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Impact of Store Ambience on Impulse Purchasing of Apparel Consumers
Vpliv ambienta trgovine na potrošnikovo impulzivno nakupovanje oblačil

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Abstract
The aim of this research was to identify the impact of store ambience on apparel consumer impulse purchase behaviour. In this paper, the influence of window display (WD), promotional offers (PO), store layout (SL), background music (BM) and fragrance of store (FOS) on consumer impulsive buying behaviour (IBB) for apparel was evaluated. The study was performed among 210 consumers in Delhi (NCR), at the DLF Mall of India, using a questionnaire developed based on existing literature. The research data was analysed using the factor analysis, and correlation and linear regression tests. According to the research findings, store features such as window display, promotional offers and fragrance have a significant effect on impulse purchase behaviour. The current study makes some suggestions for retailers to improve the ambience of their stores in order to boost impulse buying among apparel buyers.
Keywords: apparel consumer, impulse buying, store ambience, factor analysis, regression test

Izvleček
Namen raziskave je bil ugotoviti vpliv ambienta trgovine na impulzivno nakupovalno vedenje potrošnikov oblačil. V tem članku je bil ovrednoten vpliv izložb, promocijskih ponudb, postavitve trgovine, glasbe v ozadju in dišav v trgovinah na impulzivno nakupovalno vedenje potrošnikov oblačil. Raziskava je bila izvedena med 210 potrošniki v regiji Delhi, v nakupovalnem središču DLF, z uporabo vprašalnika, razvitega na podlagi obstoječe literature. Rezultati raziskave so bili analizirani s faktorsko analizo, korelacijskimi in linearnimi regresijskimi testi. V raziskavi je bilo ugotovljeno, da imajo funkcije trgovine, kot so izložbe, promocijske ponudbe in dišave, pomemben vpliv na impulzivno nakupovalno vedenje potrošnikov. Ta raziskava podaja nekaj predlogov za trgovce na drobno za izboljšanje ambienta svojih trgovin, da bi med kupci oblačil spodbudili impulzivno nakupovanje.
Ključne besede: potrošnik oblačil, impulzivno nakupovanje, trgovinski ambient, faktorska analiza, regresijski test

1 Introduction

The Indian retail sector has evolved as one of the most efficient and rapidly evolving industries due to the entry of several new significant enterprises into retail operations. It contributes more than 10% to the GDP of the country and employs around 8% of the labour force. India is the fifth-largest retail destination in the world, in terms of retail space [1].

According to the Kearney report [2], India's retail business is expected to develop at a slower rate of 9% between 2019 and 2030, going from $779 billion in 2019 to $1,407 billion by 2026 (F) and more than US $1.8 trillion by 2030 (F). Brick and mortar (B&M) stores, an offline retailer, predicted to increase their revenue by about 1.39–2.77 billion (USD) in FY22. By the end of 2022, India's direct selling business would be worth $2.54 billion USD, which is huge, and this has resulted in strong market competition. According to the report of Wazir advisor [3], the Indian apparel and accessories market is predicted to increase at a rate of approximately 7.6% by 2025 (F), reaching USD 1605 billion; hence, the competition among apparel retailer will be high.

Marketing researchers have revealed an encouraging phenomenon of impulse shopping and have employed a range of tactics to stimulate impulsive buying of apparel consumers [7]. The researchers explained how the display of a product in a retail store makes it pleasant and enticing to customers. The exterior and interiors of the apparel store, the pricing, promotion strategy, service orientation, shop-floor help, variety of items, product quality, navigation in store and operational execution are critical elements to attract customers for impulse buying [13]. Retailers need to understand the importance of having an effective strategy to improve the abmience of their stores as competition in the retail area has intensified in recent years [4]. A previous study observed that merchandising has an impact on consumer purchase behaviour [5]. According to Park [6], it has been demonstrated that an in-store display and promotional signs can affect college students' clothing impulse buying behaviour. There is no specific data that has been found between the retail atmosphere (incl. window display, promotional offers, store layout, store fragrance and background music) and apparel consumer IBB in the Indian (Delhi-NCR) context, nor how a retail display can influence the impulse buying (IB) decisions of apparel consumers in the Delhi (NCR) context. Therefore, the aim of this study was to identify the effect of in-store qualities on customer impulse buying behaviour in Delhi (NCR) markets and to provide recommendations for the most effective way to improve store attributes based on study results. Therefore, this research had five main objectives:
a) To identify the impact of window display on the impulse purchase behaviour of apparel shoppers.
b) To evaluate the impact of promotional offers on the impulse purchase behaviour of apparel shoppers.
c) To evaluate the effect of store layout on the impulse purchase behaviour of apparel shoppers.
d) To identify the effects of background music on the impulse purchase behaviour of apparel consumers.
e) To examine the impact of store fragrance on the impulse purchase behaviour of apparel consumers.

1.1 Impulse buying (IB)

For the past many years, numerous researchers have shown a keen interest in impulsive purchasing [7]. In the case of clothes shopping, impulse purchasing plays an important role. Apparel shoppers may profit more from impulse purchases when retailers provide promotional offers, which is significant for the apparel retail business. According to Abratt [8], IB at a retail store may be of great interest to both the manufacturer and the retailer. Impulse shopping implies instant buying, which is an advance shopping intention either to buy a particular product category or to satisfy a desire [9]. Rook [10] suggested that impulse purchasing is an unplanned, cognitive process that comes from affective reactions, which happen after the exposure to retail environment cues inside a physical store. Thus, store attributes play a critical role during apparel impulse buying.

Kim [11] introduced a model that represents the impulsive purchase process. This model was adopted from Churchill and Peter [12] consumer buying process model that identifies internal and external stimuli of impulse purchasing that influence consumer buying behaviour.

1.2 Factors influencing impulse purchase decisions

To gain better understanding of impulsive purchasing, we need to evaluate the internal and external
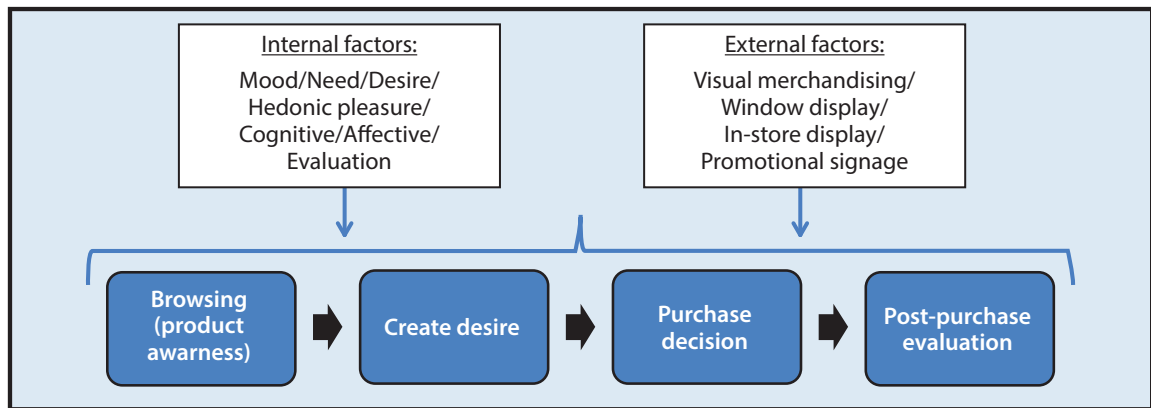
Figure 1: Model of impulse purchase process [12]

elements that inspire an impulse consumer. Two basic types of factors that can cause IB decisions are internal and external factors.

1.2.1 Internal factors
Internal variables of impulse purchasing examine the internal cues and traits of an individual that cause them to indulge in impulsive buying. Internal factors relate to an individual's internal emotions and qualities, e.g. emotional state, mood, self-feelings. Many authors have examined conceptual approaches to investigate impulse buying in the context of psychological elements (e.g. personality, self-regulation), hedonic experiences (e.g. shopping delight, emotional state, mood) and situational factors (e.g. available time, money) [13, 14].

A person's affective state can be identified by their emotional state, mood and self-feelings [15]. Internal stimuli are processed affectively and/or intellectually by the consumer, resulting in impulsive or non-impulsive conduct. As a result, sentiments such as "irresistible, want to buy, pleasant buying, feelings, and mood management" may occur [16].

1.2.2 External factors
External elements of impulsive buying are marketing strategies that are managed and controlled by retailers in an attempt to encourage customers to impulse buy [17]. When consumers see visual cues such as promotional signage, they may want to buy apparel impulsively [5]. External marketing stimuli not only bring in new consumers, but also encourage up- and cross-selling to existing (and new) customers by promoting spontaneous purchases of complementary or better products [18].

Situational factors and store display affect both in-store responses and the choice of store due to the changing and adopting nature of preferences and buying behaviour [19]. According to the findings by Rhee [20], consumers' perceptions regarding a store's visual appeal showed a stronger link with the store selection than apparel product quality, overall price level and variety. This gives credibility to the view that the store atmosphere influences the consumers' choice of a store, with window display of apparel store playing an important part. This shows that the retail setting of apparel stores influences consumer buying behaviour.

Previous research on store features has revealed that the atmosphere of a retail store is closely related to individual purchase behaviour. Beatty [9] and Donovan [21] developed the concept of retail environment and characterised it as an attempt to design the atmosphere of a store to produce specific emotional and motivational impacts in the consumer's mind that eventually enhance purchasing possibilities. The tangible variables of a retail environment, according to Faber [22], include equipment, colour scheme, store cleanliness, layout of store, display of apparel products and interior décor. On the other hand, the intangible variables include aroma, temperature, lighting and background sound [23]. Direct sensory stimuli in a retail ambience include visual components and physical amenities, while general design aspects include colour, shelf space and store layout [24]. A window display is a presentation of items that impacts individual's purchasing intentions and merchants want to provide consumers with an appropriate product at the right moment through a correct product display [25]. Retail layout may stimulate a customer's interest in

the store's ambience, resulting in increased shopper attention [26]. Impulsive buying tendency (IBT) is defined as the proclivity to make unexpected purchases and to buy immediately, with little or no thought to the implications. Shoppers with a higher IBT score are more likely to have impulsive cravings and make impulsive purchases at retail outlets [9]. Consumers and salespeople present in the store are examples of social factors in a store. The behaviour of salespeople at a retail establishment has a significant impact on individual's purchasing decisions [24]. Another important aspect is crowding, which is both challenging and necessary in retail setting [27]. Crowding, along with retail atmosphere, design and social aspects, is a more significant component that is expected to impact consumer purchase behaviour. Crowding at a retail outlet is a result of social, personal and physical elements that sensitise individuals to possible difficulties that arise due to restricted space [28].

To fulfil the objectives of this research, apparel consumer's IBB is a dependent variable and five external factors, i.e. window display, store layout, promotional offers, background music and fragrance of store, are considered as independent variables. The following hypotheses were formulated to explore the relationships between IBB of apparel consumer and these external factors.

H1: Window display influences the apparel consumer impulse purchase decision.

H2: Promotional offers influence the apparel consumer impulse purchase decision.

H3: Store layout influences the apparel consumer impulse purchase decision.

H4: Background music influences the apparel consumer impulse purchase decision.

H5: Fragrance of store influences the apparel consumer impulse purchase decision.

2 Experimental

2.1 Methodology

For this research, a sample group was selected while shopping for apparel at the DLF mall located in Delhi (NCR) to participate in the survey. The survey format was used for this study as an instrument. In order to obtain a precise measurement of impulse buying tendency (IBT), window display (WD), promotional offers (PO), store layout (SL), background music (BM) and fragrance of store

(FOS), this research formulated and used a scale on which items were examined and tested. To prove research hypothesis, 25 questions were formulated. Impulse buying tendency (IBT) and window display (WD) were the key variables, measured using a scale developed by Mehta [5] and Parsad et al. [29]. Promotional offers (PO), background music (BM) and fragrance of store (FOS) were measured using a scale developed and modified by Mohan et al. [30] and Vinish et al. [17]. The questionnaire was divided into seven major sections to evaluate the respondents' impulse buying behaviour for apparel, and the factors that influence this behaviour and demographics (Demographically). The first section of the questionnaire assessed the respondents' tendency towards impulsive purchase. The second section was used to evaluate the effect of an in-store window display, the third section was used to measure the impact of a store layout. The fourth section evaluated the effect of promotional offers, the fifth section measured the impact of background music, the sixth section examined the influence of store fragrance, while the last segment included questions to determine the demographic profile of respondents, i.e. gender, age, qualification level, occupation and income level. Each variable was measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 5.

This research included 210 Delhi (NCR) apparel store customers. In this survey, a convenience sample approach of non-probability sampling was used. Only 210 out of 265 questionnaires completed by respondents were correctly filled out and used for data analysis. Further, Cronbach Alpha was used to identify the reliability of the scale [31].

2.2 Data analysis method

SPSS 23 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software was used for data analysis. It generates descriptive statistics and frequency tables to check for data mistakes and do demographic research. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test demonstrates the precision of utilising parametric statistics. It was followed by a factor analysis based on the principal component analysis with a reliability test (Cronbach's alpha). The Pearson correlation test was used to determine the relationship between apparel consumer impulsive purchase behaviour and each of the five store attributes. The hypotheses were tested using regression analysis to determine the relationship between apparel consumers impulsive pur-

chase behaviour (dependent variable) and the five categories of store features (independent variable). In the questionnaire, different variables were developed to measure each item under study. Further, we used the principal component analysis (PCA) with Varimax Rotation to reduce these measurements to single variables. Table 1 summarises the descriptive statistics for each variable, while Table 2 represents the results of the principal component analysis with a reliability test. The PCA findings showed that all of the items had a factor loading of 0.5 or above, indicating that each item belonged to only one group (cf. Table 2). The Cronbach's alpha scores for all proposed variables were above the minimal criterion of 0.70 [31], ranging from 0.7011 to 0.798, showing that the data was statistically consistent and suitable for further study.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for variables

Variables	No. of samples	Mean	Standard deviation
Impulse buying tendency (IBT)	210	3.065	0.8539
Influence of window display (WD)	210	3.178	0.9245
Influence of promotional offers (PO)	210	3.256	1.0235
Influence of store layout (SL)	210	3.012	1.0321
Influence of background music (BM)	210	2.985	0.9857
Influence of fragrance of store (FOS)	210	3.312	1.2758

Table 2: Results of principal component analysis with reliability test

Factor	Item	Factor loading	Eigen value	Variance (%)	Cronbach Alpha
Impulse buying tendency (IBT)	IBT1	0.634	1.688	43.42	0.7011
	IBT2	0.678			
	IBT3	0.698			
	IBT4	0.707			
	IBT5	0.818			
Influence of window display (WD)	WD1	0.741	1.942	64.768	0.7242
	WD2	0.853			
	WD3	0.679			
	WD4	0.747			
Influence of promotional offers (PO)	PO1	0.746	2.235	55.606	0.798
	PO2	0.714			
	PO3	0.833			
	PO4	0.635			
Influence of store layout (SL)	SL1	0.781	1.876	52.314	0.714
	SL2	0.878			
	SL3	0.886			
	SL4	0.72			
Influence of background music (BM)	BM1	0.826	2.717	56.921	0.709
	BM2	0.834			
	BM3	0.744			
	BM4	0.628			
Influence of fragrance of store (FOS)	FOS1	0.889	2.139	71.313	0.7671
	FOS2	0.814			
	FOS3	0.754			
	FOS4	0.717			

3 Results and discussion

3.1 Descriptive statistics for demographics

Demographic characteristics of 210 apparel consumers represent 55.71% of females and 44.29% of males. The majority of respondents are in the age group of 18–25 (45.23%), then 25–35 years (29.52%), 35–45 years (15.24%) and above 45 years (10.01%). This shows that most respondents are aged 18–35. 74% respondents reported monthly family income from 100,000 to 200,000 Indian rupees.

3.2 Hypothesis testing

H1: Window Display influences the apparel consumer impulse purchase decision. The correlation test (cf. Table 3) revealed a significant association between IB and window display, with the p-value lower than 0.05 and r-value of 0.383. Furthermore, the regression analysis revealed that window display has a substantial effect on apparel consumer impulse buying behaviour. The hypothesis is supported by the p-value being lower than the alpha level (cf. Table 4).

H2: Promotional offers influence the apparel consumer impulse purchase decision. The Pearson correlation test confirmed a substantial association with a modest p-value lower than 0.05 & (r = 0.405) (cf. Table 3). The regression analysis revealed that promotional offers influenced consumer impulsive buying behaviour. The p-value was lower than the alpha level, confirming the validation of the hypothesis (cf. Table 4).

H3: Store layout influences the apparel consumer impulse purchase decision. The correlation test (r = 0.280) and (p < 0.05) revealed a significant weak relationship between IBB and store layout (cf. Table 3). Even though the Pearson correlation test revealed a substantial relationship between impulse buying behaviour and store layout, the regression analysis indicated that store layout had no significant impact on apparel consumer impulse buying behaviour (p value is greater than 0.05) (cf. Table 4).

H4: The p-value being lower than 0.05 and r-value of 0.252 (cf. Table 3) confirmed that background music slightly influences the apparel consumer impulse purchase decision. The Pearson correlation test discovered a positive weak relationship between IBB and background music. As a result, it can be concluded that background music is not highly associated with customer impulse purchase behaviour. The regression analysis discovered that there is no significant association between background music and customer impulsive buying behaviour. The fact that the p-value was greater than the alpha level (cf. Table 4) demonstrated that the data presented inadequate evidence for a significant association between apparel shopper impulsive buying behaviour and background music.

H5: Fragrance of store influences the apparel consumer impulse purchase decision. The Pearson correlation test (cf. Table 3) demonstrated a substantial association between IB and store fragrance, with the p-value lower than 0.05 and r-value of 0.372. The regression analysis demonstrated that store fragrance had a significant impact on the IBB of apparel consumers. The p-value being lower than the alpha level supports the hypothesis (cf. Table 4). As a result, the final multiple regression equation was developed using unstandardised coefficients (B):

$$\text{IBB} = 1.166 + (0.180)\ \text{WD} + (0.171)\ \text{PO} + (0.171)\ \text{FOS} + (0.099)\ \text{BM} + (-0.006)\ \text{SL} \tag{1}$$

Further, the beta coefficient (β) from the regression analysis can be utilised to discover dependent variables with a higher influence on impulse purchase behaviour for apparel consumers [32]. According to the beta coefficient results (β), window display contributed the most to explaining the apparel impulsive purchase behaviour, followed by promotional offers and store fragrance (BETA = 0.231, 0.189 and 0.172, respectively) (cf. Table 4). Figure 2 represents the effect of store attributes (variables) related to the impulse purchase behaviour for apparel consumers.

Table 3: Result of correlation with IBB

Variables	Coefficient (r)	Significance (p)
Influence of window display (WD)	0.383	0.001
Influence of promotional offers (PO)	0.405	0.001
Influence of store layout (SL)	0.28	0.002
Influence of background music (BM)	0.252	0.003
Influence of fragrance of store (FOS)	0.372	0.001

Table 4: Result of regression analysis

| Hypothesis	B (unstandardised coefficients)	p-value	β (standardised coefficients)	t-statistics
H1: Window display influences apparel consumer impulse purchase decision.	0.18	0.004	0.231	2.954
H2: Promotional offers influence apparel consumer impulse purchase decision.	0.171	0.029	0.189	2.207
H3: Store layout influences apparel consumer impulse purchase decision.	−0.006	0.132	−0.007	−0.085
H4: Background music influences apparel consumer impulse purchase decision.	0.099	0.079	0.133	1.772
H5: Fragrance of store influences apparel consumer impulse purchase decision.	0.171	0.007	0.172	2.748
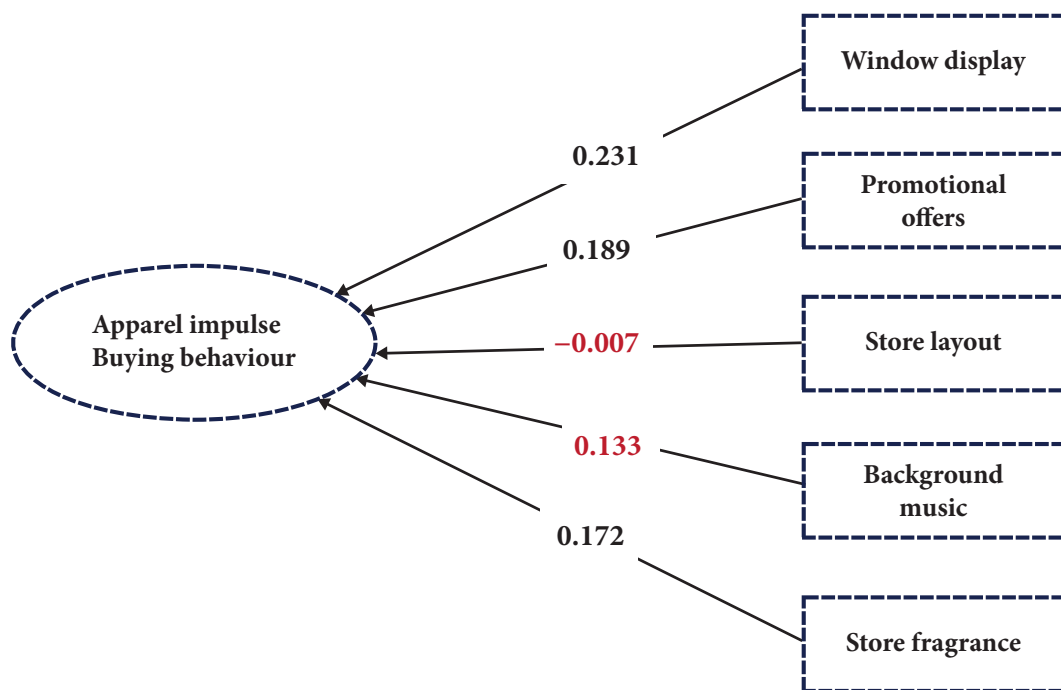
Figure 2: Structural model between store variables and impulse purchase behaviour for apparel

4 Conclusion and implications

This research evaluated a structural model to establish the relationships between various store variables and apparel shopper impulse purchase behaviour. The model helps retailers and researchers investigate the structural links between apparel store attributes and impulse buying behaviour of consumers. According to the findings, window display, promotional offers and store fragrance all have a direct significant impact on impulsive apparel purchase. Although retail store layout and background music do not significantly influence

customer impulsive buying behaviour, the findings indicated that these three characteristics (incl. window display, promotional offers and store fragrance) and consumer impulse buying behaviour are highly associated. This suggests that these store attributes, acting as motivators that arouse a desire, eventually persuade a customer to make a spontaneous purchase decision upon entering the store, i.e. they have a significant impact on consumer impulse purchase behaviour for apparel.

Apparel retailers should pay attention to visual display and marketing stimuli since they might increase the impulse buying of clothing. The current

study offers sufficient evidence that stores may use visual tactics, interactive promotional offers and fragrance to increase the attractiveness of merchandise and assist customers in becoming aware of apparel products. As apparel impulse buying is more common in younger shoppers than in elder, this tenet may be vital for store managers to be aware of young people's requirements, which may enhance their earnings. Furthermore, the research suggested that an increase in personal income has made impulse buying ubiquitous. The availability of money boosts the shopper's purchasing capability, while limited money reduces the chances of impulse purchasing. Retailers need to pay more focus on numerous promotional offers as these promotional activities meet the consumers' psychological requirements. Offering bonus packs, discount prices and cashback offers motivate consumers to do more buying impulsively. This study reveals that store layout and background music do not have a significant impact on IBB for apparel. Nevertheless, retailers must enhance the chance of impulse purchases by developing favourable emotions in customers through store layout, window displays, promotional offers, background music and store aroma.

The data was approved stastically and revealed critical links between store atmosphere and impulse purchasing of apparel customers. These findings may be used by senior managers, esp. retail store managers, to improve ambience of the store and to provide a more convenient shopping experience to attract apparel customers.

Despite its valuable findings, this study does have some drawbacks. The data was obtained to test the model at the DLF Mall in Delhi (NCR), India. Another possible limiting issue is the use of broadly generalised apparel products regardless of brands. As Indian consumers have different emotional values, lifestyles, cultural backgrounds and purchase behaviours, future research on the topic might be expanded in the following ways: a) gathering data from more representative samples with a broader variety of demographic attributes; b) including other store characteristics, situation factors, e.g. salesperson behaviour, crowd in stores, perceived enjoyment, availability of time/money and availability of product varieties; c) broadening the emphasis to branding, fashionable products (e.g. apparel, home furnishings, cosmetics, accessories); e) evaluating impulse buying in online shopping; and f) making comparisons inside and across other nations.

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Appendix

Table 5: Measurement items and content

Variable	Measurement	Content
Impulse buying tendency (IBT)	IBT1	"When I see new style of apparel products, I buy it immediately," describes me.
	IBT2	"Buy now, think about it later" describes me.
	IBT3	When I go for apparel shopping, I buy apparels that I had not intended to buy.
	IBT4	I can't suppress the desire of wanting to buy new style of apparel spontaneously.
	IBT5	I often buy apparel products without thinking.
Influence of window display (WD)	WD1	I am more likely to enter retail store if it has an eye-catching window display.
	WD2	I get an idea of what I want to buy after looking through in-store displays.
	WD3	Attractive display draws my attention and induce my impulsive buying.
	WD4	I feel compelled to visit retail store if it has an interesting window display.
Influence of promotional offers (PO)	PO1	I am more likely to make unplanned buying if the apparel product has a sale sign.
	PO2	When I see a special promotional signage in store, I go to look at the products.
	PO3	If there is a discount on apparel products, I am more likely to make an impulse purchase.
	PO4	Promotional activities (Such as buy one get one and so on) encourages me to make me to do impulse purchases during apparel shopping.
Influence of store layout (SL)	SL1	When I enter a store, I tend to follow the store layout while browsing the store.
	SL2	If the layout of the store is well structured, I am more likely to make an impulse purchase.
	SL3	If the store has eye catching arrangements, I tend to spend more time in the store.
	SL4	If it is easy to find out the apparel products that encourages me to do more purchases.
Influence of background music (BM)	BM1	Pleasant and calm background music makes me spend more time in a store.
	BM2	If I like the music inside retail store, my chances of unplanned buying become greater.
	BM3	The music playing in the store influences my impulse buying behaviour.
	BM4	I spend more time in the retail store browsing it if I like the background music.
Influence of fragrance of store (FOS)	FOS1	If retail store smells good, I tend to stay longer and look at the merchandise.
	FOS2	The fragrance used in the store affects my buying intentions.
	FOS3	I am more likely to make unplanned buying if the store smells good.
	FOS4	If fragrance of retail store is pleasant, I intend to go back to the store in future.