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## Store environment and its influence on impulse buying behavior among females: Moderating Role of shopping Pal

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### Abstract

The study aimed at measuring impact of store environment on impulse buying behavior with the moderating impact of shopping pal among females in apparel retail store. The data is gathered through questionnaires. This is descriptive and cross sectional type of study. Research approach is deductive. Mall intercept technique is used for data collection. There are 350 questionnaires were distributed among target audience which is female. 300 completed questionnaires were returned. Amos and Spss software version 21 both are used for analysis. I measured model fitness and validity on Amos through pattern matrix. Spss is used for data preparation for Amos. Moderation is also measured through Spss by using Hayes process. Overall results are showing good model fitness and reliability and validity of the model. The gap which we assessed moderating impact of situational factor shopping pal. As Pakistan is a collectivist country so my results of the study also proved that people like to shop with their friends as compare to going alone. Further recommendations suggested according this study is that although sellers should focus on group shopping. As current trend of Pakistan is that they are focusing on environment which is clean, relaxing, music, lights, helping staffs who are wearing professional uniforms etc. They are not focusing promotional activities which encourages shopping with friends or family.

**Key Words:** Retail Environment, Marketing, Shopping Pal, Impulse Buying

### Introduction

In retail, market is growing competitive. Retailers are persistently looking for ways to make their offerings different. For this retailers seek to give total experience which is unique for their customers. One way for differentiation is providing shopping environment that is customized to meet the needs of purchaser, not only needs of customers but also provide shopping environment that is pleasant and exciting (Morrison, Gan et al. 2011) Retailers recognize the importance of store atmospherics as a tool of differentiation and customer's satisfaction (Vieira 2013). Attributes of atmospherics includes both tangible and intangibles. There are three aspects of atmospherics. First feature is ambiance which is nonphysical attribute of the environment for example illumination, music, fragrance, temperature and sound that usually impact non visual senses of purchaser. Second feature includes spatial layout and

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functionality. They explain that how facility, machines and furniture organized within a setting and how they facilitate in the achievement of goal and performance of customers. The third feature is artifacts, signs and symbols that give explicit and implicit information to consumers (Bitner 1992, Liu and Jang 2009, Ramlee and Said 2014). Situational factors are exterior stimuli that effect customer at exact point of time when purchasing on impulse (Kacen, Hess et al. 2012) Usually it is not under the control of customers rather it have direct impact on Impulse buying behavior. (Khan, Hui et al. 2016). Most of the past researches were focusing on moderating impact of time, money, task definition, hedonic motivation (Chang, Eckman et al. 2011, Jung Chang, Yan et al. 2014). All were focusing impulse buying at individual level but mostly people go with peers, family member or coworker (Borges, Chebat et al. 2010). Culture of Pakistan is a collective culture where social ties among individuals are strong, people depend on each others and they live in groups (Ali and Hasnu 2013). There are less studies which have conducted on situational factors on impulse buying in the context of apparel (Jung Chang, Yan et al. 2014). There are studies which have been conducted on definition of impulse purchasing (Stern 1962, Piron 1991). Later other factors of impulse buying such as internal factors of impulse buying (Flight, Rountree et al. 2012, Badgaiyan and Verma 2014), external factors (Mehta and Chugan 2013), music inside store (Dubé and Morin 2001), fragrance inside the store (Mattila and Wirtz 2001), emotions (Foroughi, Buang et al. 2013) have been studied. Females are selected for the study because they tend to have higher depression than man so they are involved in impulse buying more to improve their mental state (Wade, Cairney et al. 2002, Tifferet and Herstein 2012). This study is focusing apparel because with the emergence of standalone classification malls are largely focusing on soft goods (Michon, Yu et al. 2008). Researchers relate impulse buying with **stimulation response theory** by demonstrating Pavlov dog salivating experiment of classical conditioning. This states that conditioned stimulus turns into conditioned response from neutral or irrelevant factor. A new connection is established between stimulus and response after pairing several times unconditioned stimulus and neutral response by customers. The neutral stimulus eventually becomes conditioned stimulus. Different stimulus conditions produces different results of conditioned response (Wu and Lee 2015).

## Retail Industry in Pakistan:

In current decade retailing is acquiring much more attention of marketers, manufacturers and researchers. Pakistan is getting great significance for stakeholders. It is a fine market for retail industry because of its economic growth. Its GDP was 3.3% in 2013-2014 and by the end of 2014 it reached to 4.1%, which shows it would increase in 2015. According to a survey conducted by US census Bureau, Pakistan stands at no sixth country in terms of population (Sabir 2014).

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## Literature Review:

### Ambient Features:

Ambient features are related to invisible experience of the environment which includes temperature, music, illumination and fragrance. (Ward and Russell 1981, Milliman 1982, Wineman 1982, Yalch and Spangenberg 1990). Music is an appropriate, controllable atmospheric feature since its execution is inexpensive and easily customizable (Kim and Lennon 2012, Ju and Ahn 2016). Music makes purchaser stay more, spend extra time and money and this spending may be unplanned and possibly results in impulse purchasing (Mohan, Sivakumaran et al. 2013). Well managed illumination system also causes beneficial change in the mood and decision of the shoppers about purchase because proper illumination may tempt shoppers to more involvement and create an urge to buy (Smith 1989, Mohan, Sivakumaran et al. 2013). Store with pleasant fragrance will cause positive change in the mood of customers (Azim 2013). Research shows that fragrance increased pleasure level, which in return impacts purchasers' behavior such as spending more time and money, approach behavior and satisfaction with the shopping activity (Morrison, Gan et al. 2011). A study conducted in retail chain outlets of Karachi Pakistan. This study revealed that display, illumination, fragrance and cleanliness have positive impact on the buying intention of consumers. Whereas temperature, music and color shows not significance (Hussain and Ali 2015).

### Design Features:

These are more seeing than ambient features (Marans and Spreckelmeyer 1982). Store design plays vital role in the formation of perception about store environment. Store design is important for single brand retailers because they need to create new unique look just to be different from competitors (Floor 2006). There are three components of a store design which includes layout, signage and feature area (Banot and Wandebori 2012, Levy and Weitz 2012). Store layout can be defined as total selling space, how it separates into certain selling area. layout includes make use of space, planning of aisle and area positioning. It impacts how products presented and impact directly what purchaser see during visit and further impacts the buying decision. Another form of layout is free from layout which is the simplest type of layout. In free from layout fixtures and merchandise are placed on the floor of the store in asymmetric pattern (Banot and Wandebori 2012). There are many elements in the environment which serves as explicit and implicit signals. Signs those are displayed internal and external of the structure are explicit signs. The purpose of these signs can be used for labels, showing directions, and showing rules or behaviour. Implicit cues are used to give information to the people about explanation about place, expected behavior and norms (Bitner 1992). The third component of design features is feature areas which is designed to get attention of the customers. It includes window display, entrance, fixtures, in store displays and trend areas, dressing room, cash wraps, product handling and arrangement (Banot and Wandebori 2012). Certain design elements for example layout, color and signage can have impact purchasers' cognitive

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evaluation of the store perceived quality, price and efficiency(Singh 2016). A study concluded that design feature is the top most feature in environmental features that effects customers approach behaviour since it has higher power of effecting and interpreting (Chen and Hsieh 2011).A study conducted in pakistan found that there is a significant relationship between attractive store display and impulse purchasing behaviour because it creates an image in the mind of purchaser and makes them purchase that product(Ali and Hasnu 2013).

## **Social Features:**

Social cues are related with quantity, kind and behaviour of other customers and sales people in store(Baker, Grewal et al. 1994). It comprise of people who are inside the store environment(Baker, Grewal et al. 1994).According this definition store atmospherics consists of both customers and sales personnels. in this study customers are eliminated since previous studies suggested that other customers gave rise to crowdness and diminish perception of environment and emotions regarding store(Byun and Mann 2011, Pan and Siemens 2011, Koo and Kim 2013). Social features have both impact such as positiev(Friendly sales person) and negative (crowding).Positive aspect is more likely to strengthen approach behaviour and this is main focus of the study(Chang, Eckman et al. 2011). More sales persons on the floor, who are wearing professional outfits and greeting customers tend to foster positive store experience(Kumar 2010).A disarranged environment, presenting its personal in improper attire could boost customers' dissatisfaction when a sevice failure happens(Floor 2006, Koo and Kim 2013). The social interaction of a sales person and purchaser recorded to be one of the most significant feature in the retail environment(Jung Chang, Yan et al. 2014).

## **Consumer's Emotional Response:**

Consumers' emotional condition influences impulse buying behaviour(Jung Chang, Yan et al. 2014). Research shows that pleasant atmospherics contribute to good customers mood and pleasant mood leads towards variety seeking behavior which in return leads to impulse purchasing behavior(Azim 2013). The atmosphere of the store has immense impact on emotional satisfaction of the consumers. The impressive store atmosphere increases purchase experience of the customer and satisfaction(Silva and Giraldi 2010).

## **Shopping Pal:**

A friend or a family member who go along with customer termed as purchase pal or a companion shopper (Lindsey-Mullikin and Munger 2011, Hart and Dale 2014).shopping pals are individuals who go with buyers on shopping trips and help them in their buying decisions(Mangleburg, Doney et al. 2004). Scholars have used different terms includes pal or co shoppers to designate one from who is different from the focal person and shares the visit to the mall(Mora and González 2016).

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People tend to be socialized for the sake of avoiding loneliness so they like to purchase with pal such as family member, colleague and friend. In fact if people go for shopping alone they still have communications with the seller or other purchasers in the store. Previous studies shows that effect of gender pal on impulse buying, but there is still gap of effect of pal and impulse buying is still distinct (Chen and Gao 2016). Customer regards wait in the store to be shorter if they have someone to talk in the duration of wait. Similarly when two women shop together they talk, make suggestions and consult (Lindsey-Mullikin and Munger 2011). Study shows that shopping partner affect in decision making about product at store level (Sommer, Wynes et al. 1992, Mangleburg, Doney et al. 2004, Chebat, Haj-Salem et al. 2014). individual purchase at mall and effect is supported for single partner (Kurt, Inman et al. 2011). Past researches shows positive relationship with shopping pal and customer experience, increase their confidence and shopping enjoyment (Haytko and Baker 2004, Yi and Gong 2013, Kim, Choi et al. 2016). A study concluded that customers from collectivism were more satisfied after impulse purchase when they are with someone important as compared to shopping alone, same study shows about individualism there is no significant difference in satisfaction after impulse buying when they were with someone important or alone (Lee and Kacen 2008).

## Impulse Buying:

Impulse buying can be defined as unplanned purchasing made by customers which is an important part of the purchasers' behavior or a process of buying goods spontaneously by a purchaser (Ahmad and Vays 2011, Pattipeilohy 2013). There are four types of impulse purchasing. It consists of planned purchasing, Reminder purchasing, pure impulse purchasing and suggestion impulse buying. Planned impulse purchasing is planned to a limited extent but specific product or categories are not decided by the purchaser. Reminder impulse buying is related with reminder of a product need by seeing the store. Pure impulse buying is novelty purchase in which buyer breaks the trend of usual purchasing. Suggestion impulse buying is related with buying of new product on basis of self-suggestion but with any prior experience (Muruganatham and Bhakat 2013). Impulse purchasing is affected significantly by both internal stimuli and external stimuli. Internal factor of impulse buying is related with individual emotional feeling and desire. External factors is related with shopping experience (Ju and Ahn 2016). There are three attributes of impulse purchasing from other buying behavior. These attributes are being unexpected or unwanted, unreflective and sudden. The first attribute is related with buying situation in which purchaser is not looking for the product actively but purchases it. Unreflective buying is related with lack of product evaluation and purchaser is reluctant to think about long term results of it and evaluates its short term results in mind. Being sudden is related with the time span between seeing and purchasing the product is short (Maymand and Ahmadinejad 2011). Past researches shows that changing in fashion have direct impact on impulse buying. When new fashion clothes come in the store they distract the attention of purchaser because of new style, who gives attention to pleasure (Afonso Vieira 2009, Hirche and Bruwer 2014, Haq and Abbasi 2016).

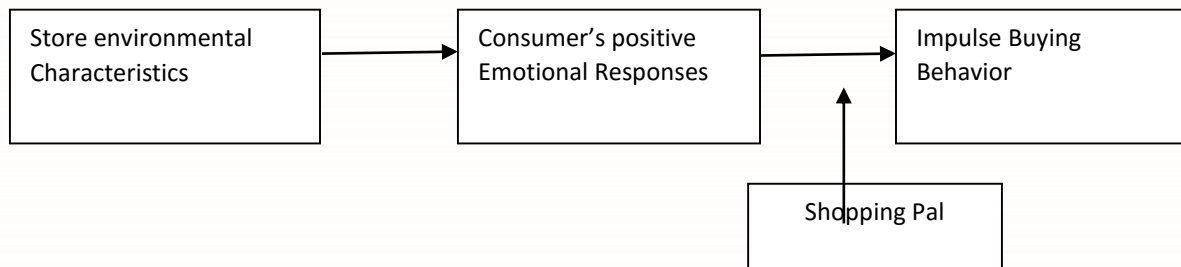
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## Theoretical Frame work:

The focus of the study is application of S-O-R model in the retail context. Environment includes stimuli “S” that effects peoples’ internal, or organism state “O” which in return impact approach or avoidance responses “R”.



## Hypothesis:

H1a: There is positive relationship between female consumers’ perceptions of the store ambience and positive emotional responses to apparel environment characteristics.

H1b: There is positive relationship between female consumers’ perceptions of the store design features and positive emotional responses to apparel store environmental characteristics.

H1c: There is positive relationship between female consumers’ perceptions of the social features of the store and positive emotional responses to apparel store environmental characteristics.

H2: There is a positive relationship between female consumers’ positive emotional responses to the apparel store environmental features and impulse buying behavior.

H3: Shopping pal is positively moderate the relationship between female consumers’ positive emotional responses to the apparel environment features and impulse buying behavior.

## Methodology:

Data is collected through questionnaires. Our target population was females customers of the fashion retail outlet “Ideas by Gul Ahmad” in cities Rahim Yar Khan, Bahawalpur, Multan and Lahore. The sample size of the study is 300 which is selected using scale the scale proposed by (Osborne and Costello 2004). Data was gathered through personal surveys using mall intercept method. It is efficient method of data collection. It is done through administering questionnaires to the respondents when they are shopping (Malhotra, Hall et al. 2006). Sampling technique used in the study is convenience sampling.

## Instrument Development:

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The scale developed by (Baker, Grewal et al. 1994) was adapted to measure store environment by considering design, ambience and social features. Seven point Likert scale was used and there were seven items in questionnaire. The scale developed by (Beatty and Ferrell 1998) was adapted to measure consumer's impulse buying behavior. Seven point Likert scale was used and three items were used in this questionnaire. The scale which was developed by (Beatty and Ferrell 1998) was adapted to measure consumer's emotional response while shopping when there is attractive ambient features. Seven items were used in the questionnaire and seven point Likert Scale was used. The scale developed by (Mangleburg, Doney et al. 2004) was adapted to measure moderating impact of shopping pal during shopping. Seven point Likert scale was used. The aim of the scale was to measure either you enjoy shopping alone or with friends.

## Analysis:

Data analysis is done through both Amos and spss both having version 21. First pattern matrix would be prepared for data preparation on Amos. Check model fitness through KMO and Bartlett's test. Reliability of the variables would also be measured through Spss. The reason for using SEM is that it deals with multiple dependent and independent variables (Tabachnick and Fidell). CFA would be run through Amos to check validity. We measure goodness of model fit as well as convergent and discriminant validity. For the purpose of measuring moderating we use Hayes process model. We will use model number 14 for the analysis.

**Reliability Analysis of the variables:** This is measured through spss. The results are showing that the variables are reliable. The values of acceptance of Cronbach alpha is suggested by (Bashir, Zeeshan et al. 2013). According to him values less than 0.06 is considered poor. The values range between 0.06 and 0.07 is considered to be moderate. Values which range from 0.07 to 0.08 are considered good, from 0.08 to 0.09 is considered very good. Values above 0.09 are considered excellent. The result of reliability in our study is considered to be good.

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Store Environment	.756	7
Emotional Response	.858	7
Impulse Buying Behavior	.704	3

In factor analysis KMO and Bartlett's tests are used widely to test overall model fitness (Haq and Abbasi 2016). The value of KMO is .837 and p value in the Bartlett's test shows overall model fitness. As per guidelines provided by authors Measure of sampling adequacy value more than 0.5 and significance of Bartlett's test endorses of model fit (Hair Jr, Black et al. 2010).

## Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

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Approx. Chi-Square	<b>832.300</b>
Df.	45
Sig.	.000

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Eigen value	3.864	1.233	1.078
% of Variance	38.644	12.232	10.785
Cumulative % of variance	47.302		
KMO	.837		

Pattern Matrix:

Factors	1	2	3
ER4	.817		
ER1	.632		
ER5	.625		
ER7	.553		
SE1		.751	
SE2		.745	
SE3		.438	
SE4		.342	
IBB2			.837
IBB1			.676



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## Communalities:

	Initial	Extraction
SE2	.419	.642
IBB1	.433	.576
IBB2	.441	.662
IBB3	.256	.287
ER6	.359	.446
SE1	.343	.538
ER4	.390	.510
ER5	.376	.529
SE3	.194	.236

Goodness of Fit Indices	Measurement Model	Acceptable Range
$\chi^2$	37.232	Nil
NC	1.32971	<5
GFI	.975	>0.80
AGFI	.951	>0.80

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RMSEA	.033	<0.06
NFI	.956	>0.80
<b>CFI</b>	<b>.988</b>	<b>&gt;0.95</b>

Overall the model shows good fitness. The values recommended for the model fitness are described as follows, and (Hu and Bentler 1999, Hair Jr, Black et al. 2010, Mohan, Sivakumaran et al. 2013).

### Construct validity:

It measures how well the results which we obtained through the use of measure fit the theory. It is measured through convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity is that the results obtained with two instruments measuring the same concept correlate highly whereas discriminant validity is established when the measure have less correlation with the variable which is supposed to be unrelated to this variable (Sekaran 2006)

### Convergent validity:

Constructs	Items	Unstandardized Regression weights	Standard Errors	Square of SE
Store Environment	SE1	.846***	Nil	Nil
	SE2	1.178***	.201	0.040401
	SE3	1.026***	.174	0.030276
	SE4	1.000	.154	0.023716
Emotional Response	ER1	.993***	.130	0.0169
	ER4	1.030***	.122	0.014884
	ER5	1.069***	.121	0.014641
	ER7	1.000	Nil	Nil
Impulse Buying	IBB1	1.000	Nil	Nil
	IBB2	.976***	.108	0.011664

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**Discriminant validity:** Discriminant validity is evaluated by examining correlation matrix of the measurement model. Discriminant validity is achieved through the results of the correlation among the constructs must be less than one (Bagozzi and Warshaw 1990) and greater than twice their respective standard error. The table above is showing that correlation of the constructs is less than one and twice of the standard error.

Factor	SE	ER	IBB
SE	1		
ER	.654 .085****	1	
IBB	.537 .087****	.613 .108****	1

## Moderation Analysis:

Moderation is measured through Hayes process as it is relatively easy method for computing moderation and mediation (Hayes 2013). This macro process is accepted all over the world as well as well appreciated by the researchers. It includes bootstrapping and upper and lower level to test significance of indirect effect (Haq and Abbasi 2016). According to the results values of store environment have significant impact on impulse buying behavior. As values of coefficient .2214 and P .0054. This shows it have a direct and significant impact/When we consider Shopping pal or shopping companion SC1 which we measured through on yes and no basis. Its more fun to shop with a friend than by myself. Our results shows people more like to shop with their friends.

Outcome Emotional Response:

	Coeff	se	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
<b>Constant</b>	.8303	.1413	5.8753	.0000	.5522	1.1084
<b>SE</b>	.7836	.0599	13.0727	.0000	.6656	.9016

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Outcome IBB:

	coeff	Se	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
<b>Constant</b>	-.2179	.7672	-.2841	.7766	-1.7278	1.2919
<b>ER</b>	.4433	.2028	2.1857	.0296	.0441	.8424
<b>SE</b>	.2214	.0791	2.8002	.0054	.0658	.3771
<b>SC1</b>	.6619	.7253	.9125	.3622	-.7656	2.0893
<b>Int_1</b>	.0640	.1798-	.3562	.7220	-.2898	.4179

Indirect Effect of x on y

ER	index	SE(Boot)	LLCI	ULCI
	.0502	.3189	-.4141	.4659

	SC1	Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
ER	1.0000	.3975	.0709	.2604	.5406
ER	2.0000	.4477	.3276	-.0396	.8805

Here 1.0000 is showing for yes and 2.0000 No. Here our analysis for 1.0000 showing effects .3975 and confidence interval .2604 showing significant relationship. Results of 2.0000 showing rejection. Hence its proved that consumers like to shop with their friends.

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## Conclusion:

The major objective of the research is to identify direct and indirect impact of store environment and positive emotional response with impulse buying and moderating impact of shopping pal with impulse buying. In past many researches have been conducting on this model which is based on stimulus response theory but none have measured situational factor in terms of shopping pal. The results of the study found that there is direct impact of store environment and Emotional response with impulse buying. The study also found positive and significant impact of shopping pal with impulse buying.

Results are matched with past studies (Chang, Eckman et al. 2011, Jung Chang, Yan et al. 2014). Results are matched with the Pavlov theory (Wu and Lee 2016). This study can be very useful for the retailers by focusing on group shopping. This could be encouraged by developing promotional message focusing group shopping or group shopping discounts. This study shows direct impact of apparel store environment with positive emotional response to the environment. The respondents who feel that the store environment was clean they are more likely to get excited and joyful in visiting the store. This is helpful for the retailers who offer relaxing and clean environment of the store are more likely to attract more customers. This study also suggests personal attention by the store employees who give personal attention is useful for attracting more purchasers. As shopping is social experience and Pakistan is a collectivist country so customers want personal attention by the sales person. Second hypothesis is related with positive emotional response. The results found that females with positive emotions are more likely to be involved with impulse buying. This is similar to the finding of (Joo Park, Young Kim et al. 2006). The results of the study support that consumers purchasing are not always planned it is supported by previous study (Rook and Gardner 1993). Previously moderating impact of situational factors time, money and task definition have been studied (Jung Chang, Yan et al. 2014). This study measures situational factor which is shopping pal measures first time and it shows pretty good results.

## Recommendations

This research is helpful for the retailers of apparels. If they want to encourage impulse buying then they need to focus on making store environment which is clean, relaxing place to shop and focus on design. They should also create some activities which encourage shopping with some friends. For example they might create best family or best friend award activities. They should develop promotional message that encourage shopping with someone. They could develop special schemes like discounts for group shoppers.

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## **Limitations of the study and future recommendations:**

In store environment additional variables could be studied. In recent researches merchandise cues also included in environmental cues in single brand store (Floor 2006). Further research could be replicated to online context. This study only focuses on employees in social features further it could include appearance of employees and crowding (Chang, Eckman et al. 2011). The results might be different when applied in other stores and among males with other type of merchandise (Jung Chang, Yan et al. 2014). We need also to categorize shopping pal such as best friend, or working pal. Data collection is cross sectional it could be collected periodically. Data collection should be improved by with extensive sample size and in other cities.

## **Ethical consideration:**

The first thing needs to consider is **informed consent**. This means that participants fully understand what they are being asked by the researcher and they must be aware if there is negative result of this participation. This is done through information sheet provided with questionnaire and ensured **confidentiality and anonymity** (Polonsky and Waller 2014).

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