

# Psychology of Shopping Through A Shopping Experiment

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## INTRODUCTION

Through **surveys** and an **observational experiment**, subjects were observed in various shopping environments and their heart rates were measured. After finding a specific item in each store, they completed a survey regarding how they felt in the store, the store's environment, and their overall experience. The main objective was to get qualitative and quantitative data on shoppers and observe trends throughout the different stores to **better understand shopping environments and their effects on shoppers.**

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

- Each subject wore a **small chest strap heart rate monitor** prior to entering the store. Their age and gender were recorded, but no other personal information
- Experimenter follows subject throughout stores and observes but does not interact with them
- The **first task regarded makeup**, and each subject was instructed to find a specific makeup item in: Target, Nordstrom, and Sephora
- Survey administered after each shopping task completed
- The **second task was in regard to clothing**, each subject was instructed to find a specific clothing item in: Target, Nordstrom, and Brandy Melville
- Items for both the makeup tasks and clothing tasks were the exact same across the stores (constant in this experiment)
- **Independent variable:** store **Dependent variable:** shopper's feelings, heart rate, and general experience

## DISCUSSION, ANALYSIS, AND EVALUATION

- Qualitative data displayed trends
- Heart rate data did not show consistent trends, technology was limited
- people who described their experience as good and were not stressed were more inclined to come back (supports the idea that shopping environment has a connection to future sales)
  - workers contribute to the shopping environment and can have an effect on potential future customers
  - workers in each store were different and **some people responded well to workers while others did not**
- people who were not welcomed in the store did not feel inclined to speak to a worker for help either, majority also indicated in their survey responses that they either 'might' or 'will not' come back.
- The overall feeling of **stress or being uncomfortable** was a recurring response in the surveys pertaining to Sephora, and it was also perceived the **noisiest.**
- Brandy Melville was agreed to be the least organized and had the least amount of people who wanted to return. While these conclusions are supported with limited data (sample size is not large), it builds on this idea that different shopping environments are perceived similarly throughout a group of different people. There were also trends between gender and age.

## DATA AND FINIDNGS

### Comparing various shopping environments

Recurring responses from qualitative data describing the shopping environment of...

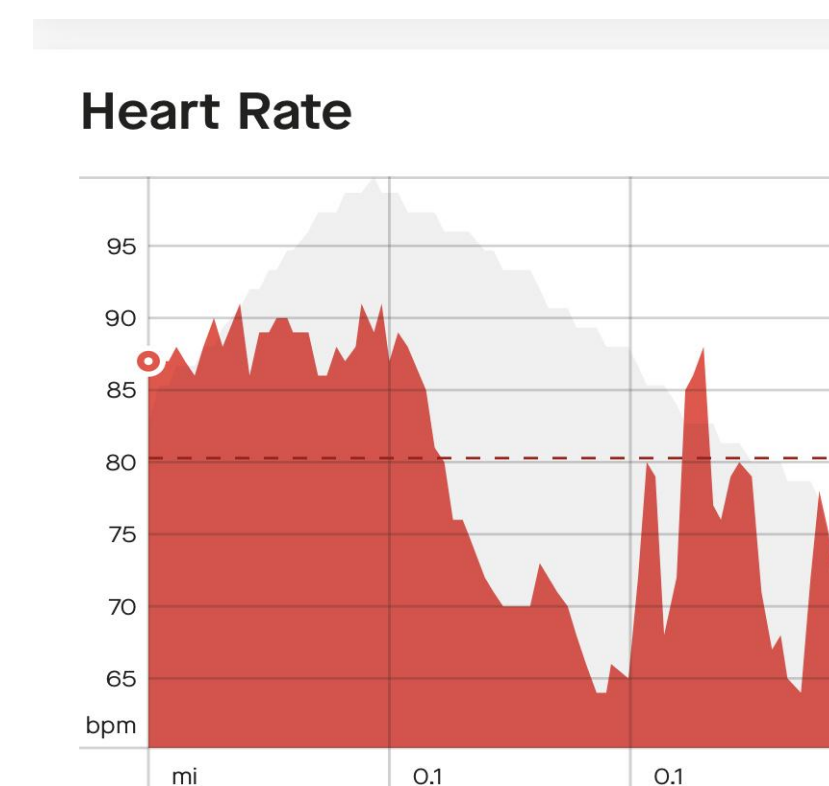


### How do these environments affect consumers?

General trends:



Chart above displays the overall trend that having a more organized store leads to an easier shopping experience.



Sample heart rate data graph, subject in Sephora shopping for clear brow gel

- Women had a **lower answer** (meaning it was easier) regarding how easy the item was to find for both clothing and makeup tasks, on average
- **Older subjects** asked for more help than **younger subjects** did
- Brandy Melville was perceived as the **least organized**, while Nordstrom the most
- subjects agreed that Sephora workers were welcoming, but often **too welcoming**
- a clean and organized environment **eases the shopping experience** and made shoppers in general more comfortable
- some respondents felt that Sephora workers were **intrusive** and they felt rushed by them

## CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND NEXT STEPS

### 1. Psychology of Scent:

- **Different scents can evoke various emotions** and influence behavior. Studies have also found that **people actually prefer smells that elicit strong memories.** The researchers found that the top lotions smelled pleasant and elicited the strongest memories.

### 2. Psychology of Organization:

- Humans are naturally inclined to find comfort in predictability
  - an organized space provides a sense of safety and predictability.
  - helps us know where things are without searching, contributing to a **feeling of security.**
- Organization also gives us a **sense of control** over our **thoughts and emotions.** When minds feel chaotic, organized surroundings can provide a **sense of order and control**
- The desire for control through organization intensified during the pandemic, offering a way to regain a sense of control amidst **chaos and uncertainty.**

### Potential next steps:

- Repeat the experiment over a longer period of time to make a large sample size possible
- More in depth surveys to get a better understanding of the shopping environments (mine focused on mostly music, lighting, organization)
- Improved heart rate data, using more advanced software to maybe show more trends
- Possible implementation of GSR for more data on how individuals perceive their surroundings (would require more \$\$ and time)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / REFERENCES

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### QR Code to Research Paper:

