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IMPACT OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR BASED ON STORE ATMOSPHERICS

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ABSTRACT
With advent of new and novel competition in retail sector prompt for exploring new elements in influencing the customer buying behavior. The larger retail brands are embarking on those factors to boost footfall and turn that traffic into sales.
Purpose: The study aimed to look into the effect of store atmosphere on consumer buying behavior in Bengaluru retail stores. Examining the Strategies for retailers to boost store atmospheres and to distinguish a store's appearance from that of its rivals, causing customers to spend more time and money and return to that store.
Methodology: Current study uses is causal and quantitative approach, wherein the primary data was obtained and analyzed statistically from customers in Bengaluru This study examines the effect of atmospheric variables such as crowd density, store floor space, and product assortment on consumer buying behavior. Non-random convenience sampling was used to select sample respondents, and data was collected using a questionnaire that used the Likert Scale to quantify responses.
Marketing and Theoretical implication: The store ambience viz., lighting and music pave the way for

more appealing to customer visit. The store need to have crown management facility and other hedonic competence to convert to sales. The inference would be for better human and other elements certainly influence the customer buying behavior in retail stores.

Introduction

Consumer behavior and buying patterns are changing along with time. Earlier people used to shop just based on needs, now they require added benefits and services. Atmospheric variables have a great impact on buying patterns of the consumers. The atmospheric variables are divided into two categories external variables (such as exterior window display, location, size of the shop, parking facility, surrounding stores) and internal variables (such as lighting, music, scent, staff, cleanliness, product displays, and waiting queues). moderators (such as sex, location, culture, income, technology and marital status) also play an important role in consumer purchase intention. A significant effort is made to find the impact of moderators, internal and external variables on consumer buying behavior.

Earlier research has shown that the atmosphere of a retail store has a direct effect on customer behavior. The atmosphere of a store affects the level of happiness, satisfaction, and mood in the store, which has a positive effect on customer purchasing behavior.

However, there have been few studies that look at the effect of visual merchandising, Promotions and offers, Ambience, store layout, and human behavior on customer purchasing behavior. As a result, this research aims to investigate the influence of these variables listed above on consumer purchasing behavior in the stores of Bengaluru.

The importance of visual merchandising ambiance etc has been ignored in India till recently, but with the emergence of the malls and shopping complexes, the merchandisers are benefitting in getting more customers.

According to this research, the problem statement that are identified appears to be temporary because consumer behavior changes according to fashion and taste. If a store, for example, has a problem with visual merchandising, which is the most important factor in influencing customer behavior, the mindset or factors influencing purchase behavior may change in response to the fashion.

The store owners are the ones who are most affected by these variables. Customers nowadays prefer goods or services that provide additional benefits. For instance, a parking lot or product discounts/offers. Visual merchandising is a method of attracting buyers by visually rendering the brand appealing to them. According to our findings Stores that lack factors that influence behavior will struggle, which will have a direct impact on merchandisers.

The issue we identified is primarily found in urban areas. People in urban areas are influenced by their culture when they enter a store. Shopping is not only a necessity for them but also a source of entertainment.

Visual merchandising, Store layout, promotions are one of the major factors driving customers inside a store. If a store does not follow up the requirements of customers, then it will gradually lose its customers. The demand for the products will reduce. The main key of a store is to attract customers from outside, if they fail in that then the store will automatically collapse.

The present study uses the S-R model for understanding the consumer behavior of

the sample selected. The study assumes the store environment as a stimulus for customers that influences their buying decisions. These buying decisions are influenced by the sensible decisions made by the consumers but still there exist buying impulsive decisions, but end with a purchase. Literature suggests that to get a comprehensive inference of the consumer buying process, the impulse buying decision process should also be considered. These impulse buying are mostly influenced by external stimuli in the consumers' environment. Marketers utilize various strategies to provoke impulse buying from consumers. These include packaging styles and material and presentation in the store. The theories of consumer behavior also enlighten the advertisers on predicting how consumers make their purchase decisions. Despite the importance of impulse buying, the marketing theory relies on logical decision-making mechanisms.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

This research will show why store atmospheres can be an important part of a marketing strategy for increasing sales and creating a positive store picture, as well as how it can influence customer impulse buying behavior. The study would also inform retailers about the various elements of store atmosphere that can induce customers to purchase on impulse, as well as how stores can be built and goods displayed in stores, as well as how it can be used to influence impulse buying by influencing the buyer's decision-making process.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Store Atmospherics has been defined by Kotler (1973) as "the effort to design buying environments to produce unique emotional effects in the buyer that enhance his purchase likelihood." He proposed a five-dimensional sense system for store atmospheres and later studies argued that store atmospherics also includes environmental factors (sound, arousal, smell, sight), product-based factors (crowding, arousal, smell), and sight (wall colors). Ambient factors, construction factors, and social factors comprise the environmental factors. It was found that the customers respond in cognitive, emotional, and biological ways in a retail environment (Baker, 1986; Bitner, 1992).
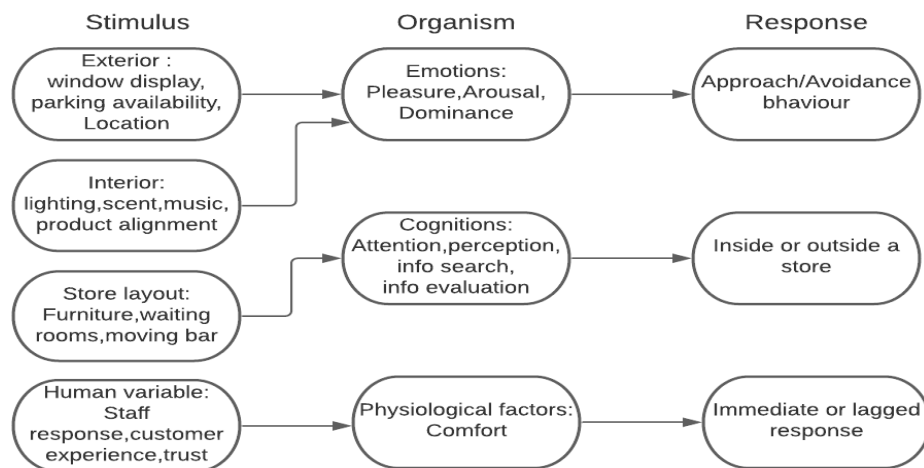
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research instrument of the study employed was a questionnaire having two sections. The first section intended to collect data on the respondents' demographic profile and the second section had the questions related to the study objectives. The moderating effect on the relationship between customer distances traveled and customer perceptions were discovered to be a significant relationship. The findings emphasized the positive relationship between customer perceptions and store attributes. These findings will aid retailers serving unorganized markets in meeting customer expectations and, as a result, retaining loyal customers.

The major concern of the present study was to understand the influence of retail atmospherics on consumers' shopping behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The impact of store environment on consumer behavior, E. Shirin Hima Bindu, Swetha Kodali and D. Ratna Kumari. International Journal of Current Microbiology and Applied Sciences, 2021. A customer who is interested in buying products and enthusiastic about their shopping experience will stay longer, spend more money, and enjoy it more when they return. The amount and quality of lighting, the impression it gives of the merchandise, and the impact it has on the appearance of the retail space are all factors in a successful sale. A customer who is interested in purchasing goods and excited about their shopping trip will stay longer, spend more money, and have a better time when they return. The quantity and quality of lighting, the feeling it creates about the merchandise, and its effect on the appearance of the retail areas are all reasons for good sales.

Store atmospherics: An effort to influence impulse buying in brick-and-mortar stores dr. Tabitha Durai & g. Stella. International Journal of Sales & Marketing Management, Jun 2020, 23–28. It consists of a pleasant shopping environment created by retailers based on consumer emotional value. Retailers are using store atmospheres to create a positive experience for customers, which leads to hedonic motivation. Brick-and-mortar stores place a greater emphasis on the in-store environment, enhancing the customer's shopping experience with innovative products. Ideas, attractiveness, excitement, and pleasure are all things that come to mind when I think of the word "pleasure." The material appearances of a retail store that used to be called "store atmospherics" are referred to as "store atmospherics." It's a combination of elements that can be felt, heard, or seen that causes people to buy things they don't need. The retail establishment the physical aspects of a store's atmosphere include sanitation, equipment, and wall painting. Display of goods, attractive decorations, and so on. The aroma, melody, and other intangible aspects are all present at the same time. Lights, and so on Consumers' emotions are influenced by atmospherics, which can lead to impulse purchases.

Impact of retail store environmental marketing cues on consumer buying physiology. Arti Lata Abhishek Ranjan Singh. International Journal of Management (IJM), December 2020. Music, cleanliness, and participant had a direct impact on customer behavior intention. Store display and layout, as well as light, had a significant impact on the pleasure of emotion. Customer behavior intention is significantly influenced by store pleasure, but not by arousal or customer retail experience.

Literature suggests that to lead the market, clothing retail stores need to improve them constantly because business sustainability requires satisfying existing customers and acquiring new customers. For doing so, retailers adopt new systems to sustain themselves in the competitive market. Visual merchandising is one of the prevailing concepts which enables retailers to attract new customers inside the store (Khisa et al., 2020).

Batista et al. (2020) studies the use of visual merchandising and concluded that it is limited to retail outlets. Visual merchandising is a technique for creating a store environment using various elements such as design, architecture, decoration, and visual communication, among others, to engage the customer in a shopping environment.

The present customers possess higher buying power because of their changing and demanding needs. The study by Nell (2017) found that visual merchandising displays influenced the consumer buying behavior unconsciously and a pleasant shopping environment made the customer stay longer in the store, leading to purchase. The study found that the sight atmospherics also influences the consumers to make purchases in direct or indirect ways.

In a study by Sondakh (2020) in Indonesia, it was found that marketers attempt to get benefitted from impulsive buying of the consumers to raise their sales. The study found that the store layout significantly influences the impulsive purchasing behavior of the customer.

The study by Timonina-Farkas et al. (2020) attempted to assess the usage of combined product assortment by the retailers to increase their sales and revenue. The study compared the proposed heuristics with three strategies of assortment planning for business insights. The three assortment planning strategies investigated in the study were, no variable products taken by retailers, cross-selling ignored by the retailers, and fixed maximum space allocation for products. It was found that if cross-selling is practiced by the retailers the variable assortment increases the profitability significantly.

Iyer et al. (2019) in their study has done a meta-analysis to understand the relationship between the impulse buying behavior of consumers and their internal and external determinants and reported that the traits, motives, consumer resources, and marketing stimuli are the major determinants of impulse buying. In addition, it was also reported that the consumers' mood and self-control mediate the affective and psychological processes of consumers' impulse buying.

Soomru et al. (2017) in their study attempted to investigate the impact of visual merchandising on consumer attention and found that color and lightening, window display, and store interior have positive and significant on consumer attention. In the study store layout was found to be negative but significantly influencing consumer attention. This concluded that the retailers should focus on visual merchandising for increasing consumer's footfall.

Gowrishankkar (2017) has also attempted to study the influence of store ambiance on the purchase behavior of consumers. He argued that the store ambiance stimulates the perception and emotions of a consumer that in turn influences the consumers' purchase decisions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The nature of the present study is quantitative and causal. It used primary data to infer the results for meaningful insights for the retail managers. The study collected the primary data through a structured questionnaire and was deployed in the retail outlets of Bangalore (Urban) for their responses. The sample size of the study was 108 respondents and was selected through a judgemental and convenience sampling process. The mode of sending the questionnaire and collecting their responses was online using social media platforms. The study used google forms for the questionnaire and responses. Google forms give an easy way to collect the data in the excel format and hence, it was being used.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the study was to investigate the impact of store atmospherics on consumer buying behavior in the retail sector.

1. To understand the retail store atmospherics elements which stimulate the consumer in the process of buying.

2. To know the association between the visits of customer and retail ambiance on consumer buying behavior.

Store atmospherics consists of various internal and external variables and hence the study also attempted to find out which of these variables have relatively more impact on consumer buying behavior.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
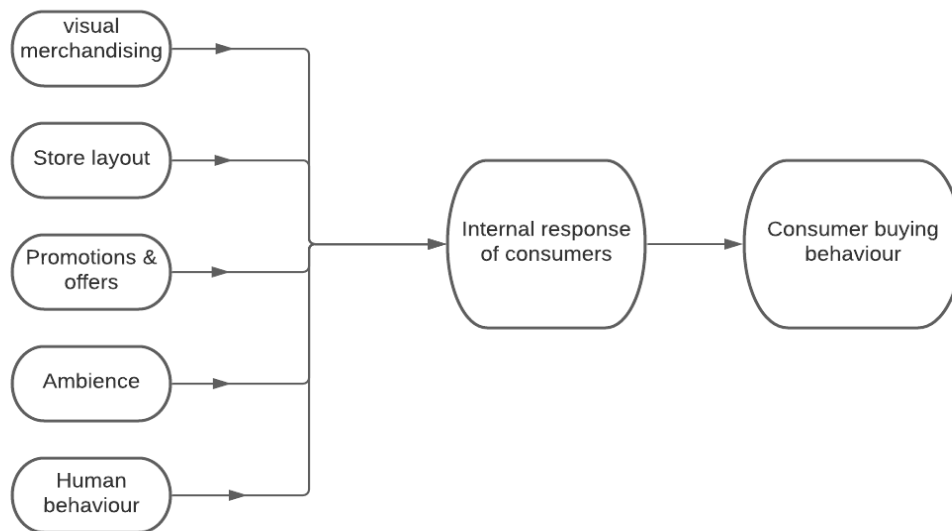
The conceptual model is used to explain the relationship between store atmospherics and consumer buying behavior. Internal consumer responses such as emotions, cognitions, and comforts will be mediated by factors of store atmosphere such as visual merchandising, store layout, promotions and offers, ambiance, and human behavior. The indirect impact on consumer buying behavior. Customer satisfaction can lead to more business. Customers are influenced by behavioral intentions such as repurchase, positive word-of-mouth marketing, and satisfaction. From a practical perspective, this conceptual paper could benefit retail stores by helping them better understand why customers dive at their location. Customers will

be stimulated to react appropriately as a result of this understanding, which will, in turn, increase customer perceived value and produce customer satisfaction, which will influence behavior.
brand attractive for target customers**3.3 Conceptual Framework**

HYPOTHESIS
H_0: there is no association between the consumer visit and retail ambiance.
H_a: there is association between the consumer visit and retail ambiance

RESEARCH DESIGN
The present study follows the descriptive research design because the study attempt to describe consumer buying behavior concerning retail store atmospherics. The following sections will discuss the data collection and sampling details for the study.
Data Collection Method
The data collection or the study was done through a questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first section recorded the respondents' demographic profile and the second section consisted of the questions related to factors of visual merchandising. The questionnaire attempted to gather the customers' retail store atmosphere experiences for further analysis and inference.
Sample size
A simple random sampling was used with a sample size of 108 respondents who visited the retail stores in Bengaluru for their purchases.
Sample frame
Buyers who typically purchase their household items from large retail stores were selected for the present study.
Statistical tool used
The statistical tool used in our research is the chi-square test for identifying the relationship between what we are studying i.e., the association between consumer behavior and internal/external variables of the store.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Variables		Frequency (No. of respondents)	Percent (%)
Age	18-25 years	65	60.2%
	25-30 years	32	29.6%
	31-40 years	10	9.3%
	40 years and above	1	0.9%
Gender	Male	78	62.9
	Female	30	37.1

The table helps understand the demographic factors that influence impulsive consumer behavior.
The table shows that 60.2% of the respondents are between the age of 18 to 25 years, 29.6% of the respondents are between the age of 25 to 30 years, 9.3% of

respondents are aged between 31 to 40 years and 0.9% of the respondents are aged 40 years and above. It is interpreted those respondents from the age group of 18 to 25 prefer to go to the stores more.

Male respondents constitute 72.2% of the respondents and female respondents constitute 27.8%. Both respondents were adult male and female retail users, consisting of 78 males (62.9%) and 30 females (37.1%). It is interpreted that both male and female respondents prefer additional services other than just shopping.

Descriptive analysis

Out of 108 responses, visual merchandising (17.6%) includes, store floor planning, window display & merchandise display makes customers visit a store. *Visual merchandising* allows for creating a store environment using various elements such as design, architecture, decoration, and visual communication, among others, to engage the customer in a shopping environment.

Promotions and offers (34.2%) which include discounts, offers & themes also influence customers to drive into the store. sales promotion provides customers with more value and incentives to visit stores or make purchases.

Ambiance (17.4%) which includes lighting, music, scent & decorations is also important for a store so that customers feel enthusiastic about shopping. Music is an important component of the store environment that has a direct impact on consumer purchasing behavior. Customers are more likely to spend more time browsing the merchandise because of the shop's pleasant atmosphere.

Store layout (23.1%) which includes artwork, furniture, size of the store, parking facility, etc. are extra benefits that customers prefer from a store. It is expected that customers will stay for a longer duration to explore more in a store provided the store is well designed. They are also more likely to mingle with other customers and sales associates. Easy access from outside and easy navigation from inside give customers a more enjoyable experience.

Human behavior (7.9%) includes staff behavior, store experience, influenced customers to build trust, repurchase, and buying intentions.

Statistical Analysis:

Since the objectives are to understand the role of atmospherics on consumer behavior, hence the below hypothesis is derived. And as data is categorical, we adopted the 'chi-square test of association' in SPSS

H_0: there is no association between the consumer visit and retail ambiance.

H_a: there is association between the consumer visit and retail ambiance

		VAR00005					
		1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	
VAR00004	1.00	4	25	4	3	6	
	2.00	1	18	7	0	3	
	3.00	2	3	1	2	6	
	4.00	3	9	3	5	2	
Total		10	55	15	10	17	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)

Pearson Chi-Square	24.363^a	12	.018
Likelihood Ratio	24.681	12	.016
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.419	1	.234
N of Valid Cases	107		

a. 14 cells (70.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.31

From the above test result, the p-value is < 0.05 (Assmp 0.018), and also test statistics is more than table value (24.363), we will be accepting alternative hypothesis thereby rejecting the null hypothesis. Therefore, it could be inferred that there is a significant association between the visit of consumers and the influence of retail ambiance.

Findings

In this research chi-square test of association utilized to determine the association of store ambiance on consumer purchasing behavior, and we gathered primary data from 108 customers via a questionnaire designed specifically for this study. Google forms forwarding via online platforms were used to contact respondents. A stimulus-response model (SOR) was utilized to empirically estimate the model. We discovered that the retail environment had an impact on many phases of a shopper's cognitive activity, such as focus, interpretation, categorization, and information processing, based on the replies. Each component of the store environment influences consumer behavior and has a beneficial impact, according to research collected.

•   8.7% of respondents believe that pleasant music is very significant and that it stimulates them to go to the store. 8.7% of respondents believe that good lighting is significant and that it stimulates people to go to the store. 13 percent of respondents believe that having an easy-to-read layout and display is highly important and drives them.6.5 percent of respondents believe that the business's graphics are very essential and that it drives them to visit the business. 59 percent of respondents believe that the ease with which they may locate a product is very significant and that it drives them to visit the store. 52.7 percent of respondents believe that the friendliness of their co-workers is very essential and that it drives them. 23.1% of the respondents have perceived that the Good location of the store is very important and it motivates them for going to the store. 90.7 percent of respondents believe that the ease with which they can park is very essential and that it stimulates them to go to the store. 39.8% of respondents believe that having enough waiting time is very important and that it drives them to go to the store. 35.2 percent of respondents believe that the promotions and deals that I may find at the store are extremely significant and that I should take advantage of them. • 17.6% of respondents believe that visual merchandising, such as window displays and mannequins, is highly significant and that it inspires consumers to visit a business.

SUGGESTIONS

- To increase consumer loyalty, retailers must emphasize product quality and the in-store environment, as well as pique consumers' quality consciousness and curiosity.
- The study's target population was retail stores that primarily served upper- and middle-class customers. The behavior of less affluent customers could not be represented.
- In the store, pop-up stalls can be set up. The pop-up stalls can be changed or updated according to the season and trend.
- Due to pandemics, there should be smooth functioning of crowd management.
- The provision of touchless cash points can be established to encourage contactless payments.
- Proper floor planning is necessary so that once the customers enter the store, make it easy for customers to do business with you.
- Live streaming feature where a consumer can take a tour of the store by staying at home while interacting with an executive in store.
- Installation of a self-service booth at its store, where customers can complete their orders using a virtual machine on their own. All they have to do is pick up a carrying bag at the booth before heading out, scan it, and pay using the digital method.
- Providing charging stations for customers so that it will be helpful to customers to charge their phone while they are shopping.
- 24*7 WhatsApp and personal support can be provided.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights the fact that atmospheric variables can influence behavior. This finding is consistent with previous research that has yielded similar findings. The research was able to address the significance of atmospheric components in buying behavior. This research emphasizes the significance of visual merchandising (store floor planning, window display, merchandise display). Graphics (artwork), decor, waiting rooms, store signage, moving bar browsing space, store size, and parking) enablement Discount pamphlets, themes (ethnic western, children, colors), and promotions and offers Lighting, music, smell, product alignment, and decoration all contribute to the overall atmosphere. Human behavior—staff reaction, customer experience, and confidence in retail stores—influences consumer purchasing behavior.

This study also established a strong relationship between the customer visit and retail atmospheric elements.

1) Customer approach behaviors are influenced by all store atmospheric factors. Design factors, intangible factors, the image of service personnel, visual merchandising, and the image of other customers are ordered from high to low in terms of impact. This indicates that the store's architecture is the most important environmental factor influencing consumer approach behavior; its power of control and perception is substantially greater than other factors.

2) Customers pay close attention to a store's design, such as whether the layout and overall arrangement are appropriate, how the interior is decorated, whether the

signs and marks are simple, whether the display of goods in corridor space, product details, and classification is complete and convenient, and so on.

3)   Intangible factors and image of service personnel, that is, music, noise, room temperature, clothing, and attitude of service personnel, etc. are also considered by customers as critical factors that will influence their behaviors. All of the previously mentioned factors have a significant positive correlation with customer approach behavior, implying that customer behavior in stores is primarily influenced by environmental factors that are most relevant to commodity. Finally, this research makes specific recommendations, suggestions, and benchmarks for establishing a store atmosphere is pleasant, and the location is convenient layout in a retail store to encourage retail shopping based on the findings of empirical research

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