

## **ATMOSPHERIC EFFECTS IN DEPARTMENT STORES: A STUDY ON TURKISH CONSUMERS' SHOPPING BEHAVIOR**

**Handan Özdemir**

*Assistant Professor of Marketing, Çankaya University*

### **Abstract**

The tough competitive landscape in the global retailing market requires managers to place customers' satisfaction at the core of their strategic thoughts. Kotler (1973-1974) is recognized to be the first author to suggest atmospherics as a marketing tool. He refers to these as "the conscious designing of space to create some effects in buyers that enhance his purchase probability". Following Kotler, many marketing scholars focused on identifying the environment's components and specifically their influence on consumer behaviour (Baker, 1986; Berman and Evans, 1995; Bitner, 1992). The focus in most of these research pieces was to consider the retail store environment as a multidimensional concept made up of design, textures, scents, colors, lights, and music. These factors could be manipulated by a store to enhance the employee's and customer's actions (Bitner, 1992, p. 65). Thus, store atmospherics can be regarded as an emotionally oriented design of space which can affect the customers significantly.

This paper provides an insight into how the atmospherics of a retail environment influence shopping behaviour. It tries to build on store atmospherics literature to gain more insights on how these store atmospherics affect Turkish consumers' shopping behaviour and purchase decisions. This study adopted a descriptive approach. Surveys were conducted face-to-face with 510 consumers at three major department stores in the capital city. Factor analysis was then carried out. The results revealed that the top five atmospheric factors with significant effect as store layout, design elements, music, lighting and scents. It was also observed that female consumers placed a greater emphasis on the atmospheric elements and they were highly influenced/ encouraged by these elements.