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***Research paper***

# The Roles of Store Atmosphere in the Consumer Buying Behavior

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**Abstract**

This article presents a store atmosphere created through the exterior, general interior, store layout and interior displays and their influence on consumer buying behavior. The object of this study was Little Wings Café, one of the most-visited cafes in Bandung, Indonesia. This cafe is designed with a library and home theme like a Barbie house. This study employed the quantitative research method using descriptive statistics. A total of 100 samples were collected from a population of 2,310 visitors. The analysis results showed that store atmosphere has a positive influence for buying decision, in which the consumers were mainly attracted by the unique outside design. In addition, the consumers have a high tendency to visit a cafe which can make their mood better and they search for information about cafes prior to visiting

***Keywords***: *Paradox marketing, store atmosphere, buying decision.*

## 1. Introduction

The City of Bandung is well-known as an entertainment city, which offers a wide variety of tourist attractions for everyone without age restriction. Along with its development, Bandung has various places to eat and hawker centers that attract many tourists to visit. Many café and restaurants have their own uniqueness. Such a condition causes intense competition and forces them to be more responsive to the changes that happen very quickly and dynamically.

One of the methods or ways to become a winner in such a competition is to create something different from the other cafés like providing a joyful environment inside the cafe, which is an important determinant of consumer's desire to spend more time and more money in a store (Donovan, 1994). This behavior occurs spontaneously for the store is delightful (Spies, 1997). This strategy is often called the store atmosphere strategy. Even though cognitive factors can mostly justify store selection and most planned buying within a store, store environment, and consumers' emotion can be important elements of buying behavior (Sherman, 1997).

### 1.1. Related works

Store Atmosphere and Its Roles

Store atmosphere can also lead to different shopping patterns and purchase intentions (Schlosser, 1998) because it can also determine consumers' preferences (Thang & Tan, 2003). In addition, it can be used as a persuader of consumer decisions so that consumers feel satisfied due to the influence of their satisfaction of purchase decision (Hidayat, 2015). The four dimensions of store atmosphere, namely exterior, general interior, store layout and interior display influence consumer decision to visit Little Wings Café. The emotional state of the potential consumers is influenced by store atmosphere, which will lead to whether the purchase will increase or decrease.

Kotler (2013) proposes the concept of paradox marketing – a process of marketing which is contrary to or different from usual marketing concepts. Yahya (2013) suggests that the marketing paradox has six concepts, namely value equation (increase in value to increase value), more for less (increasing value using low prices), polarity management (positive and negative impacts assess the product), Blue Ocean Strategy (creating new value strategies against the competition, such as product differentiation), buyer as seller (sales which sell in communities without paying), and beginning of the end (seeing the end result of the sale to go further back in order to become a guide to better future sales).

Store Atmosphere and Design Criteria

Levy and Weitz (2012) defines store atmosphere as an atmosphere which refers to the environment design such as visual communication, lighting, color, music and aroma to simulate the response, perception, and emotion so that customer buying behavior can be affected by the situation. Berman and Evan (2010) divide the elements of store atmosphere into four keys, i.e. exterior, general interior, store layout, and interior displays. The exterior has 7 sub-elements, including the marquee, parking facilities, display windows, surrounding stores, entrances, the height of the exterior building, and storefront. The sub-elements in the general interior include wall textures, flooring, lighting, and colors, scent and sounds, store fixtures, aisles, dressing facilities, dead areas, temperature, store personnel, merchandise,

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technology, cleanliness, rate, and display of price, and vertical transportation. The store layouts which are consequently planned and applied by the retailers include a) allocation of floor space: merchandise space, customer space, selling space, and personnel space; b) classification of store offerings: buying motive, functional, storability, and market segment product groupings; c) determination of a traffic-flow pattern (straight and curving); d) determination of space needs; e) mapping out in-store locations; and f) arrangement of individual products. The last is interior (point of purchase) displays. There are several types of displays and the retailers usually combine these types, including an assortment display ("products that can be opened"), a theme setting display (arranging store displays with the seasons or certain holidays), an ensemble display (displaying the product completely), a rack and case display (for items not placed on the rack), and a cut case and dump bin (to create the impression of cheap and can reduce the cost of display).

Kotler and Lane (2012) claims that customer buying decision has five stages, including problem/need recognition, information search, alternatives evaluation, buying decision, and post-buying behavior. Store atmosphere aims to attract the attention of consumers for visiting the store that can provide comfort and satisfaction to them. Thus, it can be concluded that store atmosphere which is properly applied would have a positive influence on consumer buying decision. The Hypothesis:

Ho: variable store atmosphere does not have a significant influence on purchasing decisions

H1: variable store atmosphere has a significant influence on purchasing decisions

**Table 1**: Literature Survey of Store Atmosphere & Consumer Buying Behavior

| **Store Atmosphere & Consumer Buying Behavior** | **References** |
|---|---|
| Impacts of emotional factors (enjoyment and excitement) are supplementary to cognitive factors. | Donovan, et al (1994). |
| Personality and environment factors are considerably related to impulsive purchase behavior. | Spies, et al (1997) |
| Even though cognitive factors can mostly justify store selection and planned buying in a store, store environment and consumers' emotional state can be important elements of buying behavior. | Sherman, et al (1997) |
| Store atmosphere can affect the perception of social identity products but has a small impact on the perception of utilitarian products and provoked dissimilar shopping motivations and buying objectives. | Schlosser (1998) |
| Store service and store atmosphere significantly affect the consumer preference. | Thang & Tan (2003) |
| Store's lighting, ambient scent, circulation area, climatic conditions, and cleanliness have a great effect on the length of the customer visit. | Yildirim, et al (2003) |

## 2. Method

This study employed quantitative research method using descriptive statistics. The population was the visitors of Little Wings Cafe in a month, amounted to 2,310 consumers in total, 100 respondents answered the survey. Employing the Bernoulli formula to know the number sample we used, as many as 96.04 (rounded to 100) samples were taken. The characteristics of the respondent are successfully retrieved as a resource, majority of the sex of respondents were female, aged of majority respondents between 20 to 29 years and majority the profession of respondents are students.

This study was aimed to obtain data and information describing the influence of store atmosphere on the consumer buying decision process.

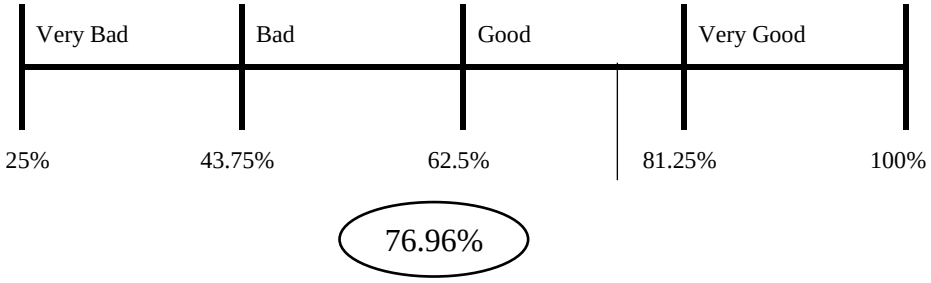



**Figure 1**: The continuum of store atmosphere

Based on Figure 1, the respondents' responses to the atmosphere store is categorized as good with a score of 76.96%, indicating that most of the respondents decide to visit the cafe due to the unique outside view of the building (combining bright pink and white) like a Barbie house, orderly layout design, and others.

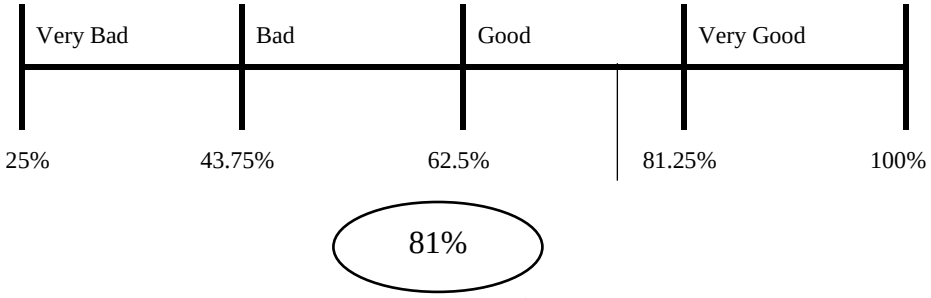



**Figure 2:** The continuum of buying decision

Based on Figure 2, the respondents' responses to the buying decision is categorized as good with a score of 81%. This confirms that the consumers need for a cafe that can make their mood better, they search for information about the cafe before visiting it, and they compare the facilities available in the cafe.

This study made a classic assumption test in advance, and the normality test showed that the data were normally distributed with a sig. value of 0.108. Meanwhile, the results of heteroscedasticity test using SPSS spread out, not forming a pattern and spread below and above zero.

The simple linear regression analysis in this study resulted in a simple linear regression equation as follows:

$$\mathbf{Y = a + bX}$$

$$\mathbf{Y = 8.204 + 0.173X}$$

In this case, when the variable X (store atmosphere) was assumed to not exist or 0, then its value was predicted to be 0, so the value of Y was 8,204 divided by 4 (the number of impulsive purchase statement items) = 2,051 and if the variable X (store atmosphere) increased by 1 unit, then the variable Y changed by 0.173. The positive sign in the regression equation confirms that the store atmosphere has a positive influence on buying decision.

The purpose of this study can be answered by performing hypothesis testing. First, a t-test was performed partially and the result showed t count (5.732) > t table (1.984), meaning that $H_0$ was rejected and $H_1$ was accepted. This indicates a significant relationship between store atmosphere and buying decision. The second was done simultaneously using the F test or ANOVA and the result showed f count (32.853) > f table (2,467), meaning that $H_0$ was rejected and $H_1$ was accepted. This indicates that store atmosphere simultaneously influences buying decision.

The magnitude of store atmosphere which influenced the consumer purchase decision was accordingly sought by calculating the coefficient of determination with a value of 0.251. The generated value indicates that the store atmosphere has contributed to the purchase decision in Little Wing Café by 25.1%, while the remaining 74.9% is influenced by other factors, such as giving rebates on products and promos in certain days. The application of store atmosphere at Little Wings Cafe is categorized as good but not maximum yet, and consumers have a high tendency to come when they need something that can make a cozy mood. In addition, they also search for information about Little Wings Café in advance so that the cafe can answer all the consumers' desires by improving its store atmosphere. Overall, this study confirms that store atmosphere shows a great impact on the consumer buying decision.

## 3. Conclusion

Variables store atmosphere has a significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions café wing, and the magnitude of the contribution seen from R square value is equal by 25.1%, while the remaining 74.9% is influenced by other factors, such as giving rebates on products and promos in certain days

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