

Original Research Article

Role of Visual Merchandising on Consumers' Impulsive Buying Behaviour: Reference to Apparel Retail Stores in Sri Lanka

Abstract

Purpose: With emerging modern phenomenons in the world, the aesthetic appeal of a product is utilized by retailers as visual marketing strategies. The main aspiration of the study is to investigate the influence of visual merchandising strategies on impulse purchases of customers in apparel retail sector, Sri Lanka.

Method: Quantitative research approach was employed. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire, using 343 consumers who are buying apparels from apparel retail stores in Sri Lanka. Acknowledging the Stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) framework of environmental psychology, window display, floor merchandising, promotional signage and mannequin display selected as the strategies of visual merchandising.

Findings: Multiple regression analysis results indicated that window display as the highest influencing factor followed by promotional signage and mannequin display in-store form on impulse purchases. However, the floor merchandising was not a significant influencer on impulse purchases.

Research Implication: The study contributes to theory by testing the applicability of the S-O-R framework of environmental psychology to visual merchandising strategies as stimulus in the apparel retail sector. The results of the study will pave the way for both small and large retailers to gain customer attraction and increase market space through providing value for the customers. Also, the study will help for customers to get an understanding about marketing strategies and how they should behave in shopping travels. Furthermore, the policymakers can make best decisions with optimizing the knowledge regarding apparel industry and consumer behavior.

Key words: *Apparel retail sector; Floor merchandising; Impulsive buying behaviour; Mannequin display in-store; Promotional signage; Window display*

Introduction

The emergence of new businesses has created a massive competition in the business world, and it highly influenced over the retail sector as well (Sumarmi and Prasyanti, 2021). This situation is exacerbated by the fact that today fashion has become a factor that changes the lives of people. In this situation, marketers always strive to differentiate their products from others and outperform other competitors. Accordingly, they are trying to introduce different strategies to attract customers through studying the consumer purchasing behaviour (Babu and Mathew, 2020).

Consumer buying behaviour is the process by which consumers select, purchase, and consume goods to satisfy their needs based on various factors (Kaur and Jain, 2016). In studying the behaviour, impulsive buying behavior receives impressive attention specifically for apparel products (Wijaya and Setyawan, 2020). In such manner, consumers motivated from various stimulants to buy products without a second thought and this is identified as a mental process and an uncontrollable process. The consumer satisfaction, experience and a

comfortable environment also have a direct impact on consumer purchases and immediate decisions.

Moreover, impulsive buying behaviour of consumers influenced by two factors as internal and external (Jain, 2021). Internal factors include personal characteristics, customer's mood, culture, and income of the consumer. External stimulus describes the factors like quality of the product, attractiveness, packaging, promotional schemes, eye-catching displays that are motivating customers to buy products (Joghee et al., 2021). These external stimuli, thus, established as a silent selling technique that focused on the strategic display of merchandise to promote retail sales (Park et al., 2015). As such, retailers' growing need to transition from the "verbal engagement" of the sales personnel to a more subtle form of a "sensory experience"-based selling environment prompted the practice of visual merchandising (Parker, 2003). In line with external stimulus, the apparel retailers are mostly using eye-catching strategies to attract customers. Visual merchandising is a powerful tool to influence consumer's emotions through attractive presentations and incredible displays to get customer's attention to buy products without a second thought (Krywulak, 2017). The basic visual merchandising patterns used by marketers are window display, floor merchandising, mannequin display/ in-store form, and promotional signage to distinguish their products from competitors (Basha and Shyam, 2021). Also, according to the Joghee et al., (2021), lighting arrangements, color combinations, product display, cleanliness, are the most using patterns of visual merchandising. Considering that, visual merchandising is also known as "silent sales person" (Kaur and Saini, 2022).

The Covid 19 pandemic has created a considerable effect on the business world and, it highly influenced on consumers' buying decisions also (Belbag, 2021). In that sense, instant purchases increased, because it was risky to be stayed at stores for a long time with this environment, people were immediately tempted to buy their essentials (Barnes et al., 2021). On these notes, visual marketing patterns provided a great support to consumers in choosing products.

The influence of atmospherics on shopping experience and behaviour has been inspired by the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) paradigm of environmental psychology (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). The theory indicates that a stimulus in the business environment (S) influences customers' organismic emotional states (O), which, in turn, lead to behavioural responses (R). As Thomas et al. (2018) opined, person's behaviour is different from one to another and various stimuli are affecting to persons mental state, and it cause to behavioural responses. A stimulus is a variable those exciting emotions and cognitive feelings of the humans and through this process, human responses are arising (Singh and Basu, 2022). As the marketing stimulus, visual merchandising principles are using by retailers to attract more customers into their shops (Kanagal, 2016). The prior studies have been examined the influence of visual merchandising stimulus such as music, light, layout on consumers' impulsive buying behavior (Randhawa and Saluja, 2017; Miao et al., 2019; Mohamad et al., 2020). It is evidence that hedonic values such as visually appealing designs play a critical role in satisfying experiences.

In Sri Lanka, there is a trend of growing "organized retail outlets" (buy multiple products from one place) in apparel retail industry (Mubarak and Mufeeth, 2020). In order to attract more customers into their stores, retailers need to pay more attention about the customer's

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feelings and attitudes because consumers are tempting to buy apparels based on their emotions (Sumarmi and Prasyanti, 2021). It is important to arrange the store to increase mental attractiveness of customers leading to buy products that they have not preferred to buy before. However, it is worth to note that the immediate focus on buying products based on consumer immediate decisions can sometimes lead to losses and unfortunate expenses for customers. Thus, visual merchandising does not always bring the positive benefits to both sellers and customers (Li et al., 2020). Considering these facts, the retailers should have an understanding about visual merchandising strategies to create attractive apparel store to increase mental attractiveness of customers. In this line, the study aims to investigate the impact of visual merchandising strategies in apparel retail stores on impulsive buying behaviour of consumers in Sri Lanka.

The study contributes to theory by testing the applicability of the S-O-R framework of environmental psychology to visual merchandising strategies as stimulus in the apparel retail sector. To the best of our knowledge this study is one of the first to consider interior and exterior visual merchandising strategies impact of in apparel retail stores on impulsive buying behaviour of consumers in Sri Lanka. From an industry perspective, the findings of the study can assist retailers and advertisers to enhance shoppers' experiences.

Literature Review

Impulsive Buying Behaviour

The consumer behavior has an evolution as step by step from past and it considerably changed after 1950's with growth of modern marketing features. Consumer buying behaviour is the way of processing the emotions and psychology in entering to buy products or services based on various internal and external stimuli (Jelani et al., 2022). As such, behaviour of purchasing is varying from individuals to individual depending on various physical, psychological and social factors.

Impulsive buying is a common and important phenomenon of consumer behaviour (Ahmed and Riaz, 2018). Consideration on impulsive buying behaviour becomes increasing attention due to consumers' behaviour changed with the Covid 19 pandemic in globally (Anas et al., 2022). Wijaya and Setyawan (2020) defined impulsive buying behaviour as an unplanned, spontaneous, and sudden purchase decision of the customer. Further, Babu and Mathew (2020) opined that the impulsive buying behaviour is a very powerful process that takes place in the mind, disrupting the normal decision making patterns of the consumer's brain. In this sense, consumers are driven to make such a quick decision based on internal (emotions, personality characteristics, culture) as well as external (eye-catching strategies, store atmosphere, product quality) stimulus (Joghee et al., 2021). In line with that, store attributes that are using by retailers affect for consumers instant reactions and those reactions that are emerging after looking something also describes the consumer's impulsive buying behavior (Borromeo et al., 2022).

With the dynamic nature of the clothing fashion, impulsive buying behaviour is mostly connected with this apparel industry (Mubarak and Mufeeth, 2020). General believe is that fashionable cloths can be given some message about the persons' personality and status

(McNeil and Moore, 2015). As a result, the apparel industry can be introduced as a consumer-oriented industry. In apparel purchasing, impulsive buying can be defined as the act of inducing oneself to gravitate towards an item as soon as it catches the eye without any prior searching about the information (Harjadi et al., 2021).

Theoretical background

To understand consumers' impulsive buying behaviour in the apparel retail environment, the S-O-R framework of environmental psychology utilized as the theoretical basis for this study. The model posits that environmental stimuli (S) lead to emotional or cognitive reactions in consumers (O) that, in turn, shape their responses (R). Stimulus (S) is the impetus within the shopping environment that influences an individual's internal states, and consequently stimulates a behavioural response. From a retail perspective, stimuli or atmospherics include the physical and non-physical elements of a retail shop environment to influence consumers' shopping behavior (Roux et al., 2020). Applying the S-O-R model to a retail context, a number of researchers have studied the role of environmental stimuli, such as ambient cues, design cues, and social cues, as predictors of emotional responses (e.g. pleasure, arousal) as well as cognition responses (e.g. ideas concerning the retailer) as a predictor of shopping behavior (Wu et al., 2013).

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Interestingly, factors that are prevailing specially in apparel retail stores such as color combination, space, layout, and sense are highly interconnected with instant purchasing decisions (Jaini et al., 2022). On these notes, the concept of visual marketing significantly developed with innovation and technological improvements in the marketing field (Shrestha, 2018) and visual merchandising becomes a determining factor of the success of retail stores by creating eye catching tactics (Kaur and Saini, 2022). The S-O-R model stresses the effect of environmental stimuli on consumer's psychological and behavioural responses, which well suits our research purpose, which is to test the effect of visual merchandising strategies on impulse purchases of customers in apparel retail sector.

Visual Merchandising

Visual merchandising strategies has a vital role in attracting the customers instantly (Soomro and Kaimkhani, 2017). Visual merchandising is the process of decorating the store and presentation of attractive displays to gain potential customer's attention (Randhawa and Saluja, 2017). Kaur and Saini (2022) described that the visual merchandising is used by retailers to develop the relationship between customers and shops by establishing interactive surrounding. Further they explained that it affects to nice mood of customers and repeat purchases by enhancing creative imagination of customers. As such, the main purpose of the visual merchandising is to attract customers, retain them in the store, create a positive attitude about shopping experience and bring them back to the store (Dash and Akshaya, 2016).

In fashion retail sector, visual marketing tactics are utilized to separate their products from competitors and to get customer attraction and preference on their products with the prevailing dynamic and competitive nature in the fashion retail industry (Mubarak and Mufteeth, 2020). The utilization of visual marketing strategies in apparel retail sector is mostly important due to representing of textile products should be creative to attract more

customers and displaying the mixture of special themes, graphics and calm environment can create positive image about the apparel shops (Basha and Shyam, 2021). Therefore, cloth designs are presenting to customers by using lighting, marquees, landscapes, decorations and music (Jaini et al., 2022).

In early definition of visual merchandising (Bastow-Shoop, et al., 1991), visual merchandising is everything the customer sees, both exterior and interior, that creates a positive image of a business and results in attention, interest, desire and action on the part of the customer. There are two aspects of visual merchandising as interior and exterior stores (Soomro et al., 2017). Interior stores such as store layout, product display, colour & lighting, mannequin display in-store form, floor merchandising and cleanliness (Mondol et al., 2021; Jelani et al., 2022; Sendu et al., 2021; Surjit, 2021), use as creative themes in apparel retail shops to establish interactive surrounding. Thus, interior stores mainly focus to retain customers in the shop, create a positive attitude about shopping experience and bring them back to the shop. As exterior stores, prior studies concerned window display, lighting arrangement, colour combinations, store layout, brand signage, music, promotional signage (Mehta and Chugan, 2013; Shrestha, 2018; Flegar et al., 2020; Sendu et al., 2021). The main intention of exterior stores is to get customer's attention to the apparel shop and inspire customers to go and peek into the shops.

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Acknowledging the prior studies, the study focuses mannequin display and floor merchandising as interior stores visual merchandising; and window display and promotional signage as exterior stores visual merchandising. These visual merchandising aspects would utilize to motivate potential customers to entry into the shops, create positive image about the shopping experience, retain them in the shop, and bring them back to the apparel shop. It is worthwhile to note that this study limits its scope to visible elements of visual merchandising. Non-visual components such as smell, feel or sound did not consider this stage of the study.

Soomro et al. (2017) defined the window display as the art of presenting a product in a way that captures the attention of the customers. As Iberahim et al. (2020) described, window display is a way of displaying store content and prices to out-of-store customers. Further explained it is something that customers see before they enter the store, and it is designed to attract them into the store. Similarly, Urquia et al. (2019) opined that the displaying the windows as more attractive and well - designed manner, customers tend to look those products suddenly. Then the window display affects to make an interest in the customer's mind to go to those shops. Tesfaye (2022) described that customer interact to the apparel products through understanding the message that showing in exterior display. Apparel outlets use window display as a communication method of new styles, concepts, models, and new themes to promote products and services (Jaini et al., 2022). Further, the study suggested that viewers can get an idea about the available products in the store and can react to the mission of the products through effective presentations on window.

A small stream of research in the window display domain has examined the influence on impulsive buying behavior (Babu and Mathew, 2020; Basha and Shyam, 2021; Badgaiyan and Verma, 2015; Miao et al., 2020). Babu and Mathew (2020) opined that window display

in organized retail outlets significantly influence on consumers' impulsive buying decisions. Align with that Basha and Shyam (2021) claimed that window display in fashion stores leads customers to buy items without pre-purchase intention. In contrast, Miao et al. (2020) argued that window display in shopping malls is insignificant factor for impulsive buying behavior. Researchers have examined window display influence from different perspectives, and inconsistencies remain in understanding this concept. In view of its significance, this study aims to examine:

H1: There is an influence of window display in apparel retail stores on impulsive buying behaviour of consumers in Sri Lanka.

Mannequin display is a creative way of presenting products using personalized templates or images to attract customers (Randhawa and Saluja, 2019). In addition to that, mannequins provide the psychological knowledge and understanding about the items, and it indicates the esthetic features by utilizing styles relating to appearance of person templates (Jelani et al., 2022). Furthermore, mannequin display deals with social acceptability of customers as the basic eye-catching marketing strategy. It contributes to the marketers by giving main ideas regarding usefulness of dummy presentations and it promotes experiments of marketing field (Cant and Wiid, 2020). Also, they observed that, with dynamic changes and seasonal changes, the arrangements of mannequins and in – store layout is changing by shop owners with aiming gain competitive advantages. Sendu et al. (2021) described mannequins create an image of the customer's mind about how it looks like if themselves pull it in their body. Also, they highlighted that mannequin display has a partially positive and significant influence on impulsive buying behaviour. Mubarak and Mufeeth (2020) indicated that there is a positive relationship between mannequin display with impulsive buying behaviour. Similarly, Thomas et al., (2018) found the strong relationship between mannequin display and impulsive buying behaviour and it positively affect for consumers' unplanned purchases.

H2: There is a positive influence of mannequin display in apparel retail stores on impulsive buying behaviour of consumers in Sri Lanka.

Ahmed and Riaz (2018) described the floor organizing and designing is used by many retailers as the "selling machine" because it is highly affected for the customer's happiness and hedonic factors. Floor merchandising defined as the proper positioning of products and proper zoning in the store that useful to customer to look that products, switch between items and remain long time in the store (Sendu et al., 2021). Further, they mentioned, it motivates customers to walk around the store and some items are kept visible to the customer along the way. Surjit (2021) opined that the effective floor designs can make reduce the overcrowded within the store because of the proper placement of products makes easier customers' store traffic. When there are separate sections for kids, women, men likewise, customers can easily select their necessities without making higher effort and time and then customers very pleased about their shopping travel (Verma et al., 2020). Mubarak and Mufeeth (2020) identified a positive relationship between floor merchandising of clothing stores and consumers' impulse purchases. However, Flegar et al. (2020) argued that there is no

significant relationship between floor merchandising and impulsive buying behaviour of customer. Considering the arguments built on the literature, the study examines:

H3: There is an influence of floor merchandising in apparel retail stores on impulsive buying behaviour of consumers in Sri Lanka.

Promotional signage is the way of attracting customers through various discounts, free product displays, special offer billboards and well-designed brand name (Urquia et al., 2019). Nyagba and Tsetim (2022) insisted that promotional signage as “silent seller” due to it gives some sales messages about various brands and different product categories by using some offers. Also, price discounts affect to consumers sensory factors such as moods, emotions, and feelings as external cues. Then engagement of customers to buy or searching items is increasing and it affect to more sales volumes of the retail shops (Jaini et al., 2022). Especially women like to enter to the shops which displaying some price discounts and offers. They usually asking about the reductions of prices and trying to negotiate with sellers regarding price schemes. When there are price offers on the entrance or exterior environment of shop or on the product, they prompt to buy products. Therefore, it triggers to purchase unnecessary items also (Randhawa and Saluja, 2017). Kwon and Ahn (2020) described that most of the customers are price sensitive and their satisfaction is dependent on price promotions. Customers try to compare perceived prices of various shops and it automatically happening in their minds by affecting buying decisions. Consequently, Basha and Shyam (2021) identified that there is a positive and significant relationship between promotional signage and impulsive buying behaviour. However, it has also been identified that promotion signage has a direct link to desire and not to actual buying behavior (Xu and Huang, 2014).

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H4: There is a positive influence of promotional signage in apparel retail stores on impulsive buying behaviour of consumers in Sri Lanka.

Retail outlets the world over are anxious to attract customers by using external and internal stimuli to create differentiation and value proposition. About 70 percent of sales in retail outlets depend on impulsive buying, so retailers make their internal and external ambiance attractive to motivate consumers to stay on their premises for an extended period, thus stimulating impulsive behavior (Amos et al., 2014). Based on the recent review of the literature, it appears that most of the recent studies have not examined the effect of both interior and exterior stores visual merchandising strategies within the same study. In view of its significance, this study aims to examine the relationship of mannequin display and floor merchandising (as interior stores visual merchandising), window display and promotional signage (as exterior stores visual merchandising) and impulsive buying behavior.

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Methods

To achieve the research objective, the study utilized deductive research approach under positivism research philosophy. Aforementioned, acknowledging the literature, the study used four dimensions in independent variable (visual merchandising strategies) namely mannequin display, floor merchandising, window display and promotional signage and dependent variable as consumer's impulsive buying behaviour. The measurement items of the selected variables were based on established scales from the literature. Table 1 shows the measurement items of each of the variable.

Table 1: Measurement Items

Variables	Dimensions	Measurement Items	Source
Visual merchandising strategies	Window Display	Window display explains the image of the apparel store I pay attention to apparel store's window display Interesting window display steals / takes my attention I am interested in shopping at well-designed window shops The window display affects me to decide which shop I choose to buy apparels	Soomro et al. (2017) Urquia et al. (2019) Karbasivar and Yarahmadi (2011)
	Mannequin Display	When I see clothing featuring a new style or design on mannequins, my attention goes on it Mannequin display steals / takes my attention When I see clothing that I like on mannequin display/ in-store form, my attention goes on it I get an idea about what to buy after looking through mannequin display/ in-store form	Flegar et al. (2020) Dash and Akshaya (2016)
	Floor Merchandising	I tend to try cloths that catches my eye without looking through whole section The floor designs motivate me to visit again A well-designed floor makes easier my shopping travel When I walk along the aisle, I tend to look through the clothing close to me	Munir et al. (2021) Flegar et al. (2020)
	Promotional Signage	When I see a special promotional sign, I go to look at that apparels If I see an interesting promotional offer on in-store signs, my attention goes on those apparel shops Promotional offers on apparels gain my attention	Flegar et al. (2020) Dash and Akshaya (2016) Urquia et al. (2019)

Variables	Dimensions	Measurement Items	Source
		Free product can be reason for me to visit the apparel store I am more likely to visit apparel stores where have promotional stalls	
Consumers' Impulsive Buying Behaviour	I buy only what is on my shopping list "Just do it" describes the way I buy products "I see it, I buy it" describes my apparel purchasing behaviour "Buy now, think about it later" describes my apparel buying behaviour I buy apparels according to how I feel at the movement I usually buy clothes without more thinking I often spend more than what I can afford I end up my shopping by spending more than I had planned I often don't have much restraint when shopping When I see a good deal, I tend to buy more than that I intended to buy I sometimes cannot suppress the feeling of wanting to buy something I often buy apparels without plan and later wonder why I bought them	Munir et al. (2021) Kwon and Ahn (2021) Dash and Akshaya (2016) Karbasivar and Yarahmadi (2011)	

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The scope of this study includes consumers who buy apparels from apparel retail stores in Colombo, Gampaha and Kandy Districts in Sri Lanka. These three main districts contain more than 75 percent of apparel retail stores. However, there is no well-established database or document to access the information about the consumers in Sri Lankan apparel retail stores, therefore purposive sample under the non-probability sampling technique was utilized. Considering the non-respondent rate, the study selected 450 consumers as the sample size.

The cross-sectional survey method is chosen to collect data from the desired sample. A structure questionnaire was constructed, including a total of 30 items to collect primary data from the desired sample. The items were measured by five-point Likert scale type questions with strongly disagree and strongly agree as end points. In quantitative approach, data analysis consists of three steps: measuring the sample profile, testing the goodness of the data, and testing the hypotheses. The sample profile is measured using frequency analysis. The measurement items' reliability and validity were tested to ensure the measurement goodness. Factor analysis, construct reliability, average variance extraction, Cronbach's alpha values, and discriminant validity were all tested. Multiple regression analysis is used to test the hypotheses.

Result

Sample Profile

The survey was conducted with 450 apparel product consumers and 343 consumers responded by filling questionnaire, indicating 76% of the response rate. The characteristics of the responders are described in terms of gender, age, marital status, education qualification, professional qualification, job status, monthly income level, and average amount is spending for buy apparel products per month. Base on the study sample 48% (165) consisted of males & females, 52% (178). While considering age groups of the respondents, it represents forty one (12%) are in the below 20 age category, ninety three (27%) are under the 31 – 40 age category and forty nine (14%) are in the above 40 category. The most respondents are represents under the 20 – 30 age group as illustrated one hundred sixty (47%). Two hundred three (59%) respondents are married and one hundred forty (41%) are unmarried respondents from total respondents of the study. Many of the respondents have education qualification of Advanced Level that represents as one hundred sixty two (47%). Also one hundred thirty one (38%) respondents have degree qualification as education level. Only the fifty (15%) of respondents have Ordinary Level as their education qualification. Moreover, one hundred fifty two respondents (44%) have professional qualification and one hundred ninety one (56%) respondents have not professional qualifications. The one hundred ninety nine (58%) respondents are engaged in employment. The remaining one hundred forty four (42%) respondents are represents as unemployed as their job status. While considering monthly income level of respondents, 58% of respondents were earning more than Rs.50,000 per month. Finally, 52% of respondents spend more than Rs.20,000 amount for buy apparel products per month.

Goodness of Measurements

To reduce the data and purify the items under each study variable, a factor analysis was used. The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin (KMO) sample adequacy measure was used. According to Vinayan et al. (2012), a KMO value of 0.60 or higher indicates a good factor analysis. Table 2 shows that the KMO value of the measurement items was greater than 0.50 and that the Bartlett's test of sphericity showed a significant level ($p < 0.001$), indicating the appropriateness of factor analysis. The loadings of the items on their correspondents ranged from 0.548 to 0.792 (greater than 0.50). From Consumers' impulsive buying behavior, item 10 was not loaded properly to the respective variable and it was dropped from the analysis.

The reliability of each variable was assessed using Fornell and Larcker's (1981) measure of composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach (1951) alpha, as shown in Table 2. The CR and Cronbach's alpha values for each construct were above 0.70, which falls within the acceptable reliability range (Hair et al., 2010). Convergent validity of the constructs was assessed by examining the average variance extracted (AVE). The results presented in Table 2 further shows that AVE values exceed the respective threshold values (above 0.50) ensuring the convergent validity.

The discriminant validity was ensured as the square root values of all AVEs exceed the correlation values of the respective constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) (Table 3). The values of the square root of the AVE are as given in italic along the diagonals in Table 3.

			Square	Estimate			
	.637 ^a	.405	.398	.467	1.440	57.569	0.000 ^b
a. Predictors: (Constant), Promotional Signage, Window Display, Floor Merchandising, In-store form/ Mannequin Display							
b. Dependent Variable: Consumers' Impulsive Buying Behaviour							

Table 5: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.769	.213		3.610	.000		
	Window Display	.484	.049	.493	9.804	.000	.695	1.440
	Mannequin Display	.116	.053	.114	2.202	.028	.656	1.524
	Floor Merchandising	.018	.052	.017	.342	.733	.682	1.465
	Promotional Signage	.127	.054	.124	2.364	.019	.639	1.564
b. Dependent Variable: Consumers' Impulsive Buying Behaviour								

The R^2 value was 0.405 ($F = 57.569$, $p = 0.001$), implying that 41% changes happening in impulsive buying behavior is going to be represent by the independent variables of Promotional Signage, Window Display, Floor Merchandising and Mannequin Display. In Table 5, the p-values for window display, mannequin display and promotional signage were less than 0.05. As a result, these key determinants have a significant influence over consumers' impulsive buying behavior in apparel retail stores in selected sample of the study. Window display has the greatest effects on consumers' impulsive buying behaviour (beta = 0.484), followed by promotional signage (beta = 0.127). Mannequin display has the smallest effect on consumers' impulsive buying behaviour (beta = 0.116). Since, the p-value of floor merchandising was higher than 0.05, it was not a significant influencer on impulsive buying behavior of the selected sample of the study.

Comment [H10]: Change to R^2

Discussion, Implications and Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of visual merchandising strategies (mannequin display and floor merchandising as interior stores visual merchandising and window display and promotional signage as exterior stores visual merchandising) on impulse purchases of customers in apparel retail sector.

According to the findings, window display has the greatest effects on consumers' impulsive buying behavior. This result is aligned with those by Sendu et al., (2021); Mubarak and Mufeeth (2020); Shrestha (2018) and Tesfaye (2022) indicating that window display is an effective retail stimuli and enhances shoppers emotions, perceptions of the mall and approach behaviours. It thus demonstrates the potential of window display as design cue to affect affective and behavioural outcomes similar to findings regarding design aesthetics in different apparel retail settings. When window display content is attractive and enjoyable, shoppers' perceptions about the mall environment is more favourable, leading to stronger approach behaviours. The findings of the current study indicate that enjoyment of window display content increases consumers' favourable perceptions about the retail shop environment and boost their moods on purchasing, resulting to increased approach behaviour. The well designed and decorated presentation on windows is the most attractive marketing tactics of visual merchandising. Based on the beautiful window displays, sometimes customers decide about their selection of shop which they are buying apparels. After looking those window displays, the image can be created about the products of this shop. Also, as visual merchandising factor, window display facilities to improve the desirability and visibility for products through prompting unplanned purchases.

The results for the stated research hypothesis indicate there is an influence of mannequin display in apparel retail stores on impulsive buying behaviour of consumers in Sri Lanka. These findings concur with earlier researchers; Mehta and Chugan (2016); Ibarahim et al., (2019); Somoon and Sahachaisaree (2018) and Tesfaye (2022). The degree of novelty (new and surprising) is one of the key elements for stimulating affective response. Mannequin display presentations stimulating affective pleasure should fit the perceived image of clothing. Consumers like to see visually stimulating displays and in-store highlights. Mannequin heads used to express various facial expressions and many styles used to creative visualization. To react for changing expectations of customers in today's environment, managers should try to lure customers by providing visual stimulus like mannequin display.

Consistent with past studies that have investigated how promotional signage affects buying behavior (Ibarahim et al., 2019; Shrestha, 2018; Thomas et al., 2018), the results of the analyses further demonstrate that promotional signage affects impulsive buying behavior of apparel retail consumers. With the effect of visual complexity and dynamic environmental order, the study found that the degree of attractiveness and using various promotional keywords become the critical point to attract more customers and product acceptance. Usually if have free products or interesting promotional offers on in-store signs, customers' attention goes on those apparels immediately.

Though consumers like to see visually stimulating displays and in-store highlights, floor merchandising was insignificant in determining the impact of visual merchandising on impulsive buying behaviour of customers. This may imply that the proper positioning of products and proper zoning in the store would not be significantly affected on impulsive buying behavior in the selected consumers in this study. Though there are separate sections for kids, women, and men likewise within the apparel shops to select the necessities that would not become the key element for stimulating impulsive buying behavior. As Sendu et al. (2021); Verma et al. (2020) and Mubarak and Mufeeth (2020) opined, the proper positioning of products and proper zoning in the store would be useful to customer to look that products, switch between items and remain long time in the store, the floor organizing

and designing would not stimulate to make unplanned, spontaneous, and sudden purchase decisions. This is further implied that in intimate apparel, both function and aesthetics are important. Finally, the findings specific to visual merchandising can offer critical insights to apparel product retailers that can help in effectively accessorizing or augmenting their products for better sales.

Limitations and future research

Although this study contributes to the current body of the literature, it had some limitations, which in turn suggest avenues for further research. Firstly, the study used only four visual merchandising strategies including visible elements. Further understanding of the promising role of lighting arrangement, colour combinations, brand signage, music and aroma, and digital signage is still needed. Thus, future study should be combined visible elements and non-visual components (smell, feel or sound). Secondly, the study applied a cross-sectional survey. For the future, it is recommended that a longitudinal study be adopted in order to develop a more comprehensive study. Also, a comparative study of different demographic characteristics (such as gender, education level, employment status and peer influences) should be involved for further study.

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