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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERIOR DESIGN ELEMENTS AND VISUAL MERCHANDISING

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary fashion retail market is no longer focused solely on product display; instead, it emphasizes creating immersive consumer experiences through effective interior design elements. Therefore, this study aims to identify the relationship between interior design elements and visual merchandising strategies in the fashion retail sector. The research is grounded in the principles of consumer behavior and interior design within the context of retail marketing. A mixed-method approach was adopted, incorporating observational analysis and consumer perception surveys.

The findings reveal that the integration of interior design elements with visual merchandising strategies creates a harmonious store atmosphere that not only attracts consumers but also enhances product presentation and storytelling within the retail environment. Elements such as lighting and color schemes play a crucial role in shaping consumer mood and directing customer attention. Layout planning is also identified as a significant factor influencing consumer movement and engagement within the store. Furthermore, the study highlights that the synchronization of interior design and visual merchandising strengthens brand positioning and enriches the sensory consumer experience. The research contributes to the field of experiential retailing by offering insights that can help retailers, designers, and marketers optimize retail environments to improve customer satisfaction.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes that interior design and visual merchandising are not separate concepts; rather, they are interconnected tools that collectively influence consumer experience in the fashion retail industry.

KEYWORDS*: Visual Merchandising, Interior Design, Consumer Behavior, Fashion Retail, Experiential Retailing, Retail Environment*

INTRODUCTION

The fashion retail sector has undergone tremendous transformation over the last few years, shifting from a product-oriented approach to an experience-oriented one. In today's competitive marketplace, fashion retailers are no longer solely focused on providing high-quality products; they are also striving to deliver unique and memorable shopping experiences. This shift in the retail industry has increased the importance of interior design elements and visual merchandising strategies as key success factors.

Interior design in fashion retail involves various elements such as space, lighting, color schemes, textures, and materials, all of which play a significant role in creating the store's ambiance. These elements help generate psychological and emotional responses in consumers, thereby influencing their shopping experiences. Visual merchandising, on the other hand, refers to the strategic presentation of products to attract customers and communicate the retailer's brand message effectively. Although interior design and visual merchandising are distinct concepts, when combined, they create a cohesive and impactful retail environment.

The relationship between interior design elements and visual merchandising becomes particularly important in the context of experiential retailing. A store's interior design not only captures customers' attention but also facilitates smooth customer movement, increases dwell time, and encourages impulse purchases. For instance, lighting can be used to highlight specific products, while colors can create moods that align with the brand image. Similarly, effective store layouts support product placement strategies that help customers connect with the brand on a deeper level.

Through this relationship, the research aims to contribute valuable insights for retailers, designers, and marketers by promoting more effective and engaging store designs. Ultimately, the synergy between interior design and visual merchandising can help businesses enhance customer satisfaction, strengthen brand positioning, and gain a competitive advantage in the ever-evolving fashion industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Effect of visual merchandising elements of retail store on consumer attention

Soomro, Kaimkhani, and Iqbal conducted a study in 2017 to examine how visual merchandising influences consumer attention. The study focused on several elements, including store layout, window displays, colour and lighting, and the overall interior appearance of retail stores.

The findings revealed that window displays, colour and lighting, and the interior design of the store positively influenced consumer attention. However, store layout showed a negative effect. The study concluded that effective visual merchandising encourages customers to visit stores more frequently and enhances their shopping experience.

Similarly, Florea et al. conducted another study on the impact of visual merchandising and store layout on customers'

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emotions and purchasing decisions. Data were collected from 488 respondents. The research found that product arrangement, lighting, and attractive window displays increased customer engagement and encouraged impulse buying behaviour. Furthermore, a well-designed store environment improved customer satisfaction and contributed to higher sales.

Overall, both studies highlight the importance of visual merchandising and store atmosphere in attracting customers and influencing their buying behaviour. Effective visual merchandising not only captures consumer attention but also enhances customer satisfaction and increases sales. Therefore, retail stores should focus on improving merchandising strategies to attract more customers and strengthen purchasing behaviour.

2. Effects of Interior Design Components on Customer Shopping Behaviours in Visual Merchandising.

Merchandising and interior design are important when it comes to how customers behave in retail stores. Oğuzhan and Ultav found out in 2022 that things like window displays and store entrances are crucial. Also, the interior of the store, like the layout, lighting, colours, and how products are arranged all play a role in getting customers to come in and stay awhile.

A store that is designed well makes people feel good; it is like an atmosphere. This makes customers happy. They want to spend more time in the store and buy things. If there are too many products all over the place, it can be bad for the experience.

So, using merchandising and interior design in a good way helps make customers happy, which means more sales and people coming back to the store. Merchandising and interior design are key to making this happen; they really help retail stores be successful.

3. A study on the effect that V.M.D (Visual Merchandising Design) in-store has on purchasing products

Visual merchandising is important for getting customers into a store and making them want to buy things. Kim said in 2013 that visual merchandising includes how a store is laid out, the lighting, the displays and the overall feel of the place. All these things help make a store look good and make customers happy. The study found that when visual merchandising is done well, it gets customers interested and makes them want to buy things.

Some other people, Soomro and friends, did a study in 2017. They found out that things like what's in the window, the colors, the lighting and how the inside of the store looks all make customers pay attention. The way the store is laid out did not seem to work as well. The study said that if a store has a visual merchandising plan, it can get more customers to come in.

Then there was another study by Florea and friends in 2025. They said that visual merchandising and how a store is laid out can affect what customers think and how they shop. They found out that when displays look good and products are arranged properly, customers are more likely to buy things on impulse and be happy with their visit.

So, all these studies show that visual merchandising and how a store looks inside are crucial for getting customers to pay attention, be happy and buy things in stores that sell things. Visual merchandising is important for stores. It helps with sales and customer satisfaction. Visual merchandising is what makes a store look good and feel welcoming to customers.

4. Analyzing the Visual Merchandising Elements for the Apparel Retailers

Visual merchandising is a strategy that retailers use to get customers in the door. It helps make a store look good. Can even boost sales. Think of it like a " salesman" that can influence what people buy.

* Window displays
* Lighting
* Color
* Store layout
* Signage

These are all parts of visual merchandising. Some researchers break these down into two groups: things you can see and touch, like fixtures and design, and things you feel, like the atmosphere and emotions. Research has shown that when visual merchandising is done well, customers are happier and more likely to buy things. Window displays and lighting are especially important. They can really draw people in. Make a big difference in how people shop. Customers notice window displays and lighting. They are key to attracting customers. Visual merchandising helps create a shopping experience.

5. Design, effectiveness and role of visual merchandising in creating customer appeal

Visual merchandising plays an important role in influencing customer behavior and purchasing decisions. Maier (2009) stated that effective visual marketing strategies, such as store layout and product displays, help customers remember a brand and encourage them to shop. Similarly, Gelsomino emphasized that a store's exterior appearance, product arrangement, and promotional displays are all essential in converting passersby into buyers.

Garvey (2010) and Storms (2006) explained that visual merchandising creates emotions and moods through visual appeal, lighting, and atmosphere, which in turn influence customers' perceptions and buying behavior. An attractive store interior and the use of creative themes also encourage customer loyalty and enhance the shopping experience.

Clark (2007) found that the use of mannequins and effective product displays plays a significant role in increasing sales, while Dawes (2008) noted that window displays are a powerful tool for attracting attention and showcasing products.

Sebastian (2008) discussed how visual merchandising has evolved alongside the growth of the internet and highlighted its increasing importance in online shopping. Bustos (2004) conducted studies showing that simplicity, creativity, and careful planning are essential for creating effective store displays, especially window displays.

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Finally, Gates (2007) stated that retailers and suppliers must work together to ensure that products are displayed and marketed in ways that appeal to customers. Visual merchandising is therefore a crucial aspect of retail strategy, as it strongly shapes customer perceptions and purchasing behavior.

OBJECTIVES

1.To understand the relationship that exists between interior design elements and visual merchandising strategies in the fashion retail industry.
2.To evaluate the impact that interior design elements and visual merchandising strategies have on customer satisfaction.
3.To evaluate the impact that store design has on brand positioning in the fashion retail industry.
4.To provide guidelines on how to effectively create a more effective store design in the fashion retail industry.

METHODOLOGY

The study on design and visual merchandising uses a descriptive and analytical approach. It aims to identify how design elements such as lighting, color, layout, space arrangement, and fixtures influence visual merchandising. The study focuses on understanding the relationship between design elements and visual merchandising techniques. Lighting, color, layout, space arrangement, and fixtures play an important role in shaping customer perception and buying behavior. The study also explores their influence on merchandising practices in retail stores.

For this research, two types of information were used: primary data and secondary data. Primary data was collected by asking people questions and observing their behavior. A questionnaire containing simple and easy-to-understand questions was prepared and distributed to customers shopping at clothing retail stores. The purpose was to understand customers' opinions regarding store design and product display. The questions focused on aspects such as lighting, store layout, color schemes, product placement, and the overall shopping experience.

In addition to the survey, observations were conducted in several retail stores. Elements such as window displays, product arrangements, lighting conditions, and the overall atmosphere of the stores were carefully examined. These observations helped in gaining a deeper understanding of retail environments, especially clothing stores.

The opinions of customers, along with the observations made during store visits, provided valuable insights into customer preferences and expectations. Factors such as the colors used in stores, ease of navigation, and the overall shopping experience were analyzed to understand what customers like and dislike about retail stores. This helped in identifying the features that make a store more attractive and customer friendly.

Secondary data for the project was collected from books, research articles, journals, and websites related to interior design and visual merchandising. These sources provided theoretical knowledge and helped in understanding the fundamentals of interior design and visual merchandising. They also supported and validated the findings of the study.

The study included approximately 30 to 50 participants. These participants were selected through convenience sampling, as they were easily accessible customers visiting retail stores. Since store design and merchandising strategies directly affect customers, their responses were considered valuable for the research.

The collected data was analyzed using methods such as percentage analysis, charts, and comparisons. These techniques helped in understanding patterns and relationships between interior design elements and the effectiveness of visual merchandising. The analysis showed how store design elements influence customer attraction and shopping behavior.

However, the study has certain limitations. The sample size was limited, and the research was conducted over a short period of time. Customer responses may also vary because individual preferences and tastes differ from person to person. Despite these limitations, the study clearly indicates that interior design plays a significant role in enhancing visual merchandising and improving customer satisfaction. Therefore, interior design is an important factor in successful merchandising and creating a positive shopping experience for customers.

- **To understand the relationship that exists between interior design elements and visual merchandising strategies in the fashion retail industry.**

The fashion retail industry uses interior design elements and visual merchandising strategies to improve the shopping experience and influence customer behavior. These two aspects work together to create an attractive and functional retail environment.

Interior design elements include the store layout, lighting, colors, materials, and the arrangement of fixtures and furniture. Visual merchandising strategies focus on the presentation and arrangement of products in ways that attract customers and encourage purchases. Both play an important role in enhancing customer experience in fashion retail stores.

A well-designed interior is essential for displaying products effectively. For example, proper lighting not only highlights products but also creates a certain mood within the store, making the merchandise appear more appealing. The colors used on walls and fixtures can complement the clothing and strengthen the brand's identity and consistency. In addition, the store layout, including the placement of aisles and displays, helps customers move easily through the store and quickly find what they are looking for. A good layout also ensures that important or featured products are clearly visible.

Visual merchandising strategies use these design elements to create attractive displays. Window displays, mannequins, and product arrangements are all important visual merchandising tools. Lighting, background design, and space planning further enhance the effectiveness of these displays. When combined successfully, these elements create an appealing visual experience that captures customers' attention and encourages

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them to explore the store. The ultimate goal is to increase product sales.

Interior design and visual merchandising work closely together to create a shopping environment that attracts customers and improves their overall experience. Window displays and mannequins showcase products effectively, while lighting and background design make them more eye-catching. Good space planning also makes the store easier to navigate. Together, these elements help increase customer satisfaction and sales.

In conclusion, interior design and visual merchandising are closely connected in the fashion retail industry. Both aim to create a store environment that is visually appealing, comfortable, and functional. By improving the shopping experience, they help attract customers, encourage purchases, and contribute to the success of the business.

- **To evaluate the impact that interior design elements and visual merchandising strategies have on customer satisfaction.**

The fashion retail industry uses interior design elements and visual merchandising strategies to influence customer behavior and improve the shopping experience. These two aspects work together to create an attractive and functional retail environment.

Interior design elements include the store layout, lighting, colors, materials, and the arrangement of fixtures and furniture. Visual merchandising strategies focus on how products are displayed and organized to attract customers and encourage purchases. Both are essential in the fashion retail industry because they help create a pleasant and engaging shopping experience for customers.

A well-designed interior is important for presenting products effectively. For example, proper lighting not only highlights products but also creates a specific atmosphere that makes the merchandise more appealing. The colors used on walls and fixtures can complement the clothing and strengthen the brand's identity, creating a more consistent and attractive look. In addition, the store layout, including the placement of aisles and displays, helps customers move easily through the store and quickly find what they are looking for. A good layout also ensures that important products are clearly visible.

Visual merchandising strategies use design elements to create appealing displays. These strategies include window displays, mannequins, and product arrangements. Lighting, background design, and space planning also contribute to making these displays more effective. When combined, these elements create a visually attractive environment that captures customers' attention and encourages them to explore the store. The ultimate goal is to increase product sales.

Interior design and visual merchandising work closely together to create a shopping environment that attracts customers and enhances their experience. Window displays and mannequins showcase products effectively, while lighting and background design help emphasize them. Good space planning makes the store easy to navigate, improving customer comfort and satisfaction. All of these factors can lead to increased sales.

In conclusion, interior design and visual merchandising are closely connected in the fashion retail industry. Both aim to make the store visually appealing, functional, and enjoyable for customers. By creating an inviting shopping environment, they not only improve the customer experience but also contribute to the overall success and profitability of the business.

- **To evaluate the impact that store design has on brand positioning in the fashion retail industry.**

Store design plays a major role in brand positioning in the fashion retail industry because it shapes how customers perceive a brand's identity, value, and target market. In fashion retail, the store is not only a place to sell products but also a physical representation of the brand itself. Through visual appearance, atmosphere, and layout, store design communicates the brand's personality, values, and overall image to customers.

A fashion store acts as a sensory expression of the brand. Elements such as layout, lighting, colours, materials, music, window displays, and product arrangement work together to create a specific impression in the customer's mind. These design features influence how customers emotionally connect with the brand and how they judge the quality and value of its products.

For example, luxury fashion brands often use spacious layouts, soft lighting, premium materials such as marble and glass, and minimal product displays. This type of design creates an atmosphere of exclusivity, sophistication, and elegance. Customers therefore associate the brand with high quality and prestige. In contrast, fast-fashion retailers usually use bright lighting, crowded displays, bold colours, and energetic music. These features create a sense of affordability, convenience, and trendiness, helping customers view the brand as accessible and fashionable.

Store design also affects customers' perceptions of product value. A clean, organised, and visually appealing store can make products appear more attractive and higher in quality. As a result, customers are often willing to pay more for products sold in a well-designed environment. On the other hand, a poorly maintained or cluttered store may damage the brand image and make products appear less valuable or less trustworthy.

Consistency in store design is another important factor in brand positioning. Fashion brands aim to maintain a similar look and feel across all store locations so customers can easily recognise the brand wherever they shop. Consistent design strengthens brand identity, builds trust, and creates familiarity. For global fashion retailers, this consistency helps establish a strong and reliable market presence.

In addition, store design helps attract a specific target audience. Different design styles appeal to different customer groups. For instance, stores with bold graphics, loud music, and modern layouts may attract younger consumers who seek trendy and

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energetic experiences. In comparison, elegant and minimalist stores are more likely to appeal to mature or high-income customers who prefer sophistication and luxury. Therefore, store design plays a key role in ensuring that the brand connects with its intended market segment.

Furthermore, effective store design enhances the overall customer experience. A comfortable and engaging shopping environment encourages customers to spend more time in the store, increases customer satisfaction, and improves the likelihood of repeat visits. Positive shopping experiences also strengthen customer loyalty and create a stronger emotional connection with the brand.

In conclusion, store design has a significant impact on brand positioning in the fashion retail industry. It communicates the brand's identity, influences customer perceptions of quality and value, attracts target consumers, and differentiates the brand from competitors. A well-designed store not only improves the shopping experience but also strengthens customer loyalty and contributes to the long-term success of the fashion brand.

- **To provide guidelines on how to effectively create a more effective store design in the fashion retail industry.**

An effective fashion retail store design is not only about making the store look attractive. It should also reflect the brand identity, influence customer behavior, and improve the overall shopping experience. Below are some important guidelines for designing a successful fashion retail store.

Align the Store Design with Brand Identity

The store design should clearly represent the brand's personality and values. Every design element, including colors, materials, furniture, music, and lighting, should match the brand image.

- A luxury fashion brand may use elegant, minimal, and sophisticated interiors.
- A youthful or trendy brand may use bright colors, energetic layouts, and modern displays.

When the store design reflects the brand identity, customers can easily connect with the brand and remember it.

Plan a Customer-Friendly Layout

A good store layout makes shopping easy and comfortable for customers. The store should have clear pathways and organized sections so customers can move around without confusion.

Some useful layout strategies include:

- Creating separate sections for menswear, womenswear, footwear, and accessories
- Avoiding overcrowded shelves and displays
- Providing enough walking space
- Placing popular products in easy-to-find locations

A customer-friendly layout encourages customers to stay longer and improves their shopping experience.

Use Effective Lighting

Lighting plays a major role in fashion retail stores because it affects how products look and how customers feel inside the store.

Different types of lighting can be used for different purposes:

- Bright general lighting helps customers see products clearly.
- Accent lighting highlights featured products or promotional displays.
- Soft lighting creates a warm and comfortable atmosphere.

Good lighting can make products appear more attractive and can positively influence purchasing decisions.

Focus on Visual Merchandising

Visual merchandising helps attract customer attention and increases product visibility. Creative and attractive displays can encourage customers to explore more products.

Some effective merchandising techniques include:

- Using mannequins to display complete outfits
- Creating themed or seasonal displays
- Designing eye-catching window displays
- Placing new arrivals and best-selling products at eye level or near entrances

Strong visual merchandising improves the overall appearance of the store and can increase sales.

Keep the Store Clean and Organized

Cleanliness and organization are essential in fashion retail because they create a positive impression and build customer trust.

To maintain a pleasant shopping environment:

- Keep clothing neatly folded or arranged
- Avoid overcrowding shelves and racks
- Maintain clean floors, fitting rooms, and display areas
- Ensure the store smells fresh and pleasant

An organized store looks more professional and makes shopping more enjoyable for customers.

Create a Memorable Store Entrance

The entrance is the first thing customers notice, so it should create a strong first impression.

An effective entrance should include:

- Attractive window displays
- Clear signage and branding
- Good lighting
- Featured products or promotional items

A welcoming and visually appealing entrance encourages people to enter the store and explore further.

A successful fashion retail store design combines aesthetics, functionality, and customer experience. By aligning the design with the brand identity, creating a customer-friendly layout, using effective lighting, focusing on visual merchandising, maintaining cleanliness, and designing an attractive entrance, retailers can create a store environment that attracts customers and encourages sales.

OUTCOME

The study on interior design elements and visual merchandising shows that both are closely connected and together influence customer attraction and purchasing behavior in retail stores. Effective interior design elements such as proper lighting, attractive color schemes, and a well-organized layout improve

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the impact of visual merchandising and create a positive shopping environment.

The findings reveal that lighting plays a major role in highlighting products and creating a pleasant atmosphere for customers. Similarly, color combinations within the store enhance visual appeal and help attract attention to specific products. Store layout and space planning are also important because they affect how easily customers can move through the store and explore products. A well-planned layout improves the overall shopping experience and encourages customers to spend more time inside the store.

The study further shows that visual merchandising techniques such as window displays, product arrangement, and signage become more effective when supported by good interior design. Stores that successfully balance interior design and visual merchandising are more capable of capturing customer attention, increasing engagement, and encouraging longer visits.

When customers enter a visually appealing store environment, they feel more comfortable and satisfied, which increases the likelihood of making purchases. In contrast, stores with poor lighting, overcrowded spaces, or unattractive arrangements create a negative impression and discourage customers from shopping.

Overall, the study concludes that interior design and visual merchandising are interrelated and essential for retail success. When both elements are effectively combined, they improve the store's appearance, enhance customer experience, strengthen the store's image, and contribute to increased sales and customer satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Design elements and visual merchandising are closely connected and work together to make retail stores successful. Interior design gives a store its overall look and atmosphere, while visual merchandising helps present products in an attractive and organized way. When these two aspects are planned properly, they create a store environment that is visually appealing, comfortable, and enjoyable for customers.

Elements such as lighting, color schemes, layout, and space utilization play an important role in enhancing the appearance of the store and highlighting products effectively. Visual merchandising becomes more impactful when it is supported by a well-designed interior. Together, they attract customers, increase their interest in products, and encourage purchasing decisions. Therefore, both interior design and visual merchandising are essential for the success of retail stores.

Customer satisfaction is also greatly influenced by the store environment. A well-designed and easy-to-navigate store creates a positive impression of both the store and the brand. On the other hand, poor design and ineffective product displays can discourage customers from shopping.

For this reason, store owners should focus on maintaining attractive interiors and ensuring that products are displayed clearly and conveniently. By successfully combining interior design and visual merchandising, stores can improve customer experience, increase sales, and achieve long-term success in a highly competitive retail market.

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