

Retail Display Elements and Consumer Purchase Intentions: An Integrated TPB–SOR Perspective from India

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ABSTRACT:

Purpose: This study examined the influence of visual merchandising (VM) elements lighting, layout, display, cleanliness, and music on store atmosphere and consumer purchase intentions in organised Indian retail. The study explored the mediating role of subjective norms by integrating the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) with the Stimulus, Organism, Response (SOR) framework to provide a unified explanation of how environmental stimuli interact with social pressures to shape consumer behaviour.

Methodology: Data was collected through survey by employing a structured questionnaire to 1,050 respondents across the Central, Western, and Harbour zones of Mumbai, with 974 valid responses analysed. A stratified sampling method ensured representation across age and income groups. A 5-point Likert scale was used to assess the measurement items and the same were adapted from established scales. The data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS SEM) via SmartPLS 4.0.

Findings: Results confirmed that Visual Merchandising elements significantly influence both store atmosphere and subjective norms. Subjective norms, in turn, positively affects purchase intentions and mediate the relationship between Visual Merchandising cues and consumer behaviour. The model explains 47.9% of variance in purchase intentions and 23.4% in subjective norms, demonstrating strong explanatory power. Effect size analysis indicates that Visual Merchandising exerts both direct and indirect influence on purchase intentions, while subjective norms provide a complementary pathway.

Implications: The study contributes to theory by extending TPB and SOR frameworks to retail atmospherics, highlighting the underexplored role of subjective norms as a mediator. For

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practitioners, the findings suggested that retailers should design Visual Merchandising strategies not only to enhance product visibility and store ambience but also to align with social shopping motives, thereby strengthening consumer engagement and purchase outcomes. Originality/Value: This research addresses a critical gap in the literature by systematically testing subjective norms as a mediator between Visual Merchandising cues and purchase intentions in the context of Indian organised retail. It offers both theoretical advancement and practical insights for retailers competing in dynamic, socially influenced shopping environments.

Keywords: Visual Merchandising, Subjective Norms, Organised Retail, TPB, Store Atmospheric.

1. Introduction:

Visual merchandising (VM) has emerged as a major and critical strategic tool for retailers. It shapes consumer experiences and influence purchase behaviour. VM encompasses several elements such as lighting, layout, product displays, colour schemes, music, props, and mannequins, all of which contribute to creating a compelling store atmosphere. A well-designed store creates a good atmosphere and it not only attracts consumer attention but encourages them to spend time in the retail space thereby increasing the engagement and likelihood to purchase.

According to Basu et al. (2022), VM is a product driven display mechanism that include merchandise presentation with props and mannequins. The concept has evolved over a period of time from narrowly focussed store-wide atmospherics to a wider role in influencing consumer emotions, satisfaction and purchase intentions. In this context, Store atmosphere is the mood or feeling a consumer develops because of the retail store environment. Positive store environment can be achieved through layout, design, and sensory stimuli which together create the overall shopping experience.

Although VM and store atmospherics overlaps through its elements such as color, lighting etc. but differ in their scope and purpose. VM primarily aims to enhance product visibility and drive sales. Store atmospherics focus on shaping

the sensory and experiential dimensions in a retail space. Despite the differences they are often used interchangeably.

Empirical studies highlight the multifaceted benefits of VM. It has been shown to increase footfall, strengthen product awareness, support store image, and encourage impulse buying through attractive environmental cues. Research linking VM to impulse buying theory suggests that heightened in-store stimuli—such as displays, signage, lighting, colours and props significantly increase the likelihood of unplanned purchases, evoke emotional responses, optimise brand communication, and stimulate pleasure and arousal, ultimately leading to higher spending (Baek et al., 2015), positively influence impulse buying (Gudonaviene et al. 2015). particularly in apparel retail (Nobbs et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2015).

2. Background and Purpose

Visual merchandising has been widely researched in the past and the existing studies has focused on single country contexts, apparel retail formats, or basic atmospheric cues with limited attention to the social and psychological mechanisms particularly subjective norms as a mediator. Prior studies have examined mediators such as perceived value and affect, but the role of social influence and normative expectations remains underexplored.

In addition, the rapid growth of organised retail in India, combined with increasing competition from online channels, makes it essential to understand how VM strategies can be designed not only to enhance product visibility and store atmosphere but also to align with social shopping motives.

Building on this foundation, this research examines how visual merchandising elements influence consumer purchase intentions in organised retail stores, with subjective norms as a mediating construct. By combining the SOR - Stimulus, organism, Response framework with the TPB - Theory of Planned Behaviour, the research provides an explanation of how environmental stimuli interact with social pressures to shape consumer behaviour. This work bridges a significant gap in prior studies, delivering theoretical insights alongside managerial implications for strengthening consumer involvement and purchase decisions.

3. Review of Literature and Theoretical Background

The visual merchandising elements contributes towards creating a good store environment

which adds to the store value thereby enhances the appeal for the consumers and increasing their dwell time in the store. A customer looks for value while shopping from an outlet not only from the products they purchase from the store but also overall value because of shopping from the store as well. According to Diep, V. C. S., & Sweeney, J. C. (2008), consumers derive value from the Shopping trip not only from the purchased product but also from the store environment and experience. Store value has a stronger impact on shopping trip value. While focusing on the Visual Merchandising variables the retailers should also think about improving overall store appeal. Further to support the conceptual model several literatures were studied and the following were analysed in detail.

3.1. Cleanliness:

Consumers prefer to shop from outlets that maintain cleanliness when it comes to food and grocery retail. Cleanliness reflects quality and safety of the items consumed from the store. It improves the value perceptions of the store to the consumers. The table summarises the studies on cleanliness in retail and highlights the benefits of the same.

Table 1: Summary of Cleanliness

Aspect	Consumer Effect	Key References
Repeat Visits	A clean and consistent layout encourages consumers to return	Huddleston et al. (2004)
Store Choice	Cleanliness ranked as a top attribute alongside product selection and pricing	Carpenter & Moore (2006)
Integrated Attribute	Cleanliness should be considered part of overall store environment (appearance, comfort)	Arnold et al. (1983)
Positioning Strategy	Modern retailers highlight cleanliness and assortments to signal quality and value	Goldman (1974)
Consumer Perceptions	A tidy, appealing environment reduces stress and enhances value perceptions	Baker et al. (2002)

Source: Literature Review

3.2. Music:

Background music during shopping can increase the dwell time of the customer within the store and also increase sales. Music is a key ambient cue which shapes the affect, arousal, dwell time and shopping behaviour of the consumers

(Milliman, 1982, Milliman, 1986. Mohan G et.al. 2013) and when combined with right amount of lighting can evoke positive affect and arousal and triggers impulse buying (Eroglu & Machleit 1993, Mattila & Wirtz 2001). Similarly, the pace and intensity of the music influence how quickly

consumers walk and how long they remain in the store. Slow and low volume music increases the dwell time within the store and consumers buy more (Smith & Curnow, 1966; Milliman, 1982, Milliman 1986). Music is an ambient variable that affects the arousal, time spent and overall spending (Bitner, 1992; Yalch & Spangenberg, 1990; Bruner, 1990; Garlin & Owen, 2006). Sometimes it is also observed that background music does not necessarily improve customers' reported enjoyment, approach behaviour, perceived time, experience etc. sometimes no music can result in higher enjoyment and gender too moderates' music effects (Andersson, P. K., et al., 2012). Research shows that outcomes vary depending on factors such as in-store music versus silence, and design elements like tempo, volume, mode, familiarity, fit, popularity, and genre. These variables influence customer affect (emotions, perceived time, satisfaction) and behaviour (time spent, sales, purchase intentions, patronage) (Michel et al., 2017). Retailer need to understand the relevance of music as an in-store variable to enhance the environment and its eventual impact on the customers.

3.3 Light

In-store lighting affects consumer behaviour (James & Mehrabian, 1976). Light is a tool used not to just highlight the products and create a right store atmosphere but also used for shaping the consumer perceptions regarding store image, brand, value and shoppers' mood to buy (Lata, A., & Singh, A. R. (2020), value derived (Areni & Kim, 1994) from the store. Bright light when presented at low intensity creates a positive perception regarding the product (Vaccaro et al., 2008) and Spotted light when used for highlighting the merchandise can influence purchase intentions and store attractiveness (Somoon, K., & Sahachaisaeree, N. 2010). Well-designed lighting induces positive emotions (Smith, 1989), such as happiness, pleasure, heightens excitement but has little effect on perceived shopping experience (Lata, A., & Singh, A. R., 2020). In-store lighting motivates consumer to examine the merchandise (Sherman et al., 1997) and has positive correlation with

excitement and thereby impulse buying (Mohan et al., 2013). Thus, lighting not only just enhances store aesthetics but plays a strategic role in influencing the consumer perceptions regarding the store and thereby affects the purchase intentions.

3.4 Layout

Layout and display elements are considered as core atmospheric cues in apparel retail (Lata & Singh, 2020) and are used by retailers as part of retail branding (Huddleston et al., 2004). Well-designed layouts reduce the need for information as it becomes easy to locate the products and find information (Spies et al. 1997), improves the emotional responses (Mills et al., 1995) influences shopping time, frequency of visits to the store and satisfaction levels (Agnihotri & Oberai, 2009). Based on the SOR framework, layout (stimuli) influences the ambience (organism) and results in unplanned purchases (Response). It can affect the volume of products purchased (Sherman et al., 1997). In addition, a good layout with music, light can enhance the overall store atmosphere and it stimulates impulse buying (Mohan et al. 2013) help in easy movement within the store (Singh et al., 2014) but also minimises the efforts taken by the customer (Alawadhi & Yoon, 2016) and it increases customer satisfaction and revisit intentions (Behera & Mishra, 2017). Thus, Layout is helping in providing information to the consumers and also helps in easy movement within the store. A good layout can improve customer satisfaction and influences the purchase intentions of the consumers.

3.5 Display

Modern retail stores are distinguished by wider assortments, price-based displays, and multi-line formats, unlike traditional outlets with limited ranges (Goldman, 1974). Retailers should tailor displays to product categories (Hart & Davies, 1996), effective display principles include colour schemes, textures, placement (windows, islands, enclosed displays), and props (Pegler, 2012). Structure, scale, and contrast enhance the impact of colour, lighting, and mannequins (Nobbs et

al., 2015), while realistic mannequins and ordered props positively influence perceptions (Somoon & Sahachaisaeree, 2010). For non-branded goods, clear signage with product information and pricing supports purchase intentions (Patricia et al., 2015).

3.6 Subjective Norms:

Subjective norms represent the normative experience to engage or refrain from a particular behaviour. They consist of **social norms** (what individuals are expected to do) and **descriptive norms** (what individuals actually do) (Ham, 2014). Ajzen (1991) states that subjective norms often contribute less strongly to behavioural intentions as compared to attitude and perceived behavioural control, suggesting that personal factors may outweigh social pressure in shaping consumer purchase decisions. Nevertheless, shopping in social contexts particularly with friends generates the highest hedonic value and positive effects on consumer experience (Borges et al., 2010).

Gender differences in shopping motivations further illustrate the role of subjective norms. Khare (2011) found no significant differences in terms of aesthetics, flow, exploration, and convenience. However, he observed, distinctions emerged in role enactment and social motives wherein women's shopping behaviour reflects responsibility toward family needs, whereas men often perceive mall shopping as a social leisure activity.

4. Store Environment

A themed store environment improves appeal, differentiation and customer attitudes thereby fostering loyalty and enjoyment (Foster & McLelland, 2015). Well-designed store atmospherics along with in-store promotions stimulate browsing and enhances appeal that consumers prefer to spend more time in-store, generating positive word-of-mouth and deeper engagement (Peng & Zhou, 2021) creates positive moods, increase dwell time, encourage unplanned purchases (Wright et al., 2006) thereby influencing Customer satisfaction and purchase intentions as well as positive word-of-

mouth promotions (Elmashhara & Soares, 2022). However, the context varies according to the city while Tier I shoppers value sophisticated atmospherics, while Tier II consumers prioritise convenience, discounts, and merchandise variety. For Tier II markets, retailers should emphasise basic atmospherics and supportive staff to build patronage (Tripathi et al., 2010).

The Synthesis of prior research highlights that VM and store atmospherics are not just operational elements but strategic tools that can be used by the retailers to shape consumer emotions, perceptions as well as social behaviours. It also indicates that retailers should move from functional design to context sensitive strategies which would bring together the physical stimuli and social influences. By placing Subjective norms as a mediating construct, this study advances the theoretical understanding about how environmental elements interact with societal norms to drive purchase intentions. It also highlights that retailers should balance between aesthetics and social relevance and adopt different approaches for Tier I and Tier II markets. This dual focus on Sensory engagement and normative alignment provides way forward for the Indian retailers to strengthen consumer loyalty, enhance experiential values and remain competitive in an evolving marketplace.

5. Research Gap:

A comprehensive review of the literature reveals a clear transition in the role of Visual Merchandising (VM) from being considered as a functional sales tool to an emotional and experiential driver of consumer behaviour (Baek et al., 2015; Gudonavičienė et al., 2015). However, most studies remain apparel-centric, single-country, and overlook contextual differences such as Tier I shoppers valuing sophisticated atmospherics versus Tier II consumers prioritising convenience and discounts. While in the past studies have explored mediators like perceived value and affect in detail but subjective norms is not explored in detail (Elmashhara & Soares, 2022). Although Ajzen (1991) suggested the weak

role of subjective norms as compared to perceived behavioural control and attitude, empirical evidence confirms that normative expectations can significantly influence purchase intentions in social shopping contexts (Ajzen & Madden, 1986; Pookulangara & Natesan, 2010; Borges et al., 2010). This gap justifies the present study, which integrates TPB and SOR frameworks to examine how VM cues shape purchase intentions through the mediating role of subjective norms in Indian organised retail. Integrating subjective norms into the SOR framework as an organism variable offers a novel pathway to explain how social pressures interact with environmental stimuli to drive consumer behaviour.

SOR studies use cues as stimuli, affect as organism and approach/avoidance as response but not much studies have integrated subjective norms as an organism. Thus, there exists a gap which has necessitated this study. This study examines the influence of visual merchandising elements on consumer purchase intentions in organised retail, with subjective norms serving as a mediating factor.

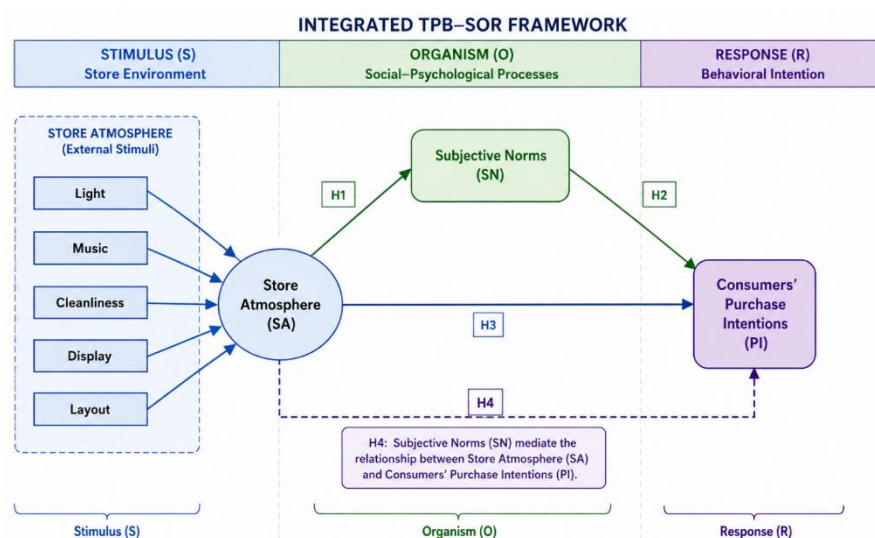
6 Conceptual model and hypothesis development

6.1 Conceptual Model

The Stimulus, Organism, Response (SOR) model has been used in retail to design store environments that increases customers time in the store and positively influence their purchase intentions. In parallel, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) suggests that behavioural intention of an individual is a key determinant of actual behaviour. According to the theory the intention is shaped by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) has been used lately in understanding consumer behaviour towards organic products and few other categories in retail. Since, these studies also indicated that social norms and acceptance of the behaviour influenced the consumers' purchase intention in the context of organic products and other categories of retail it was of interest to include subjective norms in the study. Also, it would enable us to understand the reasons behind the social acceptance of a particular behaviour during the shopping trip. Thus, the construct subjective norms have been extracted and is grounded in SOR theory and the same is applied in this context. Thus, the research proposes that Visual Merchandising (VM) influences purchase intentions (PI) and subjective norms (SN) mediate the relationship between the two.

Fig 1: Conceptual Model



Source: Authors own work, Designed using Chatgpt

A well-designed retail environment not only enhances hedonic value but also reinforces perceptions of social acceptance, thereby encouraging consumers to spend time and make purchases.

Building on the reviewed literature, subjective norms emerge as an important determinant of consumer behaviour. While their direct effect on purchase intentions is often weaker compared to attitudes and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991), studies consistently highlight that social approval and normative expectations can still shape consumer decision-making (Ajzen & Madden, 1986; Pookulangara & Natesan, 2010). Moreover, shopping in social contexts, particularly with peers, enhances hedonic value and strengthens the influence of subjective norms (Borges et al., 2010).

Visual merchandising cues create a favourable store atmosphere that interacts with these normative pressures. When consumers perceive that their shopping behaviour aligns with social expectations, the persuasive effect of store design is amplified, thereby reinforcing purchase intentions.

The following are the hypothesis proposed after completing a detailed literature review:

H1: Store Atmosphere positively influence subjective norms.

H2: Subjective norms positively influence consumers' purchase intentions.

H3: Store atmosphere positively influences consumer purchase intentions

H4: Subjective norms mediate the relationship between Store atmosphere and consumers' purchase intentions.

7. Methodology

7.1 Sample

A structured questionnaire was administered to consumers across Mumbai's Central, Western, and Harbour zones to ensure representation of varied age and income groups. To achieve equal coverage across the three strata, 1,050 questionnaires were distributed, and respondents were selected using stratified sampling. After data cleaning, 974 valid responses were retained for analysis. Consumers from supermarkets and hypermarkets were considered.

The instrument gathered demographic information and assessed perceptions of cleanliness, lighting, music, layout, display features, subjective norms, and purchase intentions. All items were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale. The scale items were adapted from previously validated studies (Behera et al., 2021; Panneerselvam & Halpeth, 2020; Mishra et al., 2014) and refined to suit the context of study.

Data analysis was done using Smart PLS 4.0. The measurement model's reliability and validity were tested, and latent scores were employed to construct second-order constructs. The structural model was evaluated to test the hypothesised relationships.

8. Data analysis

The data collected through the survey was analysed using PLS SEM software. The conceptual model considered visual merchandising elements Light, display, music, cleanliness and layout together represent store atmosphere, subjective norms and purchase intentions as key constructs. The study also analysed the impact of visual merchandising elements in creating a positive store atmosphere and its influence on the consumer purchase intentions. Further, it also assessed the role of subjective norms as a mediator between store atmosphere and purchase intentions and its impact. Based on the study the following are the findings:

Table 2: Demographic data

Type		Details	N	%
Gender	1	Male	564	57.9%
	2	Female	408	41.9%
	3	prefer not to say	2	0.2%
Age	1	<21 years	82	8.4%
	2	21 yrs -30yrs	233	23.9%
	3	31 yrs - 40 yrs	235	24.1%
	4	41 yrs - 50 yrs	189	19.4%
	5	51 yrs - 60 yrs	122	12.5%
	6	> 60 yrs	113	11.6%

Source: Data Set from Survey

The sample represented almost equal representation of gender with 57.9 % Males and 41.9% Female responding to the survey. Among the respondents surveyed it was found that among the different age groups considered respondents who shopped from super markets were between 21 to 50 years of age group. The

respondents were from different educational background and the respondent represented the higher as well as lower income groups. The family monthly income of the respondent is depicted here:

Table 3: Income of the respondents

Income Range (₹)	Percentage of Respondents
Less than 10,000	5.00%
10,001 – 20,000	5.20%
20,001 – 30,000	14.00%
30,001 – 40,000	12.80%
40,001 – 50,000	13.80%
50,001 – 60,000	16.50%
60,001 – 70,000	10.30%
70,001 – 80,000	6.50%
80,001 – 90,000	4.80%
90,001 – 1,00,000	2.70%
Above 1,00,000	8.40%

Source: Survey data

The data was analysed using Smart PLS 4.0, applying Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to evaluate the hypothesised relationships. The structural model was assessed through path coefficients, R^2 values, f^2 effect sizes, and Q^2 predictive relevance. The measurement model was

evaluated using composite reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity to ensure the robustness of the constructs. Results confirmed that all Variance Inflation Factor values (VIF) were below 3, indicating that there is no collinearity issues and confirming the suitability of the data for further analysis.

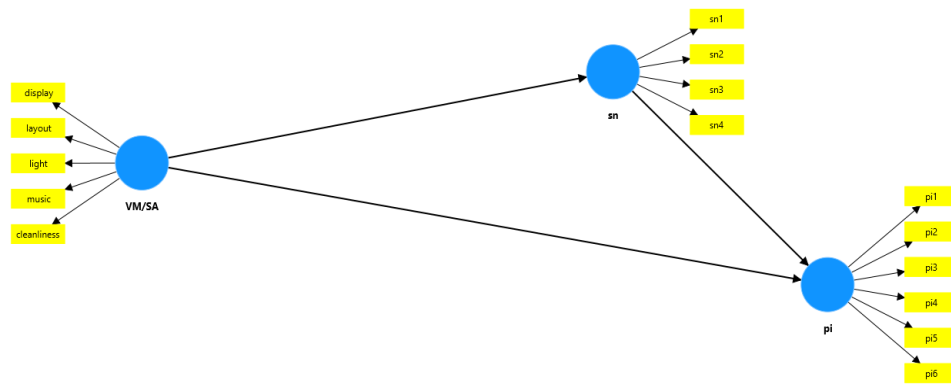


Fig 2: SEM Model

8.1 Construct Reliability and Validity

Table 4: Reliability Testing

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)
Cleanliness (CL)	0.829	0.66	0.833	0.886
Display (DIS)	0.825	0.533	0.827	0.873
Layout (LAY)	0.787	0.543	0.791	0.855
Lighting (LIG)	0.774	0.525	0.774	0.847
Music (MUS)	0.758	0.576	0.763	0.844
Purchase Intentions (PI)	0.843	0.561	0.844	0.885
Store Atmosphere (SA)	0.891	0.297	0.906	0.904
Subjective Norms (SN)	0.783	0.606	0.796	0.86

Source: Data from Survey

Table 5: Summary of tests

Aspect	Method / Indicator	Findings
Software Used	SmartPLS 4.0	Applied for PLS-SEM analysis
Analysis Technique	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM)	Used to test hypotheses and model validity
Structural Model Assessment	Path coefficients, R ² , f ² , Q ²	Confirmed explanatory power and predictive relevance
Measurement Model Assessment	Composite reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity	All constructs met recommended thresholds
Collinearity Check	Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)	All VIF values < 3, indicating no collinearity issues
Overall Suitability	Reliability and validity confirmed	Data suitable for further analysis

8.3 Factor Loadings

Table: 6 Path Coefficients

Construct	Item Code	Loading
Cleanliness	CL1	0.797
	CL2	0.837
	CL3	0.816
	CL4	0.8
Display	DIS1	0.768
	DIS2	0.75
	DIS3	0.726
	DIS4	0.704
	DIS5	0.738
Layout	LAY1	0.751
	LAY2	0.779
	LAY3	0.747
	LAY4	0.776
Lighting	LIG1	0.724
	LIG2	0.711
	LIG3	0.722
	LIG4	0.717
	LIG5	0.748
Music	MUS1	0.802
	MUS2	0.769
	MUS3	0.756
	MUS4	0.706
Purchase Intentions	PI2	0.797
	PI3	0.763
	PI4	0.753
	PI5	0.758
	PI6	0.745
Subjective Norms	SN1	0.802
	SN2	0.82
	SN3	0.796

Source: Data from Survey

8.4 Fornell-Larcker criterion

Table: 7 Fornell Larcker Criterion

	CL	DIS	LAY	LIG	MUS	PI	SA	SN
CL	0.813							
DIS	0.35	0.73						
LAY	0.395	0.683	0.737					
LIG	0.45	0.482	0.559	0.725				
MUS	0.234	0.138	0.142	0.287	0.759			
PI	0.339	0.644	0.549	0.419	0.109	0.749		
SA	0.626	0.856	0.857	0.768	0.309	0.642	0.545	

SN	0.282	0.601	0.506	0.391	0.129	0.657	0.592	0.779
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Source: Data from Survey

From the above table, it is evident that the values of square root of AVE are higher across

both the rows and columns thereby indicating the discriminant validity of the constructs.

8.5 Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) – Matrix

Table: 8 HTMT Matrix

	CL	DIS	LAY	LIG	MUS	PI
CL						
DIS	0.414					
LAY	0.493	0.848				
LIG	0.553	0.599	0.714			
MUS	0.288	0.164	0.17	0.374		
PI	0.403	0.772	0.673	0.518	0.136	
SA	0.772	0.921	0.966	0.946	0.557	0.699
SN	0.342	0.74	0.639	0.495	0.157	0.8

Source: Data from Survey

The table 5 indicates that the HTMT ratios of the constructs are lesser than 0.85 which indicates that they are measuring different concepts and

thus the discriminant validity of the constructs is confirmed.

8.6 Path coefficients

Table: 9 Path Coefficients

	β (Beta coefficient)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
SA -> PI	0.597	14.453	0.000
SA -> SN	0.484	11.414	0.000
SN -> PI	0.401	6.565	0.000

Source: Data from Survey

Table: 10 Interpretation of Path Coefficients

Path	β (Beta coefficient)	T-value	P-value	Interpretation
SA → Purchase Intentions	0.597	14.453	< 0.001	Visual merchandising has a strong and positive effect on purchase intentions, indicating that well-designed retail environments directly enhance consumers' intention to purchase.
SA → Subjective Norms	0.484	11.414	< 0.001	Visual merchandising significantly influences subjective norms, suggesting that store-related cues shape consumers' perceptions of social approval and normative expectations.
Subjective Norms → Purchase Intentions	0.401	6.565	< 0.001	Subjective norms significantly and positively affect purchase intentions, highlighting the role of social influence in strengthening consumers' buying intentions.

Source: Data from Survey

From the above table it is evident that positive store atmosphere can directly influence the consumer intention to purchase. Visual Merchandising also influence the subjective norms thereby it shapes consumers' perceptions regarding how they think others expect them to behave. Consumers often believe that their

family, friends and peers would support or approve purchasing from that store. Thus, store related cues would influence the social acceptance and personal choices and consumers tend to feel that shopping from the store is socially endorsed.

8.7 R² Values**Table:11 R² Values**

	β (Beta coefficient)	T statistics	P values
PI	0.479	12.077	0.000
SN	0.234	5.628	0.000

Source: Data from Survey

Table:12 Interpretation of R² Values

Construct	Effect Size (β)	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Purchase Intentions (PI)	0.479	12.077	< 0.001	Strong, statistically significant predictor; model robust in explaining behavioural intentions.
Subjective Norms (SN)	0.234	5.628	< 0.001	Moderate, statistically significant effect; social influence contributes meaningfully to consumer behaviour.

Source: Data from Survey

The results demonstrate that the constructs Purchase intentions as well as subjective norms enhance the explanatory strength of the model, with purchase intentions exerting a more

pronounced influence than subjective norms. From the results, it is evident that the purchase intentions (PI) and Subjective Norms (SN) also exhibit statistically significant results.

8.8 F² Values**Table: 13 F² Value**

	Beta coefficient (β)	T statistics	P values
SA -> PI	0.239	3.378	0.001
SA -> SN	0.305	4.121	0.000
SN-> PI	0.237	2.737	0.006

Source: Data from Survey

Table: 14 Interpretation of F² Values

Path	β (Beta coefficient)	Sample Mean (M)	STDEV	t-value	p-value	Effect Size (f ²)	Interpretation
SA → PI	0.239	0.249	0.071	3.378	0.001	0.239	Store Atmosphere has a small to moderate, significant effect on

							Purchase Intentions, confirming the role of retail cues in shaping consumer behaviour.
SA → SN	0.305	0.323	0.074	4.121	0	0.305	Store Atmosphere exerts a moderate, significant effect on Subjective Norms, showing that environmental stimuli influence social perceptions and normative expectations.
SN → PI	0.237	0.246	0.087	2.737	0.006	0.237	Subjective Norms have a small yet significant effect on Purchase Intentions, indicating that social approval contributes meaningfully, though less strongly than atmospherics.

Source: Data from Survey

Overall, the F^2 results suggest that Store Atmosphere serve as a key explanatory construct in the model, exerting both direct and indirect influence on purchase intentions, while

subjective norms provide an additional but complementary contribution to explaining consumer behaviour.

8.9 Q2 Values

Table: 15 Q2 Values

	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
PURCHASE INTENTIONS	5844.000	4129.906	0.293
SUB NORMS	3896.000	3083.572	0.209
STORE ATMOSPHERE	4870.000	4870.000	0.000

Source: Data from Survey

Table: 15 Interpretation of Q^2 Values

Construct	Q^2 Value	Predictive Relevance	Interpretation
Purchase Intentions	0.293	Moderate to strong	The model demonstrates substantial predictive relevance in explaining and predicting consumers' purchase intentions.
Subjective Norms	0.209	Moderate	The model shows adequate predictive capability in predicting subjective norms, indicating meaningful explanatory power of the predictors.
SA	0	Not applicable	As an exogenous construct, predictive relevance is not assessed for VM/SA; hence, a Q^2 value of zero is expected.

Source: Data from Survey

From the analysis, it is evident that the predictive relevance of the structural model was assessed using Stone-Geisser Q^2 statistic which was obtained through blind folding procedure. The Q^2 values for purchase intentions is 0.293 which is above the threshold levels of zero indicating moderate to strong predictive relevance. This indicates that the constructs in the model demonstrates substantial capability to predict consumers' purchase intentions.

The Q^2 values for subjective norms are 0.209, which is above the threshold levels of zero indicating a moderate to strong predictive relevance. This implies that the constructs in the

9. Mediation

Interpretation of Mediation Results

Table 16 Mediation Analysis

	β (Beta coefficient)	Sample mean (M)	Std. dev	T statistics	P values	Interpretation
SA → PI	0.597	0.6	0.041	14.453	0	Significant direct positive effect of Store Atmosphere on Purchase Intentions
SA → SN	0.484	0.49	0.042	11.414	0	Store Atmosphere significantly influences Subjective Norms
SN → PI	0.401	0.399	0.061	6.565	0	Subjective Norms significantly influence Purchase Intentions

Table 17: Mediation Analysis Interpretation

Effect Type	Path	Coefficient	Significance (p-value)	Interpretation
Direct Effect	SA → PI	0.597	0	Store Atmosphere has a significant direct positive impact on Purchase Intentions
Indirect Effect	SA → SN → PI	0.194*	0	Subjective Norms mediate the relationship between Store Atmosphere and Purchase Intentions
Total Effect	SA → PI (Direct + Indirect)	0.791	0	Combined effect confirms both direct and mediated influence, indicating Partial Mediation

Source: Survey data

model predicts adequately the consumers' perceptions of social approval and normative influence.

The Q^2 value for the Store atmosphere is 0.000. As Store atmosphere is an exogenous construct in the model, predictive relevance is not expected and the absence of the values is consistent with methodological guidelines.

Overall, the results confirm that the model possesses satisfactory predictive relevance for its endogenous constructs namely Subjective norms and purchase intentions. This indicates the robustness of the structural model.

The structural model results indicate that Store Atmosphere (SA) has a positive direct effect on the purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.597$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the retail environmental cues shapes consumers purchase intentions. In addition, Store Atmosphere (SA) influences subjective norms significantly ($\beta = 0.484$, $p < 0.001$), which indicates that Store atmosphere influences the consumers' perception on social approval and normative experiences.

Subjective norms, in turn, exert a significant positive effect on purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.401$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that consumers are more inclined to develop purchase intentions when they perceive supportive social influence. The

simultaneous significance of the paths $SA \rightarrow$ subjective norms and subjective norms $\rightarrow$ purchase intentions establish that there is a presence of an indirect effect of SA on purchase intentions through subjective norms.

Importantly, the direct effect of SA on purchase intentions remains statistically significant even after accounting for subjective norms, indicating that subjective norms **partially mediate** the relationship between Store Atmosphere (SA) and purchase intentions. This finding suggests that while Store Atmosphere (SA) directly influence purchase intentions, a portion of this effect is transmitted through subjective norms.

10. Hypothesis Testing

Table 18 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	β (Original Sample)	T-value	P-value	Decision
H1	SA $\rightarrow$ Subjective Norms	0.484	11.414	< 0.001	Supported
H2	SA $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intentions	0.597	14.453	< 0.001	Supported
H3	Subjective Norms $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intentions	0.401	6.565	< 0.001	Supported

H1: Store Atmosphere positively influence subjective norms.

H1 indicated that Store atmosphere will positively influence subjective norms and the hypothesis is supported with the results (β : 0.484, P-value: 0.001) thus indicating Store atmosphere has a positive influence on subjective norms and it shapes the consumers' perceptions of social approval.

H2: Subjective norms positively influence consumers' purchase intentions.

H2 indicated that subjective norms will positively influence consumers' purchase intention and the hypothesis is supported with the results (β : 0.401,

P-value: 0.001) thus indicating the role of social influence positively in buying decisions.

H3: Store Atmosphere positively influence consumer purchase intentions

H3 investigates the influence of Store Atmosphere (SA) elements on the purchase intentions of the consumer. Results indicate that the Store Atmosphere has a significant positive effect on the consumer purchase intentions (β : 0.597, P-value: 0.001) and thus H3 is supported.

H4: Subjective norms mediate the relationship between Store Atmosphere and consumers' purchase intentions.

H4 proposed that subjective norms mediate the relationship between store atmosphere and

consumer purchase intentions. The results confirm a significant direct positive effect of store atmosphere on purchase intentions, as well as a significant indirect effect through the pathway store atmosphere → subjective norms → purchase intentions. This indicates the presence of **partial mediation** via subjective norms, thereby supporting H4.

Overall, the results provide empirical support for the mediating role of subjective norms and are consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior, highlighting that environmental stimuli influence behavioural intentions both directly and indirectly through normative beliefs.

11. Discussions:

The current study examined the influence of Store Atmosphere on consumer purchase intentions by incorporating subjective norms grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour as a mediator. The findings provide a strong empirical validation for the proposed model and highlights how retail store environmental cues can shape consumer decision making.

The results of the study indicate that Store Atmosphere has a strong and positive effect on the consumer purchase intentions. This indicates that a good store layout, attractive displays and other atmospheric elements such as light, music and cleanliness can attract the consumers to purchase from the store, irrespective of the presence of other intervening psychological processes. This reinforces the prior literature evidences on retailing and consumer behaviour which emphasise on the strategic role of Store Atmosphere and its role in influencing consumer responses.

Store Atmosphere significantly affect subjective norms which highlights that it shapes the individual perceptions regarding social approval. This also suggests that a well- designed retail environments indicate social desirability and acceptance wherein the consumers believe that shopping from these stores would get the approval of people closer to them. This finding extends TPB based research by demonstrating

that normative beliefs can be influenced by contextual and environmental stimuli.

In addition, subjective norms were found to predict purchase intentions thereby confirming the importance of social influence on consumer decision making. Although the effect of subjective norms was comparatively weaker than the direct effect of Store Atmosphere (SA), it nonetheless played a meaningful role, as reflected in both path coefficients and effect size estimates. This indicates that consumers' intentions are shaped not only by personal evaluations but also by perceived social endorsement.

The mediation analysis reveals that subjective norms partially mediate the relationship between Store Atmosphere (SA) and purchase intentions. The presence of significant direct path alongside a significant indirect effect suggests that Store Atmosphere (SA) influence purchase intentions through both direct experiential routes and indirect social influence mechanisms. This partial mediation underscores the complementary nature of environmental cues and social norms in shaping consumer intentions.

The mediating role of subjective norms provides a novel contribution. While the earlier studies suggested that subjective norms exert weak influence as compared to attitude and behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991), this research shows that in social shopping context, normative social pressures significantly influence purchase intentions. These findings align with that of Borges et al. (2010) and Pookulangara & Natesan (2010), where they stated that peer presence and social approval improve hedonic value and decision making.

The predictive relevance assessment further strengthens these findings. The Q^2 values for purchase intentions and subjective norms indicate that the model has moderate to strong predictive relevance. This suggests that the proposed framework is not only explanatory but also useful to predict consumer responses in similar settings elsewhere.

Overall, the findings contribute to the TPB literature by demonstrating that retail environmental cues can actively shape subjective norms and behavioural intentions. From a managerial perspective, the results suggest that investments in Store Atmosphere (SA) can simultaneously enhance consumers' personal evaluations and strengthen perceived social approval, thereby increasing purchase intentions. Retailers should therefore view store design as a strategic tool that operates through both psychological and social pathways.

12. Conclusions, Limitations and Managerial Implications

This study examined the role of Store Atmosphere (SA) elements namely cleanliness, lighting, music, display, and layout in shaping consumer purchase intentions in organised Indian retail stores. The findings of the study confirm that SA cues had significant influence on the store atmosphere which in turn influenced the subjective norms and both of them influenced purchase intentions. Subjective norms were found to mediate the relationship between SA and purchase behaviour thereby extending the application of TPB Constructs within the SOR framework. The study also provides a composite explanation of how environmental stimuli interact with social pressure to drive consumers into decision making.

From the theoretical perspective, the research highlights the underexplored area i.e. role of subjective norms in retail atmospherics, thereby offering a novel contribution by positioning it as a mediating construct. The results suggests that the retailers should design their Store Atmosphere strategies not only to improve the product visibility and ambience within the store but also it has to resonate with social shopping motives. This would strengthen the consumer engagement and purchase outcomes.

13. Limitations

Despite these contributions, several limitations have also been observed. Firstly, the study was limited to single metropolitan city (Mumbai) and

this may limit the possibility of generalising of findings to other regions or rural contexts. Secondly, the cross-sectional design captures consumer perceptions and behaviour at one point of time. This may restrict the insights into long-term behavioural changes. Thirdly, the study focused exclusively on physical or offline retailers store environment. While online and omnichannel retailers are left unexplored. Finally, demographic variables were not tested in detail, they may influence the strength of SA and subjective norms in shaping purchase intentions. Future research could address these limitations by adopting multi-city or cross-cultural designs, conducting longitudinal studies to capture evolving consumer behaviour, and extending the framework to online and hybrid retail formats. Incorporating demographic and cultural moderators would also enrich understanding of how SA cues interact with social pressures across diverse consumer segments.

14. Implications of the Study

14.1 Academic Implications- This study advances the literature on retail atmospherics by integrating Store Atmosphere (SA) with subjective norms as mediating construct. Prior research has focused on perceived value, affect or consumer perceptions as mediating variables. This study demonstrates the social influence and its role in shaping consumer perceptions. The research brings together a unified theoretical model that explains how environmental stimuli interact with social pressures and drives consumer purchase intentions. This investigation enhances theoretical perspectives by building upon TPB framework by including store level stimuli, positioning Subjective norms as Organism variable within SOR framework thereby strengthening its explanatory power, providing empirical evidence from Indian organised retail context and adding to the existing literature base which predominantly is based on western studies and apparel retail.

14.2 Social Implications –The study indicates that retail stores are social arenas where consumers identify belonging and approval from

peers and family. The study also highlights how shopping behaviour is shaped by social approval and group dynamics. A well- designed retail environment can be engaging, fostering positive emotions, social bonding etc. it encourages collective participations, cultural expression and shared experiences. In addition, the peer presence, family expectations and cultural norms reinforce purchase decisions and thus retail spaces go beyond just being transactional venues.

14.3 Managerial Implications - The study offers several insights for retail managers and practitioners. First, the strong direct influence exerted by Store Atmosphere (SA) on purchase intentions highlights the importance of investing in well-designed retail store. Store elements should be used strategically to create a visually appealing environment that would be engaging and would also stimulate consumers' intention to purchase.

Second, the significant effect of Store Atmosphere (SA) on subjective norms suggest that retailers can leverage on this by designing the retail store spaces in a way that would convey social desirability and relevance that the consumers perceive that shopping from that store would be supported by their social groups. For example, visually appealing themes, interactive displays etc can strengthen consumers' beliefs that significant others would approve their purchasing decisions.

Third, subjective norms being the mediator, managers should acknowledge the importance of social approval in shaping consumer purchase intentions and bring customer engagement through their strategies. In-store events, influencer collaborations, or user-generated content displays can enhance perceived social approval and strengthen purchase intentions.

Finally, the model's predictive relevance indicates that the retail managers can employ these insights in designing the store strategies which would encompass experiential, attitudinal and social dimensions which would eventually improve the retail store performance.

15 Future Research Directions

This study adds to the earlier contribution to the literature on retail store atmospherics but there are still uncovered aspects that could be explored further. First, the studies could incorporate additional TPB constructs to have an understanding of consumers' purchase decision making processes.

Second, the research could also include the influence of variables such as age, gender, shopping orientation etc. as potential moderators. This would help in determining whether the influence of SA and subjective norms varies across consumer segments.

Third, the present study focuses on physical environment and in future studies comparing the effects with online retail context can be undertaken.

Finally, longitudinal studies can be undertaken to establish relationships and observe changes in consumer responses over a period of time. These studies would offer deeper insights into the dynamically changing environment.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

We hereby declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. The research was conducted independently and no financial support has been received from any agency. There are no additional relationships that would influence the study. There are no patents to disclose. Further there are no additional activities to disclose.

Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the manuscript preparation process

Statement: During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used the assistance of Co-Pilot in order to develop idea for preparing summary tables, identifying the research gap, Checking the completeness of the manuscript and language improvement. After using this tool, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the published article.

Data Availability

All data supporting the findings of this study are presented within the article. The survey instruments used for data collection can be obtained from the corresponding author upon request. This ensures transparency and provides an opportunity for future researchers to replicate or extend the study.

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Ethical Declaration

This research was conducted in full adherence to established ethical standards for academic studies. Participants consent was obtained prior to the survey after assuring them of confidentiality and anonymity. Participation was voluntary, and respondents could withdraw at any stage without consequence. No personal identifiers were recorded, and the data were used solely for academic purposes. The research complies with the ethical guidelines of Visvesvaraya Technological University and aligns with the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki.

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