

**VISUAL MERCHANDISING IN RETAILING:
INFLUENCING CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR
TOWARDS APPARELS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
PUNE CITY IN INDIA**

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Abstract:

Virtual merchandizing is the art of creating visual displays and arranging merchandize assortments within a store to improve the layout and presentation and to increase growth, sales and hence in turn the profitability. VM helps to attract the customers, towards the displayed products and also improves the shopping experience for customer by sending the right message about the merchandize and presenting it in a unique manner with effective creative quotient. Hence passion for design and creativity are essential to be a good visual merchandiser. The study was focused to determine the important factors of visual merchandising which influence consumer's perceptual process, buying behavior and in-store promotion activities. Various visual merchandising techniques like graphics and signage, fixtures, props, lighting and space management were considered and study there impact on the buying of the customers. The study also tried to understand and 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, increases the sales figures that will pamper the bottom line.

This research paper is focusing on perceptions of consumers regarding visual merchandising and influence of visual merchandising on consumer buying behavior towards apparels. Primary data was collected from 100 respondents from Pune city who were visitors of garments stores, branded showrooms and malls in various areas of Pune city. Some statistical methods like paired sample t test and Chi square tests are use to check influence of visual merchandising on buying behavior of customers.

Key Words: Visual Merchandising, Apparels, consumer behavior

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1. Introduction:-

- **Definition & Meaning of Visual Merchandising:**

Visual merchandising can be defined as everything the customer sees & feels- both exterior and interior environment and atmospherics- that creates a positive image of a business and results in attention, interest, desire and action on the part of the customer. It gives the business an edge over competition. Strategically used, visual merchandising can even create a brand identity, right image which leads to a *sustainable positioning*. It sets the context of the merchandize in an aesthetically pleasing fashion, presenting them in a way that would attract the window shoppers convert them into prospects and ultimately buyers of the product or service.

In today's retailing environment visual merchandising plays a central rather a pivotal role of the retailers marketing strategy. Besides the window displays, which are clearly designed with the purpose to attract walking by consumers and encourage walk-ins, there are also in-store decorations that are designed to enhance the customer's comfort and convenience while shopping, and overall to offer the consumer a better shopping experience. Taking into account the importance of visual merchandising on retail businesses today, the single and most important reason for using visual merchandising displays is to engage and associate with them to *churn out desire* and inspire shoppers, to encourage them to buy more of the products the retailer is selling, to increase sales, make margin and generate a return on floor space.

- **Visual Merchandising & the Perceptual Process**

The perceptual process starts with a sensory exposure. In visual merchandising, the sensory exposure is most likely sight since it has such a high importance to consumers as it the beginning of the perceptual process. This exposure leads to attention and subsequently to the comprehension. Sensory exposure, such as a signs, window displays etc in a mall, needs to be at or above the absolute threshold. The absolute threshold is the minimum level of stimuli a consumer needs to experience a sensation which produces vibrations in the strings of desire. If these attributes are not at the absolute threshold, it will more than likely go unnoticed by the shoppers. While the level of stimuli is subjective matter, it becomes empirical for retailers to consider while planning and developing different elements and attributes of visual merchandising.



Internal factors

- 1) Hedonic needs
- 2) Self-discrepancy
- 3) Mood status
- 4) Self regulatory resource availability
- 5) Autistic Stimuli
- 6) Social status
- 7) Subjective well being

External factors

- 1) Pervasive creativity & Visual stimuli
- 2) Shopping format
- 3) Store ambience
- 4) Merchandise display & presentation
- 5) Socio-cultural factors
- 6) Perceived crowding

Visual Merchandising & Consumer Buying Process



Arousal is the state of physical wakefulness or alertness experienced by a consumer in the conscious & subconscious mind. Arousal is low when sleeping and high during exciting events. Arousal is an important consideration when evaluating the performance level of stimulation a display possesses. With too little stimulation, arousal remains low and consumers retain little information. But if stimulation is very high, consumers become over-stimulated and essentially shut down. Their arousal also becomes too high, resulting in comparatively little retained information. This goes against assumptions that an overly-stimulating display is memorable. In fact, consumers remember the most about a display when their arousal is subtle.

2. Review of literature:

Shapiro (1992) describes these factors as unexpected desire to go out and buy something without direct visual confrontation. Among these factors, is self -discrepancy i.e. a difference between actual self and ideal self. Actual self is the representation of the attributes that a shopper believes he or she actually possesses, or that shopper believes others believe they possess. The "actual self" is basically a person's self-concept. It is one's perception of own attributes (intelligence, athleticism, attractiveness, etc.).

Ideal self is your representation of the attributes that someone (yourself or another) would like you, ideally, to possess and usually motivates individuals to change, improve and achieve.

Edward Tory Higgins (1987) provides a platform for understanding how different types of discrepancies between representations of the self are related to different kinds of emotional vulnerabilities.

(Kalla & Arora 2011). Dittmar (2005) found that the shoppers who are high on this personality trait of self-discrepancy become excessive shoppers which are highly motivated to buy, in order to support the improvisation of their actual self. In this way they try to feel up the "gaps" between how they see themselves (actual self) and how they wish to be seen (ideal self).

Verplanken et al. (2005) assert that low self-esteem is also a source that leads to impulse buying as a mean of psychological relief from the self-discrepancy.

Another internal motivator is the hedonic needs. This term is defined as "Those facets of consumer behavior relating to multi-sensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of one's experience with products" *(Kalla & Arora 2011, p149)*. *Singer (1966)* suggests that hedonic consumption is tied to imaginative constructs of reality. What consumer's desire reality to be is what hedonic

consumption acts are based on, rather than what consumers know to be real. This motivator can be related to the concept of self-discrepancy described above (*Dittmar, 1992; Lunt and Livingstone, 1992*). This dissimilarity between real and desired could play a role in invoking impulse.

Hedonic vs. Utilitarian goods

Under the study for Hedonic motivation, there is quite a bit of research has been carried on how this type of motivation can influence people's shopping habits. Hedonic goods are consumed for luxury purposes, which are desirable objects that allow the consumer to feel pleasure, fun, ecstasy, enjoyment and a sense of indulgence. This is the different from Utilitarian goods, which are purchased for their practical uses and are based on rationality. Because of this, the consumer is generally willing to spend more on luxury hedonic items because here they can rationale that these items are more associated with their ideal-self, and won't be purchased very frequently, which allows the buyer to be less price sensitive and more impulsive towards these items. These goods could constitute anything from pedicures to artistic furniture to latest fashion apparels to fine chocolate; basically anything that a consumer desires to enjoy and get indulged in. Utility goods are items that are purchased frequently and are an inevitable part of the consumer's daily life, which leads the consumer to be more sensitive to price factor towards these goods because they are purchased and used frequently. These items can be cleaning fluid, laundry detergent, clothing, toilet soaps, or other items that a consumer uses regularly- bought out of necessity and don't necessarily bring any joy to the consumer.

The positive hedonic influence comes from the buying of luxury goods for enjoyment and indulgence which ultimately influences the buying behavior in a positive way which in turn increases the footfalls and ticket size. , and utilitarian goods

Piron (1989, 1991) noticed another important stimulus in motivating impulse purchases, which are autistic stimuli. Autistic thoughts are resulted in response to internal impulses and are self-contained and self-serving (*Kalla & Arora 2011*). They don't follow rational and are frequently associated with emotional urge and sensuality. Consequently, Hirschman (1985) asserts that autistic stimuli can have strong and aggressive suggestive power and can result in impulsive buying behavior.

Mood states play also an importance role that leads to impulse buying. Some people indulge themselves in impulse purchase in order to relieve unpleasant mood (*Elliott, 1994*) but also to

cheer up themselves (*Mick and DeMoss, 1990*). Similarly, *Youn and Faber (2000)* had suggested in a study that positive and negative feeling states are potential motivator for impulse buying. In decision-making consumers experience a "balance beam" effect between affective (emotional) desires and cognitive (reasoning) willpower, triggered by internal and external stimuli. *Verplanken et al. (2005)* took up this feelings states concept in a more recent research, and even suggest that negative rather than positive affect is a driving force behind chronic impulse buying.

Now external factors are those that retailers can influence and can enjoy greater control over. Here, consumer impulse purchasing behavior is influenced and triggered by many shop related environmental factors such as pervasive creativity & visual stimulus, shopping format, self-service, store environment, discounts, display, shelf space, ambient factors, socio-cultural factors perceived crowding, ownership of membership/loyalty card (*Kalla and Arora, 2011*).

Visual stimulus encountered accidentally by the shopper can generally be the product itself (*Liang and Meng, 2008*) or *promotional signage (Piron, 1991)*. *Rook and Hoch (1985)* suggest that consumer impulse buying is driven by the environmental stimulus and is followed by an unexpected urge to obtain it (I see I want to buy). According to previous research on "impulse buying" related to "encounter with the object", the latter one is seen as a very powerful trigger to the act of impulse buying (*Kalla and Arora, 2011*). Sticking to *Rook's researches (1987)*, he suggests that it is hard for consumers to refrain from the urge in the moments following their encounter with the object. Therefore, *Vohs and Faber (2007)* assert that touching, tasting, sniffing and physical proximity with the product churns out the desire to get it.

Socio-cultural factors, which embrace store employees and other customers, are considered by *Mattila and Wirtz (2008)* as external factors that influence impulse buying as well. Past research findings show that employee behavior and helpfulness of salespeople enhanced the willingness to buy (*Bittner, 1990; Baker et al., 1994*). However, *Rook and Fisher (1995)* challenge this social factors concept. According to them, anonymity might encourage impulse purchasing. This idea is supported by *Lethonen and Maenpaa (1997); Stern (1962)* who recognized that self-service environment is an impulsive purchase factor. Indeed, it enhances the shopping pleasure and as a result, the shopper, who is free to move around, free to act and unwatched, is more likely willing to try on "new things and styles and fantasize, wrapped in the anonymity of a self-service environment" (*Supriya M. Kalla and A. P. Arora 2011*).

However, a contrast has to be made between self-service environment and in-store browsing. *Jones et al. (2003)* considered in-store browsing as creating encounters with desirable products that may evoke an appeal to buy. This urge is getting harder to refrain from due to physical proximity of the product. Consequently, malls and retail stores have come up with a list of “things to focus on”, which includes specific roles that different forms of in-store signage have to play, in order to effectively increase sales (*Woodside and Waddle, 1975; Abratt and Goodey, 1990*). *Rostocks (2003)* states that one of the main reasons, that urge people to buy more, is “looked well on shelf” i.e. visual merchandising. This has a significant impact on impulse buying. *Mattila and Wirtz (2008)* suggest that achieving to stimulate the store environment increases the likelihood of impulse buying because it creates impulsivity which leads to a momentary loss of self-control.

3. Objectives of the study:-

- 1) To find out the affect of visual merchandising on buying behavior of customers.
- 2) To determine the important factors of visual merchandising influencing customers' buying behavior and in-store promotion activities.



3. Hypothesis:-

H0:- There is no difference in average half yearly expenditure on apparels by the customers for the garment stores not using visual merchandising and garment stores using visual merchandising.

H1:- There is significant difference in average half yearly expenditure on apparels by the customers for the garment stores not using visual merchandising and garment stores using visual merchandising.

4. Research Methodology:-

Type of Research:- Qualitative and Analytical research

Influence of visual merchandising on consumer buying behavior was the major focus of this study so this research is qualitative as well as analytical type.

Sampling Size

Sample Size: 100 visitors of garment stores present at different locations in Pune.

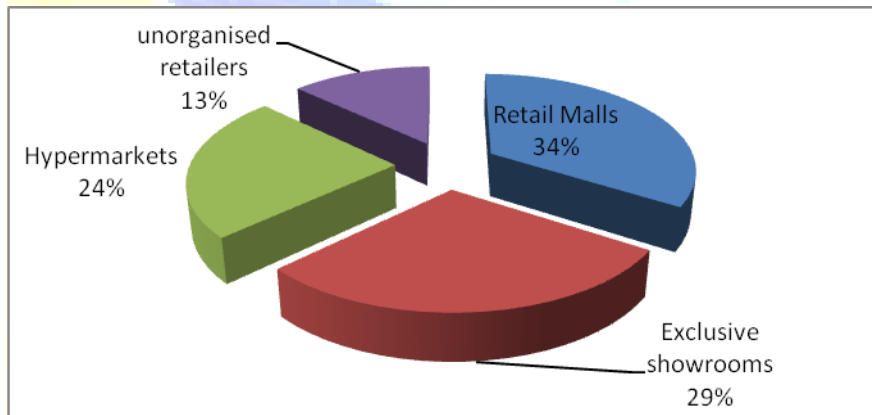
Data Source

Both secondary data and primary data were used for the information generation. The inferences were drawn mainly from primary source. Visitors of various garment stores in pune city were considered as respondents and primary data regarding influence of visual merchandising practices adopted by retailers and its impact on buying behavior of consumers was collected by making them fill questionnaire.

6. Data analysis & Interpretation:-

1. Place of Purchase:

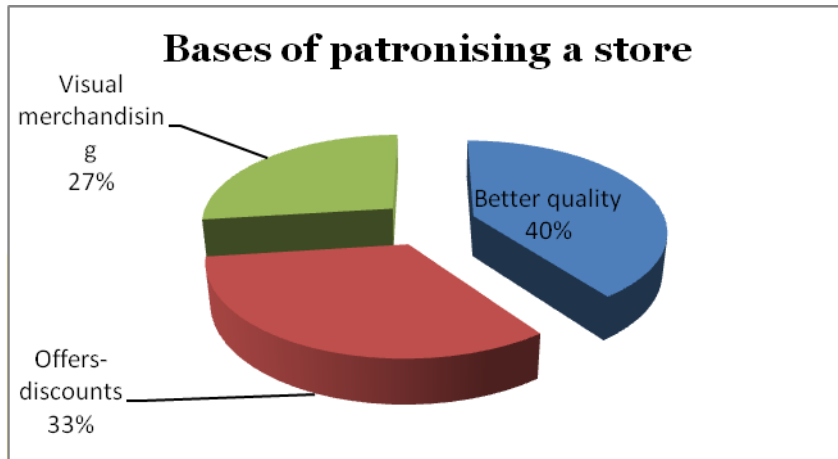
Q. 1 - From where you like to shop or purchase apparels?



It was found during the survey that 34 percent of the customers purchased their apparels from retail malls while 29 percent customers preferred to buy their apparels from exclusive showrooms. It was also found that 24 percent customers bought from hypermarkets as compared to 13 percent who preferred to buy apparels from ordinary retailers/shops. This reveals malls as the most sought after shopping destinations these days as these malls have good environment ambience, security, variety, fun and above all these malls provide customers with a great shopping experience.

2. Reason for Choosing a Particular Store:

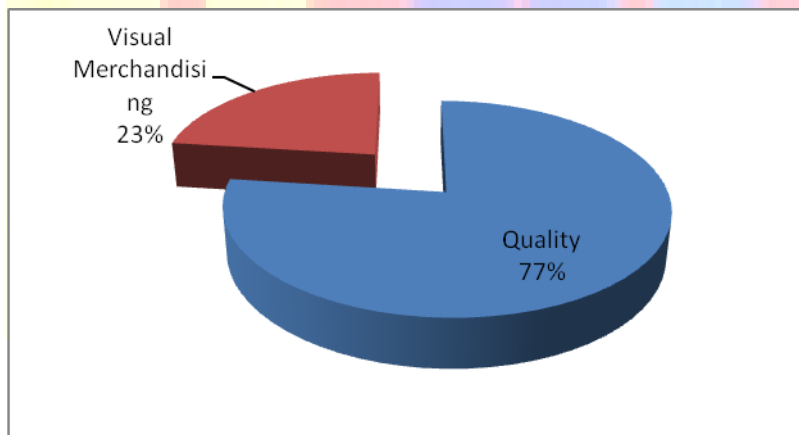
Q. 2- On what basis you patronize a particular store/ retail outlet for purchasing apparels?



As said in above point there are many competitors present in the market who are selling the same product. But the survey 40 percent customers feel that better quality is the main reason for choosing and patronizing a particular store. Another, 33 percent customers said that promotional offers and discounts are the main factors that influences their store selection decision. Visual merchandising for 27% is the main reasons for visiting a particular store.

3. Factors Affecting Purchase of Apparels:

Q.3-Which of the factors given below is responsible for your inclination towards shopping in organized retail outlets/malls?

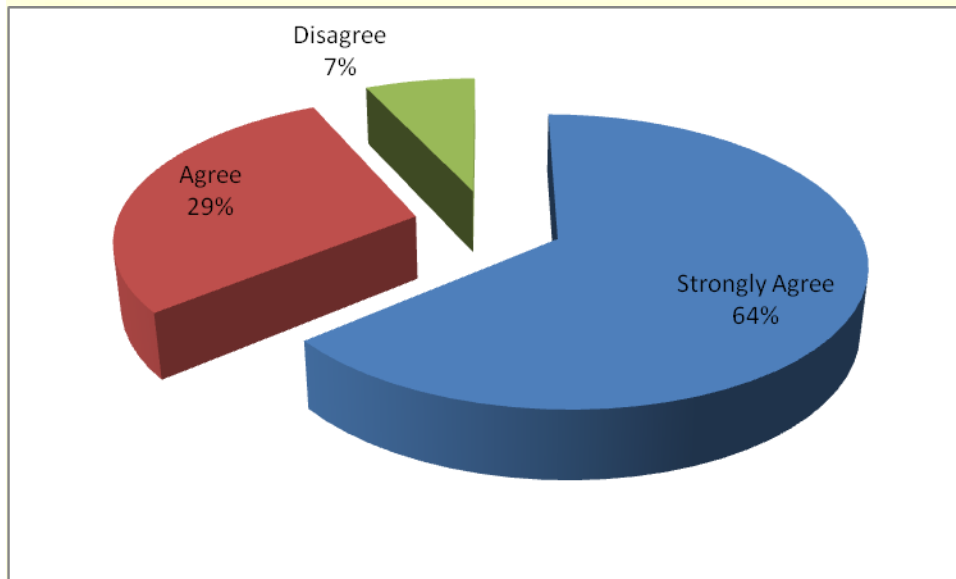


During the study, five important and crucial factors (quality-price-variety-design and visual merchandising) affecting the purchase of apparels have been identified. The survey clearly indicated that 77% of customers feel that quality is a very important factor affecting the purchase of apparels. 23% of customers said that visual merchandising is a very important factor for

purchase of apparels. This conveys a message to retailers that visual merchandising by virtue of its pervasive creativity acts as a silent salesman and they can increase the walk-ins in their stores by focusing on the art of visual merchandising.

4. Attention Paid to Displays and Signage:

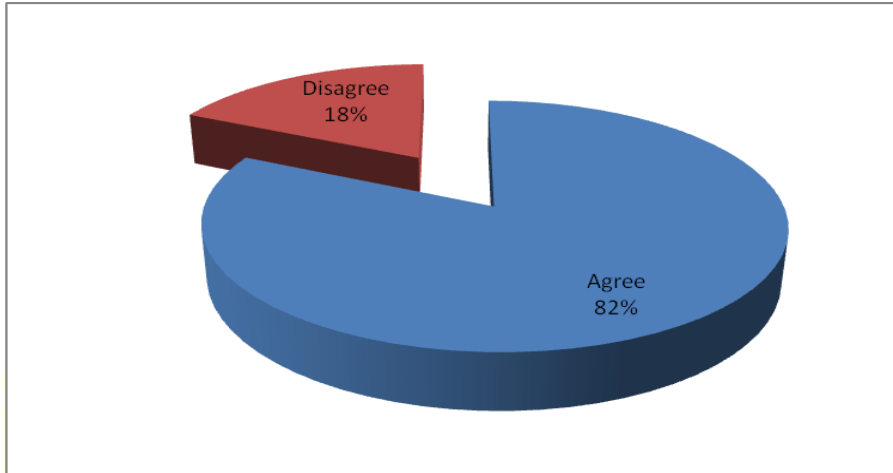
Q. 4- Do the visual merchandising in the form of visual effects; displays, signage, window display etc and overall atmospherics and ambience attract your attention and swing your mood towards buying.



It was found in the research that 93 % of the customer when enters the retail store they look at all the visual merchandising, displays, other visuals and signages presented in the store. Attractive window displays are the effective tools to grab the customer's attention and drag them inside the store. Very few only 7% do not pay any attention to displays or signage.

5. Inclination towards changing the clothing styles –Try New Apparel:

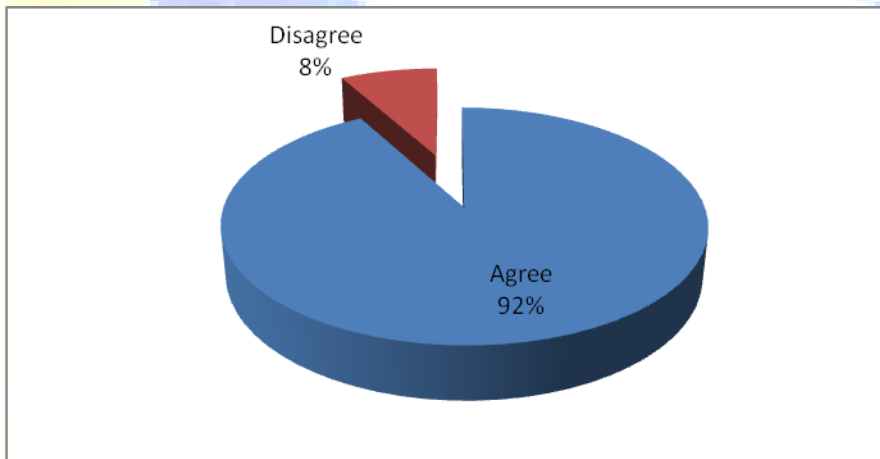
Q. 5- Do you feel an impulse to try for and buy apparels of new style/trends/fashion when you see them on display (i.e. display on mannequins)?



It was found from survey that 82 percent of customers said that they would try new apparels which are on display while 18 percent do not try and prefer their usual garments/apparels for which they have come to the store.

6. Displays Attract More Attention:

Q. 6- Do you think that apparels displayed on mannequins and in other forms of visual merchandising attract more attention than the ones which are stacked?

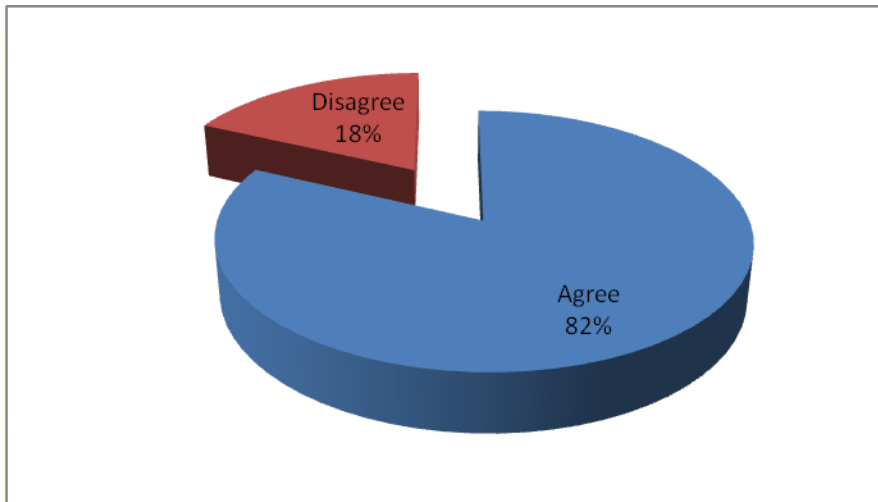


92 percent of respondents felt that those things which are on display attract more attention of the buyer as compared to the ones which are stacked in the stores .People while shopping give lot of attention to the in-store form and what is displayed on the mannequins. Thus the display on the mannequins should be attractive as the customer gets a fair of what should they buy only after looking at the display. Maybe the retailer have many competitors in the market but the winner is one who has good display which as a way of attracting the customer towards your store and once

he is in then it is salesman skill which will work to make an effective sale. Hence the important step is to bring the customer to the store and this is possible by attractive displays.

7. Relationship of Color, Lighting, Ambience and Attractive Visuals with Time Spent in Store:

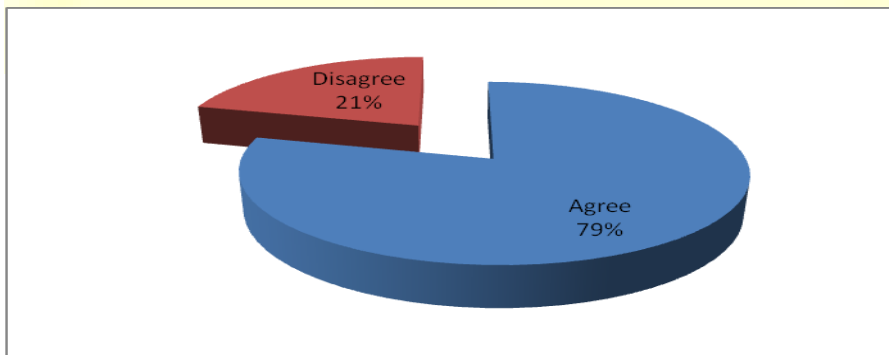
Q. 7- Do you think that factors of visual merchandising like color, lighting, ambience and attractive visuals make you to spend more time in the store?



82 % of the respondents felt that color, lighting, ambience and attractive visuals make them spend more time in store while 18% customers feel that various attributes of visual merchandising do not have any relation with the time spent in the stores. Results clearly indicate that in general, stores that are brightly lit, with the lights cleverly blending with the interiors lead to higher customer comfort, and as such, more sales.

8. Effect of Good Interiors and Display on Buying Behavior:

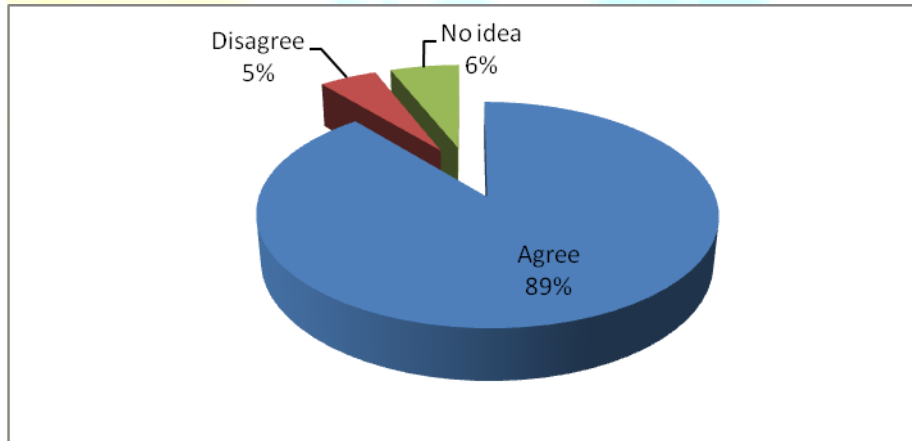
Q. 8- Do you think that good ambience and attractive display affect you buying behavior and stimulate to shop you more?



79% of customers feel that good interiors and display leads them to more impulsive buying behavior and stimulate to shop more. The reason behind this is that once customer walks in, it is but imperative to ensure that they enjoy their first encounter with the store. After all, repeat visits will only happen if a customer's first visit is a memorable one. The logical arrangement of counters, with clear passageways allows for easy access to merchandise. Remaining 21% said that their buying behavior is not affected by good interiors and display.

9. Connection of Visual merchandising and Marketing of Product:

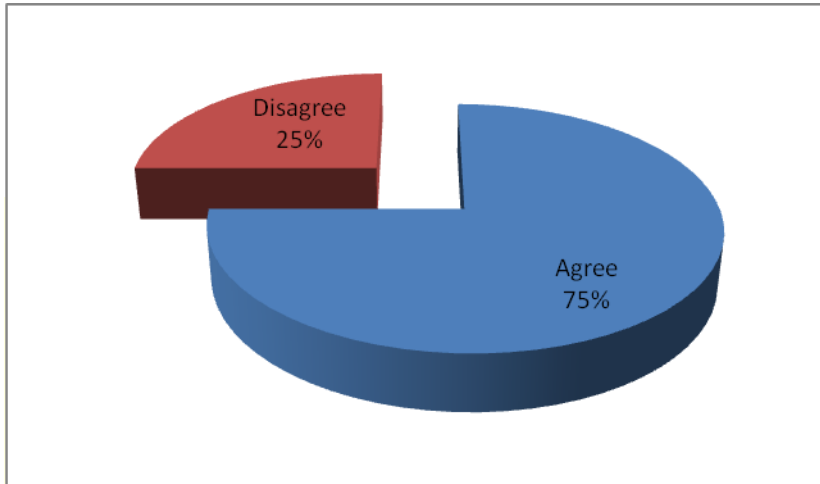
Q. 9- Do you think that applying effective visual merchandising techniques help retailers to market their product in better way?



The study indicated that 89 percent of customers feel that by designing and applying effective visual merchandising techniques retailers can market their products in a better way. Survey shows that only five percent of customers said that effective visual merchandising has no effect on marketing of products. The remaining six percent said that they had no clue regarding effect of visual merchandising on marketing of products.

10. Effect of Visuals and Display of Apparels on Final Buying Decision:

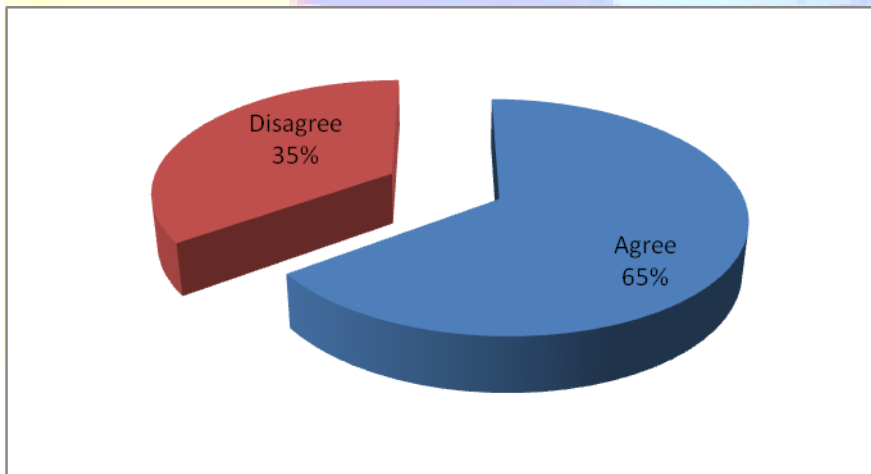
Q. 10- Do you think that your final buying decision is positively affected by effective visuals and displays of the apparels?



The survey revealed 75% percent of customers said that their final buying decision is influenced by visuals and display of apparels while 25% customers said that visuals and display have no effect on their final buying decision.

11. Relationship between Visual Merchandising and Impulse Buying:

Q. 11- Do you think that attractive visual merchandising induces impulsive buying behavior in you?



During the study, it was found that 65% customers said that attractive visual merchandising induces impulsive buying due to the fact that shoppers has tendency to indulge in these kind of goods. Remaining 35% of customers said that visual merchandising does induce impulsive buying. Retail setting, such as visual merchandising, therefore, can influence consumers'

impulse buying by providing information or reminding needs as well as producing positive feelings.

11. Change in average half yearly expenditure on apparel:

Q. 11 Tick mark for average half yearly expenditure on apparel for different places?

	Average half yearly expenditure on apparels in Rs.							
	Below 2000	2000 - 5000	5000 - 8000	8000 - 10000	10000 - 15000	15000 - 20000	20000 - 30000	30000 - 50000
Regular Garment shop	48	26	13	9	4	--	--	--
Branded Garment Store	--	4	12	22	19	41	2	--
Shopping Mall	--	--	6	9	24	35	16	10

HYPOTHESIS:-

Null Hypothesis:- H0:- There is no difference in average half yearly expenditure on apparels by the customers for the garment stores not using visual merchandising and garment stores using visual merchandising.

Alternative Hypothesis H1:- There is significant difference in average half yearly expenditure on apparels by the customers for the garment stores not using visual merchandising and garment stores using visual merchandising.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING:-

Assuming that regular garment shops are not using visual merchandising practices and branded garment stores and shopping malls are using visual merchandising practices

Step 1:- Calculation of Collective half yearly expenditure of all respondents for each category store separately

For Regular Garment Shop (Assumption:- Not using visual merchandising practices)		
1	48 X 1000 (Avg. of 0 & 2000)	Rs. 48000
2	26 X 3500 (Avg. of 2000 & 5000)	Rs. 91000
3	13 X 6500 (Avg. of 5000 & 8000)	Rs. 84500
4	9 X 9000 (Avg. of 8000 & 10000)	Rs. 81000
5	4 X 12500 (Avg. of 10000 & 15000)	Rs. 50000

For Branded Garment Stores (Assumption:- Using visual merchandising practices)		
1	4 X 3500 (Avg. of 2000 & 5000)	Rs. 14000
2	12 X 6500 (Avg. of 5000 & 8000)	Rs. 78000
3	22 X 9000 (Avg. of 8000 & 10000)	Rs. 198000
4	19 X 12500 (Avg. of 10000 & 15000)	Rs. 237500
5	41 X 17500 (Avg. of 15000 & 20000)	Rs. 717500
6	2 X 25000 (Avg. of 20000 & 30000)	Rs. 50000

For Shopping Mall (Assumption:- Using visual merchandising practices)		
1	6 X 6500 (Avg. of 5000 & 8000)	Rs. 39000
2	9 X 9000 (Avg. of 8000 & 10000)	Rs. 81000
3	24 X 12500 (Avg. of 10000 & 15000)	Rs. 300000
4	35 X 17500 (Avg. of 15000 & 20000)	Rs. 612500
5	16 X 25000 (Avg. of 20000 & 30000)	Rs. 400000
6	10 X 40000 (Avg. of 30000 & 50000)	Rs. 400000

Using two independent sample T test for checking difference or similarities between two variables. Average half yearly expenditure of people on apparels in stores using visual merchandising and in stores not using visual merchandising.

Two independent sample T test by using SPSS:

Group Statistics

Visual Merchandising Practices		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Avg. Half yearly expenditure of people	Avg. half yearly expenditure of people in stores not using Visual Merchandising	5	7.0900E4	20323.63157	9089.00435
	Avg. half yearly expenditure of people in stores using visual merchandising	12	2.6062E5	2.33029E5	67269.81304

Independent Sample t-test									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T test of equality of means					
		F	Sig.	t	d. f.	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95 % confidence interval of difference	
								Lower	Upper
Avg. half yearly expenditure of people	Equal variances assumed	8.815	.010	-1.784	15	.095	-1.89725E5	-416442.	36992.60424
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.795	11.395	.017	-1.89725E5	60424.	338500.125798743

Interpretation: As values of t for both cases i. e. for equal variances assumed and equal variances not assume are different therefore rejecting null hypothesis and accepting alternative hypothesis therefore there is significant difference in average half yearly expenditure on apparels by the customers for the garment stores not using visual merchandising and garment stores using visual merchandising.

7. Findings:

- An important finding is that the store derives as much of its identity, character and gravity from its physical contours, as from the products it houses and the individuals who manage the transactions there in.
- In addition was also found that visual merchandising practices certainly influence customers' buying behavior.
- The research revealed that is a direct proportional relationship between customers' buying behavior and in-store form/mannequin display, promotional signage and window display.
- Through the study it was also found most of the firm's main idea of display is to show the newest trends and the new arrivals.
- It is observed that most people are lured into buying the product looking at the shop's ambience and visual display. Therefore retailers should put more efforts creating attractive and eye-catching window display providing information regarding new products, fashion trends, or coordination tips. Studies indicated that a retailer has roughly seven seconds to capture the attention of a passing customer.
- The following elements combine to form a distinctive image that not only reaches out and grabs the customer's attention, but also makes a positive impression within those precious seconds. The image makers are: an identifiable store name, a powerful visual trademark, an unmistakable storefront, an inviting entrance and a consistent and compelling store look and hook.
- Since most of the tools of visual merchandising significantly influence customers' buying behavior, retailers should continuously reinforce their usage to create favorable shopping environments to influence customers' both in-store responses and future store choice decisions. Everything you do in the store must fit into the image you chose to create.
- This will lead to creation of a recognizable image that will be applied and communicated effectively through multiple media to gain customer recognition and loyalty.
- There is significant difference in average half yearly expenditure on apparels by the customers for the garment stores not using visual merchandising and garment stores using visual merchandising.

8. Recommendations:-

- Windows display acts as a stimulus for the customers to enter the store. It has various benefits like displaying best merchandize, providing information about new arrivals and attracting price sensitive customers by displaying promotional merchandise therefore retailers should put up a attractive and informational display.
- Most of customers are willing to purchase products from retail stores in the evening hours and therefore, managers can pay special attention to make attractive environment in the store premises and make action to control the rush condition.
- Colors create a psychological impact on the minds of the customers and can capture attention. They reflect one's moods and thus, add meaning .Therefore color plays a vital role in creating a positive shopping experience. Hence, retailers should be careful at the time of selecting the color scheme.
- Majority of customers respond to the lighting more positively. They specially mentioned that lighting helps to select correct products, reduce the time wasted and feel relaxation during the shopping tours. Therefore, visual merchandisers can select appropriate lighting system that creates satisfaction of psychological needs of customers.
- Music is played in retail store not with the objective of providing entertainment but for influencing buying behavior. The type of the music played at the outlet depends upon the products being sold and target audience. Therefore the selection of the music to be played at the store and at what volume is some of the challenges that retailers generally face. The soft and classic music are highly recommended than other type of music.
- There should be proper relation between the season and the products displayed. The store environment should be warm, welcoming and friendly giving a customer a memorable shopping experience.
- The Store should be organized logically like proper groups and categories should be mentioned, so that all merchandize of one type, color, and size is positioned together helping the customer to make a clear choice.
- Visually appealing stores and outlets did help the respondents to create an image of the brand in the minds of the customers.
- Among the various features of the store like the lightening, display on the mannequins , staff behavior , cleanliness were important to convert the window shoppers into the real

buyers. The shop managers should always supervise these personally so as to increase the footfalls.

CONCLUSION

Visual Merchandising as a silent salesperson, as its tools does not speak but definitely convey their sales message through visual appeal. In order to fulfill the changing expectations of today's customers, retailers need to place greater emphasis on presentation of merchandise. Retailers have to understand the importance of shopper's expectations and provide the right environment to lure them. VM serves as a significant influence of the retail experience and the shopper's decision making process. It provides competitive advantage and helps in building the overall image of the store.

Since a lot of retailers have started adopting this concept, one should be innovative enough in VM to achieve better results. It was known from the research that visual merchandizing has direct relation with the sales performance. Due to Visual merchandising the customers gets attracted towards hence increasing the stores footfall, which ultimately has a positive impact on the sales figures. The research also threw light on the fact that visual merchandising has the capability to invite people to enter the store and develop their buying behavior.

The results proved that there was relationship between customers' buying behavior and in-store form/mannequin display, promotional signage and window display. The study also provided insights about types of visual merchandising that can influence customers' buying behaviors. Three most important factors of visual merchandising namely attractiveness of window display, innovative assortments and cleanliness and neatness of store/ store environment have been identified. Hence, Visual merchandising has become an important variable in present scenario.

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