Visual merchandising and interior design environment impact on consumer apparel buying behaviour with special reference to the apparel stores in Mumbai and Pune

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Abstract. The stores engaged in the pursuit of selling the Apparels are striving hard to acquire and retain the customers amidst stiff competitions. Visual Merchandising is the discipline that deals with the relationship between an object, the context in which it is placed and it's relevant image. It is imperative that the image of the product is such that customers gravitate towards it; this is done by ensuring that its placement context is enticing. There are innumerable apparel stores in the market nowadays. However, what gives each brand an edge is how they market their products; and this is where visual merchandising comes into play. An exploratory research is conducted to examine how the visual merchandising and interior design environment evoke desire to purchase the apparels. The objective of the study is to explore how the apparel buying behaviour is influenced by the visual merchandising. Through extensive literature review it has been found that the most suitable dependent variable would be impulse purchase behaviour. A total of 150 respondents were selected from Pune and Mumbai using simple random sampling technique. On analysis of the data through SPSS, the results reveal that floor merchandising, promotional electronic signage, mannequin display are the most statistically significant factors in impacting consumers' impulse purchase behaviour.

Keywords: Apparel buying, consumer buying behaviour, impulse purchase behaviour, floor merchandising

1 Introduction

India has become the third most attractive market for Apparel industry according to a study done by AT Kearney, which also states that apparel is the second largest category in retail, representing 5.8% of US$ 600 billion. (Shiware, 2013). India has the world's largest youth population with more than 50% of its population below the age of 25 and 65% of its population below the age of 35. (Wizar,2013). This young population with rapidly rising disposable income is leading the charge in embracing newer designs, brands and technological advancements. Notably, the e-commerce industry's growth of US$ 125 billion is single-handedly being driven by this young population and has emerged as a very important channel for apparel industry. This in turn has brought in significant behavioural changes in the purchase patterns of the young population on account of exposure to global trends and increasing cosmopolitanism of Indian

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cities. Since a person's identity is closely linked with clothing and footwear which links to status, class and self-actualization, it should conform to particular city's social norms. It has been observed in previous research that tendency to conform to cultural values of a society is as strong as before irrespective of the effects of globalisation (Corbu, 2009). Previous studies have identified attributes such as price, brand, design and quality having significant influence on consumers' evaluations of apparel products (Hines and Swinkler, 2006). However, with changing times, advent of e-commerce and organised retail, the importance of each attributes does not remain the same and there is a potential for new attributes to influence the preferences of customer. Similarly, consumers in different cities within India may have different preferences of purchasing and product attributes.(Keane and Erdem, 1996).

2 Literature Review

Several researches have been conducted to explain the consumer purchase behaviour. The research conducted by Davies, B. & Ward, P. (2005) [1],aims to prove the use of facet theory in the field of visual merchandising and its relationship with retail branding. In this study, facet theory was applied to the hypothesized relationships, using Small Spaces Analysis (SSA) which proved to be quite useful as both retail branding and visual merchandising are multivariate in nature. The study performed by Klein, A. &Baun, D. (2001)[2], was an empirical research focusing on visual merchandising and interior design environment to evoke optimum level of customers' arousal by using electro dermal activity (EDA) as an indicator. EDA is very sensitive and can even indicate the smallest variation in arousal. The study which was done by Singh, M. et al (2015) [3], was carried out at Indore shopping mall, MP where data from about 200 customers was collected through questionnaires. A total of 4 hypotheses were taken into consideration for their impact on the buying decisions of consumers – i.e., Design Layouts, Cleanliness of market premises, Window Display and Promotional Signage. The study proved that all of the above stated factors had a significant impact on the customer preference (dependent variable). The research work ofOpris, M. &Bratucu, G. (2013) [4], was undertaken to explore the intricacies and creativity implemented by various retail stores in window display art in order to build an eye-catching window. The researchers Law, D. et al. (2012) [5],adopted a qualitative method of data collection through focus group interviews involving eight groups. It was found that ideal female image in fact generated a negative response because many customers could not relate to the "flawless figure" of the mannequin and were unsure of how would they look in the displayed lingerie. In terms of product nature, it was found that as compared to outerwear, Chinese women found it embarrassing to witness public displays of intimate apparels. The study concluded that perceived localness is important for visual merchandising of intimate apparels.

The study by Karbasivar, A. &Yarahmadi, H. (2011) [6],aimed to understand the relationship between consumer buying behavior(with regard to retail apparels outlets) and four external cues namely window displays, credit cards, cash discount and free products. The study was conducted using n=275 sample size in Iran and used the survey method to collect responses from shoppers at a mall. The results found that two of the major external cues that indicated more impulse buying behaviour were ever there is cash discount and in store window displays of any form.

The main objective of this study by Pillai R. et al (2011)[7], stems from the belief that the selling of a product is incomplete without communicating its image. Hence, it aims to find out the extent to which visual merchandising leads to a potential purchase. The findings of the research indicates that price sensitive segment chooses to buy visually appealing branded products. On the part of the merchandisers, the study proved that visual appeal was imperative and that illumination was the most preferred factor by them. Schmid Mast et al. (2009) [8], found that social status of an individual too has influence on his/her susceptibility to interpersonal influence. Consumers' who prefer uniqueness most likely don't place importance to normative influence. This quality helps these consumers to assert their uniqueness during their shopping experience. Mandhachitara and Piamphongsant (2008) [9] has described that things like fashion clothing help in self-construal and also in asserting affiliation with a group.

Depending on the retail preference and patronising the consumers have been grouped into vivid types based on the shopper typologies. (Hartel and Leo 2015) [10]. Thought the Orientation related to the Shopping appears to be simple, it is considered to be the complex mix of economic, social and cultural phenomenon. (Lee and Shim 1999) and it also plays a very special role in performing certain specific activities. (Gehrt 1998) [11].The shoppers' orientation includes the shoppers with various styles, market behaviour and with vivid preference for the stores of their choice. (Shim and Gehrt ibid 1998) [11]. The shoppers exhibit the variation in the shopping orientation depending on their persona characteristics' and personalities (Bae 2004).

The conceptual model related to the Buying proposed by Radha Krishna (2007) [12] indicated the factors that leads to the a particular behaviour of buyer which is predominantly based on the demographic and the marketing factor.

Constructs	Papers
Mannequins	Kim, J. (2003), Law, D. et al. (2012),Tammy, R. et al (2010), Mehta N. &Chugan, P. (2013),Opris, M. &Bratucu, G. (2013),Vinamra et al., (2012), Singh, M. et al (2015)
Floor Merchandising	Kim, J. (2003), ,Mehta, N. &Chugan, P. (2013),Wu, J. et al(2013),Vinamra et al., (2012)
Promotional Signage	Kim, J. (2003),Mehta, N. &Chugan, P. (2013),Singh, M. et al (2015)
Window Display	Prajapati, S.&Rathod, K. (2013), Kim, J. (2003), Karbasivar, A.&Yarahmadi, H. (2011),Mehta, N. &Chugan, P. (2013),Opris,M.&Bratucu, G. (2013)
Illumination	Prajapati, S.&Rathod, K. (2013), Pillai R. et al (2011),Opris,M.&Bratucu, G. (2013),Madhavi, S. &Leelavati T. (2013)
Layout	Madhavi, S. &Leelavati T. (2013), Singh, M. et al (2015)
Colour	Wu, J.et al (2013),Opris, M. &Bratucu, G. (2013),Madhavi, S. &Leelavati T. (2013)
Theme	Madhavi, S. &Leelavati T. (2013)
Landscaping	Mower, J. et al, (2012)
Cleanliness	Singh, M. et al (2015)

Table 1 The various constructs that were derived from the literature.

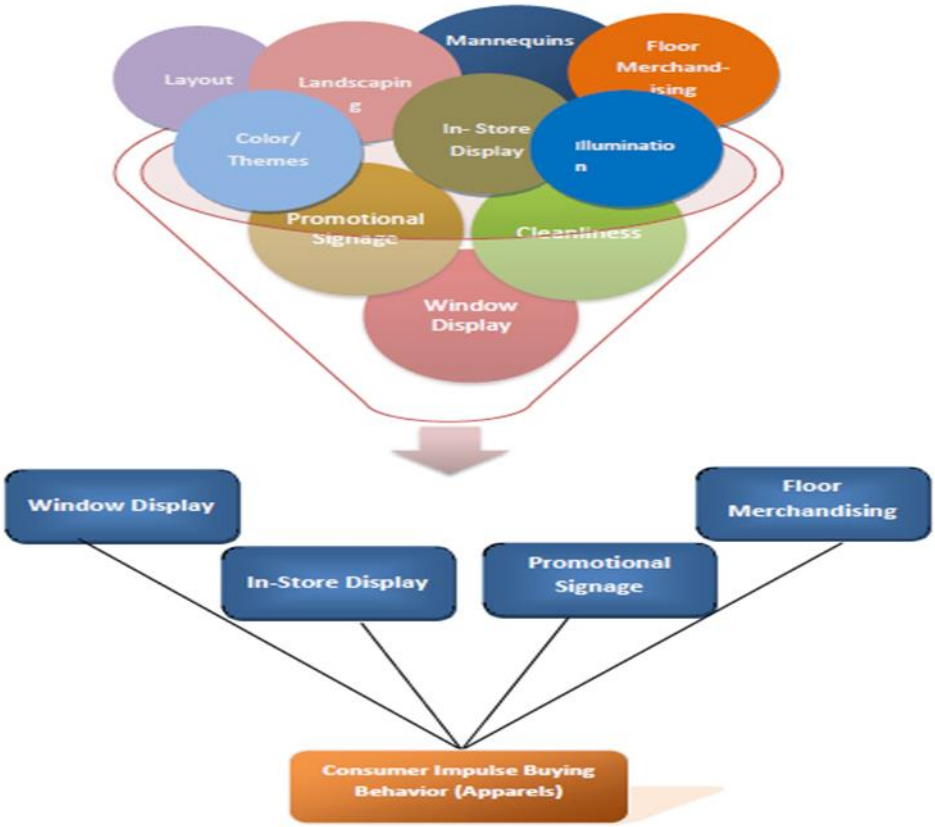

Fig.1 shows the various constructs that were derived from the literature.

3 Hypothesis Of The Study

Based on the above literature the following hypotheses were derived:

- **H1:** Customers who buy on impulse are influenced by mannequin displays
- **H2:** Customers who buy on impulse are influenced by window displays
- **H3:** Customers who buy on impulse are influenced by promotional signage
- **H4:** Customers who buy on impulse are influenced by floor merchandising

4 Objective Of The Study

- To study the visual merchandising impact on the consumer's apparel purchasing behaviour

- To study specifically the impact of, in store mannequin display, promotional signage, window display, and floor merchandizing on consumer purchase behaviour.

5 Methodology

In this study, survey method is adopted and a cross-sectional descriptive research approach is followed as the variables undertaken for study cannot be attempted to any way of manipulation since they are of intrinsic in nature. These variables are studied using descriptive research. As indicated by Shuttleworth,2008) the survey method ensures the collection of the relevant quantitative data to understand the consumers purchase decision making style which helps the researcher to make an approximation on the test of causality(Bush & Burns 2007). The research data was collected through the Personal interview method. A combination of judgemental and convenience sampling methods were adopted to select the 150 respondents from Mumbai and Pune region.

The data collected from the respondents were cleansed to ensure that are no missing or invalid responses. Next the KMO and Bartlett‟s test, test of communalities, factor analysis and construct validity tests were performed. This showed the grouping of the factors and indicated that, mannequins, window display, promotional signage and floor merchandising are clearly four distinct factors. The coded items are shown below before proceeding with the SPSS analysis.

Code	Item
F2	The manner in which the product is displayed in the store has an impact on my buying decisions
F3	While passing by I get fixed to dresses which are eye catching
F4	Product assortment, product placements and props have a high impact on my buying decisions
F5	I look for clothing close to me especially when I am walking on the isle
I1	Viewing Promotion sign results in me buying more than i intended to buy
I2	when I find the window visual display attractive of a store I end up in buying more
I3	I find myself spending more than intended on clothing items that are paired together
M1	Any new style of apparels displayed in the store makes me by more.
M2	I tend to buy the apparels displayed on the mannequin
M3	The apparels displayed on the mannequin triggers the idea in me to buy the apparel.
M4	store displays triggers me to make apparel purchasing decision
Plii	Any attractive sale sign on my vicinity results in unintended apparel buying
Pliii	Any type of sales promotional offer signs displayed in the store temts me to buy the apparel
Pliv	when I enter a store I look for promotional offering signage
Plv	Any special promotion sign makes me to look for the apprels
WDi	window display of the stores draws my attention
WDii	I am attracted to enter a store if I notice promotional offers at the store entrance

WDiv	On looking at the window display of a shop i am able to gauge the type of store and its sales promotional offerings
WDv	The visual display of a shop front attracts me to enter the store

Table 2 Grouping of the factors

Interpretation of test for communalities

Communalities indicate the amount of variance in each variable that is accounted for. In the test for communalities in SPSS, it is found that M1 and M4 has values less than 0.5. All the other questions gave an extraction output greater than 0.5. The principal method is used for extraction. All values which are less than 0.5 are removed.

	Initial	Extraction
WDi	1.000	.616
WDii	1.000	.721
WDiii	1.000	.693
WDiv	1.000	.640
M1	1.000	.418
M2	1.000	.721
M3	1.000	.698
M4	1.000	.421
F1	1.000	.772
F2	1.000	.783
F3	1.000	.748
F4	1.000	.575
Pli	1.000	.673
Plii	1.000	.679
Pliii	1.000	.600
Pliv	1.000	.687
I1	1.000	.767
I2	1.000	.721
I3	1.000	.771
I4	1.000	.761

Table 3 Test for communalities

Now, all questions have communality factor > 0.5

Hence factor analysis is performed,

Factor Analysis Interpretation

Component	**Initial Eigenvalues**			**Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings**			**Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings**		
	Total	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**
i	5.564	30.913	30.913	5.564	30.913	30.913	3.046	16.923	16.923
ii	2.527	14.038	44.951	2.527	14.038	44.951	3.046	16.922	33.844
iii	1.954	10.858	55.809	1.954	10.858	55.809	2.482	13.791	47.636
iv	1.670	9.278	65.088	1.670	9.278	65.088	2.457	13.648	61.283
v	1.137	6.319	71.407	1.137	6.319	71.407	1.822	10.124	71.407
vi	.749	4.162	75.569						
vii	.612	3.399	78.968						
viii	.584	3.246	82.215						
ix	.499	2.771	84.985						
x	.472	2.624	87.609						
xi	.394	2.187	89.796						
xii	.370	2.057	91.853						
xiii	.322	1.787	93.640						
xiv	.290	1.614	95.254						
xv	.254	1.410	96.664						
xvi	.214	1.190	97.854						
xvii	.202	1.121	98.975						
xviii	.185	1.025	100.000						

Table 5. Variance Explained

Principal Component Analysis method of extraction

Though the ideal percentage should be 75% the computed value is 71.4%

	Component				
	i	ii	iii	iv	v
WDi			.738		
WDii			.752		
WDiii			.804		
WDiv			.720		
M2					.750
M3					.735
F1	.826				
F2	.847				
F3	.830				
F4	.707				
Pli				.771	
Plii				.725	
Pliii				.717	
Pliv				.753	
I1		.843			
I2		.831			
I3		.852			
I4		.769			

Table 6 Rotated Component Matrix

The result of the Rotated Component Matrix clearly indicates that Mannequins, Window display, Promotional Signage and Floor Merchandising are the 4 different factors that affect impulse purchase behaviour.

Construct Validity

The purpose of performing the Construct validity test using Scale Composite Reliablity(SCR),Standard Factor Loadings(SFL),Chronbach's Alpha test of Reliabilty, Discriminat Validity and Average Variance Extracted(AVE). These tests are performed to establish on the fact regarding how well the research data could be transformed into a useable research data.

Factors	Factor Loading	1-Square FL	SCR	Square of FL	AVE	Interpretation
Window Display	0.74	0.46	0.85	0.54	0.58	Reliable
	0.79	0.38		0.62		
	0.8	0.35		0.65		
	0.72	0.48		0.52		
	3.05	1.67		2.33		
Mannequin Display	0.75	0.44	0.71	0.56	0.55	Reliable
	0.74	0.46		0.54		
	1.49	0.9		1.1		
Floor Merchandising	0.83	0.32	0.88	0.68	0.65	Reliable
	0.85	0.28		0.72		
	0.83	0.31		0.69		
	0.71	0.5		0.5		
	3.21	1.41		2.59		
Promotional Sinage	0.77	0.4	0.83	0.6	0.55	Reliable
	0.73	0.47		0.53		
	0.72	0.49		0.51		
	0.75	0.43		0.57		
	2.97	1.8		2.2		
Impulse Purchase	0.84	0.29	0.89	0.71	0.68	Reliable
	0.83	0.31		0.69		
	0.85	0.27		0.73		

	0.77	0.41		0.59		
	3.3	1.28		2.72		

Table 7 Reliability and Average Variance Extracted

- As seen in the table above, all the factor loading values are greater than 0.5 hence indicating reliability.
- All the SCR values are greater than 0.70, is a pure evidence that the items have got high level of internal consistency relatively.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is a test which is performed to ascertain the impact of the visual merchandising factors on impulsive apparel buying behaviour of the customers.

		WD	M	F	P	I
WD		0.762787	.264**	.314**	.214*	0.153
M		.264**	0.742564	.506**	.243**	.393**
F		.314**	.506**	0.804311	.278**	.255**
P		.214*	.243**	.278**	0.742024	.400**
I		0.153	.393**	.255**	.400**	0.824586

Table 8 Discriminant validity

- The values in the table are the Pearson Correlation values for the various factor combinations depicted.
- The correlation was run after calculating the average of each factor with respect to each response.
- The Pearson values are all less than the highlighted values (square root of AVE) which are an evidence of nil relationship among the factors

Cronbach's Alpha

In this study the Chronbach"s alpha test is performed on the 5 (1-Dependendent variable which is Impulsive Buying Behaviour) and the other 4 dependable variable used in our study includes the 4 Visual Merchandising promotional factors.

The results of our study are as follows –

Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha Test)

(1) Impulse Buying Behavior

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.881	0.881	4

Table 9 Statistics with regard to the Reliablity

Since the value of Chronbach‟s alpha test is 0.881for impulse buying behaviour i.e. is a straight evidence that the item has got high level of the internal consistency relatively, since the value is way above 0.7.

(2) The Aspect of Window Display

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.79	0.79	4

Table 10 Reliability Statistics

Since the value of Chronbach‟s alpha test is 0.790 for window display, is pure evidence that the item has got high level of the internal consistency relatively, since the value is way above 0.7.

(3) In regard to the In-Store/Mannequin Display

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.825	0.827	2

Table 11 Cronbach's Alpha

Since the value of Chronbach‟s alpha test is 0.825 for In-Store/Mannequin Display, is obvious evidence that the item has got high level of the internal consistency relatively, since the value is way above 0.7.

(4) With respect to Floor Merchandising

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.859	0.859	4

Table 12 Cronbach's Alpha

Since the value of Chronbach"s alpha test is 0.859 for Floor Merchandising, is bright evidence that the item has got high level of the internal consistency relatively, since the value is way above 0.7.

(5) Regarding the Promotional Signage

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.774	0.777	4

Table 13 Cronbach's Alpha

Since the value of Chronbach"s alpha test is 0.774 Promotion Signage, is a clear evidence that the item has got high level of the internal consistency relatively, since the value is above 0.7.

Hence we see that for each of the 5 variables the value of Chronbach's alpha test is more than 0.7 and thus we have an acceptable and strong reliability to go ahead with our research.

Model Summary[b]				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.411[a]	0.292	0.227	0.76392

Table 14 Regression Analysis

a) Predictors: (Constant), *AvgP, AvgWD, AvgM, AvgF*

b) Dependent Variable: *AvgI*

The R square value in the output shows 0.253. The value of 25.3% of the variance reported in the dependent variable (impulse purchase behaviour) can be explained by the independent variables; which are the four visual merchandising factors. This indicates that there is low amount of variance that is being explained by the data collected. Although the R square value is low this is expected from research that studies could be due to the psychological aspects of humans.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	23.173	4	5.543	9.50	.000[b]
1	Residual	65.36	112	0.584		
	Total	87.533	116			

Table 15 Anova

a) Variable which are dependent: *AvgI*

b) The Predictors *AvgP, AvgWD, AvgM, AvgF* are Constant.

In the ANOVA table we can see the significance value is <0.05 hence this shows us that the regression model is a good fit of the data. There is a good fit of the data in the regression model as the ANOVA calculation has a level of significance value which is <0.05

Model	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**T**	**Sig.**	**95.0% Confidence Interval of B**	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	1.313	0.557		2.356	0.02	0.209	2.418
AvgWD	-0.001	0.126	-0.001	-0.009	0.992	-0.251	0.249
AvgM	0.272	0.084	0.311	3.235	0.002	0.105	0.438
AvgF	0.01	0.116	0.009	0.089	0.929	-0.22	0.241
AvgP	0.346	0.093	0.322	3.735	0	0.162	0.53

Table 16 Coefficients

a) Dependent Variable: *AvgI*

b) The significance values show that only *AvgM* (Mannequin Display) and *AvgP* (Promotional Signage) are statistically significant independent variables.

With the coefficients we can form the following regression equation:

$$Y(AvgI) = 1.313 + 0.272(AvgM) + 0.346(AvgP)$$

Conclusion

The aim of our study was to see the impact of visual merchandising on consumer purchase behaviour with reference to apparel stores. The factors of visual merchandising that we studied were window display, in store/mannequin display, floor merchandising and promotional signage.

Though all the four factors of visual merchandising acts as four independent factors while impacting the impulse buying behaviour of apparel, we conclude from the research findings that that all these four factors have an impact on the consumer purchase behaviour ins some form or the other.

However out of these four factors, there were two, Mannequin Display and Promotional Signage factors of visual merchandising that are statistically significant when it comes to impulse apparel purchase behaviour.

This suggests that consumers are most influenced to buy a certain product if they find the mannequin display attractive. The promotional signage is also a driving factor to positively influence an individual's to buy a product. Hence, we can firmly conclude that managerial attention should be focused on these two factors in order to increase impulse purchases. They should make their mannequin displays more attractive and the promotional signage more enticing for the consumers. This is likely to increase the sales of their product on impulse.

This is interesting as it furthers the already existing research, by Kim, J. (2003) which states both promotional signage and mannequin display are significantly related to impulse buying behaviour. Much like our research the same paper shows that window displays and floor merchandising also affect the behaviour, however, this is fairly lower when compared to the former two. The paper by Mehta, N. &Chugan, P. (2013) states that floor merchandising is as important a factor as the other two. Our research, like the research done by Kim, J. (2003), contradicts this.

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