

A study on consumer attitude towards window display and layout of an apparel retail store

R.Surjit¹
{rst.fashion@psgtech.ac.in¹}

Department of Fashion Technology, PSG College of Technology, Coimbatore, India¹

Abstract. Consumer attitude plays a major role when it comes to a product purchase, especially when it is apparel. The consumer gets attracted to various aspects in a store before making a purchase. The aspect of creating attraction is the concept of visual merchandising. In visual merchandising, window display and layout are two key features which promote selling. In this study, the consumer attitude towards these two key features are analysed with respect to apparel store. The influencing factor to enter a store, influence of in store visual merchandising and display on store traffic, influence of layout on the shopping behaviour, importance of window display compared to other visual merchandising techniques and impact of window display on ones interest towards clothing are analysed with the help of a survey among 500 customers visiting various apparel stores. It is found that 31.2% state that window display is the most influencing factor to visit a store. It is also found that the store traffic is improved by in store visual merchandising and display with 38.8% stating that mannequin styling and creative product display increase store traffic. The display also promotes impulse purchase. Around 60.8% respondents feel that layout affects shopping experience and 35.8% people prefer free flow layout for apparel store. It is also observed that the window display is considered to be the most important technique in visual merchandising to attract the customers than others as 41% say so. The respondents feel that the store image is captured through window display. The window display increases interest for a product and is considered as the main factor to visit a particular store by 53% people. Hence, the window display and layout are to be done with utmost care as they increase the business for apparel retail store.

Keywords: Consumer attitude, Store traffic, Window display, Visual merchandising, Layout.

1 Introduction

The visual merchandising helps apparel store generate traffic which can be effectively converted to sales. Visual merchandising involves creating the store ambience in such a way that it promotes sales. It involves exterior and interior arrangement in a store. It helps in attracting, engaging and also motivating customer in making a purchase [1]. Effective visual merchandising strategies help in evading competition as there are so many apparel retailers in a particular area selling similar products. It helps in standing out from the rest of the sellers. Interesting and attractive ways of visual merchandising are the need of the day and all the retailers are on the path of increasing their visual merchandising potential. There are various elements of visual merchandising like store exterior, interior, music, lighting, graphics,

window display, in store display, layouts, product arrangement, mannequin display, etc., Studies have been carried out to check the patronage intention against each of these elements to improve their relevance in store's success [2]. The promotional signage, window displays and layouts play a prominent role in visual merchandising. It is needed in today's context to create appealing window displays, store layouts, season based themes, festive based themes to attract potential customers to the outlet. Studies show that visual merchandising has been a real tool to convert a potential customer into a real customer [3]. The impact of visual merchandising on the buying behaviour of a consumer has been studied at length. Descriptive and inferential statistics have been used. A study by Selvaraj et. al. used chi square testing and found that window display, signage, colour and brightness were the important factors of visual merchandising [4]. Store entry by a customer is based on the visual merchandising techniques used, especially the exterior display that creates interest for the customer and makes him or her to take a decision to enter the store [5]. The window display gives the required information to the customer to decide if they have to make an entry into the store.

The visual merchandising tools also increase the chances of impulse buying behaviour through mannequin display and promotional signage [6]. The layout is another factor that contributes to the buying behaviour [7]. The walking pattern of the customer in a retail outlet influences his or her decision in making a purchase. Another important contributor for store entry is the mannequin display [8] especially during initial start of the outlet as it strikes the right note in the minds of the customer thereby evoking his or her sensory pleasures. It helps in deciding the right store for a customer related to his or her personal preference. It will encourage the pre purchase process by making the customer at least try the clothing once.

The advertising plays a vital role in increasing the buying interest of a customer [9] as there is over communication today. Right advertisements have to be created for consumers to know the details of the brand and product. The advertisement helps the customer to choose the right product or service among the available ones which are in abundance. Choosing the best requires advertisement and so it plays an important role in marketing process [10]. The advertisements should invoke positive thoughts in the customer to increase their interest towards a product [11]. Since advertisement has a psychological impact on the customer behaviour, it should be ensured that the advertisement changes the whole environment to be positive for the customer [12]. Window display tools are effective advertisers as they make the customer visit a shop. They communicate and engage with the customer. The window display has a significant impact on the mental image and arousal response of a customer [13]. Similar to window display, layout is another important factor that contributes to customer buying behaviour as mentioned above.

Hence, in this study, an attempt is made to study the customer attitude towards display and layout of apparel retail outlet.

2 Materials And Methods

This study involved conducting a survey with 500 respondents using a questionnaire. The respondents were not selected based on any age group as overall consumer attitude was to be assessed. The survey was administered to people visiting apparel retail stores in Coimbatore. They were explained the questions and then asked to answer them. For people who had difficulty in writing on their own, their responses were filled by the questioner and an approval was got from them for the answers marked. The questionnaire was divided into two

parts. The first part had questions on demographic details. The second part had questions on the consumer attitude towards window display and store layout. The details of the second part of the questionnaire are given below:

Influencing factor to enter a store

The question asked under this category was to find the most influencing factor for a customer to enter a store. The options given were store exterior graphics and signage, window display, outer glimpse of store, kind of merchandise on display, brand name and logo, promotional offering at the entrance

Influence of in store visual merchandising and display on store traffic

The first question in this category was to find the impact of in store visual merchandising and display on the store traffic. The question was asked about the most important factor that influences store traffic. The options given were bold graphics, music, lighting, mannequin styling, creative product display, layout and price talkers. The other question was the impact of display on making an impulse purchase.

Influence of layout on the shopping behaviour

The question in this category was to find the influence of layout on the shopping behaviour. The first question was asked about the effect of design and layout of a store on the consumer shopping experience. The second question was on the type of layout preferred. The options given were straight layout, race track layout, spine layout and free flow layout.

Importance of window display compared to other visual merchandising techniques

The questions asked were 1. Will the consumer enter a store by getting attracted to the mannequin and window display? 2. Has the customer purchased an item of clothing displayed in window? 3. What is the most important feature when visiting a store for the customer among lighting, fixtures, window display, music and layout? 4. Do the customers use window display to figure out the store's overall image?

Impact of window display on ones interest towards clothing

The questions asked were 1. Does the consumer's interest increase by seeing products in the display? 2. Do the customers notice the shops window display while making a purchase of apparel 3. Is window display a main factor that is considered before visiting particular apparel store?

3 Results And Discussions

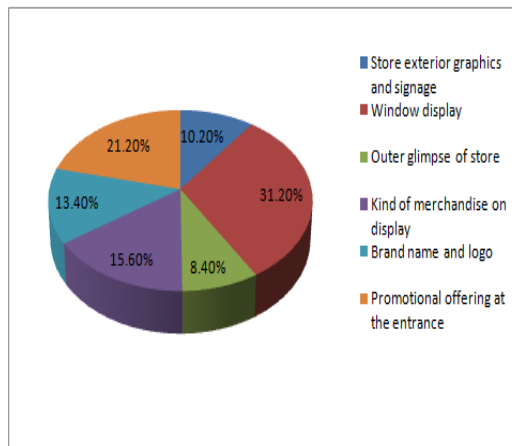
The survey questions answered by the respondents were analysed and following results were interpreted. It was found that the age of customers who answered ranged between 18 and 52. The number of male respondents was 196 and female respondents were 304. The average amount spent by the respondents for purchase of clothing in a year was Rs.14,000.

Influencing factor to enter a store

The answer for the question on the most influencing factor for a customer to enter a store is shown in Fig 1. The majority of people felt that window display was the influencing factor to enter a store. The window display had the highest approval at 31.2% followed by

promotional offering at the entrance at 21.2%. The offers attract many customers to go for the purchase as many customers buy products during festival offers. The purchase is all about the product that is being sold and so 15.6% feel that the kind of merchandise on display influences them to enter a store. The brand name and logo attracts 13.4% and store exterior graphics and signage make 10.2% of people to enter a store. The outer glimpse of store does not play a major role and only 8.4% feel that they wish to enter by just having a glimpse at the outlet.

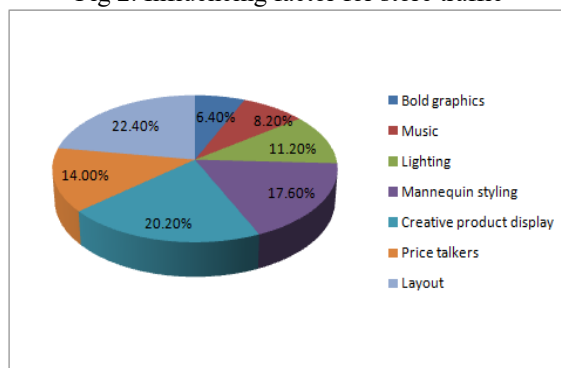
Fig 1. Influencing factor to enter an apparel store



Influence of in store visual merchandising and display on store traffic

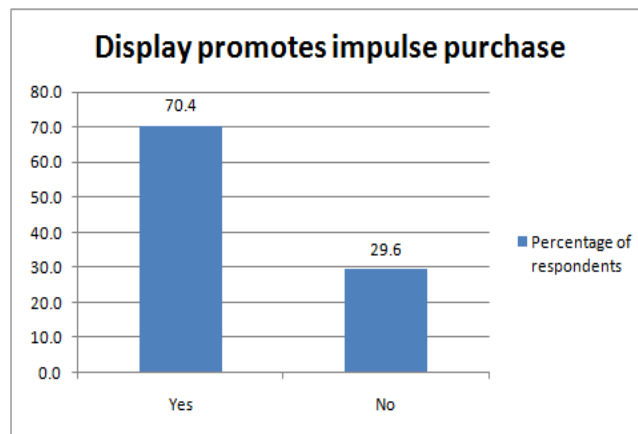
The influence of in store visual merchandising and display on store traffic is shown in Fig 2. It is observed that creative product display is the key driving factor on store traffic as 20.2% feel so. 17.6% feel that mannequin styling increases store traffic as it evokes interest to people to check due to eye catching mannequin styling. The layout is the second most important aspect to create store traffic as 22.4% say that. The another interesting observation is that price talkers or price tags attract 14% people as price plays a psychological role in visiting and purchasing from a shop. The other aspects like lighting, music and bold graphics have 11.2%, 8.2%, 6.4% approval from respondents that they do increase store traffic. The display and mannequin styling are the ones that stand out from the rest to increase the store traffic.

Fig 2. Influencing factor for store traffic



It was found that the store display promotes impulse purchase. Many of the respondents felt that they do a purchase because of getting attracted to the display. 70.4% respondents felt that they would make an impulse purchase due to display evoking interest to purchase the product as shown in Fig 3. Only 29.6% people felt otherwise.

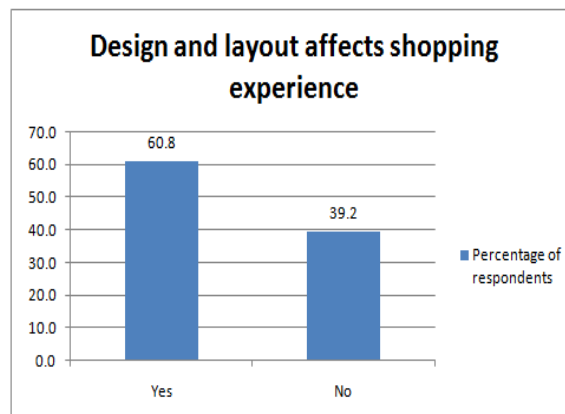
Fig 3. Impact of display on impulse purchase



Influence of layout on the shopping behaviour

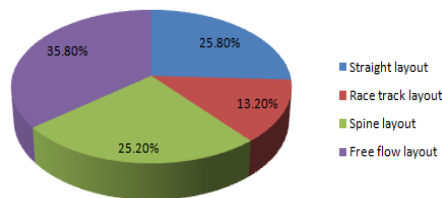
The influence of layout on the shopping behaviour of a customer was analysed. The impact of design and layout on shopping experience was checked and it was found that 60.8% felt that the design and layout of the store affects their shopping behaviour as shown in Fig 4. The majority felt that design and layout play a major role as it makes their purchase convenient and it also makes customers access products easily and quickly without any effort. There is only 39.2% customers saying that design and layout doesn't affect their shopping experience.

Fig 4. Design and layout on shopping experience



Out of the layouts used for apparel retail store, it was found that majority of people preferred free flow layout as shown in Fig 5. 35.8% respondents felt that free flow layout would suit apparel retail outlet. The straight layout and spine layout also had equal importance between them as 25.8% preferred straight and 25.2% preferred spine layout. Actually many people prefer standard way to follow to reach a product and do the purchase. But the result here is different as free flow layout is preferred. In metropolitan cities, people are busy and would need fixed layouts whereas in cosmopolitan cities, people do have the time to follow a free flow layout where they will spend time to search and pick required merchandise. Only 13.2% people preferred race track layout.

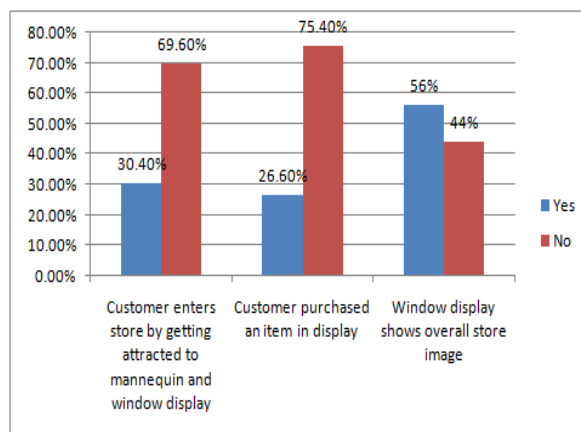
Fig 5. Layout for apparel retail outlet



Importance of window display compared to other visual merchandising techniques

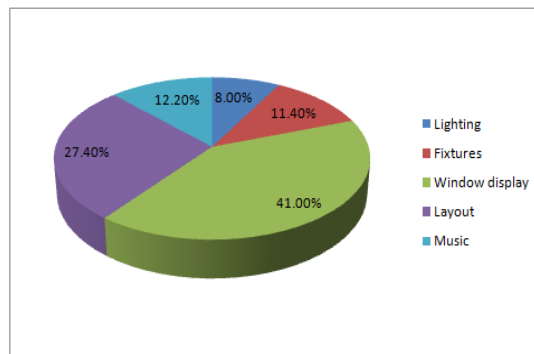
From the Fig 6., the importance of window display compared to other visual merchandising techniques can be evaluated. 69.6% customers do not enter the store only by getting attracted to mannequin and window display. Although window display is the important factor, other factors do contribute and this shows that it is not the only factor that would make 100% of customers enter the store. However 56% feel that the window display shows the overall store image. Also only 26.6% people purchased the product that was on display. It could be because people get evoked by the display product and then check various options available to select the right apparel.

Fig 6. Impact of window display on purchase and store entry



Another question was posed to the customer with respect to the most important visual merchandising factor among the various ones and the results are shown in Fig 7. It was interesting to note that 41% people felt that window display is the most important factor among the various factors. Effective window displays attract people and make them enter a shop which increases the chances of purchase. The second important factor is the layout with 27.4% saying so followed by music at 12.2%. The fixtures in the store are considered important by 11.4% and only 8% people felt that lighting is important.

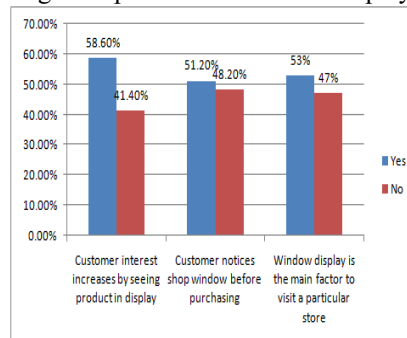
Fig 7. Different visual merchandising factors



Impact of window display on ones interest towards clothing

The Fig 8. shows the importance of window display. A question was posed on the interest of customer increasing when seeing a product in display. It was found that 58.6% felt that their interest increases by seeing a product in display and 41.4% people felt otherwise. This is because the display is arranged in such a way that it attracts the customer and evokes the right senses in the minds of the consumer with respect to product purchase. Also another question was asked on customer noticing shop window before making a purchase and 51.2% said that they noticed the window before purchasing thereby stressing the importance of window display. The last question was to find the main factor to visit a particular store and 53% said that window display is the main factor that would make them visit a particular store. It is a very interesting finding that window display is the main factor to be considered thereby stressing its importance.

Fig 8. Importance of window display



This study has provided a clear picture on the importance of window display and layout on increasing the store traffic of apparel retail outlet and how they need more emphasis to increase the business potential of apparel retail outlet. The consumer attitude towards them has been clearly identified.

4 Conclusion

The display and layout of apparel store are checked for their importance in this study. A questionnaire was given to 500 customers of different apparel retail outlets. The results were analysed for the influence of in store display, window display and layout on store traffic, shopping behaviour and consumer's interest towards clothing. The customers' belonged to different age group ranging between 18 and 52 and involved females majorly. The average amount spent by customers for yearly purchase of clothing was mentioned as Rs.14000. It was found that the window display is the influencing factor for the customer to visit the store. It was further confirmed that the customer gets interest towards a product due to display. 41% respondents communicate that window display is the most important aspect out of all visual merchandising techniques. It is also found that many customers have purchased the product that was on display and 51.2% noticed the window before making a clothing purchase. Only 30.4% customers said that they entered a store because of getting attracted to the mannequin. Customers preferred free flow layout among all the layouts. Window display was considered to be important than layout when both of them were compared against each other. Out of the different visual merchandising techniques, this study was able to find that the layout, in store display and window display are the key factors that contribute to growth of apparel retail outlet.

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