

Multimodality in Storefront Windows: The Impact of Verbo-Visual Design on Consumer Behavior

Authors : Angela Bargenda, Erhard Lick, Dhoha Trabelsi

Abstract : Research in retailing has identified the importance of atmospherics as an essential element in enhancing store image, store patronage intentions, and the overall shopping experience in a retail environment. However, in the area of atmospherics, store window design, which represents an essential component of external store atmospherics, remains a vastly underrepresented phenomenon in extant scholarship. This paper seeks to fill this gap by exploring the relevance of store window design as an atmospheric tool. In particular, empirical evidence of theme-based theatrical store front windows, which put emphasis on the use of verbo-visual design elements, was found in Paris and New York. The purpose of this study was to identify to what extent such multimodal window designs of high-end department stores in metropolitan cities have an impact on store entry decisions and attitudes towards the retailer's image. As theoretical construct, the linguistic concept of multimodality and Mehrabian's and Russell's model in environmental psychology were applied. To answer the research question, two studies were conducted. For Study 1 a case study approach was selected to define three different types of store window designs based on different types of visual-verbal relations. Each of these types of store window design represented a different level of cognitive elaboration required for the decoding process. Study 2 consisted of an on-line survey carried out among more than 300 respondents to examine the influence of these three types of store window design on the consumer behavioral variables mentioned above. The results of this study show that the higher the cognitive elaboration needed to decode the message of the store window, the lower the store entry propensity. In contrast, the higher the cognitive elaboration, the higher the perceived image of the retailer's image. One important conclusion is that in order to increase consumers' propensity to enter stores with theme-based theatrical store front windows, retailers need to limit the cognitive elaboration required to decode their verbo-visual window design.

Keywords : consumer behavior, multimodality, store atmospherics, store window design

Conference Title : ICBEMMR 2018 : International Conference on Business, Economics, Marketing and Management Research

Conference Location : Singapore, Singapore

Conference Dates : March 22-23, 2018