

Impact of Visual Merchandising on Consumer Buying Behaviour in Retail Stores

Dr. N.Ramya¹, Rithika K²

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce with Professional Accounting, Dr. N.G.P. Arts and Science College, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

²III B.Com, Department of Professional Accounting, Dr. N.G.P. Arts and Science College, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract- The project "*Impact of Visual Merchandising on Consumer Buying Behaviour in Retail Stores*" focuses on how the visual presentation of products in stores, such as displays, store layout, and lighting, affects consumer purchasing decisions. It examines whether these visual merchandising elements attract customers, influence what they buy, and improve their overall shopping experience. The study aims to help retailers understand the importance of good product presentation, leading to better customer satisfaction and increased sales. By optimizing these visual strategies, stores can potentially boost their competitiveness in the retail market.

Key Words- Visual Merchandising, Customer Satisfaction, Consumer Buying Behaviour, Retail Store, Hypermarket, Shopping Experience.

INTRODUCTION

The retail industry secures the fifth position as an industry and is the second largest employer after agriculture, providing bright and exciting job opportunities in India. Retail business is undergoing rapid transformation in its marketing practices. Till a few years ago, we bought most of the daily use products from small shops in our neighbourhood or a nearby market. Generally, the shopkeepers sell goods—either individually as a sole proprietor or with the help of a few assistants. In the last few years, however, the concept of large departmental stores and malls has come up, which also provide the same products.

Today, supermarkets, departmental stores, hypermarkets, malls and non-store retailing like multilevel marketing and telemarketing, have replaced or co-exist, transacting with the traditional retail businesspersons, such as hawkers, grocers and vendors, etc. There are various levels at which retail businesses operate—ranging from small, owner-

operated and independent shops to those in the national and international market. An increase in income levels and the need for new products and services, a rise in standard of living, competition in the market and increasing consumption patterns of customers have contributed to the demand for creation of these type of stores.

An in-depth exploration of consumer buying behavior towards hypermarkets is a crucial endeavor in understanding the dynamics of modern retail and its impact on consumer choices. In an era where hypermarkets have become ubiquitous in many parts of the world, it is essential to dissect the various factors that influence consumers' purchasing decisions within this retail environment. This study seeks to unravel the intricate web of factors that shape consumer preferences, shopping habits, and satisfaction levels when it comes to hypermarkets. The emergence of hypermarkets as a dominant force in the retail industry has transformed the way consumers shop, offering an extensive array of products under one roof, competitive pricing, and an enhanced shopping experience.

This phenomenon has, in turn, prompted a shift in consumer behavior, raising questions about the factors that drive individuals to choose hypermarkets over other retail formats and how these choices are influenced by demographic, economic, and psychographic factors. Through this study, we aim to shed light on the key determinants of consumer decision-making within the hypermarket setting, exploring aspects such as price sensitivity, brand loyalty, convenience, product assortment, and the impact of marketing strategies. By delving into these critical aspects of consumer behavior, we hope to provide valuable insights to hypermarket operators, marketers, and policymakers seeking to tailor their

strategies and services to better align with the expectations and preferences of their target audience.

This research endeavors to serve as a comprehensive guide for understanding the intricate relationship between consumers and hypermarkets, ultimately offering practical recommendations and solutions to enhance the overall shopping experience and drive growth in this ever-evolving sector of the retail industry.

In a rapidly changing consumer landscape, the hypermarket format stands as a beacon of convenience, offering a one-stop solution for a diverse range of consumer needs. This study, therefore, aims to decipher the evolving patterns of consumer buying behaviour within this expansive retail environment. As hypermarkets continue to evolve and adapt to the demands of the modern consumer, understanding the motivations, concerns, and preferences of shoppers becomes increasingly crucial for the success and sustainability of these retail giants.

The consumer journey through a hypermarket involves a multitude of decisions, from product selection and price comparison to store layout, promotions, and overall customer experience. Through this study, we aim to delve into these complex decisions, seeking to uncover the underlying psychological and sociological factors that guide shoppers as they navigate the aisles of hypermarkets.

Furthermore, with the growing digitalization of shopping, the study will also explore the synergy between brick-and-mortar hypermarkets and their online counterparts. In an era where consumers have access to a wealth of information and an ever-expanding array of shopping channels, this research seeks to elucidate how hypermarkets can maintain their relevance in the face of e-commerce competition and the changing retail landscape.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of store visual merchandising is to influence consumer purchasing behavior. However, the effectiveness of visual displays and the investment allocated to them remains uncertain in practice. So the study have undertaken to analyses the relationship between visual merchandising and consumer buying behaviour.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To analysis the buying pattern of the

customers.

- To study the impact of visual merchandising on consumer buying behaviour poof thecustomers.
- To study the behavior of buyers and product selection while shopping at a retail store.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The outcomes of this study are anticipated to provide valuable insights for hypermarket owners and operators, assisting them in tailoring their strategies to meet the dynamic needs and expectations of consumers. By gaining a deeper understanding of the factors driving consumer choices within the hypermarket setting, businesses can optimize their operations, enhance customer satisfaction, and ultimately prosper in the highly competitive retail industry. As consumer preferences continue to evolve, the findings of this research will serve as a compass for the hypermarket industry, helping it adapt and thrive in the years to come.

Research Methodology

1. Research Design

A descriptive research design is used in this study.

2. Source of data

Secondary data is collected by the help of various journals, articles and from explore internet.

Chapter Scheme

Chapter I

This chapter deals with introduction to study, statement of problem, objective of the study, scope of the study and research methodology.

Chapter II

This chapter deals with the review of literature.

Chapter III

This chapter deals with overview of the study, steps to develop and relationship between visual merchandising and consumer buying behavior.

Chapter IV

This chapter deals with conclusion and recommendation

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dharani S.K. and Praveen S.V(2023)²⁴, By studying

consumer behavior we can identify the needs, preference and their expectation. To analysis the consumer decisions while purchasing the products they want and the relationship between the customer satisfy and their loyalty towards the supermarket. It is a systematic and logical plan to resolve the problems faced by the supermarket. The majority of consumer have said yes to the matter of price importance in the supermarket. The service should be need to improve and to get a personal care from the salesperson to consumer in order to feel good for the consumer.

Dr. Sangamesh Hugar (2022), According to surveys and economic recession, Indian customers is more conservative. Analysis the planned purchase intention of the customer beforebuying the product. Descriptive research is used in order to find the survey of the study from 100 consumers. Questionnaire and interview method is used in present study. Maximum customer doesn't have the preferred time to purchase they will come when they are free. Customers make sudden purchases of product because of availability of discounts, offerings, costs, convenience, environment, reliability and quality.

Mohammad Shahwaz and Merwin Kenneth Sequeira (2021), The main goal of this research is to provide a comprehensive literature review of impulsive buying behavior by reviewing different consumer behavior research studies and works. It is aimed at finding which factor influences Impulsive Buying Behavior the most out of several factors such as Product Category, Product price, Product Promotions, Mood of Customers, Store Layout, Store Environment. The sampling technique used was Non-Probability Sampling as it was not a random sample. The survey was conducted through google questionnaire form 142 respondents have respond to the form. 35% of consumer tend to impulse buy products in the range of 100-199 and 32.9% were like to purchase in the range of 200-299. The recent developments in Technology, Marketing Practices, increases in income and expenditure, lifestyle of consumers, and credit availability have been enablers for Impulsive Buying Behavior.

Dr. C. Thirumal Azhagan and R. Faizal Mohamed(2020), Visual merchandising is the process through which a retail store's display of products is made attractive, and enticing to thecustomer, not only as a stimulus to enter the store, but to create an impression in the customer'smind. It is a way in which

the store can communicate the style and the sense of potential customers. The objective of visual merchandising is to ensure the awareness of customers andto increase the level of perception and comfort of customers. The visual merchandiser combines elements such as exterior designs, along with interior elements such as floor layouts, internal displays, window displays in creating a positive store image. Visual merchandising can also induce impulse purchases, i.e. spontaneous, unplanned purchases by the customer, wherethe decision is made inside the store, in response to the stimuli in the store such as product placement in the store.

S.Sellappa and R.Maala(2018), Most supermarkets are very large stores, which stock a widerange of product. In most area of the country customer can choose different supermarket to purchase of their need. The pattern of consumer buying behavior can be grouped as place of purchase, item purchased, methos of purchase, response to the sale promotion of the sales person. The survey has been taken from 120 consumers in the form of questionnaire technique.35% for time saved 37% prefer the low cost 36% visit the supermarket for twice a month. The purpose of the supermarket is the products are in the low price and has various type of brands in the same product. The supermarkets in Tirunelveli should be design customer retention programmers' either by giving reward points or by making them as members of customer club.

Visual Merchandising

Visual merchandising is the practice in the retail industry of optimizing the presentationof products and services to better highlight their features and benefits. The purpose of such visual merchandising is to attract, engage, and motivate the customer towards making a purchase. Visual merchandising traditionally occurs in brick and mortar stores using a blend oflighting, color combinations, and articles of decor to stimulate an observer and generate interest.

Effective visual merchandising uses a range of physical components to reflect a brand'simage and aesthetic, including:

Color: Different colors reflect different moods and tones. Choose a color scheme that matches your company's image.

Lighting: Lighting can help set a mood in your space and draw attention to specific products or areas of your

store.

Space: The layout and spacing of your store dictates how customers move through your space, where they spend more of their time and what they see.

Sound: Sounds, like ambient nature sounds or loud rock music, can add to the overall atmosphere in your space.

Smell: Certain smells may promote distinct feelings, such as calm or excitement. Smells can also trigger memories and positive associations, such as the smell of evergreen during the holidays.

Technology: Technology, such as digital displays and interactive installations, can enhance customers' engagement with your brand.

History of Visual Merchandising

When giant 19th century dry goods establishments like Marshall Field & Co. shifted their business from wholesale to retail, the visual display of goods became necessary to attract consumers. Store windows were often used to attractively display the store's merchandise. Overtime, the design aesthetic used in window displays moved indoors and became part of the overall interior store design, eventually reducing the use of display windows in many suburban malls. In the 20th century, well-known artists such as Salvador Dalí and Andy Warhol created window displays. In the beginning of 21st century, visual merchandising was becoming a science. Currently, visual merchandising has become a major tool of business promotion which is widely used to attract customers and increase sales.

Importance of Visual Merchandising

- **Improve customer experience:** Customer experience is vital to running a successful business and visual merchandising is a very important part of it. It helps to organise the retail space and help customers find what they're looking for easily – thus improving their experience while shopping in your store. Moreover, it helps to attract, engage, and inform customers better with carefully designed displays.

- **Sell targeted items:** Some items bring in more profits than others, and sellers want to sell more of these. Visual merchandising helps highlight these targeted items and thus help sell them more.

- **Influence Buyer decisions:** Visual merchandising also involves using neuro marketing techniques to influence buyers' decisions by appealing

to their unconscious minds. This involves strategic product placement (profitable items are kept at the eye level), store paint (to set the mood), fragrance (to make you want more), and music (to influence you subconsciously).

- **Meet sales goals:** Visual merchandising is the salesperson that persuades the customer to purchase intended products subconsciously. Marketers do this by strategically placing profitable items, making them noticeable and tempting people to buy them.

- **Market retail stores:** A memorable store is what stands out in the crowd of boring retail stores. Visual merchandising aims to make the store stand out and find a place in the customers' minds. This is done by using visual cues, positioning, and aesthetics, making them stop and look and, sometimes, even take photos or spread the word organically.

Consumer Buying Behaviour

Consumer Buying Behavior refers to the actions taken (both on and offline) by consumers before buying a product or service. This process may include consulting search engines, engaging with social media posts, or a variety of other actions. It is valuable for businesses to understand this process because it helps them better tailor their marketing initiatives to the marketing efforts that have successfully influenced consumers to buy in the past.

A variety of factors go into the consumer buyer behavior process, including cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors. Taken separately, they may not result in a purchase. When put together in any number of combinations, the likelihood increases that someone will connect with a brand and make a purchase. Let's take a closer look at each of these factors.

- **Cultural Factors** - Culture is not always defined by a person's nationality. It can also be defined by their associations, their religious beliefs or even their location.

- **Social Factors** - Elements in a person's environment that impact the way they see products.

- **Personal Factors** - These may include someone's age, marital status, budget, personal beliefs, values, and morals.

- **Psychological Factors** - A person's state of mind when they are approached with a product will often determine how they feel not only about the item

itself but the brand as a whole.

Factors Influencing Consumer Buying Behaviour

Consumer buying behavior is influenced by a multitude of factors, both internal and external. These factors can be complex and interrelated, shaping the choices consumers make when purchasing products or services. Some of the key factors influencing consumer buying behavior include:

- Personal Factor

Demographics: Age, gender, income, education, occupation, and family size can all impact purchasing decisions. For example, a young single person may have different buying preferences compared to a middle-aged parent with children.

Lifestyle and Personality: An individual's interests, activities, and values can affect what they buy. For instance, someone with an active lifestyle might prioritize athletic gear or healthfoods.

- Psychological Factor

Perception: How consumers perceive a product, brand, or price influences their buying behavior. Perceptions can be shaped by marketing, word of mouth, and personal experiences.

Motivation: Consumer needs and wants drive their buying behavior. These can range from basic needs like food and shelter to higher-level needs like status and self-esteem.

Attitude: A consumer's attitude towards a product or brand can be positive, negative, or neutral. It can be influenced by past experiences, marketing, and social factors.

- Social Factor

Reference Groups: People are often influenced by their reference groups, which can include family, friends, colleagues, or online communities. What these groups value can impact individual buying decisions.

Culture and Subculture: Cultural values, beliefs, and norms play a significant role in shaping consumer behavior. Subcultures, such as ethnic or religious groups, can also have distinct buying patterns.

Social Status and Roles: A person's social status and the roles they occupy in society can influence their buying behavior. For example, a person's role as a parent might lead to purchases of children's products.

- Economic factor

Income: The level of income a person or household earns directly affects their purchasing power and choices.

Price and Value: Consumers consider the price of a product relative to its perceived value.

They may be willing to pay more for quality or a brand they trust.

Economic Conditions: Economic factors like inflation, employment rates, and interest rates can impact consumer spending.

Objective of Consumer Buying Behaviour

- Understanding consumer needs and preferences
- Predicting consumer buying behaviour
- Exploring decision-making processes
- Segmenting and Targeting markets
- Assessing customer satisfaction and loyalty
- Adapting to changing consumer trends
- Strategizing businesses for growth

Importance of Consumer Buying Behaviour

- Comprehending consumer needs:

Businesses utilize consumer behaviour research to gain valuable insights into the needs, desires, and motivations of their target audience. Consequently, understanding empowers companies to create products and services that successfully cater to consumer demands, resulting in enhanced customer satisfaction.

- Fabricating effective marketing strategies:

Leveraging the study, businesses can discern the most efficient marketing techniques and channels to reach their target audience. Furthermore, this knowledge aids in the development of targeted and compelling advertising campaigns, pricing strategies, and promotional activities that connect with consumers and boost sales.

- Identifying market opportunities:

By conducting consumer behaviour research, businesses can detect emerging trends, evolving preferences, and untapped market needs. Thereby enabling companies to spot new opportunities for products or services, enhance existing offerings, and maintain a competitive edge in the market.

- Enhancing customer experience:

Through this study, companies can acquire valuable insights into the complete customer journey, encompassing the stages from pre-purchase to post-purchase. This understanding empowers businesses to

enhance the customer experience, personalize interactions, and deliver exceptional service. As a result, this fosters customer loyalty and generates positive word-of-mouth.

- Minimizing risks and failures:

Understanding consumer behaviour helps businesses minimize risks associated with product failures or unsuccessful marketing campaigns. Through the analysis of consumer preferences, feedback, and behaviour, companies can make informed decisions concerning product design, features, packaging, and marketing strategies, consequently minimizing the likelihood of failure.

- Building strong brand relationships:

The research assists in establishing robust, long-term relationships with customers. Through understanding consumer preferences, values, and purchasing behaviours, companies can customize their brand messaging, communication, and offerings, enabling them to forge a powerful emotional bond with consumers.

Steps to develop an Effective Consumer Insight Strategy:

- Define objectives

Clearly articulate the goals and objectives of the customer insight strategy by identifying the specific insights you aim to gather and how they will bolster your business objectives.

- Identify data collection sources

Identify the sources of customer data that will yield valuable insights like customer surveys, focus groups, interviews, social media listening, website analytics, sales data, customer service interactions, and market research reports.

- Gather and analyze data

Implement strategies to gather pertinent data from the identified sources by employing methods such as deploying surveys, conducting interviews, or analyzing existing data sets. Also, employ suitable data analysis techniques to unveil patterns, trends, and correlations within the data.

- Segmentation and profiling

Segment your customer base according to shared characteristics, such as demographics, psychographics, purchasing behaviour, or preferences. Simultaneously, develop customer profiles or personas to gain a deeper understanding of distinct customer

segments.

- Conduct qualitative study

Conduct qualitative research methods like focus groups or in-depth interviews to gather deeper insights into customer motivations, needs, and perceptions. This can further provide valuable qualitative insights to complement quantitative analysis.

- Consumer journey mapping

Map out the customer journey and identify key touchpoints and interactions where insights can be gathered. This helps in understanding customer behaviour at different stages and identifying areas for improvement.

- Collaborate cross – functionally

Engage cross-functional teams from departments like marketing, product development, sales, and customer service to collaborate and share insights. Align strategies to ensure effective implementation of the customer insight strategy across the organization.

- Apply insight

Utilize the acquired insights to guide decision-making and develop strategies. It's important to customize product offerings, marketing campaigns, and customer experiences according to identified customer preferences and needs.

- Continuously iterate and refine

Continuously gather data, analyse it, and update your understanding of consumer behaviour. Also, regularly review and refine your customer insight strategy to ensure it remains aligned with changing market dynamics and consumer preferences.

- Ethical consideration

Ensure data collection and analysis processes adhere to ethical guidelines and privacy regulations. Also, safeguard customer data responsibly to uphold trust and confidentiality.

Relation Between Visual Merchandising and Consumer Buying Behaviour:

- Attracting Attention

Effective visual merchandising techniques, such as window displays, signage, and product placement, can grab the attention of consumers. Eye-catching displays can draw shoppers into the store or encourage them to explore specific product areas, increasing the likelihood of making a purchase.

- Creating Ambiance

The overall atmosphere and ambiance of a retail space, influenced by visual merchandising elements like lighting, music, and decor, can affect how consumers feel while shopping. A pleasant environment can enhance the shopping experience, making customers more likely to linger in the store and make purchases.

- **Highlighting Products**

Visual merchandising techniques are used to showcase products in the most appealing way possible. This includes arranging products in visually appealing displays, using color and lighting to draw attention to key items, and employing signage and graphics to highlight promotions or product features. By effectively showcasing products, retailers can increase their desirability and encourage purchases.

- **Facilitating Decision Making**

Visual merchandising can help consumers make purchasing decisions by providing them with information and guidance. Clear signage, product demonstrations, and well-organized displays can help shoppers understand product features and benefits, compare options, and make informed choices more easily.

- **Creating Brand Identity**

Visual merchandising plays a crucial role in shaping a retailer's brand image and identity. Consistent use of visual elements such as logos, colors, and imagery helps reinforce brand recognition and loyalty among consumers. A strong brand identity can influence purchasing decisions by evoking positive associations and emotions.

- **Encouraging Impulse Purchases**

Strategic placement of products and promotions can prompt impulse purchases. Eye-catching displays near checkout counters or at strategic points throughout the store can tempt shoppers to add additional items to their basket that they may not have originally intended to purchase.

- **Enhancing the Overall Shopping Experience**

Ultimately, visual merchandising contributes to the overall shopping experience, influencing consumers' perceptions of a brand and their likelihood of returning in the future. By creating an engaging and visually appealing environment, retailers can leave a positive impression on shoppers, increasing the likelihood of repeat business and word-of-mouth recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

Recommendation:

➤ The strategic arrangement of products, displays, and ambiance within a store can significantly impact how consumers perceive and interact with merchandise. Through captivating visual displays, retailers can effectively communicate brand identity, evoke emotions, and create memorable shopping experiences that ultimately drive purchasing decisions.

➤ By utilizing elements such as color, lighting, layout, and signage, retailers can guide consumer attention, highlight product features, and stimulate desire, thereby increasing the likelihood of a purchase.

➤ Additionally, well-executed visual merchandising can enhance perceived product value and credibility, leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, as consumers increasingly seek immersive and Instagram-worthy shopping experiences, innovative visual merchandising techniques can differentiate a store from competitors and attract foot traffic.

➤ Thus, the impact of visual merchandising on consumer buying behavior underscores its importance as a powerful tool for retailers to engage and convert shoppers into customers.

Conclusion

Visual merchandising plays a pivotal role in influencing consumer buying behavior within retail stores. Through strategically curated displays, signage, and layout, retailers can capture the attention of consumers, create memorable experiences, and ultimately drive sales. A well-executed visual merchandising strategy can evoke emotions, convey brand messages, and highlight product features, thereby influencing purchasing decisions. By effectively showcasing products in an appealing manner, retailers can enhance perceived value, instill trust, and encourage impulse purchases. Furthermore, visual merchandising helps to differentiate brands in a competitive marketplace, strengthening brand identity and fostering customer loyalty. In conclusion, the impact of visual merchandising on consumer buying behavior in retail stores is undeniable, as it serves as a powerful tool for engaging customers and driving conversion rates.

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