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The Influence of Store Atmosphere on Shoppers' Impulse Purchasing Behavior

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Course: BUSN39 Degree Project in Global Marketing

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In the beginning, the authors would like to thank each other. As a matter of fact, it is a challenging task for us to finish a thesis within two months. Fortunately, we know our inherent advantages and potential disadvantages. We learn from each others' strengths and offset weaknesses. Therefore, the process of writing this thesis can also be regarded as the process through which we explore each others' potential.

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Abstract

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Background The forms of retailing can be divided into store retailing and non-store retailing. It is necessary for retailers who base their business in the fixed locations to conduct in-store marketing in the physical environment to enhance sales performance. Retailers generally take information and communication techniques such as store atmospheric design and interaction between shoppers and store employees to perform in-store marketing strategy. Shoppers' impulse purchases are the essential source for retailers to enhance sales performance and make profits especially in the electronics industry.

Purpose This thesis aims to study the influence of store atmosphere (exterior, interior, layout and design, point-of-purchase and decoration display, and human factors) on shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior in the electronics stores in Sweden.

Methodology This thesis is based on the qualitative research, SIBA is chosen for the current case study. The authors not only make store observation but also conduct interviews with 12 male and female shoppers.

Conclusion The atmospheric stimulus such as the attractive advertisement and information demonstration outside the store, some specific non-ambient scent in the store, well-organized check-out space, point-of-purchase signage with discount information or direction of ancillary products, the salespeople's professional service can lead to shoppers' pleasure and arousal which in turn leads to their impulse purchases in the electronics stores. It should be pointed out other factors of store atmosphere such as well-designed storefront, appropriate background music, color decoration, and lighting inside the store and well-organized store layout can lead to shoppers' positive emotions. Even though these factors cannot directly stimulate shoppers to make impulse purchases, they can encourage shoppers' approach behavior such as spending more time shopping in the store and having positive attitudes to the store and its products.

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1 Introduction

In the first chapter, the authors not only provide the background knowledge of retailing, store retailing, store atmosphere and impulse purchasing, but also describe the research purpose and problems that this thesis aims to address. The expected academic and managerial contribution is also specified.

1.1 Background

It is undoubted for us to take for granted that retailing has substantially influenced our lifestyle. As an increasing number of scholars and researchers make contribution to the field of retailing over the past decade, the meaning of retailing has not been confined to selling goods to customers through retail stores. This means the researchers have developed broader definitions of retailing. Cox and Brittain (2004) perceive retailing as selling both tangible and intangible products (products and services) to the end customer for personal, family, or household use. According to Dunne and Lusch (2008), retailing has the effect of spurring the economy to faster growth through establishing the bridge between customers and manufacturers/wholesalers. Specifically, retailers, as an essential part of the retailing system, sell the supplies produced by different manufacturers or offered by wholesalers or service providers to individual customers to satisfy their demands.

The forms of retailing can be divided into store retailing which is based upon fixed locations such as stores and markets and non-store retailing which utilizes the Internet platforms to conduct transactions (Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007). This means retailers can utilize either physical stores and markets or online channels to sell products or services to their customers. In terms of Internet retailing, Dunne and Lusch (2008) point out that it would be difficult for retail managers to predict the role that Internet will play in the future marketplace, which means it remains unknown whether online shopping will be developed into individuals' daily needs that must be satisfied. Regardless of the development of Internet retailing, store retailing remains the dominant channel for shoppers to make purchases in the current marketplace (Stahlberg and Maila, 2010).

For retailers who base their business in the fixed locations, it is necessary to conduct in-store marketing in the physical stores and markets in order to enhance their sales performance (Beatty and Ferrell, 1998; Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007). The researchers point out that when shopping in the physical stores or markets, shoppers' buying behavior tends to be influenced positively or negatively by the store environment (Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007). This indicates that the store environment can be perceived as a significant factor that can determine shoppers' point-of-sale buying behavior. Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein

(2007) mention that both information and communication techniques could be utilized by retailers when they attempt to perform in-store marketing strategy. Therefore, retailers generally take into account a wide range of environmental factors such as the structure of the physical store, product demonstration, store atmosphere, space allocation, and salespeople.

In terms of shoppers' purchasing behavior, Solomon et al. (2006) point out that it is composed of six stages including stimulus, problem recognition, search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase evaluation. However, this purchasing model more often than not happens when the shoppers have a clear understanding of what they are stimulated to purchase in the stores. The retailers should be aware of the fact that shoppers' buying behavior can result from their shopping plans that are made before they enter the store or their impulse decisions that are made when they are in the store. This means that shoppers sometimes have no intention to make a purchase before they enter the store, but they are stimulated by certain store factors to make an impulse purchase in the retail environment. In the current marketplace, shoppers generally spend less time on making shopping plan not only because the income is increased and the amount of leisure time is decreased with the change of society but also because shoppers tend to pursue self-identity and perceive shopping as a lifestyle (Solomon et al., 2006). Therefore, shoppers are more often than not encouraged to purchase more and accordingly an increasing number of impulse purchases is the fact (Luo, 2005). Beatty and Ferrell (1998) find out that shoppers' impulse purchases are the essential source for retailers to enhance sales performance and make profits. According to the statistics from impulse purchasing researches, 61 percent of healthcare and beauty products, 51 percent of pharmaceuticals and over 50 percent of supermarket items were based on impulse purchasing; additionally, 62 percent of discount store shoppers and over 39 percent of department store shoppers have experienced impulse purchasing (POPAI/DuPont Studies, Kollat and Willet, 1967; 1978; Prasad, 1975). However, the figure for impulse purchasing has increased dramatically with the economic development. Luo (2005) finds out that approximately 62 percent of supermarket sales and 80 percent of all sales in certain product categories were due to the shoppers' impulse behavior. Therefore, impulse purchasing should be carefully treated by retailers due to its increasing trend.

1.2 Problem statement

According to the statistics offered by Stahlberg and Maila (2010), shoppers make approximately 70% of brand choices in the physical stores, which indicates that physical stores remain the most popular channel for shoppers to make purchases. However, it should be pointed out that some of in-store buying behavior happens due to the shoppers' impulse decisions. In general, before shoppers make an impulse purchasing decision in the retail environment, there are a wide range of store environmental stimulus that can drive their behavior. Store atmosphere is one of the

stimulus that can positively or negatively influence shoppers. As a matter of fact, store atmosphere refers to the effort to design buying environments that can positively influence the shoppers' emotions and feelings which in turn influence their purchasing behavior (Bourlakis, Mamalis and Sangster, 2005; Dunne and Lusch, 2008). Therefore, from shoppers' perspective, store atmosphere can be perceived as the stimulus that can influence their psychological and behavioral responses in the shopping environment. In terms of the components of store atmosphere, some researchers divide it into five sensory categories according to the sensory channels including sight, sound, scent, touch and taste (Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007), while some researchers advocate the store atmosphere should be identified from a broader perspective including exterior, interior, layout and design, point-of-purchase and decoration displays, and human factors (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons, 2010).

However, the authors find out that prior studies regarding store environment or impulse purchase are primarily centered on department stores, supermarkets, grocery stores and clothing stores (Bellenger, Robertson, and Hirschman, 1978; Park, Iyer and Smith, 1989; Abratt and Goodey, 1990; Zhou and Wong, 2003; Terblanche and Boshoff, 2004; Bourlakis, Mamalis and Sangster, 2005). The primary reason for a number of researchers to focus on the food industry and clothing industry is that impulse purchase is common and easy to occur in the related stores. The researches which focus on the electronics industry are scarcely available. This means it would be interesting for the authors to put emphasis on the electronics industry where there is not sufficient data in connection with store atmosphere and impulse purchase.

According to Advisen (2012), the electronics industry covers a wide range of products including household appliances, audio and video equipment, computers, digital cameras, cell phones, DVDs/CDs, etc. Electronics retailers not only provide necessities for people's personal, family, or household use that can make lives easier, but also offer technology products which are in high demand especially among younger generations who tend to depend on the convenience brought by the state-of-the-art equipment (Advisen, 2012). Advisen (2012) also points out that the demand for electronics products has increased over the past decade, which can be confirmed by the fact that an increasing number of retailers begin to enter this industry. In the Swedish marketplace, the most well-known electronics retailers are Media Market, El-Giganten, SIBA, ONOFF, Expert and Netonnet (EUROMONITOR, 2013). From the perspective of products sold by the electronics retailers, some merchandise with low prices such as CDs/DVDs, batteries, bulbs, some specific ancillary products like cartridges for the print tends to have a short life. Saleh (2012) points out that a short product life can be regarded as a significant characteristic feature for impulsively purchasing one specific product, which makes electronics industry meaningful and interesting to be studied in this thesis.

Within the electronics industry, a number of shoppers have experienced unpleasant

shopping experience in the physical stores. The displeasure primarily generates from the malfunctioned products that are bought with high prices, which can lead to the shoppers' negative emotions and feelings (Saleh, 2012). Besides, the store employees' attitudes and behavior can make the shoppers uncomfortable. Specifically, the salespeople take powerful attitudes to sell products or provide little help for shoppers, under which circumstances the shoppers tend to perceive the shopping experience uncomfortable and unpleasant (Saleh, 2012). The shopping experience demonstrates that the quality of the products as well as the customer service provided by store employees can influence the shoppers' emotions and feelings toward the products and their shopping behavior in the electronics store. Even though the retailers cannot control the product quality since the major responsibility belongs to the manufacturers, they can ensure the customers service inside the physical stores. Since store personnel is one of the significant components of store atmosphere (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons, 2010), it is necessary for the authors to study human factors of store atmosphere and other atmospheric dimensions and their influence upon shoppers in the electronics stores in this thesis.

According to EUROMONITOR's (2013) report, the sales volume of consumer electronics in Sweden experienced a gradual decrease in the years 2011 and 2012. Customers' strong sensitivity to the product price is one of the main reasons for this downward trend. Swedish electronics retailers claimed to be new victims in 2012 since Expert and OnOff were bankrupt during the economic crisis. According to the report's forecasting, Swedish electronics industry will continue to experience a negative volume growth in both 2013 and 2014. Furthermore, Internet retailing, which utilizes online channels to present and sell products or services, is gaining increasing popularity. There is no exception in the electronics industry in the Swedish marketplace. The retailers, especially those who focus on physical stores as distribution channel, should be aware of the phenomenon that an increasing number of shoppers utilize retailers to acquire product information, receive recommendations, test and compare the products in the physical stores and then make a purchase in the online store (Burns, 2010). Therefore, the electronics retailers who base their business in the physical stores in Sweden are confronted with two principal problems including how to survive themselves under the negative economic background and how to fulfill competitive advantages over online retailers.

In general, the retailing of electronics stores is different from that of supermarkets and grocery stores, not only because the majority of products offered by electronics retailers are relatively expensive, but also because the life cycle of most electronics products especially white goods such as fridges and washing machines is relatively longer than that of fast consumer goods. Even though a number of electronics products are perceived as high-involvement products with high prices whose purchasing process involves a high level of risk and requires information collecting and processing, impulse purchasing behavior can still happen in the electronics industry (Kotler et al., 2005). The fundamental reason is that the market's demand has

not been fulfilled and the introduced products drive the shoppers to update their electronics products each year (Advisen, 2012). Therefore, in order to make the electronics retailers survive under negative economic circumstance and win over online competitors, it is necessary for retailers who base their business in the fixed stores to stimulate their shoppers to make impulse purchases. It should be emphasized that store atmosphere can be utilized as the stimulus to arouse the shoppers' pleasure to make impulse purchases (Bourlakis, Mamalis and Sangster, 2005; Dunne and Lusch, 2008). Since online retailers do not share the same characteristic features of store atmosphere, it is reasonable for store-based electronics retailers to make use of different dimensions of store atmosphere to increase the sales performance and then win competitive advantages in the Swedish marketplace.

1.3 Research purpose and questions

The purpose of this thesis is to study the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse buying behavior in the electronics stores in Sweden from shoppers' perspective. The store atmosphere refers in particular to five categories including store exterior, general store interior, layout and design, point-of-purchase and decoration display, and human factors (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons, 2010). In this thesis, a qualitative research is designed in order to gain more knowledge from shoppers and the authors select SIBA, a typical electronics retailer in the Swedish marketplace, for case study.

The following research question guides this study:

How does store atmosphere (store exterior, store interior, layout and design, point-of-purchase and decoration display, and human factors) influence shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior in the electronics stores in Sweden?

1.4 Contribution

The authors attempt to work as academic pioneers to deeply analyze how the store atmosphere influences the shoppers' impulse buying behavior. From academic perspective, there is little literature regarding the relationship between the store atmosphere and the shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior. Consequently, the research results can serve as the complementary reference when future researchers pay attention to this specific topic.

Besides, the authors expect to provide substantial knowledge for Swedish retailers especially those within the electronics industry. The electronics retailing in the Swedish market tends to be ignored by researchers. Therefore, the authors hope to explore the research of the electronics industry. Even though the authors concentrate

on the shoppers in Lund, a southern city in Sweden, the acquired insights can make contribution to retail managers when they plan to utilize store atmosphere to make strategic planning.

1.5 Disposition

Chapter	Description
<p>1. Introduction</p>	<p>In the first chapter, the authors not only provide the background knowledge of retailing, store retailing, store atmosphere and impulse purchasing, but also describe the research purpose and problems that this thesis aims to address. The expected academic and managerial contribution is also specified in this chapter.</p>
<p>2. Theoretical background</p>	<p>The theoretical framework of this thesis is discussed from the perspective of shoppers. At first, the authors introduce the concept of impulse purchasing. Two models that describe the shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior are deeply analyzed as well. After that, the authors put emphasis on the description of store atmosphere and its influence on shoppers' emotional and behavioral responses. Through integrating and synthesizing all these knowledge, the authors establish a new model regarding how different dimensions of store atmosphere influence shoppers' emotions and impulse purchasing behavior in the physical store.</p>
<p>3. Methodology</p>	<p>This chapter will describe and present the methodology used in the research as well as motivate why it was chosen. To be more detailed, the author will start by clarifying the way of research design, research approach and data sources. The following subsections are research strategy and research method. Then, ended with the last subsection which will discuss the reliability and validity of the research. The whole chapter will closely relate to the research purpose: to study the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse buying behavior in the electronics stores in Sweden.</p>
<p>4. Empirical findings</p>	<p>In this chapter, the authors not only provide the results of observation after the authors check the store environment of SIBA in Lund for three times, but also demonstrate the findings of interviews with 12 male and female shoppers. Through the</p>

	<p>effective synthesis of all these information, the authors present the findings that the authors acquire from observation and interviews from five different perspectives including the influence of store exterior, interior, layout and design, point-of-purchase and decoration display, and human factors on shoppers.</p>
<p>5. Analysis</p>	<p>In this chapter, the authors analyze how the store atmosphere influences the shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior through combining the concepts and models introduced in the theoretical framework with the empirical findings that the authors have made in the qualitative research. The analysis is presented from five atmospheric perspectives including external stimulus, general interior stimulus, layout and design, point-of-purchase and decoration displays, and human stimulus.</p>
<p>6. Conclusion</p>	<p>In this chapter, the authors make conclusion which aims to answer the research questions. The research contribution and managerial implications are discussed as well. Furthermore, the authors describe the limitations that exist in this thesis and provide the suggested future research.</p>

2 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis is discussed from the perspective of shoppers. At first, the authors introduce the concept of impulse purchasing. Two models that describe the shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior are deeply analyzed as well. After that, the authors put emphasis on the description of store atmosphere and its influence on shoppers' emotional and behavioral responses. Through integrating and synthesizing all these knowledge, the authors establish a new model regarding how different dimensions of store atmosphere influence shoppers' emotions and impulse purchasing behavior in the physical store.

2.1 Impulse purchasing

Since the competition is increasingly stiff in the present marketplace, the impulse purchasing of consumer goods has been perceived by all type retail companies as a pressing priority as well as a competitive advantage (Virvilaite, Saladiene, and Bagdonaite, 2009). From the academic perspective, impulse purchasing has developed into an interesting and complicated research topic that has been attracted to a number of researchers in different fields including consumer behavior, marketing, psychology and economy over the past decade (Virvilaite, Saladiene, and Bagdonaite, 2009).

In terms of the concept and characteristics of impulse purchasing, Saleh (2012) has realized the phenomenon that the terms of impulse purchasing and unplanned purchasing were generally used interchangeably in early researches. For instance, Engel, Blackwell, and Kollat (1982) defined impulse purchasing as the purchases that shoppers have no intention to make before they enter the store. Rook and Fisher (1995) regarded impulsive purchasing and unplanned purchasing as synonyms.

However, Solomon et al. (2006) provide a breakdown of three categories of situations under which unplanned purchasing takes place, which clearly explains the relationship between unplanned purchasing and impulse purchasing. To be specific, unplanned purchasing may happen when the shopper is prompted to make a purchase in a store (Saleh, 2012). This means that shoppers are very likely to make unplanned purchases when they are unfamiliar with the store layout, or when they are under time pressure, or when they remind themselves of buying some products or services that are available in the store (Solomon et al., 2006). Besides, unplanned purchasing may happen when shoppers buy something impulsively without any advance planning. The purchase that is made due to the shoppers' irresistible urge can be regarded as unplanned purchasing and impulse purchasing as well (Solomon et al., 2006). Additionally, unplanned buying may take place in the stores that shoppers frequently visit. Shoppers' negative feelings such as distress, anxiety, tension and unconsciousness that they are unable to resist can drive them to make rush purchases,

which can also be perceived as making compulsive buying in this situation (Saleh, 2012). Therefore, it can be understood that unplanned purchasing is a broader concept that is different from impulse purchasing in essence while impulse purchasing is one situation that unplanned buying occurs.

In order to facilitate the understanding of impulse purchasing, Bourlakis, Mamalis, and Sangster (2005) describe the development of its definition in their research. In 1980s, impulse purchasing was considered as the situation where shoppers have a sudden, powerful and persistent urge to make an immediate purchase. In 1990s, the definition of impulse purchasing was modified to describe a sudden, immediate and spontaneous purchase that a shopper makes without any pre-shopping intention to accomplish a specific purchasing task or to buy a specific product. However, Virvilaite, Saladiene, and Bagdonaite (2009) provide a more concrete explanation which is based on past researches. They define impulse purchasing as the instantaneous unplanned purchasing behavior that results from shoppers' emotions when they are exposed to the stimulus that can trigger their psychological reactions. In this thesis, the authors decide to apply this latest definition for the fundamental reason that it matches the impulse purchasing model that will be put forward in the following section.

Virvilaite, Saladiene, and Bagdonaite (2009) also elaborate four principal characteristic features of impulsive purchasing. First of all, impulsive purchasing is unplanned, which means shoppers make a purchasing decision on a certain moment rather than due to the buying intention made before entering the store or their recognition of problems. Secondly, it is the presence of stimulus that drives shoppers to make impulse purchasing. A number of researchers have mentioned that the purchase environment is an essential element of stimulus, which will be discussed later in this chapter (Sherman, Mathur, and Smith, 1997; Tai and Fung, 1997; Turley and Milliman, 2000; Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007; Virvilaite, Saladiene, and Bagdonaite, 2009). Thirdly, impulse purchasing is generally determined instantaneously. Finally, shoppers feel emotional reactions when facing stimulus, since they are controlled by their emotional forces.

2.2 Impulse purchasing model

In order to study how the store atmosphere influences shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior, the authors will introduce two related models in this section. At first, the S-O-R model will be introduced to interpret the conceptualization and relationship of store atmosphere, consumer emotions and purchasing behavior. Then the M-R model which explains the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' emotional states such as pleasure and arousal and approach/avoidance behavior will be deeply analyzed. However, it should be pointed out that the M-R model is established based upon S-O-R paradigm (Turley and Milliman, 2000).

It should also be pointed out that both S-O-R model and M-R model are derived from the study of environmental psychology (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Bourlakis, Mamalis, and Sangster, 2005). As a matter of fact, environmental psychology aims to research how the environment influences human's in-store behavior (Chebat and Michon, 2003). Chebat and Michon (2003) explain that the core thought of environmental psychology is that the store itself can provide its shoppers with a unique environment and atmosphere that affects their buying decisions in the physical stores. However, retailers and shoppers tend to have different understanding of the significance of store atmosphere. Retailers perceive store atmosphere as a tool that can be utilized to generate psychological influences on shoppers to enhance their willingness of making purchases through creating an appropriate store environment (Chebat and Michon, 2003). Shoppers think of store atmosphere as one of the essential elements that they take into account when evaluating the quality of the surroundings (Chebat and Michon, 2003). The detailed contents regarding store atmosphere will be discussed in Section 2.3.

2.2.1 S-O-R model

The S-O-R model refers to the abbreviation of stimulus-organism-response model in the environmental psychology. It should be firstly emphasized that this model is based upon two assumptions (Tai and Fung, 1997). One is that shoppers' feelings and emotions decide what and how they purchase in the stores, and another is that shoppers adopt different emotions in response to different environment.

In terms of three primary components of the S-O-R model, stimulus, organism and response are corresponding to store atmosphere, consumer emotions, and purchasing behavior in the current study (Sherman, Mathur, and Smith, 1997), which is clearly presented in the Figure 2.1. In this paradigm, the atmosphere serves as the stimulus (S) that leads to the shoppers' emotional reactions (O) and then their purchasing behavior (R). The detailed explanation of the model components will be demonstrated in the subsequent contents.

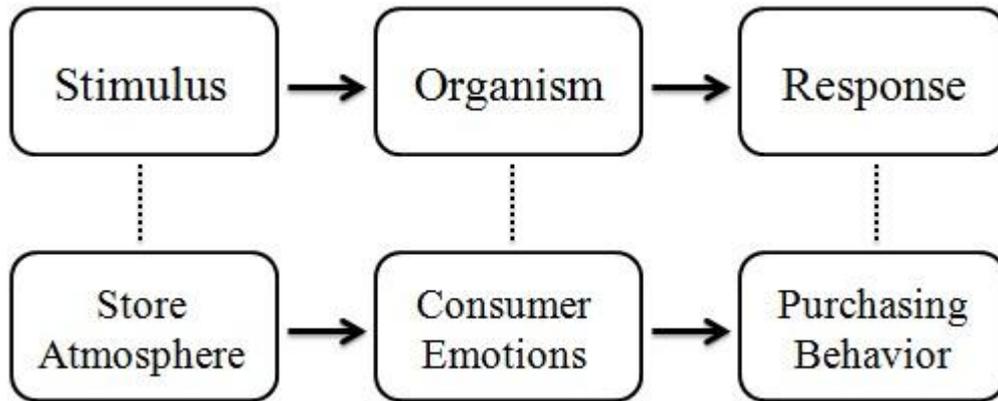


Figure 2.1: stimulus-organism-response model (Sherman, Mathur, and Smith, 1997)

Stimulus is generally perceived as any object or phenomenon that is capable of rousing or promoting human actions (Sherman, Mathur, and Smith, 1997). In the earlier researches regarding decision-making process, the stimulus is more often than not described as the external factors that drive the shoppers to make unplanned purchase decisions (Bagozzi, 1986). Bagozzi (1986) thinks of the stimulus as the marketing mix variables and other environment factors that are all external to the shoppers.

However, Sherman, Mathur, and Smith (1997) have different understanding of the stimulus in the stimulus-organism-response system. Based upon the classical S-O-R model in which stimulus refers to things that can influence people's internal emotional states, these researchers narrow the content of the stimulus and define that it is the store atmosphere that serves as the stimulus to affect the shoppers' feelings and emotions in the field of environmental psychology. Sherman, Mathur, and Smith (1997) even divide the store atmosphere into three categories including social factors (e.g. salespeople), design factors (e.g. layout, color, cleanliness, etc.), and ambient factors (e.g. smell, lighting, etc.). The detailed knowledge regarding store atmosphere will be deeply analyzed in Section 2.3.

In the stimulus-organism-response model, organism refers to the shoppers' perceptual, physiological, feeling and thinking processes that work between the stimulus and people's final responses (Sherman, Mathur, and Smith, 1997). This means the emotional states that are internal to individuals serve as the organism. In the environmental psychology, the shoppers' emotional states mediate the influence of store atmosphere on their in-store behavior.

In terms of the response, it generally refers to the shoppers' behavioral actions that are made due to the shoppers' mood and environment evaluation. However, Sherman, Mathur, and Smith (1997) point out that the definition of response cannot be confined to the shoppers' purchasing behavior. They think that the number of items purchased, the amount of time and money spent in the store, and the shoppers' feelings toward store environment should also be considered as the shoppers' final responses in the retail environment.

Overall, it is manifest that stimulus, organism, and response are interrelated in the S-O-R model. In general, the stimulus of the store atmosphere are expected by retailers to exert positive influences on shoppers' emotional states which will in turn positively affect their purchasing behavior in the retail environment.

2.2.2 M-R model

The M-R model is named after Mehrabian-Russell, a pioneering researcher in the field of environmental psychology. Even though M-R model was established originally in 1970s, the contemporary researchers have constantly updated their interpretation towards this knowledge. Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein (2007) make a summary of this model that the store atmosphere as well as individual personality can psychologically lead to shoppers' two principal emotional states of pleasure and arousal which in term result in either approach or avoidance behavior. This process is clearly presented in the Figure 2.2.

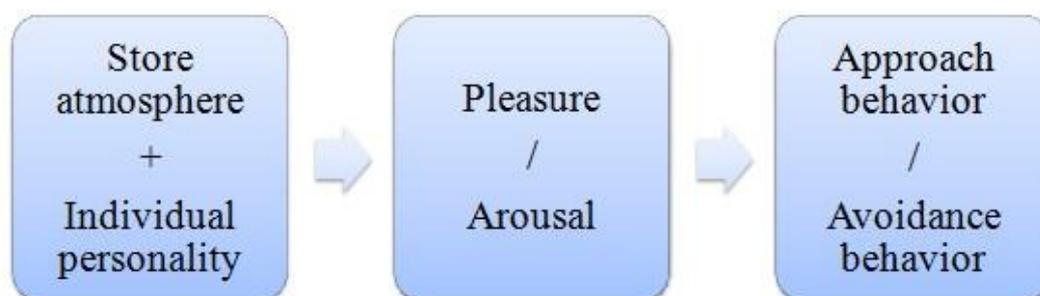


Figure 2.2: M-R model (Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007)

Compared with S-O-R model which merely describes store atmosphere as stimulus,

M-R model takes shoppers' individual personality into consideration (Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007). In terms of atmospheric stimulus, it is reflective that some shoppers purchase products or services in specific types of store environment. However, in terms of the function of shoppers' personality, a number of researchers find out that some kinds of personality are closely related to the shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior in the retail environment (Adelaar et al, 2003; Shahjehan, 2012). Personality refers to people's inherent psychological characteristics that can reflect their responses to the environment (Solomon et al., 2006). In general, people's personality can be reflected from the big five model. According to big five model, people's personality can be divided into five categories including extraversion, agreeableness, conscientious, neuroticism, and openness (Shahjehan, 2012; Dobewall, 2014). Each type of personality has its own traits, which can be seen from Table 2.1. As a matter of fact, each kind of personality can positively or negatively influence the shoppers' purchasing behavior in the store environment. For instance, high-neurotic shoppers tend to be easily influenced by their negative emotions such as tense and nervous, which is likely to hinder their purchasing behavior in the store. Besides, shoppers whose personality tends to be low-neuroticism or conscientious are able to have a good control of their impulse behavior, which means these kinds of shoppers are less likely to make impulse purchases in the retail environment. Therefore, shoppers' inherent personality can indeed affect their emotions and purchasing behavior in the physical stores.

Personality	Traits
Extraversion	e.g. excitability; sociability; talkativeness; assertiveness
Agreeableness	e.g. trust; kindness; cooperation
Conscientious	e.g. self-discipline; responsibility; good impulse control; goal-directed behavior
Neuroticism	e.g. emotional instability (experience negative emotions easily); emotional stability (impulse control)
Openness	e.g. imagination; artistic sensitiveness; a broad range of interests

Table 2.1: five types of personality in the big five model (Shahjehan, 2011)

In the M-R model, pleasure and arousal are two primary mediators when shoppers evaluate the influences of store environment. Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein (2007) define pleasure as the level of positive emotions while perceive arousal as the excited and stimulated feelings.

These two dimensions of emotions can lead to two contrasting types of behavior: approach behavior and avoidance behavior. Specifically, increasing pleasure can enhance the amount of time that shoppers spend on visiting the store, the amount of impulse purchases that shoppers have no intentions to make before they enter the store, shoppers' willingness to communicate and interact with store employees and revisit the store, which can be regarded as the approach behavior (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007). It should be emphasized that the shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior can be perceived as one type of the shoppers' approach behavior in the retail environment. However, arousal should be maintained at a moderate level for the fundamental reason that low levels can make shoppers lose interest in the store while high levels can impel them to leave the store in the shortest time or avoid the store in the future due to their uncomfortable feelings (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007). These kinds of avoidance behavioral responses should be prevented by retailers. In order to facilitate shoppers' approach behavior, these researchers also mention that the optimal levels of arousal are supposed to be created by the retailers through designing and constructing a pleasant store environment.

Overall, compared with S-O-R model which is a basic purchasing model, M-R model takes store atmosphere as well as individual personality into account when studying the stimulus, describes the shoppers' emotions as pleasure and arousal, and divide their behavioral responses into approach behavior and avoidance behavior. This means that M-R model covers broader and more thorough contents to explain the process of how the store atmosphere and other elements influence the shoppers' emotions and behavior in the retail stores. Therefore, the authors determine to apply M-R model for research in this thesis. However, it should be pointed out that even though both store atmosphere and shoppers' personality can affect the shoppers' purchasing behavior, the authors will focus the stimulus on the store atmosphere in order to achieve the purpose of this thesis.

2.3 Store atmosphere

The process of shoppers' purchasing behavior has been discussed in the above section. Both S-O-R model and M-R model have emphasized the importance of store atmosphere as the start in the shoppers' purchasing process. Therefore, the authors will deeply analyze the concept of store atmosphere in this section.

In the present marketplace, it is necessary for retailers to give a priority to the design

of store atmosphere not only because the number of competitive outlets is increasing but also because the differences between products and prices are narrowing (Bourlakis, Mamalis, and Sangster, 2005). In terms of the definition of store atmosphere, Dunne and Lusch (2008) perceive it as the effort to design and create buying environments that can exert emotional effects on the shoppers. The generated emotions can further influence shoppers' purchasing enjoyment and subsequent purchasing behavior in the retail environment.

2.3.1 Components of store atmosphere

In general, different researchers give different breakdown of the components of store atmosphere. There are two principal perspectives in the academic field. Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein (2007) advocate that the shoppers experience the store atmosphere primarily through their sensory channels including sight, sound, scent, touch and taste. Therefore, these researchers divide the atmospheric components according to five sensory categories, which is demonstrated in detail in Table 2.2.

Five senses	Components
Visual sense	Color, brightness, sizes, shapes of fixtures and goods, floors, look of salespeople, etc.
Auditory sense	Background music, audio advertising, in-store radio, noises from other people, etc.
Olfactory sense	The scent in the store, etc.
Tactile sense	The material used for floors, the sensation of touching products, etc.
Gustatory sense	Food samples, etc

Table 2.2: the components of store atmosphere according to five sensory channels (Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007)

By contrast, another method to divide the elements of store atmosphere is developed from a broader perspective (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons, 2010). The stimulus of store atmosphere can be primarily divided into five categories including external stimulus, general interior stimulus, layout and design, point-of-purchase and decoration displays, and human stimulus. Within these five extensive categories, there are altogether 57 specific factors that are indentified to constitute store atmosphere, which can be clearly seen in Table 2.3.

Categories	Components
External stimulus	External signs, entrances, exterior display windows, height of building, size of building, surrounding stores, lawns and gardens, address and locations, architectural style, surrounding area, parking availability, congestion and traffic, exterior walls
General interior stimulus	Flooring and carpeting, color schemes, lighting, music, P.A. usage, scents, tobacco smoke, width of aisles, wall composition, paint and wall paper, ceiling composition, merchandise, temperature, cleanliness
Layout and design	Space design and allocation, placement of merchandise, grouping of merchandise, work station placement, placement of equipment, placement of cash registers, waiting areas, waiting rooms, department locations, traffic flow, racks and cases, waiting queues, furniture, dead areas
Point-of-purchase and decoration display	Point-of-purchase displays, signs and cards, wall decoration, degrees and certificates, pictures, artwork, product displays, usage instructions, price displays, teletext
Human stimulus	Employee characteristics, employee uniforms, crowding, customer characteristics, privacy

Table 2.3: five categories of store atmosphere (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons, 2010)

In this thesis, the authors decide to adopt the second description to analyze the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior. The primary reason is that the division of store atmospheric factors conducted by Turley and Milliman (2000) or Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons (2010) is consistent with the process during which the shoppers reach adjacent to the store, enter the store, shop in the store and even make impulse purchases in the store. Specifically, when shoppers get close to the store, they are surrounded by the design of store exterior. The well-designed store exterior can drive the shoppers to enter the store. Once shoppers go into the store, they have to face the store interior such as its decoration, layout, and point-of-purchase and have the opportunities to interact with store employees. Therefore, the authors believe that the second division of store atmosphere is more suitable in this thesis. However, the authors realize that it is inappropriate and impossible to study all the listed elements respectively in this thesis not only because the authors are restricted by the time resource but also because the study of all the elements is more reasonable in the quantitative research. Since the authors will use qualitative research to accomplish the thesis purpose, the authors will analyze the five categories (external stimulus, general interior stimulus, layout and design, point-of-purchase and decoration displays, and human stimulus) from a holistic perspective rather than elaborate each factors included in the categories. The authors aim to present a whole picture of the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior. In the following contents, the authors will provide theoretical analysis from five different dimensions.

2.3.2 External stimulus

External stimulus can be regarded as the exterior store design which plays a pivotal role in attracting passing shoppers to enter the store. In order to describe the significance of external design, Dunne and Lusch (2008) draw an analogy that the store exterior, which is also called the storefront, can be compared to the book cover if the retail store is regarded as a book. These two researchers even believe that a successfully-designed store exterior is able to be easily noticed by passing motorists or shoppers and leave a profound impression on them.

The exterior of a physical store is supposed to not only clearly demonstrate its name and general nature but also provide the shoppers with some implications regarding the products or services it sells inside the store (Dunne and Lusch, 2008). The store exterior generally includes all the signage outside the physical store and the architecture of the storefront (Dunne and Lusch, 2008).

Even though the list of external stimulus of store atmosphere made by Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons (2010) covers 14 different elements, Dunne and Lusch (2008) emphasize the importance of exterior display windows in their research. Display windows can be utilized by retailers to serve as the outdoor media to disseminate

advertising information to shoppers. In general, store windows have the function to draw the passing shoppers' attention and even induce them to enter the physical store; therefore, store retailers should give priorities to the design of their display windows. In order to fulfill the function of exterior display windows, Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons (2010) suggest that the contents demonstrated through the windows should not only convey interesting and exciting feelings to shoppers but also cover the information of products or services inside the store. They also mention that the window demonstrations should be changed frequently in order to satisfy shoppers' desire for novelty. It should also be pointed out that the shoppers are forming attitudes and opinions towards the store and its inside products or services within a few seconds that they reach close to the physical store (Dunne and Lusch, 2008). This means once the shoppers face the external stimulus such as the storefront and exterior display windows, they begin to generate emotions in their minds.

2.3.3 General interior stimulus

This category of general interior stimulus covers a wide range of elements including flooring, lighting, scents, sounds, temperature, cleanliness, wall textures and color (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons, 2010). Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons (2010) point out that the shoppers' perception of all the interior stimulus can exert influences on their approach or avoidance behavior, the amount of time shoppers spend in the store environment, and the store's sales performance. In the following contents, the authors will put emphasis on the elaboration of four different interior stimulus including music, scent, color, and lighting to which a number of researchers have made contribution.

Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein (2007) identify that music is able to evoke the shoppers' complex affective responses and thereby influence their purchasing behavior in the retail environment. As a matter of fact, each musical composition consists of three principal dimensions including a physical dimension (e.g. volume, tempo, rhythm), an emotional tone, and a preferential dimension (e.g. the level of the shoppers' preference to the music) (Mattila and Wirtz, 2001), all of which will exert subtle influences upon shoppers' emotions and feelings. For instance, Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein (2007) point out that fast music is conducive to help shoppers foster a sense of excitement and leave them vivid impressions which will facilitate their purchasing behavior in the retail store, whereas slow music drives the shoppers to move slowly and devote more time to shopping in the retail store. Dunne and Lusch (2008) confirm that the tempo of music influences shoppers' duration in the physical store and the type of music affects the number of their purchases. Further, Ferreira and Oliveira-Castro (2011) find out that the amount of time that shoppers spend in the store is positively influenced by the well-known music with high tempo and moderate volume. Overall, the appropriate background music can create a more relaxing purchasing environment for shoppers, attract shoppers to stay longer, and

stimulate their unplanned purchasing behavior.

In terms of the scent, Mattila and Wirtz (2001) point out that it include ambient scent and non-ambient scent. The researchers explain that ambient scent refers to the scent that is present in the retail environment rather than that is generated from the merchandise. In general, ambient scent can influence the shoppers' perception of the store as well as its products including the items such as furniture that are impossible for shoppers to smell. Mattila and Wirtz (2001) also find out that shoppers tend to have positive evaluations and behaviors in the retail environment with ambient scents. Specifically, scent can be differentiated by three dimensions including the affective quality of the scent (e.g. how pleasant the scent is), its arousing nature (e.g. how it serves to evoke the shoppers' emotional responses), and its intensity (e.g. how strong feelings the scent conveys) (Mattila and Wirtz, 2001). These dimensions of the ambient scent can influence the shoppers' emotions and feelings; therefore, retailers can utilize the scent as an effective in-store marketing tool to put their shoppers in the right mood. However, Dunne and Lusch (2008) suggest that retailers should take the products or services they offer and their target shoppers into consideration in order to make the ambient scent consistent with the store image when they determine the use of scent.

The influence of color on shoppers' in-store behavior has also been investigated by a number of researchers. Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons (2010) find out that color is conducive to influence the shoppers' stimulated purchases, the duration in the retail environment, their arousal and pleasant feelings, and store image. In the contemporary marketplace, retailers tend to apply color psychology to the store design (Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007), which means different colors generate different psychological influences on shoppers. For instance, white and blue is the symbol of calm and clean, whereas red, orange and yellow convey stimulating and arousing feelings and are generally associated with warmth and action (Solomon et al., 2006). When designing the store, some retailers prefer to use a specific color that is also extensively used in their branding. Some retailers prefer to use as few colors as possible in the retail environment in order to avoid conflicting with the colors of the merchandise.

However, the influence of lighting on shoppers' purchasing behavior cannot be unified for the fundamental reason that the result will be different in different types of stores. Dunne and Lusch (2008) provide two contrasting examples. The bright lighting in the wine stores influences the shoppers to examine and handle more products while the bright lighting in fashion stores tends to convey a discount store image to the shoppers. However, there are few researches that focus on the influence of lighting on the shoppers' behavior in the electronics stores. Some researchers mention that the effective use of lighting such as product spotlighting and dim ambient lighting is able to increase the shoppers' enjoyment, while the products or services become cheap and unexciting in shoppers' minds if retailers use the

floodlighting inappropriately (Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons, 2010).

2.3.4 Layout and design

Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein (2007) point out that the successful retail stores should be designed to consciously or unconsciously direct their shoppers to some important merchandise areas, which can further stimulate shoppers' impulse purchases and enhance the productivity in the sales space.

In terms of the store layout, it should be designed to be easily understandable in order to facilitate shoppers' grasp of merchandise distribution. Shoppers tend to have mental maps of the store layout in their minds. The clear and well-organized mental maps contain information about the locations of specific products, categories and check-outs, which can exert positive influences on the shoppers' perception of shopping convenience and increase the possibility of impulse purchases (Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007). When designing the store layout, retailers have two choices including grid store layout and free-form store layout, which can be clearly seen from Figure 2.3.

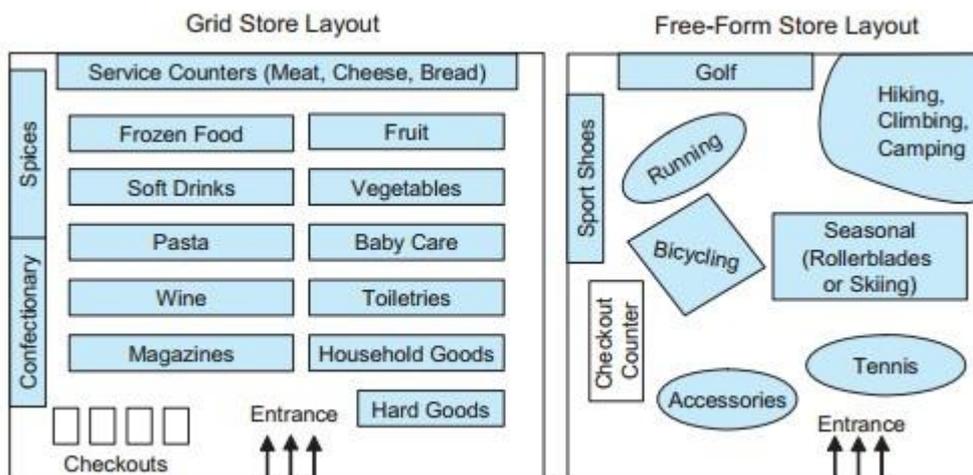


Figure 2.3: two basic types of store layout (Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007)

The grid store layout can bring great convenience to shoppers who prefer to locate

certain products easily and move through the entire store quickly. The grid pattern allows the retailers to channel shoppers to avoid crowding; however, it is generally not stimulating (Dunne and Lusch, 2008). Therefore, the grid store layout is more appropriate for retailers of fast-moving consumer goods for the primary reason that it makes the shopping process fast and efficient (Dunne and Lusch, 2008). By contrast, the free-form layout makes shoppers move freely in certain areas and along certain path due to its irregular pattern, which is conducive to create a more relaxed shopping environment.

Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein (2007) also put emphasis on the significance of space allocation which should be designed according to the space quality. The retailers are aware of the fact that different areas in the retail environment are more often than not treated differently by shoppers. Specifically, shoppers pass through different areas at different speed and certain areas are easier to draw shoppers' attention compared with others. The retailers should pay more attention to the check-out areas where impulse purchasing behavior often happens (Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007). Especially when shoppers stand in a queue or pass through for checkout, they can be easily stimulated to make a purchase.

Overall, the store design is able to not only evoke positive emotions and feelings in the shoppers' minds and create a comfortable store atmosphere to enhance impulse purchases but also make the store differentiate from its competitors.

2.3.5 Point-of-purchase and decoration display

In terms of the arrangement at the point-of-purchase, Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons (2010) point out that the prominent display of products in the retail environment can substantially enhance the store's sales performance including certain amounts of impulse purchases. However, Dunne and Lusch (2008) focus their research on the point-of-sale signage which is attached directly to the fixtures. Point-of-purchase signage generally contains some words since it aims to provide the shoppers with detailed information of specific products. The most significant function of point-of-purchase signage is to inform the shoppers of the price of the signed product. Dunne and Lusch (2008) also emphasize that the special point-of-purchase signage for advertisement, sales, and clearance should be marked with different colors to highlight its values so that the shoppers can easily distinguish it from other normal signage. In most situations, the signage combined with price information is easy to attract shoppers' attention and stimulate them to make an impulse purchase in the retail environment (Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons, 2010).

Lifestyle graphics, as a relatively new element of store decoration, has been studied by Dunne and Lusch (2008). In the marketplace, an increasing number of retailers begin to demonstrate lifestyle images in certain significant store areas. In most retail

environments, the photos used by retailers are the images of the products. But some retailers present the photos whose contents are related to the merchandise or are able to stimulate shoppers to make purchases. However, retailers should adopt careful attitudes toward the selection of lifestyle photos for the fundamental reason that different shoppers tend to have different lifestyle and accordingly regard the pictures differently. Therefore, once the retailers determine to use the lifestyle photographic to stimulate purchases, they should ensure that the photographic images can appeal to major shoppers at the same time cannot convey annoying feelings to each shopper (Dunne and Lusch, 2008).

2.3.6 Human stimulus

In terms of human stimulus, Turley and Milliman (2000) suggest analyzing its influences on shoppers' purchasing behavior from the two perspectives: one is other shoppers while another is retail employees.

When studying the influence of other shoppers in the physical store environment, the majority of researchers prefer to focus on the crowding as a principal environmental issue. Perceived crowding has been seriously investigated by researchers. Turley and Milliman (2000) point out that the shoppers' perceived crowding tends to exert detrimental influences upon their evaluation of shopping experience including their levels of satisfactions, the number of purchases, shopping excitement and their perception of the product or service quality. Therefore, it is necessary for the store retailers to avoiding creating a crowded environment for their shoppers.

Apart from this, a number of researchers have investigated the influence of retail personnel on shoppers' purchasing behavior from different perspectives, and Turley and Milliman (2000) make a summary of these knowledge in their research. To be specific, the research with emphasis on retail employees' clothing demonstrates that shoppers' emotions tend to be negatively influenced by the personnel's unprofessional attires under the circumstances of service failure. Besides, the research concerning the influences of social cues indicates that if the retailers can utilize more social stimulus such as the retail employees' friendliness to attract shoppers, the shoppers' purchasing arousal will be accordingly increased. Moreover, the research that focuses on the influence of salespeople on the shoppers' perception illustrates that shoppers tend to regard the retail store where a certain number of sales employees wearing uniform clothing greet them and entertain them properly as a provider of higher service quality. Overall, the retailers should put value on the appearance of their employees for the fundamental reason that the store personnel is not only the medium to present the firm's ideals and attributes in front of the shoppers but also the stimulus to influence the shoppers' emotions and behaviors (Turley and Milliman, 2000).

2.4 Theoretical framework

In Section 2.2, the authors have determined to adopt the M-R model to describe the process of shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior. In section 2.3, the authors further analyze the store atmosphere from the perspectives of five different dimensions including external stimulus, general interior stimulus, layout and design, point-of-purchase and decoration display, and human stimulus. In order to combine the M-R model and the knowledge of store atmosphere, the authors develop a new model which can be seen from Figure 2.4.

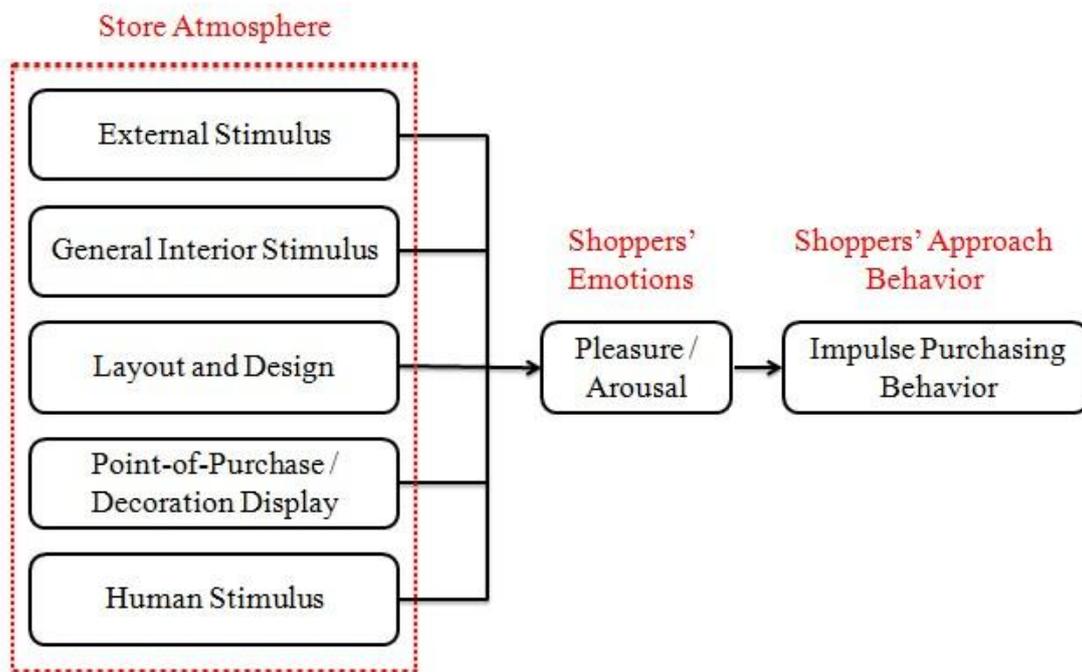


Figure 2.4: the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' emotional and behavioral responses (developed by the authors)

This new model is composed of three components including store atmosphere, shoppers' emotions and shoppers' approach behavior. To be specific, the store atmosphere refers to external stimulus, general interior stimulus, layout and design, point-of-purchase and decoration display, and human stimulus (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons, 2010). Shoppers' emotions refer to pleasure (e.g. positive emotions) and arousal (e.g. excited and stimulated feelings) (Zentes,

Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007). According to the M-R model, the shoppers' psychological responses can lead to either approach behavior or avoidance behavior. In this thesis, the authors tend to put emphasis on the approach behavior in order to fulfill the purpose of this thesis. However, shoppers' approach behavior covers a wide range of responses such as making impulse purchases that are beyond the shoppers' buying plan, increasing the duration in the physical store, enhance the shoppers' willingness to communicate and interact with store employees, and revisiting the store (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007). Since this thesis aims to study how store atmosphere influences the shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior in the electronics store, the authors will focus the shoppers' approach behavior on their impulse purchases that they have no intention to make before entering the store.

Therefore, this newly-built theoretical framework aims to study how the five categories of store atmosphere influence the shoppers' emotions of pleasure and arousal which will further affect their approach behavior particularly their impulse purchasing behavior in the retail environment. However, it should be pointed out that this new model is the general framework that is built according to previous literature. Since this thesis puts emphasis on the study of electronics industry, the authors will test whether this model is effective in the electronics stores in the Swedish marketplace in the following content.

3 Methodology

This chapter will describe and present the methodology used in the research as well as the motivation why it is chosen. To be more specific, the authors will start by clarifying the way of research design, research approach and data sources. The following subsections are research strategy and research method. Then, this chapter will end with discussing the reliability and validity of the research. The whole chapter is closely related to the research purpose: to study the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse buying behavior in the electronics stores in Sweden.

3.1 Research Design

Burns and Bush (2006) define research design as “a set of advance decisions that makes up the master plan specifying the methods and procedures for collecting and analyzing the needed information”(p. 116). Research design can be generally divided into three categories including exploratory research, descriptive research and causal research (Burns and Bush, 2006). When the authors select the type of design to be applied in the research, descriptive study is not taken into account since descriptive study aims to clarify the details of a person, organization or phenomenon and its finding is used to predict the future variables (Burns and Bush, 2006; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). In this thesis, the research design aims to understand the relationships between variables of store atmosphere and shoppers' impulse purchase behavior, which means descriptive study is excluded. The authors also decide to exclude the exploratory study design that is more often than not used to explore new insights or interpret new problems in a specific unexplored academic field (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009; Malhotra and Birks, 2007). After checking academic materials, the authors find out that there are some existing relevant literature regarding store atmosphere and impulse purchase. This means exploratory study design is inappropriate to be used in this thesis. After considering the research purpose that aims to study the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse purchase behavior in the retail environment, the authors determine to design the research as a causal study. According to Ghauri and Grønhaug (2005), the causal study focuses on the ‘cause and effect’ relationship between different variables. Specifically, if a variable can affect or determine another variable, the relationship between these two variables is the focal point of the causal study (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). In this thesis, the authors aim to solve the research question: how does store atmosphere influence shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior in the electronics stores in Sweden. It can be seen from the research question that store atmosphere and shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior are two variables in this research. Since this thesis aims to study the relationship between these two variables, it is appropriate for the authors to apply a causal study in this research in order to fulfill the research purpose. Based upon the theoretical framework that has

been put forward in the second chapter, the authors prepare to study the causal relationship by understanding how the different dimensions of store atmosphere lead to shoppers' emotional and behavioral responses. The research begins with the consideration of selecting appropriate research approaches which can solve the research questions in a logical way and can gather relevant empirical data.

3.2 Research Approach

In essence, a causal study can be conducted in either qualitative or quantitative research. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), quantitative research and qualitative research are two principal research approaches. Quantitative research is based on the precise measurement whereas qualitative research puts emphasis on how individual perceives and interprets the social reality (Bryman and Bell, 2011). To be more specific, qualitative research emphasizes on collecting and analyzing non-numerical data such as words and interpretation rather than making quantification analysis (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Descombe (2010) points out that there are five primary characteristics features in terms of qualitative research. Firstly, qualitative research allows higher levels of researchers' involvement. Secondly, data can be analyzed during the process of data collection. Thirdly, the researchers can use words or visual images as units. Fourthly, qualitative research can be used to understand the phenomenon from a holistic perspective. Fifthly, qualitative research is applicable to small-scale studies. When taking the research purpose into consideration, the authors decide to conduct qualitative research in this thesis.

There are some reasons that drive the authors to make determination to select qualitative research in this thesis. Specifically, this thesis aims to study the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse purchase behavior in the electronics stores. This research purpose can be accomplished through qualitative research for the fundamental reason that only the in-depth information from the shoppers' insights can answer the research question. In general, qualitative approach provides the researchers with opportunities to uncover people's real thoughts and responses (Malhotra and Birks, 2007). In order to obtain shoppers' true thoughts and purchasing experience in the electronics stores, the authors need to put emphasis on 'words' through communication and interaction with shoppers instead of asking them to fill quantity forms. Besides, it should be pointed out that a small-scale research is required when researchers attempt to deeply study one specific company or organization. The fundamental reason is that it enables researchers to make sufficient use of the limited resources (Bryman and Bell, 2011). In this thesis, the authors plan to conduct a deep study of one specific electronics retailer in Sweden, which means detailed knowledge and information need to be acquired through conducting a small-scale research. Even though qualitative research is difficult to replicate and lack transparency (Bryman and Bell, 2011), qualitative research method is adapted in this thesis since the research purpose can be fulfilled through performing in-depth investigation to study the

influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse buying behavior in the electronics stores in Sweden.

Abduction approach, which is commonly used in the research, can be perceived as the mixture of inductive approach and deductive approach. To be more specific, abduction approach is effective if researchers aim to discover new factors such as variables or relationships (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). When selecting abduction approach, researchers could establish the empirical basis through an inductive approach and need not reject any theoretical preconceptions like a deductive approach (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009). In this thesis, the authors can utilize the research to test whether the theoretical framework properly works under the circumstance of electronics stores through deductive approach. At the same time, the authors can check whether other dimensions of store atmosphere that are not mentioned in the theoretical framework can lead to the shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior in the electronics stores in the Swedish market. The abduction approach is adapted to the research in this thesis since it is able to iteratively go back and forth between theories and empirical data. The purpose of this thesis is to study the influence of different dimensions of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse buying behavior in the electronics stores in Sweden. In the second chapter, the authors have established a new and general model to describe the relationship between the different dimensions of store atmosphere and shoppers' impulse purchase behavior. According to this basic theoretical structure, the authors create a valid interview guide which can be seen in the appendix. After gathering the empirical data through conducting interviews, the authors are likely to find out other findings which are different from the theoretical knowledge. Since the theoretical framework is generally built according to former research and does not emphasize which industry it works, it is likely that the model mentioned in Section 2.4 cannot be applied in the electronics industry. After acquiring new findings, the authors can move back to the theories to re-create or modify the theoretical framework. With the iterative movement, the authors could ensure the final results and conclusion. Therefore, for the sake of achieving research purpose, an abduction research approach is more appropriate to be applied in this thesis.

3.3 Data Sources

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) point out that primary data and secondary data are two principal types of data sources. Researchers can choose either primary data or secondary data, or a combination of both data sources when collecting empirical information and knowledge. In this thesis, the authors decide to collect primary data to accomplish the research purpose. Since primary data are directly gathered from the source of information, the first-hand information can be more relevant to the research purpose and increase the applicability of the research (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Moreover, the data relevance is highly qualified when collecting primary data for the

fundamental reason that the questions that the authors ask or the authors' observation are tailor-made for the specific research question (Bryman and Bell, 2007). However, it is generally time-consuming and costly for the researchers to conduct in-depth interviews or observation, which means the great devotion of time and financial resources can be perceived as the drawbacks of primary data collection (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

Since this thesis aims to study the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse buying behavior in the electronics stores in Sweden, the authors focus on two variables: store atmosphere and shopper's impulse purchasing behavior. The authors decide to directly gather the information regarding store atmosphere instead of collecting second-hand information or photos. The primary reason for this decision is that using primary data allows the authors to collect more relevant information about store atmosphere according to the theoretical knowledge and framework mentioned in the second chapter. It can also help the authors avoid misunderstanding the second-hand information and knowledge which is gathered by other researchers. Besides, the authors need to understand the shoppers' related insights and shopping experience through asking them a series of theory-based questions for the purpose of studying the relationship between the store atmosphere and shoppers' emotional and behavioral responses. Therefore, the authors determine to collect and analyze the primary data for the sake of gaining relevant information to fulfill the research purpose in this thesis.

3.4 Research Strategy

Denscombe (2010) defines research strategy as a plan for a specific goal, and it can help researchers solve research questions (Yin, 2009). Whether the research strategy is suitable, feasible and ethical is the principal standard for selection, which means the selected strategy must relate to the research purpose, access to the data source, and strictly follow the research ethics (Denscombe, 2010). In order to fulfill the criterion of strategy selection and research purpose, the authors decide to choose case study as research strategy.

3.4.1 Case Study

Case Study is the research strategy that is commonly used in qualitative research. In general, it *"focus on one (or just a few) instances of a particular phenomenon with a view to providing an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in that particular instance"* (Denscombe, 2010, p. 52-53). Case

study is more often than not adopted to investigate the contemporary phenomenon within the real-life context; however, the relevant behavior is not influenced by the context (Yin, 2009). Besides, case study is widely used in the small-scale social researches, aiming to clarify the generalization by researching the particulars (Denscombe, 2010). Since researchers generally take one or a few instances into account in the study, researchers have more opportunities to discover new insights and find out more details in order to avoid the superficial results (Denscombe, 2010).

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), the appropriate selection of research strategy is based on research approach, research purpose and research questions. In this thesis, the qualitative and abduction approach is designed for a causal study, which focuses on studying the relationship between different variables. This indicates that it is detrimental to use quantitative study for the fundamental reason that it cannot deeply understand the different variables and their relationship. Ghauri and Grønhaug (2005) mention that case study is commonly used in business researches since the contemporary phenomenon is difficult to quantify through analyzing various variables and their relationship. The purpose of this research project is to identify the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse buying behavior in the electronics stores in Sweden. The authors are able to obtain the shoppers' in-depth insights through focusing on one specific electronics retailer in the Swedish marketplace. There are three characteristic features that research approach aims to achieve and case study intends to fulfill. Specifically, a small-scale research should be conducted to discover the research target's deep insights and the results should be applied for generalization. Moreover, case study is generally used to answer research questions that begin with how and why (Yin, 2009). In this thesis, the research question is "how does store atmosphere influence the shoppers' impulse purchase behavior in the electronics stores in Sweden". Therefore, it is reasonable for the authors to select case study in order to address this research question that begins with how. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that case study allows researchers to use more than one research method to tackle complicated research problems; therefore, it is reasonable for researchers to select case study as research strategy under complex reality (Denscombe, 2010). Therefore, choosing an appropriate case can be perceived as the precondition for the research.

3.4.2 Case Selection & Case Background

According to Denscombe (2010), case study approach requires 'cases' which are "*based on things like an individual, an organization, an industry, a workplace, an educational programme, a policy or a country*" (Denscombe, 2010, pp.55). In this thesis, the authors need to find out a typical case to clarify the generalization through in-depth research and analysis. The case should be closely related to the research purpose that aims to study the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse

purchase behavior in the electronics stores in Sweden. According to the research purpose, one specific Swedish electronics retailer need to be chosen as a case and the shoppers' related insights and experience need to be obtained. In this thesis, the research is conducted through a small-scale study and the results that are acquired from the detailed case study can be used to generalize the particular phenomenon.

Sweden is "*a country with one of the toughest consumer electronics retail markets in the world*" (PlanetRetail, 2012), which is put forward by the Planet Retail. The electronics retailers in the Swedish marketplace, especially the local electronics retailers, are confronted with hard-solved problems and obstacles under this social background. For instance, two domestic electronics retailers, On Off and Expert, have experienced bankrupt in the past three years. However, SIBA, who serves as one of the largest consumer electronics retailers in Sweden, has survived in the economic crisis. This drives the authors to select SIBA as a case for further in-depth research to study the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse purchase behavior in this thesis. According to the authors' observation, SIBA Lund store presents attractive store exterior, well-designed interior decoration and layout, effective point-of-purchase decoration and provides professional customer service inside the store. This indicates that SIBA Lund store has clear characteristic features of store atmosphere, which deserves the authors' further in-depth research. Therefore, it is reasonable and appropriate for the authors to select SIBA to study how different perspectives of its store atmosphere influence its shoppers' impulse purchase behavior in the physical store.

SIBA AB is not only one of the leading consumer electronics firms but also one of the earliest home electronics retail companies in the Scandinavia area. SIBA AB was founded by Folke Bengtsson and started operating in consumer electronics market in the year 1951. SIBA was the first retailer to cover computers and telephones in its product range in the year 1989. Nowadays, SIBA's headquarter is situated in Gothenburg, and it has already recruited more than 700 employees in three countries including Sweden, Norway and Denmark. It should be pointed out that SIBA AB is named as ComputerCity in Denmark which is a branch of SIBA AB. SIBA covers a wide range of products primarily in four product categories including IT & Entertainment; TV, Audio & Camera; Small domestic appliances; Telecom & GPS. SIBA's business philosophy is to provide the shoppers with products with low prices as well as satisfactory service. In terms of customer service, it should be emphasized that SIBA aims to offer high levels of service to shoppers in order to meet their requirements for electronics products (SIBA AB, 2014).

3.5 Research Methods

Research method, as a tool to collect data, is generally different from research strategy. Various data collection methods can be utilized by researchers at the same time whereas only a case study can work as the research strategy. In order to serve the case study strategy and fulfill the research purpose, observation and interview alike are chosen as the research methods to collect primary data in this thesis. Interview and observation are complementary research methods, since interview can provide the shoppers' subjective and detailed insights regarding the influence of store atmosphere on their emotional and behavioral responses and observation can offer clear presentation of the store atmosphere outside and inside the physical store. After realizing the research question is difficult to answer directly, the authors decide to select the multiple research methods to comprehensively address the research problem through gaining subjective knowledge from interviews and objective information from observation.

3.5.1 Observation

Observation enables the researchers to collect primary data in a direct way, which means the researchers can gather first-hand or source information by conducting observation (Denscombe, 2010). It should be pointed out that interviews make the participants' subjective consciousness exert influences upon the research results, which makes the data obtained from interviews different from that from observation. In some situations, interviewees answer research questions after thinking a few seconds and even fail to tell the truth in the research. Therefore, collecting data from observation can complement the deficiencies caused by interviews. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) examine two different types of observation: structured observation and participant observation. Structured observation is commonly used to collect quantitative data and focuses on discovering the frequency of people's action (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). In sharp contrast of structured observation, participant observation is commonly used to collect qualitative data. It is mainly associated with sociology and anthropology and concentrates on discovering the meaning of people's action (Descombe, 2010; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). If the researcher decides to conduct participant observation, he/she is supposed to become a member of the group or organization and fully participate in the lives or activities (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Participant observation generally provides a superior platform to acquire affluent and real insights directly from the

observed objects (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The researcher who has clear research purposes in his/her mind personally collects data so that the gathered data can be used for the research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). However, time-consuming, ethical dilemmas and data recording are the main drawbacks of participant observation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Specifically, during the participant observation, researchers need to consume an amount of time to collect all the information by themselves and record information in an appropriate way. Besides, researchers are confronted with the ethical dilemmas since they are far from giving 'informed consent' to the observed objects (Denscombe, 2010).

3.5.1.1 Observation Process

When taking the research approach and research purpose into consideration, the authors decide to play a role as a complete participant when conducting the participant observation. Once the participant observer plays the role as a complete participant, he/she should take part in organization or group's activity and his/her identity should be concealed (Gill and Johnson, 1997).

In this thesis, the authors aim to study the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse purchase behavior in the electronics stores in Sweden. Therefore, it is of great significance for the authors to observe the different dimensions of store atmosphere outside and inside SIBA Lund store. According to the theoretical knowledge and framework, SIBA store needs to be observed from five perspectives of store atmosphere including: store exterior; store interior; layout and design; point-of-purchase and decoration display; human factors. Specifically, store exterior include the design of storefront, external signage and the use of exterior display windows. Store interior puts emphasis on background music, ambient scent and non-ambient scent, color decoration and lighting. Layout and design refers to the design of store layout, product distribution and space organization. Point-of-purchase and decoration display focuses on the use of interior signage and lifestyle graphics inside the store. Human factors are observed from two perspectives including other shoppers and store employees. The authors pay attention to all these factors when making observation. All these factors of store atmosphere are strictly related to the former theories; therefore, the empirical data that is gathered from observation can provide more appropriate and accurate results for the research. The process of observation starts from observing the store exterior to store interior decoration (store interior; layout and design; point-of-purchase and decoration display) and then to the human factors. When making observation inside the store, the authors look around in

the SIBA just like other ordinary shoppers so that the identity of the authors is unrevealed in front of salespeople and shoppers in the physical store. The authors experience the same store atmosphere with other shoppers and have asked salespeople for help in order to be a complete participant to observe SIBA Lund store and gather primary information. What is also worth mentioning is that field notes are used to record the findings during the observation process and the observation method provides truthful information for the research results. From a practical perspective, two authors observed SIBA Lund store separately at the first-time visit and then compared the records in order to avoid missing any important observation data. The authors visited SIBA store together at the second and third time for the sake of checking the authenticity of the non-uniform data and confirming the accuracy of the consistent data. On average, it takes the authors approximately two hours to finish each observation.

Moreover, SIBA's store atmosphere and shoppers' impulse buying behavior are the two focal points in order to explore the research purpose. Shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior is another variable that the authors expect to observe; however, the impulse purchase is generally perceived as a quick buying decision that is controlled by the shoppers' subconscious and psychological responses. This means that it is difficult to directly study the shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior through the participant observation. Therefore, the authors decide to observe the shoppers' other behavior when they shop in the electronics store, which aims to look for the appropriate candidates for interviews. To be specific, the authors decide to track the shoppers who look like killing time without any purchasing plan in the SIBA. When targeting a shopper, the authors observe which shopping area the shopper pays more attention to and make a purchase, how long it approximately takes for the shopper to make a purchase, whether the shopper is attracted by the products that are presented on the point-of-purchase signage and posters, whether the shopper communicates and interacts with store employees, etc. After the pre-observed shoppers leave the check-out place, the authors introduce ourselves and the research purpose to the shoppers and ask them whether they have made an impulse or unplanned purchase in the SIBA. In order to look for suitable observation and interview participants, the authors have made visits to SIBA Lund store every day in a week.

In this research, the authors not only use the observation to collect primary data of SIBA store atmosphere but also use it as an auxiliary method to select interviewees and complement research data.

3.5.2 Interview

“When the researcher needs to gain insights into things such as people’s opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences, then interviews will almost certainly provide a more suitable method – a method that is attuned to the intricacy of the subject matter” (Denscombe, 2010, p.173). This means that the merits of choosing interview as the research method is that it can acquire in-depth information at high response rate. Besides, some unanticipated useful information can be obtained through flexible interviews. By contrast, the drawbacks of interview should also be taken into consideration. Interview generally costs time and brings difficulties especially when the researchers make transcription and analysis of the qualitative data (Descombe, 2010). Even though the results of an interview can be varied to help the researchers gain sufficient insights concerning the research problem, the interview process can be less structured. An effective way to solve this drawback is to enable the interviewer to avoid the situation where the interviewees are misled by interviewers or themselves (Burns and Bush, 2006). In this thesis, the authors aim to understand how store atmosphere affects the shoppers’ impulse purchase behavior in the electronics stores. The answers to the question that begins with how are generally difficult to acquire through conducting a simple questionnaire. The authors are aware of the fact that only through in-depth interviews can the shoppers’ insights be acquired. Therefore, interview is an appropriate and effective method for the authors to find the answers to the research question in this thesis.

3.5.2.1 Interview Design

Semi-structured interview is generally designed with a clear guide of research questions, which not only enables the interviewees to develop more ideas but also facilitates the interviewer to acquire more information (Denscombe, 2010). The answers are open-ended in the research; therefore, the interviewer can focus on the interviewees’ viewpoints and actuate them to share more thoughts (Denscombe, 2010). In this thesis, the research question involves the impulse purchasing behavior which can be perceived as a quick buying decision due to the shoppers’ subconscious and psychological responses; therefore, it is inappropriate for the authors to directly ask the interviewees questions about impulse purchasing behavior. The authors decide to structure the interview guide that follows the five categories of store atmosphere according to the theoretical framework, and conduct the semi-structured interview in order to find out the shoppers’ in-depth insights regarding the influence of store atmosphere on their emotional and behavioral responses. The interview guide consists of twenty-four open-ended questions. When making interviews with shoppers, the authors, as the interviewers in the research, firstly ask the interviewees about the background information and some general questions about making purchases in the SIBA. The main questions are designed to study the shoppers’ emotional and

behavioral responses in the SIBA from five dimensions of store atmosphere including external stimulus, general interior stimulus, layout and design, point-of-purchase and decoration display, and human stimulus. In the interviews, the authors will not directly ask the shoppers' behavioral reactions towards different dimensions of store atmosphere, for the fundamental reason general questions cannot facilitate the interviewees' responses. Instead, the authors attempt to understand whether the shoppers notice and are attracted by the specific dimension of store atmosphere and then discover whether it will influence their emotions and behavior through asking open-ended interview questions. The last question is intended to ask a conclusive question which is related to the research purpose. It should be pointed out that even though the questions are designed according to the theoretical framework that is put forward by the authors in the second chapter, all the dimensions of store atmosphere mentioned in the interviews refers to those of SIBA who belongs to the electronics industry in Sweden. Before conducting the interview guide, the authors have piloted it with two individuals who point out the misunderstanding among a series of open-ended questions.

In this thesis, the one-to-one in-depth interview is applied in the research for the fundamental reason that it helps the authors obtain detailed and in-depth insights from shoppers and it is easier for the authors to control and arrange the schedule (Denscombe, 2010). Besides, one-to-one interview can not only protect the shoppers' privacy but also build mutual trust during the interview process. In order to obtain interviewees' true insights, the interviewer should conduct the interview in an open and honest manner (Denscombe, 2010). Since the aim of this research is to study the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior in the electronics stores in Sweden, any shoppers who have impulse purchase experience in the SIBA can be defined as the target interviewees for the research. Due to time and financial limitations, convenience sampling is chosen as the sampling method. Convenience sampling is one of the most common sampling types, which is defined as choosing participants who are readily available and easily contacted (Koerber and McMichael, 2008). The authors plan to visit SIBA Lund store at different time period and select the interviewees under different situations in the store for the sake of increasing the accuracy of the collected data,. At last, the authors visit SIBA Lund store in the morning, lunchtime and afternoon on both weekdays and weekends.

In order to look for suitable interview participants who can speak English, the authors have made visits to SIBA Lund store for several times. After shoppers leave the check-out place, the authors introduce ourselves to the pre-observed shoppers who are selected in the observation and ask the shoppers whether they are willing to spare time to do an interview about the store atmosphere and their impulse purchases. Once the shoppers show their willingness to cooperate, the authors invite them to the nearest Café store. There are some reasons why the authors decide to make interviews with shoppers in the Café store. Specifically, each interview takes about 40 to 45 minutes on average, which may make the shoppers feel impatient due to the long period. The

authors hope to enable the shoppers to feel relaxed during the interviews in order to obtain more detailed insights from shoppers. Besides, the authors hope to offer a relatively private and comfortable place to conduct the interview so that shoppers can feel free to talk with the authors. For instance, it is easier for the authors to acquire the shoppers' actual and in-depth thoughts regarding the research topic when they feel like communicating and interacting with friends during the Fika time. It should be pointed out that it is of great significance to record the interview since human memory is not entirely reliable and bias and error can intervene with memory (Denscombe, 2010). Therefore, the authors request the participants' permission to make record before conducting the interview for the fundamental reason that gathering audio records or field notes within the ethical moral can facilitate the use of interview information.

Due to time restriction, the authors accomplish two or three interviews each day. These interviews are conducted at different time period and have been completed within one week. The authors consider ceasing the interviews until some shoppers' insights start repeating. Finally, twelve shoppers including six male interviewees and six female interviewees ranging from 21 to 48 years old have taken part in the interviews. The detailed background information of interviewees is illustrated in Table 3.1.

Interviewee	Gender	Age
Interviewee 1	Female	32
Interviewee 2	Female	25
Interviewee 3	Female	24
Interviewee 4	Male	23
Interviewee 5	Male	29
Interviewee 6	Male	21
Interviewee 7	Male	28
Interviewee 8	Female	26
Interviewee 9	Female	29

Interviewee 10	Male	38
Interviewee 11	Female	45
Interviewee 12	Male	48

Table 3.1: shopper respondents' background information (developed by the authors)

3.6 Reliability and Validity

Validity and reliability alike are the basis for judging the credibility of the research. Reliability “refers to whether a research instrument is neutral in its effect and consistent across multiple occasions of its use”. (Denscombe, 2010, p. 298) There are several ways for researchers to check the reliability in scale and test such as test-retest, alternate form method and split-half method (Bell, 2010). In order to guarantee the reliability of collecting data, the researchers are supposed to enable all the interviewees to understand the questions in the same way and answer the questions without any possibility of uncertainty (Bell, 2010; Silverman, 2011). It is of great necessity to pre-test the interview guide. In addition, Silverman (2011) states that the reliability of interview can be maintained through the pre-test of interview, interview schedule, interview skills, the whole process of interview recording and quality of record transition. Observer bias can be perceived as the challenge to the reliability of participant observation, since the observers may interpret the findings based on their common sense knowledge and former life experience (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Conducting the participant observation in an objective manner is an effective way to decline the bias. It should be pointed out that in order to guarantee the reliability of the research results in this thesis, the authors determine to pre-test the interview guide with two English native speakers for the sake of making all the shoppers understand the research questions in the same and right way. The authors also encourage interviewees to make responses without hesitation when conducting interviews. The records are made when the authors make observation as well as interviews with shoppers. In terms of the observation and interview process, the authors attempt not to take individual subjective emotions and feelings into account in order to assure the reliability of the research.

Validity is a more complex concept and it is “concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 157), which means validity is related to whether an item describes what it is supposed to describe (Bell, 2010). The validity of the qualitative research is generally affected by the researcher on the setting, the value of the researcher and the truth status of a respondent's account (Silverman, 2011). A well-designed interview guide should

strictly follow the theoretical framework for the sake of ensuring the collected data and accomplishing the research purpose (Descombe, 2010). Besides, participant observation remains at a higher level on ecological validity for the fundamental reason that participant observation relates to the study of social phenomena under natural background (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Therefore, the interview guide is well organized to discover the shoppers' thoughts regarding the research topic and participant observation is applied in the SIBA Lund store. Both interview and observation are strictly designed to follow the theoretical knowledge and framework in order to ensure the validity of the research results.

4 Empirical findings

In this chapter, the authors not only provide the results of observation after the authors check the store environment of SIBA in Lund for three times, but also demonstrate the findings of interviews with 12 male and female shoppers. Through the effective synthesis of all these information, the authors present the findings that the authors acquire from observation and interviews from five different perspectives including the influence of store exterior, interior, layout and design, point-of-purchase and decoration display, and human factors on shoppers.

4.1 Store exterior

In terms of store exterior, the results of observation demonstrate that SIBA posts its large advertisements on two sides of the external walls. Shoppers could notice the advertising information from different directions. These advertisements include the new product's information and SIBA's specific service such as SIBA's bank card. When looking through the giant glasses near the entrance, the shoppers can have a rough view of the store layout and the products inside the store. Red is the main color of SIBA's branding. Accordingly, the storefront makes a continuation of this feature of red design. The product posters are located at the store entrance, which makes the shoppers easily notice them when they enter the store. The contents of the posters generally consist of the photo, price and slogans of the products. It should be pointed out that the key word of SIBA's slogan is 'BILLIGT' which means cheap. At the entrance, SIBA also provides shopping baskets and free newspapers for its shoppers. The newspapers' contents include normal product information as well as discount information in the physical store.

In the qualitative research, the majority of interviewees mention that they will pay attention to the external factors of the electronics store. However, the authors find out that there are two situations in which shoppers will ignore the store exterior. In one situation, the external factors such as the storefront decoration and the advertisements will be ignored by the shoppers who claim to be rational customers. This can be reflected from the quote of a male shopper.

“In most situations, I will go into the store directly without paying attention to the exterior decoration and design. I know that all the external decoration is designed by the store in order to stimulate me to buy more and more products inside the store. You know, I am very rational. I will not be attracted by those colorful advertisements. So I choose to ignore them.” (Interviewee 7)

In another situation, those shoppers who go to one specific electronics store

frequently tend to pay no attention to the external store factors for the fundamental reason that they are very familiar with the store and the store exterior is difficult to attract their attention. One male shopper who has lived in Lund for more than ten years happens to be this kind of shopper.

“Usually, I park my car in front of the store and then enter the store directly. It seems I don’t pay attention to the store exterior. I am very familiar with the electronics stores in Lund including SIBA, Media Market, Elgiganten. I have lived in this city for many years and I come here to do shopping almost every one month. I clearly know the store layout, the brands, the products, even the salespeople in the store. So, there is no need for me to care the change of the store exterior.” (Interviewee 10)

In spite of these two situations, the store exterior generally exerts influences upon shoppers’ emotions. In terms of the storefront, different shoppers have different expectations toward it. Some shoppers believe that the large space is the basic element of storefront design. One male shopper mentions that *“The storefront should be large, because the large space gives me implication that the store is large and the products and brands in the store are broad.”* (Interviewee 6) Another young shopper even directly links the space of storefront with his shopping willingness, as he points out that *“If the storefront is big enough, I will be easily attracted by it and I will be more willing to make purchases in the store.”* (Interviewee 5) Therefore, the male shoppers tend to be attracted by the large space of the storefront. However, the authors find out that female shoppers will evaluate whether the design of storefront is appropriate to the store itself. This is captured from the quotes of two female shoppers of different ages.

“I think if the design of storefront is luxury and gorgeous, it gives me the feeling that the products it sells are also luxury, high-end, of good quality. On the contrary, if the design is outdated and unfashionable, I will doubt whether the store can ensure the product quality. Of course, a good design will make me good mood and attract me to enter the store. The casual design will make me pass the store. Well. In terms of the electronics store, it is not necessary to be designed to be luxury. But, the storefront should be simple, clear, large, up-to-date, the symbol of good quality. I think the design of SIBA is appropriate if not perfect.” (Interviewee 11)

“The design of storefront should be consistent with the style of the store. I mean, the electronics store makes me feel it modern, technological, innovative, and cutting-edge because of the nature of the products in the store. So, the storefront should also express this kind of feeling. Of course, if possible, the design could add some

elements that can reflect the special characteristics of the store to make it different from other stores.” (Interviewee 8)

These quotes indicate that the design of the storefront should take the nature of the electronics store into consideration. This means the merchandise the electronics stores sell are generally the sophisticated and the latest technological products; therefore, the design of storefront should make implications of the products sold inside the store and convey the feeling of being up-to-date and innovative.

In terms of the storefront arrangement, some interviewees emphasize that the demonstration of the advertising information in the storefront area is of great significance since they tend to be easily attracted by the advertisements. Interviewee 2, Interviewee 4 and Interviewee 9 all mention that they will enter the store to check the specific product shown in the advertisement. Interviewee 4 even makes a real example that once the advertisement of the latest headphone attracted his attention, he entered the store and found out that headphone was placed in the catching location. At last, this young shopper made a purchase due to his unknown impulse. Interviewee 1 provides another example about the purchase of headphone due to the outside advertisement. When this female shopper noticed the outside advertisement that clearly described the refund information, she purchased the favorite headphone without any hesitation. Therefore, the external advertisement and information demonstration play a pivotal role in stimulating the shoppers' impulse buying behavior in the retail environment.

Exterior display window, as a significant external factor of the physical store, has been mentioned by a number of interviewees. In the interview, one female shopper clearly explains the function of display windows. Interviewee 1 mentions that *“Through the display windows, I can see what the store sells. Maybe I can see just some products instead of all the products. If what I see through the window is the ones I am interested in, then I will go into the store immediately.”* This means the exterior display window can be perceived as the important channel to demonstrate the products the store sells and attract the passing shoppers to enter the store. It should be pointed out that the giant transparent glasses of SIBA exterior can be regarded as the display windows and are appreciated by the majority of shoppers.

However, in terms of the exterior design of SIBA, some interviewees adopt negative attitudes toward it. One interviewee thinks that the whole design of the storefront is not high-end enough and deserves improvement. (Interviewee 2) Fortunately, only one shopper holds this kind of negative attitude towards the design. The majority of the interviewees perceive the whole store design as pleasant and comfortable. Besides, some shoppers point out that even though the store exterior is designed carefully by the retailer, it is difficult to attract their attention not only because of the position of some advertisements but also because of the advertising contents. This can be reflected from the following quotes.

“I can be attracted easily by the advertisements near the storefront. However, it is difficult for me to notice the advertisements on the walls of the store exterior due to the location where I am. Sometimes, I cannot see the whole advertising picture due to the visual restriction.” (Interviewee 3)

“Most of the products on the advertisements are goods with big size and high price. For example, the retailers put the advertisements about the fridge, the TV, etc. It is impossible for me to make a purchase decision within short period, because I already have one in my home. So, I think it will be more effective for the electronics retailer to show some advertisements about products with reasonable prices, maybe between 200 and 300 kr.” (Interviewee 1)

In terms of other external factors of SIBA, some interviewees emphasize the importance of the lockers and shopping carts in the storefront area (Interviewee 4; Interviewee 9). The primary reason is that this kind of humanized equipment can bring great convenience to shoppers who have already bought a lot of products in other places before they enter the electronics store. With the lockers and shopping carts available, the shoppers will generate positive emotions to the store in their minds and regard the store with the ability to offer good service. Furthermore, Interviewee 9 suggests that the electronics retailer could provide some free brochures near the entrance that inform the shoppers of the brands and products available in the physical store, which can facilitate the shoppers’ buying process inside the store. Overall, the shoppers expect to gain as much shopping convenience as possible from the retailer, which means the design that is conducive to shoppers’ shopping process can lead to their positive emotions and make them more willing to make purchases in the store.

4.2 Store interior

According to the observation, the authors find out that red remains the principal color for decoration in the SIBA after entering the store. It is obvious that all the signs and shelves are designed in red color. The background music comes from the TV area and it can also be regarded as the demonstration of the functionality of TVs and stereos. According to the authors’ observation, SIBA primarily uses fast music for background music and it more often than not changes the songs. However, the musical volume is a little bit lower to some shoppers. The whole store uses the warm lighting, looks clean and does not produce any scent.

In order to deeply study how store atmosphere influences shoppers’ emotional and behavioral responses, the authors conduct the qualitative research. The authors have acquired much knowledge about the influence of store interior factors on shoppers. In this section, the findings will be presented from four perspectives including

background music, store scent, color, and lighting.

4.2.1 Music

In terms of the shoppers' attitude towards the background music, four interviewees claim that they have never paid attention to the music in the electronics stores while eight interviewees confirm that music can indeed influence their emotions and behavior. Both Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 3 point out that background music is the best way to adjust store atmosphere and make shoppers enjoy the shopping process. The following quote describes the influence of music on shoppers' emotions and feelings.

“One day, I went to SIBA for shopping. Actually, I was very tired at that time because I just finished shopping in Nova. But, when I entered the store, I heard a nice song. Sorry, I cannot remember the name of the song. But the familiar song really made me feel relaxed and forget my tiredness at that moment. Actually, I really appreciate those stores who can use the background music appropriately. So, to me, the music positively influences my mood.” (Interviewee 1)

Having confirmed the influence of music on shoppers' emotions, the authors find out that most shoppers prefer fast music with sense of rhythm for the fundamental reason that the tempo can stimulate the shoppers to move actively in the store and make purchasing decisions with great pleasure. The influence of fast music on shoppers' psychological responses can be clearly reflected from children's emotions. One male shopper (Interviewee 10) mentions in the interview that he often does shopping with her little daughter and the girl generally becomes excited once she enters the store. This shopper believes that it is the background music with fast tempo that makes his daughter psychologically active.

Besides, compared with strange music, the interviewees express the same opinion that the familiar music makes them stay longer in the store. Interviewee 2 provides an example that once the background music happens to be the one she likes, she will not leave the store until the song ends. She also explains that the time seems to go by faster when she is surrounded by familiar songs. This indicates that familiar background music has the function to make shoppers stay in the store for a longer period.

Moreover, the majority of the shoppers emphasize that the volume of the background music should be controlled at a moderate level. A young male shopper thinks that the music volume that can just cover shoppers' conversation sounds is the most appropriate (Interviewee 4). This shopper also points out that too low volume will makes the customers ignore the existence of music while too high volume will exert

pressure on customers and make them avoid the store. The shopper who does shopping with children mention that the high volume will make the younger generation feel uncomfortable and even make them cry (Interviewee 10). The shopper who does shopping with the elderly points out that the high volume will render the senior people especially those who have heart diseases upset and drive them to leave the store as soon as possible (Interviewee 12). All these feedback from shoppers demonstrates that high volume of background music should be avoided by the electronics store because it will negatively influence shoppers' emotions and make them avoid the store. However, in terms of the musical volume in the SIBA, some shoppers point out that the volume can be increased to a moderate level because they more often than not do not notice the existence of background music.

Another two points that the shoppers mention in the interviews should be particularly put forward in this section. Firstly, the repetition of music should be avoided because the loop will make the shoppers feel bored of the shopping experience in the retail environment. Secondly, the music played in the stereo system area should be particularly noticed and designed by the retailer because the music is the decisive factor of shoppers' evaluation of the products on display.

Overall, the qualitative research illustrates that background music is able to positively or negatively influence most shoppers' emotions and behavior in the retail environment. In terms of SIBA, the majority of shoppers believe that the background music can positively influence their emotions and feelings and make them visit the store for a longer period with pleasure. However, it should be pointed out that no shoppers directly link their impulse purchasing behavior with the background music in the SIBA.

4.2.2 Scent

In the qualitative research, all the interviewees point out that there is no special scent in the SIBA. When asked whether the scent should be added in the physical store, the majority of interviewees think that there is no need for the retailer to do this. The primary reason is that different shoppers have different feelings to the scent. One female shopper explains that *"If the retail produces some special scent in the store, some people may feel it comfortable and pleasant while some people may feel upset and annoyed."* (Interviewee 2) Therefore, it is reasonable for electronics retailers not to make any scent in the electronics store according to the shoppers' feedback.

However, some shoppers mention that the retailer could create some scent in some special sell districts such as coffee area. This can be captured from the quotes of two female shoppers.

"I think the scent of coffee really stimulates me to make an impulse

purchase decision. About three months ago, I came to SIBA just for killing time. When I walked close to the coffee machine area, a strong smell of espresso made me become excited. Actually, the smell came from the coffee machine on display. At that time, there is a picture in my mind. You know, I imagine if I buy it, then I can make espresso by myself at home. So, I made a quick decision to buy the coffee machine in a few minutes, maybe just two minutes. I think I was very impulsive at that time.” (Interviewee 9)

“I think it will be perfect to create some coffee scent in the area where coffee machine and related products are sold. If possible, SIBA could create the demonstration space to teach people how to make coffee and invite them to try the free sample. I guess many people will be attracted by the smell of coffee. You know, Swedish people really like drinking coffee.” (Interviewee 1)

The shopping experience demonstrates that the scent of coffee can stimulate shoppers’ impulse purchasing behavior in the electronics store. As a matter of fact, to those coffee lovers, there is no doubt that the scent of coffee can positively influence their emotions and feelings to the certain products and stimulate them to make an impulse purchasing decision.

4.2.3 Color

SIBA uses red as the principal color for interior decoration, which gains appreciation from all the shoppers in the interviews. In general, shoppers regard red as the symbol of enthusiasm, energy, and warmth. One female shopper analyzes the inherent properties of different colors, which can be seen in the following quote,

“The typical color of SIBA is red. The color it uses for branding and interior decoration is red. Red belongs to warm color, I think. When I was a student, my teacher told us that warm color can stimulate people’s exciting feelings. But the cool color such as blue makes people calm. So, if I am the store manager, I will also decorate the store with red. It is a wise choice.” (Interviewee 8)

Besides, a number of interviewees relate red with their emotions. For instance, Interviewee 2 mentions that *“I prefer warm colors such as red, yellow, orange because these colors can make me pleasant.”* Interviewee 5 mentions that *“Red makes me excited to do shopping.”* Interviewee 9 mentions that *“Red makes me energetic to do shopping.”* All these feedback indicates that this color can positively influence shoppers’ emotions and feelings. Once red decoration conveys positive emotions to the shoppers, they tend to hold positive expectations to the services

provided by the retailer and increase their willingness to make purchases in the physical store. This can be reflected from the shopper's explanation.

"I am satisfied with SIBA's interior decoration. The main color is red. Red is the color for enthusiasm. I believe, the customer service provided by SIBA is also enthusiastic just like the color. I am willing to make a purchase in such an enthusiastic environment."
(Interviewee 9)

The red decoration tends to leave deep impression on some shoppers. They tend to perceive red as the characteristics, style and symbol of SIBA (Interviewee 3; Interviewee 4; Interviewee 11; Interviewee 12). Therefore, SIBA succeeds to utilize the color not only to create a warm and harmony retail environment to influence shoppers' emotions and willingness to make purchases but also to help the shoppers recognize the store image and create impression in their minds.

In terms of the use of color for store interior, some interviews advocate that the retailer should avoid using too many different colors in the physical store. Both Interviewee 7 and Interviewee 12 believe that the complicated color scheme will make shoppers psychologically uncomfortable, which means the simple color decoration is preferred for shoppers in the electronics store. But more colors can be used in some special areas such as the district for selling children's products, as one parent points out that the colorful decoration is able to attract children's attention and make them excited (Interviewee 10).

Overall, the usage of red as the principal color for interior decoration in the SIBA can positively influence the shoppers' psychological feelings and can lead to their approach behavior such as making purchases with pleasure and arousal and having deep impression of the brand. Still, it should be emphasized that the results of qualitative research show that the positive emotions created by the color decoration cannot directly lead to the shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior in the SIBA.

4.2.4 Lighting

Through conducting the qualitative research, the authors find out that different shoppers have different preferences in terms of the lighting used in the electronics store. In the interviews, the majority of the shoppers claim that they prefer warm lighting when shopping in the electronics stores. The primary reason is that the warm lighting is able to help the electronics store create a natural and comfortable environment which can in turn stimulate the shoppers to stay in the store for a longer period. This can be reflected from the following quotes.

"I like warm lighting, because it brings me pleasure and makes me

feel relaxed. SIBA uses warm lighting. It is great. It will not make me feel stressful to shop in the store. So, I usually spend about half an hour shopping in the SIBA.” (Interviewee 12)

“I like warm lighting. My home is also warm lighting. So when I shop in the SIBA, it lets me feel shopping at home. The atmosphere is warm and cozy. I like this kind of feeling and I am willing to spend more time in the store.” (Interviewee 9)

Apart from the natural atmosphere that the warm lighting can create, the warm lighting is able to help the shoppers evaluate whether the product is appropriate for their home decoration, which can be seen from the following response.

“I like warm lighting. You know, I also use bright lighting in my home. So, when I do shopping, I can evaluate whether this goods is appropriate to the interior decoration of my home.” (Interviewee 3)

All these responses from the interviewees indicate that warm lighting is positive to influence the shoppers’ emotions and lead to their approach behavior such as spending more time in the store with pleasure. However, the shoppers tend not to relate the warm lighting with their impulse purchasing behavior in the store.

In addition, some shoppers in the interviews point out that the warm lighting has its own inherent drawback. To be specific, the warm lighting may lead to color difference. One female shopper (Interviewee 1) mentions that the color of the product she bought in the SIBA who uses warm lighting looks a little bit different when she checks it in the bright lighting. The color difference sometimes makes her uncomfortable and sad.

By contrast, some shoppers prefer the electronics stores with bright lighting for the fundamental reason that it allows them to see the merchandise clearly. The following quotes are the interviewees’ explanation.

“I prefer the stores with bright lighting, because it helps me see the details of the product. Under bright lighting, the color of the product is much closer to its true color. I can reduce the possibility of buying a product with color difference.” (Interviewee 1)

“I think it is important for the store to present the appearance and function of the electronics products. Bright lighting is a good way to demonstrate the goods in front of us.” (Interviewee 4)

All these responses from interviewees indicate that bright lighting facilitates the shoppers’ evaluation of products on display. Another two interviewees (Interviewee 5; Interviewee 8) put forward the opinion that the bright lighting can make the shopping

space look larger.

In terms of the influence of lighting on products, some interviewees mention that warm lighting is able to make the electronics products look high-end and cutting-edge. One male shopper (Interviewee 5) provides an example that the same product looks sophisticated in the warm lighting whereas it may look ordinary in the bright lighting.

However, in terms of the necessity of product spotlighting and ambient lighting, the majority of interviewees show that there is no need for the retailer to add extra lighting. They believe that the existing lighting is sufficient for them to observe the products. However, the minority of shoppers think that the retailer could add the spotlighting to some best-selling merchandise, through which shoppers' attention can be attracted.

4.3 Layout and design

According to the results of observation, the authors find out that the distribution of shelves is clear and regular in the SIBA. The authors believe that SIBA's layout belongs to the grid style. The detailed layout of the store can be reflected from the Figure 4.1. In terms of SIBA, its entrance and exit place are separated, which means if the shoppers want to get out of the electronics store, they have to go through the whole store. SIBA uses a red long carpet to indicate the main path from the entrance to the exit. It is manifest that the discounted merchandise is always placed on both sides of this path.

SIBA Store Layout

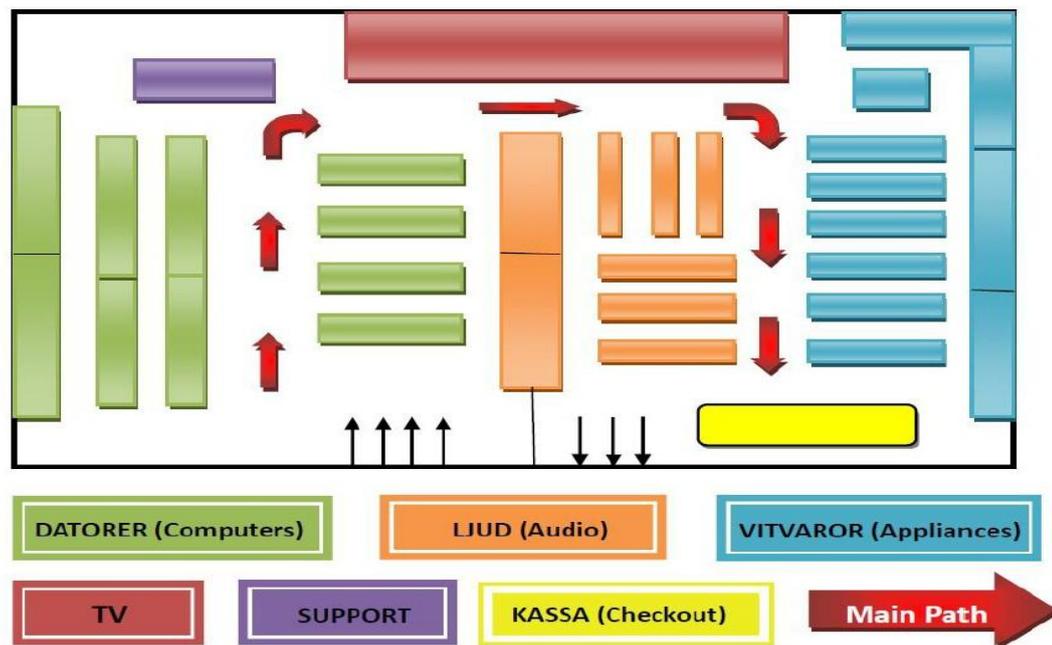


Figure 4.1: the store layout of SIBA (developed by the authors)

SIBA divides its store space into six areas: DATORER (Computers), LJUD (Audio), VITVAROR (Appliances), TV, SUPPORT and KASSA (Check-out). Each area can be clearly identified by the shoppers in the store. It should be pointed out that in the LJUD (Audio) area, there is sofa available which allows the shoppers to sit down to enjoy the music and test the stereo products. In the KASSA (check-out) area, SIBA always sells small and cheap products such as chocolate, beverage, ice-cream, portable speakers, batteries, and data conversion lines.

In terms of the results of the qualitative research, the authors find out that it is difficult to determine which type of store layout is better for electronic store because different shoppers have different preferences. Some shoppers prefer grid store layout for the primary reason that it enables the merchandise to be clearly presented in front of the shoppers. Once the shoppers enter the store, they can locate the products they are interested in within short period. This means the grid layout can help the shoppers purchase the planned product with the shortest time, which tends to reduce the planned shoppers' stay in the physical store. However, some interviewees who are unplanned shoppers point out that they are willing to stay in the store for a longer period if the merchandise is demonstrated in a grid way because the clear product display makes the store atmosphere look light and spacious and makes them pleasant

(Interviewee 3; Interviewee 4).

By contrast, some shoppers prefer the electronics store with free-form layout. The primary reason is that the free style is conducive to create a warm and relaxing shopping environment. Interviewee 10, a shopper who often does shopping with families, points out that *“I prefer free-style layout. You know, we usually go to the electronics store without any buying plan. I mean, we go there just for killing time. I think the free-form layout makes me feel comfortable, without any pressure.”* Besides, another advantage of free-form layout is that it makes the shoppers to discover some novel products. The male shopper explains that *“The free-form layout drives me to visit the store from the entrance to the exit. During this process, I can discover many products that I have not noticed before. Sometime, I buy some products that are beyond my shopping plan.”*(Interviewee 12) However, some shoppers complain the inconvenience brought by the free-form layout. These shoppers tend to be negatively influenced by the free-style layout because it makes the product demonstration look messy; therefore, the shoppers become in the down mood and their duration in the store will be reduced.

In the qualitative research, the authors also find out that different shopping areas are treated differently by shoppers. When shoppers visit the store without plan, they tend to pay more attention to the shopping areas that they are interested in. For example, young female shoppers will check the hair products whereas young male shoppers will be attracted by the latest gaming products. As a matter of fact, the area on which shoppers will spend more time depends on their individual preference and interest. However, the results of the interviews show that almost all the shoppers, regardless of their gender and age, will pay attention to the check-out area. The following quotes are the shopping experience provided by some interviewees.

“I am easily attracted by the check-out place. I will buy a bottle of water or chocolate almost each time. Last week, I went to SIBA. I found that SIBA sells the KEX chocolate biscuits in large package. You know, I have not seen this kind of big package even in the supermarkets. So I bought it immediately, of course impulsively.”
(Interviewee 1)

“When I leave the electronics store, I often feel thirsty. So, I will buy a bottle of water or ice cream without any thinking when checking out.” (Interviewee 2)

“Last week, I did shopping in SIBA. At the basket near the check-out desk, I saw the comb. It is a famous brand. The color is the newest. It is just 130kr. I decided to buy it in 2 seconds. I often buy some products with low prices near the check-out area. The products there are often cheap. So, I do not care the price and will make an impulse

buying decision immediately.” (Interviewee 6)

All these quoted responses indicate that the check-out place is an important area where shoppers will make unplanned and impulse purchases due to their physical need or the products with reasonable prices or other attractive features. When speaking of check-out place, it should be pointed out that all the shoppers have not experienced the queue when they check out in the SIBA. This indicates that the crowding situation does not exist at the check-out place in the SIBA.

4.4 Point-of-purchase and decoration display

According to the authors’ observation, SIBA provides a wide range of signage at the point-of-purchase location. It can be seen from the fixtures that the ordinary price signage are in white whereas the signage for discounted merchandise are generally labeled in yellow. This makes the shoppers easy to distinguish the discounted products with others. It should be pointed out that SIBA places the yellow stickers which explain the reasons for discount on some of the products. 'BRA VAL' (good choice) is another special sign on some of the price signage. This sign can be perceived as the official suggestion that SIBA provides for its shoppers. Besides, SIBA uses posters as the point-of -purchase signage in the retail environment. The yellow posters with 'FYND!' (bargain) are the most common symbol of discounted merchandise in the SIBA. These posters can be easily seen in the area of discounted products. The posters with bomb pictures or product photos are another type of point-of-purchase signage in the SIBA which are designed to stimulate the shoppers to notice the product. Moreover, SIBA uses red posters which aim to remind shoppers of buying the ancillary products in the store. For example, a red poster which writes 'Do not forget paper and cartridges for your printer!' is placed next to the printer.

Through the qualitative research, the authors find out that the point-of-purchase signage is one of the most significant factors that the shoppers will pay attention to when they shop in the electronics store. All the interviewees claim that they tend to be easily attracted by the in-store signage with clear discount information. Some shoppers introduce their impulse purchasing experience due to the point-of-purchase signage, which is shown in the following quotes.

“Last month, I bought a coffee maker because of the attractive discount price. When I walked close to coffee machine area, I saw the poster with price information immediately. Actually, I have an old coffee machine in my home. So, it is not a must to buy a new one. But the price was really attractive. It is just 299kr. At that moment, I think I cannot miss it.” (Interviewee 11)

“I am interested in online games. So, the keyboard and mouse must

be professional and of good quality. One day I visited the store, I saw a big poster. It wrote that my favorite brand had a discount price. I bought it immediately.” (Interviewee 6)

These responses imply that the signage that informs the shoppers with discount price is easy to attract the customers' attention and stimulate their impulse buying behavior in the electronics store. In terms of the contents of the point-of-purchase signage, it is necessary to include the discount price. Apart from the price, some shoppers suggest that the latest electronics products should be recommended by the store through the design of point-of-purchase signage. Interviewee 5 points out that *“Each time I visit the electronics store, I want to discover some new products. If the latest products are always put together with the common ones, it will be easily missed.”* This means the electronics store could design signage to direct the shoppers to notice the latest products. Besides, some shoppers mention that the contents of point-of-purchase cannot be confined to the clarification of price. The primary characteristic features of the product should also be emphasized on the point-of-purchase signage. These shoppers claim that the reasonable price is not the mere reason that can drive their impulse purchasing decisions. In some situations, the shoppers will be attracted by the unique function of the product (Interviewee 3; Interviewee 4; Interviewee 12).

However, when conducting interviews, the authors find out that the minority of the shoppers have unpleasant shopping experience in the SIBA due to the point-of-purchase signage. This can be reflected from the following quotes.

“Sometimes, I find that the price label is messy. The discount price label does not match the product. I feel strange. Sometimes, I will go to check the price with the salespeople. Sometimes, I will give up.” (Interviewee 4)

“Last summer, I bought the ice-cream maker. It said on the poster that it was 30% discount. But when I checked out, it showed the original price. I had to argue with the employee. I was a little bit angry at that moment.” (Interviewee 6)

These two cases illustrate that the electronics retailer should check the price with the product when they make point-of-purchase signage. The mistaken price will negatively influence the shoppers' emotions and even their willingness to make a purchase in the store.

Another factor of store atmosphere that has been mentioned frequently by the interviewees is product display. Some shoppers point out that they will impulsively buy some adjunctive products that are placed close to the main product. For example, Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 8 bought the coffee capsules when they purchased the coffee maker. And Interviewee 6 bought the iPad cover accompanied with the iPad.

This means that it is necessary for the store to put the adjunctive products close to the main product which can stimulate the shoppers' impulse purchases. Furthermore, some shoppers point out that the live demonstration is a good way for the shoppers to understand the product. Interviewee 9 mentions that *“When we go to SIBA, we can see the TV sets with beautiful images. Though the images, we can evaluate its quality. Actually, I think the retailer could make more presentations in the store to let us test the product from different angles. For example, the retailer can show us how to use the coffee machine. I believe it will be interesting and can attract many people to make impulse purchases in the store.”* This indicates that live presentation of the product can be utilized by the electronics retailer to attract the shoppers' attention and stimulate them to make impulse purchases.

In terms of the use of lifestyle graphics in the electronics store, the shoppers tend to hold different opinions in the interviews. Some shoppers believe that the retailers should put emphasis on the product itself. This means if the graphics are designed and presented, the contents should focus on the product's function and other characteristic features. However, some shoppers think that more graphics that are unrelated to the products could be designed in the electronics store in order to create a more relaxing retail environment. Although the interviewees cannot achieve consensus regarding the content of graphic design, they can accept both forms of graphics.

4.5 Human factors

In the SIBA, the authors find out that there are two or three salespeople working at the same time. In general, salespeople wait for shoppers at the support area and sometimes walk around in different shopping areas. White shirt, suit pants and colorful tie are the salespeople's uniforms. These uniforms make the salespeople look professional and easy to be recognized by the shoppers. The salespeople in the SIBA look friendly and can offer detailed product overviews to the shoppers with patience. The authors have ever noticed that the salespeople helped the customer to carry heavy products to the check-out place, and offered kindly service throughout the period. The authors have made the observation in the SIBA three times at different working period and happen to experience the store's busy and free time. If the salespeople are not busy or there are few shoppers in the SIBA, the salespeople will ask shoppers whether they need help and actively provide product information for shoppers. By contrast, if the store is busy, shoppers always need to find and wait the salespeople for help, and sometimes the waiting time is quite long.

From the shoppers' perspective, all the shoppers in the interviews claim that they have not met with crowding situations in the SIBA. But some interviewees mention that if the crowding happens in the electronics store, their emotions will be negatively influenced. Interviewee 8 guesses that she will become anxious and upset with the crowding and Interviewee 1 points out that the crowding will stimulate her to escape

the store as soon as possible. However, two interviewees (Interviewee 9; Interviewee 12) inform of a special situation that can generate crowding for several seconds. Specifically, when shoppers check the merchandise between shelves, other shoppers who are in wheelchairs or carry the shopping baskets will pass them by. Under this circumstance, they feel that the store environment is a little bit crowded due to the insufficient space. But this will not influence their emotions to continue shopping because this kind of negative feeling disappears immediately in their minds.

In terms of retail employees, all the interviewees think that it is easy for shoppers to recognize personnel in the store because of their clothing. All the shoppers believe that it is necessary for personnel to wear uniforms because unified clothing conveys the professional feelings.

Apart from this, all the shoppers mention the significance of salespeople when they shop in the electronics store. The findings of interviews show that shoppers will actively ask salespeople for help when they want to acquire more information about the product, or when the price label is ambiguous, or when they want to test the product. It should be pointed out that the majority of shoppers mention that the salespeople will not actively communicate with shoppers until the shoppers go to the information desk especially during the busy times. Some shoppers think it is not necessary for salespeople to actively interact with them because too passionate behavior will render the shoppers stressful. After communication and interaction with salespeople in the SIBA, all the interviewees are satisfied with their service because they can offer professional explanations and recommendations. A number of shoppers provide examples of their impulse purchases after pleasant conversations with the salespeople.

“I bought the massage pillow primarily because of the salespeople’s recommendation. When I went to ask the salespeople about how to use the pillow, the salespeople not only told me its usage but also introduced its function. His explanation was very professional. His voice was attractive. At last, I felt there was no reason for me to skip this product. So, I bought it impulsively.” (Interviewee 1)

“When I was hesitating whether to buy the laptop, the salespeople explained its function, warranty service, and discount information with great patience. You know, I was influenced by his professional and enthusiastic explanation. I made an impulsive decision to buy a new laptop at last.” (Interviewee 6)

“One day, I was considered buying which type of camera. Then I went to consult the salespeople about the two different types. The salespeople clearly explained the differences and made recommendations from my perspective. You know, he did not

recommend me to buy the expensive one. I really appreciated his honesty. At last, I impulsively bought the cheaper camera but that is more appropriate to me.” (Interviewee 10)

It is manifest from these quotes that the professional customer service provided by salespeople can positively influence shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior in the electronics store. However, a number of interviewees point out one drawback of SIBA that there are not sufficient salespeople in the store. Specifically, some shoppers meet with the situation in which they have to wait for the mere salespeople who is communicating with other shoppers in the store. Under this circumstance, some patient shoppers will wait for the salespeople; however, some impatient shoppers will become depressed within several minutes and even decide to leave the store. This indicates that the shoppers' emotions and behavior will be negatively influenced once their need cannot be satisfied within short period. Therefore, Interviewee 2 suggests that SIBA could recruit more salespeople in the store especially during the discount season in order to provide the shoppers with immediate customer service.

5 Analysis

In this chapter, the authors analyze how the store atmosphere influences the shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior through combining the concepts and models introduced in the theoretical framework with the empirical findings that the authors have made in the qualitative research. The analysis is presented from five atmospheric perspectives including external stimulus, general interior stimulus, layout and design, point-of-purchase and decoration displays, and human stimulus.

5.1 The influence of store exterior on shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior

The exterior design of the store can be perceived as the external stimulus of the store atmosphere. In general, the well-designed store exterior is able to attract the passing shoppers' attention (Dunne and Lusch, 2008). The results of the qualitative research demonstrate that there are two situations in which the shoppers will ignore the store exterior. Specifically, the shoppers who claim to be rational ones tend to pay no attention to the external design in order not to be attracted by the advertisements and decoration outside the electronics store. In this situation, it is the shoppers' individual personality that decides the shoppers' behavior (Adelaar et al, 2003; Shahjehan, 2012). In this thesis, the authors do not take the shoppers' personality into account in order to fulfill research purpose. Secondly, the shoppers who are very familiar with one specific store due to their frequent visit for a number of years will also ignore the changes of the store exterior.

In spite of these two circumstances, almost all the shoppers in the qualitative research show that they will pay attention to the external design. Through conducting the qualitative research, the authors find out that different shoppers have different expectations to the design of store exterior. Some shoppers (Interviewee 5; Interviewee 6) think that the storefront with large space is able to attract their attention and stimulate them to enter the store. However, the authors believe it is impossible for the electronics store to change its size of the storefront for the fundamental reason that the floor area is fixed once the store is established.

Even though it is not feasible for the electronics store to modify its storefront space to attract the shoppers' attention, the retailer can utilize the design to influence the shoppers' emotions and behavior. Specifically, some shoppers (Interviewee 8; Interviewee 11) will evaluate whether the design of the storefront is appropriate to the electronics store itself. The interviewees' feedback demonstrates that a well-designed store exterior can positively influence the shoppers' emotions and their approach behavior such as entering the store immediately and having positive attitudes toward

the store and its merchandise whereas the outdated and inappropriate external design can lead to the shoppers' avoidance behavior such as passing the store directly. However, different types of stores should be designed differently. In terms of the electronics store, the shoppers point out that the design of the storefront should be consistent with the whole style of the store to convey modern, technological and innovative feelings. As a matter of fact, the electronics store generally covers a wide range of products including household appliances, audio and video equipment, computers, digital cameras, cell phones, DVDs/CDs, etc (Advisen, 2012). These products can not only serve as the necessities for people's personal, family, or household use but also be perceived as the technological equipment that can make people's lives easier. Therefore, the external design of the electronics store should take the nature of its products inside the store into consideration in order to create an innovative and state-of-the-art atmosphere. Once the shoppers regard the external design of the store as innovative and cutting-edge, they tend to believe that the products inside the store are also innovative, up-to-date, and sophisticated, which will not only increase their feelings of pleasure and arousal before they enter the store but also enhance their willingness to make purchases after they enter the store (Dunne and Lusch, 2008).

In terms of the external design of the electronics store, Dunne and Lusch (2008) point out that apart from the clarification of the store's name and nature, it is also significant for the retailer to provide the shoppers with some implications regarding the products or services it sells in the store environment. In the qualitative research, the majority of the shoppers regard the demonstration of the advertising information in the storefront area as the one of the primary channels to understand the products inside the store. Through the observation, the authors find out that SIBA posts its advertisements on two sides of the external walls, which allows the shoppers to notice the advertising information from different directions. The advertising contents not only cover the product information but also include the specific service provided by SIBA. A number of shoppers point out that they will enter the store to check the product which is displayed in the external advertisement. In the research, one male shopper (Interviewee 4) describes his real experience of buying the headphone impulsively due to the outside advertisement. When he recalls this shopping experience, he believes that it is the advertisement in the storefront that stimulates him to make an impulse purchasing decision. Besides, another shopper (Interviewee 1) made an impulse purchase of headphone due to the refund information which is particularly shown outside the store. Therefore, these two cases indicate that the advertising information which is demonstrated outside the store can serve as the stimulus to drive the shoppers to make an impulse purchasing decision after they enter the electronics store (Dunne and Lusch, 2008).

However, some shoppers complain that the products in the advertisements usually do not match their needs. For example, one shopper (Interviewee 1) points out that the merchandise in the advertisement is not able to stimulate her to make a quick

purchasing decision and more products with lower prices should be demonstrated outside the store. This does not mean that it is completely right for the electronics retailer to present the products with low prices in the external advertisement. The authors believe when SIBA designs the advertisements, it is of great significance to take their shoppers' needs and desires into consideration in order to draw their attention within the shortest period (Dunne and Lusch, 2008).

From the theoretical perspective, exterior display windows can also be utilized by the retailer to disseminate advertising information to shoppers (Dunne and Lusch, 2008). The display windows provide the shoppers with the opportunity to have a rough understanding of the products available in the retail environment. The display windows are also an important stimulus that can drive the shoppers to enter the store. It should be pointed out that only the display windows that are designed to satisfy the passing shoppers' interests are able to generate their pleasure and arousal to enter the electronics store. It is very likely that the shoppers will miss the store which has not any attractive characteristic features compared with other physical stores. However, the authors are aware of the fact that many electronics stores in Sweden have not display windows due to the design of the architecture. But according to the authors' observation, SIBA, one of the electronics retailers in the Swedish marketplace, succeeds to utilize the giant transparent glasses to replace the solid walls near the entrance. The usage of glass walls allows the passing shoppers to have a rough understanding of the store layout and the products inside the store. Therefore, the function of the glass walls can be regarded as similar to that of exterior display windows. Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons (2010) suggest that the window demonstrations should be changed frequently in order to satisfy shoppers' desire for novelty. However, it is impossible for the electronics retailer to change its store layout and products frequently because the store layout is generally fixed when the design of the store is settled and the products will be replaced only when the new products launch. But the interior decoration can be modified to attract the shoppers' attention. As Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons (2010) suggest that the contents demonstrated through the windows should convey interesting and exciting feelings to the shoppers, SIBA could utilize the glass walls to bring surprise to the shoppers. For instance, on the special holidays such as Christmas and Easter, the interior space which can be seen by the shoppers outside the store can be carefully designed to match the festival atmosphere. Once the shoppers notice these modifications, their positive emotions such as pleasure and arousal will be increased which means their willingness to enter the store and make purchases will also be enhanced.

Dunne and Lusch (2008) also point out that the shoppers begin to form attitudes towards the store when they reach close to the store location. This means that the shoppers begin to evaluate the store before they reach the store entrance. Therefore, the electronics retailer can utilize the space in front of the store to attract the passing shoppers' attention. For instance, the exterior signage can be placed at appropriate locations in order to direct the shoppers to walk close to the store.

In the qualitative research, the authors find out two factors of store exterior design that have not been covered by the theoretical knowledge. Some interviewees (Interviewee 4; Interviewee 9) emphasize the significance of the lockers and shopping carts in the storefront area of the electronics store especially when they happen to have already bought some products in other places. In terms of SIBA, the authors find out that there are only shopping baskets available in the storefront. Besides, some shoppers (Interviewee 9) in the interviews mention that the electronics retailer could provide the shoppers with free brochures that inform the brands and products available in the store. In the catching location of the entrance, SIBA offers newspapers that contain the latest product and discount information. As a matter of fact, the shoppers' demands for lockers, shopping carts, or brochures stem from their desire for the shopping convenience in the store environment. This means if the electronics retailer can provide the shoppers with more equipment and facilities that are conducive to their shopping process, the shoppers tend to raise pleasure and arousal in their minds, which will in turn contribute to their approach behavior after they enter the store.

5.2 The influence of store interior on shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior

In this part, the authors will integrate the theoretical knowledge with the empirical findings to analyze the influence of interior stimulus on the shoppers' psychological and behavioral responses primarily from four perspectives including background music, store scent, color, and lighting.

5.2.1 The influence of music on shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior

Even though only four shoppers in the interviews mention that they do not care the background music when they shop in the electronics store, most interviewees confirm that their emotions and behavior will be influenced by the background music. Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein (2007) point out that music has the ability to evoke the shoppers' affective responses, which can be confirmed by one interviewee's experience. Interviewee 1 mentions that the appropriate background music makes her forget tiredness temporarily and feel relaxed. This shopper's response illustrates that the music is effective to evoke the shopper's positive emotions and feelings because the appropriate music can alleviate the shopper's fatigue.

In terms of the types of music, almost all the shoppers prefer fast music rather than slow music. The primary reason is that fast music generally has sense of rhythm and

the tempo is conducive to stimulate the shoppers' movement in the electronics store. In the qualitative research, one male shopper (Interviewee 10) who usually does shopping with his family points out that his little daughter becomes excited when she listens to the background music with fast tempo in the SIBA. This is consistent with the research provided by Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein (2007) that fast music can enhance the level of excitement in the shoppers' minds. Since increasing excitement are more likely to lead to the shoppers' approach behavior (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007), it is reasonable for the electronics retailer to use fast music as the background music in order to positively influence their shoppers' emotional and behavioral responses.

Moreover, all the shoppers mention that they prefer familiar music rather than strange songs. The results of interviews indicate that the familiar music is closely related to the amount of time that the shoppers spend in the electronics store. This can be reflected from one female shopper's feedback. Interviewee 2 mentions that once listening to the familiar music, she will not leave the store until it ends, which makes her feel time goes by fast. This feedback indicates that the shoppers tend to stay in the store for a longer period once they are surrounded by familiar music, which matches the research conducted by Ferreira and Oliveira-Castro (2011).

Furthermore, the volume of the background music, as the physical dimension of the music, can also influence the shoppers' emotions and feelings and then their approach or avoidance behavior (Mattila and Wirtz, 2001; Ferreira and Oliveira-Castro, 2011). In the qualitative research, the shoppers point out that the musical volume should be controlled at an appropriate level for the fundamental reason that low volume music will be ignored by the shoppers whereas high volume will make the shoppers psychologically uncomfortable especially children and elderly people. It should be emphasized that the high volume should be avoided by the electronics stores because it can drive the shoppers to leave the store within the shortest period. Therefore, in order to foster the shoppers' positive emotions and stimulate them to stay in the electronics store for a longer period, it is necessary for the retailer to control the volume to a moderate level. However, a number of interviewees believe that the musical volume is a little lower in the SIBA; therefore, if SIBA plans to utilize the background music to influence its shoppers, it is necessary for it to enhance the volume to a moderate level.

Additionally, in the research, some shoppers point out that they cannot bear the repetition of background music when they shop in the electronics store. Their emotions will be negatively influenced by the loop of music. According to the authors' observation and the shoppers' feedback, this situation does not happen in the SIBA because SIBA will change the music frequently.

Overall, the background music in the SIBA is able to positively influence the shoppers' emotions and feelings and can even lead to the shoppers' approach behavior

such as spending more time in the physical store. However, the psychological feelings of pleasure and excitement which results from the background music are not strong enough to stimulate the shoppers to make impulse purchases in the retail environment.

5.2.2 The influence of scent on shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior

The store scent can be divided into ambient scent and non-ambient scent (Mattila and Wirtz, 2001). In the electronics store, the ambient scent refers to the scent that exists in the store while the non-ambient scent generally refers to the scent that is created by the merchandise sold in the retail environment.

In terms of the ambient scent, all the shoppers mention that there is no special scent in the SIBA. This means that the ambient scent does not exist in the SIBA. Further, the majority of the interviewees point out that there is no need for the electronics store to create the ambient scent for the fundamental reason that different shoppers tend to have different reflections to the scent. One shopper (Interviewee 2) mentions in the interview that the same scent may make some shoppers pleasant but make other shoppers uncomfortable. Therefore, even though the theoretical knowledge shows that the retail environment with ambient scent can positively influence the shoppers' perception and evaluation of the store and its products (Mattila and Wirtz, 2001), it is sensible for SIBA not to produce any special ambient scent in the physical store according to the interviewees' feedback in the qualitative research.

In terms of non-ambient scent, some shoppers advocate that it is necessary for the electronics retailer to create scent in some special areas. In the research, two shoppers (Interviewee 1; Interviewee 9) link their impulse purchases of coffee machine and related products with the scent of coffee. This indicates that the smell of coffee can be accepted by some shoppers and can even stimulate their impulse purchasing decision. Even though some shoppers point out that they will be positively influenced by the scent of coffee, the retailer should carefully consider whether to add this special scent. According to Mattila and Wirtz's research (2001), the shoppers' emotions toward the scent can be influenced by three aspects of the scent including its quality, its arousing nature, and its intensity. This means even though some shoppers are satisfied with the smell of coffee and their pleasure and arousal will be increased, the intensity of the smell can also positively or negatively influence the shoppers' emotions and feelings.

Overall, when SIBA decides to produce the ambient scent or non-ambient scent in the physical store, it is significant for the retailer to take the products they sell in the store and their target shoppers' preferences into consideration in order to positively influence the shoppers' emotional and behavioral responses (Dunne and Lusch, 2008).

5.2.3 The influence of color on shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior

In the field of color psychology, different colors can influence the shoppers differently (Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007). SIBA, as one of the electronics retailers in Sweden, uses red as the primary color for interior decoration. In the qualitative research, all the shoppers are satisfied with the red decoration. The shoppers believe that red symbolizes warmth, energy and enthusiasm. Furthermore, some shoppers (Interviewee 2; Interviewee 5; Interviewee 9) mention that the red decoration makes them feel pleasant, excited, and energetic to do shopping in the electronics store. This demonstrates that red is the color that can positively influence the shoppers' emotions and behavior in the retail environment as Solomon et al. (2006) point out that the warm colors such as red, orange and yellow are able to convey stimulating and arousing feelings to the shoppers.

Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons (2010) point out that color can positively or negatively affect the shoppers' stimulated purchases and their duration in the physical store, which can also be confirmed by the shoppers' responses in the research. One female shopper (Interviewee 9) expresses her opinion that she is willing to make purchases in the SIBA because the red decoration makes her believe SIBA has satisfactory customer service. This feedback indicates that the shoppers tend to have positive attitudes towards the store when the color used for interior decoration positively influences the shoppers' psychological feelings. When their pleasure and arousal are increased to large extent, the possibility of making impulse purchases in the SIBA will accordingly increased (Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007). Still, it should be pointed out that in the current situation, the color decoration is unable to directly stimulate the shoppers to make an impulse purchases in the SIBA.

In terms of the design of the store, some retailers prefer to use the branding color as the principal color for interior decoration. It is manifest that SIBA is this kind of retailer. In the research, a number of shoppers mention that they regard red as the characteristic feature of SIBA (Interviewee 3; Interviewee 4; Interviewee 11; Interviewee 12). Therefore, it can be concluded that SIBA uses the red decoration to create a pleasant and harmony shopping environment that can not only positively influence the shoppers' psychological and behavioral responses but also strengthen the branding image in the shoppers' minds (Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007).

Apart from the principal color, SIBA uses as few colors as possible for store decoration according to the authors' observation, which happens to match the shoppers' psychological thoughts. A number of interviewees point out that there is no need for SIBA to use more colors for interior decoration for the fundamental reason

that the complex color usage will make the shoppers psychologically uncomfortable (Interviewee 7; Interviewee 12). However, the shopper (Interviewee 10) who usually does shopping with children point out that the colorful decoration in certain areas such as children's product district can positively influence the children's emotions. The authors think that this shopper's suggestion for colorful decoration only represents the individual opinion. Once the electronics retailer decides to adopt this suggestion, the retailer should consider whether the partial decoration will influence the whole feelings that the store conveys to the shoppers.

5.2.4 The influence of lighting on shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior

In general, the electronics store uses either warm lighting or bright lighting in the physical environment. According to the authors' observation, SIBA uses warm lighting for interior decoration. However, after conducting the qualitative research, the authors find out that different shoppers have different preference to the lighting. Specifically, the majority of the shoppers express that they prefer the warm lighting in the SIBA for the fundamental reason that the store environment seems to be natural and harmony with warm lighting. The use of warm lighting can even lead to the shoppers' approach behavior in the store such as the increasing duration in the SIBA. The positive influence of warm lighting on the shoppers' emotional and behavioral responses can be reflected from the interviewees' feedback. Interviewee 12 points out that he tends to spend more time in the store with warm lighting since it can make him relaxed and pleasant. And Interviewee 9 mentions that warm lighting makes the store environment warm and cozy, which drives her to stay in the store for a longer period. Besides, the use of warm lighting in the SIBA allows the shoppers who also use warm lighting in their home to evaluate whether the merchandise is suitable for their home decoration. Furthermore, in the research, some shoppers mention that the electronics products seem to be state-of-the-art and high-end with the irradiation of warm lighting in the SIBA. However, it should be pointed out that even though warm lighting can positively influence the shoppers' emotions and feelings when they shop in the SIBA, no shopper makes impulse purchases just due to the influence of warm lighting in the physical store.

Still, it should be pointed out that the use of warm lighting is not without its own drawback. In the qualitative research, some shoppers (Interviewee 1; Interviewee 4) point out that the color of the product may look like different under different types of lighting. This means warm color may bring about color difference, which will sometimes negatively influence the shoppers' emotions and feelings after they make a purchase. According to the interviewees' responses in the research, the use of bright lighting is able to avoid this disadvantage since the bright lighting allows the shoppers to check the products clearly and avoid buying the product with color difference.

Overall, the warm lighting has its own strengths and weaknesses. Once the electronics retailer decides to use warm lighting for irradiation in the store, it is necessary for SIBA to consider how to address the color difference that the use of warm lighting may bring about in order to positively influence its shoppers' psychological and behavioral responses.

From the theoretical perspective, Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons (2010) point out that the appropriate use of product spotlighting and dim ambient lighting can lead to the shoppers' enjoyment. However, there is no special lighting except the warm lighting in the SIBA according to the authors' observation. The feedback from the interviewees also demonstrates that the existing lighting in the SIBA is sufficient for the shoppers to check the product information. Therefore, the shoppers do not require extra lighting in the SIBA. However, a certain number of shoppers suggest that SIBA could equip the spotlighting to some best-selling products in order to attract the shoppers' attention.

5.3 The influence of layout and design on shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior

In general, the store layout should be designed to facilitate the shoppers' understanding of product distribution (Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007). In the current marketplace, the electronics retailers design their store layout either in the grid form or in the free form. The results of the qualitative research demonstrate that different shoppers tend to have different preferences in terms of store layout.

In the research, the majority of the shoppers express that they prefer the stores with grid layout such as SIBA. The fundamental reason is that they are attracted by the regular and well-organized product demonstration. Through conducting the qualitative research, the authors find out that the shoppers who have already set purchasing plans before they enter the electronics store can easily locate the products within the shortest period. The grid store layout allows the shoppers to have mental maps in their minds, which means they tend to have a clear understanding of where the product is and how to check out (Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007). Therefore, the grid store layout makes the shoppers fulfill the shopping process effectively and efficiently, which indicates that the time that the shoppers spend in the store is reduced to some extent due to the well-organized store design. Even though the planned shoppers generally devote less time to accomplishing the purchasing plan, their perception of the store tends to be positive owing to the shopping convenience that the clear layout brings about. Therefore, the grid store layout exerts positive influences on the planned shoppers' emotional and behavioral responses. On the other hand, the unplanned shoppers point out that they more often than not spend more time in the electronics store with grid layout. Interviewee 3 and Interviewee 4 mention that

the electronics stores organized in a grid way such as SIBA look light and spacious and the regular product presentation makes them in a good mood. Accordingly, their emotions of pleasure drive them to stay in the store for a longer period. Therefore, the unplanned shoppers' psychological and behavioral responses will also be positively influenced by the electronics store's grid layout. Another point that has not been mentioned by the interviewees in the research is that the grid layout is effective to channel the shoppers in the store which can avoid crowded situations (Dunne and Lusch, 2008). In terms of crowding, all the interviewees point out that they have not experienced it in the SIBA. This indicates that the grid layout contributes to creating an uncrowded atmosphere in the SIBA.

By contrast, a certain number of shoppers claim that they prefer the stores with free-form layout since the free style makes the store environment more relaxed and comfortable (Dunne and Lusch, 2008). Besides, some shoppers will purchase some products that are beyond their buying plan due to the direction of the store's free layout. However, some shoppers' emotional and behavioral responses will be negatively influenced by the free-form layout since it makes the product presentation look messy and brings the shoppers inconvenience.

Overall, regardless of which type of layout the electronics store designs, it is impossible for the retailer to change it because the layout is fixed when the store is designed. In terms of SIBA, the majority of the shoppers are satisfied with its layout which makes the shelves and products be arranged in a regular way. It should be emphasized that SIBA uses a red long carpet to direct the shoppers from the store entrance to the exit, which aims to positively influence the shoppers' behavior in the store. As Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein (2007) point out that the physical stores should be designed to consciously or unconsciously guide the shoppers' movement, the red long carpet used in the SIBA can be perceived as the interior decoration that can direct the shoppers' in-store shopping process.

In terms of the concrete layout of product display, the electronics stores tend to divide the physical environment into different sections. According to the authors' observation, there are primarily six shopping areas in the SIBA including DATORER (Computers), LJUD (Audio), VITVAROR (Appliances), TV, SUPPORT and KASSA (Checkout). In general, shoppers tend to treat different shopping areas differently. For instance, the shoppers are more likely to increase the duration in the area by which they are fascinated whereas they will pass by the uninteresting areas at fast speed (Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007). The results of the qualitative research demonstrate that different shoppers tend to have different preferences to the shopping district. This means that the shoppers will dedicate more time to the shopping area they are interested in. It should be pointed out that this decision depends on the shoppers' individual preference and interest.

Through conducting the qualitative research, the authors also find out that almost all

the shoppers will spare some time to the check-out space before they leave the electronics store. Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein (2007) point out that the shoppers are very likely to make impulse purchases in the check-out space. This situation more often than not happens in the SIBA. In the KASSA (check-out) area, SIBA usually provides the shoppers with some small products with lower prices such as chocolate, drinks, ice-cream and batteries, which stimulates the shoppers to make impulse purchases within the shortest period. In the research, the interviewees (Interviewee 1; Interviewee 2; Interviewee 6) admit that they make impulse purchases due to their physical need, or the attractive price, or other reasons when checking out in the SIBA. The feedback indicates that SIBA succeeds to utilize the check-out space to stimulate the shoppers' impulse behavior in the electronics store. Therefore, once SIBA recognizes that the check-out area is one of the popular areas that can influence the shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior, the retailer should pay more attention to its space design and product display.

5.4 The influence of point-of-purchase and decoration display on shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior

Among all the interior decoration, the point-of-purchase signage is the most important element that can stimulate the shoppers to make approach behavior in the retail environment (Dunne and Lusch, 2008). It is particularly noticeable that the signage with price information can easily attract the shoppers' attention and drive them to make impulse purchases (Dunne and Lusch, 2008). In the qualitative research, some interviewees attribute their impulse purchasing decision to the point-of-purchase signage with attractive discount information in the SIBA. For instance, Interviewee 6 bought the keyboard and mouse impulsively since he is attracted by the poster which clearly demonstrates the discount price. Interviewee 11 made an impulsive decision to buy a coffee machine due to the discounted price even though she already has one in the home. The feedback demonstrates that the shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior is closely related to the point-of-purchase signage in the physical electronics store.

As a matter of fact, all the product signage with discount price is marked in yellow in the SIBA, which can be easily distinguished by the shoppers since the normal signage is labeled in white. This design with color marks matches Dunne and Lusch's research (2008) that the special point-of-purchase signage used for advertisement or sales purposes should be designed in different colors in order to make it different from others. Besides, SIBA generally hangs up the yellow posters which write 'FYND!' (bargain) in the discount area. This kind of point-of-purchase signage can be regarded as the promotion of discounted products. According to the research conducted by Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons (2010), the retailers can improve the sales performance through placing the main products at the catching locations in order to attract the shoppers' attention. Therefore, the discount area with attractive point-of-purchase

posters can be considered as an effective way for SIBA to increase the shoppers' impulse purchases in the store. Furthermore, SIBA designs the point-of-purchase posters with bomb pictures or product photos in order to emphasize the high cost performance of the merchandise on display. This can also be perceived as the channel for SIBA to promote its products in a vivid way.

Since price is not the only factor that can stimulate the shoppers to make an impulse purchase decision, the content of the point-of-purchase signage should be designed from a broader perspective. Specifically, some shoppers point out that the latest electronics products should be highlighted by the point-of-purchase signage in the physical store. The shoppers are very likely to miss the new product if there is no special label or poster to attract the shoppers (Interviewee 5). Besides, a number of shoppers mention that the point-of-purchase signage should cover the information of the characteristic features of the product (Interviewee 3; Interviewee 4; Interviewee 12). The primary reason is other factors can also attract the shoppers' attention and influence their willingness to make impulse purchases. Dunne and Lusch (2008) point out that it is necessary for the retailer to contain some words in the point-of-purchase signage in order to present the detailed product information to the shoppers. This means that it is reasonable for SIBA to clarify some important features of the products on the point-of-purchase signage. Still, it should be pointed out that SIBA place yellow stickers with the explanation for discount on the packages of certain products. SIBA also places the sign of 'BRA VAL' (good choice) to certain products, which can be regarded as the official purchasing suggestion that SIBA offers to its shoppers. All these treasures can positively influence the shoppers' purchasing process in the SIBA.

However, the results of the qualitative research demonstrate that a few shoppers (Interviewee 4; Interviewee 6) have unpleasant shopping experience in the SIBA due to the mistaken prices in the point-of-purchase signage. The electronics retailers should be aware of the fact that the shoppers' emotions will be negatively influenced when they check out and find out the price does not match the price label. Therefore, it is of great significance for SIBA to check the price label in order to exert positive influences upon the shoppers.

Through the qualitative research, the authors find out that product display can also influence the shoppers' purchasing behavior in the electronics store. In the SIBA, the retailer utilizes the red posters to remind the shoppers of purchasing the adjunctive products. According to the authors' observation, SIBA places the poster that writes 'Do not forget paper and cartridges for your printer' next to the printer. In the research, a number of shoppers have mentioned their impulse shopping experience of buying the ancillary products in the SIBA. For instance, the shoppers bought the iPad cover together with iPad and the coffee capsules accompanied with the coffee machine without any thinking (Interviewee 1; Interviewee 6; Interviewee 8). The impulse purchasing behavior indicates that the appropriate display of the main product and its ancillary products with careful guidance can positively influence the number of

products that the shoppers purchase impulsively in the store. Besides, a number of interviewees suggest that SIBA could utilize the live demonstration to convey the product information to the shoppers. They believe that the live presentation can easily attract the shoppers' attention and then positively influence their emotions and even purchasing behavior in the store (Interviewee 9).

In terms of lifestyle graphics, even though the theoretical knowledge emphasizes that the use of photos that are unrelated to the product itself is able to influence the shoppers' emotions and behavior in the retail environment (Dunne and Lusch, 2008), the authors find out that there are no lifestyle pictures in the SIBA. The results of the qualitative research illustrate that if the electronics retailer decides to decorate the interior environment with lifestyle pictures, some shoppers prefer the pictures whose contents put emphasis on the presentation of product features whereas some shoppers prefer the photos that are unrelated to the products in order to shop in a more relaxing environment. Even though the shoppers cannot achieve consensus regarding the content of graphic design in the research, both types of photos are accepted by all the interviewees. In general, different shoppers have different lifestyles and tastes. Therefore, once SIBA decides to decorate the physical store with lifestyle graphics, the retailer should ensure the photos are appealing to its target customers as well as offensive to none (Dunne and Lusch, 2008).

5.5 The influence of human factors on shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior

The influence of human stimulus on the shoppers' emotional and behavioral responses can be analyzed from the perspectives of other shoppers as well as retail employees.

The influence of other shoppers generally refers to the shoppers' perceived crowding. According to Turley and Milliman's research (2000), once the shoppers regard the store environment as crowding, they tend to have negative attitudes toward the shopping experience. In the qualitative research, the shoppers claim that once the crowding happens in the electronics store, they are very likely to become anxious, upset, and even escape the store within the shortest time. It is obvious that the shoppers' emotions and feelings are negative and their behavioral response is avoidance. Even though all the shoppers in the interviews claim that they have not met with crowding situations in the SIBA, it is necessary for the retailer to keep creating an uncrowded environment for their shoppers. Still, it should be pointed out that some shoppers (Interviewee 9; Interviewee 12) are confronted with the short period of crowding when they shop between shelves. Specifically, when they meet with other shoppers who are in wheelchairs or carry the shopping baskets, they tend to feel the store environment is relatively crowded. Even though these shoppers claim that their emotions will not be influenced by the short crowding, it is necessary for

SIBA to consider broadening the space between shelves in order to bring convenience to shoppers.

In terms of retail employees, all the shoppers admit that the salespeople or other store personnel are easy to be recognized in the SIBA because they wear the uniforms of white shirt, suit pants and colorful tie. Turley and Milliman (2000) point out that once the employees are unable to provide the shoppers with satisfactory service, their unprofessional clothing will negatively influence the shoppers' emotions. When performing the qualitative research, the authors find out that all the interviewees are satisfied with the customer service provided by the employees in the SIBA. This means the situation that Turley and Milliman (2000) describe does not exist in the SIBA. On the contrary, since the store employees wear uniforms and provide outstanding service, the shoppers tend to increase the positive emotions towards the store which can further contribute to their approach behavior in the SIBA.

In the research, the significance of salespeople has been mentioned by all the interviewees. When shoppers want to acquire more product information, confirm the price, or test the product, they will actively go to the information desk to communicate and interact with the salespeople. A number of shoppers mention that they usually make an impulse purchase in the SIBA after the conversation with the salespeople. For instance, Interviewee 1 bought the massage pillow impulsive after the salespeople's detailed explanation. Interviewee 6 made an impulsive decision to buy a laptop since the salespeople clearly inform the shopper of the product function, warranty service and discount information with kindness. The feedback indicates that if the salespeople can provide the shoppers with sufficient knowledge about the product, it is very likely for the shoppers to make impulse purchasing behavior in the electronics store. In the interview, another shopper (Interviewee 10) points out that when he considered two different types of camera, the salespeople recommended him to buy the cheap one instead of the expensive one, which made him appreciate the salespeople's behavior and made an impulse buying decision. As a matter of fact, once the shoppers find out that the salespeople shoulder their responsibility of making objective and unbiased recommendation, they tend to have positive attitudes toward the salespeople. Accordingly, their positive emotions such as pleasure and their arousal such as the stimulated feeling will be increased to large extent. Sometime the positive feelings become strong enough to lead to the shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior in the store (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007). It can be seen from the interviewees' description that it is the salespeople's professional recommendation that leads to their impulse buying behavior in the electronics store. Apart from recommendation, it should be pointed out that other social stimulus can be utilized by the salespeople to attract the shoppers to make approach behavior in the store. Turley and Milliman (2000) advocate that it is necessary for the salespeople to present their friendliness to the shoppers in order to increase the shoppers' arousal to make purchases. Even though the shoppers have not mentioned the salespeople's friendliness in the interviews, the authors believe that the

employees in the SIBA take friendly attitudes towards the shoppers because all the shoppers are satisfied their customer service.

However, some shoppers complain that there are not sufficient salespeople in the SIBA. In some situations, the shoppers have to wait for the salespeople who are communicating with other shoppers. The shoppers' feedback demonstrates that they will more often than not lose interest in the store when they happen to meet with this situation. As Turley and Milliman (2000) point out that shoppers tend to have positive emotions when there are enough salespeople who are prepared to provide service, it is necessary for the retailer to ensure that a certain number of salespeople can be accessed by the shoppers. The electronics retailer should be aware of the fact that the shoppers' emotions will be negatively influenced by the wait for salespeople which will in turn lead to their avoidance behavior; therefore, SIBA should take the salespeople arrangement such as its number and schedule into consideration in order to avoid exerting negative influences upon shoppers.

6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the authors make conclusion which aims to answer the research questions. The research contribution and managerial implications are discussed as well. Furthermore, the authors describe the limitations that exist in this thesis and provide the suggested future research.

6.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis is to study the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior in the electronics stores in Sweden. After the authors acquire theoretical knowledge and insights from shoppers, the research question that has been put forward in the first chapter can be answered from five different dimensions of store atmosphere in this section.

The well-designed store exterior can attract the passing shoppers' attention (Dunne and Lusch, 2008), which has been confirmed by the shoppers' approach behavior such as entering the store within the shortest period once they notice the external stimulus outside the electronics stores. However, before entering the physical electronics stores, the shoppers can have a rough understanding of the products or services inside the store through the advertising demonstration, exterior display windows and newspapers in the catching location of storefront. Among all these exterior factors, the shoppers link their impulse purchasing behavior with the attractive advertisement and important information explanation outside the store. Even though former theories have emphasized the importance of the presentation of product information outside the store (Dunne and Lusch, 2008), the research indicates that advertising and information demonstration can lead to shoppers' impulse purchases inside the electronics stores. In terms of external display windows, Dunne and Lusch (2008) point out that they can draw the passing shoppers' attention and even induce them to enter the physical store. This point is also confirmed by the shoppers' feedback in the research. However, it should be pointed out that even though shoppers can generate positive emotions and feelings to the external display windows, the psychological responses are generally not strong enough to stimulate them to make impulse purchases in the electronics stores. Still, the authors have to emphasize that the external facilities that can bring convenience to shoppers, which has not been covered by the theoretical knowledge, can lead to shoppers' positive emotions and feelings. Even though the shoppers' psychological responses to this specific factor are unable to stimulate them to make impulse purchases, their pleasure and excitement can lead

to approach behavior such as spending more time shopping in the electronics stores and having positive attitudes toward the store and its products.

In terms of store interior, this thesis puts emphasis on background music, scent, color, and lighting in the electronics stores in Sweden. Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein (2007) identify that music can evoke the shoppers' complex psychological responses and then influence their purchasing behavior in the retail environment. However, the qualitative research shows that music can positively influence the shoppers' emotions but cannot stimulate their purchase behavior in the electronics stores. Besides, in terms of scent, Mattila and Wirtz (2001) find out that shoppers tend to have positive evaluations and behaviors in the retail environment with ambient scents. However, the authors find out that the shoppers generally do not expect ambient scent in the electronics stores, which is not consistent with the theory. On the other hand, even though the theoretical knowledge does not mention the influence of non-ambient scent on shoppers, the research results demonstrate that some specific non-ambient scent such as the smell of coffee can stimulate the shoppers to make impulse purchasing behavior in the electronics stores. Moreover, Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons (2010) find out that color is effective to influence the shoppers' stimulated purchases, which is not applicable in the electronics stores. The positive emotions caused by color decoration are not strong enough to stimulate the shoppers to make impulse purchases in the electronics stores. Additionally, the theoretical knowledge cannot provide consensus regarding the influence of lighting on shoppers in the electronics stores. The research demonstrates that even though different shoppers have different preference to the lighting, the appropriate use of lighting can lead to the approach behavior such as shopping in the store for a longer period rather than the impulse purchasing behavior.

The well-organized store layout is able to facilitate the shoppers' purchasing process in the retail environment (Dunne and Lusch, 2008), which can also be confirmed in the electronics stores. For planned shoppers, the electronics store with grid layout can help them finish shopping within the shortest period, which can lead to their positive emotions and attitudes toward the store. For unplanned shoppers, the grid layout can make them spend more time visiting the electronics store due to the organized product distribution. By contrast, the electronics store with free-form layout can make the shoppers enjoy the purchasing process in a relaxed environment. Therefore, different shoppers have different preferences toward the store layout. However, it should be emphasized that even though Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein (2007) mention that well-designed store layout can increase the possibility of impulse purchases, the research demonstrates that layout cannot directly lead to the shoppers' impulse

purchasing behavior in the electronics stores. Store retailers generally utilize the store design to consciously or unconsciously guide the shoppers' buying process (Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein, 2007). Different shopping areas are treated differently by the shoppers. Shoppers generally pay more attention to the area that they are interested in, which is determined by their individual preference. However, the check-out space is the most popular area in the electronics store. Zentes, Morschett, and Schramm-Klein (2007) point out that impulse purchasing behavior often happens in the check-out areas, which is consistent with the situation of electronics stores. Shoppers more often than not make impulse purchases due to their physical needs, the attractive product price, or other reasons when they check out in the electronics stores.

According to Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons (2010), the signage with price information is easy to attract shoppers' attention and stimulate them to make an impulse purchase in the physical stores. The research results also confirm that the signage with attractive discount information can lead to shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior in the electronics stores in Sweden. However, once the discount price is not consistent with the check-out price, the shoppers' emotions and feelings will be negatively influenced which can even lead to the avoidance behavior such as giving up purchasing and having negative attitudes to the store. This can be explained by Dunne and Lusch's research (2008) that point-of-purchase signage aims to inform the shoppers of the price, which cannot be ignored by the electronics retailers. Dunne and Lusch (2008) also mention that point-of-purchase signage generally contains some words in order to provide the shoppers with more information. In the electronics stores, the appropriate display of the main product and its ancillary products can lead to the shoppers' impulse purchases if the store can provide some guidance to remind shoppers to buy the ancillary products. Besides, even though Dunne and Lusch (2008) suggest using lifestyle graphics to stimulate purchases in the retail environment, shoppers tend not to relate their purchasing behavior to the photos in the electronics stores.

In terms of human factors of store atmosphere, Turley and Milliman (2000) point out that shoppers' perceived crowding can negatively influence their emotional and behavioral responses. Even though this situation does not happen in the electronics stores in Sweden, shoppers point out that they are very likely to make avoidance behavior such as leaving the store as soon as possible once crowding happens. Turley and Milliman (2000) also point out that the shoppers' purchasing arousal can be increased by the retail employees' social behavior. The research demonstrates that once the salespeople can provide the shoppers with sufficient product knowledge or

offer unbiased and objective recommendation, the shoppers' psychological feelings will be positively influenced to stimulate them to make impulse purchases in the electronics stores. However, it should be emphasized that the lack of salespeople who are prepared to offer customer service can lead to the shoppers' negative emotions and avoidance behavior such as leaving the store without purchases, which has not been covered by the theoretical knowledge.

Overall, store atmospheric stimulus such as external advertisement and information demonstration, some specific non-ambient scent, well-designed check-out space, point-of-purchase signage with discount information or direction of ancillary products, salespeople's professional service can lead to shoppers' pleasure and arousal which in turn leads to their impulse purchases in the electronics stores. However, it should be pointed out other factors such as storefront, background music, color decoration, lighting and store layout can lead to shoppers' positive emotions. But the positive feelings are generally not strong enough to stimulate the shoppers to make impulse purchases in the electronics stores. Instead, the positive emotions that result from these factors can lead to shoppers' approach behavior such as spending more time shopping in the electronics store and taking positive attitudes to the store and its products.

6.2 Theoretical contribution

This thesis can be perceived as the theoretical reference to study the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse purchase behavior in the retail environment. This research makes contribution to the model establishment through broadening the M-R model to describe the process how different perspectives of store atmosphere affect the shoppers' emotional and behavioral responses. Specifically, the authors refer the store atmosphere into five dimensions including store exterior, interior, layout and design, point-of-purchase and decoration display, and human factors and do not take the shoppers' individual personality into consideration in the newly-established model. The authors also focus the shoppers' behavior on the approach behavior especially impulse purchase behavior in the model. Therefore, this newly-built theoretical model has broadened the existing knowledge on the impulse purchase model within environmental psychology. Besides, the research results acquired through the new theoretical model can make contribution to the electronics industry for the fundamental reason that this knowledge has not been obtained before.

Moreover, the relationship between the store atmosphere and the shoppers' impulse

purchase behavior has not been extensively explored; therefore, the interrelation between these two fields discussed in conjunction in this research not only appears to be timely and provides new insights into the scarcely investigated issue but also has opened a field for future research.

Additionally, this research gathers the shoppers' understanding of store atmosphere in a qualitative research, which provides a new perspective to interpret this concept and adds to the foundation for future elaboration in this field.

6.3 Managerial implications

In the present marketplace, electronics retailers can utilize store atmospheric design to win competitive advantages since the products or services offered by different retailers are considered similar by shoppers (Turley and Chebat, 2002; Virvilaite, Saladiene, and Bagdonaite, 2009). Therefore, it is necessary for electronics retailers to understand how the store atmosphere influences the shoppers' emotions and behavior, according to which they can make corresponding retail strategic planning (Fill, 2009). Based upon the theoretical knowledge and the shoppers' insights, the authors derive the following practical recommendations for electronics retailers in Sweden.

- The advertisements outside the electronics store can stimulate the shoppers to make impulse purchases. Therefore, when retailers design the advertising information, they should take their target shoppers' needs and desires into consideration in order to positively influence the shoppers' approach behavior (Dunne and Lusch, 2008).
- The shoppers point out that the non-ambient scent such as the smell of coffee can stimulate them to make impulse purchasing behavior in the electronics store. However, when the retailers decide whether to produce some specific scent, they should not only take the products sold in the store and the target shoppers' preferences into account (Dunne and Lusch, 2008), but also evaluate three dimensions of the scent including its quality, its arousal nature, and its intensity (Mattila and Wirtz, 2001).
- Even though lighting cannot directly stimulate the shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior, the electronics retailers should realize that the color difference of the product that results from the lighting can lead to shoppers' negative emotions and avoidance behavior. Besides, the spotlighting to certain products can be utilized by the retailers to direct the shoppers' attention.
- Since the point-of-purchase signage with discount information can lead to the shoppers' impulse purchases in the electronics store, the retailers should confirm

the accuracy of the price. The wrong or misleading price can lead to the shoppers' negative feelings and avoidance behavior. In addition, the in-store signage can cover information such as the recommendation of new products and the important characteristic features of the product because the price is not the mere stimulus that can lead to the shoppers' impulse purchases.

- Since the salespeople can stimulate the shoppers to make impulse purchases in the electronics store, the retailers should ensure the sufficient employees who are prepared to offer customer service. The lack of salespeople can negatively influence the shoppers' emotional and behavioral responses. The retailers should also ensure that the store is uncrowded for the same reason.

In general, after the electronics retailers implement the design of store atmosphere, they should carefully evaluate the outcomes including shoppers' emotional responses (e.g. arousal, pleasure) and their behavioral responses (e.g. approach behavior, avoidance behavior). In order to direct the shoppers to make approach behavior such as making impulse purchases, the retail managers or executive can further adjust the retail strategy and store atmospheric design according to their evaluation.

6.4 Limitations

In this section, the authors elaborate the limitations existing in the research.

Firstly, the authors select SIBA, an electronics retailer in the Swedish marketplace, as case study and conduct the qualitative research in Lund, a southern city in Sweden. It should be pointed out that SIBA is not the mere electronics retailer in the Swedish marketplace. The retailers such as Media Market and Elgiganten are also popular ones in the current market. This indicates that SIBA cannot represent all the electronics retailers in Sweden and the insights acquired from SIBA's shoppers cannot represent the opinions of other stores' shoppers. Therefore, the research results need future evaluation in terms of its generalization.

Secondly, the authors are confronted with time and financial constraints during the process of accomplishing this thesis. Since the authors cannot dedicate more time and cost to conducting the qualitative research, the authors have made interviews with only 12 male and female shoppers. Even though the interviews will not cease until the shoppers begin to repeat their insights, this kind of repetition cannot strongly prove that the empirical data has been collected sufficiently. The research overlapping might be an accidental phenomenon. If the authors have more time and financial resources to perform the qualitative research, this drawback can be improved and more findings can be acquired from the shoppers. In addition, the resource restriction affects the integrity of the research. At the beginning of the research, the authors plan to conduct interviews with both shoppers and retail managers in order to conduct an in-depth

case study of SIBA. Unfortunately, the authors have failed to obtain the permission of making interviews with retail executive during the process of completing this thesis. The lack of empirical findings from the perspective of retail managers can be perceived as the deficiency of this thesis.

Thirdly, language can be regarded as the barrier to explore more reliable findings in this thesis. Due to the language obstacle, the authors are aware of the fact that conducting English interviews with non-English native speakers can increase the possibility of misunderstanding. If the interviewers and respondents can use the same mother tongue to communicate during the interviews, the mutual misunderstanding can be avoided to large extent. Besides, the authors find out that most information and introduction of SIBA is written in Swedish. Since the authors are restricted by the language, the authors have to miss some valuable documents and articles.

6.5 Future research

This thesis provides empirical findings from Swedish marketplace, which could also facilitate international studies on the same topic. It would be meaningful for future researchers to study the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior in other countries since the data collection may create differences among shoppers under different background. The differences may give essential suggestions for retailers to utilize the store atmosphere to stimulate the shoppers' impulse purchases. The authors have already established the theoretical framework to study the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' emotional and behavioral responses, which can be perceived as the foundation for future research.

The conducted study is based upon the qualitative research to acquire the shoppers' insights regarding how different atmospheric factors affect their emotions and behavior. However, the authors find out that it is suggestive to conduct an additional quantitative research to apply the results to a broader field. According to the breakdown of store atmosphere (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Ballantine, Jack, and Parsons, 2010), there are 5 categories and 57 factors collectively. Through performing quantitative research, the significant factors that can influence the shoppers' approach or avoidance behavior can be discovered.

In this thesis, the authors study the electronics industry. As a matter of fact, the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior can be applied to other retail stores such as fashion stores and bookshops. It would add value to find out how shoppers are influenced by the store atmosphere in different types of retail stores and develop ways of how to appeal them to make impulse purchases in a tailored way.

When describing the shoppers' impulse purchasing model, the authors find out that

the shoppers' individual personality can influence their emotions and behavior in the retail environment. However, in order to fulfill the research purpose, the authors do not take shoppers' personality into account in this thesis. Therefore, the future research can study how the shoppers' personality as well as the store atmosphere can influence the shoppers' impulse purchasing behavior in the retail environment.

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Appendix I

Interview Guide

We are two master students writing our thesis within retailing industry at the School of Economics and Management in Lund University. The purpose of our thesis is to study the influence of store atmosphere on shoppers' impulse buying behavior in the electronics stores in Sweden. Our interview will take you about 40 minutes, and we promise to protect your personal privacy that all the information or record we get will only use in our master thesis's analysis.

Background information

- (1) Gender? Age?
- (2) How often and how long do you go to electronics stores such as Media Market, Elgiganten, SIBA? In general, do you go there with or without buying plan?
- (3) Will you impulsively buy some products that are beyond your purchasing plan in the SIBA? What?
- (4) Do you remember what stimulates your impulse buying decisions?
- (5) Do you think it is a pleasure to do shopping in SIBA? What is your feeling?
- (6) How do you think of the store atmosphere / environment in the SIBA?

External stimulus (exterior store design)

- (7) When you walk close to the electronics store, do you notice the outside advertisement / display? Will you be attracted by them? Will you go into the store to check the product on advertisement? Will you make impulse purchases due to these factors?
- (8) How do you think of the storefront and its design?

General interior stimulus

- (9) Do you notice the background music in the store? Will the music influence your emotions and impulse purchasing behavior? Which type of background music do you prefer, fast/slow, familiar or not, high/low volume?
- (10) Do you notice the scent in the store? Do you think that retailers should create the scent in the store? Will the scent influence your emotions and impulse purchasing behavior?
- (11) How do you think of the color used for decoration in the SIBA? Is the color suitable for the interior decoration? Will the color decoration influence your

emotions and impulse purchasing behavior?

- (12) How do you think of the lighting? Do you prefer bright lighting or warm lighting? Why? Do you think it is necessary to add product spotlighting? Why? Will the lighting influence your emotions and impulse purchasing behavior?

Layout and design

- (13) How do you think of the store layout? Which one do you prefer, grid or free style? Why?

- (14) There are many shopping areas in the store. In which area do you spend more time for shopping? Which area is the most attractive to you?

- (15) Do you pay attention to the check out area? Will you buy some unplanned or impulse products in the check out place?

- (16) Do you experience of being a queue for a long time? Will you impulsively buy some unplanned things when you are in a queue?

Point-of-purchase and decoration display

- (17) Will you pay attention to the point-of-purchase signage/poster in the store? Will you be attracted by them? Will it influence your emotions and impulse purchasing behavior?

- (18) Will you be attracted by the discount poster/signage? How do you be attracted? What is your feeling? Will it stimulate your impulse buying behavior?

- (19) Do you think the retailers should decorate the store walls with some pictures that are unrelated to the products?

Human stimulus

- (20) Do you meet with the situation that the store is crowding? If yes, what is your feeling? Will it influence your in-store behavior?

- (21) In general, do you communicate and interact with the salespeople? Are you satisfied with their service? Are they friendly to you? Are you satisfied with their clothing, their appearance?

- (22) Will they recommend products to you? Do you think they should provide recommendation or information actively to you? Will you make impulse purchases after you communicate with salespeople?

- (23) In terms of salespeople, what could be improved?

Overall

- (24) In terms of the store exterior, interior, layout, design, point-of-purchase signage/post, decoration, store employees, what should be improved?