

## **Impact of visual merchandising as a motivating factor on shopper buying behaviour**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The present study was carried to investigate the impact of visual merchandising on customer buying behaviour that is affected by store atmospherics features like store front, mannequins, window displays, themes, lighting, colours, music, scents, temperature, sale signs, crowding and posters. The objective of the study was to examine the impact of different motivational factors emerged from store atmospheric cues that attracts customers to go inside a store and entice them to make a purchase. For the present research work purposive sampling, Interview schedule and convenient sampling methods were used to carry out the research work. The sample size consisted of 101 research scholars from faculty of arts and Sciences of Panjab University, Chandigarh. Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test measure of sampling adequacy was used to examine the appropriateness of factor analysis that showed store atmospherics bring a psychological feeling in the mind of customers who enters the store. The output of the study unfolds that Window displays was considered the most important motivating factor with Mean and SD ( $5.09 \pm .984$ ). Color was considered the second important motivating factors with Mean and SD ( $4.95 \pm 1.29$ ) followed by lighting ( $4.49 \pm 1.33$ ), Sale signs ( $4.45 \pm 1.38$ ), Store front ( $4.43 \pm 1.35$ ), music ( $4.26 \pm 1.39$ ) and Themes and Story of collection ( $4.16 \pm 1.58$ ) was found as eighth important factor to shoppers. Temperature ( $3.75 \pm 1.61$ ) was revealed as the ninth important motivating factor as respondents felt that they mainly notice the temperature in extreme conditions. Scents ( $3.12 \pm 1.75$ ) was revealed as tenth important factors as respondents were attracted by different types of scents in the store environment. Posters ( $3.01 \pm 1.42$ ) and Crowd ( $1.86 \pm 1.31$ ) was considered as the least important motivating factor as maximum respondents avoided shopping in crowded stores.

**Key Words :** Visual merchandising, Shopper buying behaviour, Music, Lighting, Scents

### **INTRODUCTION**

Visual Merchandising has been around since the civilization begins. As vendors used to sell fruits and vegetables and arranged their products in an attractive manner for the touch and feel of the customer, or when the farmer displayed his red and ripe apples on the top of basket, this presentation of merchandise is called visual display of goods, or visual merchandising. Ebster and Garaus (2011) define visual merchandising as "the art and science of presenting products in the most visually appealing way", emphasizing on the communication with the customers through images and presentations.

Visual Merchandising refers to “Store Displays” or “Window Dressings”, It is the arranging of props, fixtures, signage, graphics, mannequins and backdrop to influence a customer to enter the store and make a purchase.

**History of visual merchandising :**



**Fig. 1 : The development of Arcades and Grand Expositions in 18<sup>th</sup> century      First departmental store in 1852**



**Fig. 2 : Window display by Gordon Selfridge in 1920s, live models posing in picture      FWindow display of 21<sup>st</sup> century**

**Components of visual merchandising :**

The elements are the aids used that helps to show or enhance the clothes on display. These include mannequins and other forms, props, fixtures, lighting, color, music, banners, signage and graphics.



**Props**

**Mannequins**

**Signs**

**Props:**

Props are creative displays that are often built with items that were pulled from junk pile or items that were manufactured for other uses but serve as wonderful props for windows and interior settings.

**Signage and graphics:**

Retailers use signage to identify the location of merchandise. They are featured in many different formats including posters, boards, banners, backlit transparencies and pennants.

**Color:**

Color is a powerful visual element. It can set mood, emphasize features and highlight a product. The creative use of colors can enhance a retailer's image and help create a mood.

**Lighting:**

Lighting is an essential part of visual presentations. Working with light to make displays and merchandise more dramatic is the goal of every display design. Lighting can be used to direct shoppers through the store, draw attention to a part of a display area or specific item in a display.



**Blue color theme adding to royalty**

**Lighting in the form of Glass jars**

**Music:**

The right music is thought to have the potential to increase sales opportunities, define retail image and attract more customers.

**Mannequins:**

A mannequins is a three dimensional form representing the human body. The use of mannequins in display apparel tells the customer how a person will look in the garment. They are available in realistic, semi-realistic, abstract and partial forms.

The atmospheric dimensions colour, lighting levels, appearance of objects (size and shape), volume, pitch tempo and style of sounds; nature and intensity of scent play an important role in affecting the mood of a customer in a store (Baker, 1986)

Light and color can have such a strong influence on people's attention so as to even physically attract customers toward a retail display and set a tone for the store's atmospherics (Bellizzi *et al.*, 1983)

Kellaris and Kent (1992) The right music is thought to have the potential to increase sales opportunities, define retail image and attract more customers

Pleasant scents facilitates recall of pleasant memories, increase prosocial behaviour and increase the time spent in store. (Baron and Bronfen, 1994) Merchandise display can also be an important aid in helping consumers to make purchase decision. Window display is an important promotional issue. Consumers can more easily locate and obtain the required merchandise, if they are well displayed on fixtures (Dunne, 1990 and Bitner, 1992)

Quartier *et al.* (2003) undertook a study in Belgium regarding the influence of lighting on consumer mood and buying behavior. The study provided a broader look on how lighting is applied in retail spaces. Results showed that lighting is acknowledged to have an incremental added value to retail environment, store branding and even bind consumers.

Shaw (2004) undertook a study in Central Illinois and studied the effect of store image and store design on female consumer decision process and found that women were more likely to be attracted to stores that cater to their aesthetic needs (color, music, store layout, scents), women notice not only the events that effect them directly but also the ones that contribute to overall retail environment.

Hu and Jasper (2006) conducted a study in USA, about the roles social cues play in the store environment and their impact on store image. They found that customers had a more favorable attitude towards merchandise and service quality and feel more aroused or pleased within a store where more social cues were present. Social cues involve a number of artistic elements such as color, lighting, mannequins, fixtures, graphics and salesmanship.

Liaw (2007) conducted a study in Taiwan to explore the influence of Multiple store environment cues on shopping mood and found that visual elements such as store design and store employee could influence shopping mood but the influence of music was not so significant. As a result retail stores should make use of good environmental designs, and service staff, other visual factors such as music, lighting, scents, color, product placement stimulate positive emotion in customers and create an initial impression on the customers entering the stores.

Khandai *et al.* (2012) studied the impact of window display, in-store mannequin, floor merchandising and promotional signage on impulse buying. The study was conducted in Delhi. The result showed that window display work as a strong stimuli inducing and motivating the shopper to make an unplanned purchase decision upon entering the store.

Jain *et al.* (2012) studied the relationship between women impulse buying, product decision making and visual appeal of apparel displays. The study was conducted in Delhi. The result showed that apparel displayed on mannequins inside the store windows has a significant impact on the purchase decision of women.

Mishra and Agnihotri (2012) study determined the major visual display determinants and their impact on consumers shopping behaviour . The study was conducted on 150 respondents and carried in six organised Indian grocery retail chains in New Delhi. Collectively the study concluded that consumers entering retail stores are fascinated by the way the products are displayed, appearance of shelves and attractive colour schemes but are troubled by product pricing and they do not bother for the store entrance, signage, walkways, lightning and quality of merchandise in the store.

### **Objectives :**

The objectives of the study was to find out the impact of motivational factors- store front, window displays, mannequins, color, lighting, scents, sale signs, posters, crowd, themes, music that attract customers to go inside a store and entice them to make a purchase.

## METHODOLOGY

A broad perspective to understand the motivations and needs of young consumers requires an exploratory qualitative research along with quantitative aspects. To analyse this, 101 research scholars from faculty of arts and Sciences of Panjab University were interviewed. The city Chandigarh is the locale of the study. For the present research work purposive sampling, Interview schedule and convenient sampling methods were used to carry out the research work.

In-depth interviews were conducted from research scholars of various departments of Sciences mainly Anthropology, Physics, Botany, Chemistry, Zoology, Geology and Nanoscience, Arts mainly History, Psychology, Geography, Economics, Political science and Education

Quantitative technique (Factor analysis ) allowed respondents to provide a richer and more accurate set of responses. Where as the quantitative options help to interpret answers more easily and accurately.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Factor output :

Table 1 shows the factor analysis of visual merchandising which comprises of 12 factors that motivate respondents to go inside a store and check on products. Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test measure of sampling adequacy was used to examine the appropriateness of factor analysis. Kaiser- Meyer Olkin (KMO) had value of .564 indicated the correlation pattern between sampling was adequate for the factor analysis. Bartlett's test for sphericity was found highly significant ( $p < .001$ ) showed that there was significant correlation between between two items.

On the basis of Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalisation, 5 factors have been extracted. The first 5 factors explained 66.4 % of variance. Each factor is integrated of all those variables that had factor loadings greater than . 4.12 factors used in the study were compressed into 5 components.

**Table 1 : KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.546
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	204.914
	df	66
	Sig.	.000

**Table 2 : Total Variance explained**

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	2.394	19.947	19.947	2.394	19.947	19.947	1.962	16.352	16.352
2	1.859	15.495	35.442	1.859	15.495	35.442	1.712	14.268	30.620
3	1.367	11.389	46.831	1.367	11.389	46.831	1.595	13.295	43.915
4	1.224	10.200	57.031	1.224	10.200	57.031	1.396	11.632	55.547
5	1.127	9.391	66.423	1.127	9.391	66.423	1.305	10.876	66.423
6	.967	8.055	74.478						
7	.775	6.454	80.932						
8	.587	4.889	85.821						
9	.514	4.284	90.105						
10	.468	3.898	94.003						
11	.426	3.549	97.552						
12	.294	2.448	100.000						

**Extraction method: Principal component analysis :**

Variables	Components					Mean(SD)
	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>F1</b>						
Sale sign	.711					4.45± 1.38
Crowd	.772					1.86 ± 1.31
Posters	.642					3.01 ± 1.42
Theme	.437					4.16 ± 1.58
Av. score- 3.37						V
<b>F2</b>						
Store front		.715				4.43± 1.35
Music		.652				4.26 ± 1.39
Scents		.726				3.12 ± 1.75
Av. Score- 3.93						IV
<b>F3</b>						
Store front			.438			4.43± 1.35
Window display			.552			5.09± .984
Color			.868			4.95 ± 1.29
Av. score- 4.82						I
<b>F4</b>						
Mannequin				.843		4.50± 1.27
Music				.423		4.26 ± 1.39
Theme				.432		4.16 ± 1.58
Av. score- 4.30						II
<b>F5</b>						
Lighting					.727	4.49± 1.33
Temperature					.578	3.75 ± 1.61
Av. score- 4.12						III

**Factor 1 :**

The Factor 1 explained variance of (19.947 %) and comprised of four variables namely music, scent, poster and crowd. All these variables contribute to motivating factors of store atmospherics. It ranged from .772 (for crowd) to .711 (for sale sign) indicating posters (.642) and theme (.437). Sale signs (4.45±1.38) being the most influential factor and crowd (1.86± 1.31) being the least influential factor. However, the average score for factor 1 was 3.37, which is the (lowest among all five extracted factors). Probably, shoppers did consider these factors important, but the impact of sale signs was more than other factors.

**Factor 2 :**

Second factor extracted in this research explained (15.495 %) of variance. It comprised of 3 variables; Store front, music and scents. Factor loading for all three variables ranged from Store front (.715) to Music (.652). Average score per factor for this factor turned out be 3.93 indicating the second least influential factors among five extracted factors. It indicated that shoppers are more attracted towards store fronts and music as compared to scents. Dube, Chebat and Morin (1995) also found that Background music is very influential and it adds to the interaction between

buyers and sellers. The music played affects buyer behaviour, creates store/brand image and thus attract or control store traffic.

**Factor 3 :**

This factor explained 11.389 % of variance. However, this factor shows association within three factors *i.e.* store front, window display and color. Factor loading of these factors ranged from Color (.868) to Store front (.468). Average score per factor was 4.82 which is the highest among five extracted factors. Window display (5.09 ± .984) was considered the highest factor among all extracted factors. However, these variables underline a common theme. Store front, colors and window displays were considered important attractive factors for shoppers as they entice customers to enter a store and make a purchase.

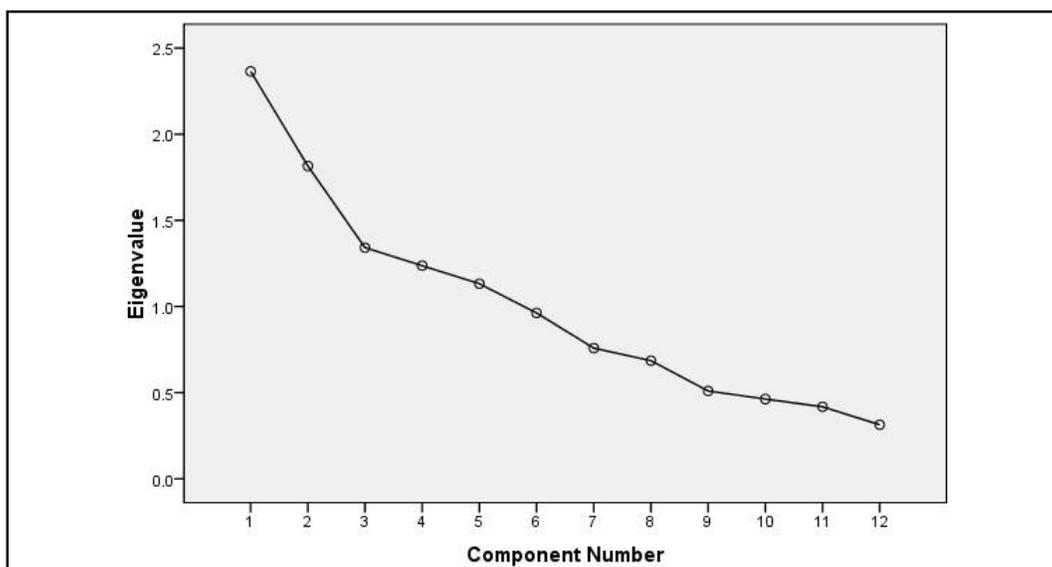
**Factor 4 :**

Fourth factor extracted in this study explained 10.200% of variance. It contained variables such as Mannequin, music and themes and story of collection. The factor loadings ranged from .843 to .423. Mannequin (being the third highest extracted factor Average score per factor was 4.30. This is the second important factor out of five extracted factors.

**Factor 5:**

Fifth factor extracted explained 9.391% of variance. However, the factor shows association among Lighting (.727) and Temperature (.578). Lighting being the fourth highest extracted factor among all factors. Average score per factor was 4.12 which is the third highest among five extracted factors. Levy and Weitz (2009) also examined that lightning help in creating a sense of excitement in the store environment. They also mentioned that the important use of lighting is focusing the merchandise with spot lights on special items. Thus focusing the merchandise can train shoppers eyes to the items and give merchandise an additional appeal and unique selling points.

Scree plot displays the Eigen value and to analyse the factor analysis Eigen value above 1.0



**Fig. 3 : Screen plot**

A quantitative and qualitative approach was employed. A grounded approach using an open coding technique was employed, where the researcher coded the open-ended question and the themes were identified for each question. Further the interviews were sorted into themes. Some of the interviews were quantified on Visual merchandising, Displays, Lighting, Music, Window displays and Colors explaining the overall impact of Visual merchandising are as under:

Themes	Narratives
Visual merchandising	“Visual Merchandising is an attractive factor .Stores in a simple and subtle way attracts a person. One is not aware but consciously or unconsciously, V.M. attracts people . <i>Jihnu akkha na khaan ohnu muh ne ki kahna</i> ”(the things which does not appeal to eyes would not liked to be eaten) (Simranpeet,27, Married, Jat Sikh, Arts, Nuclear family)
Displays	“As you think of US Polo brand, a house, saddle, full kit of Polo game comes to your mind. The displays actually build a brand image”(Mandeep, 28, Married, Khatri, Science, Hostler)
Posters	“Once she saw a Benetton brand store displayed posters to eradicate racism. These posters attracted and educated us. she can still recall these brand displays in my mind” (Shruti, 25, Unmarried, Khatri, Sciences)
Mannequins	“She saw a <i>Kurta</i> in white colour displayed on mannequin in Bhuvneshwar at Fab India. she loved Khadi stuff and still remembered that <i>Kurta</i> and the first thing that came to her mind, when she came to Chandigarh was to visit Fab India store”.(Richa, 32, Married, Hindu Bania)
Color	“ She was very much impressed by the color displayed in the window at zara store. Sometimes she said they just focus on one single color and one get aware that these colors are in fashion this season”(Radhika, 28, Unmarried, Brahmin ,Chandigarh , Sciences, Day scholar)
Lighting	“Lighting is an important part of display, Color and lightning together attracts customer’s attention. Casual clothes look good with different types of lighting focused on them. Meena Bazaar display of lehgas and sarees with the focus of soft yellow lights always attract us” (Ritu, 34, Married, Brahmin, Himachal Pradesh, Sciences, Day scholar)
Music	She prefer listening to Soft rhythmic music, music attract her attention. This is the reason why she visited Zara store. Music lend her to stay longer in the store and many a times, she have purchased many products due to music running in the background (Mansimar, 24, Unmarried, Khatri Sikh, Arts, Hostler)

### Summary and conclusion :

In the nutshell, it can be concluded that Visual Merchandising helps in buying, attracts our eyes, influences our decision, and helps in getting first hand experience of the goods displayed and helps one to make up the mind about that products.

Overall out of 12 factors, five components were extracted. Associated was found among five groups. Together as a group, Store front, window display and color was considered the most important motivating factors with average score 4.82. The second important association was found among Mannequins, music and theme and story of collections with average score 4.30. Lighting and temperature was the third important motivating factor with average score 4.12. The fourth factor loading association was found among Store front, music and scents with average score 3.93 and the fifth factor loading was found among sale signs, crowd, posters and themes and story of collection with average score 3.12.

The study further revealed that with regard to factors, window display was considered the most important factor that attracted shoppers to visit the stores with Mean and SD (5.09+ .984). Color was considered the second important motivating factors with Mean and SD (4.95 ± 1.29). Customers also mentioned that they were attracted by clothes on mannequins (4.50±1.27) as it gives them information regarding how to wear this garment and even it makes customers aware

regarding the colors which are in fashion this season. Further findings revealed that lighting ( $4.49 \pm 1.33$ ) was considered the fourth important motivating factor as maximum respondents felt that garment looks somewhat different with the focus of additional lights on them. Sale signs ( $4.45 \pm 1.38$ ) was found as the fifth important motivating factors as maximum respondents mentioned that they generally enter stores by looking at the sale signs in windows. Store front ( $4.43 \pm 1.35$ ) was regarded as the six important motivating factor followed by music ( $4.26 \pm 1.39$ ) as maximum respondents were of the view that Shoppers are attracted by different types of music running in the stores. Music increases their stay in the store and even influences their buying behaviour. Themes and Story of collection was found as eighth important factor to shoppers. Temperature ( $3.75 \pm 1.61$ ) was revealed as the ninth important motivating factor as respondents felt that they mainly notice the temperature in extreme conditions. Scents ( $3.12 \pm 1.75$ ) was revealed as tenth important factors as respondents were attracted by different types of scents in the store environment. Posters ( $3.01 \pm 1.42$ ) and Crowd ( $1.86 \pm 1.31$ ) was considered as the least important motivating factor as maximum respondents avoid shopping in crowded stores.

Shoppers now a days are more attracted by safe, attractive and comfortable shopping environments. Moreover, retailers now feel delighted in learning more about their target customer than ever before and they tend to provide shoppers a good store environment. They take a proactive integrated atmospherics approach to create a certain look of the store by making use of ambient, design and social factors to stimulate shopping behavior and contribute to customer perceptions.

Since more store design are being ‘tailored’ for this new generation of shoppers, continuous investigation into shoppers needs in the store environment is necessary.

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