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IMPACT OF STORE ATMOSPHERE ON IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOR OF UZBEK CONSUMERS

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- Impulse buying accounts for a sizeable percentage of all purchases according to recent industry research. And **primary objective in retailing is to increase impulse temptation of consumers to enhance sales** ^[6,7]. Canadian grocery chain observed that its **profitability would increase by more than 40% if each customer purchased an additional item on impulse** ^[8].
- Many researchers until now investigated impulse buying and its antecedents including individuals' impulse buying tendency ^[1], impulse buying traits ^[9], consumer impulsiveness scale ^[6], product involvement ^[10], situational factors such as time and money availability ^[1], in-store advertisements ^[11], in-store signage ^[12], in-store slack ^[13], display ^[14], and type of food consumed ^[15]. **Majority of these studies were conducted in North America, Europe and Asia. There is still little or no research on Central Asian consumers who have unique peculiarities, characteristics, culture and buying habits formed living both in centrally planned and free market economies.**

Impulse buying is a sudden, compelling, hedonically complex purchase behavior in which the speed of the impulse purchase decision precludes any thoughtful, deliberate consideration of alternatives or future implications [16, 17, 18]. **Impulse buying is more emotional than rational, which is why it is why it is normally used by states of intense feeling.**

The purchase is unintended because it is made while shopping, although the individual was not actively looking for that item, had no pre-shopping plans to buy the item, and was not involved with a shopping task, such as searching for a gift [19].

Unplanned ≠ Impulse

Unplanned purchases may happen when customer has a need for the product but did not include it to shopping list. Second, unplanned purchases do not necessarily accompany by strong positive feelings and urge [21].

Impulse buying in its turn can be categorized using three criteria. First, it is **spontaneous and followed by improved mood and gratification**. Second, **urge during an impulse buy is extremely powerful and difficult to resist** [9, 17, 22, 23]. Third, the individual making an impulse buy shows a **diminished regard for any costs or consequences** [23].

Impulse Buying

Personal

Education

Impulse Buying
Trait

Feelings

Demographics

Self-identity

Product

Design

Discount

Packing

Price

Easy of storage

Advertisement

Situational

Store Atmosphere

Smell

Sound

Signage

Culture

Available Time

Available Money

Social Influence

- All factors which are **associated with person who is shopping, his feelings, educational experience and mood states are grouped to this category.**
- Behavior of men and women are different in terms of shopping preferences on many levels ^[27]. Some researchers claim that women are more active in impulse purchasing than their male counterparts ^[28, 29], but opposite site of researchers ^[30] debated male customers buy more impulsively than female customers. Behavior of women is impacted by advertising, displays, atmosphere, promotions and approach of the personnel ^[31, 32]. In contrast, Akram et al. (2016) state that men pay attention products what they need and try to finish shopping fast with slight level of commitment, hence, women make more impulse purchases than men ^[33].

H1. There is impact of gender on impulse buying behavior of customers.

- Store accessibility, sales staff, time available for shopping, interior design of shopping area, arrangement of equipment and merchandise within the store, display of merchandise, point of sale promotional materials are main factors in third group.
- **Store environment** consist of ambient factors and is defined as “**the effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhance his purchase probability**” [4]. Store atmosphere is captured by sense, thus features of store environment are defined by sensory terms, and main elements of them are sight, sound, scent and touch. **Elements of store atmosphere are: color, size, shape, temperature in store, layout, signs, symbol [37], assortment, availability and effectiveness of salesperson [38], cleanliness of store, merchandise’s display [39].**

- According to many marketing researchers, retailers should maximize their effort to visual factors in store to attract and impact on shopping behavior of customers to make purchase. **Vision sense of customers is the most influential factor, because 83% of information is received by seeing to the brain** [40].
- Signage is especially powerful stimulation tool for discounted prices. combination of signage and discounted prices in coffee experiment increased sales up to 3.5 times. This is due to significant relationship between promotional signage and impulse buying behavior [43]. When customer sees the discounted price tag, he or she tries to buy it to capture a chance of saving money although it is unplanned and unneeded product.

H2. There is impact of signage on impulse buying behavior of customers.

- Sound is one of the main sensitive factors that enhance the product delivery to customer. **Music is a major, frequent and common factor that instinctively encourages mood and creates positive impression on impulse buying behavior** [33]. Experiment with music showed that when **slow music played, sales increased by 38 % compared with fast music** [44]. When shopper listen pleasant background music, they **spend more time** than usual, and consequently buy more products than planned.

H3. There is impact of background music on impulse buying behavior of customers.

- Scent in store might be of two types: **smell of the certain product and smell of the environment** ^[46]. In food, beverages, cosmetics and cleaning products **customer can easily evaluate quality of product by smelling it** ^[47]. Smell associations of women and men are different. For example, smell of lavender gives relaxing effect on women, but it arouses men ^[35].
- Scent influences on customer's mood and emotions, makes them stay longer in store, feel excited and purchase more products ^[48]. Customers spend more time in store if there is a good music and scent ^[49].

H4. There is impact of scent on impulse buying behavior of customers

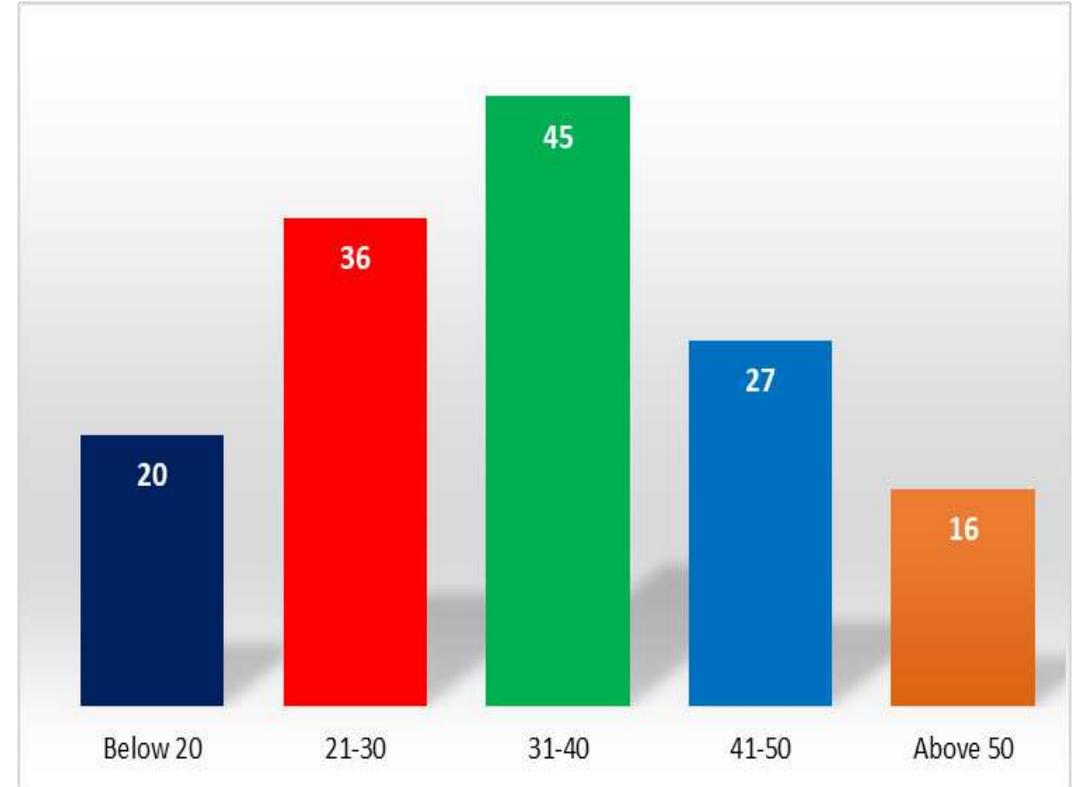
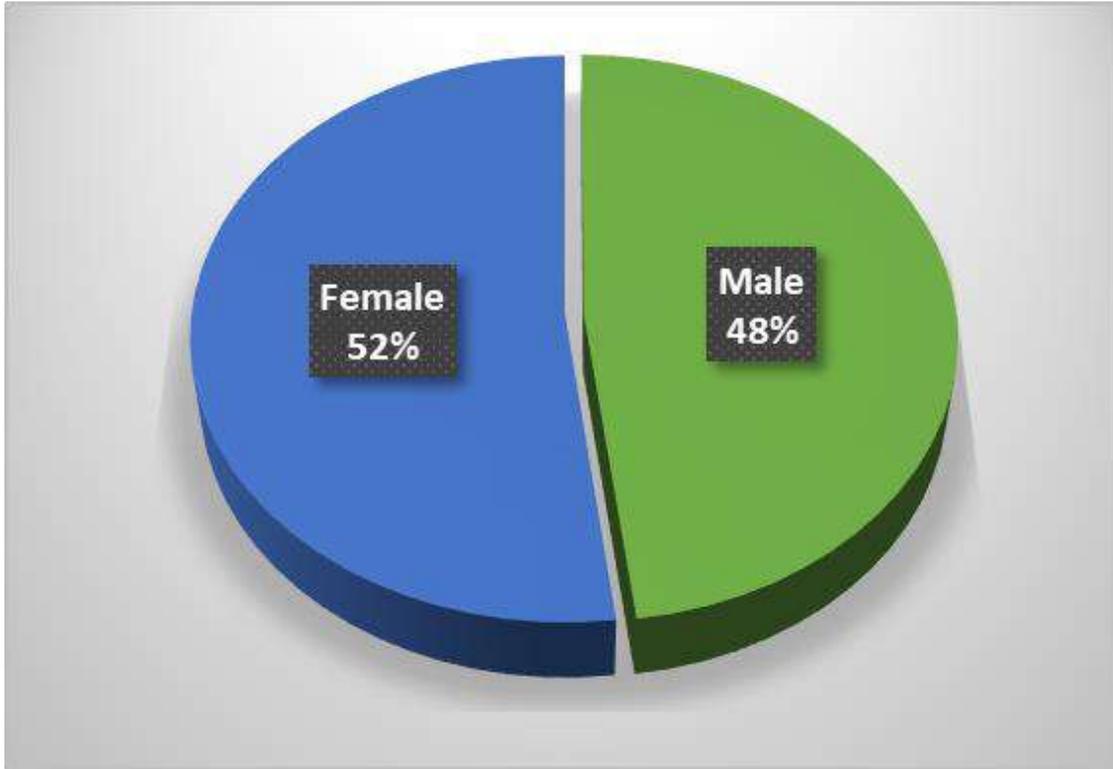
- Survey was conducted in two large Uzbek supermarket chains, namely **Makro** and **Korzinka.uz**.
- **Convenience sampling** technique was applied to select respondents, as this type of technique is reliable and easy for choosing customers randomly in shopping locations.
- Data was collected from **150 respondents** over two weeks' period.

- **Structured questionnaire** consists of 14 questions and was prepared in Uzbek, Russian languages. Questions were prepared using five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 – Strongly disagree to 5 – Strongly agree. Questionnaire consist of three parts:
- Part 1: questions on demographics, gender, age, number of visits and spending time of customer in supermarkets.
- Part 2: questions to determine how customers are exposed to impulse buying and how they behave in certain situation under influence of store atmospheres.
- Part 3: questions on independent variables of research.

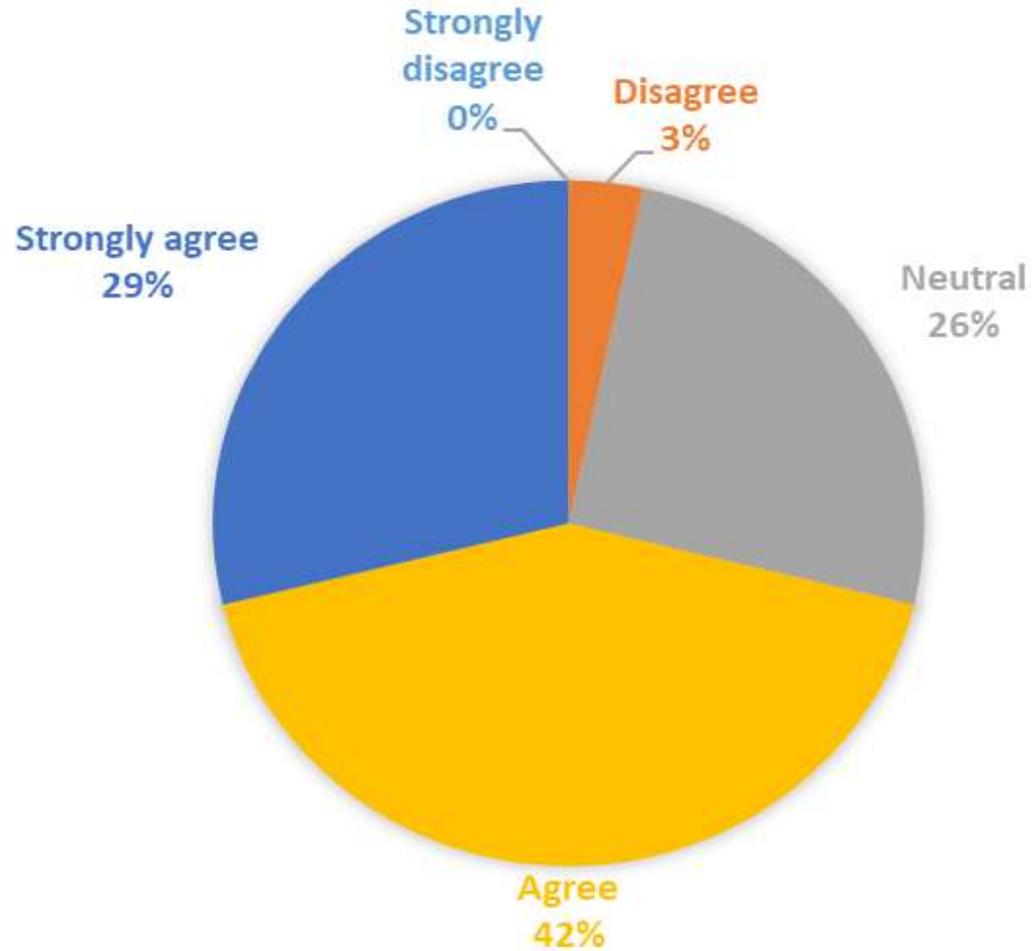
- Collected data was analyzed in STATA using **ordinal logistic regression** to determine which individual independent variable has statistically significant influence on dependent variable. Additionally, **Chi2 test** was done to determine relationship between variables of research.

$$\text{Consumer Impulse Purchase} = \beta_1 \text{gender} + \beta_2 \text{signage} + \beta_3 \text{music} + \beta_4 \text{smell} + \beta_5 \text{age} + \beta_6 \text{spending time}$$

Results – Descriptive Statistics



Results – Descriptive Statistics



71% respondents purchase more products than they initially planned.

According to Chi2 test there is **statistically significant relationship between:**

- gender and impulse buying.
- signage and impulse buying.
- background music and impulse buying.
- scent and impulse buying.

Ordered logistic regression

Ordered logistic regression

Number of obs = 150

LR chi2 = 79.57

Log likelihood=-102.17332

Prob>chi2 = 0.0000

Pseudo R2 = 0.2803

| Impulse buying | Coef. | Std.Err. | z | p> z | [95% Conf. Interval] | |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------|-------|--------------|----------------------|-----------|
| Gender | -1.522342 | .6126604 | -2.48 | 0.013 | -2.723134 | -.3215491 |
| Signage | -.1729861 | .2765152 | -0.63 | 0.603 | -.7149459 | .3689736 |
| Pleasant_music | 1.120675 | .3168953 | 3.54 | 0.000 | .4995717 | 1.741778 |
| Attractive_smell | .5527134 | .2495435 | 2.22 | 0.031 | .0641412 | 1.041286 |
| Age | .8241946 | .2495435 | 3.30 | 0.001 | .3350984 | 1.313291 |
| Spending_time | 1.196521 | .3173212 | 3.77 | 0.000 | .5745829 | 1.818459 |

- Although signage, music and smell have statistically significant association with impulse buying ($p=0.25$, $p=0.38$, $p=0.000$), but only music and smell have statistically significant impact on impulse buying ($p=0.000$, $p=0.031$).
- On contrary Ballantine et al. (2010) and Patil and Agadi (2016) stated that signage with discount price information is the best tool to attract shoppers' attention and it easily stimulate them to buy product impulsively. Scent is a determinant how consumers evaluate store environment and product quality. Therefore, in supermarkets artificial smell is used to attract consumers' attention to different products, mainly food.

Recommendations

Research results suggest retailers pay more attention to developing internal environment of supermarkets in order to influence on consumers' behavior and enhance their shopping experience. This may lead to competitive advantage and attract more consumers.

Effective usage of in-store scent, signage and music may motivate customers to buy more products impulsively.

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