A STUDY ON IMPACT OF STORE ATMOSPHERICS ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOURAL INTENTION

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Abstract:

Store atmospherics plays an important role in influencing customer buying behaviour; it has received rising attention from academics and practitioners in the present days. However, studies of store atmospherics in branded apparel stores has hardly studied in India. In order to gain more understanding on the same, this paper through light on the various elements of store atmospherics and its possible impact on consumer buying behavioural intentions. Therefore, this research paper presents an analysis which aims to examine the relationship between store atmospherics (product display, window display, store layout, signage, lighting, colour product shelf position etc.), and behavioural intentions. This research Analysis helps retailers and visual merchandisers for the better understanding of their store atmospherics and its composition. Research outcome resulting from discussions can be tested on various dimensions for further research and implementation.

Keywords: Store atmospherics, Consumer buying behaviour, Store layout, interior color, Illumination.

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1. Introduction

A store atmosphere can altogether impact buyers' shopping behavior. Customers as an individuals' assess their surroundings based on secondary information source (Petty and Wegener, 1999), it includes suitable music (Sweeney and Wyber, 2002), light (Areni and Kim, 1994), color (Crowley, 1993), and aroma (Teller and Dennis, 2012). Are the store atmospheric cues that have considerable influence on shoppers' responses and connected with the offerings in the store? (Bruner, 1990). The environment of shopping influences customers' feelings (Douce and Janssens, 2011) and total spending time of the customer (Thang and Tan, 2003).The shopper can easily get connected with the store which has pleasant store atmosphere, whereas the unclean environment can badly affect the customer's mood and can trigger prevention (Bone and Ellen, 1999).By eliciting shopper's senses, it can be made a pleasurable buying experience in a retail store. Eroglu (2003) argues that companies and retailers now target consumers who prefer value and are interested in stores that make efforts to create value through different visual marketing tools and marketing strategies. These tools include the concept of "Atmospherics" and the creation of "atmospheric cues" along with the product. The atmospherics defined as an effort to design the purchasing store environment in such a way as to arouse certain emotions that increase the chance of purchase. Bastow - Shoop et al. (1991), The atmosphere of the store indicates that it is the design of an environment with the help of visual communication, lighting, color, music and aroma, to stimulate the emotional and perceptive responses of customers and, therefore, influence the their buying behavior.

Background:
Lamba (2013)The garment business has moved to the saturation stage and the growth rate is slow. As the industry witnessed the buying behavior is getting changed very rapidly the fast fashion clothing trend lasts for 2 or 4 months only .Hence it becomes very tough for the apparel retailers to maintain sustainable growth or at least stable position in the apparel market with increasing competition with the arrival of more and more new brand in regular intervals .Now a days, especially youth is more fascinating towards new style apparels which became a part and parcel of their personality and life style . He also stated that the best clothing retailers will hold the marketing techniques that can adopt the store features to each place to address the demand of different levels. Different elements of store atmospherics like color, lighting, store layout product shelve position, product display, window display etc, have positive impact on consumer buying behavior. However, very fewer studies have been conducted to analyze the impact of all the elements of store atmospherics and its possible impact on consumer buying behavior at one go. Therefore this research study intends to study the impact of the above all variables on consumer buying behavior in a selected branded apparel stores in Visakhapatnam city.

Objectives of the Study:
1. To understand the impact of store atmospherics on consumer buying behavior.
2. To discuss the association between Store atmospherics and consumer buying behavior.

2. Review of Literature

Store environment
Turley and Milliman (2000), in their study of the impact of the store environment on shopper behavior, they focused on the impact of the store's atmosphere on time spent in the store, that was the focal point of attention by researchers and, in this way, more discussions are deserved. The time spent in the store is connected to the desire

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to remain or leave the shop and is additionally connected to the choice to purchase or not in the store. They identified that if the store environment can make the customer to spend long time in the store that has a connection to the purchase decision. According to Tullman Mathew (2004), most consumers (63%) remember the times when the store environment made them buy more or spend more time in a store. Furthermore, among those influenced by the store's environment, almost half (45%) reported not spending more money in the store, but more time.

Groeppel-Klein (2005), studied several empirical studies and found that the store environment has a great influence on consumer behavior and the image of the store. The study also concluded by considering empirical studies that the store environment has a great influence on the consideration of consumers of goods and causes the consumer to react to the store. Impulse buying and store display are not correlated. The merchandising of the floor, i.e. the variety of items in all the colors, and sizes, quality of the product are linked with impulse purchase. Jiyeon Kim (2012) identified a substantial association between the impulse purchase behavior of college students and the various forms of display, mannequin and promotional signage in the retail store. Even though the window display and various product arrangements on the floor appeared to not considerably initiative the impulse purchase behavior of college students, the survey reports are still suggested that these customer impulse purchase variables and buying behaviors are meaningfully associated.

Retail Store Environment –Influences shopping behavior:
Retail store environments convey various messages to its customers and can provide an instrumental and aesthetic value (Fiore and Ogle, 2000). A creative and innovative store environment can make the shoppers attentive and helping them to come to better

understanding about merchandise, its quality, services and image of the store. (Baker et al., 1994, Yani-de-Soraino and Foxall, 2006).A Research conducted on environmental psychology revealed that shopper purchase behavior is influenced by environmental qualities of the store. Furthermore they give pleasure shopping experience and excitement. They make the customers to show more attention and positive purchase behavior in the store (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982). Stoel et al, 2004).Customer's actual behavior is being mediated by the important emotional responses of pleasure, excitement and dominion.For example, the desire to join with others in the store and willingness to spend considerable amount of time and money and to consume, the desire to stay or escape from the environment, (Yani-de-Soraino and Foxall, 2006). The Buyers who stay long hours in a store are more positively exhibited the tendency to buy and therefore luxury stores planned to encourage their customers to stay longer by using subtle and welcome techniques.(Lindeman, 2007). Expressed that usage of music, scents different textures and lighting creates unique micro environment within the traditional retailing.All these sensory elements of the store very influential on customers. (Kent, 2007).They can provide better and pleasant shopping experience to its consumers also influences the buying behavior in retail stores. The better the sensory appeal of the store, the better shopping experience will be for the customer. (Soars, 2009).

A Positive Relationship between Store Environment and Shopper Affective Responses:
A plenty of research surveys have developed the role of mood mediation in customer buying behavior (Baker et al., 1992, Donovan and Rossiter, 1982, Fiore et al., 2000, Moody et al., 2010, Teng et al., 2007; Yalch and Spangenberg, 2000). Donovan and Rossiter (1982) stated that the shoppers who experience the pleasant store atmosphere are likely spend more time in it

and talk to salesmen and spend amount notably . Baker et al. (1992) noticed that the responses of the customers influenced by store dynamics in a way that pleasure induced by music and lighting enhances the purchase tendency of the shopper.

Fiore et al. (2000) discussed the buying process by establishing connection between cognitive and affective stages and also behavioral patterns. A study on the effects of store displays, store ambience and scents on buying process, Fiore et al. (2000) in their study discovered emotional and cognitive pleasure and sensory retail provoked by pleasant fragrance effectively influences the purchase intention. Yalch and Spangenberg (2000) observed number of purchase times in connection with the music played in the retail store and recorded that music that is not familiar during shopping hours increased pleasure with shopping time rather the music with familiarity. However, customers experienced more excitement with known music, here the feeling of pleasure is negatively affected .The excitement and pleasure is because of music played in the store. It is also influenced the perception of the actual time of purchase.

3. Methodology

After questionnaire tested with Chronbach's Alpha method it has proven standard and subjected it validity and reliability of tool, and the questionnaire was accepted and administered for data collection. Finally the researcher administered the data collection from the customers with their acceptance to provide necessary information through questionnaires by using stratified random sampling. In this connection the researcher selected 4 branded apparel stores and gathered the essential data from the respondents in the selected retail stores where branded apparels are sold. Ultimately, the researcher has collected the required data from 428 customers who purchase branded apparels. After scrutinise the collected questionnaires removed unfilled and finally 400 sample questionnaires considered for this study. Out of these 400 samples, and 100 samples each from four branded apparel stores in Visakhapatnam.

Analysis and Discussion:
Multiple regressions Analysis:
Dependent variable: Impact of Store atmospherics on consumer buying behavior

Table – 1: Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.815(a)	0.663	0.652	0.727

Predictors:
1. Product Display (When visiting shops, I pay attention to the displays. I tend to buy products displayed on or near the payment desks.)
2. Window displays (Creative shop windows attract you to a store. Frequent changes to the window display are arousing interest for the products in that store I tend to choose the store depends on the eye-catching window display.)
3. **Interior Colour**(The colorful assortment of fast fashion products could awake your conscience, Interior color can create a positive mood to buy garments in the store)
4. **Lighting (**The use of lights of different brightness to decorate the shop would stimulate the preference for products; your interest in a product may increase if you can see it clearly.)
5. Signage (Signage increases your knowledge of the products presented, Always pay attention to the signs.)
6. Store layout (I like shopping, if I find the desired products quickly and without much search, when I enter a store, I tend to follow the store's design while I browse the store.)
7. **Mannequin display** (I get an idea of what I want to buy after looking at the mannequin displays in the store, I tend to depend on the mannequins to decide what is to be bought.**)**
8. **Product Shelf Position (**I tend to look at products located at eye level)

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In the above table, the multiple correlation coefficient (R) is considered to be one measure of the quality of prediction of the impact of store atmospherics on consumer buying behaviour. A value of 0.815 indicates a good level of prediction. The R square value is (coefficient of determination) 0.663 which indicates that the various independent variables explain 66.3% of the variability of the dependent variable, Influence of Store atmospherics on consumer buying behaviour (Table-)

Table – 2: ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	502.822	17	29.578	55.899	.000(a)
Residual	255.040	482	0.529		
Total	757.862	499			

Significant @1%level

Dependent variable: Influence of Store atmospherics on consumer buying behavior
1. Product Display (When visiting shops, I pay attention to the displays. I tend to buy products displayed on or near the payment desks.)
2. Window displays (Creative shop windows attract you to a store. Frequent changes to the window display are arousing interest for the products in that store ,I tend to choose the store depends on the eye-catching window display.)
3. **Interior Colour** (The colorful assortment of fast fashion products could awake your conscience, Interior color can create a positive mood to buy garments in the store)
4. **Lighting** (The use of lights of different brightness to decorate the shop would stimulate the preference for products, Your interest in a product may increase if you can see it clearly .)
5. Signage (Signage increases your knowledge of the products presented, Always pay attention to the signs.)

6. Store layout (I like shopping, if I find the desired products quickly and without much search, When I enter a store, I tend to follow the store's design while I browse the store.)
7. **Mannequin display** (I get an idea of what I want to buy after looking at the mannequin displays in the store, I tend to depend on the mannequins to decide what is to be bought.)
8. **Product Shelf Position** (I tend to look at products located at eye level)

The F-ratio in the ANOVA table - tests whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data. The overall model was significant. The table shows that the independent variables statically significantly predict the dependent variable $F_{(17, 482)} = 55.899$, $p<0.000$(i.e. the regression model is good fit of the data)

Table – 3: Coefficients (a)

S.No	Statements	Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
	(Constant)	0.367	0.262		1.399	0.163
1.	**Product Display:** When visiting shops, I pay attention to the displays.	0.136	0.042	0.099	3.231	0.001

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No.	Statement					
2.	I tend to buy products displayed on or near the payment desks	0.197	0.037	0.229	5.320	0.000
3.	**Window Display:** Creative shop windows attract you to a store.	0.075	0.075	0.055	1.004	0.316
4.	Frequent changes to the window display are arousing interest for the products in that store	0.305	0.058	0.295	5.239	0.000
5.	I tend to choose the store depends on the eye-catching window display	0.202	0.044	0.197	4.637	0.000
6.	**Interior Color** The colorful assortment of fast fashion products could awake your conscience	0.046	0.054	0.045	0.863	0.389
7.	Interior color can create a positive mood to buy garments in the store	0.050	0.033	0.055	1.537	0.125
8.	**Lighting** The use of lights of different brightness to decorate the shop would stimulate the preference for products	0.160	0.036	0.158	4.443	0.000
9.	Your interest in a product may increase if you can see it clearly	0.065	0.053	0.044	1.237	0.217
10.	**Signage** Signage increases your knowledge of the products presented	0.010	0.047	0.007	0.215	0.830
11.	Always pay attention to the signs	0.346	0.042	0.341	8.165	0.000
12.	**Store layout** I like shopping, if I find the desired products quickly and without much search	0.355	0.037	0.372	9.655	0.000
13.	When I enter a store, I tend to follow the store's design while I browse the store	0.013	0.047	0.010	0.270	0.787
14.	**Mannequins** I get an idea of what I want to buy after looking at the mannequin displays in the store	0.540	0.042	0.448	12.831	0.000
15.	I tend to depend on the mannequins to decide what is to be bought	0.393	0.049	0.344	7.967	0.000
16.	**Product Shelf Position** I tend to look at products located at eye level	0.292	0.054	0.198	5.403	0.000

Significant @1%level

Source : Prepared by Author(2023)

Dependent variable: Influence of Store atmospherics on consumer buying behavior

Statistical Significance of the independent variables:

The above table shows the beta coefficients and p- values provided by the standard multiple regression tests. As seen in the table, **Product Display** (When visiting shops, I pay attention to the displays. I tend to buy products displayed on or near the payment desks.) **Window displays** (Creative shop windows attract you to a store. Frequent changes to the window display are arousing interest for the products in that store ,I tend to choose the store depends on the eye-catching window display.) **Interior Color** (The colorful assortment of fast fashion products could awake your conscience, Interior color can create a positive mood to buy garments in the store) **Lighting** (The use of lights of different brightness to decorate the shop would stimulate the preference for products, Your interest in a product may increase if you can see it clearly .) **Signage** (Signage increases your knowledge of the products presented, Always pay attention to the signs.) **Store layout** (I like shopping, if I find the desired products quickly and without much search, when I enter a store, I tend to follow the store's design while I browse the store.)**Mannequin display** (I get an idea of what I want to buy after looking at the mannequin displays in the store, I tend to depend on the mannequins to decide what is to be bought.)**Product Shelf Position** (I tend to look at products located at eye level)

make the largest unique contribution in explaining the dependent variable , i.e. Influence of Store atmospherics on consumer buying behavior with respective standard beta coefficients of 0.099, 0.229, 0.295, 0.197, 0.158, 0.341, 0.372, 0.448, 0.344, 0.198 with p- value less than the alpha level 0.05.

The P-values of the remaining independent variables are greater than 0.05 are not making a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable, i.e. there is no significant directional relationship between those activities and consumer buying behavior.

Table – 4: Result of Regression Analysis

Dimensions	df	R square	F	β	T	Sig.
Dependent Variable : Consumer Buying Behaviour	482	0.663	55.899			0.000
Product Display: When visiting shops, I pay attention to the displays.				0.099	3.231	0.001
I tend to buy products displayed on or near the payment desks				0.229	5.320	0.000
Window Display: Creative shop windows attract you to a store.				0.055	1.004	0.316
Frequent changes to the window display are arousing interest for the products in that store				0.295	5.239	0.000
I tend to choose the store depends on the eye-catching window display				0.197	4.637	0.000
Interior Color The colorful assortment of fast fashion products could awake your conscience				0.045	0.863	0.389
Interior color can create a positive mood to buy garments in the store				0.055	1.537	0.125
Lighting The use of lights of different brightness to decorate the shop would stimulate the				0.158	4.443	0.000

preference for products					
Your interest in a product may increase if you can see it clearly			0.044	1.237	0.217
Signage Signage increases your knowledge of the products presented			0.007	0.215	0.830
Always pay attention to the signs			0.341	8.165	0.000
Store layout I like shopping, if I find the desired products quickly and without much search			0.372	9.655	0.000
When I enter a store, I tend to follow the store's design while I browse the store			0.010	0.270	0.787
Mannequins I get an idea of what I want to buy after looking at the mannequin displays in the store			0.448	12.831	0.000
I tend to depend on the mannequins to decide what is to be bought			0.344	7.967	0.000
Product Shelf Position I tend to look at products located at eye level			0.198	5.403	0.000

Source: Prepared by Author(2023)

4. Results and Discussion:

The result of multiple regression is shown in the above table , it is revealed that whenever customer visit a store , they will pay attention to the displays, they also check the products being displayed near checkout desk. Frequent changes of the window display helps the retailers in arousing customer interest towards the store and its product, an eye-catching window display improves the tendency of entering into the store.

Appropriate Lighting with different brightness will stimulate customer preference towards the displayed product, Customer always pay attention to signs, so appropriate signage is important to guide the customer within the store. If customer founds his intended items without much search and difficulty, customer will get delighted, to make it possible, Store layout plays a vital role.

An appropriate In –store Form / mannequin displays helps customer in giving idea about what merchandise is to be bought from the store, they also play an important role in his/her purchase decision, mostly the products located at eye- level will be viewed by most of the customers, so right Product Shelf Position is also contributes positively in making purchase decision. As per the result obtained through regression analysis , it is evident that product display , window display , Lighting , Signage , Store Layout , In-store form /Mannequin, Product shelf position are statistically significantly predicted Purchase decision ,The remaining two independent variables (colour) did not add significantly in predicting the dependent variable (p>0.05)

The Consumer buying intension in branded apparel store is significantly influenced by the most of the Store atmospherics like. product display , window display , Lighting , Signage , Store Layout , In-store form /Mannequin, Product shelf position , hence the null hypothesis is rejected

Estimated model Coefficients
The general form of the equation to predict Purchase decision from Product Display, Window Display Lighting, Signage, Store

layout, in –store Form / mannequin Product Shelf Position is:

Predicted Impact of Store atmospherics on consumer buying behavior intension

= 0.367 + (0.136 XWhen visiting shops, I pay attention to the displays.) + (0.197 XI tend to buy products displayed on or near the payment desks) + (0.305 X Frequent changes to the window display are arousing interest for the products in that store) + (0.202 X I tend to choose the store depends on the eye-catching window display) + (0.160 X The use of lights of different brightness to decorate the shop would stimulate the preference for products) + (0.346 X Always pay attention to the signs) + (0.355 X I like shopping, if I find the desired products quickly and without much search) + (0.540 X I get an idea of what I want to buy after looking at the mannequin displays in the store)+ (0.393 X I tend to depend on the mannequins to decide what is to be bought) + (0.292 I tend to look at products located at eye level).

5. Conclusion

In the case of any retail business, all efforts have to be measured for their financial viability .The rationale for deciding this will be based on the cost of the display element and its effect on the retail sales. Many a time, Retailers /Visual merchandisers are faced with the challenge of justifying the expenditure on props and execution. The obvious way to justify these spends is to monitor the growth in sales that is happening as a result of the Store atmospherics .Often, it is difficult to correlate Consumer buying behavior on impact of Store atmospherics. Merchandise presentation (product display) enhances the USP (unique selling proposition) of the product displayed. it is the most effective tool to communicate the highlight the key features of the merchandise. Dominance is established in stores where the first thing that a customer looks for is the colour of the product .people see colours, buy colours. Colour is what sells. It takes precedence over style and size**.** Lighting is one of the elements that attract the consumer into a branded apparel store If the intended item appears under attractive lighting, the desire of buying will be

instantly boosted up. This study say says, the retailer must focus on interesting promotional Signage like reduced price, sales promotion, etc., on in-store signs, as it has direct bearing on customer buying intension. As store layout is connected with the overall effectiveness of the store and also project an image to the market, advised to retailers to study the pros and cons, before it gets materialized. Music must be pleasant and can have direct impact on the store atmosphere, makes the customer to spend for a longer time in the store, which further positively influence the buying behavior of the customers. The tendency of the consumer to enter in a branded apparel retail store increases when he/she attracted by its in-store form / mannequin display. So, a Retailer /Visual merchandiser has to work in close association with the operation teams to identify the right theme, the right product to display, window display , signage ,lighting , store layout , background colour and product shelf position . As E-retailing is booming up in India, customers are slowly habituating to buy their preferred goods online. Research can be conducted in the future on the efficiency and effectiveness of online retailing.

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