

Effect of In-store Atmosphere on Customer Buying Behaviour in Shopping Mall in Kannur

Ms. Reshma Sreedharan¹, Mr. Aswin Prakash²

Assistant Professor, School of Management Studies, Chinmaya Institute of Technology, Govindagiri, Chala, Kannur – 670007.

Assistant Professor, School of Management Studies, Chinmaya Institute of Technology, Govindagiri, Chala, Kannur – 670007.

Corresponding Author: Ms. Reshma Sreedharan

ABSTRACT: *Indian retail is one the fastest growing retail in world due to economic growth of country. Indian Retail Industry is the fifth largest in the world. Indian retail industry is largest among all other industry accounting for over 10% of the country's GDP and around 8% of the employment. Retail industry in India has become 4th and one of the most dynamic and fast paced industries with several players entering the market. Retailing is considered as most happening industry in India after IT industry. The study examines the impact of three store atmospheric factors namely ambient factors, design factors, and social factors on customer buying behaviour in shopping mall of Kannur. A sample of 147 customers was selected for the purpose of the study. Exploratory factor analysis of responses indicated that atmospherics have impact on the buying decision of customers.*

KEY TERMS: *Atmospheric, Buying behaviour, Employment, GDP.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Retail sector is the most dynamic and fastest growing sector in the Indian economy. It is expected to reach 12 percent growth per annum. Retail sector is upbringing a major change after the IT revolution in India. The retail sectors contribution towards the country's gross domestic product (GDP) is over 11 per cent. India has been ranked as fifth largest global destination in the world for the retail space. In India, the retail market is expected to grow from US\$ 672 billion in 2017 to US\$ 1.1 trillion in 2020. The estimation of total consumption expenditure in retail is going to be nearly US\$ 3600 billion by 2020 from US\$ 1,595 billion in 2016. It has been projected that maximum of the total revenues in the retail sector will be from the food and grocery segment which accounts to 66%, followed by apparel segment with 9% in the year 2020. In the upcoming years, organic labels in products like hair care, cosmetics, food and apparel are going to create a niche in the herbal-ayurvedic segment. The Indian organised retail penetration share (7%) is low compared to US (85%), but it is expected to reach 10%. The dominating retail formats in India are Mono-branded retail shops, Multi-branded retail shops, Convergence retail outlets, and E-retailers. Now the retailers are concentrating on online retail business format. The online retail business is also expected to grow and it will reach the revenue of US\$ 60 billion by 2020.

Kerala is considered as a consumer state as it is depended on the neighbouring states to fulfil its consumer needs. Due to the increase in the urban population rate in Kerala, it seems to have a bright future for retailing. The government and co-operative sector are dominating the retail sector in Kerala along with few private sectors for meeting the requirements of customers. The major retail government and co-operative run outlets in Kerala are Supplyco, Triveni, and Neethi stores. But now the private sector like Varkeys, Big Bazaars, and Reliance have more number of retail outlets scattered all over Kerala. The State Government in Kerala is thinking to formulate a retail policy towards making Kerala as the retail hub of the country. Kumar Rajagopalan, CEO, Retail Association of India (2018) stated that Kerala has the potential to be the next Dubai or Singapore in promoting retail tourism. It has the advantage of high tourism prospects, rising income, highest literacy and technology savvy which will create a favourable scenario for the retail.

Retail business is facing high level of competition. For the retail business to be successful, it has become necessary to respond quickly and understand the customer's behaviour. The focus should be towards finding out the customer preferences and factors which influence their purchase decision. Store Atmosphere is a critical factor which can drive customer to respond in retailing. Store atmospheres are designed environment that create or reinforce the buyers' learning towards buying a product (Kotler et al., 2013). It includes all the physical characteristics used in a retail store to attract customers. It comprises of ambient factors, design factors, and social factors which helps in creating a positive image in the customer's mind. Every retail business sets an

objective to maximise sales with customer satisfaction and minimise overall costs. Atmospheric in retail store needs adequate attention especially for a physical store as it can act as a direct contributor towards enhancing the customer experience. It can also have a significant impact on the overall performance of the retailer. Today the customers are more demanding and prefer a pleasant store atmosphere and comfortable settings. It adds on to their shopping experience. The store's atmosphere can contribute towards a retail businesses success or failure. It's imperative to design a proper store atmosphere as it can prove to be an effective marketing tool.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Turley and Chebat (2002) stated that retail organizations can bring change in-store behaviour by creation of an atmosphere. Turley and Milliman (2000) in the literature review of various authors found that there exists some significant relationship between store atmosphere and shopping behaviour. According to Kim et al. (2015) store atmosphere is one of the significant attribute which contributed towards customer shopping enjoyment. This in turn was a significant predictor of store loyalty. Levy and Weitz (2009) believed that store environment can be intensified with the usage of various cues like lighting, colour, music, and scent. Ambient, Design and Social factors in a store environment together can create an impression in the customer's mind (Baker et al. 2002; Levy & Weitz 2009).

Ambient Factors

Music can create a good atmosphere for shoppers but loud and poor quality music can lead to a negative experience Mathur and Goswami (2014). Harrington and Capella (1994) highlighted that playing the right kind of music (emotional and physical) can evoke desired behaviours in customers. Few studies have found that music played in stores can lead to increase in sales (Matilla & Wirtz, 2001), influence the buying decision of customers (Baker et al., 2002), and influence customer perception towards the store (Hui et al., 1997). Some studies (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Mitchell, 1994; Bosmans, 2006) indicated that the environmental aroma influences customer more than the communication about quality or attributes of the product. Scent in the store can trigger emotions and create memories which can encourage purchase of the product (Mitchell, 1994). Store should be well illuminated by giving consideration to aging shoppers or less visionary shoppers (Mathur & Goswami, 2014). Proper lighting can enhance the visibility of the product to customers (Hussain & Ali, 2015). Customers are bound to spend less time if the store has either very low or very high temperature and this may create a negative word of mouth (Lam, 2001).

Design factors

Banat & Wandebori (2012) stated that layout of a store means division of selling arena with space utilization and arrangement of products. As per Bharathi & Sudha (2017) the product should be displayed to fit customers and help in making them feel good. The movement of customers is affected by the way the products are displayed in store (Ward, Bitner & Barnes, 1992). Mathur & Goswami (2014) found that if the store does not maintain cleanliness then it might turn off many shoppers. Hussain & Ali (2015) concluded that customers will have encouragement and motivation to visit the store again, only if the store environment is clean. Product assortment can be used as a strategic positioning tool for capturing the customer attention and retention (Grewal et al., 2009). Customers select a store for purchasing based on the product assortment and availability (Surabhi & Mishra, 2014). Bellizi et al. (1983) stated that colours can create a psychological effect on the mood state of customers which can lead to product purchase. Also, usage of warm colours is more effective in attracting the potential customers towards the store.

Social factors

Social factor is relevant for a brick and mortar store as they help in promoting communication between the customers and employees. Sharma and Stafford (2000) highlighted that the purchase intention of the customers can be influenced with the number of salespersons. As the customers may feel that they need not wait for longer time to get service which can result in creating positive feelings and satisfaction towards the store. Grewal and Sharma (1991) pointed out that lesser number of salesperson can create a negative shopping experience for the customers as they may have to spend more time in searching for the product. Employee's attributes play a significant role in building relationship with the customers (Kim and Kim, 2012). Further, he added that physical attributes comprises of dress, smiles and gestures. Halpern and Odell (2000) supported that to draw the attention of customers; the employee's attire should match the store's image. Behavioural attributes of the employees are their characteristics and interaction which can help in creating a positive perception of the store (Kim & Kim, 2012). Mattila & Wirtz (2008) mentioned that employees with a friendly approach can help in reducing the negative perceptions of customers. As per Lin and Chiang (2010), employee's behaviours can have an impact on customer's behaviours during their whole interaction in the service process. Hatfield et al. (1994) revealed that a friendly and helpful behaviour by the employees can create a pleasant experience for the

customers. Employee's responses can help in enhancing the shopping experience of the customer leading to revisiting the store again.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of this research were to study the impact of three factors namely ambient factors, design factors, and social factors on customer buying behaviour in retail store and identify which of the factors have more impact on customer buying behaviour.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study was confined to retail stores in shopping mall in Kannur. Convenience sampling was used to select the sample. A sample of 147 customers was selected for the purpose of the study. A self-administered questionnaire was prepared for collecting the data. The in-store atmosphere was measured based on ambient, design, and social factors. The questionnaire consists of closed ended question and five point Likert scale questions. The collected data was analyzed by using factor analysis with the help of SPSS version 20.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data was tested using Cronbach alpha. The results as seen from the table indicated that the data were reliable as the reliability score is 0.700.

Table I

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.700
	Approx. Chi-Square	1582.184
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	231
	Sig.	.000

Source: Survey data

The KMO value ranges between 0 and 1. A value of 0 indicates that factor analysis is inappropriate for the data and a value of 1 indicates that factor analysis will yield distinct and reliable results. A value of 0.5 or above means that the sample is adequate and factor analysis can be conducted. But if the value is below 0.5 then more data has to be collected (Field, 2000). As seen from Table 1, the KMO value for the data is 0.700 which is acceptable.

For factor analysis to work there has to be some kind of relationship between the variables and this is tested using the Bartlett's Test of sphericity. This test indicates whether factor analysis is appropriate for a given set of data. Factor analysis can be considered appropriate for a data only if the significance value is less than 0.05 (Field, 2000). As the significance value for the present data as shown in Table 1 is 0.000, factor analysis is appropriate for this data. As the present data satisfies both KMO test and Bartlett's test, factor analysis is appropriate.

Table II

Communalities		
	Initial	Extraction
Cleanliness of the store motivates me to buy more	1.000	.756
Clean shelves of retail store motivates me to stay more	1.000	.748
Cleanliness of retail store attracts me to visit again	1.000	.812
Listening to music creates a relaxed atmosphere while shopping	1.000	.761
Music in store motivates me to buy more	1.000	.728
Pleasant environment created by music makes me spend more time in the store	1.000	.538
Scent in retail store encourages me to purchase more	1.000	.809
Scent in store makes me to revisit retail store	1.000	.798
Fragrance of the store makes me to stay more time	1.000	.786
Fully air conditioned environment makes me comfortable while shopping	1.000	.685

Lighting in the outlets is pleasing to the eyes and makes me to stay more	1.000	.726
Good colour of lighting attracts me towards products	1.000	.674
Colour in the store creates a positive image in my mind	1.000	.718
I tend to buy more when I come across attractive and impressive displays	1.000	.678
Display motivates me to look at the products more critically	1.000	.477
Creative & systematic arrangement of products in the store helps me in the selection of product	1.000	.734
I like to shop from stores which has knowledgeable employees	1.000	.754
I buy from stores which has helpful and friendly employees	1.000	.723
I would like to shop longer in the retail outlet with good store atmosphere	1.000	.651
I would like to visit the store with good atmosphere again	1.000	.748
I would like to repurchase from store with good atmosphere in future	1.000	.753
I would tell my family and friends about the retail store which has good atmospherics	1.000	.759

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Survey data

Table 2 explains the communalities before and after extraction. It shows the extent to which each variable accounts for the variation in the factor. Principal component analysis works on the assumption that all variance is common. So before extraction all communalities are 1. Column two, i.e., the extraction column indicates the percent of common variance associated with each question. Hence from Table 2, it can be stated that 81.2 percent of variance associated with the variable ‘Cleanliness of store attracts customer to visit again’ is common, 80.9 percent of variance associated with the variable ‘Scent in retail store encourages customer to purchase more’ is common and so on. The table clearly shows the percent of common variance associated with each variable. The highest percent of common variance is in the case of ‘Cleanliness of store attracts to visit again’ and lowest in the case of ‘Display motivates the customer to look at the products more critically’.

Table III

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cleanliness of the store motivates me to buy more	.297	.033	-.209	-.030	.405	-.149	.660
Clean shelves of retail store motivates me to stay more	.060	.136	.035	.000	.796	-.295	.064
Cleanliness of retail store attracts me to visit again	.076	.023	.062	.003	.856	.253	.073
Listening to music creates a relaxed atmosphere while shopping	.289	-.050	.674	-.141	-.292	.151	.303
Music in store motivates me to buy more	.768	.026	.252	-.202	.099	-.109	.105
Pleasant environment created by music makes me spend more time in the store	.520	.000	.422	.156	.067	.128	.210
Scent in retail store encourages me to purchase more	.882	.139	.061	.083	.013	.013	-.021
Scent in store makes me to revisit retail store	.877	.036	.078	.122	.066	.026	.024
Fragrance of the store makes me to stay more time	.728	.072	.328	.259	.069	.265	.014
Fully air conditioned environment makes me comfortable while shopping	.165	-.030	.483	.650	.026	-.002	.008
Lighting in the outlets is pleasing to the eyes and makes me to stay more	.287	.251	.584	.071	.472	.009	-.111

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Good colour of lighting attracts me towards products	.293	.186	.685	.256	.113	.074	-.025
Colour in the store creates a positive image in my mind	.127	.216	.636	.436	.092	.227	-.001
I tend to buy more when I come across attractive and impressive displays	.164	.022	.076	.723	-.070	.302	.161
Display motivates me to look at the products more critically	-.035	.296	.034	.619	.043	.050	.000
Creative & systematic arrangement of products in the store helps me in the selection of product	-.033	.071	.183	.138	-.030	.164	.804
I like to shop from stores which has knowledgeable employees	-.073	.004	.158	.248	.061	.805	.102
I buy from stores which has helpful and friendly employees	.186	.251	.083	.050	-.091	.780	.000
I would like to shop longer in the retail outlet with good store atmosphere	.177	.718	.067	.248	.065	-.135	.122
I would like to visit the store with good atmosphere again	.117	.789	.131	.074	-.049	.201	.216
I would like to repurchase from store with good atmosphere in future	-.005	.818	-.090	.195	.144	.112	-.072
I would tell my family and friends about the retail store which has good atmospherics	-.027	.736	.340	-.216	.102	.126	-.166

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.

Source: Survey data

Table 3 shows the rotated component matrix which is the matrix of factor loadings for each factor into each variable. 0.5 was used as the cut-off for factor loading. The factors converged at 10 iterations. The variables are listed in the descending order of size of their factor. As evident from Table 3, factor rotation resulted in the extraction of 7 factors as significant determinants of store atmosphere and customer buying decision. Factor 1 loaded across five variables, i.e., 'Music in store motivates customer to buy more', 'Pleasant environment created by music makes customer spend more time in the store', 'Scent in retail store encourages customer to purchase more', 'Scent in store makes customer to revisit retail store', and 'Fragrance of the store makes customer to stay more time' which will jointly be termed as 'Music and Fragrance'. The Second factor loaded across four variables, i.e., 'Shop longer in the retail outlet with good atmosphere', 'Visit the store with good atmosphere again', 'Repurchase from store with good atmosphere in future', and 'Recommend family and friends about the store with good atmospherics' which can be referred to as 'Purchase decision and Atmospherics'. The third factor loaded across four variables, i.e., 'Lighting in the outlets makes customer to stay more', 'Good colour of lighting attracts customer towards products', 'Colour in the store creates a positive image', and 'Listening to music creates a relaxed atmosphere while shopping' can be termed as 'Colour and Relaxation'. The fourth factor loaded across three variables, i.e., 'Customers tend to buy more due to attractive & impressive displays', 'Display motivates customer to look at the products more critically', and 'Fully air conditioned environment makes shopping comfortable' can be termed as 'Display and Temperature'. The fifth factor loaded across two variables, i.e., 'Clean shelves of retail store motivates customer to stay more', and 'Cleanliness of retail store attracts customer to visit again' can be referred to as 'Cleanliness and loyalty'. The sixth factor loaded across two variables, i.e., 'Customers shop from stores which has knowledgeable employees', and 'Customers buy from stores which has helpful and friendly employees' can be referred to as 'Knowledgeable & Social'. The seventh factor loaded across one variable 'Cleanliness of the store motivates customer to buy more', can be termed as 'Neatness and buying'.

Hence, the twenty-two variables included in the analysis converged into a seven factor namely 'Music and Fragrance', 'Purchase decision and Atmospherics', 'Colour and Relaxation', 'Display and Temperature', 'Cleanliness and loyalty', 'Knowledgeable & Social', and 'Neatness and buying'.

Table IV

Descriptive Statistics of Ambient Factors					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Listening to music creates a relaxed atmosphere while shopping	147	1.00	5.00	4.1020	.91961
Music in store motivates me to buy more	147	1.00	5.00	2.8095	1.00228
Pleasant environment created by music makes me spend more time in the store	147	1.00	5.00	3.5850	1.04582
Scent in retail store encourages me to purchase more	147	1.00	5.00	2.9252	.95148
Scent in store makes me to revisit retail store	147	1.00	5.00	3.1361	.93369
Fragrance of the store makes me to stay more time	147	2.00	5.00	3.1633	.89167
Fully air conditioned environment makes me comfortable while shopping	147	2.00	5.00	4.3197	.81917
Lighting in the outlets is pleasing to the eyes and makes me to stay more	147	2.00	5.00	3.7687	.78573
Good colour of lighting attracts me towards products	147	2.00	5.00	3.7347	.87057
Valid N (listwise)	147				
Average				3.5049	

Source: Survey data

From the table, it is evident for the ambient factor, average mean is 3.51. The value of 3 corresponds to neither agree nor disagree, hence it can be inferred that the customers have neutral opinion about the ambient factor. The customers in Kannur prefer shopping from store which provides fully air conditioned environment with good lighting and fragrance.

Table V

Descriptive Statistics of Design Factors					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cleanliness of the store motivates me to buy more	147	2.00	5.00	4.0612	.81278
Clean shelves of retail store motivates me to stay more	147	2.00	5.00	4.0000	.72149
Cleanliness of retail store attracts me to visit again	147	3.00	5.00	4.2245	.62806
Colour in the store creates a positive image in my mind	147	2.00	5.00	3.9116	.76682
I tend to buy more when I come across attractive and impressive displays	147	2.00	5.00	3.7347	.83851
Display motivates me to look at the products more critically	147	2.00	5.00	3.9796	.70681
Creative & systematic arrangement of products in the store helps me in the selection of product	147	3.00	5.00	4.2041	.57265
Valid N (listwise)	147				
Average				4.0165	

Source: Survey data

The above table shows that the average mean is 4.02 for design factor. The value 4 corresponds to agree, so it can be concluded that there is agreement of customers with the design factor of the stores. The customers tend to buy more when they come across attractive displays in store but the products need to be arranged systematically.

Table VI

Descriptive Statistics of Social Factors					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I like to shop from stores which has knowledgeable employees	147	3.00	5.00	4.2721	.56808
I buy from stores which has helpful and friendly employees	147	3.00	5.00	4.3878	.54205
Valid N (listwise)	147				
Average				4.3300	

Source: Survey data

From the table, it is clear that the average mean is 4.33 for social factors. It can be concluded that there is agreement of customers with social factors. The customers would prefer buying from stores in shopping mall of Kannur which has knowledgeable and friendly employees.

From the above table 4, 5, and 6, it can be seen that the average mean of social factors, followed by design factors is high. Hence, it can be inferred that the customers of Kannur prefer buying from retail stores in shopping mall which have social and design factors. It also needs to focus on the temperature, lighting and fragrance of the store to give the customers a pleasant shopping experience so that they would repurchase from the store again in future and also will recommend their friends and family to buy from the store with good atmospherics.

V. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

From the study, it is clear that the customers prefer buying from retail stores which have social and design factors. But the store should also provide good ambience to the customers to have a pleasant shopping experience. If the store provides good atmosphere, then the customers will show patronage towards the store and will recommend others also. The study also reveals that factors like 'Music and Fragrance', 'Purchase decision and Atmospherics', 'Colour and Relaxation', 'Display and Temperature', 'Cleanliness and loyalty', 'Knowledgeable & Social', and 'Neatness and buying' were important aspects considered by the customers while buying from stores in shopping mall. Hence, the store managers should consider all these points to influence the buying decision of customers. However as the conclusions are based on analysis of responses provided by the customers, there can be chance of bias in the opinion provided which can affect the findings. Also, there is a scope to extend the study to various other retail formats.

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