

Impact of Visual Merchandising of Retail Store on Consumer Decision Making

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ABSTRACT

The major objective and purpose of this study was to determine and evaluate how visual merchandising can influence consumer attention. Visual Merchandising is a technique to visually make the brand attractive and highlights the unique features of the store. Brands work with specialized marketers who focus on visually enhancing the brand and provide them with a unique shopping experience in the stores. The study focuses on four important factors of visual merchandising and the hypotheses are based on these i.e. store layout, window display, colour & lighting and store interior, music, fragrance, temperature and how it influences the attention of consumers. Non probability sampling technique was used to conduct this research and a structured questionnaire was designed to collect responses. 282 individual responses were collected with their contact details to have authentic individual feedback. Since store layout had a negative but significant impact on gaining consumer attention, the hypothesis for store layout was rejected. The rest of the hypotheses for window display, colour and lighting, store interior and temperature have been accepted that they have a positive and significant impact on consumer attention. The study concludes that marketers should focus on visual merchandising strategies for attracting customers and increase the footfall of store which may also lead to gain an edge over competitors, which leads to sustainable competitive advantage.

Keywords: Visual Merchandising, Foot Fall, Store Lay out, Sustainable competitive Advantage

INTRODUCTION

Visual attraction and communication have been considered vital components of retailing suggested by researchers and practitioners both (McGoldrick, 1990, 2002). Therefore, Visual merchandising is an activity that is given interest in Retailing. In order to remain in the market and achieve a competitive edge over the competitors' retailers are incorporating various differentiating strategies and techniques in their operations (Kerfoot, Davies, & Ward, 2003). Visual merchandising is one of those benefiting strategies that is considered as one of the determinants of success for a retail store. In visual merchandising the management ensures that both the exterior and interior of their store is appealing enough to attract the customers. Both the exterior and interior seems to have a major impact on consumers buying behaviour and is observed to stimulate interest and desire to purchase among them. This technique also helps in the selling of the right kind of the product to the right kind of customer by

developing attraction and displaying products accordingly (Wanninayake&Randiwela, 2007).

Pegler (2011) stated in their paper that visual merchandising influences the psychological behaviour of consumers by visually communicating the product to customers. One of the crucial factors in this regard is that the product and the message that merchandiser is trying to communicate through visual merchandising is properly reaching out the customers or not. It's considered as one of the silent sales people in marketing and in case of any flaw or miss communication the purchase behaviour of consumers might get negatively influenced. Some of the primary factors that contribute in this regard are the selection of right colour, lighting effects, shelving of the product etc that as a whole enhance the impact of visual merchandising. These attributes that are important component of visual merchandising increases the sales in the retail industry by attracting the consumers towards the products displayed. The primary job of this technique is to highlight all the differentiating elements of all the products in such a way that it not only attracts the customer but also communicate all the attributes of all the products effectively (Pegler, 2011).

The primary reason behind conducting this research is to analyse the influence that visual merchandising and its element on consumer attention. Brand name, window display, colour and outlook of the store are some of the elements of visual merchandising whose role in gaining consumer's attention would be specifically discussed in this research (Wanninayake&Randiwela, 2007).

Objectives and Significance of the Study:

Visual merchandising is a major way of communicating with the customers. It has become a very essential tool in today's era where marketers find new and innovative ways to grab the attention of customers. The key elements of visual merchandising which contributes in attracting customers are window display, store layout, colour& lighting and store design. This research paper will contribute in visual merchandising literature especially in the Indian retail context by analysing and finding the influence of visual merchandising on gaining consumer attention in local context of India.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Visual Merchandising:

The quality of store atmospheric elements of retail environment is considered to be part of visual merchandising (Kotler, 1974). Donovan and Rossiter (1982) extended the concept of store atmosphere by categorization of physical in-store variables such as store layout, architectural design, wall colour and social factors such as how interaction takes place and behaviour of people.

In general, Visual Merchandising has two major areas the store exterior and interior and other variety of factors like colour combination, lighting scheme, product placement, store layout and design, mannequin placement and props selection, furniture and fixtures). All these factors play an important role in creating a favourable shopping atmosphere (Law, Wong & Yip, 2012). For instance, Baker et al. (1992) found how lighting and background music alter a consumer's perceptions and reactions to a store design. Similarly, Babin et al. (2003) found that the combination of colours and lighting has important role in influencing the consumer purchase intention. Intangible store elements, such as scents or fragrance, can also stimulate one's emotional state and mental imagination (Fiore et al., 2000).

Matilla and Witz (2008) stated visual merchandising as a marketing technique in which the retailers enhance both the exterior and interior of their store in order to attract their target customers. It helps the retailers constructing a strong and positive image for their store as well as helps in generating the required amount of attention and desire among the consumer. They also explained that both the exterior

and interior of the store must be in coordination with each in order to create a lasting impact and must be designed keeping in mind the target market of the store specifically. He further stated that this technique of visually making the brand attractive has proved to be extremely beneficial in connecting the target market with the brand by visually highlighting the distinctive and unique features of the store over the competitors. Chandon, Hutchinson, Bradlow and Young (2009) highlighted that visual merchandising is one those in store marketing tools that actually triggers unplanned buying among the consumers. In this technique the marketers visually enhance their outlet by creating an aesthetic atmosphere, appropriate shelf arrangement, attractive window display, cleanliness etc.

In visual merchandising marketers' targets and influence all the five sense of human being that is sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste by determining overall atmosphere of the store accordingly. This visually pleasant atmosphere of the store not only gathers the customer's attention but also helps in achieving high level of sales for the store. However, it is not a single day process and the store management or marketer is required to continue upgrading their store's outlook as per the demands of their consumers and requirement of their products. The atmosphere must be such that it acts as the driving force behind the return of the customer towards the store. For this purpose, it is necessary that management design both the interior and exterior of the store as per their target market. Evaluation of consumer's perspective must be done on continuous basis in order to incorporate all the changes that the target market wishes visualize for their favourite store (Stanley, 2010).

Visual merchandising is basically a way of gaining consumers attraction by visually making the brand attractive for target customers. Retailers use this as a tool to grab consumers' attention by presenting the merchandise in such a manner that it will boost sales. Marketers use this technique to highlight the products & services for walk-in customers because it also plays a major role in impulse buying behaviour.

Park et al, (2014), discussed that the proper use of visual merchandising makes the retail brand differentiate to competing brands, establishes brand preference among consumers. Pillai et al, (2011) found in their research that consumers do get influenced by attractive window displays, properly designed store layout, and overall appealing visual merchandising and companies can convert the potential visitors into actual buyers.

Colour & Lighting as stimulus in store Visual Merchandising:

Unexpectedly very few research can be found on how a store's principal colour choice affects consumer reactions (Crowley, 1993). Baker et al. (1992) research in which they described how lighting and background music alter a consumer's perceptions and reactions to a store design. This research examines how colour and lightening as variable combine, influence consumer attention.

Colours do have an effect on human resource performance and cognitive interpretation that lead to create desired consumer reactions (Jacobs and Suess, 1975; Babin et al., 2003). Crowley (1993) reviewed the literature and concluded that colour has an influence on both consumers' evaluation (affective tone) and activation (arousal tone).

Research in field of Retail has found these results consistent. Experimental research proposes that cool-coloured in store settings are favored more over warm-coloured store settings (Bellizi et al., 1983; Crowley, 1993). Furthermore, in one of the experimental research projects where hypothetical television purchase suggested there can be decrease in likelihood of postponing the purchase decision in case of blue background as compared to a red background (Bellizi and Hite, 1992). Hence, it is believed that

violet/blue interior walls will generate higher level of positive affective tone and increased purchase intentions than compared to darker tone like red/orange.

Lighting along with colour has been tested in various experiments, in one of the research projects it was revealed that as a classical music and soft lights combination signals consumers to expect pay higher prices (Baker et al., 1994), lights also moderate colour's effect. In an independent lighting research, it's suggested that bright fluorescent (soft) lights and warm (cool) colours are more used by discount stores (Baker et al., 1992; Bellizi and Hite, 1992; Schlosser, 1998).

Colour& Lighting and Consumer Attention:

Consumer attention is a phenomenon which means bringing something to the notice of consumers. It is a reaction of consumers in return of the awareness a marketer provides in promoting his product or service.

The influence that colours and lighting of the store has on the consumer has been a topic of investigation among the researchers since the past few years. According to research conducted by Olson (2005) it has been observed that both these components of visual merchandising greatly affect consumers' psychological behaviour. It has been evaluated that the impact of cool colours such as blue and green are more attention gaining than the warm colours. It was further highlighted through the research that stores with red or yellow paints are considered negative and unappealing to consumers in contrast to the blue or green wall paints. However, Solomon, Gary and Askegaard (2006) contradicted in this regard by stating that the preference of colour for a store must be done keeping in mind the demand and the ongoing trend as it hugely attracts the customers.

Moreover, Asfars (2010) firmly believes and has stated the significance of having appropriate lighting in the store numerous times in his research. Through the past researches it has been observed that those stores that contain brighter lights are more attention gaining compared with the stores containing low lights. It is because of the simple fact that consumers can easily determine their desire product in bright light in comparison with the lower light. Even the minute details about the product such as the ingredient incorporated in its making and all the labels are important to consumers and can only be observe if proper lighting is provided to the customers.

Asfars (2010) stated that lighting is necessary to grab the attention of the consumers and encourage them towards initiating the purchase. He further stated that it is the responsibility of the store management to ensure that the lighting of the store is such that it manages to create a pleasant and calming atmosphere for the customers as vision is one of those senses that facilitate the purchase process and hence, holds extreme significance in the visual merchandising technique.

Colour and lighting are one of the important factors of visual merchandising retail setting. In light of all the previous research findings, colour and lighting as variable has been adopted to check how it effects consumer attention, hence following hypothesis has been created:

Colour& lighting of the retail store have significant positive impact on consumer attention.

Store Layout as stimulus in a store Visual Merchandising:

The layout or outlook of the store holds a significant importance in a success of the outlet. It is the responsibility of management to make sure that store layout is done in such a way that finding the desire product is not difficult for customers. The entire outlook and ambiance of the store interior is said to be store layout in retail merchandising. Products placement and spacing of floor is an integral part in store layout and design. In an empirical study Garrus et al., (2015) stated that a good store layout increases the probability of consumers to stay longer in the store and enjoy traffic free shopping experience. Asfars

(2010) highlighted that those products that are placed at a convenient position tend to generate more sales for the store than the products situation at a distant unfavourable position.

All the large stores make sure that the layout of their store is such that it helps in generating large in-store traffic but minimize the need of unnecessary motion for customers. The different types of store layout that is free flow, grid, race track and spine layout. These entire store layouts help different type of business respectively. The free flow layout facilitates impulse buying and is usually observed in stores like Nike while grid layout is mostly practiced at grocery stores, retail outlets etc as it has counters and shelves. One of the biggest advantages of this type of layout is that it's easily accessible for customers. The next in line that is race track layout facilitate a loop area where the exit and entrance is at the same end while lastly the spine layout has aisle starting from the front till the very end of the store and is usually adopted by retailers opening on a huge scale (Carpenter & Moore, 2006).

According to Grewel, Baker, Levy and Voss (2003) the selection of store layout must be done keeping in mind the requirement of the target market and products available while it should be able to stimulate impulse buying among the customers instantly. It should be that influential that customer unintentionally spends more money than they intend to. The layout must be such that it a customer entering the store conveniently finds all the goods required to him (Ebster&Garaus, 2011).

Store Layout of the retail store has significant positive impact on consumer attention.

Window Display as stimulus in store Visual Merchandising:

The art of displaying the products in a manner that increases consumer attention. Marketers are using this as a technique to increase footfall in store by exhibiting the products creatively. Good window display also leads to unplanned buying. Marketers also use this as a strategy to convey promotional messages to their consumers.

Razzouk, Seitz and Chaudhuri (2001) contributed through his research by stating that there are numerous retailers out there offering same kind of products to the consumers. However, the thing that differentiates one retailer from another is the way he exhibits his products that draws the attention of the customers. Window display is one of those attractive measures highlighted by Mopidevi and Lolla (2013). It is now being considered as one of the most used and beneficial ways of drawing customer's attention. Retailers are working hard in order to make their displays attractive and dynamic than their competitors as they have realized that it's one of those things that leave a positive impression on their customers. They further explained in their research that the image of the store is built by its window display and whether the customer prefers to walk into the store or not highly depends on the display that is being put forward to him. Moreover, the display could easily portray anything that a retailer wishes his customers to observe such as any promotional or seasonal discount, new arrivals, sales etc (Mopidevi& Lolla, 2013).

It is because of the increasing level of competition all around the world that competition in this industry is also raising alarmingly. In such situation providing customers with unique and distinctive window displays is the only mean through which retailers can keep up the attention of consumers (Mehta &Chugan, 2013). Surprisingly, it has been observed that window displays can play a lot major role than traditional advertising methods. Furthermore, retailers can target the right kind of customers through this way by displaying according to the perception of their target market. Furthermore, this also helps the customers as they can decide which store to enter making the decision process is easier for them and saving their time. Kim (2013) contradicted regarding window display increasing sales by stating that no prior research has proved effectiveness of window display in increasing sales but it has been observed to

stimulate impulse buying behaviour among consumers. However, it is significant that the display should be appealing enough to trigger this stimulation rather than just a decorative art piece.

The art of displaying the product in such an aesthetic manner that it stimulates the desire of purchase among consumers is known as visual merchandising. This technique helps in generating larger store traffic increasing the sales of the products eventually. Customers are highly imaginative and develop a certain image of a store in their minds. It is the primary responsibility of the management to ensure that both the exterior and interior of their store is designed keeping in mind the image that their target market has developed in their minds. The outlook of the store should be design in such a way that it is not only appealing but is highly convenient for the customers as well. In order to successfully implement this technique marketer must conduct a thorough research and indulge into a proper planning considering all the details that is required in order to establish a visually pleasing store for their target market. The outlook of the store should portray the true essence of the brand and must highlight those attributes that make the store distinctive from their competitors (Stanley, 2010).

Bashar and Irshad, (2012) in their study revealed that window display and floor merchandising have positive correlation with impulse buying behaviour and overall Visual merchandising has a significant impact on the consumer buying behaviour. In light of above literature, following research hypothesis has been created:

Window Display of the retail store has positive and significantly impact on consumer attention.

Store Interior Design as stimulus in store Visual Merchandising:

The interior design of the store plays a vital role in shopping experience. Proper signage, fixtures, seating arrangements are few fundamental elements of store interior and décor.

The interior décor is one of the key elements of visual merchandising. According to a study conducted by Hoch and Purk (2000) the interior of the store or the shelving of the product must be done in such a way that it contributes towards increasing the in-store traffic for the outlet. This can be easily achieved by situating the shelves at the right height where they are easily visible as well as accessible to the customers. Those products that are high in demand must be placed at the lower end while the low demand product must be place at a high altitude where they are easier to grab the attention of consumers. However, Davis and Tilley (2004) highlighted that shelving in a store is a challenging job and is often considered as one of the basic elements behind the success or failure of a store.

As mentioned by Carpenter and Moore (2006), one of the biggest factors that drive the customer either towards or away from the store is the cleanliness and hygiene of store. If the management is concerned about their outlet's hygiene, they are more likely to draw large number of customers towards their store while unclean stores stimulate opposite reaction among them. Moreover, it also helps in constructing a positive image of the store in the mind of the consumers.

According to Yun and Good (2007) along with the colour scheme and theme there are various other things that helps the management in the interiors of the store such as seating arrangements, various props, fixtures and signage. The signs placed at different spots are considered extremely significant as it helps the consumers with the direction as well as the management in promoting the brand.

Interior design of the retail store has significant positive impact on consumer attention.

RESEARCH METHOD

Method of Data Collection:

For this study quantitative data was collected through a survey based on questionnaire which was self-

developed to suite the nature and objective of the study.

Sample Size & Sampling Technique:

282 respondents were selected as sample size for this research. The questionnaire included close ended questions and instrument was distributed randomly. The ethical use of respondents' data and information was also ensured. The sampling technique used for the research was non probability and the respondents were chosen on the basis of convenience. The respondents were general consumers at different retail markets.

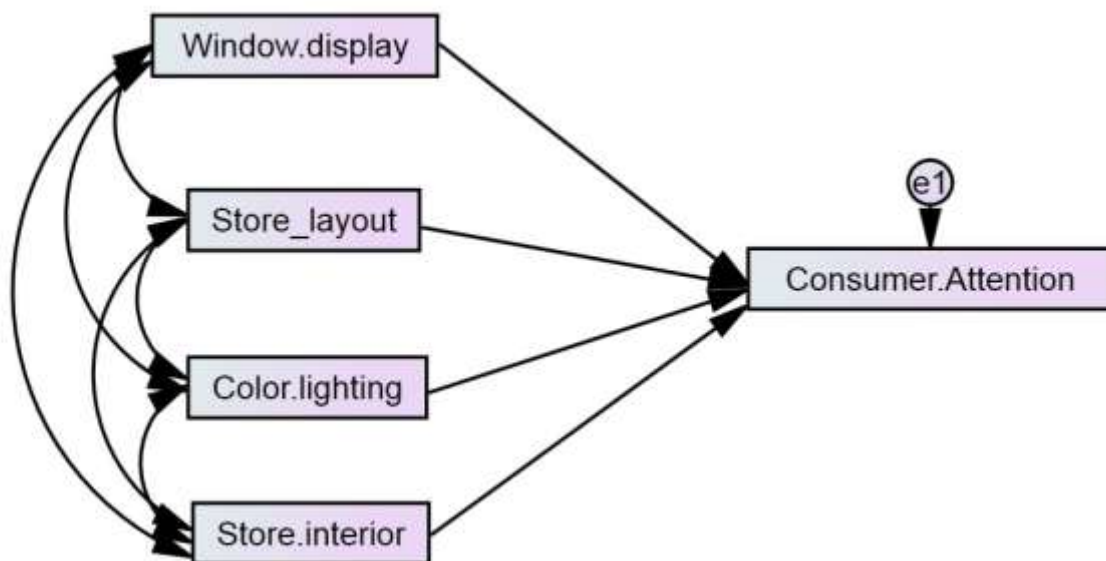
Instrument of Data Collection:

In order to gather data for this research the instrument of questionnaire was used. The questionnaire has been developed using Likert scale of 1 to 5 starting from strongly disagree (1) to strongly Agree (5). The target population for this survey was general consumers.

Research Model developed

The idea behind the research was to study and analyse how visual merchandising variables such as store layout, window display, colour& lighting and store interior design affect in gaining consumer attention. Figure 1 represents the model developed to conduct the study.

Figure 1: Research Model



Reliability and Measurement of Variables

Table 1: Constructs and Items Reliability

No	statements	p-value	Correlation Coefficient	Cronbach's Coefficient alpha
Store Layout				0.856
	A good store layout makes it easy for consumers to find desired products.	0.000	0.824	
	ie aisle (passage way) should be designed in a way that avoids in-store traffic jams.	0.000	0.898	

consumers often intend to buy unplanned products if the store has proper product shelving.

Window Display 0.841

- | | | |
|--|-------|-------|
| 1. Window displays explain the image of the store. | 0.000 | 0.828 |
| 2. Good window display influence consumers to visit the store. | 0.000 | 0.894 |
| 3. Window display is a good source for retailers to advertise promotional campaigns (seasonal discounts, new arrival, sales, etc.) | 0.000 | 0.791 |
| 4. | 0.000 | 0.854 |

Window display leads to impulsive (unplanned) buying.

Color & Lighting 0.837

- | | | |
|---|-------|-------|
| Brightly lit stores are more attractive than dimly lit stores. | 0.000 | 0.894 |
| Stores with cool colours such as green and blue are more attractive than stores with warm colours such as red and yellow. | 0.000 | 0.792 |
| Proper lighting of the store helps consumers to easily observe the labels and details of the desired product. | 0.000 | 0.781 |
| Good lightning impacts the atmosphere of the store. | 0.000 | 0.841 |
| Good Lightning encourages consumers to visit the store. | 0.000 | 0.878 |

Store Interior Design 0.891

- | | | |
|---|-------|-------|
| Colour and lighting of the store should be aligned with the furniture of the store in order to reflect a basic theme. | 0.000 | 0.854 |
| The interior design of the store should be aligned with the theme of colours that are used in the company logo. | 0.000 | 0.893 |
| Direction signs are necessary for customers to easily locate their desired product in the store. | 0.000 | 0.887 |
| The store should maintain proper cleanliness in order to gain consumer attention. | 0.000 | 0.874 |
| The store atmosphere makes customers comfortable to stay longer in the store? | 0.000 | 0.951 |

Consumer Attention 0.864

- | | | |
|--|-------|-------|
| The infrastructure of the store effects consumer attention. | 0.000 | 0.872 |
| Attractive visual merchandizing plays a major role in seeking consumer attention | 0.000 | 0.905 |
| 3. The design and interior of the store plays an important role in gaining consumers attention to visit and stay 4. longer in the store. | 0.000 | 0.794 |
| Effective colour and lighting of the store leads to consumer attention. | 0.000 | 0.887 |

Table 2 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.858	21

The reliability of the collected data of the study is given in Table 2. The reliability test was applied and the results show that the gathered data of the research is 85.8% reliable and data can be used for testing hypotheses.

Statistical Test applied on data

All the variables were analysed using SPSS 19 version and AMOS 18 version both were used. For the first two models Amos was used while for the third double mediated model Process macro of Hayes (2013) was used. Multiple Regression analysis was applied to evaluate the impact of variables of visual merchandising on consumer attention.

Analysis and Results

Findings and Interpretation of Results

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Consumer Attention	4.0875	.52229	280
Store layout	4.1821	.46776	280
Window display	4.0152	.52704	280
Color lighting	3.9257	.48687	280
Store interior	4.0457		

Table 3 represents Descriptive Statistics showing independent and dependent variables and their values. Based on the data, the mean value of consumer attention is 4.08, store layout is 4.18, window display is 4.01, color& lighting is 3.92 and store interior design is 4.04. While the overall mean of the data is 4.04. Any value less than 4 shows the rejection of hypothesis. According to the results, there is an impact of store layout, window display, color& lighting and store interior design on consumer attention. Further to check the direction of impact of variable on dependent variable multiple regression was carried out on AMOS. Results are presented below with interpretation.

Table 4 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Change Statistics				Sig. F
				Square the Change	Std. Estimate	Error of Change	of F	
1	.581 ^a	.337	.328	.42829	.337	34.973	4 275	.000

Predictors: (Constant), Store interior, Window display, Store layout, Colour lighting

The model summary of the analysis is provided in Table 4. The value of R square is 0.337 which means that 33.7% variation is explained by the model.

Table 5 Anuva

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	25.661	4	6.415	34.973	.000 ^a
Residual	50.445	275	.183		
Total	76.106	279			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Store interior, Window display, Store layout, Color lighting
Dependent Variable: Consumer Attention

Table 5 represents ANOVA which shows the significance of the model fit. Since the significant value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05, the model is said to be significant for further analysis to check the effect of each independent variable on Consumer Attention.

Table 6 Regression Coefficients

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Consumer Attention <--- Window display	.137	.061	2.247	.025
Consumer Attention <--- Store layout	-.210	.068	-3.082	.002
Consumer Attention <--- Color lighting	.249	.067	3.700	.000
<u>Consumer Attention <--- Store interior</u>	<u>.453</u>	<u>.060</u>	<u>7.567</u>	<u>.000</u>

Table 7: Intercepts of the model

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
<u>Consumer Attention</u>	<u>1.603</u>	<u>.272</u>	<u>5.892</u>	<u>.000</u>

Table 8: Total Effects of all four IV's on DV

Window display	Store layout	Store interior	Color lighting	
Consumer Attention	.137	-.210	.453	.249

Table 9: Direct Effects of IV's on DV

Window display	Store layout	Store interior	Colour lighting	Consumer Attention	.137	-.210
	.453	.249				

The table 6 of coefficients shows the significant values and beta value of all independent variables. The sig value of all the four-variable used in the model are less than 0.05 and are significant.

Furthermore, Color& lighting in table has 0.000 sig value and 0.249 beta value of which explains that it is significant and positively affect consumer attention. Hypothesis 1 that Color& lighting of the retail store have significant positive impact on consumer attention has been accepted

Likewise store layout has sig value of 0.002 which is significant but beta value of store layout is 0.21 which shows that it has a negative impact on consumer attention. It reveals that if the store layout has not been planned out and consumer is not able to figure out how to roam inside the store, bad layout will have negative effect on consumer attention and experience.

The sig value of window display is 0.026 which is significant and beta value is 0.137 which shows that it has a positive impact on consumer attention. Hence hypothesis 3 that Window Display of the retail store has positive and significantly impact on consumer attention was accepted.

The sig value of store interior design is 0.000 which is significant and its beta value is 0.453 showing a positive impact on consumer attention. Therefore hypothesis 4 that Interior design of the retail store has significant positive impact on consumer attention was accepted.

Figure 2: Research Model tested

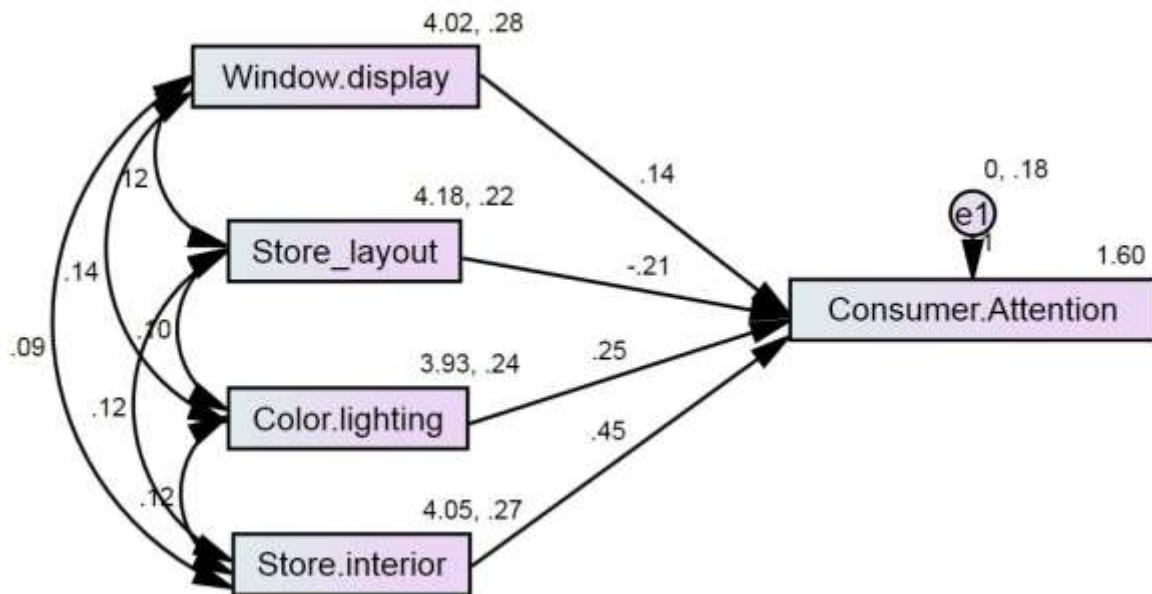


Table 10: Hypotheses Assessment Summary

Hypotheses	Beta Value	Sig Value	Empirical Conclusion
H1: Color& lighting of the retail store have significant positive impact on consumer attention.	0.249	0.000	H1 Accepted
H2: Store Layout of the retail store has significant positive impact on consumer attention	-0.210	0.002	H2 Rejected
H3: Window Display of the retail store has positive and significantly impact on consumer attention	0.137	0.026	H3 Accepted
H4: Interior design of the retail store has significant positive impact on consumer attention.	0.453	0.000	H4 Accepted

Discussions, Conclusion, Policy Implications and Future Research

Discussions & Conclusion:

The study was conducted for evaluating the impact of visual merchandising on consumer attention in retail store in Indian context. Analysing and examining the influence of visual merchandising variables i.e. window display, store layout, colour & lighting and store interior design of different retail outlets in attracting consumers was done by collecting responses of consumer in retail setting through questionnaire. Results were revalidating the findings of previous researches that Visual merchandising is a very important tool and has effect on impulse buying behaviour (Kim, 2013) and Bashar and Irshad (2012) revealed that window display and floor merchandising have positive correlation with impulse buying behaviour and overall Visual merchandising has a significant impact on the consumer buying behaviour and in increasing the footfall of the stores. This research was carried out with consumer attention as dependent variable to add new findings in visual merchandising literature.

People are usually attracted towards the stores that looks attractive and eye catching. This results in impulsive buying as well. The findings of this research that window display has positive significant effect on consumer attention supported the previous findings that providing customers with unique and distinctive window displays is the only mean through which retailers can keep up the attention of consumers (Mehta & Chunga, 2013). The colour and lighting help in making people to step in the store as the findings of this research were that colour and lighting has significant and positive effect on consumer attention similar to findings of Asfars (2010) in which it was stated that lighting is necessary to grab the attention of the consumers and encourage them towards initiating the purchase (Olson, 2005; Jacobs and Suess, 1975; Babin et al., 2003). Lastly layout of the store should be designed in an organized way with good interior as it makes the consumers stay longer in the store. The layout must be such that it a customer entering the store conveniently finds all the goods required to him (Ebster & Garaus, 2011). In an empirical study Garaus et al., (2015) stated that a good store layout increases the probability of consumers to stay longer in the store and enjoy traffic free shopping experience. Findings of this study also signify that if store layout is bad then it will have negative impact on consumer overall experience. Visual merchandising is one of the techniques which are used to attain competitive advantage as well. People are more likely to visit or shop from the store which can gain their attention. Marketers are using the visual merchandising strategy to bring more customers in the store to that of the competitors.

This study concludes that visual merchandising has an impact on consumer attention along with enhancing the consumer behaviour. To gain the attention of consumers' window display, colour & lighting and store interior design plays a very vital role. If we conclude the research, it is seen that H1, H3 and H4 were accepted while H2 was rejected. Getting consumers attention and consideration is something very important for the store managers to increase their buying. Store managers should use visual merchandising strategies to communicate with the customers and making them visit their stores. As it is said, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression". In order to make VM work, the retailer needs to utilize VM to develop a powerful store-image effectively. Image can be described as the overall look of a store and the series of mental pictures it evokes within the beholder. The right kind of Visual Merchandising boosts the sales graph rise upwards. This is achieved by creating an environment not only to attract a customer but also to retain his/her interest, create desire and finally augment the selling process. Generally, the store makes use of a publication generated by them called the VM guidelines. These guidelines discuss in detail how the store is set up ranging from what type of fixtures

to use in each area, use of store logo to distance of shelves from each other and many more. A plan-o-gram is nothing more than a picture of how various fixtures, shelves and walls will present your merchandise. It is a simple but a very powerful concept because it takes into consideration research on buying habits of consumers. Creating a plan-o-gram forces the retailer to carefully evaluate which products go where and how many will be displayed. Of course, it also includes building and designing a store space that understands the theme, functionality and commercial viability of the fashion retailer. An effective store design can in many cases bring about much more sales than a substantial expenditure on an advertisement campaign. From studies it is observed that Visual Merchandising has key role to play in shaping consumer psyche not only applied to Indian Context but also in Global arena. Hence we can say that Visual Merchandising is a global practice & retailers should practice it judiciously for better brand visibility and brand identity.

Findings:

Hence we can conclude that Visual Merchandising can be used as one of the prominent tools to increase sales, enhanced customer experience, brand identity, competitive advantage, customer behaviour insights, efficient space utilization & for emotional engagement of customers.

Policy Implications Future Research:

Retailers and other store managers should focus on implementing the elements of visual merchandising. This should be included in their marketing practice as this is a very unique and innovative way of communicating with customers in this increasing retail space in malls. Based on this research, the marketers should focus on window display of products, colour & lighting along with store interior design to gain and increase the attraction level of consumers and prospect customers. It ultimately has an impact on consumer buying behaviour and consumer attention as well.

This research was carried out with lot of limitation. Future study can be carried out on a broader perspective of visual merchandising to increase consumer attention and buying behaviour. Carpenter and Moore (2006) have used the cleanliness and hygiene of store as variable in visual merchandising, this variable can also be used in future. Furthermore, music and scents inside the store as mediating variables can be added in the model and tested to give new insights and broader research in visual merchandising. In this study simple aspect of lighting and colour were taken into consideration, in future researchers can include categories of colour and lighting like dark or bright colour and bright fluorescent (soft) lights as variables used by Baker et al., (1992) and Schlosser, (1998). Inclusion of all these variables in Visual merchandising model can reveal very interesting and useful findings for retail industry.

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