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Enhancing Well-Being through Anti-Depression Campaign Websites: Application of Transtheoretical Model

Tatiana Levit

Alexis Zederayko

Magdalena Cismaru

University of Regina, Canada

Abstract

We present the Australian anti-depression campaign beyondblue to exemplify how the Transtheoretical Model of Change (TTM)(Prochaska et al., 1992) can be used to guide the development of campaign websites that prompt attitudinal and behavioural change. We first emphasize that encouraging people to manage depression can enhance their well-being. We then briefly introduce TTM, which involves five stages of change through which a person moves to a depression free life. Focusing on the first stage of change, Precontemplation, we explain how we created a set of very detailed criteria to apply TTM to design campaign websites. We then use the criteria to analyze the online content of beyondblue and demonstrate the applicability of TTM in mass communication in the depression context.

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Increasing Walking Among Overweight and Obese Adults: Initial Insights from an Australian Formative Study

Mohammad Abdul Kadir, Social Marketing @ Griffith, Griffith Health Institute, Griffith University, mohammad.kadir@griffithuni.edu.au

Krzysztof Kubacki, Social Marketing @ Griffith, Griffith Health Institute, Griffith University, k.kubacki@griffith.edu.au

Sharyn Rundle-Thiele, Social Marketing @ Griffith, Griffith Health Institute, Griffith University, s.rundle-thiele@griffith.edu.au

Mazhar Haque, Mater Adult Hospital University of Queensland, mazhar.haque@mater.org.au

Abstract Regular brisk walking can decrease the rates of chronic diseases increasing at the same time quality of life. Yet, walking rates decreased over time. The findings reported in this paper are part of a formative research study, which aims to develop a social marketing walking behaviour change intervention targeting overweight and obese adults. Fifteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with overweight and obese participants living in the Brisbane and Logan city council areas. Three themes emerged. First, Australian walking guidelines were confusing and perceived to be unattainable. Second, location was identified as an important enabler with respondents expressing clear preferences for familiar locations. Finally, results indicate that program outcomes should focus on the amount of time spent walking rather than distance.

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Silver surfers: proposing an e-servicescape framework for active ageing

Track

Primary: Living well, longer

Secondary: Advancing theory and research in social marketing

Silver surfers: proposing an e-servicescape framework for active ageing

Abstract

Older consumers are 'surfing' the Internet and using technology to remain active as they age. Many of these 'silver surfers,' however, are rejecting services that reflect traditional, medical approaches to ageing. This trend creates a problem for researchers and service managers; there is no evidence base to inform the design of e-services that leverage consumer perspectives of ageing to help consumers remain active as they age. This paper therefore aims to a) conceptualise the issue of active ageing 'in older people's own terms' as a foundation for designing e-services for active ageing, b) define a new five-dimensional approach to e-servicescapes and c) advance a framework that explains the response of ageing consumers to cues in

the e-servicescape. The proposed framework can be tested in empirical studies to form an evidence base for service design and social marketing interventions aimed at promoting active ageing.

Introduction

In the wake of the 'silver tsunami', concerns about unprecedented levels of public health spending have given rise to ageing services promoting positive health behaviour change. Services aimed at promoting behavioural change must shift beyond 'technical and functional thinking' to consider all influencing factors, including the consumer's own value constructions (Russell-Bennett et al., 2013). It follows, then, that active ageing services should be designed to reflect the ageing consumer's lived experience and perceptions of value. In practice, despite new perspectives that highlight active, positive experiences of ageing, most ageing services remain grounded in traditional, medical approaches. The net result of this practice is that many services designed for ageing consumers fail to achieve adoption and uptake. There is declining interest in traditional, medical-based models such as residential aged care, with a new wave of savvy consumers rejecting viewing these models as a 'last resort'.

The design of services that are attractive to an ageing market requires a fundamental understanding of the consumer's lived experience to ensure congruence between service features and the needs and values of the consumer thus encouraging uptake of the service. A useful services marketing model for explaining the impact of service features on behaviour is the extended servicescape model (Rosenbaum et al., 2011). Servicescape research describes the physical environment as being rich in cues to signify the organisation's capability and quality, and to communicate its image and purpose (Bitner, 1992). Examples of these cues are temperature, music, equipment and style of décor (Bitner, 1992). These cues produce in the consumer an internal response (cognitive, emotional, physiological) and in turn, a behavioural response (to approach, or to avoid); (Bitner, 1992). The servicescape model has since been extended to consider environmental stimuli within three dimensions: physical (encompassing ambient conditions, space/function and signs/symbols/artefacts), social and restorative (Rosenbaum et al., 2011). With the rise of e-services as a means of searching for, selecting and consuming health and ageing services, there is a need to understand how the servicescape model can be translated to the online environment to facilitate positive behaviour change. This leads to the first research question being addressed in our proposed model: RQ1 How do consumers respond to cues in the e-servicescape of an active ageing service?

The existing servicescape literature deals primarily with the relationship between cue and response, with less attention paid to internal influences that consumers 'bring to' the service encounter, such as personality traits and cultural influences (Lin, 2004). Despite affective disposition (the tendency to experience stable positive or negative affect over time and situations) having been identified as an important predictor of customer satisfaction, perceptions of service quality and even self-reported consumer behaviours (Burns and Bowling, 2009), to date there has been no empirical investigation of the impact of affective disposition on consumers' interpretation of servicescape cues. It is particularly absent from studies of the online environment (e-servicescape); (Mari and Poggesi, 2011). Given the heterogeneous nature of the ageing experience, there is a need to understand what affect personality traits such as affective disposition will have on consumer's response to service features. This leads to the second research question being addressed in the proposed model: How does affective disposition influence the way e-servicescape cues are interpreted by ageing consumers?

The purpose of this paper is threefold; first, to conceptualise the issue of active ageing 'in older people's own terms' as a foundation for changing the way that an e-service is designed for ageing consumers; second, to define a new five-dimensional approach to e-servicescapes; and third, to propose a framework that explains the response of ageing consumers to cues in the e-servicescape. This conceptual framework can then be tested in empirical studies to form an evidence base for service design and social marketing interventions aimed at promoting active ageing.

A Consumer Approach to Active Ageing

The study of active ageing is a relatively new phenomenon (Depp and Jeste, 2006). Fuelled by increasing social and economic anxiety about the impact of an ageing population ("the burden of ageing"), new

perspectives on ageing emphasise continued engagement in life (Depp and Jeste, 2006). Descriptions such as ‘healthy ageing’, ‘successful ageing’, ‘productive ageing’, and ‘active ageing’ incorporate positive normative notions of living well into older years (Boudiny, 2013). Despite the popularity of active ageing as a concept, there remains a lack of consensus on its definition and this has contributed to a failure to translate it into service design (Bryant et al., 2001). Moreover, operationalisation of the concept still relies on objective, functional measures such as absence of disease that don’t necessarily reflect the consumer’s lived experience (Depp and Jeste 2006). The consumer reality of active ageing challenges the frame traditionally applied by researchers (see Table 1) (Bryant et al., 2001; Rowe and Kahn, 1997). Consumers define health in later years as ‘going and doing something meaningful’, with key determinants of ageing well including ‘1) something worthwhile and desirable to do, 2) the ability to accomplish the activity, 3) the resources to support the activity and 4) sufficient will or positive attitude’ (Bryant et al., 2001, p. 940). In describing the importance of resources, consumers emphasise valued relationships with family and friends (Bryant et al., 2001).

Consumer Perspective	Medical Perspective
Multidimensional	Weighted towards physical / functional attributes
Emphasises personality and attitude	Emphasises behaviour
Heterogeneous / segmented	Cohort or age-based
Positive self-perception / high satisfaction	Deficit-based, i.e. focus on limitations
Subjective measures	Objective measures

Table 1: Comparison of Consumer and Medical Perspectives on Active Ageing

A key feature of the consumer perspective on ageing is the importance of personality factors and in particular affective disposition (Duay and Phelan, 2006). Ageing consumers describe the role of personality in shaping the ageing experience (“that all depends on the type of person you are”) (Bryant, et al. 2001). Indeed, positive affect has been shown to influence ageing consumers’ perceptions of their health and has been linked to better health outcomes (Cohen and Pressman, 2006). Research has also demonstrated that an individual’s affective disposition, or their tendency to experience either negative or positive emotions over time and across situations (Watson et al., 1988), influences perceptions of service quality (Burns and Bowling, 2010), job satisfaction (Judge and Larsen, 2001) and life satisfaction (Piccolo et al., 2005).

E-servicescape Theory

Technological advances are driving fundamental changes in the way that consumers maintain their health as they age. One example is the rapid uptake of health and medical smartphone applications, with increasing numbers of smartphone users downloading healthcare-related apps. Designers of these e-services need to understand how to create servicescapes that resonates with the consumer and promotes positive behavioural outcomes. To understand the e-servicescape we need to return to the early nineties when servicescape research began in earnest. The term ‘servicescape’ credited to Bitner (1992) to explain how the built environment can be designed and managed to engender positive behavioural outcomes of consumers and employees within service organisations. The model draws on Merhrabian and Russell’s Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model to describe stimuli, or ‘cues’ within three dimensions; ambient conditions, spatial layout / functionality and signs / symbols / artefacts. The model was subsequently expanded by Tombs and McColl-Kennedy (2003) to include the social dimension and later by Rosenbaum et al. (2011) to include the dimensions of restorative, social and physical (combining Bitner’s ambient conditions, spatial layout/functionality and signs/symbols/artefacts into a single dimension of physical).

The emergence of the virtual servicescape reflects the shift from service provision in the physical environment (Bitner, 1992) towards electronic environments such as the Internet, portable devices (e.g. PDAs) and smart-phone applications. The virtual servicescape field uses different terminology to describe its domain including e-scape (Koering 2003), cyberscape (Williams and Dargel, 2004) and e-servicescape (Hopkins et al., 2009). For this research, we have adopted the term ‘e-servicescape’ (Hopkins et al., 2009) as it best conveys the application of the original model into a bricks-and-clicks

setting, describing an organisation’s web site as a service setting with features ‘that can be managed to evoke a desired response’ (Hopkins et al., 2009).

The e-servicescape retains the ambient conditions and spatial layout/functionality dimensions of Bitner’s (1992) framework, examining cues such as colour, virtual layout and navigation, but has largely integrated or replaced the third dimension of signs/symbols/artefacts. Neither of the two additional dimensions in the extended servicescape model (restorative and social) has been adapted into the e-servicescape. The social and restorative dimensions are important in the context of active ageing servicescapes as they have the potential to facilitate supportive relationships and improve quality of life (Rosenbaum et al. 2011), issues of key relevance to older consumers. For this research, we define the active ageing e-servicescape by drawing on Hopkins et al’s (2009) e-servicescape framework and Rosenbaum et al.’s (2011) extended servicescape model to propose a five dimensional model; ambient, spatial/functional, symbolic, social and restorative. In the next section we outline how these e-servicescape dimensions may influence uptake or rejection of an e-service by ageing customers and the impact of affective disposition.

Proposing an e-servicescape Framework for Active Ageing

We propose that an appropriately designed and managed e-servicescape can promote active ageing by facilitating each of the key determinants of ‘ageing well’; 1) something worthwhile and desirable to do, 2) the ability to accomplish the activity, 3) the resources to support the activity (with an emphasis on relationships) and 4) sufficient will or positive attitude’ (Bryant et al., 2001). To inform the design of e-services that reflect the consumer’s definition of active ageing we propose an e-servicescape framework for active ageing (Figure 1):

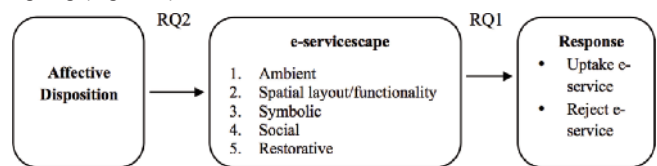


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual e-servicescape Framework for Active Ageing

Cues in the e-servicescape

The first research question to be addressed is: How do consumers respond to cues in the virtual servicescape of an active ageing servicescape? Bitner’s (1992) model describes two categories of consumer behavioural responses to the servicescape; approach (attraction / stay and explore / spend money / return / carry out plan) or avoidance (opposites of approach). For this research, we consider ‘approach’ to mean uptake of the e-service and ‘avoid’ to mean rejection. We apply Bitner’s (1992) definition of cues, drawn from environment psychology research, as environmental features that can be controlled by the service manager to engender a response on the part of the consumer or employee. We demonstrate how cues in each of the five dimensions may influence a response:

Dimension	Example: Influence of cues in an active ageing e-servicescape
1. Ambient	Ambient conditions such as colour are likely to correlate with attitudes to the service, for example the use of certain hues to induce feelings of relaxation (Gorn et al., 2004). In turn, feelings of relaxation may influence the propensity of ageing consumers to participate socially.
2. Spatial layout / functionality	Aspects of spatial layout and functionality such as ease of navigation and usability are likely to lead to a sense of control and conversely, if usability is low, ageing consumers could feel that the ‘ability to accomplish the activity’ is compromised (Bryant et al., 2001).
3. Symbolic	Symbolic cues are under-researched in the e-servicescape domain (Mari and Pogessi, 2011). Examples of signs, symbols and artefacts that could influence the response of an ageing market to the e-servicescape are logos or marks that signal a ‘senior-friendly’ service. Such symbolic cues are likely to engender a sense of trust in the service environment.
4. Social	Social cues such as display of emotion and facilitation of ‘connection’ via online forums could promote opportunities for ageing consumers to build relationships and social networks, both seen as important resources to support meaningful activity (Bryant et al. 2001).
5. Restorative	Restorative servicescapes can be cultivated by environmental stimuli in health-based services (Rosenbaum et al., 2011). One aspect that could be translated to the virtual environment is ‘fascination’ or ‘the ability to hold a person’s attention effortlessly’ (Rosenbaum 2011, p. 606). An example would be online brain-training games that engage ageing consumers in ‘something worthwhile and desirable to do’ (Bryant et al., 2001).

Table 2: The Influence of Cues within an Active Ageing e-service

Affective Dispositions and the e-servicescape

The second research question to be addressed is: How does affective disposition influence the way virtual servicescape cues are interpreted by ageing consumers? Whilst ‘affective states’ are understood as being transient and in response to service experiences (Westbrook, 1980), ‘affective disposition’ describes an individuals’ general disposition to experience negative or positive mood states (Watson and Clark, 1984). Affective disposition has been shown to influence attitude, satisfaction and perception (Burns and Bowling, 2009). Indeed, Bitner’s (1992) original model identified that individual personality traits are likely to influence a person’s reaction to servicescape cues and that ‘each individual enters an environment in a particular mood state’ (p. 65). In a study of older adults with chronic disease, positive or negative affect was shown to influence how individuals view their health and their symptoms (Hu and Gruber, 2008).

A key premise guiding this study is that affective disposition may influence responses to servicescape cues and that this may yield ‘unique’ effects in terms of behavioural response within an active ageing e-servicescape. Table 3 provides examples of the ways in which affective disposition may affect the interpretation of cues in each dimension of the e-servicescape.

Dimension of cues	Example of how affective disposition may influence interpretation
1. Ambient	Positive or negative affect influences information processing (Watson and Clarke, 1984), which could affect the way ambient conditions, for example colour, are interpreted.
2. Spatial layout / functionality	Positive or negative affect influences levels of ‘alertness’ (Watson, Clarke, and Tellegen, 1988), which could affect the way spatial cues, for example web navigation, are interpreted.
3. Symbolic	Affect and affective intensity can influence memory (Watson and Clarke, 1984), which could affect the way signs and symbols, for example logos and other brand marks, are interpreted or recalled.
4. Social	Affect is associated with personality, e.g. positive affect with extraversion (Watson and Clark, 1984). Aspects of personality could affect the way social cues such as online forums are interpreted, for example an individual high in extraversion may have a higher propensity to engage socially online.
5. Restorative	Positive or negative affect influences how individuals’ view their mental wellbeing (Hu and Gruber, 2008), which could affect the way restorative cues such as ‘creating a sense of belonging’ are interpreted. For example, someone with a positive affective disposition may be more receptive to this restorative cue.

Table 3: Examples of Influence of Affective Disposition on Cue Interpretation

Implications / Conclusion

With a rapidly ageing population in Australia and many other Western countries, it is important that government agencies and not-for-profit agencies develop e-services that are attractive to ageing consumers. We propose that developing e-services in health that are less overtly medicalised (e.g. weight, cholesterol) and more aligned with the consumer definition of ageing (e.g. doing something meaningful) will result in higher levels of uptake and result in positive health behaviours. The design of these e-services needs to leverage the specific cues in each dimension of the e-servicescape that will result in uptake and overcome barriers resulting in rejection. Furthermore the design needs to actively link to the affective disposition of the consumer to ensure there is congruence between the consumer and the e-service. This will lead to more effective e-services for ageing consumers benefiting both the individual and society as older consumers engage in more active lifestyles.

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Stick With It! Preliminary Results of a Pilot Study using Nudging to Assist with Weight Loss Maintenance

Amy Wilson¹, Svetlana Bogomolova¹ and Jonathan D Buckley²

¹ Ehrenberg Bass Marketing Research Institute, University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia.

² Alliance for Research in Exercise, Nutrition and Activity (ARENA), Sansom Institute for Health Research, University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia.

Abstract

Four out of five people who lose weight, are unable to maintain their weight loss. Therefore there is a need for effective weight maintenance interventions. “Stick With It!” is a six-month randomised controlled trial testing the feasibility and efficacy of using low-cost nudging items, that support key weight maintenance behaviours. Preliminary six-month results indicate that (1) participants used and like the items “A great way to reinforce the proper way to eat and exercise” and (2) there is a trend towards greater weight and abdominal fat regain in the control group (n = 5) compared to the intervention group (n = 9). Early results suggest “Stick With It” is feasible and may be effective for minimising weight regain.