In-store Customer Perception towards Furniture in a Multi-product outlet – A Synthesis of Literature Review and Research Agenda

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *Consumers' when getting into a store; behaviour is critical; to be observed-and to understand their perception of products that they are eager to buy. When customers look at products, in general, as they walk through the retail outlet, their perception gets influenced due to various factors like atmospherics and visual merchandising, sales executives, price display offers, and many more. This interesting; study leads us to understand what would work and what needs improvement. A customer would buy based on the influence that he is subjected- to through various mediums of impact created in an outlet like lights, music, air conditioning, product feel, and many more or through digital media. Hence this article synthesizes; many years of scholarly research on consumer perception published in a few of the leading journals in this field; globally.*

Design/ Methodology/ Approach: *Buying products from a store is a dynamic process involving individuals and families; therefore, the cornerstone of purchase is to buy the best value product at a cost that matches the value the product delivers. The base of creating a good customer relationship is on the present value and the future value and longevity of a product that customers utilize and enjoy. This literature synthesis is- undertaken; to uncover various aspects that pull a customer to a multi-product store via digital marketing applications or conventional marketing processes. Expectations created by the digital marketing team vs. reality in the store create better bondage with the store team therefore and the perception towards the store changes with time and the product satisfaction that he derives.*

Findings/ Results: *This literature synthesis establishes that the concept of customer perception is highly personalized as each one tends to perceive differently based on their age, gender, qualification, religious beliefs, cognitive as well as social and cultural background. Their perception of positive thoughts and negative feelings is, observed while handling products. The research gap and the identified agenda for further synthesis were distinct and assessed using the most valuable ABCD structures. Accordingly, the literature investigation findings are synthesized and analyzed by submitting recommendations for creating a wide-ranging research agenda about customer perception in the Indian Retail market.*

Originality: *This is to understand how individuals and families behave when they visit a store. An attempt by the author to further enhance these studies for a doctoral thesis presents an attempt to learn and explore what actions and behaviours lead to a purchase of a furniture product by a customer. If these; cues; could be found from a large segment of customers, then it would be easy to create an environment of conducive signs that lead to a close of a sale[s].*

Paper Type: *Literature Review*

Keywords: Perception, Consumer in-store behaviour, Content observation and analysis, Literature review, Multi-store outlet, ABCD Framework analysis

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1. INTODUCTION :

Indian retail market is very diversified and heterogeneous, it's, a vast and a growing market; with people moving across the nation from one state to another in search of employment and career progressions, their needs and requirements do keep changing as they are on the move. This not only adds a set of new needs, which, maybe fulfilled- by customizing products, be it in furniture, electronics, or decorative items. The observation of customers is a challenge to understand their perception as to what they want to buy, how much they would like to spend, or vice versa. Customers are excited, as well; as baffled, and feel out of place when they are surrounded by stylish products and salesmen, with a great product demonstration.

1.1 Instore Consumer Behavior:

Consumers have a challenge with what to buy, how much to spend and which product to choose. They get baffled; and feel suddenly out of place when they are surrounded by sales teams and by stylish presentations with exquisite lights focusing on them. It sometimes becomes embarrassing for them, and they feel intimidated when surrounded by more than one salesperson in an outlet. It is just sheer interest to know what value they are looking at, consumer, value delivery is a concept that is gaining interest in the hearts and minds of scholars, marketing executives, market research companies as well as various kinds of marketing practitioners, there are diverse opinions and here there is a complexity in the study which obviously may give rise to confusion in its application if not understood properly [1]. Stores having the mobile app which denotes available products to book/block a product and take delivery, when they physically see the product, have a better perception of the final buy. The value proposition of mobility helps customers to decide quickly [2]. Furniture products, in general, are either wood or particleboard products and sometimes a combination of both with a few more combinations, called steel and brass, used for hinges or supportive systems. Customer insight in terms of certified wood products can help us gauge whether a practical market exists or not. Indeed, how many customers lookout for the quality of products first than the price. Most customers would not consider the environmental attributes that may include certification as well maintaining quality standards; some say they are eager to check the environmental impact and if so, would they do so [3]. Consumers buy furniture in a process based on many factors; hence it is in general, not an impulsive buying decision. Very few wooden products that consumers would buy on an impulse; hence the decision undergoes a level of consideration, therefore more costly the product would be a consideration. The customer deciding methods would follow the following steps: First recognition of need, Second vouch for the information, evaluation of options, buying and purchase decision, and after purchase buying behaviour. Hence in this way, every furniture company should formulate a technique that influences individual phases [4]. This would enable every furniture retailer to be relevant to the market as well, as the customers.

1.2 Instore Customer Perceptions:

Customer choices keep changing, and these changes are crucial to understanding them. The market is a, changing place and is bound to change constantly hence, understanding the minds of the customer in their entire buying process will enable companies to operate efficiently and successfully [5]. Let's assume a customer is in a multi-product store then it also means that the cost of buying is much less than buying in a single store, which saves time and energy both in terms of travel and selection process [6]. Environment, as well as in-store behaviour, are related and behaviour changes as and when the environment changes. Indeed, not many studies have been, done by environmental psychologists in terms of the study of the influence of the environment on buying behaviour to understand those specific cues that would increase a store's patronage [7]. In-store layout and design are very crucial determinants of an individual's behaviour. A review of the commercial publications as well as the academic literature suggests that theoretical and methodical approaches are slightly difficult to adopt in the given space and location of the retail outlet [8]. People want to be free and we can feel customers' casual approach when they are inside a store, thought the idea of a layout is to enhance buying it also brings a kind of route and discipline to be followed, as supermarkets are considered as the key areas of an independent and empowered consumer, he/ she is left with few choices to walk through as per the layout which is pre-decided [9]. Hence these routes and layouts need to be flexible and modifiable for better and constant sales [10]. Visual Merchandising is the key to presenting a product most prominently and artistically; apart from the obvious – painting windows – a painter working in a visual merchandising team may

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offer a variety of skills [11]. Visual merchandising is an art and it needs to be combined with the science of selling for the greater good.

Bell and Ternus in the year 2002, proposed in a manner that visual merchandising should provide greater support in creating a great store image on the top of the memory line of a customer experience and feel. The merchandise should speak on its own, a language that is nonverbal and it should create a liking in the minds of the customers to buy. Hence effective display at correct angles can bring in great sales by positioning and repositioning fixtures for every season or occasion or theme [12]. Therefore, buying process can be modified and influenced through Retail blogs that are fundamentally created to work as an instrument for the blogger to be able to place opinions and recommendations for their friend's group and other online consumers in general, it is a form of approach in marketing that can encourage or discourage many customers to try out furniture they have never used before [13]. Since teenagers visit the retail outlet and inform parents about their choice hence they too motivate their parents in their decision-making process, therefore product importance and usage will be the strong words that they would capture and we find that the choice of a mother and daughter does not differ much but the choice of sons' and fathers' ratings did differ [14]. Differentiation is the key to competitive advantage and hence for a greater globalized sale, mass customization is the key to such differentiation by specialization [15]. Web site service is very unique and its contribution to the service quality of a furniture company needs to be judged by the present SERVQUAL instruments that are seldom used to validate the digital impact on the perception of a customer. The website should also attract customers to the nearest store for a greater impact and feel [16]. Branding is everything for creating a greater top line and a bottom line for a retail outlet, branding should produce constant growth. This constant growth adds more value to the existing brand equity. Bigger brand equity will lead to higher profits and a better market capitalization, a strong brand can protect a retail firm from all sorts of fierce and hostile competition a strong retail brand brings in greater negotiation and bargaining power with vendors and service suppliers. It also attracts the best employees who are highly competitive [17]. Consumer behaviour in sales and marketing circumstances has always been investigated analyzed and hence five key criteria have been envisioned for better clarity: (1) price or cost thought process, (2) quality in terms of durability, longevity, (3) decisions that are abrupt and unplanned 4) planned decisions as well as non-conformist decisions. Customers with better incomes and higher education levels have more access to information that can impact their perceptions and final buying [18]. It has been observed that a child's request is more impactful on parents when the product is consumable and care should be taken to place all such products within the eye level of the consumer and that makes children great influencers in the store [19]. Discounts have an impact on the minds of the customers. Paying less is also a kind of making money and money is a great motivator to many; it also has an impact both in terms of positive and negative on the final purchase buying process. Negative; could be suspicion or doubtfulness of the product [20]. A feeling of scarcity comes when customers are panicking and are in the mood to grab all that is available, when human crowding happens it triggers shopper's competitive nature and aggressive behaviour and customers may find it very confusing and difficult to find a product of their choice thus leading to confusion and scarcity. This situation makes panicky buying and selling [21].

Rivalry exists within store format and between stores, as customers choose a particular format first and then move on to various other shops to justify their choice, hence the activity in the store should lead to a better network among retail stores within the format, as a customer is missed out, he is lost forever and may change his decision to buy or invest in something else [22]. Visibility is the key to attracting a customer to get into the outlet, this should be very strong during the late evening for a family walk in [23]. Furniture outlets have a challenge of not knowing the demand in the next few months and hence demand visibility should be clear to the team at the top level to make procurement ready hence demand visibility should be implemented by giving the manufacturer access to aggregate Point of sale data at the retail outlets. This is highly possible for manufacturing units that have retail outlets. This will help manufacturers to plan for refilling stocks in the outlets. Although there are several ways in which the manufacturer could potentially make use, this demands visibility for greater availability of products [24].

A literature review is therefore organized to cover the following variables impacting the customer in-store behaviour while buying furniture:

(a) Consumer perception in store, behavioural aspects e.g., cognitive, social, cultural, religious hypotheses, reflections, and reactions to a marketing stimulus.

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(b) Data collected from in-store behaviour.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHOLARLY REVIEW :

The literature review aims to study the consumer perception in stores concerning multi-product retail outlets. The study, therefore, is an attempt to assort as a set of research papers and provide various aspects that lead to the closing of a sale. Broadly, the objectives of the literature review are as under:
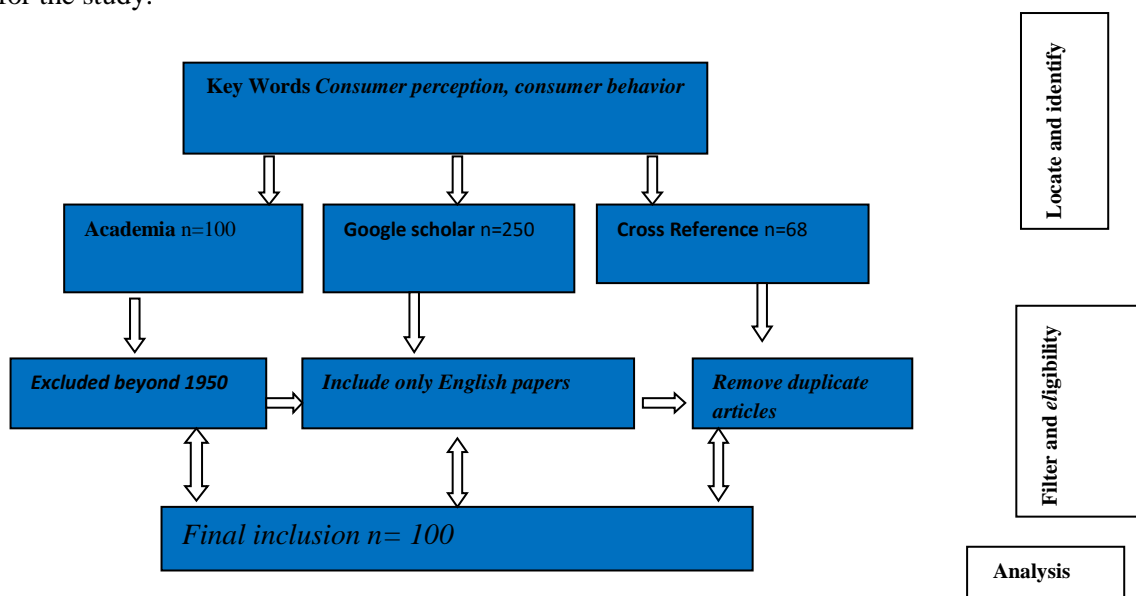
(1) To examine and study various aspects of in-store perception of a customer in various locations in India as well as abroad

(2) To know various gaps in the area of store perception when it comes to furniture for home or office use.

(3) To determine specifically how people respond to various cues that the marketing team creates for an in-store customer.

(4) To identify a process to develop and construct the research outline and agenda by exploring the areas of the gap that could be further studied and handed over to retailers to apply for a day-to-day sale.

(5) To find various possible signs of atmospherics that can be repeated in a retail in-store setting.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OF LITERAURE REVIEW :

For this study, various data bases, Google scholar, Academia, Cross Reference have been searched to establish relevant research scholarly articles, thesis and conference proceedings. The literature review is further enhanced by including books and internet resources to cover consumer in-store-behavior. The further enhancing of reading towards a search for the unknown is to explore what is not researched and the whole process is to find the gap that needs to researched, hence in this process four steps were followed:

(1) Key words were searched to find out various articles that are written and published through various search engines like Google scholar, Academia, Cross Reference

(2) Set a criterion in the process what to include and what to exclude in the review process

(3) Filtering process in other words screening

(4) Synthesize the finally collected published articles to build up a theoretical frame work of vectors that affect the consumer perception while buying a furniture and summarize the ideal solution to improve the consumer perception points that when noted by an executive can convert for a faster sale.

A conceptual framework has been designed keeping factors affecting consumer behavior has been drafted for the study.

Fig. 1: Summary of literature review steps

Source: Author

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4. SCHOLARLY REVIEW OF RESEARCH LITERATURE :

A literature review is an important; aspect of understanding the extent to which; the knowledge has been; explored in any given domain, customer; perception and customer behavior in a store is a very; significant study; in getting cues to closing the sale. Every Salesman strives for the close of a sale. Closing a sale is very; critical for a store. Customers are very tricky; as they would choose a few products in-store and will keep verifying the same online, this makes it more complicated to understand what is exactly happening in their minds, for the final decision of buying. It also becomes very imperative to know what to speak and what not to speak to a customer at the crucial point of the decision-making process of a sale.

In a multiproduct retail outlet and single-store retail outlet things are different and can be seen in the vastness of the stocks, hence diversion and delay in making a decision take place [6-10]. Seasonal offers are inter-connected to perceptional changes, and behavior can be modified; with visual merchandising coupled with great offers [11], [12].

Perception of an entire family and people accompanying them (influencers) have a say in the purchase, and impact is also; triggered by the digital marketing team to create better branding for a greater footfall [13-17].

Pricing a product in line with the online pricing is a clever thought that retailers need to think of, and they also should place products in such a manner that it creates competing products for a comparative analysis in the minds of the customers, retailers can also open a parallel E-Commerce website or convert the existing website into an E-Commerce web site by linking a payment gateway like Razor pay for immediate and quick payment.

A store is tangible.

A brand is intangible; therefore, a store personality is derived from a brand personality, hence we get an idea of store personality antecedents through discussion of brand personality antecedents, and when human feeling and brand personality match, both online and offline sales get impacted [18-22].

Retail visibility from a driving distance coupled with parking space and in-store space can bring in a feel to come again and buy again [23-27].

A retail outlet has customer facilities like an escalator and lifts when coupled with a great salesman demonstration of the benefits features, and functions that they offer coupled with a warranty and guarantee of products makes a difference [28-31]. For all warranty and service issues, authorized service centers need to support the retail outlet, a few products are in the mode of DIY- do it yourself, knockdown kits that could be assembled by the customer, bringing in the joy of self-making of furniture, hence the color, feel and texture of the product would be the choice of the customer to match the interiors of his house; products when purchased need to have a durable life for extreme customer satisfaction [32-36]. A very long durable product will have a greater impact on the next purchase perception process.

Repeat customer means a loyal customer who easily comes with great user-friendly products that have an appearance that is compelling to come back to the store again [37-40]. The final destination of a customer is the billing counter and after his experience here the customer would go home and look at the quality and durability based on the MRP printed versus the offer that he has got [41-44].

When the product is, taken, home; the operational experience of furniture gives a feel of the product in terms of innovation and novelty, the design per se in terms of ecological impact would also be a point when choosing a product when companies offer product exchange as it is easy for a customer to dispose of the old furniture, makes a better perception towards a sale [45-50].

When customers receive the products at their door, which is in line with the prices offered online, either from a single brand outlet or a multiproduct outlet, creates a 'wow' experience if it brings in great product functionality that is multiple [51-55]. Electronic products like T.V and music systems are switched on, to demonstrate the picture quality and sound clarity in a showroom it brings joy when the favorite songs of customers are played while buying furniture, this brings in strong feelings and liking. The room size and interiors will trigger an imagination for furniture products, provided there are no power cuts and power shortages in the store. Understanding human relations with the interiors and furniture are components of love among partners and the tangible furniture each different. Intimacy is increased by a feeling- of fear, being in love with, sympathy, trust, and closeness between two partners when coupled with great ergonomically designed furniture. Hence, they crave one other, presented with a strong feeling for interiors and furniture [56-60]. A shopping experience is critical to register a great experience with children while choosing an item of furniture, drinking water, water in the washroom,

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the safety of children or kids makes a perceptional difference in just married couples [61-65].Customer renovating their homes, seeking to re-polish their old furniture, and families that are empty nests or newly built houses keep seeking new designs and come back for a second purchase to bring the new design nearest to a particular theme [66-71]. The overall built-up area of a customer's house will give an architect a feel as to how his home can be decorated or improved with new furniture. Few; fitments in a kitchen, like kitchen cabinets, may require new infills. Homes that have home offices may also require an overhaul for better functionality and smooth synchronization of the furniture that is new within a new house [72-76]. When both husband and wife are working, they opt for various credit facilities as they may be eligible for a credit facility. They would choose consumer credit from companies like Bajaj Finserve Ltd., HDB Financial Services, IDBI, or; just a credit card converted into an EMI mode [77-79]. Instructions and directional boards are essential for communicating with customers. For- proper; usage of facilities like child-feeding room, toilets, food courts, first aid, CCTV Camera, washroom, and fire exit is essential statutory norms. Retail outlets; should also display a map or a drawing of the floor layout on each and every floor and should, indicate 'you are here now on the floor design. This helps people to know the route to exit in case of danger like fire or a bomb blast [80-89]. Cool & green products are what, keep the young generation hooked via engaging them through Facebook and Instagram for a better ticket size or basket size, hence when the young Turks are engaged through online surveys and questionnaires for a better choice of a retail outlet [89-93]. The range of products that are senior citizen-friendly, coupled with the image of the organization in terms of CSR activities that they do in terms of local procurement for enhancing the shopping experience with great packing material and carry bags to carry products home will have an everlasting experience in the minds of the customers [94-100]. A customer's primary objective is to get the best furniture that suits their taste and requirement. The following is the table that depicts the research area, focus area, and references.

Table 1: A record of Exemplary publications by scholars related to Customer In-store Perception

S. No.	Research Area	Focus Area	References
1	Consumer perception	Based on the value that they get for the money they pay. The perception of the customer is determined by the key deliverables; that the store can deliver.	[1]
3	Consumer perception	Stores having mobile accessories have an impact too. Attracting; customers to stores and taking delivery from the store	[2]
4	Consumer perception	Perception also changes when the type of material changes, the immediate feeling is of durability and longevity concerning price	[3]
5	Consumer buying behavior	Normally. Furniture buying is not impulsive. One considers many factors; hence pushing a customer to close may hamper the same	[4]
6	Consumer buying behavior	Customers keep changing in the market. Customers' demands keep changing; hence one needs to focus on those changing behaviors	[5]
7	Multi Product retail outlet	When there are multi products in a store, the whole observation gets diverted, what else to buy and how do we complement additional purchases	[6]
8	In-store behavior	The environment in a store needs to be changed to bring a small change; in the behavior of the customers; hence the in-store behavior is modified when the environment changes	[7]-[8]
9	Individual buying products	Store layout also creates an impact on in-store behavior while buying products	[8]-[9]-[10]
10	Visual merchandising and in-store behavior	In-store behavior can be modified; through the impact of visual merchandising. A good display	[10]

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		coupled with lighting in an air-conditioned environment brings the joy to select more	
11	Seasonal offers and (VM)	Seasonal offers with various themes can change the whole perception of the store. VM creates an impact on perception	[11]
12	In-store behavior and seasonal offers and (VM)	Visual merchandising and seasonal offers should lead to automatic sales, thereby reducing the efforts put in for sales as well as the reduction in the overall cost from other methods used	[12]
13	Influencers accompanying the customer	When influencers accompany customers, there is an impact on their final buying decision process by the influencers	[13]
14	Perception of a family	The impact of family on decisions can make a huge difference. Women, teens, and working family members in the family have an influence on the choice of brand and choice offers currently running	[14]
15	Option of customization	A customization is an option that creates differentiation and a competitive advantage to be better than others	[15]
16	Digital marketing	Scope for faster impact	[16]
17	Branding and packaging of products	Branding creates an identity for customers to select and include in their billing cart; therefore, every piece of furniture needs to be named and a code to create an identity	[17]
18	Store personality and Pricing in line with online store	Brands do speak without a language when it matches the human personality coupled with a matching price online, offline bonding happens	[18]
19	Placing of a product and perception	At eye level for children if it is children's study table	[19]
20	Discounts and schemes	There is always a positive and a negative impact of discounts on customers	[20]
21	Competing products	Products, stores and teams compete; creating scarcity and overly crowded stores create a sort of scarcity	[21]
22	Competition	Competition is essential within the store; and between the stores. Competition brings in the need to do the best sales demonstration. This would bring out the best; in both men and products.	[22]
23	Furniture outlets visibility	Though increasing brand visibility at the retail level will result in better brand communication for all the goods, the observations of this, as much as their large competitors do, might have some guidelines about cost-effective alternatives for brand visibility and communication.	[23][24]
24	Store space and size	The store should never be empty, and demand should be predicted; by tracking the current sales at the Point of sale. Counter space; and size should be; managed well. Stocks should be; replenished immediately	[24]
25	Store space and location	Products should be; placed aesthetically. Furniture products are big there, should be space to walk around the furniture to bring in the feel of it. Location matters as rents matter; and furniture stores need in general, more display space	[25]

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26	Parking space	Parking should be clear and safe. Important vector for entering into the premises. Parking needs to be well organized and controlled.	[26]
27	Security and safety	Every retail mall needs security men who can guide customers to a safe purchase. They need to be escorted if required	[27]
28	Lift and escalator	Customers need unique benefits other than the products. Lifts and escalators enable them to have better perception and a faster buy	[28]
29	Salesmen's Demonstration	Efforts should be; made to impart these competencies to the salesman through frequent training, to make the salesman competent enough to answer FAQs effectively.	[29]
30	Benefits features and functions of a product	Core benefits; offered; need to be; presented to customers with a demonstration	[30]
31	Warranty and guarantee	After-sales service is expected- by customers, and it should be supported; with warranty deals.	[31]
32	After sales service	After-sales service is a must, and effective after-sales service can enhance the chances of buying more different products in the life cycle.	[32]
33	Authorized service centers	Authorized Service centers bring in the feel of well-trained personnel, and this also means that their products are going; to be serviced by the best team.	[33]
34	Do it yourself kits	In an emergency like a disaster and rehabilitation, customers should have products and furniture; that is in the form of Do it yourself. This; enhances quickness and brings easy recovery.	[34]
35	Color feel and texture of the product	Color of Streets and color of furniture are; connected as color impacts minds, color feel and texture bring in a choice to the customer, and the luminosity of the products can bring in the best combinations for interiors.	[35]
36	Durability and longevity of the product	Customers prefer durability and longevity to-be for products that are not purchased frequently, and they expect hassle-free functionality of the product.	[36]
37	Appearance of the product	Furniture that is good in appearance and if they can enhance the mood of an individual; brings in a warm feeling. New Furniture that changes color with the mood of the person sitting on it brings in a paradigm.	[37]
38	User friendly	User friendly, and it should be; ergonomically designed to suit people who sit for long hours during a day	[38]
39	Loyalty of customers	Loyalty is the key to having a repeat customer. A loyal customer would speak good about it to many more prospective customers'	[33][39]
40	Repeat customers due to better design of furniture	A restaurant has; a piece of good furniture that will get repeat customers, and the interior design coupled with a good seating arrangement can add excellent value to food.	[40]
41	Billing counter experience	Billing automation is essential. Carts fitted with RFID tracking devices will help to bill counter faster processes.	[41]
42	Quality and durability of the product	Wood needs to be treated well and should be; varnished before the time of delivery of the	[42]

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		furniture. Raw material- wood needs to be; checked well before it is- deployed for the production process	
43	Finishing of the product	Good finishing is a must. Certain chemicals cause an environmental hazard and should be; taken off. Good finishing is a must before every delivery.	[43]
44	Display and MRP pricing	Increasing competitiveness has forced outlets to compete with better pricing. Every product needs to have an MRP displayed at a visible distance.	[44]
45	Operational experiences of the product	Furthermore, design thinking uses the methods and the ability of designers to match the needs of people with what is technologically feasible.	[45]
46	Perception of travel distance for returning products not liked	Virtual fitting rooms for furniture can reduce sales returns, and this; can reduce the time taken to travel, and the perception of the firm changes as the time is; reduced.	[46]
47	Innovation and novelty and New Product Development	Products need to be unique and novelty in nature. They need to be innovative and be relevant to today's work from home option.	[47]
48	Eco Design	Eco Design of products that do not damage the ecological balance coupled with saving storage space and running cost of stocking	[48]
49	Product exchange offers	Old; products may be discarded: during the seasonal offers; and at the right time for customers to get an exchange for old products.	[49]
50	Disposal of the product	Product reuse should be encouraged, products when modified chances of disposal get reduced, and the disposal process should be environmentally friendly.	[48], [50]
51	Product door delivery	Door delivery is a service that can change the person perceives the business. Door delivery can also help in a barter trade if need to be done and speeds up the process of replenishing the products.	[51]
52	Online and off line pricing	Online and offline pricing is critical to maintaining a constant flow of business. Too much difference would drive away the offline customers hence, a balance needed.	[52]
53	Single brand outlet	Exclusive brand outlets may fit in few markets, and it takes efforts to build this single brand outlet.	[53]
54	Multi- product outlet	Optimal channel design is essential to stock, a variety and range of products.	[54]
55	Better Product functionality	In most design cases, the designer needs to have; an idea of functionality and usability. The designer needs to know a detailed understanding of the final user for better functionality.	[55]
56	Wow experience	Three types of features: Basic product, Product-performance, and Product excitement features.	[56]
57	Strong feeling and liking	People like a product and in turn like the store. The store-brand pulls them again and again. This strong feeling is like intimacy to the customer. The whole family starts liking it, creating a strong feeling.	[57]
58	Electronics and furniture products	Virtual Reality (VR) is the best for future furniture retailing. Internet-based Integrated Solution (VRIS) systems allow customers to choose furniture (table, wardrobe, center table, beds) to create a living room.	[58]

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59	Room size and interiors	Artificial rooms need to be created physically in the retail outlets and these rooms will give a visual effect of the room that would come up in their homes.	[59]
60	Power in the store	Stores need to have a backup of power and they need to create a situation of no scarcity for the customer to stay longer.	[60]
61	Water in the store	Water in the store is essential as families do visit the store and women in general need to feel the comfort of the functional washrooms.	[61]
62	Shopping experience	The retail outlet needs to be relevant and should create a great shopping experience with variety, range, collection, offers, and pricing.	[62]
63	Child safety and choice of furniture	Since furniture and other products are big and heavy, children need to be, watched for safety. Children meet with accidents at home and are admitted; to the hospital due to furniture accidents. Hence, safety is an essential component when buying furniture.	[63]
64	Just married customers looking for furniture	As we know that the requirement of furniture is important for the people, it is designed for supporting numerous activities such as seating, eating, sleeping, etc. The consumers family plays a vital role in the searching, purchasing, using, and evaluating of various types of furniture according to their choice, taste, and preferences; the consumer behavior towards the furniture is good due to its brand, quality, durability, style, color, price, and comfort, etc. and it also satisfies the consumers through the payment method and discounts while they purchase the furniture directly from the furniture stores. It has been observed that the consumers are satisfied through the purchase of furniture based on wood like plywood, teak wood, rosewood, etc.	[64]
65	Family with kids studying. Anthropometry	Young families seem to have furniture on the move and family with kids needs to have more foldable furniture with flexibility and better ergonomics/anthropometry.	[65]
66	Old furniture re-polish	Old furniture needs to be re-polished for longer life. They need to be repaired and given a fresh look for a longer life.	[66]
67	Empty nest	Families whose children have moved out will be looking for furniture that is less in cost and easily transferable.	[67]
68	House renovation	House renovation is an ongoing process in society, and to upgrade is to improve. This process brings in dust and allergy as well a new thing to be filled in.	[68]
69	Newly built house	New houses need new furniture and it all depends on the location and the purpose of the accommodation either for own use or for rent.	[69]
70	House re-design	The 1990 and 2000 brought in new house designs copied from Europe, Turkey, and Russia in the Asian region. House re-design helps people to create new opportunities.	[70]

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71	Second time purchase	A company's success can be measured by the way they manage the database. This database helps companies to get repeat business.	[71]
72	Over-all built-up area	Space, storage, noise levels, and visual privacy is a challenge hence to maximize workspace satisfaction designers need to plan all these aspects for greater usage of the built-up area.	[72]
73	Fitting and service	Customers should feel easy to fit in and work. A product that is easy to transport and assemble is the key to customization.	[73]
74	Refills and replacements for wooden kitchen/pantry cabinets	A kitchen pantry would help to run the kitchen in the best suitable manner and to keep a track of the inventory in the kitchen, a smart kitchen and a kitchen that has the best replacement in the cabinets is the key.	[74]
75	Accessories and fitments	New product development is essential and accessories and fitment keep the business moving. What is seen in automobiles needs to be seen in furniture too?	[75]
76	Office work	Interactive working is essential in an office and the furniture should be conducive to the same.	[76]
77	Payment terms	Payment convenience helps people to plan and buy. Credit payments via companies that provide consumer finance are the key.	[77]
78	Husband wife influence on purchase of furniture	Couples, husband and wife have an impact on each other's choices and their individual opinions matter	[78]
79	Credit facilities	Goods that are in immediate needs to be supported by credit companies providing these facilities, as products like mobile and computers need to be supported.	[79]
80	Instruction inside the store	Instructions give direction in the movement within the mall and instructions in the store are a direction to lead customers to buy more.	[80]
81	Sales men and sale women assistance	A smile goes a long way and products that need good assistance from salesmen; have to be trained when to smile and when not to smile. It is found that costly products need to be dealt with by very serious salesmen.	[81]
82	Child feeding room	Child feeding rooms are essential in a retail mall and when children are fed, the mother and the child can prepare themselves for more time to be spent shopping.	[82]
83	Toilets	A good washroom, which is hygiene and clean makes a better perception of the quality of products and services of the showroom.	[83]
84	Drinking water facility	Drinking water is a must and this facility should always be maintained in adequate quantity and quality	[84]
85	Food courts	Entertainment aspects like food, movies, and other play areas are essential for a long stay of the customer.	[85]
86	First aid	First aid is the first help that a person receives in an accident and accidents can occur at any time. Hence the first aid box to be filled adequately and the same	[86]

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		should be known by the team and should also be well trained in the same in case of emergency.	
87	Fire fighting	Fire in a mall is critical for people to survive and it should be put off as quickly as possible. The firefighting equipment should be well maintained and kept ready for any kind of fire, like electric or normal fire.	[87]
88	CCTV surveillance	Through CCTV cameras management does surveillance of the shop floors and can check the number of transactions.	[88]
89	Cool experience what is new	What is new and what is latest in terms of the trend is what people keep looking for and hence furniture for home office, institutions need to be upgraded.	[89]
90	Surveys and questionnaires	Satisfaction surveys need to be done and this should be a process to be followed regularly.	[90]
91	Green products	Environmentally friendly products need to be displayed and they should be specially designed with unique shades for better visibility.	[91]
92	Ticket size or basket size	Every customer has a plan. What to buy on cash and what to buy on credit and hence enhancing the basket size is the role of a salesperson inside the store.	[92]
93	Choice of private label	Private labels compete with the existing labels in a big way and they counter with price thought they lack the brand power they still can compete with the local brands.	[93]
94	Range of products	A customer needs to see a full range before he decides on what to buy and the range of products defines his buying process.	[94]
95	Public address system and digital LCD Scrolling message display	Announcement chambers, universal product codes, electronic points of sale and electronic points of sale, and electronic surveillance have become an integral part of every modern retail outlet. LCD scrolling message display becomes a complementary address system to the public.	[95]
96	CSR activity	Every retailer is part of society and should involve people with its social responsibility and this helps create synergy and positive vibes for benefit of the society.	[96]
97	Senior citizens	Package size, print size and should be visible for senior citizens to decide what to buy and how much to buy. It should be user friendly for people above 70 years of age.	[97]
98	Local Procurement	Local Manufacturers should be supported to sell their products in the nearest store and this support will go a long way in generating a good business relationship with the local manufacturers.	[98]
99	Enhanced experience	Crowding will bring down the enhanced shopping experience and hence the customer's crowd should be split in various directions for better movement and shopping from the central public address system.	[99]
100	Packing material and carry bags	Packaging material is the key to avoiding products from moisture and dampness. This enhances the chance of making a better perception for a customer.	[100]

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4.1 Summary of the Review:

After analyzing a large number; of research papers, the current status identified the following vectors-Psychological, social, cultural, personal needs, economic, technological, and government regulations and taxation. The same summarized below:

(1) There is an impact on consumers, behavior due to the influence; of various visual merchandising activities.

(2) The online sellers are snatching away the business of regular retailers to a large extent, and hence retailers need to incorporate brick and click models within their existing business process.

(3) In a physical store, the experience felt; can never be matched; to an online furniture sale, which is influenced only by price.

(4) Customization is practically a problem for an online furniture seller; hence a competitive advantage is formed due to customization requirements for an offline retailer.

(5) People have space constraints due to transferable work or small houses, thus leading to more customized furniture product demand.

5. IDENTIFIED ISSUES IN CONSUMER INSTORE BEHAVIOUR AND COMMON PITFALLS :

Based on the literature review, six areas that influence consumer behavior are Psychological, Social, Cultural, Personal, Economic, and Technological vectors, independent and interdependent. All these vectors mentioned have an impact in terms of technology the customer uses in response to a technology the retail outlet uses and engages a customer- the same is in the following diagram (figure 2). Coupled with these, it also has the sub-categories like gender and educational levels.
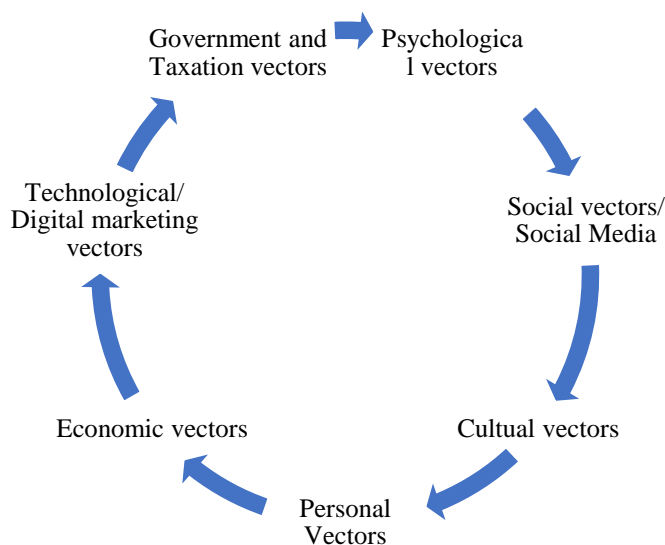

Fig. 2: Factors that impact customer Behavior

Source: Author

6. IDEAL SOLUTION AND PRESENT STATUS :

The Ideal solutions that need to be for better customer behaviour and better perception would be as follows:

(1) The retail outlet should have a wide range to choose from.

(2) The retail sales teams need to be trained from time to time in terms of changes that would happen across.

(3) The retail outlet needs to create a visual impact in terms of visual merchandising and better sourcing.

(4) The retail staff need to be given proper refreshments to create great salesmanship, or else they burnout.

(5) The customer benefits like in-store facilities need to be taken care off.

(6) Billing and stock checking to be up to minute to enhance stock availability to the customer.

(7) Creating a conducive environment for longer, stay in the outlet.

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(8) Ensuring that the A.C, Music, Scent, Lighting, Product arrangement, Gifts, and sweets are available for a better instant perception.

(9) Behavioral cues and perceptional cues to be considered and taken care of: touch, feel, texture, shape, size, and colour of products to be; arranged in the right; manner.

(10) Women and children influence decision making; hence their choice selection needs to be increased; to the maximum.

(11) New products development and bringing in new products regularly; is essential.

(12) Store timing and working days will also make a difference.

(13) Guarantee/ warranty and service issues to be; addressed within 48 hours.

(14) Instruction and direction boards with proper price tags need; to be put up.

(15) Offers and price discounts to be communicated; through digital marketing.

(16) Customer engagement on regular intervals to be taken care.

(17) Parking and hygiene aspects to be taken care off.

7. RESEARCH GAP :

Customer behavior and customer perception as a study are less done in the retail outlet of the furniture industry. This industry comprises carpenters, interior designers, and wood-related industries. Challenges faced by the retail furniture industry are from cheap imports and fewer technology-supported organizations operating in tier two and tier three cities. The furniture business is big, business; in the first world countries lot of research happens in this area abroad; whereas, in India, not much research happens due to differences in education and technology as carpentry and woodwork; are not taught in schools and engineering colleges, hence it is an unexplored area with potential as each one of us needs tables chairs and other furniture to work and live.

(1) The majority of the research happens in India is in the area of FMCG retailing and not in the furniture retailing.

(2) A need for the study after the pandemic is to understand furniture requirements for all work from home needs as well as furniture for new start-ups.

(3) As a large number of; homes and apartments are coming up in tier two and tier three cities due to various government initiatives, hence; the demand for furniture products is increasing. Most of the customers need a T.V stand for a new T.V, a sofa to sit and a center table to keep things.

(4) Also, there is insufficient data on the influence of customer perception when it comes to furniture choice and purchase.

(5) Few researchers are doing; research- in this area as the back-end operations of a retail store are the factory that makes this furniture.

(6) Very few retail outlets that sell furniture have their factory of their own either, they are; outsourced or imported, hence customization or variety is the gap that a Manu retailer can choose to do so.

(7) Very few studies are available for developing strategies to create better customer behavior and better perception in the furniture retail industry.

8. SUMMARY OF CUSTOMER INSTORE BEHAVIOUR BASED ON LITERATURE REVIEW :

Table 2: Summary of Customer In-store behaviors based on literature review

S. No.	Group	Perception Determinants	References
1	Customer Behavior	Selection process- how customers behave while selecting furniture for their own or office use is to be seen and recorded. The Behavior aspects indicate their preparation as well as the decision-making process. The choice of furniture is based; on certification of quality of wood and environmental friendliness considered or not and be; observed in the consumer behavior.	[1], [2], [3]

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2	Customer Perception	Choice of items for the entire house, choice and decision making by individuals as well as family members.	[1],[2], [14]
3	Visual Merchandising	Display in terms of category, pricing, and complementary placing and instructions inside the store. A- good; visual merchandising can create impulse buying. Usually an impulse, buying is unpredictable.	[10],[11],[12],[80]
4	Salesmanship	Product presentation skill, benefits, features; and functions.	[81]
5	New products in furniture	Innovation and variety is the key to customization for new product development.	[47]
6	Services and In-store benefits	Facilities that provided like; a lift, escalator, free home delivery, warranty, service issues, packaging assembling, and installation at home.	[82]-[90]
7	Payment terms and billing systems	Credit facilities from consumer finance companies and billing terms. Immediate offers with credit be given to customers.	[77], [78], [79]
8	Seasonal offers and schemes- retail strategy and responsibility	Retail Strategy and retail responsibility, creating seasonal offers, schemes, and customer benefits; communicating the same with digital marketing tools.	[80], [81]

Source: Author

9. RESEARCH AGENDAS OF CONSUMER INSTORE BEHAVIOUR IN INDIAN FURNITURE MARKET A SPECIFIC STUDY :

Based on this literature review, the research scholar proposes the following:
(1) To investigate customer perception in-store
(2) To further investigate the buying behaviors
(3) To forecast sales month-wise, season-wise
(4) To investigate; what message is impactful via digital media for better footfall
(5) To provide an indicate a process for furniture right product production
(6) To ensure that the team is achieving incentive

9.1 Analysis of Research Agenda:
Customers come as individuals, in groups like friends and family. When we analyze them, we understand that their perception is influenced not only by their thoughts but by the thoughts of others. When announcements are- made using the public address to customers, we find that they get influenced by the offers. This leads one to understand that buying behavior; can be manipulated.

Influencing and manipulating their thoughts and decisions will play a major role as these announcements promote certain offers that are very catchy and customers do tend to get influenced. Hence will it be the same in all seasons or will it be different in a particular season for a given product? This also leads us to investigate what messages are effective and in which media. For example, when we send messages to all customers who have entered the retail outlet about an offer, we need to wait for the customer's reaction. Will the messages result in a sale or not; is the question and how will it be taken and converted into a sale or, let us assume that we just, send a WhatsApp message with images or pictures of a product accompanied by an announcement to customers in the public address system (mike) what; will result in terms of a sale?

As sales teams have targets on stocks that are non-moving can be coupled with this media of capturing the attention iof customers issrs inside a store is to be found in a perceptional study. This analysis is a grounding to take it forward and analyze the same. It also makes one feel how best the sales team coupled with the marketing team can create an immediate impact in the store.

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10. FINAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL IN CHOSEN TOPIC:

10.1 Title:

A comprehensive study on In-store customer perception and buying behavior toward furniture in a multiproduct outlet in Mangalore and Dakshina Kannada.

10.2 Purpose:

The learning cum study will bring out and highlight customer perception and buying behavior in Mangalore and Dakshina Kannada (DK) district, retail outlets, especially after the OMICRON, epidemic we have experienced the changes that have happened in the buying capacity of individuals and families in terms of their changes in product preference like work from home furniture due to the changes in their organization of work and the entire work culture in general. This research focuses on customer perception and behavior of the respondents. The study encompasses some important; factors such as work from home furniture as well as regular furniture.

10.3 Research and investigative Objective:

The subsequent; objectives of the study are below mentioned-
(1) To examine customer perception in-store due to various visual merchandising activities
(2) To compare buying of furniture for work from home and furniture for home
(3) To analyze the factors that impact the buying behavior of furniture in-store
(4) To analyze the impact of digital marketing and the kind of messages that increase the footfall into the store
(5) To explore the possibilities of putting the right furniture in-store for an, increase; in sales for better incentives.

10.4 Proposed methodology:

Study population:
The people under study consist of customers (employed as employees in other organization) as well as having their own business[s] in Mangalore and D.K.
Study sample:
A sample population; of male customers; will be chosen; among the retail outlets in Mangalore and Dakshina Kannada districts.
Study Instruments:
The learning process will set up a validated natural, prearranged questionnaire. This questionnaire will be pre-meditated in the Likert scale setup. The primary part of the questionnaire will be based, on respondents' demographic profiles, while the second section will focus on the factors that affect customers'; store perceptions and behavior.
Study procedure:
The learning is mostly; the primary; information using a validated questionnaire and the secondary data collected from published books, journals, scholarly and researched articles, opinions blogs, books, websites, research news, reports, and other related projects.
Examination and explanation from the Leaning:
The in-sequence data gathered; from main- sources will be put; to test using the app and statistical package test; and SPSS software.

10.5 Consequences and answers from the learning:

The findings and the results will be published utilizing relative- tables, stream charts, and metamorphic depictions for educational and manufacturing explanations.

10.6 Conclusions and implications of this learning:

This conclusion will get big and more significant once the findings are assimilated; through a light on the main factors of customer perception and the suggestions will improve Customer perception of buying behavior and the customer experience in a store. The findings of the study will be suggested, to the Kanara Chamber of Commerce and Industries as well as to the Furniture industry for implementation.

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10.7 Limitations and constraints to this learning:

This learning will be conducted only on male customers working in public and private companies across Mangalore and Dakshina Kannada district. Future studies can also include other neighboring districts from where customers visit and buy from DK as well as from other related products like electronics and interiors. Not all retail outlets will permit the review survey.

The learning is narrowed down to DK, and the findings may not be relevant for other locations

This learning where the respondents may not enroll and open up to disclose their work from home environment and get the real, picture of their satisfaction with the furniture.

11. ABCD LISTING OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL :

ABCD framework analysis is engaged here to analyze every individual characteristic of customer perception in an in-store ABCD framework; will help us to understand the effectiveness of a particular process, strategy, or concept that a retailer would like to introduce in an outlet. Every research proposal has pros and cons; hence ABCD way of analysis allows us to analyze from multiple angles; this avoids the chances of missing something in the whole gamut of doing the detailed study. It also gives us an idea of analyzing; the research proposal based on various (1) Advantages, (2) Benefits, (3) Constraints, and (4) Disadvantages of research work, on the topic of In-store customer perception [101] and the same is listed below:

11.1 Advantages of Instore perceptional studies:

(1) The study will help us understand the instore perception, what drives them to buy, and can be copied into another store of the same brand.
(2) The study will make us know the buying behavior of the customer.
(3) The study will mainly focus on furniture customers buying customized or standardized products.
(4) The study will also cover furniture retail shops, malls as well as standalone single store retail and multi-store retail.
(5) The study of employees making various decisions while choosing work from home furniture.
(6) The study survey questionnaire will focus on the buying patterns of individuals in buying home furniture.

11.2 Benefits of Instore perceptional studies:

(1) The study will tell us what mistakes to avoid in the process of improving the buying behavior
(2) The benefits of this study would help retailers forecast various seasonal demands
(3) The study will help train executives to deliver better sales and earn incentives as they will know the perceptions and in-store behavior of the customer.

11.3 Constraints of Instore perceptional studies:

(1) Customers visit retail outlets with families within a time frame and they may be busy in the process hence there could be a situation in which they may feel intimidated sometimes.
(2) Few retailers may restrict the movement of the researcher on their premises
(3) Few customers may also be not open to questions due to time constraints
(4) Indeed, the perception of customers while researching could also lead them to think that their data could be compromised.

11.4 Disadvantages of Instore perceptional studies:

(1) Perception of a customer could also be; influenced by others whom they meet in the store, it could be various service providers or a few known people who they meet during the shopping process. Their influence may change the perception of a store or a few products in the store.
(2) Since customers are included and not the vendors, service providers hence vendors, perspectives; will be missed out.
(3) Busy counters and crowding during the peak sales time would limit the time in discussing with the respondent during the survey.

12. SUGGESTIONS TO IMPLEMENT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES ACCORDING TO PROPOSAL :

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(1) Establish the population to study:

The Customers to be studied are; the study inhabitants or population, which will be determined; by consulting various outlets in the DK region and consultation with the Kanara Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

(2) Develop and adopt study methods and methodologies:

A learning survey questionnaire will be developed; by the researcher; based on the buying and using habits of consumers, and customers to identify their buying habits. Engaging, the Likert scale format is subject to validation or substantiation process.

(3) Carry out to collect data:

After substantiation of the questionnaire that is going to be, used a: survey questionnaire to be distributed; among the sample population for primary data collection. The less Important secondary facts will be composed of various websites, journals, reports, thesis books, blogs, newspapers, and magazines

(4) Execute data study:

SPSS software will be engaged in analyzing the data collected and SPS will be applied to operate and assess the data composed. Every variable will be subjected to expressive statistics in the form of the incidence/ frequency with percentages and permanent variables will be subjected to mean and standard deviation. ANOVA test, as well as Cronbach's alpha, shall be undertaken for analyzing and evaluating various groups' similarities and student t-tests(unpaired) will also be used to compare incessant variables

(5) Result understanding and explanation:

The findings and the result will be published utilizing comparative tables, stream charts, and metamorphic representation for academic and industry explanations

(6) References and Bibliography:

A range of inputs will be engaged: to take it forward: blogs, books, publications, websites, various web applications, thesis publications, and many more will be referred, to for the sake of going deeper and stronger in the chosen field.

13. CONCLUSION :

We know that demand for furniture will increase due to new buildings and apartments coming up all over the country, a retailer needs to be ready in terms of the demand that will be there for multiple ranges of products. This study aims to fill up the gap in the scholarly literature review on furniture and furniture buying customer experiences in terms of perception and buying behavior. In this In-store customer Perception literature published, the review seeks to identify and understand a variety of parameters associated with the customers for office or for home needs. Most of the empirical studies were to understand the customer in general. Demographic vectors of a family and the number of children and their relationship in making furniture choice to the final member especially the head of the family (the father) male was taken in to study. The studies revealed that various factors in the store either created a positive or a negative impact on the final customer's decision-making method of buying furniture. The studies also proposed several changes that could be done at the executive level for a better closing technique and this could be used across the industry and reduce the demand for imported furniture and opt for Indian products. This study also teaches us to know the needs of a customer for better customization rather than for imported furniture. This would bring efficiency to the furniture manufacturing and retailing industry. There is ample scope for retail to grow provided retailers understand the preferences for storage space in the retail mall [102].

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