

A STUDY ON CONSUMER ATTITUDES TOWARD BRANDED APPAREL VISUAL MERCHANDISING

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Abstract

In the Postmodern Era, firms and retailers are willing to pay for commodities with no substantial points of differentiation, creating a climate in which competition is fierce across all sectors. Merchandising is a powerful tool that modern retailers utilise to distinguish themselves from the competition, raise their profile in the industry, and win over shoppers. The store's success or failure depends on the opinions of its customers. First impressions matter greatly in determining whether or not customers will spend more time and money in a store. Therefore, learning the fundamentals of visual merchandising is essential. Visual merchandising, in its simplest form, is the act of carefully placing a company's items or branding in close proximity to the cash register. The effectiveness of visual marketing as a product-selling strategy is generally accepted. The purpose of this study is to determine if and how customers are influenced to make impulse buys as a result of businesses' use of visual merchandising. This instruction was founded on primary data gathered from the people being questioned. The study will recruit 250 people from Gujarat who are the intended targeted audience.

Keywords: Retail, Visual Merchandise, Customer, Buying Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Visual merchandising (VM), which is often commonly referred to as "visual presentation," is an efficient means of presenting a positive image of a company and its products to customers who may be interested in making a purchase. Displaying things that go well together, such as apparel and accessories, in close proximity to one another encourages further sales, educates customers, and boosts the reputation of the shop or brand, all of which contribute to an increase in overall revenue. It does this by drawing attention to products or services at a critical stage in the purchasing process, which in turn encourages consumers to make purchases. Window displays, as well as those located inside and outside buildings, are included in its scope. A thorough strategy for visual merchandising will include the installation of storefronts with decorative glass, signs in a range of colours, creative window displays, an inviting ambiance with abundant lighting and luxurious carpets, and walls that have been brilliantly painted. Although it is most frequently associated with retail businesses, it is also utilised by a variety of other industries to promote the goods and services that they offer.

Retailers of all sorts, from supercenters to boutiques, have become aware of the fact that these kinds of establishments are frequently frequented gathering places for younger people. India is well on its way to becoming a consumer-driven nation as a result of its quickly growing middle class, which is expanding at a rapid rate. The concept of Mahatma Gandhi that the "Consumer is the King" needs to serve as our guide in this situation. Even the most devoted shopper can profit from the social components of window shopping, mall hopping, eating out, extravagant consumption, and travelling and shopping in groups. Examples of these activities include. Consumers in modern India have come to demand a standard of customer service, product quality, and retail environment that is on par with that of consumers in other industrialised countries. As a result of this change, working in virtual reality (VR) is rapidly becoming one of the most sought-after and lucrative job paths in India.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research conducted by Sanjita Bista (2018) has the objective of determining the relationships that exist

between store management, customers, and visual merchandising in traditional brick- and-mortar retail settings. This research takes a peek into the future to predict the challenges that businesses will have to face on a regular basis. The writers focused their emphasis primarily on the store manager's benefits, the display window, and the components of visual merchandising.

In her article titled "Visual Merchandising in the Digital World." published in 2018, researcher Saumya Sinha discusses the significance of employing visual merchandising strategies in conjunction with social media in order to attract customers who purchase online. Some of those stores' window displays fundamentally upended the accepted understanding regarding the proper way to present products for sale. The act of shopping is a very tactile experience, and one can have a better understanding of what is being sold by looking at, touching, and even smelling the various products. If you want to create eye-catching windows that represent the ambitions and dreams of today's consumers, the secret is to display more than just products that have the potential to sell.

Law et al. (2012) wanted to investigate the emotional response of in-store shoppers to various stimuli, and they did so by taking into account the consumers' aesthetic, symbolic, and cultural interpretations of visual merchandising aspects such as colour. In other words, they took into account the aesthetic, symbolic, and cultural meanings of colour.

Randhawa and Saluja (2017) study the effect of visual merchandising in the phenomena of customers making impulsive purchases. Their research focuses on the impulse buying behaviour of customers. In India, there is frequently a lack of appreciation for effective visual merchandising. However, over the course of the past five years, it has managed to pique the interest of young people and is assisting business owners in overcoming the challenge of attracting new clients. The inclination of consumers in Punjab to do their shopping in enclosed venues such as malls and complexes is quickly growing and becoming more common. The primary purpose of the study was to shed light on the intriguing conundrum that faces today's merchandiser in his or her pursuit to attract clients through the strategic application of visual merchandising signals.

According to Soomro et al. (2017), visual merchandising is a tool that can be used to boost the visibility of a store and draw attention to the products that are being sold by a particular brand. Brands with an emphasis on aesthetics like these work hard to enhance the shopping experiences of their customers over the course of their whole relationship with the company.

According to Khan and Kumar, some examples of visual marketing aspects are product display, store ambience, floor merchandising, promotional strategy, and a discount signage board (2016).

In their study, Zulaikha Fatima and her colleagues, 2017, shed light on a developing field that is associated with the retailing industry. Smartphones, which have fundamentally changed the way shopping is done as we know it, are a godsend to merchants because research suggests that technology should motivate businesses to innovate. The shopping experience that we have become accustomed to has been revolutionised by smartphones. Customers' expectations have evolved as a result of the proliferation of technology like as scan-and-go, mobile apps, and the Internet. As a result, businesses are better able to attract the types of customers they want to attract.

Dale (2017) provides readers with two retail math formulae as a manner by which the performance of visual merchandising may be measured. These formulas can be found in the reference section of the article. They are making a contribution to the Visual Merchandising Council as well as the industry of visual merchandising. Following additional testing, it was discovered that the lone remaining scale item loaded only one of the components. The participants were given a random assignment to one of eight circumstances, each of which had a different type of store, a different style of signage, and a different intensity of visual displays. According to the findings, there were no significant interactions found between the types of stores and the visual merchandising in terms of the responses received from customers.

Chang et al. (2014) investigated how customers' positive emotional responses to the atmospheres of apparel stores influenced their impulsive purchases. As a guide, they used a model called the Stimulus-Organism-Response. According to the findings of the study, consumers are more likely to have positive feelings and make impulsive purchases when they shop in businesses that are well-designed.

Both Upadhyay et al. (2017) and Tumbe & Krishnakumar (2018) get to the same conclusion, which is that reshaping changes the landscape of the commercial world. It is therefore essential for the success of modern merchants to provide customers with cutting-edge services such as home delivery and the production of an atmosphere reminiscent of a bazaar. They believed that the proliferation of new approaches contributed to the already dynamic and complex nature of the business sector as a whole. Consumers do longer base their

purchases on the fulfilment of their most fundamental requirements as they once did. Product presentation is becoming increasingly crucial as a direct result of the increased product diversity and increased customer sophistication. In an effort to capture the attention of customers, companies have increased their investment in the VM concept (Visual Merchandise). Customers care more about the characteristics of a product than they do about the price of that goods. Both the constantly altering attitudes of the clients and the deft presentation of the items for sale are necessary in order to keep the seller interested in their business.

According to Saif and Aimin (2016), having a comprehensive marketing strategy is essential to the success of any company in the long run. You need to be able to conceptualise and construct a strategy even with little resources if you want to reach the goals and objectives that you have set for yourself in marketing. The authors conducted a meta-analysis in order to investigate the connection that exists between two components of the content of a marketing plan: the decisions made and the actions done. It is vital to maintain an effort over an extended period of time in order to reposition a product and make it more appealing to a different demographic of consumers. Using a theoretical model that had been built in the past, the authors made a correlation between the efficiency of a standardised international marketing strategy and the financial performance of a firm. They investigated whether or not there was a connection between the success of the company and its efforts to adapt its marketing methods for the international market.

In her PhD dissertation from 2016, Logkizidou investigates the impact that visual marketing has on consumer cultural capital. She discovered that it has a bigger impact on consumers who have higher levels of cultural capital. The current body of research on luxury retailing looks on how important product presentation is to the process of establishing and sustaining a favourable brand image. In his thesis, he explains how the influence of visual marketing displays and the moderating effect of cultural capital both have an effect on consumers' intentions to make a purchase.

Visual merchandising is no longer something that can be ignored because research has shown that storefront displays and promotional materials have a significant impact on the purchasing decisions of customers (Kiran and Mridula, 2015; Saeed, 2015). As a result, visual merchandising is no longer something that can be ignored. The primary goals of Saeed's research were to gain an understanding of customer behaviour and determine the extent to which lighting, as a component of visual merchandising, plays a role in drawing a customer's attention to a particular section of the store where they can make a purchase and to a particular location within the store. A before-and-after experimental design was utilised in this research project in order to investigate the impact that lighting has on customers' tendency to make a purchase or pay a visit to a particular storage facility. It was found that light had a positive affect on attracting customers to enter the store, and researchers also observed an increase in foot traffic as a result of this.

Single-brand apparel shops (Kumar & Kim, 2014) have not conducted research on the relationship between the atmosphere of their stores and the responses of their clients, despite the significance of these businesses to the fashion industry. The goal of this study was to discover whether or not customers of a single-brand fashion retailer have similar cognitive and affective judgements about the business as opposed to the merchandise, and the results showed that they did have these judgments. In order to test the assumptions, the researchers employed a mall intercept survey in conjunction with a non-recursive structural equation model. The research came to the conclusion that the concept of a store functioning as a brand is applicable to the sale of a single brand product due to the fact that social, design, ambient, and retail signals all influenced internal evaluations.

In their comprehensive review of the relevant literature, Roxana and Ioan (2013) analysed the findings of empirical studies that investigated the thought processes, emotions, and behaviours of shoppers while they were out shopping. The scientists arrived at the conclusion that researchers didn't pay much attention to other environmental cues like background music, ambient fragrance, and other factors like these. They developed a complete theoretical framework as part of their research, which they used to investigate how background fragrance influences the judgments that purchasers make.

Mari and Poggesi (2013) did a detailed literature review of the topic, employing precise criteria; they looked at 188 papers and mapped out possible new directions for additional research. This was done to overcome the gap in knowledge that existed before to their work. Their discoveries contributed to the establishment of a relationship between the behaviours of customers and innovative understandings of various facets of the services that were supplied.

Murray et al. (2019) reviewed the existing literature on aesthetics in order to gain a better understanding of how consumers' responses to novelty, unity, and diversity explain their aesthetic enjoyment and avoidance. The authors investigated how customers responded to a recently renovated apparel store as well as a store prototype that had been used in the past. They found that buyers were more satisfied with their aesthetic

experience when they were exposed to novel and varied products, in comparison to shopping in traditional establishments.

Pillai and colleagues conducted a study in 2011 in which they collected data through the use of a survey and then randomly chose some of the respondents to interview. The most significant finding in the field of visual merchandising is that the shop must maintain an appealing display window; the layout of the company is the single most important aspect in effective visual merchandising. The store is required to maintain an aesthetically pleasing lighting scheme and display idea at all times. According to the findings of the research, it is critical to ensure that the aesthetic appeal of retail establishments is kept current with the times.

El-Gohary embarked on the task of doing a marketing literature evaluation of E-marketing in the year 2010. His writings served as a repository of previous studies' findings and methods for interpreting and developing an appropriate knowledge of e-emergence marketing's across a variety of topics and philosophies; all of these were incorporated into E-Marketing publications. His writings also served as a repository of previous studies' methods for developing an appropriate knowledge of e-emergence marketing's across a variety of topics and philosophies.

These studies all emphasised how important it is to design a plan for visual marketing that takes into account the aesthetic, symbolic, and cultural expectations of the audience you are trying to reach. The practise of visual merchandising can be handled from a variety of perspectives, each of which is adapted to the particulars of a specific product category. The majority of the study that has been conducted up to this point has focused on how particular aspects of visual merchandising influence customers. There was a significant amount of writing about a variety of other topics, but none of it related to mobile phones. There hasn't been a lot of research done in the field of visual merchandising for digital and mobile devices. The impact that effective visual merchandising can have on sales of electronic goods including computers, mobile phones, audio equipment, and other related items is the primary emphasis of this study. When it comes to the planning of their store layouts, businesses will find this data to be helpful.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To analyse the impact of the visual merchandising on impulse buying behaviour.
2. To examine the relationship between consumer demographics and perceptions of visual merchandising

SAMPLE SIZE

As part of this research study, a total of 250 customers from the state of Gujarat in India were questioned in order to evaluate their perspectives on a variety of factors related to visual merchandising.

SOURCES OF DATA

The collection of primary data was made possible by focusing on 250 persons who are now residing in the state of Gujarat.

The secondary data have been compiled using information obtained from a wide variety of sources, including websites, articles, and reports that have been published.

DATA ANALYSIS

ONE SAMPLE TEST

1. H₀ : Consumers do not believe that store interior affects their buying behaviour. H₁ : Consumers believe that store interior affects their buying behaviour.

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Fashion ability of Store Interior	-6.387	249	.000	-.468	-.61	-.32

INTERPRETATION

It is possible to deduce from the data presented in the table that the value of significance is 0.000, which is much lower than the average value of 0.05. As a result of this, the null hypothesis cannot be accepted, and it is possible to draw the conclusion that buyers believe the ambiance of a store has an impact on the products they choose to purchase.

2. H₀ : Consumers do not believe that discount and offer signage affects their buying behaviour.
H₁ : Consumers believe that discount and offer signage affects their buying behaviour.

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Discount and Offer Signage	-3.121	249	.002	-.260	-.42	-.10

INTERPRETATION

The table that came before this one reveals that the number that is considered significant is 0.002, which is significantly lower than the average value, which is 0.05. As a result of this, the null hypothesis cannot be accepted, and one conclusion that can be derived from the data is that customers believe that discount and offer signage influences their choice of products to purchase.

3. H₀ : Consumers do not believe that lighting in store affects their buying behaviour. H₁ : Consumers believe that lighting in store affects their buying behaviour.

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Lighting	-9.718	249	.000	-.624	-.75	-.50

INTERPRETATION

The data that was just presented shows that the significance value is 0.002, which is a very significant reduction from the conventional value of 0.05. As a result of this, the null hypothesis is not supported, and one conclusion that can be derived from the findings is that customers feel the lighting in a store has an effect on the products they choose to buy.

4. H₀ : Consumers do not believe that music inside store affects their buying behaviour. H₁ : Consumers believe that music inside store affects their buying behaviour.

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Music	.275	249	.784	.024	-.15	.20

INTERPRETATION

It is clear from the data presented in the table that the significance value is significantly higher than the average value of 0.05, which comes in at 0.784. The null hypothesis is accepted because this number is greater than 0.05; therefore, it is possible to draw the conclusion that customers do not feel that music played inside stores influences their propensity to make purchases.

5. H₀ : Consumers do not believe that adequate free space for movement inside store affects their buying behaviour.
H₁ : Consumers believe that adequate free space for movement inside store affects their buying behaviour.

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Adequate Free Space for Movement	-7.005	249	.000	-.524	-.67	-.38

INTERPRETATION

It can be concluded that the null hypothesis is not correct because the significance value of 0.002 is significantly less than the expected value of 0.05. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that customers believe that the availability of adequate open space for movement within stores has an impact on the way in which they make purchases.

CHI-SQUARE TESTING

H0 : There is no significant relation between demographic variables of the consumers and their perception towards visual merchandising.

H1 : There is significant relation between demographic variables of the consumers and their perception towards visual merchandising.

Variable- 1	Variable-2	Pearson Square	Chi-P Value	Decision	
Gender	Fashion Ability of Store Interior	10.307	0.573	There is no Significant Relation	
	Discount and Offer Signage	9.039	0.045		
	Lighting	7.592	0.800		
	Music	5.695	0.207		
	Adequate Free Space for Movement	3.816	0.414		
	Attractive Mannequins	3.548	0.452		
	Window Display	2.411	0.642		
	Age	Fashion Ability of Store Interior	1.354		0.833
		Discount and Offer Signage	0.927		0.450
Lighting		13.731	0.302		
	Music	15.000	0.226		
	Adequate				

	Free Space for Movement	6.679	0.862
	Attractive Mannequins	6.761	0.857
	Window Display	6.852	0.851
Marital Status	Fashion Ability of Store Interior	10.067	0.594
	Discount and Offer Signage	12.903	0.360
	Lighting	13.062	0.349
	Music	20.280	0.047
	Adequate Free Space for Movement	24.207	0.047
	Attractive Mannequins	16.224	0.351
	Window Display	11.282	0.489

According to the findings of the chi-square test that were shown earlier, there is no correlation between the consumers' demographic features and their perspectives on visual merchandising. These findings were derived from the data collected from a study that was conducted on customers.

CONCLUSION

You may think of visual merchandising as having a silent salesperson in the room who manages to convey their message just as effectively via the use of striking graphics. In order to appeal to the tastes of today's discerning consumer, stores must place a premium on how their products are displayed. The success of a store depends on the proprietors' ability to meet the needs of its clientele and provide them with an ambiance that compels them to make purchases. From this study's findings, we can draw the following conclusion: in-store visual merchandising plays a crucial role in influencing customers to make hasty purchases. Retailers must always work to meet the changing needs of their customers by bringing in new products that are currently in style. The store should make an effort to be as warm and inviting as possible in order to attract as many consumers as possible and keep them there for as long as feasible. When putting out a marketing presentation, the store should pay special attention to visual merchandising elements including display screening, store layout, graphics, signs, and other accessories.

The attractiveness of the store's mannequins and window displays, as well as the store's interior design, the visibility of sales and discounts, the quality of lighting, and the availability of clear pathways for customers to shop, all contribute to consumers' impressions of the store's fashion prowess.

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