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# Impact of Store Atmospheric on Customers Buying Behavior in India: A Review

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## **Abstract**

*Atmospherics in retail context has been recognized very important by researchers as well as practitioners. This paper is going to find out the impact of retail store atmospheric on the buying behavior of consumers visiting store. In this regard various empirical studies have been conducted by many researchers of the world. Different studies published in books, scientific journals and research papers have contributed different outcomes regarding the impact of store atmospheric on consumer buying behavior. This creates a confusion regarding the positive and negative impact of retail store atmospheric. So there is a need to extend an overview of the literature review. In this paper the conclusion of various research papers is to be analyzed, so that the role of store atmospheric can be understood in retail context.*

**Key words:** store atmospheric, buying behavior, aspects of atmospheric.

## **Introduction**

In retail context atmospheric means aesthetics and ambiance of a store. The atmospheric variables like color, music, smell, lighting, crowding, window displays, and store design, store font etc. reflect the store atmosphere and play a very important role in customers' perception and evaluation of the store. Retail stores with pleasant environment and moderately arousing atmosphere are likely to influence shopping behavior of the customers in a positive way. The buying process starts as soon as consumers recognize their needs. Their decision of shopping depends upon many factors like the decision to enter into a particular store, the time spent by them inside the store, the ambiance of the store, the store environment etc. the buying decision very much depends on the store environment and its effect on consumer emotions.

## **Objective**

To analyze various research papers written on 'Impact of Store Atmospheric on customers buying behavior'. And to find out the atmospheric factors which are considered important by the customers while shopping in a retail store.

## **Research Methodology**

The research is based on analyzing the past research papers which are related to the retail store atmospheric and its impact on buying behavior. The review work has been based only on secondary data.

## **Review of Literature**

**Nancy M Puccinelli, Charles Spence, Dhruv Grewal and Annel Roggeveen, (July 2014)**

The paper focuses on the question that how should a multisensory approach related to atmosphere can be designed to run the retail store. For answering this question this paper reviews the scientific evidence towards few aspect of store environment that can influence the buying behavior of customers. The findings of the research talks about the further need to give more emphasis on how multisensory atmosphere shapes the buyers experience and behavior of shopping.

**Shun Yin Lam,(2001)**

This research paper reviews various previous studies about influence of retail store environment on customer shopping behavior. On the basis of previous findings the author analyzed various propositions concerning the

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multiple effect of single environment factor, congruence between these elements and store's merchandise and equivalent role of consumer characteristics. The review paper pays more attention to identify research issues related to store design, store environment and atmospheric elements for future investigation.

**Priyanka Singh, Neha Katiyar, Gaurav Verma,(August 2014)**

This paper lays emphasis on the ability of retail store environmental elements to convert customers into buyers. This qualitative research by author concentrates on those attributes of store which are marked important from consumer's point of view. The paper has two major objectives: 1) To discuss that the store image is important but not sufficient to evaluate store performance and consumer behavior. 2) To compare the benefits of store image and store equity. To achieve these objectives the researcher discusses the various concepts of store layout and store atmosphere factors.

**Jayant V. Joshi, Vijay R. Kulkarni(December 2012)**

The study works upon finding out the aspects which are considered important from customer point of view in a retail store. The researcher has used exploratory method of research. The study was conducted for 1 year time duration and data was analyzed using spss17 version. The author concluded that there are 20 important factors in a retail store that can influence customer and he grouped these 20 elements into five categories namely store interior & exterior, store employees & other shoppers, comfort, beauty & aesthetics, display & creative arrangement of products, attractive display.

**Dr. Meera Mathur, Dr. Shubham Goswami,(October 2014)**

The author have described about the concept of importance of store environment for customer purchase intension. This exploratory research is done in Udaipur city of rajasthan on more than 500 hundred customers and conclusion is this only that store atmospherics are important determinants to push sales in retail stores.

**Dr. Anubha Vashisht, Dr. Bharti Wadhwa, Dr. Aakanksha Uppal, (October 2014)**

The research paper explains that how the lifestyle of the consumers especially those who lives in metro cities like Delhi. Customers are attracted towards mall shopping there they have access to all the products and have ease of making decision.

**Elaine Sherman and Anil Mathur, Ruth Belk Smith (July 1997)**

The article presents a large scale field study of customers based upon a framework and the results suggest that consumers' emotions can be mediating factor in purchase process in a store. This study focuses o store environment and its effect on consumer's emotions. This research confirms that although cognitive factors may largely account for store selection and for most planned purchases within the store, the environment in the store and the emotional state of consumers may be important determinants of purchase behavior.

**L.W. Turley, Ronald E. Milliman, (2000).**

This review paper focuses on the research conducted over the years on the effects of facility-based environmental cues, or "atmospherics", on buyer behavior. We review the pertinent literature by constructing a comprehensive table atmospherics, of the empirical studies in this area that focuses on the various findings associated with these investigations. This table indicates that atmospheric variables influence a wide variety of consumer evaluations and behaviors. In addition to discussing the findings and contributions of this literature stream, the article concludes by identifying gaps in the literature and suggesting potential future topics for atmospheric related research.

**Anna S. Mattila and Jochen Wirtz,(April 2001)**

This research paper gives information about two main drivers of retail environment scent and music that drives the in-store evaluation and behavior. The paper manipulated scent and music in a 3 (no music, pleasant low arousal and high arousal music) by 3 (no scent, pleasant low and high arousal scents) factorial design in a field setting. The findings show that when ambient scent and music are congruent with each other in terms of their arousing qualities, consumers rate the environment significantly more positive, exhibit higher levels of approach and impulse buying behaviors, and experience enhanced satisfaction than when these environmental cues were at odds with each other.

**Foong Wei Yan, Dr. Rashad Yazdanifard**

This article pays emphasis on the work of retailers to differentiate the retail offerings in order to attract more consumers and to influence consumer's perception towards shopping. The research identified and examined the variables that control the relationships between store environment and consumer purchasing behavior as well as emotional tendencies. Consumers purchasing decision are also influence by other consumers in a store. Elements such as decoration, lightning, and layout of a store may bring significant effect, crowding people is also an important role in creating positive influence on consumers mind. This paper concludes that there is no best way for enhancing a store environment as the trends keeps on changing.

**El-Bachir Sabrina (May 2014)**

This research report gives information about impact of retail store atmospherics elements on emotional replies and behavior replies of the consumer. The research confirms the influence of factors of store environment on the behavior, responses and feelings of more than 110 clients.

**Ishwar Kumar, Ruchi Garg, Zillur Rehman,(March 2010)**

The paper gives us information about how a change in the retail store visuals, store design and environment creates value perception among customers. The study correlates the retail environment with customer value. This study is also helpful in formulating strategies for increasing customer value in retail store.

**Malaika Brengman, Kim Willems, Yannick Joye, (November 2012)**

This paper studies the effect of in-store vegetation and greenery on consumer emotions and responses toward the store. The author at the end concluded that in-store vegetation and greenery has both negative as well as positive effect. Negative effects for example block out the view on marketing relevant information; it can reduce shopper circulation and so cause crowding; it can hinder easy access to certain products and positive effects for example stress reduction of employees, more positive moods of the consumers etc.

**Abu Bashar, Krishana Kumar Saraswat,(Mar-2015)**

This research paper investigates the relationship between purchase intention of the consumers and various elements of the store like product collection, store ambience and atmosphere. The study is conducted in Delhi/NCR, and 250 questionnaires were filled. The author concluded that every attribute of the retail store mentioned above has its own importance and influence in shaping the purchase intention of the consumer in a retail store.

**Ann Petermans, M.S. and Koenraad Van Cleempoel,(January 2010)**

This article presents the case studies of two European food retail stores which were designed to meet the physical and social needs and wants of the consumers in the marketplace. The author focuses on the literature review of the importance of creating efficient, user-friendly, and aesthetically pleasing shopping environments, which pay particular attention to intangible social aspects. This article focused on a comparison of two descriptive case studies of supermarkets. Longitudinal attentiveness has not been addressed and can be considered as a limitation of the study.

**Paurav Shukla, Barry J. Babin,(May 2013)**

The research examines the impact of psychographic variables and store characteristics on utilitarian and hedonic shopping value. The study also captures the influence of several store characteristics such as assortment, after sales service and ambience. This study also provides evidence relating to how retailer controlled variables can influence consumer derived shopping value. Moreover, the study provides further evidence regarding how shopping value can lessen the dire impact of consumer defection at retail store level. This study makes multiple conceptual, substantive and managerial contributions to the literature relating to shopping value. The findings also demonstrate the critical importance of shopping value in store switching behavior. A quantitative methodology employing a self-administered structured questionnaire was used to measure and validate the hypothesized relationships.

**Renaud Lunardo, Ababacar Mbengue,(2011)**

The atmosphere of a retail store is a powerful marketing tool for influencing consumer behavior to the benefit of the retailer. This article explores the case where consumers perceive the store environment as a

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manipulative tool in use by the retailer. This article hypothesizes that incongruent store environments urge consumers to make inferences of manipulative intent (IMI) from the retailers, and that those inferences negatively influence consumer's perception of the retailers' integrity, and attitudes toward the atmosphere and the retailers. Empirical results from an experiment confirm the hypotheses. Though results are consistent with the hypotheses, this article does not examine the processes underlying how atmospherics induce consumer's IMI.

**Chris Lazaris, Adam Vrechopoulos, Georgios Doukidis, Katerina Fraidaki,(June 2015)** Omni channel retailing includes retail stores, online stores, mobile stores, mobile app stores, telephone sales and any other method of transacting with a customer. This research paper gives information about how Physical retail store visitors interact with the offline and the online channel simultaneously, mainly through their smart mobile devices. The study investigates the importance consumers attach to a series of online practices offered in the physical retail stores and explores consumers' preferences regarding the combined use of online & offline store atmosphere and Omni-channel criteria that affect their purchasing intentions towards the physical store. The conclusion provides some implications to practitioners and researchers regarding the Omni-retailing technologies that should be applied in the physical stores, as well as the importance of online & offline store atmosphere in order to purchase from them.

**Patrick Bohl,(September 2012)**

This paper provides an insight into how the atmospherics of a retail environment influence shopping behavior. Its objective is to support researchers and practitioners by summarizing the current state of knowledge and identifying gaps and avenues for future research. The scope covers studies in retail marketing and environmental psychology published during the last 35 years. It has been shown that environmental cues (music, scent etc.) have an effect on the emotional state of the consumer, which in turn causes behavioral changes, both positive (approach, buy more, stay longer etc.) and negative (not approach, buy less, leave earlier etc.). There are a number of opportunities for further Research as too little is known about the moderating effects of Arousal and Dominance and how they interact with each other and with Pleasure dimension. Also a number of other moderators, such as gender and culture, should be integrated into the model.

**Riaz Hussain & Mazhar Ali(2015)**

This research paper identifies the effects of store atmosphere on the consumer purchase intention in international retail chain outlets of Karachi, Pakistan. This was the first study, which investigated the collective impact of atmospheric variables at one point in time on purchase intention. A sample of 300 consumers was taken who usually visited these outlets. Data was collected through a well-structured questionnaire and analyzed through regression analysis. This research examined the impact of cleanliness, music, scent, color, lighting, temperature, display/layout on purchase intention of consumers. Cleanliness, Scent, Lighting and Display/Layout have significant positive influence on the consumers' purchase intention while music and color have minimal impact on the consumer purchase intention, whereas, the temperature has almost no impact on the consumer while shopping.

**Dr. Girish Karunakaran Nai, Dr. Appalayya Meesala(June 2014)**

This paper gives us information about the effect of visual merchandising elements on success of white goods and electronics retail stores. The elements of VM included in this study are store image, store atmosphere, store environment, shopping comfort, merchandise assortment, and store layout. This study was conducted on 76 customers who visited these stores. The primary data taken was analyzed on SPSS v 20 using multiple regressions and discriminate analyses. The study shows that customer Satisfaction is influenced by Store Environment, Shopping Comfort and Merchandise Assortment while Repurchase Intention is determined by Store Environment, Shopping Comfort, and Merchandise Assortment. It was further found that Cross Purchase is influenced by Store Atmosphere and Shopping Comfort while Store Loyalty is determined by Shopping Comfort and Store Layout. Recommendation of Store to Others is influenced by Store Environment and Shopping Comfort.

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**Ana Clara Duran, Karen Lock, Maria do Rosario D O Latorre, Patricia Constante Jaime (October 2015)**

This research study is part of a cross-sectional observation survey conducted in 13 districts across the city of Sao Paulo, Brazil in 2010-2011. Food store and restaurant observational tools were developed based on previously available tools, and then tested it. They included measures on the availability, variety, quality, pricing, and promotion of fruits and vegetables and ultra-processed foods. We used Kappa statistics and intra-class correlation coefficients to assess inter-rater and test-retest reliabilities in samples of 142 restaurants, 97 retail food stores (including open-air food markets), and of 62 restaurants and 45 retail food stores (including open-air food markets), respectively. Construct validity as the tool's abilities to discriminate based on store types and different income contexts were assessed in the entire sample: 305 retail food stores, 8 fruits and vegetable markets, and 472 restaurants.

### **Conclusion**

On the basis of reviews of numerous past research most of the researchers on the basis of their empirical analysis concluded that both customers and employees are important part of store environment. Further there is a need to pay more attention on multisensory atmosphere as there is multiple effect of every single atmospheric variable which has the capability to push sales in a store. The determinants of store environment are mainly categorized into three categories namely ambient factors ( Air quality including temperature, humidity, ventilation and noise, scent, cleanliness), Design factors(color style, material décor, shape, layout, signage, texture, pattern, accessories), Social factors(number, appearance and behavior of other customers and employees). Although cognitive factors may largely account for store selection, the environment in the store and the emotional state of consumer may also be important factors of purchase behavior.

Some of the studies concluded that atmospheric variables like scent, lighting and sound influences a wide variety of consumers evaluations and behavior. Researchers have 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, 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 behavioral intentions of customers (such as return intentions and positive word-of-mouth). Store environment and behavioral intentions will lead to customer satisfaction, and simultaneously such satisfaction will independently have a positive influence on buying intentions.

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