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Store Ambience on Young Apparel Consumers' Impulsive Buying Behaviour

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to discern the influence of store ambience on the impulsive purchasing behavior of consumers in the apparel sector. The study investigated the impact of various factors, namely window display (WD), promotional offers (PO), store layout (SL), background music (BM), and fragrance of the store (FOS), on consumer impulsive buying behaviour (IBB). The research was conducted involving 252 youth participants. A questionnaire, developed from existing literature, served as the primary data collection tool. The gathered data underwent analysis through correlation tests and linear regression. The research findings underscore the significance of certain store features, specifically window display, promotional offers, and fragrance, in influencing consumer impulsive purchase behaviour within the apparel sector. Consequently, the study provides practical recommendations for retailers to enhance the overall ambience of their stores to stimulate impulsive buying among apparel consumers.

INTRODUCTION

The retail landscape in Sri Lanka has transformed into a highly efficient and swiftly advancing industry, primarily driven by the entry of numerous significant enterprises into retail operations. The Sri Lankan economy heavily relies on the apparel and textile industry, serving as a key contributor to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2023, the Apparel market in Sri Lanka is valued at US\$1.66 billion, and it is projected to experience an annual growth rate of 2.08% (CAGR 2023-2028). The largest segment within the market is Women's Apparel, accounting for a market volume of US\$0.83 billion in 2023.

(Amos *et al.*, 2014) stated marketing researchers had observed a positive trend in impulsive shopping and have utilized various strategies to promote impulsive purchases among apparel consumers. They have elucidated how the presentation of a product in a retail setting enhances its appeal and allure to customers. Crucial elements for attracting customers to engage in impulsive buying include the exterior and interior design of the apparel store, pricing strategies, promotional approaches, service orientation, assistance on the shop floor, product variety, quality, store navigation, and operational execution (Mandolfo & Lamberti, 2021). Retailers must recognize the significance of implementing a successful strategy to enhance the ambience of their stores, given the heightened competition in the retail sector over recent years (Han *et al.*, 1991).

By adopting the above empirical evidence, the problem statement can be formulated as, "To investigate the impact of store ambience factors namely window display, promotional offers, store layout, background music, and fragrance of the store on impulsive buying behaviour among young apparel consumers."

Research Objectives

The following Objectives were to be intended to achieve:

1. To identify the level of window display, promotional offers, store layout, background music, fragrance of the store and impulsive buying behaviour among young apparel consumers.
2. To explore the relationship among window display, promotional offers, store layout, background music, fragrance of the store and impulsive buying behaviour among young apparel consumers.
3. To investigate the impact of window display, promotional offers, store layout, background music, and fragrance of the store on impulsive buying behaviour among young apparel consumers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

External elements of impulsive buying are marketing strategies that retailers manage and control to encourage customers to impulse buy (Pallikkara *et al.*, 2020). When consumers see visual cues such as promotional signage, they may want to buy apparel impulsively (Mehta & Chugan, 2012). According to the findings by Rhee (2017), consumers' perceptions regarding a store's visual appeal showed a stronger link with the store selection than apparel product quality, overall price level and variety. This gives credibility to the view that the store atmosphere influences the consumers' choice of a store, with window displays of apparel stores playing an important part. This shows that the retail setting of apparel stores influences consumer buying behaviour. Direct sensory stimuli in a retail ambience include visual components and physical amenities, while general design aspects include colour, shelf space and store layout (Baker *et al.*, 2002). A window display is a presentation of items that impacts an individual's purchasing intentions. Merchants want

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to provide consumers with an appropriate product at the right moment through a correct display (Baker *et al.*, 1992). Retail layout may stimulate a customer's interest in the store's ambience, increasing shopper attention (Bloch *et al.*, 1989).

Impulse Buying Behaviour (IBB)

For many years, numerous researchers have shown a keen interest in impulsive purchasing (Amos *et al.*, 2014). In the case of clothes shopping, impulse purchasing plays an important role. Apparel shoppers may profit more from impulse purchases when retailers provide promotional offers, which is significant for the apparel retail business. According to Abratt & Goodey (1990), IB at a retail store may greatly interest both the manufacturer and the retailer. Impulse shopping implies instant buying, which is an advance shopping intention either to buy a particular product category or to satisfy a desire (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998). Impulsive buying tendency (IBT) is defined as the proclivity to make unexpected purchases and to buy immediately, with little or no thought to the implications. Rook (1987) suggested that impulse purchasing is an unplanned, cognitive process that comes from affective reactions, which happen after the exposure to retail environment cues inside a physical store. Thus, store attributes play a critical role during apparel impulse buying. The following hypotheses were formulated to explore the relationships between IBB of apparel consumers and these five store ambience factors.

Research Hypotheses

Window display

Window displays are used in the facade of the store through which retailers use to draw the customers into the store and provide messages about the products offered inside the store (Levy & Weitz, 2002). According to Britta *et al.*, (2010), well- designed storefront window displays are regarded as a useful technique to attract the attention of new customers and motivate them to visit the store. Findings of the research conducted by Mehta & Chugan, (2014) suggested that there is a positive relationship between window display and impulse buying. Therefore, this research proposed following hypothesis:

H1: There is a positive impact of window display on impulsive buying behaviour.

Promotional Offers

According to Levy and Weitz (2002) promotional signage gives information about special offers and price discounts offered in the store. Consumers can experience an urge to buy impulsively when visually encountering cues such as promotional incentives (Dholakia, 2000). Therefore, it was hypothesised:

H2: There is a positive impact of promotional offers on impulsive buying behaviour.

Store Layout

According to Bitner (1992) & Spies *et al* (1997) good store layout enables customers' to find the product that

they need in a quick manner. Moreover, Baker *et al* (1994) stated that well organised store layout enhances the process of shopping by creating convenience for customers. Therefore, this research proposed following hypothesis:

H3: There is a positive impact of store layout on impulsive buying behaviour.

Background Music

Music is considered as an important element of store atmosphere which directly influences consumer buying behaviour (Levy & Weitz, 2002). According to the findings of Mattila & Wirtz (2001) consumers are more likely to stay longer in stores due to the presence of good background music and browse through the store looking at the merchandise. As a result, good background music triggers the senses of consumers by stimulating the process of impulse buying. Thus, below mentioned hypothesis was proposed:

H4: There is a positive impact of background music on impulsive buying behaviour.

Fragrance of Stores

Pleasant aroma of the store makes customers spend more time looking through merchandise, which will result in impulse buying. The impact of store smell on impulse buying behaviour was identified in the study of (Mattila & Wirtz, 2008) and (Mohan *et al.*, 2013). Hence, this research hypothesised that:

H5: There is a positive impact of the fragrance of stores on impulsive buying behaviour.

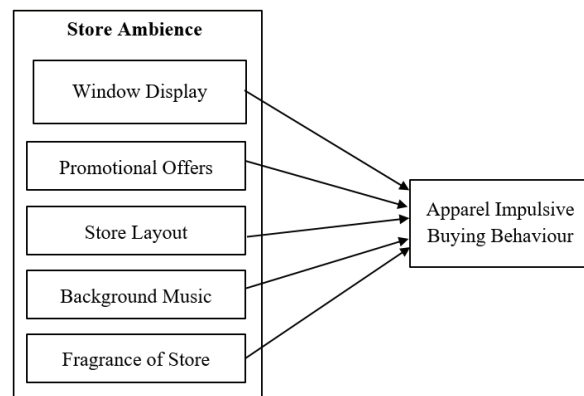


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: (Trivedi *et al.*, 2022)

METHODOLOGY

Sampling and Data Collection

In this research, the data was collected from 252 young apparel consumers through a convenience sampling method by using an online survey Google Forms. The “Five Point Likert Scale” was used to measure the variables. This scale consisted of five scales ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” was applied in part II of the questionnaire to identify responses. Pearson’s correlation analysis and regression analysis were used to analyse the collected data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows profiles of respondents who are males (45.2%) and females (54.8%) use impulsive buying during apparel purchases. The younger apparel consumers mostly use impulsive buying during apparel purchases as

finding shows that the majority of apparel consumers fall in the age categories between 1997 to 2010 and 51.2% respondents reported monthly family income below 25,000 Sri Lankan rupees. Internal reliability of the items is checked by using

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

| Demographic Factors | Category | Number of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Gender | Male | 114 | 45.2 |
| | Female | 138 | 54.8 |
| | Total | 252 | 100 |
| Age | 1997 - 2010 | 231 | 91.7 |
| | Non 1997 - 2010 | 21 | 8.3 |
| | Total | 252 | 100 |
| Monthly Family Income | Below 25000 | 129 | 51.2 |
| | 25000 - 49999 | 53 | 21.0 |
| | 50000 - 74999 | 38 | 15.1 |
| | 75000 - 99999 | 21 | 8.3 |
| | 100000 and above | 11 | 4.4 |
| | Total | 252 | 100 |

Source: Survey data (2023)

Table 2: Reliability analysis for Overall Variables

| Variables | Cronbach's Alpha | Decision Attribute | Number of Question Items |
|----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Window Display | 0.726 | Accepted | 4 |
| Promotional Offers | 0.718 | Accepted | 4 |
| Store Layout | 0.797 | Accepted | 4 |
| Background Music | 0.776 | Accepted | 4 |
| Fragrance Of Store | 0.727 | Accepted | 4 |
| Impulsive Buying Behaviour | 0.745 | Accepted | 5 |

Source: Survey data (2023)

Cronbach's alpha reliability test. Cronbach's Alpha of each dimension is revealed in Table 2. According to George & Mallery (2003), Internal reliability is high as values are above 0.7.

Table 3 outlines the elements that influence impulsive buying behaviour of apparel consumers. Mean scores in

table 3 show that "Window Display" (x= 3.82) is found to be at the high level, followed by "Promotional Offers" (x= 3.76), "Store Layout" (x= 3.75) and "Fragrance of Stores" (x=3.61). In contrast, "Background Music" (x =3.41) and "Impulsive Buying Behaviour" (x=3.48) are at a moderate level respectively.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

| Variables | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Decision Attribute |
|----------------------------|-----|------|----------------|--------------------|
| Window Display | 252 | 3.82 | 0.686 | High |
| Promotional Offers | 252 | 3.76 | 0.554 | High |
| Store Layout | 252 | 3.75 | 0.528 | High |
| Background Music | 252 | 3.41 | 0.739 | Moderate |
| Fragrance of Stores | 252 | 3.61 | 0.684 | High |
| Impulsive Buying Behaviour | 252 | 3.48 | 0.673 | Moderate |

Source: Survey data (2023)

Note: Mean value range: 4.0 < X < 4.20: High, and 4.20 < X < 5.00: Very High 2.60 < X ≤ 3.40: Moderate, 1 ≤ X ≤ 1.80: Very Low, 1.80 < X ≤ 2.60: Low, 3:

Source: (Masri & Jaaron, 2017)

Table 4: Results of Pearson’s Correlation analysis

| Relationships | Correlation Coefficient | Sig. Value | Decision Attribute |
|---|-------------------------|------------|--------------------|
| Window Display and impulsive Buying Behaviour | 0.497** | 0.000 | Moderate positive |
| Promotional Offers and impulsive Buying Behaviour | 0.311** | 0.000 | Moderate positive |
| Store Layout and impulsive Buying Behaviour | 0.472** | 0.000 | Moderate positive |
| Background Music and impulsive Buying Behaviour | 0.570** | 0.000 | Moderate positive |
| Fragrance Of Store and impulsive Buying Behaviour | 0.758** | 0.000 | Strong positive |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey data (2023)

Table 4 portrays that the Fragrance of Stores ($r=0.758$) is positively highly correlated with impulsive buying behaviour in the apparel industry at the 1% significant level. However, the relationship between Window Display ($r=0.497$), Promotional Offers ($r=0.311$), Store Layout ($r=0.472$) and Background Music ($r=0.570$) with Impulsive Buying Behaviour are a moderate positive correlation value less than 0.7 at the 0.01 significance level.

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

The above table 5 specifies 0.247 of R square statistics of Window Display and it means Window Display has 24.7% of impact on impulsive buying behaviour towards apparel. According to the table, sig value is 0.000 ($p<0.05$). The unstandardized constant statistic is 1.632 and it shows the model would predict if the independent

variable were zero. Regression results indicate that the b value of Window Display is 0.495. It means if Window Display increased by one-point, impulsive buying behaviour increased by 0.495. Beta value is 0.497.

Table 6 shows that the regression model was significant where F-value = 26.768; $R^2 = 0.097$; $p=0.000$. Further R^2 describes 9.7% of variation in Promotional Offers can be explained by impulsive Buying Behaviour. The proposed model was adequate as the F-statistics ($F=26.768$) were significant at the 5% level ($p<0.05$). Beta is 0.311.

Table 7 shows that the regression model was statistically significant where F-value = 71.563; $R^2=0.223$; $p=0.000$. Further R^2 describes 22.3% of variation in Store Layout can be explained by impulsive Buying Behaviour. The proposed model was adequate as the F-statistics ($F=71.563$) were significant at the 5% level ($p<0.05$). Beta is 0.472.

Table 5: Results of Simple Linear Regression analysis

| Independent Variable | R | R ² | F- value | a-constant | b-value | Beta | p-value |
|----------------------|-------|----------------|----------|------------|---------|-------|---------|
| Window Display | 0.497 | 0.247 | 82.101 | 1.632 | 0.495 | 0.497 | 0.000 |

Source: Survey data (2023)

Table 6: Results of Simple Linear Regression analysis

| Independent Variable | R | R ² | F-value | a-constant | b-value | Beta | p-value |
|----------------------|-------|----------------|---------|------------|---------|-------|---------|
| Promotional Offers | 0.311 | 0.097 | 26.768 | 2.057 | 0.378 | 0.311 | 0.000 |

Source: Survey data (2023)

Table 7: Results of Simple Linear Regression analysis

| Independent Variable | R | R ² | F- value | a-constant | b-value | Beta | p-value |
|----------------------|-------|----------------|----------|------------|---------|-------|---------|
| Store Layout | 0.472 | 0.223 | 71.563 | 1.226 | 0.601 | 0.472 | 0.000 |

Source: Survey data (2023)

Table 8: Results of Simple Linear Regression analysis

| Independent Variable | R | R ² | F- value | a-constant | b-value | Beta | p-value |
|----------------------|-------|----------------|----------|------------|---------|-------|---------|
| Background Music | 0.570 | 0.324 | 120.052 | 1.708 | 0.519 | 0.570 | 0.000 |

Source: Survey data (2023)

Table 8 shows that the regression model was statistically significant where F-value = 120.052; $R^2= 0.324$; $p=0.000$. Further R^2 describes 32.4% of variation in Background Music can be explained by impulsive Buying Behaviour. The proposed model was adequate as the F-statistics ($F=120.052$) were significant at the 5% level ($p<0.05$). Beta is 0.570.

Table 9 shows that the regression model was statistically significant where F-value = 336.812; $R^2= 0.574$; $p=0.000$. Further R^2 describes 57.4% of variation in Fragrance Of Stores can be explained by impulsive Buying Behaviour. The proposed model was adequate as the F-statistics ($F= 336.812$) were significant at the 5% level ($p<0.05$). Beta was 0.758.

Table 9: Results of Simple Linear Regression analysis

| Independent Variable | R | R ² | F- value | a-constant | b-value | Beta | p-value |
|----------------------|-------|----------------|----------|------------|---------|-------|---------|
| Fragrance Of Stores | 0.758 | 0.574 | 336.812 | 2.176 | 0.784 | 0.758 | 0.000 |

Source: Survey data (2023)

Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple regression was run to predict Impulsive Buying Behaviour from Window Display, Promotional Offers, Store Layout, Background Music and Fragrance Of Stores. Table 10 indicates the multiple regression model statistically significantly predicted Impulsive Buying Behaviour $F(5, 246) = 70.174, p < 0.05, R^2 = 0.588$

with adjusted $R^2 = 0.579$. Fragrance Of Stores ($b = 0.726, SE = 0.070, p < 0.05$) added statistically significantly to the prediction of Impulsive Buying Behaviour. However, Window Display ($p = 0.272$), Promotional Offers ($p = 0.139$), Store Layout ($p = 0.375$), Background Music ($p = 0.826$) did not add significance in predicting Impulsive Buying Behaviour.

Table 10: Results of Multiple Regression analysis

| R | R ² | Adjusted R ² | df | F | p Value | | B | Sig. |
|-------|----------------|-------------------------|-----|--------|---------|---------------------|-------|-------|
| 0.767 | 0.588 | 0.579 | 5 | 70.174 | 0.000 | (Constant) | 0.389 | 0.083 |
| | | | 246 | | | Window Display | -.065 | 0.272 |
| | | | | | | Promotional Offers | 0.105 | 0.139 |
| | | | | | | Store Layout | 0.072 | 0.375 |
| | | | | | | Background Music | 0.013 | 0.826 |
| | | | | | | Fragrance of Stores | 0.726 | 0.000 |

Source: Survey data (2023)

Table 11: Results of Multiple Regression analysis

| No | Hypothesis | B | Sig | Decision |
|----|--|-------|-------|----------|
| H1 | There is a positive impact of window display on impulsive buying behaviour. | -.065 | 0.272 | Rejected |
| H2 | There is a positive impact of promotional offers on impulsive buying behaviour. | 0.105 | 0.139 | Rejected |
| H3 | There is a positive impact of store layout on impulsive buying behaviour. | 0.072 | 0.375 | Rejected |
| H4 | There is a positive impact of background music on impulsive buying behaviour. | 0.013 | 0.826 | Rejected |
| H5 | There is a positive impact of fragrance of stores on impulsive buying behaviour. | 0.726 | 0.000 | Accepted |

Source: Survey data (2023)

CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to investigate the impact of window display, promotional offers, store layout, background music, and fragrance of the store on impulsive buying behaviour among young apparel consumers. According to the findings, Fragrance of Stores has a positive significant impact on Impulsive Buying Behaviour. However, Window Display, Promotional Offers, Store Layout, and Background Music did not significantly impact Impulsive Buying Behaviour.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have some implications for retailers on how to recognise and promote impulse buying in their stores. Firstly, retailers need to focus as much on adventure, entertainment and excitement as they do on getting the right merchandise mix and pricing. Emotion and mood are enhanced by appropriate lighting, music, and scents, which may lead to impulsive purchases by customers. Second, in-store promotions and displays, such as those that advertise sales, are useful forms of in-store advertising. Thirdly, by lowering obstacles,

businesses can boost customers' inclination to purchase. Retailers can make impulse purchases less risky by offering easier return policies or by improving impulse purchase enablers like extended credit and store hours. They can also emphasise the non-economic benefits of impulse buying in their advertising campaigns.

RECOMMENDATION

The present study used a convenience sampling method from a particular region and was limited to one product category apparel. One more restriction is imposed by focusing only on one dependent variable, which is impulsive purchasing behavior. The phrase "impulse buying behaviour" has several meanings, including "pure," "reminder," "suggested," and "planned." Investigating different kinds of impulsive buying can therefore aid future research endeavours. In addition, future studies also consider the impact of additional situational factors and consumer traits such as personality, status, consumption tendencies, enjoyment of shopping, loyalty, time availability, and availability of financial resources on impulsive purchasing behaviour.

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