



A STUDY TO SCRUTINIZE THE REPERCUSSIONS OF VISUAL MERCHANDISING ON SALES AND MARKETING IN A FASHION STORE

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ABSTRACT

Visual merchandising is an important attribute for the buying of the products as customers give much importance to the visual merchandising along with the store and its products. Shopping is a welcome break from hectic schedules. At this juncture it is important to study about visual merchandising, which deals with the display of the products and creating an ambience. A good display makes people walk into the store and also helps in making them feel like taking a look around. This study scrutinizes the repercussions of Visual Merchandising in a general store and focus on relationship between getting an idea and making a decision to buy rely on mannequin display.

KEYWORDS : Visual merchandising, holistic approach, aesthetic concerns, digital displays, signage and three-dimensional displays

INTRODUCTION

Shopping has transformed from necessity to an adventure. It is more of an experience and opportunity for celebration. The good old days have gone when a list is made and shopping is done at the nearby Kirana store. Now shopping is a welcome break from hectic schedules. At this juncture it is important to study about visual merchandising, which deals with the display of the products and creating an ambience. A good display makes people walk into the store and also helps in making them feel like taking a look around. A successful retailing business requires that a distinct and consistent image be created in the customers' mind. Visual merchandising can help create that positive customer image that leads to successful sales. It not only communicates the store's image, but also reinforces the stores advertising efforts and encourages impulse buying by the customer. Visual merchandising is a major factor often overlooked in the success or failure of a retail store. Visual merchandising is the art and science of displaying and presenting product on the sales floor and on the windows with the purpose to increase store traffic and sales volume. Along with the store design, it is a key component of store's unique identity and best form of advertising.

Visual Merchandising is an integral part of retail today. There is a growing recognition of need for Visual Merchandising. But even as it continues to grow, the understanding of Visual Merchandising impact and effectiveness is still in its infancy. While there is substantial amount of research on each of the components of visual merchandising, a holistic approach towards visual merchandising involving the consumer's perceptions has not attracted much of research effort. This has prompted to take up research investigation in this field. The purpose of the study is aimed at scrutinizing the repercussion of visual merchandising and sales.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To scrutinize the repercussions of Visual Merchandising in a general store
- To determine whether there is any relationship between getting an idea and making a decision to buy rely on mannequin display
- To understand the products and services

HYPOTHESIS

- H0- There is no relationship between visual merchandising and sales
 H1- There is relationship between visual merchandising and sales

Literature Review

Derry Law, Christina Wong, Joanne Yip (2014), "How does visual merchandising affect customer affective response? An intimate apparel experience", is to investigate the relationship between visual merchandising elements and consumer affective response by focusing on function-oriented product- intimate apparel. The result indicates that when products entail both utilitarian and aesthetic concerns, social and local values should also be addressed as they can affect consumer shopping mood, approach response and purchase decision.

C.Selvarj, Dr. M Swaminathan (2013) "Brunt of visual merchandise on retail store penchant". The likely importance of quality and value for money as choice criteria was reinforced by strength of their relationship with satisfaction, variables like window displays, various signage's, size differentiation, colour and brightness generally believed to be one of the most important in determining store patronization and re-patronization. He concludes that window displays, various signage, size differentiation, colour and brightness are important factors of visual merchandise.

Muhammed Ali Tirmizi, Kashif-Ul-Rehman, M.Iqbal Saif (2015), in their study on "An Empirical Study Of Customer Impulse Buying Behaviour In Local Markets" have clearly indicated that there exists a weak association between customer lifestyle, fashion involvement and post decision stage of customer purchasing behaviour with the impulse buying behaviour.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

It is the activity and profession of developing the floor plans and three-dimensional displays in order to maximize sales. Both goods and services can be displayed to highlight their features and benefits. The purpose of such visual merchandising is to attract, engage and motivate the customers towards making purchase.

Visual merchandising builds upon or augments the retail design of a store. It is one of the final stages in setting out a store in a way customers find attractive and appealing. Many elements can be used by visual merchandisers in creating displays including colour lighting, space, product information, sensory inputs (such as smell, touch, and sound) as well as technologies such as digital displays and interactive installations. As methods of visual merchandising can be used colour and style, symmetry and rhythm, face and side presentation, etc.

ELEMENTS OF VISUAL MERCHANDISING

1. Remember that colour is king

Colour is powerful and it can make and break your visual displays. A retailer could create a horrible display, but if the colours coordinate well, the display can still be a huge success. Consider using contrasting colours like black and white and monochromatic colours-both create intriguing, eye-catching displays. Too many times we lose sight of the power of colour and its ability to attract an eye. Remember: wherever the eyes go, the feet will follow. So use colour to catch the eyes of your customers

2. Create focal point

Where does the viewer's eye focus on your display? Do their eyes move toward a specific location on the display, or are they confused where to look? Create a hotspot-or focal point. Why? Because hotspots can increase sales by 229 percent

Examine your displays from customer's point of view: the top, the floor and both sides. Often the focal point is positioned too high for the customers to see. Always check your displays to ensure

customers can easily view the hotspots and merchandise.

3. Tell a story

What's in it for customers? Tell them. Use powerful sales-enabling signage to display the advantages of buying the product. Present three bullet points that tell customers why they needed the product or how their life will become easier because of the product. Remember, you are not writing an essay but rather a headline, powerful bullet points and possibly a price proposition. By telling a story, you help the customers better understand the product and enable the buying decision. A display may lack wording or an educational sign. That's perfectly fine; as long as there's still a story, the sign can speak for itself.

4. Expose customers to the maximum amount of merchandise

A well- designed, impactful display exposes to the customer to as much merchandise as possible while avoiding a sloppy mess. The more products customers see, the more they buy. Consider using a circular store layout, which many retailers use. It's powerful because it exposes customers to more merchandise those traditional aisles. Where your store *does* use aisles, place a display in dead center so customers are forced to stop and look at the products. Have as many displays as possible and present as much merchandise as possible. But keep displays clean and sharp and ensure aisles are spacious and barrier-free to prevent deterring customers from products.

5. Use empty space wisely

There's space in all retail stores that is the most underutilized. It's the section between the displayed merchandise and the ceiling. If this space in your store is empty, you need to start using it. You can use this space for many different things, like signage providing information about products or brands. You could display customer testimonials with the customer's name and picture. You could profile a designer or supplier.

FIVE SENSORY ELEMENTS OF VISUAL MERCHANDISING

• SIGHT

The first thing that motivates a consumer to walk into a store is how the store looks. A welcoming and friendly store always scores a plus over those which are not. Bright colours, well-placed merchandise and in-store advertisements, all go into working for creating that sight for a consumer. For example, in a furniture store, facts and helpful tips by interior designers can be put up next to merchandise to aid the consumers. They can see, read and take informed decisions.

• SOUND

Indulging the sense of sound through pleasing music (in accordance with the merchandise and brand concept) is a must. At an apparel store for young adults, fashion shows on screens and tips by stylists can be aired in the store to help shoppers select clothes for themselves. Interviews or quotes by famous authors can be played at bookstores to educate the customers on what books to pick up.

• SMELL

A pleasing smell always adds to the ambience of a store. A visual merchandiser while working in accordance to the retailer's details should always keep in mind the sense of smell of a shopper. Good odor is a sure-shot bonus to the store, it may not be remembered always, but its absence shall surely be remembered. Touch

This is a tricky sense to indulge in, but most vital. For today's quality conscious consumer it is more than a necessity to be able to feel the merchandise. Be it in trying on clothes in the trial room, or testing a perfume with a tester. The client should always be made to feel at home when it comes to the sense of touch. The worth this cannot be overemphasized.

• TASTE

Not all retail stores can hope at utilizing the sense of taste. But for those who can, like chocolate stores, candy stores, F&B outlets, snack and juice bars should aim at always treating the sense of taste

of their consumers. On the house samples for tasting, free dishes or drinks on certain amount of purchases or sweets and chocolates for kids at any other kind of store are a few ways the retailer can indulge in the sense of taste of the consumer.

VISUAL MERCHANDISING PLACEMENT PROCESS

Where the products are located and how retailers arrange it around the store can be placed based on shoppers buying behavior. For their easy access and reach, the ultimate visual merchandising is liable. A proper visual merchandising can affect on consumer decision to make a buy from prompt to multiple.

- Eye level and hand level arrangement
- Customer entrance
- Window displays
- Store layout
- Customer space
- Store interior
- Store decorations
- Props

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TOWARDS RETAIL INDUSTRY

Government of India has taken various initiatives to improve the retail industry in India. The Ministry of Urban Development has come out with a Smart National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) model to enable seamless travel by metros and other transport systems across the country, as well as retail purchases. IKEA, the world's largest furniture retailer, bought its first piece of land in India in Hyderabad, the joint capital of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, for building a retail store. IKEA's retail outlets have a standard design and each location entails an investment of around 500–600 crore (US\$ 75– 90 million).The Government of India has accepted the changes proposed by Rajya Sabha select committee to the bill introducing Goods and Services Tax (GST). Implementation of GST is expected to enable easier movement of goods across the country, thereby improving retail operations for pan-India retailers. The Government has approved a proposal to scrap the distinctions among different types of overseas investments by shifting to a single composite limit, which means portfolio investment up to 49 % will not require government approval nor will it have to comply with sectoral conditions as long as it does not result in a transfer of ownership and/or control of Indian entities to foreigners. As a result, foreign investments are expected to be increase, especially in the attractive retail sector.

Data analysis and interpretation

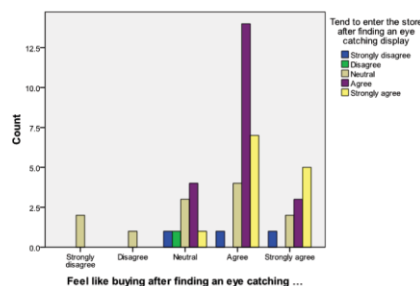
To test the relationship between visual merchandising and sales

H0 - There is no relationship between visual merchandising and sales.

H1 - There is relationship between visual merchandising and sales.

Chi-square tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.233 ^a	16	.037
Likelihood Ratio	17.555	16	.041
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.994	1	.046
N of Valid Cases	50		

Bar Chart



INTERPRETATION

Since the p value (.037) is less than 0.05 at 5% significance level. So reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. Therefore it can be concluded that there is relationship between visual merchandising and sales.

CORRELATION

To whether there is any relationship between frequent change in window display and the purchasing tendency of the buyer

X- Frequent change of window display helps in understanding about various collections

Y- Feel like buying after finding an eye catching display

Correlations			
		Frequent change of window display helps in understanding about various collections	Feel like buying after finding an eye catching display
Frequent change of window display helps in understanding about various collections	Pearson Correlation	1	.286 [*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.044
	N	50	50
Feel like buying after finding an eye catching display	Pearson Correlation	.286 [*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.044
	N	50	50
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Value of correlation= 0.286

INTERPRETATION

Since the value lies between 0 and 1, it is clear that there is a positive relationship between frequent change in window display and the purchasing tendency of the buyer. So it is clear that when the company often changes the display it increases the sales.

FINDINGS

- The visual merchandising done should focus on 5 major factors.
- Window Display
- Lighting
- Signage
- Advertisement
- Products placed near billing counter

Findings through chi-square

Through Chi-Square it is clear that there is relationship between visual merchandising and sales.

- People are attracted towards the store by the eye catching displays.
- People get into the store seeing the eye catching displays but the actual decision made to purchase a product is an individual's perspective.

Findings through correlation

Through correlation, it is clear that there is positive relationship between frequent change in window display and the purchasing tendency of the buyer.

- Many people are influenced by the mannequin display for getting an idea of what to purchase.
- When the company often changes the display, it helps in increasing the sales.

Findings through percentage analysis

- If more colours are offered to the customers then the possibility

of making a purchase is increased.

- The customers prefer the products which are placed according to the colours so that they can easily find it out.
- The lighting done in the store will also affect the buying behavior of the customer.
- Highlighting the products with different lighting could make the customers more attracted towards the product.
- The use of signage also influences a lot to highlight the selected products.
- Products should be placed near the billing counter as this also makes the customer to look into products while waiting in queue.
- Promotions greatly influence the customers to enter into the store and make a purchase. This will create awareness about the store and its products.

SUGGESTIONS

- Instead of spending the money in all the visual merchandising aspects concentrate on the five factors pointed out such as window display, lighting, signage, advertisement and products placed near the billing counter.
- The window display should be changed frequently to make the customers aware of the collections depending on the seasons and festivals.
- Make the mannequin display attractive and new trends such that customers will get new ideas seeing the mannequin display.
- The products should be placed according to the colours and more colours should be offered such that it is easy for customers to select the desired colour at ease.
- More products near the billing counters as this will influence many customers to add products while standing near the billing counters.
- Promotion should be given at a great deal of importance as this will make the customers to enter into the store. So awareness through promotion should be done regularly to increase the sales.

CONCLUSION

Visual merchandising is an important attribute for the buying of the products as customers gives much importance to the visual merchandising along with the store and its products. So care should be taken while implementing these things. We have found out five important aspects that should give importance while analyzing the impact of visual merchandising on sales. Careful analysis of each and every aspect in merchandising is done and the customers approach is also understood. We can understand that it is the combined effect of creating an ambience along with quality products which results in sales of the products.

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