Changing the servicescape

The influence of music and self-disclosure on approach-avoidance behavior

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LICENTIATE THESIS

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Licentiate thesis: Changing the servicescape, the influence of music and self-disclosure on approach-avoidance behavior.

Pernille K. Andersson, Department of Psychology, Karlstad University, Sweden.

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate and understand the effect of a servicescape's ambient and social conditions on consumers' Approach/Avoidance behavior in a retail context. More specifically, this thesis investigates the effect of music (ambient stimuli) and employees' self-disclosure (social stimuli) on consumers' Approach/Avoidance behavior in a retail store. **Paper I** comprised two experiments. Experiment 1 investigated the influence of the independent variable No music/Music. Likewise, experiment 2 studied the influence of the independent variable No music/Slow-tempo music/Fast-tempo music. The dependent variables in both experiments were pleasure, arousal, and the resulting Approach/Avoidance behavior. **Paper II** investigated the influence of the independent variable self-disclosure. The dependent variables were Approach/Avoidance behavior, measured by pleasure, arousal, liking, satisfaction, and reciprocity. The conclusions of this thesis are that both ambient and social stimuli in a servicescape affect consumers' internal responses, which in turn affect their behavior. Depending on the situation (type of purchase), retail (bank, supermarket, or electronic retail store), and stimuli (ambient or social), the internal and behavioral responses are different.

Licentiatuppsats: Att förändra butikens upplevelserum, påverkan av musik och självutlämnande information på kunders beteende.

Pernille K. Andersson, Avdelningen för psykologi, CTF – Centrum för Tjänsteforskning, Karlstads universitet, Sverige.

Populärvetenskaplig sammanfattning

Människor påverkas hela tiden av det eller de som är närvarande runt omkring oss när vi ska fatta beslut. Så är även fallet när vi agerar som konsumenter. Speciellt något som benämns butikers upplevelserum (servicescape) har visat sig påverka konsumenter. Upplevelserummet delas in i två dimensioner, fysisk och social. Inom dessa två dimensioner finns en mängd olika påverkansstimuli. Fysiska stimuli är den fysiska miljön så som doft, möblering, skyltar eller musik som spelas i butik. De sociala stimuli är den sociala miljön så som antal kunder i butiken och deras agerande, antal butikspersonal och deras agerande. Miljöpsykologer har studerat sambandet mellan fysisk miljö och mänskligt beteende under flera decennier. Mehrabian och Russell (1974) presenterade en värdefull teoretisk modell för att visa effekterna av fysisk miljö på människors beteende. Genom en stimuli-organism-respons (S-O-R) paradigm, förklarar modellen att externa miljöstimuli (S) kan generera känslomässiga reaktioner i en individ (O). Dessa känslomässiga reaktioner påverkar i sin tur individens närmande eller undvikande beteende gentemot miljön (R). Även om M-R-modellen inte ursprungligen utvecklats för att studera butikers upplevelserum, har det konstaterats vara lämplig för att förklara effekten av upplevelserummets dimensioner på konsumenternas beteende. Syftet med licentiatuppsatsen är att undersöka och förstå effekterna av stimuli i butikers upplevelserum på konsumenters känslor och beteende. I licentiatuppsatsen undersöks därför två stimuli i upplevelserummet, nämligen fysiska (musik) och sociala (butikpersonalens verbala beteende).

Ett flertal vetenskapliga studier angående musiks påverkan på konsumenters känslor och köpbeteende har bevisat att musik påverkar våra känslor gällande framför allt upprymdhet och aktivering, vilket i sin tur påverkar vårt köpbeteende. Dock har flertalet av dessa studier utförts i laboratoriemiljö där försökspersonerna ofta varit studenter. Detta stärker den interna validiteten men försvagar den ekologiska validiteten. För att komma tillrätta med detta problem undersöks i den första studien (**Paper I**) musiks påverkan på kunders känslor och beteende genom två kvasiexperiment. Första experimentet genomfördes i en elektronikbutik där musik och ingen musik

varierades under fyra dagar. Experiment två genomfördes i en dagligvaruhandelsbutik där ingen musik och tempo (lågt, högt) på musiken varierades under tre dagar. I båda experimenten så tillfrågades kunderna, direkt efter de betalat sina varor, om de kunde fylla i en enkät angående sin butiksupplevelse Resultatet från dessa två experiment visar att musik påverkar vissa delar av kundbeteendet positivt, nämligen köp, kunder köper mer när musik spelas i butik. Dock visar resultatet även på negativa effekter så som lägre grad av glädje, interaktion med andra och upplevelse av köptillfället blir mer negativ när musik spelas i butik. Resultat visar också på att effekterna av musik modereras av kön där kvinnor och män påverkas olika av musik.

Det blir allt mer vanligt att butikspersonal interagerar med kunder så som om det var en interaktion mellan vänner och ett generellt säljtips är att säljaren bör agera som en kompis och hitta något gemensamt med kunden för att på så sätt kunna påverka hans eller hennes köpbeteende i önskvärd riktning. I den andra studien (**Paper II**) undersöks, med hjälp av text baserade scenarier, hur bankpersonals verbala beteende, i form av att delge personlig information, påverkar kundens känslor och beteende. En konceptuell modell med tillhörande hypoteser testades. Modellen beskriver hur kundbeteendet (i detta fall grad av reciprocitet) påverkas av att bankpersonalen delger personlig information och hur detta medieras av dimensionerna gillande, glädje och tillfredställelse. Resultatet av modellen visar att effekten av att ge personlig information för reciprocitet medieras till fullo av dimensionerna gillande, glädje och tillfredställelse. Resultatet från denna studie visar också att det inte är fördelaktigt att delge personlig information om sig själv för att vinna fördelar, då effekten av detta är negativt för graden av gillande, glädje, tillfredställelse och reciprocitet.

Slutsatserna av denna licentiatuppsats är dels att både fysiska stimuli (musik) och sociala stimuli (verbal interaktion) i butikens upplevelserum påverkar kunders känslor och beteende. Dock är det viktigt att uppmärksamma att påverkan av olika stimuli genererar olika effekter, som i sin tur påverkas av kön och vilken sorts butik/tjänst som konsumeras.

This thesis is based on the following two papers, which will be referred to in the text by their Roman numerals:

I   Andersson, K. P., Kristensson, P., Wästlund, E., & Gustafsson, A. (2012). Let the music play or not: The influence of background musik on consumer behavior. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 19*, 553-560.

II   Andersson, K. P., Gustafsson, A., Kristensson, P., & Wästlund, E. (2012). *Selling by Telling, Effects of Self-disclosure on Reciprocity*. Unpublished manuscript

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The notion that the service environment affects consumer behavior is widely accepted in the academic literature (Baker, Levy, & Grewal, 1992; Bitner, 1992; Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), and the importance of atmospherics to the execution of retail marketing strategies has been emphasized by Kotler (1973) and others. Today, many retail marketers view the store environment as increasingly important in satisfying consumers by providing a positive total shopping experience and by positioning the store in the consumer's mind. During the past three decades, researchers have recognized the influence of atmospherics as tangible cues in consumer evaluations of service quality and repeat purchases in a variety of service settings (Bitner, 1992; Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Kotler, 1973). Bitner (1992) coined the term "servicescape" to denote a physical setting in which a marketplace exchange is performed, delivered, and consumed within a service organization. A servicescape is considered to contain physical factors that can influence consumers' and employees' approach or avoidance behavior related to a retail store. Although Bitner's servicescape model is considered solely in terms of physical factors, Baker et al. (1992) suggested the inclusion of social factors such as density, appearance, and behavior of other consumers and sales personnel as part of the servicescape. Given the existence of retail environments such as Apple's concept stores and Abercrombie & Fitch in the U.S., and Swedish examples such as IKEA and Stadium, the extension from Baker et al. (1992) seemed valid. Today, consumers are bombarded with stimuli when entering a store. As an example, the mall Mood in Stockholm uses music, scents, and light to stimulate consumers and Stadium uses an employee training program to increase interaction with consumers.

This thesis uses the servicescape concept as its starting point and aims to understand the effect of physical and social environments on consumers' behavior in a retail context. Specifically, this thesis addresses the effects of music and employee behavior on consumers' approach or avoidance behavior.

The following section presents an overview of research into servicescapes and approach-avoidance theory. Subsequently, two influencing factors, music

and employee behavior, are presented. Finally, empirical studies are summarized and discussed.

1.2 Servicescape

Bitner's (1992) servicescape is grounded in the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) paradigm and is one of the most cited typologies in marketing (Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003). The servicescape framework describes the effect of a complex mix of atmospherics, such as physical design and décor elements, which influence the internal responses and external behaviors of both consumers and employees. A servicescape is defined as "the man-made, physical surroundings as opposed to the natural or social environment" (Bitner, 1992, p. 58) and is accepted as an important determinant of consumer psychology with respect to affect (e.g., emotion), cognition (e.g., satisfaction), and behavior (e.g., patronage, positive word of mouth). Mehrabian and Russell (1974) postulated that all responses made within a servicescape are considered approach or avoidance behaviors.

A servicescape (Bitner, 1992) is considered a packaging of services and consists of three components:

- Ambient conditions;
- Spatial layout and functionality; and,
- Signs, symbols, and artifacts.

Ambient conditions include various elements such as color, light, temperature, noise, scent, and music, all of which might have an effect on consumers' five senses, which influence their perception and their response to the environment. Spatial layout is the design and arrangement of buildings, equipment, and furniture according to the needs of the service delivery process. Signs, symbols, and artifacts are visual symbols used to create an appropriate atmosphere and direct consumers during the service encounter.

As mentioned, Baker et al. (1992) proposed a limitation to Bitner's (1992) framework, which is that it does not incorporate social elements that consumers may also interpret when for formulating approach decisions. Tombs and McColl-Kennedy (2003) address this gap by arguing that consumption settings feature a social servicescape, which is composed of other consumers, and that consumers respond to the displayed emotions of other consumers. Baker et al. (1992) operationalized the social factor in terms of the number and affability of retail salespeople. Zomerdijk and Voss (2010) argue that one way to influence consumers' emotions and engage them is through the service

employee. They state that the interaction between consumers and service employees is an important factor that influences perceived quality and consumer satisfaction. Several studies propose that ambience, such as music (Jain & Bagdare, 2011; Turley & Milliman, 2000), and social, such as employees (Baker, Grewal, & Parasuraman, 1994; Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2011), are the most influential factors within a servicescape. For instance, Ryu and Jang (2007) present empirical data showing that music and employees are the most influential factors in consumers' approach behavior in an upscale restaurant. Regarding music, research shows that this type of stimuli in a servicescape affects consumer behavior; regarding employees, verbal interactions with consumers have the same effect. Figure 1 displays a servicescape framework including the two environmental dimensions of music and verbal interaction.
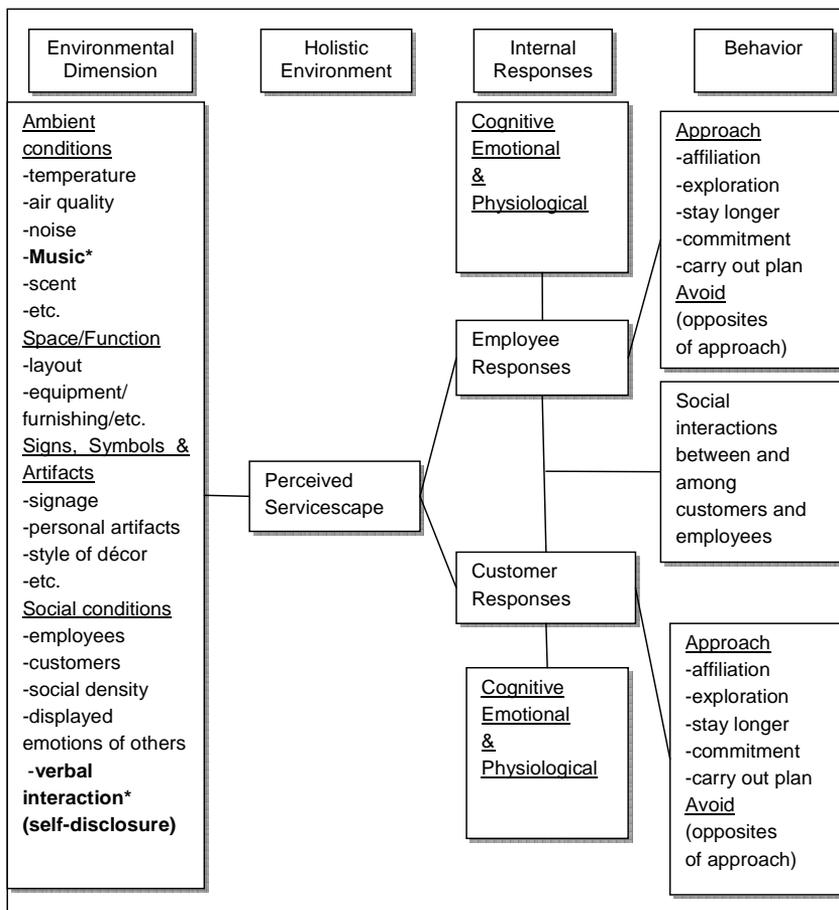
Figure 1. A framework for understanding two environmental dimensions of the servicescape (Bitner, 1992**,** further extension by Baker et al., 1992; Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003).

1.3 Approach–avoidance behavior

As previously noted, Bitner's (1992) servicescape implies that an individual's perception of, and behavior within, a given environment are the result of emotional states created by that environment (Baker et al., 1992). An important starting- point for the servicescape is made from environmental psychologists Mehrabian and Russell (1974). Mehrabian and Russell developed a theoretical model (hereafter, M-R model) that suggests that environmental stimuli (S) lead to an emotional reaction (O) that, in turn, drives a consumer's behavioral response (R) in line with the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) paradigm. The application of the model facilitates prediction and an understanding of the effects that the environment has on human behavior. The model posits that consumers have three emotional states in response to environmental stimuli – pleasure, arousal, and dominance (hereafter, PAD) – that, in turn, elicit either approach or avoidance behavior (Baker & Cameron, 1996; Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Ryu & Jang, 2007). In PAD, pleasure refers to the affective state of feeling good, happy, pleased, or joyful. Arousal refers to the extent to which an individual feels stimulated, excited, alert, or active. Finally, dominance is the degree to which an individual feels influential, in control, or important. Since its introduction, the M-R model has been used extensively in environmental research such as within the consumer behavior field. Over the years, empirical studies that have tested the model found that the dimensions pleasure (P) and arousal (A) underlie the affective response to any environment, whereas dominance (D) did not have a significant effect on approach or avoidance behavior (Russell & Pratt, 1980; Ward & Russell, 1981). Thus, dominance, in relation to approach or avoidance behavior, has not been given the same treatment in recent studies. Therefore, when addressing the effect of environmental stimuli on emotional states, the continued presentation only considers pleasure and arousal.

Approach or avoidance behavior is considered to have four aspects: first, a desire to physically stay in (approach) or get out of (avoid) the environment; second, a desire or willingness to look around and explore the environment (approach) versus a tendency to avoid moving through or interacting with the environment (avoidance); third, a desire to communicate with others in the environment (approach) as opposed to a tendency to avoid interacting with others (avoidance); and fourth, the degree of improvement (approach) or interruption of performance (avoidance) and satisfaction with task performance (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). These four aspects are viewed as appropriate for describing behavior in a retail environment, which

is related to store patronage intentions, repeat-shopping frequency, and positive communication with others, such as positive word-of-mouth (hereafter, WOM) (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Ryu & Jang, 2007). Since Donovan and Rossiter (1982) first applied the M-R model in consumer settings, it has been validated in various settings related to consumer behavior, such as retail settings (Li, Kim, & Lee, 2009; Rompay, Galetzka, Pruyn, & Garcia, 2008), bank settings (Dubé, Chebat, & Morin, 1995), travel agencies (Bitner, 1990), and restaurants (Jang & Namkung, 2009).

1.3.1 Music's influence on approach or avoidance behavior

The use of background music to influence consumer behavior in modern retail stores is widely recognized (Garlin & Owen, 2006; Jain & Bagdare, 2011). Music has been observed as a powerful stimulus in shaping the retail experience. It is used for attention, identification, association, and remembrance in many more settings than just retailing. In a meta-study, Turley and Milliman (2000) analyzed 60 published empirical studies involving the influence of atmospheric variables on consumers, which revealed that music is the most commonly studied general interior cue and is seen as a key ambient factor in retail environments. Music has, and is still, a much studied subject within retail stores (Jain & Bagdare, 2011). The results of studies using music as an independent variable show that music played in different settings appears to have a significant effect on a variety of dependent variables such as affective (mood, arousal, pleasure, emotion), financial returns (value of sales, quantity purchased, gross margins), attitudes and perception (liking, brand loyalty, service quality), temporal (duration perceived/actual, time to consume), and behavioral (patronage frequency, store choice, in store traffic flow) (Garlin & Owen, 2006; Jain & Bagdare, 2011; Turley & Milliman, 2000).

In line with the M-R model, research shows that music influences both pleasure and arousal, which, in turns, affects consumers' approach or avoidance behavior (Ryu and Jang, 2007). For example, Hui, Dubé, and Chebat (1997) found that music ameliorated the emotional evaluation of the environment for consumers waiting for a service. In turn, this amelioration led to approach behavior toward the banking service. Therefore, music played in retail environments can change the affect, behavior, and cognition for consumers. Furthermore, music with positive valence also triggered a more positive emotional response to the wait. Similarly, Vida, Obadia, and Kunz (2007) found that music that is perceived to positively fit the store image affected the length

of shopping time, which indirectly influenced consumers' expenditure. Areni and Kim (1993) showed that classical music influenced an important part of approach behavior, namely purchase, and consumers selected more expensive merchandise rather than increased the volume of merchandise purchased. Mattila and Wirtz (2001) findings suggest that matching arousal quality ambient stimuli, such as by playing high arousing music (i.e., fast tempo music) with a high arousing scent (in this case, grapefruit), increases consumers' pleasure and approach behavior in a retail outlet.

Summarizing the research carried out on how music impact consumers' approach behavior it becomes obvious that there is a causal relationship between the two variables (i.e., music and consumer behavior). Moreover, the impact of music is not always direct but can also be mediated by gender (Kellaris & Altsech, 1992) and music tempo (Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002; Eroglu, Machleit, & Chebat, 2005).

Regarding gender, several studies indicate that gender might have a moderating and/or mediating effect on music's influence on consumer behavior. Grewal, Baker, Levy, and Voss (2003) found that males and females reacted differently to atmospheric variables such as number of visible employees, number of consumers, and the presence (or absence) of music. These results suggest that males have more negative expectations than females regarding waiting time and evaluated store atmosphere less positively than females. Kellaris and Rice (1993) found a gender difference in hearing sensitivities which was used to explain why females respond more positively than males to music at lower volumes. Further, Kellaris and Altsech (1992) examined the influence that music and gender have on the time experience and discovered that gender moderated the effect of loudness on perceived duration in a store. Another study by Kellaris and Mantel (1994), suggested that gender and its interaction with mood (induced by music) could influence consumers' time perceptions. Their results showed that female participants were affected by their mood state more than their male counterparts and that mood had no influence on time perceptions independent of gender. Research also shows that females prefer slower, softer music and that males prefer louder, faster music regardless of the genre of the music (Stipp, 1990). In line with this finding, Sweeney and Wyber (2002) determined that females preferred slow, top-40 music, which was also related to a higher perception of service quality and pleasure.

Regarding music tempo, studies have shown that music tempo influences traffic pace and sales volume, with slow-tempo music leading to increased sales

volume (Milliman, 1982), and that music has a moderating effect on attention level, mood, and time estimation (Chebat, Gelina-Chebat, & Filiatrault, 1993). Music tempo has also been shown to lead to behavioral responses such as approach or avoidance tendencies (Eroglu, Machleit, & Chebat, 2005). Studies that used tempo as a variable indicate that slow-tempo music slows down consumers, which causes them to spend more time in a store and buy more than when fast-tempo music is being played. Milliman (1986) found significant differences with slow-tempo music and fast-tempo music regarding the time that a consumer spends in a restaurant and making purchases, where slow-tempo music increased time spent and money spent. Another interesting finding from this study was that slow-tempo music increased service time. In other words, the tempo of the music also affected employees.

In summary, music seems to be moderated by gender (Kellaris and Altsech, 1992) and mediated by music tempo (Eroglu et al., 2005; Caldwell and Hibbert, 2002). Therefore, when addressing music's effects on consumer behavior in retail stores, the continued presentation considers gender and music tempo (see Figure 2).
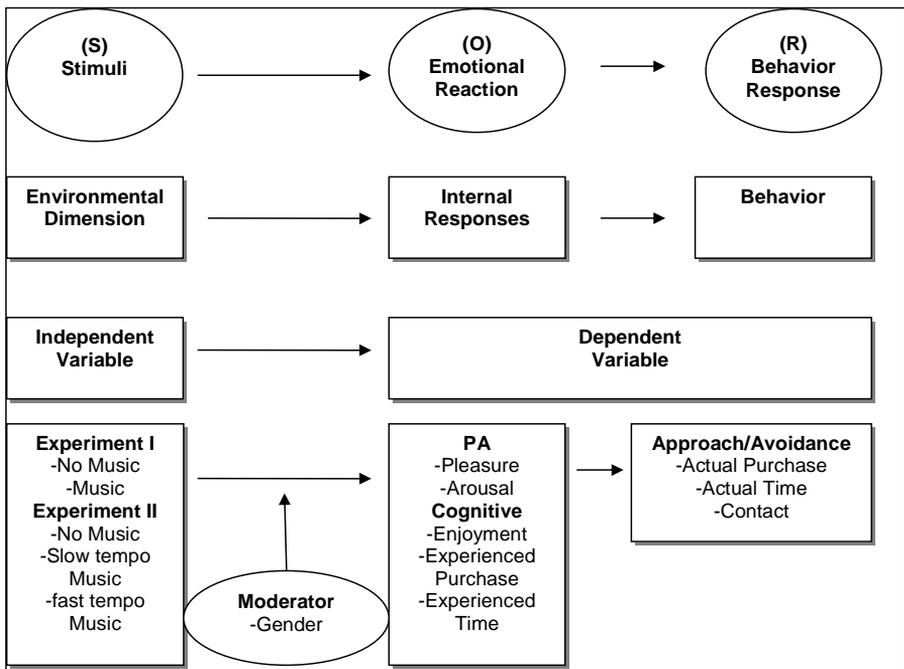
Figure 2. Relationship between the S-O-R model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), Bitner's servicescape (Bitner, 1992), and the independent variable and measured dependent variables in Paper I.

One interesting feature of studies on music's effect on consumers is that they have been conducted in experimental settings. A common methodological approach is to conduct such studies in a psychology department using undergraduate students as the empirical subjects. Of course, the important consequence is that the study's internal validity is strengthened but on behalf of sacrificing external validity. Because many studies are conducted only in laboratories, an implicit argument can be made for studies that investigate music's effect on consumers in real-life settings. A noteworthy exception to this argument is from Yalch and Spangenberg (1990), who conducted a field experiment with actual consumers showing that music increases the time spent in a store. Therefore, when addressing music's effect on consumer behavior, the continued presentation considers field experiments in natural settings with real consumers.

1.3.2 Self-disclosure's influence on approach or avoidance behavior

A servicescape influences consumers' emotions through ambient conditions such as music and through employees because an employee and his or her specific behavior are considered stimuli in the social dimension of the servicescape (see Figure 1). The interaction between consumers and service employees is an important factor that influences consumers' approach or avoidance behavior in retail contexts. Ryu and Jang (2007) empirical findings suggest that the interactions with employees affect consumers' emotional states, such as pleasure and arousal. They further suggest that pleasure influences a consumer's approach behavior intentions, such as recommendation and patronage. Moreover, employees are a valuable resource for establishing a connection with consumers (Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010). Research on service suggests that certain service encounters are more similar to a meeting between friends instead of reflecting an economic transaction (Price & Arnould, 1999). Therefore, not surprisingly, cultivating friendships as a business strategy is not an entirely new approach in marketing (Grayson, 2007). For example, friendship may be used to increase feelings of doing something in return, such as reciprocity in terms of increased likelihood of purchase or spreading positive WOM.

To define friendship, the psychological literature suggests self-disclosure as a critical property. Self-disclosure regards a situation in which friends or acquaintances are expected to share personal information with one another (Cozby, 1973; Grayson, 2007). When one of the parties shares information about himself or herself, the other party is expected to reciprocate by sharing

information. In this way, a reciprocal exchange of information occurs that depends on what the previous party shared, and the reciprocal action matches approximately what was disclosed. In this way, Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990) suggest that an important factor in friendship formation in a service encounter is reciprocal self-disclosure, which can contribute to creating future sales opportunities. Interestingly, in a study on female undergraduates, Burger, Soroka, Gonzago, Murphy, and Sommervell (2001) showed that self-disclosure increased a liking for the other, and this liking led to automatic responses in terms of requests from individuals in which they shared something in common or with whom they briefly spoke. Applied to a retail perspective, employees who share personal information about themselves may yield advantageous behavior in the form of increased liking of a store or even facilitating future sales. In line with these results, Jiang, Hoegg, Dahl, and Chattopadhyay (2010) found that incidental similarity (revealed by self-disclosure) between the consumer and the salesperson resulted in a more favorable attitude toward the salesperson and a higher intention to purchase. Disclosure of personal information to another person is viewed as central to the development of close relationships (Collins & Miller, 1994; Cozby, 1973; Forgas, 2011).

Self-disclosure has been studied with respect to breadth (quantity), which refers to the amount of information disclosed, and depth (quality), which refers to the intimacy of the information and the duration or time spent describing the information (Cozby, 1973). A common method of operationalizing self-disclosure is to manipulate or measure its level of intimacy, where intimate topics (e.g., one's feelings about marriage) are considered higher levels of disclosure than less intimate topics (e.g., one's favorite musical group) (Collins & Miller, 1994). In an early review of self-disclosure by Cozby (1973), research results suggest that liking increase when the topic disclosed is on a medium intimacy level. Several studies of self-disclosure in social psychology have conclusively shown that self-disclosure increase liking for the person, even if the person is a stranger, and this has been demonstrated in lab studies as well in field studies (Collins & Miller, 1994). However, there is also research pointing toward the situation in which the relationship between self-disclosure and liking is not always positive. This avenue of research suggest that liking is affected temporally if intimate and damaging information is disclosed early or late in the encounter, where liking of the person disclosing the information is reduced if damaging disclosure occurs early in the interaction (Archer & Burleson, 1980; Jones & Gordon, 1972). Therefore, when addressing the effect of self-

disclosure on consumer approach behavior, the continued presentation considers pleasure, arousal, liking, satisfaction, and reciprocity (see Figure 3).
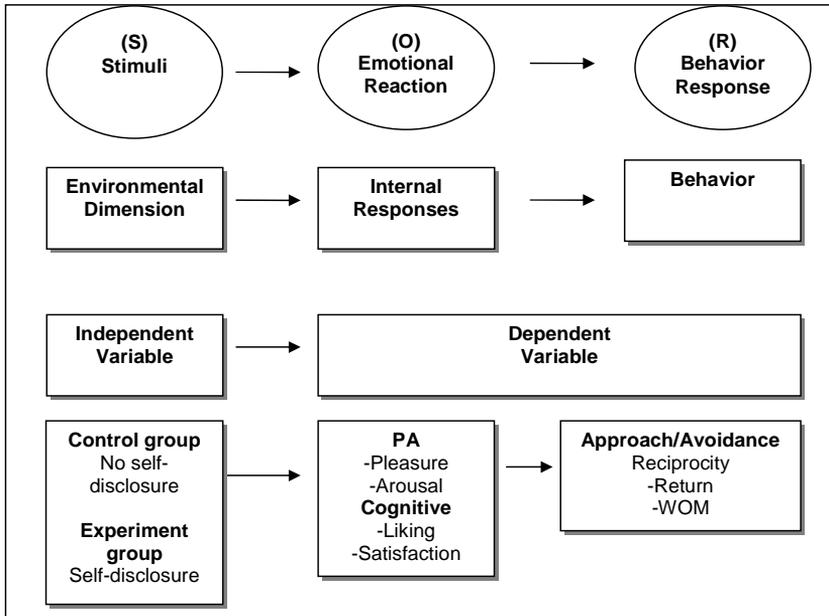
Figure 3. Relationship between the S-O-R model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), Bitner's servicescape (Bitner, 1992), and the independent variable and measured dependent variables in Paper II.

Most research in this area has been conducted from the perspective of the role that self-disclosure plays in the development and maintenance of relationships, such as between friends (Miller & Kenny, 1986), in therapy contexts (Knox, Hess, Petersen, & Hill, 1997), and with consumers who self-disclosure to companies (White, 2004). A gap in the research exists regarding the effect of self-disclosure by front-line employees of information on themselves and the potential effect on reciprocal behavior that might occur.

1.4 Aim of the thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate and understand the effect of a servicescape's physical and social dimensions on consumers' Approach/Avoidance behavior in a retail context. More specifically, this thesis investigates the effect of music (physical dimension) and employees' self-disclosure (social dimension) on consumers' Approach/Avoidance behavior in a retail store.

Paper I comprised two experiments. Experiment 1 investigated the influence of the independent variable No music/Music. Likewise, experiment 2 studied the influence of the independent variable No music/slow-tempo music/fast-tempo music. The dependent variables in both experiments were pleasure, arousal, and the resulting Approach/Avoidance behavior. Because both experiments were conducted in real retail settings with actual consumers, these two experiments used a quasi-experimental design.

Quasi-experimental designs are used when randomization is impractical and/or unethical, and are typically easier to set up than true experimental designs that require random assignment of subjects (Smith, 2009). The disadvantage of a quasi-experimental design is the lack of randomization, making it more difficult to rule out confounding variables that threaten internal validity. Given the lack of randomization, some knowledge of the data can be approximated, but conclusions on causal relationships are difficult to determine given the variety of confounding variables that exists in a social environment (West, Biesanz, & Pitts, 2000). In contrast, a quasi-experimental design minimizes threats to external and ecological validity because the natural environment does not suffer the same problem of artificiality, in contrast to a well-controlled laboratory setting (Cook & Campbell, 1979).

Paper II investigated the influence of the independent variable self-disclosure. The dependent variables were Approach/Avoidance behavior, measured by pleasure, arousal, liking, satisfaction, and reciprocity. The research concept in Paper II assumed that front-line employee self-disclosure affects customers' reciprocal behavior through mediating variables such as pleasure, arousal, liking, and satisfaction. A role-play design with text-based scenarios was used. Participants were asked to imagine that they are consumers visiting a service firm and interact with one of the firm's service employees.

Text-based scenarios are frequently used in service research (Burns & Neisner, 2006; Estelami & De Maeyer, 2002; Söderlund, 2002). One advantage to the a scenario techique is that it allows for systematic manipulation of variables and contexts that are sometimes difficult to manipulate or study in a

real-life setting (Söderlund & Rosengren, 2008). A disadvantage with role-play design is that it cannot be fully replaced with real situations in which the effect of the treatment is expected to be stronger. However, Bateson and Hui (1992) tested the same theoretical model with data obtained from a field quasi-experimental study and data from a laboratory study that used photographic slides and videotapes to simulate the service setting. The results showed that scenarios offer similar reactions to those in real-life settings.

2. THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION

2.1 Introduction

In the following two papers, 919 participants took part in three experiments. Paper I described two experiments, using final samples of 150 and 400 participants, and addressed the influence of background music on customers' Approach/Avoidance behavior. Paper II described one experiment using a final sample of 369 participants, and addressed the influence of self-disclosure on reciprocity.

2.2 Paper I – Let the music play… or not: The influence of background music on consumer behavior

2.2.1 General aim

The aim of this paper was to investigate the influence of the independent variable No music/Music on the dependent variables pleasure, arousal, and Approach/Avoidance behavior.

2.2.2 Experiment 1

Design
To explore whether music affects consumers' buying behavior and to evaluate the shopping environment in a real-life setting, experiment 1 was conducted in a Swedish home electronics retail store. The independent variable Music/No Music was varied during four days in mid-December. Popular music adapted to the Christmas period was used, and was selected by a company that specializes

in designing music for these types of store settings. The volume of the music was constant during the two days during which the music played. When exiting the store, ordinary shoppers were asked if they would like to fill out a questionnaire regarding their store visit experience. The sample consisted of 85 males and 65 females, with a mean age of 44 years (SD = 16.12).

Instruments

(a) Background data - the first part of the questionnaire contained demographic questions such as age and gender.

(b) Approach/Avoidance - the next part consisted of statements measuring approach or avoidance behavior (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982). The four subscales measuring approach or avoidance were *enjoyment* (for example, "the experience was positive," "I like being in this store"), *time experience* (for example, "I took extra time exploring the store"), *contact* (for example, "the contact with the staff was positive," "the store invites communication with other consumers"), and *purchase experience* (for example, "I made an impulsive purchase today"). Each of these four subscales was then calculated into a *general approach or avoidance* category. All items used a 10-point scale, whereby participants indicated the degree to which they agreed or did not agree with a statement (1 = do not agree, 10 = agree). Finally, *actual time spent* and *actual spending* was measured.

(c) Swedish Core Affect Scale - the last part of the questionnaire contained questions regarding PA (pleasure–arousal), measured using the Swedish Core Affect Scale (or SCAS) (see Västfjäll, Friman, Gärling, & Kleiner, 2002, for a more detailed description). This scale was used to measure the amount of affect that respondents felt. Ratings consisted of *pleasure (valence)* and *arousal (activation)* on a scale of –4 to 4 (e.g., for the *arousal* dimension, one adjective pair was sleepy –4, awake 4). Three scales with adjective pairs (translated from Swedish) were used to capture *pleasure*: sad–glad, depressed–happy, and displeased–pleased. Three scales with adjective pairs were used to capture *arousal*: sleepy–awake, dull–peppy, and quiet–energetic.

Statistics

A parametric two-way ANOVA (p<0.05) was used to test for differences in the means of the dependent variables *pleasure, arousal, actual time spent and actual spending, general Approach/Avoidance behavior* and its subscales of *enjoyment, time experience, contact, and purchase experience*. A multiple regression analysis was used

to test whether *pleasure/arousal* could predict *Approach/Avoidance behavior*. Before the analysis, the data were checked for effects from age and gender.

Results

The main results of this experiment are as follows. Firstly, music has no significant effects on *pleasure* or *arousal*, but a music and gender interaction regarding *arousal* was discovered, whereby females reported higher levels of arousal during the No-music condition than males. During the Music condition, females reported lower levels of arousal than males and, overall, women and men ended up on almost the same level. Secondly, a significant difference exists regarding *actual time* and *actual spending*, where more time and money were spent in a store under the Music condition. Thirdly, significant music and gender interactions existed regarding *general Approach/Avoidance behavior* and for the subscales *enjoyment, contact*, and *purchase experience,* indicating that gender has a moderating role for these factors. Fourthly, *arousal* was a significant predictor of *Approach/Avoidance behavior.* Additionally, the results showed that the explained variance increased under the Music condition. Taken together, further study that focused on the aspect of gender and music tempo was motivated.

2.2.3 Experiment 2

Design

Experiment 2 investigated the effect of music consumer behavior and to determine the role of gender. Experiment 2 was conducted during a regular shopping season in a large supermarket store, and used two different music tempos and no music. The independent variable was no music/slow-tempo music (60 beats per minute) and fast-tempo music (96 beats per minute). The musical pieces were selected by a company that specializes in designing music for these types of store settings. In both the fast and slow music conditions, the genre (familiar adult contemporary favorites) and volume were the same. After consultation with the retail store owner, three days of the week were selected because they were considered as similar as possible in terms of sales and consumer groups. The sample consisted of 174 males and 226 females with mean age 49 years (SD = 17.03).

Instruments

The same questionnaire was used as in experiment 1, adjusted for the new retail store.

Statistics

A parametric two-way ANOVA ($p<0.05$) was used to test for differences in the means of the dependent variables *pleasure, arousal, actual time spent and actual spending, general Approach/Avoidance behavior,* and its subscales of *enjoyment, time experience, contact*, and *purchase experience*, followed by post-hoc analysis using the LSD test ($p<0.05$) A multiple regression analysis was used to test whether *pleasure/arousal* could predict *Approach/Avoidance behavior*. Before the analysis, the data were checked for effects from age and gender.

Results

The main results of this experiment are as follows. Firstly, music has no significant effect on *pleasure* or *arousal*, but a music and gender interaction regarding *arousal* was discovered, indicating that gender has a moderating effect on *arousal*. Secondly, a significant difference existed regarding *actual spending*. A follow-up LSD post-hoc test showed that spending was significantly lower in the No music condition than in the two-music conditions. Thirdly, music has the following effects: (i) on g*eneral Approach/Avoidance behavior*, where approach behavior was significant higher in the No music condition than in the slow-tempo condition, (ii) on *enjoyment*, where enjoyment was significantly lower in the two music conditions than in the No music condition, and (iii) on *time experience,* where time experience was significant higher in the No music condition than in the two-music condition. Fourthly, *pleasure* was a significant predictor for *Approach/Avoidance behavior*, to a greater degree than *arousal*. Additionally, the result showed that the explained variance increased in the fast-tempo condition.

2.3 Paper II – Selling by Telling – Effects of Self-disclosure on Reciprocity.

2.3.1 Aim

The purpose of this study was twofold. First, we sought to investigate the effect when front-line employees self-disclose information about themselves and the

potential effect of the resulting reciprocal behavior that might occur. The second aim was to test a conceptual model using a hypothesized relationship of constructs that displays how a consumer's reciprocal behavior is influenced by self-disclosure through several mediating variables.

Design

A text-based scenario methodology was employed. The scenario involved a bank teller discussing a common investment opportunity. Two scenarios were developed: one with self-disclosure (experimental condition) and one without self-disclosure (control condition). Both texts contained a description of an encounter with a bank teller. In the experimental condition, the bank teller revealed a personal experience (self-disclosure) to guide the consumer in choosing the investment opportunity.

A manipulation check was used to control whether the bank teller was perceived as being personal in the self-disclosure scenario. This perception was measured on a 10-point scale (1 = do not agree, 10 = agree), where participants were instructed to indicate whether they agreed with the statement (I found the employee being personal). The manipulation check showed a significant difference between the two scenarios (t = 15.284, df = 356, $p < .001$, $d = 1.77$), indicating that the experimental group judged the bank teller as being more personal, $M_{experiment}$ = 8.05, $Sd_{experiment}$ = 2.38, than was the case for the control group, $M_{control}$ = 3.89, $Sd_{control}$ = 2.69. A total of 369 local residents participated in the experiment (35 percent male and 65 percent female), with 165 in the control group and 204 in the experimental group, and with a mean age of 33.8 years (SD = 15.19).

Instruments

(a) A questionnaire was developed to measure the dependent variables. The first part of the questionnaire contained demographic questions regarding age and gender.

(b) The second part of the questionnaire contained three groups of dependent measures of *Approach/Avoidance*. The first group used four items to measure *satisfaction* with the service encounter (e.g., I am very pleased/satisfied/contented/dissatisfied with the encounter). This scale is adopted from Oliver and Swan (1989); the second group measured *reciprocity* in the form of positive WOM and repatronage (two items measured reciprocity toward the bank teller, and two items measured reciprocity toward the bank). This scale is adopted from Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman's behavioral-intensions battery

(1996); and the third group of items measured the experience of the bank teller, labeled *liking,* adopted from Koermer, Ford and Brant's SPSS (Service Provider Sociality Scale) (2000), (four items indicating that the bank teller was, for example, kind, polite, proficient, and serious). These three measures each used one reversed item with a negative statement (for example, I am very dissatisfied with the encounter). All items were measured on a 10-point scale and participants were instructed to fill out whether they agreed with the statement (1 = do not agree, 10 = agree). Reliability was calculated for all measures: *satisfaction* α = .94, *general reciprocity* α = .89, *reciprocity* toward the bank teller α = .90, *reciprocity* toward the bank α = .66, and *liking* α = .75. With the reliability results in mind, each group of measures was then calculated into a composite index used in the subsequent analysis.

(c) The last part of the questionnaire contained measures of core affect (the Swedish Core Affect Scale or SCAS) (see Västfjäll et al. 2002) for a more detailed description). The SCAS scale was used to measure affect among respondents. Ratings were made of *pleasure (valence)* and *arousal (activation)*. *Pleasure* was measured with the adjective pairs (translated to Swedish) of sad–glad, depressed–happy, and displeased–pleased. *Arousal* was also measured using the adjective pairs sleepy–awake, dull–peppy, and quiet–energetic. The data were computed into and analyzed as general indexes of *pleasure and arousal.*

Procedure

Thirty-two undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory-level social psychology course were recruited to collect data for this investigation. The students were instructed to administer surveys to ten non-students. The students were divided into two groups. One group was administered a questionnaire using a scenario without self-disclosure and the other group was administered a questionnaire using a scenario with self-disclosure. Before the students administered the survey, they were instructed (during a four-hour lecture) in the research and hypotheses of the present study. All instructions were aligned to create equality between conditions.

Statistics

To investigate whether self-disclosure of front-line employees leads to reciprocal behavior from customers, mediated by liking, pleasure/arousal, and satisfaction, a path analysis with maximum likelihood procedures (using Amos 19) was conducted. The exogenous variable representing the two scenarios was included in the model, and it was scored using two values (0 = no self-

disclosure, 1 = self-disclosure). To test the differences regarding reciprocity toward the bank compared with the employee, a mixed ANOVA with group as a between-subjects factor and reciprocity (toward the bank and employee) as a within-subjects factor was applied.

Results

The results indicated that self-disclosure affects reciprocal behavior, but it is mediated through liking, pleasure, and satisfaction. Further, self-disclosure has a negative effect on liking and on pleasure and satisfaction. The findings also suggested that self-disclosure has a negative effect on consumers' reciprocal behavior in terms of positive WOM and repatronage. This negative reciprocal effect is significantly stronger for a front-line employee, but it also rubs off on the bank.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Introduction to conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate and understand how the physical and social dimensions of a servicescape affect consumers' behavior in a retail context. More specifically, the effect of music and employees' self-disclosure was studied in relation to Approach/Avoidance behavior. Paper I comprised two experiments. Experiment 1 investigated the influence of the independent variable No music/Music and experiment 2 investigated the influence of the independent variable No music/slow-tempo music/fast-tempo music. Because both experiments were conducted in real retail settings with actual consumers, a quasi-experimental design was used in these two experiments. Paper II investigated the influence of the independent variable self-disclosure and used a role-playing design with text-based scenarios.

3.2 Main results

3.2.1 Music's influence on Approach/Avoidance behavior

The results of Paper I show that music positively affects one important part of approach behavior, namely purchase. This result is in line with several other

studies that have shown that music influences sales (Eroglu et al., 2005: Caldwell and Hibbert, 2002; Milliman, 1986). Despite the fact that consumers spend more money under music conditions, other parts of approach behavior decrease under these conditions, particularly in experiment 2. In experiment 1, gender moderates the effect that music has on approach behavior, where females display approach behavior more than males when no music is playing.

Experiments 1 and 2 both found that music affected arousal level, but that gender moderated this effect. The results from Paper I indicate that arousal level is connected to approach behavior. When arousal level is high, approach behavior increases, but gender moderates this effect. Research that have investigated the effect of pleasure and arousal on approach behavior suggests that pleasantness has a consistently positive effect on approach behavior but that arousal effects are not as consistent and vary across studies (Kaltcheva & Weitz, 2006). For example, Milliman (1982) report that arousal decreases purchase intension and spending; Sherman, Mathur, and Smith (1997) found the opposite, and Smith and Curnow (1966) found no effect. Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006) suggest that the arousal effect may be moderated by consumers' motivational orientation, in that arousal has a negative effect on pleasantness if consumers have a recreational motivational orientation. Conversely, when consumers have a task-oriented motivational orientation, arousal has a negative effect on pleasantness. The results of Paper I indicate that gender has a moderating effect on arousal and on approach behavior. Therefore, several moderators can influence consumers' Approach/Avoidance behavior in a retail setting.

The result of music and gender interactions indicates that music affects females and males differently. Females are positively affected by No music or slow-tempo music. Males are affected positively by Music and fast-tempo music. This result is in line with studies by Kellaris and Rice (1993), who found that females respond positively to music at lower volumes, and Stipp (1990), who showed that females prefer slow and soft music compared with males, who prefer fast and louder music.

From the two experiments, the conclusion is that music affects consumer behavior but that type of retail store and gender influence both the strength and the direction of the effect.

To some extent, the results of Paper I contradict the results of studies conducted in laboratory settings, which raises questions about the external and ecological validity because a natural environment does not suffer the same problem of artificiality compared with a well-controlled laboratory setting.

Indeed, laboratory studies are needed to understand the effects of music, but one must be careful not to transfer the results from well-controlled laboratory settings to real-life studies because real-life situations are more complex and are influenced by a diversity of variables. Therefore, research on music must continue to conduct studies in natural settings and consider factors such as gender, which is often overlooked, to fully understand the effect that music has on consumer behavior.

3.2.2 Self-disclosure influence on Approach/Avoidance behavior

The results of Paper II indicate that self-disclosure affects an important part of approach behavior, namely consumers' reciprocal behavior, which is related to store patronage intentions and positive communication with others, such as positive WOM (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Ryu & Jang, 2007). However, this effect is mediated through liking, pleasure, and satisfaction. The proposed model and related hypotheses stated that self-disclosure should affect both pleasure and arousal, but the result indicated that arousal had an insignificant effect on satisfaction and consumers' reciprocal behavior.

Disclosure of personal information to another person is viewed as central in developing relationships, and research on self-disclosure suggest that liking should increase for the person who reveals personal information (Collins & Miller, 1994; Cozby, 1973; Forgas, 2011). However, the result from this study contradicts these suggestions. Instead, this study found that self-disclosure has a negative effect on liking and for pleasure and satisfaction. The findings of this study also suggest that self-disclosure has a negative effect on consumers' reciprocal behavior in terms of positive WOM and repatronage. This negative reciprocal effect is significantly stronger for the front-line employee, and it rubs off on the bank. Others in service research noticed this contagion, where consumers' perceptions of the performance of front-line employees were shown to determine not only encounter satisfaction but also satisfaction with the firm (Ganesh et al., 2000).

Several possible explanations exist for why reciprocity yielded a negative response. The first potential explanation regards the appropriateness of the disclosure. According to Hewitt (2007), using Goffman's theory of symbolic interactionism, individuals play several roles in their lives and these roles have certain behavior connected to them given the specific context in which they are acted. Therefore, friendliness may suit some roles (for example, a nurse taking

care of a patient), whereas it is perceived as unnatural in others (for example, a bank teller).

Another possible explanation for the negative effect of self-disclosure is the difficulty of transferring psychological findings of self-disclosure to a business context and hope for an automatically positive response such as increased sales. This behavior, which is natural in the context of developing relationship among friends, could be perceived as manipulation (and sometimes malicious) in a business context. In sum, these results show that using self-disclosure as a strategy to create a greater degree of liking is not beneficial because it unlikely leads to advantageous reciprocal responses.

This study suggests that the role of the bank teller does not include the behavior "acting as friends." Thus, the role of a hairdresser, but not the role of a bank teller, may allow self-disclosure. This finding potentially offers considerable insights for management. Managers are expected to be interested in knowing how self-disclosure from an employee influences consumers' future repurchase intentions. The notion that being friendly and personal is not only about acting as a friend and has implications for employee training. Because employees represent and are the face of a company, front-line staff should recognize the effect that self-disclosure may have on consumers' reciprocal behavior. To this end, front-line employee training should include recognition of the appropriate types of behavior (in other words, in line with Goffman's theory previously described) when providing consumers with service.

3.2.3 Final conclusions

The purpose of this thesis was to understand how the physical and social dimensions of a servicescape affect consumer behavior, in terms of approach and avoidance, in a retail context. More specifically, the thesis examined the effect that music and employee behavior have on consumer behavior and showed that both physical and social stimuli in a servicescape affect consumers' internal responses, which in turn affect their behavior. Depending on the situation (type of purchase), retail (bank, supermarket, or electronic retail store), and stimuli (physical or social), the internal and behavioral responses are different.

In Paper I, the conclusions are, firstly, that music has a positive effect on one part of approach behavior, namely purchase. In both experiments, purchases increase when music is played, but other dimensions of approach behavior, such as enjoyment and contact, decrease when music is played,

indicating a negative effect of music on approach behavior. Secondly, the results show that gender moderates the effect that music has on approach behavior and the internal response arousal. Thirdly, the results show that the predictive value of arousal and pleasure are different depending on the type of retailer and music tempo. The results of experiment 1 showed that arousal predicts Approach/Avoidance behavior, where the explained variance increases under the music condition. However, the results of experiment 2 showed that pleasure has the strongest explanatory value and the explained variance progressively increases, and is lowest, under the No music condition and highest under the Fast-tempo condition.

In Paper II, the conclusion is that self-disclosure has a negative effect on approach behavior regarding consumers' reciprocal behavior, and the proposed model shows that this effect is mediated through liking, pleasure, and satisfaction. Numerous contemporary studies on the servicescape concept has proposed the importance of including a social dimension as a critical variable that influences consumer behavior, where employee appearance and employee density are associated with the social environment (Baker et al., 1992; Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003). Paper II in this thesis investigated how employees share verbal information, and the result indicated that self-disclosure influences customers' affective and behavioral reactions in the same fashion as employee appearance and density. However, previous research largely neglected the role that social dimensions have on a servicescape (and only focused on the physical appearance of employees and consumers and density variables). This result shows the importance of acknowledging verbal interaction, in this case self-disclosure, as part of the social dimension in a servicescape.

Overall, this thesis highlights a situation in which influencing stimuli can take retailers out of control. In paper I this is indicated by the fact that laboratory studies and field studies have shown a clear positive effect on approach behavior (e. g. sales) from music but in a real retail context the same conclusions are not necessarily valid. Instead, shown in paper I, the music effect was moderated by variables such as gender and tempo. In paper II, the negative influence of self-disclosure on approach behavior indicates the risk of using and transferring psychological findings directly into a business context, and take for granted that the same result will appear. Instead, self-disclosure of retail sales personnel resulted in avoidance behavior from the customer. To sum up, this thesis has contributed to the framework of servicescape showing that both physical (music) and social (self-disclosure) stimuli in servicescapes has an effect on consumers' internal responses (pleasure, arousal) and

behavioral responses (approach-avoidance). Taken together, the inventive activities that occur in everyday retail stores, as well as the results from these three experiments also call for further studies on how consumer behavior within retail stores is affected.

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