A STUDY ON GENERAL SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR BASED ON VISUAL MERCHANDISING IN MALLS WITH REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE

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Abstract:
Visual Merchandising has been around since the dawn of civilization, since humans started selling merchandise to a customer. When a vendor arranged his goods to be more attractive for a customer, or when a farmer put the biggest and ripest apples on top of the basket for consumers to see and touch, that is visual merchandising. In present generation, people do not shop merely to obtain items they need, but also to satisfy their wants. Frequently, shopping does not even involve making a purchase. For consumers, window-shopping has become a popular pastime. Visual merchandisers create "miniature worlds" for merchandise in an effort to attract the attention of consumers, draw them into the store and keep them coming back in the future. Despite the advanced techniques seen in visual displays, visual merchandising is not a new concept or art. As early as the 18th century, merchandise was staged in interesting and unique arrangements to attract consumers'. Visual Merchandising and communication helps improve the conversion of visitors to purchasers and increase transaction values by encouraging multiple sales. The main objective of the study is that to analyse the general shopping behaviour of the respondents in shopping malls and to assess and analyse the effectiveness of the visual merchandising efforts of the sellers in terms of notice ability, opinion and attractiveness to visit the store. For this a sample of 250 was collected from the respondents were percentage analysis, Kruskal Wallis and descriptive statistics were used as statistical tools to analyse the data. The conclusion is that female respondents have higher impact towards time of visiting the mall and time spent for shopping in malls so female respondents can be targeted towards selling the products through visual merchandising.

Key Words: Visual Merchandising & Shopping Malls and Communication

Introduction:

Retail marketing has caught lot of attention in the past one decade. India ranks as the second most attractive retail destination globally among thirty emergent markets. In terms of purchasing power parity (PPP), India is ranked 4th largest economy after USA, China and Japan[1.] One of the major contributors is the modernized retail format that is, "The Shopping Mall - the one stop destination". Shopping has transformed from necessity to an adventure. It is more of an experience, opportunity for celebration. Now a days shopping is a welcome break from hectic schedules. At this juncture it is important to notice that visual merchandising, deals with the display of products and creating an ambience. It also helps to create the positive customer image that leads to successful sales. It not only communicates the stores image, but also reinforces the stores advertising efforts and encourages impulse buying by the customer.

Visual merchandising is a major factor often overlooked in the success or failure of all retail stores. It is purely marketing based terminology and represents the most important marketing tools and also the most direct means of communication to the product which means that any promotional signage like billboards, banners, posters, pamphlets, shop boards, shelf markers and hand bills of any company, shop or brand which customer can see or visualize during his visit to the market or during shopping.

Statement of the Problem:

Visual displays of a store are intended to changes the minds of consumer towards buying behaviour. But in real time it is always a question whether the visual displays and the amount spent on visual displays is really effective. Hence this study was undertaken to analyse their effectiveness in terms of conversion of attraction to interest, interest to desire and desire to action. By understanding this behaviour of shoppers, marketers can develop unique market offerings designed specifically to attract the patronage of consumers within this important segment. The main problem is that whether people are buying the product what they see in malls. In context to India very little research is done for this subject. This study will also provide insights to retailers about which types of visual merchandising that can influence consumers" impulse buying behaviors.

Review of Literature:

Lea-Greenwood, Gaynor (1998), This paper outlines recent research which demonstrates that the re-naming of display as visual merchandising has led to centralisation and professionalism of the function. Centralization of visual merchandising has given the function a strategic profile which has to date been

neglected within the literature. The move towards centralization and therefore increased professionalization and sophistication of the creative process is discussed and includes the following benefits outlined by the respondents: (1) communicating a cohesive brand image; (2) differentiating the offer from the competition; (3) integrating promotional effort across the brand; (4) increasing availability of technology to facilitate the process. The paper concludes with future research avenues and recommendations.

G. Surrendar. (2001), In this article, 'Visual merchandising –the synergy to show, tell and sell' states that Marketing brings horse to the water but visual merchandising makes the horse drink. He believed that visual merchandising is the most impactful communication tool which drives the customer in and also plays a role of silent salesman. He further stated that visual merchandising had two aspects, one is commercial part and other is aesthetic done within the store to immediately arrest customer's attention.

Scope of the Study:
- ✓ The study is restricted to the city of Coimbatore.
- ✓ The study is restricted to individuals who do shopping in malls.
- ✓ To find out the impact of visual displays in the store which causes to change the buying decisions of the customers
- ✓ It is important to notice that Visual merchandising is involved in getting more visitors to stores.
- ✓ It is of immense importance which attracts customers towards impulsive buying in the store.

Objectives of the Study:
- ✓ To define the demographic characteristics of the respondents.
- ✓ To analyse the general shopping behaviour of the respondents in shopping malls.
- ✓ To assess and analyse the effectiveness of the visual merchandising efforts of the sellers in terms of noticeability, opinion and attractiveness to visit the store.
- ✓ To identify the conversion of visual merchandising efforts to actual purchase.
- ✓ To offer suggestions of the study.

Limitations of the Study:
In spite of detailed analysis made in the present study, this study is not free from the following limitations.
- ✓ The study is purely based on the views of 250 respondents only.
- ✓ The study has been confined to Coimbatore city only. So, the result may not be applicable to other areas.
- ✓ The study period is restricted only to six months.
- ✓ The result is fully drawn on the basis of information provided by the respondents. So it may lack authenticity.

Research Methodology:
The study is intended to analyse the consumers' attraction and preference towards visual merchandising in malls. The methodology includes area of the study, pilot study, sources of data, sampling design and statistical tools used.

Area of the Study: This study was carried out in the city of Coimbatore, which is the Manchester of South India.

Pilot Study: Before carrying out the original study the pilot study was done. For this study, twenty respondents were selected randomly from the area of the study and they were asked to respond to the questions included in the questionnaire. This pilot study was carried out only for testing the validity and worthiness of the constructed questionnaire. From the pilot study, necessary changes has been done according to the respondents suggestions and structured questionnaire was prepared to investigate the objectives of the study and administered to the sample respondents.

Source of Data: The data base of the study consists of both primary and secondary data that helped the researcher in systematic frame work of the study.

Primary Data: The primary data was collected through questionnaire which was prepared and administered by taking a sample of 250 respondents, comprising of different categories of respondents like students, employees, etc.

Secondary Data: The secondary data were collected from books, journals and magazines. Periodical information from different websites were also used for the study.

Sampling Design: For the purpose of this study, the data were collected from 250 respondents by using convenience sampling technique.

Statistical Tools Used: Percentage analysis, Chi - square

Analysis and Interpretation:

Demographic Characteristics		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	133	53.2
	Female	117	46.8
	Total	250	100.0

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Marital Status	Single	165	66.0
	Married	85	34.0
	Total	**200**	**100.0**
Age	Below 20 years	22	8.8
	21-30	56	22.4
	31-40	78	31.2
	40Above	94	37.6
	Total	**250**	**100.0**
Educational Qualification	School level	47	18.8
	Graduates	53	21.2
	Post graduates	81	32.4
	Professionals.	69	27.6
	Total	**250**	**100.0**

The above table represents the demographic variables of respondents. From the above it is observed that out of 250 respondents surveyed, 133 (53.2%) of the respondents were male and 177 (46.8%) were female. Under the category of marital status 165 (66%) were single and 85 (34%) were married. It is found that, 22 (8.8%) of the respondents are below 20 years of age and 56 (22.4%) of them belong to the age group of 21 – 30 years and 78 (31.2%) of the respondents fall under the age group of 31 – 40 years and 94 (37.6%) of them are under the category of above 40 years. From the above table educational qualification, 47 (18.8%) of the respondents were under school level, 53 (21.2%) of the respondents were graduates, 81 (32.4%) of the respondents were post graduates, 69 (27.6%) of the respondents were professionals. From the above table occupation, 12 (4.8%) of the respondents were student, 27 (10.8%) of the respondents were employee, 61 (24.4%) of the respondents were businessman, 85 (34.0%) of the respondents were professionals and 65 (26.0%) of the respondents were home maker. Further it is observed that 72 (28.8%) of the respondents are earning monthly income below Rs.10000, 69 (27.6%) of the respondent's monthly income ranges between Rs.10001 – Rs.20000, 44 (17.6%) of the respondent's earnings varies between Rs.20001 – 30000, 41 (16.4%) of the respondent's monthly income varies between Rs.30001 – 40000 and 24 (9.6%) of the respondents were earning above Rs.40000 per month. In the case of family size of the respondents 25 (10.0%) of the respondents are having 2 members in their family, 84 (33.6%) of the respondents are having 3 members in their family, 52 (20.8%) of the respondents are having 4 members in their family and 89 (35.6%) of the respondents are having above 4 members in their family. From the above table place of residence, it is observed that 35 (14.0%) of the respondents were from rural area and 215 (86.0%) of the respondents were from urban area.

Kruskal Wallis:
Association between Gender and Factors Related to Time and Amount Spent By Respondents in Malls:
Ho1: There is no relationship between gender of the respondents and time of visiting the mall
H02: There is no relationship between gender of the respondents and Time spent for shopping in malls
H03: There is no relationship between gender of the respondents and Amount spent for shopping in malls
H04: There is no relationship between gender of the respondents and Shopping behaviour of the respondents

	Gender of the respondents	N	Mean Rank
Time of visiting the mall	Male	133	112.96
	Female	117	139.75
	Total	250	
Time spent for shopping in malls	Male	133	107.76
	Female	117	145.67
	Total	250	
Amount spent for shopping in malls	Male	133	132.53
	Female	117	117.51
	Total	250	
Shopping behaviour of the respondents	Male	133	124.64
	Female	117	126.48
	Total	250	

Test Statistics[a,b]			
	Time of visiting the mall	Time spent for shopping in malls	Amount spent for shopping in malls	Shopping behaviour of the respondents

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Chi-Square	11.305	19.981	2.926	.047
df	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.001	.000	.087	.829
a. Kruskal Wallis Test				
b. Grouping Variable: Gender of the respondents				

Interpretation:

It depicts that there is a relationship between gender and Time of visiting the mall (0.001), Time spent for shopping in malls (0.000) as the level of significance is less than 0.05. It also reveals that female respondents have higher impact towards time of visiting the mall and time spent for shopping in malls.

Purchase Behaviour of Respondents Towards Various Products Descriptive Statistics:

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Attraction towards in store music / videos	250	.7560	.60159
Attraction towards recorded announcements	250	.4760	.84158
Attraction towards posters	250	.4120	.87022
Attraction towards promo offers	250	.7840	.55369
Attraction towards sign boards	250	.5120	.76695
Attraction towards mannequins and other forms of display	250	.1480	.94746
Attraction towards balloon decorations	250	.3520	.81409
Attraction towards themes and special events	250	.4840	.82247
Attraction towards celebrity visits	250	.3880	.68067
Attraction towards dancing lights	250	.4600	.72837
Attraction towards people dressing as famous cartoon characters	250	.5440	.79662
Valid N (listwise)	250		

Interpretation:

Based on the mean value of various factors related to purchase behaviour the respondents have high attraction towards promo offers followed with store music/videos, people dressing as famous cartoon characters, sign boards, themes and special events, recorded announcements, dancing lights, posters, balloon decorations and mannequins and other forms of display.

Findings:
- ✓ Most of the respondents were female.
- ✓ Most of the respondents are single.
- ✓ Most of the respondents are form the age group of 40 and above.
- ✓ Most of the respondents are post graduates in our survey.
- ✓ There is a relationship between gender and Time of visiting the mall, and Time spent for shopping in malls. Female respondents have higher impact towards time of visiting the mall and time spent for shopping in malls.
- ✓ The respondents have attraction towards promo offers and store music/videos when compared with other types of variables used with the study.

Suggestions:
- ✓ Visual Merchandising communication is one of the quickest and most effective ways to improve retail profits.
- ✓ Not seen means not available: so the merchandise should be easily located by the shoppers here we need to give simplicity of navigation.
- ✓ A range complexity is equal to Blindness; The VM strategy should be simple for a layman to understand and should be easily displayed through internal sign and signage.
- ✓ Too much merchandise will disinterest the shoppers: VM strategy should be to highlight the best.
- ✓ Too little merchandise will result in loss of sale: A right assortment or right range needs to be put up and it is a challenging job.

Conclusion:

The conclusion is that female respondents have higher impact towards time of visiting the mall and time spent for shopping in malls so female respondents can be targeted towards selling the products through visual merchandising. As the respondents have attraction towards promo offers and store music/videos these factors can be concentrated to increase the sales in future period of time.

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