

EFFECT OF VISUAL MERCHANDISING ELEMENTS OF RETAIL STORE ON CONSUMER ATTENTION

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to determine how visual merchandising influences consumer attention. Visual Merchandising is a technique to visually making the brand attractive and highlights the unique features of the store. Brands hire specialized marketers who focus on visually enhancing the brand and provide them with a good shopping experience in the stores. The study focuses on four important factors of visual merchandising and the hypotheses are based on these i.e. store layout, window display, color & lighting and store interior, and how it influences the attention of consumers. Nonprobability sampling technique was used to conduct this research and a structured questionnaire was designed to collect responses. 280 individual responses were collected with their contact details to have an authentic individual feedback. Since store layout had a negative but significant impact on gaining consumer attention, the hypothesis for store layout was rejected. The rest of the hypotheses for window display, color and lightning and store interior have been accepted that they have a positive and significant impact on consumer attention. The study concludes that marketers should focus on visual merchandising strategies for attracting customers and increase the footfall of store which may also lead to gain an edge over competitors.

Keywords: *Visual Merchandising, Retail store outlet, Consumer attention.*

INTRODUCTION

Visual attraction and communication have been considered vital components of retailing suggested by researchers and practitioners both (McGoldrick, 1990, 2002). Therefore, Visual Merchandising is an activity that is given interest in Retailing. In order to remain in the market and

achieve a competitive edge over the competitors, retailers are incorporating various differentiating strategies and techniques in their operations (Kerfoot, Davies, & Ward, 2003). Visual merchandising is one of those benefiting strategies that is considered as one of the determinants of success for a retail store. In visual merchandising the management ensures that both the exterior and interior of their store is appealing enough to attract the customers. Both the exterior and interior deem to have a major impact on consumers buying behavior and is observed to stimulate interest and desire to purchase them. This technique also helps in the selling of the right kind of the product to the right kind of customer by developing attraction and displaying products accordingly (Wanninayake & Randiwela, 2007).

Pegler (2011) stated in their paper that visual merchandising influence the psychological behavior of consumers by visually communicating the product to customers. One of the crucial factors in this regard is that the product and the message that Merchandiser is trying to communicate through visual merchandising is properly reaching out the customers or not. It's considered as one of the silent sales people in marketing and in a case of any flaw or miss communication the purchase behavior of consumers might get negatively influenced. Some primary factors that contribute in this regard are the selection of right color, lighting effects, shelving of the product etc. that as a whole enhance the impact of visual merchandising. These attributes that are an important component of visual merchandising increases the sales in the retail industry by attracting the consumers towards the products displayed. The primary job of this technique is to highlight all the differentiating elements of all the products in such a way that it not only attracts the customer but also communicate all the attributes of all the products effectively (Pegler, 2011).

The primary reason behind conducting this research is to analyze the influence that visual merchandising and its element on consumer attention. Brand name, window display, color and outlook of the store are some elements of the visual merchandising whose role in gaining consumer's attention would be specifically discussed in this research (Wanninayake & Randiwela, 2007).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Visual merchandising is a major way of communicating with the customers. It has become an essential tool in today's era where marketers find new and innovative ways to grab the attention of customers. The key

elements of visual merchandising which contribute in attracting customers are window display, store layout, color & lighting and store design. This research paper will contribute to visual merchandising literature especially in the Pakistani retail context by analyzing and finding the influence of visual merchandising on gaining consumer attention in the local context of Pakistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Visual Merchandising

The quality of store atmospheric elements of the retail environment is considered to be part of visual merchandising (Kotler, 1974). Donovan and Rossiter (1982) extended the concept of store atmosphere by categorization of physical in-store variables such as store layout, architectural design, wall color and social factors such as how interaction takes place and behavior of people.

In general, Visual Merchandising has two major areas the store exterior and interior and other variety of factors like the color combination, lighting scheme, product placement, store layout and design, mannequin placement and props selection, furniture and fixtures). All these factors play an important role in creating a favorable shopping atmosphere (Law, Wong & Yip, 2012). For instance, Baker, Grewal, and Levy (1992) found how lighting and background music alter a consumer's perceptions and reactions to a store design. Similarly, Babin, Hardesty, and Suter (2003) found that the combination of colors and lighting has an important role in influencing the consumer purchase intention. Intangible store elements, such as scents or fragrance, can also stimulate one's emotional state and mental imagination (Fiore, Yah, & Yoh, 2000).

Matilla and Witz (2008) stated visual merchandising as a marketing technique in which the retailers enhances both the exterior and interior of their store in order to attract their target customers. It helps the retailers constructing a strong and positive image for their store as well as helps in generating the required amount of attention and desire among the consumer. They also explained that both the exterior and interior of the store must be in coordination with each in order to create a lasting impact and must be designed keeping in mind the target market of the store specifically. He further stated that this technique of visually making the brand attractive has proved to be extremely beneficial in connecting the target market with the brand by visually highlighting the distinctive and unique features of the store over the competitors. Chandon, Hutchinson,

Bradlow and Young (2009) highlighted that visual merchandising is one those in-store marketing tools that actually triggers unplanned buying among the consumers. In this technique, the marketers visually enhance their outlet by creating an aesthetic atmosphere, appropriate shelf arrangement, attractive window display, cleanliness etc.

In visual merchandising marketers' targets and influence all the five sense of human being that is sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste by determining the overall atmosphere of the store accordingly. This visually pleasant atmosphere of the store not only gathers the customer's attention but also helps in achieving a high level of sales for the store. However, it is not a single day process and the store management or marketer is required to continue upgrading their store's outlook as per the demands of their consumers and requirement of their products. The atmosphere must be such that it acts as the driving force behind the return of the customer towards the store. For this purpose, it is necessary that management design both the interior and exterior of the store as per their target market. Evaluation of consumer's perspective must be done on a continuous basis in order to incorporate all the changes that the target market wishes visualizes for their favorite store (Stanley, 2010).

Visual merchandising is basically a way of gaining consumers attraction by visually making the brand attractive for target customers. Retailers use this as a tool to grab consumers' attention by presenting the merchandise in such a manner that it will boost sales. Marketers use this technique to highlight the products & services for walk-in customers because it also plays a major role in impulse buying behavior.

Park, Jeon, and Sullivan (2014), discussed that the proper use of visual merchandising makes the retail brand differentiate to competing brands, establishes brand preference among consumers. Pillai, Iqbal, Umer, Maqbool, and Nunil (2011) found in their research that consumers do get influenced by attractive window displays, properly designed store layout, and overall appealing visual merchandising and companies can convert the potential visitors into actual buyers.

Color & Lighting as a stimulus In-store Visual Merchandising.

Unexpectedly very little research can be found on how a store's principal color choice affects consumer reactions (Crowley, 1993). Baker et al. (1992) research in which they described how lighting and background music alter a consumer's perceptions and reactions to a store design. This research examines how color and lightening as variable combine, influence consumer attention.

Colors do have effects on human resource performance and cognitive interpretation that lead to creating desired consumer reactions (Jacobs & Suess, 1975; Babin et al., 2003). Crowley (1993) reviewed the literature and concluded that color has an influence on both consumers' evaluation (affective tone) and activation (arousal tone).

Research in the field of Retail has found these results consistent. The experimental research proposes that cool-colored in store settings are favored more over warm-colored store settings (Bellizi, Crowley, & Hasty, 1983; Crowley, 1993). Furthermore, in one of the experimental research where hypothetical television purchase suggested there can be a decrease in the likelihood of postponing the purchase decision in the case of blue background as compared to a red background (Bellizi & Hite, 1992). Hence, it is believed that violet/blue interior walls will generate a higher level of positive affective tone and increased purchase intentions than compared to darker tone like red/orange.

Lighting along with color has been tested in various experiments, in one of the research, it was revealed that as a classical music and soft lights combination signals consumers to expect pay higher prices (Baker, Grewal, & Levy 1992), lights also moderate color's effect. In an independent lighting research, it's suggested that bright fluorescent (soft) lights and warm (cool) colors are more used by discount stores (Baker, Grewal, & Levy 1992; Bellizi & Hite, 1992; Schlosser, 1998).

Color & Lighting and Consumer Attention. Consumer attention is a phenomenon which means bringing something to the notice of consumers. It is a reaction of consumers in return of the awareness a marketer provides in promoting his product or service.

The influence that colors and lighting of the store have on the consumer has been a topic of investigation among the researchers since the past few years. According to a research conducted by Olson (2005), it has been observed that both these components of visual merchandising greatly affect consumers' psychological behavior. It has been evaluated that the impact of cool colors such as blue and green are more attention gaining than the warm colors. It was further highlighted through the research that stores with red or yellow paints are considered negative and unappealing to consumers in contrast to the blue or green wall paints. However, Solomon, Gary, and Askegaard (2006) contradicted in this regard by stating that the preference of color for a store must be done keeping in mind the demand and the ongoing trend as it hugely attracts the customers.

Moreover, Aspfors (2010) firmly believes and has stated the significance of having appropriate lighting in the store numerous times in his research. Through the past researches, it has been observed that those stores that contain brighter lights are more attention gaining compared with the stores containing low lights. It is because of the simple fact that consumers can easily determine their desire product in bright light in comparison with the lower light. Even the minute details about the product such as the ingredient incorporated in its making and all the labels are important to consumers and can only be observed if proper lighting is provided to the customers.

Aspfors (2010) stated that lighting is necessary to grab the attention of the consumers and encourage them towards initiating the purchase. He further stated that it is the responsibility of the store management to ensure that the lighting of the store is such that it manages to create a pleasant and calming atmosphere for the customers as vision is one of those senses that facilitate the purchase process and hence, holds extreme significance in the visual merchandising technique.

Color and lighting are one of the important factors of visual merchandising retail setting. In light of all the previous research findings, color and lighting as a variable have been adopted to check how it affects consumer attention; hence following hypothesis has been created:

H₁: Color & lighting of the retail store have significant positive impact on consumer attention.

Store Layout as a stimulus In-store Visual Merchandising. The layout or outlook of the store holds a significant importance in a success of the outlet. It is the responsibility of management to make sure that store layout is done in such a way that finding the desired product is not difficult for customers. The entire outlook and ambiance of the store interior are said to be store layout in retail merchandising. Products placement and spacing of floor is an integral part of store layout and design. In an empirical study Garaus, Wagner, and Kummer (2015) stated that a good store layout increases the probability of consumers to stay longer in the store and enjoy the traffic free shopping experience. Aspfors (2010) highlighted that those products that are placed at a convenient position tend to generate more sales for the store than the products situation at a distant unfavorable position.

All the large stores make sure that the layout of their store is such that

it helps in generating large in-store traffic but minimize the need for an unnecessary motion for customers. The different types of store layout that are free flow, grid, race track, and spine layout. These entire store layouts help different type of business respectively. The free flow layout facilitates impulse buying and is usually observed in stores like Nike while grid layout is mostly practiced at grocery stores, retail outlets etc. as it has counters and shelves. One of the biggest advantages of this type of layout is that it's easily accessible for customers. The next in line that is race track layout facilitate a loop area where the exit and entrance are at the same end while lastly the spine layout has aisle starting from the front till the very end of the store and is usually adopted by retailers opening on a huge scale (Carpenter & Moore, 2006).

According to Grewel, Baker, Levy and Voss (2003), the selection of store layout must be done keeping in mind the requirement of the target market and products available while it should be able to stimulate impulse buying among the customers instantly. It should be that influential that customer unintentionally spends more money than they intend to. The layout must be such that it a customer entering the store conveniently finds all the goods required to him (Ebster & Garaus, 2011).

H₂: Store Layout of the retail store has significant positive impact on consumer attention.

Window Display as a stimulus In-store Visual Merchandising. It is the art of displaying the products in a manner that increases consumer attention. Marketers use this technique to increase footfall in store by exhibiting the products creatively. Good window display also leads to unplanned buying. Marketers also use this as a strategy to convey promotional messages to their consumers.

Razzouk, Seitz, and Chaudhuri (2001) contributed through his research by stating that there are numerous retailers out there offering the same kind of products to the consumers. However, the thing that differentiates one retailer from another is the way he exhibits his products that draw the attention of the customers. The window display is one of those attractive measures highlighted by Mopidevi and Lolla (2013). It is now being considered as one of the most used and beneficial ways of drawing customer's attention. Retailers are working hard in order to make their displays attractive and dynamic than their competitors as they have realized that it's one of those things that leave a positive impression on

their customers. They further explained in their research that the image of the store is built by its window display and whether the customer prefers to walk into the store or not highly depends on the display that is being put forward to him. Moreover, the display could easily portray anything that a retailer wishes his customers to observe such as any promotional or seasonal discount, new arrivals, sales etc. (Mopidevi & Lolla, 2013).

It is because of the increasing level of competition all around the world that competition in this industry is also rising alarmingly. In such situation providing customers with unique and distinctive window displays is the only mean through which retailers can keep up the attention of consumers (Mehta & Chugan, 2013). Surprisingly, it has been observed that window displays can play a lot major role than traditional advertising methods. Furthermore, retailers can target the right kind of customers through this way by displaying according to the perception of their target market. Moreover, this also helps the customers as they can decide which store to enter making the decision process is easier for them and saving their time. Kim (2013) contradicted regarding window display increasing sales by stating that no prior research has proved the effectiveness of window display in increasing sales but it has been observed to stimulate impulse buying behavior among consumers. However, it is significant that the display should be appealing enough to trigger this stimulation rather than just a decorative art piece.

The art of displaying the product in such an aesthetic manner that it stimulates the desire of purchase among consumers is known as visual merchandising. This technique helps in generating larger store traffic increasing the sales of the products eventually. Customers are highly imaginative and develop a certain image of a store in their minds. It is the primary responsibility of the management to ensure that both the exterior and interior of their store is designed keeping in mind the image that their target market has developed in their minds. The outlook of the store should be designed in such a way that it is not only appealing but is highly convenient for the customers as well. In order to successfully implement this technique marketer must conduct a thorough research and indulge into a proper planning considering all the details that are required in order to establish a visually pleasing store for their target market. The outlook of the store should portray the true essence of the brand and must highlight those attributes that make the store distinctive from their competitors (Stanley, 2010).

Bashar and Irshad (2012) in their study revealed that window display and floor merchandising have a positive correlation with impulse buying behavior and overall Visual merchandising has a significant impact on the consumer buying behavior. In light of above literature, following research hypothesis has been created:

H3: Window Display of the retail store has positive and significantly impact on consumer attention.

Store Interior Design as a Stimulus In-Store Visual Merchandising.

The interior design of the store plays a vital role in the shopping experience. Proper signages, fixtures, seating arrangements are few fundamental elements of store interior and décor.

The interior décor is one of the key elements of visual merchandising. According to a study conducted by Hoch and Purk (2000), the interior of the store or the shelving of the product must be done in such a way that it contributes towards increasing the in-store traffic for the outlet. This can be easily achieved by situating the shelves at the right height where they are easily visible as well as accessible to the customers. Those products that are high in demand must be placed at the lower end while the low demand product must be placed at a high altitude where they are easier to grab the attention of consumers. However, Davis and Tilley (2004) highlighted that shelving in a store is a challenging job and is often considered as one of the basic element behind the success or failure of a store.

As mentioned by Carpenter and Moore (2006), one of the biggest factors that drive the customer either towards or away from the store is the cleanliness and hygiene of store. However, If the management is concerned about their outlet's hygiene they are more likely to draw many customers towards their store while unclean stores stimulate opposite reaction among them. Moreover, it also helps in constructing a positive image of the store in the mind of the consumers.

According to Yun and Good (2007) along with the color scheme and theme, there are various other things that help the management in the interiors of the store such as seating arrangements, various props, fixtures, and signage. The signs placed at different spots are considered extremely significant as it helps the consumers with the direction as well as the management in promoting the brand.

H4: Interior design of the retail store has significant positive impact on consumer attention.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample Size & Sampling Technique

280 respondents were selected as the sample size for this research. The questionnaire included close ended questions and instrument was distributed randomly. The ethical use of respondents' data and information was also ensured. The sampling technique used for the research was non-probability and the respondents were chosen on the basis of convenience. The respondents were general consumers at different retail markets.

Data Collection Method

For this study quantitative data was collected through a survey based on a questionnaire which was self-developed to suit the nature and objective of the study.

The Instrument of Data Collection

In order to gather data for this research the instrument of a questionnaire was used. The questionnaire has been developed using a Likert scale of 1 to 5. The target population for this survey was general consumers.

Research Model

The idea behind the research was to study and analyze how visual merchandising variables such as store layout, window display, color & lighting and store interior design effect in gaining consumer attention. Figure 1 represents the model developed to conduct the study.

Figure 1. Research Model

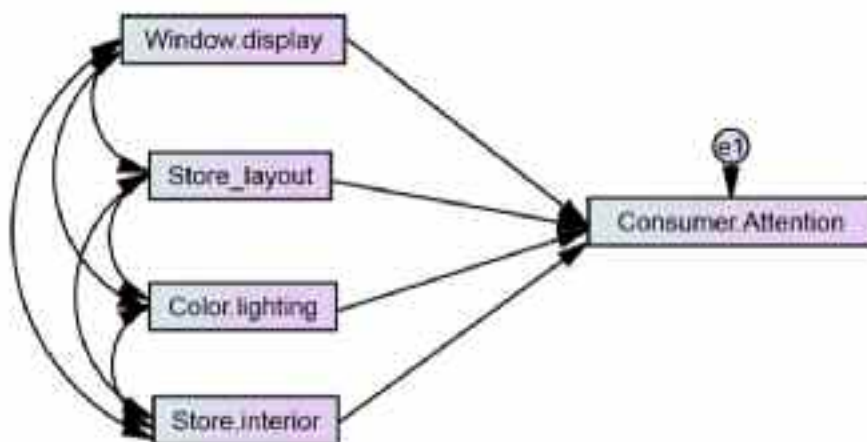


Table 1. Constructs and Items Reliability

No	statements	p-value	Correlation Coefficient	Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha
Store Layout				0.856
1.	A good store layout makes it easy for consumers to find desired products.	0.000	0.824	
2.	The aisle (passageway) should be designed in a way that avoids in-store traffic jams.	0.000	0.898	
3.	Consumers often intend to buy unplanned products if the store has proper product shelving.	0.000	0.845	
Window Display				0.841
1.	Window displays explain the image of the store.	0.000	0.828	
2.	Good window display influence consumers to visit the store.	0.000	0.894	
3.	Window display is a good source for retailers to advertise promotional campaigns (seasonal discounts, new arrival, sales, etc.)	0.000	0.791	
4.	Window display leads to impulsive (unplanned) buying.	0.000	0.854	
Color & Lighting				0.837
1.	Brightly lit stores are more attractive than dimly lit stores.	0.000	0.894	
2.	Stores with cool colors such as green and blue are more attractive than stores with warm colors such as red and yellow.	0.000	0.792	
3.	Proper lighting of the store helps consumers to easily observe the labels and details of the desired product.	0.000	0.781	
4.	Good lighting impacts the atmosphere of the store.	0.000	0.841	
5.	Good Lightning encourages consumers to visit the store	0.000	0.878	
Store Interior Design				0.891
1.	Color and lighting of the store should be aligned with the furniture of the store in order to reflect a basic theme.	0.000	0.854	
2.	The interior design of the store should be aligned with the theme of colors that are used in the company logo.	0.000	0.893	

3.	Direction signs are necessary for customers to easily locate their desired product in the store.	0.000	0.887
4.	The store should maintain proper cleanliness in order to gain consumer attention.	0.000	0.874
5.	The store atmosphere makes consumer comfortable to stay longer in the store?	0.000	0.951
Consumer Attention			0.864
1.	The infrastructure of the store affects consumer attention.	0.000	0.872
2.	Attractive visual merchandising plays a major role in seeking consumer attention	0.000	0.905
3.	The design and interior of the store play an important role in gaining consumers attention to visit and stay longer in the store.	0.000	0.794
4.	Effective color and lighting of the store lead to consumer attention.	0.000	0.887

Table 2. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.858	21

The reliability of the collected data of the study is given in Table 2. The reliability test was applied and the results show that the gathered data of the research is 85.8% reliable and data can be used for testing hypotheses.

Statistical Test Applied on Data

All the variables were analyzed using SPSS 19 and AMOS 18 version both were used. For the first two models, AMOS was used while for the third double mediated model Process macro of Hayes (2013) was used. Multiple Regression analysis was applied to evaluate the impact of variables of visual merchandising on consumer attention.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Findings and Interpretation of Results:

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Consumer Attention	4.0875	.52229	280
Store layout	4.1821	.46776	280
Window display	4.0152	.52704	280
Color lighting	3.9257	.48687	280
Store interior	4.0457		

Table 3 represents Descriptive Statistics showing independent and dependent variables and their values. Based on the data, the mean value of consumer attention is 4.08, store layout is 4.18, window display is 4.01, color & lighting is 3.92 and store interior design is 4.04. While the overall mean of the data is 4.04. Any value less than 4 shows the rejection of the hypothesis. According to the results, there is an impact of store layout, window display, color & lighting and store interior design on consumer attention. Further to check the direction of impact of the variable on dependent variable multiple regression was carried out on AMOS. Results are presented below with interpretation.

Table 4. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.581 ^a	.337	.328	.42829	.337	34.973	4	275	.000

Predictors: (Constant), Store interior, Window Display, Store Layout, Color lighting

The model summary of the analysis is provided in Table 4. The value of R square is 0.337 which means that 33.7% variation is explained by the model.

Table 5. ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	25.661	4	6.415	34.973	.000 ^a
Residual	50.445	275	.183		
Total	76.106	279			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Store interior, Window Display, Store Layout, Color lighting.
Dependent Variable: Consumer Attention

Table 5 represents ANOVA which shows the significance of the model fit. Since the significant value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05, the model is said to be significant for further analysis to check the effect of each independent variable on Consumer Attention.

Table 6. Regression Coefficients

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Consumer Attention	← Window display	.137	.061	2.247	.025
Consumer Attention	← Store layout	-.210	.068	-3.082	.002
Consumer Attention	← Color lighting	.249	.067	3.700	.000
Consumer Attention	← Store interior	.453	.060	7.567	.000

Table 7. Intercepts of the model

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Consumer Attention	1.603	.272	5.892	.000

Table 8. Total Effects of all four IV's on DV

	Window display	Store layout	Store interior	Color lighting
Consumer Attention	.137	-.210	.453	.249

Table 9. Direct Effects of IV's on DV

	Window display	Store layout	Store interior	Color lighting
Consumer Attention	.137	-.210	.453	.249

The table 6 of coefficients shows the significant values and the beta value of all independent variables. The sig value of the entire four variable used in the model are less than 0.05 and are significant. Furthermore, Color & lighting in the table has 0.000 sig value and 0.249 beta value of which explains that it is significant and positively affect consumer attention. Hypothesis 1 which states that Color & lighting of the retail store have significant positive impact on consumer attention, is accepted.

Likewise, store layout has sig value of 0.002 which is significant but the beta value of store layout is -0.21 which shows that it has a negative impact on consumer attention. It reveals that if the store layout has not been planned out and the consumer is not able to figure out how to roam inside the store, the bad layout will have a negative effect on consumer attention and experience.

The sig value of window display is 0.026 which is significant and beta value is 0.137 which shows that it has a positive impact on consumer attention. Hence hypothesis 3 that Window Display of the retail store has positive and significantly impact on consumer attention was accepted.

The sig value of store interior design is 0.000 which is significant and its beta value is 0.453 showing a positive impact on consumer attention. Therefore hypothesis 4 that Interior design of the retail store has significant positive impact on consumer attention was accepted.

Figure 2. Research Model tested

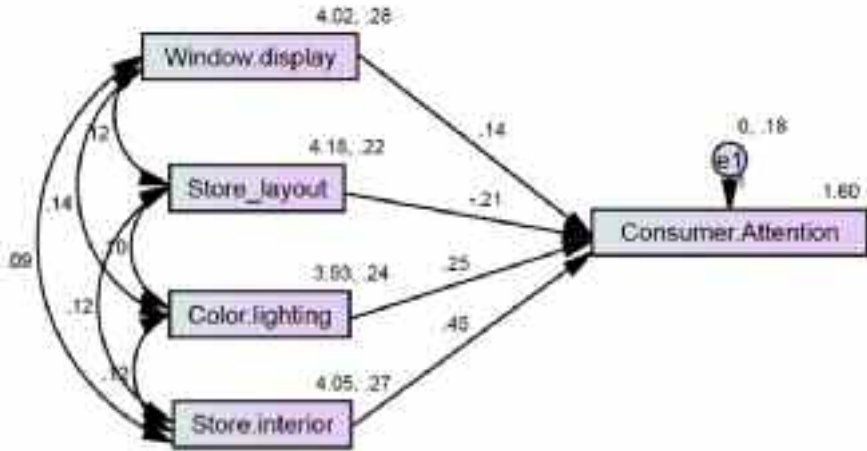


Table 10. Hypotheses Assessment Summary

Hypotheses	Beta Value	Sig Value	Empirical Conclusion
<i>H₁: Color & lighting of the retail store have significant positive impact on consumer attention.</i>	0.249	0.000	H₁ Accepted
<i>H₂: Store Layout of the retail store has significant positive impact on consumer attention</i>	-0.210	0.002	H₂ Rejected
<i>H₃: Window Display of the retail store has positive and significantly impact on consumer attention</i>	0.137	0.026	H₃ Accepted
<i>H₄: Interior design of the retail store has significant positive impact on consumer attention.</i>	0.453	0.000	H₄ Accepted

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The study was conducted for evaluating the impact of visual merchandising on consumer attention in the retail store in the Pakistani context. Analyzing and examining the influence of visual merchandising variables i.e. window display, store layout, color & lighting and store interior design of different retail outlets in attracting consumers were done by collecting responses of the consumer in a retail setting through a questionnaire. Results were revalidating the findings of previous researchers that Visual merchandising is a very important tool and has effect on impulse buying behavior (Kim, 2013) and Bashar and Irshad (2012) revealed that window display and floor merchandising have positive correlation with impulse buying behavior and overall Visual

merchandising has a significant impact on the consumer buying behavior and in increasing the footfall of the stores. This research was carried out with consumer attention as a dependent variable to add new findings in the visual merchandising literature.

People are usually attracted towards the stores that look attractive and eye-catching. This results in impulsive buying as well. The findings of this research that window display has a positive significant effect on consumer attention supported the previous findings that providing customers with unique and distinctive window displays is the only mean through which retailers can keep up the attention of consumers (Mehta & Chugan, 2013). The color and lighting helps in making people step in the store as the findings of this research were that color and lighting has significant and positive effect on consumer attention similar to findings of Aspfors (2010) in which it was stated that lighting is necessary to grab the attention of the consumers and encourage them towards initiating the purchase (Olson, 2005; Jacobs & Suess, 1975; Babin et al., 2003). Lastly, the layout of the store should be designed in an organized way with a good interior as it makes the consumers stay longer in the store. The layout must be such that it a customer entering the store conveniently finds all the goods required to him (Ebster & Garaus, 2011). In an empirical study Garaus et al. (2015) stated that a good store layout increases the probability of consumers to stay longer in the store and enjoy the traffic free shopping experience. Findings of this study also signify that if store layout is bad then it will have a negative impact on consumer overall experience. Visual merchandising is one of the techniques which are used to attain competitive advantage as well. People are more likely to visit or shop from the store which can gain their attention. Marketers are using the visual merchandising strategy to bring more customers in the store to that of the competitors.

This study concludes that visual merchandising has an impact on consumer attention along with enhancing the consumer behavior. To gain the attention of consumers' window display, color & lighting and store interior design play a very vital role. If we conclude the research, it is seen that H1, H3, and H4 were accepted while H2 was rejected. Getting consumers attention and consideration is something very important for the store managers to increase their buying. Store managers should use visual merchandising strategies to communicate with the customers and making them visit their stores.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

Retailers and other store managers should focus on implementing the elements of visual merchandising. This should be included in their marketing practice as this is a very unique and innovative way of communicating with customers in this increasing retail space in malls. Based on this research, the marketers should focus on the window display of products, color & lighting along with store interior design to gain and increase the attraction level of consumers and prospect customers. It ultimately has an impact on consumer buying behavior and consumer attention as well.

This research was carried out with a lot of limitation. Future study can be carried out on a broader perspective of visual merchandising to increase consumer attention and buying behavior. Carpenter and Moore (2006) have used the cleanliness and hygiene of store as variable in visual merchandising, this variable can also be used in future. Furthermore, music and scents inside the store as mediating variables can be added in the model and tested to give new insights and broader research in visual merchandising. In this study, simple aspect of lighting and color were taken into consideration, in future researchers can include categories of color and lighting like dark or bright color and bright fluorescent (soft) lights as variables used by Baker et al., (1992) and Schlosser, (1998). The inclusion of these entire variables in the Visual merchandising model can reveal very interesting and useful findings for the retail industry.

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