

RETAIL ATMOSPHERICS – A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT

The conceptual research entitled “**Retail Atmospherics**”, focusing on how atmospherics are critical to any form of retail business, the link between shopping behaviour and physical environmental factors. Physical environmental factors, for instance layout, internal, fittings, lightings, etc. This aims to study is mainly carried to analyse the effectiveness of existing mix of atmospheric cues based on the retailer the opinion of shoppers’. Thus the research is more needed one for the retailer to evaluate the retailer environment which increases stiffer competition among other retailers in the market. This is based in the Non Probability Sampling and Research adopted judgment Sampling Technique. The atmospherics stimulus such as examined the key components of retail atmospherics such as general interior and exterior variables, layout and design, point of purchase and decoration and finally human variables which are closely associated with shoppers’ in the retail environment and then it helps to analyzed the effectiveness of existing atmospherics cues in the super market then the research was consider satisfaction and expectations towards atmospheric elements purchase in order to find out the intention and increases of value among the shoppers.

Keywords: *Atmospherics, Shoppers, Retail, Store Layout and Visual Merchandising.*

1. Introduction

Atmospherics are critical to any form of retail business, the link between shopping behavior and physical environmental factors. Physical environmental factors, for instance layout, internal, fittings, lightings, etc. Influence the amount of time spent and the evaluation of merchandise. It becomes important for the retail to effectively plan. Atmospherics refers to physical characteristics associated with the store. These characteristics include both interior and exterior elements as well as layout planning and display. Display is popularly referred to as visual merchandising. Atmospherics plays a significant role in attracting customers to store improving quality of service experience, creating a brand positioning for the outlet and improving customer-retention rates. There are various aspects related to presentation, styling, and design that are used commonly across all the accepts of atmospherics. Some of these are tools like lighting, color planning, use of walls and physical materials. There are also emerging critical issues related to atmospherics in the context of internal retailing. The effective use of technology and design is the key to higher hits, browsing time and sales.

2. Definition

- Atmospherics pertains to a store’s physical characteristics that are used to develop the image of the retail unit and draw customers. It describes the physical elements in a store’s design that appeal to customers and encourages them to buy.
- Exterior atmospherics refers to aspects like store front, display windows, surrounding business, look the shopping centre, etc. It is considered important to attract room customers.
- Interior atmospherics refers to aspects like lighting, colours, facilities, etc. It helps the display and provides customers with relevant information.

3. Importance of Atmospherics Planning

- Atmospherics planning is increasingly gaining relevance.
- Planned shopping centres and lifestyle stores.

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- Customer indicated a high level of store patronage when the work environment.
- It plays an important role in brand positioning for the outlet, attracting customers, facilitating better organization of the store.

4. Role of Atmospheric Planning

- Enhances the image of the retail outlet
- Attract new customers
- Creates a definite USP
- Generates excitement
- Facilitates easy movement inside the store
- Ensures optimum utilization of retail space
- Reduce product search time for the customer
- Reinforces the marketing communication of the outlet
- Influences the service quality experience

5. Immediate Effects of Retail Unit Environment

The three immediate effects of retail unit environment stimuli are

- ❖ Pleasure
- ❖ Arousal
- ❖ Dominance

Pleasure

- This kind of effect means effectual reaction of shoppers' n service environment.

Shoppers have perceived the environment as enjoyable or otherwise

Ex: Playing classical music in Hindi.

Arousal

- It assesses the extent to which the environment stimulates the shoppers in a particular environment.
- Playing slow instrumental music may result in subdued activity level from customers in service settings such as restaurants, compared to no music or fast music.

Dominance

- Customers feel dominant or submissive in the service environment.
- The dominant colour in the store also creates a response.
- Individuals associate the colour red with active, assertive, and rebellious moods, they associate blue with sedate tranquillity and a suppression of feelings.
- Environments could be constructed to encourage or discourage approach behaviours.

6. Impact of Physical Environment Factors on Shopping Behavior

Exterior atmospherics

- Exterior atmospherics refers to all aspects of physical environment found outside the store.
- It significance affects store traffic and sales.
- It is generating by all aspects of the store exterior.
- Retailers can use the storefront as a strong differentiating factor to attract and new customers.

7. Four Key Aspects of Exterior Atmospheric

- Retail store entrance
- Display windows
- Marquee or signboard
- Parking facilities

Retail store entrance

- Store entrance provides prospective customers access to the retail outlet
- Store entrance has to fulfil two important criteria
 - ✓ Functional
 - ✓ Aesthetic

- Retailers or owners of the stores even stand outside and invite the passing shoppers to visit their stores and tell them about the availability of specific merchandise. The most common store entrance alternatives used by retailers are:

Shutter-covered

- It is the most common storefront among Indian retail stores.
- The shutter is raised or removed during the working hours.

Modular fabrication

- It is a one-piece rectangular or square entrance that may attach several stores.

Prefabricated structure

- It is a store frame prepared in a workshop and assembled at the store site.

Prototype storefront

- It is commonly used by franchisers and chains to maintain a uniform image of their stores.

Display windows

- Display windows are very common among retailers dealing in garments and gift items.
- It has emerged as significant marketing tools to not only communicate with prospective shoppers but also attract new customers to the store
- During festival seasons, retailers display their selective merchandise along with their respective prices or discounts offered to attract pedestrian traffic, particularly the price-conscious shoppers
- That retailers look into while deciding on various aspects of windows display are number, size, colour, shape, material, theme of display, and the frequency of changes.

Marquee or sign board

- A marquee is usually a painted or neon light displaying only the store name or the store name along with the trademark and other important information of retail store at the storefront or entrance.
- The quality of marquee influences the image of the store perceived by the customers.
- Storefronts and marquee plays an important role in enhancing the visibility of the retail unit by providing a clear view of the store to the pedestrian and moving vehicles.

Parking facilities

- It plays an important role in the success of retail firm.
- The importance of a parking facility is of great significance in urban shopping centers, where the number of car owners is increasing exponentially and people drive to the nearest possible point of the shopping centre.
- The emergence of an automobile-owning shopping class, retailers, irrespective of their location in planned shopping centres or district centres or neighbourhood centres, are now providing adequate parking facilities to their customers

8. Interior Atmospherics

- It refers to all aspects of the physical environment found inside a store.
- It affects sales, time spent in the store and approach avoidance behaviour of the target segment.
- Some key ingredients of interior atmospherics are flooring, music, interior store design, level of cleanliness, etc...
- The layout and design of a retail centre and store.

Ex:

- ✓ Traffic patterns
- ✓ Allocation of floor space
- ✓ Layout of merchandise
- ✓ Passages
- ✓ Traffic flows

Interior design factors

- Flooring
- Colours
- Sounds
- cleanliness
- Personnel
- Lighting
- Merchandise
- Fixtures
- Temperature
- Cash register placement
- Self-service
- Technology

Lighting

- Lighting arrangement adds significant meaning to entire atmosphere of retail store.
- The basic purpose of lighting is that enables shoppers to see the merchandise with ease while the retail setting looks brighter and more attractive to customers.
- Lighting affects the colour of the merchandise on display in the retail store

Ex:

- ✓ Garments and jewellery retailers use lighting to display their products better.

Role of effective in-store lighting

- ✓ Improves visibility and attractiveness of the store
- ✓ Eases the evaluation of product attributes
- ✓ Establishes the right mood

Music

- Music is one of the key environment variables that can influence shoppers.
- Shorter duration of shopping with familiar background music was related to time misperceptions.
- Environment factors like music, affect time spent in the store, propensity to shopping, and satisfaction with the shopping experience.

Store layout

- It refers to the interior retail store arrangement of departments or grouping of merchandise.
- It involves paying adequate attention to factors such as expected movement of the customers visiting the store and space allotted to customers to shop and making adequate provision for merchandise display.
- Customer-friendly store layout is likely to motivate shoppers to move around the store and the shop more than what they had planned for.
- Store layout planning involves decisions about allocation of floor space, product groupings and nature of traffic flow, which can take the form of straight or grid traffic flow, free-form flow or racetrack flow.

Grid

- It is commonly used system followed by conventional grocery stores, as it facilitates planned shopping behaviour so thus customer can easily locate products on their shopping list.
- Grid arrangement is not very aesthetic but it ensures smooth shopping trips of shoppers within the stores.
- The quantity of merchandise display on the floor is optimized.
- Grid layout saves expenditure on the fixtures as it requires standard fixtures.

Free form

- It also referred to as “**boutique layout**”
- It provides an informal setting to shoppers facilitating shopping and browsing.
- Fixtures and aisles are placed asymmetrically. this offer convenience during shopping.
- It is also shown that it increases the time this consumer is willing to spend in the store.
- It is mainly used by large department stores and department of large retail stores.

Racetrack

- This layout offers an unusual, interesting, and entertaining shopping experience while encourages impulses and promotional purchases
- Retail units with multiple departments for racetrack in order to attract shopper to each department
- It is also known as loop layout design

Ex: Big bazaar

Stored layout

- This is a very common variant of store layout design among independent and leading retail chains in the organized sector in India.
- It arrangement provides comfort to the shoppers and also helps the retailers to manage the stock display effectively.

Visual merchandising

- It is also referred to as display, is defined as the activity of promoting the sale of goods, especially by their presentation in retail outlets.
- It includes various aspects such as store floor plan, store windows, signs, merchandise display, space design, fixtures and hardware.

Benefits of effective display

- ✓ Encourages a customer to wander about to discover novelties
- ✓ Re-affirms the store's image
- ✓ Arrange merchandise for easy access
- ✓ Introduces and explains new products
- ✓ Gives ideas on how to use it

Display concepts can be based on one or a combination of the following themes:

- ✓ Seasons
- ✓ Special occasion or holidays
- ✓ Colours
- ✓ Trends and activities
- ✓ Themes

9. Factors guiding uses of Merchandise Display Fixtures

- Product line
- Customer profile
- Level of competition

Components of display

- ✓ Wall displays
- ✓ Floor fixtures
- ✓ Display products
- ✓ Supplies and equipment
- ✓ Promotion items
- ✓ Lighting fixtures

Wall displays

- It refers to slat wall panels and fixtures, grid wall panels and displays, slotted wall standards, face-out, hang rails, and shelving.

Floor fixtures

- These are grid wall panels and accessories, garment rack, display cases and counters metal shelving, floor and club merchandisers.

10. Conclusion

The research focus is examined with the key components of retail atmospherics such as general interior and exterior variables, layout and design, point of purchase and decoration and finally human variables which are closely associated with shoppers' in the retail environment.

Creating the right environmental setting of prime importance for retailers' now a day and then it helps to analyze the effectiveness of existing atmospheric cues in the super market then the research was considering satisfaction and expectations towards atmospheric elements purchase in order to find out the intention and increases of value among the shoppers'.

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