

Investigating the Relationship between Store Environment and Impulse Purchasing Behavior by Mediating Role of Store Pleasure

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Abstract: The objective of the present study was to investigate the relationship between store environment and impulse purchasing behavior by mediating role of the store pleasure. The research method is descriptive-correlational, applied in terms of objective, and cross-sectional in terms of time. Data collection tool is a questionnaire. The final Cronbach's alpha of questionnaire was calculated to be 0.891. The questionnaire of this study has good reliability. The statistical population of this research included all customers of Refah Chain Store in Kerman city and 383 questionnaires were received. According to the results of research, there is no significant relationship between store environment and impulse purchasing intention. There is a significant relationship between store environment and store pleasure. There is a significant relationship between store pleasure and impulse purchasing intention and there is a significant relationship between store environment and impulse purchasing intention with mediating role of store pleasure.

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1. Introduction

In today's business environment, the customer is an active and influential member of all business activities, because if the goods and services meet customer expectations, he will feel satisfied and the customer will continue to purchase and introduce the service and product to others, which it will essential role in growth and survival of the company (Gilbert & Veloutsou, 2006). Undoubtedly, customers who use their purchasing place as their credit confirm this issue, which requires a considerable amount of time and resources from the desired stores. In today's world, customers prefer to choose a place to purchase so that they can enjoy the time spent for purchasing and paying money, even if they do not find the product at the end. It means that the purchasing space is important as much as the goods, services, appearance and design of the product. The service environment plays an important role in providing services because the environment can develop pleasant emotional responses to customers, while enhancing the human memory and perceptions (Lin and Liang, 2011: 32). According to Cutler (1973) study, the purchasing or service environment is part of the product package (Countryman and Jang, 2006: 534). Environmental psychologists believe that the vital role of the physical environment relies on its ability to facilitate or prevent people from achieving their goals in purchasing environment (Grewal et al., 2003: 133).

The store environment can play a role in impulse purchasing. Impulse purchasing is a common phenomenon in the world (Yi, Sunghwan, Baumgartner, Hans, 2011: 458). Based on Muartar Kent, CEO of Coca-Cola Company, nearly 70 percent of the company's sales are due to impulse purchasing by customers, (Karmali, 2007: 18). Similarly, a Canadian chain store found that if every customer purchases a single item of goods in impulse manner, the store profit would increase by 40% (Babin and Attaway, 2000: 99). Therefore, the impulse purchases are significant part of the performed purchases (Feyz and Salahshoor, 2010: 134). Impulse purchasing in today's competitive world is one of the good strategies for increasing corporate profits, especially in retailers and e-businesses (Zhou and Wong, 2003). All stores and purchasing centers all over the world try to impress the purchasers and encourage them to purchasing goods (Heydar Zadeh and Taher Kia, 2010). These factors include individual factors such as impulse purchasing tendency (Weun et al., 1998). The level of optimal motivation of product class variables such as involvement (Jones et al., 2003), situational factors such as time and money available (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998), in-store advertisements (Zhou and Wong, 2003), in store signs (Pack and Chelsea, 2006), showcase (Ghani & Kamal, 2010: 155) and type of food eaten (Mishra et al., 2012: 795). On the other hand, a store obtains high score in terms of pleasure from the customers' perspective stimulates the

customers, in which consumers would have positive evaluations of the company (Guenzy et al., 2009: 291). A store obtains high score in terms of pleasure from the customers' perspective stimulates the customers (Ashley et al., 2010: 249). The stimulation caused by music and the aroma in the store enhances the purchasing pleasure, which ultimately affects purchasing behavior and purchasing satisfaction (Morrison et al., 2011: 558). In store marketing has a great impact on consumer visibility (Chandon et al., 2009: 17). Purchasers react psychologically and behaviorally to music. Music is one of the most important factors that its impact on emotional states is investigated in studies.

Music is an important peripheral and environmental factor. Music creates special behaviors from customers. Good music creates positive emotions in customers (Garlin and Owen, 2006: 755). Proper lighting in the store also guides the customers towards the goods and creates a positive emotion in them, so music and light both leave positive emotions of in people. If the stores have appropriate layout of the goods and install guiding signs at the store, shoppers would easily find their products. In this case, a positive emotion and experience will be created in customers. The layout of store is very important because it guides customers in choosing the products (Aghazadeh 2005: 31). Good layout makes purchasing more enjoyable and reduces the stress in purchasing (Baker et al., 2002). The pleasure of purchasing will increase the impulse purchases (Sharma et al., 2011). Sales staff can make purchasing fun for customers. Sellers' responses have a great impact on customer responses. Intelligent behavior of sellers, such as smiling or availability, creates positive emotions in customers (Mattia & Anz, 2002). Sales staffs are considered more dynamic power than past in the world of business, and their efforts have a direct impact on the various activities of organizations (Khan Khodaei et al., 2012: 128). With regard to topic of research, some studies have been carried out independently, but no research on topic of research has been conducted. For example, Sherman et al. (1997) examined the effect of the layout of store, decorators, and sales employees on unplanned customer purchases, but they did not examine the effect of these factors on impulse purchases, while impulse purchasing is different from unplanned purchasing. Betty and Freel (1998) offered a model for impulse purchasing that included individual characteristics (tendency to impulse purchasing, tendency to purchasing pleasure), but they did not investigate the factors associated with the store. Danavan (1993) showed that store space affects purchasing pleasure and time and money spent on purchasing. Spice et al. (1997) found that the proper layout of the store would reduce the search for

information. In fact, proper layout makes it easier for customers to find the goods they need. Grossbart et al. (1975) showed that external characteristics of the purchasing environment have a direct effect on the behavior of retail customers. Other researchers also examined the relationship between store environment assessment as a whole and purchasing behavior, which emphasized direct and significant relationships between the two variables (Yuksel, 2007: 58). Haydar Zadeh and Javanbakht (2015) examined the effect of purchasing environment perceptions on consumer emotions, perceived value, and behavioral tendencies of tourists. They showed that there was no significant relationship between the environmental perceptions of tourists and the behavioral tendencies, but the positive and significant effects of purchasing environment perceptions on pleasure and stimulation was confirmed. Grossbart et al. (1975) published an article entitled importance of the purchasing environment and purchasing behavior and results showed that external characteristics of the purchasing environment had a direct impact on the behavior of retail customers. Yuksel (2007) conducted an article entitled "The effect of emotions, purchasing value and customer purchasing behavior," and results showed relationship between store environment assessment as a whole and purchasing behavior, which confirmed direct and significant relationships between the two variables.

2. Store environment

The store environment includes a variety of stimuli including color, sound, aroma, layout and space, which are important guide for purchasers (Jungmi et al., 2008: 249).

Creating store space is a competitive strategy used by retailers to influence consumer behavior that in turn leads into increased sale. The store physical environment affects consumer perceptions, and this is done by sensory, visual, auditory, olfactory, and even tactile mechanisms. The environment is especially important for retailers. The most important task of retailers is to control the physical environment in order to influence the behaviors, attitudes and beliefs of consumers in a desirable manner (Moun and Minor, 2009).

Baker (1986) expanded the typology classification of store space elements into three groups, including environmental factors, design factors, social factors. Environmental factors are non-visual, such as background conditions of store, including the elements of music / sound, lighting, aroma, and color. Store design factors are categorized into functional (store layout, showcase, comfort and privacy) and beauty (architecture, color of materials, and style) elements.

Using these elements, they give identify for store and encourage customers for purchasing activities. The social factors describe the people who are in the store environment, including the number, type, and behavior of sellers and customers (Jungmi et al., 2008).

The stores are designed in a way to facilitate consumer movements, help display of goods, and help create a special atmosphere. The overall goal is to maximize profits by increasing sales through the cost-benefit plan of the store (Monoun and Mino, 2010). The design and layout of shelves and showcases can have a direct effect on increasing the level of customer purchasing, that is, by inducing and encouraging the customer, his motivation to purchasing can be increased (Khoyeh, 2010). The appearance and environment of the store is very effective in attracting the customer, facilitating the customer's impulse purchasing process with the correct layout of the goods. In stores providing a comfortable environment for their customers so that customers can spend more time in the store environment and see different items, the percentage of sales due to impulse purchasing would be high. Today, private hypermarkets are very important to customers in purchasing and by using different solutions such as establishing a childcare environment and their playgrounds and playing music in stores, and trained sellers, they try to keep the customer in store in store so that the customer spends more time in the store. Appearance, cleanliness, and beauty of the environment are very effective in attracting the customer. All of us prefer to purchase from a store that is stylish, has polite staff, and comfortable environment, and we recommend this store to our friends and relatives (Kaviani Nia, 2011).

Insist on impulse purchasing

Impulse purchasing takes place after insisting on impulse purchasing (Sultan et al., 2012: 72). Insisting on impulse purchasing of a product in a store is created in the customer's mind (Dholakia, 2000: 955). Insisting on an impulse purchasing is a spontaneous and sudden process taking place before an impulse purchasing. As customers spend much time in hallways of the store and see different products, they insist on impulse purchasing would increase (Betty and Freel, 1998). Impulse purchasing is a sudden and stable insistence on purchasing a product immediately. In fact, impulse purchasing is more influenced by emotional factors rather than logical factors, so impulse purchasing takes place after an insistence on a sudden purchasing and has an immediate aspect.

Store environment and insist on impulse purchasing

Music is an important non-verbal instrument commonly used to improve stores space. Music makes customers stay longer in the store and spend much

time in store. Music and lighting are one of the most important factors creating the state of insistence on impulse purchasing by customers (Uroglu & Machlite, 1993).

Proper layout can also help create a state of impulse purchasing in customers (Aghazadeh, 2005). Proper arrangement can even create a state of insistence on an impulse purchasing of economic customers. Sellers can also guide customers to search the store and find products, and thus create a state of insistence on impulse purchasing. Store search means roaming in the store for entertainment or having no intention for purchasing.

Tendency to purchasing pleasure and positive emotions

In addition to meeting the customer's functional requirements, purchasing can be enjoyable for them (Tireft & Hershtin, 2012). The tendency to purchasing pleasure is the pleasure obtained in the purchasing process (Betty and Freel, 1998). In impulse purchasing, emotions of entertainment and pleasure are more expressed and people enjoy this act. The purchasing pleasure is the emotion of pleasure felt by person during the purchasing process (Feiz and Salahshoor, 2010: 200).

Research hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between store environment and impulse purchasing intention.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between store environment and store pleasure.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between store pleasure and impulse purchasing intention.

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant relationship between store environment and purchasing pleasure intention with mediating role of purchasing pleasure.

3. Methodology

The research method is descriptive-correlational and it is cross-sectional research in terms of objective and cross-sectional in terms of time. Data were collected using library and field studies, which questionnaire was used for field studies. Accordingly, 9 questions were used to measure the store environment, 5 questions were used for measure the store pleasure, and 9 questions were used to measure impulse purchasing. The mentioned questionnaires are evaluated based on the 5-option Likert scale. By initial distribution of 30 questionnaires, reliability of the questionnaire was obtained to be 0.821, and the final Cronbach's alpha was calculated to be 0.891. Considering the value of 0.7 to confirm the questionnaire reliability, this research questionnaire has a good reliability. The population of this research includes all Refah Chain Store customers in Kerman.

Given the high size of population and the lack of access to all customers, 384 people were obtained using the Cochran formula with 5% error, and 400 questionnaires were distributed to reduce the error rate and 383 questionnaires were received. In this research, face validity and construct validity were used for assessing the validity of the questionnaire. In examining the face validity, the questionnaire was first provided to 30 relevant experts including supervisors, advisors, and professors in management and statistical researcher-specialist and their views were obtained. After minor reforms, the questionnaire was confirmed. Using a confirmatory factor analysis, structural validity was examined.

4. Research findings

Descriptive statistic

After analyzing the data, it was found that 207 (54%) of the respondents are male and 176 (46%) of them are female.

In addition, 95 people (24.8) were in the age group of 25 years and below, 85 people (22.2) were between the ages of 26 and 35 years, 115 people (30.0) were between the ages of 36 and 45, and 88 people (23.0) were in the age group of 46 years and older.

Moreover, 141 people (36.8) had high school level of education and lower, 62 people (16.2%) had associate degree, 100 people (26.1%) had bachelor degree, and 80 people had master or higher level of education.

Table 1)- Descriptive Statistics

Table 1- descriptive statistics

		%		%
Gender	male	54.0		24.8
	female	46.0		22.2
18-25 years		36.8	26-35 years	30.0
		16.2	36-45 years	23.0
	Associate	26.1		
	Bachelor	20.9		
High school and lower	Master and higher			

Confirmatory factor analysis

The research measurement model in the mode of estimating the standard coefficients and in the mode of significance of standard coefficients is shown in Figures (1) and (2). In the figure related to estimating the standard coefficients, questions of the factor loads are shown, and in the figure related to significance of

standard coefficients, the significance of the factor loads is shown. As shown in Figure 1, the factor loads of all questions are greater than 0.5, and as shown in Figure 2, the significance coefficients of the questions are out of the range of 1/96 to -1/96, so the model is acceptable.

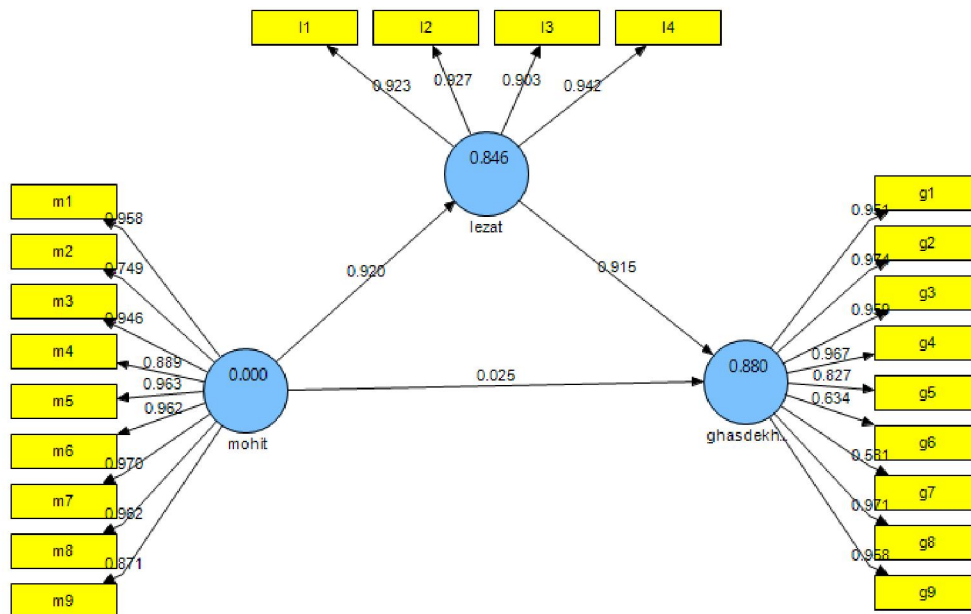


Figure (1)-The model of measurement in the mode of estimating the standard coefficients

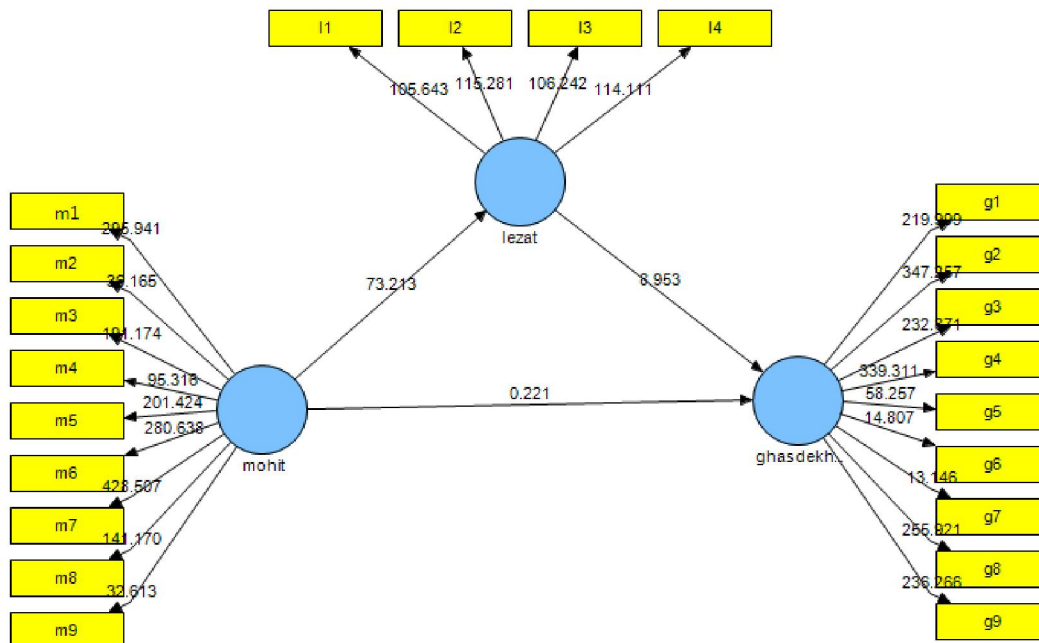


Figure (2)- Measurement model in the state of significance of standard coefficients

Structural model analysis

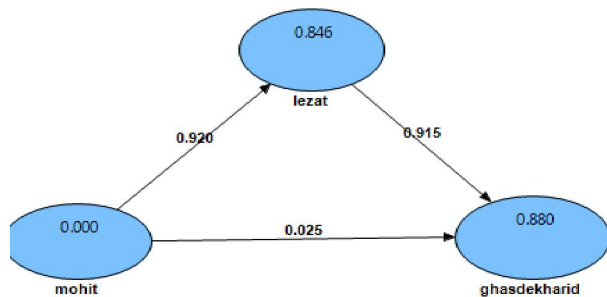


Figure (3)- research structural model in the mode of standard coefficients

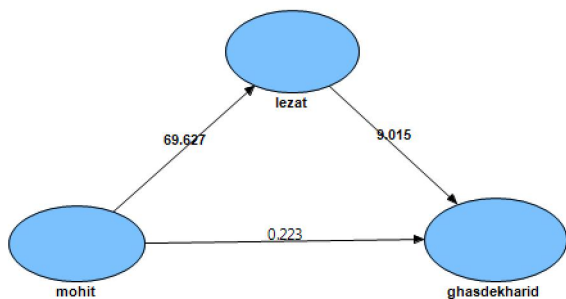


Figure 4- Structural model of research in the mode of significance of standard coefficients

In investigating the structural model, the relationships between variables are examined using pls software, and the hypotheses of the research are tested. The structural model of the research in the mode of standard coefficients is shown in Figure3 and the structural model of the research in the mode of significance of standard coefficients is shown in Figure 4.

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