Effect of Store Environment, Perceived Crowdedness, and Perceived Noisiness on Consumer Buying Behavior Through Brand Attachment

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Abstract

Consumer buying behavior is becoming a key component in marketing where individuals search, select, use, and dispose off goods to satisfy their needs and wants. In the current competitive environment, cutthroat competition exists in the retail industry due to the development of social media channels. Now the success of a retail business is based on its ability to understand consumers' buying behavior. Therefore, the retail industry focuses on the factors and preferences that affect buying behaviors. Previously, crowdedness in shopping stores may lessen consumers' evaluation of products and decrease their satisfaction. However, recent research proved that crowdedness could significantly affect buying behavior. This study is conducted to check the role of the store environment, perceived crowdedness, and perceived noisiness on consumers buying behavior. We have conducted two surveys for this study. First, identify the top five popular brands in the clothing industry, and, secondly, the determinants of consumer's buying behavior were tested through a sample of 311 respondents. Results show that both store environment and perceived crowdedness affect brand attachment, whereas brand attachment mediates the relationships between store environment, perceived noisiness, perceived crowdedness, and consumer buying behavior. The results will assist future researchers and policymakers in devising marketing strategies by considering the determinants of consumer buying behavior.

Keywords: Store Environment, Perceived Crowdedness, Consumer Buying Behaviour, Brand Attachment, Perceived Noisiness

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Introduction

Supermarkets and large shopping malls are creating a unique image of the modern retail settings in the main towns of the city. These malls attract consumers and provide a wide range of goods under one roof (Khan et al., 2020). That is why the retail sector appears as the most active and emergent sector because numerous native players are moving towards this segment. This systemized retailing is likely to flourish multi times shortly, mainly due to varying lifestyles, enhanced monthly income, and suitable demographic dissection (Helmefalk & Hulten, 2017). The frequent changes in consumer spending habits and buying behavior have become an exciting area of research for marketers. Mainly the consumers' buying behavior is determined by the two approaches. Impulsive buying is considered the most common approach that evolves because of its intricate nature, detected amongst an extensive range of products (Sharma, Sivakumaran, & Marshall, 2010). Impulse buying is an abrupt inclination to purchase products that the buyer is not intended to buy and has taken those items with no profound observation (Tifferet & Herstein, 2012). Hence using a reference to the fact that buyers occasionally indulge in impulse purchases, anyone may claim that entire products are probably purchased impulsively.

Ridgway, Kukar-Kinney, and Monroe (2008) explained compulsive buying as an obsession with purchasing as monotonous and unrestrained. Compulsive shoppers are helpless as they show a deficiency of impulse control on spending (Kukar-Kinney, Scheinbaum, & Schaefers, 2016). Consequently, compulsive consumers may perhaps face an extraordinary liability as well as societal and domestic hitches (Achtziger et al., 2015). Meanwhile, Gallagher et al. (2017) observed that compulsive buying results from decreased functioning in individuals and would like to shrink undesirable expressive stimulation. Duroy, Gorse, and Lejoyeux (2014) mentioned that people exhibit compulsive buying due to loss of control, attractions from companies (discounts, sale events), and instant optimistic approaches. The self-concept theory shows that people have two kinds of self-concept: the actual self and the ideal self (Malar et al., 2011).

There is a need to identify the aspects affecting consumer buying behavior that is essential to identify how consumers buy numerous products and what factors influence this decision (Sheeraz et al., 2020). Amongst them, one can discuss the situational factors like store environment, diversity of choices, time pressure, resources available, social norms, and word of mouth created through advertisement. Crowdedness and noise are two other important factors determining consumers' buying behavior inside the store. In addition, to determine consumer buying behavior, these factors also play a vital role in developing attachment with the brands. Based on current attachment concepts and theories, brand

attachment is an emotional link that ties a buyer via a brand and ripens strong attachment to the brand.

Consumers find hedonism, conspicuousness, value, and exclusivity from brands. They have faith that a durable and permanent emotional connection with the brand will apt their actual self-image and assist them in getting an ideal self-image (Seo & Buchanan-Oliver, 2015). Consumers who have a strong attachment towards a brand are inclined to invest the extra money (Whan Park et al., 2010)**.** Therefore, the stronger the brand attachment, the higher the compulsive buying propensity**.** In recent times, Kaufmann et al. (2016) described consumers who exhibit high brand attachment are also expected to buy the brand's merchandise, whether original or not fabricated. Once the users are firmly attached to brands, they love to purchase them. A better understanding of buying behavior circumstances can be worthy to researchers and marketers as it offers valuable information about marketing and shopping behavior.

In recent years, shopping through social media and online stores has gained many consumers' attention (Aruna & Santhi, 2015). Consumers now love to do shopping through these online stores. But still, shopping malls are increasing globally and serving all the social classes. These malls offer a large variety of products under one roof. Consumers can get almost all the products under one roof conveniently. This trend is also flourishing in Pakistan at a high pace (Sheeraz et al., 2017). So, despite having online shopping stores, people visited these stores. What is the reason behind this? It is a brand attachment that compels the consumers to come to stores.

Although many studies previously addressed the issue related to consumer buying behaviors, the effect of the store environment, perceived crowdedness, and perceived noisiness on consumer buying behavior through brand attachment still requires attention. That is why the current study is conducted to shed light on this critical issue. The research findings may be helpful for researchers and marketers to identify the opportunities by considering the factors necessary to understand consumer buying behaviors. In addition, it helps to determine the reasons that force consumers to go to shopping stores. Recently, megamalls, hyper stores, and large shopping malls have gained much attention from consumers and investors. These malls have gained popularity due to different brands and their physical environment and ambient nature. Consumers rush into these stores because they feel comfortable and conveniently get their desired products under one roof.

In this regard, measuring consumer buying behavior becomes very important to know about the buying patterns of consumers. This study provides a new dimension to marketing research by describing the importance of physical stores even in the presence of online stores. The relation of brand attachment with consumer buying behavior has been

extensively studied. This research is unique as it provides a new dimension by emphasizing factors like store environment, perceived crowdedness, and perceived noisiness. These factors affect buying behaviors and how these three factors influence brand attachment, which affects consumers' buying behavior. This study also contributes to research by describing the mediating role of brand attachment between the store environment, perceived crowdedness, perceived noisiness, and consumer buying behavior.

This study contributes to the current literature in the following ways. Firstly, it shows that brand attachment mediates between store environment, perceived crowdedness, perceived noisiness, and consumer buying behavior. Secondly, it explains that these factors significantly impact brand attachment and consumer buying behavior. Finally, as an antecedent of brand attachment, the store environment also plays an essential role in consumer buying behavior. Although the brand attachment is not developed instantaneously but is established over time, the impact of store environment and crowdedness can be seen very surprisingly.

Literature Review

Consumers Buying Behaviour

Impulsive buying is the unprompted reaction to a provocation that results in instantaneous purchasing that fulfills both emotive and hedonic desire (Bratko, Butkovic, & Bosnjak, 2013; Jalees & Raza, 2017). The definition mentioned above has been developed after years of studies about impulse buying. In a formative work Amos, Holmes, and Keneson (2014) described impulse buying as a prevailing and untiring desire to purchase something instantaneously. Impulse buying attitude is usually be classified as unintended, but unintentional purchases are not always be characterized as impulse purchases (Kacen, Hess, & Walker, 2012; Verhagen & van Dolen, 2011). This difference is that unintentional buying merely arises because the requirement for the product exists. Still, the consumer cannot place that item in a planned shopping list. Unintentional buying could not be conveyed by a dominant desire or deep positive approaches generally linked with an impulse purchase.

Conferring to Karbasivar and Yarahmadi (2011), impulse buying happens when a buyer is ended without any product valuation. The consumer is uncaring to the circumstance that he needs the product or not. It is just obtained on the desire to purchase despite filling the need. Impulse buying is emotive as its definition is derived as an abrupt, unintended, or unorganized buying decision making (Malembo, 2015). It is full of emotions when matched to more thoughtful decision-making processes. It is also factual that although it is sentiment, there are signs of a thinking process behind all the impulsiveness.

People are considering short-term paybacks rather than long-term penalties. For some consumers, the fulfillment of hedonic objectives is met by acting on impulse, and thus it is pretty clear that not all incentive pursuers nor all the plunders are impulsive.

Impulsive buying is pragmatic in all areas of buying. For instance, when purchasing music from a shopping store, some artists or albums are generally in mind, but listening to the cutting-edge hits or the old classics generates an impulse that aids the buying decision. Therefore, impulsive buying happens (Verplanken & Sato, 2011). Another example is when moving to a fast-food restaurant, the consumer perhaps or perhaps does not have a fixed target of what to eat, but the atmosphere, the odor, and the photos of food attack the conscious and the subconscious of the consumer executing the impulsive behavior. An overall observation about apparel is relatively comparable. The association with the products can also fluctuate during impulse buying when matched to general purchasing. Impulse buying or procuring with little or no planning is also a type of low-involvement decision-making (Muruganantham & Bhakat, 2013a). Ning Shen and Khalifa (2012) detected that understanding the consumer regulates the connection between buying impulse and the actual impulsive behavior.

There is a lot of research in psychiatry devoted to compulsive buying that describes it as unnecessary, tedious, uncontainable obsessions. Cravings or behaviors are about shopping, leading to individual suffering and compromised functioning. Personnel having compulsive buying disorders are repeatedly involved in impulsive consumption. Nevertheless, the compulsive buying disorder has an irreplaceable damaging outcome on an individual because of the dreary, uncontrolled habit of compulsive buying (Amos et al., 2014; Flight, Rountree, & Beatty, 2012). Granting research revealed that impulsive and compulsive buying perhaps results in implementing coping strategies (Yi & Baumgartner, 2011). Studies have categorically proved the clarity of the two concepts that compulsive buying is a conspicuously different phenomenon (Flight et al., 2012; Xiao & Nicholson, 2013).

Store Environment

The retail environment means all those elements present in the store and is under the retailer's control, affecting the shoppers' buying behavior in favor of the seller (Huang, & Chen, 2017). The impact of selling store environments on buyer insights and practice is a matter which has gained comparatively little consideration and is considered an essential element to develop store image. The perception of atmospherics expresses the store atmosphere as the struggle to design purchasing atmospheres to yield an emotional impact that increases buying likelihood. The effect of store environments on buyer behavior such

as surfing and money spent in the store have been studied broadly (Verplanken & Sato, 2011). In addition, scholars have called for more research to understand further the impact of store environments on consumer impulse buying.

Buying impulsiveness is a consumer's propensity to purchase suddenly, unreflectively, instantly, and kinetically. Store environmental factors such as social (employee pleasantness) certainly impact buying behavior. However, the effects of other aspects of atmospheric stimuli on purchases permit reinvestigation from the consumer's viewpoint, and it can be identified in sensory terms. Touch, sound, and sight are the leading sensory channels for the atmosphere (Zhang, Winterich, and Mittal, 2010). The atmosphere is mainly significant for the seller when the competitive outlets drastically increase when there is little difference between product and price or when product entries are intended at different societal classes or lifestyle buyer groups. As the introduction of the atmospherics concept, scholars have used two methodologies to study the influence of stores on spending behavior (Lloyd. 2014).

Perceived Crowdedness

Crowdedness is described as the population density per unit area (Maeng & Tanner, 2013; Maeng et al., 2013). Crowdedness results in the physical closeness of consumers in a limited zone. In a crowded environment, people avoid each other, which sometimes results in an aversive situation that may lead to various confrontational moments (Guinn, Tanner, & Maeng, 2015). For instance, crowded inhabitants are characterized by many psychiatric admittances, increased morbidity and mortality rate, and more frequent youthful crime. Furthermore, crowding can be a reason for anxiety, uncontrolled emotions, and averting situations. Crowdedness in the open market may negatively affect consumers' contentment and spending interval. Likewise, consumers feel reluctant to purchase products they find in a congested spending atmosphere (Guinn et al., 2015). Once a consumer develops a feeling that his space is occupied, his intellect of independence and exclusivity is susceptible. This situation stimulates the consumers to reaffirm their liberty, as revealed in preference for new diverse choices or sole choice substitutions (Xu, Shen, & Wyer, 2012). Crowdedness could also motivate consumers to make an effort to control their personal space by limiting communication with other consumers. So, people in a highly populated condition might avoid annoying dealings by looking away from other individuals, thus passing through a filter by avoiding responses from their direct social surroundings (X. I. Huang, Huang, & Wyer, 2017).

Perceived Noisiness

Hearing and listening in selling surroundings are generally associated with the music perspective (Helmefalk & Hulten, 2017; Jain & Bagdare, 2011) audibility and noise. It is somewhat evident to retailers that auditory sensory cues affect consumer cognition and psychological practices, state of emotions, like mood, valence, excitement, and buying decisions (Andersson et al., 2012; Jain & Bagdare, 2011). Ambient background sound influences consumer buying practices daily and assists them to navigate by finding articles more rapidly (Chen & Spence, 2010). In retail stores, this means that soothing environmental sounds may include product or service sounds produced because of irrepressible cues, like the level of noise by talking consumers or environmentally naturally occurring retail sounds. In a retail environment, noise influences consumers' perceptions, buying behavior, and emotions (Demoulin, 2011; Jain & Bagdare, 2011).

In extensive research, Helmefalk and Hulten (2017) and their colleagues have discovered emotional reactions to atmospheres. Over and done with their research work, they have established that two dimensions related to environmental aspects are critical in eliciting the emotional response: pleasure-displeasure and amount of stimulation. So, we can say that any natural or artificial environment can be positioned in a two-dimensional space replicating peoples' passionate reaction to the place. Studies show that vigorous reaction measured on those measurements can determine behaviors concerning the environment. For instance, surroundings that provoke happiness allow people to spend time and resources, while unpleasant environments are avoided. Likewise, exciting atmospheres are rated positively unless the delight is joint with obnoxiousness. That is why unpleasant environments with high stimulation (lots of motivation, noise, and misunderstanding) are mainly avoided. Hui and Bateson (1991) found that increased perceptions of individual control are associated positively with increased pleasure in environmental crowding.

Brand Attachment

Though the studies have scanned attachment in interpersonal perspectives, the exploration in marketing proposes that consumers can also have affections and attachments to marketplace articles, including product brands (Shimul, 2015), figures (Thomson, 2006), and distinctive belongings (Kleine & Baker, 2004). We can express brand attachment as the power of the association linking the brand with the personality. According to the attachment concept Mikulincer & Shaver (2007), this connection is illustrated by a manageable memory network (or mental representation) that includes beliefs and moods about the brand and the brand's relationship with personnel. Psychological theories describe attachment as the link between an individual and an item or other articles (Whan

Park et al., 2010). Brand attachment is a longstanding and guarantee-oriented bond in the middle of the brand and the consumers (Esch et al., 2006; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Two essential aspects reveal the conceptual stuff of brand attachment: brand self-connection and brand prominence.

Brand– self-connection. The idea that attachment comprises a necessary bond that includes the mental and sensitive association between the brand and the self describes here and somewhere else as a brand self-connection (Chaplin & Roedder John, 2005). When consumers assume a part of themselves, a sense of unity is developed with the brand, beginning a mental connection that ties the brand with the self. Although intellectual in its illustration, this bond between brand and self is naturally sensitive (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Park & MacInnis, 2006; Thomson, 2006), relating numerous and possibly intricate emotions regarding the brand, comprising grief and nervousness from a brand–self separation, pleasure and relief from the brand–self contiguity and vanity from the brand–self exhibition. Consumers are also connected to a brand because it denotes who they are (provides an identity) or because it is significant considering objectives, personal anxieties, or life plans (an instrumentality basis; (Mittal, 2006).

Brand prominence. Apart from brand self-connection, earlier studies recommended the degree by which positive approaches and recalls about the attachment item are supposed to be at the top of attention shows an indication of attachment. Rendering to (Collins 1996; Mikulincer, 1998), pleasant memories regarding the attached entity are more projecting for individuals who have a solid attachment to the object than those who display a frail attachment. The belief that brand self-connections establish with time and form skill proposes that the thoughts and emotions related to the brand turn out to be a portion of an individual's commemoration and differ in the apparent articulacy or comfort they strike to the mind. We know this element as brand prominence. Brand– self-connection is a central attachment element because it reveals attachment as the link joining a person with the brand. We suggest that brand prominence enhances the accuracy in computing the power of the connection linking the brand to the consumer. The reason behind that is that when beliefs and emotions regarding the brand are handier, prominence can have a powerful impact on decision-making (Whan Park et al., 2010) and, eventually, on consumer buying behavior (Akçura, Gönül, & Petrova, 2004).

Store Environment and Consumer Buying Behaviour

Fundamental research in marketing assists the postulation that the environment providing the physical services impacts the consumer behavior through education supporting organized discrepancy in consumer considerations and behavior accredited to

physical consumption environmental features. Notably, studies on store environments document the retail environment's ability to change consumer feelings. Situational aspects are external factors that affect the consumers when purchasing (Kacen et al., 2012). These are typically not controlled by the consumers but directly affect purchasing behavior. Situational factors are supposed to comprise five dimensions and each angle, i.e., the store's environment, social impact, time (Foroughi, Buang, & Sadeghi, 2012). Resources and credit card available (has an association with impulse buying behavior (Khan et al., 2015). Generation Y is expected to purchase on impulse if they have the time money (Dong-Jenn, Huang, & Feng, 2011) and are encircled in a relaxed store environment (Khan et al., 2015). Apart from that, social suitability has also influenced consumers to engage in impulse buying.

Nonetheless, the association between instinctive behavior and actual behavior is fading if a consumer favors impulse buying behavior as unsuitable because of some ins and outs. Under these circumstances, even a consumer who remarkably shows impulsiveness has a little likelihood of ensuring his desire for purchasing (Wu & Huan, 2010). These changes in emotions influence the consumer's mood-affecting buying behavior and the evaluation of consumers' post-shopping. Emotions induced by a retail environment also influence shopping performance and contribute to consumers' purchasing decisions. Thus, there is significant experimental, conceptual, and informal proof for recommendations suggesting a consumer emotion-patronage behavior relationship.

H_1: Store environment has a positive impact on consumer buying behavior.

Perceived Crowdedness and Consumers Buying Behaviours

Crowdedness is described as the population density per unit area (Guinn et al., 2015; Maeng & Tanner, 2013; Maeng et al., 2013). Crowdedness results in the physical closeness of consumers in a limited zone. In a crowded environment, people avoid each other, which sometimes results in an aversive situation that may lead to various confrontational moments (X. I. Huang et al., 2017). For instance, crowded inhabitants are characterized by a high degree of psychiatric admittances, an increase in morbidity and mortality rate, and more frequency of juvenile crime. Furthermore, crowding can be a reason for anxiety, uncontrolled emotions, and averting situations. Congested buying settings are standard in our routine life. For instance, shopping malls offering discounts have a more congested environment than those high-end shopping malls; crowdedness is at its peak in stores on weekends than during weekdays and has a congested environment earlier on Christmas than later.

The majority of the time, consumers feel unpleasant in a crowded atmosphere. When a consumer has a feeling that his space is being occupied, their intellect of independence and exclusivity is vulnerable. This situation stimulates the consumer to reaffirm his liberty, as revealed in preference for new diverse choices or single choice substitutions. For instance, this could constrict one's level of understanding (Maeng & Tanner, 2013) and reduce the control over their feelings. In the shopping atmosphere, perhaps this could lessen consumer contentment (Muruganantham & Bhakat, 2013b), shrink the time spent on purchasing, and negatively influence the assessment of products during shopping (Guinn et al., 2015). The shopping environments involve the mob of purchasers, store size, ambiance, scheme, and layouts, whereas the selling atmosphere involves numerous sales and marketing accomplishments. When consumers encounter related graphical provocation in shopping stores or other persuasive incitements, the urge for purchasing could be prompted.

Impulse purchasing is thought to be appropriate in today's shopping setting having advanced sales campaigns, innovative messages, and proper usage of expertise in the shopping stores (Muruganantham & Bhakat, 2013a). Muruganantham and Bhakat (2013b) recommended that impulse purchasing starts when a consumer is exposed to a stimulus when he is in the store. The several factors inside the store directly or secondarily affect the consumer's buying behavior. The environment of the stories is subjective to characteristics such as design, lighting, the appearance of commodities, furniture, surface casings, noise, colors, dress, and the behavior of staff. Extremely motivating and pleasing surroundings increase buying. The appearance of Products and contextual music are critical factors for the consumer (X. I. Huang et al., 2017). Crowdedness can negatively influence consumer gratification and buying intervals inside the stores.

Furthermore, consumers feel reluctant are to spend on those merchandises they come across in a congested shopping atmosphere (Guinn et al., 2015). This situation stimulates the consumer to reaffirm liberty, as revealed in preference for new diverse choices or sole choice substitutions (Xu et al., 2012). So, people in a highly populated condition might avoid annoying dealings by looking away from other individuals, thus passing through a filter by avoiding responses from their direct social surroundings.

H_2: Perceived crowdedness has a significant impact on consumer buying behavior.

Perceived Noiseless and Consumers Buying Behaviours

Research shows that when a consumer comes into the stores, the background music and noise inside will unconsciously affect the consumer's purchasing behaviors. It has been

established that when consumers demonstrate a positive response to noise, the consciousness of waiting time will also be prejudiced. Research by Helmefalk and Hulten (2017) discovered that when a consumer is exposed to a noisy atmosphere, it will lessen the time interval consumed on spending. On the contrary, when the noise inside the store has small space, and background music played inside the store is pleasant and slow, both time and money spent will be more by the consumers. Furthermore, noise and music will affect the emotional reaction of consumers (Khorrami et al., 2015) and lessen anxiety from waiting as it can be understood that suitable sound help to produce enjoyable feelings in consumers. Thus, the sound in the shopping store can affect the consumer's mood and thinking. Hence affects consumer buying behavior.

H₃: Perceived noisiness has a negative impact on consumer buying behavior.

Mediating Role of Brand attachment

Recent research shows that respondents with compulsive behavior have an emotive connection with brands (Japutra, Ekinci, & Simkin, 2019). Y.-K. Lee, Chang, Lin, and Cheng (2014) observed that consumers are committed to specific brands as they are money-oriented and restless with the contemporaneous demanding figurative safety. Earlier research revealed that materialism and the propensity of compulsive purchasing are very much interconnected (Johnson & Attmann, 2009). X. I. Huang et al. (2017) described those consumers who do not have personal attachments depend on substantial belongings as ancillary affection. Hence, consumers develop a materialistic approach to lessen their nervousness. Rendering to Roberts and Jones (2001), nervousness enhances compulsiveness in purchasing behavior. Furthermore, consumers having a strong attachment to a brand spend extra possessions (money or time) for the brand. Therefore, stronger brand attachment results in more compulsive buying propensity. In recent times Kaufmann et al. (2016) explain that consumers showing an advanced level of brand attachment are expected to buy goods of the brand, either prototypes or imitations. Shimul (2015) debated that brand attachments have an association with the sentimental status of the brand. Brands are proficient in inducing a consumer's wistful understanding by considering their experience with a specific brand in the past (Whan Park et al., 2010). If brands can induce sentimental experiences, consumers will have a solid attachment to those brands and enhance the probability of gathering brand artifacts (Shimul, 2015). Therefore, the current research suggests the hypothesis as:

H₄: Brand Attachment has a significant impact on consumer buying behavior.

It has been explained as the entire imprint epitomized in the commemoration as supposed features related to the store, which are both independent and interdependent in the consumer's mind, learned from present and earlier experience to stimuli (Thomson, MacInnis, & Whan Park, 2005). Association between store environment and experience inside the store remained a discussing point in studies. Previous circumstances of store image, like environment, retail range, and salespeople, can influence the experience of consumers inside the store, and hence their brand experience is also affected (Whan Park et al., 2010). Likewise, elegant furnishing, shiny finishes, interactive presentation, proficient sales personals, and high-profile, high-valued real estate (of a store) help create an exclusive and distinct experience (Thomson, 2006). The collective impact of the store environment, sales staff, diversity of items, eminence, and additional precursors of store image helps the consumers establish a strong attachment with their brand (Shimul, 2015). Thus, help us to postulate the hypothesis as:

H5: Brand attachment mediate the relationship between store environment and consumer buying behavior.

Crowdedness is the population density per unit area (Guinn et al., 2015; Maeng & Tanner, 2013). Crowdedness results in the physical closeness of consumers in a limited zone. In a crowded environment, people avoid each other, which sometimes results in an aversive situation that may lead to various confrontational moments (Reis & Sprecher, 2009; Stokols, 1972). For instance, crowded inhabitants are characterized by many psychiatric admittances, increased morbidity and mortality rate, and more frequent youthful crime. Furthermore, crowding can prompt anxiety (Collette & Webb, 1976), uncontrolled emotions, and averting situations (Harrell, Hutt, & Anderson, 1980). Crowdedness in the open market may negatively affect consumers' contentment and spending interval (Eroglu, Machleit, & Barr, 2005). Likewise, consumers feel reluctant to spend on products they find in a congested spending atmosphere (Guinn et al., 2015). So, individuals in highly populated conditions escape annoying dealings by ignoring other individuals thus pass through a filter by avoiding responses from their direct social surroundings (Evans & Wener, 2007). But, this escape from interacting with people socially has negative significance.

For instance, this basic need of people remained unfulfilled. Thus, how does an individual handle a crowded aversive condition and still fulfill their need to belong? One way to fulfill this need is to increase affection for non-human items like brands. Personnel has a vital requirement towards belongingness, and hence keeping a societal connection has been a prevailing hominoid object (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Once the

circumstances weaken the attachment link, individuals will look for other items to form this connection. Therefore, people who face relational obstructions have a finely tuned aspiration to re-join with other close persons (Mead et al., 2010). On the other hand, if this is not possible instantly, people try to gratify the requirement of belongingness by some other means.

For instance, people attempt to accomplish this need for the association by following others or buying entities that indicate their general relationship with other individuals and groups (Wan, Xu, & Ding, 2013). Though brands are not MacInnis human objects, sometimes they can be made humanized (giving a name, human-like physical characters). To such a level, they can substitute for attachment bases (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). Solid association with a brand, like individuals, develops with time because of multiple connections between the purchaser and the brand (Lastovicka & Sirianni, 2011; Thomson et al., 2005; Whan Park et al., 2010).

On the other hand, factors that intimidate consumers' emotions of attachment may enhance the need for belongingness and subsequently impact the attachment to aims in non-social domains. As observed previously, mature and isolated consumers, generally having fewer societal networks in routine life, are more expected to make attachments to the products they utilize. Likewise, socially omitted people can form relations with brands showing human-like (humanized) features because, for them, these brands are probably the best substitutes that can offer social links (R. P. Chen, Wan, & Levy, 2017). Affection towards the brand can be affected via non-social aspects, which momentarily enhance the need for the association. However, earlier studies recommend that the absence of social networks can stimulate individuals to use brands as an alternative to accomplishing the need for belongingness. We suggest that individuals in the congested atmosphere will be reluctant to communicate with others in nearby surroundings.

Consequently, we will be further inclined to associate with non-human objects, like brands. To this degree, brands are not considered an alternative for human affection but somewhat as alternatives to it. For instance, autistic people, who do not like to interact socially, take away from societal connections. On the other hand, fulfill the need to belong through fastening themselves to particular figurines, like keys, tin cans, or additional non-living objects (S. Lee, Odom, & Loftin, 2007). Likewise, in a congested environment where people tend to avoid social interaction, they may go for their belongings such as their mobile phones to avoid interacting with individuals in the adjacent atmospheres (Andrews, Luo, Fang, & Ghose, 2015). It is perceived that the jam-packed environment lessens an individual's aspiration for interaction with other individuals. Though, this approach does not essentially affect the general need for belongingness. But the ways to fulfill their desire

are affected. Consequently, if crowdedness led persons to discover viewpoint of interaction with individuals aversive, this might also lessen the moods of affection to personnel. As it may result in not accomplishing their needs for belongingness, they may fulfill their need by enhancing their attachment with non-human objectives. Thus:

H_6: Brand attachment mediate the relationship between perceived crowdedness and consumer buying behavior.

Sound is a basic sense of human beings developed inside the womb. According to the physiological point of view, hearing is much more delicate than sight in different ways. Nevertheless, it is essential for interaction as it is the only sense that alarms us to endangerment. Emotions and feelings physiologically transfer both music and sound; therefore, it is a direct technique to stimulate feelings directing at the dynamic features of products and, consequently, the brand (Aruna & Santhi, 2015). Therefore, sound contributes to an increased brand perception among the target consumers. Studies on the sound sense have revealed that noise influences the store atmosphere and consumer behavior by producing connections and arousing memories. According to scholars, various types of rational expressions- jingles, voices, music, sound branding, signature sound- facilitate a sound experience and assist in attaining distinction (Alexander & Nobbs, 2016).In large market sellers, the noise was stated to have a somewhat lousy impact; the sample identified the sound as excessively lurid, and that secondary noise of people: other buyers and staff proclamations were disturbing that can negatively impact the consumers. But if the consumer is attached to a brand, that relationship is converted into a positive association. That is why we state that:

H_7: Brand attachment mediate the relationship between perceived noisiness and consumer buying behavior.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model
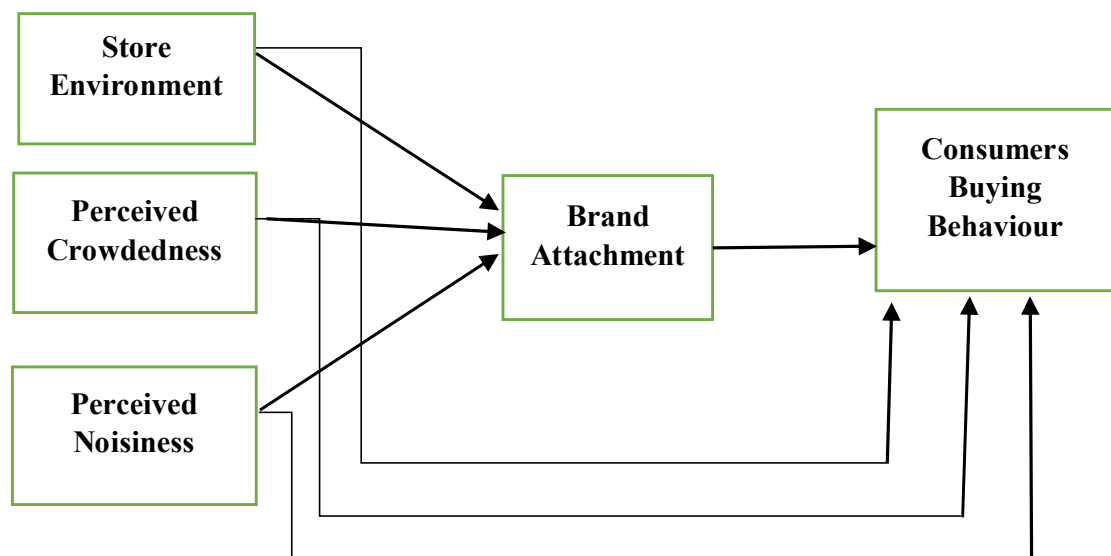
Research Methodology

The target population of this study is those consumers who are directly involved in shopping in different stores. The store is the physical place that consumer usually visits to buy a product (Alazzawi & Farcuta, 2012). We selected those shopping malls because multiple brands are available under one roof, and consumers feel more comfortable in these stores where they can easily purchase what they want. There are almost eight large shopping malls located in Lahore city. We selected individuals from different stores as they are the best population to tell about buying behaviors. First, we have surveyed through a mini questionnaire to find out the most popular brand among the consumers. Then, the mini questionnaire was circulated among the consumers. The response to this survey was recorded, and then the main questionnaire was emailed to those consumers through TCS and courier services. So, the Target population is class people shopping in hyper stores, large shopping malls such as Metro, Hyperstar, Emporium Mall, and Packages Mall. Individual consumers shopping in retail stores are the unit of analysis.

Furthermore, the sample size of this research is 350. Samples are collected by non-probability sampling technique, expressed as the chances of each event for selection from the entire population are unknown. It is not possible to respond to research questions or address the objectives required to establish statistical interpretations regarding the characteristics of the population (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). We have applied convenience sampling for data collection. The convenience sampling method is a way to collect data randomly in the most effective way by considering different factors like access, time, and cost.

Structured questionnaires are used in this study to collect data from respondents. Careful attention is paid primarily to the words and order of the questions. Items are neatly organized and conveniently shared. Total questionnaires were distributed at the shopping after permission from various shopping malls. Questionnaires are filled by respondents individually in a natural environment. Initially, we circulated 500 questionnaires to the consumers; some of the questionnaires were incomplete, but in the end, we were able to collect data from almost 350 respondents who are supposed to be sufficient for research. Now, this response, Primary data is employed to respond to the study inquiries and the hypothesis.

Measures

Consumer buying behavior is the study of persons, groups, or businesses and the methods they adopt to select, protect, utilize and dispose of products, services, experiences, or attitudes to fulfill the needs and the consequences of these processes on consumers and

the society (Al-Azzam, 2014). It is measured through the five items scale developed by Karbasivar and Yarahmadi (2011). The store environment is the physical features and adjacent impact of a merchandising store that appeals to consumers. The scale used by Akram et al. (2016) consists of four items. All items are measured on the five-point Likert scale where 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree.

Crowdedness regards the population density per unit area (Guinn et al., 2015; Maeng & Tanner, 2013; Maeng et al., 2013). It was measured through a three-item scale crowded, little too busy, and many consumers. It was measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. Perceived noisiness discusses the level by which the consumer feels the sound stimulation in the store; a music stimulus is an insubstantial background environment; it is a visual feeling that can affect the consumer's subconscious (Wang et al., 2017). Jha, Singh, and Suresh (2014) measure it through three items scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. Brand attachment is an enduring and guarantee-oriented link in the middle of the brand and consumers (Esch et al., 2006; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). To measure brand attachment, respondents are requested to specify their emotions far the brand of mobile phone they are using by (Thomson 2006) responding to six items taken from the scale of brand attachment, specifically: affectionate, friendly, love, peaceful, passionate, delighted, captivated, connected, bonded, and attached. Answers are reported in scales from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data Analysis and Results

This section describes the analysis carried out and shows the experimental results to check the postulated assumptions. After the introduction, the second portion shows the fundamental analysis of the data. A general explanation of the respondents involved in the survey is provided in the subsequent portion. Outcomes of measurement model are utilized to evaluate the outer loading, validity, and reliability of the constructs, path coefficient, specific indirect effects, and construct cross-validated redundancy is presented in next section.

Data Editing and Coding

Once the process for collection of data is completed, it is then edited to confirm the comprehensiveness of the data. It includes inspecting the data collection forms from errors, legibility, and reliability among grouping (Moses, 2012). As per recommendation from Sekaran and Bougie (2016), respondents who filled a minimum of two-thirds of the survey forms are included for sampling in our study. After that, collected data is manually inserted

into a data file in SPSS. There are two main methods to carry out the process: pre-coding or post coding (Gringart, Helmes, & Speelman, 2005). We applied the pre-coding method in this study, whereas all the question items are precoded with numeric values. To roll out the out-of-range value, we exercise the Frequency analyses process for each variable. Any value out of the limit is re-examined and corrected where necessary.

Data Screening

Screening is essential to confirm that all the data is correct, free from outliers, and affirms that all variables are distributed normally. Affirmation to normality is necessary because this is the supposition required to apply SEM (Kline, 2005), and thus, the data file is studied carefully. When respondents cannot answer a question of one or more items, we usually encounter missing data. The data screening reveals a negligible amount of missing data (less than 5%). Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2013) stressed that up to 10%   of missing data does not affect any severe error in explaining the results.

Current studies recommend that the best option to handle missing data is through Expected Maximization (EM) compared to other approaches like mean substitution and list-wise deletion method (Graham et al., 1997). However, as the missing data was negligible, the choice of the process does not substantially impact the statistics as every process has its advantages and disadvantages. So, these missing values were interchanged with the mean response of the individual variable. This approach is considered to be the best suitable because mean substitution is the standard and broadly applied technique (Schwab, 2013) for the handling of missing data as it is based on effective responses that make the average a most acceptable alternative of missing data

Table 01: Respondents Profile of Survey 1

Respondents Characteristics	Numbers	Percentage
Gender		
Male	132	80%
Female	33	20%
Age		
Below 25 years	11	7%
26-30 years	26	16%
31-35 years	50	30%
36-40 years	29	18%
41-45 years	28	17%
46-50 years	15	9%
Above 50 years	5	3%
Favourite Brand		
Junaid Jamshaid	26	16%
Satrangi	5	3%
Sapphire	3	2%
Limelight	5	3%
Outfitters	3	2%
Kayseria	3	2%
Gul Ahmed	10	6%
Nishat	16	10%
Warda	10	6%
Khaadi	28	17%
Sana Safina	5	3%
Bonanza	8	5%
Uniworth	23	14%
Bareeze	18	11%
Brand Feature		
Quality	97	59%
Price	8	5%
Design	46	28%
Accessibility	13	8%
Visit to Brand		
Weekly	12	7%
Monthly	74	45%
Quarterly	61	37%
Semiannually	18	11%

Entire data for survey one has been presented in table 1 in statistics and percentages for ease of understanding. The total number of respondents for survey 1 is 165. Eighty percent (132) of the total sample size are male, while 33 females respond to this survey, accounting for 20% of the total sample size. Most of the sample population (90%) for

survey 1 is from 26 years to 50 years. The majority of the sample population (68%) selected the top five brands as their favorite brand, which we included in survey 2. Almost 88 percent of respondents (145) preferred the quality and design of cloth to select the brand.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis for Survey 2

Respondents Characteristics		Numbers	Percentage
Gender			
	Male	253	85%
	Female	58	15%
Age			
	Below 25 years	22	7%
	26-30 years	49	16%
	31-35 years	81	26%
	36-40 years	58	18%
	41-45 years	65	21%
	46-50 years	24	8%
	Above 50 years	12	4%
Occupation			
	Employed	211	68%
	Unemployed	15	5%
	Student at School	9	3%
	Student at college/university	48	15%
	Others	28	9%
Monthly income			
	Below 20 Thousand	23	7%
	20 thousand- 50 Thousand	87	36%
	50 Thousand-100 Thousand	130	42%
	Above 100 Thousand	71	23%

The total sample size for survey two consists of 311 respondents, shown in table 2. The majority of the respondents are male (85%), and the remaining (15%) are female. Everyone among the respondents (99%) can understand the English Language showing that they do not face difficulties interpreting the form. Most of the respondents are less than 46 years old (88%) regarding age. The majority of the respondents were employed (68%). Finally, most respondents had monthly income between 20 thousand to above 100 thousand (93%).

Table 3: Validity and Reliability of Constructs

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Consumers Buying Behaviour	0.883	0.889	0.915	0.683
Store Environment	0.844	0.853	0.895	0.681
Perceived Crowdedness	0.796	0.810	0.879	0.708
Perceived Noisiness	0.707	0.716	0.835	0.628
Brand Attachment	0.890	0.893	0.916	0.646

Reliability measures are free from random inaccuracies and produce reliable outcomes (Moses, 2012). The purpose of reliability is to reduce the prejudices and inaccuracies in the study (Yin, 1994). In this study, the reliability of construct is measured through 1) construct reliability (CR), 2) Cronbach's alpha and 3) average variance extracted (AVE). Cronbach's alpha is a widely used method to evaluate reliability (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). It is supposed to be the primary method the scholars use to determine the reliability of the data (Churchill Jr, 1979). For the acceptance of reliability, different scales are recommended in the literature. For example, (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1978) recommends that alpha be more than 0.70 to show internal reliability. Whereas, Carmines and Zeller (1979) recommend the acceptance criteria of 0.80 for internal reliability. As for as new levels of acceptance are concerned, a level of 0.60 is reliable (Carmines & Zeller, 1978). Instead of numerous points of view on acceptance level, it is commonly established that a value of alpha 0.70 and greater is reliable to designate internal reliability. So, this study considered 0.70 as a thresh-hold value to show the reliability of the constructs.

Validity is described as the capacity of a gauge to evaluate what is planned to be measured (Moses, 2012). Mainly validity is of three kinds: criterion validity content constructs, convergent and discriminant validity. Content validity evaluates the level of content of a scale used to evaluate a construct (Malhotra, Agarwal, & Peterson, 1996). To evaluate content validity, vigilant consideration was agreed for the development of questionnaires. For example, only authenticated dimensions obtained from previous studies are utilized in our research. Additionally, the questionnaires were passed through a back-translation process. With the help of this process, remarks from professionals on the phrasing of the items in the questionnaires were examined. All unclear phrases were

corrected. Though understanding the subjective nature of content validity, other parameters for the valuation of validity are used to authenticate the constructs in the current study.

Construct validity is related to the instrument's assessment (Churchill Jr, 1979). So, construct validity talks about the level by which several items being measured replicates the latent construct those items are considered to evaluate (Moorthy et al., 2012). Construct validity is evaluated by examining both discriminant and convergent validity. As per the recommendations of Sekaran and Bougie (2016), convergent validity evaluates whether the items of the same variable are very much interrelated, whereas discriminant validity assesses the measures of variables that are not interrelated too highly with other variables.

The current study analyses discriminant and convergent validity by accompanying confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). To develop convergent validity, at least fundamental factors loading must be significant, and the standard loading level must be 0.50 or greater (Shanka, Quintal, & Taylor, 2006). Furthermore, average variance extracted (AVE) is another gauge for assistant convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). On the contrary, discriminant validity is developed once the approximate correspondences among the factors are less than 0.85 (Kline, 2005). Criterion validity can evaluate correlation by other standard measures of a similar construct (Moses, 2012). Criterion validity is identical to convergent validity. Evaluation of convergent validity incidentally shows that criterion validity is fulfilled (Malhotra et al., 1996).

Our study value of Cronbach's Alpha lies between "0.707 to 0.945", which shows that all constructs have impartially standard factor loading values. The validity and reliability of Composite Reliability (CR) values and Cronbach's Alpha values are greater than 0.7 (Tenenhaus et al., 2005) and are acceptable. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is commonly used to evaluate convergent validity, and the least value should be 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Moreover, it shows that the latent construct apprehended at least 50% of measurement variance. All the constructs were measured for their validity and reliability. Complete effects are shown in Table 3.

Table 4: Discriminant Validity

Constructs	Brand Attachment	Consumers Buying Behaviour	Perceived Crowdedness	Perceived Noisiness	Store Environment
Brand Attachment	**0.804**				
Consumers Buying Behaviour	0.702	**0.826**			
Perceived Crowdedness	0.720	0.700	**0.842**		
Perceived Noisiness	0.725	0.761	0.602	**0.793**	
Store Environment	0.693	0.719	0.664	0.658	**0.825**

Moreover, to find out the discriminant validity, the Fornell-Larcker criterion was used, shown in Table 4. Highlighted values in Table 3 are the square root of AVE, greater than the predictable correlation values, indicating the discriminant validity of constructs used in the suggested models. Overall, the results fulfill the necessities for establishing the validity and reliability of reflective measurement models. The value for Discriminant validity should be less than 0.85. Moreover, the HTMT ratio of correlations recommended by (Henseler, Hubona, & Ray, 2016) was also considered the latest criterion to evaluate discriminant validity of constructs present in measurement models. As per recommendations, the value of HTMT more than 0.85 shows a prospective issue for discriminant validity (Farooq et al., 2018). In this research, all values are less than the minimum level of 0.85, which shows no problem with discriminant validity.

Table 5: Outer Loading Values

Items	CBB	SE	PC	PN	BA
CCB1	0.842				
CCB2	0.765				
CCB3	0.841				
CCB4	0.900				
CCB5	0.777				
SE1		0.778			
SE2		0.859			
SE3		0.855			
SE4		0.806			
PC1			0.813		
PC2			0.838		
PC3			0.873		
PN1				0.769	
PN2				0.795	
PN3				0.813	
BA1					0.839
BA2					0.810
BA3					0.783
BA4					0.827
BA5					0.751
BA6					0.810

Note: SE= Store Environment, PN= Perceived Noisiness, PC= Perceived Crowdedness; CBB=Consumers Buying Behaviour, BA= Brand Attachment

Many items are being used to measure each variable in every measurement model. If the items used for measuring variables become redundant, then the measurement model needs to be specified again by eliminating those redundant items (Kline, 2005). After eradicating these items, we obtain a parsimonious Uni-dimensional construct (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). To obtain the Uni-dimensionality of the variables, items specific for evaluating a suggested fundamental variable should have comparatively high values of loadings (0.50 or more) on that factor (Hair et al., 2014; Moorthy et al., 2012). Secondly, the predictable correlations among the variables ought to be less than 0.85 (Kline, 2005). Finally, the model should also fulfill the criteria to meet the multiple fit indices.

In any condition when the measurement model is not fulfilling the criteria mentioned above, standardized residual covariance and modification index are evaluated as these can indicate the reasons for the misfit. In the measurement model, previously developed items are observed variables and shown in rectangular and factor (variable) oval shape. Only arrows with single head connecting the factor to indicators and single headed

arrows joining the mistake related to their specific gauges. The arrows with double heads indicate the relationships between factors. The statistics on the arrows joining the factors to their respective items are factor loadings. Outer loading is used to determine the reliability of individual items of a variable. Loading more than 0.70 shows the item's reliability. Loading values of all the variables involved in the construct of the reflective measurement model are present in this table. In our study, all the values range from 0.751 to 0.900, presented in table 5, which is higher than 0.7 suggested by (Hulland 1999).

Table 6: Path Coefficient

Hypothesis	Beta value	T Statistics	P Values	Result
Store Environment → Consumers Buying Behaviour	0.146	2.560	0.011	Supported
Perceived Crowdeness → Consumers Buying Behaviour	0.100	2.380	0.018	Supported
Perceived Noisiness → Consumers Buying Behaviour	0.278	4.626	0.000	Supported
Brand Attachment→ Consumers Buying Behaviour	0.482	7.368	0.000	Supported
Store Environment → Brand Attachment	0.391	6.062	0.000	Supported
Perceived Crowdeness → Brand Attachment	0.215	5.229	0.000	Supported
Perceived Noisiness →Brand Attachment	0.408	7.491	0.000	Supported

Path coefficient evaluation plays a vital role in deciding whether the relationship between the established hypotheses is found in data. All the researchers considered absolute values and significance levels of path coefficient. Researchers should keep the value of the path coefficient in mind because even in significant relationships, it might be too small to affirm managerial attention. If the path coefficient value is greater than 0.20, the connection is relevant (Chin, Thatcher, & Wright, 2012). In the current study, all the values are comparable to the standard range.

Table 7: Specific Indirect Affect

Hypotheses	Beta value	T Statistics	P Values	Result
Store Environment → Brand Attachment→ Consumers Buying Behaviour	0.188	4.520	0.000	Supported
Perceived Crowdeness → Brand Attachment→ Consumers Buying Behaviour	0.103	4.273	0.000	Supported
Perceived Noisiness → Brand Attachment→ Consumers Buying Behaviour	0.197	5.361	0.000	Supported

Specific Indirect effect: We checked the mediating role of brand attachment between Independent variables like store environment, perceived crowdedness, perceived noisiness, and dependent variable, consumer buying behavior. According to the results mediating the role of brand, attachment has been established. We hypothesized that store environment, perceived crowdedness, and perceived noisiness have a significant relationship with consumer buying behavior. We used the partial mediation criteria of Sarstedt et al. (2020).

We also postulated that all these variables have a significant relationship with brand attachment. Then brand attachment plays a mediating role between store environment, perceived noisiness and crowdedness, and consumers' buying behavior. We have evaluated the mediating effect of brand attachment on consumer buying behavior. The results revealed that brand attachment mediates the relationship between store environment, perceived crowdedness, perceived noisiness, and consumer buying behavior. The direct effect of Brand Attachment on consumer buying behavior is also significant ($p < 0.05$). The outcomes revealed that brand attachment mediates the relationship between store environment, perceived crowdedness and noisiness, and consumer buying behavior.

Conclusion

This research is conducted to explore the variables impacting consumer buying behavior, facilitate the retailers' better understanding of consumers' needs, and make their businesses more lucrative and viable by increasing purchasing from consumers. This study provides a deep insight into how to store environment, perceived crowdedness, and perceived noisiness influence consumers' buying behavior. Generally, the physical store environment affects consumers' buying behavior, which is vital in developing a solid attachment with brands. The findings of our study also support our hypothesis that the store environment has a significant positive relationship with consumer buying behavior.

Secondly, crowdedness and noisiness in the stores also impact consumers' purchasing behavior. The results of our study also support this hypothesis. Furthermore, after the literature review, it was assumed that brand attachment plays a mediating role between the store environment, perceived crowdedness, perceived noisiness, and consumer buying behavior. Statistical analysis of our study also supports this hypothesis that store environment and perceived crowdedness are the variables responsible for developing brand attachment and ultimately affect consumers' buying behavior.

Theoretical Implications

Previous studies have shown a great negative impact of the crowded environment. In a crowded environment, consumers have a feeling of restriction, and this can induce anxiety among the consumers, and they can lose control (Hui & Bateson, 1991). So, it results in a reduction of time the consumers stay in the shopping environment and guide the consumers to escape and reduces the interaction with sales staff (Harrell, Hutt, & Anderson, 1980), and this will destructively affect their behavior with the store (Hui & Bateson, 1991) and the brands being sold in the store (Guinn et al., 2015). On the other hand, we discover that when a consumer is exposed to a crowded atmosphere, it will significantly impact the relationship between brand and consumer. Though the crowded environment stimulates the consumers not to interact with other people, it helps enhance the association between consumers and brands and strengthens this relationship.

Managerial Implications of Study

The current study suggests many implications that would be beneficial for retailers who want to invite new consumers and enhance store benefaction. Retail managers can benefit from this research by considering the circumstances that can influence the buying. This study stressed the strategic significance of using the in-store environment to encourage impulse purchasing decisions among consumers to enhance sales and revenue. As Cooper, Gutierrez, and Hameed (2004) stated, an increase in shopping frequency is strongly associated with surfing activity; traders may also use the study results to increase their retail collection and make the shopping atmosphere better with store displays to activate impulsive buying. It is also of supreme importance for retailers to combine their in-store promotional aspects because economic and environmental engagement elements might holistically balance each other to yield positive sales results.

In a highly competitive atmosphere, only those retailers can persist and prosper who can go beyond their clients' prospects in facilitating a pleasant shopping experience. Evaluating brand association is also supportive for marketers for understanding the strong point of the bonding between the brand and consumers. These understandings will offer marketing managers gadgets and skills to benefit the progressive, competitive brand

market. Crowdedness is a natural part of routine life (shopping malls, subway, and restaurants). Marketers should take advantage of crowded environments as these places strengthen the brand-consumer relation. Discount offers, for instance, can create an impact when consumers are prone to a crowded purchasing atmosphere. Furthermore, with the development of technology, companies can quickly discover consumers' locations. In all these scenarios, organizations can advertise their products when the consumers are expected to be in a crowded environment. This research recommends that it is advantageous for retailers in designing retail store atmosphere and supports the belief that it is very significant or even essential to study the related nonvisual sensory cues in the prevailing store environment.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

This research has numerous restrictions and prospects for upcoming research like many other studies. Firstly, a limitation is associated with the sample size in this study. However, we gathered a limited sample from a population. Secondly, the respondents of this study were consumers from Lahore. So, it is challenging to generalize the outcomes of this research for consumers having multicultural backgrounds. Future studies should increase the sample size and reproduce the model somewhere else to increase its generalizability. Though the study concentrated primarily on supermarket consumers, it was not specific on specific products mainly purchased on impulse due to the store environment. In this regard, the current study results cannot account for the likely variances in the elasticity of different products to different promotional strategies. A study that relatively inspects the in-store environment tempted impulsive and compulsive buying across different and particular product ranges; collections or brand classifications can substantially impact consumer buying behavior and contribute to the knowledge of trade approaches in a more precise way.

Secondly, this research does not evaluate any particular cognitive assessment (perceived quality, perceived price) and affective evaluation (pleasure, arousal) but is assessed on broader concepts of effect and cognition. Such specific assessment measures can be applied in the future to recognize various aspects of cognition and affect. Therefore, future studies can apply and spread this study by exploring further multi-sensory signs in designing store environments like demonstrative and appealing corresponding signals and their impact on buyers' feelings and buying behavior. These clues and variables can also have a supposed influence on the complete buyer experience of the store environment. Because these cues and variables are explored in this research, future studies on assessing their effect on consumer emotions and buying behavior are recommended. Finally, an essential perspective for upcoming research is to assess whether our results can be

generalized to several cultures and stores contexts. As we have used small convenience stores in Lahore in our study, our study's findings probably do not generalize to entire retail stores. Further research should consider new variables that can impact buying behavior. For example, scholars can add anxiety levels and materialism in their model.

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