

Shaping Retail Brand Personality Perceptions

How Customers' Bodily Experiences Influence Brand Perceptions

Motivation

- Customer experiences are widely acknowledged as an important facet in retail brand management (e.g., Pucchinelli et al. 2009**). This research investigates how **customers' bodily experiences in retail environments** contribute to retail branding goals.
- Central to this research is the concept of **retail brand personality** – defined as “a consumer’s perception of the human personality traits attributed to a retail brand” (Das et al. 2012, p.98**). Retail brands, e.g., Globetrotter, IKEA, H&M, can hold various **personality dimensions**, such as “ruggedness”, “warmth”, and “competence” (e.g., Aaker 1997**).
- The strategic shaping of retail brand personality contributes to the overall store image, helps to reach positioning goals, and increases customer loyalty, retail sales, and profitability (e.g., Grewal et al. 2009**).

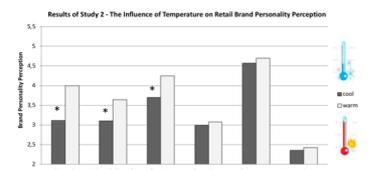
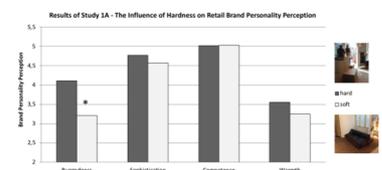
Research Question

Based on findings on human personality perception (e.g., Williams and Bargh 2008**), this research examines whether **bodily experiences transfer metaphoric meaning to customers' retail brand personality perceptions**.

Studies and Results

Three studies test the proposed idea and manipulated customers' bodily experiences of hardness and ambient temperature.

- Study 1A shows that the feeling of **hardness** (vs. softness) increases (decreases) a customer's perception of a retailer's brand personality as **rugged**.
- Study 1B uses response time measures and finds that the simple sight of hard (vs. soft) store furniture triggers the bodily priming effect shown in Study 1A.
- Study 2 indicates that experiencing a **warm** (vs. cold) environment increases (decreases) a customer's perception that the retailer's brand personality is **warm**.



The graphs show that bodily experiences influence customers' retail brand personality perceptions. Importantly, bodily experiences affect only those personality dimensions that are metaphoricly related.
Note: * p<.05

Conclusion

Overall, bodily experiences transfer their metaphoric meaning to brand personality perception. These results are consistent across field and laboratory experiments and across different brands. Our findings are highly applicable for retail managers to shape brand perceptions.

Jana Möller¹, Steffen Herm²
¹ Freie Universität Berlin, ² HTW Berlin

** Read the article, find all the references:

Möller, J., & Herm, S. (2013). Shaping retail brand personality perceptions by bodily experiences. *Journal of Retailing*, 89(4), 438-446.



Cooperation
Partner:



Hochschule für Technik
und Wirtschaft Berlin
University of Applied Sciences

Contact: jana.moeller@fu-berlin.de