



## Effect of Visual Merchandising of Apparels on Impulse Buying Behavior of women

### KEYWORDS

Visual Merchandising, Apparel industry, Impulse Buying

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**ABSTRACT** *The evolution of visual merchandising brought about a new process of shopping. It resulted in a shift from verbal engagement between retailers and customers to a sensory experience. With increasing competition, retailers today are using the merchandising tool to differentiate themselves from other competitors in a prominent way. Visual merchandising is an art of presentation, which puts the merchandiser in focus. It is everything the customer sees, both exterior and interior, that creates a positive image by generating attention, interest, desire and action on the part of the customer. It includes window displays, signs, interior displays and any other special sales promotions taking place. Visual merchandising is used in all the fields be it fashion, technology, accessories market and so on. It is today a lifeline of apparel industry because apparel industry has short product life cycles. This paper attempts to explore the effect of visual merchandising of Apparel outlets on impulse buying behavior of women.*

### 1. Introduction

In current world, ultra market competitiveness is a business aspect that gives most business owners sleepless nights and confronts every retailer with a question that what encourages a customer to enter a shop. The answer is simple and crystal clear – it is visual merchandising with a coordinated effort. Visual merchandising today forms a critical element of retailing, regardless of the kind of products and services the one offer. Besides the facade and windows, there is also in-store decor that is designed to enhance the customer's comfort and convenience and enhance their shopping experience. Merchandising encompasses planning involved in marketing the right merchandise or service at the right place, at the right time, in the right quantities, and at the right price and helps in converting a walk-by shopper into walk-in customer.

### 2. Visual merchandising

Visual merchandising is the presentation of a store and its merchandise to the customer through the teamwork of the store's advertising, display, special events, fashion coordination, and merchandising departments in order to sell the goods and services offered by the store (Mills et al., 1995, p.1). According to Wright et al. (2006), atmospheric stimuli please the actual and emotional needs of consumers and enhance the degree of consumer participation in a store, leading to favourable purchasing behaviours. Pegler (1998), visual merchandising involves a number of technical and artistic components: colour, texture, lighting, mannequins, fixture, graphics, signage and so on. Kotler (1973) indicated that one of the most significant features of the total product is the place from where it is bought. In some cases, the place, more specifically the atmosphere of the place, is more influential than the product itself in the purchase decision. Bhalla and Anurag (2009) defined visual merchandising as the presentation of any merchandise at its best (1) colour coordinated (synchronized colors); (2) accessorized (related products/ props); and (3) self-explanatory (descriptive/illustrative). It is one of the final stages in the process of setting up of a retail store which customers would then find attractive and appealing. Morrison (2002) explains that one of the key challenges for the retailers is to constantly add value to their brand. He recommends new and innovative elements to existing retail marketing mix. Chandon, P et. al (2009) examined the interplay between in-store and out-of-store factors on consumer attention to and evaluation of brands displayed on supermarket shelves.

The global fashion apparel industry is one of the most impor-

tant sectors of the economy in terms of investment, revenue, and trade and employment generation all over the world. Apparel industry has short product life cycles, tremendous product variety, volatile and unpredictable demand, long and inflexible supply processes. The apparel retail industry has a significant impact on the overall industry. The demands of consumers, and the options presented to them within the apparel industry, are countless. Through the years, retailing has evolved and competition has become cut-throat. It is imperative for apparel outlets to find innovative ways to lure customers in order to remain competitive.

### 3. Impulse Buying

The brands are today struggling to get maximum attention of shoppers and marketers are using various innovations to induce shoppers to make more and more unplanned purchases because the power of impulse buying is immense. Impulse buying is generally described as unplanned shopping. This phenomenon has been progressively increasing and the maximum credit goes to visual merchandising. Impulse buying may be defined as a purchase decision made in-store with no explicit recognition of a need for such a purchase, prior to entry into the store (Kollat & Willett, 1967; Kollat, 1966; Bellenger et al, 1978). Rook (1987) identified impulse buying behaviour with descriptors such as a spontaneous, intense, exciting, urge to buy with the purchaser often ignoring the consequences. Impulse buying tendency has been conceptualized as a personal trait that influences consistent responses to environmental stimuli. (Dholakia, 2000; Murray, 1938)

### 4. Rationale for study

With increasing competition, marketers strive to ensure that their stores are appealing to their target markets because it is very difficult to create a differential advantage on the basis of brand itself. First impressions are often important indicators for apparel outlet footfalls. It plays an important role in a consumer's decision that is to enter or not to enter in a store. This study provides insights as to why visual merchandising should be considered an important component of any marketing plan and how visual merchandising enhances the time span at an outlet and induces impulse buying behaviours of women.

### 5. Research Framework

A framework was developed to guide the research & it suggests specific relationships among visual merchandising and impulse buying behaviour of women. The primary objective of the study is to capture the effect of visual merchandis-

ing of apparels on impulse buying behaviour of women and explore the relationship between visual merchandising and time spent at outlet. The primary data was collected through questionnaire. The sample size was 100 women who were above 18 years of age of Western Ahmedabad. Convenience sampling was used among women who had just finished shopping at apparel outlets.

The subjects were classified according to their age, marital status, education, monthly family income, working status, time spent at apparel outlet, frequency of visit to apparel outlet. In order to analyse response, this study uses SPSS software as a statistical tool. The analysis was carried at 5% Level of Significance.

The majority of respondents consisted of women who were married and were in the age group of 26-33 years of age. Maximum percentage of sample consisted of working women who visited the apparel outlet fortnightly and that too in evening time.

**6. Analysis & Interpretation**

**6.1 Cronbach's alpha**

The reliability analysis was carried out on data containing 18 statements and Cronbach's alpha value is 0.699. So, data is reliable.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.699	18

Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
store signage and graphic	67.03	34.555	.418	.674
store interior design	66.78	34.254	.465	.669
entrance design	66.58	36.084	.296	.686
store exterior graphics & signage	66.84	36.520	.220	.693
store lighting and music	67.48	33.909	.351	.679
moving space	67.43	31.763	.466	.663
ambience	67.29	33.218	.368	.677
point of sale display	66.31	38.337	.054	.705
clear display table	66.91	34.426	.405	.674
attractive window display	66.40	37.717	.116	.701
location of display point	66.49	38.394	.023	.710
kind of merchandise on display	66.48	35.929	.302	.686
information signage	67.26	34.013	.369	.677
bold graphics	67.20	36.101	.210	.695
attractive mannequin	66.25	38.432	.036	.707
communication element	67.07	36.450	.172	.699
floor graphics and instore wall graphics	67.19	32.418	.523	.658
promotional offering	66.27	37.714	.113	.702

Independent Sample T- Test										
F		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
Total	Equal variances assumed	5.247	.024	2.099	98	.038	5.43972	2.59160	2.9678	10.5826
	Equal variances not assumed			4.599	10.136	.001	5.43972	1.18282	2.80900	8.07043

**6.2 Factor analysis**

It is used as method of transforming the original variables into new, non-correlated variables, called factors. It uses principle component factor analysis & varimax rotation to choose the main component factors. The principle of choosing factors followed Kaiser's standard to choose those factors whose Eigen values are greater than one, after the varimax rotation the absolute value of factor loadings must be greater than 0.5.

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.754
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	489.930
	df	153
	Sig.	.000

At the initial stage of analysis, exploratory factor analysis was conducted using principal component approach with varimax rotation. In this study, Barlett test of sphericity and KMO(0.754) indicate that data are appropriate for factor analysis. In the analysis, only factors having eigen value greater than one were considered significant.

Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>				
	Component			
	1	2	3	4
store signage and graphic	.676			
store interior design	.715			
entrance design				
store exterior graphics & signage				.663
store lighting and music	.709			
moving space	.772			
ambience	.517			
point of sale display		.565		
clear display table	.508			
attractive window display		.687		
location of display point		.522		
kind of merchandise on display		.759		
information signage				.588
bold graphics			.666	
attractive mannequin		.731		
communication element			.711	
floor graphics and in-store wall graphics			.637	
promotional offering		.592		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

The research was carried on visual merchandising factors that affect impulse buying behaviour and a set of results were obtained. Four factors were extracted from statements about visual merchandising that affect impulse buying behaviour of women.

Factor 1: Store Interior , Factor 2: Store Display , Factor 3: Store Communication , Factor 4: Store Signage

**6.3 Independent sample t-test**

*Null Hypothesis 1:* There is no significant difference in mean visual merchandising factors affecting impulse buying behaviour of women.

SPSS output shows that Significance level for Levene's test is below 0.05, so the variance for two groups are different. The null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there significant difference in mean visual merchandising factors affecting impulse buying behaviour of women

*Null Hypothesis 2:* There is no significant difference in mean visual merchandising factors affecting time spent at apparel outlet.

Independent Samples Test										
F		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
Total visual	Equal variances assumed	5.742	.018	2.279	98	.025	3.56205	1.56286	.46060	6.66350
	Equal variances not assumed			2.803	36.705	.008	3.56205	1.27077	.98654	6.13757

SPSS output shows that significance level for Levene's test is below 0.05, so the variance for two groups are different. The null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is significant difference in mean visual merchandising factors affecting time spent at apparel outlet.

### 7. Limitations

In ideal situation, larger the sample, greater the similarity to overall population but the study was limited to only western ahmedabad so there is some degree of locality to result. A larger, more diverse sample, which is desired, could not be obtained due to time limitations. This study relied exclusively on questionnaire to assess visual merchandising factors affecting impulse buying behaviour of women.

### 8. Managerial Implications

Impulse buying occurs when a consumer experiences a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately. At apparel outlets, retailers can provoke customers to buy using visual merchandising tactics. The way the merchandise is used is also an important criteria to influence buying behaviour and the time span at an outlet. The impulse buying experiences can contribute to establishing store loyalty and store image. The findings of this study also provide sufficient evidence that apparel outlet can effectively utilize visual merchandising to increase the time spent at an outlet resulting in impulse buying behaviours

### 9. Conclusion

In present times, consumers are not influenced anymore from routine selling styles but they are influenced by the show-cases. In changing global environment, visual merchandising has become most discussable topic. It is a silent salesperson that does not speak but definitely convey their sales message through visual appeal. From small players to big ones, all are actively involved in the activities of promoting by presentations in their outlet including eye catching windows, product display, attractive sales, clearance signs in combination with colour, lights, smell, sound.

Traditional appearance of fashion stores is changing rapidly and contemporary designs have been possible through technological innovations. The growth in competition and the changes of consumer habits obliges businesses to introduce new designs in order to attract more customers. . In order to fulfil the changing expectations of today's customers, apparel outlet have to understand the importance of shopper's expectations and provide the right environment to lure them. An effective visual merchandising can improve a store's brand image and increase sales. An apparel outlet should be designed in such a way that it results in inviting appearance that makes the customer especially women feel comfortable and eager to buy.

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