

# Influence of store environment of museum gift shops on buying emotion of visitors: A study of museums and visitors in Thailand

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## Abstract

This study examines the possibility of using the store environment of museum gift shops in Thailand to influence the buying emotion of Thai museum visitors to increase their sales. The paper proposes that previous studies on the influence of store environment on the buying emotion of customers do not fit the nature of museum gift shops and the cultural context of Thais. The author uses a mixed quantitative and qualitative research methodology to collect data from Thai visitors in three museums in Thailand. The findings corroborated that majority of the local visitors considered that the store environment of the shops influences their buying emotion. However, in the mindset of many, different from suggestions that museum gift shops form a part of visitors' museum visiting experience and help fulfill the educational mission of museums, the shops were places for them to connect and socialise with friends and relatives. Hence, although many of them had a habit of visiting gift shops, they seldom bought things.

**Keywords:** store environment, museum gift shop, buying emotion, Thai visitors

## Introduction

In Thailand, financial sustainability remains an issue for museums. Although many museums do not charge local visitors entrance fees, the funds they receive from the government are also limited. For example, the Cultural Exhibition Hall of Chaiyaphum Province was initiated by the Ministry of Culture, but no government budget was available (Krajaejan, 2014). Facing a tight budget and low income from entrance fees, museums need to find ways to ensure financial sustainability.

Museum gift shops are an important source of revenues for museums (Coleman-Lochner, 1998; Harlow, 1997). The gift shops of members of the Museum Store Association in the United States generate an average annual revenue of around USD 8.2 million (Shapley and Starzee, 2011). Store revenues, up to a point, contribute up to 15% of a museum's budget (Kelley, 2007).

Considerable studies have examined and confirmed the influence of a store environment on the buying emotion of customers. Donovan and Rossiter (1992) claimed that a store environment could arouse positive emotions among customers so that they are motivated to spend more money and return to the store. Keller (1987, in Chu and Lam, 2004) pointed out that a store environment is essential to influence the buying emotion of many customers who tend to make purchase decisions at the point of purchase. Baker, Levy, and Grewal (1992) claimed that facing a time when retailers experience difficulty in creating differential advantages in the marketing mix of products, price and promotion, the store environment becomes a good differentiation opportunity.

The paper is to study the extent the store environment of museum gift shops influences

the buying emotion of local visitors. In what ways does the store environment of museum gift shops influence the buying emotion of Thais in Thailand?

## Purposes

The author would like to achieve the following objectives:

- a. To present and provide empirical support to outline the impact of museum gift shop environment on the buying emotion of Thai visitors in Thailand and
- b. To give references to museum administrators in Thailand and museum gift shops owners the possibility to make the best use of the environment to enhance the buying emotion of local visitors so as to increase sales.

## Benefits of the paper

To the best of the knowledge of the author, no research has ever been done on the influence of the museum gift store environment on the buying emotion of local visit. Findings of this research, on the one hand can give guidelines to museum administrators or museum gift shop owners best ways to arrange the environment to influence the buying emotion of local visitors so as to increase sales. On the other hand, the researcher believe that certain new and good theories can be introduced from this paper.

## Rational of the problem

Despite many studies propose the positive impact of the store environment on the buying emotion of customers. They might not apply to the nature of museum gift shops and the cultural context of Thais. First, these studies are mostly restricted to fashion, discount, and coffee shops,



which have a different nature from a museum gift shop. Second, the studies are based on the cultural context of Western countries.

Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006) suggested that retailers should create a high-arousal environment for recreational consumers and a low-arousal environment for task-oriented consumers. Floch (1988, in Lam, 2001) found that customers focus on the utilitarian value of a shop for household and some grocery items; however, they focus on a shop's hedonic value for books, perfumes, and fashion. Andreu, Bigné, Chumpitaz, and Swaenc (2006) stated that internal atmospherics in a shopping center has a negative effect on the customers' disposition to pay. These researchers claimed that customers tend not to pay more for a pleasant atmosphere or they might associate a pleasant atmosphere with high-price stores. These suggestions illustrate that the influence of the store environment on customers varies according to the nature of the store and motivations of visitors.

However, museum gift shops are different from other retail shops. First, surveys show that museum gift shops are an integral part of the visitors' experience (Profitable Times Newsletter, n.d.). Products such as books, souvenirs, premiums, clothes and accessories of a museum gift shop, different from those of other retail shops, have a well-defined specific purpose. They have to tie in with the mission of the museum to which it is attached (Shapley and Starzee, 2011). Also, they help extend the education experience to visitors (Kitchen, 1998; Profitable Times Newsletter, n.d.) While other retail shops have to compete for customers, a museum gift shop is attached to a museum where no competitors of the same nature are present.

Also, studies show that the responses of people

to a store environment vary with their cultural background. Liao, Huang, Huang and Deeseentham (2012) found that Americans are more concerned with design cues of a coffee shop, whereas Taiwanese pay more attention to social cues. Jasper and Hu (2007) claimed that unlike American women, Chinese women formed a favorable impression of a store with low social orientations.

Unfortunately, substantial store environment research to date has not examined how the environment of museum gift shops influence the buying emotion in the Thai cultural context. Although some studies examined the shopping behavior of Thais, they were mostly restricted to the fashion industry.

## Research Methodology

This study will use both primary and secondary data. The author will use a mixed exploratory qualitative and quantitative research methodology to collect the primary data. The quantitative research methodology gathered data such as relative occurrence and frequency within a sampled population. The qualitative research collected data that could provide non-quantifiable insights into behaviors, motivations, and attitudes (Creswell and Plano, 2011). The use of this mixed methodology enabled cross-validation of the collected data to generate outcomes with enhanced validity and reliability (Decrop, 1999). The questionnaire for both quantitative survey and qualitative open-end questions will be based on the typology of Baker's three-factor framework. Secondary data will be collected from books, literature, papers, journals, newspapers, proceedings, and websites on the store environment and the buying emotion of customers.

The author will write to the administrators of the Museum of Siam, the National Museum of Bangkok, and Rattanakosin Exhibition Hall and obtained permission to collect data inside the museums. The Museum of Siam, a museum of history was established in 2004. It was a project of Thaksin Shinawatra, the former Prime Minister of Thailand, to materialise his policy of self-development and acquisition of knowledge by the Thai public (Sritama, 2004). Regarding to its souvenir shop, apart from books that are related to history and religion of Thailand, the shop sells a number of hands-on products and gifts that express Thainess. The National Museum, Bangkok is the central museum of Thailand. The museum is an art, archaeology and history museum. The National Museum, Bangkok is “arguably the most comprehensive museum in the region” (Kelly, 2001, p. 101) as it covers “every sort of Thai cultural material” (Lenzi, 2004, p.145). The Rattanakosin Exhibition Hall (REH) was opened to the public in 2010. The hall is a royal project and belongs to the Crown Property Bureau, which manages the property of the royal family of Thailand. The REH introduces visitors to the communities, arts, culture, tradition and architectures of the Rattankosin era and the evolution of the Thai society from its past as a water community to its present as a cosmopolitan. The products inside the souvenir shop of the REH are mainly books, stationeries, clothes and materials that express the way of living of Thais. The author will use a simple convenience sampling technique to select Thai visitors in the three museums.

## Literature Review

Religious buildings, such as ancient Greek temples and cathedrals of Medieval Europe, are

the earliest examples of buildings that utilise their artificial environment to stir the emotion of people (Kotler, 1973). Their interior and exterior architectures aim to stir the religious feelings of the faithful (Kotler, 1973). However, in the business context, Kotler (1973) was the first to initiate the application of artificial environment, which he termed as “atmospherics” to retailing.

Defining the environment is to “distinguish the person (“me”) from the physical features that surround him or her (“not me”)” (D’Astous, 2000, p. 149). Atmospherics refers to the effort to design an external buying environment to enhance the purchasing probabilities of customers (Kotler, 1973). On the basis of the main sensory channels for atmosphere to sight, sound, scent, and touch, Kotler (1973) distinguished among the visual, aural, olfactory, and tactile sensory dimensions of a store atmosphere. He stated that atmospherics may serve as an attention-creating medium that could deliver discriminative stimuli to customers for them to recognise vendor differences. Eventually, the atmospherics may serve as an affect-creating medium that can enhance customer buying probability. Since Kotler introduced the retail “atmospherics” concept, several studies have focused on the influence of the environment on the buying emotion of customers.

Different from Kotler’s categories, D’Astous (2000) claimed that Baker’s (1986) typology of ambient, design, and social factors focuses on the physical antecedents of customer responses and the explicit consideration of social factors. The ambient factor refers to intangible background features, such as air quality, lighting, music, and scent, in the environment. Customers may notice these features if they exceed an acceptable range (Baker, Grewal,



and Levy, 1992). The design factor refers to aesthetical and functional features, such as architecture, colour, and layouts of stores and product displays, that exist at the forefront of a customer's awareness (Baker, Grewal, and Levy, 1992). The social factor includes the number, type, and behavior of salespeople and customers inside a store.

Bitner's (1992) "servicescape" concept aims to differentiate the elements of the tangible physical environment, such as signage, equipment, and furniture that provide clues about the service offered from other physical evidence of uniforms and business cards (in Mudie and Pirrie, 2006). Bitner (1992) stated that "managers continually plan, build, change and control an organisation's physical surroundings; but frequently the impact of a specific design or design change on ultimate users (customers and employees) of the facility is not fully understood" (p. 57). The key dimensions of "servicescape" are ambient conditions, space and functionality, and the use of signs, symbols and artifacts (Mudie and Pirrie, 2006). These dimensions may help customers distinguish a company by influencing the way the company is categorised and influence the beliefs of the employees of the company about their importance in the company and with their colleagues (Bitner, 1992).

Turley and Millman (2000) categorised pertinent literature on the influence of marketing atmospheres on customers into the following variables:

- General external, such as storefront, marquee, building architecture, and parking;
- General interior, such as lighting, scents, and colour usage;
- Layout and design, such as allocation of floor space and product groupings;
- Point-of-purchase and decoration, such as

product displays and posters; and

- Humans, such as customer and employee characteristics

They stated that among these variables, numerous studies have addressed the interior variable and customer's perceptions of the variable. By contrast, external and layout and design variables have received less attention.

Different from the variable categorisation of Turley and Millman, Lam (2001) categorised pertinent literature on store environment into three levels of aggregation, namely, elementary, factor, and global levels. The elementary level studies individual environmental elements, such as music, colour, and furnishing. The factor level studies the elements as factors or in groups, such as the Baker's typology. The global level explores the environment of different stores as manipulations. This level of study focuses on the relationship between the emotions induced by a specific environment and the behaviors in the environment.

On the basis of the framework of Bitner, Mudie and Pirrie (2006) categorised the elements of service environments according to the cognitive, affective, and physiological/behavioral responses of people. The cognitive response, a belief formation, is formed by arranging the elements of a service setting to convey cues and clues that influence customers' expectations of the setting. Affective response is formed by employing elements, such as colour and lighting, to elicit the desired emotional response. Physiological and behavioral responses are two possible outcomes of the affective response, that is, either to approach or avoid. According to Mudie and Pirrie (2006), pleasant emotional responses lead to the former and unpleasant ones to the latter.

Instead of studying the elements of retail environment that produce positive customer feelings, D'Astous (2000) studied the irritating elements. Using Baker's (1986) typology as the conceptual framework of his study, D'Astous (2000) discovered that the extent of irritation induced by environmental shopping irritants varies according to the gender and age of respondents. D'Astous (2000) further suggested that retailers should minimise irritants, such as high-pressure selling and overcrowding of their shops.

Despite the various studies and categorisations of the store environment, researchers have aimed to study how the dimensions or elements of store environment influence the buying emotion of customers. Mehrabian and Russell (1974) proposed three emotional states of people in their physical and social environment, namely, pleasure–displeasure, arousal–non-arousal, and dominance–submissiveness. Pleasure–displeasure refers to the degree at which a person experiences happiness, joy, or contentment. Arousal–non-arousal is the activity, excitement, or alertness level of a person. Dominance–submissiveness is the extent to which a person feels unrestricted and in control of a situation. Kaltcheva and Weitz (2006) claimed that in general, pleasant shopping environments positively influence shopping behavior, such as unplanned spending, duration of stay in shops, and social interaction; however, they stated that arousal effects are relatively less consistent. Russell and Pratt (1980) claimed that the pleasure and arousal states of customers can adequately represent the emotional or affective responses of customers to an environment.

Overall, a positive store environment lengthens the time customers stay inside a store (Wakefield and Baker, 1998). As consumers stay longer, their

desire to explore the store also increases. The more the customers explore the store, the opportunity to buy more items and spend more money likewise increases (Donovan, Rossiter, Marcoolyn, and Nesdale, 1994; Sherman, Mathur, and Smith, 1997; Wakefield and Baker, 1998).

## Research Methodology

This paper used both primary and secondary data. The author used a mixed exploratory qualitative and quantitative research methodology to collect the primary data. The quantitative research methodology gathered data such as relative occurrence and frequency within a sampled population. The qualitative research collected data that could provide non-quantifiable insights into behaviors, motivations, and attitudes (Creswell and Plano, 2011). The use of this mixed methodology enabled cross-validation of the collected data to generate outcomes with enhanced validity and reliability (Decrop, 1999). Secondary data were collected from books, literature, papers, journals, newspapers, proceedings, and websites on the store environment and the buying emotion of customers.

Regarding the quantitative data, as the author could not determine the number of Thais who visited museums in Thailand, the sample size was based on the population of Bangkok. In 2014, the total population was reported to be approximately 8.5 million (World Population Review, 2015). Based on Yamane's formula with a precision level of +/- 5% and a confidence level of 95%, a sample size of 400 respondents was considered appropriate.

The quantitative questionnaire was divided into the following three sections:

- a. Demographic data of respondents;
- b. Frequency of respondents visiting museum



gift shops and types of products they bought; and

c. Responses of respondents to the elements of store environment's influence on their buying emotion; the ratings are based on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely).

For the qualitative part, the author used semi-structured open-end questions to interview 40 Thai visitors in the three museums. Walker (1985) considered the data collected from 40 interviewees valid. The questionnaire was divided into the following three sections:

- a. Demographic data of interviewees;
- b. Motivations of interviewees for buying things from museum gift shops; and
- c. Opinions of interviewees on the ways the elements of a store environment can influence their buying emotion.

The elements of the store environment for both quantitative and qualitative research were based on Baker's typology of ambient, design and social factors. The primary data were collected on February 20, 27, and 28, 2016. The author used SPSS software to analyse the quantitative data and synthesize the descriptive statistics with the qualitative research data.

## Findings

Of the 450 questionnaires distributed, 420 were properly filled out. Demographic data

Of the sample, 65.2% were female and 34.8% were male. In terms of age, 42.4% were 21–30 years old, 35.5% were 11–20, 15.4% were 31–40, and the remaining was above 41. In terms of occupation, 61% were students, 23.8% were employees, 5.7% were civil servants, 3.8% were business owners, 3.1% were self-employed, and the remaining was unemployed.

Of the 40 interviewees, 21 were female and 19 were male. Furthermore, 15 were 31–40 years old, 12 were 21–30, 6 were 51–60, 5 were 41–50, and 2 were 61 and above. Also, 19 of them were students, 8 were employees, 6 were civil servants, 4 were business owners, and 3 were self-employed.

Frequency of visiting museum gift shops and habits of purchasing items from them Regarding respondents' frequency of visiting museum gift shops, the findings are listed in Table 1 (Appendix 1). The findings on the things buying frequency of those who always and sometimes visit museum gift shops from the shops are listed in Table 2 (Appendix 1). For the question on the type of products that they usually buy from the shops, the findings are as listed in Table 3 (Appendix 1).

The findings showed that 32.2% of the respondents had a habit of visiting museum gift shops and 47.6% tended to visit the shops during their stay in museums. However, among them, more than 55% never bought any item from the shops. About the type of product that they usually bought from the shops, nearly 80% of the respondents were interested in souvenirs such as magnets and postcards. The qualitative data helped explain the reasons that respondents were keen on buying such souvenirs. 80% interviewees said that they bought and gave the souvenirs to their friends and relatives. "I like buying things from museum gift shops. The merchandise inside the shops have identities. They bear the name of the museum. I buy and give them as souvenirs to my friends," said Interviewee 2. "The products of a museum gift shop are unique. Many of them are not available in other retail shops. Whenever I visit a museum, I always buy and give them to my friends," said Interviewee 4. Regarding the



most popular type of souvenirs, the majority of interviewees mentioned key chains, badges, and postcards, which were inexpensive and easy to carry. “They (the souvenirs) are small and cheap. I buy and give them as gifts to my friends. Today, I have bought a bunch of badges,” said Interviewee 23. “Souvenirs such as key chains, postcards, and magnets are small, easy to carry and not expensive. I have bought many for my friends and relatives,” said Interviewee 17.

### **Influence of store ambience on buying emotion**

Regarding respondents’ responses to the influence of the ambient, design and social factor on their buying emotion, the findings are listed in Table 4, 5 and 6 respective (Appendix 1).

#### ***Ambient***

Of the four elements, respondents were more concerned with the air quality of the shop, followed by the scent and music. The element of lighting was the least significant to the respondents. The qualitative data could further elaborate the mindset of respondents on the influence of these elements.

#### ***Air Quality***

Of the 40 interviewees, 75% replied that the air quality of a museum gift shop was influential. “If the air ventilation and temperature of a museum gift shop are good and cool, I will stay there longer for shopping,” said Interviewee 30. “Who could stay in a shop where the air quality is not good? If the shop is hot, and the air quality makes me feel uncomfortable, I’ll leave immediately,” said Interviewee 12. Although several interviewees believed that the air quality would influence their buying emotion, 10 of them did not. “No, I do not think so. Normally, a museum gift shop is small. It

will not take a long time for me to walk around,” stated Interviewee 11. “I do not see how the air quality will enhance my buying emotion. It does not influence me at all,” said Interviewee 9.

#### ***Scent***

70% of the respondents claimed that a scented gift shop would extend their stay in the shop. “A gift shop with a fresh scent makes me feel good. I’ll then stay in the shop longer,” said Interviewee 13. However, some clarified that a shop had to refrain from spraying perfumes or air refreshers. “Spraying perfumes or air fresheners is not a good way to improve the scent of a gift shop,” said Interviewee 7. “A refreshing scent makes me feel good. However, if a shop sprays perfume that mixes with the odour of human sweat, the smell of the air makes me feel sick,” said Interviewee 24. However, some interviewees did not consider the scent of a gift shop was essential. “A gift shop has to be free from odours. Hence, whether a gift shop is scented or not does not bother me,” said Interviewee 25.

#### ***Background music***

64% the interviewees remarked that the background music could enhance their buying emotion. “Soft music can make me feel relaxed. If my mood is good and relaxed, I will tend to buy things,” said Interviewee 8. However, a few replied that the background music helped make the shop lively. “I think the music makes the shop not too quiet. It gives more life to the shop,” said Interviewee 26. Out of 42 interviewees, 8 replied that the background music was not influential to them at all. “Many shops do not have any musical background. I do not care about the music. I just buy what I like,” said Interviewee 6.

#### ***Lighting***

64% of interviewees claimed that a gift shop





with good lighting would increase their buying emotion. “I think it (lighting) is pretty helpful. The use of a good lighting, in particular spot lights on a product can draw my attention to the product,” said Interviewee 8. Some claimed that the use of warm-colour light could make the products stand out. “The use of the light in warm colours such as yellow or orange makes the products look good,” said Interviewee 40. However, some regarded that the function of lighting was to help them see the products clearly. “A store has to be bright so that I can see the products clearly,” said Interviewee 9.

### **Store design factor**

The findings showed that respondents were more concerned with the layout of a museum gift shop, followed by its architecture and product display. Among these elements, the element of colour was considered least significant. The qualitative data helped elaborate the details of the responses.

#### **Layout**

Among the 40 interviewees, 64% stated that a shop with a good layout could give them a clear orientation. “A store with a good layout can tell me where the products are. It helps facilitate my shopping,” said Interviewee 4. “A well-organised shop with a good layout and orientation can help me search for products with ease. Without any doubt, this will enhance my mood to shop,” replied Interviewee 1. However, some did not hold the same opinion. “I do not think it matters. Normally, a gift shop is small. I just walk around the shop. I never care about the layout,” said Interviewee 38. “I think gift shops have to be spacious. Many museum gift shops are very small. The space of a gift shop is more important than the layout,” said Interviewee 23.

#### **Architecture**

Around 80% of interviewees said that the good architecture of the shops provided them with a beautiful background for taking photos. “A museum gift shop with nice architecture is good. I can take a lot photos, which I can share with my friends on Facebook. After taking the photos, I feel happy. I’ll then have a mood to shop,” said Interviewee 37. “A gift shop with a good architecture can make the shop look outstanding. It can arouse my interest in taking photos. I’ll upload the photos to Facebook,” said Interviewee 40. However, not all interviewees shared these opinions. “I am more interested in the product than the architecture,” said Interviewee 9.

#### **Display**

About 50% of the interviewees observed that displaying gift shop products nicely is essential. “A neat and tidy display of products can arouse my interest in looking around. It is all about presentation. Whether a shop can attract my attention depends on how the products are displayed,” claimed Interviewee 24. Some suggested that the shop should display plenty of products. “The products have to be well-displayed and labelled. Also, the more product varieties there are on the shelves, the more interested I am in shopping,” said Interviewee 25.

#### **Colour**

60% of the interviewees claimed that they felt good with a shop using nice colours. “A gift shop using nice colours; in particular blue or grey makes me feel good. This will definitely improve my buying mood,” said Interviewee 18. “The colour of a gift shop can give the shop a sense of warmth or coolness. I am attracted to a shop that uses cool colours,” said Interviewee 13. Many of them claimed they were attracted to shops using nice

colours; in particular cool colours for photo taking. “A gift shop using colours such as blue and green (cool colours) will attract me to go inside to take photos. I’ll then post the photos to social media,” said Interviewee 9. However, a few said that the colour of a gift shop was not important at all. “I think a gift shop has to have good lighting instead of nice colours,” said Interviewee 35.

### Social factor

Between the two elements of salespeople and customers, respondents were more concerned with the former. Of the interviewees, over 80% were concerned with the smiles and friendliness of salespeople. “The friendliness of salespeople matters. They have to be friendly and smile at customers,” stated Interviewee 7. “Friendly and helpful salespeople make me feel good and enhance my buying emotion. Their smiles and kind behavior really help,” said Interviewee 16. Also, many of them did not consider as important the number of salespeople. “The number of salespeople does not matter. Their behavior is essential. They have to be friendly,” claimed Interviewee 2.

Many of the interviewees were concerned with how behaviour of customers in a shop would influence their shopping mood and interrupt their conversation with friends. “I like visiting a shop with my friends. I do not like a shop with a lot of noise. A crowded shop is fine with me as long as customers inside the shop behave well. The noise will influence my mood to talk to my friends and interest in looking around the shop,” said Interviewee 26. Some interviewees were concerned with how the behavior of customers would influence their privacy. “If I see people; in particular children running around and talking aloud, I’ll just leave the

shop. A gift shop is always not spacious. People should be considerate and respect the privacy of other customers,” claimed Interviewee 36.

A summary of the ranking of all elements according to their influence to respondents are listed in Table 7 (Appendix 1).

Of these elements, salespeople were considered to be the most influential to the buying emotion of respondents, followed by layout, air quality, architecture, and scent. Lighting was considered the least influential.

### Data Analysis

The findings of the present paper illustrate that museum gift shops, to most Thai visitors, are places for them to socialise and connect with friends and relatives. In addition, despite the claim that the influence of store environment on shoppers varies according to the nature of shops, the findings of the present paper illustrate that the influence of the environment of museum gift shops on Thai visitors has similarities and differences from previous literature that is mainly based on retail shops of other nature.

Previous studies have suggested that the main role of museum gift shops is to help extend the visiting experience of visitors. Chen (2015) claimed that the main motivation of Thais for visiting museums in Thailand is to gain knowledge. The findings of this present paper indicate that majority of Thai visitors are not interested in buying items that are related to museums or education. Instead, they seem to simply like buying souvenirs. Lockstone (2011) stated that the main motivation of tourists for buying souvenirs in museum gift shops is to extend their visiting experience and memory through a tangible object. Wallace (2010) stated



that the souvenirs of museum gift shops conjure many layers of enduring feelings. The paper findings show that Thai visitors mainly purchase souvenirs for their friends and relatives. Through these souvenirs, Thai visitors may share with their friends and relatives the enduring feelings of their visit to museums and exhibitions.

Moreover, the findings illustrate that many Thai visitors consider a good architecture of museum gift shops and that well-coloured museum gift shops provide them with an attractive background for picture taking such that they can share photos with their friends. Kindberg, Spasojevic, and Fleck (2005, in Ames and Naaman, 2007) illustrated two reasons for taking camera-phone images, that is, social versus personal and affective versus functional. Social and affective photos are those taken for tagging and sharing with friends and family members. Kindberg et al. (2005, in Ames and Naaman, 2007) asserted that these photos are often used to enrich or document mutual experiences or share experiences with friends and family. On this basis, photo taking in front of or inside a gift shop with good architecture is a social function for them to connect with friends and relatives.

The phenomenon of experiencing enjoyment from shopping has long attracted academic discussions (Bäckström, 2011). These discussions have claimed that some people shop to obtain pleasurable experiences and stimulate their senses (Bloch et al., 1989; Ohanian and Tashchian, 1992; Sinha and Uniyal, 2005, in Bäckström, 2011), and several people consider shopping as a form of leisure-time enjoyment (Bäckström, 2011). Furthermore, these discussions have illustrated how many people go shopping without any intention to purchase any product. Varley (2014) stated that the service

quality of a retail shop is a prime area in which customers judge a retailer's offer over another. The qualitative findings of this present paper illustrate that many Thai visitors expect shopping in museum gift shop a pleasurable and enjoyable activity with friends. Many of them avoid entering a crowded shop because the noise of crowds will interrupt their conversations with their friends. They are also concerned about the friendliness and smiles of salespeople and not about service quality. Thus, although many Thai visitors visit museum gift shops, over 55% of them do not purchase items from the shops. In addition, given that many of them visit museum gift shops not to buy items, the percentage of neutral responses to the influence of the elements on their buying emotion is relatively high.

Previous studies have demonstrated that a store environment can be controlled by manipulating various cues. The cues, in turn, can influence the behavior of store patrons (Darden et al., 1983, in Baker et al., 1992). The findings of the present paper illustrate the three environment factors that influence the buying emotion of Thai visitors significantly and evenly. Furthermore, although previous studies have suggested that the influence of the store environment on customers varies according to the nature of the store, a comparison of the findings and the literature indicates similarities and differences.

Meer (1985) stated that soft lighting can create a more relaxing and pleasant mood than bright lighting (in Baker, Grewal, and Levy, 1992). Areni and Kim (1993, in Lam, 2001) claimed that light could influence the visual acuity of objects in display and the arousal experience of shoppers. Although Milliman (1982) and Yalch and Spangenberg (1990) claimed that music lengthens the stay of customers

inside a store and increases the customers' desire to spend. Liao and Liaw (2011) found that the background music in a store does not influence the buying emotion of consumers. The qualitative findings of the present paper tend to echo the claims of these previous literature. However, although Griffitt (1970, in Lam, 2001) demonstrated a lab setting that proved that the attraction and affection feelings of people are negatively related to the effective temperature of surroundings, the qualitative data of the present paper illustrate that 25% of interviewees are not concerned with the temperature setting of gift shops.

Different from the claim of Bellizi, Crowley, and Hasty (1983) that warm colours could attract people to enter a store and shop, and similar to the claim of Liao and Liaw (2011) that a store that uses cool colours in its interior design could extend the shopping time of consumers, the qualitative data of this paper illustrated that many Thai visitors prefer gift shops that use nice cool colours. Crowley (1993, in Liao, Huang, Huang, and Deeseentharn, 2012) stated that the nice colours of stores could increase consumer's intentions to enter the store to look around; however, the findings of the present paper illustrate that the colours of a museum gift shop arouses the interest of visitors to take photos outside and inside the shops.

On the element of architecture, Mazursky and Jocaby (1986) claimed that the interior architecture of a store is second only to the store's brand. In addition, Wakefield and Baker (1998) emphasised the necessity for malls to use architectural details to elicit excitement from customers. The massive renovation plan of the Siam Center in Bangkok in 2005 aimed to attract fashion-conscious consumers aged between 12

and 28 years (Rungfapaisarn, 2004). However, the findings of this paper illustrated that the element of architecture was considered important only after the friendliness of salespeople, the layout and good air quality of the store. Furthermore, majority of the interviewees were more interested in using the architecture as background for photo taking.

Regarding salespeople, numerous scholars and researchers have emphasised their professionalism, behavior, and number availability. Baker (1986) claimed that the appearance, behavior, and the number of salespeople could help shape the perception of customers on the level of service quality of a retail store. Kotler et al. (1996, in Chu and Lam, 2004) noted that a deep knowledge on the products and the responsiveness to customer needs are required of salespeople. Baker, Grewal, and Levy (1992) noted that an adequate number of salespeople present in a store helps create a pleasant shopping atmosphere. However, majority of Thai visitors are more concerned with the friendliness and smiles of the salespeople.

Furthermore, Bateson and Hui (1987, in Tendai and Crispen, 2009) illustrated that overcrowding results in an unpleasant shopping experience. They further claimed that overcrowding reduces shopping time, lessens the buying quantity, and defers the buying intention of customers. However, many Thai visitors are not really concerned about the overcrowding of museum gift shops. They are more concerned with the behavior of those inside the shops.

## Conclusion

The findings corroborated that in the mindset of local visitors, the shops were places for them to connect and socialise with friends and relatives.



Hence, although many agreed the store environment of the shops influenced their buying emotion, they tended not buying things from the shops. Also, this mindset helps explain the high number of neutral responses of respondents to the influences of environment elements on their buying emotion.

## Recommendations

Baker's three-factor framework explains how store environment influences customer behavior. Should the administrators wish to improve their store environment, they can consider the following recommendations:

- The salespeople have to be very friendly and always smile.
- The temperature of the shop has to be cool and air circulation should be good.
- The architecture of the shop has to be outstanding.
- The layout has to be well-organised and the product display has to be well-categorised.
- The shops have to use cool colour.
- The background music has to have slow tempo.
- The lighting has to be soft.

## Weaknesses of the paper

The paper has evident weaknesses. The data were collected from well-established museum gift shops with a pleasant store environment. If the paper was conducted in museums with less well-established shops, the findings might also be different. Also, the paper does not examine the relationship between the buying emotion and consumption behavior of visitors. Will the enhancement of buying emotion direct influence impulsive buying of customers?

## Further study

To many Thais, museum gift shops are places for spending time and connecting with their friends. Does this association also apply to other gift and retail shops in Thailand? Also, through what means can a museum gift shop increase the impulsive buying of Thais? These questions lead to good topics for future research.

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## Appendix 1

**Table 1: Respondents' frequency of visiting museum gift shops**

Do you visit museum gift shops during your stay in museums?	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Sometimes	200	135
Always	85	47.6
Never	32.2	20.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2: Responses of those who visited museum gift shops on their frequency of buying items from the shops**

Do you purchase items from museum gift shops?	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Never	186	115
Sometimes	34	55.7
Always	34.3	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3: Products that respondents tended to buy from museum gift shops. As respondents could choose multiple answers, the total number of responses exceeded 335.**

What do you usually buy from museum gift shops? You can choose more than one answer.	Number of Respondents	Percentages
Souvenirs such as postcards and magnets	601	79.8
Items related to museum exhibitions	86	11.4
Items about the museum	54	7.2
Educational items	6	0.8
Others	6	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>753</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4: Responses of respondents to the influence of elements of the store ambient factor on their buying emotion.**

Store Ambient Factor	Number of respondents (Percentages)					$\bar{X}$	S.D.
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)		
The air quality such as temperature, humidity, and air ventilation in a museum gift shop will influence my buying emotion.	112 (26.7)	199 (47.4)	89 (21.2)	15 (3.6)	5 (1.1)	3.95	0.853
The scent of a museum gift store will influence my buying emotion.	126 (30.0)	161 (38.3)	103 (24.6)	16 (3.8)	14 (3.3)	3.88	0.993
The musical background of a museum gift shop will influence my buying emotion.	103 (24.5)	184 (43.8)	83 (19.8)	40 (9.5)	10 (2.4)	3.79	0.997
The brightness of a museum gift shop will influence my buying emotion.	64 (15.2)	191 (45.5)	112 (26.7)	35 (8.3)	18 (4.3)	3.59	0.986
<b>Average</b>						<b>3.80</b>	<b>0.957</b>

**Table 5: Responses of the respondents to the influence of the store design elements.**

Store design factor	Number of respondents (Percentages)					$\bar{X}$	S.D.
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)		
The layout of a museum gift shop will influence my buying emotion.	113 (26.9)	214 (51.0)	77 (18.3)	9 (2.1)	7 (1.7)	3.99	0.830
The architecture of a museum gift shop will influence my buying emotion.	115 (27.4)	185 (44.0)	96 (22.9)	18 (4.3)	6 (1.4)	3.92	0.893
The product display of a museum gift shop will influence my buying emotion.	87 (20.7)	222 (52.9)	84 (20.0)	20 (4.8)	7 (1.6)	3.84	0.855
The colour of a museum gift shop will influence my buying emotion.	123 (29.3)	151 (36.0)	105 (25.0)	35 (8.3)	6 (1.4)	3.83	0.990
<b>Average</b>						<b>3.89</b>	<b>0.892</b>

**Table 6. Responses of respondents to the influence of elements of the social factor on their buying emotion.**

Store social factor	Number of respondents (Percentages)					$\bar{X}$	S.D.
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)		
The type, number, and behavior of salespeople of a museum gift shop will influence my buying emotion.	161 (38.3)	151 (36.0)	86 (20.5)	19 (4.5)	3 (0.7)	4.07	0.912
The type, number, and behavior of customers in a museum gift shop will influence my buying emotion.	99 (23.6)	159 (37.8)	117 (27.9)	33 (7.8)	12 (2.9)	3.71	1.003
<b>Average</b>						<b>3.89</b>	<b>0.957</b>

**Table 7: Ranking of the store environment elements according to their influence on the respondents**

Elements of ambience, design, and social factors	Number of respondents (Percentages)					$\bar{X}$	S.D.
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)		
The type, number, and behavior of the sales-people of the museum gift shop will influence my buying emotion.	161 (38.3)	151 (36.0)	86 (20.5)	19 (4.5)	3 (0.7)	4.07	0.912
The layout of a museum gift shop will influence my buying emotion.	113 (26.9)	214 (51.0)	77 (18.3)	9 (2.1)	7 (1.7)	3.99	0.830
The air quality such as temperature, humidity, and air ventilation of a museum gift shop will influence my buying emotion.	112 (26.7)	199 (47.4)	89 (21.2)	15 (3.6)	5 (1.1)	3.95	0.853
The architecture of a museum gift shop will influence my buying emotion.	115 (27.4)	185 (44.0)	96 (22.9)	18 (4.3)	6 (1.4)	3.92	0.893
The scent of a museum gift store will influence my buying emotion.	126 (30.0)	161 (38.3)	103 (24.6)	16 (3.8)	14 (3.3)	3.88	0.993
The product display and layout of a museum gift shop will influence my buying emotion.	87 (20.7)	222 (52.9)	84 (20.0)	20 (4.8)	7 (1.6)	3.84	0.855
The colour of a museum gift shop will influence my buying emotion.	123 (29.3)	151 (36.0)	105 (25.0)	35 (8.3)	6 (1.4)	3.83	0.990
The musical background of a museum gift shop will influence my buying emotion.	103 (24.5)	184 (43.8)	83 (19.8)	40 (9.5)	10 (2.4)	3.79	0.997
The type, number, and behavior of customers in a museum gift shop will influence my buying emotion.	99 (23.6)	159 (37.8)	117 (27.9)	33 (7.8)	12 (2.9)	3.71	1.003
The lighting of a museum gift shop will influence my buying emotion.	64 (15.2)	191 (45.5)	112 (26.7)	35 (8.3)	18 (4.3)	3.59	0.986