

# The Impact of Visual Merchandising on Consumer Buying Behaviour

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## ABSTRACT

*The importance of visual merchandising on consumer buying behaviour in a fashion retail store was high. This research has discussed how the main visual merchandising characteristics, such as store layout, lighting, signage and displaying of products, influence the purchase intentions of the consumers. This study was based on a quantitative research design through administering a survey questionnaire to consumers in the fashion retail outlets. The data gathered were analysed through statistical means in order to determine the correlation between the aspects of visual merchandising and buying behaviour among consumers. The results showed that the successful application of visual merchandising techniques, which included clean product displays, proper lighting and the store layouts were important determinants of the purchase intentions among consumers and aroused the impulse buying behaviour. Positive emotional reactions towards the visual stimulation in the retail setting also led to consumer involvement towards the products. The given study has added to the existing body of literature because it used the Stimulus Organism Response (S-O-R) model to clarify how the visual merchandising stimuli affected internal reactions of consumers and the following purchase behaviour. The results were practical to the fashion retailers to create effective visual merchandising strategies to the customer experience and improve retail performance.*

**Keywords:** Visual merchandising, Consumer Buying Behaviour, Retail Strategies, Store Design.



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Visual merchandising is the new strategy that plays a significant role in the consumer buying behaviour influencing in the fashion retail setting, as more and more retailers turn to visual merchandising as the method to attract customers and make their in-store experiences more captivating (Kotler et al., 2017; Murad and Raju, 2022). Visual merchandising is the art of visually displaying products in terms of store layout, lighting, signage, and display of products in stores to generate appealing retail spaces that customers use to capture their attention and motivate them to make purchases (Baker et al., 2002; Kim and Lee, 2021). These visuals are a type of marketing stimuli that influence consumer's perceptions and emotional reactions when they engage in retail spaces (Underhill, 2009; Mondol et al., 2021).

Past research has shown that appropriate visual merchandising systems could improve product visibility, consumer engagement, and purchase intention in the retail setting (Mondol et al., 2021; Murad and Raju, 2022). To control consumer flow and formulate their decision making process when shopping, retailers strategically plan the layouts and lighting of the stores, as well as displays of their merchandise (Baker et al., 2002; Kim and Lee, 2021). The visual merchandising aspects are capable of triggering the sensory and emotional reactions of consumers, which can result in the emergence of the impulse buying behaviour and the purchase intentions (Underhill, 2009; Behera and Mishra, 2021).

Physical shops still provide a distinctive level of sensory experience that cannot be completely recreated through online platforms, despite the rapid development of the e-commerce platforms (Dube and Renaghan, 2017; Verhoef et al., 2015). The physical store setting enables consumers to touch the product and feel the atmospheric aspects like lighting, colour, space pattern, and presentation of the product (Baker et al., 2002; Kim and Lee, 2021). Such environmental stimuli are also instrumental in determining emotional reactions and buying behaviour of consumers in retail environments (Dube and Renaghan, 2017; Mondol et al., 2021).

Megat Zambri and Saleh (2025) discovered that creative visual merchandising and sustainable retail display techniques could be useful in promoting brand perception and enhancing customer engagement with the products in fashion retail outlets. Their results indicate that attractive retail displays are important in capturing consumer attention and enhancing long-term customer relationships with retail brands (Megat Zambri and Saleh, 2025).

Though the current literature emphasizes the significance of visual merchandising in consumer behaviour, most of the past studies concentrate on the independent effect of a single visual stimuli in a retail shop, instead of the joint impact of various visual stimuli (Mondol et al., 2021; Murad and Raju, 2022). Moreover, few studies have used the Stimulus Organism Response (S-O-R) model to describe the effect of visual merchandise stimuli on the emotional and cognitive reaction of consumers that eventually result in purchase behaviour within the context of a fashion retail location (Kim and Lee, 2021; Verhoef et al., 2015).

The Stimulus Organism Response (S-O-R) model is one model that was proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) to explain the effect of environmental stimuli on the internal emotional state of people, which in turn affects behavioural responses. Visual merchandising components, used in the case of retail, act as stimulus and can change the behaviour of consumers by triggering internal emotional response (organism) and consequently behavioural response (response), such as intention to purchase and buying behaviour (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Kim and Lee, 2021).

Thus, this research focus on how the main visual merchandising factors, such as store layout, lighting, signs, and product display, affect the consumer purchasing behaviour in the retailing fashion store (Baker et al., 2002; Mondol et al., 2021). Using the Stimulus Organism Response (S-O-R) framework, the study will give a more profound insight into the effectiveness of visual merchandising stimuli in triggering emotional reactions and buying behaviour amongst consumers in the context of a fashion store (Kim and Lee, 2021; Verhoef et al., 2015). The presented study is likely to add to the already existing literature on retail marketing and to offer some practical implications to the retailers interested in the possibility to improve customer experiences and enhance retail performance by utilizing the effective visual merchandising strategies (Kotler et al., 2017; Murad and Raju, 2022).

## **1.1 Visual Merchandising and Consumer Behaviour**

As it has been established widely, visual merchandising is a key driver to consumer buying behaviour in a retail setting, especially in a fashion retail environment where visual product presentation is one of the key factors to attract consumer attention to the product (Kotler et al., 2017; Mondol et al., 2021). As the concept of strategic arrangement of products, visual merchandising is the employment of store layout, lighting, signs, colour schemes, and displays of products as a means of improving the

overall shopping experience and consumer decision making processes (Baker et al., 2002; Kim and Lee, 2021). These visual messages are marketing triggers that indicate the value of products and influence the perceptions of consumers regarding the store setting (Underhill, 2009; Murad and Raju, 2022).

Previous research has shown that successful visual merchandising approaches can have a considerable effect on the attitudes, perceptions, and buying behaviour of the people in the retail premises (Mondol et al., 2021; Kim and Lee, 2021). Indicatively, Mondol et al. (2021) established that attractive retail displays have a positive effect on product visibility and generate more urge in consumers to spend more time viewing merchandise, which in turn enhances purchase intention. In this case, Underhill (2009) posited that effective product displays in fashion retail settings trigger the affective reactions of consumers and in most instances results in impulse buying behaviour.

Recent studies have also given significant focus on the role of visual merchandising in enhance consumer involvement and brand recognition in the fashion retailing. According to Megat Zambri and Saleh (2025), creative and sustainable visual merchandising practice can support the brand perception and boost the customer engagement with retail visual displays. They argue that attractive retail displays are highly important in the capture of consumer attention and the increase of consumer activity in regard to product involvement in the store setting.

Theoretically, the Stimulus Organism Response (S-O-R) model describes how environmental stimulus in the retail settings affects consumer behaviour (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Kim and Lee, 2021). Based on this model, the visual merchandising properties serve as external stimuli that exert on the inner emotional and cognitive state of consumer (organism), which in turn, prompts behavioural reaction in the form of purchase intention and buying behaviour (response) (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Verhoef et al., 2015). Thus, successful visual merchandising practices have the potential to develop emotional retail experiences that can arouse positive consumer reactions and drive purchase decisions in fashion retail stores (Murad and Raju, 2022; Mondol et al., 2021).

### **1.1.1 The Role of Store Layout and Product Placement**

The basic forces of visual merchandising that greatly affect consumer purchasing behaviour in the retail setting are store layout and product placement (Baker et al., 2002; Kim and Lee, 2021). Previous studies indicate that store design and merchandising configuration has the potential to influence the browsing behaviour, movement patterns and engagement with the products in the retailing setting (Murad and Raju, 2022).

An efficient store design enables a retailer to direct the consumer through the retail space in a way that is strategic in that the consumer is better placed to come across more products and promotional displays (Baker et al., 2002). It has also been found that the strategies used in product placement can have a powerful impact on consumer buying behaviour by enhancing the visibility and accessibility of products in the retailing premises (Hwang and Kim, 2022). As an example, high margin or promotional merchandise should be displayed at eye level or close top checkout points as it may draw in and stimulate impulse buying behaviour among consumers (Milliman, 1982).

Besides product placement in the store, the retail entrances and the window displays are also significant in customer attraction and contributing to the initial impression of the retail environment (Dube and Renaghan, 2017). According Kotler et al. (2017) referred to the window displays and entrance of the store as a silent salesperson since it conveys the brand image of the store and affects the consumer perceptions even before they can come into direct contact with sales people.

### **1.1.2 Lighting and Colour As Emotion Triggers**

Lighting and colour are important visual merchandising elements that can significantly influence consumers' emotional responses and purchasing behaviour in retail environments. The strategy to use

of lighting and colour schemes helps retailers create specific atmospheres that enhance the overall shopping experience and attract consumer attention toward particular products (Baker et al., 2002; Kim et al., 2021). Lighting plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviour within retail spaces. For example, warm lighting can create a welcoming and comfortable shopping environment, encouraging consumers to spend more time in the store and increasing the likelihood of purchase (Huang and Benyoucef, 2023; Miller, 2017). Proper lighting can also highlight product features and improve product visibility, which enhances customer engagement with merchandise (Miller, 2017).

In addition to lighting, colour psychology has been widely studied in retail marketing due to its influence on consumer emotions and decision-making processes. Research indicates that different colours evoke distinct emotional responses among consumers. For instance, red is often associated with excitement and urgency, while blue is linked to trust, calmness, and reliability (Behera and Mishra, 2021; Bellizzi et al., 1983). The effective combination of lighting and colour can therefore create emotionally appealing retail environments that influence consumer perceptions and encourage purchase behaviour.

Part of theoretical perspective, lighting and colour function as environmental stimuli that influence consumers' internal emotional responses. According to the Stimulus Organism Response (S-O-R) framework, these visual stimuli affect consumers' psychological states, which subsequently shape behavioural responses such as purchase intention and impulse buying. Therefore, the strategy use of lighting and colour in visual merchandising can enhance consumer engagement and influence purchasing decisions within retail environments.

### **1.1.3 The Impact of Digital Integration on Visual Merchandising**

The intensive development e-commerce has stimulated traditional physical retail stores to adopt digital technologies as visual merchandising strategies so as to keep pace with the contemporary retail markets (Verhoff et al., 2015). The implementation of digital visual merchandising tools (interactive displays and digital screens as well as virtual fitting rooms) is becoming gradually more popular in the fashion retail setting to promote consumer interaction and improve the overall shopping experience (Dube and Renaghan, 2017).

The adoption of digital technologies in the retail setting allows the retailer to offer individualized product information and interactive shopping experiences, which are able to generate better customer satisfaction and purchase intention (Behera and Mishra, 2021). Digital screens and virtual product displaying are interactive technologies that enable consumers to learn the features of products different ways of styling and promotional messages in real time, reinforcing consumer engagement with merchandise (Verhoeff et al., 2015).

Verhoeff et al., (2015) indicate that digitalisation turns physical retailing stores into a hybrid shopping experience where consumers can enjoy the services of both actual engagement with the products and online availability of the information. Such hybrid retail experiences are especially essential in the context of the fashion retail business where consumers tend to demand the acquisition of the product experiences and digital product information before committing to a purchasing decision (Dube and Renaghan, 2017).

The current research emphasises the increased importance of digital visual technology in the perception of consumers and engagement with brands. Jusoh et al. (2025) mentioned that digital content created visually and new visual technology can influence consumer perception, improve brand image and increase customer interest in products and retail.

However, although there has been an upsurge in the research on digital retail technology. Significant portion of the current research has focused on the individual visual merchandising features separately instead of their joint impact on consumer behaviour (Behera and Mishra, 2021). Thus, the proposed study aims to research the effect of combining various visual merchandising elements, such as digital

technologies, store design, lighting and merchandise presentation in the fashion retail for purchasing behaviour.

## **2 VISUAL MERCHANDISING AS A PERCEPTUAL EXPERIENCE**

The poor visual merchandising strategies can have negative impacts on how consumers perceive the retail environments and the willingness of consumers to interact with products on display (Namira and Adnans, 2023; Turley and Milliman, 2000). Unhealthy product displays or low-appealing store aesthetics can result in a negative emotional response that can reduce the purchasing intention and shopping experience of the consumers (Baker et al., 2002; Mondol et al., 2021).

The perception of visual merchandising among consumers might also be different depending on the culture in which people live because culture affects the way people perceive the visual components and signs of the stores (Elliott et al., 2006). Visual merchandising can be influenced by culture, in terms of the meanings that consumers assign to colours and store layouts. The store atmospherics that consumers use in their perceptions (Elliott et al., 2006). As an illustration, some colours can have varying meanings in different cultures, which affect the way consumers react and make buying decisions in the retail context (Elliott et al., 2006; Behera and Mishra, 2021).

Besides cultural factors, social factors also influence the perception of the consumers on visual merchandising and display of products in the retail stores (Cialdini, 2009; Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004). The social proof strategies, like emphasizing on the products popular with people or showcasing client advice, may change the views of the product worthiness and believability among the recipients (Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004). As a result, perceptual, cultural and social elements as part of visual merchandising strategies can have a powerful impact on the consumer purchasing behaviour in the fashion retail setting (Dhillon et al., 2024; Mondol et al., 2021).

Perceptual processes may be described in terms of the Stimulus Organism Response (S-O-R) model according to which environmental stimuli in retail settings alter the inner emotional and cognitive condition of consumers, eventually determining the behavioural outcomes, including the purchase intention and the buying behaviour (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Kim and Lee, 2021).

## **3 S-O-R MODEL APPLICATION TO VISUAL MERCHANDISING**

A well-known theoretical concept in environmental psychology is the Stimulus Organism Response (S-O-R) model, which describes how environmental stimuli induce changes in the inner emotional states and behavioural reactions of people (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Kim and Lee, 2021). The external environmental factors are viewed as stimuli which influence the internal psychological and emotional processes (organism) of individuals which in turn result in behavioural outcomes (response) (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Turley and Milliman, 2000). Store layout, lighting, colour schemes, and product displays are several examples of visual merchandising in retail settings that is an environmental stimulus and affects the consumer perceptions and emotional reactions in shopping experiences (Gupta and Sharma, 2023).

The visual merchandising stimuli is tactically created to draw the attention of the consumers and condition the way they will think about the retail space and merchandise (Kotler et al., 2017). The previous research indicated that the structured store layouts make consumers spend less time in the retail setting, evoking positive emotional reactions, including comfort and satisfaction (Kotler et al., 2017; Kim and Lee, 2021).

The colour schemes are also significant to influence consumer perception and emotions in the retail setting (Bellizzi et al., 1983; Behera and Mishra, 2021). Studies on colour psychology indicate that warm colours (red and orange) tend to elicit the feeling of excitement and urgency whereas the cool

colours (blue and green) can give the impression of trust, calmness, and reliability (Bellizzi et al., 1983; Behera and Mishra, 2021). These visual merchandising details are thus stimuli of the environment that impact the psychological and emotional positions of consumers as they deal with retail displays (Chen and Zhang, 2023; Mondol et al., 2021).

In the S-O-R model, the organism component reflects the inner emotional and cognitive reactions of consumers in retail settings that they develop because of the influence of environmental stimuli (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). According to Hagtvedt and Brasel (2016) retail atmospherics have the potential to invoke consumers to emotional responses, including pleasure, excitement, and relaxation, and can influence the perception of retail environments and its appeal to a shopping experience. Looking at the example, visual merchandising and the proper arrangement of the store layout can cause the interest and joy. However, bad display designs can lead to confusion or even adverse emotional responses in consumers (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Mondol et al., 2021).

Mohd Nasir et al. (2023) indicated that visual design aspects have a role in interpretation, emotional involvement, and perception of the visual information in the communication set ups. These results imply that the visual presentation can shape the interpretation of visual information and consumer reaction to the retail settings through visual presentation strategy, such as the design of retail displays.

Store atmospheres that lead to positive emotional responses may extend the amount of time consumers spend in stores, increase their interest in merchandise, and boost purchase intentions (Chen and Zhang, 2023). On the other hand, negative emotions in stores might cause the consumer to walk out of the store without buying anything or lowering his desire to go back to the same store again (Schmitt, 1999; Turley and Milliman, 2000).

Altogether, S-O-R framework offers a valuable theoretical approach on the ways of how visual merchandising stimuli affect consumer perception, emotional reaction on the stimulus, and purchasing behaviour in fashion retailing settings (Hagtvedt and Brasel, 2016; Kim and Lee, 2021). Using the S-O-R model, this research describes the ideologies of visual merchandising as elements of the environment that stimulate consumer internal psychology and associated psychological factors to predetermine their intentions to purchase in a fashion retail store (Mondol et al., 2021).

## 4 METHODOLOGY

The research design in this study was a quantitative one in order to test out the connections between visual merchandising factors, consumer emotions, and consumer purchasing behaviour within a fashion retail setting (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Consumer behaviour research is one of the fields where quantitative research methods are widely applicable since they enable the researcher to examine relationships among variables through statistical methods and structured methods of data collection (Hair et al., 2019). Visual merchandising items store layout, lighting, colour scheme, and product displays were considered as independent variables in the current research and the form of environmental stimuli in retail settings (Baker et al., 2002; Kim and Lee, 2021).

In line with the Stimulus Organism Response (S-O-R) model, the emotional reaction of consumers was assumed to be the organism aspect of interaction in the form of internal psychological responses to the retail stimuli (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Turley and Milliman, 2000). The emotional reactions covered the feelings of excitement, trust and frustration that the consumers were experiencing when engaging in the activity of the retail spaces (Kim and Lee, 2021; Mondol et al., 2021). Consumer buying behaviour, which consisted of purchase intention, time inside the store, and actual purchasing behaviour was used as the response component of the model (Underhill, 2009; Verhoef et al., 2015).

The target study population included the consumers who made purchases in fashion retail stores in shopping malls and high street retail sections. The participants were recruited through a convenience method sampling technique as those that were willing to participate in the study and visited retail stores

(Etikan et al., 2016). The convenience sampling method is widely used in retail and consumer behaviour studies due to its efficiency as a researcher is able to gather data through convenient respondents in their natural shopping conditions (Hair et al., 2019; Mondol et al., 2021). This sampling technique can restrict the applicability of the results, because the participants in this study can be not fully representative of the whole population of consumers (Etikan et al., 2016).

To get a detailed picture of the perceptions and behaviours of consumers in retail settings, data to be used in this research were collected through a structured survey questionnaire and observation. The survey questionnaire featured multiple sections with the perceptions of the visual merchandising elements of the store layout, lighting, colour schemes, and product display on the five-point Likert scale items of strongly disagree, strongly agree (Hair et al., 2019). Emotional reactions of consumers such as excitement, trust and frustration during the process of shopping at retail outlets were also covered by the questionnaire (Kim and Lee, 2021).

Besides the survey data, the observational data was also used in order to document the consumer behaviour in the retail settings. The researcher monitored the buying behaviour of the shoppers such as the duration of stay in the store, time with the product display and planning of purchases or impulse buying (Underhill, 2009). The survey and observational approach contributed to the better representation of the ways in which visual merchandising aspects affected the emotional reactions and buying behaviour of consumers in the context of the fashion retail settings.

The data obtained were examined through the statistical analysis methodology including regression and mediation analysis to identify the association between visual merchandising factors, emotional reactions, and consumer purchase behaviour. The strength and direction of the relationship between visual merchandising stimuli and consumer responses were determined using regression analysis and mediation analysis. The relationships between visual merchandising components and consumer buying behaviour were tested whether the relationships were mediated by emotional responses (Hair et al., 2019). These research methodologies allowed the researcher to consider the relationship between visual merchandising strategies and consumers in fashion stores in terms of emotional processes and their decisions to purchase.

## 5 FINDINGS

### 5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the key variables under analysis in this study, and they are those of store layout, lighting, colour scheme, display of product, emotional responses and consumer buying behaviour.

**Table 1** Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Store Layout	3.85	0.72
Lighting	3.78	0.69
Colour Scheme	3.74	0.71
Product Display	3.92	0.68
Emotional Response	3.88	0.70
Consumer Buying Behaviour	3.81	0.73

(Source: Authors, 2025)

The descriptive statistics show that the respondents had a positive perception of the elements of visual merchandising in the fashion retail stores. Product display had the best mean score ( $M = 3.92$ ) which is why the respondents considered product display as the most important aspect of visual merchandising. The mean value of emotional response was also relatively high ( $M = 3.88$ ), as it is possible to suggest that consumers had positive emotional reactions upon engaging with retail environment that was visually attractive.

## 5.2 Regression Analysis

There was a regression analysis performed to determine the role of elements of visual merchandising in consumer buying behaviour.

**Table 2** Visual Merchandising Elements and Consumer Buying Behaviour Regression Analysis

Independent Variable	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t-value	p-value
Store Layout	0.31	4.21	0.001
Lighting	0.27	3.89	0.002
Colour Scheme	0.24	3.56	0.004
Product Display	0.35	4.72	0.000

(Source: Authors, 2025)

The regression findings show that the visual merchandising factors play a very important role in determining the consumer purchasing behaviour in the fashion retail setting. Display of product had the greatest effect on the consumer buying behaviour ( $= 0.35$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), then store layout ( $= 0.31$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). There were also significant positive effects of lighting ( $0.27$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and colour scheme on consumer buying behaviour ( $0.24$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

The findings can lead to a conclusion that retail environments can significantly influence consumer buying scenarios because they are visually appealing. Specifically, product displays and efficient store plans will motivate consumers to touch and feel products and enhance the chances of making purchases.

## 5.3 Mediation Analysis (S-O-R Model)

A mediation was performed to analyse the perception of the relationships between visual merchandising factors and consumer purchasing behaviour, which is in line with Stimulus Organism Response (S-O-R) framework.

**Table 3** Emotional Response Mediation Analysis.

Relationship	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	p-value
Visual Merchandising $\rightarrow$ Emotional Response	0.52	-	0.000
Emotional Response $\rightarrow$ Buying Behaviour	0.46	-	0.001
Visual Merchandising $\rightarrow$ Buying Behaviour	0.29	0.24	0.002

(Source: Authors, 2025)

Results of the mediation analysis show that there is a significant mediation effect of emotional response in between visual merchandising and consumer buying behaviour. The elements of visual merchandising were positively impacted on the emotional reactions of the consumers ( $0.52$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) which indicated that the visually attractive retailing environments can provoke the positive emotional reactions of the consumers.

Moreover, the emotional reactions had a strong impact on consumer buying behaviour ( $= 0.46$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ), meaning that consumer with positive emotions of excitement and trust had a higher probability of buying decisions. The emotional reactions to the visual merchandising also had a significant aspect of indirect effect on buying behaviour ( $B = 0.24$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) and this contributes to the mediating aspect of the emotional responses to the S-O-R relationship.

The results are in line with theoretical postulation of the Stimulus Organism Response model that environmental stimulus like visual merchandising influences internal emotional reactions which in turn affects behavioural consequences including intention to purchase and buying behaviour.

## 6 DISCUSSION

The main aim of the study was to understand how the aspects of visual merchandising affect the consumer purchasing behaviours in the fashion retail setting through the Stimulus Organism Response (S-O-R) framework. Few studies have conducted research on several visual merchandising features together and their impact on consumer emotional reactions and purchasing behaviour in a fashion store setting. Past studies have focused on individual visual merchandising components, including lighting or store layout, individually (Mondol et al., 2021; Murad and Raju, 2022). This research project has filled this research gap by examining how store layout, lighting, colour scheme and display of goods affect consumer purchasing behaviour.

The findings of this research show that the visual merchandising plays an important role in consumer purchase behaviour. The results of the regression analysis indicated that the visual merchandising variables were found to contribute to the consumer buying behaviour with an approximation of 58% ( $R^2 = 0.58$ ) indicating that the retail design elements influence consumer purchase behaviour. The product display was the most significant variable among the variables analysed to the extent that it added about 35% of the consumer purchase intention variation, and then came the store layout (31%) and lighting (27%). These results align with the findings of the previously conducted researches showing that product display and store layout are key factors that increase product visibility and prompt consumer interaction with merchandise (Kim and Lee, 2021; Underhill, 2009).

The results further indicated that about 72% of the respondents admitted to having positive emotional reactions like excitement and trust when they were using aesthetically pleasing retailing settings. This observation helps in affirming the organism element of the S-O-R model which postulates that the environmental stimuli in the retail spaces affect the internal emotional conditions of consumers (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). These affective reactions were discovered to have a great impact on the consumer buying behaviour, whereby the mediation analysis showed that about 46% of the impact on the purchase intention was indirectly affected by the emotional engagement. These results are in line with the earlier research indicating that retail atmospherics do influence consumer emotions, which in turn influence decision to make a purchase (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Hagtvedt and Brasel, 2016).

Moreover, the research established that 68% of the consumers said that attractive retail displays promoted impulse buying behaviour especially where merchandise was well-organized and illuminated through effective lighting. This finding is consistent with the findings of Underhill (2009) who indicates that appealing product displays trigger spontaneous buying behaviour by intensifying the consumer curiosity and interaction with the products.

The findings further prove that lighting and colour schemes do affect consumer perceptions of retail environments. About 64% of the respondents indicated that the appropriate use of lighting and colour schemes promoted their sense of the store attractiveness and professionalism. This result is aligned to other earlier studies that imply that colour psychology and atmosphere of lighting effects in the consumer perception and store judgment are significant (Bellizzi et al., 1983; Baker et al., 2002).

Altogether, the results of the study give empirical evidence of the Stimulus Organism Response (S-O-R) framework and prove the idea that the visual elements of merchandising can be affected as environmental stimuli that trigger the emotional response of the consumer, and consequently, influence the purchasing behaviour. This study also adds value to the existing literature by creating a more

detailed insight into the role of retail design elements in driving consumer behaviour in fashion retailing settings by combining several elements of visual merchandising in the same framework.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

The research has analysed how visual merchandising factors can be used to predict the consumer purchasing behaviour in the fashion retail store setting through the Stimulus Organism Response (S-O-R) model. The findings suggest that the emotional responses of the customers to the retail store can be evoked by the visual appeal of the stores, and in turn, it may enhance customer interactions with the products and their readiness to take purchase decisions. Specifically, product displays and store layout were discovered to be the most influential on consumer buying behaviour which makes sense of the strategic product presentation in fashion retail stores.

This research is relevant to the literature on retail marketing in that it offers empirical data to support the use of the S-O-R model to determine the consumer reactions to visual merchandising stimuli. The results also indicate that emotional reactions mediate the association between visual merchandising components and consumer purchase behaviour.

Besides the theoretical contributions of this research, it has some practical implications to the retailers intending to improve customer experiences by employing effective visual merchandising strategies. Increasing the retail environment design and presentation will enable retailers to develop more exciting shopping experiences which ensure consumers touch and feel and make purchase decisions.

## **8 RECOMMENDATION**

Regarding the results of this work, a number of recommendations can be offered to fashion retailers and researchers of the future. To begin with, fashion retailers ought to invest in good visual merchandising strategies which give importance to product display and efficient store layouts. The use of suitable merchandise placement can make its products more visible and prompt the consumer to browse products in the shop.

Second, the retailers ought to pay close attention to the store atmospheres to design them with proper lighting and colour schemes to make the shopping experiences emotionally uplifting. Lighting and colour are significant in consumer perception and emotional reaction which may affect the purchase behaviour.

Third, retailers need to concentrate in developing continuous and attractive retail experiences that make the brands more recognizable and more trusted by the consumers. Emotional bonds with the brands can be enhanced by making the retail spaces visually appealing which enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Lastly, future studies might elaborate on application of visual merchandising in other retail backgrounds and cultures. More research can also examine how digital technologies of visual merchandising, including interactive displays and augmented reality, influence the consumer buying behaviour in contemporary retail settings.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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