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## STORE AMBIENCE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN HARYANA

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### ABSTRACT

*The objective of this research paper is to study the concept of store ambience, its various components and its impact on the impulse buying behavior of college students in Haryana. Retail Industry is growing at a very fast pace and numerous changes are taking place in the external and internal environment of the retail organizations. Store ambience is the heart and core of any retail store and the success story of any retail store revolve around it. Customers are experiencing a variety of stimulus' from the ambience of the retail stores which arouses buying intentions in the mind of the customers. Factors of store ambience like sight, sound and smell creates a psychological aura in the store and arouses impulse buying behavior. Because music, light and scent/odour in a store always awakens the senses of the customers who are visiting the store. So with the help of this research paper the researcher wants to elaborate thoroughly the concept of store ambience and its various components like sound, sight, temperature, color and smell and their respective importance in arousing unintended purchase in them.*

**Keywords:** Store Ambience, Sight, Sound, Smell, impulse buying, temperature, color.

### INTRODUCTION

Store Ambience is a major part of the store design and it is defined as the dominant sensory effect created by the store's design, physical characteristics and merchandising activities. The components of the store that collectively produce the store atmosphere are the store exterior, general store interior i.e. flooring, walls, lighting) layout and displays. The sensory reaction they produce within an

individual can be considered in terms of sight, smell and sound. It also refers to all the physical and non-physical elements of a store that can be controlled in order to enhance the behavior of its occupants, both customers and employees. These elements present a multitude of possibilities including ambient cues such as color, smell, music, and lighting, texture as well as artifactual and architectural elements.

## **COMPONENTS OF STORE AMBIENCE**

Store ambience comprises of exterior atmospherics, interior atmospherics, store layout and visual merchandising. The various elements of store ambience are as follows:

### **1) Exterior Atmospherics**

- Storefront
- Entrances
- Signboard
- Fascade
- Window Display
- Adjoining Store
- Parking Accessibility

### **2) Interior Atmospherics**

- Lighting
- Flooring
- Temperature
- Trial Rooms
- Music
- Cleanliness
- Sales Staff

### **3) Store Layout**

- Front Display
- Floor Space
- Customer Traffic Flow
- Merchandise Grouping

- Payment Counters
- Department Location

### **4) Visual Merchandising**

- Theme of Window Display
- Promotional Signages
- Assortment
- Shelves and Moving Racks
- Lighting Fixtures
- Flooring Fixtures

All these factors of store ambience arouses all the six senses of the shoppers and the objective of making customers comfortable, happy and spend more time in the store was fulfilled. These factors projects an image of the store in the mind of the customer which helps retail stores in forecasting repeated visits of the shoppers in the retail stores. The three factors i.e. sight, sound and smell are the big determinants of a retail store ambience.

## **IMPORTANCE OF STORE AMBIENCE AND ITS COMPONENTS**

In the past customers tend to focus only on the product attributes, features and their functions. But now due to invent of information technology, more exposure and high educational level the customers not only want to purchase products and services but

they want to experience the whole purchasing process which includes entertainment part also and this is what the retail stores are pursuing nowadays. Retailers of this century are not providing products and services to the customers but they are offering a whole shopping experience to the customers which comprises of the various components of store ambience which was discussed in the previous paragraph. Store ambience is effective and important not due to their impact on customers to buy but they induce customers to buy again and again, and creates a strong brand image in the mind of the customers.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The objective of conducting this study is to find out the impact of various stores ambience components on the impulse buying behavior of college students in Haryana.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Store ambience comprises of nonvisual elements of a stores environment mainly the 3S's i.e. Sight, Sound, and Smell. These factors have a significant impact on the customer's impulse buying behavior and arouse pleasure, comfort and lead customers for unintended purchase. A brief review of the literature pertaining to this research work is as follows:-

XU (2007) in his research work conducted in Bangladesh concludes that the merchandise display and the role of salesman is very significant and influences the buying behavior of customers.

Vida (2008) in his research article studied the impact of background music on the impulse buying behavior of customers and concluded that the customers likelihood for music in the retail stores brings positive impact on the shopping behavior of customers and led them spent more time and money in the store.

Tiapana (2009) investigated the impact of store layout on the consumers purchasing behavior and intentions at convenience stores in Kwa Mashu in South Africa and concludes that there is a significant relationship between store layout and consumer buying behavior.

Mariri and Chipunza (2009) studied that how the various in-store components impact the impulse buying behavior of Africans and make a strong relationship between impulse purchase and the store ambience factors.

Morrison et.al. (2011) in their research article named "In-Store music and aroma influences on shoppers behavior and satisfaction retailers" they experimentally examined it and concluded that presence of vanilla scent

and soft music have a significant impact on the buying behavior of shoppers in the retail stores.

Olahut et.al. (2012) found that music has a great impact on the shopping behavior of customers and it sets their pace in the retail store and make them stay in the store for longer time duration. Soothing and slow music also relax the visitors of the store and make them explore the store for longer time duration.

Anning-Dorson (2013) in his research conducted in Ghana investigated the impact of store ambience factors on the shop and brand choosing behavior of customers in Ghana and concluded that displays in the store and the sales people of the store were the main factors that attract customers in the store.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Sample Population:** Population of the study comprises of the college students of state Haryana.

**Sampling Technique:** Judgment and convenience sampling technique

**Sample Size:** 140

**Research Instrument:** Questionnaire

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

**Table-1 Factors which influence college students/shoppers to enter the store and to explore it.**

Influencing Factors	Customers Preference (%)
Fascade of the Store	38.46
Window Display	31.7
Mannequins/Dress Forms	21
Promotional Signages	24.8
Theme on Poster	14.6
Footfall	9.2

Table no. 1 describes the various factors of store ambience which influenced and pushed the shoppers to enter the store and explore the merchandise. Fascade (34.46%) of the store was the most influential and attract college students/shoppers to enter the store and pushes them to explore the available merchandise. Window display (31.7%) was the second most influential factor. Mannequins and the dress forms (21%) also contribute a lot in luring college students/shoppers in the store. Promotional signages (24.8%) also considered an important factor in attracting college students/shoppers. Theme on Poster (14.6%) and Footfall (9.2%) were considered as the least significant factors in this category.

**Table-2 Store Ambience factors which attracts college students/shoppers in the Retail Stores**

<b>Store factors</b>	<b>Ambience</b>	<b>Customers Preference (%)</b>
<b>Sound</b>		<b>18.5</b>
<b>Temperature</b>		<b>25</b>
<b>Color Theme</b>		<b>34.5</b>
<b>Focal Lights</b>		<b>23.6</b>
<b>Odour</b>		<b>24.7</b>
<b>Theme Inspiration</b>		<b>12.6</b>

Table no. 2 describes the various store ambience factors which directly or indirectly pushes the shoppers for impulse buying. This factor arouses emotional and psychological feelings in shoppers and led them for impulse buying. 34.5 % of customers/shoppers feel that color theme have a significant impact on them in context to impulse buying. Temperature (25%) and Odour (24.7%) plays a very important role in attracting them in the store and for further exploration of merchandise in the store. Focal Lights (23.6%) also brings a very good impact on the mood of the shoppers. Sound /Music also impacts the shoppers in the store and helps in relaxing them and insists them in spending more time in the store which directly or indirectly leads to impulse buying. Theme inspiration (12.6%) was considered as the

least influential among the store ambience factors.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this research study identified that ambience of a store refers to physical characteristics of a store like fascade, window display, music, lighting, temperature, odour; fixtures etc. These factors draw attention of shoppers and make them enter the store for buying the merchandise available in the store. All these ambience factors have a strong impact on the likelihood of the shoppers because these factors puts a psychological impact on the mind of the customer make them relaxed and happy and pushes them for spending more time in the store which ultimately increases the footfall in the store and leads to increase in sales due to un intended buying.



## IMAGES OF VARIOUS STORE AMBIENCE FACTORS

### FASCADE



## LIGHTS AND DISPLAY OF PRODUCTS









## MANNEQUINS



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