AN ANALYSIS OF IN STORE AMBIENCE AND DESIGN FACTORS INFLUENCE ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Rallabandi Srinivasu¹, Dr. S. Balaji², Dr. K. Rajendran³
¹Research scholar, Department of Business Administration, Annamalai University
²Assistant Professor, Research Supervisor, Department of Business Administration, Annamalai University
³Associate Professor, Department of Business Administration, Jawahar Science College

ABSTRACT:
The purpose of this study is to analyse of in store ambience and design actors influence on consumer behaviour, there are still contradictory findings on propositions presented. In view of the contradictory findings, this study depicts the consumer behaviour in Andhra Pradesh and prevailing aspects in supermarkets. This study proposes an integrative conceptual model on how ambience characteristics could ensure positive consumer buying behaviour among retail customers. The study recommends that supermarket in Andhra Pradesh should endeavour to initiate programs that will emphasize on scent as opposed to music and lighting as the latter do not affect consumer buying behaviour while scent does.

Keywords: Consumer Behaviour, Factor, Supermarket and Environment.

I. INTRODUCTION
In our competitive era, an attractive store ambiance is essential in encouraging customers to buy a products. A considerable number of studies have been performed based on the proposition of the ambiance and design of the store on a satisfaction level and buying behaviour of the consumer. However, the existing literature regarding the influence of the total setting of the store on the emotional reaction of consumers and their approach to purchasing and loyalty remains limited. Therefore, this study examines the aspects that are pertinent to the evaluation of consumers with respect to the environment of a higher scale store, namely, store atmosphere, music and service. Kotler (1973) stated that these aspects and stressed the importance of purposefully designing the store area to induce specific feelings from the shoppers. Kotler maintained that developing a store setting that will elicit the desired response from consumers to enhance the bottom line is not easy. In addition, Kotler claimed that not much attention has been given to the atmospheric aspect of the store because the managers usually consider the practical and operational aspects of the business and the atmosphere, as a basic necessity, was often left out. The environment of the store that sells a particular product is an essential aspect of the product itself, the environment highly affects the image of the product and the attitude of consumers toward the product. Thang and Tan (2003) analysed that store preference is heavily affected by store image. In addition, the store dimensions have significant influence in attracting customers to a store. However, stores can only attract customers if the latter’s expectation of the former is fulfilled and if the customer does not feel a discrepancy between their expectation and what is presented. The store and supermarkets décor and the music played within the store can be synced to meet the customer expectations (Newman and Patel, 2004), retailers who want to be the shoppers preferred choice must pay attention to their stores ambiance and exert effort or extra design to make the store stand out and distinguishable from their competitors.

The present analysis that the behavioural effects of the ambiance of the store on consumers behaviour. The evolution of the marketing sectors literature shows that several researchers have realized the importance of physical and psychological motivation in spurring the consumers purchase decision. In particular, the design of the store setting can influence consumers and be used as an important marketing strategy. In this regard, the studies have employed different terminologies to identify the effects of store surroundings on shoppers. In the past thirty years, different terminologies have been introduced in the literature on conceptual designs, including environmental psychology, service space, the study of shelf space and a fairly new term called atmospherics.
Store and Super Market Atmospherics

The store and super market atmospherics is an array of tangible and intangible dispositions interwoven into a web of meanings that touches the social, psychological, economic, cultural, and religious life style of consumers, due to concordance with current fad, fashion, and trends. Store and super market atmospheric cues may generate sets-and-subsets of associations related to attributes, benefits, emotions of pleasure-displeasure, attraction distraction, high-low confidence, self-actualization and basic human desires. The store and super market atmospherics as consisting of environmental elements such as bright or dim lighting, classical or familiar music, attractive window dressing and layouts, magnificent architectural design, freshness and fragrance, appropriate temperature to make it cosy and comfortable, soothing and trendy colour, attractive logo and gentle crowding are ideal conditions that can affect the current and future behaviour of consumers (Smith and Burns, 1996). The entire retail environment that includes brand design consistently throws brand messages that the consumer experiences throughout the shopping endeavour. The store and super market environment is harmoniously designed in order to communicate brand personality and image of the store. In order to add depth to the perceptions encapsulated in the atmospherics and communicate the retailer's brand value, each element of the retail environment is transformed so that it is differentiated from the competitors, standardized and stimulate consumers purchasing activity.

Image 1: Factors of store ambience stimulus on consumers purchase behaviour.

The store environment consisting of physical designs, social ambience, emotional cues, olfactory and tactile characteristics influences the consumers' subjective interaction with the environmental stimuli. These environmental stimulation can affect consumers' cognitive process altering value perception and shopping behaviour. Kotler (1973–4), in one of the earliest literature on retail atmospherics, stated that environmental dispositions in and around a retail store can evoke perceptions about store image and patronage intention. The store atmosphere influences emotional states such as pleasure, arousal, dominance and submissiveness and consequently blocks or elevate the consumers mood and shopping motive. In a similar research on retail atmospherics, Gardner and Siomkos (1990) stated that store atmospherics such as lighting, layout, displays, fixtures, colours, textures, sounds and fragrance affect consumer product perception. The environmental cues not only craft store image but also speak about the identity of the store's clientele and act as signals of quality and value to other customers. Customer behaviour, particularly among those with higher stimulus seeking tendency or hedonism, is dependent on the atmospheric characteristics of a shopping area.

Design Factors

Design factors can create attraction and uniqueness to appeal to people at a focal point by signalling a pleasant and worthwhile experience. The design aspects of stores are an ideal convergence of artistic ideas, instinct and business in a planned and profitable manner. Din (2000), shoppers need to create or find out new environment in which space, cost and flexibility are designed in such a way that they effectively communicate brand value and attract consumers. Store's layout may communicate value by increasing search efficiency, comfort, inventory capacity, product quality, price, product displays, etc. Signage and window dressing is the face index of the store that can attract or repel customers from the store. Customers may develop associations of trust, value, quality of goods and services, price, warranty and guarantee, etc as they come across visuals such as signage, window dressing, logo,
etc based on past shopping experiences. Signs and graphics used in the store act as bridge between the merchandise and the target market. The design factors create theatrical effect, add personality, beauty and communicate store image.

**Role of the consumer in determining the price**

The price of a commodity is determined by the rule of supply and demand. Consumers have a desire to buy a commodity, and to satisfy this demand, manufacturers generate a supply. A goods equilibrium market price is the price at which the quantity supplied corresponds to the quantity ordered. Store environmental effects on buying habits and the desire to return and improve the opportunity for satisfaction in order to appreciate the impacts of brand experience, such as atmospheric colour, luminosity and style.

While we are facing an economic recession and there is no doubt that this environment is shifting shopping habits, products and stores do have potential and consumers can continue to adapt and shops will grow with them (Faria, 2012). Beyond observing the economic process, understanding the current market and its different areas of trade must go beyond implementing marketing strategies that include the manufacture and distribution of consumer products.

**II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To analyses the store ambience and design factors influence on consumer behaviour.
- To study the impact of store ambience and design on consumer buying behaviour.
- To measure the influence of store environment on consumer buying behaviour.

**Review of literature**

Mathaba (2013) stated that the store image factors influencing store choice among sportswear consumers in India and found store atmospherics, sales assistance, in-store induced appeals, store accessibility and promotion or brand availability as the environmental factors that influenced consumer behaviour. Thus, Dhurup et al. recommended marketers of sports apparel stores to enhance these factors as a way of increasing sales.

Olahut, El-Murad and Plaias (2012) discussed an empirical review of studies published on the relationship of atmospherics and consumer behaviour across the world with an aim of establishing the gaps to be filled. The study identified the articles to be reviewed based on key words: dimensions of atmospherics, atmospherics, shopping behaviour, S-O-R model. The findings showed that music was an effective tool in influencing consumers’ moods with louder music was characterized by longer shopping times when compared to softer music. Loud music triggered more memory traces that enhanced the retrospective approximations of time. Additionally, the study established that people’s cognitive processes influence how music shapes the attitude towards stores and salespeople. When other cognitive stimulations were low, soothing music was found to enhance the cognitive processes. Modern-day retailers have also discovered the relevance of using music to differentiate their stores from competitors, hence, give their stores a certain image.

Vida (2008) explained the effect in-store background music has on consumer behaviour in retail stores in Ljubljana, Slovenia by intercepting shoppers at the checkout areas as they exited two major hypermarkets and three specialty retail stores that deal in sports equipment and apparels. The researcher used experimentation method to conduct the study. Both planned and unplanned background music were used and the study went on for two weeks, which resulted in 259 respondents being interviewed. A questionnaire was used to collect data and the maximum likelihood estimation technique used to analyse the data. Findings showed that when shoppers perceived the background music as fit, they developed positive experiences that led them browse store merchandize favourably, hence, spent more finances and time within the store. And also the study established that stores whose background music was planned received high music-fit scores from customers than stores with unplanned music. Based on the limited scope to background music and specialty retail stores/hypermarkets, the study proposed further investigation on foreground music and using a wide scope of retail store

Yalcin and Kocamaz (2003) analysed that the effects store atmosphere attributes have on loyalty intentions of hyper or supermarkets in Istanbul, Turkey dealing in food retailing. Using descriptive survey, the study targeted 500 shoppers but only received 317 dully-filled questionnaires. Snowballing was used to identify shoppers of the target retail stores while correlation was used to analyse the data. The findings indicate that loyalty of consumers
had a significant positive correlation with in-store atmospherics. The study measured atmospherics based on colour, scent, temperature, hygiene and lighting.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study was explanatory research using cross-sectional survey design. The explanatory research was ideal to describe the characteristics of the variables and at the same time investigate the cause effect relationship between variables. The choice of cross-sectional allowed collection of quantitative data from a population in an economical way. This design was archetypal because of its suitability in elaborating the characteristics of a particular individual or group of individuals (Kothari, 2006). The target population for this study is familiar stores and supermarket in Andhra Pradesh. This study used two sampling strategies are stratified and convenience sampling. Stratified sampling was used to enable the researcher target a specific number of shoppers from each supermarket so as to enhance inclusivity. To get respondents who meet this criterion required the researcher to sample them according to convenience as they exited the target supermarkets. Using convenience sampling, the researcher intercepted any shopper exiting the target stores for interviewing. Thus, the sample size for this study was 100. Finally, the researcher conduct in-depth interviews to fine tune the information. Therefore this technique support and reveal the facts behind quantitative analysis information.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The study then investigated how the general perception of the music and lights factors influenced customer buying behaviour. The collected results were as shown in the regression coefficients’ outputs in table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music made waiting time at the counter look shorter</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>0.480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music made me explore the supermarket's merchandize</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>0.097</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music influenced the number of goods bought in the supermarket</td>
<td>-0.067</td>
<td>0.097</td>
<td>-0.086</td>
<td>-0.693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likely to return to the supermarket because of the music</td>
<td>-0.120</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>-0.224</td>
<td>-1.658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting influenced longer stay in the store</td>
<td>0.288</td>
<td>0.158</td>
<td>0.394</td>
<td>1.816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting influenced the spending of more money</td>
<td>-0.011</td>
<td>0.298</td>
<td>-0.183</td>
<td>-0.372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting influenced the buying of more goods</td>
<td>-0.052</td>
<td>0.234</td>
<td>-0.083</td>
<td>-0.224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting encouraged future return to shop from the store</td>
<td>-0.045</td>
<td>0.168</td>
<td>-0.042</td>
<td>-0.270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source : Primary Data

The results in table 1 shows that at 95 percent significance level, music and lighting in supermarkets has no statistical significance with the behaviour consumers exhibit while shopping since p>0.05. Specifically, these results indicate that music and lighting is not a critical determinant of the behaviours shoppers in supermarket exhibit as it neither influences longer stay in the supermarket or spending more money in the store or buying of more goods, or future return to the store. These results could be attributed to the fact that the lighting, though artificial, was adjusted to offer the effect similar to natural lighting, which is just ideally good for seeing merchandize. As such, the lighting did not influence consumer behaviour because the consumers considered it normal. The findings of this study disagree with those by Yalcin and Kocamaz (2003) found that lighting and music correlated positively with consumer loyalty, but was consistent that shoppers browsed more merchandize when exposed to bright in-store lighting and music.
Recommendation

Supermarkets in Andhra Pradesh should endeavour to initiate programs that will educate or equip their employees with skills for being friendlier, having courtesy and being helpful to customers so as to enhance the effect employees have on customer buying behaviours. Though offering good background music and lighting are good ambience and design factors for supermarkets, they should concentrated upon to offer complimentary aspects to shoppers experience to ambience to provide a holistic appeal to a consumer. Although ambience had the highest factor of influence, it should not be the only factor under consideration in improving consumer behaviour in a store. Though Supermarkets should, adopt appealing or pleasing fragrances/scents in their atmospheres to attract and increase shopper activities in the stores. The products display should be made convenient for customers to explore and handle. Managers must take into consideration the environmental cleanliness so that consumers are encouraged and influence to visit again. Proper lighting is advised for visibility of the products to consumers. More than one colour could be used in lighting of retail outlets wherever possible without compromising on visibility and matching with the surrounding context. It is recommended to play music for creating a soothing environment.

IV. CONCLUSION

The customers perceived the background music played in supermarkets in Andhra Pradesh as appealing to listen to. However, the study found that the background music played had no relationship with customers shopping behaviour. The background music did not have any effect on the waiting time at the counter, the time spent browsing merchandize in the store, the number of goods purchased and the likelihood of returning to shop from the supermarket in future.

On lighting, the study found that the common form of lighting in supermarkets was artificial and bright light. The lighting in supermarkets in Andhra Pradesh has no statistical significance with the behaviour consumer’s exhibit while shopping. Specifically, lighting does influence longer stay in the supermarket, but does not influence the amount of money spent in the store and the purchasing of an increased number of goods. Majority (68 percent) of the customers surveyed found the supermarket stores to have a pleasant scent, which correlated strongly with consumer behaviour. Pleasant scent in the supermarket made the shopping environment conducive to shoppers. The study also found that the pleasantness of the scent in the store directly and significantly related with the time consumers spend in the supermarket. Pleasant scent also negatively affected the desire to leave the supermarket. Additionally, the study found the design of has no significance with the desire to spend more money in the supermarkets.

Generally, the background music played in these supermarkets appeal shoppers. However, music is not an influencer of consumer buying behaviour among shoppers of supermarkets in Andhra Pradesh. The supermarkets use artificial bright lighting for their stores. However, the lighting has no influence on consumer buying behaviour among shoppers to those supermarkets. Additionally, supermarkets spray their internal atmospheres with pleasant fragrances (scents). Pleasant scents in the supermarkets make the atmospheres conducive for shopping. Pleasant scents increase the time consumers spend in supermarkets. The study also concludes that pleasant scent reduces the chances of customers leaving the supermarket hence encouraging customers to browse more merchandise. And also found that customer satisfaction is influenced by store environment, shopping comfort and merchandise assortment and repurchase intention is also determined by store environment, shopping comfort, store design and merchandise assortment while store loyalty is determined by shopping comfort and store layout.

Most of the conceptual studies attempt to emphasize that good store atmospherics will lead to positive effect on behavioural intentions of customers. Store environment and behavioural intentions will lead to customer satisfaction and simultaneously such satisfaction will independently have influence on buying intentions.

REFERENCES