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EDITORIAL

Le marketing à l'aune des transformations sociétales : permanence ou renouvellement ?

Marketing in the light of societal transformations: permanence or renewal?

Les Millenials constituent un segment à la fois attractif pour les marques mais complexe à séduire, de par l'ambivalence de leurs attitudes et comportements. Ils sont de surcroît fortement connectés et réagissent avec rapidité sur les réseaux sociaux pour exprimer leur accord ou leur désaccord avec les choix des marques.Comment cette génération vient-elle remettre en cause l'efficacité de leviers marketing traditionnels ? Au-delà de cette cible spécifique, comment les entreprises peuvent-elles répondre aux nouvelles aspirations des consommateurs ? Comment le marketing peut-il ou doit-il se réinventer pour répondre aux attentes de ses cibles ?C'est à ces questions que les articles de ce numéro apporteront des réponses.

Comment les jeunes générations réagissent-elles aux publicités provocantes s'appuyant sur un tabou ? C'est à cette question que répond l'article rédigé par Ludivine Destoumieux, Julien Grobert et EricVernette.Leur recherche s'appuie sur une étude qualitative auprès de vingt répondants âgés de 22 à 32 ans, invités à partager leur propre conception du tabou et à réagir ensuite à quatre publicités choquantes, deux s'appuyant sur un tabou sexuel, deux s'appuyant sur un tabou mortifère.Tout d'abord, la plupart des dimensions traditionnelles du tabou se retrouvent dans leur propre définition du tabou, notamment la production culturelle, située géographiquement et historiquement, le caractère interdit ou leur incertitude. Ensuite, les discours reflètent l'ambivalence de cette génération, qui souhaite simultanément refléter un état d'esprit d'ouverture et suivre la norme sociale. Enfin, les réactions mettent en évidence le rôle primordial du contexte social dans lequel les publicités sont visionnées, la publicité devenant ou non tabou en fonction de l'entourage avec lequel elle est visionnée.

L'adoption de produits alimentaires non carnés est marquée par d'importantes différences de genre (Ruby, 2012; Stevens *et al.*, 2014).Comment dépasser les stéréotypes de genre et amener les hommes à consommer davantage de produits non carnés ? Pour répondre à cette question, Magali Trelohan et Jordy Stefan réalisent une expérimentation auprès de 241 répondants afin de tester l'effet de l'expérience (aucune, indirecte, directe) sur les jugements des répondants relatifs à un pâté étiqueté ou non comme étant végétarien. Les résultats établissent que les produits ayant un label végétarien sont plus attractifs aux yeux des femmes car ils sont évalués plus sains et écologiques, et moins attractifs aux yeux des hommes du fait de l'absence de viande. Ces stéréotypes de genre, en particulier le plus faible degré de masculinité associés aux produits végétariens, peuvent toutefois être annihilés à travers l'expérience directe du produit (dégustation).

Millenials are an attractive segment for brands, but one that is difficult to appeal to because of their ambivalent attitudes and behaviors. Moreover, they are highly connected and react quickly on social networks to express their agreement or disagreement with brands' choices. How does this generation challenge the effectiveness of traditional marketing levers? Beyond this specific target, how can companies respond to the new aspirations of consumers? How can or should marketing reinvent itself to meet the expectations of its targets? These are the questions that the articles in this issue will answer.

How do the younger generations react to provocative ads based on a taboo? This is the question answered by the article written by Ludivine Destoumieux, Julien Grobert and Eric Vernette. Their research is based on a qualitative study with twenty respondents aged 22 to 32, who were asked to share their own conception of taboo and then to react to four shocking ads, two based on a sexual taboo, two based on a taboo dealing with death. Firstly, most of the traditional dimensions of taboo are found in their own definition of taboo, including cultural production, geographically and historically situated, forbiddenness, or their uncertainty. Second, the discourses reflect the ambivalence of this generation, which wishes to simultaneously reflect an open mindedness and follow the social norm. Finally, the reactions highlight the primordial role of the social context in which the advertisements are viewed, with the advertisement becoming or not becoming taboo depending on the context within which it is viewed.

The adoption of non-meat food products is marked by significant gender differences (Ruby, 2012; Stevens et al., 2014).How can we overcome gender stereotypes and get men to consume more non-meat products? To answer this question, Magali Trelohan and Jordy Stefan conduct an experiment with 241 respondents to test the effect of experience (none, indirect, direct) on respondents' judgments of a pâté labeled or not labeled as vegetarian. The results establish that products with a vegetarian label are more attractive to women because they are rated as healthier and environmentally friendly, and less attractive to men because of the absence of meat. These gender stereotypes, in particular the lower degree of masculinity associated with vegetarian products, can however be negated through direct experience of the product (tasting).

The next two papers are in the area of consumer behavior, focusing on savings behavior and the levers of purchasing behavior, respectively.

Les deux articles suivants s'inscrivent en comportement du consommateur, et s'intéressent respectivement aux comportements d'épargne et aux leviers des comportements d'achat.
L'insuffisance du comportement d'épargne peut exposer des individus et des foyers à une vulnérabilité financière et porter atteinte à leur bien-être financier. L'article d'Olivier Nicolas et Richard Ladwein propose de dépasser les limites des approches cognitives et d'adopter une approche plus psychologique du comportement d'épargne.Les deux déterminants majeurs de l'intention d'épargne, à savoir l'importance accordée à l'épargne et l'efficacité personnelle en matière de gestion financière, sont ainsi expliqués par des variables psychologiques telles que le plaisir associé à l'épargne, l'estime de soi ou encore le bien-être financier.

S'appuyant sur la théorie des niveaux de représentation de Trope et Liberman (2003), Danielle Lecointre-Erickson, Patrick Legohérel et Bruno Daucé s'intéressent au rôle des vitrines comme déclencheur des comportements d'achat. Ils postulent ainsi qu'une vitrine concrète conduira à des intentions comportementales plus favorables qu'une vitrine abstraite. Les résultats d'une quasi-expérimentation auprès de 144 participants confirment l'effet direct du niveau de représentation de la vitrine sur les intentions comportementales, ainsi qu'un effet indirect à travers l'atmosphère perçue.
Pour clôturer ce numéro, Frédérique Orticoni et Jean Dufer interrogent la pertinence et l'actualité du marketing-mix dans les recherches actuelles. Adoptant une perspective historique, ils identifient trois périodes au cours desquelles la vision du marketing a fortement évolué, impactant par là même les contours du marketing-mix. Le focus initial sur le produit s'est ainsi progressivement déplacé vers l'expérience vécue par le consommateur puis vers la co-création de valeur. Les auteurs concluent à la permanence du marketing-mix, à condition de voir celui-ci comme un outil utile d'apprentissage et d'enseignement et non pas comme une théorie du marketing.

Ces cinq articles soulignent à la fois la grande capacité d'adaptation du marketing à un monde en mutation rapide et la permanence de son fil directeur fondé sur une écoute de plus en plus fine des consommateurs. Si les typologies « d'avant » (la ménagère de 50 ans +s'est depuis longtemps noyée dans son baril de lessive) ne sont plus d'actualité, la méconnaissance du marché – voire son ignorance, cachée derrière des théories/idéologies prétendument humanistes – serait funeste. Les articles contenus dans ce numéro montrent, à qui en douterait, que le consommateur est profondément humain.

Insufficient saving behavior can expose individuals and households to financial vulnerability and undermine their financial well-being. The article by Olivier Nicolas and Richard Ladwein proposes to go beyond the limitations of cognitive approaches and to adopt a more psychological approach to saving behavior. The two major determinants of saving intention, namely the importance attached to saving and self-efficacy in financial management, are thus explained by psychological variables such as the pleasure associated with saving, self-esteem and financial well-being.
Based on Trope and Liberman's (2003) theory of levels of representation, Danielle Lecointre-Erickson, Patrick Legohérel and Bruno Daucé are interested in the role of shop windows as a trigger for purchasing behavior. They postulate that a concrete window display will lead to more favorable behavioral intentions than an abstract window display. The results of a quasi-experiment with 144 participants confirm the direct effect of the level of representation of the shop window on behavioral intentions, as well as an indirect effect through the perceived atmosphere.
To close this issue, Frédérique Orticoni and Jean Dufer question the relevance and topicality of the marketing mix in current research. Adopting a historical perspective, they identify three periods during which the vision of marketing has strongly evolved, thereby impacting the boundaries of the marketing mix. The initial focus on the product has gradually shifted to the consumer experience and then to the co-creation of value. The authors conclude that the marketing mix is still relevant, provided that it is seen as a useful learning and teaching tool and not as a marketing theory.
These five articles underline both the great capacity of marketing to adapt to a rapidly changing world and the permanence of its guiding principle based on an ever more refined understanding of consumers. If the typologies of the past are no longer relevant (the 50+ year old housewife has long since drowned in her barrel of laundry detergent), the lack of knowledge of the market - or even its ignorance, hidden behind supposedly humanistic theories/ideologies - would be fatal. The articles in this issue show, to anyone who doubts it, that the consumer is profoundly human.

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No more taboos for young people? sex and death in provocative advertisement.

Abstract

According to young people, «nothing is taboo anymore». Taboos, as cultural productions, geographically, historically, and socially situated, evolve in line with society and mentalities. One may therefore wonder whether the traditional representations of taboos found in literature are not, at least in part, dated. This research proposes to answer the following questions: What are the current representations and modalities of the concept of taboo? What impact could they have on attitudes to provocative advertisements? What advertising strategies can moderate these reactions? We mobilize a sample of 20 semi-directive individual interviews, asking respondents about their experiences as spectators of shocking advertisements using taboos. We assess their individual perceptions and attitudes, in the face of various sexual and morbid stimuli pre-tested as taboo. The interviewees are invited to share their own definition of the concept, we compare their speeches with defining facets found in the literature. The ambivalent young people want to push forward the morals and the mentalities, it is taboo for them to say that they have taboos, they appear thus rather favorable to taboos' breaking if advertisement has progressive intentions. This study demonstrates the importance of social and momentary contexts in forming the attitudes towards provocative advertisements.

Key words: Taboo, Provocative advertising, Sex, Death, Young

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" Thanks to young people, it is more and more talked about and therefore no longer taboo."

Introduction and objectives

Between 1200 and 2200 ads and more generally 15,000 commercial stimuli per day and per person, this is what Arnaud Pêtre, a researcher in Neuromarketing, estimated in 2007. Fifteen years later, the spectacular development of the Internet has multiplied our exposure and modified our way of interacting.

In this advertising space, to differentiate in the middle of the vast amount of advertising information, there is a real competition between advertisers to attract attention. In recent years, we have been facing an overload of advertising information that exceeds the attention capacity (Anderson and De Palma 2012). Under these conditions, Manceau and Tissier-Desbordes (2006) explain that when choosing an advertising strategy, it is a question of choosing between: (1) demonstrating the quality of the product (2) relying on the aesthetic quality of the advertising (3) or provoking through the use of taboos. As a result, companies adopt radical tactics to stand out (Dahl, Sengupta and Vohs 2009). Taboos are known to be an excellent advertising tactic for attracting attention (Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda 2003; De Pelsmacker and Van Den Bergh 1996; Myers et al. 2020; Parry et al. 2013; Pope, Voges and Brown 2004; Reichert, Heckler and Jackson 2001; Vézina and Paul 1997; Sabri 2012a), the taboo is the stimulus for provocative advertising (Pope, Voges and Brown 2004).

Nevertheless, still few marketing research have focused on the question of provocative advertisements and their impact. These researches are often not based on the notion of taboo despite the numerous and rich investigations of the concept in Anthropology, Sociology and Psychoanalysis. In fact, the understanding of the influence of the five defining characteristics of taboo (cultural production, forbidden, sacred, contagion, ambivalence) (Sabri, Manceau and Pras 2010) on consumer behavior, on the perception of taboo aspect, as well as on the societal and ethical consequences of the transgression of taboos have been understudied in the academic world, especially for marketing use. This massive revolution in advertising justifies the re-inquiry of individual attitudes towards provocative advertising. How do individuals perceive taboos in the context of advertising consumption and the deviant positioning of a brand?

Following stereotypes, young people are well known to be rebels and are seen as challenging social norms. They are particularly targeted by provocative advertisements that match this need (Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda 2003). In the context of studies on provocative advertising and taboo, young people are insensitive to taboos (Parry et al. 2013). In today's digital revolution, they are particularly present on the internet, thus favoring their chances to face taboos (access to pornography, shocking photos and videos, films/reports, uncensored, live) and ads that may or may not be provocative (national and international). They are also active on social networks, where we can discover the appearance and development of new movements (Je suis Charlie, WOKE movement, #MeToo, ...). Provocative advertising produces strong reactions on social networks (Hanan, Moulin and Portes 2020). It seems interesting to verify the perceptions and today's attitudes of young people towards the transgression of taboos in provocative advertising. This research involves the theoretical framework of taboo and provocative advertisement to discover the new individual representations of young people in front of the use of taboos in provocative advertising. This work mobilizes 20 semi-directive interviews, we propose an update of knowledge on the concept of taboo by suggesting a new and less dated individual representations. We verify the attitudes and advertising strategies that can moderate them. We study the underlying mechanisms that could explain, among other things the diffusion of transgressors via the impact of momentary and social context on the individual's evaluation of the advertising taboo. Our field of application concerns the individual's reactions associated with an advertising stimulus considered to be taboo. What attitudes do lonely individuals adopt when faced with this type of ad? What advertising strategies can impact these reactions? How do respondents position themselves and self-assess their own taboos? How do they define this concept?

Conceptual framework

Taboo concept

The term taboo was imported by Captain James Cook following his discovery of the Pacific Islands in 1769 (Encyclopaedia Universalis, 2018). Taboo has multiple facets, the concept is difficult to define and there are many disagreements in the literature. After a meta-analysis of studies carried out before 2010 directly and indirectly on taboos, Sabri, Manceau and Pras (2010) defined the concept of taboo as: "*a cultural production, of a sacred (religious) or magical (profane) nature, which enacts behavioral and/or conversational prohibitions, associated in the individual with emotional ambivalence, and whose transgression is likely to provoke sanctions because of the contagious nature of the taboo*" (p.60).

1 Sylvain, 24 years old

Cultural production geographically and historically located. First, taboo is a socially situated cultural production, an unwritten but very old code instituted for the security of the group (Freud 1912). It organizes the social structure and creates links between individuals. Therefore, the origin of taboos is quite simply narrowed down to the culture, the societies and the individuals that compose them. Secondly, taboos also depend on geographical situations, they differ according to groups, locally, nationally, but are sometimes universal such as incest, cannibalism, and murder (Freud 1927). Finally, it is a historically situated cultural production: taboos are created and destroyed (Wilson and West 1981, 1992). Appear, disappear, new ones appear and so on. In other words, their presence at a given time, in a given place is temporary, provisional, taboo and the elements considered as such requires special attention and regular updating.

Sacredness. For decades and originally, the taboo was considered "*essentially religious*" (Tournier 1975, p.151). These are religious prohibitions whose transgression will cause divine punishment (Frazer 1911; Van Gennep 1904).

Transgression. The question of sanctioned transgression is at the crossroads of cultural production and sacred nature. Transgression implies a punishment that can be social since individuals who do not respect rules dictated by the group are considered deviant. In this sense, that group can impose cognitive or affective punishments (Abrams et al. 1990; Berger and Luckmann 1966; Durkheim 1915). The processes underlying the spread of transgressors remain unidentified. Nevertheless, we know that once transgressed, taboos become less taboo (Wilson and West 1981, 1992).

Prohibition. We note that the facet of the "forbidden/ prohibited" is predominant in the term taboo (Frazer 1911; Van Gennep 1904; Webster 1942). It's a conversational prohibition that restricts freedom of expression. These limits are in fact linked to conveniences that may be moral, social or religious (Walter 1991). The prohibition may also be behavioral, with certain actions being associated with "*life practices labelled as abnormal, strange or unacceptable by social groups*" (Sabri, Manceau et Pras 2010, p.64), making them behavioral taboos subject to social punishment (Van Gennep 1904). Taboos can be both behavioral and conversational. For example, death is a conversational taboo (Walter 1991); it is a difficult subject to discuss in society. Moreover, killing one's neighbor or inflicting death on oneself are considered behavioral taboos (Durkheim 1897).

Contagion. The taboo is considered contagious and transmissible (Frazer 1911; Van Gennep 1904). In other words, a completely ordinary object, encountering a taboo one, would in turn become contagious. Furthermore, a person transgressing the taboo would be contaminated and could *in fine* transmit it to the social group (Cazeneuve 1971), thus becoming a threat.

Ambivalence. Taboo is at the origin of a certain emotional ambivalence towards the forbidden, it is perceived as a prohibited action for which there is, despite everything, a strong attraction in the unconscious (Freud 1912). The individual is torn between taking refuge in the norm and keeping his impulses inside or satisfying his desires and urges his impulses through revolt. Certain profiles would be more likely to accept or even transgress the taboo: ambivalents are inhabited by doubt, positive univalents are positive in the face of the taboo, in fact they do not consider the act or subject to be taboo and they oppose negative univalents: "*the positive univalents are indeed mostly men, middle-aged, weakly religious and weakly erotophobic*" (Sabri 2012a, p.16).

Provocative Advertising

The use of provocation, particularly in advertising, would make it possible to attract attention thanks to the "shock" effect. Its use has increased since the 1980s (Pope, Voges and Brown 2004). Many firms use this strategy (Theodorakis and Painesis 2018). These practices take many forms, from coarse language to blasphemy (Brown and Schau 2001), nudity and sex (Jones, Stanaland and Gelb 1998; Kerin, Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia 1979; Manceau and Tissier-Desbordes 2006; Reichert, Heckler and Jackson 2001; Sabri-Zaaraoui 2007) and extending to violence, suffering, drugs, political issues, ethnicity or even death (Manceau and Tissier-Desbordes 2006, Sabri-Zaaraoui, 2007; Vézina and Paul 1997). These sometimes hard-to-see advertisements cause shock, fear, disgust, shame, and emotionally affect the consuming public (Albouy 2016; Becheur and Valette-Florence 2014; Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda 2003; Morales and Fitzsimons 2007; Morales, Wu and Fitzsimons 2012; Vézina and Paul 1997). For some researchers, the very objective is to offend the audience (Brown and Schau 2001). For others, these methods are more tolerable, since they are primarily intended to differentiate themselves from the multitude of other advertisements; some would even be laudable because they seek to change habits by promoting good behavior (Albouy 2016; Manceau and Tissier-Desbordes 2006; Reichert, Heckler and Jackson 2001). To qualify an advertisement as provocative, it must have a distinct character, a certain ambiguity and, above all, transgress a cultural or social taboo (Vézina and Paul 1997). In other words, the taboo is the stimulus for provocative advertising (Pope, Voges and Brown 2004).

Among controversial advertisements, there are advertisements (product related) for practices, subjects or products that are not taboo themselves (perfumes, cars, ...) but where the execution of the advertisement is taboo, in a humorous or provocative way. In contrast, there are advertisements whose strategy is not to provoke but to make known, make people

like a behavior or make them buy a tabooed product. These products and behaviors are qualified as *"unmentionable"* (Wilson and West 1981, 1992). Then, awareness-raising advertisements (cause related) sometimes use taboos but with a different purpose: to promote the development of responsible behavior. In terms of reactions to these different advertising strategies, the academic world faces disagreements (Table 1: Taboos in advertising reactions and moderators).
Mostly, previous researches agree that advertising taboo attracts attention (Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda 2003; De Pelsmacker and Van Den Bergh 1996; Myers et al. 2020; Parry et al. 2013; Pope, Voges and Brown 2004; Sabri 2012b ; Vézina and Paul 1997), interest (Reichert, Heckler and Jackson 2001) and encourages brand identification (Myers et al. 2020; Vézina and Paul 1997) but it also provokes negative affective attitude towards the ad (Aad) (De Pelsmacker and Van Den Bergh 1996; Peterson and Kerin 1977; Vézina and Paul 1997), towards the brand (Ab) (Peterson and Kerin 1977; Sabri and Obermiller 2012; Vézina and Paul 1997) and reduces purchase intention (Sabri and Obermiller 2012) especially among women (Dahl, Sengupta and Vohs 2009; Manceau and Tissier-Desbordes 2006; Parry et al. 2013; Peterson and Kerin 1977; Prendergast and Chia Hwa 2003; Theodorakis and Painesis 2018; Vézina and Paul 1997).

Table 1

Taboos in advertising reactions and moderators

Reactions	Positive impacts	Attract attention	Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda 2003; De Pelsmacker and Van Den Bergh 1996; Myers et al. 2020; Parry et al. 2013; Pope, Voges and Brown 2004; Sabri 2012b; Vézina and Paul 1997
		Increase interest	Reichert, Heckler and Jackson 2001
		Benefit memory	Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda 2003; Myers et al. 2020; Sabri 2012b
		Encourage brand identification	Myers et al. 2020; Vézina and Paul 1997
		Positive on attitudes	Pope, Voges and Brown 2004; Severn, Belch and Belch 1990
		Favors message-relevant behaviors	Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda 2003
	No impact	No impact on Pi	De Pelsmacker and Van Den Bergh 1996
		No impact Ab	De Pelsmacker and Van Den Bergh 1996
	Negative impacts	Reduce brand identification	De Pelsmacker and Van Den Bergh,1996
		Negative impact on Aad	De Pelsmacker and Van Den Bergh 1996; Peterson and Kerin 1977; Vézina and Paul 1997
		Negative impact on Ab	Sabri and Obermiller 2012; Vézina and Paul 1997; Peterson and Kerin 1977
		Negative impact on Pi	Sabri and Obermiller 2012

Moderators	Consumer demographics	Sex	Dahl, Sengupta and Vohs 2009; Manceau and Tissier-Desbordes 2006; Parry et al. 2013; Peterson and Kerin 1977; Prendergast and Chia Hwa 2003; Theodorakis and Painesis 2018; Vézina and Paul 1997
		Age	Manceau and Tissier-Desbordes 2006 ; Prendergast and Chia Hwa 2003 ; Sabri-Zaaraoui 2007 ; Vézina and Paul 1997
	Relation consumer-advertising	Product involvement	Vézina and Paul 1997
		Psychological distance	Theodorakis and Painesis 2018
	Advertising strategy	Type of taboo	Theodorakis and Painesis 2018
		Advertising objective	Parry et al. 2013; Pope, Voges and Brown 2004
		Congruence	Pope, Voges and Brown 2004
	Advertising characteristics	Perceived humor	Sabri 2012b
		Viral	Prendergast and Chia Hwa 2003

Method

Given our objective (to understand young people individual's representation of the taboo) and the nature of our research object (taboo advertising stimuli), the semi-structured interview methodology proved to be the most promising and appropriate approach. It turns out that the sensitivity of this research subject imposes the consideration of possible biases linked to the defense mechanisms put in place by individuals, and therefore an adapted methodology.

We conduct a qualitative data collection on 20 French people aged 22 to 32, (10 women and 10 men). All the interviews are based on an interview guide with presentation of four advertising stimuli pre-tested (N=77) as the tabooest in a database of 70 advertisements and presented non-randomly as a set of images. Two of the stimuli, product related, use the taboos of nudity and sexuality to sell. The first advertisement from Tom Ford shows a woman lying naked with her intimacy hidden by a bottle of the brand's perfume. It is indicated "*Tom Ford for men*" and "*The first fragrance for men from Tom Ford*". The second advertisement is from Sainte Maure de Touraine, the brand sells logs of goat cheese and has turned its product into the penis of a naked man in the ad. It is written "*Come and taste my Sainte-Maure natural source of well-being*". The other two stimuli are cause-related advertisements using death and more specifically animal abuse. They were produced by PETA, an animal rights organization. One shows a woman posing holding high a bloody animal corpse and "*Here's the rest of that fur coat*", and the other shows a man holding a sheep with torn skin in front of the camera and "*Here's the rest of your wool coat*". These ads use death (animal abuse) or sex (nudity), the two taboo themes favored by advertisers (Manceau and Tissier-Desbordes 2006).

In the interview guide, five themes were addressed (1) as an introduction, respondents were able to express their experiences and feelings as spectators of advertisements, (2) we then refocused the interview on shocking advertisements (3) then taboos, before (4) presenting the stimuli and (5) leading the individual to define the concept of taboo and the facets that compose it. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and were subject to manual vertical and horizontal thematic content analysis. Content analysis consists of "*transcribing the qualitative data, developing a coding scheme, coding the information collected and processing it. The analysis describes the survey material and studies its meaning*" (Andreani and Conchon 2005, p.2). A specific coding scheme was realized for doing the analysis, all themes were analyzed with this grid. The coding was done in French, the original language of the interviews, to avoid various biases related to translation. Verbatims are word-for-word translations. The relevance of the themes was highlighted by counting their occurrences through the interviews conducted. The average length of interviews is 51 minutes, we accumulate a total of 17 hours of interviews.

Findings

The presentation of the results is organized in three axes. Firstly, we verify the concordance between the elements of definition presented above and the results of the interviews. We study the orientation of the discourses to verify the respondents' self-evaluation of their sensitivity to taboos, current representations, and why according to the youngest "nothing is taboo anymore". Then, we look at attitudes before and during exposition to provocative advertisements as well as strategic advertising elements that promote positive attitudes. Finally, we will conduct a gender comparison, according to a genetic bicategorization (male/female).

Taboos facets

In a few words, the forbidden, the geographically and historically located cultural production are many elements that persist in the individual's perception of the taboo.

Cultural production, geographically et historically situated. According to our respondents, taboos depend on cultures and countries since "*each country will have its specificities, and each culture too*" (Aude, 23)[2] They are also subjects that "*society denies*" (Mélina, 23) so their breaking "*upsets the codes of society, the traditions, all the anchored beliefs, so anchored that we are not aware of them and (...) that we repeat them, from generation to generation"* (Paola, 23), also the repetitiveness of the transgression of taboos, due to the evolution of the mentalities widely approached by the respondents, provoke the disappearance of some and make them, thus, evolve in time (Appendix 1: Taboos evolution). Sexuality, nudity, homosexuality, single-parent families, divorce are, according to our respondents, taboos that have disappeared. Racism, sexism, animal abuse are the actual taboos. Smoking is starting to become one. Finally, tomorrow's taboos will be irresponsible behaviors towards the environment, meat consumption and certain behaviors related to COVID19.

Sacredness. Our results question certain knowledge we had about taboos. Indeed, no respondent addressed the sacred, magical, profane aspect of taboo. The current taboos no longer seem to originate from or are no longer the consequence of religion. Octave, 27 years old, explains that "*religions have for a very long time had a very strong impact on our societies and today we see taboos becoming less and less taboo*". Religion, the origin of taboos, has itself become a taboo "*the taboo of religion*, *we don't get too close to it*" (Aude, 23) "*we must above all do not talk about religion*" (Mélina, 23). Thus, its use in advertising appears shocking: "*they* (United Colors of Benetton) *had mixed homosexuality, religion, uh... racism, they had everything, politics too, so they did well on purpose to shock everyone*" (Paola, 23). According to 3 of our respondents, this is a taboo that is already fading and will disappear. Our results show that taboos could have their origin elsewhere than in religion, and that religion, producer of taboo, has itself become a taboo.

Prohibition. The most redundant element in our interviews is prohibition, taboos are subjects that are forbidden, we cannot talk about them, "*we can even talk about apprehension to talk about it*" (Melvin, 25 years old). In the concept of taboo "*there is the fact of keeping silent, and of not saying anything you see, that is the fact of passing it under silence, to do as if it did not exist*" (Alexandre, 26). "*We agreed*" (Lea, 23), it is not acceptable, it would go against the cultural, moral, and ethical values of individuals, it does not "*respond the codes of propriety*" (Guillaume, 28), these topics make "*a large audience uncomfortable*" (Melvin, 25) and they are also topics "*that are not too accepted in advertising*" (Valentin, 22).

The majority of the respondents approach the taboo as conversational rather than behavioral prohibition, for example "*sex surrounds us but we don't talk about it, it's not in our culture*" (Lucie, 23) and it is present in our mind, but we don't verbalize it: "*everyone has an opinion on it, but we don't dare share it*" (Valentin, 22)

Transgression. We do not find any information in the interviews concerning the risks associated with a possible transgression, the laws are cited as regulating. But in the case where they do not regulate the subject, the risk is rather linked to the social context, no punishment but rather a tense situation, discomfort, embarrassment or even fear "*I know that there can be opposing opinions and that it can create tensions*" (Clémence, 23).

Ambivalence. The majority of the interviews are divided into two contradictory phases. On the one hand, the respondents consider that these subjects are shocking in advertising, that they are not intended to be used for commercial purposes and that they provoke negative reactions (shock, anger, sadness, misunderstanding, ...), On the other hand, they also consider that "*it is necessary to talk about it*" (Clémence, 23), that "*if it could feed the debate, or make people ask themselves certain questions*" (Aude, 23) then this is positive because "*it helps society to break taboos*" (Paola, 23).

Contagion. The question of contagion was not addressed by the respondents, neither from the object to the individual, nor from the individual to the individual or the social group, nor from one object to another. The respondents showed no signs that there is a contagiousness of the taboo, that the negative attributes associated with the ad will transfer to the brand. On the contrary, they explain that even if they have negative reactions (shock, irritation...) they will live their

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2 In the interest of confidentiality, first names have been changed.

emotions at the time and then resume their life without any form of boycott, as Céline, 25 years old, explains: "*I'm not going to do any particular action behind I'm not going to say... I'm not going to criticize the ad on social networks or I'm not necessarily going to tell my friends and family about it (...) I'm going to keep it to myself, I'm going to be a bit upset and then... then I'm going to move on*". On the other hand, the respondents question the quality of the work, the skills, and the legitimacy of the communication manager at the origin of the ad as expressed by Maxence 30 years old: "*the advertisers who were paid I hope they were not paid much, or they were fired because...*". In other words, the transgressor brand and its consumers seem completely dissociated from the advertisement, it is the creator himself who is questioned.

Discourse orientation: taboos in general. Regarding the orientation of the interviews, during their speeches the respondents have a strong tendency to quote the taboos (that they imagine) of others, of society, specifying that they do not consider these themes as taboo. They foresee the reaction of people for whom it would be taboo (shock, debate...), specifying that their own attitude would be completely in opposition (laughter, ignorance...). Nevertheless, few individuals have been able to express their own taboos. In fact, almost half of the respondents explain that they have no taboos, and this assertion is often justified by their self-perceived open-mindedness. Individuals who admit their taboos adopt a defensive attitude by specifying that they are aligned with the social norm, that they find a taboo topic "*like everyone else*" (Sylvain, 24). Moreover, when the interview enters the phase of questioning about taboo, respondents tend to replace the first person singular (me) with the plural (us) "*it makes us uncomfortable*" (Guillaume, 28), or even to globalize to a big part of population "*the majority find it embarrassing*" (Melvin, 25) or to society as a whole: "*quite shocking for society*" (Octave, 27). Young people do indeed seem to have an ambivalent attitude towards taboos, they seem to be uncertain about their position, doubting as they speak, sometimes they deliberately and instantly change their minds ("*it's not a taboo… well, yes, you can put it in the taboos*" Guillaume, 28; or " *It doesn't shock me... well... in fact it shocks me because I remember and I talk about it. Yes, it's shocking*" Jules, 23) or even involuntarily contradict themselves. Regarding taboos in general, we notice that individuals adopt a first reaction of positive univalents (not taboo, not shocking) instinctively, by automatism or by social convenience and, after reflection, they are likely to reposition themselves as negative univalents (it's taboo, it's shocking).

Taboos in provocative advertising

In a few words, respondents are less favorable when they are not confronted with examples of advertising than they are when actually confronted to them. They are supportive of the use of taboos in advertising when it is intended to change morals and break taboos. They may be more favorable, or at least less unfavorable, to the use of taboos in advertising (without a progressive purpose) if it is humorous, aesthetically pleasing, congruent, or because they do not feel concerned. Women have more unfavorable attitudes than men. The taboo is taboo when it appears in an impromptu way, without being prepared for it, especially at first exposure or when it is not "*the right time*". The social context of exposure to the announcement is very important (no children, not with family, not with strangers, rather alone or with friends) because "*the taboo becomes taboo depending on who you are with*".

Attitudes

We notice that the respondents converse on the reality that today the use of taboos is more and more common without necessarily specifying if they are in favor or against it. It is an advertising strategy which, according to them, allows brands to stand out, to make the advertisement memorable and to mark the public ("*brands have to stand out so they use taboos quite a lot*" Aude, 23; "*it is shocking, so we remember it*" Jules, 23). According to the respondents, taboos should be talked about, it fuels debates and allows mentalities to evolve: "*I think that on the contrary, we should make more advertisements on subjects that are a little... a little taboo, it could educate many people*" (Sylvain, 24).

When respondents were asked about their experiences and memories of watching shocking or taboo ads, without having been exposed to the stimuli, two categories of ads stood out. The first category concerns advertisements that deliberately use taboo to sell. The second category concerns shocking awareness-raising advertisements intended to change behaviors. We find these two categories in our stimuli, the product-related advertisements are using the taboos of sex and nudity to sell perfume, the cause-related advertisements are using the taboo of death to raise awareness about animal abuse. By counting the number of favorable motivations/emotions and unfavorable obstacles/emotions cited by the respondents, we have drawn up Table 2 comparing the percentages of appearance according to the categories of advertisement and according to the presence or absence of the said stimuli.

Table 2

Reactions with/without stimuli

	Without Stimuli		With Stimuli	
	Product-related Shocking ad	Cause-related Shocking ad	Product-related Sexual stimuli	Cause-related Deathly stimuli
Motivations Favorable emotions	6%	41%	29%	**69%**
Obstacles Unfavorable emotions	**94%**	**59%**	**71%**	31%

Overall, it appears that, without stimuli, the obstacles are even more present than the motivations for both product-related and cause-related ads. When respondents are exposed to stimuli, they appear to be more favorable to both categories of ads, and the motivations are even more numerous than the obstacles for cause-related ads. In other words, individuals are more unfavorable to provocative ads in general when they must discuss them without being exposed to them, while in reality, when they are faced to them, they become more favorable.

Without stimuli (before seeing the ads)

Specifically, without stimuli, for product-related advertisements, an overwhelming majority of obstacles are cited by respondents among the most redundant: the codes used are considered by respondents to be in disagreement with their own ("*I don't like the image they convey at all in terms of roles in society*" Paola, 23).Then, the lack of congruence with the product ("*violence and sexuality, but which would not be linked, well which do not bring anything in fact to the video for example you have a perfume which is going to smell uh, a flower in particular, well you are going to show images of this flower in a radiant field (...) that would make more sense*." Jules, 23). For a great majority, the question of targeting. In fact, these advertisements should not be exposed to all public ("*I consider that we cannot necessarily put everything on television, I don't know, I always think of the children who see this type of images*" Clémence, 23). The most present feelings are anger ("*it's really going to make me angry, it's going to exasperate me, it's going to piss me off*" Aude, 23) and incomprehension ("*the ads for shower gels with naked women, we've been watching that on TV for years and ... why?"* Sylvain, 24). The positive elements that stand out are related to the aestheticism and the humor of some of these ads. For cause-related ads, without stimuli, the individuals are more divided. The obstacles are also related to targeting, the problem of the "all public". Concerning unfavorable feelings most often cited are guilt, sadness, and powerlessness, which in the end demonstrate the effectiveness of awareness advertising rather than a real aversion to this type of ad.

With stimuli (after seeing the ads)

When respondents are exposed to the stimuli, favorable motivations and emotions increase substantially. For the product-related ads, these variations emerge from intrinsic characteristics present in the ad (see below 4.2.2. Advertising strategies and moderators) especially the aesthetics of the ads (for the Tom Ford ad) and humorous side (for the Sainte Maure ad). In both cases the respondents expressed that these ads were eye-catching. The negative reactions are linked to a certain perceived vulgarity, to the objectification of the body without apparent congruence, to the sexist side (for Tom Ford, perfume for men), corresponding for the respondents to an apparent lack from the communication managers: "*it marks a lack of arguments*" Jules, 23; "*it's typically something with a lack of creativity*" Maël, 22. Reactions are similar for the two product-related ads: anger and incomprehension, the Sainte Maure ad also provokes disgust (N=9)[3] since its objective is to sell cheese. Concerning the cause-related ads, favorable reactions became clearly superior to unfavorable ones following the exposure to the stimuli. Respondents were in favor ("*I am completely in favor, I think it's great that we're talking about it, because we're trying to hide as much as possible of what's going on behind, even though it exists*" Octave, 27) despite the shocking aspect of the advertisements "*I like this one, but it's horrible*" (Paola, 23), some even consider that "*they don't go far enough*" (Guillaume, 28). Here, not only the communication and/or advertising sector is considered, the advertisement is acceptable because it is an advertisement for a fight association ("*it's shocking but it's for*

3 (N= number of respondents who mentioned it/20)

PETA so it's okay" Sylvain, 24). Regarding the obstacles and unfavorable reactions, the respondents mainly question the creative characteristics of the advertisement rather than the use of provocation. The human-animal position is perceived as degrading for the animal "*she does not even hold the corpse with respect (...) the animal is not even in a dignified position to be presented, she holds it like a trophy"* (Alexandre, 26). The animal seems to be "too" alive, in suffering "*We hurt it but not... but we didn't finish it so it's horrible, we hurt it for nothing, it's half alive, how will it live afterwards? it hurts my heart more*" (Mélina, 23) which provokes sadness, disgust and guilt. These results also demonstrate the effectiveness of the awareness campaign rather than a real aversion to provocative advertising.

Advertising strategies and moderators.

To promote favorable reactions, advertisers must consider different points in their decision making, whether to use a taboo or not, which one, how, and media/time of broadcast. Many environmental factors can moderate the individual's perception of taboos' breaking in advertising. The moderators that are cited by all the individuals (N=20) and on numerous occasions in their interviews are the individuals around them (family, friends, strangers in particular) and the moment (appropriate or not). In other words, they are willing to face the transgression of a taboo in a certain context. Obviously, these two moderators are not independent of each other since the social context differs at different moments. Melvin, 25 years old explain that "*The context and the environment in which you find yourself is important, but when you're alone, it's easier to be confronted with this kind of advertising, (...) because you don't have the social pressure that there is around you, you think, well, go ahead, I can look at what I want*".

- *Momentary context*, it appears that the moment affects the attention paid to a taboo ad and the attitude respondents adopt towards it: Léo, 23, explains that "*when you're not in that mood or you're doing something else, well, you ignore it a bit... because you don't want to think about it (...) because sometimes you're not ready to have these images in front of you*". This respondent clearly expresses a possible escape from advertising if it comes at the wrong time. Reactions moderated by the momentary context are also addressed by Alexandre, 26 years old: "*It would really shock me if it came at a bad moment*".

This raises the point that the taboo would be taboo when faced unprepared ("*we can relate the shock to the surprise*" Jules, 23). Facing the taboo with preparation would include having already seen the advertisement "*the more we see it, the less it shocks us, so the less we consider it taboo*" (Leo 23); "*it's not something we're used to seeing, it can be shocking*" (Octave, 27). It is shocking when it is "*the first time*" (N=7). Respondents who were already familiar with an advert declared it as their favorite, in particular because of its "*familiarity*" (Valentin, 22). The medium and time of broadcast are also cited, and the perceived target of the ad is important. The momentary context is also strongly linked to the social context.

- *Social context*, the social context also plays a major role, "*advertising becomes taboo depending on (...) the person you have next to you*" (Alexandre, 26), "*it differs depending on who you talk to*" (Léo, 23), 75% of the respondents clearly specify that their reactions and perceptions of the taboo depend on who they are with at the being. Moreover, they agree that when they are with friends, they will have rather favorable reactions (i.e., laughing, joking, ...). But if they are with their family or with strangers, the announcement will provoke embarrassment, fear for almost half of the individuals or an escape through ignorance to avoid "*tensions*" (Clémence, 23). Then, respondents raise their concerns about the targets of controversial advertisements; their attitudes may become more unfavorable if they consider that children could have access to the ad.

Other attitudinal moderators may facilitate more favorable reactions to taboo ads the more often cited are the following:

- *Advertising objective* (N=18), respondents explain that breaking a taboo in an advertisement when its purpose is to raise awareness and promote good behavior is more legitimate, more understandable, "*I think it's cool because it's actually shocking but shocking to bring awareness"* (Céline, 25) and indeed less offensive, so they will be more supportive than when the taboo advertisement has the purpose of selling a product or service: "*It's not about selling, it's about denouncing, and I think it's more legitimate to put an image in this style"(Maël, 22).*
- *Perceived humor in the ad* (N=15), according to some respondents, the use of humor in advertising reduces or even eliminates the shocking/taboo nature of the ad. This point is more present among men "*it allows you to appreciate an image more easily even if it has a sexual connotation, you say to yourself "well that's fine, it makes me laugh so it's more acceptable*" (Melvin, 25). Whereas for women, even though it is less present, it is still a reality: "*it is less shocking because it makes you laugh at first sight*" (Marine, 22).

- *Aesthetics* (N=14*)*, when we ask the respondents why they prefer a taboo ad to another one, some raise the question of the aestheticism, the beauty of the advertisement, its visual characteristics, "*it is rather elaborate, it is graphic*" (Guillaume, 28); "*it is well-realized, the colors, they are well*" (Jules, 23); "*it is beautiful*" (Paola, 23). It could also modify the taboo perception: "*I might consider it taboo because it' s not artistic*" (Alexandre, 26).
- *Consumer gender and age*, (N=13) some men and women agree that "*maybe it's also because I'm a woman and I'm more virulent when the female body is used in this way*" (Aude, 23) and that on the other hand "*it doesn't shock me as a man*" (Guillaume, 28), "*maybe it's because I'm a man*" (Leo, 23). The difference between the genders' attitudes seems to be linked by the type of visual used, in fact, by the type of taboo transgressed. The question of identification with the ad is also raised: "*I identify a little more with the fact that there is an actress, well a woman on the ad, it makes me connect more, identify a little more and therefore the message gets across a little better*" (Céline, 25). They also expressed that children and elderly people might not understand the humor, the breaking of taboos, the awareness and that it would probably shock them more, "*it must not be seen by children, elderly people who lived in another time and who may have a different mind from ours*" (Maxence, 30).
- *Consumer personality, values, and beliefs* (N=10), according to our respondents, attitudes depend on "*the degree of sensitivity of the people*" (Léo, 23), on their "*beliefs*" (Mélina, 23), their "*open-mindedness*" (Sylvain, 24)
- *Perceive proximity* (N=6), the issue of proximity is addressed by respondents when they explain that advertising is not taboo for them. Without perceived proximity, taboos show no relevant impact: "*I am not the target, so it has no impact on me*" (Lucie, 23); "*I do not identify with it*" (Celine, 25). On the contrary, too much identification and perceived proximity can foster negative emotions: "*I feel shocked, disturbed because it brings back bad memories, it projects me into the situation, I feel guilty, some of the behaviors I have while driving could cause this, I identify myself*" (Marine, 22). The issue of perceived proximity appears in our results only for cause-related advertisements, often linked to the issue of guilt about the behavior denounced in the advertisement.

Discourse orientation: taboos in advertising

When questioned about taboos in advertising, respondents evaluate themselves more unfavorably than when confronted with the stimuli itself. They appear to be rather favorable, according to them: "*We have to talk about it, it's not a taboo*" (Martin, 30). The desire to transgress is the source of the ambivalence. In the rest of the interview, when they indicate the taboos that others have, that they do not have, we notice that they know this taboo exists. Young people are willing to break taboos, to talk about everything ("*I don't have any taboos, we have to talk about everything because today everything exists, so we have to talk about everything*", Melina, 23), which explains the common statement: "*there are no more taboos*".

Respondents consider the use of shocking/taboo ads as an "*advertising weapon*" (Melvin, 25), to stand out, to attract attention or even to create buzz: "*more and more we understand that breaking taboos allows us to create buzz and so as a result it has become a bit popular*" (Paola, 23) Moreover, the breaking of taboos can be initiated by advertising: "*they really try to break the taboos I think, the more advertising advances and the more it has to change, to shock and so they are going to hit in what has never been done and so necessarily it progresses little by little, and little by little there are no more taboos.*"(Valentin, 22) Young people want the disappearance of taboos and are in favor of breaking them in advertising "*There are taboos important to talk about and I think it's good that some ads do it*" (Aude, 23). According to the respondents, breaking the taboos by advertising could "*make people debate and react*" (Maël, 22) and thus "*improve behaviors*" (Martin, 30)

Gender comparison.

Men feel that they are seeing less and less taboo ads, unlike women. However, in terms of self-assessment of their own taboos, both men and women in our sample did not consider themselves subject to taboos because of their personality. All the men explain that others had taboos but that they had none. Women are more likely to justify their own taboos by the social norm "like everyone else" and to consider that it is necessary to talk about it, to feed the debate. When faced with taboo announcements in a social context, most women in our sample explain that they would tend to enter discussion/debate with the individuals around them, while the majority of men would act as if nothing had happened.

If we were to establish sexotypical behaviors, we would say that as suggested in the literature, women report adopting more unfavorable attitudes than men. When individuals express themselves on their "usual" reactions, we notice that the main reactions declared by women when confronted with a taboo breaking announcement are (1) shock (2) fear, (3) embarrassment, discomfort, and (4) understanding during sensitization or in the case of taboo breaking aimed at changing mentalities. *A contrario,* men declare to (1) laugh, (2) understand the issue and the last position (3) to find themselves in a situation of embarrassment or discomfort. However, once confronted with stimuli, women do not have more negative reactions or more obstacles than men.

DISCUSSION

Theorical perspective

Given the rise of digital, revolutionizing the habits of consumption of advertising and promoting the emergence of movements with progressive vocation, the question of the advertising taboo has remained insufficiently addressed by the academic world in recent years. The purpose of this work is to investigate the current attitudes of young people towards taboo breaking advertisements to provoke.

The facets of taboo among young people.

Based on the synthesis of the work conducted on taboo by Sabri, Manceau and Pras in 2010, we investigate the appearance and importance of the defining facets of the concept in the respondents' discourses. These works confirm that the taboo is still perceived today as a cultural production of society that depend on geographical areas (Prendergast and Chia Hwa 2003; Sabri-Zaaraoui 2007) and time (Wilson and West 1981) In our case, it is a social prohibition.

Concerning the facets that we question, the sacred aspect. The new taboos no longer originate from religion but rather from societies. Religion itself has become taboo. Parry and his co-authors already stated in 2013 that religion was an inappropriate topic in advertising. In response to the question of contagion of the advertising taboo towards the brand (Sabri, Manceau et Pras 2010): the negative contagion of a taboo transgression in advertising towards the brand has not been observed. These results are consistent with De Pelsmacker and Van Den Bergh (1996). Furthermore, there is a significant drop in the negative repercussions of the use of taboos in ads due to the perceived objective of the brand. In other words, when the brand is seen as having good intentions, in a progressive spirit, seeking to change mentalities, it can use taboos in its advertising communications.

Young people's reactions to taboo in advertising and moderators of attitudes

This study suggests that young consumers self-report more aversion to provocative advertising than they are. The negative feelings and obstacles expressed by respondents when they are not confronted with the stimulus reduce significantly once they are confronted with it. In the context of cause-related ads, positive attitudes and motivations are the majority. These results contrast with those of Vezina and Paul (1997) who indicated that consumers had a positive attitude towards provocation but reacted rather negatively once they were faced with it.

This work raises the importance of momentary context. Taboo is taboo when it is unexpected, impromptu when we face it without preparation, it catches us off guard that lead to negative emotions such as embarrassment, discomfort, and unease. In other words, if the individual is ready to face it, especially once he has prepared an argument or socially acceptable behavior, he can confront the taboo since it becomes controllable. This process is in line with the spread of transgressors. The taboo becomes less taboo once it has already been transgressed (Wilson and West 1981, 1992), because we become accustomed to it and mentally ready to deal with it, this includes knowing the ad, and having seen it before.

Subsequently, considering the context also raises the question of social presence. Proximity and relationship maintained with nearby individuals seem to have an importance on the perception and possible transgression of the taboo. Indeed, it seems that the people with whom it is most difficult to transgress a taboo are family members and strangers. The social apprehension of being rejected applies in these social contexts. The taboo is not an individual production, but rather a subject or behavior that becomes (or does not become) taboo according to the social context. Taboos only appear in front of others, it's taboo when we develop the feeling that it is impossible to exhibit in a social context.

Some moderators known from the literature are confirmed such as humor (Sabri 2012b), the objective of the advertisement (Parry et al. 2013; Pope, Voges and Brown 2004), congruence (Pope, Voges and Brown 2004) and sex of the person evaluating the advertisement (Dahl, Sengupta and Vohs 2009; Manceau and Tissier-Desbordes 2006; Parry et al., 2013; Prendergast and Chia Hwa, 2003; Theodorakis and Painesis, 2018; Vézina and Paul 1997). The gendered analysis confirms that as suggested in the literature, women self-assess more unfavorable than men. Nonetheless, we do not notice any difference when confronted stimuli. Women are also in favor of talking about it, of breaking down taboos and of talking about everything. In short, both young women and men remain rather favorable to the use of provocative advertisements insofar as the intention behind them is considered laudable or intended to change mentalities, progressive. Manceau and Tissier-Desbordes (2006) questioned the moderating effect of aesthetics, humor and congruence, our results show that they reduce the perception of taboo and unfavorable attitudes in the context of provocative product-related advertisements.

The progressive momentum of society and the need to not repeat past mistakes, ultimately has an impact on the perception of taboos. Today, it is taboo among younger people to say that they have taboos, since we must be able to talk about everything, otherwise we would limit the evolution of thoughts and morals.

Managerial implications

From this work, important managerial contribution emerge: advertisers face a population of young consumers, in a process of deconstruction, who expect social progress resulting from the transgression of taboos and thus, in fact, from the upheaval of morals. The key elements emerging from these interviews are that young people, who are ambivalent, see the positive in questioning a conditioning that they have been experiencing since childhood. Thus, they adopt positive emotional reactions to advertisements that use taboo feeding debates. However, certain moderators such as the social context and moment, whether individuals are ready to witness a taboo scene or not, must be considered because they can have a particular impact on their attitudes. In this sense, it is crucial to strategically choose your media and timing. In addition, it also appears that our respondents are deeply concerned about the impact of this type of ad on more sensitive profiles such as children; they will only be in favor of this type of ad if the timing and media appear to them to be devoided of the presence of this audience. An advertisement transgressing a taboo whose objective is to raise awareness will provoke more favorable reactions than a product-related advertisement, with a monetary vocation. Finally, the creative characteristics of the advertisement, namely its aesthetic aspect as well as the humor perceived in it, can literally annihilate the shocking character, thus provoking favorable attitudes. In summary, the 22–32-year-old target group seems to be conducive to adopting favorable attitudes towards the transgression of taboos in advertising.

Limitations

This research has certain limitations, the study of taboos makes it difficult to collect data since the taboo, by definition, is a prohibition. Thus, talking about it requires transgressing certain norms. Taboo, a sensitive subject by nature, can leads to certain biases related to the difficulty of individuals to verbalize their taboos. Also, we question individuals about their experiences as spectators of advertisements, we are facing here a possible memory bias.

Further research

This work has raised new moderators, through individual semi-directive interviews, it suggests the importance of the social and momentary contexts on the individual's attitudes formation. If knowing the ad allows the individual to be ready, thus reducing the perception of taboo and consequently unfavorable attitudes towards the ad, then prior exposure to the ad, the repetition effect or warning the respondent should greatly improve attitudes. Further research should also verify perceptions and attitudes towards taboos directly in a social context. The study of the effect of social presence alone on the one hand and the effect of normative social pressure on the other hand would allow to better understand individual's attitudes and to propose managerial recommendations favoring positive attitudes towards provocative advertisements. Since young people have a strong tendency to be ambivalent, flexible, faced to taboos, it is conceivable that their opinions can easily be modified by social influence.

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Appendix 1

Taboos evolution

	Application	Apparition
Disappeared Taboos		
Sexuality	General + Advertising	6
Homosexuality	General + Advertising	6
Nudity	General + Advertising	4
Single-parent families and divorce	General + Advertising	3
Religion	General	3
Actual Taboos		
Racism	General + Advertising	10
Sexism	General + Advertising	8
Animal abuse	General	5
Cigarette ad	Advertising	3
Future Taboos		
Irresponsible behavior towards the environment	General	9
Meat consumption	General + Advertising	7
COVID19-related behaviors[4]	General	3

4 Data collection carried out in March-April 2020 (first lockdown) in France

The Role of the Type of Experience in Inhibiting Gender Stereotypes of Vegetarian Products.

Abstract

Recommendations to reduce meat consumption are increasing and more meat substitutes are proposed in supermarkets. However, the adoption of these products appears to be highly dependent on the gender of consumers (more women than men buy these products). Our results show that the vegetarian character of a product negatively influences the attractiveness of this product to men. On the other hand, the vegetarian product is not perceived as more attractive to women. Interestingly, the unattractiveness of the product to men disappears with a shorter psychological distance with the product through a direct experience. We discuss the gender asymmetry and the role of the type of experience and propose recommendations for brands and retailers.

Key words: Vegetarian; Gender; Food; Experience

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Introduction

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the consumption of meat has been increasingly questioned, particularly for products coming from intensive livestock farming, which is presented as harmful to the environment and to health. At the same time, vegetarian food has gained in popularity and is increasingly presented as an interesting alternative for the environment and health (Beverland, 2014; Stuart, 2009; Thøgersen, 2010). According to Allied Market Research, the global market for meat substitutes (tofu, tempeh, seitan, textured soy protein, patés, sausages, plant-based steaks, etc.) is expected to double between 2017 and 2026 to reach $8.1 billion[1]. In 2017, Europe was the leading continent for this market, accounting for 38.5% of the global household income. However, the adoption of these products is marked by strong gender differences (Ruby, 2012; Stevens et al., 2014). Two interrelated aspects seem to underlie this difference: on the one hand, meat is associated with masculinity (Stevens *et al., 2014*), while, on the other hand, vegetarian products are perceived as healthier and better for the environment. These two last characteristics make vegetarian products more attractive to women (Brough *et al., 2016*). In a first place, our research therefore aims to explain the greater attractiveness of meat substitutes for women, by considering these factors. In a second and main place, our research aims at identifying how experience can inhibit this stereotype. This purpose is the main contribution of this paper as previous studies conducted on vegetarian products and gender issues do not take into consideration the type of experience with the products and are based on mental associations. We will begin by analysing the literature to understand the stereotypes of these products and the role of the type of experience in creating shorter or greater psychological distance to the product. Then we present the methodology used and the results of our studies. Finally, we will discuss these results.

Theoretical background

We start this literature review by defining sex and gender stereotypes. Then, we show the connections between gender stereotypes and products and brands. Then, we focus on gender stereotypes of meat and vegetarian products. Finally, we discuss the effects of direct and indirect experience on the perception of the products to highlight the crucial role of the type of experience and the need of new investigations.

Sex and gender stereotypes

Sex is defined as the biological sex that a person has (masculine or feminine). Gender identity is the extent to which an individual identifies themselves as masculine or feminine (Deaux, 1985). Gender is used by individuals as a principle to organize life and to process information about themselves and the world (Bem, 1981). This principle is based on stereotypes and leads to stereotyped behaviours which means that stereotypes are both descriptive and prescriptive. They express what people are and what people should be (if they deviate from the norm). So, stereotype is a "widely shared and simplified evaluative image of a social group and its members" (Vaughan and Hogg, 2011, p.51).

Gender stereotypes indicate how men and women are, should be and how they should behave, according to their gender (Heilman, 2001). Gender stereotypes are particularly resistant to change (Haines et al., 2016). Nevertheless, few studies have explored how to change these stereotypes, particularly in the field of consumption.

Gender stereotype of products and brands

there is even a form of anthropomorphism which consists of spontaneously attributing a gender to a brand or a product based on its attributes. Thus, certain brands will be perceived as more feminine or more masculine (Neale et al., 2016). Similarly, certain products will be perceived as more feminine or masculine (Bellizzi and Milner, 1991; Fugate and Phillips, 2010; Milner and Fodness, 1996).

Consumption behaviour is also affected by gender stereotypes and, particularly, food consumption behaviour (Cavazza et al., 2020). Differentiated behaviour are observed or expected for men and women. Vegetarian products and meat crystallise these differences.

Femininity of Vegetarian Products and Masculinity of Meat

A specific feature of vegetarian products is that they are associated with femininity (and weakness), whereas meat products are associated with masculinity (and power) (Rosenfeld et al., 2020; Rothgerber, 2013; Ruby, 2012; Stevens et al., 2014). The stereotype of masculinity of meat has long been demonstrated. This stereotype is based on the idea that

1 https://www.alliedmarketresearch.com/press-release/global-meat-substitute-market.html meat, as a product of hunting, is a male domain (Rozin et al., 2012), although recent studies have shown that, in many prehistoric societies, hunting (of large or small animals) was as much a male as a female activity (Cohen, 2017). Another idea underlying the stereotype of meat and masculinity is that it is physiological through the need for muscle. Men are considered to be those who go out and engage in physical activity, so they must have a powerful constitution with strong muscles (Fiddes, 1991). They should therefore eat more meat, a source of protein and therefore of strength. But Rozin et al. (2012) point out that the link between meat and sex is not based on biological similarities. Indeed, products of female origin such as dairy products and eggs are not perceived as being more feminine or less masculine. Thus, the association between men and meat is more socially constructed than historically or biologically based. However, it is still deeply rooted and continues to determine the eating behaviour of men and women, as each tends to act as expected for his or her own sex (Rozin et al., 2012; Sobal, 2005). The gender of food, in general, is based on culture rather than biology (Zellner et al., 1999) and the goal for each sex is to maintain its gender identity (Sobal, 2005). Meals therefore contain less meat for women and more meat for men, and men tend to prefer meals with meat (Sobal, 2005). For their part, vegetarian products are associated with femininity, and more women than men are vegetarian. Men will often prefer a flexitarian diet to a vegetarian diet (Rosenfeld et al., 2020) because it avoids making them feel less masculine (Rothgerber, 2013).

Vegetarian products are also identified as healthy and environmentally friendly (Beverland, 2014). Thus, they have been identified as beneficial to health, weight loss, animal welfare, food safety, fair and ethical trade, as well as having a positive impact on the environment and more women are concerned with the healthy and green aspects of their food consumption (Apostolidis and McLeay, 2016). The same associations are identified for ethical and green products (Brough et al., 2016; Shang and Peloza, 2016). Green products are perceived more as feminine and therefore tend to be avoided by men. One explanation is that even though each sex tries to maintain its gender identity, men are more concerned about maintaining their gender identity. Consequently, they will be more concerned about consuming products that correspond to their gender stereotypes and will avoid those that stereotype them as feminine. It is worth noting that both women and men are aware of this stronger need for men to maintain their gender identity (Brough et al., 2016).

Finally, even if meat is closely associated with masculinity, an intriguing aspect has been uncovered regarding vegetarian foods: are vegetarian products more associated with femininity because of their absence of meat or because of their mental associations with health and greenness? Thus, products seem to be defined as feminine or masculine directly or indirectly because of their associated representations. This issue is critical for a better understanding of the representation of vegetarian products and, broadly, the construction of gender stereotypes in consumption. So, vegetarian products are stereotyped as feminine in two ways: firstly, because they do not contain meat and secondly because they are perceived as good for health and the environment. Based on studies showing that (1) vegetarian products are identified as healthy and good for the environment (Beverland, 2014; Van Loo et al., 2017); (2) vegetarian products are associated with femininity (Ruby, 2012; Stevens et al., 2014); (3) healthy and green products are associated with femininity (Brough et al., 2016; Shang and Peloza, 2016),we propose the following hypotheses:

- H1: The labelling of a product as **"plant-based"** positively influences the perception of the product as attractive **for women**.
  - H1a: This relation is positively mediated by the perception of the product as **healthy**.
  - H1b: This relation is positively mediated by the perception of the product as **"green"**.
- H2: The labelling of a product as **"plant-based"** negatively influences the perception of the product as attractive **for men**.
  - H2a: This relation is negatively mediated by the perception of the product as **healthy**.
  - H2b: This relation is negatively mediated by the perception of the product as **"green"**.

Since representations of food and products in general are based on experience, we would like to know if the type of experience has any influence on these associations.

Effect of Direct/ Indirect Experience on the Perception of the Product

In their seminal paper, Holbrook and Hirschmann define the experience as *"those facets of consumer behaviour that relate to the multi-sensory, fantasy, and emotive aspects of product use"* (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982, p.99). From this this experiential perspective, we could argue that information processing is not enough to understand and explain consumers' behaviour. Therefore, stereotypes on their own are insufficient to understand consumers, since other information will guide their perceptions, decisions, and behaviour. Experience may even supersede the stereotypes. Thus, the consumer experience varies on a continuum from direct to indirect, depending on the level of interaction (i.e. the senses involved) between the product and the consumer (Hamilton and Thompson, 2007).

The direct experience of a given product engages all the senses and could involve the taste of a food product.

For instance, an indirect experience might be reading a review or description, seeing a product on a shelf, media reports or listening to hearsay (Hamilton and Thompson, 2007; Johnstone and Tan, 2015). Hamilton and Thompson (2007) stress that direct experience leads to concrete mental representations because of the shorter psychological distance with the product, whereas indirect experience leads to abstract mental representations of the product because of the greater psychological distance. Thus, previous beliefs and stereotypes will be stronger when arising from indirect experience.

Previous studies conducted on meat and vegetarian products (meat substitutes) and masculinity/femininity do not make a distinction between direct or indirect experience or absence of experience. They only consider mental associations without any experience of the products. Nevertheless, a review of the literature in this field suggests that experience of the product is crucial and can change its perception (Krishna and Schwarz, 2014; Lee et al., 2006). More specifically, the type of experience (direct or indirect) influences the perception of the food product itself, and this influences other aspects such as taste (Trelohan and Stefan, 2018). So, we suggest that experience could also influence the perception of the product as feminine or masculine. Consequently, we aim to test the perception of meat-based products and vegetarian products (meat substitutes) by taking into consideration the type of experience. On the one hand, this approach will help us understand the associations of masculinity / femininity with meat and vegetarian products. On the other hand, it will help us understand the role of experience in the construction of gender stereotypes in consumption.

Previous studies have shown that the effects of the type of experience differ depending on positive (halo effect) or negative (horn effect) impressions of the product (Trelohan and Stefan, 2018). Thus, the “horn effect” can be inhibited by a direct experience, whereas the perception of products with a “halo effect” will vary according to the type of experience (direct or indirect). Because negative impressions and stereotypes are more resistant to change than positive impressions and stereotypes (Baumeister et al., 2001), the former can only be changed or inhibited by a direct experience. Hence, whether without any experience or with only an indirect experience, we expect vegetarian products to be considered as unattractive for men and attractive for women. Conversely, we assume that the perception of unattractiveness of vegetarian products for men will be inhibited by direct experience, whereas their attractiveness for women will still be present.

Based on the literature cited above, we assume that all the previous hypotheses (H1, H1a, H1b, H2, H2a, and H2b) can be negatively moderated by the type of experience ($H1_m$, $H1a_m$ $H1b_m$, $H2_m$, $H2a_m$, and $H2b_m$). We consider that the more direct experience is the direct experience as all senses are engaged. The less direct experience is the absence of experience, and the indirect experience is in the middle of both (direct experience and absence of experience). Consequently, a negative moderation means that the more direct the experience is, the lower the influence of the main effect will be. So, the main effect will be inhibited by a more direct type of experience. Our hypothesis are the following:

- $H1_m$: The positive influence of labelling of a product as **“plant-based”** on the perception of the product as attractive **for women is likely to be lower when the experience is more direct.**
  - $H1a_m$: The positive mediation on this relation by the perception of the product as **healthy is likely to be lower when the experience is more direct**.
  - $H1b_m$: The positive mediation on this relation by the perception of the product as **“green” is likely to be lower when the experience is more direct.**
- $H2_m$: The negative influence of labelling of a product as **“plant-based”** on the perception of the product as attractive **for men is likely to be lower when the experience is more direct.**
  - $H2a_m$: The negative mediation on this relation by the perception of the product as **healthy is likely to be lower when the experience is more direct**.
  - $H2b_m$: The negative mediation on this relation by the perception of the product as **“green” is likely to be lower when the experience is more direct.**

The attractiveness of vegetarian products for women can be moderated negatively by indirect and direct experience ($H1_m$). The unattractiveness of the vegetarian products for men can be moderated negatively by direct experience ($H2_m$). The difference between the moderated hypothesis for men and women (in the first case, only direct experience, in the second case, both indirect and direct experience) is based on the higher need of maintenance of gender identity for men.

Methodology

Experimental protocol

We conducted a between-subjects 3X2 design study with three conditions for the experience: absence vs. indirect experience (viewing an image – Appendix 1) vs. direct experience (tasting) and two conditions for the labels: meat-based paté and plant-based paté.

The choice of the paté used for the experiment is based on several criteria. First, we needed a product that was exactly the same for the two conditions, apart from the presence or absence of meat. Second, for practical reasons, it was better to have a product that could be consumed without cooking (cooking and more specifically heating could create differences). Third, we needed a product that looked the same in the case of plant-based and meat-based conditions. Finally, we needed a product associated with perceptions of healthy and green that could vary under the three different “experience” conditions.

Participants were randomly assigned to each condition. Under the condition of absence of experience (n=81), only the label was presented (paté, plant-based paté). Under the condition of indirect experience (n=68), a photo (the same for all conditions) was presented in addition. Under the condition of direct experience (n=92), a paté was offered for tasting. To control for the taste of the paté, the participants tasted two different patés: one was a meat substitute and the other a traditional paté (meat-based). Each participant tasted a single paté. The purpose was to ensure that effects due to experience were not induced by the taste of the paté itself, as some consumers claim that the taste of meat substitutes is different from that of meat. For ethical reasons, people were asked beforehand whether they followed a specific diet, and no one did. The two patés were similar in appearance (colour, texture). No significant difference was observed between the perceived tastes of the two patés.

Measures

For each condition, respondents were asked to evaluate the healthiness, environmental friendliness and attractiveness for men and women.

The “green” and “healthy” measures were based on items from Trelohan and Stefan (2018). The items for “green” are natural and organic. The items for “healthy” are dietetic, balanced, diet, healthy, and good for health. To ensure the validity and reliability of the measurements, we conducted a principal component factor analysis and a reliability test based on Cronbach’s alpha. The KMO index is good (0.84). The communalities of each item range from 0.68 to 0.80. They are divided into two factors which explain a total of 73% of the variance, indicating the good quality of the scales. Participants were asked if they believed that [label] [product] could be qualified as [natural, good for health, organic, etc.]. The participants evaluated their perceptions using a 10-point scale. The scales of healthy (α=0.86) and green (α=0.75) are reliable.

For both and men and for women, the gender stereotype is measured through the attractiveness of the product assessed as a single item, i.e. “Do you consider this product as attractive for men / women?” This measure enables us to identify the gender stereotype of the product.

Depending on the condition, the label was “paté” or “plant-based paté”, and the conditions were stated explicitly (“You are going to taste a paté / plant-based paté” or “You are going to see a picture of a paté / plant-based paté). Each survey question also repeated the terms, such as “This paté / plant-based paté is (...)”. The participants then evaluated their perceptions using a 10-point scale.

Sample description

The final sample was made up of 241 respondents (M_{age}= 19; 49.8% female), all students from a university or business school. The table below shows the distribution of respondents according to each condition.

Table 1

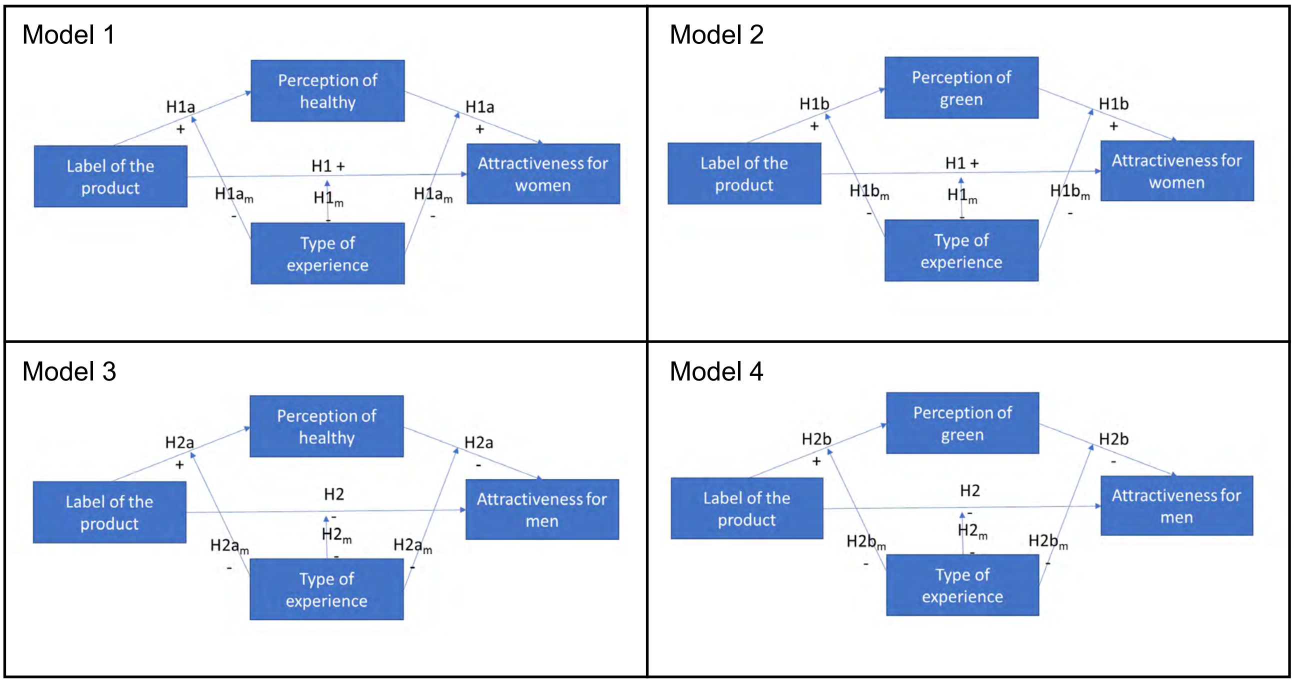
Description of the sample

n	Absence of experience	Indirect experience	Direct experience	Total
Paté	41	33	47	121
Plant-based paté	40	35	45	120
Total	81	68	92	241

Statistical analysis

Following Duman and Ozkara (2021), we tested four models based on our hypothesis:

Figure 1 : Models used for hypotheses testing



The Hayes PROCESS macro (model 4 and model 59 – see Appendix 2) was used to perform the moderated mediation analysis (Hayes, 2018). More precisely, to test the significance of the mediation effect (H1, H2, H3, H4), we used Model 4 and calculated 5000 bootstrapped samples to estimate the 95% bias- corrected and accelerated confidence intervals of the indirect effect. A mediation test is significant when the lower and the upper bounds of the bootstrap confidence intervals of the indirect effect between the predictor and the outcome do not include zero (Hayes, 2018).

Then, to test the moderated mediation effects ($H1_m$, $H2_m$, $H3_m$, $H4_m$), we used Model 59 with bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals (BC; 95% CI) based on 5000 bootstrap resamples. Model 59 allows us to combine parameter estimates from a mediation analysis with parameter estimates from a moderation analysis. The two estimates are combined to quantify the conditionality of the impact of the plant-based product label on the perception of attractiveness for men and women (Hayes, 2018).

Results

Descriptive analytics

In the plant-based label condition, the attractiveness of the product for men (M=5.94; SD=2.52) is lower than the attractiveness of the product for women (M=6.64; SD=2.17). In the meat-based condition, the attractiveness of the product for men (M=7.30; SD=2.29) is higher than the attractiveness of the product for women (M=6.88; SD=2.38).

Theoretical model 1 (hypothesis 1, 1a, 1_m and $1a_m$): Influence of the plant-based label on attractiveness for women, mediated by perception of healthy and moderated by the type of experience

We used PROCESS model 4 to address Hypothesis 1 and 1a, which states that labelling a product as "plant-based" has an effect on the perception of the product as attractive for women and this is mediated by the perception of the product as healthy. Our results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Hypothesis Results

Model	Independent variable	Dependent variable	B	S.E.	t	p	95% Confidence interval LLCI	ULCI	Hypothesis
Model 1 and 3	Plant-based	Healthy R^2 = 0.124	1.249	0.215	5.810	0.000	0.826	1.673	H1a (s) H2a (s)
	Plant-based x	Healthy	W1: -2.222	0.505	-4,402	0.000	-3.217	-1.228	H1a$_m$ (s) H2a$_m$ (s)
	experience	R^2 = 0.272	W2: -2.270	0.467	-4,856	0.000	-3.192	-1.349	H1a$_m$ (s) H2a$_m$ (s)
Model 1	Plant-based	Attractive for	-0.512	0.310	-1,650	0.100	-1.123	0.099	H1 (n.s.)
	Healthy	women	0.222	0.087	2,543	0.012	0.050	0.394	H1a (s.)
		R^2 = 0.029							
	Plant-based x	Attractive for	W1: -4.03	0.842	-0,478	0.633	-2.063	1.257	H1$_m$ (n.s.)
	experience	women	W2:0.547	0.798	0,686	0.493	-1.025	2.119	H1$_m$ (n.s.)
		R^2 = 0.115	W1:0.643	0.222	2,910	0.004	0.206	1.079	H1a$_m$ (s.)
	Healthy x experience		W2:0.479	0.231	2,074	0.039	0.024	0.934	H1a$_m$ (s.)
Model 3	Plant-based	Attractive for	-1.254	0.332	-3,779	0.000	-1.907	-0.600	H2 (s.)
	Healthy	men R^2 = 0.166	-0.081	0.093	-0,874	0.383	-0.266	0.102	H2a (n.s.)
	Plant-based x	Attractive for	W1:1.307	0.897	1.457	0.146	-0.460	3.075	H2$_m$ (s.)
	experience	men R^2 = 0.166	W2:2.889	0.849	3.401	0.001	1.216	4.563	H2$_m$ (s.)
			W1:0.211	0.236	0.895	0.371	-0.254	0.676	H2a$_m$ (n.s.)
	Healthy x experience		W2:0.220	0.246	0.893	0.373	-0.265	0.704	H2a$_m$ (n.s.)
Model 2 and 4	Plant-based	Green R^2 = 0.039	0.884	0.283	3.124	0.002	0.327	1.442	H1b (s.) H2b (s.)
	Plant-based x	Green	W1: -2.241	0.653	-3,435	0.001	-3.527	-0.956	H1b$_m$ (s.) H2b$_m$ (s.)
	experience	R^2 = 0.230	W2: -1.886	0.604	-3,121	0.002	-3.077	-0.695	H1b$_m$ (s.) H2b$_m$ (s.)
Model 2	Plant-based	Attractive for	-0.417	0.294	-1,419	0.157	-0.997	0.162	H1 (n.s.)
	Green	women	0.207	0.066	3,145	0.002	0,0774	0.337	H1b (s.)
		R^2 = 0.042							
	Plant-based x	Attractive for	W1: -0.219	0.761	-0,287	0.774	-1.719	1.281	H1$_m$ (n.s.)
	experience	women	W2:0.511	0.715	0,715	0.475	-0.897	1.919	H1$_m$ (n.s.)
		R^2 = 0.145	W1:0.653	0.182	3,595	0.004	0.295	1.011	H1b$_m$ (s.)
	Green x experience		W2:0.548	0.169	3,249	0.001	0.216	0.881	H1b$_m$ (s.)
Model 4	Plant-based	Attractive for	-1.378	0.317	-4,342	0.000	-2.003	-0.753	H2 (s.)
	Green	men R^2 = 0.074	-0.025	0.071	0,349	0.728	-0.115	0.165	H2b (n.s.)
	Plant-based x	Attractive for	W1:1.362	0.818	1.665	0.097	-0.250	2.974	H2$_m$ (s.)
	experience	men R^2 = 0.178	W2:2.888	0.768	3.761	0.000	1.375	4.402	H2$_m$ (s.)
			W1:0.338	0.195	1.731	0.085	-0.047	0.722	H2b$_m$ (n.s.)
	Green x experience		W2:0.317	0.181	1.746	0.082	-0.041	0.674	H2b$_m$ (n.s.)

n.s. = not supported; s.=supported

The labelling of the product as “plant-based” is not a direct predictor of the perception of the product as attractive for women (95% CI: [-1.123, 0.099]. Results reveal that labelling a product as “plant-based” has an indirect effect on the perception of the product as attractive for women; this is qualified by significant mediation through the perception of the product as healthy (95% CI: [0.062, 0.534]). Thus, hypothesis H1 is not supported and hypothesis H1a is supported.

We used PROCESS Model 59 to address hypothesis $H1_m$ and $H1a_m$ (moderation of hypothesis H1 and H1a by the type of experience). The “type of experience” is a multi-categorical variable. In the model tested, W1 is a comparison between the condition “absence of experience” and “indirect experience”, while W2 is a comparison between “absence of experience” and “direct experience”.

Regarding both W1 and W2, results indicate that the “label x type of experience” interaction has no statistically significant effect on the perceived attractiveness of the product for women. However, regarding W1, we observe a moderating effect of the type of experience on the relationship between “health” and “attractiveness for women” (95% CI: [0.206, 1.079]). Regarding W2, results also indicate a moderating effect of the type of experience on the relationship between “health” and “attractiveness for women” (95% CI: [0.239, 0.934]). For both W1 and W2, the relationship is positive, meaning that experience - both indirect (W1) and direct (W2) - enhances the influence of perceiving the product as healthy on the attractiveness of the product for women. Thus, hypothesis $H1_m$ is not supported and hypothesis $H1a_m$ is supported. Finally, regarding W1, we observe a moderating effect of the type of experience on the relationship between “labelling of the product” and “health” (95% CI: [-3.217, -1.228]). The same result is observed for W2 (95% CI: [-3.192, -1.349]). For both W1 and W2, the relationship is negative, meaning that experience (both indirect (W1) and direct (W2)) decreases the influence of product labelling on the perceived healthiness. The conditional effect of the focal predictor at values of the moderator confirms this result by showing a significant effect of the relationship only in the “absence of experience” condition (95% CI: [2.090, 3.433]).

Thus, hypothesis H1 and $H1_m$ are not supported and hypothesis H1a and $H1a_m$ are supported.

Theoretical model 2 (hypothesis 1, 1b, 1_m and $1b_m$): Influence of the plant-based label on attractiveness for women, mediated by perception of green and moderated by the type of experience

PROCESS model 4 was conducted to address Hypothesis 1 and 1b, which states that labelling a product as “plant-based” has a positive effect on the perception of the product as attractive for women; this is mediated by the perception of the product as green. Results are presented in Table 2.

The label of the product as “plant-based” is not a direct predictor of the perception of the product as attractive for women (95% CI: [-0.997, 0.162]. Results reveal that labelling a product as “plant-based” has an indirect effect on the perception of the product as attractive for women; this can be qualified by significant mediation through the perception of the product as “green” (95% CI: [0.039, 0.387]). Thus, hypothesis H1 is not supported and hypothesis H1b is supported.
PROCESS Model 59 was conducted to address hypothesis $H1_m$ and $H1a_m$ (moderation of hypothesis H1 and H1a by the type of experience). The “type of experience” is a multi-categorical variable. In the model tested, W1 is a comparison between the condition “absence of experience” and “indirect experience” and W2 is a comparison between “absence of experience” and “direct experience”.

Regarding both W1 and W2, results indicate that the “label x type of experience” interaction has no statistically significant effect on the perceived attractiveness of the product for women. However, regarding W1, we observe a moderating effect of the type of experience on the relationship between “green” and “attractiveness for women” (95% CI: [0.295, 1.011]). Regarding W2, results also indicate a moderating effect of the type of experience on the relationship between “green” and “attractiveness for women” (95% CI: [0.216, 0.881]). For both W1 and W2, the relationship is positive, meaning that experience - both indirect (W1) and direct (W2) - enhances the influence of the perception of the product as green on the perceived attractiveness of the product for women. Thus, hypothesis $H1_m$ is not supported and hypothesis $H1b_m$ is supported.

Finally, regarding W1, we observe a moderating effect of the type of experience on the relationship between “label of the product” and “green” (95% CI: [-3.527, -0.956]). Regarding W2, results indicate a moderating effect of the type of experience on the relationship between “label of the product” and “green” (95% CI: [-3.077, -0.695]). For both W1 and W2, the relationship is negative, meaning that experience - both indirect (W1) and direct (W2) - decreases the influence of the label of the product on the perceived healthiness. Thus, hypothesis 3m is supported.

Thus, hypothesis H1 and $H1_m$ are not supported and hypothesis H1b and $H1b_m$ are supported.

Theoretical model 3 (hypothesis 2, 2a, 2_m and $2a_m$): Influence of the plant-based label on attractiveness for men, mediated by perception of healthy and moderated by the type of experience

PROCESS model 4 was conducted to address Hypothesis H2 and H2a, which states that labelling a product as “plant-based” has a positive effect on the perception of the product as unattractive for men; this is mediated by the perception of the product as healthy. Results are presented in Table 2.

The labelling of the product as “plant-based” is a direct predictor of the perception of the product as unattractive for men (95% CI: [-1.907, -0.600]. Results reveal that this relation is not mediated through the perception of the product as healthy (95% CI: [-0.348, 0.112]). Thus, hypothesis H2 is supported and hypothesis H2a is not supported.

PROCESS Model 59 was conducted to address hypothesis $H2_m$ and $H2a_m$ (moderation of hypothesis H2 and H2a by type of experience). The “type of experience” is a multi-categorical variable. In the model tested, W1 is a comparison between the condition “absence of experience” and “indirect experience” and W2 is a comparison between “absence of experience” and “direct experience”.

Regarding W1, results indicate that the “label x type of experience” interaction has no statistically significant effect on the perceived unattractiveness of the product for men. Regarding W2, results indicate that the “label x type of experience” interaction has a statistically significant effect on the perceived unattractiveness of the product for men (95% CI: [1.216, 4.563]). As the effect of the label as plant-based decreases the perceived attractiveness of the product for men, this positive moderating effect shows that direct experience (but not indirect experience) inhibits the influence of labelling the product as plant-based on the perceived unattractiveness for men. Thus, hypothesis $H2_m$ is supported and hypothesis $H2a_m$ is not supported.

Finally, we observe a moderating effect of the relationship “label x type of experience” on health for both W1 (95% CI: [-3.217, -1.228]) and W2 (95% CI: [-3.192, -1.349]). This effect is negative. These results show that both direct and indirect experience decreases the influence of labelling the product as plant-based on the perception of the product as “healthy”.

Thus, hypothesis H2 and $H2_m$ are supported and hypothesis H2a and $H2a_m$ are not supported.

Theoretical model 4 (hypothesis 2, 2b, 2_m and $2b_m$): Influence of the plant-based label on attractiveness for men, mediated by perception of green and moderated by the type of experience

PROCESS model 4 was conducted to address Hypothesis H2 and H2b, which states that the labelling of a product as “plant-based” has a positive effect on the perception of the product as unattractive for men; this is mediated by the perception of the product as green. Results are presented in Table 2.

The labelling of the product as “plant-based” is a direct predictor of the perception of the product as unattractive for men (95% CI: [-2.003, -0.753]. Results reveal that labelling a product as “plant-based” has an indirect effect on the perception of the product as unattractive for men, but this is not qualified by significant mediation through the perception of the product as “green” (95% CI: [-0.119, 0.182]). Thus, hypothesis H2 is supported and hypothesis H2a is not supported.
PROCESS Model 59 was conducted to address hypothesis $H2_m$ and $H2b_m$ (moderation of hypothesis H2 and H2b by type of experience). The “type of experience” is a multi-categorical variable. In the model tested, W1 is a comparison between the condition “absence of experience” and “indirect experience” and W2 is a comparison between “absence of experience” and “direct experience”.

Regarding W1, results indicate that the “label x type of experience” interaction has no statistically significant effect on the perceived unattractiveness of the product for men. Regarding W2, results indicate that the “label x type of experience” interaction has a statistically significant effect on the perceived unattractiveness of the product for men (95% CI: [1.375, 4.402]). As the effect of labelling a product as plant-based decreases the perceived attractiveness of the product for men. This positive moderating effect implies that direct experience (but not indirect experience) inhibits the influence of labelling and can thus decrease the perceived unattractiveness of the product for men. Thus, hypothesis $H2_m$ is supported and hypothesis $H2b_m$ is not supported.

Finally, we observe a moderating effect due to the interaction of “label x type of experience” with “green” for both W1 (95% CI: [-3.527, -0.956]) and W2 (95% CI: [-3.077, -0.695]). This effect is negative. These results show that both direct and indirect experience can decrease the influence of labelling the product as plant-based, enhancing the perception of the product as “green”.

Thus, hypothesis H2 and $H2_m$ are supported and hypothesis H2b and $H2b_m$ are not supported.

Discussion

Theoretical contributions

The results of this study deepen our knowledge on the perception of vegetarian products and thus respond to a gap identified in the literature (Hartmann and Siegrist, 2017). More specifically, the results better explain the effect of vegetarian product labelling on the attractiveness of a product for men and women. This research also contributes to our knowledge about the gender-related perception of products by revealing that mental representations such as unattractiveness for men can be inhibited through direct experience.

First of all, our results are consistent with previous studies regarding the perception of attractiveness of vegetarian products for women and their unattractiveness for men (Ruby, 2012; Stevens et al., 2014). We propose some explanations for these perceptions, showing that the effect of attractiveness of vegetarian products for women is due solely to the perception as being healthy or green. Thus, the labelling of a product as vegetarian does not directly imply that the product is perceived as attractive for women. Our results suggest that products are perceived as attractive for women when they are healthy (dietetic) and green. This is because these attributes are given to vegetarian products and they are therefore perceived as more attractive for women. It is noteworthy that products labelled as vegetarian are not always dietetic. The most remarkable result is that there is no symmetry regarding the perception of unattractiveness of the product for men. In this case, the labelling of the product as vegetarian implies a direct effect that is not mediated by the perception of the product as healthy or green. So, vegetarian products are perceived as attractive for women because they are perceived as healthy and green; and they are note perceived as attractive to men because of the absence of meat. This clarification represents our first theoretical contribution to studies in this field.

Then, regarding the moderating effect, experience has a negative effect on the relationship between the labelling of the product as vegetarian and its perception as being healthy and green. This means that, without any prior experience, vegetarian products are perceived as being healthy and green, but this perception is negatively affected in the case of indirect or direct experience. Therefore, when people taste a product, they base their perception on their concrete mental representations (experience). In this case, their direct experience is different from their abstract mental representations of the product. This could be explained by the choice of product, in this case a paté, which is neither healthy nor green. Moreover, the paté chosen for the picture and the tasting is a very common product. Hence, the participants analyse the paté they see or taste and put aside their abstract mental representations. This explanation is supported by the literature on direct and indirect experience (Hamilton and Thompson, 2007; Johnstone and Tan, 2015). Our study also stresses the need to test the perceptions of meat substitutes in consumption contexts (Elzerman et al., 2011, 2013) and shows that a concrete mental process occurs which annihilates the abstract representations. However, our results also highlight that an abstract mental representation of a product as green and healthy may disappear during consumption and therefore raises questions about potential re-purchasing after consumption. Broadly, our results show that gender stereotypes in consumption are linked to the psychological distance with the products.

We also observe that the asymmetry between attractiveness of products for women and unattractiveness for men persists with the moderation of the type of experience. Thus, experience will change the relation between the perception as healthy or green and the perception of attractiveness for women. Both indirect and direct experience can enhance this relation. This result confirms our expectations since we assume that the previous positive representations of a product (halo effect) can be changed by indirect and direct experience. In this case, concrete mental representations (based on experience) overlap abstract mental representations (Hamilton and Thompson, 2007; Johnstone and Tan, 2015, Trelohan and Stefan, 2018). Meanwhile, direct experience (and not indirect) inhibits the perception of the product as unattractive for men. The phenomena of concrete mental representations taking over from abstract mental representations is observed to the point that they cancel out any effects of the labelling of vegetarian products on the perception of attractiveness for men. This should be because the product chosen in our study looks and tastes like a meat-based paté. Consequently, the paté is perceived as not being a threat for masculinity. It is explained by the strong need for men to maintain their gender identity and the fact that, in this regard, vegetarian products can be a threat (Brough et al., 2016; Rothgerber, 2013). Our second contribution to studies in this field is that gender stereotypes regarding products and their threat to masculinity can be inhibited by direct experience.

Finally, our research highlights above all a gender asymmetry in the perception of the products. Indeed, the perception of a product as being less attractive to men is not linked to its perception as being more attractive to women. This result is evidently explained by the greater need for men to maintain their gender identity and by the awareness of this need shared between men and women (Brough et al., 2016). Moreover, girls may integrate very early on (from the age of 3) that the gender valued in society is the male gender, so they are more likely to adopt male gender behaviours than boys adopting female gender behaviour (Bauer, 1993; Le Maner-Idrissi and Renault, 2006; O'Brien et al., 2000; Signorella et al., 1993). Our results therefore show the extension of these gender patterns into adulthood and food consumption.

Managerial implications

Our results on experience have implications for brands that have to make their products look as well as tasty, healthy and green to avoid losing consumers whose motivations to buy are based on these characteristics. This point is our first main managerial implication.

The second managerial implication of our study is that creating indirect and direct experiences will change consumers' negative representations of a product and it will be crucial in changing gendered perceptions. By choosing to use paté in our study, we are able to reveal changes in the perceptions of the product depending on the level of experience (absence, indirect or direct). In this perspective, brands should increase their efforts on the first purchase because it will be a direct experience that could change perceptions of the product. Promotions could be a strategy to facilitate this first purchase. They should also propose tasting in the shops as this is another way to create a direct experience. Finally, they could also increase indirect experiences; even if the effects are smaller, it could be a less expensive way to attract new consumers. In this perspective, they could focus on the size and quality of the product image in their advertisements.

Finally, these results also shed light on the reasons for the greater adoption of the vegetarian products by women. As substitutes (like a plant-based paté) are perceived as unattractive for men (regardless of the gender of the respondent), men might consider that a vegetarian diet could reduce the diversity of their food choice. This also provides interesting insights for brands and retailers who wish to democratize their vegetarian products and extend them to male consumers: the product will be more accepted as attractive for men if it looks and tastes like meat-based products, like in our experiment. Thus, the new developments of vegetarian products trying to mimic meat could be successful for this market segment (men).

Limitations and future research

The first limitation of this research is the choice of product. Each product or category of product has its own representation. In this study, "paté" was chosen for the four reasons evoked in the methodology section. Future research could test other products or categories of products. Especially, it could be interesting to test products perceived as more or less feminine and masculine. The present research was conducted with students. It would be interesting to test the effects with other generations and social classes. Finally, further studies could test the moderating effect of the masculine/feminine gender of respondents or their adherence to sex stereotypes.

Work on other vegetarian products needs to be carried out to confirm these results. To verify the presence of this asymmetry, it will also be necessary to conduct research on products perceived as more attractive to men. Last but not least, this field of research will also have to look beyond the gender-binary world to include everyone (transgender and non-binary people, for example) (McKeage et al., 2017).

Finally, our results create new avenues of research showing that gender stereotypes, but probably also other stereotypes, could be modified by lessening the psychological distance through direct experience, or even indirect experience. This would be possible when the need to maintain gender identity is not too strong. New studies could be conducted to test and deepen our understanding of this contribution to research on gender stereotypes.

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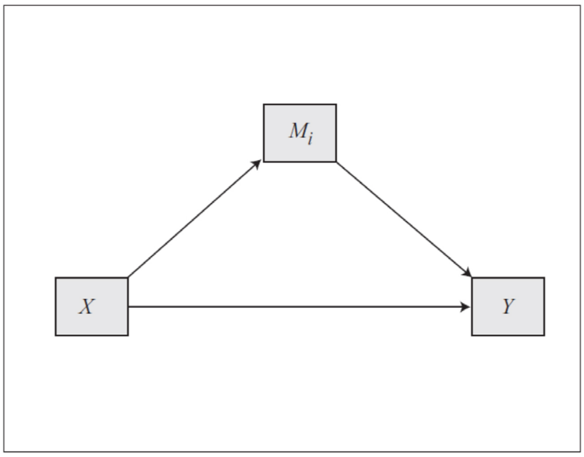
Appendix

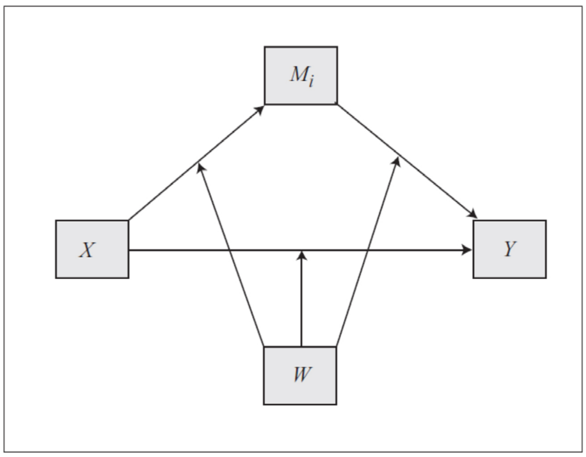
Appendix 1. Picture of the paté

Appendix 2. PROCESS Models used in the research

PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes, 2018, p.585)



PROCESS Model 59 (Hayes, 2018, p.598)



Identity and hedonic factors as determinants of savings intentions.

Abstract

Savings are a major individual and collective issue. Yet, for several decades, consumers have been saving less or too little. Despite academic research and public initiatives, little is known about individual savings behaviors.

Based on a conceptual model centered on identity and hedonic constructs, major in consumer behaviors theories, and a more precise definition of savings stages, our study investigates the impact of self-esteem, pleasure of saving, and financial well-being, on savings intentions. Using structural equation modeling, we show these factors are more influential than classic determinants such as self-efficacy. Our analysis highlights the benefits of studying and considering savings behaviors as consumers' behaviors and experiences.

Key words: savings, pleasure, self-esteem, identity, financial well-being.

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This article was conducted without any technical or financial assistance.

Introduction

Despite the accumulation of savings during COVID-19 lockdowns, most Western consumers display a low savings ratio. Thus, many people might not be able to cover their financial needs for real estate, health contingencies, and especially retirement (Rooij et al. 2011). Insufficient savings may expose individuals and households to financial vulnerability and can damage their financial well-being. Yet, in consumer behavior, a large part of the literature on money is centered on credit, debt, and, in general terms, their misdeeds. The literature on savings remains less abundant. Helping people save more money is a recent concern (Dholakia et al. 2016; Newmeyer et al. 2021). The literature has identified several determinants of savings intentions and behaviors, with a preference for rational determinants, related to risk tolerance, or based on knowledge and skills. But research on the influence of constructs such as financial literacy has been disappointing (Alsemgeest 2015; Asaad 2015; Fernandes, Lynch & Netemeyer 2014; Reyers 2019). To develop a better understanding of why people save, we approach it as consumer behavior. We focus on the realization of saving decisions and we investigate the influence on savings intentions of factors such as the concept of self, pleasure, financial well-being, or involvement. After presenting the conceptual framework of our research and our research questions, we detail our findings, before concluding on the contributions, limitations, and perspectives of this research.

Conceptual Framework and Research Questions

Money plays many functional and symbolic roles. As people engage daily in financial behaviors (Lee & Hanna 2015), consumers must understand and master how to interact with money to be integrated into society (Abramovitch et al. 1991; Lazarus 2012). To consumers, savings are a strategic issue (Bessière & Gollac 2019; Pinçon & Pinçon-Charlot 2007) to face life contingencies (Gutter et al. 2012), to invest in durable goods or real estate, for personal or commercial reasons. Savings help attain financial stability and independence (Loibl et al. 2011), and they contribute to financial satisfaction (Joo & Grable 2004; Traut-Mattausch & Jonas 2011). Quantitatively, savings behaviors are extremely significant. For instance, in 2019 French consumers subscribed to 2.5 million new savings accounts (Livrets A), while they closed 2.8 million of such accounts. In this scope, savings decisions and behaviors are a major component of daily life (Asaad 2015; Engelberg 2007). To perform these behaviors and decisions, consumers rely on their knowledge of financial concepts and mechanisms (Grohmann et al. 2015). Savings are inherently complex behaviors (Bayuk & Patrick 2021; Rooij et al. 2011). Savings decisions require basic knowledge of financial concepts (Grohmann et al. 2015). Many households and consumers lack the necessary knowledge to make appropriate decisions when it comes to savings (Pham et al. 2012; Rooij et al. 2011). Thus, consumers need help to save more, more regularly. Besides economic and practical concerns, savings behaviors may be a significant component of the transformative consumer research movement to redirect consumption forces (Keller & Lusardi 2012). As supposed by Baudrillard (1970), savings may be an elitist strategy for those wanting to distinguish themselves from the crowd of consumers. In this respect, savings behaviors apply materialism to money, time, and intangible possessions, thus promoting a new kind of materialism. Furthermore, the savings environment is currently experiencing 3 major evolutions. (a) Savings foundations are still shaken by the aftermath of the subprime crisis. (b) Most governments progressively dismantle public programs for retirement and social security, boosting savings needs. (c) Recently, new competitors: neobanks, and fintech, entered the market. To encourage financial institutions and policymakers in designing, customer-centered, effective new savings programs and strategies, the objective of this research is to clarify how several psychological determinants interact to impact savings intentions, and potentially savings acts. We hereby explore and combine two approaches: (a) defining savings more precisely by distinguishing actions from decisions, and (b) interpreting savings as consumer behaviors, with affective and hedonistic components.

Literature review

What are savings?

Fundamentally, savings are possessions put aside for later use. Savings can involve any tangible or intangible medium (Falicov 2001; Tendy et al. 2015). Using objects as savings may be preferable to investments or holding a savings account, as objects provide almost immediate access to liquid forms of money. The definition of savings as a behavioral process must be more accurately specified. Comparing savings to congruent concepts: wealth, investment, assets, holdings, or capital, we elicited a more precise definition of the concept. Savings behaviors encompass 4 successive stages: (a) decision stage: deciding to save not consumed incomes or possessions that have a value, (b) concretization stage or savings acts, (c) possession and preservation stage, and (d) consumption stage. Profit may be expected, notably through the gain of interests, but it is not mandatory. The literature focuses on savings decisions and their consequences. Frequently, it considers savings decisions are systematically and flawlessly transformed into savings acts. Instead, most of the time, those acts take place in the future and must be repeated several times to reach the goal associated with the savings decision. That is one of the major problems faced by individual savers. We suggest researching the determinants of savings acts.

Savings acts, institutional and monetary savings

We define a savings act as any action that results in a quantitative or qualitative change in an individual's monetary savings. This refers to the subscription of different categories of savings products, and to monetary movements (addition, withdrawal, or transfer of money between savings products) concerning these savings products. The numerical importance of such deeds is indisputable[1].

While the concept of the savings act is more accurate than simply savings behaviors, it is based on two implicit assumptions: (a) the institutional aspect of savings and (b) its monetary nature. Referring to savings products implies excluding any savings behavior that is not carried out exclusively with products managed by a financial institution. This narrow definition also exists among consumers (Tendy et al. 2015). However, institutional and formal acts of savings do not cover all forms of savings. Symmetrically, we cannot consider that consuming less than one's income is sufficient to characterize voluntary savings behaviors. We propose to distinguish between (a) institutional and formal savings acts, i.e. savings acts involving a savings product in a financial institution, and (b) informal savings acts when a sum of money is set aside, whether by earmarking or another separation process, to be used later. With dematerialized money, such a process can be as simple as a mental accounting operation. Focusing on monetary savings is the literature's second assumption. Still, non-monetary savings do exist. In this research, we focus on institutional monetary savings behaviors, specifically savings acts.

Interpreting savings as a consumer behavior

Savings decisions and behaviors are potentially influenced by many determinants (Gutter et al. 2012). Interestingly, while the literature considers that savings are ancient behaviors (Wärneryd 1998), two restrictive conceptual views prevail to categorize savings behaviors. (a) One defines savings as what remains when income has been spent on consumer goods. Here savings are not even a behavior. (b) Savings are rational behaviors and decisions that don't belong to consumption but may influence it. They are subordinated to consumption (Duesenberry 1949). A third, less popular, framework somehow interprets savings as mechanisms - and not behaviors – apart from psychological and social forces, by convening. biology (Doyle 1999), mathematics, or habits (Katona 1975). All three frameworks exclude savings from consumer behaviors. Still, as is the case for credit and debt, several elements support the hypothesis that savings may be a consumer behavior (Ladwein 1999). For Baudrillard (1968), consumption has no limit. It is « a systematic manipulation of the signs » and an « active mode of relating to objects and building a relationship with others». It satisfies desires as much as needs. It is also social interaction, a practice, a media between individuals and groups (Douglas & Isherwood 1979). Consumer society is not only an economic phenomenon but also a cultural and social one (Douglas & Isherwood 1979; Ladwein 2017). All these characteristics are compatible with money and savings. The development of savings behaviors, such as life insurance, has been allowed by the emergence of social norms (Zelizer 2005). The literature review showed that savings convey a great number of functional but also symbolic, cultural, and social meanings. Saving is a strategy to consume and manipulate time. Trying to save more money in a consumer society may be interpreted as a very elitist social strategy (Baudrillard 1970). Even materialism may be pursued by accumulating money as a specific kind of possession. Indeed, savings magnify two behaviors related to possessions (Belk 1983): possessiveness and acquisitiveness, as it is extremely easy to stock monetary savings. Consumer behavior theory offers the opportunity to explain savings behaviors with identity, hedonic or affective determinants. These concepts can help us better understand how savings acts are implemented. We successively explore pleasure, involvement, subjective financial well-being, self-concept, and self-efficacy as potential determinants of savings intentions.

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[1] According to the 2013 TNS SOFRES - La Banque Postale barometer, 57% of respondents said they had dipped into their savings over the last 6 months and 31% planned to do so over the next 6 months. In terms of amounts, in 2019, net flows of financial investments - which therefore underestimate the total amount of inflows and outflows generated by acts of savings - represented 143 billion euros, including 89 billion for savings accounts alone and 49 billion for life insurance and retirement savings.

Research hypotheses

Without long-term longitudinal research, it is extremely difficult to observe repeated savings acts. To circumvent this issue, we rely on savings intentions, defined here as subjective judgments about whether consumers think they will engage in saving money. Being strongly influenced by the economic theories, the literature on savings remains substantially based on the Life Cycle Hypothesis (LCH) (Modigiliani & Ando 1963) postulates. In the articles based on the LCH theoretical frame, the models used are inspired by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). TPB is a psychological theory developed by Ajzen (1985) that postulates that behavioral intentions are determined by three components: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In turn, behavioral intentions determine behaviors (Ajzen 2012). According to the TPB, saving is a volitional behavior, and savings intentions are a strong predictor of savings behaviors, even if barriers do exist (see Magendans et al. 2017).

Involvement: importance and pleasure of savings behaviors

The literature considers that the level of involvement influences intentions and concretization of decisions. Savings acts and behaviors require commitment (Aldlaigan & Buttle 2001; Eisingerich & Bell 2007). The influence of commitment may be assessed using involvement or satisfaction. Involvement has been associated with savings decisions (Labelle, Colombel & Perrien 2003). We propose to extend its influence to savings acts. Amongst the 5 involvement dimensions identified by Laurent and Kapferer (1986), we focus on the interest and importance of the behavior and the pleasure associated with the behavior. The importance of money is a major dimension of attitudes towards money (Yamauchi & Templer 1982) and attitudes toward savings (Furnham 1999). In models inspired by the Theory of Planned Behavior, constructs of attitudes towards savings frequently include items on savings importance (eg. Croy et al. 2010). If one values savings, and the security it provides, and is committed to the act of savings, then savings acts will be performed seriously, and diligently because they are involved in savings acts. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H1. The higher the importance granted to savings, the stronger the savings intentions.

Consistent with the PAD (Pleasure - Arousal - Dominance) model of experience, the anticipated positive emotions associated with a behavior correspond to behavioral beliefs of an emotional or affective nature: happy/sad, happy/contracted, pleasure/boredom, optimistic/pessimistic: emotions can be associated to savings acts. Interactions with money are emotionally charged (Engelberg 2007). The literature sometimes assumes that emotions and affects may influence savings. Hedonic aspects, notably enjoyment, influence savings indirectly: it is predictive of low or non-regular savings (Lunt and Livingstone 1991). They also act directly: savers feel positive emotions towards savings (exciting, satisfying), while non-savers either feel negative emotions (sad, unexciting) related to lower consumption, even if some consumers do not associate any emotion with savings (Tendy et al. 2015). In models inspired by the Theory of Planned Behavior, constructs of attitudes towards savings frequently include items that can be associated with hedonism: eg. saving is pleasant, enjoyable (Loibl & Scharff 2010). Precisely, the literature associates pleasure, hedonistic feelings, and emotions with savings decisions. In the economic literature, pleasure, labeled as savouring is related to one's capacity to report gratification and to be patient. Savers may experience dread or savouring emotions due to the waiting between decisions and outcomes (Loewenstein 1987). Furthermore, when affective dimensions (Labelle et al. 2003) or emotions are associated with savings (Ayadi 2010), it specifically concerns investments. In this case, pleasure and emotions are related to the thrill of taking risks with one's money. As regards repeated savings acts, we postulate that pleasure and positive emotions derive from three aspects : (a) pleasure of seeing projects progressing towards their fruition, (b) satisfaction of being able to repeat savings acts at an acceptable frequency, and (c) a good savings experience when conducting savings acts. In this perspective, consumers having no particular project attached to their savings behaviors, or those who do not succeed in repeating their savings acts, would experience less pleasure with their savings behaviors. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis.

H2. The higher the pleasure associated with savings, the stronger the savings intentions.

Pleasure and positive emotions associated with savings acts reinforce the importance granted to savings. According to Laurent and Kapferer (1986), the importance of savings as an object, and the pleasure associated with it, are related in terms of consumers' involvement. Also, we can propose the following hypothesis:

H3. The higher the pleasure associated with savings, the higher the importance granted to savings.

Besides pleasure, other sentiments such as financial well-being behaviors can influence savings acts and intentions.

Financial well-being

Even if its definition is disputed (Brüggen et al. 2017), financial well-being is one of the major facets of well-being. According to Brüggen et al. (2017), financial well-being is the perception of being able to sustain current and anticipated desired living standards and financial freedom. The relationship between well-being and savings behaviors is well-established. As monetary possessions, savings help increase financial well-being. Saving is associated with economic optimism (Lunt & Livingstone 1991). Savings intentions interact directly with well-being (Kim et al. 2003), or indirectly, through money management (Donnelly et al. 2012). Most of the time, the savings literature postulates that future financial well-being is consecutive to past savings behaviors. Still, present savings intentions and behaviors may be positively influenced by present subjective financial well-being. Savings behaviors and intentions are often repeated, as savings goals and decisions can rarely be achieved with only one single savings act. When planning and thinking about future savings acts, consumers are influenced by their current subjective financial well-being. When consumers are aware of rational and positive consequences of their savings decisions and acts, eg. when their savings decisions for their 401(k) personal retirement savings plans lead to positive outcomes, they reinforce their savings behaviors and display higher saving rates. Thus, consumers use a kind of reinforcement learning as they observe their past behaviors lead to better financial outcomes (Choi et al. 2009). The same mechanism can operate with financial well-being playing the role of a subjective consequence of savings decisions and acts. First, to maintain their subjective financial well-being, consumers have to repeat their savings acts, by holding their savings intentions at a high level. Second, since subjective financial well-being is based on a comparison between financial mean and expectations, high subjective well-being indicates consumption expectations are met. It is a sign consumers may devote more income to savings. Their savings intentions shall be stronger. Third, subjective financial well-being may be the trigger of a reinforcement mechanism applied to savings intentions. If it is already high, consumers can consider that their past savings acts were accurate and adapted and thus, can be renewed. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H4. The higher the financial well-being, the stronger the savings intentions.

The literature considers the association between financial management behaviors and financial well-being as a “common finding” (Kim et al. 2003). This relationship is moderate (Sahu & Rath 2003; Gutter & Copur 2011). The reasoning behind the positive influence of perceived self-efficacy on subjective financial well-being remains unexplained (eg. Gutter & Copur 2011). It seems based on a chain of relationships: a) financial self-efficacy is a proxy of financial literacy and education, b) financial self-efficacy and financial literacy are positively influencing financial management behaviors, c) financial management behaviors lead to positive financial outcomes, d) positive financial outcomes positively influence financial well-being, so e) financial self-efficacy influences financial well-being. Still, if not investigated by the literature, a causal scheme, where financial well-being influences savings intentions and behaviors, is hypothesized (Brüggen et al. 2017). First, when consumers are satisfied with their financial well-being, that is with the consequences of their financial behaviors, they are aware that these behaviors were optimized, among other factors, by their financial self-efficacy. Their financial well-being is a cue of a positive mastery experience, i.e. that their financial self-efficacy is producing positive outcomes. Besides mastery experience, self-efficacy is also influenced by psychological states (Bandura, 1997). Financial well-being can be one of these psychological states. The need to assess one’s self-efficacy on a specific subject is only limited when behavior is a habitual routine (Bandura 1982). As savings acts are repeated but are not habitual routines, consumers need to reassess their self-efficacy after each savings act. If financial self-efficacy may depend on or may be related to financial education, knowledge, or skills, it includes a self-confidence component (Bandura 1982). Self-efficacy mitigates or controls self-doubts, it implies self-assurance. Lown’s (2011) financial self-efficacy scale includes at least one item directly referring to self-confidence. Acting as a psychological state, increased financial well-being will positively reinforce the self-confidence part of financial self-efficacy. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5. The higher the financial well-being, the higher the financial self-efficacy.

Self-concept and savings behaviors: the case of self-esteem

While self-efficacy focuses on the impact of skill on savings intentions and behaviors, savings may be driven by mechanisms related to the self and identity (Dulebohn & Murray 2007). Economic psychology and economics mobilize self-esteem as a reinforcement of «adequate» skills and practices. Simultaneously, the strong influence of self-concept on consumer behavior is well established (Sirgy 1982). As a possession, money is an extension of the self (Belk 1988). Money is associated with self-concept (Belk 1988; Prince 1993) and self-esteem (Tang 1992). Self-concept is positively associated with wealth accumulation (Gathergood 2012), lower spending, and a greater propensity to save (Baumeister 2002; Romal & Kaplan 1995). Individuals are more motivated when the tasks they perform have implications for the extended or shared self (Kaiser et al. 2017). Saving is involving, and socially meaningful. Savings behaviors are associated with the goal of self-actualization (Xiao & Noring 1994). The literature distinguishes several facets of self-concept: sense of self, self-image, self-congruence, self-representation, self-continuity, social self, ideal self, and self-esteem (Rosenberg 1979; Sirgy 1982). Several of these facets have been associated with materialism and credit misuse (Donnelly et al. 2013; Richins 2011), and poor personal financial management (Dew and Xiao 2011). According to the goal theory, people are more motivated when tasks they conduct have implications for their extended or shared self (Kaiser et al. 2017). So we may postulate that savings behaviors are an expression of the self. But some facets of self, such as the realization of self, negatively influence financial behaviors and decisions (Topa et al. 2012). We focus on one of the most important concepts related to self and identity: self-esteem. Self-esteem is the degree to which the qualities and characteristics contained in one's self-concept are perceived to be positive (APA Dictionary). Even if self-esteem has been associated with financial planning (Neymotin 2010), and subjective financial knowledge (Tang & Baker 2016), it has rarely been associated with financial behaviors. For Neymotin (2010), individuals with low self-esteem may act inefficiently or refuse to implement a savings behavior, because their low self-esteem leads them to be less persistent and to block information that indicates failure, which would lead to suboptimal decisions. It seems quite logical to postulate that perceived self-efficacy, whether general or specific, is reinforced by high self-esteem.

H6. The higher the self-esteem, the higher the financial self-efficacy.

Self-esteem also influences attitudes and values. First, self-concept is one of the individual determinants of involvement (Valette-Florence 1989). As a dimension of the involvement with saving, the importance granted to savings is potentially influenced by self-concept, including by the self-esteem facet. Then, as concerns money, high self-esteem is associated with ascetic values, but also with non-generosity (Prince 1993). This finding can be extended to savings as a form of money. Most importantly, people with high self-esteem tend to be less materialistic and are more inclined to save (Park & Roedder John 2011; Tang & Baker 2016). Hence we propose the following hypothesis :

H7. The higher the self-esteem, the higher the importance granted to savings.

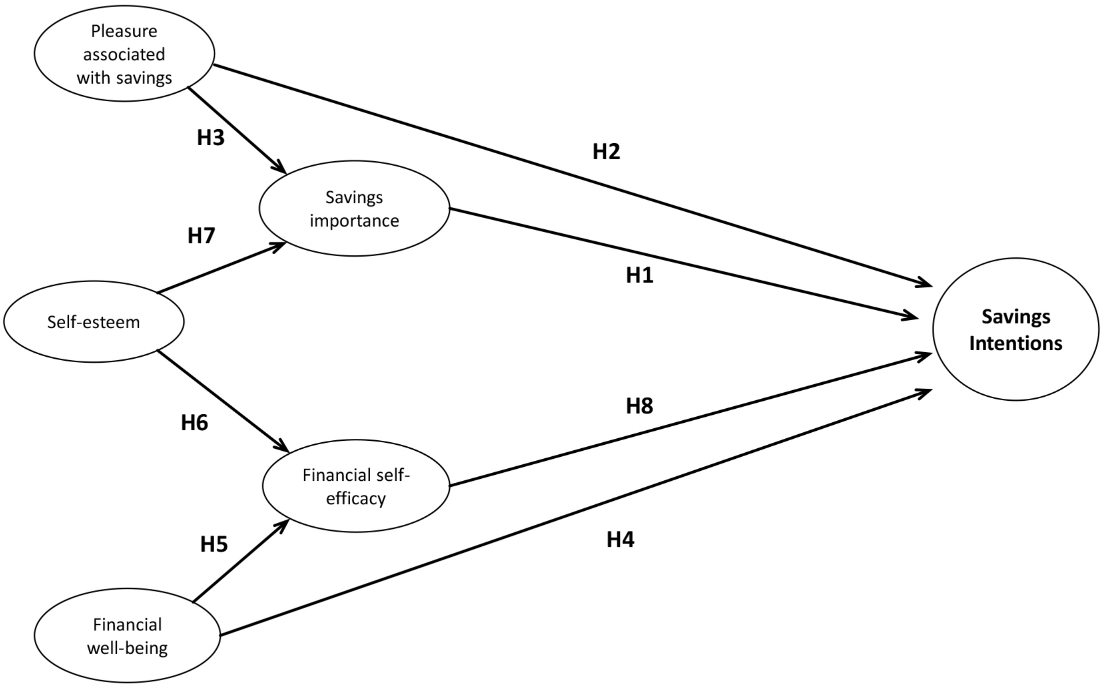
Self-efficacy

To assess more accurately the impact of pleasure, self-concept, and well-being on savings acts with a parsimonious model, we mobilize only one reference savings determinant. Among major savings determinants (Aaker et al. 2011; Engelberg 2007; Gutter et al. 2012; Romero & Craig 2017), financial self-efficacy is perceived as an influential construct (Allgood & Walstad 2016; Parker et al. 2012; Robb & Woodyard 2011). Self-efficacy is a central concept of the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura 1997). Financial self-efficacy can be defined as the subjective feeling of having the ability to achieve one's financial goals (Forbes & Kara 2010), the ability to understand the issues of domestic finance, its mechanisms, the skills to perform financial calculations and measure the consequences of saving or mismanagement (Jappelli & Padula 2013). It is akin to a form of self-confidence that overrides objective knowledge of financial topics (Parker et al. 2012). In models inspired by the Theory of Planned Behavior, it appears as the major determinant of behaviors and intentions. It is the primary factor influencing financial behavior intentions (Chatterjee et al. 2011; Croy et al. 2010; Gutter et al. 2012; Loibl et al. 2011; Magendans et al. 2017). Financial self-efficacy influences investment and retirement decisions and behaviors (Dietz et al. 2003; Forbes & Kara 2010; Chatterjee et al. 2011). We can therefore formulate the following hypothesis:

H8. The higher the financial self-efficacy, the stronger the savings intentions.

Based on these different elements we designed a conceptual model displayed in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 : Conceptual model



Method

The data for this research were collected through an Internet survey of a sample of French consumers, who were all members of an access panel. The sample consisted of 410 individuals aged 18 to 75. The questionnaire was self-administered in February 2020. It was designed to limit common bias variance. This sample is representative of the French population regarding age, gender, professional occupation, and income. It diverges from the French population in household structure and education. Both criteria may influence savings behaviors. According to our sample, French people are frequent savers: 54% save every month.

We chose to use scales that exist in the literature, adapting them to our research. The first scale used concerns the importance granted to savings and comprises 5 items. It focuses on the anticipation and security provided by saving (Briers & Laporte 2013). We measured pleasure associated with savings behaviors by adapting the 3-item pleasure scale from Laurent et Kapferer's (1986) implication profiles. We measured perceived financial self-efficacy by translating Lown's (2011) Financial Self Efficacy Scale. This scale has 6 items, all formulated negatively. We measured self-esteem using a shorter (4 items) version of the RSE scale validated by Tambs and Roysamb (2014). We measured subjective financial well-being by slightly adapting Sharma and Alter's (2012) 5-item scale. The last scale measured saving intentions. We adapted Ayadi's (2010) 3-item scale to include all kinds of savings acts, whichever the saving product. To facilitate the execution of the questionnaire, all items in these constructs were measured using 5-point Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Items are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1

Constructs

Scale	Itel ref.	Item wording	Outer loadings	Cronbach alpha	Jöreskog Rho	Composite reliability	AVE	R^2
Importance granted to savings (Rose & Orr, 2007)	IME1	Saving money gives me a sense of security	0,817	0,881	0,895	0,913	0,678	0,279
	IME2	It is very important to me to save money for the future	0,873					
	IME3	Financial planning for the future provides me a sense of security	0,890					
	IME4	I prefer to save money because I am never sure when things will collapse and I will need the cash	0,774					
	IME5	It is very important to me to save enough to provide well for my family in the future	0,756					
Pleasure associated to savings (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985)	PLE1	It would give me pleasure to save	0,915	0,879	0,944	0,923	0,800	0,019
	PLE2	Everytime I save, it is a bit like giving msyelf a gift	0,860					
	PLE3	Saving is a pleasure to me	0,908					
Perceived financial self-efficacy (Lown, 2011)	FSE1	It is hard to stick to my spending when unexpected expenses arise	0,829	0,842	0,849	0,894	0,678	0,156
	FSE2	It is challenging to make progress towards my financial goals	0,856					
	FSE4	When faced with a financial challenge, I have a hard time figuring out a solution	0,818					
	FSE5	I lack confidence in my ability to manage my finances	0,787					
Subjective financial well-being (Sharma & Alter, 2012)	FWB1	Compared to my financial position last year, my financial position this year is much better	0,823	0,86	0,862	0,899	0,641	0,189
	FWB2	In comparison to most of my peers, I am financially much better off	0,773					
	FWB3	Compared to my material possessions last year, my material possessions this year are generally more important	0,815					
	FWB4	In comparison to most of my peers' material possessions, my material possessions are more important	0,782					
	FWB5	In comparison to last year, my ability to spend money freely is less constrained	0,806					
Self-esteem (Tambs et Roysamb, 2014)	EST1	I take a positive attitude toward myself	0,823	0,812	0,825	0,876	0,639	X
	EST2	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others	0,752					
	EST3 (reverse)	I certainly feel useless at times (reverse)	0,782					
	EST4 (reverse)	I feel I do not have much to be proud of (reverse)	0,836					
Savings intentions (Ayadi, 2010)	INT1	I intend to realize saving deeds during the next 6 months	0,939	0,930	0,930	0,955	0,877	0,394
	INT2	It is very likely that I will save money during the next 6 months	0,950					
	INT3	Saving money is one of my projects for the next 6 months	0,921					

The scales were carefully translated from English into French. We checked the consistency of the translation by retranslating scales into English. A preliminary PCA including all the scales and Cronbach's alpha measures were conducted. It confirmed the reliability and validity of the measures we selected for the constructs. The data were analyzed with a partial least squares structural equation modeling software (SmartPLS 3). 2 items were discarded from the financial self-efficacy scale. All constructs are reliable. Cronbach's □ are all above 0.8, as are Jöreskog Rho as detailed in Table 1. According to the usual procedure (Fornell & Larcker 1981), the outer loadings of the items are all significant (p<0.001) and are greater than 0.75. This makes it possible to achieve convergent validity. The wording of all the items can be found in Table 3. The AVEs (Average Variance Extracted) associated with each construct are also all greater than 0.5. Composite reliability also is above the required thresholds. The discriminant validity is supported by Fornell-Lacker and HTMT criteria (Cf. Table 2). Items correlated better with their construct than with other competing constructs (Henseler et al. 2016). Post hoc tests were conducted to assess common bias variance.

Table 2

Fornell-Lacker & HTMT criteria

Fornell Lacker	Subjective financial well-being	Perceived financial self-efficacy	Importance granted to savings	Savings intentions	Pleasure associated with savings	Self-esteem
Subjective financial well-being	**0.799**					
Perceived financial self-efficacy	-0.267	**0.825**				
Importance granted to savings	0.167	-0.116	**0.824**			
Savings intentions	0.317	-0.287	0.541	**0.937**		
Pleasure associated with savings	0.159	-0.098	0.514	0.441	**0.894**	
Self-esteem	0.228	-0.216	0.173	0.133	0.062	**0.798**

HTMT	Subjective financial well-being	Perceived financial self-efficacy	Importance granted to savings	Savings intentions	Pleasure associated with savings
Perceived financial self-efficacy	0.303				
Importance granted to savings	0.183	0.144			
Savings intentions	0.345	0.325	0.592		
Pleasure associated with savings	0.183	0.115	0.547	0.456	
Self-esteem	0.268	0.250	0.201	0.161	0.092

Findings

As recommended for PLS analyses, hypotheses were tested using bootstrapping (Hair et al. 2017). Based on direct paths and effects, all hypotheses were validated (Table 3, Figure 2). The influence of pleasure associated with savings on the importance granted to savings (H3. ß=0.506; t=10.909) is high, but expected, as both constructs belong to implication profiles (Laurent & Kapferer 1986). Financial self-efficacy is reinforced by positive financial well-being (H5. ß=-0.234; t=4.348)[2], confirming our conceptual hypothesis. Importance granted to savings (H1. ß=0.394; t=6.963) has the largest influence on savings intentions, notably since it draws on the influence of pleasure associated with savings.

[2] *Since all financial self-efficacy items are negatively worded, for all relationships involving financial self-efficacy, a negative value indicates a positive relationship.*

The direct influence of pleasure associated with savings (H2. ß=0.191; t=3.588), financial self-efficacy (H8. ß=-0.177; t=3.953), and financial well-being (H4. ß=0.174; t=4.385) on savings intentions, is very similar in magnitude. Even if these relationships are moderate, they indicate that both pleasure associated with savings and financial well-being have a direct and indirect impact on savings intentions. Thus, hedonic and affective factors significantly impact savings intentions. The influence of self-esteem on the importance granted to savings (H7. ß=0.145; t=2.486) and financial self-efficacy (H6. ß=-0.166; t=2.399) is validated. It confirms the indirect influence of self-esteem on savings intentions and behaviors. Overall, the impact of importance granted to savings exceeds the influence of financial self-efficacy on savings intentions, even when it is reinforced by self-esteem and financial well-being. This result underlines financial self-efficacy's smaller impact once affective, hedonic, and self-concept factors are enlisted to predict savings intentions.

Figure 2 : Results

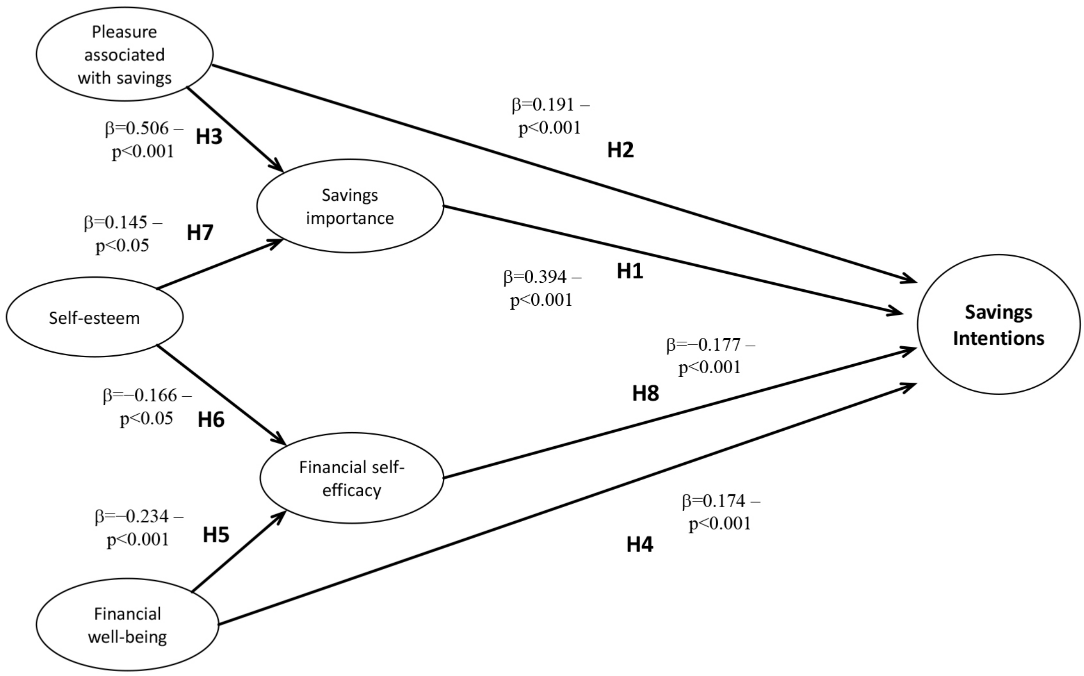


Table 3

Test of the hypotheses

		Direct effects				Total effects			
		Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	T Statistics	P Values	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	T Statistics	P Values
H1	Savings Importance -> Savings Intentions	0.392	0.394	6.963	0.000	0.392	0.394	6.963	0.000
H2	Pleasure / savings -> Savings Intentions	0.195	0.191	3.588	0.000	0.393	0.391	8.192	0.000
H3	Pleasure / savings -> Savings Importance	0.505	0.506	10.909	0.000	0.505	0.506	10.909	0.000
H4	Financial well-being -> Savings Intentions	0.174	0.174	4.385	0.000	0.214	0.216	5.241	0.000
H5	Financial well-being -> Financial self-efficacy	-0.230	-0.234	4.348	0.000	-0.230	-0.234	4.348	0.000
H6	Self-esteem -> Financial self-efficacy	-0.163	-0.166	2.399	0.016	-0.163	-0.166	2.399	0.016
H7	Self-esteem -> Savings Importance	0.142	0.145	2.486	0.013	0.142	0.145	2.486	0.013
H8	Financial self-efficacy -> Savings Intentions	-0.176	-0.177	3.953	0.000	-0.176	-0.177	3.953	0.000

Discussion

We identified a model where constructs related to consumer behavior, specifically self-esteem and pleasure, influence self-efficacy and directly impact savings intentions. Even if the relationships observed are moderately significant, they endorse the objective of our research. Savings behaviors, specifically savings acts, can be analyzed as consumer behaviors, opening new ways for interpreting savings. Emotional and hedonic mechanisms influence savings intentions and potentially savings acts, as they do with most consumer behaviors. First, we must confirm that savings intentions predict accurately savings acts. The influence of pleasure appears to extend beyond the thrill of risking one's money by selecting investments. It can be a simpler set of emotions, related to the satisfaction of having accomplished one's goals, or of mastering saving skills. Together with financial well-being, it highlights the experiential nature of savings behaviors. Savings experience is a promising area of research. The interpretation of financial well-being influence is more complex. By associating our finding that financial well-being impacts financial self-efficacy with the already explored influence of financial self-efficacy on financial well-being, we describe a circular relationship between both constructs. It is most likely this loop includes savings behaviors. If we proposed that well-being influences self-efficacy through the self-confidence component of self-efficacy, how self-efficacy may directly influence well-being remains to be explored. To investigate in-depth these relationships, we have to analyze both concepts' definitions. Self-efficacy is well-defined by the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura 1997). But based on the TPB, self-efficacy must be distinguished from controllability of behavior (Ajzen 2002): is well-being more influential on controllability than on self-efficacy? The Social Cognitive Theory's literature adopts no definitive position on the level of precision of self-efficacy. Using an existing construct, we tested financial self-efficacy. What would be the influence of a more specific savings self-efficacy? The financial well-being definition also is discussed (Brüggen et al. 2017). Here we investigated mostly the hedonic aspect of this construct. How would this influence evolve if we include an economic aspect, or a eudemonic aspect (Ayadi, Paraschiv, Vernette 2019)? What would be the influences of enlarged financial well-being including 4 facets (Ayadi, Paraschiv, Vernette 2019)? Investigating financial satisfaction (Dew & Xiao 2011; Donnelly et al. 2012; Joo & Grable 2004; Prawitz et al. 2006) may be a decisive stage here. Indeed, this concept position is disputed: some distinguish it from financial well-being (eg. Brüggen et al. 2017), while others consider it a facet of well-being (Ayadi, Paraschiv, Vernette 2019). If financial well-being differs from financial satisfaction, what are the interactions between both constructs?

Several elements of the reinforcement mechanism we relied on to explain financial well-being and pleasure influences on savings intentions must be investigated. If we retain Rothschild and Gaidis terminology (1981), first we have to determine if financial well-being and pleasure or savings experience are primary or secondary reinforcers. If they are secondary reinforcers, which is most likely, their effects will be weaker than a primary reinforcer such as the interest rate of a given savings product. According to behavioral learning theory, saving is a situation of simultaneous choice: financial well-being and pleasure reinforcement effect shall be continuously maintained, all the more so since they are both delayed reinforcers.

Finally, self-esteem influence on financial self-efficacy potentially confirms that self-efficacy includes a specific self-confidence component. The extent of commonality between both concepts is to be explored: if self-confidence is predominant in financial or saving self-efficacy, self-esteem could be a proxy of financial self-efficacy. The influence of self-esteem on savings confirms that values associated with savings and savings behaviors are a promising area of research.

Limitations and Further Research

This research has some limitations. Our definition of savings behaviors as savings acts, and the method we use to elicit them, are open to improvements. Savings decisions frequently stem from spouses' joint decisions or even from family choices: it would be enlightening to duplicate our research by interviewing couples together. Financial well-being and financial self-efficacy constructs could be improved. Several classical factors influencing savings can supplement our conceptual model, for instance: risk tolerance, time styles, motives, materialism, frugality, or sobriety. An investigation of mediating and moderating effects is needed, notably for those effects involving sociodemographic factors. Indeed, according to the Life Cycle Hypothesis and to most theories of saving based on LCH, age, income, and professional status are the major determinants of the amount of money saved. Frequent savers, or those with higher income, shall be specifically studied as they have more opportunities to save and more savings experience. Transcultural comparisons are in order as identity, hedonistic and affective factors are strongly influenced by the cultural environment. Longitudinal research would allow us better investigate how psychological determinants influence savings acts.

Research on savings and savings acts shall focus on 3 areas : (a) an analysis of the emotions and experiences associated with savings acts (b) the value of savings behaviors and the practice of saving, and (c) a better conceptualization of financial well-being and financial self-efficacy and equivalent concepts. Our results confirm that, compared to savings decisions, savings acts can trigger emotional responses and support an experience. Apart from dread and savouring, emotions associated with savings acts, and their influence on the repetition of these acts, remain to be investigated. The different facets of the savings experience for each of the 4 stages of savings behaviors shall be explored, using the framework developed by Roederer (2012). The investigation of meanings associated with savings and savings behaviors can help better understand the savings experience. An integrative theoretical framework shall be developed to better understand, and map, how the different constructs related to financial well-being, financial literacy, and financial self-efficacy do interact. This framework could be based on the referential proposed by Ayadi, Paraschiv, and Vernette (2019). Furthermore, since self-efficacy, self-esteem, or attitudes towards risks are shaped and influenced by socialization, it appears strategic to investigate how the various sources of financial, and economic socialization, interplay to influence consumers' savings behaviors. Resources similar to social capital (Pinçon & Pinçon-Charlot 2007) or cultural capital are needed to understand what is expected from a potential saver. As for overindebtedness (Duhaime 2003), these resources make it possible to avoid bad choices and, ultimately, financial failure and its psychosocial problems. The lack of cognitive, cultural, or social resources (Hamilton et al. 2019) at the stage of saving action may increase savouring (Arrondel et al. 2014), influence the willingness to postpone gratification, and affect feelings of self-efficacy, and self-esteem (Hamilton et al. 2019). The complexity of the actions required to save may impede the realization of savings decisions. Finally, considering informal, non-institutional, or non-monetary savings acts shall help limit the consequences of barriers to formal and institutional savings, which are poorly understood and little studied.

Managerial implications

Banks and policymakers shall include hedonistic values, and emotions when developing savings products, and savings programs, building upon positive savings experiences. The pleasure of a savings act, and its repetition, shall inspire communication campaigns. Applying experiential marketing to savings behaviors offers a new approach to savings programs, complementary to incentives, nudges, and automated savings. Today, when not automated, the action of saving is a set of purely administrative, and digital actions, with few human interactions. A savings act probably offers a bland experience. Such characteristics may stimulate disinterest, and even resistance, to the transformation of savings intentions into actions, accentuating the impact of cognitive biases, and psychological barriers, notably when low-income or vulnerable consumers are concerned. To make savings acts more experiential, financial institutions, and policymakers, may develop a kind of 'savingscape' approach, trying to make saving as easy, and fun, as possible. They must communicate on the savings experience rather than on its rationality. Simultaneously, if self-esteem is an important determinant of savings behaviors, dedicated public programs shall regularly support consumers' self-esteem. Adding self-esteem to customer profiles, eg. for KYC (know your customer) compliance purposes, is another consequence of our findings. Both self-esteem and pleasure are enhanced by the collective, and collaborative, structures, far from individual, rational behaviors. Savings acts may benefit from their potential ability to generate communities of consumers, sharing ideas, and choices, but also practices and skills (Newmeyer et al. 2021).

Conclusion

With this work in progress, we demonstrated that the consumer behavior framework can greatly enhance the understanding of savings behaviors. The investigation of savings experiences together with a better understanding of concepts such as financial well-being, and self-efficacy will help managers design new, more effective, savings campaigns, and programs. The influence of self-esteem and pleasure on savings intentions may be a clue to possible relationships between savings and materialism. Bringing experience, and pleasure, to savings, would be greatly appreciated by consumers. The influence of reinforcement mechanisms also is a promising area of research on savings. By specifically analyzing the different stages of savings behaviors, other significant findings will emerge.

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The influence of window displays on patronage intentions: The case of French tourist bureaux.

Abstract

Objective: Tourist bureaux in France are evolving from their conventional role of solely providing information toward a newer commercial role of selling goods and services to tourists. Window displays are an important marketing tool for attracting tourists, and traditionally attract attention and incite individuals into the point-of-sale. The goal of this study is to apply Construal Level Theory to tourist bureau window display content and to examine its influence on patronage intentions.

Design/methodology/approach: The study applies the S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) paradigm to examine the influence of window display construal level on patronage intentions. One hundred and forty-four (144) volunteers participated in a laboratory experiment applying abstract (1) and concrete (2) window display images in a quasi-experimental design over a four-week period in November-December 2017.

Results: The results show that window display construal level has a direct positive significant influence on patronage intention. The findings support those of previous studies and extend current research on window displays and exterior atmospherics in the tourism sector.

Originality: This study is the first to explore the influence of window display construal level on patronage intentions in a retail-oriented context of tourist bureaux and contributes to the scant literature on exterior atmospherics.

Key words: window display; tourist bureau; Construal Level Theory

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Introduction

Tourist bureaux worldwide are commonly known for welcoming and informing visitors. The role of these tourist bureaux can vary from country to country, diversifying from their initially informative role to activities that are more oriented toward economic and commercial value creation. Tourist bureaux in France are traditionally perceived by the population as venues that simply distribute information when requested, for instance. However, they are slowly becoming event organizers and resellers of goods and services (MONA 2017). This recent evolution is due to the 2009 French Economic Modernization Act enabling tourist bureaux to legally sell goods and services. Consequently, this evolution means that these venues need to change their view of their role in the local economy. Individuals entering tourist bureaux should no longer be seen as travelers who obtain their desired information and then leave. They are consumers, and some tourist bureaux have taken note. The tourist bureau of Angers in Western France is a case in point, clearly adopting a commercial outlook by welcoming individuals with personalized service and a point-of-sale with a reservation platform and a variety of gift products.

Various strategies enable managers to improve the experience that consumers have in their points-of-sale and to ultimately increase sales. Research on this topic has largely been addressed in the marketing literature (Souiden, Ladhari, and Chiadmi 2018). Marketing literature on store atmospherics explains how stimuli influences the senses and ultimately leads to desired behaviors, such as spending more time in the store, increasing expenditures or encouraging intention to return (Das and Varshneya 2017; Donovan and Rossiter 1994; Kotler 1973; Spence et al. 2014). The store exterior has received less attention in the literature (Bloch and Kamran-Disfani 2017; Oh and Petrie 2012). The main role of store windows identified in the literature is to provide information to the consumer (Sen, Block, and Chandran 2002) and to attract consumers' attention (Lange, Rosengren, and Blom 2016). Recent retailing research has also begun to examine how the level of verbo-visual complexity in high-street store windows influences store entry propensity (Lick, Bargenda, and Trabelsi 2020). Even though research has identified the role of dual visual attention (Oh and Petrie 2012), studies have focused more on bottom-up rather than on top-down visual processes (Lange, Rosengren, and Blom 2016). Although colors and shapes can attract the eye, other research suggests that the way props are displayed or the types of props that are displayed can induce degrees of cognitive interpretation and construal. The focus of this paper leans toward the latter and seeks to explore whether certain types of display construals can influence patronage intentions. The current study seeks to fill these gaps and answer the following research question: How do window displays influence affective and cognitive reactions, and patronage intentions?

The article is structured in four parts. Firstly, a review of the literature analyzes the research on window displays, internal reactions and patronage intentions. The overarching paradigm that the authors chose for this study is the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) paradigm (Mehrabian and Russell 1974). Thus, the stimulus (S) (i.e. the store window display) will influence the consumer's internal cognitive and affective reactions (O) which will then influence behavioral responses (R) (i.e. patronage intentions). A positivist, hypotheticodeductive approach is used to experimentally test the effects of the chosen variables in this study. The authors apply the principles of Construal Level Theory (Liberman, Trope, and Wakslak 2007; Trope and Liberman 2003) to explore the effects of display construal.

Then, we present the methodological approach and the tools used for the study. Thirdly, we present the findings of the study. Fourthly, the authors discuss the results and possibilities for future research. This study is the first to explore the influence of window display construal level on patronage intentions in a retail-oriented context of tourist bureaux and contributes to the scant literature on exterior atmospherics. This study also opens the door to future research on the manipulation and effects of construal level and potentially of psychological distance in window displays.

Literature review

In order to respond to the gaps in the literature, this section reviews the research on window displays and Construal Level Theory, perceived global atmosphere and affective responses, and expected shopping value.

Window displays and Construal Level Theory

This paper conceptualizes store windows as exterior atmospheric variables (Turley and Milliman 2000). Research shows that atmospheric variables influence consumers' future intentions (Heung and Gu 2012; Roschk, Loureiro, and Breitsohl 2017; Sen, Block, and Chandran 2002). Roschk, Loureiro, and Breitsohl's (2017) meta-analysis shows that visual atmospheric variables have a significant influence on behavioral intentions. Atmospheric variables in a restaurant context have a significant, positive influence on customers' behavioral intentions, notably on willingness to spend more, on word-of-mouth and on the intention to return to the restaurant (Heung and Gu 2012). The results from Sen, Block, and Chandran's (2002) window display study reveal that consumers observe products in the display in order to obtain relevant information on the store's product category, which then influences future purchase decisions. The findings from Mower, Kim, and Childs's (2012) study show that consumers have greater patronage intentions in the presence of window displays. The findings from Lange, Rosengren, and Blom's (2016) recent in situ study show that creative displays attract more store entries.

The extant literature on the role of the exterior of touristic points-of-sale remains limited and disparate. Yüksel's (2009) study was a field experiment conducted on tourists visiting a clothing store. The findings of the study show that variations in color influence tourists' internal reactions and behavioral intentions (e.g., "I'd like to explore the store"). Lecointre-Erickson, Daucé, and Legohérel's (2018) study, although published in the retailing literature, focused on the influence of an interactive window display in a tourist bureau. Their findings show that interactive window displays in French tourist bureaux induce arousal but not pleasure.

Previous studies have explored how props, products and the way they are organized in the display attract attention and facilitate information processing. For example, Oh and Petrie's (2012) experiment provides respondents with images of "artistic" displays, which can be considered fairly abstract and encourage exploration processes, and "merchandise-oriented" displays, which can be considered fairly concrete and encourage comprehension processes. However, previous studies do not clearly put forward a theoretical framework to explain which window dressing could be more influential than another. This paper posits that Construal Level

Theory (CLT) may help us to better understand consumers' perceptions of window displays. Cornelius, Natter, and Faure's (2010) storefront study briefly mentions CLT. However, the authors do not explicitly apply CLT principles to the displays. Construal Level Theory (CLT) (Liberman, Trope, and Wakslak 2007; Trope and Liberman 2003) postulates that events and objects that are considered to be psychologically distant are construed in an abstract manner. Inversely, events and objects that are considered to be psychologically proximal are construed in a concrete manner. The formation of a higher level of construal "involves a belief about the substitutability for a specific purpose of two or more subjectively distinct objects" (Liberman and Trope 2014, p. 366). Psychological distance (Liberman, Trope, and Stephan 2007) corresponds to the degree of divergence from the "me", the "here" and the "now" along four different dimensions: temporal, spatial, social and hypothetical.

Recent advertising research has examined the effect of congruency between construal level and psychological distance (Choi et al. 2019). In line with Amit, Algom, and Trope's (2009) findings, pictures are correlated with psychological (temporal) proximity, whereas text is correlated with psychological (temporal) distance (Choi et al. 2019). More specifically, Choi et al. (2019) find a positive effect from using advertising with text to promote goods that will be consumed in the future or that are in stores that are geographically distant and a positive effect from using advertising with pictures for goods that will be consumed in the near future or that are in stores that are geographically close.

Construal level and psychological distance have also been applied in the tourism literature to explain the effects of advertising messages on tourist evaluations (Kim et al. 2014; Line, Hanks, and Zhang 2016). Kim et al. (2014) found that manipulation of construal level and psychological (temporal and spatial) distance of hotel room website images had significant influences on attitude toward the hotel. More specifically, imagining travel to a faraway destination in the far future encourages more favorable evaluations of abstract messages and pictures (e.g., "Comfortable bed and top-quality bedding"; picture of broad scenery around the hotel), and imagining travel to a nearby destination or in the near future encourages more favorable evaluations of concrete messages and pictures (e.g., "Bed with pillowtop mattresses and 100% down comforters"; picture of a detailed hotel room). Sen, Block, and Chandran's (2002) findings show that store merchandise in window displays is strongly correlated with intention to purchase. These findings suggest that consumers in front of a display that has more concrete images (such as products that can be purchased immediately) will positively influence patronage intentions. We therefore formulate the following hypothesis:

H_1 Concrete construal level in a window display will positively influence patronage intentions.

Perceived global atmosphere and affective responses

This paper focuses on how tourists perceive the atmosphere of a commercial environment.
Rayburn and Voss (2013) define perceived global atmosphere as "the overall impression of the store's atmosphere as a pleasant or unpleasant place to shop" (Rayburn and Voss 2013, p. 401). This concept reflects a cognitive process where the tourist holistically appraises a commercial environment as being either beneficial or harmful to achieving one's goals or to satisfying one's well-being (Chebat and Michon 2003). Perceived atmosphere in the retailing literature has been shown to positively influence internal reactions and behavioral intentions (Chebat et al. 2014; Poncin and Ben Mimoun 2014).
Affective responses are a key variable to integrate when examining shopping environments since they have been shown

to influence behavior (Das and Varshneya 2017). Research in environmental psychology shows that two dimensions – valence and intensity – fully represent the core of affective responses in physical environments (Russell and Pratt 1980). Research in the retail marketing and tourist shopping literature have shown that these components best reflect hedonic and utilitarian dimensions. Valence reflects pleasure and the degree of pleasantness or unpleasantness of an affective response (Vieira 2013). Arousal is "an affective property (dimension) ranging from sleep to frantic excitement" (Mehrabian and Russell 1974, p. 18). Research findings show that the pleasure and arousal dimensions are sufficient in measuring affective response in retail settings (Vieira 2013).

Construal level has been shown to influence behavioral intentions (Trope, Liberman, and Wakslak 2007), but not in the context of window displays. This paper examines window display design using CLT, and proposes that top-down cognitive processing will occur when respondents observe the window display. This is in line with the cognition-emotion model of internal processing (Lazarus 1991). Window display construal level corresponds to manipulating top-down attention processes where information that is modified is related to voluntary, cognitive processing. This type of manipulation differs from bottom-up attention where salience (e.g., colors, luminosity and shapes) or the valence (positive or negative) of window display elements are modified and where affective reactions serve as a heuristic in the decision-making process.

The literature on atmospheric variables has revealed a mediating influence of global perceived atmosphere (Chebat and Michon 2003; Dennis et al. 2010; Poncin and Ben Mimoun 2014). Chebat and Michon's (2003) findings reveal that scents have a positive, significant influence on the perceived global atmosphere of a shopping mall. The findings from Poncin and Ben Mimoun's (2014) study show a mediating effect of perceived global atmosphere when using new in-store technologies. Dennis et al.'s (2010) findings also demonstrate a mediating effect of perceived global atmosphere between the presence of digital signage and approach behaviors. These findings suggest that the tourist's perception of the point-of-sale's atmosphere, which is induced by the window display, will influence the tourist's patronage intentions.

H_2 Perceived global atmosphere will positively mediate the relation between window display construal level and patronage intentions.

Poncin and Ben Mimoun (2014) have shown that perceived atmosphere has a significant positive influence on affective reactions. Chebat and Michon (2003) have shown a mediating influence of perceived atmosphere on the relation between scents and affective arousal. In the hospitality literature, the findings from Lam et al.'s (2011) study show that ambience of the perceived casino atmosphere has a significantly positive influence on affective response. Choi et al.'s (2019) studies show significantly positive relations between advertisements with text (pictures), affective reactions and purchase intentions. The findings also revealed that advertisements with text had positive effects on attitudes and purchase intentions for durable goods whereas advertisements with pictures had more positive effects for nondurable goods. These findings suggest that construal level in a store window will significantly influence internal reactions. We therefore propose the following hypothesis:

H_3 Perceived global atmosphere will positively influence (a.) pleasure and (b.) arousal.

Expected shopping value

Recent literature in retailing has begun to examine the role of window displays in shopping experience (Lecointre-Erickson, Daucé, and Legohérel 2018). In the experimental literature, shopping experience can be measured by its perceived value. This paper adopts a bidimensional conceptual approach to shopping value, where value is composed of hedonic and utilitarian dimensions (Babin, Darden, and Griffin 1994). This paper argues that the perception of tourist bureaux as being commercial retail outlets is too recent for us to apply a more sophisticated multidimensional approach that may include irrelevant dimensions such as a social dimension. Lecointre-Erickson, Daucé, and Legohérel's (2018) study showed that perceived global atmosphere induced by the arousing effect of interactive window displays in tourist bureaux positively and significantly influenced perceived expected hedonic shopping value.

The informational nature of window displays is considered part of the pre-experience phase of a point-of-sale's shopping experience, and the effects of this pre-experience separation from the core in-store experience and persuasive nature of the display can be explained by CLT (Trope, Liberman, and Wakslak 2007). Poncin and Ben Mimoun (2014) have shown that perceived atmosphere has a significantly positive influence on perceived value. Chebat et al. (2014) reveal a significantly positive effect of the perceived atmosphere of a mall on hedonic and utilitarian shopping value.

Research in the hospitality literature has shown a correlation between perceived value and construal level (Jeong and Jang 2015). The findings from Jeong and Jang's (2015) study on healthy menu promotions show that hedonic values (e.g., values associated with eating at a fine-food restaurant) lead to more abstract thinking (e.g., "enjoy lifelong health") whereas utilitarian values (e.g., values associated with eating at a quick-food restaurant) lead to more concrete thinking (e.g., "enjoy a healthy meal today"). This would suggest that positive internal reactions induced by store window construal level would influence perceived expected value prior to entering the point-of-sale. We therefore formulate the following hypotheses:

H_4 Pleasure will positively influence expected utilitarian (a) and hedonic (b) shopping value.

In the shopping literature, arousal is associated with hedonic motivations where the consumer seeks fun and stimulating dimensions of a shopping activity. On the other hand, pleasure is more associated with utilitarian motivations where the consumer seeks the usefulness of completing a task (Vieira 2013). Arousal has a significantly positive influence on hedonic shopping value and pleasure has a significantly positive influence on utilitarian shopping value (Vieira 2013). Wang et al.'s (2007) study on social indices in online points-of-sale reveal significant effects of arousal and pleasure on hedonic and utilitarian shopping value. Yüksel's (2007) study on tourist shopping reveals significant effects of arousal on hedonic shopping value and of pleasure on utilitarian and hedonic shopping value. We therefore propose the following hypotheses:

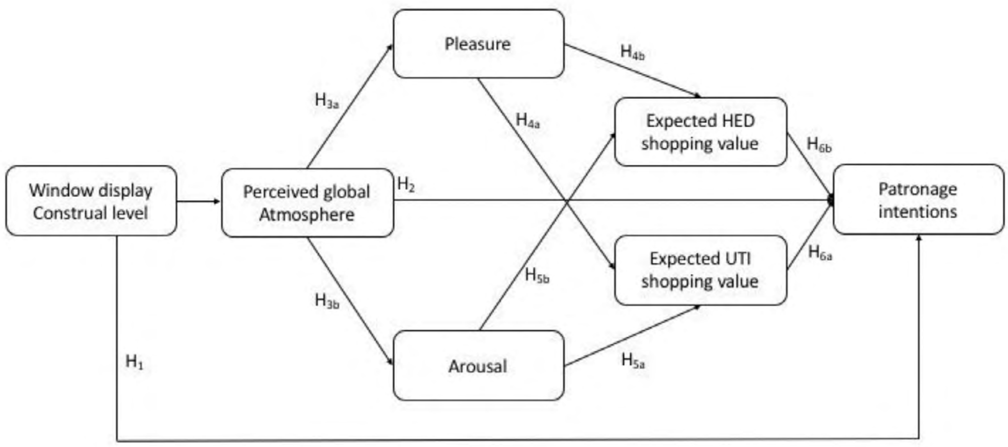
H_5 Arousal will positively influence expected utilitarian (a) and hedonic (b) shopping value.

Poncin and Ben Mimoun (2014) found a significant effect of perceived value on patronage intentions. Rahman, Wong, and Yu's (2016) study also revealed a significant influence of shopping value on patronage intentions. Lloyd, Yip, and Luk's (2011) study found that perceived value has a positive significant influence on behavioral intentions. Yüksel (2007) found a significantly positive influence of hedonic shopping value on tourists' approach behaviors. Alternatively, Albayrak, Caber, and Çömen (2016) found significantly positive effects of shopping value on behavioral intentions, even though utilitarian shopping value had a stronger influence on behavioral intentions than hedonic shopping value. Finally, Perez-Vega et al. (2018) found significantly positive relations between hedonic and utilitarian value and behavioral intentions. We therefore predict the following:

H_6 Expected (a.) utilitarian and (b.) hedonic shopping value will positively influence patronage intentions.

Figure 1 summarizes the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study testing the relationship between window display construal, perceived global atmosphere, affective responses, expected shopping value and patronage intentions.

Figure 1 : Conceptual and theoretical framework



Methodology

Subjects

One hundred and forty-four (144) volunteers (52 males, 92 females) participated in our study. The individuals were divided into 2 experimental conditions. The average number of respondents per condition was 72. This convenience sample primarily included university personnel and students at the undergraduate and graduate level. An intercept method was used to recruit volunteers. Individuals who had not mastered the French language or who were unable to clearly understand protocol instructions were excluded from the study. No ethics committee approval was needed at the time this study was conducted. Each volunteer was informed that all data collected were anonymous.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of the sample

Gender		Frequency	Percentage
	Men	52	36.1%
	Women	92	63.9%
Age			
	Under 15	-	-
	15 to 18	2	1.4%
	19 to 24	104	72.2%
	25 to 34	12	8.3%
	35 to 44	14	9.7%
	45 to 54	10	6.9%
	55 to 64	2	1.4%
	65 to 74	-	-
	Over 74	-	-
Professional category			
	Farmer	-	-
	Craftsman	-	-
	Upper-level manager	18	12.5%
	Middle-level manager	2	1.4%
	Employee	9	6.3%
	Manual worker	-	-
	Retiree	-	-
	Other (student, unemployed, etc.)	115	79.9%
Visits to tourist offices in general			
	Never	39	27.1%
	Once per year	56	38.9%
	Once every six months	36	25.0%
	Once every three months	11	7.6%
	Once a month	2	1.4%
	Twice a month	-	-
	Four times a month	-	-

Experimental procedure

Questionnaire data were collected over a four-week period during November and December 2017. A quasi-experimental design with concrete (2) and abstract (1) window displays was established for this experiment. A between-subjects approach was used exposing each individual to a specific display condition followed by a questionnaire. Each viewing condition was free of time constraints to reflect the realistic nature of looking at a window display.

Questionnaire

The authors developed the questionnaire for the study in accordance with the literature review. The authors pre-tested the questionnaire for errors and clarity, then pre-tested the scales for internal consistency and reliability before administering the questionnaire to the final sample of respondents. Constructs included in the questionnaire were perceived global atmosphere (Rayburn and Voss 2013), arousal and pleasure (Bradley and Lang 1994), expected utilitarian and hedonic shopping value (Lecointre-Erickson, Daucé, and Legohérel 2018) and patronage intentions (Baker et al. 2002). Since the study was conducted in France, the questionnaire was administered in French. The scales were adapted to the tourism context. The French translations of the original English scales had been previously validated in the literature. All the scales had French translations except for perceived global atmosphere. The perceived global atmosphere scale was translated from the original English version into French using the translation-back translation technique. That is, the original version of the scale was translated into French by bilingual university linguists and then translated back into English by other bilingual university linguists (Appendix A).

Manipulation of image construal levels

Empirical research in consumer behavior emphasizes the distinction between abstract and concrete construal levels through desirability, the consequences and benefits of an object or event (the “why”), and the feasibility of an object or event (the “how”) (Kim, Zhang, and Li 2008). One main characteristic of a tourist service is its intangible nature. Services are characterized by stronger spatial and sensorial distance than goods, which are tangible by nature. Since psychological distance is associated with construal level, this paper considers services and events to be abstractly construed. On the other hand, consumers can physically see and touch products, such as bottles and packages. This psychological proximity is associated with concrete construal. This paper proposes that tourist bureau window displays can be manipulated through dimensions of psychological distance – sensorial (Kardes, Cronley, and Kim 2006), temporal (Trope, Liberman, and Wakslak 2007), and spatial (Trope, Liberman, and Wakslak 2007) distance – as well as through construal level itself (Amit, Algom, and Trope 2009; Kim et al. 2014). Sensorial distance was manipulated through the absence versus presence of tangible goods. This manipulation is in line with Kardes, Cronley, and Kim’s (2006) finding that it is easier for a consumer to imagine using a product when the product is physically present and seen. Temporal and spatial distance was manipulated through immediate access versus deferred access to an offer. This manipulation is in line with Liberman, Trope, and Stephan (2007) and Liberman, Trope, and Wakslak (2007), where the more temporally and/or geographically distant an object or event is, the more abstractly it will be construed and viceversa. Finally, in line with Amit, Algom, and Trope (2009) and Kim et al. (2014), construal level was manipulated through the presence of unspecific images and text or the presence of specific products.

The images chosen were adapted to the tourism sector and to displays that can be found in French tourist bureaux. For concretely construed window displays (Figure 2), the objects chosen included bottles of liqueur and sparkling wine, jars of jam, as well as bags of cookies and chocolates. The abstractly construed displays (Figure 3) were made up of posters for future local events. The posters included images and text. The photographic images of a real tourist bureau display window and of product and posters displays provided by the tourist bureau of the city of Angers (Loire Valley, France) were manipulated using Photoshop software. Real photos were not used due to the difficulty of obtaining pristine images with no reflection of sunlight or exterior landscapes in the glass.

Figure 2: Window display (concrete construal level)

Figure 3: Window display (abstract construal level)

Manipulation check

A total of 37 undergraduate students in two tourism schools in France rated nine window display images on a scale from 1 (very concrete) to 7 (very abstract) (Jin and He 2013; Kim et al. 2014). The nine images included cultural posters; landscape posters; non-food products and cultural posters; local food products; local non-food products; food products and cultural posters; landscape posters and non-food products; cultural posters with food and non-food products; landscape posters with food and non-food products; and landscape posters with food products. The image with the cultural posters was retained for the abstract construal condition (M=4.43, SD=1.625), and the image with the local food products was retained for the concrete construal condition (M=3.30, SD=1.648). The results from a paired sample t-test show a significant difference between the abstract image and the concrete image (t=3.035, p=0.004).

Results

Pre-test findings

A pre-test was conducted using SPSS 22 to test the internal consistency and reliability of the latent constructs (n=100). In line with Anderson and Gerbing (1988), an exploratory factor analysis was conducted followed by a confirmatory factor analysis on the latent constructs “expected shopping value”, “perceived global atmosphere”, “patronage intentions” and the control variable “mood”. The unidimensional “pleasure” and “arousal” SAM scales were not included in the pre-test as previous studies have shown psychometric validity for these scales and as their unidimensional nature would simply generate a value of 1 for the various tests for reliability and validity. The number of factors extracted was determined using the Kaiser method and Horn’s parallel analysis. The Kaiser method is directly available in SPSS software and extracts the number of factors based on eigenvalues that are higher than 1. Parallel analysis coding is imported into SPSS software (O’connor 2000) and extracts the number of factors with eigenvalues that are higher than the Monte Carlo (MC) simulation values. Although the parallel analysis is less common, parallel analysis is considered to be a superior factor-extraction method (Schmitt 2011). Validity was measured using factor loadings and Cronbach’s alpha.

Table 2

Pre-test results for internal reliability and consistency

Item	Loadings	α de Cronbach
Perceived Global Atmosphere		**0.865**
Kaiser method: total variance explained = 71.41% (F1: eignevalue = 2.856)		
Parallel analysis: F1: eigenvalue = 2.856>MC simulation = 1.222)		
Atmos1 Charming – obnoxious	0.811	
Atmos2 Comfortable – uncomfortable	0.882	
Atmos3 Displeasing – pleasing	0.862	
Atmos4 Appealing – unappealing	0.823	
Expected Utilitarian Shopping Value		**0.704**
Kaiser method: total variance explained = 20.11% (F1 : eigenvalue = 1.207)		
Parallel analysis: F1: eigenvalue =1.207>MC simulation = 1.173)		
Uti1 I will accomplish just what I want to on this trip to this office of tourism.	0.839	
Uti2 I will be disappointed because I will have to go to another store to complete my shopping.	0.745	
Uti3 I feel this shopping trip will be successful.	0.705	

Expected Hedonic Shopping Value		**0.853**
Kaiser method: total variance explained = 51.28% (F1 : eigenvalue = 3.075)		
Parallel analysis: F1: eigenvalue = 3.075>MC simulation = 1.343)		
Hed1 Compared to other things I would do, the time spent shopping will be truly enjoyable.	0.873	
Hed2 This shopping trip will truly be a joy.	0.863	
Hed3 I will enjoy this shopping trip for its own sake, not just for the items I may purchase.	0.841	
Patronage intentions		**0.789**
Kaiser method: total variance explained = 70.77% (F1: eignevalue=2.123)		
Parallel analysis: F1: eigenvalue=2.123>MC simulation = 1.291)		
I would be willing to go shopping in this tourist bureau.	0.909	
I would be willing to make a purchase in this tourist bureau.	0.922	
I would be willing to recommend this tourist bureau to friends.	0.669	
Mood (control variable)		**0.954**
Kaiser method: total variance explained = 88.01% (F1: eignevalue=3.520)		
Parallel analysis: F1: eigenvalue=3.520>MC simulation = 1.222)		
Irritable – Happy	0.938	
Depressed – Delighted	0.942	
In a bad mood – In a good mood	0.943	
Sad – Cheerful	0.930	

Partial-Least Square (PLS) approach

A PLS-SEM approach was chosen for data analysis of the perceived atmosphere, pleasure, arousal, expected shopping value and patronage intention endogenous constructs using SmartPLS version 2.3.4 (Ringle, Wende, and Becker 2015). The PLS approach is not limited to the normal distribution of data, nor is it limited to sample size (Reinartz, Haenlein, and Henseler 2009), and is therefore appropriate for this dataset. This approach can test the effects of several variables at once, whereas more traditional linear approaches cannot (Hair et al. 2017).

Results for the measurement model

Internal consistency and scale reliability were examined on the constructs of the final sample. All the values for the item loadings were above the minimum threshold of 0.40 (Hair et al. 2017), indicating satisfactory reliability of the items within each latent construct. Average variance extracted (AVE) is the most common indicator for determining convergent validity of a model (Fornell and Larcker 1981). The recommended indicator for measuring internal consistency and scale reliability when using a PLS approach is composite reliability (CR) (Cho and Kim 2015). Recent research has found that this indicator is superior to Cronbach's α for estimating consistency and reliability, especially when using a PLS-SEM approach (Wong 2016).

The loading for the Uti2 item was below the threshold of 0.70. As a result, this item was removed from the Expected Utilitarian Shopping Value construct in order to improve convergent validity, leaving this construct with two items. The final reported AVE values are above the minimum threshold of 0.50 (Hair et al. 2017), and CR values reported are above the minimum threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al. 2017), indicating satisfactory convergent validity for the constructs.

Table 3

Assessment results of the measurement model

	Loadings	AVE	CR
Perceived Global Atmosphere		0.803	0.942
Atmos1 Charming – obnoxious	0.873		
Atmos2 Comfortable – uncomfortable	0.908		
Atmos3 Displeasing – pleasing	0.879		
Atmos4 Appealing – unappealing	0.924		
Expected Utilitarian Shopping Value		0.700	0.822
Uti1 I will accomplish just what I want to on this trip to this office of tourism.	0.755		
Uti3 I feel this shopping trip will be successful.	0.912		
Expected Hedonic Shopping Value		0.739	0.895
Hed1 Compared to other things I would do, the time spent shopping will be truly enjoyable.	0.862		
Hed2 This shopping trip will truly be a joy.	0.853		
Hed3 I will enjoy this shopping trip for its own sake, not just for the items I may purchase.	0.865		
Patronage Intentions		0.787	0.917
Pat1 willing to shop in this tourist bureau	0.874		
Pat2 willing to make a purchase in this tourist bureau	0.903		
Pat3 willing to recommend this tourist bureau	0.884		
Mood (Control Variable)		0.748	0.922
Irritable – Happy	0.834		
Depressed – Delighted	0.906		
In a bad mood – In a good mood	0.835		
Sad – Cheerful	0.882		

The Fornell-Larcker criterion is the most common indicator for determining the discriminant validity of a model (Fornell and Larcker 1981). However, recent research has shown that the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio is more appropriate in PLS models for determining discriminant validity, and that this criterion is superior to the Fornell-Larcker criterion when using a PLS approach (Henseler, Hubona, and Ray 2016; Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2015). However, we have added this criterion alongside the HTMT ratio values in order to ensure transparency. The square root of the AVE values for each of the latent constructs are superior to the values of their correlations, and all the HTMT ratio values are below the recommended threshold of 0.85 (Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2015), indicating discriminant validity for the latent constructs.

Table 4

Fornell-Larcker Criterion results

	Arousal	Atmosphere	Hedonic value	Patronage intentions	Pleasure	Utilitarian value	Window display construal
Arousal	1.000						
Atmosphere	0.161	0.915					
Hedonic value	0.159	0.545	0.869				
Patronage intentions	0.326	0.599	0.588	0.891			
Pleasure	0.091	0.474	0.335	0.317	1.000		
Utilitarian value	0.005	0.292	0.349	0.302	0.321	0.821	
Window display construal	0.063	0.345	0.182	0.424	0.010	0.077	1.000

Table 5

Results from Heterotrait-Montotrait (HTMT) ratio values for convergent and discriminant validity

	Arousal	Atmosphere	Expected Hedonic Shopping Value	Patronage intentions	Pleasure	Expected Utilitarian Shopping Value	Construal Level
Arousal							
Atmosphere	0.166						
Expected Hedonic Shopping Value	0.173	0.626					
Patronage intentions	0.340	0.658	0.672				
Pleasure	0.091	0.500	0.365	0.333			
Expected Utilitarian Shopping Value	0.046	0.368	0.503	0.415	0.411		
Construal Level	0.063	0.362	0.197	0.461	0.010	0.089	

Even though researchers and developers have recently integrated criteria, such as RMS_{Theta} and SRMR, for measuring model fit in PLS software, measuring model fit is not encouraged when using a PLS approach (Henseler et al. 2014). However, we are reporting the SRMR fit index in this paper in order to ensure transparency. The SRMR value for the model is 0.073. This is below the threshold of 0.08, indicating satisfactory model fit.

Structural model findings

SmartPLS version 2.3.4 (Ringle, Wende, and Becker 2015) software was used to analyze the relationships between window display construal level, perceived global atmosphere, pleasure, arousal, expected utilitarian and hedonic shopping value and patronage intentions. The authors used reversed coding for the pleasure, arousal, and perceived global atmosphere variables during the statistical analysis. Collinearity between the latent constructs was assessed using the variance influence factor (VIF) indicator. The VIF values were between 1 and 1.588, indicating an absence of collinearity issues between the latent constructs (Hair et al. 2017),

A non-parametric bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples was conducted in order to determine the level of significance of the relationships between the constructs in the model (Hair et al. 2017).

A blindfolding procedure with seven observations was conducted in order to assess the predictive relevance (Q^2) of the latent constructs. Results indicate satisfactory levels of predictive relevance (>0) for all the latent constructs except for arousal (-0.013<0) (Hair et al. 2017).

Cohen's effect sizes (f2) indicate the strength of the effect of an exogenous construct on an endogenous construct. The results of the f2 values for most of the constructs were above 0.02 (Henseler, Hubona, and Ray 2016), indicating satisfactory effects for these endogenous constructs. Weaker values (<0.02) were reported for arousal – expected hedonic shopping value, arousal – expected utilitarian shopping value, and expected utilitarian value – patronage intentions.

The model explained 52% of the variance in patronage intentions. In support of previous findings in retailing, the results show a significantly positive influence of window display construal on patronage intentions, supporting H1 and in line with previous findings (Oh and Petrie 2012). More specifically, the more concrete the window display construal, the stronger the influence on patronage intentions. The findings for specific indirect effects also indicate a positive mediating effect of perceived atmosphere on the relationship between window display construal level and patronage intentions (p<0.001), supporting H_2.

All other relationships are significantly positive, except for the following cases. The findings indicate that relationships with the arousal construct, for which the results show no predictive relevance via the blindfolding procedure, are non-significant. Therefore, hypotheses H_{3b}, H_{5a} and H_{5b} are not supported. Also, the relationship between expected shopping value and patronage intentions is only significantly positive through expected hedonic shopping value, supporting H_{6b}. The findings show no significant relationship between expected utilitarian shopping value and patronage intentions (H_{6a}) and are consistent with previous findings (Yüksel 2007). A summary of the results is presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Path coefficients and results for significance levels

Hypotheses	Path	Path coefficient	*t* values >1.96	Significance	*p* values
H_1	Window display construal level → Patronage intentions	0.251	3.895	***	<0.001
H_2	Window display construal level → Atmosphere	0.345	4.554	***	<0.001
H_2	Atmosphere → Patronage intentions	0.297	4.204	***	<0.001
H_{3a}	Atmosphere → Pleasure	0.474	6.700	***	<0.001
H_{3b}	Atmosphere → Arousal	0.161	1.968	*	0.049
H_{4a}	Pleasure → Expected Utilitarian Shopping Value	0.323	4.735	***	<0.001
H_{4b}	Pleasure → Expected Hedonic Shopping Value	0.323	3.526	***	<0.001
H_{5a}	Arousal → Expected Utilitarian Shopping Value	-0.025	0.295	NS	0.768
H_{5b}	Arousal → Expected Hedonic Shopping Value	0.130	1.710	NS	0.087
H_{6a}	Expected Utilitarian Shopping Value → Patronage Intentions	0.072	0.937	NS	0.349
H_{6b}	Expected Hedonic Shopping Value → Patronage Intentions	0.356	5.228	***	<0.001
*** p<.001, ** p<.01, *p<.05					

The authors controlled for gender, frequency of visits and mood through interaction moderation on all of the latent constructs. The findings show no significant results (p>0.05).

Discussion

Discussion and theoretical implications

This study extends the experimental literature by addressing the role of window displays in tourist bureaux. Although previous marketing research on window displays has focused on the influence of the level of creativity and innovativeness of displays, this study focuses on the types of products and services to display. This study demonstrates through CLT that concrete construals positively influence patronage intentions in tourist bureaux.

In line with Oh and Petrie (2012), our findings suggest that “concrete” window displays facilitate understanding of the point-of-sale’s offer and incite the consumer to adopt an approach behavior. The positive mediating effect of perceived global atmosphere along with the perceived positive effect of global atmosphere on pleasure indicates that window display construal level can enable the consumer to identify the components necessary for perceiving the pleasing or displeasing characteristics of the shopping environment. These results suggest overall that the cognitive dimension of display construal level provides heuristics for practical decision-making as well as for understanding the sales environment. This study contributes to the mounting literature employing CLT in tourism marketing.

Practical implications

As already stated, tourist bureaux are evolving from their conventional role of solely providing information toward a newer commercial role of selling goods and services to tourists. Travelers entering tourist bureaux should no longer be seen as tourists who obtain their desired information and then leave. They are consumers. And in the age of the digital era, more and more information is provided online, giving the opportunity to tourist bureaux to become real points-of-sale where tourists may want to book tickets and buy various goods and services. In this context, tourist bureaux are moving toward a more retail shop-oriented model and pointof-sale management. Here, the window display is a key element of the tourist journey, from the exterior attractiveness of the window display to the interior shopping experience within the purchase decision-making process. Dressing a window display appropriately to tourists’ needs can guide them in being more pragmatic with the time that they dedicate to shopping at the point-of-sale.

The present study has demonstrated the importance of the window display and its potential impact on tourists’ patronage intentions. For example, among contributions already discussed in the paper, results have shown evidence of a positive influence of window display construal on patronage intentions: the more concrete the window display becomes, the stronger the influence on patronage intentions. It could be interesting to replicate such a study in situ and track additional data in order to understand if previous behaviors are followed by a buying or booking decision within the tourist bureau.
In retailing, window displays have for a long time been considered an efficient tool. In various sectors, retail shop managers try to reap as many benefits as possible from efficient and attractive window displays. The present study has investigated specific issues. Many others should be considered in order to better understand the attractiveness of window displays in tourism and hospitality sectors.

Managers of tourist bureaux should definitely pay attention to their window displays. This concern is not limited to tourist bureaux, as many other tourist places and hospitality companies have window displays, including travel agencies (with more and more implementing digital and dynamic content), boutiques located on the ground floor of many hotels, shopping areas where transit passengers spend a significant amount of money, souvenirs and gift shops in all theme parks, as well as at the end of visits to museums, zoos, etc.

The main targeted segment should also be considered. In a theme park for instance, managers could consider if they should prioritize children with stories, dreams, fun and excitement, etc. and with objects to be construed in an abstract manner, or rather the parents, through providing reasons to purchase, the price of the souvenirs, size and practical dimensions when traveling back home, etc., where the object is construed in a concrete manner. Future research could also investigate the role of tourists’ country of origin when entering tourist bureaux. Window displays may not have the same impact depending on the tourists’ cultural background. Therefore, the content of a window display and the way it is organized and construed should be studied in a cross-cultural context, which is often the case for many tourist bureaux.

Limits and future research

A main limit of this study is the nature of the sample. This study was conducted in a laboratory experiment on a sample made up primarily of students. The controlled environment of the laboratory ensures a level of filtering of external influencers, factors and "noise". However, this approach is criticized for its lack of realism, and future research should replicate the study in situ. Future research should also investigate combined "top-down" and "bottom-up" cognitive processes and effects generated from window displays.

The issues of psychological and cultural distance have already been considered in the literature (Hateftabar 2021), but should be further investigated in the context of window displays and international visitors. Since psychological distance is associated with construal level, services and events are considered as abstractly construed, but in the meantime, tourists may also physically see and/or touch goods such as bottles, gifts, etc. Therefore, future studies could go deeper into the dimension of psychological distance and, more specifically, into the correlation with cultural distance. Both concepts are considered similar ones, where psychic distance is defined as the wider concept comprising cultural distance (Avloniti and Filippaios 2014). Psychic distance assesses cultural differences and similarities between countries at the individual level and reflects an individual perception of cultural differences among countries. Because tourists facing the window display of a tourist bureau, not to mention boutiques at theme parks or airports, often come from different countries, the dimension of psychological distance may then contribute to a better understanding of tourists' perception of the window display, either abstractly or concretely construed, based on their cultural differences.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire section structure and items

Section 1: Level of mastery of the French language.

1. Native fluency 2. Bilingual fluency 3. Professional fluency 4. Intermediate fluency 5. Weak fluency

Section 2: Questions concerning the window in front of the office of tourism.

What reaction does this window display evoke in you? Look at the SAM figures. They represent a scale from 1=Excited to 9=Calm (1=Happy to 9=Unhappy). Your reaction can be situated either at one of the SAM figures or between two SAM figures. Choose the number that best corresponds to your reaction.

How do you perceive the overall atmosphere of this office of tourism thanks to this window display?

What experience do you think you will have in this office of tourism thanks to this window display?

Section 3: Questions concerning current mood and frequency of visits to tourist bureaux

Frequency of visits: 1. Never; 2. Once a year; 3. Twice a year; 4. Every quarter; 5. Once a month; 6. Twice a month; 7. Every week

Section 4: Demographic questions (gender, age, profession)

What reaction does this window display evoke in you?	Excited, aroused, frenzied, jittery, wide awake, stimulated	123456789	Unaroused, relaxed, calm, dull, sluggish, sleepy
What reaction does this window display evoke in you?	Happy, pleased, satisfied, contented, hopeful, relaxed	123456789	Unhappy, annoyed, unsatisfied, melancholic, despairing, bored

How do you perceive the overall atmosphere of this office of tourism thanks to this window display (on a scale from 1 to 7)?	Charming	1234567	Obnoxious
	Comfortable	1234567	Uncomfortable
	Pleasing	1234567	Displeasing
	Appealing	1234567	Unappealing
I will accomplish just what I want to on this trip to this office of tourism.	Totally disagree	1234567	Totally agree
I will be disappointed because I will have to go to another store to complete my shopping.	Totally disagree	1234567	Totally agree
I feel this trip to this office of tourism will be successful.	Totally disagree	1234567	Totally agree
Compared to other things I would do, the time spent shopping will be truly enjoyable.	Totally disagree	1234567	Totally agree
This shopping trip will truly be a joy.	Totally disagree	1234567	Totally agree
I will enjoy this shopping trip for its own sake, not just for the items I may purchase.	Totally disagree	1234567	Totally agree
I would be willing to go shopping in this tourist bureau.	Totally disagree	1234567	Totally agree
I would be willing to make a purchase in this tourist bureau.	Totally disagree	1234567	Totally agree
I would be willing to recommend this tourist bureau to friends.	Totally disagree	1234567	Totally agree
How do you feel right now?	Irritable	1234567	Happy
	Depressed	1234567	Delighted
	In a bad mood	1234567	In a good mood
	Sad	1234567	Cheerful

Marketing Mix metamorphoses: Between permanence and contingency.

Abstract

The marketing mix (MM) has been one of the most controversial topics of marketing, both as a theoretical framework and as a practical management tool. It reveals a wealth of ideas and an academic profusion that deserves to be better known. This article proposes to examine this fundamental concept in the light of the evolution of marketing. A temporal-based review of literature allows to attach its multiple forms to the developments of marketing and to the changes of the contexts in which they appeared. MM metamorphoses comply with those of marketing. This paper also enlightens the great resilience that the original formulation has shown over time. Nonetheless, the latest socio-economic trends seem to ask for another way of doing both marketing and the MM, leaving the door open for new formulas.

Key words: Marketing mix, 4Ps, evolution of the marketing mix, evolution of marketing

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Introduction

Few topics of the commercial theory have so intensively inspired as well as divided the marketing researchers as the MM. Mnemonic formulae have been frequent, patterned after the very popular “4Ps”, including five, seven, thirteen, even fifteen Ps; four to seven Cs, three to five Vs, four to thirty Rs, four Ss, fours Es, four As, etc., as well as a wide variety of acronyms. The abundance of formulations attests to the lack of consensus on this subject. It is not surprising since the mix metaphor itself suggests the availability of a wide range of possible ingredients and different ways of mixing them.
Some authors like Constantinides (2006) proposed a disciplinary classification of theses numerous initiatives and of the criticism of the 4Ps emanating from each area of marketing. According to us, such a wealth of ideas deserves to be considered in the light of the evolution of marketing. Are the countless conceptual forms used to characterize the MM the expression of the adaptations that marketing had to undergo over time? This is what this article is about. Indeed, it endeavours to identify the avatars of the concept of the MM throughout its evolution, which is itself anchored in the developments of marketing.

Marketing has developed from several approaches and schools, but it has undeniably been dominated and greatly impacted by managerial thinking. Marketing is also imbued with the spirit of the “consumptionist” society in which it has been built. Nevertheless, it got enriched throughout the encountered market situations, socio-economic landscapes, trends and technologies, but also thanks to the dissemination of both theoretical knowledges and practices, as well as through the contact with the movements that passed through it. Some of them are at opposite ends of the managerial paradigm.
As it was already bearing the stigma of diverging approaches on which it was constructed, marketing has indeed known numerous transformations, so that, as Pierre Volle (2011) said, there is not one but several marketings, not one but several histories of marketing. There is no doubt that the role and place assigned to marketing within the company, as well as the techniques on which it relies, have significantly evolved over time. What about the MM?

The concept is one of the key pillars of the Marketing Management School of thought, which formally emerged in the 1950-1960s in the US and whose ideas had dominated the theory and practice of marketing for more than 30 years. Both marketing management and the MM would owe their success to the marketing concept “revolution”, a new management practice in the American business community which was born in the 1950s. The concept advocated a change of philosophy and a customer orientation. Thereupon, profit acquisition was contingent upon the consumer’s satisfaction, which was then at the center of the marketing approach.

While the marketing concept was gaining a hegemonic position in marketing discourse, the question of how to accomplish the managerialism of this concept was raised. The practical evidence of the MM, as “the” method of implementation of the marketing concept had become an evidence, as had market segmentation and targeting, two inseparable notions that were also born in the 1950s.

Let us recall that the MM, precisely, represents the interface between a company and its customers. It has been defined as the choice, the dosage, and the optimal combination of the means by which a company designs a satisfactory and profitable offering to its market target. Put simply, the MM had become the method of implementation of the marketing concept as defined in the 1960s. Thus, while the MM was born out of a very empirical initiative guided by the intent to provide the decision maker a tool to design his planning, the concept was then propelled to the heart of the marketing theory, although it seems that this had never been the intention. Besides, this resulted in a shift in marketing orientations. Thereupon, marketing adopted an explicitly managerial perspective, which replaced macromarketing as the focus of the discipline. The MM became the dominant paradigm that was supposed to explain all marketing phenomena, topics and issues. Thus, it has been at the core of marketing.

With this in mind, it is not surprising that the way of conceiving marketing has a significant influence on the conception and design of the MM. Confronted with the evolution of the marketing doctrine and the “fragmentation of mainstream”, the MM had to question and re-invent itself. From this view point, this concept perfectly illustrates the resilience capacity of the discipline. The emergence of new conceptual forms went hand in hand with the fragmentation of marketing into several disciplinary fields as it was expanding. Our point of view is that it makes sense to re-situate this fundamental concept in a temporal approach, by linking the evolution of academic discourse on the MM to the evolution of the marketing thought. Indeed, the various MM models are best understood when placing the concept in the dynamic context of the evolution of marketing.

The intent of our paper is not historical. It is not didactic either, although it could allow to gain a better understanding of the MM, which is often presented in a simplistic way, thus eluding all the full wealth of this concept. Finally, it is important to note that this paper deals with the representations of the MM by academics over time and not with MM practices; representation which, without a doubt, has been shaped by the marketing discourse. Based on an extensive literature review on the MM, three periods are identified during which marketing underwent evolutions significant enough to impact the MM. Thus, the MM's roots will be seen to fluctuate from a focus on the product, as a bearer of values, keeping a classical orientation of marketing, to a focus on the consumer, as a subject of experience, within the framework of a "market from" orientation, and then as a co-creator of value with the domination of a "meet" logic, respectively.

In an environment that is still modified, however, an acceleration of the changes is happening. Maybe the opening onto a new period? It will then be legitimate to question the future of the MM in such a framework.

First period: early mm in the context of a supply driven marketing (from the birth and formalization of the concept, in the mid 1950s, until the end of the 1980s)

Birth of the term and formalization of the concept

It is today indisputable that the earliest incarnations of the MM can be found prior the 1950s, in the writings of pioneers of marketing. Yet it was Borden who introduced the term "Marketing Mix" in 1953 (Wood, 1963). Although it is commonly agreed that a mix consists in a mixture of elements, however, the number and the nature of the components vary among precursor models: a mix with two categories for Albert Frey (1956), six categories for Kelley and Lazer (1958), then three categories in a revised edition (Lazer & Kelley 1962), and six controllable decisions area for Howard (1957).
The original model, probably the most comprehensive, was a list of 12 variables (product, price, branding, distribution, personal selling, advertising, promotions, packaging, display, servicing, physical handling, fact finding and analysis). Based on long-range planning, this model included a less well-known external side. Its genesis was exposed by Borden (1964) in a late and retrospective publication in which he claimed the concept's authorship.

The MM has nonetheless remained essentially associated with McCarthy's (1960), quadrilogy –Product, Price, Place and Promotion– corresponding to four generic marketing exchange functions. This model is the only one that has survived. As already mentioned its supremacy essentially corresponds to the rise and dominance of the school of marketing management, with its emphases on the 4Ps. This school, originally limited to manufacturers, was in full swing in the 1960s. The MM inevitably carries its logic and complies with its vision of marketing which, we recall, was then essentially envisioned as a way to stimulate demand and facilitate exchanges; at that time, exchange was seen rather from a "transactional perspective".

Yet, the 4P MM also unquestionably marries a period, a geographical and a socioeconomic context (i.e., the US during the Postwar Prosperity), as well as a field (i.e., consumer marketing). It matches a way of life (built around mass consumption), to which the access was facilitated by an extensive distribution and low prices resulting from economies of scale; the whole being encouraged by a persuasive communication. In addition, it fell within an approach (a "marketing to" approach) and within a conception of the company (sovereign) and of its consumer (passive), as well as of the relationships that bind them together (an unbalanced competitive mode for the benefit of the seller).

Finally, some opponents may have lost sight that, beyond the MM model, what is called the "MM Management paradigm" goes far beyond the emblematic MM (whose diffusion took place around its 4P version). It is also both a coherent approach and a set of tools such as segmentation, targeting and positioning (a notion that was born in the 1980s). Anyway, the hegemony of the 4Ps was such that the numerous complementary or alternative MM proposals, indeed, were built upon McCarthy's model, thus neglecting certain qualities of Borden's initial canvas. It was all the more unfortunate that the MM had become the method of implementation of the marketing concept as defined in the 1960s.

As a price for its success, the 4Ps have been subject to sometimes strong criticisms.

First reconsiderations of the 4P MM

During the long interval between its genesis and the end of the 1980s, the 4P MM globally adhered to a traditional perspective of marketing, relying on a supply driven orientation. Nonetheless, it was widely put into question as it faced a series of evolutions. A range of events alternately shook both marketing and the MM. In particular, we note the formation of new independent research movements and the borrowings from distinct fields of study such as sociology and psychology in the 1960s; major reflections on exchange as the heart of marketing and on strategic thinking and planning in the 1970s; the questioning of the usual practice of marketing, in favour of a larger consideration of the affective dimension of consumption, the questioning of planning in the 1980s; as well as many calls from certain researchers for a greater emphasis on marketing theory.

It should also be recalled that the 1980s were marked by a questioning of the cognitivist paradigm, hence contributing to disturb certain of its theoretical frameworks. However, it was probably the hegemony of marketing management which amplified this questioning. A double expansion of marketing, both organizational and within the company, inevitably led to major reflections on marketing and on the MM.

Insufficiencies of the 4Ps in the face of the expansion of marketing within the company

Given that Borden's original MM got forgotten, the diffusion of marketing was organized around the 4P paradigm. During this period, the role of marketing evolved so as to include key decisions such as market targeting, product positioning, branding, product innovation, and new business development. In this new context, some authors considered that McCarthy's taxonomy reveals some inaccuracies such as the absence of explicit references to the target market (Chollet 1976), the absence of marketing research (Traynor 1985) or a rather imprecise connection to the strategy (O'Shaughnessy 1984) and to other levels of decision-making (Swiners 1982). Its shortcomings, both external and strategic were denounced by Ohmae (1982) for whom the mix contains no determinant factor, and by Kotler (1986) who proposed two additional Ps (Power and Public Relations) within the "megamarketing" framework. However, maybe many of these criticisms may have originated in the arbitrary separation of the MM from other related concepts such as segmentation, targeting and positioning, but also from a coherent sequence (i.e., Analysis, Planning and Control). This is the view of Möller (2006). According to him, it is both flawed and unfruitful to examine and interpret the MM detached from its wider theoretical context, the Managerial School of Marketing.

Internal shortcomings were highlighted as well, partly explained by marketing management's hegemon, that is to say the appropriation by marketing of areas which were not previously integrated into it. The inclusion under the MM's umbrella of a certain number of elements led to oppose researchers. For example, historically, "Promotion" (the fourth P) corresponds to advertising, and more generally to commercial communication, which existed before marketing. Promotion was then absorbed by marketing to become one of the elements of the MM. However, for a long time, advertisers had progressively turned towards image shaping by relying, over time, on more diversified techniques. Thus, the term Promotion itself, very oriented towards persuasion, opposed researchers. Chollet (1976) proposed to rather refer to it as the "means of pressure". In the end, consensus was found around the term "Communication". But the hybrid nature of the fourth P, itself subdivided in heterogeneous categories as sales promotion, advertising or personal selling, raised many problems (for a review see for example, Van Waterschoot & Van den Bulte 1992). Besides, not all authors agreed on the place of certain elements within the mix such as the salesforce (Zeyl & Brouard 1986), but also regarding where to position public relations (Dewitt 1974; Kotler 1986; Mindak & Fine 1981) or customer service (Lambert & Harrington 1989; Sterling & Lambert 1987), elements that were not previously included within the MM.

Insufficiencies of the 4Ps originating from marketing's organizational expansion

The 1970/80s were also marked by the broadening of marketing and by its integration of social exchange principles, stimulating major debates. Marketing's extension outside of the purely commercial area inevitably made the MM confront new challenges. As social, ecological and ethical concerns were spreading through society, there was a need to translate and apply the mix to these different contexts. There was also a need to adapt the model to a non-profit context and to address for instance the challenge of a cause-related marketing (see, e.g. Varadarajan & Menon 1988; Yudelson 1988).

In the commercial area, the classical marketing also did not match the complexity and specificities of certain fields such as industrial markets. While some authors defended that consumer marketing and industrial marketing are not fundamentally different, singularities started to get identified in the 1970s. In this field, perennial and long term relationship, cooperation, mutual trust, interaction and network are essential data. A European research initiative, known as the Industrial Marketing and Purchasing [IMP] Group, developed an alternative approach to mainstream marketing, especially around the work of Hakansson. This explains why there have been so few propositions of MM models (e.g., Judd 1987, who added a fifth P for "People" to show the crucial role of employees).

In the marketing of services as well, whose interest has grown simultaneously in the US and Europe, authors made more or less severe criticism of the 4Ps, depending on their conception of marketing and services. The unique nature of services (i.e., intangibility, inseparability, perishability and variability) required a special focus on certain elements such as the crucial role of people in the deliverance process, the importance of environmental factors, the interaction and quality issues, but also the service quality which was becoming a pivotal concern. At that time, some service marketing scholars supported a break free from product marketing.

To take account of the specificities of services, Boom & Bitner (1981) extended the original framework to 7Ps, including Participants, Physical evidence and Process. Validated by several authors, this model was probably the most famous in this field. Many other less generalist taxonomies, however, were proposed to adapt to the specific features of fields such as hospitality, tourism or the distributional industry, another sector that would gain a foothold in the mid-1990s.

While the 4P framework continued to prevail in the US, in opposition to the limits of the tools of marketing management, more relational approaches were developed, especially around the work of the American Berry, of the

French authors Eiglier and Langeard, but also around less well-known initiatives originating from northern Europe and from Canada, with a focus on interactions (in particular Grönroos and Gummesson from the Nordic School of Services). In fact, as Baker (2016a) explained, the Nordic School perspective saw the marketing of services as an integral element of overall management. The latter approach, that is one of the most radical challenging of the mix paradigm, would later achieve a certain success and would participate to the hegemony of a service marketing.

The review that we just performed highlighted the regular revisions and updates that the MM underwent. The questioning was mainly waged on two fronts: services and industrial marketing; two areas where relationships and interaction are much-needed. This challenging was also mainly European. However, twenty-five years after their birth, the 4Ps still remained deeply rooted in marketing's "genes", to such an extent that, in 1985, reviewing its official definition, the American Marketing Association (AMA) yet chose to do it around the 4Ps:

> "Marketing is planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, distribution of ideas, goods, and services so as to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives" (in Gundlach & Wilkie 2010, p.89).

In doing so, the AMA seemed to "hallow" the managerial school of marketing and the MM as the essence of marketing. Yet, despite its popularity at that time, according to certain authors, the 4P paradigm might have become inadequate for describing the breadth of marketing applications in the 1980s and beyond (Bruner 1988; 1989). Worse, in the words of Kent (1986, p.145), the 4Ps would have become "an article of faith". At the end of the 1980s, after a quarter of a century of literature, academic reflection on the MM was therefore in full swing and the "paradigm battle" was on.

Second period of reformation of the mm in the face of a market orientation: from a marketing "to" to a marketing "from" (early 1990s – mid 2000s)

The 1990s faced major changes in the business environment, particularly significant technological transformations at the dawn of the digital age, a changing consumer landscape, as well as the rise of new concepts and new approaches. Revisions of the MM commensurate with the magnitude of the impending upheavals could then be expected, propelled in particular by market orientation, a new approach which has probably been marketing's largest and most diffuse approach. Different conceptualizations were proposed for this approach (for a review, see for example Lambin 2007b). Market orientation is resolutely customer focused, but not only. Indeed, it takes into account other market actors such as competitors and other key market stakeholders.

The 1990s marked an important turning point in the literature. A particularly academically prolific period started, revealing a paradox. Marketing was built theoretically around a logic of needs, in response to an overly business-oriented perspective. It won its spurs by putting the consumer in the center of business and by giving a determinant role to his satisfaction. However, it proved to be far too centered on the company. The resolution of this paradox encouraged the changeover from a marketing centered on the product, as a bearer of values, to an approach that is more oriented towards the consumer, his perception, and his experience. It also encouraged the transition from an extensive approach to a more intensive one, which gives a privileged place to relationship and to a better adaptation of the offering to customer expectations.

Sometimes described as a transition to the postmodern era, this period also witnessed a series of turbulence and questioning, as well as a deep discomfort, given the unpredictability of consumers' behaviour. Consequently, new challenges were arising for "mainstream marketing", and new reformulations for the MM, accompanied by new divisions and oppositions. The latter, indeed, was reproached for having many weaknesses such as a product orientation instead of a customer focus, a one way orientation and no interactivity nor personalized communication, an offensive rather than a collaborative character, etc. (For a review, see e.g., Constantinides 2006). Certain researchers like Anderson and Taylor (1995), however, relativized these criticisms, considering that the 4P paradigm was time-tested.

The literature aroused by the MM during this period is extremely abundant. This wealth and diversity went together with the (r)evolutions to which marketing seemed to be confronted. Then, what were the substantial MM metamorphosis in this second period?

The necessity to conceive the MM from the customer

Firstly, putting the customer at the heart of the approach implied conceiving a MM based on customer value standards and perceptions. This determination can be identified in several models (e.g., Bennett 1997; Lauterborn's, 1990; Yudelson 1999). Lauterborn's 4Cs (Consumer, Cost, Convenience and Communication) are one of the best known of these initiatives. Yudelson's four new Ps (Performance, Penalty, Perception, and Process) appropriately relate to both the customer and the exchange interaction as part of a total quality-driven relationship. Furthermore, the addition of a fifth P ("Partner') aimed at showing that the customer is a partner involved in the value-creating exchange activity.

Instead of Price, most of these new taxonomies comply with the broader notion of Costs or Penalties, which are also perceived, an initiative that was already visible in Bruner's (1988) 4Cs (Concept, Cost, Channel and Communication). Instead of insisting on the product's distribution, a broader definition addresses all aspects of the buying experience and encourages multi-channel marketing.

As far as Communication is concerned, while it still remained too constricted into influence and persuasion and too scattered into multiple very different elements, an imperative necessity to connect to consumers (and to other publics) with a unified and coherent message arose, leading to the emergence of an integrated approach, supported by the new Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) concept. For their part, Van Waterschoot and Van den Bulte (1992), focused on establishing a clear distinction between sales promotion and communication by adding a promotional mix to the basic mix. Besides, in the 1990s, the integration of public relations (PR) into marketing was far from consensual (Miller & Rose 1994).

Given its crucial role in creating value, the place given to the brand within the MM was also questioned. Its scope extended beyond the product, and its management evolved. Melewar and Saunders (2000) added the brand as an eighth P ("Publications") to the 7P taxonomy of services marketing. Tomasella's (2002) classification granted it the central place. His extended MM articulates seven variables around brand positioning (4Ps plus Co-brandind, Sensory Identity and Innovation). In addition, globalization as well as audience diversification exacerbated the shift from the brand product to a more institutional branding. This integrated approach of marketing at an institutional level was defended by Balmer (1998, 2001, 2003), who relied on a corporate MM structured in 11Ps. Reflections on the concept of corporate reputation that accompanied his taxonomy presented a growing academic interest. Indeed, the audience was expanded to diverse markets and stakeholders which companies had understood the importance of creating links with. This partly explains the breakthrough of relationship marketing and the willingness to include it into the MM.

Integrating relationship and loyalty into the MM

The MM was reproached for overemphasizing customer acquisition, and therefore a rather transactional and short-term perspective. In the meantime, many relational approaches developed, some of them advocating the widespread use of symbiotic marketing. Thus, a marketing called "relational" was opposed to the so-called transactional marketing, "a rhetorical label invented in the 'paradigm battle' of the 1990s" (Möller, 2006).

Beyond the many debates it has generated on its nature, as well as on its emergence and on its paradigmatic status, in the 1990s, relationship marketing became the dominant theme almost everywhere. Furthermore, having emerged in parallel, approaches founded on other modes than classical marketing participated more actively to the advent of an orientation focused on the wholeness of relationship. In such a vision of marketing, the company holds a less sovereign place, as illustrated by the concept of "part-time marketer" (Gummesson 1991). How did this rise of relationship affect the MM?

In the industrial field, cradle of relational and interactive approaches, few initiatives validated the classical conceptual framework (e.g., Judd, 2003, who refined his 5P model). According to Anderson et al. (1999), each P of the 4P model would deserve to be reevaluated in the light of a context where relationship and networks management occupy a determinant place.

In the services area, marketing evolved. Certain authors like Collier (1991) continued to validate the classical 4P model in its version extended to 7Ps; or 5Ps for Heuvel (1993) who gauged the impact of the seller's behavior on both the relational and the overall satisfaction. For their part, Ellis and Mosher (1993) extended the 4Ps to 6Ps, including "People" and "Presentation" to assist professional service firms. Bitner (1991) emphasized the importance of service quality. Finally, Lovelock and Wright (1999) introduced "Productivity/quality" as a eighth P for their model of integrated service management. The customer/service provider interaction and its resulting relationship are indeed decisive factors of the perception of the service quality.

Furthermore, at that time, after the industrialization phase of the 70s and 80s, a new approach, carried out by more interactive marketing schools, was taking shape in services: a customer-focused service mindset, whose practical implications regarding the conception and application of the MM could be anticipated (Beaven & Scotti 1990). According to Gadrey (1992), the ultimate step in developing a service activity would be to "render service" by finding complex and individualized solutions to the client's problems. Service is therefore seen as a form of relationship, rather than a category of market offerings. For proponents of these approaches, marketing was moving towards a new paradigm, in which the 4Ps had become outdated (e.g., Grönroos 1994; Gummesson 1994). However, the problem of operationalizing relationship marketing led them to consider alternatives such as the 30Rs proposed by Gummesson's (1994).

What about the consumer MM in this new context? As expected, relational approaches, originally developed in industry and then in services, entered the consumer marketing with more vigour. Goldsmith (1999, p. 179) stated that "services marketing emphasis on customer satisfaction and long-term relationships with customers have influenced goods marketers to think differently about their businesses and their customers". By the way, according to the author, managers of all types of businesses should be encouraged to think about the 7Ps. Anyway, relationships gradually established themselves as a more significant element to foster loyalty, leading both manufacturers and distributors to design their MM in a more relational perspective.

The formers challenged their mix in two ways. In the mid-1990s, the rise in distributors' marketing skills exacerbated conflicts between industry and commerce. Manufacturers tried to find a positive solution through new forms of partnership-based relationships (such as Trade Marketing or Category Management). This required for companies to integrate the distributor's constraints, at the design phase of their own MM. At the same time, their estrangement with their customers and the resulting retention issues led manufacturers to rethink loyalty in a more relational way, while it had been structured, up to that point, around the product and the transaction (see, e.g., Moulins 1998). Already aware of the relational weaknesses of the 4Ps, Rozenberg and Czepiel (1984) had proposed to formulate a separate MM for existing customers, with the aim of maximizing customer retention. This perspective naturally evolved towards an emphasis on relationship, considering customer value more widely, such as through the capitalization on the established relationship. Vavra's (1993) concept of «aftermarketing» illustrates this orientation. However, some authors remained attached to the more traditional conceptual framework, such as Rafiq and Pervaiz (1995), who demonstrated that the 7Ps performed in the field of goods as well as in the field of services.

Concerning distributors, they were not spared from loyalty issues. In this field as well, a shift was observed from traditional merchandising (which focuses on MM elements) toward more integrated approaches and active customer management, with more emphasis on customer relationships (Mulhern 1997).

Successively, industrial marketing, and then services marketing, have made it possible to better understand the interactions between the company and the consumer, generating new practices and new fields of reflection, such as Quality Management and Customer Relationship Management (CRM). Collaborative and interactive approaches developed also into consumer marketing, in particular through the rise of the internet and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). They marked the adoption of one-to-one marketing practices and the shift from a segmentation-based approach to a more personalized approach of customer, as well as the search for a better customer experience. These were as many challenges that the MM was about to take up.

Meeting the challenge of the internet revolution and of digitalization: adaptation, personalization, customization of the MM, e-MM and experiential MM.

In the 90s, customer satisfaction had become one of the keystones of marketing; a problem all the more serious that it is linked with customer retention. At the same time, the rise of the internet and digital technologies opened up new possibilities in terms of communication, of distribution, and more broadly of interaction, allowing to meet more finely customer expectations. This revolutionized the marketing landscape.

A short period called "dot-com boom" (1995-2000), gave rise to much reflection. During their short existence, the virtual companies (namely e-tailers or dot.com retailers), that were created during this period, developed and introduced new internet based marketing techniques at a rapid pace, creating a new world for marketing. Originally developed in an e-distribution context, these techniques were widely used by other organizations, both in BtoC (Business to Consumer) and BtoB (Business to Business) spaces, leading to the advent of a specific digital marketing (also referred to as e-marketing or internet marketing). The issue of an e-MM was inevitably raised, along with, the question of the validity of the 4P model for effectively dealing with these new challenges.

Indeed, as Gandolfo (2009) noted, the original version of the MM showed major limitations particularly in this digital context. The poor categorization of e-marketing techniques, the lack of understanding of interrelationships, the lack of a holistic view, and the lack of a clear definition of e-marketing aggravated this problem. In addition, as Kalyanam and McIntyre (2002) rightly pointed out, depending on the area of interest, the marketing community had developed a very selective view of e-marketing techniques. To web developers and technology integrators e-marketing was mainly about building web sites. To the advertising industry it was about the impact of internet advertising on generating web traffic and brand building. To the CRM community, internet was about personalization and to auction oriented sites it was about word of mouth and community building. Finally, as Kalyanam and McIntyre (2002) also noted, the internet community had also introduced new vocabulary such as the terms "viral marketing", "data mining", "personalization", "mass customization", "one-to-one marketing", etc. However, some of them were sometimes used, in one way or another, to refer to the same concept, adding difficulty.

What about the MM in this new digitalized context? Was digitalization compatible with the traditional MM? Once again, the authors' position oscillated between rejection and adaptation of the 4Ps. If, for authors like Schultz (2001), marketers had to "bid farewell to the 4Ps", for other like Siegel (2005), just as they had an enduring place offline, the importance of the 4Ps was equally compelling online. Thus, once again, the 4Ps mobilized and divided the academic world, which proposed either adaptations or more radical solutions.

Some authors didn't question the model but rather studied how digitalization changed the way each of its elements was approached. Indeed, in a digitalized environment, the traditional MM in 4 or 7Ps had to fulfil new roles and many differences appeared between physical and online marketing (Aldrige et al. 1997; Allen et al. 2001; Harridge-March 2004; Peattie et al. 1997). The advent of the Internet and wireless communications technologies offered a different perspective on the 4Ps (O'Connor et al. 1997). Bhat and Emdad (2001) showed how the virtual value chain transforms the traditional 4Ps by giving them new dimensions. According to them, in e-commerce, success will depend on how the physical value chain and the virtual value chain activities are matched and integrated.

In order to take up the e-marketing challenges, some authors supported totally or partially renewed approaches of the MM. For a more interactive digital approach, Constantinides (2002) proposed the 4S web-MM (Scope, Site, Synergy and System) as a new approach and conceptual basis for online marketing. Dennis et al. (2005) presented a new version of the marketing retail and e□retail mixes, distilled into a framework with seven mnemonic Cs: Convenience, Customer value and benefit, Cost to the customer, Computing and category management, Customer franchise, Customer care and service and Communication and customer relationships.

Instead of rejecting the 4Ps altogether, some authors rather considered hybrid versions, adding new items to the traditional model. Kalyanam et al. (2002) characterized the e-MM using a 4Ps+$P^2C^2S^2$ acronym. In other words, they kept the original 4Ps and then added Personalization and Privacy, Customer service and Community, and Security and Site design. Robins (2000) proposed to work out eight personal e-benefits for buyers: Inexpensive, Interactive, Involving, Information-rich, Instantaneous, Intimate, Individual, and Intelligent. As with the traditional mix, these 8Is offered marketers a mental checklist, a useful guide in their continuing efforts to refine and advance e-marketing practices. Yet, unlike the traditional mix, the e-mix focused on individuals. According to Chaffey and Smith (2001), without supplanting the 7Ps, Peppers and Rogers' 5Is (Identification, Individualisation, Interaction, Integration and Integrity, 1997) could complete the model.

One of the the salient features of e-marketing is that it is performed with and around information through a virtual value chain. Indeed, database marketing made it possible to go beyond traditional segmentations, by offering more individualized approaches such as personalization and customization. The 1990s marked the beginning of an economics of variety, carried by the concepts of delayed differentiation or mass customization (Pine 1993), and of one to one marketing (Peppers and Rogers 1993). This created new challenges for the MM. Initiated in a "mass context", the latter had to evolve to adapt to this economics of variety.

The trend towards personalization, which became one of the key initiatives of the time, was already visible through a phenomenon called "servitization" that spread in the late 80s. Personalization, which can be achieved by adding services to a product offering, was reflected in the MM classifications of some authors from the services sector (Berry 1990; McDonald and Payne 1996) or not (Doyle 1994; Vignali and Davies 1994). By capturing customer specific information, the internet and World Wide Web offered the opportunity to customize products and services. Considering that it allows a unique positioning strategy, Goldsmith (1999) integrated Personalization as the 8th P of his model, alongside Product, Price, Promotion, Place, Personnel, Physical assets, and Procedures. According to Kalyanam et al. (2002), mentioned above, personalization transcends all aspects of e-marketing.

Instead, Logman (1997) considered customization, which offers customers the possibility to customize the products themselves, and which necessarily implies customers' participation in product design. From his point of view, five different instruments of the MM (product, purchase price, communication, distribution and logistics, and after-sales support and costs) can be customized. The author stated that customization requires a one to one relationship, a more individualized management of commercial and non-commercial contacts, and a personalization of interactions. It is why it goes far beyond the framework of product differentiation. For Patterson and Ward (2000), who are proponents of a relationship management approach (instead of a relationship marketing) in the services field, the classical 4Ps must give way to a CRM that they conceptualized in a new 4C quadrilogy (Communication, Customization, Collaboration and Clairvoyance).

Finally, the customers' active participation in the co-design process logically provided food for thoughts on the customer's experience, now considered through a managerial perspective, through the emerging idea of Customer Experience Management (CEM). For authors as Pine and Gilmore (1998), value it is not created within the company, it is essentially experiential. Consumption is then seen as a holistic and more emotional experience for the customer.

Marketing practices had to evolve towards a re-enchantment of the customer, thanks to an experiential offering that supplants products, and services: the experiential offer. The experiential MM, proposed by Schmitt (1999a, 1999b), is no longer exclusively focused on products' functional attributes; it is based on a set of action levers or intentional stimuli (called «experience providers») that are set up by the company to generate the experience, through a more or less active customer participation.

It is difficult to escape a certain prolixity in such a prolific period. Yet, this fertility led to rather mitigated points of view regarding the real changes that had occurred. Most of the initiatives presented seem, after all, still too close to a supplier's perspective, in the BtoC field at the very least. The paradigm shift that brought them out was far from being unanimously accepted. Möller (2006) proposed a rereading of the 4Ps, estimating that many authors were misreading the mix and therefore drawing misleading conclusions about it. Baker (2000) considered the 4P model as a useful, simplifying device to enable marketing managers to impose some structure and direction on the tasks they must perform. Finally, according to Constantinides (2006), several studies confirmed that the 4P MM had remained the trusted conceptual platform of practitioners dealing with tactical/operational marketing issues.

Ultimately, considering that industrial marketing obtained an independent status and that its preoccupations are far from the 4Ps, one can say that the strongest 4Ps opponents emanated from the supporters of the relationship and services fields. Besides, Van Waterchoot and Foscht (2010) explained that services marketing had evolved from an autonomous subfield of marketing into an aspiring dominant approach in contemporary mainstream marketing that was supposedly applicable to any kind of organization. This tentative to place the service perspective as the new core of marketing received a boost with the publication by the Americans Vargo and Lusch (2004) of an article entitled "Evolving to a new dominant logic of marketing". In the process, in 2004 the AMA changed its definition of marketing, opening a new period. Indeed, the mid-2000s seem to have paved the way for some perspective shifts with, maybe, more significant consequences on the MM.

Third period of reconsideration of the mm around value co-creation: from marketing "from" to marketing "with" (from the mid-2000s onwards)

This third period has seen an acceleration of the integration movement, a refinement of the concepts, and a new rise of relationship, amplified by the 2008 crisis and new advances in ICT. This led to more interaction and to an increased customer participation in value creation, opening up new reflections on understanding and delivering value to the customer and, as a consequence, on the MM. These changes were significant enough that, in 2004, the AMA attempted to incorporate them into a new revision of the definition of marketing, which became:

> "an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to the customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders" (in Gundlach & Wilkie 2010, p.90).

According to some authors, this definition reflects a still narrow conception of marketing, particularly due to its focus on marketing management at the expense of alternative perspectives. Nevertheless, the consequences of this revision on marketing and its repercussions on the MM can already be predicted. Indeed, this new definition marks a second turning point in the way of thinking the marketing. How has the MM adapted to these new developments?

MM, value creation and co-creation

While they structured the previous definition, exchange and the 4Ps have now disappeared, giving way to value creation. It therefore seemed necessary to express this in the MM. As a result, Kumar's (2007) 3Vs model is mixed around 3 values: consumer value (Who to serve?), value proposition (What to offer?), value networks (How to offer?). Value is also found in the SIVA model (Solution, Information, Value and Access) proposed by Dev & Shultz (2005a, 2005b).

In the marketing terminology, product delivery has given way to value proposition: the company no longer designs an offering; it builds a value proposition, communicates its value and delivers it to the customer. However, the notion of delivery became problematic. In an increasingly customer-centric period, less emphasis was placed on the exchanged item, for the benefit of a growing interest in the creation process. The «towards» logic, guided by a focus on the product, in which the MM is included, was challenged in favor of two other logics which are the basis of a service-centered perspective: a «for» logic, based on service and guided by skills, and a «with» logic, focused on interactivity and relationships. The 2000s were indeed associated with a greater focus on the service concept, with no «s», indicating the process of doing something for and with someone. However, this logic was not identified in the same way depending on the authors.

For certain authors, the logic of service seems to be more related to the solution: “selling solutions rather than products, i.e. ‘a unique combination of products and services components’ that could solve a customer’s problem” (Lambin et al. 2007a, p.129). This conception is the basis of some mix frameworks such as the SIVA model mentioned above. According to Lambin, the solution approach is an “outside-in” view of the market which is fully customer-centric and provides a different way of looking at the elements of the MM (Lambin 2007b). While reinterpreting the 4Ps, the author added a fifth variable, surprisingly entitled “Selling”, which would enclose the full importance given to the dialogue with the consumer and to the negotiation process.

We said this is surprising because, nowadays, the term “sale” very poorly reflects the acceptance contained in the term “dialogue”. Indeed, the latter falls within a real perspective shift where the consumer appears to be much more active and co-creator of value. The dialogue and the collaborative approach that come with it (“with” logic) have been described as “meet” logic. These co-creative approaches have been crystallized in new interactive approaches of marketing, especially in the service logic. Initiated by Vargo and Lusch (2004), and advocated by the Nordic School, with some divergences, this logic constitutes the fulcrum of an alternative theoretical framework to the mainstream MM perspective. Their promoters advocate a shift from a goods-dominant logic to a service-dominant logic. However, this assertion has recently been challenged by Tadajewsky and Jones (2020).

Anyway, in accordance with a service logic, value is no longer contained solely in the goods and services, nor only in consumer’s perception. It is not created or delivered by the company but emerges during the use, in the very process of value creation by the consumer. From a passive marketing target, to whom a value offering is delivered thanks to a MM cleverly orchestrated by the company, the consumer now plays the key role, to the extent of considering that, without him, there can only be, at most, a value potential. Value creation is viewed from a value-in-use rather than a value-in-exchange perspective. We are at the other end of the spectrum from the traditional linear approach to marketing, which had to consider giving way to a more interactive approach and to co-creation. The latter makes outdated both the separation between supplier and customer, and the traditional MM concept that is attached to it. Indeed, as linearity has been replaced by circularity, it is conceivable that, inevitably, the MM has had difficulty finding its place.

While Grönroos (2006), from the Nordic school, strongly condemns the 4P paradigm, for Vargo and Lusch (2004), this reorientation would not require to abandon most of the traditional core concepts such as the MM, but it would rather complement these concepts. Similarly, for Hakansson and Waluszewski’s (2005), who defended an alternative approach based on networks, interactions and relationships, the 4Ps could still be a useful starting point in many analyses. However, the model should then be reframed, including how the 4Ps are conceptualized. To this end, they have reinterpreted the 4Ps by focusing on a more customer-oriented approach, the interaction with customers, value creation and satisfaction.

The need to blend MM and relationship

Relationship management was highlighted in the AMA’s new definition. Thus, relationship was then no longer a simple alternative. Besides, for some authors, the contrasts between relational and transactional marketing were less relevant. Zineldin and Philipson (2007), for example, stated that the traditional MM theory is an essential requirement for building and sustaining relationships with customers, and that there is a need to blend relational MM and transactional MM. Whether it was put forth as a new paradigm or not, relationship marketing inevitably reappeared with strength, helped by the 2008 crisis that revealed different sensitivities. Relationship was also embraced by experiential marketing which, in its second generation, was no longer envisioned as the proposal of an experiential offering designed by the company, but rather a cocreation experience, with an active consumer.

Also, due to the emergent use of social media for marketing purposes, the mid-2000s set the stage for a different kind of relationship, called «many to many”, and for a more community-based marketing.

Further digitalization and the inclusion of social media in the MM

In the 2000s, digital marketing became more sophisticated. This period saw the birth of the major social networking services Facebook, You Tube and Twitter and the creation of major platforms of the «sharing economy», as well as the development of a lot of new tools like ewow, customer reviews, etc. With the expansion of offerings, there was a remarkable increase in the use of online social forums in digital media.

Being built on an architecture of participation and on a «horizontalization» of relationships, these emerging Web 2.0 technologies led companies to redefine some key aspects of their MM. For Mangold and Faulds (2009), social media were a hybrid element of the promotion mix. According to Bryant (2009), participation is more relevant than ever with the Web 2.0 revolution; but it is more than a supplementary P to the MM. Participation should now encompass all of the four Ps as a lens through with the Ps should be approached. It is the Web 2.0 MM.

MM and stakeholders: the need to go beyond the 4Ps and beyond the consumer

In the face of the changing marketing landscape, it was imperative to take up the challenge of integrating the interactive dimension of the new digital environment, but also the long term perspective, in order to serve more institutional objectives and rally different audiences. For the first time, the term "stakeholder" was included in the AMA's new definition of marketing, giving the concept of "stakeholder marketing" a central place into the field's body of thought. Encouraged by this renewed interest, Balmer (2006), in favor of an institutional model of stakeholders, refined its corporate MM: 6Cs (instead of the previous 11Ps). One of them, «Constituencies», is clearly allocated to stakeholder management. A research trend, called «stakeholder marketing theory», resulting from the more classical market orientation, invited the scientific community to reflect on how to go beyond reductive marketing approaches, and beyond the 4Ps and the consumer (Bhattacharya & Korschun 2008). These were new opportunities and challenges for marketing and for the MM.

One might expect that this conception of marketing, based on openness and dialogue, would be incompatible with the linear, unilateral and short-term logic that sustains the 4P MM. Yet, surprisingly, the latter continued to oppose researchers. In the end, all the academic reflections it inspired have not significantly impacted McCarthy's quadrilogy, which remains a reference. Moreover, it should be noted that there were fewer MM proposals during this period and that these proposals didn't emanate from mainstream authors. Thus, although other schools have displayed with more strength their divergence from the marketing management school, in the late 2000s, the famous 4P model (or its extended version) continued to have a prominent place in the marketer's toolkit. In the words of Zineldin and Philipson (2007, p. 229), "the Kotlerism of the 4Ps is still dominating". Yet, the 2010s seemed to herald new developments and a movement was consequently emerging. Lacking landmarks, marketing seemed to be waiting for new initiatives. The latest definition of the AMA supported this idea.

Towards a new period: another marketing and another MM?

Having failed to sufficiently capture the transformations made by marketing in its 2004 official definition, the AMA revised it again in late 2007. Marketing became:

> "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large" (in Gundlach & Wilkie 2010, p.90).

The 2010s were the theatre of an acceleration of the implemented changes. As a result, marketing was expected to be heavily impacted. The continuation of integration took place on several fronts. Channel integration in a cross-channel logic was undoubtedly one of the heaviest. It required bringing the physical and the digital worlds together (which met under the neologism "phygital") and it blurred certain boundaries. It rendered obsolete previously relevant oppositions such as communication and distribution, purchase and consumption, goods and services, etc., as well as, for the proponents of a service-dominant logic, the traditional BtoB/BtoC opposition.

Without falling into the excess of interactive schools, for which the producer/consumer categorization is inconsistent, we are witnessing today an unanimous recognition of the importance of customer in value creation. Information asymmetry, that has benefited marketing in the past, tends to diminish, forcing companies to take greater account of customer's interests. Moreover, if value and value creation occupy a central place, they are no longer the prerogative of the customer, because there is also a sense in creating value for stakeholders and, more broadly, as the AMA points out, for society at large; probably a strong axis for marketing which rediscovers the importance of its external legitimacy.

Finally, the internet has undoubtedly paved the way for a more participatory and social marketing, via social networks. However, as Pantano et al. (2019, p. 7) noted, "although previous studies have identified the importance of interacting with consumers as a new component for implementing successful marketing strategies, there are still few studies concerning the use of this media as a new integrative tool of the marketing mix model, while literature should also present common frameworks to take into account the online interactions within the marketing mix model". According to the authors, since social media tools support typical marketing activities such as advertising, sales, CRM, and new product development, they should be analysed by scholars and practitioners as a proactive element of the MM.

On the other hand, the physical distancing that came with the internet has led to a new relational quest, which seems urgent to consider. Relationship, consequently, reappears as a central theme, both in the academic world and in practice, probably because the continuation of digitalization has changed the landscape. Although the mid-2010s reinforced the directions taken in previous years, there is, at the same time, a will to correct marketing's excesses: excesses in the field, where the manipulative practices of the early periods led to a bad image of marketing, and excesses in research which regularly heralds revolutions that are not.

It is undeniable that an awareness emerges, and the rise of other points of view that defend a more humanist, less mechanistic vision of marketing leaving more room for values. A “better marketing for a better world” is expected (Chandy et al. 2021). A marketing able to combine ethics and performance (see e.g., Salerno et al. 2013). There is a growing sense that marketing is looking for another model and that a new period may well open up, maybe a fourth period for the MM. Indeed, a new model would have its place, in line with the changing marketing context, compatible with its paradoxes, while being as simple as the 4Ps but also more unifying. Is the MM relaying these upheavals?

Actually, the MM undoubtedly continues to interest researchers, and new models are clearly inspired by rising trends. In a reissue of their book “Marketing Management”, Kotler et al. (2012) exposed four new Ps (People, Process, Action Programmes and Performance) that better reflect the concept of holistic marketing. Besides, Warrink (2018) evaluated in detail the effect of the implementation of the Marketing 3.0 concept on the 7P MM.

Some models try to fully fit into the AMA’s new definition that was reapproved in 2017. For example, Peattie and Belz (2010) proposed a new 4C sustainability MM (Customer solutions, Customer cost, Convenience and Communication.). Sheth and Sisodia (2011) presented a 4A quadrilogy (Acceptability, Affordability, Accessibility and Awareness) in a book with the evocative title «The 4 A’s of marketing: creating value for customers, companies and society». Londhe (2014) propounded a purely conceptual model in 4Vs which combines value and stakeholders (Valued Customers, Value to the Customers, Value to Society and Value to the marketer). We find the same willingness to overcome the challenges posed to the environment and the society at large in Bhalerao and Deshmukh (2015). They proposed to achieve a more holistic approach to “green marketing” by blending its principles into the 4P MM, redesigned for the context of sustainable development.

Pomering’s (2017) taxonomy obviously incorporates ethical and social concerns. Gordon’s (2012) model is an expanded mix for application to contemporary social marketing, encompassing new concepts or tools such as stakeholder engagement, relational thinking and co-creation. Supporters of a broadening movement of social marketing, Tapp and Spotswood (2013) reconfigured a model that moves from the 4Ps towards a more integrative model. Certain researchers rather presented a revised MM adapted to the needs of BoP (Bottom of the Pyramid) customers (Chikweche & Fletcher 2012; Purohit et al. 2020). For their part, Ettenson et al. (2013) revisited the solution approach in the BtoB context. In turn, Batat (2019) took on the 7Ps of the “old” MM and introduced the 7Es of the new experiential MM (Experience, Exchange, Extension, Emphasis, Empathy, Emotional touchpoints, Emic/Etic process), a tool that focuses on the consumer as a starting point in marketing strategies. There are also many recent initiatives, in specific fields such as hotels, health-care, wine, luxury, etc.

E-marketing has undoubtedly remained one of the biggest challenges to the MM and the relevance of the 4Ps of marketing in today digital world continues to spark debate. Some authors reassessed the MM through the lens of digitalization. Among the points of interest was the inclusion of social networks into the traditional MM models, as an element of the promotional MM (Guillermo & Galobart 2011), or more broadly as a new element of the traditional MM model (Pantano et al. 2019). Luo (2017) proposed a new framework for the context of the mobile commerce, namely 4 e-Ps (Pull-push participative communication, Personalization, Promptness and Privacy). In order to adapt to today’s technological environment, Jackson et al. (2016) conceptualized a customer mix as a prerequisite for the MM and addressed the subject of a Digital Marketing Communication 2.0 (DMC 2.0) to develop a dialogue with customers and facilitate conversations between customers using internet-based communication platforms. In order to fully embrace today’s “phygital world”, Kotler et al. (2018) introduced a new set of connected MM, the 4Cs (Co-creation, Currency, Communal activation and Conversation), as part of the concept of Marketing 4.0. Finally, in a very recent paper, integrating the presumption activity into the core of marketing, Demirbag-Kaplan and Cavusoglu (2022) presented a new MM model labelled with 4Ss (namely, Solutions, Smartness, Speed, and Semiotics), that highlights how the traditional 4Ps or 4Cs should be addressed from a co-creation perspective.

Conclusion

MM’s evolutions have been traced from its birth until its most recent manifestations. A temporal presentation of the literature allowed to demonstrate that its metamorphoses comply with those of marketing discourse. Indeed, whether they conformed to the evolution of the mainstream thinking or to a parallel movement, the numerous initiatives punctuating the history of the MM aspired to compensate for the perceived shortcomings of the dominant model, and to provide a model that is more in line with the marketing and contextual realities revealed over time. The emergence of streams of thought, that resulted from a path parallel to consensus and defend another vision of marketing, played a significant role, contributing either to shaping the mix through renewed approaches, or to moving away from it for the benefit of more radical positions that advocate a shift of paradigm.

This article has shown the unsuspected wealth and the exceptional diversity of this old concept as well as its high resilience. During the six decades that followed its first formulation, many expressions of the MM have been proposed in order to adapt it, as effectively as possible, to each of the contexts with which it has been confronted. Most of these alternative propositions emanated from a specific marketing environment, such as services marketing. Therefore, some of them turned out to be perfectly adequate, which is not surprising: tailor-made generally wins over ready-to-wear. Nevertheless, the universality of the 4P mix remains its main advantage. It is like a «Swiss army knife» that allows coping more or less successfully with any commercial situation.

Besides, we share Baker's opinion (2016b, p. 306) that "underlying criticism of the MM mode is the mistaken view that it was ever intended as a 'theory' of marketing rather than a currently useful generalization or helpful learning and teaching tool". Thus, as a tool in building and implementing an effective marketing strategy, the 4P MM seems here to stay, whether dominant logic or not. The economic entrenchment of a grid that aims to help managers better represent the means to act on supply and demand probably explains the permanence of this concept.

The fact remains that marketing and the MM must continue to take up challenges, if only because marketing seeks to meet stakeholders' expectations, which implies renewing itself as society changes. "The MM has arrived at a crossroad, with opposing scenarios for its future" (Wichmann et al. 2022, p. 1). Our point of view is that a real opportunity is coming forth for more inclusive, more holistic, and above all more balanced approaches. Beyond the multiple versions of the mix referenced over time, the latest socio-economic trends seem to ask for another way to do marketing, leaving the door open for new models of the MM.

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