

IMPACT OF VISUAL MERCHANDISING ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN RETAIL STORES

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ABSTRACT

The Indian retail industry is witnessing the use Visual merchandising at a very fast rate in the stores. The same is now commonly used by both the Indian and multinational brands for the retail stores operated in India. The concept of Visual Merchandising is based on the fact that the Consumer Buying Behavior at the retail store is culmination of the shopping experience which includes various displays present. The present research is a study conducted to assess this impact of Visual Merchandising on the Consumer Buying Behavior in the Indian stores with special reference to the clothing and apparel industry.

Keywords: Visual Merchandising, Consumer Buying Behavior, Apparel Industry.

INTRODUCTION

Visual merchandising includes all the customer sees in reaching the store and after entering it. This includes the external appearance of the shop, the store sign, display windows, interiors décor, store layout, fixturing, lighting, and the way the merchandise is viewed and displayed inside the store. Digital merchandising often involves activities that cater to the senses of the consumer other than the visual ones, such as music or fragrance.

The activity was simply called display. However, visual merchandising, which is the impersonal visual depiction of goods and props, is much wider than show. Visual merchandising, or visual presentation, is used to convey to prospective customers the trend, value and quality characteristics of a store.

The objective of visual merchandising is to educate the consumer, improve the reputation of the shops, and facilitate multiple sales by displaying clothing together with accessories. As the ultimate objective of visual merchandising and retailing is to get the customer to buy, in the light of fashion trends, visual merchandising must entice the customer into the shop, effectively introduce the fashions that the store has to sell, and show the customer how to wear and access them.

Consumer behavior requires the study of individuals and the process they use to pick, use, and set up products and services to fulfill their needs and the effect on the consumer and society as a whole of these approaches. Consumer behavior refers to all

the thoughts, feelings and actions a person has or takes before or during the purchase of any product, service or concept. The action of the consumer is the principle that answers what, why, how, where, and where a person makes a purchase.

By exploring the visual merchandising strategies that cause impulsive purchases by consumers, a few foreign researchers have contributed to the field, but more needs to be determined.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology Adopted

- Visiting of the selected Clothing retail stores.
- Identification of the available visual merchandising elements/techniques.
- Carrying out of the structured interview with visual merchandiser.
- Getting general information from customer for clustering.
- Identification of the improvements need to be done to attract more customers.

Problem Identification

Clothing retail is a very volatile business. The clothing retail market has a high degree of competition and most clothing retailers are struggling to attract customers as well as to stand out from the rest and to be the best retail clothing chain in the world.

To attract buyers, clothing outlets use various types of visual merchandising elements, but implement less advanced elements, which are easily used in the world, in comparison. Some retail stores use these elements without appropriate processes and guidelines, thus failing to produce the desired results. This results in the lack of facilities with certain elements. In the other hand, the effect of the applied element is not perceived by consumers, so the degree of sales expectations is not realised.

Aim

The aim of this research is to study the effect of visual merchandising components on consumer buying behaviour, to identify the highly influential visual merchandising components and then to compare the outcomes with those of other retail stores, in order to decide on changes to attract more customers.

Objectives

- To explore the highly prominent elements of visual merchandising applied in branded retail clothing stores.
- To explore the visual merchandising elements used in Manyavar clothing retail stores in contrast with the elements used in other retail stores.
- To analyse the effect on customer buying behavior of visual merchandising.
- To identify the highly influential visual merchandising elements consumer's buying actions

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Visual Merchandising Elements

The visual merchandising elements available have been established and recorded.

- **Exterior signs**

The purpose of the signs is to gain knowledge of the client and announce the identity of the shop. Promotional, directional, position and information signs are present.

- **Marquee**

The name of a store is shown using a special form of sign. Materials used: leather, wood, metal or plastic.

- **Entrance**

It is important to attract visual appeal from customers. Different types are straight, arcade and angle store front designs.

- **Window display**

Enclosed, Semi- Enclose & Live model window displays · Mannequins Important by displaying how it looks when placed on, to improve the appeal of the clothing. Such forms which are commonly used are realistic, semi-realistic, abstract, semi-abstract, headless and three-quarter mannequins.

- **Mannequins**

Essential for enhancing how it looks when put on, to improve the appeal of the clothing. Such forms which are commonly used are realistic, semi-realistic, abstract, semi-abstract, headless and three-quarter mannequins.

- **Colours**

The first element that consumers respond to when choosing or rejecting a garment is colour. The three main types of colours are warm, cold and neutral. Color combinations change depending on the season.

- **Lighting**

Various lighting styles used at stores Interior signs Different interior signs Room & Layout Different sections in a store Use to draw attention to a part of the area or a specific item in the display or to coordinate parts of the total area. Soft lighting provides an intimate and welcoming space, while a modern feel is produced by bright lighting. With floodlights, the season, revolving, flashing, and spotlights are commonly used types.

- **Space & Layout**

It reflects how efficiently the distributor uses its space. The goals of store design are to direct the customer around the store and encourage purchasing growth, to create a balance between sales and shopping space, to create an efficient display of merchandising and to use multiple levels to provide context and variety.

- **Cleanliness**

The cleanliness of the store and items is the very important. Maintain shop floor and fit on rooms and racks and other fixtures in a cleanly manner.

- **Music**

Classical slow music played except at CIB. Background music makes customers tend to spend more time and make choices freely.

- **Fragrance**

For fragrance air fresheners are used.

FINDINGS AND RESULT

The effect of Visual Merchandising on the buying behavior of customers and the core elements of Visual Merchandising that contribute most to the buying of impulses have been discovered. The study found that visual merchandising activities definitely impact the customer buying behavior and also contribute to the Impulse buying. The findings indicate that the themes most closely correlated with the intention to buy were: colors of product, style of presentation, knowledge of fixtures, pathfinding, sensory qualities of materials and lighting.

Relationship between the buying behavior of consumers and in-store form/mannequin display, advertising signage and display of windows. The research also offered insights into ways of visual merchandising that can impact the purchase habits of consumers. Three most significant visual merchandising factors have been established, namely window display attractiveness, innovative assortments, and cleanliness and neatness of the store/store environment. The conclusion is that visual merchandising is directly linked to the success of sales. Customers get attracted, thus the the store's footfall, which eventually has a positive effect on the sales figures.

RECOMMENDATIONS & SUGGESTIONS

The highly influential or effective visual merchandising elements are window displays, mannequins, colour combination, use of music and creative displays. Compared with international branded stores, following recommendations can be made. Some creative window displays are arranged without using dummies. It is a quite different as customer attention is directly taken only to the clothing but the dummies.

A store window can group together items by use, price, size, type, or by color scheme.

Digital Screens are considered as one of the most effective methods used in internationally mostly in major cities for effective communication with potential customers.

It is evident that most customers can be inspired with the creative lighting arrangement.

In addition, following international standards and concepts along with appropriate mannequins and creative arrangements can be displayed in interior sites, which enable stores to introduce their new fashions and key items in a more effective way.

Instagram is the ultimate visual tool for brands, retailers and even new start up stores to get their brand message further, wider and more global, making their store a must-visit destination

CONCLUSION

It is clear that visual merchandising elements play a vital role in the retail business and it has a great impact on consumers' buying behaviour. The highly effective visual merchandising elements are window display, mannequins, colour combination, use of music and creative displays.

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