

A Review on Apparel Fashion Trends, Visual Merchandising and Fashion Branding

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Abstract

Visual merchandising encourages customers to enter the store by making it appealing to them and influencing their perception of it. It is the art of putting together effective display designs and ideas in order to boost store traffic and sales. It's also a way to engage with customers and influence their purchasing decisions. A fashion trend occurs when a particular item, silhouette, color, or other new look rises in popularity. It changes with the seasons, and the store serves as a hub for communicating these changes to potential customers. Because items must be sold within a certain time frame, several display tactics are used to best present the merchandise and communicate the current fashion trends to customers. Visual merchandising becomes a key aspect of difference from merchants in the same category as retail firms, particularly fashion brands, try to compete in an already saturated market. Effective branding is now a vital success component for all types of fashion firms. Fashion brands may use effective branding tactics to build equity, promote consumer brand loyalty, and increase profitability. Visual merchandising is critical for inferring various customers' perspectives and adding value to businesses. Its major goal is no longer to make items appealing in order to sell them quickly; it is rather to stand out, develop the correct brand image, and give the greatest possible customer experience. Visual merchandising aspects, when employed correctly, can infiltrate the buyer's brain and prompt them to generate a favorable opinion of the store, allowing it to leverage its brand image. In this context, this research review focuses and aims to study the link between visual merchandising and Apparel Fashion trends, to study the relationship between visual merchandising and fashion branding and to find out the research gaps and scope for future research directions in the area of visual merchandising applied in fashion apparel industry.

Keywords

Visual Merchandising, Apparel Fashion Trend, Consumer Behavior, Fashion Branding, Brand Equity, Retail Design

1. Introduction

Visual merchandising can be simply defined as the physical presentation of products. It is the coordination of all physical elements of a business to project the right image. Visual merchandising has increased tremendously in importance with the growth of self-service retailing. The purpose of such visual merchandising is to attract, engage, and motivate the customer towards making a purchase. Visual merchandising is also coined as the “Silent Selling”. In the world of Fashion Apparel it has great impact on store image and eventually on the retail business.

It's also a way to engage with customers and influence their purchasing decisions. A fashion trend occurs when a particular item, silhouette, color, or other new look rises in popularity. It changes with the seasons, and the store serves as a hub for communicating these changes to potential customers. Visual merchandising becomes a key aspect of difference from merchants in the same category in retail firms, particularly fashion brands; try to compete in an already saturated market. Effective branding is now a vital success component for all types of fashion firms. Fashion brands may use effective branding tactics to build equity, promote consumer brand loyalty, and increase profitability.

In the current scenario the main goal of visual merchandising is to make the retail merchandise to stand out, develop the correct brand image, and give the greatest possible customer experience. The goal of this review research paper is to look at the relationship between the ever-changing phenomenon of fashion trends and visual merchandising and how it affects consumer behavior, which aids in the creation of a brand image and/or the promotion of a fashion brand. To achieve this, the researchers adopted the descriptive research method through secondary data collection, studied and analyzed the past researches carried out in the research area in focus. Since the nature of the subject is very versatile, the review is categorized into various sub domains and the relationships of VM with consumer behavior, fashion trends, fashion branding and retail design, etc. are presented. Finally, the paper is concluded with the research gaps and scope of further research directions. Structure of this study is mentioned below (**Figure 1**) as described.

2. Research Objectives

The core aim of this research is to find out the facts and discover the past research outcomes which are concealed. Therefore, the main objectives of this

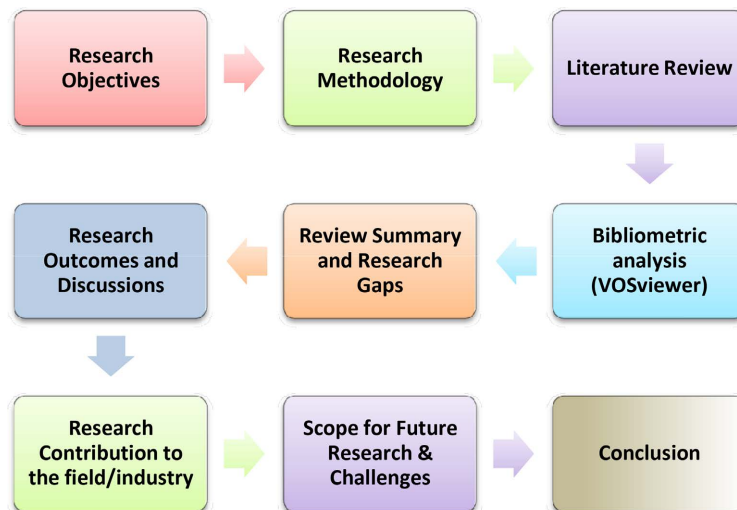


Figure 1. Flow chart of the process.

research work are formulated as follows:

- 1) To study and gain adequate insights into the concepts, principles and elements of visual merchandising through in depth literature review.
- 2) To study the newer developments of visual merchandising and retail store experience in recent times.
- 3) To study the link between visual merchandising and Apparel Fashion trends.
- 4) To study the relationship between visual merchandising and fashion Branding.
- 5) To find out the research gaps and scope for future research directions in the area of visual merchandising applied in fashion apparel industry.

3. Research Methodology

The methodology of research applied here is the descriptive research method through secondary data collection. The research papers published by the researchers in the past 15 years are studied; these were search and sourced from different database by using keywords like Visual merchandising, Fashion trends, Apparel retail, Brand Image to stay relevant. Approximately 90 papers were shortlisted and reviewed keeping the objectives in focused and were divided in 5 categories for review purpose. It analyzed and presented in this simple literature review research paper giving answer to the objectives set and scope/direction for future research.

4. Literature Review

The main aim of this Literature reviews to study the previous researcher's work in the similar area to map the journey/evolution of it and find a background for further study. Therefore to understand the visual merchandising and its multi-dimensional nature and effects, the secondary data from the literature are collected from various research journals.

Classification of Reviews:

Considering the multidimensionality of the visual merchandising subject, the reviews are classified in the 5 different categories (**Figure 2**) and review presented as below-

- 1) Visual Merchandising and Apparel Fashion Trends;
- 2) Visual Merchandising and Fashion Branding;
- 3) Visual Merchandising and Consumer Behavior;
- 4) Visual Merchandising and Retail Display Design;
- 5) Visual Merchandising and Latest Technologies.

4.1. Visual Merchandising and Apparel Fashion Trends

This subsection reviews the researches carried out in the area of visual merchandising in relevance to the fashion trends applicable for the apparel industry.

[1] Consumers who make early purchases of fashion apparel often pay a premium for being the first to wear the new styles. These consumers are often characterized as being relatively less price sensitive and more affluent than those who make their purchases later in the selling season. Their study result indicates that, when developing marketing plans, retailers need to be aware of the fact that fashion-forward consumers who purchase apparel early in the season are more sensitive to economic conditions and expectations than previously believed. [2] Fast fashion is a concept that will continue to affect the fashion apparel industry over the next decade and will have a direct effect on the way consumers purchase and react to trends. A continued research relative to the supply-side of fast fashion is important, emphasis should be placed on examining consumers 'perception of fast fashion. Empirical understanding of consumer characteristics and their motivation to make purchase decisions for throwaway fashion can help retailers in developing effective marketing strategies to perform more effectively in the market.

[3] Fashion as an unplanned process of re-current change against a backdrop of order in the public realm. As a social phenomenon, fashion has been culturally

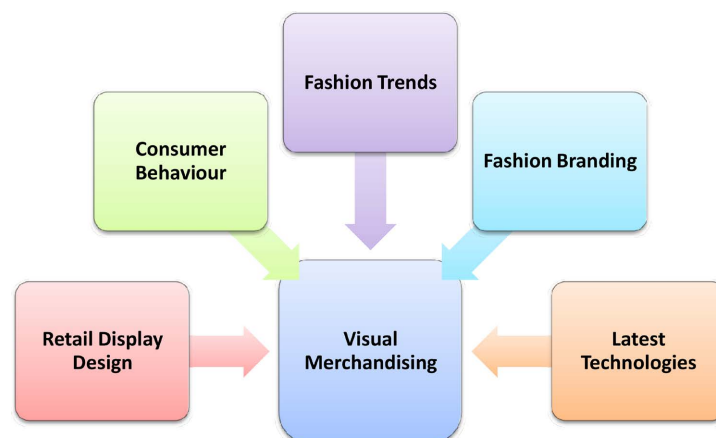


Figure 2. Classification of literature review.

and economically significant since the dawn of modernity and has increased in importance with the emergence of mass markets, in terms of both production and consumption. [4] The possibility of conceptualizing a “natural” law of trend mechanisms in fashion. While fashion belongs to the realm of artifice, sociality, and culture, “natural” is here to be understood as an inherent mechanism beyond the whims of human actions. Fashion is studied within an Anglo-American context as both a production system and a meaning system. Fashion as an industry covers fashionable clothes, but it also is related to, for instance, accessories and the beauty industry.

[5] Fashion today is not just a mix of tastes with trend. It has actually become a blend of various cultures and creativity in trends. The influence of the western wear played a significant role in changing the Indian fashion ideals. With a major influence of the media, various kinds of fashion magazines provide latest designs and styles in color photographs along with details of stuff used, measurements, price range, shades available and the places from where they can be used. TV programs give live telecast of major fashion shows conducted not only in India but also in all parts of the world. These programs provide a good look at the fashion world in all the seasons so that the people can make their own choices while shopping. [6] Fast moving fashion or fast fashion describe a scenario where fashion retailers implement a range of strategies in order to adequately meet market demand by ensuring that they have the right product, in the right place, in the right time. Fast fashion clothing always follows up and creating season trend, new product to the store with amazing speed with window display transformation is usually two times a week. Without communicating, it won't be possible to sell a product. [7] state that trends are transformations that involve different aspects of social, cultural, individual, and aesthetic spheres. Fashion trends are expressions of trends—which are socio-culturally grounded—in aesthetic spheres, mostly by means of visual and haptic characteristics applied to clothing and apparel products and are often considered fads or short-term trends.

[8] The key premise of fast fashion business model and the respective supply chain is the design, development, production and merchandising of on-trend and high-value products at a rapid rate. Additionally, the underlying creative process must be responsive to the data, which is reflective of the current trends, popular demand, seasonality, operational limits, cost-effectiveness, etc. [9] There is a consumers' responses to fashion visual merchandising (VM) from a neuro-scientific perspective. The brain activation of the subjects showed significant differences according to the fashion VM types. When they were exposed to the creative VM, their response was notably higher. A difference was also observed in brain activation depending on the level of fashion involvement: Highly fashion-involved subjects showed higher brain activation to creative VM, while those with low-level of fashion involvement showed more brain activation for the fact-based VM. [10] Fashion retailers display thousands of products at their outlets based on their specific market and cultural and moral values. A specific

market means that every market has its taste in terms of fabrication, color, silhouettes, and accessories. Every fashion retailer displays those articles that are mostly adopted by the respective community of that market. Their exploratory study illustrates that window display; store display, mannequin display, and signage promotion have a positive and significant impact on impulse buying.

[11] The “Made in India” campaign has given a major boost to Indian fashion designers, who were lacking behind because of fast fashion brands. As vocal for local turned out to be a success, it has simultaneously helped in creating a boon for sustainable fashion. Now, many customers have started shopping more consciously and thinking about the ethical aspects of their shopping experience. [12] There is a direct linkage to fast-fashion oriented impulse purchase among millennial. External and internal factors that can stimulate impulse purchase behavior perceived by the millennial. Internal stimuli (Emotion and Hedonic value) appear the most powerful predictors of fashion-oriented impulse purchase (Figure 3). Findings in the research are meaningful for both global and local fashion brands targeting millennial. Specifically, fashion retailers should not only improve their in-store environment but also know how to contribute positive

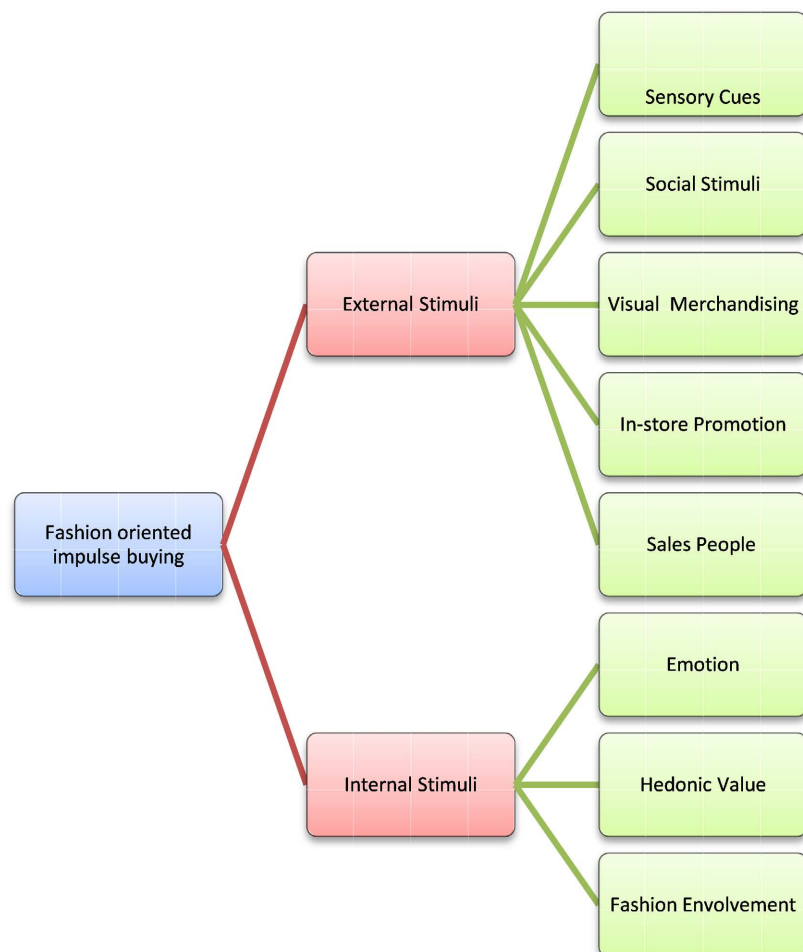


Figure 3. Research model proposed by Nguyen, S. T., & Ha, T. M. (2021).

emotions, hedonic value and raise fashion involvement among young customers and thus can trigger their impulse purchase.

4.2. Visual Merchandising and Fashion Branding

The reviews of the researches carried out in the area of visual merchandising in relevance to the Fashion Branding applicable for the apparel industry are presented in this section.

[13] The retailer's display decisions can negate the equity of an established brand; this occurs because consumers have expectations about retail displays and the relationship among displayed brands. Study results demonstrated that high-equity brand valuations are influenced by an unfamiliar context brand when a mixed display structure leads consumers to believe that the context brand is diagnostic for judging the high-equity brand, the precedence given to one brand over another in the display makes expectations about brand differences or similarities accessible, and the unfamiliar context brand disconfirms these expectations. [14] Proposed a model (Figure 4), the four concentric circles

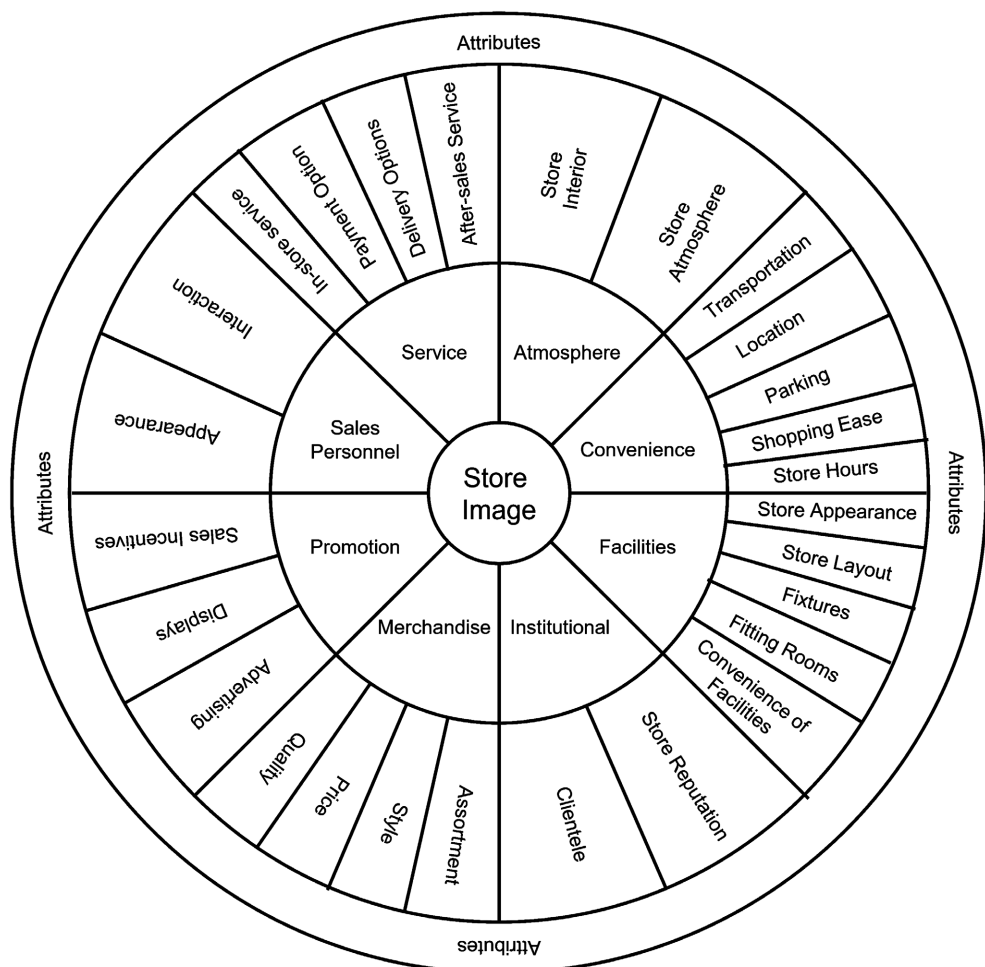


Figure 4. Store image model proposed by Visser, E. M., Du Preez, R., & Janse Van Noordwyk, H. S. (2006).

represent a mutual influence on each other. Central to the model is store image. The eight dimensions underpinning the construct are represented in the first concentric circle, followed by the sub dimensions underlying each dimension. The outer concentric circle of the model constitutes the specific store attributes underlying the identified sub dimensions and dimensions. The perception of these store attributes is integral to store image formation.

Also noticed that Merchandise and Clientele were the two most important store image dimensions according to the exploratory study conducted. The dimensions Service, Store atmosphere, Post-transaction satisfaction, Promotion, Institutional factors and Physical facilities, in this order, followed in perceived importance (Figure 5).

[15] The retailers marketing strategy have to take into account two sets of attributes: 1) Loyalty Drivers and 2) Shopping Experience Enhancers (Figure 6). Retailers can use these attributes in different degrees based on their positioning strategy, but the basic two dimensions will remain the same. These attributes will have to be integrated into the retail format. For apparel shopping, the loyalty drivers are merchandise mix, sales promotions, price, and recommendation/relationship whereas the shopping experience enhancers are store reputation/advertisements, temperature (air conditioning), return/guarantee, and ambient conditions.

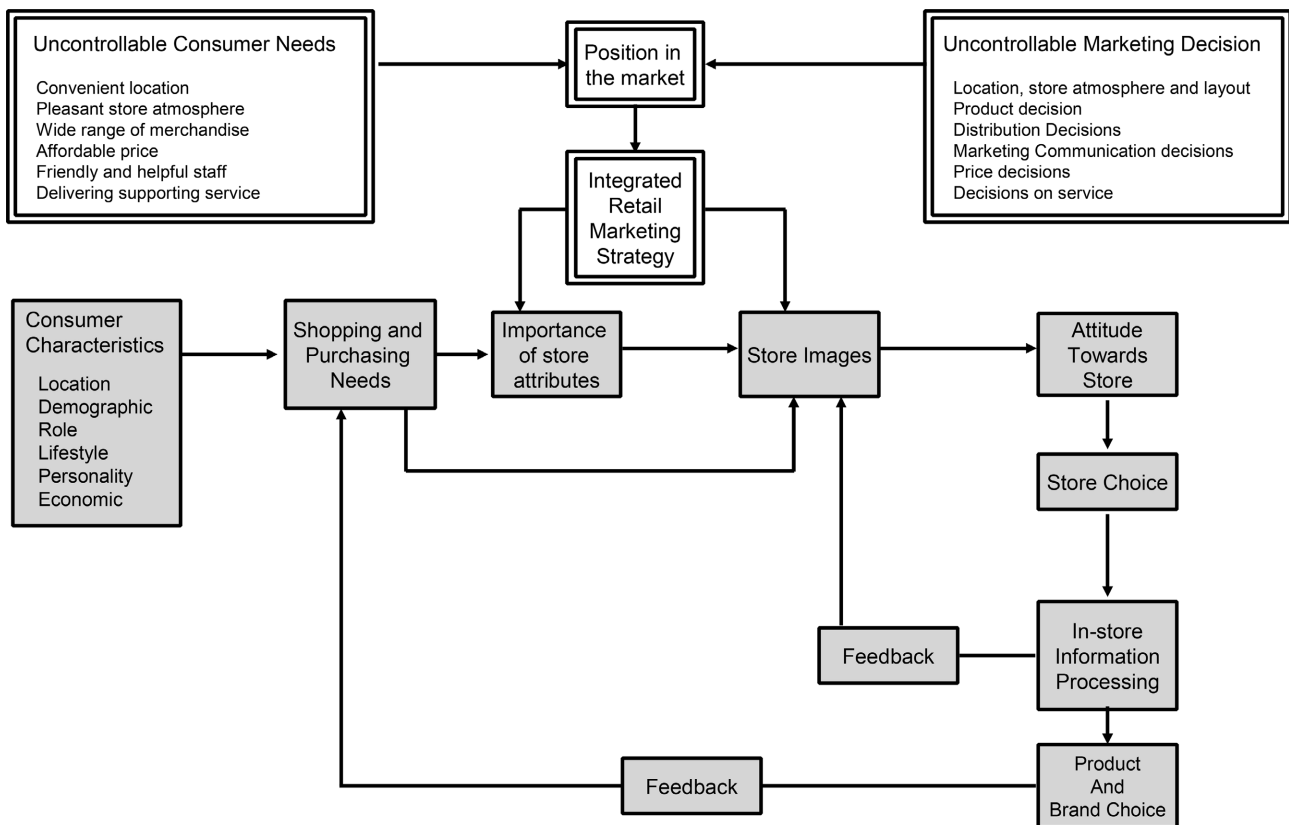


Figure 5. Integrated model of store choice and retail marketing strategy (Adapted from Monroe & Gultinan in Assael, 1992, p.630; Davidson, Sweeney & Stampfl in Terblanche, 1998, p. 106).

[16] Further the sources of equity in fashion markets explored and found that in the fashion industry, the variables that show great potential for differentiation are excellence in the delivered finished product, brand image and design. In addition, loyalty and brand associations, in which image and design stand out, have been shown to be the most outstanding sources of brand equity. [17] It is generally known that the decisional process regarding to choose or not to choose a brand is determined by anecdotal evidence. Having a great product without a strong identification is not enough. If a potential customer can relate to previous experience with the identity of a brand, he/she surely developed a brand image and is more likely to prefer that specific brand. Associating product with a strong brand identity (Figure 7) is a key factor in competitive advantage and leads to great financial rewards.

[18] Branding ultimately works as a signal. It allows consumers to quickly recognize a product as one they are familiar with or one they like. It acts as a

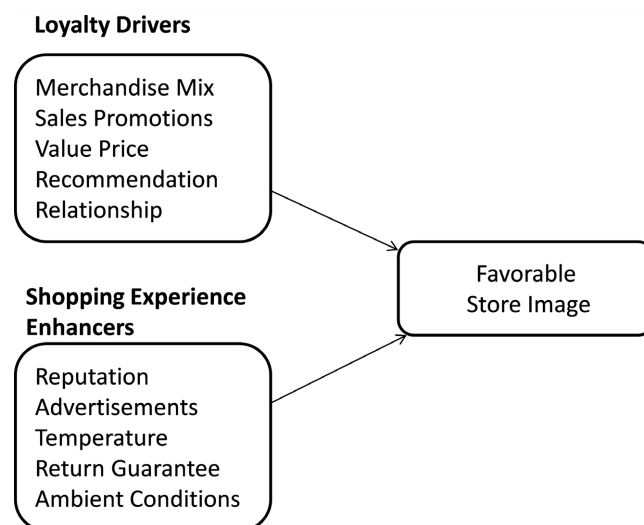


Figure 6. Apparel store preferences in an evolving Market by Mittal, A., & Mittal, R. (2008).

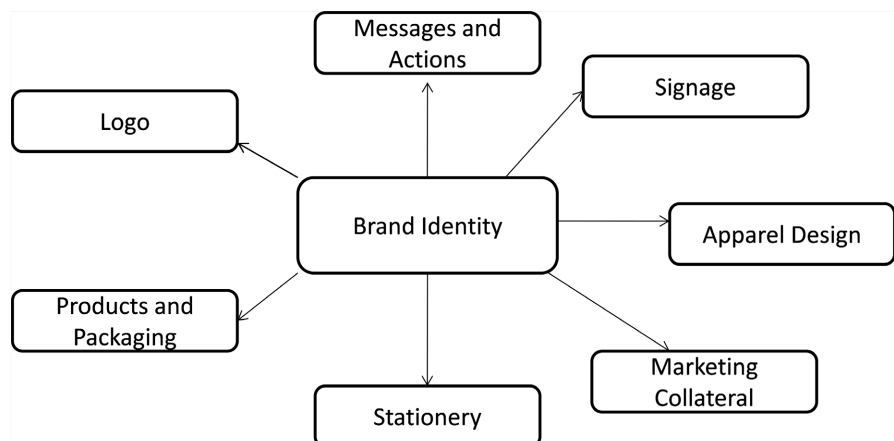


Figure 7. Brand identity elements by Mindrut, S., Manolica, A., & Roman, C. T. (2015).

memory cue, allowing consumers to retrieve relevant information from memory. This information may be about past experience of the brand, brand perceptions or brand associations. The information we have stored about brands is crucial in guiding our decisions. Branding has become one of the most important aspects of business strategy. Branding is central to creating customer value, not just images and is also a key tool for creating and maintaining competitive advantage. [19] Visual merchandises have direct influence on the customer buying behavior in the product. Findings show that for the brand sales visual merchandising is the important factor to purchase the brand and maintaining the brand equity. [20] In order to make VM work, the retailer utilizes VM to develop a powerful store-image effectively. Image can be described as the overall look of a store and the series of mental pictures it evokes within the beholder. Everything done in the store must fit into the image chosen for the store. Creation of this recognizable image is applied and communicated effectively through multiple media to gain customer recognition and loyalty. "Image is everything". Further, adds that the themes that linked most strongly to purchase intention were: merchandise colours, presentation style, awareness of fixtures, path finding, sensory qualities of materials and lighting. Initial findings suggest that liking of display does not totally determine purchase, but does make it four times more likely. [21] Due to the competitive nature of the highly saturated fashion market and the growth of multichannel, brands are increasingly looking for new ways to engage with their consumers through the physical store. Their finding supported the notion that multi-sensory branding is highly conducive to communicating brand messages, as in the majority of situations the participants agreed that each of the sensory stimulators were congruent with the brand identity. The conceptual model suggested that well implemented sensory experiences have positive effects on the brand equity of a fashion retailer.

[22] Visual merchandising influences customers' brand associations. Although exterior displays did not significantly influence favorability of brand associations, the study still suggested that these variables are correlated. The same happens with both visual merchandising variables and uniqueness of brand associations. Additionally, fashion retailers should consider interior and layout aspects in consumers' favorable and strength of associations of their brands, and the exterior displays in terms of awareness. [23] study addresses the Visual merchandising techniques for retail business practices which involve elements associated with visual displays for enhancing the image of store. It is quite challenging for the retailers as they are in the state of generating revenues without creating and building image. This study presents the way of display mechanism with appropriate layouts and design elements in sync with merchandise displayed to attract people and eventually build an image of stores. [24] Branding has been around for centuries as a mean to distinguish the goods from one producer to others. Branding creates mental structures that help consumers organize their knowledge about products and services in a way that clarifies their decision-making

and, in the process, provides value to the firm. A brand is thus a product or service whose dimensions differentiates it in some way from other products or services design to satisfy the same need. A credible brand signals a certain level of quality, so satisfied buyers can easily repurchase the product, which led to loyalty. [25] In order to increase the consumer purchase decision, company need to find out some strategies to increase their sales. One of the strategies to maintain the customer loyalty that set by Giordano Manado Town Square is using Brand Equity (**Figure 8**). In their study it was found that the brand equity and visual merchandising has a significant effect on consumer purchase decision. Further it was also mentioned that Store appearance in form of lighting and colour plays a major role in attracting the customers towards the store and can be considered as very important store attribute for driving the purchase decision of customers.

[26] studied the Consumer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) of top five global fashion brands (as rated by Interbrand (2012) report) from the perspective of Indian consumers. The results of this study were interesting because they depicted striking contrast with the Interbrand ratings. The ranking of global fashion brands was in the following order: Louis Vuitton, H & M, Nike, Gucci, Zara and Adidas. Since H&M is yet to start its operations in the Indian market, it was not considered in the study. But talking about the responses gathered from Indian consumers for rest of the brands, the rankings stood as follows: Nike, Adidas, Zara, Gucci and Louis Vuitton. This suggests that the equity of these brands is not uniform across every country and the brands are perceived differently in different countries. Thus, the brands need to customize their marketing and branding strategies differently for a specific country rather than being complacent with the global ratings and later losing market share to the competition. [27] Examines the communication and marketing tool called visual merchandising (VM) by which the product and the brand are displayed through the store. The elements of VM transmit particularly an emotional identity in fashion retail. The international success of Spanish companies like Zara, Pronovias and Mango is linked to the visual communication of the brand image through the universe of retail. Study Results suggest that VM helps Spanish companies to gain brand recognition and positioning—in an effective and coherent way—and



Figure 8. Conceptual framework proposed by Sambuaga, R., Kindangen, P., & Tielung, M. (2017).

lead consumers to simplify shopping decisions. [28] reinforce the importance of the brand's aesthetic elements, as the sensory dimension of the three brand image dimensions had the strongest association with brand aesthetic. However, positive affective and cognitive brand image dimensions associated with the fashion brand may curtail brand switching tendencies as these two brand image dimensions had stronger relationships with love marks, which lead to brand loyalty. Therefore, all three-brand image dimensions are important in building Consumer Based Brand Equity CBBE, but the dimensions differ in their relative impact during the steps leading to loyalty.

[29] presents the impact of visual merchandising on brand image and reveals that more focus should be given for in store decorations as it has the most impact on the brand image compared to other VM elements. The brand logo should be displayed at the window display along with the mannequins and decorations done in compliance to the brand, as it's the focal point that creates the first brand impression. Further added that brand equity is built from the confidence of consumers about a brand; higher the confidence, higher the amount they'll be willing to pay. Confidence in a brand includes five important considerations: performance of the functions, social image associated, consumer's sentimental attachment, balance between value and functionality and consumers' trust in the brand. [30] Studied using consumer-based brand equity approach, proposed a research model which examines the factors affecting consumer's brand loyalty in the fast fashion context. It was hypothesized that consumer's perceptions of fast fashion, including brand awareness, perceived quality, perceived value, brand personality, organizational associations, and brand uniqueness, affect consumer brand loyalty and results reveal that brand awareness, perceived value, organizational associations, and brand uniqueness are the contributing factors to generating consumer's loyalty toward fast fashion brands (Figure 9).

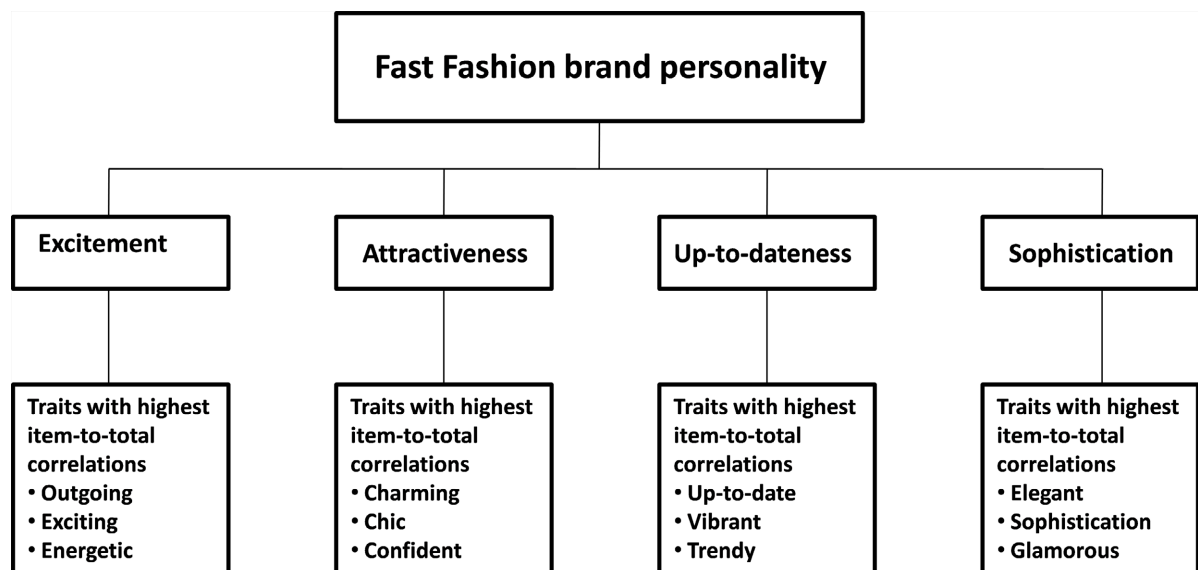


Figure 9. Structure of fast fashion brand personality by Su, J., & Chang, A. (2018).

[31] Empirically investigated the factors affecting consumer’s fast fashion brand loyalty by examining students, perceptions and loyalty toward fast fashion brands. The hypothesis to this research was that consumer’s perceptions of fast fashion, including brand awareness, perceived quality, perceived value, brand personality, organizational associations, and brand uniqueness, affect consumer brand loyalty. Based on the results this study found that brand awareness, perceived value, organizational associations and brand uniqueness were factors that influenced their brand loyalty towards fast fashion brands. [32] A brand image measurement can be done based on aspects of a brand such as brands being easy to remember and pronounce. The logo symbol and the name used should be interesting and unique so that they attract people’s attention and are easily remembered and consumed. It should be easy to recognize brand beside a logo, as a brand is known through messages and the way in which products are packaged and presented to consumers, which is called trade dress. [33] Emotional branding is essential, especially to fashion brands, when developing brand strategies in a volatile marketplace. Trends that support a need for these strategies include consumers’ desires for positive experiences, expressing authentic self, achieving warm glow from helping others, and co-creating design or ideas with the brand. To become more competitive to the apathetic consumers, fashion retailers employ emotional branding as a way to engage their customers, addressing the growing trend of consumers’ seeking emotional relationships with a brand. Although brand technicalities such as product attributes, features, and facts may be unmemorable, personal feelings and experiences better shape consumers’ evaluations of brands (Figure 10).

4.3. Visual Merchandising and Consumer Behavior

This subsection reviews the researches carried out in the area of visual

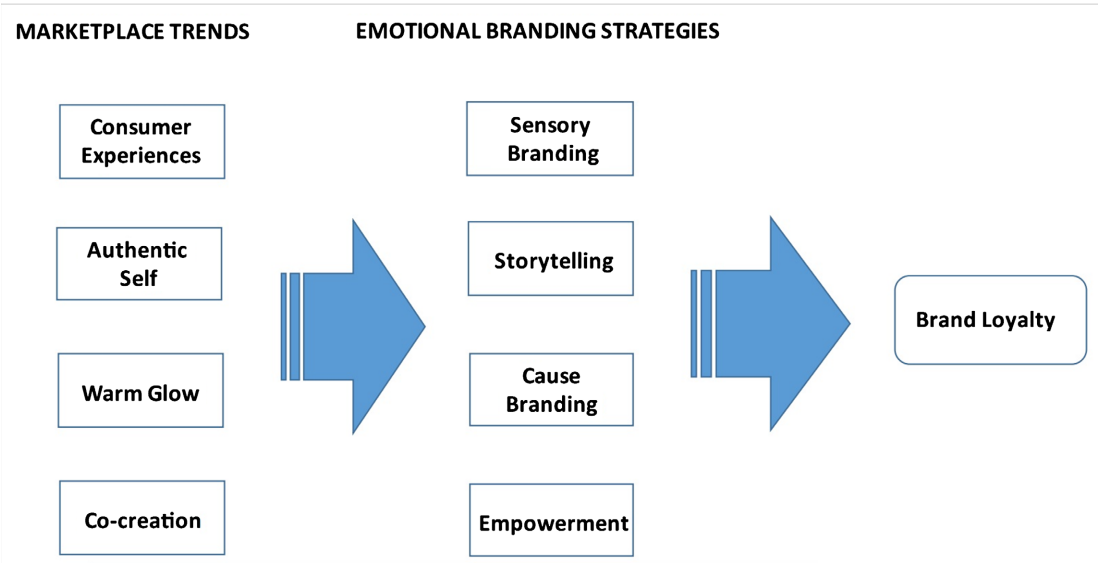


Figure 10. Emotional branding by Kim, Y. K., & Sullivan, P. (2019).

merchandising in relevance to the consumer behavior, applicable for the apparel industry.

[34] Retail clothing stores continually have to adapt to marketplace demands to remain competitive. Customer retention has become a major objective for many clothing retailers. Researchers combine the management of a number of the controllable personal and non-personal elements that a customer is exposed to and interacts within a retail store, as part of the shopping experience. The empirical results suggest that there are five dimensions considered important by consumers when assessing their satisfaction with a total retail experience in a clothing store. These are: merchandise value, internal store environment, and personal interaction with staff, merchandise variety and complaint handling (Figure 11).

[35] Women place greater emphasis on window displays, especially at the beginning of fashion seasons and also mentioned in their finding that women are more susceptible to novelty; pay greater attention to fashion when compared with men who are more susceptible to impulse purchases. This conclusion enables display designers to grasp the importance of always including the trends, colours and lines of the season and particularly for collections targeting a female market and embarking on the design process with the objective of visually merchandising the store through the window display, especially in women stores.

[36] The specific goal attached to a specific store affects not only the shopper's

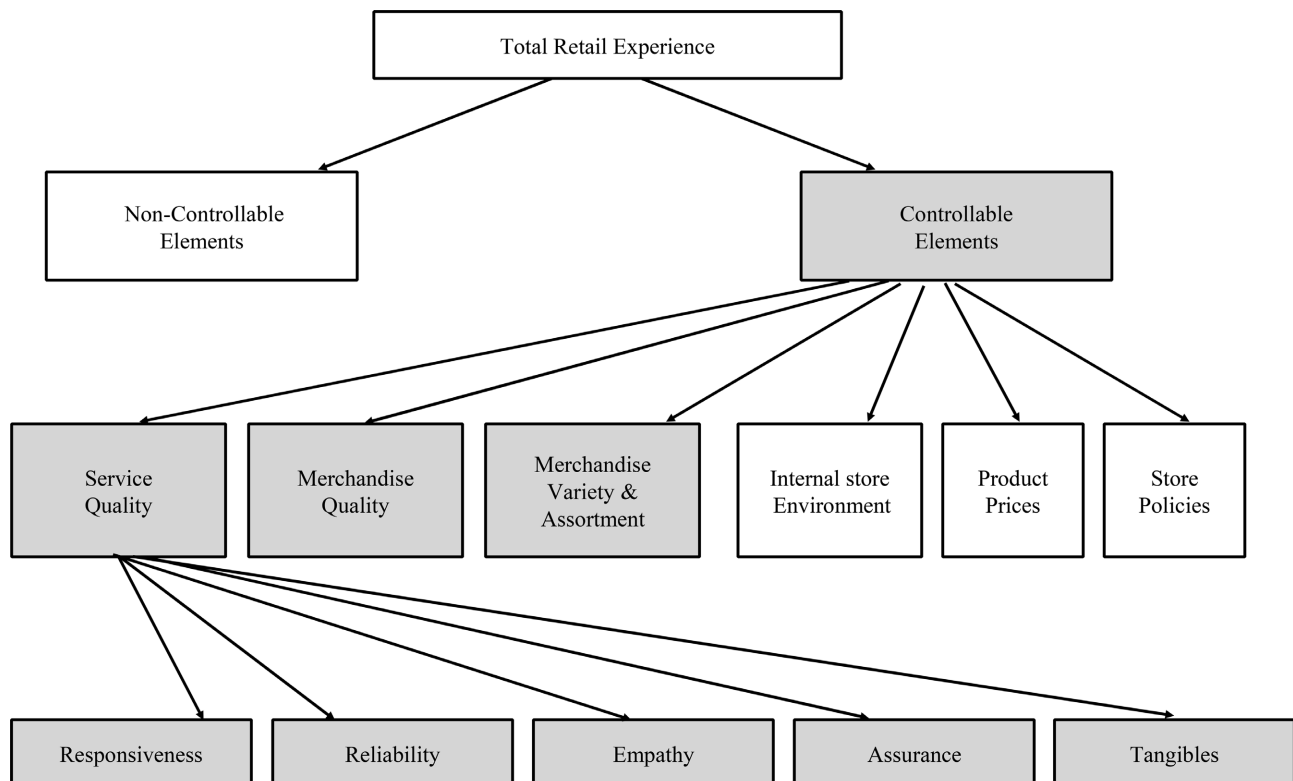


Figure 11. Theoretical structure of the total retail experience by Terblanche, N. S., & Boshoff, C. (2003).

initial store choice but also his or her unplanned buying inside the store. It is well known that exposure to out-of-store marketing activity facilitates planning and that exposure to in-store marketing stimuli generates unplanned buying. They found that for unplanned buying, in-store and out-of-store marketing could be mutually reinforcing (**Figure 12**).

[37] developed a model of a system and compare its performance to three alternative systems: quick-response-only systems, enhanced-design-only systems, and traditional systems (which lack both enhanced design and quick response capabilities). They found that enhanced design helps to mitigate strategic behaviour by offering consumers a product they value more, making them less willing to risk waiting for a clearance sale and possibly experiencing a stock out. They also found that although it is possible for quick response and enhanced design to be either complements or substitutes, the complementarity effect tends to dominate. Hence, when both quick response and enhanced design are combined in a fast fashion system, the firm typically enjoys a greater incremental increase in profit than the sum of the increases resulting from employing either system in isolation. [38] Experiencing the brand may be a prerequisite for developing customer-brand relationship over time. Moreover, the type of brand experience, or experiential dimension, may determine whether a brand entices or annoys the self, enables or disables the self, or enriches and impoverishes the self, and, in turn, creates brand-self distance and prominence. Brand experience consists of four dimensions: a sensory dimension, which refers to the visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory and olfactory stimulations provided by brands; an affective dimension, which includes moods and emotions; an intellectual dimension, which includes both convergent/analytical thinking and divergent/imaginative thinking about the brand; behavioural dimensions, which includes actions, bodily and interactive experience (**Figure 13**).

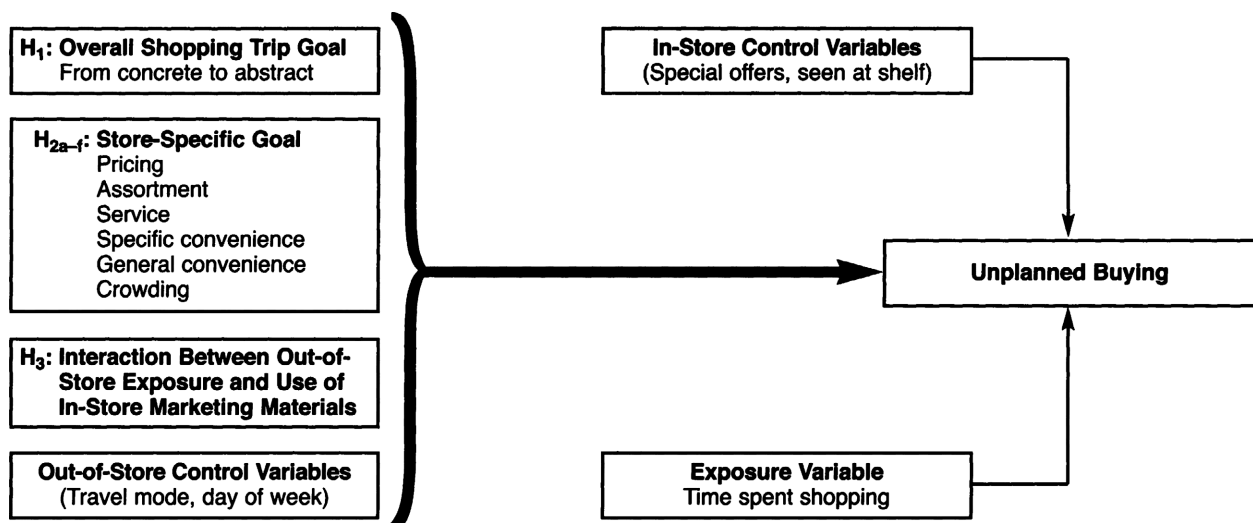


Figure 12. Conceptual framework: How pre-shopping factors drive unplanned buying by Bell, D. R., Corsten, D., & Knox, G. (2011).

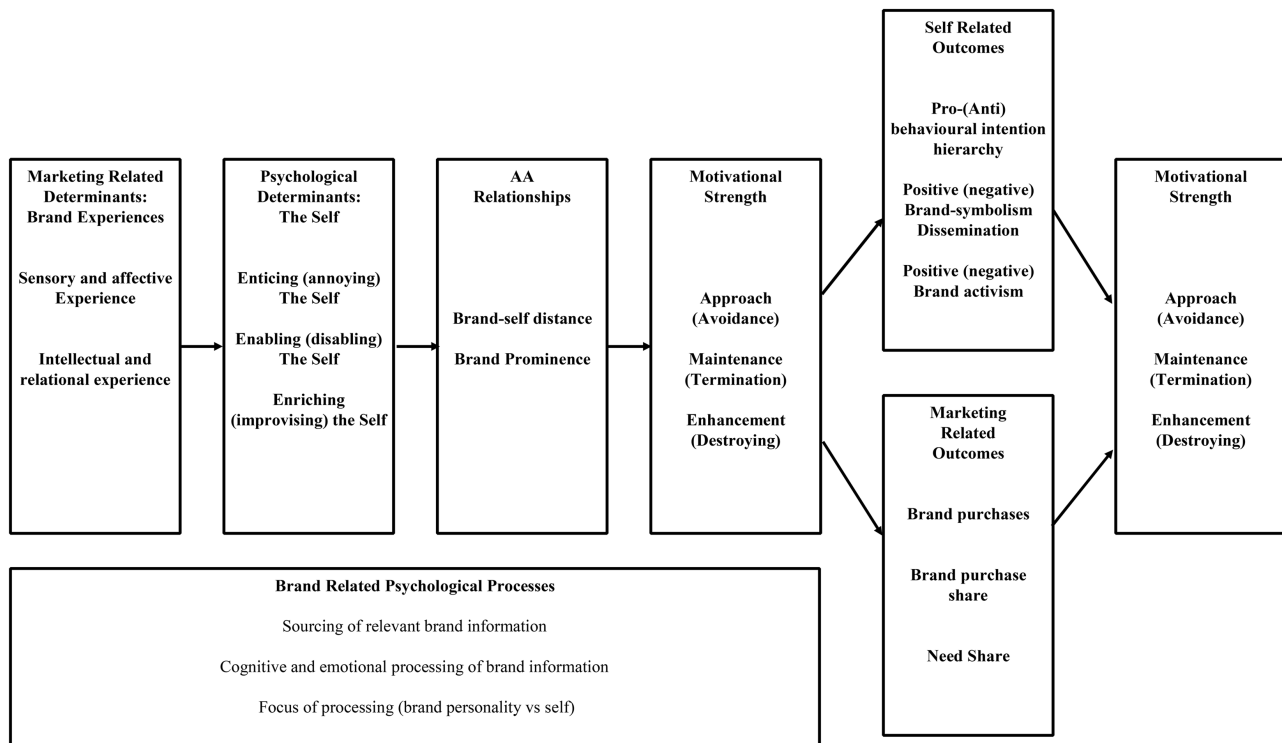


Figure 13. The extended Attachment-Aversion (AA) relationship model by Schmitt, B. (2013).

[39] The process by which four store environment (music, light, employee, and layout) and two individual characteristics (shopping enjoyment tendency (SET) and impulse buying tendency (IBT)) influence impulse buying behavior through positive and negative affect, and urge to buy impulsively. It was found that store environment drove impulse buying (IB) through positive affect and urge. Results also showed that the personality variables (SET and IBT) influenced IB through positive affect and urge. This paper did not find support for the relationship between negative affect and urge. [40] focused on how impactful visual merchandising is when it comes to understand the consumer behavior for women apparels. In their survey based study, the findings clearly proved sufficient evidence that retailers can utilize visual merchandising to increase desirability of products and to help customers being aware of the products as well as to create favorable attitudes. Therefore it can be said that visual merchandising practices, serving as stimuli that provoke a desire which ultimately motivates a consumer to make an unplanned purchase decision upon entering the store and significantly influence consumer's impulse buying behaviors. [41] The experience of shopping is highly influenced by the visual merchandising displays (also known as feature areas where merchandise is presented) used in store. The way products are displayed and promoted in apparel retail stores can have a vast impact on consumer responses and how much merchandise the retailer sells. The findings indicated that the visual merchandising displays guide consumers in the direction of the products they are seeking and that it also guides their de-

cisions.

[42] The effect of store environment on customers' internal evaluations and behavior toward single-brand apparel retailers was explored and examined whether customers have similar cognitive and affective perceptions toward the store versus merchandise. A mall intercept survey was conducted and a no recursive structural equation model was employed to test the proposed hypotheses. This study found that social, design, and ambient cues as well as merchandise cues influence internal evaluations and ultimately approach behavior toward single-brand apparel retailers. This study also affirmed that the store-as-a-brand concept is valid for a single-brand apparel retailer (Figure 14).

[43] Customers pay special attention to the designing in a store, including whether the layout and overall structure is reasonable, how is the interior decoration, whether the signs and marks are clear, whether the display of commodities in corridor space, commodity information and classification is complete and convenient. Intangible factors and image of service personnel, that is, customers as critical factors that will influence their behaviors also consider music, noise, room temperature, clothing and attitude of service personnel etc (Figure 15).

[44] There is a direct proportional relationship between customers' buying

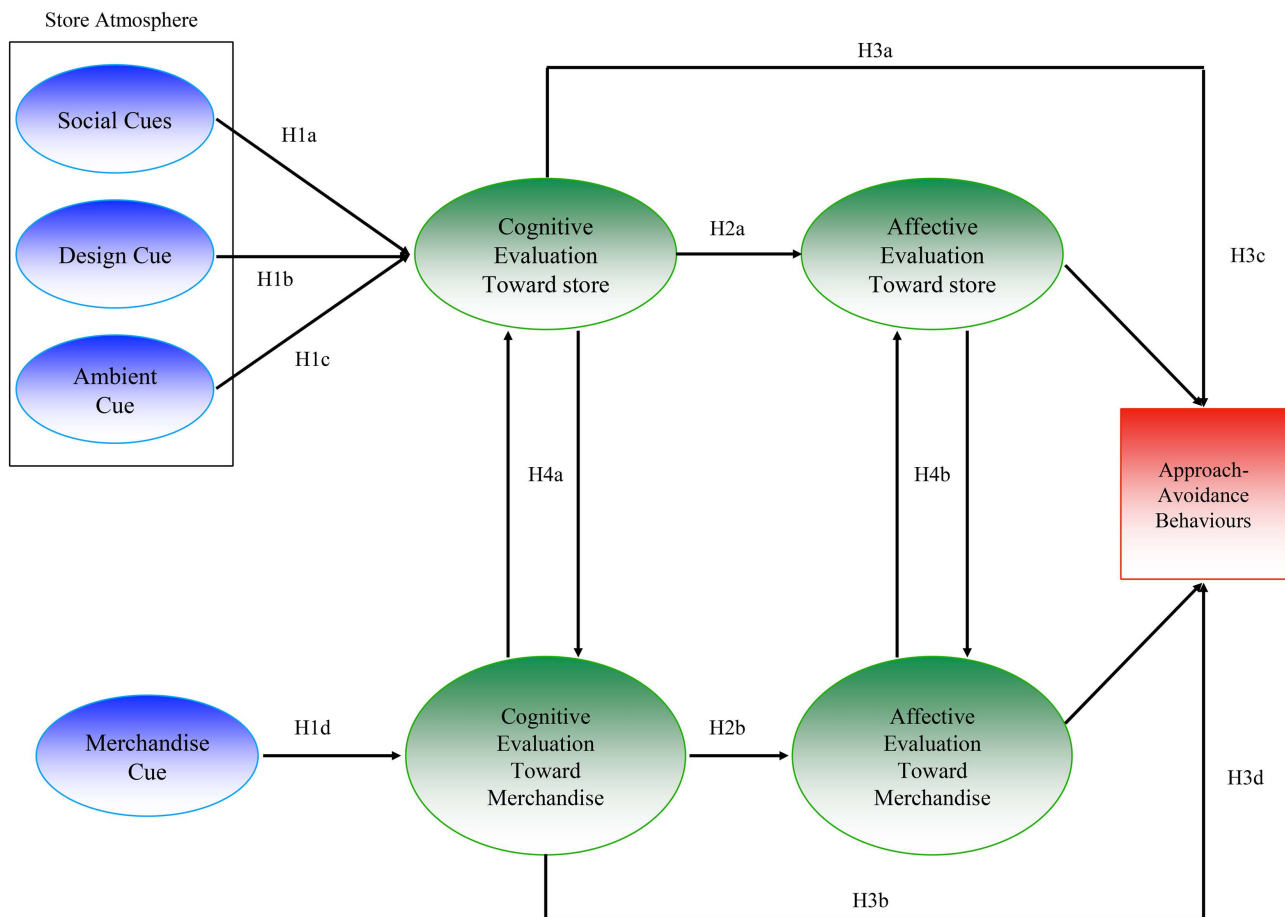


Figure 14. Research model proposed by Kumar, A., & Kim, Y. K. (2014).

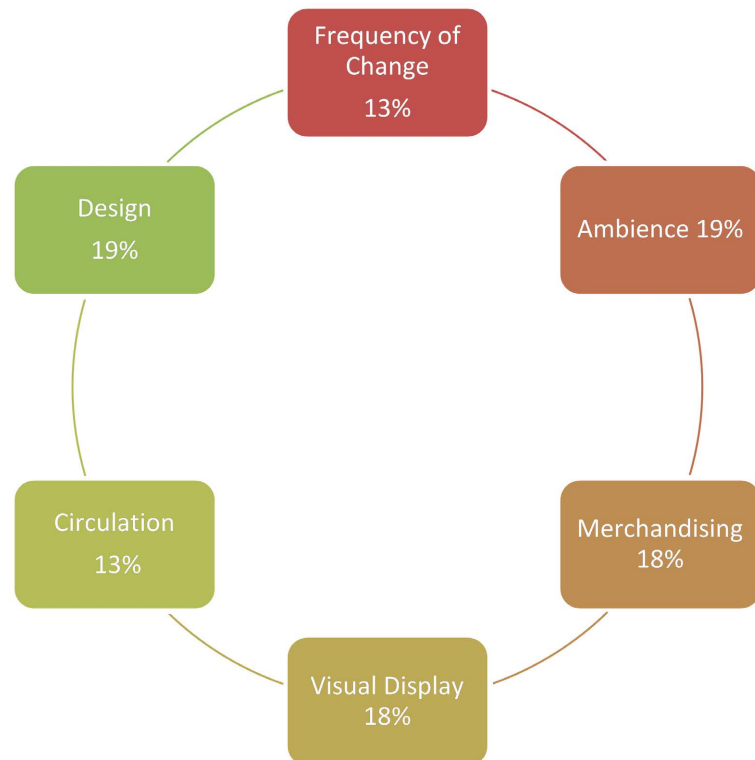


Figure 15. Customer's perception towards retail shop-ability attributes Singh, P., Katiyar, N., & Verma, G. (2014).

behavior and in-store form/mannequin display, promotional signage and window display. Also observed that most people are lured into buying the product looking at the shop's ambience and visual display. Further it is suggested that retailers should put more efforts creating attractive and eye-catching window display providing information regarding new products, fashion trends, or coordination tips. Studies indicated that a retailer has roughly seven seconds to capture the attention of a passing customer. [45] The impact of visual merchandising, viz. store layout, in-store product display, mannequin display, and promotional signage, on impulse buying behavior of customers in apparel retail stores through a questionnaire survey collected from 201 consumers visited the stores. The results of the study suggest that visual merchandising elements do have a significant impact on impulse purchase in apparel retail stores, with store layout having the highest impact, followed by promotional signage, and mannequin display, while in-store product display did not have a significant impact on impulse purchase. [46] conducted an empirical study to understand visual merchandising and its impact on consumer buying behavior. They studied how visual merchandising and outlook factors impact store image and customer buying behavior. It was found that window display; fixture, signage, mannequin, colors and lighting were significantly associated with consumer buying behavior. In order to stand out in the increasing competition, it is important that retailers design their store and present it in a creative and eye-catching manner. Greater

concern should be given to the product displayed in windows and on mannequins, as they are drivers of store visits. [47] Fashion information, which consumers receive from various sources, directly affects their decision to adopt or reject a style. It was suggested that information sources could be classified into three sources: marketer-dominated; consumer-dominated; and neutral. The information sources have changed during the recent twenty years. [48] Store ambience has a deep impact on influencing buying decision of a customer. Color, music store location, product display, music plays a vital role in invoking customer to make purchase. Their results proved that there is a relationship between customers' buying behavior and product display, store ambience, floor merchandising, promotional strategy and discount signage. When consumers are made to exposed to these visual stimuli, it is observed that they are more likely to make a purchase. These visual effects make an effect in consumer mind, which makes a desire to purchase a product. They also mentioned window display is the first touch point of store with the customers and added Promotional strategy and discount signage will enhance the experience of the store. [49] Visual merchandising is responsible for creating interest, desire, and action among customers. It works silently and helps in accelerating the sales, building the brand image and generating the traffic in the retail store. The author found a positive correlation between different variables and statements. Age, Gender and Income are influencing customers to buy from those retail stores, which are focusing upon visual merchandising.

[50] present four important factors of visual merchandising and their hypotheses were based on these *i.e.* store layout, window display, color & lightning and store interior, and how these influences the attention of consumers. Non-probability sampling technique was used to conduct the research and a structured questionnaire was designed to collect responses. They found that store layout had a negative but significant impact on gaining consumer attention. The window display, color and lightning and store interior have a positive and significant impact on consumer attention (Figure 16).

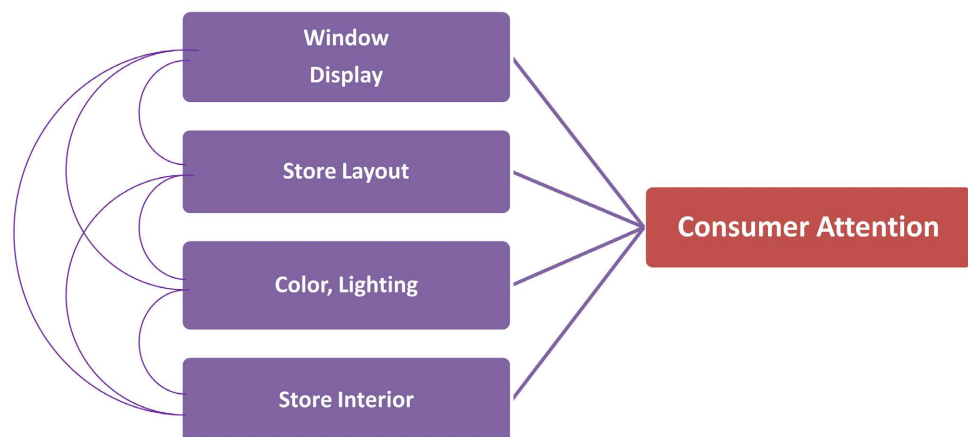


Figure 16. Research model by Ali Soomro, D. Y., Abbas Kaimkhani, S., & Iqbal, J. (2017).

[51] Most of the youth are trendy and classy and thus presentation of goods in fashion industry determines whether they will purchase the apparels or not. This implies that visual merchandising experts are obliged to highlight the products, make them appear to be more attractive and visible in order to increase their sales. This can be achieved when visual and physical issues related to products are positioned to unify brand image (Figure 17).

[52] Fashion industry is targeting more on teenagers as to bring the revolution in fashion world and as they are more into fashion world because of the peer pressure and pushing themselves towards a modern look. Frequency of shopping among teenagers has also got a tremendous boost with the promotional activities of the fashion industries as well as the strong urge to fit into the peer group the teenagers buy more often than needed. Teenagers who evaluate what is in fashion before going shopping, this gives the hint that fashion holds a special position in their lives. [53] conducted a survey using convenience sampling and found that visual merchandising is optimizing the presentation and aesthetic appeal of a product in brick and mortar stores using a combination of tactics which include enhanced lighting, colour blend and digital graphics to highlight product features and draw the attention of the customer. It is majorly aimed at efficient use of retail space to generate more sales and revenue. It has consequently turned into a tool which can be used by clothing retailers to distinguish themselves from competitor too how store design, in-store merchandised show, mannequin displays, and graphic signage has an the effect of on consumer buying



Figure 17. Research model by Gopu, K. S. (2019).

patterns in a positive way. [54] The relationship between store layout and consumer purchasing intentions is positive and significant. And any growth or decline in the product display attribute would influence the intention to purchase. In addition, the connection between colour & lighting and the intentions to purchase is positive and significant. This would influence customer buying intentions if there is any rise or decline in colour and lighting.

4.4. Visual Merchandising and Retail Display Design

In this section, the researchers review the researches carried out in the area of visual merchandising in relevance to the retail display design applicable for the apparel industry.

[55] For a brand an appealing merchandise selection is a key reason why a particular place is a desirable place to shop. Stores “losing touch” with their customers through inappropriate merchandise selection will lose customers. Also found and suggest that brand should pay attention to exterior of the store because if customers do not find the same attractive, will not enter into the store.

[56] The interplay between in-store and out-of-store factors on consumer attention to and evaluation of brands displayed on supermarket shelves. They find that the number of facings has a strong impact on evaluation that is entirely mediated by its effect on visual attention and works particularly well for frequent users of the brand, for low-market-share brands, and for young and highly educated consumers who are willing to trade off brand and price (Figure 18). They also find that gaining in-store attention is not always sufficient to drive sales. For example, top- and middle-shelf positions gain more attention than low-shelf positions; however, only top shelf positions carry through to brand evaluation.

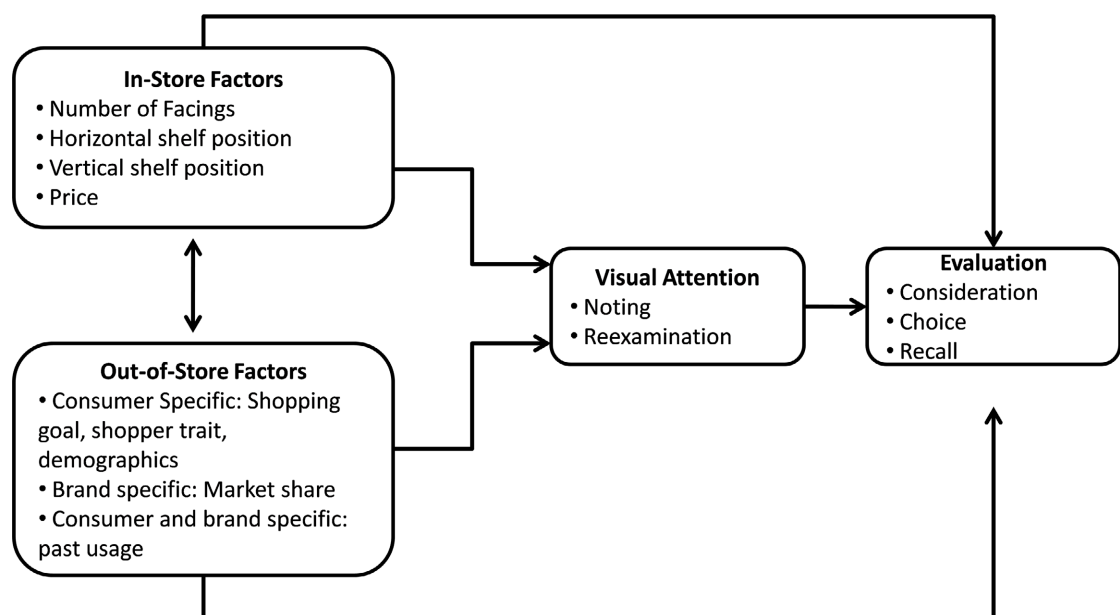


Figure 18. Drivers of attention and evaluation at the point of purchase by Chandon, P., Hutchinson, J. W., Bradlow, E. T., & Young, S. H. (2009).

[57] Shop window display which combines products and messages in order to attract viewers' attention. Attractive shop windows that promote certain items, announce sales, or welcome a season invite passersby to stop, look at, desire, enter, and buy. The arrangement of goods depends on composition with regard to color schemes, materials, cultural or seasonal themes, harmony, balance, variety, and effective details to convey meaning. [58] Retailers need to pay special attention to all elements of their retail mix which includes store design and atmospherics for selling the products in the competitive environment. They indicate that window display and landscaping had no main effects on pleasure or arousal. However, the presence of window display and landscaping influenced respondents' liking of the store exterior and patronage intentions. Additionally, consumers' liking has the store exterior and mood positively influenced patronage intentions. [59] There are two types of point of view when evaluating visual store displays, which include utilitarian and hedonic aspects. The utilitarian aspect relates to the actual needs of consumers, such as garment deterioration, seasonal changes and occasions. The hedonic aspect finds that the perceived female image governs consumer interpretation and acceptance of visual displays. Display elements, such as mannequins, colour, lighting and props that emphasize feelings of feminine sexuality, tend to trigger negative affective responses in consumers, which finally affect purchase intentions.

[60] Visual merchandising design (VMD) which can be classified into three parts; firstly VP (Visual Presentation) which plays a role in presenting life styles to the target customers and delivering messages of the store and merchandise, according to each seasonal theme. Show windows or stages, on which customers eyes fall, belong to this category. Second one is PR (Point of Sales Presentation), which plays a role in showing sales points of merchandise to draw customers' attention; it highlights colourful coordination and styling. The third one is IP (Item Presentation) as a display and sales space; it occupies most of the store space such as hanger, showcase and display stand. It enables customers to directly access to merchandise, according to the type of brand, color, price and kind. [61] Store environment is significantly related to layout and creative coordination factors of visual merchandising. New style/trend information aspect of store image is significantly related to window and merchandise display and creative/inspirational coordination of visual merchandising factors. Merchandise assortment construct of store image is significantly related to layout and creative/inspirational coordination aspects of visual merchandising, which is positively related to customer visit frequency. [62] The big store window displays are theatre scenes nowadays: with expensive backgrounds, special effects and high fashion mannequins. The final role of the displays is to convince customers to enter the store and trigger the purchasing act, which is the final goal of the retail activity. [63] attempt to provide more dynamic perspectives of a store environment with diverse angles. Differently displayed items, along with the manipulation of several VM components such as lighting, color and props, brought dif-

ferent results in the evaluation of store environment, including VM attribute evaluation, emotion and behavioral responses toward the store. The study explains that with VM strategies focused on providing a “visual theme” rather than on the product itself, shoppers can experience arousal and pleasure in the store, thus becoming likely to spend more time and money in the store.

[64] Visual merchandising is a valuable tool for retailers to increase sales. Visual merchandising helps retailers to understand the brand, their customers, their product range and how to segment it and present it to the best advantage to drive sales from the customers. It also creates good vision about organization. A good image surely sets a business apart from competition. In customer driven marketing it is very imperative to increase sales through some innovative sales promotion technique. Repeated visits by customers happen only when their first purchase is a memorable one. [65] Visual Merchandising is a significant aesthetic practice that helps a company and retailer to create the brand image at POS. They further revealed that visual merchandising is the key to gain the competitive advantage against rivals in the market and it helps the firms to increase the sales, to create brand image, to attract the customers towards the products. So the firms should make strategic long term planning's to execute the visual merchandising at the POS (Point of Sale). [66] Investigated using a qualitative two-phase approach of nonparticipant store observations and in-depth interviews with visual merchandisers, the research focused on two main elements of window display: color and lighting. Undertaking a comparison between the VM window display techniques of high street and luxury fashion brands, the primary research demonstrated that a clear difference in approach was evident and that this was dependent on the position in the marketplace. Also the majority strongly agreed that window displays are the most important VM tool because they produce immediate reactions and provide customers with a difference experience through creativity and art. [67] in their study on “Window Display—The New Retail Mantra” emphasized about the importance of window display which is emerging as a new mantra in retail and it is fast changing from a dull uninteresting exhibition of wares in the store window to a dynamic form of advertising. Display can be done according to the space available, coming festival, for any social cause, promotional activities or any theme, the main objective of display doing is to convert passive customer to active customer. [68] The show window presentation and ancillary facilities of VM elements have a positive effect on the perception of newness, while merchandise display, layout, and signage have a positive influence on the perception of prestige. Therefore, the VM elements in the fast fashion stores that affect the perception of newness and prestige are unique. The perceptions of newness and prestige have a positive impact on time spent in fast fashion stores.

[69] Visual Merchandising helps customers to have an amazing shopping experience. For a Visual Merchandiser, a store is like a theatre. The walls & floor are like stage of theatre. The lighting, fixtures & visual communications makes

the set of the stage & the merchandise play the characters in the show. [70] Research finding shows that the visual merchandising elements were inarguably well employed by the luxury brand retailers, which was followed with the retailers selling high price fashion products. Among the visual merchandising elements special lighting and window displays are favored by all the retailers. [71] Interior display helps to show customers what's new in the store. Interior display gives customer reason to buy the product. Regular shoppers generally know where the products are displayed. In-store displays installed properly helps to change the customers mind in a positive direction leading to sales.

[72] Visual merchandising is all about creating a novelty in store through creative steps that will change the behavior of the person coming to store for shopping. Either a small store or big retail store creating an ambiance and good atmosphere for the customer is must or that can be achieved with creative imagination of the visual merchandisers and designers. By giving this personal touches and rather inexpensive creativities will add wonders to sales figures and customer will love to shop when they are having a comfortable experience of shopping. [73] Introducing new trends using visual merchandising elements, such as display fixtures and props, contributes to the creation of visual experiences in retail environments. Study further provides insight for designers, architects, and retailers on how customers engage with their retail environment and direct visual attention, in tandem with emotional arousal in response to visual stimuli. A consumer-centric approach could eventually increase consumer satisfaction and impact brand loyalty. When a retailer plans a new physical store, the designer can consider highlighting visual merchandising elements known to attract the attention of consumers and stimulate emotional arousal.

4.5. Visual Merchandising and Latest Technologies

In this section, the researchers review the researches carried out in the area of visual merchandising in relevance to the Latest Technologies applicable for the apparel industry.

[74] The effective integration of online within the offline physical store in one holistic shopping experience in the fashion field. It explores the merging of three key dimensions in creating an integrated experience—physical store variables, advanced technologies implementation and consumer attitudes and motivations. The role of advanced technologies in the physical store suggests that research online and purchase offline is an essential step in shopping activities. The use of mobile has gained importance, providing opportunities for fashion retailers. The conceptual framework identified the elements that encompass an online-offline shopping experience and serves as a first step in generating an integrated experience.

[75] 3D technology attempts to provide a more dynamic perspective on store environments for consumers, using diverse rather than fragmentary angles. Differing item displays and the manipulation of several VM components, such as

lighting, color, or props, resulted in varying patterns in the evaluation of store environment, the emotions involved, and the behavioral responses toward a store. With VM strategies focused on providing a visual theme rather than on the product itself, shoppers can experience arousal as well as pleasure in the store, and thus are likely to spend more time and money in the store (**Figure 19**). In product-centric VM stores, shoppers can experience pleasure through great variety, perception of spaciousness and the simple and systematic arrangement, and decide to stay in the store longer, leading to the probability of their spending more money.

[76] Study investigated the consumers' affective response to the visual complexity of a fashion retail environment. The results indicated that retail managers should manage the level of visual complexity using visual patterns of interior elements and arranging merchandise and furniture aesthetically to design store environments that effectively trigger positive emotions and enhance attention of target consumers. [77] The traditional brick-and-mortar store formats need to be modified to interact with the buying expectation of customer, mainly the young people. The consumption habits of this cohort cause the companies to reformulate their marketing strategies and develop new digital strategies. Today companies know the importance of offering tangible and intangible goods to consumers upon purchase, including investments in technology in POS visual merchandising. Experiential retailing is an emerging strategy that attracts consumers through a combination of hedonic and utilitarian values communicated through multisensory retail marketing strategies.

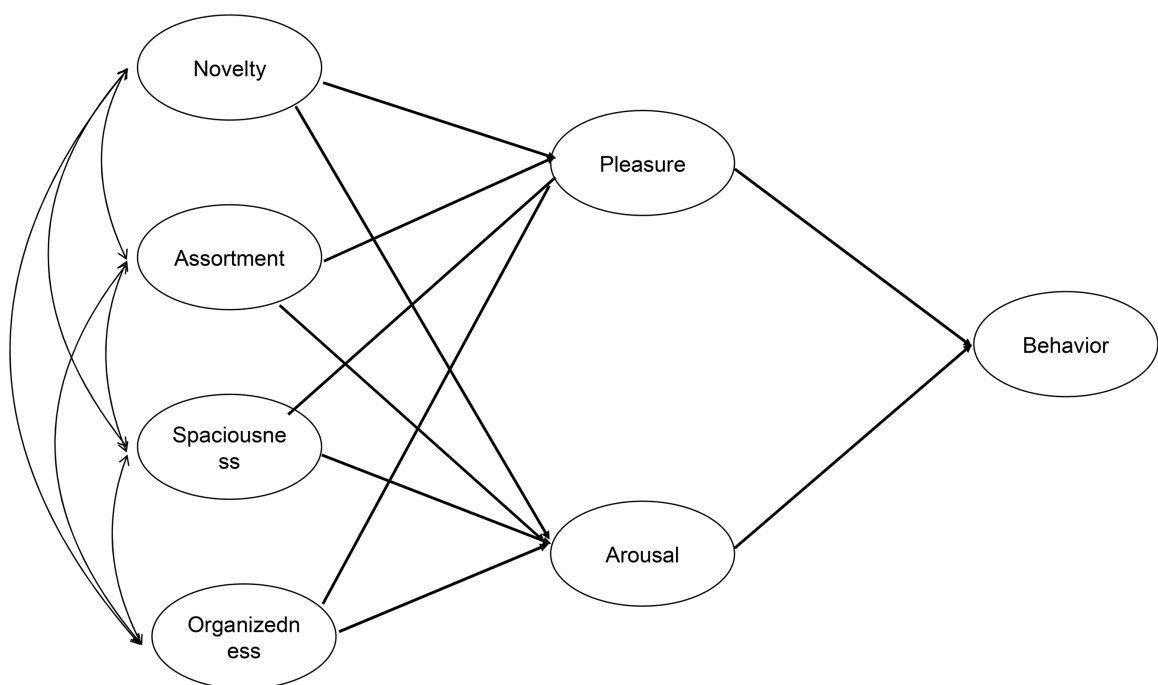


Figure 19. Conceptual framework (Theme-centric VM store) by Baek, E., Choo, H. J., Yoon, S. Y., Jung, H., Kim, G., Shin, H., Kim, H., & Kim, H. (2015).

[78] Specifying the target market will enable physical store to identify among their customers who accept in-store technology or not. Customers' attitude towards in-store technology acceptance will be affected positively or negatively depending on their sex and age range differences. Because the younger generation perception for technology is different from that of the older generation, the younger generation has better knowledge and interest to use technology. This in turn affects customers' overall in-store shopping experience by affecting customers' information search and purchase decision inside the store. It is said customers' information search is affected positively if in-store technology enable them to find what they want. In addition, such technology will affect customers' purchase decision when they are able to identify what they need, to choose among alternatives and finally purchase. [79] The introduction of the Omni channel should be seen as an opportunity for retail growth, and not as a reaction to the development of the e-commerce. The concepts of web rooming and show rooming are popular nowadays, as they are common scenarios in the digital age. Article also analyzed the characteristics of the new costumers that belong to the generation of Millennial, and their differences from previous generations. This gap is justified by the widespread dissemination of the internet and communication technology. In this way, companies need to be adapted to be competitive in the market, by adjusting their points of sales and marketing strategic actions. Visual Merchandising is a tool that contributes a lot to this adaptation of the physical POS (Point of Sale), especially on fashion retailers, so that there is a re-signification of these spaces serving the new consumers.

[80] The consumer's perception of visual product aesthetics is three-dimensional, and it differs depending on consumers' levels of fashion innovativeness and fashion leadership. Consumers can distinguish the details in the design of a garment, and determine how they fitted into different garments. It was pleasing for consumers to see and have superior-designed clothing. In addition, consumers felt compelled to purchase superior-designed clothes that appealed to them, and had a strong motivation to buy them. [81] When a sustainable retailer engages in sustainable visual merchandising, consumers see a congruence between the brand's sustainable image and the in store sustainable stimuli (**Figure 20**). This perceived congruence might evoke a positive attitude toward the sustainable visual merchandising, which in turn evokes willingness to buy from and intentions of patronage toward the retailer.

[82] Contributes to the retail literature by introducing a new practical shelf space allocation model, which includes practical merchandising tactics resulting in the store, shelf, and product constraints. Store layout and customer traffic are the main factors that influence the time spent by customers in stores. The advantages and importance of shelf level differentiation were also discussed and finally, the role of pallets in maximizing the vertical space on regular shelves is presented. Further adds that market attributes such as regional segmentation, trends, size, and target customers are also very important (**Figure 21**).

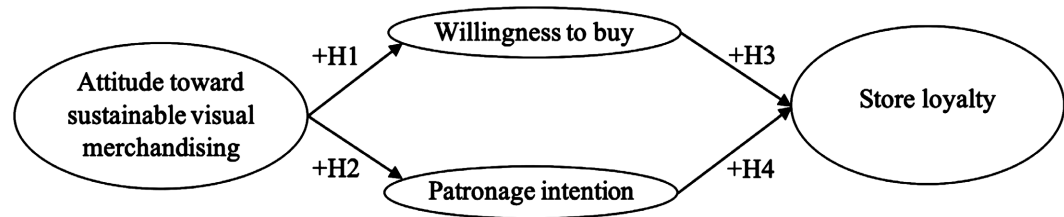


Figure 20. Proposed research model showing relationships among variables by Sadachar, A., Konika, K., & Chakraborty, S. (2021).

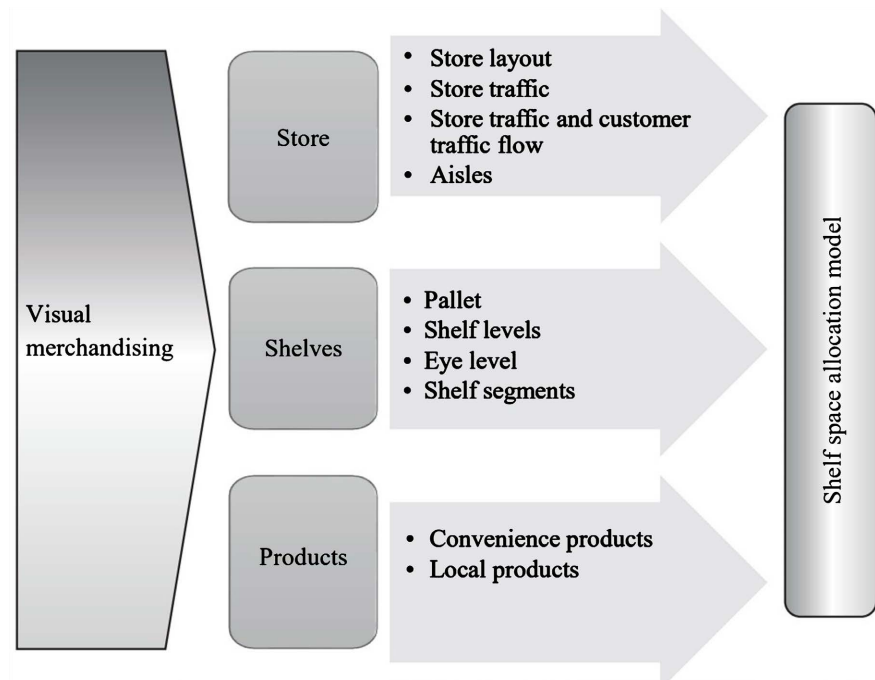


Figure 21. A framework of the impact of visual merchandising management to the shelf space allocation model by Czerniachowska, K. (2021)

[83] Conducted an empirical test to demonstrate the social Robot Mannequin RoMa's acceptability and performance. In test the robot was outfitted and placed in a showcase at an apparel store where prospective customer behavior was studied via a camera, microphone and questionnaire. The results indicate that RoMa was able to increase the number of people who looked at the showcase by 280% during the day, which validates the idea of visual merchandising and sales enhancement. In addition, with its design and adequate affinity RoMa was able to attract customer attention from the viewpoints of anthropology, movements, and likeability. [84] Further assess new technological advances that could change the way we buy clothes, exploring existing solutions that are still commonly confused with each other: Smart fitting rooms (SFR), interactive mirrors (IM), Virtual Reality (VR), and Augmented Reality (AR). Although explored and researched in the last years, solutions like IM and SFR was once part of what was considered the future of fashion retail. However, poor business models and lack of technological advances at the time limited these solutions. New technologies

such as Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR) and Mixed-Reality (MR), combined with the latest Smartphone evolution could relaunch solutions like these. In the fashion sector, very dependent on the presentation of collections and novelty products in stores, if offline retail is out-of-reach, like it might become even more frequently in the future, products have to be digitally and virtually presented to the customer. [85] Research suggested a way to convey the store atmosphere to consumers without having them physically visiting the store, viz., recording VR store videos and uploading them to the website. VR store experience used in the study consisted of 360-degree-based VR videos that recorded a physical store. Unlike the suggestion from earlier studies to create virtual stores graphically, this study recommends a simple method for any retailer. Retailers can record and post 360° store videos using 360° camera on their website or other video portals, in addition to 2D store images. If the retailers upload VR video materials on their website, consumers can watch the videos with VR headsets from any location. Because simple 360° VR videos can encourage customers to perceive the store as attractive, and both the camera and VR headsets are inexpensive and widely available already, this method can be cost-effective for retailers, including small businesses.

5. Bibliometric Analysis (VOSviewer)

VOSviewer is a tool that is used to generate, visualize and analyze bibliometric networks. These networks include research authors, journals, institutions and individual publications. The bibliometric analysis was done under 5 categories same as review of the literature which are being presented in the below map, shows the network of co-occurring keywords sourced from abstracts and bodies of research articles for better understanding of the research work done in the key areas and also the emerging ones.

5.1. Visual Merchandising and Apparel Fashion Trends

VOSviewer bibliometric analysis in **Figure 22** shows 5 clusters with major occurrence and strongest link between marketing, consumers, retail stores, shopping etc. The occurrence of fashion in comparison with others is not very strong but it shows its connection with many of the keywords such as clothing, trends, fashion etc. it is also showing the recent areas of study *i.e.* impulse buying, fashion goods, globalization etc.

5.2. Visual Merchandising and Fashion Branding

The analysis in **Figure 23** shows 5 cluster with major occurrence of consumer, marketing and retail stores with consumers behavior having the major connect with brand loyalty, perception etc. it can be noticed that Brand image and fashion has weak connection and less occurrence. It also shows the new area of research like packaging, advertising, trend and sustainability etc.

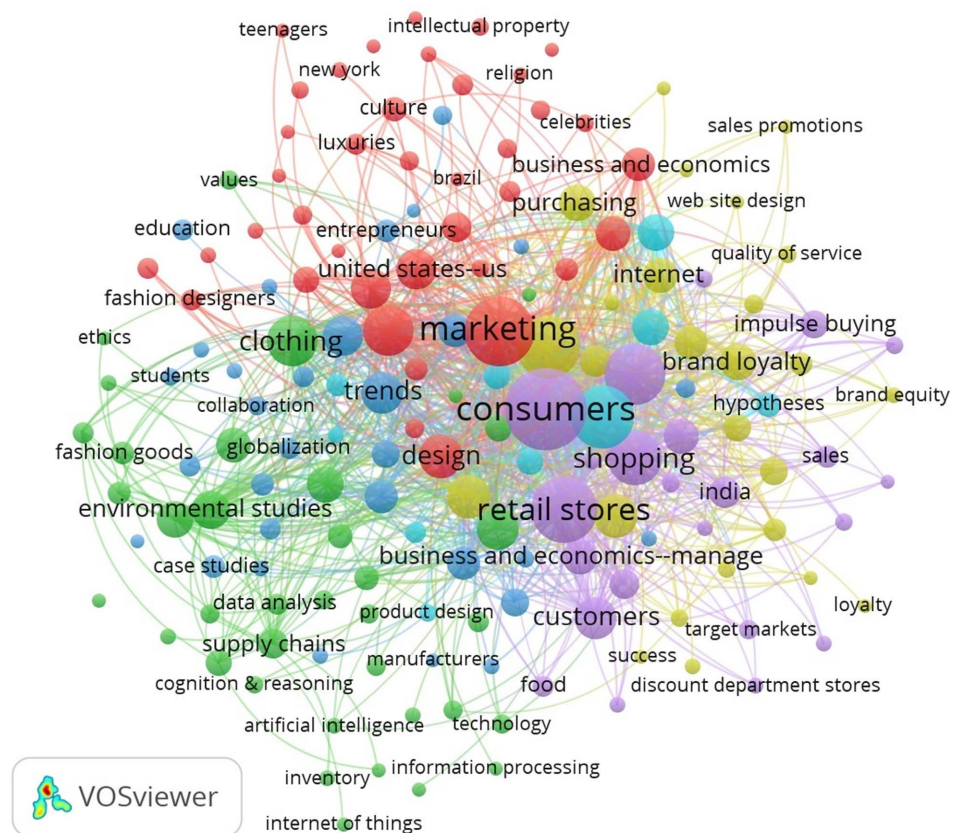


Figure 22. Bibliometric analysis of keywords.

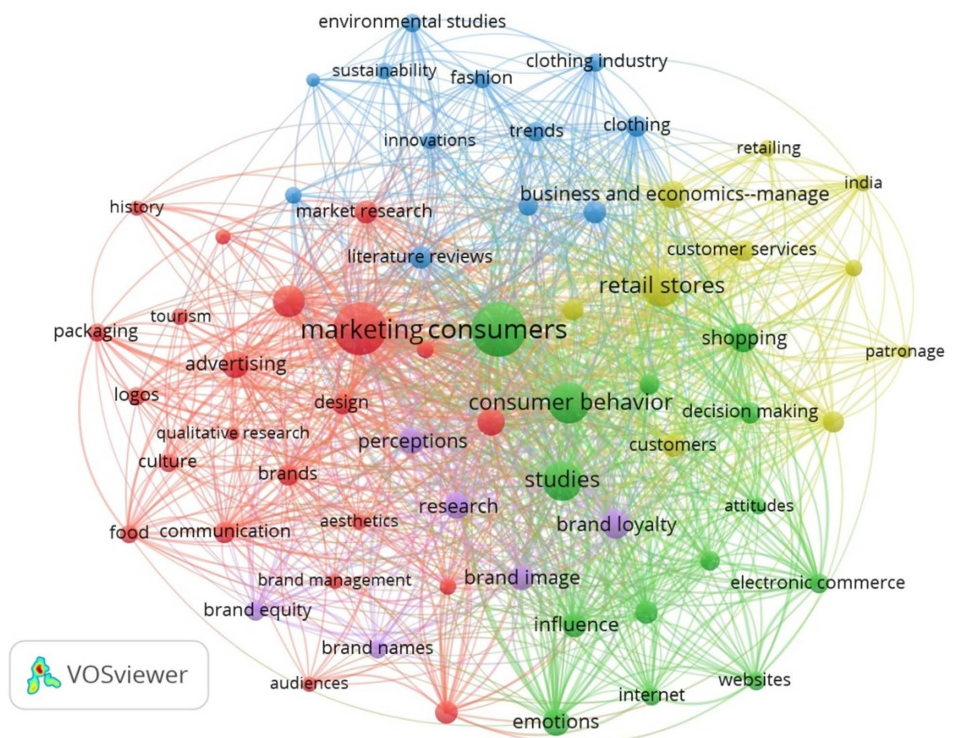


Figure 23. Bibliometric analysis of keywords.

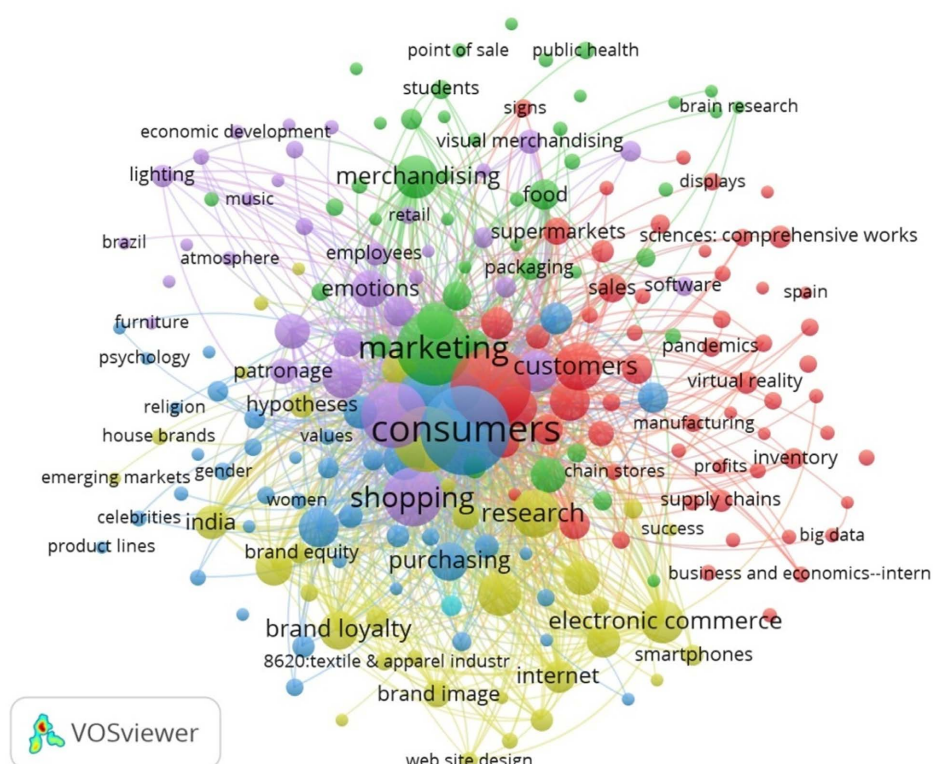


Figure 25. Bibliometric analysis of keywords.

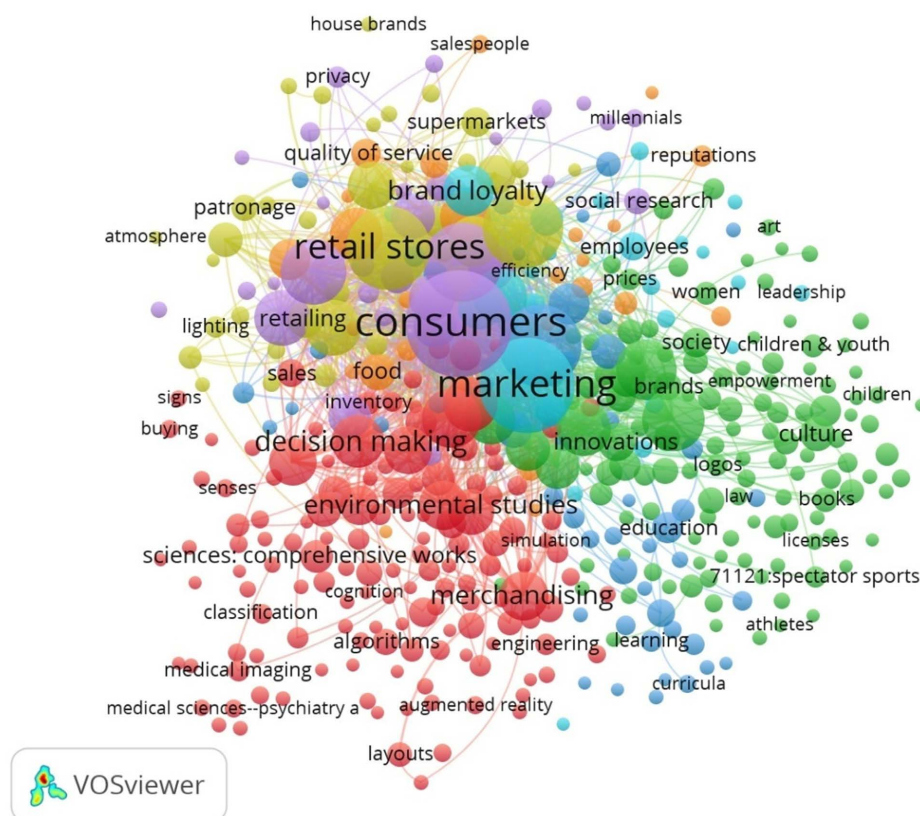


Figure 26. Bibliometric analysis of keywords.

6. Review Summary and Research Gaps

Review of literature done quite extensively, covering multiple area of visual merchandising such as its impact consumer behavior, studying the key elements of visual merchandising, role in creating images of the brand and playing a key role in brand equity building and also touches the role of trend in visual merchandising. Many of the papers also discussed the multisensory experience of the store, use of technological advancement like 3D simulation, AR/VR in space design etc and its impact.

However there are many other areas, which lack of study and can be explored further such as:

- 1) Reviewing the convergence of styling and trend in window display according to the season and occasion.
- 2) Educating the customer about Fashion styling and trends through in-store display and presentation.
- 3) Exploring the imperative role of Visual Merchandising in diffusing the fashion trends.
- 4) Studying the impact of fashion trend forecasts display on consumer buying behavior pattern.
- 5) Studying the role of signage and graphics in communicating display information.
- 6) Studying the role of demographics on styling of window dressing and in-store display.
- 7) Studying the impact of visual merchandising on Fashion Brand Equity.

7. Research Outcomes and Discussions

The core aim of this research was to find out the facts and discover the past research's outcomes with regards to the objectives formulated.

It was found that Visual merchandising which has evolved from a mere display to providing a complete shopping experience is a very important tool in fashion apparel retail industry. It has many elements, when put together in sync with the target market and Brand philosophy creates wonders in converting passerby into shoppers. Researchers also found that it plays a very crucial role in creating a brand image since it communicates the brand message to the audience. Window display which is a very important element, if done nicely communicates the brand and influences the consumer. Also found that thematic and trendy display always influences and fetches the attention of audience.

Further study clearly shows that visual merchandising has a great impact on influencing the customer, affecting their shopping behavior and pattern. Results proved that there is a relationship between customers' buying behavior and product display, store ambience, floor merchandising, promotional strategy and discount signage. When consumers are made to be exposed to these visual stimuli, it is observed that they are more likely to make a purchase. It was also observed that exposure to out-of-store marketing activity facilitates planning and that ex-

posure to in-store marketing stimuli generates unplanned buying. They found that for unplanned buying, in-store and out-of-store marketing can be mutually reinforcing.

When it comes to fashion trend and its impact on visual merchandising, study shows that not much has been done and explored in the area of fashion trends. Some observation revealed that fast moving fashion describes a scenario where fashion retailers implement a range of strategies in order to adequately meet market demand by ensuring that they have the right product, in the right place, in the right time. Also when it comes to fashion trend since everything is moving on a fast pace if window display and in-store display get changed frequently will have positive impact. This leaves a gap area for future explorations since the young generation mostly believes in fast fashion.

Some researchers have found that the brand equity and visual merchandising has a significant effect on consumer purchase decision. These results were supported by previous researchers too. Store Branding works as a signal. It allows consumers to quickly recognize the place and product as one they are familiar with or one they like. It acts as a memory cue, allowing consumers to retrieve relevant information from memory. This information may be about past experience of the brand, brand perceptions or brand associations. Study suggests that in order to make VM work, the retailer utilizes VM to develop a powerful store-image effectively. Image can be described as the overall look of a store and the series of mental pictures.

Reviews also assess new technological advances that could change the way we buy clothes, exploring existing solutions that are still commonly confused with each other: Smart fitting rooms (SFR), interactive mirrors (IM), Virtual Reality (VR), and Augmented Reality (AR). They have also talked about the concept of 3D simulation for online shopping and store experience.

8. Research Contribution to the Field/Industry

The outcome of this review study would be an essential contribution in the field of academics and for sincere practitioners of the industry as mentioned below:

- Visual merchandising is an essential element of marketing for fashion brands. It helps create the brand image by incorporating various elements and communicates brand ideology and message, influencing the target/potential consumer. This study will help them understand the pivotal role of fashion styling and trend in retail space design and its impact on consumers.
- Every business wants to retain customers and try to maintain long-term relationships. Visual Merchandising is one technique to leave an unforgettable impact on customers' minds and help them in their shopping. In today's time when fashion is moving very fast, and consumers are conscious, this is very imperative for a visual merchandiser to design windows and space in such a way so that narration is clear and competitive.
- Research outcomes will make brands understand the importance of fashion

trends and style and will allow them to include this in the role of visual merchandiser, as it will help them do better in their business and eventually making of the right Brand Image.

9. Scope for Future Research & Challenges

Study shows certain gap and unexplored areas of visual merchandising as mentioned above. Since nothing much has been found and done before in the areas of establishing association between Visual Merchandising, Fashion Trend and Brand Image, a research study could be conducted on the basis of primary data collection. It may be possible that the new perspectives would bring valuable insights that could be beneficial for academicians and fashion brand retailers at large. If its being done on a very large scale, it will take a lot of time. Hence this challenge could be avoided by conducting study at small or regional levels according to the fashion seasons.

10. Conclusion

In this study the apparel fashion trend, visual merchandising and fashion branding with regards to fashion apparel industry and their association with each other was discussed. It demonstrates that Visual merchandising and its elements (Both exteriors and interiors) have a great impact on consumer behavior. Visual merchandising which has been upgraded to store experience has a strong connect with image of the store which is an important element of brand equity. Since fashion is an ever changing phenomenon, Visual merchandising too has to move with the time so that it can be in sync with young cohorts. Also introduction of technological advances is very much inevitable in the area of visual merchandising. Thus, it can be concluded that this study shows a deep insight and also provides a direction for the future research areas.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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