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Vijay Rathee
Assistant Professor
UILMS, Gurgaon, India

Chand Prakash
Assistant Professor
SGT University, Gurgaon,
India

Influence of Visual Merchandising on Customer Buying Decision- A Review of Literature Approach

Vijay Rathee, Chand Prakash

Abstract

Visual merchandising has been often neglected when it comes to determinants that affect the customer buying behavior in a retail store. Shopping has become a brand experience rather than merely a transaction. The moment of real purchase takes place at the point of purchase where the decision on how much to buy is made. The store's future depends on what the consumer sees and experiences at the store. Thus retail design and visual merchandising play a crucial role in creating this difference. This paper mainly focuses in knowing the customers insights on visual merchandise and its effect on customers buying decision while shopping.

Keywords: Visual Merchandising, Customer, Retail Store, Apparel

Introduction

As the retail business moves from the product to the space the store where all the things happen, the shopping ambience has become important now, with the retailer giving their stores a contemporary and consumer-friendly design, and consumers expecting to shop in a store with good ambience. Shopping has become a brand experience rather than merely a transaction. The moment of real purchase takes place at the point of purchase where the decision on how much to buy is made. The store's future depends on what the consumer sees and experiences at the store. Retail design and visual merchandising play a crucial role in creating this difference. Visual merchandising, also regarded as a „silent salesman“, is the science and art of suggestive selling by display and presentation. Visual merchandising focal points are placed strategically in the store and communicate the features and benefits of the merchandise. An effective window display will attract the passerby and convert them into browsers and spenders through the process of „conversion“. Retail companies are increasingly spending on both the environment and the fixtures and stylish fittings, emphatic lighting and digital signage, and are in for an international appeal.

Mall as a large retail contains of many stores, restaurants, and other business establishment placed in a series of connected and adjacent building or a single large building, has become an evidence of the fashion store growth, such as department store that provide fashion products from many brands and many merchandise variety, boutiques, and retail fashion store from local and foreign country. Each of the fashion stores competes to each store in order to make the customer enter the store and make a purchase. Talking about fashion retailers, nowadays it has been developed into higher existence. There are many competitions in the market. New players emerge in the market to satisfy customer demand by placing themselves in attractive shopping malls. The fashion retailers could not depend on products, price, promotion, and place to win the competition among the competitors. Visual merchandising as the total store environment including window and merchandise display, layout, coordination, merchandise assortment, signage, and lighting are managed by the retailers to attract consumer to enter their store and expected to create pleasure feeling for customer in order to make them do a purchase in their store. Visual merchandising also converges to create a distinctive image among the fashion retailers. Fast moving fashion or fast fashion describe a scenario where fashion retailers implement a range of strategies in order to adequately meet market demand by ensuring that they have the right product, in the right place, in the right time Fast fashion brand as well as local retail fashion brands offer

Correspondence:
Vijay Rathee
Assistant Professor
UILMS, Gurgaon, India

many kinds of fashion products such as clothes, bags, shoes, and accessories, drive to global fashion trends. Fast fashion clothing always follows up and creating season trend, new product to the store with amazing speed, and window display transformation is usually two times a week. 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 notice that visual merchandising, which deals with the display of 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 customer's mind that permeates all product and service offerings. 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 in 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.

Review of Literature

Amandeep Kaur (2013) has undertaken a study in Chandigarh to determine the important factors of visual merchandising which influence consumer's buying behavior and in-store promotion activities. Questionnaires regarding visual merchandising were filled by the customers visiting the retail stores present at different locations in Chandigarh. Various visual merchandising techniques like graphics and signage, fixtures, props, lighting and space management were considered and study their impact on the buying of the customers. The study also tried to explain the relationship between impulse buying and visual merchandising. Through research we will be able to see that whether visual merchandising can attract more customers, increase the traffic in the store, which ultimately would, increase the sales figures

Bashar & Irshad, (2012) has considered impact of form display, window display, promotional signage and floor merchandising by taking sample size of 250 Indian respondents by applying Pearson correlation. His findings are that window display and impulsive purchasing are positively correlated. Impulse buying and store display are not correlated. Floor merchandising is also correlated with impulse buying.

Derry Law, Christina Wong & Joanne Yip (2012), aim to explore consumer affective response on visual stimulus in stores by considering the aesthetic, symbolic and cultural perceptions of function-oriented product-intimate apparel. The literature to date tends to focus on the interaction between individual visual merchandising elements (e.g. colour, lighting) with consumers. However, the product nature and its symbolic meaning have not been seriously taken into consideration. Due to the immense market potential in the East, applying western-developed theories may not be universally appropriate. There may be different

results and patterns in consumer behavior. Thus, this study enrich existing knowledge of atmospheric management by including the interaction of Eastern values and product nature on affective responses

Mehta & Chugan, (2012) has studied the contact of visual merchandising on shopper impulse buying behavior. He took sample size of 84 customers visiting the retail stores of India and find that window display has direct relation with impulse buying. However no significant relation is found between form display and impulse buying but floor merchandising shows direct relation.

S. Madhavi & T. S. Leelavati (2013) have tried to contribute to a deeper understanding about the impact of visual merchandising on consumer buying behavior in shopping stores. The paper analyses the influence of visual merchandising, especially the one related to the shop-windows, on consumer buying behavior according to store attributes most valued by consumers.

Vinamra Jain, Ashok Sharma & Pradeep Narwal (2012), in their paper explores women's decision making behavior towards apparel's based on how they are displayed in windows and in stores on mannequins or in form. Specifically it offers empirical results on the relationship between women's impulse buying, product decision making and visual appeal of apparel displays. A questionnaire survey was employed as the tool to collect primary data and was administered to 150 ladies in the Delhi/NCR region of India. The result shows that apparel displayed on mannequins inside the store and in show windows has a significant impact on the purchase decision of women

S. Meenakumari (2013), in this research attempted to find out the role of visual merchandise on Retailing among supermarkets in Chennai city. The components of visual merchandise were analyzed in this study to find out the impact on purchase decision in supermarket. A sample of 105 was collected. Promotional signage and floor space plays important role in buyer's decision.

Conclusion

The paper shows that visual merchandising plays a significant role in apparel purchase decision of the customer. Customer's expectations changes periodically and retailers must realize the significance of these expectations and offer them a congenial environment to attract and retain the customers. Apparel retailers must consider various factors like store design, layout, store front, display themes, lighting, music, etc. while making visual presentation.

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