



MASTER THESIS

PLEASURE OR EXPERTISE

The interaction effect of scent and staff appearance on the store experience in footwear retail

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S2865505

ENSCHEDA

February 19th, 2024

Communication Science and Business Administration (MSc) | The Joint Educational Program in Digital Marketing | The Faculty of Behavioural, Management, and Social Sciences (BMS)

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DOCUMENT TITLE

Pleasure or expertise: The interaction effect of scent and staff appearance on the store experience in footwear retail

DATE

The 19th of February 2024

VERSION

Final Version

PROJECT

Master Thesis Project

PROJECT NUMBER

192491009

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PREFACE

Welcome to the Master thesis of Len Nijhof. First, I would like to introduce myself briefly. My name is Len Nijhof, and I am a Double Degree MSc. student in the joined educational study program of Communication Science and Business Administration at the University of Twente (UT), in Enschede. With great pleasure and profound pride, I present this research report, which delves into the intriguing field of store atmospherics and sensory marketing within the context of retail footwear. This study explores the complex interactions between two crucial components within retail, scent and staff appearance, and their captivating influence on store experiences. Over the past 20 weeks, I have been conducting experimental research in a real-world footwear store, which marked the end of my study program at the UT. My academic journey turned out to be both enriching and challenging, yet I am grateful for all of the assistance and counsel I obtained along the way.

Above all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my first supervisor, Mirjam Galetzka, whose wise counsel and valuable critiques have been instrumental in molding the level of excellence and depth of this study. Moreover, I would like to thank my second supervisor, Letizia Alvino, whose input, and support were always valuable. I am in particular thankful to Rob Hoogerwerf from Aemster, who generously provided the scent machines for scientific use. It is my hope that the knowledge gained from this study will stimulate further research and contribute to the wider area of scent marketing, which might benefit Aemster in the development of scent innovations for practical use in the future. Additionally, I want to express my deepest appreciation to my parents, Jan and Marie-lousie Nijhof, for allowing me to conduct this field study in their beloved footwear store in Hengelo, Nijhof Schoenen. Also, I want to thank the customers of Nijhof Schoenen for providing essential data for this research, and the entire Nijhof team, for their ongoing support and readiness to engage in this study

Lastly, I want to take this opportunity to thank my friends and family for their continuous understanding, encouragement, and help throughout my academic career. Their confidence in my ability has served as an ongoing source of inspiration. I am eager to see more research and discussion on the many facets of the store experience in the dynamic and ever-changing retail environment. But above all, I hope you enjoy reading this report.

Len Nijhof

Enschede, February 19th, 2024

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Retail businesses are increasing their efforts to improve store experiences in light of changing customer preferences. Researchers claim that experiences may be enhanced by a single pleasant scent, which supports prior results on the universal pleasantness of floral scents. This study conducted experimental research in a real-world footwear store, which is characterized by leather scent that evokes feelings of luxury and high quality. Within this industry, staff members perform a critical role in forming customer perceptions, with formal appearance denoting professionalism and expertise, while informal appearance suggests friendliness and pleasure.

Objective: This field study aimed to examine the combined effect of scent and staff appearance on the store experience in physical footwear. The moderating role of shopping orientation, concerning utilitarian (task-driven) and hedonistic (pleasure-driven) customers, and the mediating role of customer trust were also studied.

Method and context: A 2 (leather vs. floral scent) x 2 (formal vs. informal staff appearance) experimental research design was selected. The experiment took place at Nijhof Schoenen, a physical footwear store in Hengelo, the Netherlands. In total, 363 customers were asked to participate in filling out a survey after their store experience.

Results: This study showed that informal staff appearance results in pleasure among hedonistic-driven customers. Also, a positive store experience significantly increased loyalty intentions among footwear customers, and higher expertise impressions increased pleasure among footwear customers. However, the findings of the main study showed no further statistically significant effects of scent and staff appearance on expertise impressions, a pleasurable experience, the store experience, loyalty intentions, and sales figures.

Discussion and conclusion: Although hedonic customers were positively affected by informal staff appearances, no other conclusions regarding the effect of scent and staff appearance can be drawn. As the study sample consisted of devoted customers, the findings may be explained by participants' prior store loyalty, and respondents might have provided answers based on their broad experiences rather than their specific store experience. Future studies should explore non-loyal research participants, using a variety of measures and research settings, to obtain deeper insights into the effect of scent and staff appearance in retail. It could also be beneficial to increase the body of research on what store atmospherics contribute to loyalty intentions that eventually drive retail sales.

Keywords: Store experience – footwear retail – floral and leather scent – informal and formal staff appearance – hedonic and utilitarian shopping orientation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the rise of online shopping over the past decades, the majority of people still prefer to purchase at physical retail outlets (Baker et al., 2020). Marketing literature shows that retailers may have a competitive advantage due to their environment, in which store experiences contribute to establishing a long-term customer-retailer relationship based on loyalty (Baker et al., 2020; Grewal et al., 2014). In light of that, retailers have been forced to reinvent themselves, e.g., by deepening their service orientation and enhancing the store experience (Baker et al., 2020). A single strategy to improve store experiences refers to scents, since pleasant ambient fragrances positively affect the amount of time and money customers are willing to spend in the store (Bosmans, 2006; Madzharov et al., 2015; Spangenberg et al., 2006). Studies on sensory marketing affirm the emotional response of customers to scent in the decision-making process in retail (Moore, 2019). Yet, customers goals and their shopping orientation can have a significant impact on how scent affects their store experience (R. Hoogerwerf, personal communication, September 14, 2023). The literature distinguishes a utilitarian shopping orientation, resulting from task-driven purchases, and a hedonic shopping orientation, deriving from pleasure and fun in the store experience (Babin et al., 1994; Babin & Darden, 1995; Harris et al., 2018).

But what scent results in an improved store experience in footwear retail? Previous research has yielded inconsistent findings regarding the specific scent that improves store experiences, likely due to the effect being contingent upon the study's context. Spangenberg et al. (1996) discovered that scent type had no effect on store evaluations or behaviours among students in an artificial retail setting as long as the scent was neutral or pleasant. According to Gulas and Bloch (1995), the scent of flowers is universally perceived as enjoyable and pleasant, aligning perfectly with hedonistic-driven customers who look for pleasure in the store experience. Hirsch (1990) found that when customers tried on sneakers in a room with a blend of floral scents, their buying intentions increased, and participants demonstrated a stronger readiness to spend money. Other research, however, has shown that congruency with the product category and retail environment is crucial to favourably impacting the store experience for customers (Bosmans, 2006; Leenders et al., 2019). Footwear stores are generally characterized by a leather scent brought on by the leather goods (J. Nijhof, personal communication, May 11, 2023). Customers frequently perceive the scent of leather, which aligns with the product category of footwear stores (congruency), to be luxurious as well as of high quality (Arboleda et al., 2017; Goldberg, 2022). On the contrary, customers associate

floral scent as a strong initiator of positive feelings (Gulas & Bloch, 1995; Haviland-Jones et al., 2005), which is incongruent with footwear. Due to the inconsistency within the marketing literature, further exploration is required.

Besides the influence of ambient scent on store experiences, customers' impression formation can also be affected by staff members. Within service environments, a high focus is placed on the interactions between customers and staff members (Verhoeven et al., 2007). Beyond physically desiring to view, touch, and fit the latest trends in shoe fashion (Li et al., 2018), customers require in-depth product information, physical examination, or personal advice in terms of expertise when looking for new shoes (J. Nijhof, personal communication, May 11, 2023). This is especially applicable to individuals who struggle with extra-wide feet or orthopaedic foot injuries (Otter et al., 2010; Tehan et al., 2019). Customers are forced to rely on staff members, in which customer trust is a key component (Ball et al., 2004; Guenzi et al., 2009; Woodside & Davenport, 1974). Research shows that customers draw conclusions about other individuals regarding their trustworthiness based on their clothing (Yan et al., 2011). Multiple studies found that staff appearances strongly affect customers' impressions in terms of information accuracy, quality and service expectations, customer satisfaction, and behavioural and purchase intentions (Bashir & Rule, 2014; Bitner, 1990; Shao et al., 2004; Yan et al., 2011). Clothing may highlight a wearer's unique characteristics, such as gender, faith, social orientation, or in this context, the level of expertise the staff member possesses (Hoodfar, 2003). Formal clothing, as stated by Molloy (1988), plays a significant part in altering an individual's perception towards another individual, which has a strong association with authority, as described by Cialdini (2016). According to Cho (2001), customers seem to assume that staff members who are dressed formally have the qualities that go along with this kind of style, such as professionalism, trustworthiness, and expertise. In comparison, informal staff appearance is strongly associated with the creativity and friendliness of the staff members (Cardon & Okoro, 2009). Nevertheless, the literature remains unclear when it comes to the preferred style of staff appearance in a physical footwear store and will therefore be further investigated.

This field study aims to study the combined effects of scent and staff appearance on customers' impressions and store experiences in footwear retail, moderated by customers' different shopping orientations. Based on the concept of congruence, combining leather scent with formal staff appearance may interact and strengthen one another (Macinnis & Park, 1991; Roy & Singh, 2023), creating a cohesive and luxurious ambience and reinforcing the perceived quality and expertise impression of the store, in particular for utilitarian-oriented

customers. On the other hand, a floral scent combined with an informal staff appearance may portray a sense of pleasure and enjoyment, aligning with a pleasurable store experience, especially for hedonistic-oriented customers. Next to measuring the impacts on customers' impressions and store experiences, the effect on sales figures and loyalty intentions in footwear will be measured. With a 2 x 2 experimental research design, this study aims to answer the following research question:

Central research question

"To what extent does exposure to scent (leather vs. floral scent) in combination with staff appearance (formal vs. informal appearance) impact customers' impressions and affect store experiences in a physical footwear store?"

Theoretical contributions

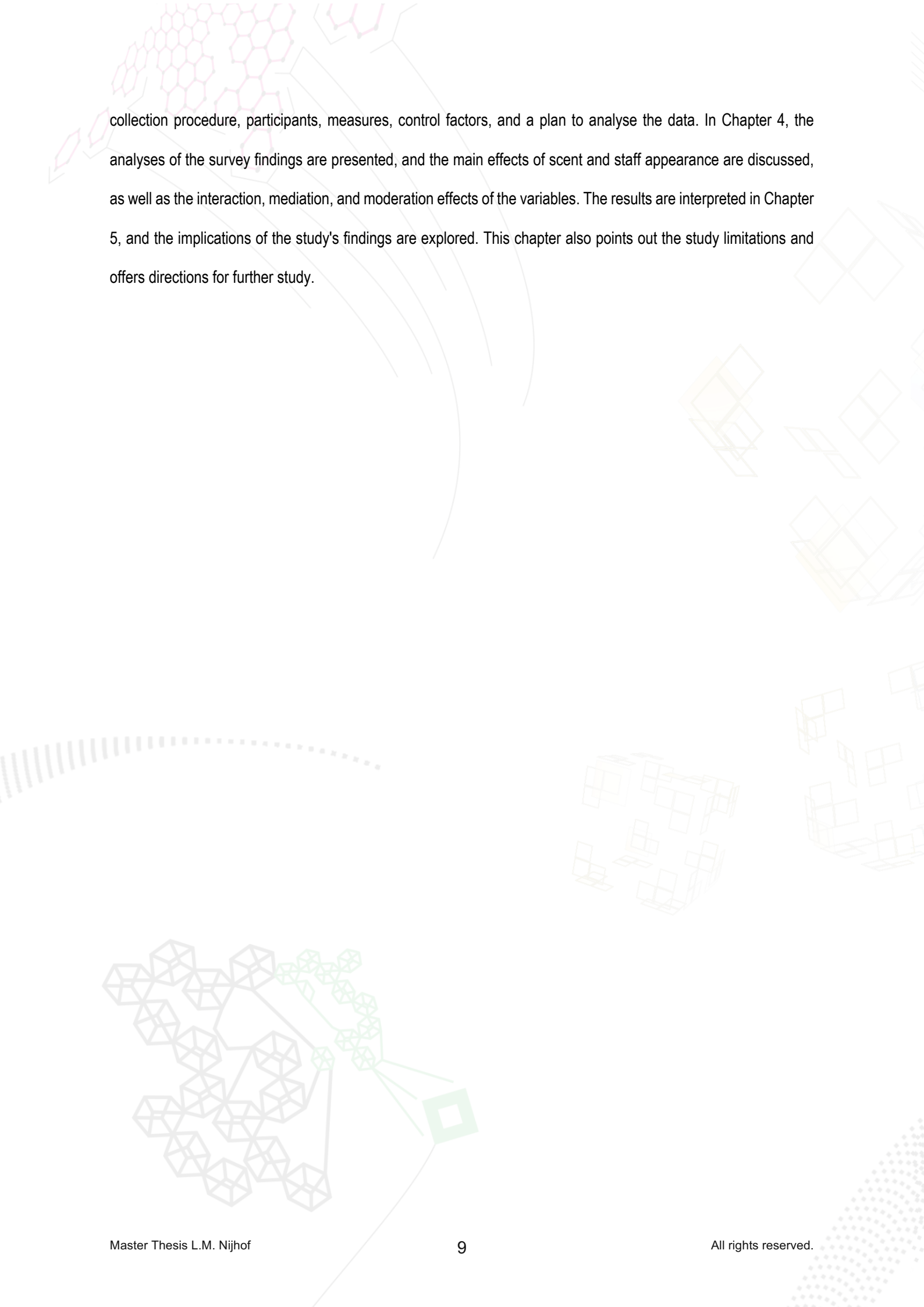
This study contributes to the literature by highlighting the current research gap concerning scent congruency (leather vs. floral scent) while at the same time understanding footwear customers' preferences in staff appearance (formal vs. informal). Although the importance of environmental cues in service environments has been widely acknowledged, the literature is unclear in terms of understanding the impacts and interplay between ambient scent and staff appearance for different shopping orientations, especially in physical footwear stores.

Managerial contributions

From a managerial perspective, footwear retailers that aim to enhance store experiences can benefit greatly from the insights obtained from this study. By comparing different combinations of cues in retail and understanding how the interplay between scents and staff appearance impacts utilitarian and hedonic shoppers, retailers may advantage by effectively tailoring their strategies to meet the various demands and preferences of their customers (Kaltcheva & Weitz, 2006), eventually enhancing the store experience, driving customer loyalty, and increasing retail sales (Baker et al., 2020).

Report structure

The structure of this study will be as follows. The second chapter of this report provides the theoretical framework, reviewing existing literature on store experiences, customers' shopping orientations, and the effect of ambient scent and staff appearance on consumer impressions and store experiences. The research methodology is described in the third chapter, and covers the research design and context, the materials, the pre-test of the stimuli, the data



collection procedure, participants, measures, control factors, and a plan to analyse the data. In Chapter 4, the analyses of the survey findings are presented, and the main effects of scent and staff appearance are discussed, as well as the interaction, mediation, and moderation effects of the variables. The results are interpreted in Chapter 5, and the implications of the study's findings are explored. This chapter also points out the study limitations and offers directions for further study.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 STORE EXPERIENCES

Scholars have been studying how different aspects of service environments impact customer decision-making ever since the term *atmospherics* entered the literature (Kotler, 1973), incorporating elements to improve store experiences and increase sales (Hagtvedt & Chandukala, 2023). By nature, service environments and customer perceptions about them are multi-sensory (Douc e & Adams, 2020), making shopping at retail stores a holistic experience where customers are simultaneously exposed to a variety of sensory cues (Spence et al., 2014). Kotler (1973, p. 50) defined *atmospherics* as “the effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhance his purchase probability”. Prior studies in traditional retailing have mostly emphasized customers’ interactions with other customers, *atmospherics*, staff, and integrating technology in the environment (Baker et al., 2020; Bitner, 1992; Kotler, 1973; Pijls et al., 2019; Pizam & Tasci, 2019). Studies have described and classified service environments in a variety of ways. Berman and Evans (1995) classified *atmospherics* into four groups, including the store’s interior, exterior, design elements and layout, and factors related to the point-of-purchase. Building on that classification, Turley and Milliman (2000) added the fifth category of human values, focusing on the impact of retail staff on customers’ purchasing experiences and decisions. As this present study focuses on the store experience in a physical footwear store, it builds on the typology by Baker et al. (2020), which encompasses ambient factors (relating to background stimuli, and in this study ambient scent), design factors (including visual elements like colours and layout, which are not used in this study), and social factors (concerning the interactions between customers and staff members and in this study the appearance of staff).

Environmental psychology (Spangenberg et al., 1996) uses the Stimulus-Organism Response (S-O-R) model by Russell and Mehrabian (1977) to explain how elements in the physical store environment affect store experiences. The S-O-R model describes how the environment serves as stimuli (S) that can cause a human (O) to act or feel in a certain way (R), depending on their internal feelings. People’s feelings of pleasure, arousal, and dominance (PAD model) are influenced by environmental stimuli that are subconsciously or consciously perceived and processed (Russell & Mehrabian, 1977). These subjective emotions influence responses, commonly referred to as approach or avoidance behaviour (Russell & Mehrabian, 1974). A positive response to the stimuli is called approach behaviour, in which someone prefers to explore and stay longer in the environment, revisit the store, and

eventually spend money. The counterpart is called avoidance behaviour, referring to a negative reaction to the stimuli and feeling the need to leave the environment, spending no money, and not revisiting the store. Based on existing literature, it is expected that positive evaluation of the store experience results in approach behaviour, favourably impacting sales figures and customer loyalty in a footwear store, resulting in the following hypothesis:

H1 (+): A positive store experience in a physical footwear store will increase a) the sales and b) the customer loyalty intentions of the physical footwear store.

2.2 SHOPPING ORIENTATION

Store experiences may vary depending on the person's shopping orientation when entering a footwear store. It makes a difference whether a person enters a store with the determination to make a purchase, like buying new shoes, or intends to socialize with staff members or other customers and explore the new footwear collection (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003). These different orientations might impact customers' impressions and affect the store experience in a physical footwear store. The literature distinguishes utilitarian and hedonic shopping orientations to define different shopping orientations (Babin et al., 1994; Babin & Darden, 1995).

2.2.1 Hedonic shopping orientation

The value derived from pleasure in store experiences is known as a hedonic shopping orientation (Babin et al., 1994; Harris et al., 2018) and refers to the emotional elements of the store experience that are conveyed through fun, feelings, and imagination (Babin & Attaway, 2000). Purchases that are hedonistic-driven originate from pleasure and enjoyment instead of work fulfilment. Hedonistic-oriented footwear customers are immersed in the environment and look for the latest trends to satisfy their pleasurable needs (Babin et al., 1994; Li et al., 2018). Buying shoes may be an outcome of the store experience, although it may not have been the initial goal when entering the footwear store (Babin et al., 1994).

2.2.2 Utilitarian shopping orientation

In addition to viewing, touching, and fitting the latest trends in shoe fashion, which are characteristics of hedonistic-oriented customers (Li et al., 2018), other customers have a utilitarian shopping orientation when entering the footwear store and are rather concerned about the functionality of the product than, e.g., the appearance of the

product (Babin et al., 1994). For example, they might require in-depth product information, physical examination, or personal advice in terms of expertise when looking for new shoes. Shopping with a utilitarian orientation can result in more cognitive and task-driven outcomes since it represents the efficient acquisition of goods as well as information (Babin et al., 1994; Babin & Darden, 1995). Individuals with more problematic feet, e.g., rheumatoid arthritis, find it challenging to select appropriate shoes that reduce their symptoms because of structural change and foot pain (Otter et al., 2010; Tehan et al., 2019). Even though it has been demonstrated that people with troubled feet benefit from wearing specialized therapeutic footwear, these shoes are frequently not considered to be the most fashionable items. These customers prefer to continue purchasing at the standard brick-and-mortar retailer (Tehan et al., 2019; Williams et al., 2007).

Expertise impressions

Numerous research works have examined the role of expertise in building store experiences, which is in particular important for the utilitarian shopper (Babin et al., 1994). If a staff member is able to solve a long-standing foot issue by providing detailed advice, demonstrating knowledge and skills, and suggesting the right product or shoe brand, which are all important aspects for utilitarian-driven customers (Babin et al., 1994), customers' impressions of expertise may be the result. Expertise, which derives from the source credibility theory, refers to a person's capacity to professionally evaluate a product (Ohanian, 1990). J. Cho et al. (2009, p. 3752) defined expertise as "the extent to which a source is perceived as being capable of providing correct information." Additionally, gaining competence and expertise involves extensive engagement and a high degree of familiarity and knowledge with the product (Ohanian, 1990; Saleem & Hawkins, 2021). According to a study by Happ et al. (2021) on the store experience in sports retail stores, customers want their own opinions to be supported by a sales specialist. This research shows that cognitive stimuli, e.g., strong and convincing arguments, may emphasize the retailers' skills and experience in the mind of the customer, which eventually may lead to an improved store experience. A study by Barnes et al. (2016) explored the role of staff competence and expertise in a grocery store and found that increased customers' impressions of expertise can create higher levels of pleasure, positively contributing to the amount of money that was spent. Building on the work of Barnes et al. (2016), this study hypothesises the following:

H2 (+): Higher expertise impressions positively affect a) the pleasurable experience and b) generate sales in a physical footwear store.

2.3 AMBIENT SCENT

Over the years, multiple studies have explored the significance of scent on store experiences and behavioural responses. According to a global study on sensory marketing, scent impacts the store experience (Moore, 2019), positively impacting the amount of time and money customers are willing to spend when the scent is perceived as pleasant (Bosmans, 2006; Madzharov et al., 2015; Spangenberg et al., 2006). Herz and Engen (1996) explain that processing scent takes place in a primitive area of the human brain in comparison to other sensory inputs. Consequently, increasing customers' alertness, improving the store experience, and encouraging successful purchases require minimal to no cognitive effort (Fitzgerald Bone & Scholder Ellen, 1999).

Roschk et al. (2017) suggested that the presence of a pleasurable scent resulted in increased levels of enjoyment, satisfaction, and behavioural intention. However, managers should consider the congruence of stimuli and align the pleasant scent with the retail environment, otherwise, the stimuli could have negative impacts on the store experience (Roschk et al., 2017). Ambient scents that are semantically congruent to the evaluated products can favourably influence product evaluations, variety seeking, and expenditure (Bosmans, 2006; Madzharov et al., 2015; Spangenberg et al., 2006). Congruity is an often-used concept in marketing literature to describe how well a cue complements other marketing stimuli (Macinnis & Park, 1991; Roy & Singh, 2023). Semantic congruence refers to how two or more sensory stimuli meanings are related and explain one another (Krishna et al., 2010). For example, selling Christmas accessories and playing Christmas music in the background in order to enhance the Christmas ambience of the store. In this context, semantic congruence takes place through the product category (shoes) and the scent (the smell of leather). A leather scent is often associated with quality (Arboleda et al., 2017) or considered luxurious by customers (Goldberg, 2022).

On the other hand, Spangenberg et al. (1996) found that as long as a scent was regarded as neutral or pleasant by the customer in the retail environment, the type of scent was irrelevant. The study considered the effect on store evaluations and the approach and avoidance behaviours of students in a simulated store environment. A particular neurological connection between the nerve responsible for smell and the emotional memory part of the brain may explain this finding (Herz, 2004). As a result, when applied in-store, these memory associations may induce positive emotions and result in an improved and pleasurable store experience (Fitzgerald Bone & Scholder Ellen, 1999). Goldberg (2022) explored multiple categories of pleasant scents in high-end fashion stores, including

earthy, fruity, fresh, and floral scents. A pleasant scent might make customers feel unique and important, especially in a high-end clothing business (Goldberg, 2022). The scent of flowers is universally perceived as enjoyable and pleasant across individuals and cultures, regardless of the context (Gulas & Bloch, 1995). Strong sensory connections with prior pleasant experiences, such as learned associations of flowers, may play a role in creating feeling of happiness that flowers elicit, such as romance and festivities, where flowers have an important role (Huss et al., 2018). Autobiographical memory is triggered by sensory cues, like a floral scent, which forms a web of happy memories based on prior interactions with flowers (Nelson & Fivush, 2004). Flowers influence customers' impressions and allow people to engage with the environment (Huss et al., 2018). For instance, a study by Hirsch (1990) found that when customers tried on sneakers in a room with mixed floral scents as opposed to an unscented one, their buying intentions increased, and participants demonstrated a stronger readiness to spend money.

The literature is inconsistent when it comes to the role of scent congruency and its impact on customers. Since research shows that the congruence of scent between the product category and retail environment is crucial to favourably impacting the customer's experience (Bosmans, 2006; Leenders et al., 2019), this study compares the effect of leather scent (semantically congruent with footwear) with a floral scent (semantically incongruent with footwear). In line with Arboleda et al. (2017) and Goldberg (2022), this study anticipates that leather scent creates a luxurious and higher-quality atmosphere, thereby enhancing customers' expertise impressions. On the other hand, it is expected that the floral scent increases feelings of happiness (Nelson & Fivush, 2004), resulting in a pleasurable store experience among footwear customers (Fitzgerald Bone & Scholder Ellen, 1999).

H3 (+): Leather scent positively affects customers' expertise impressions in a physical footwear store compared to floral scent. (*main effect scent*)

H4 (+): Floral scent positively affects customers' pleasurable experience in a physical footwear store compared to leather scent. (*main effect scent*)

2.4 STAFF APPEARANCE

Next to the importance of ambient scent on the store experience of customers, staff members are a vital component as they perform the service or take actions to let the product work. As a result, the interactions between customers and staff members are of high importance (Verhoeven et al., 2007; Wilson et al., 2006). According to Rosenfeld and Plax (1977), clothing serves a variety of communication functions and has an impact on nonverbal behaviour. Clothing may emphasize a person's distinctive qualities, such as their gender, profession, or social orientation (Hoodfar, 2003), but also a staff member's trustworthiness and degree of sophistication (Yan et al., 2011).

Several studies have looked at how staff appearance affects customers' impressions and behavioural intentions. Bitner (1990) discovered that a chaotic setting with a staff member dressed less than professionally negatively affects customer satisfaction when an issue in service delivery takes place. Shao et al. (2004) illustrated that exposure to staff members in appropriate clothes (vs. inappropriate) increased the quality expectations and purchase intentions of customers. Moreover, findings from Yan et al. (2011) demonstrated that the formality of a sales representative's attire favourably affects customers' expectations for service and their thoughts of the store as a whole. In a study on perceived information accuracy, Bashir and Rule (2014) found that the sender's information was perceived more accurately when he or she was dressed in red as opposed to blue or white.

According to Sebastian and Bristow (2008), formal attire also has a significant impact on how individuals are treated. Molloy (1988) claimed that a man with a suit has a higher chance of earning respect and obedience compared to a man without one, strongly referring to authority, as explained by Cialdini (2016). Cialdini (2016) showed how people tend to follow figures of authority, referring to highly influential individuals, e.g., the leader of a dictatorship or a hierarchical boss. The use of titles like "doctor," wearing uniforms or suits, and staff appearance can all be used to influence and persuade customers. Considering this in the context of footwear retail, titles such as "Senior Footwear Specialist," "Expert in Therapeutic Feet," and "Head of Product Quality" may act as a persuading factor. Cho (2001) argues that customers tend to infer that staff members who are dressed formally possess the attributes associated with this type of style, such as professionalism, trustworthiness, and creating customers' expertise impressions. Contrarily, staff members' friendliness and creativity have a stronger association with their informal staff look (Cardon & Okoro, 2009) and can be more easily linked to pleasure and relaxation, creating customers' pleasurable experiences. It is interesting to find out whether the level of formality in

the staff's appearance, including title and name tags, affects customers' impressions and impacts the store experience. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H5 (+): Formal staff appearance positively affects customer' expertise impressions in a physical footwear store compared to informal staff appearance. (*main effect staff appearance*)

H6 (+): Informal staff appearance positively affects customer' pleasurable experience in a physical footwear store compared to formal staff appearance. (*main effect staff appearance*)

2.4.1 Customer trust as mediator

Without any credibility and trustworthiness, a staff member's advice or skills can easily be called into question, decreasing the expertise impression among customers (Ohanian, 1990). Customer trust is an important component in creating higher levels of expertise, as customers have to rely on the skilled consultancy and professional opinion of the sales representative (Ball et al., 2004; Guenzi et al., 2009; Woodside & Davenport, 1974). The concept of customer trust is often reviewed as multidimensional, including both affective and cognitive characteristics (Nosi et al., 2022). Moorman et al. (1992, p. 315) defined the concept as "a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence." Building on that definition, Sirdeshmukh et al. (2002, p. 17) described customer trust as "the expectations held by the consumer that the service provider is dependable and can be relied on to deliver on its promises." As described by Cho (2001), individuals who are formally dressed are perceived by others as having traits associated with this style, including professionalism and trustworthiness, which are important aspects of developing customers' expertise impressions. This study expects that customer trust mediates the relationship between formal staff appearance and expertise impressions since formal staff appearance will lead to higher levels of customer trust, and in turn, expertise impressions. As a result, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H7 (+): Formal staff appearance will lead to higher levels of customer trust and, in turn, expertise impressions compared to informal staff appearance. (*mediation*)

2.5 INTERACTION EFFECT SCENT AND STAFF APPEARANCE

This study combines formal staff appearance with leather scent and expects an interaction effect. Since store experiences are perceived as a holistic experience where customers are simultaneously exposed to a variety of sensory cues, one particular sensory stimulus could be strengthened by interacting with another atmospheric stimulus (Spence et al., 2014). Studies on the effects of multisensory interactions in atmospherics indicate that congruency between various cues is necessary for a favorable effect. Consequently, retailers may benefit and draw the conclusion that incorporating more atmospheric stimuli into the store will keep improving customer reactions, provided that the stimuli are congruent with one another (Doucé & Adams, 2020). Based on the concept of congruence, combining leather scent with formal staff appearance may strengthen one another (Macinnis & Park, 1991; Roy & Singh, 2023), creating a luxurious and quality ambience (Arboleda et al., 2017; Goldberg, 2022), and positively enhancing the expertise impression of footwear customers. The effect will be compared with the interaction effect of informal staff appearance and floral scent. The floral scent is incongruent with the product category of the footwear store, but when combined with the informal staff appearance, both stimuli are hypothesised to communicate a sense of enjoyment and pleasure in the impression formation process (Huss et al., 2018), enhancing the pleasurable experience of customers in the footwear store. This study hypothesizes:

H8 (+): The combined effect of leather scent and formal staff appearance (congruent to each other) positively affects a) customer' expertise impressions and b) leads to an improved store experience in a physical footwear store compared to combining incongruent stimuli. (*interaction effect*)

H9 (+): The combined effect of floral scent and informal staff appearance (congruent to each other) positively affects a) customers' pleasurable experience and b) leads to an improved store experience in a physical footwear store compared to combining incongruent stimuli. (*interaction effect*)

2.6 SHOPPING ORIENTATION AS MODERATOR

It is hypothesized that the main effect of leather scent, the main effect of formal staff appearance, and the interaction effect of both stimuli will be stronger for utilitarian-driven customers, who look for expertise when buying shoes, compared to hedonistic-driven customers. On the other hand, it is expected that the main effect of floral scent, the main effect of informal staff appearance, and these stimuli combined will create a stronger positive effect for

hedonistic-driven customers in the footwear retail store who look for a pleasurable experience, compared to utilitarian-driven customers. This study hypothesizes:

H10 (+): Shopping orientation moderates the relationship between leather scent and customers' expertise impressions, creating a stronger effect for utilitarian-oriented customers compared to hedonistic-oriented customers. (*moderation effect*)

H11 (+): Shopping orientation moderates the relationship between formal staff appearance and customers' expertise impressions, creating a stronger effect for utilitarian-oriented customers compared to hedonistic-oriented customers. (*moderation effect*)

H12(+): Shopping orientation moderates the relationship between floral scent and the customers' pleasurable experience, creating a stronger effect for hedonistic-oriented customers compared to utilitarian-oriented customers. (*moderation effect*)

H13(+): Shopping orientation moderates the relationship between informal staff appearance and the customers' pleasurable experience, creating a stronger effect for hedonistic-oriented customers compared to utilitarian-oriented customers. (*moderation effect*)

H14 (+): Shopping orientation moderates the relationship between the interaction effect of leather scent with formal staff appearance and customer' expertise impressions, creating a stronger effect for utilitarian-oriented customers compared to hedonistic-oriented customers. (*moderation effect*)

H15 (+): Shopping orientation moderates the relationship between the interaction effect of floral scent with informal staff appearance and the customers' pleasurable experience, creating a stronger effect for hedonistic- oriented customers compared to utilitarian-oriented customers. (*moderation effect*)

2.7 CONCEPTUAL MODEL & HYPOTHESES

In Figure 2.1, a visual representation of all the variables, moderators, mediators, and corresponding hypotheses is provided by the conceptual model. In Table 2.1, all hypotheses have been summarized.

Figure 2.1
Conceptual Model

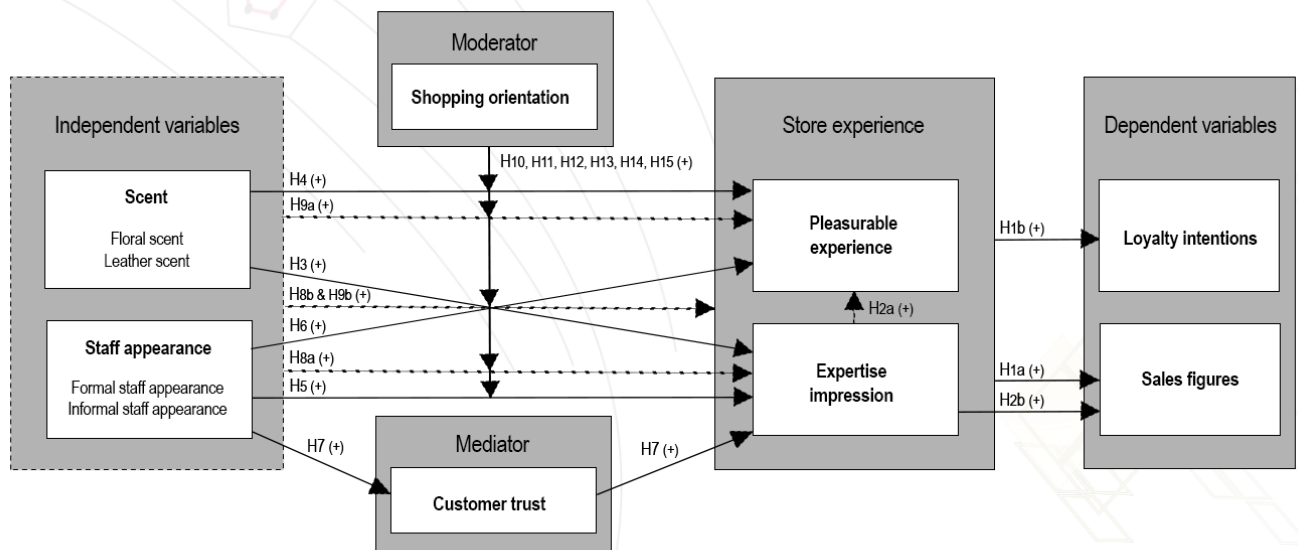


Table 2.1
Hypotheses Overview

Hypotheses	
H1a (+)	A positive store experience in a physical footwear store will increase the sales of the physical footwear store.
H1b (+)	A positive store experience in a physical footwear store will increase the customer loyalty intentions of the physical footwear store.
H2a (+)	Higher expertise impressions positively affect the pleasurable experience in a physical footwear store.
H2b (+)	Higher expertise impressions generate sales in a physical footwear store.
H3 (+)	Leather scent positively affects customers' expertise impressions in a physical footwear store compared to floral scent. (main effect scent)
H4 (+)	Floral scent positively affects customers' pleasurable experience in a physical footwear store compared to leather scent. (main effect scent)
H5 (+)	Formal staff appearance positively affects customer' expertise impressions in a physical footwear store compared to informal staff appearance. (main effect staff appearance)
H6 (+)	Informal staff appearance positively affects customer' pleasurable experience in a physical footwear store compared to formal staff appearance. (main effect staff appearance)
H7 (+)	Formal staff appearance will lead to higher levels of customer trust and, in turn, expertise impressions compared to informal staff appearance. (mediation)

H8a (+)	The combined effect of leather scent and formal staff appearance (congruent to each other) positively affects customer' expertise impressions in a physical footwear store compared to combining incongruent stimuli. (interaction effect)
H8b (+)	The combined effect of leather scent and formal staff appearance (congruent to each other) leads to an improved store experience in a physical footwear store compared to combining incongruent stimuli. (interaction effect)
H9a (+)	The combined effect of floral scent and informal staff appearance (congruent to each other) positively affects customers' pleasurable experience in a physical footwear store compared to combining incongruent stimuli. (interaction effect)
H9b (+)	The combined effect of floral scent and informal staff appearance (congruent to each other) leads to an improved store experience in a physical footwear store compared to combining incongruent stimuli. (interaction effect)
H10 (+)	Shopping orientation moderates the relationship between leather scent and customers' expertise impressions, creating a stronger effect for utilitarian-oriented customers compared to hedonistic-oriented customers. (<i>moderation effect</i>)
H11 (+)	Shopping orientation moderates the relationship between formal staff appearance and customers' expertise impressions, creating a stronger effect for utilitarian-oriented customers compared to hedonistic-oriented customers. (<i>moderation effect</i>)
H12 (+)	Shopping orientation moderates the relationship between floral scent and the customers' pleasurable experience, creating a stronger effect for hedonistic-oriented customers compared to utilitarian-oriented customers. (<i>moderation effect</i>)
H13 (+)	Shopping orientation moderates the relationship between informal staff appearance and the customers' pleasurable experience, creating a stronger effect for hedonistic-oriented customers compared to utilitarian-oriented customers. (<i>moderation effect</i>)
H14 (+)	Shopping orientation moderates the relationship between the interaction effect of leather scent with formal staff appearance and customer' expertise impressions, creating a stronger effect for utilitarian-oriented customers compared to hedonistic-oriented customers. (<i>moderation effect</i>)
H15 (+)	Shopping orientation moderates the relationship between the interaction effect of floral scent with informal staff appearance and the customers' pleasurable experience, creating a stronger effect for hedonistic-oriented customers compared to utilitarian-oriented customers. (<i>moderation effect</i>)

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study examined the combined effects of scent and staff appearance on the store experience in a physical footwear store, moderated by different shopping orientations. A 2 (leather vs. floral scent) x 2 (formal vs. informal staff appearance) experimental research design was selected for this study. Furthermore, this field study investigated the mediating role of customer trust in creating expertise impressions within the footwear store. The different combinations of cues have been compared to better understand how the interplay between scents and staff appearance impacts the different shopping orientations, eventually enhancing the store experience, driving customer loyalty, and increasing retail sales.

The experiment took place in two different but similar weeks. Participants in the first week of the experiment experienced the entire week leather scent with alterations to staff appearance from day to day, starting with formal staff appearance on Monday and ending with informal staff appearance on Saturday. During the second week of the experiment, participants were confronted with a floral scent in combination with staff members dressed informally and formally. This week, the staff appearance condition started with an informal appearance on Monday and ended with staff members dressed formally on Saturday. By doing so, the participants have either been confronted with formal or informal-dressed staff members. Between both weeks, there was one week in between, to have more equivalent weeks. In total, four different conditions were tested, which are illustrated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
Schedule for the Experimental Research Design

Day of the week	Experiment week 1 Week 46 - 2023	Week 2 Week 47 - 2023	Experiment week 3 Week 48 - 2023
Monday	Leather scent, formal appearance	No cues	Floral scent, informal appearance
Tuesday	Leather scent, informal appearance	No cues	Floral scent, formal appearance
Wednesday	Leather scent, formal appearance	No cues	Floral scent, informal appearance
Thursday	Leather scent, informal appearance	No cues	Floral scent, formal appearance
Friday	Leather scent, formal appearance	No cues	Floral scent, informal appearance
Saturday	Leather scent, informal appearance	No cues	Floral scent, formal appearance

3.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT

The context of the experiment concerned a physical footwear store named Nijhof Schoenen, which is located in Hengelo, the Netherlands. With over 800 m² of shopping space and 20 staff members, Nijhof has been a trusted name in the region for more than 90 years in terms of comfortable and fashionable footwear. The store has a broad assortment for woman, men, and kids and focuses primarily on service and comfort when buying shoes (J. Nijhof, personal communication, May 11, 2023).

3.3 MATERIALS

A scent machine has been used to evoke a floral scent within the footwear store. Since the smell of leather was already clearly present in the footwear store (J. Nijhof, personal communication, May 11, 2023), the stimulus required no reinforcement. The scent diffusers were borrowed from a company named Aemster. The Amsterdam-based business is a global leader in technology and innovations in air diffusers and scent systems, as well as scent marketing. Aemster provides a variety of outstanding scent options to improve various environments and retail settings (R. Hoogerwerf, personal communication, September 14, 2023). Two strategically placed scent diffusers were used within the store to completely cover the retail area in the field study. These cold air scent diffusers, known as “Bold stand-alone scent diffusers,” were placed in selected spots close to airflow sources, including the entrance of the store and air conditioning units, to ensure equal distribution of the floral scent. These diffusers rely on air pressure to function and provide a high-end scent experience with adaptable intensity by an app. Therefore, it provided precise and balanced scent distribution throughout the store. Before the experiment took place, a pre-test was first conducted, which is described in Section 3.4 of this chapter. In Figure 3.1, one scent diffuser is illustrated, situated in the footwear store.

Figure 3.1

Application Scent Diffuser in the Footwear store



The staff appearance stimulus concerned clothing, shoes, and a name and title tag. Based on an instruction video provided by the researcher, the staff members were able to select their clothing and shoes. The video also made it clear that employees should not behave or act differently when the study took place. Since environmental cues, including ambient factors (scent) and social factors (staff appearance), affect consumer behaviour (Baker et al., 2020) but also the behavioural responses of staff members (Bitner, 1992), this was addressed in the video. Formal and informal name and title tags were arranged by the researcher. By first pre-testing this condition, a clear difference between informal and formal staff appearance was assured. Figure 3.2 visualizes the staff appearance condition of the main study.

Figure 3.2

Stimulus Staff Appearance Condition Main study



3.4 STIMULI PRE-TEST

For this experimental design, a manipulation check was first executed to ensure the effectiveness of the stimuli. Five participants, who were selected based on convenience sampling (Stratton, 2021), took part in the pre-test. Their ages ranged from 24 to 69 and contained two male and three female participants. The pre-test consisted of survey questions that were constructed with Qualtrics Survey Software. The entire pre-test consisted of a number of 12 main questions, which can be found in Appendix 1.

3.4.1 Scent condition

First, the scent condition was pre-tested to check whether the cue manipulated the participants accurately and evoked the intended associations, starting with the floral scent. Participants could sniff at two floral scent samples supplied by Aemster, including the Cedar Cenote and the Floral Fiordland (R. Hoogerwerf, personal communication, September 14, 2023), and were asked to associate the scent freely. The aim was to measure the first associations when confronted with the scent. The findings of this part of the pre-test can be found in Table 3.2. The challenge of matching scent to a context or environment depends on the impression that people form based on their prior interactions with the scent (Arboleda et al., 2017; Herz & Engen, 1996). Therefore, the pre-test took place inside the store to ensure the stimuli manipulated the participants within the context of this study.

Table 3.2
Pre-test Results: Free Association

Participants	Cedar Cenote	Floral Fiordland	Leather scent
Participant 1	"Unpleasant scent. It smells like moss".	"Does not align with this store. Toilet smell."	"New leather goods (jacket, shoes)."
Participant 2	"Sweet forest scent".	"Smell of flowers."	"Natural products. Pleasant smell."
Participant 3	"Fruity smell, pleasant atmosphere."	"Lovely, clean environment. Friendliness, pleasant atmosphere."	"Typical smell for a shoe shop. Real leather fragrance."
Participant 4	"Natural objects/products."	"Pleasant scent. Perfume."	"Leather."
Participant 5	"Pervasive smell. Doesn't get very happy about it."	"Fine fragrance. Quite subtle. This does make me happy."	"Although it is a strong smell, it is appealing. I am thinking of new products."

Based on these findings, it was decided to continue with the Floral Fiordland scent sample in the pre-test since no participant associated the Cedar Cenote scent with the intended associations of a floral scent. Although one participant indicated that Floral Fiordland was associated with a toilet smell, no other significant results were mentioned in this part of the pre-test. Next, participants were asked to score their scent associations, focusing on the incongruence with the store and the level of pleasantness and happiness the floral scent evoked. By using a 5-point Likert scale, participants were asked to rate statements such as "I feel happy when encountered with this scent" on a scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree) (Sullivan & Artino, 2013).

The results in Table 3.3 provide an overview of the floral scent association pre-test, demonstrating the mean (M) and standard deviations (SD), indicating that the stimuli manipulated the participants accurately and the intended associations were evoked. The floral scent manipulation check ended with a number of questions measuring the scent intensity and pleasantness since an abundance of an (unpleasant) scent may negatively affect the results (Bosmans, 2006). Participants were first asked to score the intensity of the floral scent on a scale from 1 (not intense at all) to 5 (very intense) and were asked to rate statements like: “I had a strong sense of smell while at the store”, using a 5-point Likert scale (Sullivan & Artino, 2013). The results can be found in Table 3.5.

Table 3.3
Pre-test Results: Floral Scent Association

Floral scent association	M (SD)
Happiness	3.67 (1.140)
Pleasantness	4.40 (0.548)
Scent incongruence	3.40 (1.517)

The pre-test continued with the manipulation check of the leather scent. For this condition, participants were asked to sniff at two leather objects, including a belt and a shoe made of premium leather. The results of the free association are illustrated in Table 3.2 and show that participants identified the leather scent. Next, perceptions of high quality, luxury, and level of congruence between the leather scent and the store environment were pre-tested, measuring the intended associations by using a 5-point Likert scale. These questions were different from the floral scent association since this study hypothesized different associations for both scents. An example statement concerns: “When encountered with this scent, I think of luxury products.” The results are illustrated in Table 3.4 and demonstrate a high mean and moderate standard deviation, indicating that the stimuli manipulated the participants accurately and the intended associations were evoked.

Table 3.4
Pre-test Results: Leather Scent Association

Leather scent association	M (SD)
Luxury products	4.40 (0.548)
Scent congruence	4.80 (0.447)
High-quality perception	4.20 (0.837)
Quality and luxury goods	4.40 (0.548)

Additionally, the scent intensity and pleasantness of the leather scent were pre-tested (Bosmans, 2006). By using a 5-point Likert scale, the same questions about the scents' intensity and pleasantness as those related to the floral scent were asked in this section of the pre-test. These questions provided vital information about the perceived strength and perceived pleasantness of the scent within the context of physical footwear, enabling appropriate changes to conform to the planned scent experience. The results are summarized in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5

Pre-test Results: Scent Intensity and Pleasantness

	Floral scent M (SD)	Leather scent M (SD)
Scent intensity #1	2.40 (0.548)	3.20(0.837)
Scent intensity #2	3.24 (0.740)	4.00 (0.509)
Scent pleasantness	3.47 (1.044)	3.87 (0.517)

In the end, the purpose of the stimuli was explained to the participants, and their perceptions and ideas regarding the manipulations were taken into consideration. In general, no specific suggestions were made by the participants that should be added to the conditions. However, two participants warned about the intensity level of both scents, as they could easily become too much. This can also be concluded from the results in Table 3.5, showing a considerably high mean for both the floral (M =3.24, SD =.74) and leather scents (M =4.00, SD =.51). Therefore, it was of high importance to test the store environment once again a couple of days before the experiment started both with and without the scent diffusers, to imitate the same store environment as it would be in the field study.

The weekend before the experiment began, an additional pre-test was conducted. Five staff members of the footwear store were selected to participate, including two males and three females, ranging in age from 18 to 56 years old. Once more, intensity and pleasantness questions were asked to prevent an abundance of floral and leather scents within the footwear store. The results showed that the scent diffusers could easily become too abundant within the footwear store. One participant indicated that she got headaches from the floral scent, and two other participants indicated that it was overwhelming and just too much. Therefore, the number of seconds the diffusers operated (working time) decreased and the number of seconds the diffusers did not operate (stop time) increased. Eventually, a good balance was found with a working time of 10 seconds and a stop time of 150 seconds, which was used in the main study. The leather scent did not appear to be too intense and was perceived as pleasant by the participants.

3.4.2 Staff appearance condition

The pre-test continued with the staff appearance manipulation check, showing different photos to the participants of staff members who were dressed both formally and informally. Participants were first asked to assess the level of formality of the staff member in photos 1 and 2, which can be found in Figure 3.3. Based on a 5-point Likert scale, statements such as: “I perceive the appearance of the person in photo 1 as formal” and “I perceive the appearance of the person in photo 2 as formal” were asked on a scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree) (Sullivan & Artino, 2013). The results are shown in Table 3.6 and demonstrate a clear distinction in staff appearance between photos 1 and 2.

Figure 3.3

Pre-test: Staff Appearance Manipulation Photos 1 and 2



Table 3.6

Pre-test Results: Level of Formality

Level of formality	Photo 1 M (SD)	Photo 2 M (SD)
Formality of the staff appearance	4.60 (0.548)	2.00 (0.707)
Formality name/title tag	4.75 (0.500)	1.40 (0.548)
Formality colors of staff appearance	5.00 (0.000)	1.00 (0.000)

Moreover, formality associations were measured, focusing on perceptions of professionalism, trustworthiness, and level of expertise for the formal staff appearance. Associations concerning informally dressed staff members were measured by focusing on friendliness, creativity, and pleasantness. Photos 3 and 4, which are illustrated in Figure 3.4, have been used for the staff appearance association pre-test. Participants were asked to score their

associations on a 5-point Likert scale, including statements like: “The person in photo 3 looks professional”, and “The person in photo 4 looks professional.” The results are shown in Table 3.7 and demonstrate a clear distinction between the associations for formal and informal staff appearance.

However, the distinction between the friendliness ($M = 3.2$, $SD = 1.304$) and pleasantness ($M = 3.4$, $SD = 1.342$) of the formal staff appearance is considerable high in comparison with the informal staff appearance. Therefore, it was decided that staff members should only wear black clothing in the formal condition of the main study, and staff members were asked not to wear any (black) blazers or jackets in the informal condition. Eventually, the purpose of the stimuli was explained to the participants, and their perceptions and ideas regarding the manipulation were taken into account in order to enhance and strengthen the stimuli. Besides the suggestion to make the informal appearance less formal, no significant conclusions can be drawn from these results.

Figure 3.4

Pre-test: Staff Appearance Manipulation Photos 3 and 4

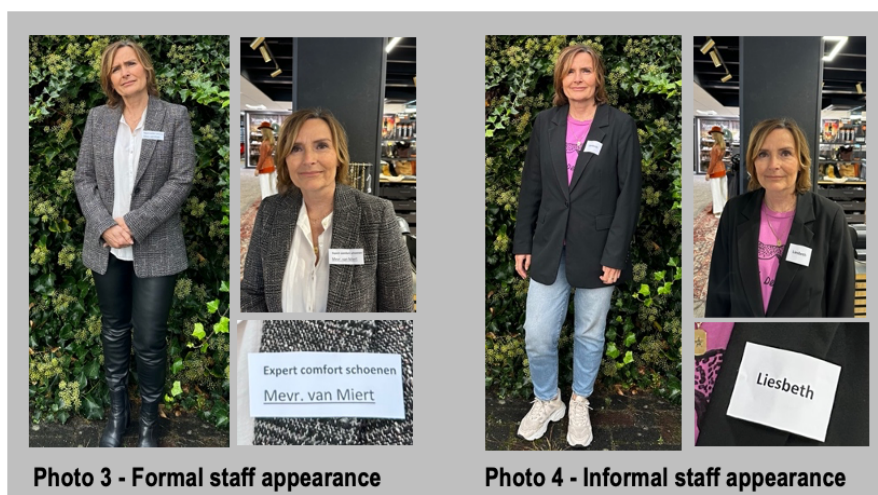


Table 3.7

Pre-test Results: Staff Appearance Formality Association

Staff appearance formality association	Photo 3 M (SD)	Photo 4 M (SD)
Professionalism	1.40 (0.894)	2.00 (1.414)
Trustworthiness	4.60 (0.548)	2.00 (1.225)
Level of expertise	4.60 (0.548)	1.80 (0.837)
Friendliness	3.20 (1.304)	3.60 (1.517)
Creativity	1.80 (1.304)	3.20 (1.643)
Pleasantness	3.40 (1.342)	3.20 (1.304)

3.5 PARTICIPANTS

In total, 363 participants gave their consent to take part in the field study. Participants younger than 18 years were excluded from the sampling procedure. In the event that customers returned after visiting the store for the first time, they could not participate in the study again. 10 responses were removed before data analysis as more than 20% of their answers were missing. The remaining 353 responses have been used for the data analysis. In Table 8, an overview of the distribution per gender and age group for each of the four conditions is visualized, including the percentage of participants who visited the footwear company before. Two participants have been excluded from Table 8, as one participant preferred not to reveal their gender and one participant forgot to fill out this question.

The average distribution between male (M =34.3%) and female participants (M =65.7%) is not equally spread over the conditions. This can be explained since Nijhof Schoenen's largest group of customers is female. Moreover, the number of participants within the age group of 57 years and older is on average considerably higher (M =42.1%) compared to the group between 18 and 24 years old (M =7.9%). As can be seen in Table 3.8, there were relatively more males in condition 4 compared to the other conditions. To test whether there is an equal spread in gender and age groups within the sample over the four conditions, a Pearson Chi-Square was conducted. Based on this test, it was decided to take gender as a covariate in the analysis.

Table 3.8
Demographic Factors per Condition

Manipulation	Leather scent		Floral scent	
	Condition 1 Leather + Formal N = 96	Condition 2 Leather + Informal N = 95	Condition 3 Floral + Informal N = 77	Condition 4 Floral + Formal N = 83
Gender				
Male	22.9%	34.7%	35.1%	44.6%
Female	77.1%	65.3%	64.9%	55.4%
Age group				
Between 18 and 24	8.3%	8.4%	7.8%	7.2%
Between 25 and 40	18.8%	16.8%	14.3%	19.3%
Between 41 and 56	30.2%	24.2%	36.4%	39.8%
57 and older	42.7%	50.5%	41.6%	33.7%
Shopping history				
% that shopped before at Nijhof	95.8%	92.6%	93.4%	91.6%

3.6 PROCEDURE

Qualtrics Survey Software was used to create the main study survey and can be found in Appendix 2 (English version) and Appendix 3 (Dutch version). To evaluate the validity of the research method, the survey was first pre-tested among five staff members of the footwear store. By using the think-aloud strategy, participants were asked to fill out the survey questions and discuss reading comprehension issues and ambiguities within the survey (Sudiati Sudiati et al., 2018). No specific reading comprehension issues or ambiguities resulted from the pre-test.

Shortly after the store experience, randomly selected customers were asked to participate in a customer satisfaction survey by the footwear store, in order to avoid bias. All participants in the four conditions received the same Dutch survey with the same questions, which could be answered digitally on an iPad. The participant was given a brief overview of the study and was informed that all data would be handled with confidentiality. This section served as a form of consent. When consent was granted, participants could proceed with the questions and complete the survey. After handing over the iPad to the participant, the researcher left the participant unattended, so the person could answer the questions in private and without interruptions.

3.7 MEASURES

Two research methods were selected, including a survey and observation of the sales figures, to measure the effects on customers' expertise impression, pleasurable experience, the store experience, sales figures, and eventually loyalty intentions in the physical footwear store.

3.7.1 Pleasurable experience and expertise impression

In this study, *pleasure* and *arousal* from the PAD model (Russell & Mehrabian, 1974) have only been used, in line with R. J. Donovan & Rossiter (1982). An official translation of the model was used for the translation of the scale from English to Dutch. *Pleasure* was measured with 4 items, including: 'I felt happy', 'I felt pleased', 'I felt satisfied', and 'I felt contented', which participants could answer by using a 5-point Likert scale (Sullivan & Artino, 2013). The reliability analysis of the construct showed a considerably high Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = .902$).

Arousal was measured with 2 items, including the statements: 'I felt stimulated' and 'I felt excited'. Since it was impossible to construct a reliable scale for the arousal variable with the four items ($\alpha = .374$), it was decided

to delete the items 'I felt relaxed' and 'I felt aroused', creating an acceptable *arousal* scale with Cronbach's alpha = .696. Participants used a 5-point Likert scale to assess the different statements (Sullivan & Artino, 2013).

Expertise impression was measured with four items, including the statements: 'I encountered high standards of footwear expertise', 'I experienced a high-quality service', 'I could sense that I was dealing with experts', and 'I experienced professionalism and competence'. This scale was based on survey questions related to the domain of interest using the same Likert scale (Sullivan & Artino, 2013). The reliability analysis for the *expertise impression* scale showed a considerably high internal consistency ($\alpha = .920$).

3.7.2 Store experience

Three different and independent scales have been used to assess the store experience of customers at the footwear store, including the (modified) PAD model (Russell & Mehrabian, 1974), an *Environmental Rating Scale* (ER-Scale), and by using a general rating on a scale of 1 to 10.

The *ER-Scale* was measured with five items, including: 'I find shopping at Nijhof Schoenen cosy', 'comfortable', 'accessible', 'inviting', and 'inspiring'. Although there are several distinct *ER-Scales*, no standardized survey could be found to evaluate a service environment. The questions in this study were created to allow measurement of environmental assessment using a 5-point Likert scale (Sullivan & Artino, 2013). The reliability analysis for the *ER-Scale* demonstrated a good result ($\alpha = .894$).

3.7.3 Shopping orientation

Shopping orientation upon entering the store was measured with only two items, including: 'Before entering Nijhof Schoenen, I had no idea what shoes I was looking for' and 'I directly knew what to buy (e.g., comfort shoes)'. The items are based on the utilitarian and hedonic shopping orientation scale from Babin et al. (1994) and were adapted to the context of the study. It was determined to eliminate the following items: 'I was excited and was looking forward to buying new shoes' and 'I felt little excitement or pleasure to buy new shoes', as it was impossible to create a reliable scale with the four items ($\alpha = .175$). With the remaining two items, a reliability analysis was performed. However, due to the moderate Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = .577$), a median split was executed on the construct, categorizing this moderating variable in two groups of customers (mean = 3.71, median = 4.00, standard deviation

=.94). Scoring high indicates that customers had a clear idea about what products they wanted to buy (e.g., comfort shoes), which is a characteristic of utilitarian-oriented customers. Scoring low on this scale shows that participants had no idea what they were looking for in terms of new shoes, which is a characteristic of hedonistic-oriented customers (Babin et al., 1994).

3.7.4 Customer trust

Customer trust was measured with 4 items, including: 'Nijhof Schoenen gives me a trustworthy impression', 'Nijhof Schoenen gives me a feeling of trust', 'Nijhof Schoenen only wants the best for me,' and 'Nijhof Schoenen gives me the feeling that I can count on the retailer.' The measurement was based on a multi-item trust scale constructed by De Wulf and Odekerken-Schröder (2003) and adapted to the retail context as well using a 5-point Likert scale (Sullivan & Artino, 2013). The *customer trust* construct showed a high degree of reliability, meaning that the intended items accurately measured the variable ($\alpha = .874$).

3.7.5 Loyalty intention

Loyalty intention was measured based on two items, including: 'I have the intention to visit Nijhof Schoenen again' and 'I would recommend Nijhof Schoenen to my friends and family'. These questions were based on a study by Sirohi et al. (1998). The reliability analysis for the *loyalty intention* scale also demonstrated high internal consistency ($\alpha = .891$).

3.7.6 Sales figures

Sales figures were measured by observing the daily turnover within the experiment. By comparing the *sales figures* of the footwear store between the weeks of the experiment with the *sales figures* of the same day a year earlier as a benchmark, the goal was to measure whether the conditions also impacted the sales in the footwear store. Table 3.9 provides a comprehensive overview of all variables and measures and summarizes the reliability analysis results.

Table 3.9

Variables, Measures, and level of Reliability

Independent variables	Dependent variables	Measures	Cronbach's Alpha (a) Reliability analysis
Leather scent Formal staff appearance	<i>Expertise impression</i>	Domain-related items.	Expertise impression a =.920
Floral scent Informal staff appearance	<i>Pleasurable experience</i>	PAD model (Russell & Mehrabian, 1974)	Pleasure a =.902 Arousal a =.696
Interaction effects scent and staff appearance	<i>Store experience</i>	PAD model (Russell & Mehrabian, 1974); Environmental Rating Scale (ER-Scale); General store experience.	ER-Scale a =.894
	<i>Sales figures</i>	Comparing sales figures between the weeks of the experiment and a year earlier.	N/A
	<i>Loyalty intentions</i>	Loyalty intentions (Sirohi et al., 1998)	Loyalty intentions a =.891
	Mediator <i>Customers' trust</i>	Multi-item trust scale (De Wulf & Odekerken-Schröder, 2003).	Customer' trust a =.874
	Moderator <i>Shopping orientation</i>	Utilitarian and hedonic shopping orientation scale (Babin et al., 1994).	N/A

3.8 CONTROL FACTORS

As this field study took place in a real physical footwear store, it was important to control the environment to the greatest extent possible. To avoid inaccuracies, biases, and ambiguous findings, this field study aimed to control other factors in the environment as much as possible (Teller & Dennis, 2012). Given the fact that there are both crowded and calm periods in the footwear store, the survey was taken at different times during the day. Although the initial schedule aimed for four surveys per hour each day, in practice, this was not possible. In Table 3.10, the social density levels per condition within the experiment are illustrated. When analysing the data, it is important to consider the significant differences in social density levels between the conditions, as crowding affects consumer behaviour (Baker et al., 2020; Schöniger & Adler, 2022).

Also, research has shown that in-store temperature, background music, and social density significantly affect the decision-making process of consumers (Baker et al., 2020; Schöniger & Adler, 2022). Consequently, this research controlled the environmental temperature in the store at 21°C. Also, the store exclusively played the music

of the radio station Sky Radio. However, Sky Radio transformed into the "Christmas station" during the second week of the data collection, playing nearly exclusively Christmas music. Consequently, the decision was made to switch from Sky Radio to Radio 10. When analysing the data, background music will need to be taken into account because research shows how it affects store experiences (Bitner, 1992).

Controlling the number of staff members in the store compared to the previous year was another goal. This could affect the flow of customers in the store and the amount of waiting time, potentially influencing both sales and customer emotions negatively because of prolonged wait times (Baker & Cameron, 1996). Moreover, staff members were also asked to wear no perfume during the field study, as this might interfere with the floral and leather scents (Spangenberg et al., 1996). Lastly, there were no additional promotional campaigns, like discount sale items, to prevent any difference in the number of customers in the store between weeks. Table 3.10 summarizes all variables that were aimed at being controlled.

Variations in the weather are known to significantly affect consumer behaviour, sales, and retailer profits (Tian et al., 2021). As a result, different weather conditions during the experiment have been logged, and large variations are taken into consideration when analysing the data. The first week of the experiment is marked by erratic weather with rainfall and wind nearly every day, along with cloudy and gloomy days with an average temperature of 8 degrees over the entire week. In contrast, the weather showed different conditions during the second week of data collection. In addition to being substantially colder, averaging just one degree above freezing, it was mostly covered in snow. While week 1 can be better described as a typical autumnal week, week 2 can be classified as a classic winter week.

Table 3.10
Overview in-store Social Density Levels and Control Variables

Condition	Number of buying customers	Control variables
1. Leather scent and formal staff appearance	109	<i>In-store temperature: 21°C</i>
2. Leather scent and informal staff appearance	150	<i>Sound: Sky Radio/Radio 10</i>
3. Floral scent and informal staff appearance	83	No perfume for staff members
4. Floral scent and formal staff appearance	123	No promotional campaign
Leather scent	259	<i>Number of staff members:</i>
Floral scent	206	Monday-Friday 5/6 and Saturday 8/9
Formal staff appearance	232	
Informal staff appearance	233	

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS PLAN

In Chapter 4, the data is analysed and the results of this field study are discussed. The statistical software that is used for the data analysis concerns SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). SPSS is commonly used among social science and behavioural researchers (DeCoster & Claypool, 2004). Statistical analyses of the main and interaction effects are first performed, starting with Wilk's Lambda test in the multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). To support the hypotheses, a test of the between-subject design effect takes place to analyse whether there are significant variations in the dependent variables between the different conditions. Moreover, descriptive statistics are elaborated, including the mean and standard deviations, which are useful in characterizing the central tendency and distribution of the dataset. Additionally, the mediating role of customer trust and the moderating effect of shopping orientation are clarified by executing a MANOVA. Next, correlation and regression analyses are performed to test the remaining unanswered hypotheses. The sales data is ultimately examined and conclusions can be drawn from it. A summary of the findings from testing the hypotheses is shown at the end of the chapter.

4. RESULTS

The effects of scent and staff appearance on customer trust, expertise impressions, pleasure, the store experience, and ultimately loyalty intentions were first examined using a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). To investigate the overall relationships between the independent variables and the various dependent variables, a Wilk's Lambda analysis was conducted. The results of Wilk's Lambda analysis in Table 4.1 show no significant main effect of both scent, staff appearance, or the interaction effect on the combined dependent variables.

Table 4.1

Multivariate Tests: Scent and Staff Appearance

	Independent variable	Λ-Value	F-value	Sig.
Wilk's Lambda test	Scent	.970	1.424	.195
	Staff Appearance	.963	1.781	.090
	Scent * Staff Appearance	.966	1.646	.122

4.1 MAIN EFFECTS SCENT

Table 4.2 summarizes the descriptive statistics on customer trust, expertise impression, pleasure, the store experience, and loyalty intentions. Table 4.3 demonstrates the results of the test of the between-subject design effects, indicating no significant differences between the groups who were exposed to the floral or leather. In line with the MANOVA, scent was not found to have a significant main effect on any of the dependent variables. Therefore, hypotheses 3 and 4 on the main effects of scent can be rejected.

Table 4.2

Summary Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) for the Scent Condition

	Floral scent (N =161)		Leather scent (N =192)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Customer trust	4.24	.539	4.21	.588
Expertise impression	4.30	.559	4.27	.629
Store experience				
- Pleasure (from PAD)	3.91	.567	3.90	.615
- Arousal (from PAD)	2.59	.930	2.43	.880
- ER-Scale	4.13	.510	4.10	.551
-General store experience	8.76	.851	8.81	.902
Loyalty intentions	4.45	.564	4.54	.576

Table 4.3*Test of the Between-Subject Design Effect for the Scent Condition*

Independent variable	Dependent variable	F-value	Sig.
Floral and leather scent	<i>Customer trust</i>	.352	.554
	<i>Expertise impression</i>	.461	.498
	<i>Store experience</i>		
	- <i>Pleasure (from PAD)</i>	.089	.765
	- <i>Arousal (from PAD)</i>	3.148	.077
	- <i>ER-Scale</i>	.238	.626
	- <i>General store experience</i>	.053	.818
	<i>Loyalty intentions</i>	1.825	.178

4.2 MAIN EFFECTS STAFF APPEARANCE

Table 4.4 provides an overview of the means and standard deviations of the dependent variables for the staff appearance condition. The findings in Table 4.5 reveal that staff appearance had no significant impact on customer trust, expertise impression, pleasure, the store experience, and loyalty intentions. The test of the between-subject design effect demonstrated that there were no significant variations in the dependent variables between the groups that interacted with staff members dressed either formally or informally at the footwear store. As a result, hypotheses 5 and 6 on the main effects of staff appearance can be rejected.

Table 4.4*Summary Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) for the Staff Appearance Condition*

	Formal staff appearance		Informal staff appearance	
	(N =179)		(N =174)	
	M	SD	M	SD
<i>Customer trust</i>	4.19	.555	4.25	.578
<i>Expertise impression</i>	4.32	.567	4.25	.627
<i>Store experience</i>				
- <i>Pleasure (from PAD)</i>	3.89	.608	3.91	.578
- <i>Arousal (from PAD)</i>	2.57	.919	2.43	.889
- <i>ER-Scale</i>	4.10	.549	4.12	.516
- <i>General store experience</i>	8.76	.885	8.82	.871
<i>Loyalty intentions</i>	4.46	.575	4.54	.567

Table 4.5*Test of the Between-Subject Design Effect for the Staff Appearance Condition*

Independent variable	Dependent variable	F-value	Sig.
Formal and informal staff appearance	<i>Customer trust</i>	.950	.330
	<i>Expertise impression</i>	1.156	.283
	<i>Store experience</i>		
	- <i>Pleasure (from PAD)</i>	.027	.870
	- <i>Arousal (from PAD)</i>	1.842	.176
	- <i>ER-Scale</i>	.131	.718
	- <i>General store experience</i>	.249	.618
	<i>Loyalty intentions</i>	1.668	.197

4.3 INTERACTION EFFECTS SCENT AND STAFF APPEARANCE

As concluded in the MANOVA test with Wilk's Lambda at the beginning of this chapter, the interaction between scent and staff appearance showed no statistically significant effect on the combined dependent variables. Table 4.6 provides a summary of the means and standard deviations for the interaction effect of scent and staff appearance on the dependent variables. The findings in Table 4.7 reveal that the interaction effect of scent and staff appearance also show no significant effect. Consequently, hypotheses 8 and 9 on the interaction effects of scent and staff appearance can be rejected.

Table 4.6*Summary Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) for the Interaction Effect Scent and Staff Appearance*

Formal staff appearance	Floral scent		Leather scent	
	M	SD	M	SD
<i>Customer trust</i>	4.19	.578	4.21	.529
<i>Expertise impression</i>	4.36	.559	4.29	.569
<i>Store experience</i>				
- <i>Pleasure (from PAD)</i>	3.87	.589	3.89	.619
- <i>Arousal (from PAD)</i>	2.65	.990	2.48	.836
- <i>ER-Scale</i>	4.09	.530	4.10	.552
- <i>General store experience</i>	8.81	.823	8.71	.939
<i>Loyalty intentions</i>	4.39	.585	4.52	.557

Informal staff appearance	Floral scent		Leather scent	
	M	SD	M	SD
<i>Customer trust</i>	4.29	.509	4.19	.632
<i>Expertise impression</i>	4.25	.577	4.23	.671
<i>Store experience</i>				
- <i>Pleasure (from PAD)</i>	3.91	.561	3.88	.611
- <i>Arousal (from PAD)</i>	2.51	.855	2.36	.908
- <i>ER-Scale</i>	4.11	.550	4.09	.525
- <i>General store experience</i>	8.71	.882	8.92	.859
<i>Loyalty intentions</i>	4.50	.558	4.52	.598

Table 4.7

Test of the Between-Subject Design Effect for the Interaction Effect Scent and Staff Appearance

Independent variable	Dependent variable	F-value	Sig.
Scent * Staff appearance	<i>Customer trust</i>	.773	.380
	<i>Expertise impression</i>	.143	.706
	<i>Store experience</i>		
	- <i>Pleasure (from PAD)</i>	.420	.517
	- <i>Arousal (from PAD)</i>	.584	.445
	- <i>ER-Scale</i>	.126	.723
	- <i>General store experience</i>	3.464	.064
	<i>Loyalty intentions</i>	.797	.373

4.4 MEDIATION EFFECT CUSTOMER TRUST

In addition to the main and interaction effects of scent and staff appearance, the mediation effect of customer trust was hypothesized. In order to assess whether customer trust mediates the relationship between formal staff appearance and expertise impressions, it is essential that staff appearance shows a significant main effect on customer trust. The MANOVA test demonstrates a marginally significant effect of staff appearance ($\Lambda = .963$, $F(7, 325) = 1.781$, $P = .090$) on the combined dependent variable. When conducting the tests of the between-subject effects, the findings do not indicate a significantly different effect of staff appearance on customer trust ($F = .950$, $P = .330$). Therefore, hypotheses 7 can be rejected.

4.5 MODERATION EFFECTS SHOPPING ORIENTATION

The moderating effect of shopping orientation was also analysed since it was hypothesized that the effects of scent and staff appearance on expertise impression, pleasurable experience, and the store experience would be different for hedonistic and utilitarian-oriented customers. As described in Chapter 3 of this report, paragraph 3.7.3, this scale was reduced to a two-items measure (clear idea what product to buy vs. no clear idea what product to buy), which has been used as a moderating variable in the analysis. The findings of the MANOVA test are summarized and described in Table 4.8. The results of Wilk's Lambda analysis show a significant effect of the moderating variable shopping orientation on the combined dependent variables. Furthermore, Wilk's Lambda analysis shows a marginally significant effect of staff appearance, scent * staff appearance, and staff appearance * shopping orientation on the combined dependent variables. Consequently, the tests of the between-subject effects for these variables are performed, and the findings are summarized in Table 4.9. Since no significant main effect of scent, scent * shopping orientation, and scent * shopping orientation * staff appearance was found on the combined dependent variables, these variables are excluded from Table 4.9.

Table 4.8

Multivariate Tests: Scent and Staff Appearance

	Independent variable	Λ -Value	F-value	Sig.
Wilk's Lambda test	Scent	.968	1.518	.160
	Staff Appearance	.961	1.877	.073
	Shopping orientation	.942	2.812	.007
	Scent * Staff Appearance	.963	1.756	.095
	Staff Appearance * Shopping orientation	.963	1.754	.096
	Scent * Shopping orientation	.983	.793	.594
	Scent * Staff Appearance * Shopping orientation	.988	.572	.779

The results in Table 4.9 demonstrate a statistically significant effect of shopping orientation on pleasure and arousal. The analysis indicates that hedonistic-driven customers, who had no clear idea what products they wanted to buy, score higher levels of pleasure ($M = 3.942$, $SD = .046$) and arousal ($M = 2.555$, $SD = .067$), compared to the levels of pleasure ($M = 3.833$, $SD = .043$) and arousal ($M = 2.444$, $SD = .063$) for utilitarian-driven customers.

Table 4.9

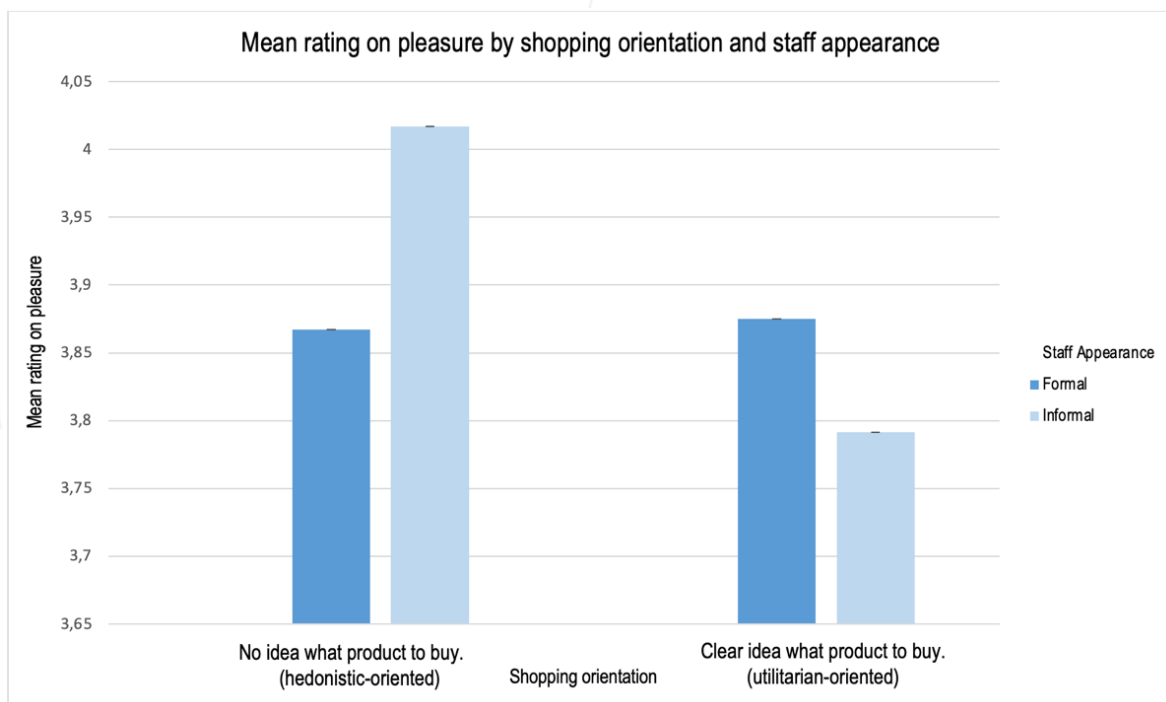
Test of the Between-Subject Design Effect of Staff Appearance and Moderation Effect of Shopping Orientation

Independent variable	Dependent variable	F-value	Sig.
Staff appearance	<i>Customer trust</i>	.942	.333
	<i>Expertise impression</i>	1.304	.254
	<i>Store experience</i>		
	- <i>Pleasure (from PAD)</i>	.260	.611
	- <i>Arousal (from PAD)</i>	1.840	.176
	- <i>ER-Scale</i>	.192	.661
	- <i>General store experience</i>	.375	.541
	<i>Loyalty intentions</i>	1.450	.229
Shopping orientation	<i>Customer trust</i>	.637	.425
	<i>Expertise impression</i>	1.317	.252
	<i>Store experience</i>		
	- <i>Pleasure (from PAD)</i>	5.149	.024
	- <i>Arousal (from PAD)</i>	4.017	.046
	- <i>ER-Scale</i>	.897	.344
	- <i>General store experience</i>	.034	.854
	<i>Loyalty intentions</i>	3.581	.059
Scent * Staff appearance	<i>Customer trust</i>	.818	.367
	<i>Expertise impression</i>	.218	.641
	<i>Store experience</i>		
	- <i>Pleasure (from PAD)</i>	.427	.514
	- <i>Arousal (from PAD)</i>	.789	.375
	- <i>ER-Scale</i>	.036	.849
	- <i>General store experience</i>	2.949	.087
	<i>Loyalty intentions</i>	1.138	.287
Staff appearance * Shopping orientation	<i>Customer trust</i>	.144	.705
	<i>Expertise impression</i>	.036	.850
	<i>Store experience</i>		
	- <i>Pleasure (from PAD)</i>	4.964	.027
	- <i>Arousal (from PAD)</i>	2.661	.104
	- <i>ER-Scale</i>	1.157	.283
	- <i>General store experience</i>	.276	.600
	<i>Loyalty intentions</i>	.111	.739

As can be seen in Table 4.9, the interaction between staff appearance and the moderating variable shopping orientation on pleasure reached significance. Figure 4.1 visualizes the interaction in a bar chart. In the informal staff appearance condition, hedonistic-oriented shoppers experienced higher levels of pleasure ($M = 4.017, SD = .067$) compared to utilitarian shoppers ($M = 3.791, SD = 0.60; F(1, 342) = 6.25, p = .013$). In the formal staff appearance condition, shopping orientation showed no significant effect on pleasure, ($M = 3.867, SD = .062$ vs. $M = 3.875, SD = 0.62; F(1, 342) = .007, p = .932$). Since informal staff appearance results in a stronger effect on the pleasurable experience for hedonistic-driven customers compared to utilitarian-oriented customers, hypothesis 13 can be accepted.

Figure 4.1

Bar chart of the Mean rating on Pleasure by Shopping Orientation and Staff Appearance



Based on these findings in combination with the previously conducted statistical analysis, it cannot be concluded that shopping orientation moderates the other relationships between the independent variables scent and staff appearance and the dependent variables customer trust, expertise impression, pleasure, the store experience, and loyalty intentions. As a result, hypotheses 10, 11, 12, 14, and 15 can be rejected.

4.6 STORE EXPERIENCE ON LOYALTY INTENTIONS

This study also hypothesized that a positive store experience in a physical footwear store would increase sales and the loyalty intentions of the store. Even though no significant relationships were found between scent and staff appearance and the dependent variables, a positive store experience may still result in loyalty intentions. To analyse this relationship, a correlation analysis is first performed on the variables, and the results are presented in Table 4.10. The findings of this analysis show that both the variables pleasure, the ER-Scale, and the store experience (general grade) correlate positively and significantly with the dependent variable loyalty intention. Arousal, on the contrary, shows a negative and insignificant correlation with loyalty intentions and will therefore not be considered in the regression analysis.

Table 4.10

Pearson Correlation between Variables of the Store Experience and Loyalty Intentions.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4
<i>Store experience</i>						
- Pleasure (from PAD)	3.91	.595				
- Arousal (from PAD)	2.49	.908	.168**(.002)			
- ER-Scale	4.11	.532	.596**(<.001)	.108*(.042)		
- General store experience	8.79	.879	.382**(<.001)	-.055(.315)	.387**(<.001)	
Loyalty intention	4.49	.572	.399**(<.001)	-.024(.660)	.590**(<.001)	.429**(<.001)

When conducting a regression analysis on how strongly a store experience predicts loyalty intentions, the multiple regression analysis shows a significant result of the ER-Scale and the store experience (general grade) on loyalty intentions. The results of this analysis can be found in Table 4.11. The ER-Scale measured whether customers found shopping at the footwear store cosy, comfortable, accessible, inviting, and inspiring. It can be concluded that loyalty intentions increase when customers evaluate the store experience in the footwear store higher. The model explains a moderate amount of variance in loyalty intentions with an adjusted R square of .393. There is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis and accept hypothesis 1b. As a result, it can be stated that a positive store experience results in higher levels of loyalty.

Table 4.11*Results of Regression Analysis of the Store Experience on Loyalty Intentions.*

Model	Non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B.	Standard Error	Beta		
<i>Pleasure (from PAD)</i>	.039	.053	.041	.744	.457
<i>ER-Scale</i>	.525	.058	.489	8.989	<.001
<i>General store experience</i>	.143	.031	.220	4.633	<.001
Adjusted R Square	.393				

4.7 EXPERTISE IMPRESSION ON PLEASURABLE EXPERIENCE

The effect of expertise impressions on a pleasurable experience is also hypothesized in this study. A correlation analysis is performed and Pearson correlation shows a positive and significant relationship between the variables ($r = .432$, $p = <.001$). Additionally, the regression analysis confirms this relationship and shows that expertise impression significantly predicts a pleasurable store experience. The findings of this analysis can be seen in Table 4.12. Therefore, hypothesis 2a can be accepted. It can be stated that higher levels of expertise among footwear customers increase the pleasurable store experience. However, the adjusted R square of .184 shows that merely 18.4% of the variability in pleasure is explained by expertise impression, which is a relatively small proportion for the model.

Table 4.12*Results of Regression Analysis of Expertise Impressions on Pleasurable Experience.*

Model	Non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B.	Standard Error	Beta		
<i>Expertise impression</i>	.430	.048	.432	8.972	<.001
Adjusted R Square	.184				

4.8 SALES FIGURES

This analysis concerns the observation of the sales figures between the conditions during the experiment. The results are compared with the sales figures from the same period a year earlier. The percentage difference in sales figures is illustrated in Table 4.13. There appears to be substantially higher revenue in the informal condition compared to the other conditions, representing a 28% rise over the previous year. However, with only the daily sales figures instead of the amount spend per customer, it is impossible to draw conclusions about whether a positive store experience or expertise impression result in sales in a physical footwear store. Therefore, hypotheses 1a and 2b are rejected.

Table 4.13

Percentage Difference in Sales Figures from the Previous Year

Condition	% difference in sales figures from the previous year
Leather scent and formal staff appearance	+6%
Leather scent and informal staff appearance	+29%
Floral scent and informal staff appearance	+26%
Floral scent and formal staff appearance	0%
Leather scent	+18%
Floral scent	+9%
Formal staff appearance	+3%
Informal staff appearance	+28%

4.9 HYPOTHESES OVERVIEW

Table 4.14
Hypotheses Overview and Results

	Hypotheses	Findings
H1a (+)	A positive store experience in a physical footwear store will increase the sales of the physical footwear store.	Rejected
H1b (+)	A positive store experience in a physical footwear store will increase the customer loyalty intentions of the physical footwear store.	Accepted
H2a (+)	Higher expertise impressions positively affect the pleasurable experience in a physical footwear store.	Accepted
H2b (+)	Higher expertise impressions generate sales in a physical footwear store.	Rejected
H3 (+)	Leather scent positively affects customers' expertise impressions in a physical footwear store compared to floral scent. (main effect scent)	Rejected
H4 (+)	Floral scent positively affects customers' pleasurable experience in a physical footwear store compared to leather scent. (main effect scent)	Rejected
H5 (+)	Formal staff appearance positively affects customer' expertise impressions in a physical footwear store compared to informal staff appearance. (main effect staff appearance)	Rejected
H6 (+)	Informal staff appearance positively affects customer' pleasurable experience in a physical footwear store compared to formal staff appearance. (main effect staff appearance)	Rejected
H7 (+)	Formal staff appearance will lead to higher levels of customer trust and, in turn, expertise impressions compared to informal staff appearance. (mediation)	Rejected
H8a (+)	The combined effect of leather scent and formal staff appearance (congruent to each other) positively affects customer' expertise impressions in a physical footwear store compared to combining incongruent stimuli. (interaction effect)	Rejected
H8b (+)	The combined effect of leather scent and formal staff appearance (congruent to each other) leads to an improved store experience in a physical footwear store compared to combining incongruent stimuli. (interaction effect)	Rejected

H9a (+)	The combined effect of floral scent and informal staff appearance (congruent to each other) positively affects customers' pleasurable experience in a physical footwear store compared to combining incongruent stimuli. (interaction effect)	Rejected
H9b (+)	The combined effect of floral scent and informal staff appearance (congruent to each other) leads to an improved store experience in a physical footwear store compared to combining incongruent stimuli. (interaction effect)	Rejected
H10 (+)	Shopping orientation moderates the relationship between leather scent and customers' expertise impressions, creating a stronger effect for utilitarian-oriented customers compared to hedonistic-oriented customers. (moderation effect)	Rejected
H11 (+)	Shopping orientation moderates the relationship between formal staff appearance and customers' expertise impressions, creating a stronger effect for utilitarian-oriented customers compared to hedonistic-oriented customers. (moderation effect)	Rejected
H12 (+)	Shopping orientation moderates the relationship between floral scent and the customers' pleasurable experience, creating a stronger effect for hedonistic-oriented customers compared to utilitarian-oriented customers. (moderation effect)	Rejected
H13 (+)	Shopping orientation moderates the relationship between informal staff appearance and the customers' pleasurable experience, creating a stronger effect for hedonistic-oriented customers compared to utilitarian-oriented customers. (moderation effect)	Accepted
H14 (+)	Shopping orientation moderates the relationship between the interaction effect of leather scent with formal staff appearance and customer' expertise impressions, creating a stronger effect for utilitarian-oriented customers compared to hedonistic-oriented customers. (moderation effect)	Rejected
H15 (+)	Shopping orientation moderates the relationship between the interaction effect of floral scent with informal staff appearance and the customers' pleasurable experience, creating a stronger effect for hedonistic- oriented customers compared to utilitarian-oriented customers. (moderation effect)	Rejected

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This field study aimed to investigate to what extent the exposure to scent in combination with staff appearance impacts customers' impressions and affects the store experience in a physical footwear store. The effects on expertise impressions, a pleasurable experience, the store experience, sales figures, and loyalty intentions for both hedonistic and utilitarian-oriented customers were explored. Informal staff appearance positively impacted the store experience of hedonic customers. For hedonistic-driven customers, it appears to be important that staff members are dressed informally to increase levels of pleasure among them, in contrast to utilitarian-driven customers, who are not affected by informal staff appearance. This study also confirmed that hedonic customers show higher levels of pleasure and arousal, in contrast to utilitarian customers. These findings expand upon Cardon & Okoro (2009), who found that informal staff appearance is strongly associated with the creativity and friendliness of the staff members, which can be linked to the emotional elements of the pleasurable store experience of hedonic customers (Babin et al., 1994; Harris et al., 2018) that are conveyed through fun and imagination (Babin & Attaway, 2000). However, the effect of scent and staff appearance did not further impact store experiences in this field study, implicating that the exposure to leather vs. floral scent in combination with formal vs. informal staff appearance does not appear to make a difference among utilitarian and hedonic customers in the footwear store.

A possible explanation for the contradictions of this study with prior findings within the literature may relate to the loyalty level of the customers who participated in this field study. More than 90% of the participants in the present study stated that this was not their first visit to the footwear store. Furthermore, considering the participants' loyalty intentions, with a mean of 4.5 and a standard deviation of .572 on a 5-point Likert scale for each of the four conditions, these intentions may stem from the participants' pre-existing loyalty to the company rather than the store experience on that particular day. Research into consumer loyalty within multiple service industries found that age is also associated with service loyalty intentions, indicating that, compared to younger age groups, older people display significantly more loyalty actions (Patterson, 2007). Given the average age of the participants in the present study, with 75% above 41 years and 42% older than 57 in each condition, this might explain the high mean in loyalty intentions among the sample. Additionally, the footwear store used in this field study is not a store where customers happen to pass by since it is not situated in a busy city centre or shopping mall. Because the store is outside of the city and must be visited specifically, it draws in a larger number of devoted customers. Consequently, customers

know what to expect, are generally familiar with the firm, and have formed an opinion of the store and its services (J. Nijhof, personal communication, May 11, 2023). The ambient scent of the footwear store as well as the staff appearance, including formal and informal name and title tags, will not alter the store experience if participants base their survey answers on previous experiences or other interactions with the company.

The lack of effects from scent and staff appearance could be the consequence of customer loyalty outweighing the relatively small effects of one-time exposure to these factors. A study by Koo and Kim (2013) also found no effects of ambient and social cues in store environmental research on 'store love', which they defined as a customer's emotional attachment to the store. They found that customer emotional devotion, together with customer satisfaction, are strong predictors of customer loyalty. Additionally, a field study by Teller and Dennis (2012) into the effects of scent in a shopping mall found no support for prior positive findings. According to this study, the external validity of the research findings will remain limited due to the unique characteristics of retail environments (in terms of geographical regions and seasons), but at the same time also because of the wide variety of consumer characteristics (in terms of demographics, psychographics, and behavioural traits like loyal customers) (Bitner, 1992; Teller & Dennis, 2012).

On the contrary, this study did find that a positive store experience in a physical footwear store results in higher levels of loyalty intentions. This validates earlier findings by Baker et al. (2020) and Grewal et al. (2014), who suggested that retail environments and in-store experiences help to build long-term loyalty-based customer-retailer relationships. Also, this field study affirms prior findings within the literature that higher levels of expertise increase a pleasurable store experience. This finding builds on the work of Barnes et al. (2016), who found that expertise can create feelings of pleasure and joy, positively impact customer satisfaction and spending, and result in a pleasurable store experience. Although considerable variations in sales figures were observed across the different conditions, it is important to interpret the findings with caution. For instance, sales in the leather-scented condition were on average 16% higher than those in the floral-scented condition. The informal staff appearance condition also appeared to have substantially more revenue than the other conditions, with a 28% increase from the prior year. Nevertheless, conclusions regarding whether expertise impressions or a positive store experience leads to sales in a physical footwear store cannot be drawn solely based on daily sales figures rather than the amount spent per customer.

5.1 STUDY LIMITATIONS

This study aimed to control other factors in the environment to the greatest extent possible to avoid inaccuracies, biases, and ambiguous findings (Teller & Dennis, 2012). However, certain elements in field studies are uncontrollable and ought to be regarded as limitations of the research. Based on the theory of “enclotted cognition,” Adam and Galinsky (2012) examined how clothes' symbolic meaning can cause behavioural responses. Formal staff appearance is associated with authority (Cialdini, 2016) and attributes that correspond with this style, such as professionalism (Cho, 2001). This field study did not measure or observe any (personal) conversations between the staff member and the customer, which are likely to also impact consumer perceptions (Baker et al., 2020). Furthermore, research has shown that scent applied in-store not only impacts store experiences (Moore, 2019) and favourably affects the approach behaviour of customers (Bosmans, 2006; Madzharov et al., 2015; Spangenberg et al., 2006) but also impacts employee responses to the stimuli in terms of approach and avoidance behaviour (Bitner, 1992). Although it was addressed in the instruction video during the preparation phase of the experiment, staff members may still have behaved differently during the field study. For that reason, this needs to be regarded as a research limitation.

Previous studies into the service environment found that in-store crowding and waiting times also affect customer perceptions, store evaluations (Baker et al., 2020; Baker & Cameron, 1996) and consumer behaviour (Schöniger & Adler, 2022). Therefore, it was decided to distribute the survey at both crowded and calm periods within the footwear store. However, equal distribution of the survey throughout the day appeared to be challenging since there were periods when there were many survey responses, most often characterized by store crowdedness, and moments when hardly anyone answered the survey, characterized by low social density in the store. Research indicates that staff members' behaviour is impacted by varying social density levels, acting differently in the store when it gets busier, and potentially impacting customers (Bitner, 1992) and survey results. When considering the social density levels in the store during the experiment, a difference in crowdedness between condition 2 (150 buying customers) and condition 3 (83 buying customers) can be observed. During data analysis, a test between the weeks was conducted, and no significant effects of the week on the dependent variables were found ($\Lambda = .969$, $F(7, 327) = 1.489$, $P = .170$).

Moreover, during the second week of the data collection, Sky Radio played nearly exclusively Christmas music. As the literature demonstrates how background music impacts store experiences (Bitner, 1992), it was decided to change the radio station from Sky Radio to Radio 10. A test between the weeks was conducted, and no effects of the week on the dependent variables were found. In contrast, changing weather conditions may have considerably impacted the results of this study. Between both weeks of the experiment, there are major differences in weather conditions. The weather was unpredictable during the first week of the experiment, with almost daily rain, wind, cloud cover, and an average temperature of 8 degrees. The weather revealed different conditions during the second week of data collection, as it was substantially colder and mostly covered in snow, with an average temperature of one degree above freezing. Since the weather substantially impact consumer behaviour, sales, and retailer profits (Tian et al., 2021), the variations in weather conditions should be considered a limitation of this study.

During data collection, confusion arose among participants about the interpretation of question 8 in the survey (see Appendix 2) due to two double negations. It might be possible that a large number of participants incorrectly answered the questions. The four items aimed to measure the shopping orientation of the customer (utilitarian vs. hedonic). Although validated scales have been used, this might clarify why the scale was not possible to construct reliably. As a result, it was decided to continue with a two-items scale and to apply a median split on the variable, measuring whether participants knew what products they wanted to buy (which is a characteristic of utilitarian shoppers, e.g., comfort shoes) or not (hedonic shoppers). Applying the median split approach for the moderation analyses also has downsides. In practical terms, this approach is less informative when compared to the multiple regression approach, losing statistical power as a result (Aiken & West, 1991). Subsequently, the likelihood of identifying true effects is lower. Also, participants already had a clear idea of what product they wanted to buy. This seems to be supported by the moderate standard deviation of the variable shopping orientation, with a median of 4.0 and an SD of .94, there seems to be a limited spread around the mean, creating unnaturally two groups of customers. In sum, this might explain why the moderation relationship shows nearly no effects and should be regarded as a limitation of the research. Given the fact that shopping orientation appears to moderate the relationship between informal staff appearance and pleasure, and effects have only been found on pleasure and not on arousal, the ER-scale, or the general store experience, it is important to interpret this finding with caution.

5.2 FUTURE RESEARCH

In the near future, scholars might consider deepening their academic knowledge and practical understanding of the influence of loyal customers on future research results. To further examine the effects of scent and staff appearance on customers in physical footwear or retail shoppers in general, academics might study a different research sample, including participants who have no prior experience with the company's operations or who are not already devoted to the store. This might help in clarifying whether the scarcity of scent and staff appearance' effects are truly attributable to the participants' degree of loyalty.

In line with the field study of Koo and Kim (2013), the current study found that a positive store experience results in loyalty intentions. Marketing literature already shows how environmental design cues (e.g., colour) and merchandise cues (e.g., displaying products) affect customers' emotional attachment to the store, which leads to customer loyalty (Koo & Kim, 2013). Academics might further investigate what environmental stimuli result in a positive store experience, customer satisfaction, and 'store love'. Additionally, since several items of the PAD model had been excluded in this study, as these sensations do not apply in a retail context (Kaltcheva & Weitz, 2006) and the dominance factor of the model was also not measured due to irrelevance (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982), it might also be interesting to further study the PAD model among a sample of loyal customers. This study found that, compared to utilitarian customers, hedonic consumers are affected by informal staff appearance, creating higher levels of pleasure. Finding out how to increase pleasure among utilitarian customers that positively contributes to loyalty intentions (Koo and Kim, 2013), resulting in sales growth (Kumar, 2010), might be worthwhile to study.

Nevertheless, Ngobo (1999) demonstrated that it might not always be rewarding to continue increasing customer satisfaction, which is an important predictor of customer loyalty (Koo and Kim, 2013), as customers can reach a ceiling effect zone. This zone was linked to a saturation effect, which occurs when higher levels of customer satisfaction reach a point of saturation following a certain threshold (Finn, 2012). Since the customers in the present study are already loyal to the company, and loyalty intentions may be a result of a positive store experience (Koo and Kim, 2013), it can be concluded that customers in general are highly satisfied and evaluate the store positively, eventually reaching a ceiling effect. Consequently, improving the store experience (and thus finding effects) will be more difficult compared to a store in which there is plenty to improve and the general store experience is considerably lower compared to this store. Future studies should take this into consideration and

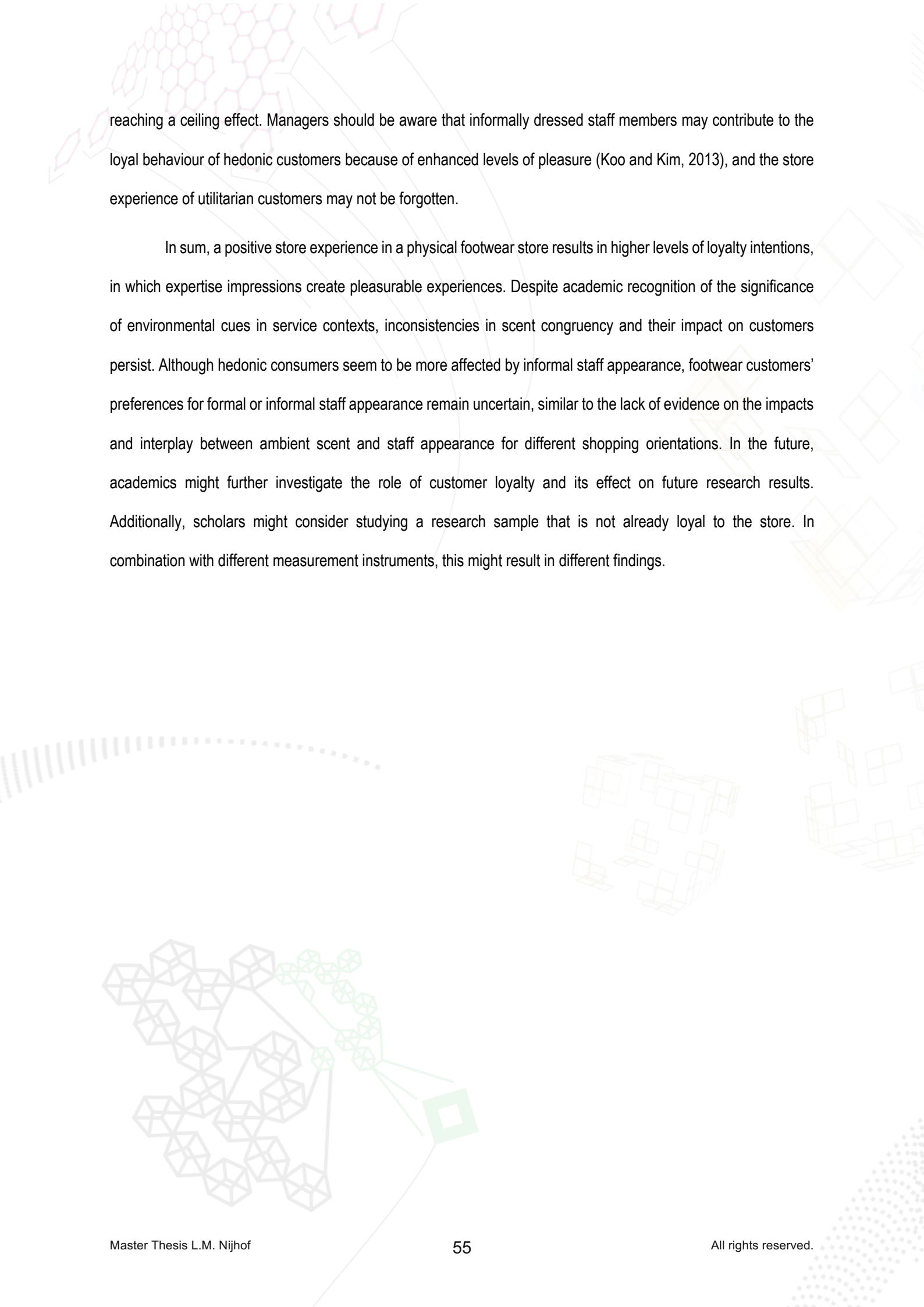
investigate various business settings and retail environments in order to generalize the research findings. They should expand this study and explore whether the influence of scent and staff appearance would be different in other types of stores, among different product categories, or business sectors. It might be possible that customers react differently in a variety of retail settings and that various research contexts result in different effects on customers. Moreover, the store and research context may be situated closer to the city centre, focusing on a different market segment, particularly appealing to "unplanned" shoppers as opposed to customers who visit the store deliberately. As a result, it might be possible that other effects would have been found in a footwear store that is located in, for example, a busy city centre, where loyalty levels are considerably lower (Guy, 1998).

Even though the sales figures varied between the four conditions, it is still impossible to draw conclusions about whether these variations are entirely attributable to the impact of scent and staff appearance, only based on daily sales numbers instead of the amount of money spent per customer. The findings of this study are inconsistent with the study conducted by Hirsch (1990), who found that when customers tried on sneakers in a room with mixed floral scents, their buying intentions and willingness to spend money increased. Given that the results of Hirsch (1990) centre on customers' behavioural intentions, one possible explanation for this discrepancy could be related to the differences in measurement between the two studies. Evaluating the present study's outcomes using more behavioural observations might provide new insights, as formally dressed staff members observed less approachable and distant customer behaviour during the field study. Alternatively, in the informal staff appearance condition, customers were more willing to share intimate stories, such as the loss of a spouse or the fact that a customer perceives shopping at Nijhof as a social event because of their loneliness. Additionally, obtaining survey responses was considerably more difficult in the formal appearance condition. People were less friendly and behaved more isolated. This is the opposite behaviour in the informal staff appearance condition, where people are happier, show more interest, and are more engaged in the survey. This might be explained by the fact that customers tend to infer how staff members possess certain attributes associated with the type of style they wear (Cho, 2001), such as professionalism with formally dressed staff members and friendliness with informally dressed staff members (Cardon & Okoro, 2009). This was also confirmed during the pre-test of this study. Based on these observations and pre-test findings, it is therefore of high importance to conduct further research and explore other research methods instead of solely a survey and sales figures.

5.3 PRACTICAL AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The extensive amount of literature demonstrating that scent and staff appearance affect customers' emotions, cognition, bodily responses, and behaviour raises serious reservations about the interpretation of the results of this study, as only informal staff appearance appeared to impact hedonic customers. The pre-test of this study also demonstrated that the hypothesized associations with both staff appearance and scent are in line with the literature. Scholars may want to consider a mixed-methods research approach by combining both quantitative research techniques and qualitative methods (Lopez-Fernandez & Molina-Azorin, 2011). An example might be the use of a quantitative questionnaire design that includes all the variables of interest (Payne & Wansink, 2011), combined with, e.g., qualitative in-store customer observations that focuses on behavioural responses (De Temmerman et al., 2023), to gain a deeper understanding of the attitudes and motives of loyal customers, as the nuances of customer loyalty may not be adequately captured by quantitative measurements. The results of the study might also vary depending on the research environment and the type of store. To determine whether the findings are generally applicable and to investigate differences in customer behaviour, it may be academically beneficial to encourage replications in various industries and retail settings.

Over time, it has become increasingly clear that in order for retailers to prosper in today's highly technologically advanced world, they must successfully navigate and manage the customer journey (Grewal & Roggeveen, 2020). Identifying and understanding customer journey touchpoints and eventually enhancing the store experience remains of high importance since bad store experiences negatively impact business outcomes (Baker, 2020). Nonetheless, marketing managers should realize that loyal customers, who make repeated purchases, are crucial to generating a fixed income for retailers. Establishing customer loyalty seems vital and inevitable in the competitive market of today, in which customers can easily choose between retailers (Kumar, 2010). This study confirmed that a positive evaluation of the store experience increases customer loyalty intentions. Successful strategies that are adapted to a wide range of customer demands and preferences, especially at different points in the customer journey, can greatly improve the store experience (Kaltcheva & Weitz, 2006), cultivate customer loyalty, and eventually drive retail sales (Baker et al., 2020). However, this study may have demonstrated how crucial it is to understand the larger context of customer loyalty, given the scarcity of its effects. When viewed from a practical perspective, the results indicate that sustained strategies aimed at preserving and strengthening store loyalty may have a greater impact than attempts to improve single store experiences among loyal customers,



reaching a ceiling effect. Managers should be aware that informally dressed staff members may contribute to the loyal behaviour of hedonic customers because of enhanced levels of pleasure (Koo and Kim, 2013), and the store experience of utilitarian customers may not be forgotten.

In sum, a positive store experience in a physical footwear store results in higher levels of loyalty intentions, in which expertise impressions create pleasurable experiences. Despite academic recognition of the significance of environmental cues in service contexts, inconsistencies in scent congruency and their impact on customers persist. Although hedonic consumers seem to be more affected by informal staff appearance, footwear customers' preferences for formal or informal staff appearance remain uncertain, similar to the lack of evidence on the impacts and interplay between ambient scent and staff appearance for different shopping orientations. In the future, academics might further investigate the role of customer loyalty and its effect on future research results. Additionally, scholars might consider studying a research sample that is not already loyal to the store. In combination with different measurement instruments, this might result in different findings.

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APPENDIX 1 – PRE-TEST

Dear participant,

First of all, welcome to this survey and thank you for your participation. In the coming 10 minutes, you will be asked several questions regarding two different kinds of scents and two different styles of staff appearance. We will start with the scent, that concerns floral and leather scent. These stimuli will be used for a field study in the physical footwear store Nijhof Schoenen, in which you are currently. Please be as honest as possible when answering these questions. Your answers will be treated confidentially and properly. You may start by sniffing at the floral scent samples and fill in all questions, excluding question 3. Next, you may sniff at the two leather goods and fill in all questions again, excluding question 2.

The text in bold concerns the question in the survey. No bold concerns the topic of the questions, which will not be shown to the participant.

1. What do you think of when you smell this scent?

Enter your answer...

2. Please indicate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to what extent you agree with the statement. (Floral scent association)

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel happy when encountered with this scent					
In general, this scent is pleasant to me					
This scent would not suit in a footwear store.					

3. Please indicate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to what extent you agree with the statement. (Leather scent association)

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
When encountered with this scent, I think of luxury products					
This scent suits well in a footwear store					
I get a high-quality perception of this scent					
High-quality goods and luxury products are associated with this scent.					

4. Please indicate on a scale from 1 (not intense at all) to 5 (very intense) how would you rate the intensity of the scent. (Scent intensity)

Enter your answer...

5. Please indicate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to what extent you agree with the statement. (Scent intensity)

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I had a strong sense of smell while at the retail store					
I was highly involved in the scents in the retail setting					
I was able to search the products easily in the presence of scent					
My interaction with the environment of scents was natural					
My sense of smell was completely engaged while at the store					
The intensity of the scent suits well in the context of the footwear store					

6. Please indicate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to what extent you agree with the statement. (Scent pleasantness)

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
The scent of this store is appealing					
There was a pleasant atmosphere because of the nice scents in the store					
The overall mood in the store was because of the pleasant ambient scent					

Elaboration on the study

Thank you for answering the questions. The floral and leather scent will be used in a field study in the store you are currently in. The leather scent aims to create perceptions of high quality, and luxury, perfectly aligning with the store environment of Nijhof Schoenen. The idea of the floral scent is to create a pleasurable experience when shopping at Nijhof Schoenen, which does not align with the general scent within a footwear store.

7. What do you think about this idea and do you have any suggestions to better evoke these associations?

Enter your answer...

Follow-up introduction

Now you will be asked questions regarding two different styles of staff appearance, including staff members who are dressed formally and informally. I will show you different photos of the staff members and based on these photos, you can answer the questions below. Please be as honest as possible when answering these questions. Your answers will be treated confidentially and properly.

8. Please indicate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to what extent you agree with the statement. (Level of formality)

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I perceive the appearance of the person in photo 1 as formal					
I perceive the appearance of the person in photo 2 as formal					
I perceive the colors of the cloths of the person on photo 1 as more formal compared to the cloths of the person in photo 2					
I perceive the name/title tags of the person in photo 1 as formal					
I perceive the name/title tags of the person in photo 2 as formal					

9. Please indicate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to what extent you agree with the statement. (Formality association)

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
The person in photo 3 looks professional					
The person in photo 4 looks professional					
The person in photo 3 looks trustworthy					
The person in photo 4 looks trustworthy					
I think the person in photo 3 has a lot of expertise					
I think the person in photo 4 has a lot of expertise					
The person in photo 3 looks very friendly					
The person in photo 4 looks very friendly					
The person in photo 3 is creative					
The person in photo 4 is creative					
I would feel pleasant in the presence of the person in photo 3					
I would feel pleasant in the presence of the person in photo 4					

Elaboration on the study

Thank you for answering the questions. The informal and formal staff appearance will be used in a field study in the store you are currently in. The informal staff appearance aims to create perceptions of friendliness, creativity, and pleasantness within Nijhof Schoenen. The idea of the formal staff appearance is to create a perception of professionalism, trustworthiness, and expertise when shopping at Nijhof Schoenen.

10. What do you think about this idea or do you have any suggestions to better evoke these associations?

Enter your answer...

11. We intend to dress the staff members as formally and informally as possible. Do you have any suggestions?

Enter your answer...

END

12. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please list any comments or questions you may have here (if not, please move on to the following page so your response will be stored).

Enter your answer...

APPENDIX 2 – SURVEY MAIN STUDY (ENGLISH)

Dear participant,

First of all, welcome to this survey! We appreciate your participation in this study. The questions in this survey are asked to customers of Nijhof Schoenen and the primary purpose of this study is to get insights into shopping experiences in physical footwear, specifically at Nijhof Schoenen.

This survey is part of the Graduation Project conducted by the Master's student Len Nijhof from the University of Twente, the Netherlands. The project is conducted under the supervision of the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences (BMS) of the University of Twente.

The survey consists of 14 questions, which will take about 5-8 minutes to fill in. You will receive an iPad from the researcher Len Nijhof in order to complete the survey online. By taking part in the study, you acknowledge that you are 18 years or older to be able to give informed consent.

With your participation in this study, you can be confident that:

- your answers are completely anonymous;
- participating in the research is entirely voluntary;
- personal information will only be used for research purposes and will never be given to third parties;
- there are no right or wrong answers in the survey;
- you can decline or quit the survey at any time without giving a reason for leaving the survey;
- participating in this study won't make you feel uncomfortable.

Please feel free to get in touch with the researcher via l.m.nijhof@student.utwente.nl if you have any questions or comments concerning the study or the survey.

We appreciate you taking the time to participate in this study.

1. Based on the information provided above, do you agree with participating in this survey?

- Yes
- No

2. How would you identify yourself?

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say.

3. How old are you?

- 18 until 24 years old
- 25 until 40 years old
- 41 until 56 years old
- 57 years old or older

4. Have you been shopping at Nijhof Schoenen before?

- Yes
- No

5. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate your experience at Nijhof Schoenen today? (1 = very bad, 5 = excellent)



6. Please indicate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) to what extent you agree with the statement.

Before entering Nijhof Schoenen....

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

I had no idea what shoes I was looking for.

I was excited and was looking forward to buying new shoes.

I directly knew what to buy (e.g., comfort shoes).

I felt little excitement or pleasure to buy new shoes.

7. Please indicate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to what extent you agree with the statement.

Nijhof Schoenen...

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

Gives me a feeling of trust

Gives me a trustworthy impression

Only wants the best for me

Gives me the feeling that I can count on the retailer

8. Please indicate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to what extent you agree with the statement.

While shopping at Nijhof Schoenen...

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

I encountered high standards of footwear expertise

I experienced a high-quality service

I could sense that I was dealing with experts

I experienced professionalism and competence

9. Please indicate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to what extent you agree with the statement.

During my visit at Nijhof Schoenen...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I felt happy					
I felt pleased					
I felt satisfied					
I felt contented					
I felt relaxed					
I felt stimulated					
I felt excited					
I felt aroused.					

10. Please indicate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to what extent you agree with the statement.

I find shopping at Nijhof Schoenen...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
cosy					
comfortable					
accessible					
inviting					
inspiring					

11. Please indicate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to what extent you agree with the statement.

Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I have the intention to visit Nijhof Schoenen again.					
I would recommend Nijhof Schoenen to my friends and family.					

12. What could be improved within Nijhof Schoenen?

Enter your answer...

13. On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you walking out of the store today? (1 = not satisfied, 10 = highly satisfied)



END

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please list any comments or questions you may have here (if not, please move on to the following page so your response will be stored).

APPENDIX 3 – SURVEY MAIN STUDY (DUTCH)

Geachte deelnemer,

We heten u hartelijk welkom bij dit onderzoek! Uw deelname wordt zeer gewaardeerd. De vragen in dit onderzoek zijn gericht op klanten van Nijhof Schoenen en hebben als doel inzicht te verkrijgen in de winkelervaringen bij fysieke schoenenwinkels, specifiek bij Nijhof Schoenen in Hengelo.

Dit onderzoek is onderdeel van het afstudeerproject van Len Nijhof, masterstudent aan de Universiteit Twente in Enschede. Het project wordt uitgevoerd onder toezicht van de Faculteit Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences (BMS) van de Universiteit Twente.

De enquête bestaat uit 14 vragen en het invullen duurt ongeveer 5-8 minuten. U ontvangt een iPad van Len waarop u de vragen online kunt invullen. Door deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek verklaart u dat u 18 jaar of ouder bent en stemt u in met uw deelname.

Met uw deelname aan dit onderzoek kunt u erop vertrouwen dat:

- Uw antwoorden volledig anoniem zijn;
- deelname aan het onderzoek geheel vrijwillig is;
- persoonlijke informatie alleen voor onderzoeksdoeleinden wordt gebruikt en nooit aan derden zal worden doorgegeven;
- er geen goede of foute antwoorden zijn in de enquête;
- u de enquête op elk gewenst moment kunt weigeren of afbreken zonder een reden op te geven;
- deelnemen aan dit onderzoek zal u geen ongemakkelijk gevoel bezorgen;
- Indien u vragen en/of opmerkingen heeft over het onderzoek of de enquête, kunt u contact op met de onderzoeker via l.m.nijhof@student.utwente.nl.

We waarderen het dat u de tijd neemt om deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek.

1. Op basis van de bovenstaande informatie, bent u het eens met uw deelname aan dit onderzoek?

- Ja
- Nee

2. Hoe identificeert u zichzelf?

- Man
- Vrouw
- Anders
- Dat houd ik liever voor mijzelf

3. Hoe oud bent u?

- Tussen 18 en 24 jaar oud
- Tussen 25 en 40 jaar oud
- Tussen 41 en 56 jaar oud
- 57 jaar en of ouder

4. Heeft u al eens eerder gewinkeld bij Nijhof Schoenen in Hengelo?

- Ja
- Nee

5. Op een schaal van 0 tot 5, hoe zou u uw ervaring bij Nijhof Schoenen van vandaag beoordelen? (0 = zeer slecht, 5 = uitstekend)



6. Geef op een schaal van 1 (sterk mee oneens) tot 5 (sterk mee eens) aan in welke mate u het eens bent met de stelling.

Voordat u naar binnen ging bij Nijhof Schoenen

Sterk mee oneens Oneens Neutraal Eens Sterk mee eens

had ik geen idee naar welke schoenen ik op zoek was.

was ik uitgelaten en verheugde me om nieuwe schoenen te kopen.

wist ik direct wat ik moest kopen (bijv. comfort schoenen).

voelde ik weinig enthousiasme of plezier om nieuwe schoenen te kopen.

7. Geef op een schaal van 1 (sterk mee oneens) tot 5 (sterk mee eens) aan in welke mate u het eens bent met de stelling.

Nijhof Schoenen...

Sterk mee oneens Oneens Neutraal Eens Sterk mee eens

geeft me een vertrouwd gevoel.

geeft me een geloofwaardige indruk.

wil alleen het beste voor mij.

geeft me het gevoel dat ik kan rekenen op de retailer.

8. Geef op een schaal van 1 (sterk mee oneens) tot 5 (sterk mee eens) aan in welke mate u het eens bent met de stelling.

Tijdens het winkelen bij Nijhof Schoenen...	Sterk mee oneens	Oneens	Neutraal	Eens	Sterk mee eens
heb ik hoge normen voor schoenenexpertise ervaren.					
heb ik een hoge kwaliteit service ervaren.					
kon ik merken dat ik te maken had met experts op het gebied van schoenen.					
heb ik professionaliteit en bekwaamheid ervaren					

9. Geef op een schaal van 1 (sterk mee oneens) tot 5 (sterk mee eens) aan in welke mate u het eens bent met de stelling.

Gedurende mijn bezoek aan Nijhof Schoenen...	Sterk mee oneens	Oneens	Neutraal	Eens	Sterk mee eens
voelde ik me gelukkig					
voelde ik me blij					
voelde ik me voldaan					
voelde ik me tevreden					
voelde ik me ontspannen					
voelde ik me geprikkeld					
voelde ik me opgewonden					
voelde ik me opgewekt					

10. Geef op een schaal van 1 (sterk mee oneens) tot 5 (sterk mee eens) aan in welke mate u het eens bent met de stelling.

Ik vind winkelen bij Nijhof Schoenen...	Sterk mee oneens	Oneens	Neutraal	Eens	Sterk mee eens
gezellig					
comfortabel					
toegankelijk					
uitnodigend					
inspirerend					

11. Geef op een schaal van 1 (sterk mee oneens) tot 5 (sterk mee eens) aan in welke mate u het eens bent met de stelling.

Sterk mee
oneens

Oneens

Neutraal

Eens

Sterk mee
eens

Ik ben van plan Nijhof Schoenen nog eens te bezoeken.

Ik zou Nijhof Schoenen aanbevelen aan mijn vrienden en familie.

12. Wat kan er verbeterd worden binnen Nijhof Schoenen?

Geef uw antwoord...

13. Op een schaal van 0 tot 10, hoe tevreden loopt u vandaag de winkel uit? (0 = niet tevreden, 10 = zeer tevreden)



EINDE

Hartelijk dank voor uw deelname aan deze enquête. Als u nog opmerkingen of vragen heeft, kunt u deze hier stellen. Zo niet, ga dan verder naar de volgende pagina zodat uw antwoorden worden opgeslagen.

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