In the Mood: The Importance of Experiential Factors in Consumer Behaviour
Towards Craft Products

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Abstract: The management and success of a small independent retail outlet presents many challenges; not only in terms of the competitive environment but also in the understanding of customers or patrons to the store in question. This paper critically evaluates important experiential factors associated with services marketing including the impacts of mood, atmospherics, and authenticity, as well as hedonic and utilitarian values on consumer behaviour; and the practical marketing initiatives that can be implemented to maximise these influences to the benefit of both the retailer and the consumer’s shopping experience.

A review of previous literature clearly identifies the individual influences that these areas have on consumer behaviour; however, these factors have generally been considered in isolation rather than as a mix of elements that interact to create an overall experience. This research seeks to identify any linkages or correlation between these factors, the effect they have on each other in a live environment, and the marketing methods that can be employed by the retailer to meet their business objectives and the needs of their customers.

The approach to this research needed to identify factors affecting the visitor experience to a retail outlet. A case study was used surrounding the Somerset Guild of Craftsmen and their Gallery situated in Martock, which specialises in the display and sale of craft products of numerous types made by its members. Both quantitative and qualitative data was obtained using a mixture of methods including a questionnaire of visitors to the Guild Gallery as well as photography and observation whilst visiting the Gallery itself.

The results suggest that there are various reasons why a visitor buys a piece of craft, which go beyond the formal attributes of the product itself. It identifies the different types of visitor that frequent the Guild Gallery retail outlet, the reasons for craft selection and the importance of experiential factors in the marketing of craft.