

**THE IMPACT OF VISUAL MERCHANDISING ON IMPULSIVE BUYING BEHAVIOR OF FEMALES ON APPAREL SEGMENT; A STUDY BASED ON MALLS IN ERNAKULAM**

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**Abstract**

Being a prosperous business, the apparel industry has seen an aggressive contest amongst the traders for attracting the people in accordance with their lifestyle. So it is an essential fact that the retailers should be able to winsome their customers in an effective manner for they need to be unique and distinctive in their trading culture. The similitude in the clothing design such as fashion or trend, urges the industry to make use of the concept called visual merchandise which develops an inclination towards the product by intensifying the irresistible purchasing approach of the buyer. The research aims to find how various aspects of retail display influence the impulse buying behavior of the customers as a result of visiting 5 shopping malls in Ernakulam. There are six dimensions of visual merchandising as well as the impact of it on spontaneous purchasing attitude analyzed here in the research. They are store layout, product display, product self-position, promotion signage, window display and In-store form/Mannequin display. And the outcome of the research reports that a huge influence of different features of interior display on spontaneous purchasing of the customers is seen. Resonantly, it is found that the visual merchandising is a significant tool in making strategic marketing plans for accelerating the sales of the products.

**Keywords** Visual Merchandising, Layout, Product display, Product Shelf Position, Promotion Signage, Window Display and In-Store Form/Mannequin Display, Impulse Buying.

**INTRODUCTION**

Among the budding markets, India is the 'fourth most attractive retail destination' across the world (McKinsey, 2011). The retail industry has become more complex and been refining swiftly. The significant contributor in the revamped retail style is 'the shopping mall- the one stop destination'(Kearney, 2011). As it is implied that malls are not only entitled to shop but also to rejoice, interact and get entertained. While shopping from big malls, customers can access to anything and everything under one roof as to exemplify, one can purchase branded products like clothes, foot wear, and electronic devices and so on. Going to and buying branded items from malls creates a feeling of complacency in the customer's' life as the products offer higher quality. When shopping is taken into account, nowadays, its culture has become novel as the malls are intending to bring something different from the traditional way of shopping culture. Hence, in the modern world, it is important for each shop to impact the people to purchase its products with appealing visual presentations which illustrate its own image and idea.

This eventually makes the shoppers become customers by forging honesty and loyalty and bolstering their impulse buying behaviors. (Bronson D 2012).It is reported that India's organized retail possessed a share of 31 percent in clothing as well as apparel in 2011(AT Kearney 2011). The customer's in India are well cognizant of the trend, the design, and also the innovative approaches happening in the shopping centers. So it is essential to learn and comprehend the aspects of visual merchandising to implement as an inevitable part of marketing strategy in order to accelerate the buying fascination in the shoppers, especially, making an influence on impulse buying behavior of women.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Bronson D (2012).Most of the retail stores give preference to visual presentations because of the constant change taking place in the economic and consumer space. Even though, there is an increment in the amount of retail space available to customers, they are expending less money on items per square foot. Baker J Haytko, D (2013).Customers get bored and uninfluenced if there is no uniqueness in window display and keeping the same for a long time. On the other hand, it can be assumed that if a customer comes once in every two weeks and if the shopkeeper wants him inclined towards the products, the windows and displays should be altered frequently which will always be intriguing and fresh. Yang et al (2011). It is perceived that different situations make different

shopping behaviors. To exemplify, if the customer enjoys shopping or if he has more leisure time, he will like preferring impulse buying. Palaniswamy et. al (2012) It is believed that the nature of impulse buying depends upon the size of the shop, if it is bigger, the spontaneity in purchasing will surge or if it is smaller, the impulse buying will not be followed. Shaheed Basheer et al (2013). The research throws light on the values of culture and lifestyles (life complacency, financial security, lifestyle, in- group contact, gender role and security) which made a great influence on impulse buying of Pakistani buyers. Ramesh Kumar Chaturvedi (2013). Even though In-store factors are one of the major influencing aspects, the scale of impact is not that concordant for all the factors. For instance, the elements like the design, convenience and image of the shop have remarkable interrelationship with impulse buying ratio however the 'Trial ability' has an adverse association with it. Guha (2013) many claim that working women, especially wives are more authentic and relieved while making decisions on purchasing. To cite an example, taking the products of FMCG, the employees have little time for shopping and that might be the reason for they shop when and only it is essential. It is not about having rejuvenation. And the wives who are working found shopping for edible items less often. RajanYadav (2009).This research confers a substructure to figure out the factors of the buyers' attitude and outlook towards the rising retail designs like the shopping mall. It also assumes that there are some important variables which influence to form the approach and comprehension in customers towards shopping malls and probes into certain variables of demography and society such as income, frequency in going to malls, time-spending formats and priorities given to products among men shoppers.

### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

India, being the 'fourth attractive retail destination' across the world amongst thirty rising markets, the retail industry provides 10 percent of the GDP and 8 percent of occupation as well (Kalla S M Arora, 2011).Henceforth, the traders have to make sure that their shops are opted by the customers for shopping. If they inculcate more innovative design on store space, it can correspond with the expectations of the consumers and thereby creating tight competition. This is where visual merchandising becomes more interesting and important to study and apply in retail industry. The principal objective of the research has been trying to highlight positive effects of retail display implementing through various techniques in order to impact customers' impulse buying behavior especially of female shoppers in the apparel section.

### **THE RESEARCH GAP**

The interpretation of the literature available on the subject depicts a sort of gap. While comparing the developed economy with developing one, the impulse buying behavior and visual merchandising towards malls among women have a significant variance. There are many research theses available regarding this subject but it refers to American and European retail consumption which has less connection and relevance with the Indian scene. In short, the materials for research are inadequate in Indian background. In the Indian retail industry, the urge to learn and analyze the visual merchandising and so forth make the women shoppers inclined towards shopping can be seen as the rate of new developments happening in the same.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In the present fashion trending world, there is a greater importance for visual merchandising which can bring the people inside the shop and make them buy apparels. It is framed as the art of retailing. In the field of retailing, visual merchandising has got a terrific impact. It is intended to captivate the shoppers and make them engaged and encouraged in buying a product. (Burns D J and Warren H B 1995).In India, both the traditional retailers and the malls have undergone terrible problems regarding the development of their top and bottom lines which adversely affected the profile and identity of the retail market in India (AT Kearney, 2011). It is understood that the retailers should be able to discern the nature of each customer and fulfill the needs and desires of theirs in an effective and efficient manner while shopping.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

- Effect of visual merchandising on impulsive purchasing attitude of female shoppers based on shopping malls in Ernakulam

### **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This research will be advantageous for a lot of retail traders and marketing occupiers to comprehend the outcome of visual merchandising in retail industry and how they are associated with the impulse buying behavior of women. The shopping supremacy and requirements of women will change accordingly. So this study will assist the manager, designer and visual merchandiser of the shop to be conscious and updated about the changing needs of females in the store environment and its image.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In order to organize this research work, the cross-sectional descriptive research design is employed which entitles the researcher to understand the problem at given point of time of the public interest. This design is having two parts. They are exploratory and descriptive. In this study, the researcher intends to examine the response of consumers towards visual merchandising and the various aspects of it. The customers who walked out the shops were surveyed with the structured questionnaire. It was a purposive sampling and conducted at Lulu mall, Oberon mall, Grand mall, Prestige mall and Central Square mall of Ernakulam for one month. The elements collected after the survey on the basis of researcher's own perception and the samples have been taken after considering certain aspects which are noted below.

The sample size of 385 respondents was chosen from various locations in various malls in Ernakulam city. All of them were managed to answer the questions about the visit of malls. Employing the sampling method, sample of 5 shopping malls are drawn. There were 385 respondents collectively and 77 from each mall.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

The investigation of the details performed in the coming stage. The initial reliability test for all seven variables was implemented. The Cronbach's Alpha of the reliability test was 0.89 for impulse purchase, 0.64 for window display, and 0.682 for in-store form/mannequin display, 0.817 for product shelf position, 0.653 for product display and 0.73 for promotional signage, which means the questionnaire is reliable. The outcome showcases that all of the abstractions has dependency larger than 0.6 so we proceed for further scanning

The objective of the study is identifying the factors influencing impulse buying. Structural equation modelling (SEM) method is opted for its faculty to inspect a sequence of dependent relationships and direct and indirect effects among the abstracts within the model. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is a type of structural equation modelling (SEM), which gives out, the relationship between understood measures.

The study evaluates the effect of store characteristic, Store Layout, Product display, Product shelf position, Promotion Signage, Window Display and In-Store Form/ Mannequin Display which leads to the spontaneous purchasing. Before doing the final model first, it considered the measurement model and test whether the statements or latent variables under each of the variables Store Layout, Product display, Product shelf position, Promotion Signage, Window Display and In-Store Form/Mannequin Display measures them correctly or not and the outcome is illustrated in the following graph.

**Table 20 Model fit Indices for CFA- Preference for investment**

	$\chi^2$	DF	P	Normed $\chi^2$	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA
Preference for investment	40.303	11	.000	3.664	.977	.907	.995	.987	.996	.006	.084

All the aspects stuffed notably on the undiscovered constructs. The value of the fit indices indicates a reasonable fit of the measurement model with data. In short the measurement model confirms to the factor structure of the abstracts.

**Table 21 Regression coefficient**

Path	Estimate	CR	P	Variance explained
unintended products <del>Store</del> Layout tend to walk directly towards the products <del>Store</del> Layout	0.785	14.853	<0.001	61.7
I tend to follow the store layout <del>Store</del> Layout	0.995	42.030	<0.001	98.9
attracted <del>Product</del> display	0.943	24.765	<0.001	88.9
buy products visually attractive <del>Product</del> display	0.966	28.474	<0.001	93.3
buy products displayed <del>Product</del> display	0.998	48.470	<0.001	99.6
	0.912	21.605	<0.001	83.1

located in eye-level	Product shelf position	0.497	7.654	<0.001	24.7
displayed on shelves	Product shelf position	0.476	7.268	<0.001	22.7
displayed on shelves on sight	Product shelf position	0.583	9.362	<0.001	34.0
special offers	Promotion Signage	0.137	2.695	0.007	1.9
Promotional signage	Promotion Signage	0.910	29.855	<0.001	82.8
Price reductions	Promotion Signage	0.977	43.525	<0.001	95.5
compelled to enter the store	Window Display	0.552	12.142	<0.001	30.4
attracted	Window Display	0.555	12.227	<0.001	30.7
decision to purchase	Window Display	0.492	10.529	<0.001	24.2
tend to buy	Mannequin Display	1.047	36.881	<0.001	109.6
get idea about what to buy	Mannequin Display	0.889	27.698	<0.001	79.0
attracted	Mannequin Display	0.008	0.156	0.876	0.0

From the table all the regression coefficient except special offers and attracted to In-Store Form/Mannequin Display have regression coefficient greater than 0.4 so we conclude that all the statements or construct measures the endogenous variables correctly. In the case of special offers and attracted to In-Store Form/Mannequin Display does not influence. So these two constructs are removed from further analysis.

The full SEM model is to identify the effect of Store Layout, Product display, Product shelf position, Promotion Signage, Window Display and In-Store Form/Mannequin Display on impulse buying. That is in this case we test the hypothesis

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Store Layout is an influencing factor in Impulse buying.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Product display is an influencing factor in Impulse buying.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Product shelf position is an influencing factor in Impulse buying.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Promotion Signage is an influencing factor in Impulse buying.

**H<sub>5</sub>:** Window Display is an influencing factor in Impulse buying.

**H<sub>6</sub>:** In-Store Form/Mannequin Display is an influencing factor in Impulse buying.

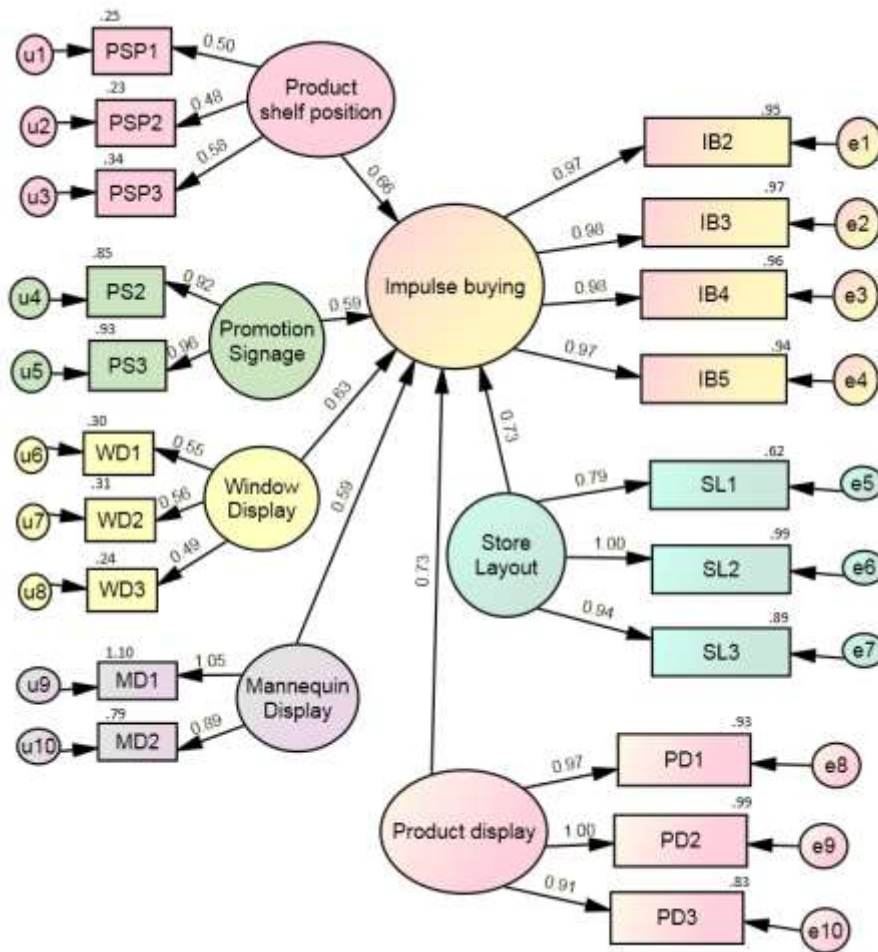
**Table 22 Model fit Indices for CFA- Influence of environmental forces**

	$\chi^2$	DF	P	Normed $\chi^2$	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA
SEM full model	28.940	24	.222	1.206	.986	.968	.929	.975	.986	.042	.023

**Table 23 Regression coefficient**

Path	Estimate	CR	P	Variance explained	rank
Store Layout → Impulse buying.	0.731	18.194	<0.000	90.06	2
Product display → Impulse buying.	0.733	18.278	<0.001	79.39	1
Product shelf position → Impulse buying.	0.660	15.495	<0.001	86.00	3
Promotion Signage → Impulse buying.	0.593	13.335	<0.001	79.57	5
Window Display → Impulse buying.	0.632	14.556	<0.001	82.00	4
Mannequin Display → Impulse buying.	0.589	13.215	<0.001	84.27	6

The Store Layout had distinctive impact on Impulse buying as the systematised straight outcome of this construct on Impulse buying was 0.731, the Product display was 0.733, the Product shelf position was 0.660, the Promotion Signage was 0.593, the Window Display was 0.632, In-Store Form/Mannequin Display was 0.589, which are more than 0.4 (also  $p$  value was important). The hypothesis  $H_1, H_2, H_3, H_4, H_5$  and  $H_6$  is accepted and conclude that The Store Layout, Product display, Product shelf position, Promotion Signage, Window Display and In-Store Form/Mannequin Display are an influencing factor in Impulse buying.



**FINDINGS**

- Majority of the respondents (40.3 percent) are come to mall and made unplanned purchasing of Garments items while 32.2 percent are come to mall and made unplanned purchasing of consumer items.
- Most of the respondent were confident in their answer that they agree with they enjoying Apparels shopping at Malls. About 58 percent Agree and 14 percent strongly agree with this statement.
- The results exhibited that the Store Layout, the element of visual merchandising had remarkable impact on Impulse buying as the standardized direct effect of this construct on Impulse buying was 0.731, which is more than 0.4.

**SUGGESTIONS**

- From studies it is clear that large number of consumers prefers visiting shopping malls on weekends and special holidays. So, the Apparel stores try to give better offers on these days.
- Retailers should provide unique, contemporary, sophisticated and exclusive merchandise in their stores according to interviewed teens as they expect exclusive and unique products in shopping malls.

- Store's layouts should be designed such a way that allows proper movement around the shop.
- The use of lighting, color and background music and flooring style should be in a matching combination.
- The consumers are still price sensitive, so storekeepers always try to maintain a low price and high quality of products for the consumers.

#### **SCOPE OF FURTHER RESEARCH**

Further research can be conducted to improve top line and bottom line of shopping malls and organized retail industry as a whole. Research can also be directed on the elderly consumers to understand the reasons for the revisit to shopping malls. A comparative analysis of mall shopping behaviour in Tier I and Tier II cities can also be undertaken. A study on comparative analysis of the preferences of consumers for malls and local retailers can be done.

#### **CONCLUSION**

This study tries to investigate the exterior elements that impact impetuous purchasing behavior. As an endeavour to inspect the relationship, this research mainly focuses to elucidate the connection between female customers' irresistible purchasing approach and different kinds of window display. A remarkable note of this research was that window display conventions evidently sway female shoppers' impetuous purchasing approach.

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