

STUDYING RETAIL DESIGN THROUGH A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Ann Petermans

Faculty of Architecture and arts, Hasselt University, Diepenbeek, Belgium

✉ ann.petermans@uhasselt.be

Ammin Gil Huerta

Faculty of Architecture, National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico

✉ ammingil@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper proposes an approach to doing research in retail design, based on theoretical viewpoints and methodologies close to the realm of interior architects and retail designers. In particular, it focuses on the question of how to study customer experiences with regard to actual stores' retail design, with the help of the Experience Web. The authors use the Experience Web to discuss the results of a cross-cultural study on customer experiences, whereby the authors, both from their proper cultural background, immersed themselves in twenty-three actual retail environments located in different Belgian shopping cities.

We argue that the research method of 'subjective personal introspection' (SPI) generates valuable exploratory perspectives on the study of customer experiences, which can be particularly relevant in the early stages of a qualitative, interpretive research process. According to the authors, SPI's potential lies in uncovering subjective and complex meanings that people attribute to experiences.

KEYWORDS: *Experiences, Experience Web, Subjective Personal Introspection, Cross-cultural Perspective, Interior Architecture.*

INTRODUCTION

Imagine a Mexican woman who's visiting Belgium, walking through the historic city center of Antwerp. She has a particular interest in retail design, so one of the first things that catches her attention is the design of Belgian retail environments. What she learned after one day of strolling around in Antwerp, is that many of the fashion brand stores there seem exactly the same as in Mexico City: the store design, the product offerings, the behavior of the personnel, even the profile of personnel working in the stores here seemed perfectly similar to her familiar Mexican experiences. Indeed, the globalized fashion industry impacts on the way that strategies of clothing brands are being translated into the design of their retail environments. Since geographical and cultural limits between countries seem to be diluting, cultural barriers are disappearing. Products thus are becoming more 'international'. In the authors' viewpoints, experience design has to be involved with these kinds of cultural considerations.

In today's experience economy, retailers and manufacturers agree that whether selling to individual customers or corporations, offering only goods and services is no longer satisfying.

As consumers often perceive products and services as homogeneous, retail stakeholders are being forced to look out for differentiation strategies. Triggering memorable 'customer experiences' in retail environments, where multiple tangible and intangible stimuli can interact (Carù & Cova, 2003, 2007; Klingmann, 2008; Petermans & Van Cleempoel, 2010a, 2010b), seems to offer interesting perspectives. Working on and investing in customer experience, however, might not seem an obvious priority in a relatively uncertain economic environment where consumers all over the world have become more particular about what they will buy. Nevertheless, research has indicated that customer experiences can encourage store and retailer loyalty (Pullman & Gross, 2004), indicating that a loyal customer base is a retailer's most valuable defense against recessionary pressures.

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of customer experiences in retail practice, academic literature focusing on this topic often lacks conceptualization of central concepts and empirical support (Jüttner et al., 2009; Verhoef et al., 2009; Petermans & Van Cleempoel, 2010b). Indeed, 'experience' as such is an abstract concept to gain insight into. Moreover, existing research on the customer-retail environment relationship, performed in academic disciplines

related to retail design, seems not to appeal to designers (Petermans & Van Cleempoel, 2010b). As different authors in the last decades have indicated that interior architecture lacks a specific body of knowledge, especially in relationship to architecture (Abercrombie, 1990; Marshall-Baker, 2000; Clemons & Eckman, 2008), Edwards (2011) pleads for combining the advancement of the discipline's theoretical knowledge base with insights into the actual design practices. Aiming to answer Edwards' recent call, the purpose of this paper is twofold: (i) to reflect on retail design, customer experiences, and the importance of cross-cultural issues in studying retail environments via a review of literature; (ii) to use the Experience Web, a tool to gain insight into customer experiences, as a means to analyze customer experiences from a cross-cultural perspective in a qualitative, exploratory study. When we report about the cross-cultural studies that were performed, we bring the three concepts presented in the literature review together: with the help of the Experience Web, the authors separately reflect about their experiences in the same sample of Belgian retail environments wherein they both immersed themselves, with particular attention for cross-cultural issues. We conclude the paper by pointing to the importance of applying a holistic research attitude when trying to understand how people experience a certain environment and the role of cross-cultural aspects in this respect.

LITERATURE REVIEW: RETAIL DESIGN, CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES AND CROSS-CULTURAL ISSUES IN STUDYING RETAIL ENVIRONMENTS

Retail design

The term 'retail design' covers several issues that need to be considered when designing commercial interiors, ranging from aesthetic, financial and legislative aspects, to understanding how the designed interior will perform functionally and commercially (Petermans & Van Cleempoel, 2010a). As a research niche, retail design has gained status in retail management, but is still an emerging discipline in the field of interior architecture. Retail design as a scientific discipline is influenced by several background disciplines. These disciplines can not only offer valuable theoretical insights from which retail design may well benefit, but they can also offer empirical and methodological insights. Disciplines such as psychology, marketing, and consumer behavior have already focused on studying the relationship between the user and the commercial environment (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Turley & Milliman, 2000). These types of studies however mostly consider and approach retail and interior architecture as a sum of isolated parameters, which can also be studied as such. This approach however does not correspond to designers' viewpoints. They are convinced that the final effects of single variables are dependent upon people's evaluation of the *total* environment (Nelson & Stolterman, 2003; Holm, 2006; Petermans & Van Cleempoel, 2010b). Spaces that need to be designed or studied need to be approached as holistic totalities, as 'wholes' where various elements interact and

determine how people feel and behave in a space. Consumers' overall perceptions about a certain store also seem to influence their overall preference for that store (Thang & Tan, 2003). Therefore, today there is an increased interest for doing research in retail settings more 'holistically', whereby one aims to be able to explain how consumers process the entire in-store atmosphere (Healy et al., 2007; Sands, 2008).

Customer experiences

In the last two decades, 'experience' truly has become a buzzword in retail-related discussions. In communication about retail and in concrete retail design, the concept is continuously being used as a means or a tool for differentiation. However, talking about the concrete contents of experience has never been easy. Indeed, what is experience, and how can it be assessed in retail and interior architecture? An extensive literature review showed that various disciplines have ascribed different meanings to the concept (Carù & Cova, 2003; Sleswijk-Visser, 2009). As a consequence, there is no general consensus about its definition (Sleswijk-Visser, 2009).

To counter these remarks, the first author developed the Experience Web (see Figure 1). This 'tool' has been developed in an attempt to conceptualize customer experiences; (a) while building on the insights of the literature on aspects of customer experience and in-store behavior; and (b) approaching the concept with a vocabulary and research methodologies close to the realm of interior architects.

In a recent publication (Petermans et al., 2013), we discussed the conceptualization and contents of the Experience Web in its full detail. In the 2013 publication, we not only theoretically reflect about the Web; we also confront the theoretical conceptualization with the connotations of relevant stakeholders with regard to the aspects containing the Experience Web.

Length restraints oblige us here to give a short summary of the contents of Figure 1.

With the Experience Web, we want to indicate that experience is always a subjective response that people have towards products, services, and the different elements that make part of a designed space. Experiences are always time and context specific, and can involve multiple communication channels. They are also spread over a period of time (before, during, and after an experience). Taking into account that prior experiences can influence future ones, experiences are also dynamic. As experiences entail different kinds of processes and responses, which are affected by (interactions between) aspects of the designed environment, situation, and user characteristics, experiences are holistic.

The aspects summarized in the upper part of Figure 1 indicate that customer experiences are influenced by aspects or elements that a designer or another involved stakeholder can control, but also by elements that are outside a stakeholder's control (e.g., subjective character of experiences). As a consequence, stakeholders can never fully control the occurrence of experiences; they can only try to create and manage their contexts.

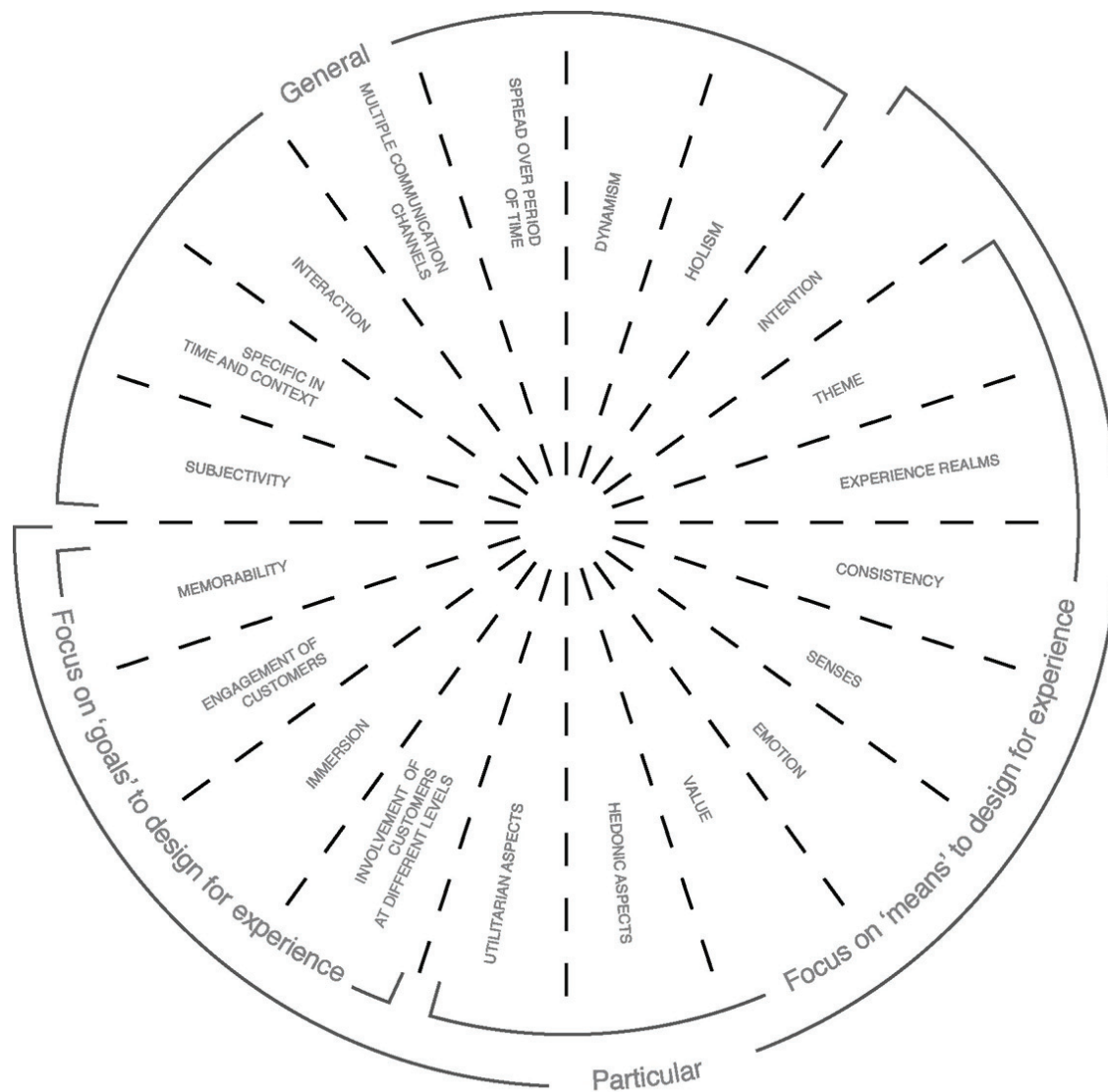


Figure 1. The Experience Web

When trying to design for these conditions, aspects of experience in the lower part of Figure 1 come to the fore. When designing for experience, stakeholders — certainly in the retail industry — intentionally try to stage an experience. In practice, most companies choose to concentrate on a particular theme or narrative that characterizes them and that appeals to their target audience. In this process, one often uses elements of Pine and Gilmore’s ‘experience realms’ (1999). Companies need to pay particular attention that every possible controllable aspect of a company’s offering is consistent with the chosen theme, and appeals as much as possible to their customers’ senses. Emotion and value-orientation are also inextricably bound up with customer experiences. When designing an environment with the aim to trigger experiences, designers and retailers need to pay attention not only to hedonic aspects but equally to utilitarian (functional) aspects. In the end, retailers and designers who try to design for experience mostly strive to involve the customer at different levels (e.g., cognitive and affective), and immerse them in

the designed environment by engaging or connecting with them in a personal way. Finally, experiences can also be, or become, memorable.

As our conceptualization of customer experience clarifies, trying to understand the complex nature of customer experiences in actual retail environments makes it essential to go beyond a view on experience as something simple and readily managed (Carù & Cova, 2007).

Cross-cultural issues in studying retail environments

The need to understand cross-cultural topics has become a central issue in several disciplines, and specifically in retail design. In order to develop ‘appropriate’ retail design, it seems necessary to understand customer behaviour, which has changed dramatically in recent decades. Indeed, amongst other factors, new patterns of consumer behaviour have been shaped due to changes in political boundaries, advances in communications technology, commerce, and regional integration. Beyond the

limits of a country, consumers are increasingly subject to a variety of influences; national consumer cultures are diluting and giving way to global hegemony. On the other hand, ethnic and nationalist identities have emerged, resulting in a greater market fragmentation (Douglas & Craig, 1997).

Many factors influence changing customer behaviour. In what follows, we dive deeper into some factors that are relevant for our research purposes. Today, consumers massively migrate from underdeveloped countries to developed countries. Many Chinese consumers for instance migrate to the United States and Europe, and many Latin American consumers (mainly Mexican and Colombian people) migrate to the United States (Douglas & Craig, 1997). In addition, consumers nowadays have the ability to be 'physically mobile' and travel all over the world, which exposes them to new lifestyles, products, and patterns of behaviour. Consumers are also increasingly 'virtually mobile'. Consumer behaviour is thus steadily being permeated by new and diverse influences; therefore, studying cross-cultural issues has become a challenging research topic, certainly in the area of retail and retail design.

In order to understand cross-cultural topics, it is important to define what culture is. According to McCort and Malhotra (1993, p. 97), in Soares (2007, p. 277), culture is 'the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habit acquired by man as a member of society', and according to Hofstede (1993, p.89), culture is 'the collective programming of the mind that distinguished one group or category of people from another'. Although it has been generally taken for granted that culture is extremely stable, there is considerable empirical evidence that clearly indicates that cultures change much more often and rapidly than previously thought (Steel & Taras, 2010).

There are various cultural frameworks and models described in academic literature, but for our purposes, Hofstede's work is particularly valuable. Using a large international sample, Hofstede (1984, 1991, 2001) created five dimensions, assigned indexes on each to all nations, and linked the dimensions with demographic, geographic, economic, and political aspects of a society (Soares, 2007). Taken into account Hofstede's work, it is relevant for our research purposes to briefly point to some interesting differences between Belgian and Mexican culture. According to Ortíz and Hernández López (n.d.), Belgian and Dutch culture is individualistic, low power distance, and rather feminine, whereas Mexican culture is collectivistic, high power distance, and more masculine. Hofstede also identified that self-actualization is a goal in individualistic countries. Collectivist societies seek other goals, such as harmony and consensus (Ortíz et al., 2013).

When we link these theories to retail design, we are convinced that retail environments are an important medium in which the cross-cultural aspects are worthy to be taken into account. Fowler et al. (2007) agree in their study about Hispanic customers in store environments. In their viewpoint, the human dimension (interaction with staff, staff attitude, language spoken) is the most important atmospheric dimension in a retail environment. Also Davis et al. (2008) state that culture is an

important influence on customers' responses to store atmospherics. Kim (1999), in Davis et al. (2008) argues that ideally the customer interface with a store should be designed so that the store attracts and retains customers across cultures; this position might be seen as a design uniformity across regions, and it'd enable shoppers at different locations to receive a consistent retail environment. However, this strategy doesn't allow regional retailers to capitalize on local themes appealing to specific market segments (Fowler et al., 2007).

In addition, shopping behavior is open to be influenced by the norms of the social group with which one identifies (Ackerman & Tellis, 2001), and shopping habits vary across countries (Millan & Howard, 2007). Also, as Millan and Howard (2007) state, the experiences sought at the mall may also be influenced by a country's economic circumstances. Culture and the state of a country's economy may moderate the level of hedonic and utilitarian shopping motives and experiences. High levels of hedonic shopping experiences may be encountered in developed consumer societies, but may be less prevalent or noticeably absent in less developed economies.

Studying customer experiences in retail environments with the help of subjective personal introspection

Methodology: subjective personal introspection (SPI)

Ethnography is a research approach, which relies on entering people's natural life worlds while aiming to interpret the complexity of human experiences. As ethnographic methodologies allow researchers to holistically understand the studied phenomenon by immersing oneself in the field and experiencing the research setting, this research approach seems essential for gaining an insight in customer experiences in actual retail environments (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Healy et al., 2007). Following Denzin (1989), we chose to apply the ethnographic method of subjective personal introspection (SPI) (Holbrook, 1986b; Gould, 1995). This method allows the researcher to be actively involved as 'research participant'. Patterson et al. (2008, p.31) describe it as the '*methodological doppelganger*' of customer experiences.

In SPI, which is also known in literature as 'auto-ethnography' (Ellis, 2008) or 'researcher introspection' (Wallendorf & Brucks, 1993), the researcher engages in a sort of participant observation of his or her own customer experiences, experienced in a certain context, and the meanings and emotions they evoke (Shankar, 2000; Shankar et al., 2001; Holbrook, 1995, 2006). Applying SPI can be particularly relevant in the early, exploratory stages of a qualitative, interpretive research process (Shankar, 2000), as it allows an enhancement of the body of knowledge. As a methodological approach, SPI has already been used to study consumer behavior (e.g., Gould, 1995; Shankar, 2000; Holbrook, 1986b; 2005).

As originally conceived, SPI focuses on the production of narrative accounts, which clarify the involved researcher's experiences. The production of these 'essays' requires input of the author's memories — personal memoirs that are possibly

sensitive to mental lapses. To overcome these issues, the support of relevant historical material, such as for instance field notes and photographs can be highly relevant (Holbrook, 2005).

Sample of stores

After having chosen to study customer experiences with the help of subjective personal introspection, twenty-three retail environments, located in three important shopping cities in the North part of Belgium (i.e. Flanders) were selected as examples of stores wherein the authors would immerse themselves in order to study their own customer experiences. The sample of stores to be visited in these cities was comprised after consulting two Belgian interior architects, who firstly both knew the Flemish retail landscape very well, and secondly, respectively had 30 years and 10 years of experience in the field of retail design. The stores to be visited thus were planned in advance. The sample of stores comprised different kinds of retail environments, ranging from interior design oriented stores, shoe and fashion stores, to general and specialist food stores. Figures 2 and 3 give an insight into a selection of the visited retail environments.



Figure 2. A selection of the visited retail environments (Xandres, Ghent)



Figure 3. A selection of the visited retail environments (Fish & Chips, Antwerp)

By choosing to study customer experiences in a very diverse sample of retail environments, we aimed to gain an insight into a broad range of customer experiences. Both authors visited the sample of stores separately, whereby the authors' respective cultural backgrounds were taken into account (the first author is from Belgium, the second from Mexico). Stores were visited during standard opening hours (i.e., between 9am and 6pm). The store visits of the first author each lasted between ten to fifteen minutes; those of the second author, approximately twenty minutes. During the store visits, both authors consciously avoided to present themselves as researchers to the store personnel. In that way, they functioned as 'instrument / subject' (Rod, 2006), while immersing themselves in the environment in relatively the same way as any other customer does.

Procedure

In all visits to retail environments, the Experience Web, discussed in the first section of this paper, functioned as a guide to help us rigorously document and explore our proper subjective experiences. While visiting the stores comprising the sample, the authors made multiple photographs in and outside the store to log elements that they valued to be important. In some stores, retailers were not eager to let the authors photograph their store; in these cases however, field notes mostly were allowed, which proved their value afterwards.

At the end of each day, filled with store visits, the authors' personal customer experiences were documented and studied for the first time via the collected field notes and photographs. Where necessary, they added some short remarks in their original field notes. In the days immediately following the store visits, the authors started writing narrative accounts on each store visit.

Due to the fact that both researchers had different backgrounds from where to 'start from', and given their cultural differences, it was expected they could have valued differently their experiences.

Data analyses

Ethnographic analyses typically work 'bottom up'; researchers start with studying the collected research data, aiming to look for patterns of thought (Riemer, 2008). Consequently, the starting-point for reflecting on the authors' customer experiences was the reading and the multiple re-reading of the narrative accounts, which they produced after having visited the sample stores. Next, and in line with what experienced ethnographic researchers advise to do when analysing the collected research data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Fetterman, 2008; Riemer, 2008), we considered the possibility of organizing the stores into groups or categories that made sense to us. By iteratively studying the collected material (Fetterman, 2008), while taking the Experience Web into account, we discovered that the stores could be meaningfully organized into groups. In what follows, we firstly discuss the research results of the Belgian researcher (first author). Next, we elaborate on

the results of the study of the Mexican researcher (second author). We conclude this section with a discussion of the cross-cultural results.

Research results

Study 1. The Belgian lens

The five groups, which the first author was able to discriminate, differ in their attention for each of the terms of the Experience Web. In her narrative accounts, this author formulated five groups ranging from ‘stores that trigger a high level of experience’ to ‘stores that trigger a low level of experience’. In what follows, we shortly elaborate on her findings.

The *first group* of retail stores, mostly in the shoes and fashion segment, included six stores. These stores very obviously tried to trigger a high level of experience in the store environment. The message the retailer wants to communicate with its brand clearly is being translated into the retail store’s design. Most of the stores in this group sell rather expensive products (for instance designer clothing and shoes), so one could almost expect that the store’s retail design is in line with the products these stores are offering. The *second group* of stores that the first author was able to discriminate comprised twelve stores (the majority of the stores visited by the first author). The retail stores in this group are very diverse, ranging from a clothing store, to a design and accessories store, and a food store. These stores clearly try to trigger customer experiences by the way the store is designed, but according to the first author’s experiences, their efforts seem not to be as pronounced as was the case for the stores in the first group. The *third group* included three stores, consisting mostly of non-food stores. The stores comprising this group were mostly so-called ‘roll-out stores’, a term used to describe the reproduction of a certain retail concept into different store locations (Meshers, 2010). When designers work out concepts for ‘roll-out’ stores, the choices they can and need to make in the design process almost certainly will be influenced by working in the framework of this particular retail typology. The designers of the sample of stores the first author visited still tried to trigger experience with their store’s design, but the first author’s experiences generally were less pronounced than in the stores, belonging to the first and second group, described here above. The store, comprising the *fourth group*, is a store which, according to the first author’s subjective experiences, had potential for triggering customer experiences, but which did not really succeed in this mission. Again, we would like to stress that the results of this first study were based on the first author’s narrative accounts, which documented her subjective customer experiences and which inevitably have been influenced by her background and the feelings and emotions she experienced while visiting the sample of store environments. The store in the *fifth group* was a so-called discount store. For these types of stores, price is an important differentiation parameter (Meshers, 2010). As a consequence, the retail design of these stores is mostly homogeneous and relatively simple, as it needs to reflect the cheapness of the product offerings.

Study 2. The Mexican lens

Analyzing the results of study 2 results in the discrimination of six groups. The second author grouped the stores that the sample comprised while looking for overarching ‘labels’. According to her lens of looking at her data, the *first group* composed seven stores, which had in common ‘exclusivity’ in their interior design and also in their products. They offered clothes, shoes and accessories. Their prices were high, and their stores had a very stylish design on the interiors and finishings. The materials which they used were elegant and the experience which they offered made customers feel very ‘high class ambient’, worth paying a high sum of money. The *second group* was composed by five stores, which had in common ‘harmony’ in their design. They offered a specialized assortment of items (ranging from books to furniture and glasses), and there was a professional consultation provided by the staff. The retail design of these stores was attractive, pleasant and harmonious; it truly was related to the products the stores sold. The products these stores offered were of good quality and their prices ranged from medium to high. The *third group* was composed by only one store. The second author decided to make a separate group here, because it is quite different in nature from the rest of the stores comprising the sample. All products the store offers are discount items: they are of common use and quite cheap. The interiors have priorities, such as to highlight the products and prices, and the colors the store uses truly call for the attention of the customer. Two stores, which had in common the ‘authenticity’, compose the fourth group: they preserved the original, authentic building for the store, which truly makes these stores different from the other ones comprising the sample. The *fifth group* is composed by three stores, which had in common a ‘multisensory’ profile. Being inside these stores, people tend to have a truly hedonic experience, stimulated by different elements, some tangible elements, and others originating in the general store’s atmosphere. These stores want the customer to feel relaxed, free to try things, and dissolve the barriers between customers and products. The products they offer are gastronomic or relating to body care. The *sixth group* is composed by five stores, which had in common ‘originality’ and a free style in the way the products and the store are composed. Being inside these locations, it may cost customers some time to truly understand the store because the products they offer are various. In one store belonging to this group, the author also experienced different atmospheres.

Discussion of research results

Applying SPI has allowed us to uncover the subjective meanings, which the authors attributed to their personal customer experiences in twenty-three retail environments located in different shopping cities in Belgium. The difference in research results originating in a study of the same sample of stores illustrates firstly, the importance of applying a *holistic* research attitude when trying to understand how people experience a certain environment, and, secondly, the role of *cross-cultural aspects* in this respect.

With regards to the application of a *holistic research attitude*, we need to take into account that in designed environments, multiple factors interact and influence customer experiences. An illustration hereof relates to the fact that the stores comprising the different groups that the authors were able to discriminate were not equally spread over the different groups for the two authors. The stores that the Latin American researcher for instance grouped together under the label 'multisensory' were spread over three different groups in the analyses of the Belgian researcher. Although both researchers studied the same sample of stores, their experiences in these stores were different. This issue comes close to the second argument, which we discussed here above; that is, the role of *cross-cultural aspects*. Due to *cross-cultural aspects*, the end results of both researchers studying the same sample in stores are quite different: the Belgian researcher ended up with five groups of stores, while the Mexican researcher formulated six groups. The Belgian researcher took the subjective interpretation and translation of the Experience Web into retail practice as a starting-point for the analyses, whereas the Mexican researcher looked for a common factor in her narratives. While doing so, she ended up with six groups of stores.

CONCLUSION

Despite the currently shared positive connotation of customer experience in retail practice, there appears to be a lack of a clear conceptualization and empirical support. Recently, the Experience Web has been presented as a holistic framework for conceptualizing customer experiences (Petermans et al., 2013). In this paper, we opted to use an ethnographic research method to study customer experience in retail practice: SPI. This method allows a researcher to holistically understand the central research topic by immersing oneself in the field and experiencing the studied setting for oneself.

As the discussion of the research results has indicated, both authors are convinced that all commercial interiors integrate some degree of 'experience' into the retail design of their stores. However, the concrete translation and interpretation of the aspects of the Experience Web seems to differ. Cross-cultural issues certainly are an important parameter in this respect.

Although SPI already has been used in consumer behavior research in the past (Gould, 1995; Shankar, 2000; Holbrook, 1986b; 2005), there also are opponents of this research method (e.g., Wallendorf & Brucks, 1993; Woodside, 2004; 2006). They have criticized SPI for being value-laden and biased (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). We agree that SPI undoubtedly is value-laden, but by explicating our proper experiences, we are able to question ourselves and our experiences far more critically than we would do with those of others (Shankar, 2000). Concerning the remark of research bias, the introspective data we collected in retail practice almost certainly will have been influenced by the reading we did prior to applying SPI in retail practice. However, because we were aware of this typical feature of qualitative inquiries, we used the knowledge from our

review of literature to inspire us in our introspective analyses. SPI furthermore has been criticized because of its relying on one's own subjective experiences as research data, without applying other research methods (Woodside, 2004; 2006). In response to this critique, we share the opinions of Gould (2004) and Shankar (2000) who indicated that there is no better place to start to study experiences than by examining our own. Indeed, SPI is a valuable method in the first, exploratory stages of a planned research program of different phases. This is also the way in which we used it.

This article focused on cross-culturally studying customer experiences by introspectively studying retail environments in different Belgian shopping cities. Further research needs to broaden our first exploratory cross-cultural perspectives. For instance, it seems worthwhile to cross-culturally study customer experiences in other geographic regions. In addition, it seems valuable to study in-depth experiences in a limited number of stores, whereby more cross-cultural participants and relevant stakeholders can be involved in the process. In the 2013 publication, for instance, we studied the perspectives of retailers, designers, and ordinary actual customers with regards to the Experience Web. It seems worthwhile for future cross-cultural research with the Web to follow a similar approach. Likewise, it seems particularly interesting to find out if our conceptualization of customer experiences — the Experience Web — is also applicable, and a valuable 'evaluation tool' in experiential spaces other than retail environments, such as hotels, care facilities etcetera.

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