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**Chhatrapati Shahu Institute of Business
Education & Research (CSIBER)**

(An Autonomous Institute)

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**Chhatrapati Shahu Institute of Business
Education and Research (CSIBER)**

**South Asian Journal of Management Research
(SAJMR)
Special Issue**

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Impact of Visual Merchandising and Store Atmospherics on the Impulsive Buying Of Customers in Salem District

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Abstract

The customers visiting retail stores purchase goods as per the pre-prepared or pre-planned list. At times, the customers tend to buy certain other goods on the sudden effect of visual merchandising and store atmospherics. Therefore, the retailers adopt these strategies for attracting the customers and increase the sales. The visual merchandising is also helpful in establishing the store image. The present study has analyzed the influence made by visual merchandising and store atmospherics on the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers. The study has been conducted among the customers of the retail stores in Salem District. Primary data collected from the sample respondents have been analyzed with appropriate statistical tools. The results have highlighted that among the demographic variables, age, gender and organizational status have significantly influenced the impulsive buying while marital status, educational level, monthly income, size of family and frequency of visit have no significant impact on the impulsive buying. It is found that the assortment has attracted the customers more to involve in impulsive buying. Colour and music have been reported to be the factors contributing to the impulsive buying more than the other store atmospheric factors. The researchers have offered suggestions for enhancing the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers by making the visual merchandising peppy and trendy.

Keywords – Visual Merchandising; Store Atmospherics; Impulsive Buying; Impact and Customers.

Introduction

Retailers adopt several strategies from time to time with a view to attract the customers. At once a customer enters into a retail store; his attention is drawn by the visual merchandising and store atmospherics. Visual merchandising guides the customer to know the product information. It helps to understand the new arrivals and their features. Window display is a part of the visual merchandising which displays the products and customer can easily identify the products and brands. Store front elevation and ambience inspire the customers who step into the retail store even if they have no purchase intention. Store atmospherics include the layout, lighting, music and scent which provide a pleasant shopping experience to the customers. The fragrance and aroma inside the store and the light music played keep the customers to stay in the store for long hours. During their prolonged stay in the store they visit each and every section of the store and buy the products. Even though the customers have visited the store with a pre planned list of goods to be purchased the visual merchandising persuades them make unplanned purchases also. The purchase decision of certain goods is made by the customers instantly on seeing the display. It is known as impulsive buying.

Review of Literature

Randiwela, P. & Wanninayake, W.M.C.B. (2007) found that impact of visual merchandising played a vital role in deciding the store. The proportion of customers strongly influenced by cleanliness was greater than that of design layout and product display but less than the proportion of customers strongly influenced by lighting. It reveals that the selection of store by the customer is determined by visual merchandising and lighting more than any other factor. The researchers have recommended that providing attractive visual merchandising materials would increase the visit of customers. **Nair, G.K. & Meesala, A. (2014)** identified that store environment and shopping comfort have made a significant impact on the satisfaction of the customers. There was a negative relationship observed between store image and customer satisfaction. It indicates that the store has not fulfilled the expectations of the customers in terms of store image. The determinants of repurchase intention included store environment, shopping comfort and merchandise assortment. Cross purchase was attributed to the store atmosphere while store loyalty was influenced by shopping comfort and store layout. **Hussain, R. & Ali, M. (2015)** examined the impact of atmospherics of the store on the purchase intention of the consumers. The results of regression analysis revealed that the impact of cleanliness, scent and lighting on purchase intention was significant while music, temperature and colour did not have any significant impact on the purchase intention of the consumers. However, significant influence was made by display and layout on the purchase intention. **Singh, N. & Mhatre, G. (2016)** have observed that most of the customers visit the stores once in a week. They want go for shopping at the week-ends. Among the window display components, product display and graphics were the attracting features in accordance with the customers. Size of the store was not found to have any significant

impact on the store choice of the customers. The authors have agreed that in-store lighting and music have enhanced the shopping experience of the customers.

Statement of the Problem

A thorough review of previous literature indicates that many studies have been conducted on visual merchandising. These studies have focussed on the role of visual merchandising in store selection and purchase decision making. The impact of visual merchandising on the satisfaction of the customers has been studied by many scholars while the relationship between store atmospherics and satisfaction has been examined in certain other studies. The impact of store image on the purchase intention and satisfaction has been discussed by previous scholars in their studies. The effect of window display on the customer shopping experience and satisfaction has been analyzed by certain researchers. However, it is found that the existing literature has a little exploration on the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers as influenced by visual merchandising and store atmospherics. Hence, the present study has been undertaken.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the present study:

- To analyze the level of impulsive buying of the customers at the retail stores in Salem District
- To examine the impact of visual merchandising on the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers in Salem District and
- To investigate the effect of store atmospherics on the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers in Salem District.

Scope of the Study

The present study aims at describing the views of the customers in Salem District about the visual merchandising. It discusses the impact of visual merchandising strategies adopted by the retail stores in Salem District on the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers. A detailed analysis is conducted about the influence of store atmospherics on the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers in Salem District.

Research Methodology

This study has adopted the descriptive method as well as exploratory research method. It describes the demographic variables of the selected respondents and explores their opinion about the visual merchandising and store atmospherics along with their impact on impulsive buying behaviour. The study has been undertaken with the primary data collected from 150 sample respondents using a structured questionnaire. The respondents were selected based on convenient sampling method. The data collected have been analyzed using percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, chi square test, ANOVA and multiple regression analysis.

Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected from the sample respondents have been grouped and regrouped for the purpose of analysis. The analysis made in this paper includes analysis of demographic variables, levels of visual merchandising and impact of visual merchandising and store atmospherics on impulsive buying of the customers. The demographic variables such as gender, age, marital status, educational level, occupational status, monthly income and size of family have been analyzed using percentage analysis. These variables are compared with the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers. In this regard, impulsive buying behaviour has been classified as never, sometimes and always. The responses given by the sample respondents have been compared with the demographic variables in order to test whether there is any significant association between demographic variables and impulsive buying behaviour by testing the following hypotheses:

Null Hypothesis H_0 : There is no significant association between demographic variables and impulsive buying behaviour of the customers

Alternative Hypothesis H_1 : There is a significant association between demographic variables and impulsive buying behaviour of the customers.

Table-1: Gender and Impulsive Buying

Gender	Frequency	Never	Sometimes	Always	Total
Male	No.	11	38	19	68
	%	16.20%	55.90%	27.90%	100.00%
Female	No.	21	23	38	82
	%	25.60%	28.00%	46.30%	100.00%
Total	No.	32	61	57	150
	%	21.30%	40.70%	38.00%	100.00%

According to the Table 1, among the male customers, 55.9 per cent of them have made impulsive buying of products sometimes and 16.2 per cent of them have never made impulsive buying. On the other hand, 46.3 per cent of the female customers have always been making impulsive buying whereas 25.6 per cent of them have never made unplanned purchases. It denotes that impulsive buying behaviour is always found among the female customers more than the male customers.

Table 2: Age and Impulsive Buying

Age	Frequency	Never	Sometimes	Always	Total
Up to 20 years	No.	12	8	4	24
	%	50.00%	33.30%	16.70%	100.00%
21 to 30 years	No.	9	33	25	67
	%	13.40%	49.30%	37.30%	100.00%
31 to 40 years	No.	5	11	13	29
	%	17.20%	37.90%	44.80%	100.00%
Above 40 years	No.	6	9	15	30
	%	20.00%	30.00%	50.00%	100.00%
Total	No.	32	61	57	150
	%	21.30%	40.70%	38.00%	100.00%

From the Table 2, it could be understood that 50 per cent of the customers in the age group of up to 20 years have never made impulse purchases while 49.3 per cent of the customers in the age group of 21 to 30 years made it sometimes. On the other hand, 44.8 per cent of the customers pertaining to the age group of 31 to 40 years and 50 per cent of the customers above 40 years of age stated that they have always been making impulsive buying. It denotes that as the age increases, the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers also increases.

Table 3: Marital Status and Impulsive Buying

Marital Status	Frequency	Never	Sometimes	Always	Total
Married	No.	18	42	32	92
	%	19.60%	45.70%	34.80%	100.00%
Unmarried	No.	14	19	25	58
	%	24.10%	32.80%	43.10%	100.00%
Total	No.	32	61	57	150
	%	21.30%	40.70%	38.00%	100.00%

Table 3 divulges that 45.7 per cent of the married customers made impulse purchases sometimes while 43.1 per cent of the unmarried customers were making impulsive purchases always. The proportions of married and unmarried customers never made impulsive purchases were the least among the respective groups of customers. It implies that impulsive buying behaviour is found more among the unmarried customers than the married customers.

Table 4: Educational Level and Impulsive Buying

Educational Level	Frequency	Never	Sometimes	Always	Total
Illiterate	No.	2	3	2	7
	%	28.60%	42.90%	28.60%	100.00%
School Level	No.	9	31	21	61
	%	14.80%	50.80%	34.40%	100.00%
UG	No.	13	16	22	51
	%	25.50%	31.40%	43.10%	100.00%
PG	No.	6	8	10	24
	%	25.00%	33.30%	41.70%	100.00%
Others	No.	2	3	2	7
	%	28.60%	42.90%	28.60%	100.00%
Total	No.	32	61	57	150
	%	21.30%	40.70%	38.00%	100.00%

It is proclaimed from the Table 4 that impulsive buying behaviour is always found among 28.6 per cent of the illiterate customers; 34.4 per cent of the customers with school level education; and 43.1 per cent of the customers with UG level educational qualification. It is stated by 41.7 per cent of the post graduate customers and 28.6 per cent of the customers other educational qualifications that they have always involved in impulsive buying. It reveals that the UG and PG level educated customers made more impulsive buying than the other customers.

Table-5: Occupational Status and Impulsive Buying

Occupational Status	Frequency	Never	Sometimes	Always	Total
Agriculture	No.	6	11	5	22
	%	27.30%	50.00%	22.70%	100.00%
Business/ Profession	No.	6	30	24	60
	%	10.00%	50.00%	40.00%	100.00%
Employed	No.	14	14	14	42
	%	33.30%	33.30%	33.40%	100.00%
Others	No.	6	6	14	26
	%	23.10%	23.10%	53.80%	100.00%
Total	No.	32	61	57	150
	%	21.30%	40.70%	38.00%	100.00%

According to the Table 5, impulsive buying behaviour was found sometimes among 50 per cent each of the agriculturists and businessmen/professionals whereas the impulsive buying behaviour was found always among 22.7 per cent of the agriculturists and 40 per cent of the businessmen/professionals. There was no difference among the employees regarding the impulsive buying behaviour. On the other hand, 53.8 per cent of the customers engaged in other occupations have involved always in impulsive buying. It denotes that the impulsive buying was found greater among businessmen/professionals and others.

Table-6: Monthly Income and Impulsive Buying

Monthly Income	Frequency	Never	Sometimes	Always	Total
Up to Rs. 10000	No.	4	5	5	14
	%	28.60%	35.70%	35.70%	100.00%
Rs.10001 to Rs.20000	No.	9	15	14	38
	%	23.70%	39.50%	36.80%	100.00%
Rs.20001 to Rs.30000	No.	11	24	23	58

	%	19.00%	41.40%	39.70%	100.00%
Above Rs.30000	No.	8	17	15	40
	%	20.00%	42.50%	37.50%	100.00%
Total	No.	32	61	57	150
	%	21.30%	40.70%	38.00%	100.00%

It could be learned from the Table 6 that 35.7 per cent of the customers earning a monthly income up to Rs.10000 as well as 39.5 per cent of the customers in the monthly income group of Rs.10001 to Rs.20000 have been making impulsive buying sometimes. Impulsive buying behaviour was found sometimes among 42.5 per cent of the customers having monthly income above Rs.30000. The proportion of customers never involved in impulsive buying was found greater among the customers with monthly income up to Rs.10000. It denotes that the low income customers did not involve in impulsive buying behaviour as the other customers.

Table-7: Size of Family and Impulsive Buying

Size of family	Frequency	Never	Sometimes	Always	Total
Up to 2	No.	3	5	6	14
	%	21.40%	35.70%	42.90%	100.00%
3 to 4	No.	16	33	31	80
	%	20.00%	41.30%	38.80%	100.00%
More than 4	No.	13	23	20	56
	%	23.20%	41.10%	35.70%	100.00%
Total	No.	32	61	57	150
	%	21.30%	40.70%	38.00%	100.00%

From the Table 7, it is divulged that 42.9 per cent of the customers having a size of family up to 2 members have always been involved in impulsive buying while 41.3 per cent of the customers pertaining to the size of family of 3 to 4 stated that they have impulsive buying behaviour sometimes only while the same statement was given by 41.1 per cent of the customers belonging to the size of family of more than 4 members. It implies that impulsive buying behaviour is found more among the small family members.

Table-8: Frequency of Visit And Impulsive Buying

Frequency of visit to the store	Frequency	Never	Sometimes	Always	Total
Monthly once	No.	7	22	16	45
	%	15.60%	48.90%	35.60%	100.00%
Fortnightly once	No.	12	17	20	49
	%	24.50%	34.70%	40.80%	100.00%
Weekly once	No.	7	7	12	26
	%	26.90%	26.90%	46.20%	100.00%
Weekly twice or more	No.	6	15	9	30
	%	20.00%	50.00%	30.00%	100.00%
Total	No.	32	61	57	150
	%	21.30%	40.70%	38.00%	100.00%

Table 8 proclaims that 48.9 per cent of the customers visiting the retail store once in a month and 50 per cent of the customers visiting the retail store weekly twice or more have agreed that they have impulsive buying behaviour sometimes whereas it was found always among 40.8 per cent of the customers visiting retail store once in a fortnight and 46.2 per cent of the customers visiting retail store weekly once. It denotes that the impulsive buying behaviour is found more among the customers visiting weekly once or fortnightly once.

Table-9: Demographic Variables and Impulsive Buying

Factors	Chi square value	DF	p value	Result
Gender	11.944	2	0.003	Significant @ 1%
Age	18.258	6	0.006	Significant @ 1%
Marital Status	2.451	2	0.294	Not Significant
Educational Level	6.081	8	0.638	Not Significant
Occupational Status	14.511	6	0.024	Significant @ 5%
Monthly Income	0.843	6	0.991	Not Significant
Size of family	0.429	4	0.980	Not Significant
Frequency of visit	5.5	6	0.481	Not Significant

According to the Table 9, the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers varies in accordance with their gender and age since the respective p values were less than 0.01. The occupational status has also a significant influence on the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers as indicated by the p value of 0.024 which is less than 0.05. However, as the p values were greater than 0.05, the other variables – marital status, educational levels, monthly income, size of family and frequency of visit have no significant impact on the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers.

Visual Merchandising and Impulsive Buying

The next part of the analysis deals with the impact of visual merchandising on the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers. In this regard, the following components of visual merchandising have been considered:

- Window display
- Mannequin display
- Floor merchandising
- Promotional signage
- Assortment

The effect of visual merchandising on impulsive buying behaviour of the customers has been analyzed using multiple regression analysis.

Table-10: Visual Merchandising and Impulsive Buying – Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.468	0.219	0.192	0.486

Predictors: (Constant), Assortment, Mannequin Display, Window Display, Promotional Signage, Floor Merchandising

Table 10 evinces that the r value was found to be 0.468. It reveals that the visual merchandising and impulsive buying are correlated to the extent of 46.8 per cent. However, the r square value 0.219 reveals that the 1 unit of change in the visual merchandising components have influenced 0.219 unit of change in the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers.

Table-11: Visual Merchandising and Impulsive Buying – Anova

Model	Source of variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F value	p value
1	Regression	9.516	5	1.903	8.059	0.000
	Residual	34.006	144	0.236		
	Total	43.523	149			

Dependent Variable: Impulsive Buying

Predictors: (Constant), Assortment, Mannequin Display, Window Display, Promotional Signage, Floor Merchandising

From the Table 11, it is understood that the F value was 8.059 and the p value was 0.000. It indicates that the selected components of visual merchandising together have made significant impact on the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers.

Table-12: Visual Merchandising and Impulsive Buying – Multiple Regression

Model	Factors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t value	p value
1	(Constant)	2.228	0.208		10.698	0.000
	Window Display	0.017	0.030	0.046	0.583	0.561
	Mannequin Display	0.026	0.029	0.067	0.898	0.371
	Floor Merchandising	0.039	0.033	0.097	1.206	0.230
	Promotional Signage	0.064	0.035	0.145	1.847	0.067
	Assortment	0.148	0.029	0.377	5.025	0.000**

Dependent Variable: Impulsive Buying ** Significant @ 1%

According to the Table 12, window display and mannequin display have no significant impact on the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers since the respective p values were (0.561; 0.371) greater than 0.05. The effect of floor merchandising and promotional signage on impulsive buying behaviour was also not significant as their p values were (0.230; 0.067) higher than 0.05. However, the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers has been influenced by assortment as indicated by the p value of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$).

Store Atmospherics and Impulsive Buying

Apart from the visual merchandising, certain other factors like store atmospherics could also have effect on the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers. The factors of store atmospherics considered for this study include:

- Lighting
- Temperature
- Colour
- Music
- Scent

Multiple regression analysis has been performed to test the impact of store atmospherics on the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers.

Table-13: Store Atmospherics and Impulsive Buying – Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.856	0.733	0.723	0.284

Predictors: (Constant), Scent, Lighting, Temperature, Music, Colour

From the Table 13, it could be understood that there has been a positive correlation between store atmospherics and impulsive buying to the extent of 0.856 since the correlation coefficient was found to be 0.856. The coefficient of determination indicates that the 1 unit change in the store atmospherics caused 0.733 unit change in the impulsive buying. It reveals that 73.3 per cent of the change in the impulsive buying is explained by the selected store atmospherics factors.

Table 14: Store Atmospherics and Impulsive Buying – Anova

Model	Source of variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F value	p value
1	Regression	31.881	5	6.376	78.873	0.000
	Residual	11.641	144	0.081		
	Total	43.523	149			

Dependent Variable: Impulsive Score

Predictors: (Constant), Scent, Lighting, Temperature, Music, Colour

It could be divulged from the Table 14 that the F value stating the relationship between store atmospherics and impulsive buying was 78.873 and the p value was 0.000. It discloses that store atmospherics factors together have made a significant impact on the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers.

Table 15: Store Atmospherics And Impulsive Buying – Multiple Regression

Model	Factors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t value	p value
1	(Constant)	1.203	0.110		10.942	0.000
	Lighting	0.133	0.018	0.317	7.199	0.000**
	Temperature	0.137	0.020	0.299	6.809	0.000**
	Colour	0.151	0.021	0.340	7.327	0.000**
	Music	0.150	0.019	0.368	8.005	0.000**
	Scent	0.113	0.020	0.248	5.600	0.000**

Dependent Variable: Impulsive Buying ** Significant @ 1%

Table 15 purports that all the selected factors of store atmospherics have made significant influence in the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers as the p values of all the variables were less than 0.01. The beta values revealed that colour has made 15.1 per cent of influence; music has made 15 per cent of influence and temperature has made 13.7 per cent of the impact. The impact of lighting was 13.3 per cent and that of scent was 11.3 per cent. It discloses that the highest impact was made by colour and the lowest impact was made by scent.

Findings

The key findings of the study have been summarised below:

From the analysis, it is proclaimed that the female customers had more impulsive buying behaviour than the male customers. The young customers, below the age of 20 years had less impulsive buying behaviour than the others while it is found to be greater among the customers pertaining to the age group of above 40 years.

Marital status wise analysis indicates that the higher impulsive buying is observed among the unmarried customers over the married customers. Graduates and post graduates have involved in impulsive buying more than the others. Impulsive buying behaviour has been found to be lesser among the employed than the customers engaged in other occupations.

It is further noted from the results that the low income customers have made planned purchases while the higher income customers have made unplanned and impulsive purchases. Impulsive buying behaviour was observed to be more among the small size family members while planned purchases were made by the large size family members. The customers visit the retail stores once in a week or once in a fortnight have stated that they always involve in impulsive buying.

Gender, age and occupational status have made significant influence on the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers. Assortment and impulsive buying behaviour have been found to be significantly associated.

The store atmospherics factors have been found to be significantly related with the impulsive buying behaviour. Among these factors, the highest influence was made by colour and the lowest impact was made by scent.

Suggestions

On the basis of findings of the study, the following suggestions have been offered:

It is suggested that the visual merchandising components shall be made trendy in order to attract more female customers. Peppy visual merchandising components are recommended to be made by the retailers which would draw the attention of the children and teen age customers.

Low price goods shall be displayed and the new arrivals shall be portrayed in the store front in order to enhance the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers working as employees.

Since assortment is influencing the impulsive buying, it is suggested that the retailers should provide more collection of brands and varieties of goods. Colour has a significant impact on the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers. Therefore, it is recommended that the retail store shall be painted with mild and attracting colours.

Conclusion

The customers visiting the retail stores involve in both planned and unplanned purchases. The unplanned purchases are referred to as impulsive purchases. The research made in this study that the impulsive buying behaviour of the customers varied in accordance with their gender, age and occupational status. Among the visual merchandising factors considered for the study, assortment is found to have affected the impulsive buying of the customers. Out of the factors of store atmospherics, colour and music have the ability to affect the impulsive buying while lesser impact has been made by scent.

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