While in the store each respondent completed questionnaire ratings, consisting of three major parts: respondents' emotional states, the General Measure of Information Rate, and subjects' intentions to behave in the store. Factor analysis and regression analysis are being used to determine which major emotional states are significant mediators of intended shopping behaviors within the retail stores.