

# Visual Merchandising: A Tool to Integrate Fashion, Retail and Consumer Buying Behaviour

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## ABSTRACT

Visual merchandising is an effective tool for retail of merchandise to consumers. This paper aims to understand the factors of instore display and brand factors which attracts the consumer to do the purchase from the particular brand store. The elements of in-store display helps to excite impulse buying on gender differently. The research would help in understanding the factors which affect buying behavior of male and female consumers which can be used in improvisation of marketing strategies and target consumer.

## 1. Introduction

Visual merchandising is a tool to display the products – Apparels and Lifestyle Accessories in an organised manner so that the costumer may be attracted and tempted to buy. The main aim of Visual Merchandising is to attract the customer to the store and excite to buy. The fashion products which are developed in reference to the fashion forecast and trend are categorised in different brand name which are associated with the brand image, The customer finds a relation and association to the brand and his/her image. As per the needs then the customer chooses a brand for the purchase of the product. (Shepard, 2012) in her book talks about how the displays can effect the shoppers sensibility and induce the shopper to return to the same store again and again. To achieve this, the Visual merchandising has a significant role to play - Creativity mingled with technology can do wonders to influence the buying decision of the consumers if the right Visual Merchandising is done.

The Fashion forecasted by the Designers each season every year gets interpreted in the form of fashion products which include Apparels, Lifestyle accessories, Home furnishings, Electronics goods etc. in terms of Style, colour, form and shape, materials and patterns which reach out to the consumers through the Brand. The Brand is a window through which Designers sell their products to consumers and have their Brand identity. In his study of shoppers buying behaviour in terms of selection of outlet and the impact of visual merchandising in Pune (Panda 2011) states that before selecting an outlet shoppers go through a complex selection process. The key factors that influence in the selection of the location of the store ,store image ,the layout of the outlet , the merchandise inside the store and attribute like Lighting, Display ,signages and variety and assortment .

## 2. Review of Literature

### 2.1 Impact of Visual Elements of Visual Merchandising

As the mall culture is hitting across the world bringing the numerous multinational brands under one roof, the customer

has a choice to choose the products from numerous brands available. The customer then is influenced by the store window displays, layout and ambience within the store which may attract him/her within the store. (Bhasin, 2009) in her research study of Visual Merchandising in Retail Industry in Mumbai with special references to cosmetics and perfumes concludes states that Visual merchandising provides stress free ambience to shoppers.

The various elements of visual merchandising which play a significant role in attracting the customer within the store and ultimately inducing to purchase is said to be the success of Visual merchandising. In the study on the role of Visual Merchandising on Apparel Purchase Decision (Krishnakumar, 2014, 37-54) states that majority of the buyers are affected by color and quality . Also light and music influences purchase decision. Attributes like Occupation and Qualification has a significant influence on purchase decision taken by the customer. In the article titled “visual merchandising- the changing scenario” (Dua and Karolia 2008)states that Visual merchandising is a way of creating appeal to the consumer which stimulates purchase while retail is the process of actually making a sale.

In the book Visual Merchandising (Bhalla and Anuraag, 2012) emphasize that window is the most important aspect of the store and the display done communicates the product range, style and price point of the merchandise within the store.

(Tinne, 2011) in her research titled factors affecting Impulse buying behaviour of consumers at super stores in Bangladesh states that Impulse buying behaviour is affected by Store image, promotional activities ,window displays, in store display, layout and the behaviour of the store personnel.

Eyelevel displays are the most stimulating displays as it excites impulse buying. As human eye represents 85% of the information that the brain receives and is responsible for 78% of the purchasing decisions (Pablo Soto, Point of

Purchase). Therefore, it is undeniable that visual display play a significant role in seduction for purchase where touch, sound and smell add to the vision stimulation for processing millions of sensation in a split second to make decisions.

## 2.2 Factors affecting Brand choice

With the growing availability of goods and services there is stiff competition among brands. There are a wide number of brands offering the same products at the same price and of same quality. So under these conditions one of the factor which influences the customer to buy a product is the way it is "displayed". Hence Visual merchandising of the store plays significant role in influencing the purchase decision. In the prevailing highly competitive business environment where there are so many brands offering the same product "Differentiation" from others, plays a significant role in influencing customer decision to purchase. (Virdi 2012) in his research titled Malls & hypermarkets: perspectives of contemporary shopping states that the golden days of malls and supermarkets are over. High rentals, merchandise oversupply and stiff competition are some of the severe problem facing the Malls/Hypermarket. In his conclusion states that the behaviour of the salesman and store behaviour effect the buying behaviour of the shopper therefore they should be trained and discount offers as important promotional tools.

With the widespread use of self-service as a tool for retail selling which gives the customer to touch, feel and understand product features well, therefore the retail spaces needs to be organised well and displayed well thereby accelerating the importance of Visual merchandising in the retail world.

The main objective of marketing is to sell products effectively while merchandising aims to present the products and the services to the buyer in the best possible way so as to induce purchase. Most of the time it is unplanned buying or impulse buying which happens inside the store which reflects the impact of elements of visual merchandising. Moarery, Zamani and Vazifehdooost (2014, 360-366.) in their research on effect of Visual Merchandising in Apparel Impulse buying on young Iranian women concludes that the Visual merchandising factors which influences the impulse buying behaviour of young Iranian women are window Display, In store display, mannequins and Promotional signage.

(Loudon and Bitta, 2002) in their book Consumer Behaviour states that the factors that affect the store choice are store location, merchandise, store design, Advertising and sales promotion. Referring to results obtained from several studies mentions that 33% of all purchases in the variety store are unplanned. 50% of the buying decisions in the supermarket is impulse buying. 62% of shoppers in discount stores buy at least one product which is not planned.

## 3. Need for the Study

From the review of literature it is evident research has been done on the impact of Elements of Visual Merchandising on the customer buying decision has been done in India and abroad but there is no such research on the impact of Elements of Visual Merchandising on the customer buying

decision has been done in Apparel and Lifestyle segment for Bhopal. Hence the need for the research.

## 4. Objectives of Research

After reviewing the previous works of researchers, the following research objectives were formulated:

1) To find out the impact of elements of Visual Merchandising on the consumer buying decision in Bhopal

2) To determine the factors determining the selection of the particular Brand store for purchase of garments and lifestyle accessories by the consumer in Bhopal.

## 5. Research Methodology

To study the factors that influence the consumer buying behaviour and impact of visual merchandising, A structured questionnaire with open ended, closed ended, dichotomous, Likert scale and multiple choice questions was formulated. 3 Malls were visited in Bhopal to collect the response from the people of age group 20-35 years visiting these malls.

To research the factors determining the selection of the particular Brand store for purchase of garments and lifestyle accessories by the consumer, a questionnaire with multiple choice and likert scale was developed and administered to respondents to collect the data.

Two questionnaires were used to collect data which included both demographic and psychographic information like age, gender, income, profession, shopping behaviour and also factors of Visual merchandising which influence or attract the consumer inside the store and motivate them to do 'either predetermined buying' or "spot buying". Also data was collected on the factors which affect the choice of the "brand" store to do purchase of Apparel or lifestyle products. To collect consumer response, potential consumers coming out particularly after purchasing from the store were administered the questionnaire and visiting the mall for shopping were also administered the questionnaire and those sitting in food court after shopping were also included. The demographic factors like the age, gender and income group selected was appropriate sample for this study as this age group is a frequent visitor to the malls and spend a major portion of their disposable income on purchase of apparels and accessories. Also around New Year lot of offers and sale/discount scheme are floated by various brands was good time to do the survey.

Around 96 respondents were administered the questionnaire to collect data. 14 responses were rejected because they were not complete.

## 6. Results

The results from the research on the impact of the elements of visual merchandising on the customer in the purchase of Apparel and Lifestyle Accessories through the intercept survey conducted in malls in Bhopal. First the sample's demographic factors like age, gender and income

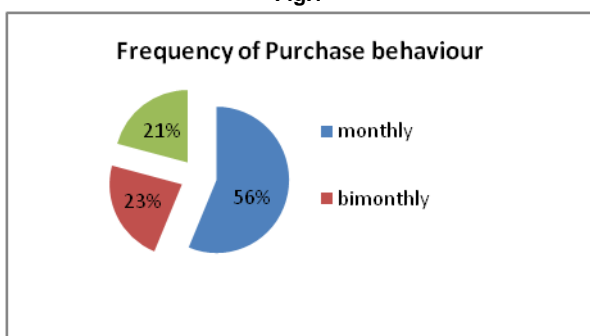
and impact of elements of Visual merchandising on the buying behaviour would be analysed. Also the analysis of the factors which influence the purchase of Apparel and Life Style Accessories from a particular Brand store would be done.

**6.1 Sample Demographic factors and Buying Behaviour analysis**

Data was collected from 96 shoppers who were exiting the stores/Mall after doing purchase in the mall. The sample included 44 males and 52 females. The respondents age ranged from 20 to 35 years with the mean age of 27 years.

**i) Frequency of purchase:** The buying behaviour was analysed by the amount invested in the purchase of Apparel and Lifestyle Products per year and frequency of shopping Apparel and lifestyle products. Around 23% respondents did purchase of Apparel and Life Style Accessories bimonthly while 56% respondents did purchase 'monthly' and while 21% respondents had 'Festival/Occasion'.

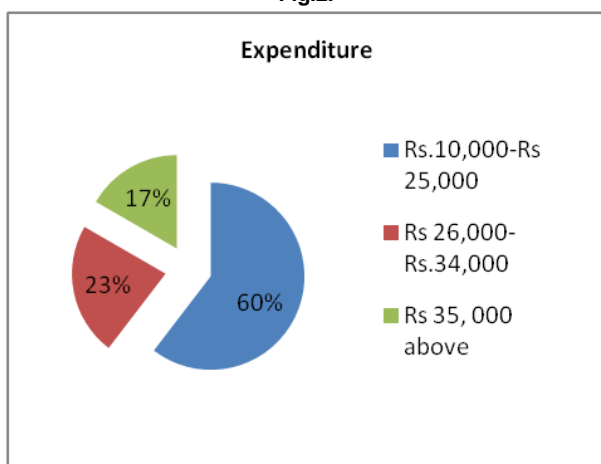
Fig.1



Source :Primary

**ii) Expenditure on purchase:** The amount spent in purchase of Apparel and Lifestyle Products per year is between Rs.10,000-Rs 25,000 by 60% respondents while 23% of respondents spent Rs.26,000-Rs. 34,000 and 17% respondents above Rs.35,000 .

Fig.2.



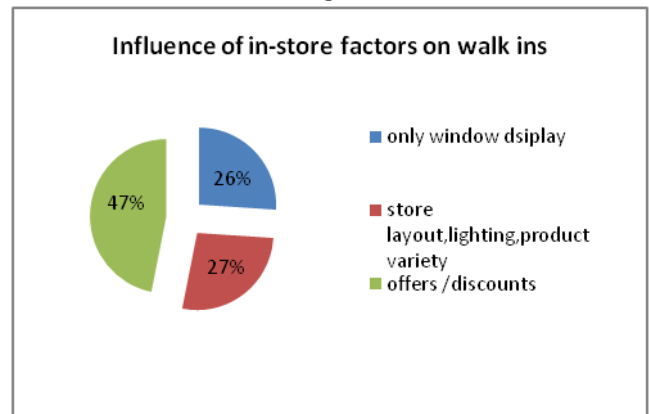
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**6.2 Impact of element of Visual Display on the Buying Behaviour in the store**

**i) Influence of Element of In store display:** The response for the elements of Visual Display which affects the walk -in to

the store was that 25 respondents were attracted into the store by seeing 'only' the window display while 26 were attracted by the other factors of Visual Display like lighting, ambience, layout of the store and 45 offer/scheme/discounts along with window display.

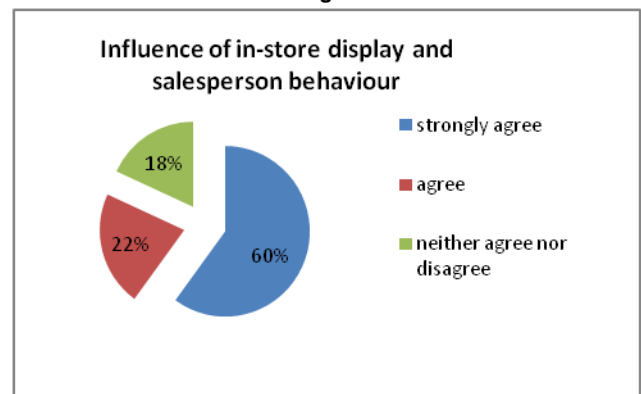
Fig.3



Source :Primary

**ii) Influence of Instore display and salesman behaviour on purchase behaviour:** 60% respondents 'strongly agree' that the purchase inside the store done was influenced by the visual display and the behaviour of the salesperson while 22% respondents 'Agree' that that the purchase inside the store done was influenced by the visual display and the behaviour of the salesperson while 18% respondents 'neither agree nor disagree'.

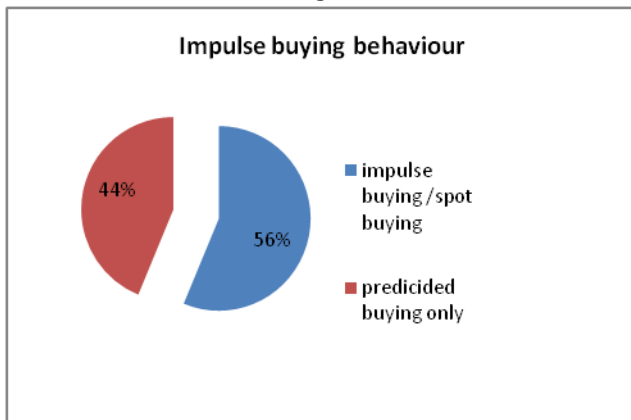
Fig.4



Source :Primary

**iii) Impulse buying or predecided buying:** The purchase in the store by 56% respondents was 'spot buying or impulse buying' while 44% respondents were predecided to do purchase.

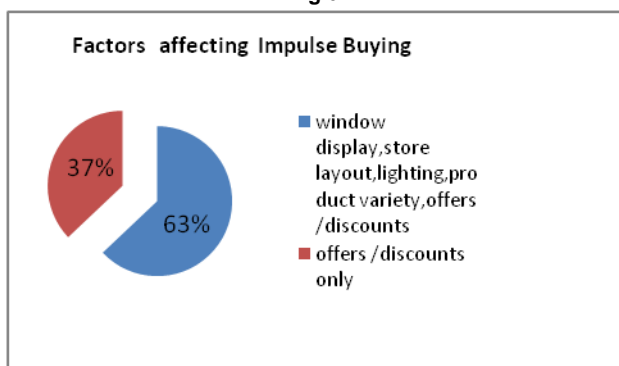
Fig.5



Source :Primary

iv) **Factors affecting Impulse buying:** For the 34 respondents the factors which affected 'spot buying or impulse buying', were Window display, Sale/Discount/Season offer, Display inside the store, behaviour of salesperson and ambience while 20 respondents were affected by Sale/Discount/Season offer 'only' for doing 'spot buying or impulse buying'.

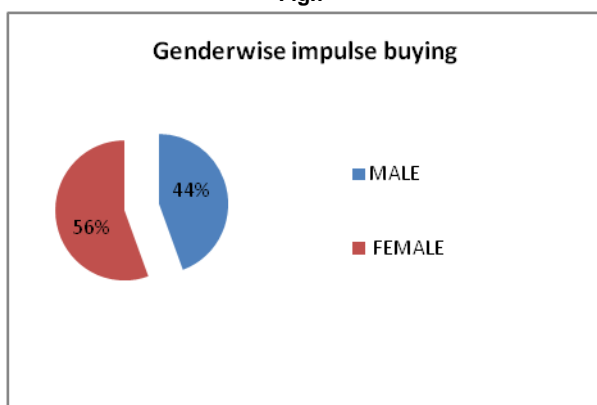
Fig.6



Source :Primary

v) **Genderwise indulgence in Impulse buying :** Out of the 54 respondents who did 'spot buying', 56% of them were females and 44% were males.

Fig.7

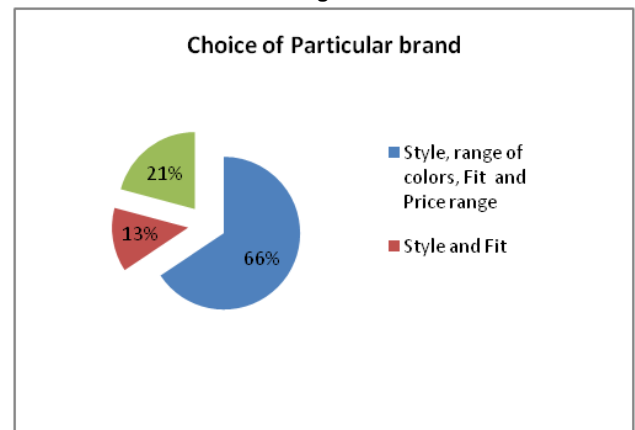


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### 6.3 Factors determining the choice of particular Brand store for purchase

i) **Factors for Preference for particular Brand:** From the response to the preference for selection of a particular Brand for purchase is Style, range of colors, Fit and Price range by 66% respondents while 13% respondent choose a particular brand for Style and Fit, while the rest 21% respondents choose a particular brand for style and price.

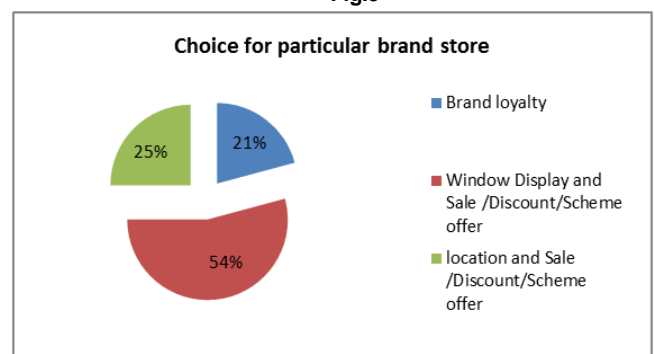
Fig.8



Source :Primary

ii) **Choice of particular brand store:** From the research findings on the selection of the 'Particular Brand store', the criteria which affect the choice of the consumer, 20 respondents regarded Brand loyalty as the prime criteria while 52 respondents Window Display and Sale /Discount/Scheme offer is important while for 24 Respondents location and Sale /Discount/Scheme offer were deciding factors.

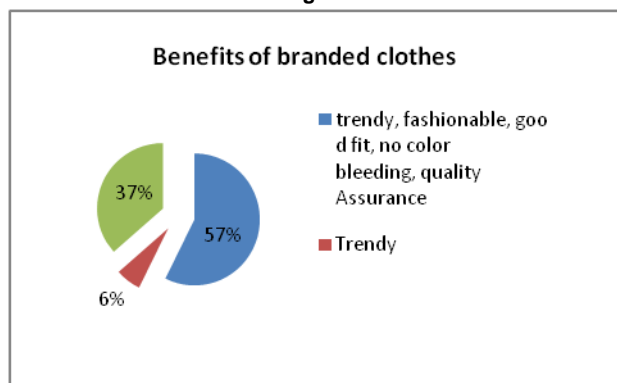
Fig.9



Source :Primary

iii) **Benefit of purchasing a Branded Apparel :** The response to the benefit of purchasing the Branded Apparel to non branded /local manufacture, 55 respondents expressed that branded clothes are more trendy, fashionable, good fit, no color bleeding, quality Assurance, 35 respondents expressed that branded clothes are more trendy, fashionable, good fit, while 6 respondents expressed that branded clothes are Trendy.

Fig.10



Source :Primary

## 7. Conclusion

After review of response from the respondents, the extent of research objectives met can be determined. From the findings of the study it is clear, that there is an impact of elements of visual merchandising like window display, lighting, layout of the store on the consumer. Most of the respondents who were fully satisfied with the inside store display were women and end up with more than budgeted purchases.

From the findings, most of the purchases done in the store are influenced by the Visual merchandising. 'Spot Buying' or Impulse buying is mostly indulged by women under the influence of Display inside the store, sale/discount/season offer schemes.

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From the findings it is also clear that the consumers who are brand loyal are majorly men while women tend to more guided by criteria like Window display, Sale /Discount/Scheme offer and Style while some low income group are guided by price along with style/ size and location. It is also clear from the findings location of the store-proximity to residence also is important for some consumers for taking buying decision.

From the research findings it is clear that consumers are ready to pay more price for the Branded garments because they are more trendy, fashionable, good fit and no colour bleeding.

From the results it is also clear that Visual merchandising, display and various offers and discounts make a great impact on impulse buying and consumers most of the time end up spending more than budgeted. Hence the Visual merchandising plays a very vital role in attracting the customer to the brand and instigating to do purchase of the fashion apparel and lifestyle accessory and thereby affecting the increased retail sale.

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