

## **Identify the Factors of Visual Merchandising on Customer Behavior on Apparel Sector (With reference to Colombo District)**

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### **Abstract**

*Apparel industry is one of the fast-growing industries in Sri Lanka. So Due to increasing high competition in retail sector and the similarity of selling same merchandise. Therefore, now days every marketer pays more attention to visual merchandising aspect to attract the customers and to survive in the industry. The purpose of this research is to study the identify factors of visual merchandising on customer purchasing behavior on apparel in Colombo district. Hence, the problem of the study is “what are the factors affecting for customer purchasing behavior on apparel”, the main objective of the study is to identify the factors of visual merchandising on customer purchasing behavior. There is one sub objective of the study is to find out the demographic factors of respondents that affecting to the overall shopping experience. The data was collected by Google form from the selected of sample of the customers who visit selected retail shops, the sample size was decided by “Yamane” calculation method. Factor analysis chi square test, Descriptive statistics used to analyze the collected data. According to the result of analysis, the factors that affecting to the customer purchasing behavior of retails shops has been identified namely, Facilities of shopping, time saving and comfortable environment which are evident from the analysis that out of 10 factors given. Gender education level, monthly income of the respondents’ is affecting the shopping experience.*

**Key words: Customer purchasing behavior, Retails shops, Visual merchandising**

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the identify factors of visual merchandising elements on consumer purchasing behavior by focusing on selected clothing retail stores in Sri Lanka, identifying the most influential

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visual merchandising elements, and then comparing the results to those of international retail stores to determine what improvements can be made to attract more customers in the Sri Lankan context.

Globalization has boosted the fashion retail industry in Sri Lanka over the last few decades. The textile and clothing sector became subject to the general rules of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade on January 1, 2005, after more than forty years of import quotas (World Trade Organization Geneva, Switzerland). On that note, Sri Lanka plays a significant role in the region's apparel sector, and it has had an impact on the country's retail business improvement. According to a Cooray, (2005) Secretary General of the Joint Apparel Association Forum (JAAF), Sri Lanka has the highest per capita apparel exports in Asia and by capitalizing on regional strengths, the country could easily thrive in positioning the South Asian region as a strong competitor second to China. "Sri Lanka has strategically nurtured its supply chain in order to meet its target of \$8.5 billion by 2020." The industry has demonstrated its capability by achieving a significant increase of \$ 4.3 billion in 2013 and is on track to achieve a further increase of \$ 2.3 billion by June 2014." Economic. In recent years, Sri Lanka's growth has been among the fastest in South Asia. Growth averaged 6.3 percent. Between 2002 and 2013, with GDP per capita rising from \$859 in 2002 to \$1,059 in 2013. 2000 to \$3,256 in 2013 (The World Bank, 2015).

According to the development of the local population's living standards, they tend to spend on world top brands manufactured in Sri Lanka, such as Abercrombie & Fitch, Gap, Marks & Spencer, Nike, H&M, Victoria's Secret, and Tommy Hilfiger, as well as Levi's, Mango, and the United Colors of Benetton. Local brands such as ODEL, Hameedia, and No Limit also compete aggressively in this market, according to the September 2013 issue of Retail Intelligence. As a result, competition among fashion retailers and customer retention have been significant challenges for current Sri Lankan fashion retailers. The Customer Retention Challenges in the Fashion Retailing Industry in Sri Lanka, Sri-Lankan fashion retailers are not widely spread, and supply chain management is not significant. (Perera, 2010)

Customers have a better opportunity to make informed purchases than ever before because of the high number of competitors, availability, and access to multiple retailing platforms. As a result, fashion retailers tend to use new

strategies for attracting customers, such as changing purchasing intentions toward fashion, understanding new customers, introducing new trends, and value creation, in order to deliver trendy products and provide good service to convenient shopping. Furthermore, retailers are becoming more accustomed to learning new visual merchandising strategies that create a bond between the customer and the retailer, such as color themes, creative display, and music meanings (Thilakarathne, 2016).

## **2. Literature Review**

According to Oxford Business Group (2016), retail is one of Sri Lanka's fastest growing sectors. In today's Sri Lanka the apparel industry has emerged as one of the most active and fast razing industries. The clothes retails business is highly competitive, and most apparel retailers are competing to attract clients as well as to definite themselves from the competitors and to be the greatest clothing retail chain in the country (Wanniachchi & Kumara, 2016).

The effect of Visual merchandising on consumers' impulse buying behavior was investigated by Saini, Gupta, & Khurana, (2015) who discovered the main features of Visual merchandising that contribute the most to impulse buying. Visual merchandising tactics, according to the study, which also contributes to impulse buying, influence customers' buying behavior.

Visual merchandising is an art that involves presenting numerous categories of goods at a store in a visually effective and appealing manner, with a focus on connecting with customers through photos and presentations (Sachdeva & Goel, 2015). As a silent salesperson, visual merchandising does not speak, but it does express their sales message through visual attractiveness. Retailers must place a higher emphasis on goods presentation to meet the shifting expectations of today's customers.

Retailers must recognize the significance of shopper expectations and create the ideal environment to entice them (Thomas, 2018). According to Wanniachchi and Kumara (2016), visual merchandizing is the art of generating visual displays and organizing merchandise assortments within a business to improve the layout and presentation and, as a result, increase growth, sales, and profitability. Marketers, particularly in the retail industry, strive to enhance revenue by employing a variety of marketing methods.

Visual merchandising is a marketing strategy in which retailers improve both the exterior and interior of their store to attract their target clientele (Mattila & Wirtz, 2008). Visual merchandising is one of those in-store marketing strategies that causes customers to make accidental purchases. Visual merchandising is one of those in-store marketing strategies that causes customers to make accidental purchases. The marketers use this strategy to visually boost their outlet by establishing an appealing ambience, right shelf arrangement, appealing window display, and cleanliness (Nidarsha & Kennedy, 2012).

Retailers face a fiercely competitive market, and as a result, they face significant challenges in differentiating their businesses based on product, location, people, price, and marketing. Color, lighting, and visual merchandising have always been seen to have an instant impact on the purchasing decision-making process in retail stores (Randiwela, 2007). The focus has shifted away from in-store product displays and toward elements that engage shoppers' senses, such as flat screen videos or graphics, music, smells, lighting, and flooring, which tend to capture the brand image or personality and contribute to the creation of a unique environment and shopping experience (Marsh, 1999).

### ***2.1 Objective of the Study***

As a developing Sri Lankan people have different point of view about visual merchandising and different reasons are influencing their visual merchandising. The objective of the study identifies the factors of visual merchandising on customer purchasing behavior.

- To identify the factors affecting of visual merchandising on consumer purchasing behavior.

### **3. Methodology**

This research hope to use quantitative research method based on the aims and needs of the research. The data collection methods will be done by using an online data collection survey's questionnaire from the related sample of population. In this research, only Google forms were used as the data collecting sources was done by sharing the questioner among the people who live in the Colombo district. The sample was selected from Colombo district

where all the 13 divisions and selected the 105 customers and samples assisted from each division.

A sample of 105 customers was selected using 90% significance level in Yamane method (1967). The total numbers of people live in Colombo district and sample of 105 respondents were selected from 13 divisions. Stratified sampling technique was used to select the sample.

After that selection of proper sample independent variable and dependent variable were categorized. According to a special marking system. All the questions in the Google form were properly arranged to measure the variables.

#### 4. Results and Discussions

There are factors, which are identified within the literature review, and it is required to identify the impact of those towards shopping experience in Sri Lanka at present. And relationships among those factors are tested using chi-square test check whether they have impact or not, for shopping.

The chi-square test is used for investigating whether the impact between two variables. Chi-square test is testing at 0.05 significant level ( $\alpha=5\%$ ). Following variables and following hypothesis are testing in chi-square.

Table 1: Shopping Experience with Gender

			Shopping experience		Total
			Yes	No	
Gender	Male	count	47	3	50
		% Shopping experience	54.0%	16.7%	47.6%
	Female	Count	40	15	55
		% Shopping experience	46.0%	83.3%	52.4%
Total		count	87	18	105
		% Total	82.9%	17.7%	100%

Source: Survey data, 2022

$$\chi^2 = 8.344$$

$$P = 0.004$$

Based on the table 1 it can be concluded that there is significant relationship between shopping experience with gender where the P value is  $0.004 < 0.005$ .

The percentages of male and female responder’s distribution were respectively 47.6% and 52.4%. Hence it can be stated that most of responders were female.

Table 2: Doing Shopping based with Age

			Shopping experience		Total
			Yes	No	
Age	18-24 years old	Count	54	4	61
		% Shopping experience	62.1%	38.9%	58.1%
	25-30 years old	Count	14	2	16
		% Shopping experience	16.1%	11.1%	15.2%
	31-40 years old	Count	11	2	13
		% Shopping experience	12.6%	11.1%	12.4%
	41-50 years old	Count	8	7	15
		% Shopping experience	9.2%	38.9%	14.3%
Total		Count	87	18	105
		% Total	82.9%	17.1%	100.0%

Source: Survey data, 2022

$$\chi^2 = 10.855 \quad P = 0.013$$

Based on the table 2 it can be concluded that there is significant relationship between shopping experience with age where the P value is  $0.013 > 0.005$ . The most of responder age were between 18-24 group and as a percentage, it was at 56%. Most of responders were in between 18-24 age.

Based on the table 3 it can be concluded that there is significant relationship between shopping experience with marital status where the P value is  $0.003 < 0.005$ . The represents marital status as single, married, divorced, and separated, other. 2.9% responders were married while 28.06% responders were single, 60.0% responders were divorced, 5.7% responders were separated, and 2.9% responders were other. Hence, it can be stated that most of responders were single.

Table 3: Marital Status with Shopping

			Shopping experience		Total	
			Yes	No		
Marital Status	Single	Count	47	16	63	
		% Shopping experience	54.0%	88.9%	60.0%	
	Married	Count	30	0	30	
		% Shopping experience	34.5%	0.0%	28.6%	
	Divorced	Count	6	0	6	
		% Shopping experience	6.9%	0.0%	5.7%	
	Separated	Count	3	0	3	
		% Shopping experience	3.4%	0.0%	2.9%	
	Other	Count	1	2	3	
		% Shopping experience	1.1%	11.1%	2.9%	
	Total		Count	87	18	105
			% Total	82.9%	17.1%	100.0%

Source: Survey data, 2022

$$\chi^2 = 16.271$$

$$P = 0.003$$

Based on the table 4 it can be concluded that there is significant relationship between shopping experience with education level where the P value is  $0.961 > 0.005$ . Educational level of responses is showing distribution of educational levels of the responders. 68.6% of the responders had educational level as up to Undergraduate. Further 19 of the responders were at degree and the percentage was at 18.1%. Moreover, there were 7 responders at High school and other represented 6.7% from the sample.

Table 4: Education Level with Shopping

			Shopping experience		Total
			Yes	No	
Education Level	High School	count	6	1	7
		%Shopping experience	6.9%	5.6%	6.7%
	University Undergraduate	Count	60	12	72
		% Shopping experience	69.0%	66.7%	68.6%
	Degree	Count	15	4	19
		%Shopping experience	17.2%	22.2%	18.1%
	Other	Count	6	1	7
		% Shopping experience	6.9%	5.6%	6.7%
Total		Count	87	18	105
		% Total	82.9%	17.1%	100.0%

Source: Survey data, 2022

$$\chi^2 = 0.296$$

$$P = 0.961$$

Table 5: Occupation with Shopping Experience

			Shopping experience		Total	
			Yes	No		
Occupation	Businessman	count	18	6	24	
		%Shopping experience	20.7%	33.3%	22.9%	
	Professionals	Count	2	0	2	
		% Shopping experience	2.3%	0.0%	1.9%	
	Executive	Count	13	4	17	
		%Shopping experience	14.9%	22.2%	16.2%	
	Scientists	Count	1	0	1	
		% Shopping experience	1.1%	0.0%	1.0%	
	Educations	Count	9	2	11	
		%Shopping experience	10.3%	11.1%	10.5%	
			Count	20	4	24



	Other Occupation	% Shopping experience	23.0%	22.2%	22.9%
	No Occupation	Count	22	2	24
		% Shopping experience	25.3%	11.1%	22.9%
	Retired	Count	2	0	2
		% Shopping experience	2.3%	0.0%	1.9%
	Total	Count	87	18	105
% Total		82.9%	17.1%	100.0%	

Source: Survey data, 2022

$$\chi^2 = 3.889$$

$$P = 0.792$$

Based on the table 5 it can be concluded that there is significant relationship between shopping experience with occupation where the P value is  $0.792 > 0.005$ . That result obtained for the income stream of respondents. According to that, businessman, professional, executive, scientists, educations, other occupations, no occupations, and retired income streams. However, their type of income stream doesn't influence to their online retails.

Table 6: Monthly income with Shopping Experience

		Shopping experience		Total	
		Yes	No		
Monthly Income	Below 20,000	Count	7	5	12
		% Shopping experience	8.0%	27.8%	11.4%
	20,000-50,000	Count	37	9	46
		% Shopping experience	42.5%	50.0%	43.8%
	50,000-100,000	Count	32	0	32
		% Shopping experience	36.8%	0.0%	30.5%
	Above 100,000	Count	11	4	15
		% Shopping experience	12.6%	22.2%	14.3%
	Total	Count	87	18	105
		% Total	82.9%	17.1%	100.0%

Source: Survey data, 2022

$$\chi^2 = 12.850$$

$$P = 0.005$$

Based on the table 6 it can be concluded that there is significant relationship between shopping experience with monthly income where the P value is  $0.005=0.005$ . The most of respondent's monthly household income lies between Rs. 20, 000 to 50,000. 30.48% of total sample with frequency 35 individual have an income within the range of above 100,000.

Based on the table 7 it can be concluded that there is significant relationship between shopping experience with retails shop where the P value is  $0.002<0.005$ . Table 7 represents visit to name of retail shops are Fashion Bug, Nolimit, Odel and Cool Planet. 25.7% responders were visit to fashion bug 43.8% responders were visit to Nolimit, and 18.1% responders were visit to, cool planet.

Table 7: Responses of Retails Shops and shopping

			Shopping experience		Total	
			Yes	No		
Retails shop	No-limit	Count	34	12	46	
		% Shopping experience	39.1%	66.7%	43.8%	
	Fashion Bug	Count	27	0	27	
		% Shopping experience	31.0%	0.0%	25.7%	
	ODEL	Count	9	4	13	
		% Shopping experience	10.3%	22.2%	12.4%	
	Cool Planet	Count	17	2	19	
		% Shopping experience	19.5%	11.1%	18.1%	
	Total		Count	87	18	105
			% Total	82.9%	17.1%	100.0%

Source: Survey data, 2022

$$\chi^2 = 1.825$$

$$P = 0.002$$

#### **4.1 Identify the Factors affecting of Visual Merchandising on Consumer Purchasing Behavior.**

Validity is measured through the using factor analysis. Factor analysis was conducted on the 10 items used to measure independent variables. To satisfy convergent validity, the following conditions should be satisfied. KMO value

should be greater than 0.5, sig. value of Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity should be less than 0.05.

Table 8: KMO and Bartlett’s test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.758
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	303.922
	df	45
	Sig.	.000

Source: Survey data, 2022

According to the table 8, the value of KMO for overall matrix is 0.758, therefore the sample taken to process the factor analysis is statistically significant. From above table, it is concluded that the strength of the relationship among variables is strong, because of the value of KMO Statistics is .758 and the null hypothesis for Bartlett’s test has been rejected since P-Value is 0.000. Therefore the data collected through the questionnaires can apply for the factor analysis.

Factor analysis is used for identifying the factors affecting to online shopping. Factors are extracted based on eigenvalues greater than 1 and scree plot to display the factors. Extraction method is Principal components as extraction method and varimax, quartimax, equamax as rotation method are used for factor analysis.

The main objective of this study is to identify the main factors of visual merchandising on customer purchasing behavior. According to the variables found in literature review, there are 10 variables, which has impact on customer purchasing behavior. They are creative displays, mannequin, cleanliness, colors, lighting systems, store layout, floor merchandising, video display, promotional signage, and music.

#### ***4.2 Distribution of Factors under the Principal Components (PCF)***

Principal components (PCF) factor extraction techniques the variable division into 10 main factors according to the variables, varimax rotation method as follows:

Table 9: PCF Extraction Method (Varimax)

Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>			
Factors	Component		
	1	2	3
Influence of creative display	<b>.670</b>	.047	.314
Influence of Color	.160	.093	<b>.727</b>
Influence of lighting system	.265	.051	<b>.741</b>
Influence of music	.809	.049	.208
Influence of Cleanliness	<b>.715</b>	.137	.162
Influence of Promotional signage	.298	.205	<b>.703</b>
Influence of Floor merchandising	-.096	<b>.631</b>	.488
Influence of store layout	.016	<b>.880</b>	.152
Influence of mannequin	.276	<b>.728</b>	-.001
Influence of video display	<b>.520</b>	.514	.075
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.			
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.			

Source: Survey data, 2022

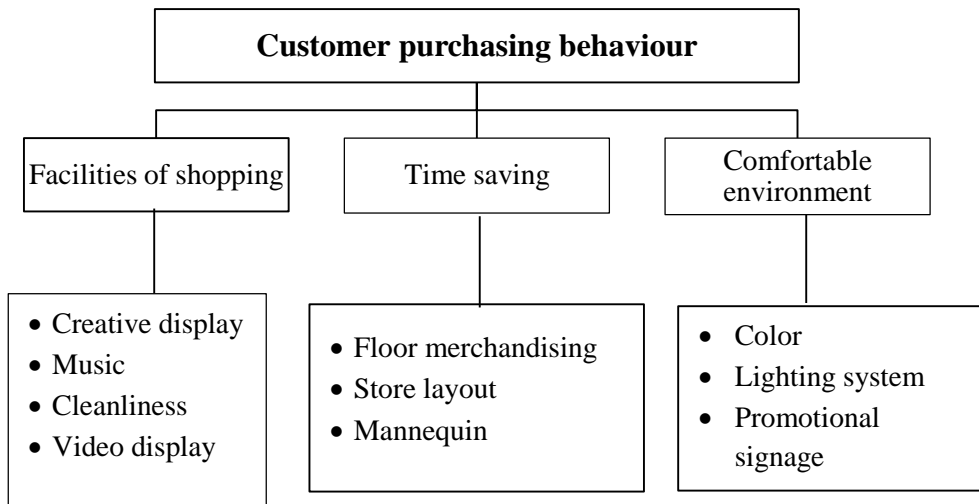
The 10 variables considered in each methodology used in table 9 described under the three key components. Under the Principal component factor extraction method, four factors under the first component, three factors under the second component and three factors under the third components. However as noted by Costello and Osborne (2005), the most common methods for successful analysis are the primary conservation analytics specialization method and the varimax factor rotation method.

The above table shows the proportion of the total variation in the data which is explained by three - factor solution. The variance of the 10 variables when standardized is 10 since the maximum variance any single variable could explain is always equal to one. The first component account for  $3.723/10 = 37.233\%$ , and the second component accounts for  $1.437/10 = 14.370\%$ . The two components together account for  $51.604\%$ , and the total variation in the 10 variables.

There are different rotation methods such as, varimax, Quartimax, Equamax, promax. Here in our research, we used varimax. Varimax attempts to simplify

the factor loadings by forcing them to be near 0 or 1. Varimax is a robust and simple procedure that typically enhances the interpretability of factors, and it is consequently the most popular orthogonal rotation scheme. The Rotated Component Matrix in the above table presents the "rotated factor loadings", which are the magnitudes of these vertical projections, or the correlations of the variables with the new factors. When a variable is highly correlated, the loading is near 1 or, say, greater than 5. According to the table, all the variables are formally distributing into the seven factors.

Figure 1: Factor Summary



*Source: Survey data, 2022*

Visual merchandising influences consumers psychologically and has the power to draw them in. They offer meaning since they mirror one's emotions. To create a satisfying purchasing experience

According to the findings, many people prefer online shopping due to its advantages. The objective of this study is to identify the factors, which have impact on visual merchandising on customer purchasing behavior. Sub objective is to study the relationship between demographic factors and shopping experience.

In order to complete the objective, related work was referred in literature review which is contained with the information about the behavior of the different factors affecting customer purchasing behavior, in multiple context/ environment such as different countries, different time periods etc.

Primary data and secondary data were used for this study. Secondary data was used to observe the nature of the population. While observing, different characteristics of the population, their composition and their behavior within different context was analyzed.

In high literacy rate, second administration district and near to main district in Sri Lanka and high population density is Colombo district and choose 105 customers using simple random sampling method.

Colombo district is selected for the sample due to different conditions. Higher literacy rate, higher population density, covers a diverse landscape so that several important land features can be detected from the selected study area. To carry out the research, four retail stores were selected, namely Fashion Bug Outlets in Dehiwala, Nolimit outlet in Maharagama, ODEL outlet in Katubedda and cool planet outlet in Dickmans road Colombo and being first administration district of the country, are some of those conditions. 105 customers from Colombo district were selected using simple random sampling method. Semi structural Google form were held along with the questionnaire to collect the primary data from selected 105 customers.

Descriptive statistics was used for describing the factors affecting shopping and the extent to which those factors have impact on for identifying the relationship among the selected variable, Chi-square test was used. And factor analysis was used for categorizing the factors which were identified within literature review, based on their impact towards customer purchasing.

Mainly three factors were identified by using factor analysis. Those factors are facilities of shopping, time saving and comfortable environment. By applying mean comparison, the factor with most impact on customer purchasing behavior was identified which time was saving.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendation**

According to the result of analysis, the factors that affecting to the customer purchasing behavior of retails shops has been identified namely, Facilities of shopping, time saving and comfortable environment which are evident from the analysis that out of 10 factors given. Gender education level, monthly income of the respondents' is affecting the shopping experience.

Visual merchandising influences consumers psychologically and has the power to draw them in. They offer meaning since they mirror one's emotions.

To create a satisfying purchasing experience, visual merchandising is essential. So, when choosing the appropriate visual merchandising tools for their fashion stores, retailers should exercise caution. To boost sales, store managers should always personally supervise these. The study's results gave enough proof that shops are using visual merchandising. To help buyers become aware of the products and to foster positive attitudes, retailers should employ some visual merchandising techniques more than others. Statistics show that window displays are the most effective factor spread knowledge and a positive attitude about new fashion trends. Promotional signage is another crucial tactic for disseminating information about promotions. According to the study, visual marketing plays a significant role in influencing impulse purchases. Retailers must therefore be the leading proponents of new merchandising strategies in clothes stores. To provide the necessary financial and non-financial support that helps to take the best chances to sustain a competitive advantage, the retailers must be persuaded of the virtues and strategic advantages of visual merchandising. Additionally, it is important for businesses to develop specific visual merchandising approaches. The present study continued with clothing segment though it can be examined in other segments also. And since this study limited only within Colombo district wherever it is falling into patriarchal society, researchers can extend it to other districts where matriarchically practices taking places. This study can be identifying the factors of visual merchandising elements.

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