

**Shopping Orientation as a Stable Consumer Disposition and Its Influence on Consumers'
Evaluations of Retailer Communication**

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Abstract

Purpose: Consumers may shop under an experiential or a task-focused shopping orientation. The present research examines whether interindividual differences in consumers' shopping orientations reflect a stable consumer disposition (i.e., chronic shopping orientation). Furthermore, it examines whether this disposition influences consumers' evaluations of retailer communication.

Design/methodology/approach: This research builds upon four studies; three were conducted online and one was conducted in the laboratory. Study 1 applied a longitudinal design, Studies 2 and 3 applied a cross-sectional design, and Study 4 applied an experimental design.

Findings: Study 1 shows that chronic shopping orientation is stable over time. Study 2 finds that interindividual differences in chronic shopping orientation are stable across different retail domains. Studies 3 and 4 demonstrate that experiential shoppers prefer stimulation-oriented claims, whereas task-focused shoppers prefer efficiency-oriented claims.

Originality/value: The value of shopping orientation for customer segmentation and tailored marketing largely depends on whether interindividual differences in chronic shopping orientation are stable. The present research is the first to demonstrate that chronic shopping orientation indeed exists as a stable consumer disposition. In addition, the research demonstrates that shopping orientation moderates the evaluation of retailer communication. Overall, the results demonstrate that chronic shopping orientation is a valuable construct for customer segmentation and tailored communication in retailing.

Keywords: shopping orientation, motivation, personality, consumer behavior, retailing, communication

Word Count: 9,343

Shopping Orientation as a Stable Consumer Disposition and its Influence on Consumers' Evaluations of Retailer Communication

Consumers go shopping for various reasons. They may, for instance, want to purchase a particular product, collect information for an upcoming purchase decision, or get an overview of the latest trends (Bloch *et al.*, 1989; Kaltcheva and Weitz, 2006). In addition, consumers may differ in how they shop, select products, or process information (cf. Van Osselaer *et al.*, 2005). An important distinction with respect to how consumers approach shopping is between an experiential and a task-focused shopping orientation. When shopping under an experiential shopping orientation, consumers seek pleasure while shopping; when shopping under a task-focused shopping orientation, they view shopping as a task to be completed, and they have the goal of finishing it as efficiently as possible (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Kaltcheva and Weitz, 2006).

Consumer research has identified shopping orientation as an important construct. Meeting experiential and task-oriented goals while shopping is positively related to bargain perceptions, time spent in the store, customer satisfaction, and loyalty (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Jones *et al.*, 2006). In addition, shopping orientation moderates the impact of the store environment on customers' experiences and behaviors (Baker and Wakefield, 2011; Kaltcheva and Weitz, 2006; van Rompay *et al.*, 2011). These findings qualify shopping orientation as a variable that may guide customer segmentation and enable retailers to tailor marketing instruments to customers' shopping orientations (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Kukar-Kinney *et al.*, 2009; Westbrook and Black, 1985).

When examining the idea of shopping orientation as a tool for customer segmentation and for tailoring marketing instruments, an important question arises: Is shopping orientation really a stable consumer disposition? That is, do consumers differ in their chronic preferences for shopping under an experiential versus under a task-focused shopping orientation? The value of

shopping orientation for customer segmentation and tailored marketing largely depends on whether stable interindividual differences in chronic shopping orientation exist: If consumers' shopping orientations are not stable, shopper segmentation and tailored communication based on shopping orientation is limited. For instance, consumers previously identified as experiential or task-focused may have different orientations at the moment they enter a store or receive a tailored promotional offer.

In their seminal paper on shopping and motivation, Westbrook and Black (1985) address the stability of shopping orientation when they call for research that examines "(1) the extent of variation in shopping motivation across alternative types of shopping, and (2) the extent of temporal variation in shopping motivation" (p. 102). Surprisingly, research in the past 25 years remains silent with regard to these aspects. Previous studies find that shoppers differ in whether they shop under task-focused or experiential orientations (e.g., Brown *et al.*, 2003; Ganesh *et al.*, 2010; Ganesh *et al.*, 2007; Hansen and Jensen, 2009; Westbrook and Black, 1985). However, these studies apply cross-sectional designs in which shoppers are interviewed once. Ganesh *et al.* (2010; 2007) go a step further and show that the same motivation-based shopper typologies emerge across different retail formats, but they do not address whether these groups consist of the same shoppers. Hence, the question of whether differences in the shopping orientations of consumers are only momentary or remain stable across time and across different retail domains remains unanswered.

A further open question refers to the value of shopping orientation for tailored communication: Does shopping orientation moderate the influence of marketing instruments other than store atmosphere? More specifically, is it possible to target shoppers according to their shopping orientation before they enter the store? Previous research has examined the influence of shopping orientation on consumer reactions to the store environment (e.g., Baker and Wakefield,

2011; Kaltcheva and Weitz, 2006), but has not examined whether shopping orientation influences consumer reactions toward tailored communication. This application would strengthen the value of shopping orientation for retail management because retailers can tailor communications such as direct mailings to different consumers more easily than they can tailor store environments.

The present research addresses these questions in four studies. Study 1 uses a longitudinal design to show that chronic shopping orientation is stable over time. Study 2 demonstrates that chronic shopping orientation is stable across different domains of shopping. Studies 3 and 4 show that chronic shopping orientation predicts consumers' evaluations of retailer claims. Overall, the contribution of the research is twofold. First, the results on temporal and domain stability indicate that chronic shopping orientation is a stable consumer disposition. Second, the results on claim evaluation demonstrate that chronic shopping orientation is a valuable construct for tailored communication.

Conceptual Background and Hypotheses

Experiential and Task-Focused Shopping Orientations

Shopping orientations come under different labels—for instance, task-oriented versus experiential (Verhoef *et al.*, 2009), task-oriented versus recreational (Kaltcheva and Weitz, 2006), product-oriented versus experiential (Dawson *et al.*, 1990), or utilitarian versus hedonic (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). Nevertheless, these labels refer to the same basic distinction between whether consumers see shopping as a task that they want to finish as efficiently as possible, or whether they seek fun and stimulation during shopping (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Kaltcheva and Weitz, 2006).

Within a cognitive goal-theoretic framework (Kruglanski *et al.*, 2002; Van Osselaer *et al.*, 2005), shopping orientations can be understood as motivational orientations that are activated by process goals (cf. Van Osselaer *et al.*, 2005). Process goals refer to the ways in which consumers pursue an outcome goal (e.g., a purchase). In these terms, consumers with an experiential shopping orientation pursue the process goal of experiencing pleasure while shopping; task-focused shoppers pursue the process goal of accomplishing their shopping mission as efficiently as possible. Reaching the process goals provides an additional source of value (Avnet and Higgins, 2006; Van Osselaer *et al.*, 2005). Hence, shopping orientation does not simply reflect shopping enjoyment or the attitude towards shopping. Both experiential and task-focused shoppers may have a positive shopping experience when their process goals are fulfilled: experiential shoppers when they find entertainment and stimulation during shopping; task-focused shoppers when they accomplish their shopping goals efficiently. This value from the process is known as shopping value, which distinguishes between utilitarian (task-focused) and hedonic (experiential) components (Babin *et al.*, 1994).

Thus, consumers may have the same focal outcome goal; for instance, going to the grocery store to buy food for dinner. Nevertheless, they may differ in their process goals and, thus, in their shopping orientations during the shopping episode: A task-focused shopper is likely to enter the store, search for products, and head toward the checkout as quickly as possible; an experiential shopper is likely to seek entertainment during the shopping episode; for instance, by discovering exotic food. Usually, “process goal[s] may be implicit and reside in the background” (Avnet and Higgins, 2006); however, process goals may also be the primary driver for visiting a store, for instance when consumers wish to be entertained by a stimulating store environment, or seek social interactions with the store personnel (e.g., Arnold and Reynolds, 2003).

Mapping shopping orientations to process goals, and thereby separating the orientation from the outcome of the shopping trip, also implies a unidimensional conceptualization of shopping orientation. A highly task-focused shopping orientation should preclude a highly experiential shopping orientation (and vice versa): The task-focused goal to finish the shopping mission as efficiently as possible is not compatible with the experiential goal of enjoying stimulation from the store environment and spending time browsing. This does not imply that consumers always have either a purely experiential or a purely task-focused shopping orientation; indeed, consumers may hold multiple goals that are either compatible or incompatible (Fishbach and Ferguson, 2007). However, pursuing a goal inhibits its competing goals (Shah *et al.*, 2002). In addition, if the competing goal is activated by external cues, it draws resources and commitment from the goal originally pursued (Shah and Kruglanski, 2002). Thus, pursuing an experiential process goal in a strict way should preclude consumers from pursuing a task-focused process goal in a strict way (and vice versa). This implies that a consumer's shopping orientation lies on a continuum ranging from experiential to task-focused.

Chronic Shopping Orientation as a Consumer Disposition

Previous research repeatedly claims that consumers differ in whether they tend to shop under a task-focused or an experiential shopping orientation (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Baker and Wakefield, 2011; Brown *et al.*, 2003; Ganesh *et al.*, 2007; Hansen and Jensen, 2009; Westbrook and Black, 1985). The present research refers to this notion of shopping orientation—if it exists as a stable consumer disposition—as chronic shopping orientation.

The cognitive goal framework supports the assumption of stable interindividual differences in shopping orientation. According to goal-based theories of personality, an individual's learning history forms the basis of “differences in the chronic activation of goals”

(Read and Miller, 2002), which determine interindividual differences. Research on motivational orientations such as regulatory focus demonstrates that process goals differ in chronic accessibility as well, which leads to stable interindividual differences in how consumers pursue a goal (e.g., Higgins *et al.*, 2001).

In the same way, the present research proposes that consumers differ in their chronic accessibility of shopping orientations as a result of their individual learning history. Hence, consumers with a chronic experiential shopping orientation should more readily activate experiential process goals when shopping, whereas consumers with a chronic task-focused shopping orientation should more readily activate task-focused process goals. Motivational orientations, in turn, affect information processing and behavior (e.g., Gollwitzer and Bayer, 1999). Thus, encountering the same stimulus (e.g., a shopping situation) activates different goals (e.g., a task-focused process goal) for different individuals, leading to differences in thinking, feeling, and behavior (e.g., rushing through a supermarket). We expect these interindividual differences to be stable.

Personality psychology addresses the stability of dispositions from two perspectives: temporal stability and cross-situational consistency (Caspi and Roberts, 2001; Mischel and Peake, 1982). Research on temporal stability shows that certain dispositions are substantially stable even over long time periods (for a meta-analysis, see Roberts and DelVecchio, 2000). Cross-situational consistency has been repeatedly found to be lower than temporal stability (Mischel and Peake, 1982). Tett and Guterman (2000), however, find evidence for substantial cross-situational consistency when considering whether situations are really relevant.

Stability is commonly defined as differential or rank-order consistency (Caspi and Roberts, 2001); (see also Hampson and Goldberg, 2006; Roberts and DelVecchio, 2000). This refers to the notion that the differences between individuals are stable. That is, an individual who

scores higher than another individual at one point in time will also score higher than the other individual at another point in time—even though the individual's absolute scores may vary across time. Differential consistency is usually measured using a correlation coefficient between two measures across time (temporal stability) or across situations (cross-situational consistency) (Caspi and Roberts, 2001).

As we propose that chronic shopping orientation is a stable disposition, we expect—by definition—that chronic shopping orientation is temporally stable. We adopt the concept of stability as differential consistency, which implies that a consumer who has a more task-focused (experiential) shopping orientation than another consumer at one point in time will also have a more task-focused (experiential) shopping orientation than the other consumer at another point in time.

H1: Interindividual differences in chronic shopping orientation are stable over time.

From the retailer's perspective, an important aspect of cross-situational consistency refers to whether chronic shopping orientation is stable across different retail domains. A retailer selling groceries, for instance, needs to know whether experiential shoppers will also be experiential when shopping for groceries, or only when shopping for apparel.

We expect that chronic shopping orientation is substantially stable across different retail domains. In line with the cognitive goal framework (Kruglanski *et al.*, 2002), we understand chronic shopping orientation as a process goal that is linked to the concept of shopping. Thus, we expect that whenever shopping as a mental construct is activated, the shopping orientation that is chronically accessible (i.e., task-focused vs. experiential) should be activated. This, however, does not imply that consumers activate the same shopping orientation in every situation. Whether a goal is active or not depends on both its chronic accessibility and features of the environment

(Fitzsimons *et al.*, 2008). Nevertheless, the effects of chronic accessibility are not overruled completely by situational influences. Bargh *et al.* (1986), for instance, find that situational influences on accessibility do not override the influence of chronic accessibility, but rather add to this influence. Research on consumers' product involvement mirrors these findings. Both enduring involvement (i.e., stable interindividual differences in involvement) and situational factors (e.g., a recent purchase decision) influence consumers' involvement in a particular situation (Dholakia, 2001; Richins *et al.*, 1992). Richins *et al.* (1992) demonstrate that the situational component does not override enduring involvement, but rather exerts an additive influence. Thus, the interindividual differences in product involvement persist within a situation.

In sum, we expect that the interindividual differences in chronic shopping orientation persist within different shopping domains. An experiential consumer's shopping orientation may be more experiential when shopping for a fun product than when shopping for necessities. Most importantly, however, he or she will have a more experiential shopping orientation in both contexts, compared to a task-focused shopper. This is in line with the conceptualization of stability as differential consistency between individuals.

H2: Interindividual differences in chronic shopping orientation are stable across different shopping domains (e.g., groceries, apparel, furniture).

Chronic Shopping Orientation and Tailored Communication

Previous research indicates that shopping orientation moderates how consumers react to the store environment (Baker and Wakefield, 2011; Chebat *et al.*, 2005; Kaltcheva and Weitz, 2006; van Rompay *et al.*, 2011). A central finding is that consumers with an experiential shopping orientation react more favorably toward arousing environments than consumers with a task-focused shopping orientation do (e.g., Kaltcheva and Weitz, 2006).

The store environment, however, is not the only instrument that retailers can use to influence consumers. For instance, retailers use communication techniques such as advertising to attract consumers and to influence their purchasing behavior (Ailawadi *et al.*, 2009). The present research proposes that chronic shopping orientation influences how consumers react to retailer communications. The core assumption is that consumers react more favorably to communications highlighting a value component that corresponds to their shopping orientation. Research on regulatory fit theory supports this assumption: Consumers react more favorably to products and persuasive appeals that fit their current motivational orientation (e.g., Cesario *et al.*, 2004; Chernev, 2004).

As task-focused shoppers have the goal of finishing their shopping as efficiently as possible, they should react more favorably to retailer communication that highlights planning and smoothly pursuing a shopping goal (“efficiency appeals”). In contrast, experiential shoppers seek fun and entertainment through browsing a stimulus-rich environment. Thus, they should prefer communication that highlights stimulating aspects of shopping, such as variety and new ideas (“stimulation appeals”).

- H3:**
- (a) Consumers with a task-focused shopping orientation prefer appeals that highlight efficient shopping, over appeals that highlight stimulating shopping.
 - (b) Consumers with an experiential shopping orientation prefer appeals that highlight stimulating shopping, over appeals that highlight efficient shopping.

Summary and Overview of the Studies

Four studies examine the hypotheses. Study 1 tests whether chronic shopping orientation is stable over a time period of eight months. Study 2 assesses the domain stability of chronic shopping orientation. Study 3 examines whether chronic shopping orientation predicts

consumers' evaluations of retailer claims (efficiency vs. stimulation appeals) across different retailing domains (i.e., groceries, apparel, and furniture). Study 4 focuses on the conditions under which chronic shopping orientation predicts the evaluation of retailer claims.

Study 1

Study 1 tests the temporal stability of chronic shopping orientation by applying a longitudinal design with eight months between the two measurements. In line with the concept of stability as differential consistency, a high correlation between the two measurement points reflects temporal stability (Caspi and Roberts, 2001).

Method

Sample and procedure. The study was conducted as an online survey. Participants were recruited from an online access panel. At measurement point t_1 , a total of $N_{t_1} = 387$ individuals participated (see Table 1 for demographics) and answered questions on chronic shopping orientation.

Eight months later, the 387 respondents who participated in the study at time t_1 via the online access panel were invited to participate at time t_2 in exchange for €2. At time t_2 , 197 participants completed the study, yielding a response rate of 50.9%. We removed ten participants from the analysis because they did not comply with the instructions, and eight participants with unusual data points regarding study duration.¹ The final sample of t_2 consists of $N_{t_2} = 179$ participants (see Table 1 for demographics).

Table 1 here.

Measures. Chronic shopping orientation was measured using an adapted version of the items of motivational orientation used by Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006). Their four-item scale

measures situational shopping orientation, but adequately reflects both the experiential and task-focused aspects of shopping orientation. Thus, these items were modified for the present research. The wording of the items was adapted to reflect chronic aspects of shopping and to enhance understandability after translating them into German. Three additional items were generated to ensure a high reliability of the scale (see Table 2 for the items).

The instructions for answering the items were given as follows: “On this page you will find statements on shopping behaviors and experiences. Please indicate for each statement how much it applies to you personally *in general*.” Participants indicated on a seven-point rating scale whether a statement applied to them or not (1 = *does not apply at all*; 7 = *fully applies*).

In a pretest with 106 participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 31.2$ years, $SD = 10.97$, 62.3% women), the scale performed well. Exploratory factor analysis extracted one factor that explained 50.6% of the variance, and the internal consistency was good ($\alpha = .83$). Thus, the seven items were used to measure chronic shopping orientation both at t_1 and at t_2 .

Table 2 here.

A number of further measures that tap into different aspects of shopping orientation exist. The present research builds on Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006) items because the goal is to use a scale that is short and reflects both the task-focused and the experiential aspects of shopping. The instruments that measure shopping motives (e.g., Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Westbrook and Black, 1985) include a number of motives that cannot always be unequivocally mapped to either a task-focused or experiential shopping orientation. Bargain hunting, for instance, can refer to a task-focused (Westbrook and Black, 1985) or to an experiential shopping orientation (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). Another prominent instrument is Babin *et al.* (1994) shopping value scale.

This instrument captures experiential and task-focused aspects of shopping, but addresses the outcomes of the shopping trip and not the motivational orientation during shopping.

Results

Preliminary Analysis. In a first step we examined the psychometric properties of the Chronic Shopping Orientation (CSO) scale. The items were subjected to exploratory factor analysis. Data came from the sample collected during the first measurement t1 ($N_{t1} = 387$). The dimensionality of the scale was analyzed with Velicer's MAP test and with parallel analysis using 5,000 random datasets (O'Connor, 2000).

Like the pretest, this test supported a one-factor solution, which explained 50.6% of the variance. Factor loadings ranged between $|.54|$ and $|.82|$ and were in different directions for experiential and task-focused items (see Table 2 for details). The one-factor solution was subjected to confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS, which resulted in an acceptable model: CFI = .969, SRMR = .0405, RMSEA = .090. Standardized regression weights ranged between $|.48|$ and $|.81|$, all $ps < .001$. The χ^2 goodness of fit statistic, $\chi^2(11) = 45.25, p < .001$, was not used to evaluate the model because large sample sizes (here: $N = 387$) produce significant results, even for models with good fit (Marsh *et al.*, 1988). In the model, the errors of items 2, 3, and 5 were allowed to correlate because these items reflect the task-focused end of the scale; that is, they were reverse-worded items compared to the other items that reflect an experiential shopping orientation (for handling correlated errors, see Brown, 2006). The modification indices of an initial model also supported this approach.

Task-focused items were recoded, and an average CSO score was calculated with low levels indicating a chronic task-focused shopping orientation, and high levels indicating a chronic experiential shopping orientation ($M = 3.5, SD = 1.15$; 1 = task-focused, 7 =

experiential). The consistency of the scale was good ($\alpha = .83$). Chronic shopping orientation was more experiential for women ($M = 3.8, SD = 1.38$) than for men ($M = 3.3, SD = 1.10$), $t(385) = 3.27, p = .001, d = 0.42$. Furthermore, chronic shopping orientation was negatively correlated with age, $r = -.15, p = .001$, indicating a more task-focused chronic shopping orientation for older participants.

Temporal stability over eight months. The temporal stability of chronic shopping orientation was tested by calculating the correlation between the CSO score at time t_1 and at time t_2 ($\alpha_{t_2} = .87, M_{t_2} = 3.5, SD_{t_2} = 1.21$). With a correlation of $r = .80$, the differential consistency of the CSO scale was excellent. This finding supports the hypothesis that chronic shopping orientation is stable over time (H1).

Analysis of dropout. Some participants who answered the CSO items at time t_1 did not answer the items at time t_2 , and thus were not included in the calculation of differential consistency. To explore whether dropout seriously endangered the conclusions regarding temporal stability, demographics (see Table 1) were compared between those who participated at both t_1 and t_2 (respondents) and those who participated at t_1 but not at t_2 (nonrespondents). These two groups did not differ in gender, $\chi^2 = 2.20, p = .14$, or education level, $\chi^2 = 2.34, p = .14$. Respondents were older ($M = 43.0$) than nonrespondents ($M = 38.8$), $t(367) = 3.03, p = .003, d = 0.32$. The proportion of students was lower in the respondent group (21.2%) than in the nonrespondent group (36.8%), $\chi^2 = 11.40, p = .003$. The CSO score at t_1 was slightly more task-focused for respondents ($M = 3.4, SD = 1.19$) than for nonrespondents ($M = 3.7, SD = 1.13$), $t(367) = 2.33, p = .021, d = 0.25$. Overall, the analyses indicate that the differences between respondents and nonrespondents were not critical and, thus, dropout did not seriously challenge the conclusions about temporal stability.

Discussion

The correlation between the two measurement points shows that chronic shopping orientation is stable over time. This finding indicates that chronic shopping orientation is indeed a stable consumer disposition. The time between the two measurements (eight months) is comparatively long, and thus the correlation is unlikely to be influenced by memory effects.

Study 2

Study 2 analyzes whether shopping orientation varies with shopping domains (H2). In order to reflect the variety of shopping domains, we used three different domains that represent different aspects of shopping (Hansen and Jensen, 2009): grocery stores as an example of a day-to-day, utilitarian shopping domain; apparel stores as an example of a more hedonic domain; and furniture stores as an example of a more expensive domain.

Method

The study was conducted online. Participants were recruited from an online access panel, which was a different one than that used in Study 1. We excluded four participants who completed the study very quickly (≤ 91 s; based on visual inspection of the distribution of study duration), which resulted in a final sample of 94 participants (see Table 1 for demographics).

Chronic shopping orientation was measured with the CSO items used in Study 1. To measure shopping orientation in the domain of grocery shopping, the same items used for measuring general chronic shopping orientation (CSO) were used, but the instructions indicated that participants should answer the items with reference to shopping in grocery stores. Shopping orientation during apparel shopping was measured with the CSO items, and participants were instructed that their answers should refer to shopping in apparel stores. Shopping orientation

during furniture shopping was measured with the CSO items, and participants were instructed that their answers should refer to shopping in furniture stores.

To control for the influence of order effects, we counterbalanced the order in which the participants answered the general CSO items and the domain-specific items over two between-subjects conditions. In one condition ($n = 44$), participants answered first the domain-specific items and then the general CSO items. In the other condition ($n = 50$), participants answered first the general CSO items and then the domain-specific items.

The general CSO items were integrated into a CSO score ($\alpha = .87$; 1 = task-focused, 7 = experiential). Similarly, the items for shopping orientation in grocery stores ($\alpha = .85$), apparel stores ($\alpha = .88$), and furniture stores ($\alpha = .85$) were integrated into separate scores.

Results and Discussion

To test the hypothesis that the interindividual differences in chronic shopping orientation hold across different domains (H2), the correlations between general chronic shopping orientation and the three domain-specific measures of shopping orientation (i.e., shopping orientation in grocery stores, apparel stores, and furniture stores) were analyzed (see Table 3). The results support H2: The domain-specific shopping orientations were correlated highly with each other. In addition, general chronic shopping orientation was correlated highly with each of the domain-specific shopping orientations. We tested whether the order in which the general CSO items and the domain-specific items were presented influenced the correlations by comparing all correlation coefficients between the two conditions using Fisher's r -to- z transformation. There were no significant differences in the size of the correlations between the two conditions, all z s < 1.64 , all p s $> .10$ (two-tailed).

Table 3 here.

In an additional analysis we tested whether the absolute levels of shopping orientation varied between the domains (see Table 3 for means). A mixed-factor ANOVA with domain (groceries, apparel, furniture) as within-subjects factor and presentation order (CSO first vs. domain-specific measures first) as between-subjects factor showed that shopping orientation did not differ significantly between the domains, $F < 1, p = .44$. In addition, neither the main effect of presentation order, $F(1, 92) = 1.30, p = .26$, nor the Domain \times Presentation Order interaction, $F < 1, p = .32$, were significant.

The results demonstrate that the interindividual differences in shopping orientation are stable across different retail domains. Consumers with a more experiential chronic shopping orientation show a more experiential shopping orientation in the three shopping domains; consumers with a more task-focused shopping orientation show a more task-focused shopping orientation in the three shopping domains. The domain stability provides further support for the assumption that chronic shopping orientation is a stable consumer disposition that contributes to explaining shopping behavior in various retail domains.

Study 3

Study 3 examines whether chronic shopping orientation predicts consumers' evaluations of retailer claims. H3a posits that consumers with a task-focused shopping orientation prefer claims that highlight planning and smoothly carrying out a shopping trip ("efficiency appeals"). In contrast, consumers with an experiential shopping orientation should prefer claims that highlight generating ideas and discovering new products ("stimulation appeals"; H3b). The study tests claims from the three different retail domains used in Study 2 (grocery, apparel, and furniture stores).

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, it examines whether chronic shopping orientation predicts consumers' evaluations of retailer claims. This finding would underline the value of chronic shopping orientation for segmentation and tailored communication. Second, the study examines whether chronic shopping orientation predicts consumers' evaluations of claims across different retail domains. This finding would underline the assumption that chronic shopping orientation is stable across retail domains.

Claims and Pretest

We developed retailer claims from three retail domains (i.e., groceries, apparel, and furniture). For each store type, one claim was tailored to task-focused shoppers and one claim was tailored to experiential shoppers (see Table 4 for the claims). The claims for task-focused shoppers highlighted aspects of planning and smoothly pursuing a shopping goal ("efficiency appeal"); the claims for experiential shoppers highlighted the generation of ideas and discovery of new products ("stimulation appeal").

The claims were pretested in a study with $N = 35$ participants from the same population as the main study. The participants of the pretest rated all claims on one seven-point rating item for efficiency orientation ("This claim highlights that you can accomplish your purchase quickly in this store."), and on one seven-point rating item for stimulation orientation ("This claim highlights that you may get new ideas in this store."). Across all three domains, the experiential claims (averaged across the three claim pairs: $M = 6.2$) were rated as more stimulating than the task-focused claims (average $M = 2.2$), all $ts(34) > 4.13$, all $ps < .001$. In the same way, the task-focused claims (average $M = 5.8$) were rated as more efficiency-oriented than the experiential claims (average $M = 2.4$), all $ts(34) > 7.69$, all $ps < .001$.

Table 4 here.

Method

The study was conducted as part of a larger testing session in the laboratory. A total of 77 participants were recruited from the local student subject pool, and participated in exchange for course credit (see Table 1 for demographics).

First, chronic shopping orientation was measured using the CSO items ($\alpha = .85$, $M = 3.7$, $SD = 1.17$). After a number of filler pages, participants evaluated retailer claims from three retail domains (i.e., groceries, apparel, and furniture; see Table 4). Evaluation of the claims was assessed on separate pages. Each page introduced a store type (e.g., groceries), together with both the task-focused and the experiential claim, and asked participants which of the two claims they liked more via forced-choice items; that is, participants chose between the task-focused and the experiential claim for each store type.

Results

Claim evaluation was measured as the number of times the stimulation-oriented claim was preferred over the efficiency-oriented claim in the three decisions. For instance, a score of 2 indicates that a participant preferred the stimulation-oriented claim for two out of the three decisions. Lower values indicate that a consumer evaluated the task-focused claims as more attractive; higher values indicate that a consumer evaluates experiential claims as more attractive. To test whether chronic shopping orientation predicts which type of claims consumers like more, the correlation between the CSO score and claim evaluation was examined. The results clearly support H3a and H3b: the more experiential (task-focused) the shopping orientation, the more participants preferred stimulation-oriented (efficiency-oriented) claims, $r = .47$, $p < .001$.² Gender did not influence the result.

In addition, logistic regressions examined whether chronic shopping orientation predicts claim evaluation across the three retail domains (i.e., groceries, apparel, and furniture). Three logistic regressions, with chronic shopping orientation as the predictor and claim choices as the criterion, provide support for the assumption. Chronic shopping orientation was a significant predictor of claim choice for all three domains (see Table 4 for the results). The results support H3a and H3b: For all three retail domains, the analyses showed that the more experiential the chronic shopping orientation, the more participants preferred stimulation-oriented claims.

Discussion

Study 3 demonstrates that chronic shopping orientation predicts consumers' evaluations of retailer claims. Experiential shoppers preferred stimulation-oriented claims, whereas task-focused shoppers preferred efficiency-oriented claims. This finding underlines that chronic shopping orientation is an interesting variable for customer segmentation and tailored communication in retailing.

Furthermore, the relation between chronic shopping orientation and claim evaluation holds over three different retailing domains (i.e., groceries, apparel, and furniture). Showing the relation over three domains provides two implications. First, it demonstrates the value of chronic shopping orientation for tailored communication across different retail domains. Second, it strengthens the finding from Study 2 that chronic shopping orientation is domain stable.

Study 4

In Study 3, we measured chronic shopping orientation before asking participants to evaluate the claims. Study 4 examines whether shopping orientation also predicts claim evaluation when consumers are not asked explicitly for their shopping orientation before they evaluate the claims. This is an important question, because retailer communications might reach

consumers in situations where they are not thinking about their shopping orientation—for instance, when watching a TV commercial or reading a direct mailer at home. In such situations, the influence of shopping orientation should be lower because shopping orientation is not active as a mental construct, and other factors might influence consumers' claim evaluation.

Shopping orientation as a mental construct, however, might also be activated without being asked about one's shopping orientation. We expect that this already occurs when consumers are thinking about shopping. Such a "shopping mindset" is especially likely when consumers are preparing a shopping trip or when they go shopping; it might also occur when features of a communication trigger thinking about shopping. We expect that when consumers are in a shopping mindset, the influence of shopping orientation on claim evaluation is similar to when they are explicitly asked about their shopping orientation.

We tested these hypotheses in an experimental design with three between-subjects conditions. In the nonshopping condition, participants first evaluated the retailer claims without having been given any shopping-related questions before. In the shopping-mindset condition, we activated a shopping mindset by using a shopping scenario before asking participants to evaluate the claims. In both conditions, we measured shopping orientation after the claim evaluation. Finally, we included a shopping-orientation condition in which we assess consumers' chronic shopping orientation before the claim evaluation in order to replicate the findings from Study 3. We expected that the relationship between chronic shopping orientation and the evaluation of retailer claims is higher in the shopping-mindset and in the shopping-orientation conditions than in the nonshopping condition.

Method

The study was conducted online. Participants were recruited from the same online access panel as in Study 2. We ensured that panel members who had participated in Study 2 could not participate in Study 4. We excluded four participants who did not comply with the instructions given in the scenario, and three participants with unusual data points regarding study duration.³ This resulted in a total of $N = 146$ participants (see Table 1 for demographics).

All participants answered the chronic shopping orientation scale and evaluated the same claims that we used in Study 3 (see Table 4). As with Study 3, each page introduced a store type (i.e., groceries, furniture, and apparel), together with both the task-focused and experiential claim, and asked participants which of the two claims they preferred via forced-choice items; that is, participants were asked to choose between the task-focused and the experiential claim for each store type. In addition, we used the items from the pretest of Study 3 as a manipulation check. We presented each claim on a separate page, and participants rated all claims on one seven-point rating item for efficiency orientation (“This claim highlights that you can accomplish your purchase quickly in this store”), and on one seven-point rating item for stimulation orientation (“This claim highlights that you may get new ideas in this store”).

We varied the order in which the items were presented in the three experimental conditions. In the nonshopping condition ($n = 57$), participants first indicated their preference for the experiential versus the task-focused claim. They then answered the chronic shopping orientation scale. In the shopping-mindset condition ($n = 42$), participants were first confronted with a shopping-related scenario. They were told to imagine that they are in the town center on an afternoon and want to shop for a few things. The scenario did not provide any further information in order not to direct participants’ responses toward a task-focused or an experiential shopping orientation. To increase their immersion in the scenario, they were asked to write a few

sentences on what they would do and how they would feel in this situation. On the next page, they indicated their preference for the experiential versus the task-focused claim. They then answered the items of the chronic shopping orientation scale. The shopping-orientation condition ($n = 44$) mirrored Study 3: Participants first answered the chronic shopping orientation scale and then indicated their preference for the experiential versus the task-focused claim. In all three conditions, participants completed the manipulation check items for the claims at the end of the study.

Results

Manipulation check. To test whether the claims were perceived as intended, a set of 2×2 ANOVAs with claim type as within-subjects factor, and presentation order (nonshopping vs. shopping mindset vs. shopping orientation) as between-subjects factor was calculated; ratings of the claims' efficiency orientation and stimulation orientation were the dependent variables. Across all three domains, the experiential claims were rated as more stimulation-oriented (averaged across the three claim pairs: $M = 5.7$) than the task-focused claims (average $M = 3.5$), all $F_s(1, 143) > 60.62, ps < .001$. In the same way, the task-focused claims were rated as more efficiency-oriented (average $M = 5.4$) than the experiential claims (average $M = 3.1$), all $F_s(1, 143) > 15.62, ps < .001$. In addition, claim ratings were neither influenced by presentation order, all $F_s(2, 143) < 1.78, ps > .17$, nor by the interaction between presentation order and claim type, all $F_s(2, 143) < 1.34, ps > .26$. Thus, the results show that the claims were perceived as intended.

Claim evaluation. As in Study 3, claim evaluation was measured as the number of times the stimulation-oriented claim was preferred over the efficiency-oriented claim in the three decisions. For instance, a score of 2 indicates that a participant preferred the stimulation-oriented claim for two out of the three decisions. Lower values indicate that a consumer evaluated the

task-focused claims as more attractive; higher values indicate that a consumer evaluated experiential claims as more attractive.

To test whether chronic shopping orientation predicts which type of claims consumers like more, the correlation between the CSO score and claim evaluation was examined for each experimental condition. The shopping-orientation condition replicates the findings from Study 3: the more experiential the shopping orientation, the more participants preferred the experiential claims, $r = .40$, $p = .008$.⁴ The same result was found in the shopping-mindset condition, $r = .43$, $p = .003$.⁵ In the nonshopping condition, in contrast, shopping orientation was not significantly related to claim preference, $r = .03$, $p = .85$.⁶ We formally tested the differences in correlation coefficients between the three groups by using the Fisher r-to-z-transformation. The correlation between chronic shopping orientation and claim evaluation differed significantly between the post-measurement condition and the shopping-context condition, $z = 2.11$, $p = .04$, and marginally significantly between the post-measurement and the pre-measurement condition, $z = 1.88$, $p = .06$. The correlations in the shopping-context condition and the pre-measurement condition did not differ significantly, $z = 0.15$, $p = .88$ (all tests two-tailed).

Discussion

Overall, the results are in line with Study 3 and provide further support for the assumption that experiential shoppers prefer experiential claims, whereas task-focused shoppers prefer task-focused claims. The results also extend Study 3 and suggest that these preferences will occur when shopping is activated as a mental construct, either by asking consumers about their shopping orientation or by asking them to imagine themselves shopping. Importantly, the results from the shopping-context condition show that activating a shopping mindset by imagining oneself in a shopping situation already activates the preference for experiential versus

task-focused claims. The study has two implications: First, it underlines the idea that chronic shopping orientation is a valuable construct for tailored retailing communications. Second, it implies that communication needs to activate a shopping mindset in order to be effective.

General Discussion

Conclusions

This research is the first to examine whether shopping orientation is a stable consumer disposition. In addition, the research finds that chronic shopping orientation influences consumers' evaluations of retailer communications. Study 1 shows that chronic shopping orientation is stable over time. Study 2 demonstrates that interindividual differences in chronic shopping orientation are stable across different retail domains. Study 3 demonstrates that experiential shoppers prefer stimulation-oriented claims, whereas task-focused shoppers prefer efficiency-oriented claims across different retail domains (i.e., groceries, apparel, and furniture). Study 4 provides further evidence that chronic shopping orientation predicts claim evaluation, and shows that this effect occurs when consumers reflect about their shopping orientation or imagine themselves in a shopping situation. Overall, the present research provides evidence that shopping orientation is a stable consumer disposition that can guide communication decisions in retailing.

The present research extends previous studies on motivational orientations during shopping by introducing the temporal dimension via a longitudinal design with eight months between measurements. Thereby, it demonstrates that whether consumers prefer to shop under an experiential or a task-focused orientation is an interindividual difference that is stable across time. Previous research has found differences between shoppers (Ganesh *et al.*, 2010; Kukar-

Kinney *et al.*, 2009; Westbrook and Black, 1985), but has not addressed the question of whether these differences are stable.

In addition, the stability of shopping orientation across different retail domains has not been demonstrated before. Study 2 shows that the interindividual differences in chronic shopping orientation persist across different retail domains: Consumers with a more experiential shopping orientation show a more experiential shopping orientation in a grocery, apparel, and furniture context; consumers with a more task-focused shopping orientation show a more task-focused shopping orientation in these domains. Study 3 provides further evidence for the stability of chronic shopping orientation across different retail domains: Chronic shopping orientation predicted the claim evaluation in the three domains.

Thus, the results imply that chronic shopping orientation is a stable consumer disposition. The interindividual differences persist over time and across different retail domains. Nevertheless, this finding does not imply that consumers always shop under their chronic shopping orientation. The shopping task or features of the store might also influence motivational orientation in a particular situation (Kaltcheva *et al.*, 2011; Kaltcheva and Weitz, 2006). The influence of situational features, however, does not pose a problem for the framework entertained in the present paper. The concept of chronic shopping orientation implies that a consumer's chronic shopping orientation is the most likely orientation to become activated when confronted with shopping. Thus, it reflects the orientation under which a consumer shops in most situations, though not in all.

Finally, the present research extends the literature on shopping orientation as a moderator of the effect of marketing stimuli. Previous research finds that shopping orientation moderates the influence of atmospheric variables of the store on shoppers' experiences and behavior (Baker and Wakefield, 2011; Kaltcheva and Weitz, 2006; van Rompay *et al.*, 2011). The present

research demonstrates that shopping orientation may also influence the effectiveness of retailer communications. In Studies 3 and 4, participants preferred claims that fit their chronic shopping orientation. In addition, Study 4 found a moderator of this effect: whether consumers were mentally engaged with shopping in the situation in which they encountered the claims, or not.

Managerial Implications

The present research implies that retailers can enhance the effectiveness of their communication by tailoring persuasive appeals to consumers' chronic shopping orientations. In addition, the finding that chronic shopping orientation is indeed a stable consumer disposition underlines its value for segmentation and tailored marketing actions: Consumers who have once been identified as experiential (task-focused) shoppers will be experiential (task-focused) shoppers in different shopping episodes and in different retail domains. Thus, retailers could assess their (prospective) customers' shopping orientations. The measurement scale that the present research used is feasible for assessing chronic shopping orientation in such a context: With seven items, the scale is easy to administer and provides reliable and valid results. Subsequently, customers' chronic shopping orientations can inform decisions about marketing activities such as communication strategies (Ailawadi *et al.*, 2009).

The present research demonstrates that retailers should address experiential shoppers with stimulation-oriented appeals and task-focused shoppers with efficiency-oriented appeals. In contexts where retailers can trace customers over different contact points—such as in online shopping or through the use of loyalty cards—retailers could tailor marketing activities even at the level of segments or individual customers: They could assess a customer's chronic shopping orientation at one point in time and tailor the following communication to the customer's shopping orientation. In contexts where retailers are not able to trace individual customers,

retailers could assess the chronic shopping orientation of their customers via a customer survey. Then, they could tailor their communication strategy to the shopping orientation that prevails in their most valuable segment of customers.

In addition, the present research provides implications on what retailers should consider when targeting customers according to their shopping orientation. In situations in which consumers are already mentally engaged with shopping—for instance, when they are shopping or preparing a shopping trip—tailored communication should be effective. For tailored communication that reaches consumers in situations when they are not thinking about shopping—for instance, when watching a TV commercial or when reading a direct mailer—retailers need to design their communication in such a way that shopping is activated as a mental construct. Retailers may achieve this by different means: for instance, by complementing their claim with strong visual cues from shopping environments, or by telling a story that lets consumers become immersed in a shopping experience.

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Footnotes

¹ We screened the distribution of time taken to complete the study and identified a larger gap of >8 min in the distribution at the right side of the distribution. We removed the eight participants at the right side of the gap (i.e., the first removed participant took 8 min longer to complete the study than the last participant who was included).

² Spearman's $\rho = .45, p < .001$

³ See footnote 1 for the procedure. In Study 4 the gap was >5 min and we removed three participants.

⁴ Spearman's $\rho = .40, p = .011$

⁵ Spearman's $\rho = .43, p = .003$

⁶ Spearman's $\rho = .06, p = .66$

Table 1

Demographics for the Studies

	Study 1			Study 2	Study 3	Study 4
	Time t ₁	Time t ₂ ^a				
		Respondents	Nonrespondents			
<i>N</i>	387	179	190	94	77	146
Gender						
Men	56.3%	59.8%	52.1%	51.1%	19.5%	49.3%
Women	43.7%	40.2%	47.9%	49.9%	80.5%	50.7%
Age [<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)]	39.9 (13.7)	43.0 (13.3)	38.8 (13.8)	40.5 (12.2)	25.1 (3.8)	39.3 (12.9)
Education						
Less than a High School Diploma	40.1%	43.6%	35.8%	33.3%	n/a ^b	33.6%
High School Diploma	59.9%	56.4%	64.2%	66.7%	n/a ^b	66.4%
Employment						
Student	28.9%	21.2%	36.8%	14.9%	n/a ^b	21.5%
Working	48.6%	55.9%	42.1%	67.0%	n/a ^b	64.1%
Other	22.5%	22.9%	21.1%	18.1%	n/a ^b	14.4%

^a Total *N* for t₂ differs from t₁ because 18 participants who did not properly complete the study at t₂ were excluded from this analysis.

^b These data were not collected in Study 3 because it was a student sample.

Table 2

*Study 1—Factor Loadings and Descriptive Statistics for the Items of the Chronic Shopping**Orientation Scale*

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	EFA	CFA	Item-total Correlations
			Factor loadings	Stand. Regr. Weights	
1 When shopping, I often have fun.	4.1	1.58	.79	.81	.59
2 When shopping, I try to get it over with as soon as possible. ^R	4.1	1.82	-.82	-.77	-.57
3 When shopping, I act as deliberately and goal-focused as possible. ^R	5.1	1.45	-.69	-.48	-.68
4 When shopping, I am usually looking for entertainment.	2.7	1.49	.60	.51	.72
5 When shopping, I mainly carry out what I have planned. ^R	5.1	1.44	-.69	-.50	-.69
6 I like to kill time by shopping.	3.32	1.77	.79	.75	.57
7 When shopping, I like to browse around.	4.9	1.52	.71	.71	.48

Note. Items translated from German. The content of item 4 referred to “shopping to relieve boredom” in the original instrument from Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006). We changed it to “looking for entertainment” based on comments questioning the applicability of the former version of the item. EFA: exploratory factor analysis; CFA: confirmatory factor analysis.

^R reverse coded (i.e., task-focused item).

Table 3

Study 2—Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Between the General Shopping Orientation and the Domain-Specific Shopping Orientations

Shopping Orientation Scales	General Shopping Orientation					Domain Specific Shopping Orientations				
	Measured First					Measured First				
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	(1)	(2)	(3)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	(1)	(2)	(3)
(1) Shopping Orientation Groceries	3.5	1.07				3.1	1.07			
(2) Shopping Orientation Apparel	3.5	1.26	.69***			3.4	1.19	.77***		
(3) Shopping Orientation Furniture	3.5	1.15	.57***	.55***		3.3	1.05	.69***	.75***	
(4) General Chronic Shopping Orientation	3.5	1.18	.88***	.78***	.69***	3.5	1.05	.81***	.71***	.73***

*** $p < .001$

Table 4

Study 3—Results of Claim Preference (N = 77)

Retailer Type	Claims	<i>n</i> ^a	Chronic Shopping Orientation ^b		Logistic Regression	
			<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Wald ^c	<i>p</i>
Groceries	efficiency: “Fast and problem-free shopping”	23	3.2	1.25	6.08	.01
	stimulation: “Discover the variety”	54	4.0	1.06		
Apparel	efficiency: “Find what you are looking for quickly”	24	3.0	1.14	10.54	.001
	stimulation: “Let yourself be inspired”	53	4.0	1.05		
Furniture	efficiency: “You have a plan for your apartment? We help you implement it.”	25	3.3	1.23	4.72	.03
	stimulation: “You are looking for good ideas for your apartment? We help you find them.”	52	3.9	0.90		

^a Number of participants who chose the claim; ^b values in rows for participants who chose the claim; ^c Wald’s χ^2 statistic from logistic regression with chronic shopping orientation as predictor and claim preference as criterion.