

# IMPACT OF VISUAL MERCHANDISING: A STUDY OF APPAREL RETAIL OUTLETS IN MALLS

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## ABSTRACT:

*In the competitive world for the Apparel industry, the purpose of visual merchandising is to attract, engage and motivate the customer towards making a purchase, where it creates an impact on the consumer buying behavior. In this study, visual merchandising elements are categorized into two sections, exterior and interior elements for analysis and conclusions. Exterior elements are exterior signs, marquees, entrance, window displays. Interior elements are mannequins, colors, lightings, cleanliness, music, interior signs, space & layouts, creative display, video display, focal points, and fragrance. . The study is aimed to find out impact of various dimensions of visual merchandising on impulse buying behavior of the customers visiting Malls.*

*From the collected data it was showed that there were clearly shows that the selected visual merchandising elements have a positive impact towards consumer buying behavior. 96% of the sample population accepted they believe those elements had influenced them to attract, engage or motivate them to experience the merchandise assortments. From the study, it was found that window display and mannequins are the highly influencing elements and also color combinations, lighting, use of music and creative display also has a great influence over consumer buying behavior.*

**KEYWORDS:** VISUAL MERCHANDISING, CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR, WINDOW DISPLAY, IN-STORE FORM/MANNEQUIN DISPLAY, FLOOR DISPLAY,

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Visual merchandising, or visual presentation, is used to communicate fashion, value and quality attributes of a store to its prospective customers. The purposes of visual merchandising are to educate the customer, to enhance the stores' image, and to encourage multiple sales by showing apparel together with accessories.



**Fig: No:1**

Since the ultimate goal of visual merchandising and of retailing is to get the customer to buy, visual merchandising must entice the consumer into the store, effectively present the fashions the store has to offer, and show the customer how to wear and access them within the context of fashion trends. With increased competition, stores are trying to create more exciting, aggressive visual presentations.



**Fig: No:2**

Visual features that create attention or pleasure in a store with the aim of enhancing the shopping experience of the customer” (Mathew, 2008). These displays are also known as feature areas. Fundamentally these displays or feature areas are used to beautify and decorate a store by adding further objects, props, fixtures, materials, posters, frills, and colours to a store in order to enhance the appeal of the products on offer. The elements of visual merchandising displays, among others, include: store design, signage and graphics, atmospherics, fixtures, and props. These elements are used in the process of visual merchandising display.



**Fig: No:3**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- To measure the effectiveness of store display.
- To understand the impacts of visual merchandising in malls.
- To understand the importance of window display.
- To know the apparel impulse buying behavior by (window display, form/mannequin, promotional signage, floor merchandise).
- To measure the Influence of Exterior design & Influence of Interior design.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

According to (Khaniwale, 2015), Consumer behaviour involves the study of individuals and the method they employ to choose, utilize, and set out products and services to fulfil their wants and the effect that these methods have on the consumer and the society as a whole. Consumer behaviour refers to all the thoughts, feelings and actions that an individual has or takes before or while buying any product, service or idea. Buyer behaviour is the concept which answers what, why, how, when, and where an individual makes a purchase.

Pegler (2010) pointed out that due to the size of super stores and department stores, they need to be “warmed up” by using the correct atmospherics and display methods. Visual merchandising displays are often used to launch new products or brand extensions to consumers as well as to beautify a store. This is a planned and orderly approach to display the stock that is available in the store. Visual merchandising displays is used to great effect in retail outlets to carry out different functions such as to assist sales, to aid the retail strategies, to converse with consumers and to assist in communicating the apparel retailers’ brand image (Levi & Weitz, 2009 and Bell & Turnus, 2008).

Alexandra Roach (2010) in his book ‘The Golden rules of Visual Merchandising’ defines “Visual Merchandising as promotion of goods through attractive and engaging product display design to encourage the sale of a product or service. VM doesn’t just refer to a special promotion display; it refers to the presentation of an entire store.” Display or visual merchandising is ‘showing’ merchandise and concepts at their very best, with the purpose of making sale.

According to Mathew (2008), visual merchandising is the creation of visual displays and the arrangement of merchandise assortments within a store to improve the layout and the presentation of the store

in order to increase store traffic and sales. The visual merchandising display process is often referred to as being the “silent salesperson” by providing the consumers with information by means of visual mediums as well as by suggestive selling (suggestions to add items to a consumers' original purchase) (Bhalla & Anuraag, 2010). These visual merchandising displays make use of inventive techniques in order to save the sales person’s as well as the shopper’s time by making shopping easier and quicker. The retail industry has changed considerably over the years and this has created (and continues to do so) a number of challenges to retailers in the form of visual merchandising displays. New formats decode into new ideas and originality.

Tyreman, David; Walton, Keith (1998) writes about theme-oriented displays and a conducive shopping environment. He states that Visual merchandising the art of dressing merchandise display areas with theme-oriented props--creates a mood for buying. Even though shoppers live in a self-service world, surveys show service is still of prime importance. People want their senses to be indulged-to feel good about what they are buying, where they are buying it and how they are going to feel about consuming it. It is a retailer's responsibility to deliver to the customer these "feelings" when they are shopping.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The research design is divided into two parts the first part is exploratory in nature and the second part is descriptive. In the exploratory study the visual merchandiser and marketing manager of the mall were interviewed to understand and find the dimensions of visual merchandising. The study was intended to focus on the impact of visual merchandising in terms of retail outlets displayed and customer response towards store displays in malls. The sample size of the research was 100customers in 10 stores. The survey was conducted in malls. The sampling technique was purposive sampling, customer who walks out of the store and from store managers and fashion stylists were surveyed with the help of structured questionnaire.

### DATA ANALYSIS:

#### CHI-SQUARE TEST: Education level and Purchasing behaviour

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NETURAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL
UG	11	10	9	5	4	39
PG	5	5	10	4	13	37
OTHERS	7	5	2	7	3	24
TOTAL	23	20	21	16	20	100

H<sub>0</sub>- There is no significant Association between : Education level and Purchasing behaviour

H<sub>1</sub>– There is a significant Association between : Education level and Purchasing behaviour

STATISTICAL	CALCULATED	DEGREES OF	TABLE	LEVEL OF	HYPOTHESIS
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TEST	VALUE	FREEDOM	VALUE	SIGNIFICANCE	
Pearson Chi-Square	10.87	4	9.49	5%	Rejected

**INFERENCE:** It is inferred from the above that the calculated value of chi square is greater than the table value. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected so there is a significant association between Education level and Purchasing behaviour .

### SUGGESTIONS:

- Windows display acts as a stimulus for the customers to enter the store. It has various benefits like displaying best merchandize, providing information about new arrivals and attracting price sensitive customers by displaying promotional merchandise therefore retailers should put up an attractive and informational display.
- Most of customers are willing to purchase products from retail stores in the evening hours and therefore, managers can pay special attention to make attractive environment in the store premises and make action to control the rush condition.
- Colors create a psychological impact on the minds of the customers and can capture attention. They reflect one's moods and thus, add meaning .Therefore color plays a vital role in creating a positive shopping experience. Hence, retailers should be careful at the time of selecting the color scheme.
- Majority of customers respond to the lighting more positively. They specially mentioned that lighting helps to select correct products, reduce the time wasted and feel relaxation during the shopping tours. Therefore, visual merchandisers can select appropriate lighting system that creates satisfaction of psychological needs of customers.
- Music is played in retail store not with the objective of providing entertainment but for influencing buying behavior. The type of the music played at the outlet depends upon the products being sold and target audience. Therefore the selection of the music to be played at the store and at what volume is some of the challenges that retailers generally face. The soft and classic music are highly recommended than other type of music.
- There should be proper relation between the season and the products displayed. The store environment should be warm, welcoming and friendly giving a customer a memorable shopping experience.

### CONCLUSION:

In this Competitive world Visual Merchandising plays a vital role in Garment Retail outlets. From this Analysis it is understood that the various features of the store like the lightening, display on the mannequins, staff behavior, and cleanliness were important to convert the window shoppers into the real buyers. This study investigated some external factors that influence impulse buying behavior as it is immediate with no pre-purchase decision. The results proved that there is a pivotal relationship between customers' impulse buying behavior and window display, floor merchandising and promotional signage. Even though, in-store form/mannequin display did not significantly lead to customers' impulse buying behavior, the results still suggested that this variable and consumers' impulse buying behavior are correlated.

In this study the researcher finds the suggestions to improve the techniques of window display in retail stores which influence the buying behavior of the consumer.

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