

The Influence of Pre-Existing Negative Affect on Store Purchase Intentions

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This study investigates the effects of two negative emotions, boredom and distress, on purchase intentions. The two emotions basically differ on their levels of arousal (low versus high). Based on notions of adaptively coping with negative emotions, it is proposed that willingness to purchase is a manifestation of a goal-directed attempt to improve one's emotional state. The results of an experiment suggested that "when bored subjects were offered the prospect of shopping in a favorable environment" they expressed higher purchase intentions; however, when offered the prospect of shopping in an uncomfortable environment, they expressed lower purchase intentions. Higher distress led to higher purchase intentions. The differences in purchase intentions between boredom and distress were interpreted by the restriction in attentional capacity induced by heightened arousal. The results also showed that (a) personal relevance accentuated boredom's influence, and (b) considering the prospect of a favorable store experience reduced levels of positive affect. Implications of the theory and findings for understanding the influence of negative affect on store patronage are discussed.

People shop not only because they need what they buy but also because they may *enjoy shopping*. Indeed, besides its strict functional and practical aspects, shopping can be fun, relaxing, or exciting (cf. Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). The prospect that a future shopping trip can make us feel better suggests that shopping may also be sought as a way of improving moods. And, not surprisingly, shopping's ability to improve moods is accompanied and accentuated by marketers efforts to make stores, malls, and service encounters, *places that make us feel good*. Compelled by their own intuitions and professional advice, retail managers have long planned their stores' atmospheric impact using environmental and social elements (e.g., music, colors, employee sociability) aimed to improve customers' in-store emotions. In turn, these mood improvements lead to a host of desired behaviors, including higher willingness to purchase, longer stays, or enhanced satisfaction (Bitner, 1992; Kotler, 1973).

The notion that positive in-store emotions enhance patronage raises a series of inter-

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related questions that deal with pre-visit emotions and which, to date, have not been adequately addressed. For example, Do we seek shopping in order to improve our moods? And, If shopping makes consumers feel better, can *preexisting* emotions influence purchase intentions? Can *negative* pre-existing emotions influence these intentions? Are we more likely to want to shop if we are in a negative emotional state (say, bored, sad, or distressed)?

The goals of the present study are to expand the examination of and offer a conceptual framework and empirical evidence for the relevance of preexisting affect on subsequent patronage. Answering the questions of whether, why, and how preexisting affect influences purchase intentions is important both from a theoretical and a managerial perspective. From a theoretical perspective, recent research has suggested that affect plays a central role in a multitude of consumption experiences and considerable interest has been devoted to understanding how these influences occur (cf. Erevelles, 1998). However, a common feature of most past studies is that they examined emotions experienced *while* subjects were in the marketplace and thus already influenced by store factors and, to some extent, by self-selection. To date, relatively little is known about the influence of preexisting emotions, in general, and preexisting negative emotions, in particular, on an impending store visit. This lack of research stands in contrast to a host of studies that examined the effects of pre-existing emotions on subsequent (and unrelated to these emotions) cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors (see Isen, 1993).

Of interest to the present investigation are two interrelated aspects of the role of emotions in store patronage. The first is the need to understand the motivations and mechanisms that lead negative emotions to influence purchase intentions. In terms of motivations, it will be argued that, depending on the situation, shopping may be sought as a means of improving one's negative emotions. Specifically, while under certain conditions, a negative emotion can enhance purchase intentions, under different conditions, the exact same emotion can decrease them. If, indeed, depending on the situation, the same emotion may lead to opposite behaviors, then selection of situations and conditions should be regarded as one of the most important arenas for study in environmental psychology. The second aspect relates to a possible asymmetry between positive and negative emotions. If negative emotions can enhance purchase intentions, then, despite their diametrically opposed nature, both positive and negative emotions may have a similar positive impact upon shopping decisions.

As for the managerial perspective, a better understanding of the emotional and atmospheric factors that impact patronage can help us develop more effective ways for shaping pre-visit and in-store emotions so as to enhance the customer's desirability to visit and shop. Even though retailers may not have direct control over consumers' feelings prior to a store visit, two affective elements in the retailer's arsenal can strengthen the visit's positive affective appeal and, thus, increase the likelihood of patronage and loyalty: (1) consumer *anticipations* of the experience and (2) the *design of in-store factors*. For example, positive affective anticipations and imagery could be achieved via emotional advertising, atmospheric store planning, *affective training* of salespeople to relate to customers in a ways that evoke emotions (e.g., fostering sociability and likability), and by highlighting via advertising or salespeople, the emotional and functional benefits of the merchandise.

ENVIRONMENT, POSITIVE AFFECT, AND STORE PATRONAGE

To date, considerable theoretical and empirical attention has been drawn to the links between marketplace factors, consumers' emotional states, and behaviors (see Donovan, Rossiter, and Nesdale, 1994; Bitner, 1992). As viewed by this line of research, in-store experiences and environmental factors can influence affective states which then influence marketplace behaviors. Theoretical explanations for these interdependencies have been based on the Mehrabian-Russell (1974) environmental psychology model described by the chain: [Store Experiences and Stimuli] → [Emotions] → [Behaviors].

The influence of positive emotions on shopping-related approach behaviors is, for the most part, clear. The notion that positive affect favorably influences patronage is one of the strongest tenets of environmental marketing (Baker, Levy, and Grewal, 1992; Bitner, 1992; Donovan, Rossiter, and Nesdale, 1994; Donovan and Rossiter, 1982; Ridgway, Dawson, and Bloch, 1990). In particular, past research has found (a) that positive emotions can be generated by pleasant environments, and (b) that positive emotions enhance approach behaviors (see Bitner, 1992 for a review).

This line of research considers in-store elements to consist of *physical* features, such as colors (e.g., Bellizzi, Crowley, and Hasty, 1983; Bellizzi and Hite, 1992; Crowley, 1993), ambience (e.g., Baker, Levy, and Grewal, 1992), music (e.g., Herrington and Capella, 1994; Kellaris and Rice, 1993; Yalch and Spangenberg, 1993), and scents (e.g., Hirsch, 1995), or *social* components, such as crowding (e.g., Bateson and Hui, 1992), number and friendliness of store employees (e.g., Baker, Levy, and Grewal, 1992) and interactions with salespeople (Swinyard, 1993).

Emotional reactions are described in terms of two primary dimensions, Pleasantness and Arousal (Russell, 1980) which, respectively, represent the subjective experiences of hedonic tone and activation and, together, determine a two-dimensional configuration called circumplex (Figure 1). In a conceptually identical framework (based on a 45 degree rotation), Watson and Tellegen (1985) suggest Positive and Negative Affectivity (PA-NA, or Elation-Distress) as the underlying dimensions.

Finally, behaviors are seen as ranging along the approach-avoidance continuum. Approach behaviors are manifested by enhanced positive responses, such as willingness to stay longer, purchase intentions, future patronage, or shopping satisfaction (e.g., Ridgway, Dawson, and Bloch, 1990; Donovan, Rossiter, and Nesdale, 1994; Swinyard, 1993) while avoidance behaviors are their opposite (for a review and extensions of the environment - affect - behavior literature see Bitner, 1992).

While there is ample agreement as to the general facets of the environment-affect-behavior models, there is no consensus as to the specific nature of the elements in this chain. The need for operational specificity is especially important for affect. Emotions consist of complex and easily altered phenomena generated and manifested by diffuse internal and external reactions. It is therefore critical to operationally define them in a more clear and precise fashion. In particular, two types of distinctions have not been adequately addressed in past research: (a) the timing of affect's inception and (b) whether affect constitutes only a main effect or whether it interacts with the environment in generating its effects.

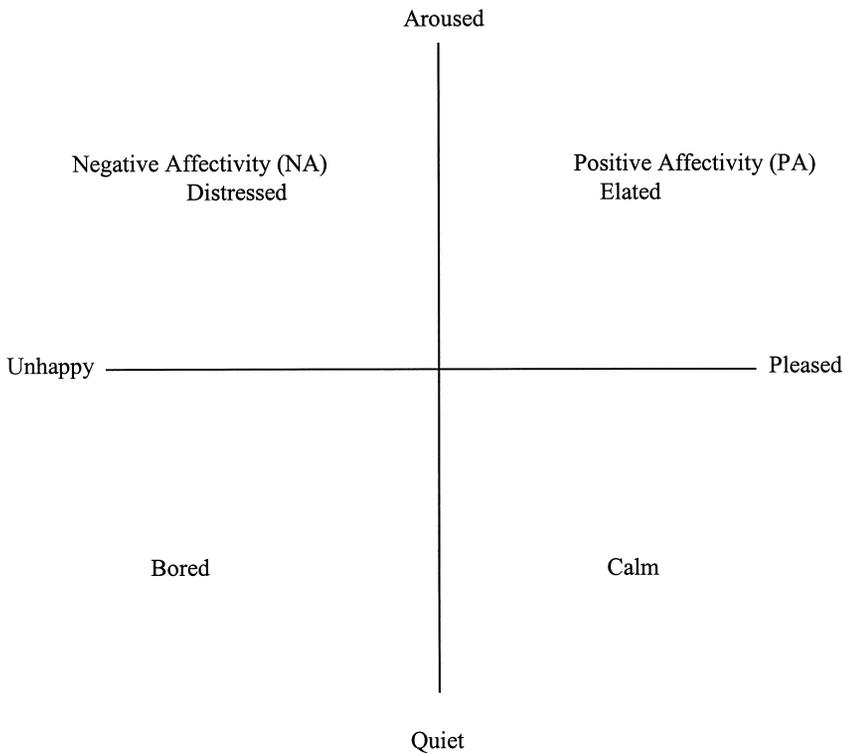


FIGURE 1

The Affect Circumplex

Past research did not always distinguish the timings of the onset or the measurement of emotional experiences (cf. Bitner, 1992). In previous studies, the timing of affect measurement ranged from before entering the store (Swinyard, 1993), a few minutes after entering it (Donovan, Rossiter, and Nesdale, 1994), after considerable time in it (Dawson, Bloch, and Ridgway, 1990; Crowley, 1993), or after the trip ended (Yalch and Spangenberg, 1993). Since emotions can be dynamically shaped not only by store features but also by one's preexisting state (Swinyard, 1993), lack of procedural clarity as to the timing of affect's onset could restrict our understanding of the joint effects of emotions and environments.

The second distinction concerns whether affect should be assessed as main effect or whether its interactions should also be taken into account when assessing its influences on behavior. These concerns parallel those raised with regards to the need to examine environments not only in their globality but also in their specificity; i.e., how particular store elements (e.g., ambience *and* employee sociability) can jointly influence subsequent emotions and behaviors (Baker, Levy, and Grewal, 1992).

PREEXISTING AFFECT AND STORE PATRONAGE

Extensive research in marketing, social and cognitive psychology suggests that preexisting affective states play an important role on a wide range of behaviors and experiences, including, persuasion (Bless et al. 1990; Mano, 1997; Petty et al. 1993), risk taking (Mano, 1994), product variety-seeking (Kahn and Isen, 1993), person impression-formation (Forgas and Bower, 1988; Mano, 1992) and creativity (Isen et al. 1985). As shown in this line of research, emotions can influence subsequent and unrelated (to these emotions) behaviors and cognitions. It is thus conceivable that pre-existing affect could also influence one's purchase intentions. However, except for one study (Swinyard, 1993), preexisting emotions have not been of focal interest in the environment-affect-behavior research.

Swinyard (1993) addressed questions regarding the influence of pre-existing affect on purchase intentions and examined the unique and joint effects of three factors, induced mood, quality of shopping experience, and personal involvement. In his study, subjects were, first, experimentally induced to a positive or negative mood using false test feedback and, then, their mood was assessed on a single positive-negative dimension. Next, they were presented with a store experience scenario, which varied on quality of shopping experience and personal involvement, and they expressed their intentions to purchase in that store. Finally, subjects mood was reassessed.

Swinyard (1993) tested four mood-related hypotheses: (1) that subjects in a good mood will have more positive purchase intentions than those in a bad mood; (2) that mood effects would be stronger for greater personal involvement; (3) that the effects of mood will be stronger for the better shopping experience; and, (4) that a better shopping experience will subsequently lead to a more positive mood. Unlike previous research, Swinyard incorporated specific affect-related effects in two ways. First, by including interactions with involvement and quality of experience, he encompassed a broader spectrum of emotion-invoked effects. And second, he distinguished between pre- and post-shopping emotions.

However, even though Swinyard's study emphasized a broader spectrum of store influences—i.e., personal relevance and social ambience—it used a single affect dimension. Lack of specificity and confounding affect's two dimensions can restrict our understanding of how emotions influence behaviors (Mano, 1997). An often made implicit assumption is that mood is reflected by the single dimension pleasantness-sadness. Yet, equating positive mood with pleasantness ignores the evidence that mood manipulations also influence arousal. Specifically, Kluger, Lewinsohn, and Aiello (1994) found that success-failure feedback (Swinyard's mood inducer) has a potent linear effect on pleasantness and a U-shaped effect on arousal. Since positive feedback induces high pleasantness and high arousal (i.e., Elation), and negative feedback induces unpleasantness and high arousal (i.e., distress), positive-negative feedback manipulations do not represent opposite polars of the valence continuum but, rather, endpoints of two independent circumplex regions. This raises some concerns and suggests that a finer depiction of affect in terms of pleasantness and arousal is needed to help establish the theoretical and practical aspects of the underlying processes that mediate affect's influence on store patronage.

Moreover, despite a relatively powerful mood induction, Swinyard (1993) found only a weak nonsignificant difference in purchase intentions between positive and negative mood; furthermore, the hypothesized interaction of mood and quality of experience also failed to reach significance. Since the notion that positive emotions favorably influence shopping patronage is one of the strongest tenets of environmental marketing, these results could be considered puzzling. At least three explanations could be advanced to explain them. First, the exclusion of a second affect dimension may have confounded effects. Second, whereas Swinyard dealt with emotions induced *prior to* an impending shopping experience, the other studies dealt with emotions experienced *while* subjects were in the marketplace. And, third, pre-existing affect may influence behaviors in ways different than store-evoked affect.

The present study extends Swinyard's (1993) work in a number of directions. First, instead of one dimension, affect's influence on store patronage is examined using the two dimensions. Second, instead of induced affect, this study uses naturally-occurring emotions. And, third, instead of the typical approach of focusing on positive emotions, this study focuses on negative affect's influence on purchase intentions.

THEORY

Gardner (1985) and Bitner (1992) suggested that a consumer entering an environment bored or upset is likely to respond differently than a relaxed or elated consumer. How do negative emotions generated prior and unrelated to shopping influence purchase intentions? Could the effects of *pre-existing negative affect* (e.g., boredom or distress) be similar to *store-generated positive affect*? How do personal and store-related factors (e.g., personal involvement and quality of a shopping experience) influence subsequent in-store behaviors and how do these factors interact with emotions in influencing purchase intentions? These are some of the main theoretical issues addressed in this study. In what could seem as a divergence from the notion that affect positivity increases purchase intentions, the present study will examine whether and under what conditions preexisting negative affect may also increase such intentions.

Coping Through Behaviors and Emotions

In addressing preexisting negative affect's influence on store patronage, this study relies on Lazarus' (1991) model of goal directed emotion-focused and problem-focused coping. Lazarus proposed that when experiencing negative emotions, people try to improve their emotional state and alleviate the problem causing that negative condition. It is proposed that under conditions of negative affect, shopping is seen as a goal directed coping mechanism that could alleviate that negativity.

There are two forms of goal directed coping mechanisms, emotion- and problem-focused coping (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Emotion-focused coping refers to *mental*

strategies aimed to master or reduce an undesirable situation by trying to manage one's emotions from the stressful experience (e.g., avoiding thoughts about an undesirable situation). Problem-focused coping involves direct *behavioral efforts* to manage or change the problem that caused the undesirable situation (e.g., undertaking a more pleasant activity). The importance of goal-directed coping reactions for dealing with negative emotions and events has been advanced in recent marketing studies that, among others, examined public service advertisements (Bagozzi and Moore, 1994), product risk perceptions (Dowling and Staelin, 1994), and service people burnout (Singh, Goolsby, and Rhoades, 1994).

The Joy in Shopping

Shopping is an experience sought, among others, for its ability to alleviate and improve moods. Many times, we shop to undergo a pleasant, relaxing or stimulating experience. A host of motivations aimed at mood improvement, mood protection, or other hedonic benefits can enhance willingness to shop (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). In informal in-depth interviews conducted by the author as to the reasons leading to shopping, a number of consumers said that, in addition to "buying what they need," they shop because they may enjoy browsing, "bargain hunting," learning about the marketplace, or, simply, because they *enjoy shopping*, per se. These consumers also said that they shopped in order to escape boredom or their everyday problems, to "hang out," to "see" and "be seen," to meet people, to avoid people, or to "kill time."

The joys and emotional benefits of shopping are pervasive. Consider, for example, two different types of shoppers, impulsive and "smart." Extensive research on impulsive/compulsive consumption has explicitly suggested shopping as a mechanism for escaping from negative feelings (Faber et al. 1995). On the other end of the impulsive-planning spectrum, "smart shoppers" (i.e., those who invest time and effort in seeking and using promotion-related information to save money) also experience considerable hedonic benefits and satisfaction when they feel responsible for attaining a deal (Mano and Elliott, 1997). Thus despite their different orientations, both types seek and receive emotional gratification from shopping.

Shopping's ability to improve moods is reinforced and accompanied by marketers' efforts to make the marketplace pleasant, or, depending on their goals, soothing or exciting places. Led by conventional and professional wisdom, retailers design their stores to be enjoyable because positive environments enhance patronage (Bitner, 1992). At the same time, however, these same positive environments may be sought by customers not only for the products in them, but also as a "remedy" for their bad feelings.

The view taken in the present study is that, depending on the expected quality of an impending shopping experience, willingness to shop is a mechanism that may be used for coping with negative emotions. Specifically, a shopping trip in favorable surroundings would be sought because of its ability to improve one's emotional state; on the other hand, shopping under disagreeable circumstances would be seen as a further deterrent of one's negative state and would, thus, be avoided. As such, purchase intentions are a manifes-

tation of both problem- and emotion-focused coping. As problem-focused coping, shopping is an activity that, in favorable settings could alleviate negative emotions and in a bad settings could deter them. As emotion-focused coping, thinking of or imagining a shopping trip in a good environment could generate positive emotions that would improve one's negative state; on the other hand, thinking of shopping in an unpleasant environment is a negative event that could further worsen one's emotions.

Arousal and Attention

The preceding suggests that the expected quality (good/bad) of an impending store visit moderates the impact of negative emotions on purchase intentions, leading to higher intentions when anticipating a good store experience and lower intentions for a bad one. However, in postulating negative affect's influence on store patronage, consideration should also be given to differences in arousal. Based on the two-dimensional model of affect, negative emotions can range from low arousal, i.e., boredom, to high arousal, i.e., distress. Of relevance to the present study is higher arousal's property to restrict attentional capacity and decrease allocation of processing resources (Easterbrook, 1959; Kahneman, 1973). More aroused subjects do not elaborate as extensively (cf. Cox and Locander, 1986; Henthorne et al. 1993; LaTour, Pitts, and Snook-Luther, 1990; Lewinsohn and Mano, 1993; Pham, 1996; Sanbomatsu and Kardes, 1988), simplify their decisions by focusing on fewer and more salient attributes (Mano, 1992, 1994; Pham, 1996), and exhibit reduced ad recall (Pavelchak, Antil, and Munch, 1988).

Reduced cognitive elaboration could prevent distressed subjects from being able to more thoroughly consider the pros or cons of a prospective shopping trip. Since they are not as likely to discriminate between a good and a bad trip, more distressed subjects would be more willing to purchase, regardless of the quality of that trip. Conversely, bored subjects, due to their lower arousal and extended processing capacity, should be able to more carefully consider the various aspects of a trip. Thus, when considering a trip to a positive environment—being able to realize its advantages—they would be more likely to purchase. However, when considering a trip to an unfavorable environment—being able to realize that it may further deteriorate their negative emotions—they would decline.

The preceding suggests two hypotheses. First, since they do not have as much cognitive capacity to consider the pros and cons of a future shopping trip and, therefore are not as likely to distinguish between better or worse environments, more distressed subjects would be more willing to purchase.

H1: *Higher distress will increase purchase intentions.*

On the other hand, since lower arousal increases cognitive capacity, more bored subjects will be more able to elaborate on the quality of an upcoming shopping trip. Thus, when considering a trip in a favorable environment, they would be more willing to purchase; if, however, the trip is to an unfavorable environment, they will be less willing to purchase.

H2: *More bored subjects will have higher purchase intentions in favorable environments but lower purchase intentions in unfavorable environments.*

Thus, depending on the expected (good/bad) quality of a future trip, a bored subject's ability to elaborate should lead to opposite directions on purchase intentions. This effect would be expressed as an interaction between boredom and quality of the expected shopping experience.

The Role of Involvement

As the personal relevance of an issue increases, people are more motivated and exert more cognitive effort to evaluate that issue's consequences. This effort is expressed as a more systematic processing of the issue-relevant arguments (Petty et al. 1993). As a result, an involved consumer would be more attentive to the expected quality of a shopping trip than a less involved one, suggesting an interaction between involvement and experience quality: higher involvement increases purchase intentions for a better experience but decreases them for an inferior one (Swinyard, 1993).

How should negative emotions interact with involvement and expected quality in influencing purchase intentions? There are two facets that need to be addressed in examining this issue: (1) coping, and (2) cognitive elaboration. From a coping perspective, both bored and distressed consumers would want to improve their negative feelings and guard their emotions (Lazarus, 1991) by favoring a better shopping trip. The question though is the extent to which they will be able to deliberate in a thorough manner on the qualities of that trip. For example, earlier we saw that given their lower capacity to elaborate, distressed subjects should not be as likely to distinguish the pros and cons of a future shopping trip.

In attempting to hypothesize how involvement influences purchase intentions, we should recap the influence of each of the key variables on cognitive elaboration: involvement increases it (because of higher motivation), distress hinders it (because of less resources), and, boredom enables it (because of more resources). Thus, in considering the joint effects of involvement and distress, given their antithetical forces on elaboration, it is not immediately clear how the two should jointly influence the deliberation of issue relevant arguments and how these would impact purchase intentions.

On the other hand, boredom and involvement's effects on elaboration are compatible since boredom can enable the more intense elaboration required under higher involvement. That is, when the motivating variable (involvement) and the enabling variable (boredom) occur in conjunction, a more thorough consideration of the issue-relevant aspects of a future trip is more likely (see also Mano, 1997). As a result, boredom should accentuate the effects of involvement and message quality on intended patronage: the more bored and the more involved subjects will find the good experience more favorable and the bad experience less favorable. Statistically, this effect should be manifested as a

three way interaction of boredom, involvement, and quality of the expected shopping experience.

H3: *Boredom will accentuate the effects of involvement and quality of experience on purchase intentions.*

Changes in Affect: Mere Consideration of a Positive/Negative Experience Can Color Emotions Accordingly

The last hypothesis does not deal with patronage per se, but addresses the effects of thinking of a positive or negative shopping trip on subsequent emotions. According to Lazarus' emotion-focused coping (1991), mere consideration of the quality (good/bad) of an impending event would color subsequent emotions in accordance to that quality (cf., Swinyard 1993).

H4: *Contemplating shopping in a good environment will improve emotions while contemplating shopping in a bad environment will worsen them.*

Naturally-Occurring Affect

To assess affect's impact on subsequent store patronage, the present study used subtle naturally-occurring affect. Induced moods intentionally evoke a particular emotion of restricted range and intensity. In contrast, naturally-occurring affect allows a broader and more genuine representation of emotions. This wider spectrum of emotions makes naturally-occurring affect an effective tool for assessing affect's influence on behavior. Three additional reasons led to the use of naturally-occurring affect. First, in contrast to powerfully induced emotions (including test feedback), subtle naturally-occurring emotions do not carry motivational aspects associated with such manipulations and could thus overcome demand characteristics and threats to validity (Simon, 1982). Second, naturally occurring emotions allow to properly interpret the source of any effects as stemming from the respondent's subjective experience and not from task-evoked confounds. Third, affect inductions (e.g., winning lotteries, test feedback) are quite powerful and atypical of pre-shopping experiences and could, therefore, limit generalizability. Thus, both from a theoretical and practical standpoint, it is important to examine whether affect's impact on purchase intentions applies to conditions of relatively weaker naturally-occurring emotions. And, since naturally-occurring affect generates a weaker impact than mood inductions, any effects obtained with it would be obtained despite its lower intensity. Nonetheless, a limitation of naturally occurring affect is that it may confound individual affect-related traits (e.g., optimism) or other variables (see Limitations in Discussion).

METHOD

Subjects and Procedure

151 undergraduates participated in the study. Prior to a scheduled lecture, they completed anonymously and at their own pace, a booklet containing the experimental material and a series of multi-item scales. The task consisted of four parts: pre-task affect measurement, exposure to an experimentally manipulated shopping scenario, elicitation of the dependent variable, and post-task affect measurement.

First, before exposure to any experimental stimuli, the naturally-occurring emotions felt at that time were assessed by having subjects respond to a series of emotion describing adjectives. Assessing affect prior to exposure to other material—when subjects did not yet know anything about the nature of the subsequent stimuli—eliminates possible confounding since it precludes the possibility that emotions were influenced by subjects' interest or liking for the main task.

Next, subjects were exposed to the study's focal stimulus, a scenario involving a store visit. They were randomly assigned to one of four conditions that varied on Store Experience Quality (good/bad) and Personal Involvement (low/high). After reading their scenario, subjects responded to a series of items assessing purchase intentions in the store (dependent variable). They then provided their evaluations of perceived personal involvement with the store experience (manipulation check) and answered, on a seven point item how likely they were to return an item to a store "if it is defective."

The emotion items were then re-administered as the post-task affect measurement. Finally, before the start of the lecture, subjects were fully debriefed and questions regarding the study were answered.

The Scenaria

The four shopping scenaria were based on Swinyard (1993). Subjects were asked to imagine that they were visiting a department store and intended "to buy a few items you need (socks and a shirt)." The scenaria described a conversation between a customer and a clerk as the customer was returning a pair of slacks previously purchased at another store in the department store chain. The slacks were returned because their zipper had broken after they had been worn only a few times and before they were washed.

Involvement was manipulated through personal relevance, to one's self or to a third person. In the high involvement condition, the subject was assigned the role of the customer (e.g., "You explain about the broken zipper and you comment 'they haven't even been washed yet, . . .'"). In the low involvement condition, the subject overheard a conversation when another shopper returned a pair of slacks with that problem (e.g., "You overhear a nicely dressed young person there to exchange some nice slacks, explaining about the broken zipper who then comments, 'they haven't even been. . .'").

Quality of shopping experience was manipulated by the clerk's reactions. In the good experience condition, the clerk was described as polite, sympathetic and helpful (e.g., he said "I am sorry you had this trouble. These have been wonderful slacks for us and this shouldn't have happened. I'll get another pair for you right away"). In the bad experience, the clerk was angry, rude, and accusing (e.g., "I have had it with you people, you are always trying to get something for nothing. This zipper looks like you broke it on purpose, just to get yourself some new slacks"). The good and bad experiences were further enhanced by the clerk's subsequent behaviors. In the good experience, he returns in a minute with a replacement pair of slacks and places them in a new bag; in the bad experience, he resentfully replaces them and stuffs the new slacks in an old wrinkled bag (for details, see Swinyard, 1993, Appendix).

Design

Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3, were tested in an analysis of variance with Purchase Intentions serving as the dependent variable. The independent variables in the analysis were: Shopping Experience Quality (bad/good), Personal Involvement (low/high), and pre-task Boredom and Distress. Experience Quality and Involvement were between-subjects factors. The two affect scales were measured and used as continuous regressors. The analyses were conducted using General Linear Models (GLM is a least squares method for fitting models that involve continuous and discrete variables; the continuous independent variables, i.e., the regressors, and the discrete variables are joined to define interaction terms).

Three points should be noted. First, the independence of boredom and distress in the circumplex (in the present sample, $r = 0.10$, n.s.) implies that the two dimensions can vary independently. That is, both dimensions may be present in the same individual to a greater or lesser degree (consider, for example, someone who is angry and tired at the same time). As also shown in past research, this independence is manifested both within and across times (e.g., feelings "in general," "at a given moment," or "right now"), in situational states, and individual traits (see Diener and Emmons, 1984; Larsen and Diener, 1992; Watson, 1988; Watson and Tellegen, 1985).

Second, since Boredom and Distress are negative emotions that primarily differ in levels of arousal, this analysis allows for a more in-depth examination of arousal's role in influencing patronage. And, third, instead of assignment to discrete conditions, continuous measurement and the regression approach allow for a more refined examination of affect's influence (Cohen and Cohen, 1983).

Hypothesis 4 (affect changes) was examined by the pre- and post-task differences in affect scales.

Multi-Item Measures

Scale unidimensionality was assessed with factor analysis, maximum-likelihood confirmatory factor analysis, and reliability-alphas. For all the scales, factor analyses and

TABLE 1

Key Multi-item Measure Statistics

Scale	Number of Items	Mean	s.d.	First Factor Explained Variance (%)	First Factor Lowest Loading	Alpha
Boredom	5	3.24	.93	57	.58	.84
Distress-NA	10	1.87	.74	46	.50	.87
Pleasantness	4	2.56	.77	57	.71	.78
Calmness	4	3.16	.88	54	.68	.81
Elation-PA	10	2.12	.74	46	.64	.86
Purchase Intentions	5	3.66	2.04	83	.85	.94
Involvement	6	5.39	1.10	68	.74	.89

reliability alphas strongly supported one-factor solutions. Table 1 shows, for each scale, the variance explained by the first factor, that factor's lowest loading, and the scale's alpha. Scale descriptions and CFA results are reported next.

Affect

Subjects indicated on 5-point items the degree that a series of emotion-describing adjectives were felt "at the present time." For boredom ("bored," "tired," "drowsy," "sluggish," and "sleepy," based on Mano, 1991), the analyses revealed very strong fit: $\chi^2 = 3.8$, d. f. = 5, $p < .60$, n.s.; the CFI and the TLI, two indexes robust to sampling and distributional considerations, showed excellent (= 1) fit.

Distress was assessed with Watson et al.'s (1988) widely used ten-item Negative Affectivity (NA) scale. The χ^2 was significant (181.0, d. f. = 35, $p < .0001$) but significantly lower from the null model ($\chi^2 = 693.13$, d. f. = 45, $p < .0001$). The CFI = .77 and TLI = .72 were both lower than required and suggesting some caution (nonetheless, note that the alpha, .87, highly exceeded the typically recommended .70).

Three additional scales, pleasantness, calmness (based on Mano, 1991) and elation-PA (Watson et al. 1988), were also used in examining changes in affect positivity (Hypothesis 4). For Pleasantness ("In good mood," "happy," "satisfied," and "pleased"), there was an excellent fit: $\chi^2 = 2.86$, d. f. = 2, $p < .24$, CFI = .99, TLI = .98. Calmness ("calmed," "at rest," "relaxed," and "serene") also showed excellent fit: $\chi^2 = 1.11$, d. f. = 2, $p < .60$; the CFI and TLI were ideal. Elation-PA, had strong fit: $\chi^2 = 100.91$, d. f. = 35, $p < .0001$, but very significantly lower from the null model, $\chi^2 = 528.2$, d. f. = 45, $p < .0001$; CFI = .86, and TLI = .82.

Affect scale reliabilities for post-task assessment were: Boredom = .86, Distress-NA = .86, Pleasantness = .76, Calmness = .83, and Elation-PA = .88. FAs and CFAs revealed results essentially the same to those of the pre-task measurement reported above.

Purchase Intentions

Following Swinyard (1993), this scale was measured with 5 seven-point items (spend more time shopping in that department, buy other items you need in the department, spend more time shopping in the store, let the clerk help you with other shopping, make a purchase from that clerk). The scale showed appropriate fit: $\chi^2 = 83.9$, d. f. = 5, $p < .0001$, but significantly lower than the null model's $\chi^2 = 818.7$, d. f. = 10, $p < .0001$; CFI = .91, TLI = .81.

Involvement (manipulation check)

Involvement with the shopping experience was assessed with Mano and Oliver's (1993) semantic-differential Value scale ("relevant," "important," "valuable," "matters to me," "significant," "of concern to me"). The scale had appropriate fit: $\chi^2 = 60.3$, d. f. = 9, $p < .0001$ but significantly lower than the null model's $\chi^2 = 577.2$, d. f. = 15, $p < .0001$; TCI = .91; TLI = .85.

RESULTS

Involvement Manipulation Check

Subjects in the high involvement condition evaluated the shopping experience as more involving than subjects in the low involvement condition ($M_{\text{low involv.}} = 5.21$, $M_{\text{high involv.}} = 5.61$, $t(147) = 2.16$, $p < .05$).

Purchase Intentions

Unless otherwise noted, degrees of freedom were (1, 130). As in Swinyard (1993), the inclination to return covariate had a small effect on intentions, $F = 2.3$, n.s. (All subsequent analyses were conducted with and without the covariate; both sets of analyses revealed essentially similar effects; the results presented here include the covariate).

The better shopping experience had a strong effect on purchase intentions ($M_{\text{bad exp.}} = 2.03$, $M_{\text{good exp.}} = 5.08$, $F = 169$, $p < .0001$). There was no main effect for Involvement. As in Swinyard, the Involvement X Experience interaction was significant ($F = 5.53$, $p < .05$). Higher involvement accentuated differences between the good and the bad experience: under low involvement, $M_{\text{bad}} = 2.10$, $M_{\text{good}} = 4.94$; under high involvement, $M_{\text{bad}} = 1.95$, $M_{\text{good}} = 5.24$.

More importantly, however, Boredom and Distress had a considerable impact on intentions. First, supporting Hypothesis 1, Distress had a significant main effect: higher

TABLE 2

Simple Correlation Coefficients between Boredom and Purchase Intentions for Each of the Four Experimental Cells

	<i>Low Involvement</i>	<i>High Involvement</i>	<i>Total</i>
Bad Experience	-.16	-.29 ^b	-.21 ^a
Good Experience	.28 ^b	.54 ^d	.38 ^c

^a coefficient significant at $p < .10$; ^b coefficient significant at $p < .05$; ^c coefficient significant at $p < .0005$; ^d coefficient significant at $p < .0001$

distress led to higher intentions ($F = 4.69, p < .04$; to illustrate this effect, consider the averages for the less and more distressed subjects (based on close-to-median splits of the distress scale): $M_{\text{low Distress}} = 3.42, M_{\text{high Distress}} = 3.86$.)

Second, supporting Hypothesis 2, there was a substantial boredom X experience interaction ($F = 20.74, p < .0001$) with quality of experience moderating bored subjects' intentions: higher boredom led to higher purchase intentions for the good experience but lower intentions for the bad one (Table 2). Specifically, for the good experience, boredom was positively related to purchase intentions ($r = .38, p < .0005$), but, for the bad experience, that correlation was negative ($r = -.21, p < .08$). (Interactions between discrete and continuous independent variables are reflected by differences in coefficients between experimental conditions; thus, in this case, support for Hypothesis 2 came not only from the strong positive relationship and the moderate negative relationship for the good and the bad experience, but also from the ample difference between these two diametrically opposed relationships; see also Table 3 and Figure 2).

Hypothesis 3 suggested that involvement would accentuate boredom's influence on patronage. Supporting this Hypothesis, the boredom X quality X involvement term was significant ($F = 4.15, p < .05$). As seen in Table 2, for high involvement, more bored subjects facing a good experience had considerably higher purchase intentions ($r = .54, p < .0001$) while more bored subjects facing the bad experience had lower intentions ($r = -.29, p < .05$). For low involvement, on the other hand, the difference between the good

TABLE 3

Regression Coefficients of the Analysis INTENTIONS = BOREDOM + DISTRESS + (BOREDOM × DISTRESS) for Each of the Four Experimental Cells

	<i>Bad Experience</i>	<i>Good Experience</i>
Low Involvement	Boredom = $-0.21, n.s.$ Distress = $0.32, n.s.$ Boredom × Distress = $0.09, n.s.$ (N = 35)	Boredom = $0.36, p < .10$ Distress = $0.49, p < .12$ Boredom × Distress = $-0.25, n.s.$ (N = 43)
High Involvement	Boredom = $-0.52, p < .005$ Distress = $0.52, p < .03$ Boredom × Distress = $-1.06, p < .001$ (N = 35)	Boredom = $1.09, p < .001$ Distress = $0.01, n.s.$ Boredom × Distress = $0.14, n.s.$ (N = 38)



FIGURE 2

Purchase Intentions as a Function of Experience Quality (good/bad) and Boredom (above/below median) for Low (left panel) and High Involvement (right panel)

and bad experiences was less pronounced ($r = .28, p < .05$, versus $r = -.16, n.s.$). Finally, these results were qualified by the interaction of all four variables in the analysis ($F = 5.20, p < .03$).

To shed more light into these results and visually demonstrate the effects predicted by H2 and H3, the sample was divided into low and high boredom groups using median splits. Figure 2 shows the effects of boredom and expected quality, for each involvement condition. First, both panels show the interaction suggested by H2: bored subjects were more favorable to the better trip and more averse to the bad trip. Second, supporting H3, these effects were more pronounced for the higher involvement condition (left versus right panel).

To examine the results further, the regression of boredom, distress, and their interaction was examined for each of the four experimental cells (Table 3). A few points are noteworthy. First, the regression coefficients of distress were, overall, positive (as suggested by H1), but ranged considerably (from 0.01, n.s., to 0.52, $p < .03$). Second, boredom and quality interacted (supporting H2). Specifically, in both cells of the good experience, higher boredom led to higher purchase intentions (positive coefficients, .36 and 1.09). However, in both cells of the bad experience, higher boredom decreased intentions (negative coefficients $-.21$ and $-.52$). Third, as predicted by H3, involvement accentuated the boredom X quality interaction: the difference between coefficients was milder for lower involvement ($-.21$ versus .36) but considerably more polarized for higher involvement ($-.52$ versus 1.09). Finally, the 4-way interaction obtained in the GLM suggested that distress qualified the quality X involvement X boredom interaction. As seen here, however, this 4-way interaction was driven, primarily, by the high involvement-bad quality cell (as indicated by its strong coefficient in the two-way interaction, $p < .0001$, in that cell).

TABLE 4

Changes in Pleasantness and Calmness from Pre-Task to Post-Task for the Bad and Good Shopping Experiences

	<i>Experience</i>	<i>Pre-Task</i>	<i>Post-Task</i>
Pleasantness	Bad	2.65	2.27 ^b
	Good	2.70	2.65
Calmness	Bad	3.17	2.83 ^a
	Good	3.16	3.06

^a difference between pre- and post-task significant at $p < .001$; ^b difference between pre- and post-task significant at $p < .0001$

Changes in Emotional States

Hypothesis 4 proposed that considering a good shopping trip would improve emotions and considering a bad trip would worsen them. To examine these changes, each affect scale was analyzed in a 2 (time: pre and post task; repeated-measures) X 2 (involvement) X 2 (experience quality) analysis (for these analyses, *d. f.* = 1, 138, due to some subjects not completing all post-experimental material).

A number of effects were significant (Table 4). For pleasantness, there was a main effect for time ($F = 18.04$, $p < .001$) due to a decrease from pre to post. This effect, however, was qualified by the interaction of time X quality ($F = 10.30$, $p < .002$) since the decline was only for subjects facing the bad experience ($M_{\text{pre-task}} = 2.65$, $M_{\text{post-task}} = 2.27$, $p < .0001$). For subjects in the good experience, pleasantness levels remained unchanged ($M_{\text{pre-task}} = 2.70$, $M_{\text{post-task}} = 2.65$, *n.s.*).

A similar pattern emerged for calmness: there was a main effect suggesting a decrease over time ($F = 9.56$, $p < .005$) qualified by the interaction of time X quality ($F = 2.82$, $p < .10$). As with pleasantness, there was a strong decline for subjects in the bad experience ($M_{\text{pre-task}} = 3.17$, $M_{\text{post-task}} = 2.83$, $p < .001$) but no significant change in calmness for the good experience ($M_{\text{pre-task}} = 3.16$, $M_{\text{post-task}} = 3.06$, *n.s.*).

Together, these results suggest that exposure to the bad shopping scenario worsened the positive emotions of pleasantness and calmness. However, since the consideration of a positive trip did not improve (or change) the levels of positive emotions, these findings only partially support Hypothesis 4.

Finally, there were two other main effects, one for boredom and one for elation, both suggesting attenuation across experimental conditions: boredom ($M_{\text{pre}} = 3.27$, $M_{\text{post}} = 3.05$; $F = 13.32$, $p < .0005$); Elation ($M_{\text{pre-task}} = 2.56$, $M_{\text{post-task}} = 2.35$, $F = 12.66$, $p < .0001$). No other effects were significant.

DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to explore the role of negative emotions in purchase intentions. The results suggest that due to their ability to process information more effectively and

elaborate on a shopping trip's features, bored subjects favored a good shopping experience and avoided a bad one. On the other hand, more distressed subjects, who could not as effectively elaborate, had a greater tendency to purchase.

These results paint a picture that, at first sight, appears different and more intricate from past conceptualizations. In seeming contrast to the notion that positive affect enhances purchase intentions, preexisting negative affect may also increase purchase intentions. Moreover, until now, research did not examine the role of subtle negative emotions felt prior to store patronage. As seen here, despite their weak emotional intensity, fragile everyday naturally-occurring negative affect may exert considerable influence on purchase intentions. When we consider that low intensity emotions are more representative of actual emotions felt before shopping (than those evoked by powerful inductions), these results suggest the importance of even slight affect changes that may precede an impending or unplanned store visit.

Coping with Negative Emotions

The enhanced tendency to purchase under higher negative affect was attributed to goal-directed coping with one's negative emotions (Lazarus, 1991). Distressed subjects tried to manage their emotions by averting their grim state and defensively avoiding the threat to their self. This was accomplished by willing to purchase, an activity that can alleviate one's negative affect. Shopping has been suggested as an escape from negative emotional states of impulsive consumers (O'Guinn and Faber, 1989). The present results, however, shed additional light into this mechanism by suggesting that its basis is not only trait-based but can also be manifested as an expression of situational characteristics. Future research needs to examine the role of state and trait elements and their interactions in influencing purchase intentions.

For bored subjects, who were able to contemplate on the quality of the trip, a good shopping trip seemed as a way to alleviate boredom and was, therefore, pursued; on the other hand, shopping under undesirable circumstances was recognized as a further deterrent to their negative state and, thus, avoided. As suggested by Lazarus, these strategic reactions are self-serving, goal-directed, and geared towards improving one's negative affect (see also Mano, 1992).

Support for the explanation of adaptive coping also came from the involvement-related effects. Higher motivation accentuated the boredom X quality relationship suggesting the role of personal relevance in coping. Subjects—and, especially the bored ones—were more likely to purchase under conditions appraised as personally involving and positive than under conditions that were not as relevant.

Finally, more support for emotion-focused coping (Lazarus, 1991) came from the changes in the positive emotions of pleasantness and calmness which declined for subjects presented with a bad store encounter. Even the simple consideration of the "bad" scenario generated enough negative emotions that eroded subjects' initial positive affective states. It is important to note that these declines in positive affect occurred by simply having

subjects read the bad scenario and despite the fact that a number of judgments were made after reading that scenario.

Does Distress Enhance Purchase Intentions?

The explanation offered for distressed subjects' enhanced disposition to purchase was differences in arousal and lower elaboration. It was proposed that they could not as carefully consider the various pros and cons of the trip and that they "just wanted out" from their negative state. The prospect of any shopping—good or bad—may also have been seen by them as preferable to their anxiety and irritability. However, while the boredom results were quite straightforward (lower intentions for "bad" shopping and higher intentions for the "good"), the results for distress were mixed and not as clear cut. The finding that distress had a main effect on purchase intentions may stem from the cumulative effects across the 4 cells. Nonetheless, closer examination of the cells reveals that significance was reached only in one of them, the more involving and bad experience (and a moderate effect in the uninvolved and good experience).

Why would distressed subjects opt to purchase in a "bad" store? One possible explanation is the strong interaction ($p < .0001$) between distress and boredom in the involving and bad experience cell. Higher distress and higher boredom are both indicative of an accentuated negative emotional state. Thus, the results in this cell may have been driven by subjects' general affective negativity (indeed, the simple correlation between pleasantness and intentions in that cell was $r = -.33$, $p < .05$, i.e., sadder subjects had a higher desire to purchase). Furthermore, that cell is the only one for which the interaction of boredom and distress was significant. In any event, such intricate interactions between affect and environmental variables are speculative and need to be further addressed in future research.

The Intricacy of Affect-Related Effects on Store Patronage

As complex human experiences, emotions have numerous and diverse influences on human behavior. This complexity became evident in the interactions within and between emotions and environmental conditions. These results parallel Donovan, Rossiter, and Nesdale's (1994) finding of arousal's moderating role in influencing purchase intentions and are akin to Swinyard's (1993) mood X involvement X experience significant term. Similar interactions involving affect variables have been found in other areas, including decision making (Mano, 1992), risk-taking (Mano, 1994), and persuasion (Mano, 1997). Taken together, they suggest an intricate interplay of affect's effects. Future research should examine whether and how emotion-related traits (e.g., compulsivity, O'Guinn and Faber, 1989) can directly influence, mediate, or moderate the relationships in the [Stimuli - Emotions - Behaviors] chain.

Affect's intricacies are also manifested when emotions of opposite hedonic tone result in similar effects. Higher purchase intentions may be precipitated both by positive

emotions (as seen in a long array of past research) and negative emotions (as seen here). The asymmetry between positive and negative affect (i.e., when positive and negative emotions have similar consequences) is a phenomenon quite common in cognitive and social psychology. Extending this notion of asymmetry, the present study found that two negative emotions, boredom and distress, may also result in dissimilar effects. When the need to improve a negative emotional state was combined with either high or low arousal, a different pattern of effects on purchase intentions emerged. Thus, arousal may provide another reason for asymmetries in affect's influence on behavior (Mano, 1994).

In contrast to pleasantness', arousal's theoretical and empirical role in environmental psychology has not always been clear. Despite their distinction, pleasantness and arousal are sometimes expected to have identical effects and are both seen as reinforcers of approach behaviors (e.g., Baker, Levy, and Grewal, 1992; Ridgway, Dawson, and Bloch, 1990). The lack of clarity of arousal's role has also been manifested in the findings of environment's influence on arousal (i.e., when arousal is the dependent variable). For example, some research did not detect hypothesized differences in arousal levels generated by colors (e.g., Bellizzi and Hite, 1992) or music (e.g., Yalch and Spangenberg, 1993). Complicating this picture is the evidence that, like success-failure feedback (Kluger et al. 1994), some environmental stimuli (e.g., color wavelength, Crowley, 1993) may have a U-shaped effect on arousal. [Arousal's intricate effects have also been reported in persuasion (Baggozi, 1996; Mano, 1997; Sanbomatsu and Kardes, 1988) and risk taking (Mano, 1994)].

The results of this study also highlight the need to explore arousal's interactions with other variables, in general, and affect-related variables, in particular. Donovan, Rossiter, and Nesdale (1994) suggested that in-store pleasantness moderates arousal's impact: for pleasant environments, arousal is positively related to patronage behaviors; yet, for unpleasant environments, arousal is inversely related to patronage. Complementing the picture, the present results stress the importance of pre-purchase arousal as an important moderator influencing store patronage. Taken together, these results further suggest affect's complex and intricate effects before and after entering a store.

Limitations

The use of naturally-occurring emotions as independent variables was driven by the need to interpret the source of any effects as stemming from the respondent's subjective experience and not from task-evoked confounds. However, despite its advantages, a limitation of naturally-occurring affect is that it may confound emotional or motivational tendencies or other personal characteristics that could enhance the inclination to experience positive (or negative) hedonic tone (Seligman, 1975; Watson, 1988). Thus, potential confounds such as personality and motivations (other than involvement) cannot be totally ruled out. In future research, in order to assure that preexisting emotions influence store patronage, there is need to employ both naturally-occurring and manipulated moods and demonstrate converging patterns of influence. (The above notwithstanding, such conver-

gent findings have been reported in the decision making literature; see Lewinsohn and Mano, 1993, and Mano, 1994).

A second criticism is the artificiality of the scenarios which could potentially induce demand characteristics. For example, strongly stated “bad/good” scenaria may have contributed to subjects’ purchase intentions. Note, however, that the study’s focus is not on the features of a shopping experience per se (i.e., whether good/bad or un/involving experiences influence purchase intentions). Rather, the study centered on the interface between one’s emotions and the quality and involvement of anticipated experiences. The question of generalizability though still remains and whether more realistic situations would result in different forms of interface between affect and purchase intentions than those found here is an important topic of future research.

CONCLUSION

Past research has shown that in-store affect positivity can enhance purchase intentions. The present study suggested that pre-existing negative affect could also enhance purchase intentions. In particular, the premise that in-store affect positivity leads to approach behaviors needs to be extended to incorporate the notion that pre-existing affect negativity may have similar repercussions.

Affect plays a central role in shaping customers’ willingness to go for a shopping trip as well as their in-store behaviors. Whether happy, bored, or angry, consumers’ emotions have a powerful influence on a variety of consumption behaviors. The present results are another step in exploring the intricacy of the relationships between emotions and store factors. By including pre-shopping emotions in the [environment-affect-shopping] framework and by incorporating the more detailed two-dimensional view of affect, the present findings offer insights which expand the theoretical relevance of current perspectives on affect and consumption. Emotions are complex human responses and their precursors and consequences are not easily tied down. The broader implications of these findings await further study. Additional research is necessary in the lab and the store to advance our understanding of the joint consequences of affect, environment, and individual motivations and traits on marketplace behaviors.

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