

Apparel buying behaviour of college boys and girls in relation to visual merchandising: A comparative study

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■ **ABSTRACT** : Visual merchandising can be defined as everything the customer sees, both exterior and interior, that creates a positive image of a business and results in attention, interest, desire and action on the part of the customer. In India College students are one of the most attractive segments as they have their own attitude, personality, perception and beliefs based on their prior shopping experiences. Boys and girls due to their different upbringing and socialization along with various other social, biological, and psychological factors depict different types of behaviour at various situations. The present study was undertaken to find out the role of visual merchandising on apparel buying behaviour of college students. To achieve the objective of the current study, survey was carried out on 180 college students (90 boys and 90 girls) between the age ranges of 25-35 years of Udaipur city. Questionnaire method was used for data collection. Maximum boy's preferred to buy their apparels from exclusive showrooms whereas maximum girls preferred to buy their apparels from online buying and shopping malls. Majority of boys and girls (72.2% and 82.2%) stated that effective visual merchandising induces impulsive buying. Both respondents (boys 75.5% and girls 80%) agreed that their final buying decision is affected by visuals and display of apparels.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Visual merchandising

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Apparel is one of the basic needs of human beings. From ancient times human beings used different ways to cover their body. Apparel industry is one of the primary segments of our Indian economy and one of the largest sources of foreign exchange earnings. Clothing plays an important role in the individual's life and influences his attitude. Apparel contributes maximum in determining the first impression of person on others. These are symbols of one's personality and traits. In India College students are one of the most attractive

segments as they have their own attitude, personality, perception and beliefs based on their prior shopping experiences. Young group have significant importance from marketers, as they have growing purchasing power, their money attitude also have been changing with increasing competition, retailer strive to ensure that their stores are appealing to their target markets. Due to increasing competition and the similarity of merchandise, retailers utilize visual merchandising to differentiate their offerings from others as well as to improve the desirability

of products. Visual merchandising can be defined as everything the customer sees, both exterior and interior, that creates a positive image of a business and results in attention, interest, desire and action on the part of the customer (Passewitz *et al.*, 1991).

Objective :

To find out the role of visual merchandising on apparel buying behaviour of college students

RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted on 180 college students of 25-35 years of age group studying in Management Colleges *i.e.* Pacific College of management, Faculty of management studies, Maharaja College of management. For this purpose a list of PG students of this age (25-35 years) group studying in college was taken from the college administration and students was contacted personally. On the basis of willingness to participate in the study 60 students (30 boys and 30 girls) were selected from each college. Thus the total sample size consisted of 180 students. Questionnaire method was considered as the most suitable technique for getting the complete and desired information. Questionnaire was tested on 10 percent non- sample subjects. The collected data was analyzed for frequency and percentage.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study as well as relevant discussion have been presented under following heads:

General background information of the respondents:

Majority of boys respondents (85.55%) belongs to the age group of 25-28 year and rest (14.44%) of the subjects were from 29-32 year age group, whereas majority of girls respondents (76.66%) were from 25-28 and rest 23.33 per cent were from 29-32 year age group. (70%) were boy's from the nuclear family and (30%) were from the joint family and majority of girl's respondents (63.34%) belongs to nuclear family and 36.66 per cent respondents were from joint family. (48.88%) boys were from small size families, 27.77 per cent were from medium size families and (23.33%) were from large families.

Role of Visual Merchandising:

Place of purchase:

With regardsto place of purchase, in the boy's group most of boy's (40%) frequently purchased their apparel from exclusive showroom followed by (30%) frequently from shopping malls, 27.7 per cent rarely purchased from hypermarket, 24.4 per cent sometimes purchased their apparel from online buying and 8.8 per cent respondents sometimes purchased their apparels from wholesale shop.

Whereas more than half of the girl's (52.2%) answered that they frequently purchased their apparel from online buying followed by (44.4%) purchased their apparel from shopping malls, (38.8%) respondents rarely purchased their apparel from wholesale shop, 18.8 per cent purchased their apparel from hypermarket and only 15.5 per cent purchase their apparels from exclusive showrooms.

On the whole data shown in Table 2 depicts that

Table 1 : General background information of the respondents (n=90)				
Age	Boys		Girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
25-28years	77	85.55	69	76.66
29-32 years	13	14.44	21	23.33
Above 33	0	0	0	0
Family type				
Nuclear	63	70	61	63.34
Joint	27	30	29	36.66
Family size				
Small (upto 4 member)	44	48.88	39	43.33
Medium (upto 8 member)	25	27.77	32	35.55
Large (8 and above)	21	23.33	19	21.11
Family occupation				
Business	48	53.3	39	43.3
Service	25	27.7	32	35.5
Farming	17	18.8	19	21.1

maximum boy's preferred to buy their apparels from exclusive showrooms whereas maximum girls preferred to buy their apparels from online buying and shopping malls. From the Pearson Chi- Square value it was found that significant difference between boys and girls regarding place of purchase: wholesale shop, shopping mall, Exclusive showrooms and there was no significant difference regarding hypermarket and online buying.

Attention paid to displays and signage:

Table 3 clearly reveals that 80 per cent boy's respondent and 87.7 per cent girl's respondents paid attention to displays and signage while only 20 per cent boys and 12.2 per cent girls do not pay attention. Signage's are the means by which a customer gets to know about the price and discount offered. Customers give 3-5 seconds of their attention to window display. Therefore the retailer's visual message should be conveyed to the customer in that short period of time.

Help of display and signage:

An attempt was made to find out the role of display and signage, it is clear from Table 3 that 76.6 per cent boy and 84.4 per cent girls said that signage and displays helps them during shopping. Remaining 23.3 per cent and 15.5 per cent said that signage's and displays do not assist while shopping.

The reason behind this, as much as 80 per cent of all sales are generated at Point of purchase by signage, displays and events within the store. Signage provides ease in shopping. Displays also provide an opportunity to have the "Touch and Feel Effect" which is very important to make a purchase decision which is very prominent in case of Indian consumers.

Try new apparels:

Data reported from Table 3 shows that (67.7%) boy's respondents and (76.6%) girl's respondents said that they would try new apparels which are on displays

Places	Always		Frequently		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		Pearson Chi-Square Value
	Boys f (%)	Girls f (%)	Boys f (%)	Girls f (%)	Boys f (%)	Girls f (%)	Boys f (%)	Girls f (%)	Boys f (%)	Girls f (%)	
Hypermarket	12 (13.3)	5 (5.5)	8 (8.8)	17 (18.8)	19 (21.1)	16 (17.7)	25 (27.7)	26 (28.8)	26 (28.8)	26 (28.8)	6.399NS
Wholesale shop	11 (12.2)	5 (5.5)	15 (16.6)	25 (27.7)	8 (8.8)	15 (16.6)	19 (21.1)	35 (38.8)	37 (41.1)	10 (11.1)	27.132*
Shopping Malls	10 (11.1)	30 (33.3)	27 (30)	40 (44.4)	16 (17.7)	5 (5.5)	20 (22.2)	10 (11.1)	17 (18.8)	5 (5.5)	28.163*
Exclusive showrooms	13 (14.4)	15 (16.6)	36 (40)	14 (15.5)	14 (15.5)	25 (27.7)	12 (13.3)	26 (28.8)	15 (16.6)	10 (11.1)	19.083*
Online buying	22 (14.4)	14 (15.5)	21 (23.3)	37 (41.1)	17 (24.4)	16 (17.7)	16 (23.3)	14 (15.5)	13 (14.4)	10 (5.5)	6.725NS

NS=Non-significant

* indicates significance of value at P=0.01

Sr. No.	Views about visual merchandising	Boys		Girls	
		Yes f (%)	No f (%)	Yes f (%)	No f (%)
1.	While visiting a store do you pay attention to display and signage?	72 (80)	18 (20)	79 (87.7)	11 (12.2)
2.	Does the signage and display help you in shopping?	69 (76.6)	21 (23.3)	76 (84.4)	14 (15.5)
3.	Do you have a look on apparels on displays and try anything new?	61 (67.7)	29 (32.2)	69 (76.6)	21 (23.3)
4.	Do the apparels on display attract more attention?	77 (85.5)	13 (14.4)	81 (90)	9 (10)
5.	Do you think that applying visual merchandising techniques the company can market its product in a better way?	79 (87.7)	11 (12.2)	82 (91.1)	8 (8.8)
6.	Do you think your final decision is affected by visuals and display of apparels?	68 (75.5)	22 (24.4)	72 (80)	18 (20)
7.	Does effective Visual Merchandising induce impulsive buying on you?	65 (72.2)	25 (27.7)	76 (84.4)	14 (15.5)

while (32.2%) boys and (23.3%) girls do not try new apparels and prefer their usual garments. Since, a majority of respondents had tendency to adopt change. Therefore, the retailers can make use of this opportunity and they can make use of effective visual merchandising techniques and can attract customers.

Displays attract more attention:

The data in Table 3 indicated that 85.5 per cent boys and 90 per cent girl felt that apparels on displays attract more attention as compared to (14.4%) boys and (10%) girls who contradicted the same.

Connection of visual merchandising and marketing of products:

An attempt was also made to find out the connection between visual merchandising and marketing of products; data in Table 3 reveals that (87.7%) boys and (91.1%) girl's respondents said that by applying effective visual merchandising techniques the companies can market their products in a better way. While (12.2%) boys and 8.8 per cent girls said that effective visual merchandising has no effect on marketing of products. Because Today's fast faced, competitive world provides a multitude of challenges for retailers. With the help of effective visual merchandising retailers can differentiate their products and can market them in a better way.

Effect of visuals and displays on final buying decision:

An insight into Table 3 highlights that (75.5%) boys and (80%) girl's respondents agreed that their final buying decision is affected by visuals and display of apparels while (24.4%) boys and (20%) girls said that visuals and displays have no effect on their final buying decision. This is why because visual merchandising sets the context of the merchandise in an aesthetically pleasing fashion presenting them in a way that would convert the window shoppers into prospects and ultimately buyers of the product.

Relationship between visual merchandising and impulsive buying:

Perusal of data in Table 3, reflect that 72.2 per cent boys and 84.4 per cent girls respondents stated that

effective visual merchandising induces impulsive buying, remaining 27.7 per cent boys and 15.5 per cent girls was not with this statement.

In a line of the study Rumzitaushif and Gupta (2015) suggested that visual merchandising elements like: merchandise, promotions, displays and ambience across the stores influences impulsive buying behaviour.

Overall data reveals that girl's respondents were more in agreement with the aspects of visual merchandising as compared to boy's respondents (Madhavi and Leelavati, 2013; Ramamurthy and Hazarika, 2009).

Conclusion:

It can be concluded that visual merchandising practices influence college students (boys and girls) apparel buying behavior and it was found that there is a direct relationship between the college student's impulsive buying behaviour and visual merchandising and these practices, serve as stimuli that provoke a desire that ultimately motivates a consumer to make an unplanned purchase decision upon entering the store and girls were highly influenced by visual merchandising practices as compared to boys.

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