

## INFLUENCE OF MANNEQUINS ON IMPULSE BUYING OF THE CUSTOMER

S. MEENA

Associate Professor, Hindustan Institute of Technology and Science, Padur (Chennai)

### ABSTRACT

Built in a variety of human forms, mannequins can trigger customer's imaginations, making them visualize themselves wearing the merchandise. Also, mannequins can be completely accessories to provide an altogether different look. They can be used individually or in groups. Mannequins are a store's most valuable asset for it speaks the clearest fashion message. A mannequin will stand tirelessly for hours and days, in the same place, same position or attitude, always smiling, fresh and pleasant encouraging the shoppers to come into the store.

**KEYWORDS:** Mannequins, Consumer, Sales, Buying behavior.

### INTRODUCTION

**“Mannequins add glamour, drama and a seduction factor to retail stores”**

– Sanjay Agrawal, Managing Director, FRDC

Mannequins are 'static models' used by the retailers to tell different stories and play different role. Mannequins help the shopper to connect themselves through the body idiom. A lady would love to see mannequins wearing the sari of the latest trend. It helps to demonstrate how a fashion will look along with the accessories. A shopper generally with the help of mannequin identifies the style and personality of the store. Generally, the strategy of using a mannequin is to create an emotion in the display and thereby encourages the shoppers to come into the store and take a closer look of the merchandise. As per Meera Sapra, an Industry practitioner on VM says that “Mannequins defines the attitude of the collection. Thus, mannequins are designated to the focal area/window in-store panels complementing and enhancing the personality of the brand”.

Clothing stores focus on dressing mannequins. This is because customers are more willing to buy products if they can visualize themselves wearing or using the particular products (Savey Bakarne, 2008). Of all the presentation tools, mannequins are the most popular. Built in a variety of human forms, mannequins can trigger customer's imaginations, making them visualize themselves wearing the merchandise. Also mannequins can be completely accessorized to provide an altogether different look. They can be used individually or in groups. Currently most stores use them in groups to strengthen specific fashion statements.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is there any influence of Mannequins on impulse buying behaviour of the customer?

2. Is there any relationship between demographic variables and Mannequins?

To answer these research questions, objectives and hypothesis were framed and tested.

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the influence of Mannequins on consumer's Impulse buying in fashion apparels.
2. To investigate the relationship between demographic variables of the respondents and Mannequins.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study depends mainly on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. However, all relevant published information from electronic database and journals were collected for the purpose of the present study.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Derry Law et al., (2012)** investigated the relationship between visual merchandising elements and consumer affective response. The study was conducted in Hong Kong and the data was collected from Chinese female consumers between the age of 25 and 35. The results revealed that mannequins with a high degree of similarity in body shape and proportion tend to leave a better impression on consumers. The study proved that from an individual consumer perspective, the first criterion of a visual display to determine an acceptable yet pleasant feeling is the mannequin. The results also show that colour and texture create strong symbolic messages followed by props and product styles.

**Nath P. (2010)** described about mannequins, which play a vital role in promoting sales, attracting customers and showcasing a brand to its advantage. The author specified that the increasing popularity of mannequins amongst the visual merchandisers was due to the benefits of the retailers deriving with its effective usage as it is observed that the effective use of mannequins with the right props and accessories leads to impulse buying among the customers.

The author insisted that today retailers are emphasizing more on window dressing and product display because of mannequins as they are known as "Silent Sales People". According to the author the mannequin business in India is growing at the rate of 25 to 30 percent per year. He further added that mannequins play a crucial role in pushing any merchandise by using effecting display techniques. All mannequins are designed to express an emotion and individual attitude and it lends a feel good factor to the consumer. The author concluded that mannequins are now evolving as the tool of marketing and sales promotion.

**Sarah E. Fister (2009)** investigated consumer's responses on two types of visual merchandise displays – full size mannequin and flat hanging display in an in-store retail setting. A convenience sample of 76 men and 76 women were employed. The study considered display type as independent variable and the shopping value as moderator and the dependent variables were aesthetic response, approach response and perceived risk. The study suggested that retailers who are interested in increasing the effectiveness of their in-store displays' must understand the importance of visual

merchandising. The retailers should value visual merchandising as a technique to increase approach responses and retain customers. The study suggested that visual merchandising will provide in-store entertainment, encourage customers mental imaginary processing, improve store image, reduce perceive risk and increase customer loyalty.

### **IMPULSE BUYING**

The need to understand impulse buying in stores was first identified in the marketing literature over seventy years ago (Clover, 1950). Impulse buying is generally considered synonymous with “unplanned buying”. At present, when market competition is high and all types of companies apply promotion in their activities, stimulation of impulse purchasing in the market of consumer goods may become a strong competitive advantage. The following are the reviews related to impulse buying:

**C.S. Dalvi (2014)** studied the buying behaviour of the consumers to measure the level of satisfaction derived by the shoppers. The study was based on primary data using the questionnaire. The findings of the study reveals that majority of the shoppers prefer to spend time between one to two hours and the study concluded that impulsive buyers can be converted into compulsive buyers if they are satisfied with the product and services offered by the stores and they tend to recommend the store to the potential customers and prefer repurchasing.

**Meysm Moayery et al., (2014)** investigated the relationship between apparel impulse buying behaviour and visual merchandising among Iranian young adult females. The study provides insights to shop owners and researchers for understanding structural relationship between visual merchandising and apparel impulse buying behaviour. The results proposed that window display, mannequin and promotional signage directly affect impulse buying. It was concluded that retailers should pay attention to visual merchandising practice since it can trigger impulse buying of apparel.

### **CONCEPT OF FASHION APPARELS**

#### **“Clothes that are currently popular are called fashion” (Priest & Pullen)**

Buttle (1988) referred to visual merchandising as a neglected area in fashion marketing research. However, for intimate apparel, Hart and Dewsnap (2001) also developed a decision making model to explain the behaviour.

Previous studies focus on the perspective of need theories on clothing. Recently, clothing researchers have started to focus on benefits, needs or motives in purchasing clothing from the consumer's behavioural perspective (Shim & Bickle, 1994). “Clothing, then, applies to those objects that we obtain by buying, receiving, or constructing and attach to or wear on our body” (Kaiser, 1997). Consumer's knowledge about clothing will also modify their clothing purchase behaviour (Jin & Koh, 1999). According to Kumar and Sunderesan (2010), textile is among the leading sectors in the Indian economy in terms of production, exports and employment. “Fashion, as part of history, repeats itself and is defined as the prevailing style in clothing at any given period of time” (Amaden & Crawford, 2005).

**Hypothesis 1:** There is significant difference between the Demographic variables and Mannequin

**H<sub>0</sub> 1a:** There is no significant difference between gender and Mannequin

### INDEPENDENT T TEST FOR SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GENDER AND MANNEQUIN

VARIABLES	GENDER	MEAN	SD	T VALUE	P VALUE
MANNEQUIN	MALE	3.72	0.726	0.155	0.198
	FEMALE	3.71	0.701	0.153	

Table reveals that the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance and there is no significant difference between the genders with respect to mannequin, since P value is more than 0.05. This indicates that both male and female respondents perceive the mannequin, in the same manner. This is because generally shoppers irrespective of their gender prefer stores which are attractive, colourful and provide better environment.

**H<sub>0</sub> 1b:** There is no significant difference between occupation of the respondent with respect to Mannequins

### ANOVA FOR SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE OCCUPATIONS OF THE RESPONDENT WITH RESPECT TO MANNEQUINS

VARIABLE	OCCUPATION	MEAN	SD	F VALUE	P VALUE
MANNEQUIN	BUSINESS	4.026	0.659	4.249	0.002
	PRIVATE	3.728	0.663		
	GOVERNMENT	3.644	0.914		
	MNC	3.446	0.642		
	OTHERS	3.714	0.686		

The above table reveals that there is significant difference between the occupation of the respondents and mannequin as the p value is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. It is clear that the respondents are more attracted by mannequin.

Different occupation groups perceive window mannequin in different manner, whereas business people and private employees are influenced more than Government and other categories employees. This is because business people may have income at any time and they have potential to buy the product immediately when they are attracted. As far as the private employees like IT professionals are considered, even though their job is not guaranteed they are paid more when compared to Government employees. Therefore they have surplus money which can be utilized for shopping. So when these respondents are attracted they can buy the products and make unplanned purchase.

### MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION

The mean is the most commonly used method of describing central tendency. Dispersion is the spread of values around the central tendency. There are two common measures of dispersion, the

range and the standard deviation. The standard deviation shows the relation that set of scores has to the mean of the sample.

#### MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF MANNEQUIN

STATEMENTS	MEAN	SD
When I see clothes on artificial doll, I tend to buy it	3.48	1.103
I find artificial dolls useful for visualizing how the clothes would look on me	3.99	0.953
I usually look at artificial dolls to see the latest styles	3.69	1.098

“The effective use of mannequins with the right props and accessories leads to impulse buying amongst the customers.” (Nath, 2010)

The above statements were posted to know the influence of mannequin on the impulse buying of the respondent. The statement “I find artificial dolls useful for visualizing how the clothes would look on me” has the highest mean of 3.99 and lowest SD = 0.953. This shows that the respondents find the mannequins to visualize themselves in that particular clothing. “While clothing retailers frequently use mannequins with idealized body –types, fit information may better conveyed through the use of more life-like mannequins that reflect the dimensions and proportions of the store's major target market(s) (S. Sen et al., 2002). The second statement “I usually look at artificial dolls to see the latest styles” with mean = 3.69 and SD = 1.098, explain the expectation of the respondents regarding the latest styles and trends. The statement “When I see clothes on artificial doll, I tend to buy it” which has the minimum mean = 3.48 and SD = 1.103 elucidate that the respondents tend to buy the clothes on mannequin.

#### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Descriptive statistics are useful for describing the scale variables and measures of the data. In a research study with large data, descriptive statistics may help to manage the data and present it in a summary table. Descriptive statistics provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Data was collected from 539 respondents whose demographic profiles are summarized below.

#### FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Demographic variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age group (In years)	Below 20	11.5
	21-30	41.6
	31-40	22.6
	41-50	18.9
	Above 50	5.4



Gender	Male	180	33.4
	Female	359	66.6
	Unmarried	182	34
Occupation	Business	50	9.3
	Private	209	38.8
	Government	60	11.1
	MNC	44	8.2
	Others	176	32.7
Education	School Level	53	9.8
	Under Graduate	234	43.4
	Post Graduate	127	23.6
	Professional	107	19.9
	Others	18	3.3

In order to provide background information of 539 respondents who provided valid data, descriptive statistics were calculated and presented in the above table. Age is an important factor to decide the shopping habits of the customers. Several studies proved that different age group has different opinions regarding their purchase decision. The present study segmented the respondents into five categories namely, below 20 years, 21-30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years and above 50 years. The table shows that 41.6% of the respondents comes under the age group of 21-30, followed by 22.6% under the age group of 31-40 and 18.9% belonged to the age group of 41-50. As the researcher confined the age group to be above 20 years, there is only 11.5% of age group below 20 years who are employed and there are only 5.4 % of the respondents of age group above 50 years. In addition to age, gender and marital status of the respondents were collected.

Gender is an essential variable that influences the shopping habit of the customer. Male and Female respondents have different perception towards the shopping habits and are influenced by various elements while shopping.

The profession of the respondent was considered as one of the important factors to find out whether it creates a significant difference in the perception of the shopping habits of the respondents. The researcher classified the occupations into various categories such as Business, Private, Government, MNC and Others. The table indicates that 38.8% were in the private sector, 11.1% were in Government Sector and 8.2% are in MNC's. Only 9.3% were doing Business and the majority of 32.7% of the respondents come under Other category who were the Home makers and retired people who takes the major purchase decision of their family.

To find out whether the educational qualification of the respondent influences the shopping habits, the details regarding their qualification was collected. Educational background was classified into school level, Under Graduate, Post Graduate, Professional and Others. The above table shows that 38.8% of them were Under Graduates, 23.6% were Post Graduates, 19.9% were Professionals and 9.8% of the respondents had only school level education. There were 3.3% respondents who come under another category.

## FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

Mannequins are a store's most valuable asset for it speaks the clearest fashion message. A mannequin will stand tirelessly for hours and days, in the same place, same position or attitude, always smiling, fresh and pleasant. It should be handled with care. Mannequins are the most popular symbol of visual merchandising and a great example of commercial art. An apparel and lifestyle retail segment heavily depends on mannequins to connect with their customers. As Mannequins have the potential to convert the window shoppers into the real buyers, shop managers should always supervise to maintain these factors to increase the foot falls.

Consumer expectations regarding in-store design have increased. There is also a heightened desire for shopping excitement, which can be delivered through innovative design of the physical environment. Stores' environments provide consumers with informational clues about the uniqueness of the merchandise and assist in shaping consumer attitudes and perceptions about the store image.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provided sufficient evidence that retailers can effectively utilize Mannequins to increase desirability of products and to help customers become aware of the products as well as to create favourable attitudes. Positive impulse buying experiences contribute to establish store loyalty and customers' perceived value and satisfaction. This will influence future buying decisions which lead to patronage intentions.

## WORKS CITED

- Bashar, Abu & Irshas Ahmad. (2012). 'Visual Merchandising and Consumer Impulse Buying Behaviour: An Empirical Study of Delhi & NCR.' *International Journal of Retail Management & Research*, Vol. 2, Issue 4, pp. 31-41.
- Bapna. (2010). 'Window Shopping.' *Apparel*, Vol.30, Issue 2, pp.70-73.
- Yoo, Chan Yun. (2005). 'Pre-attentive Processing of Web Advertising.' *Journal of Interacting Marketing*, Vol.22, Issue 2, pp2-18.
- Chien-Ju-Hung. (2008). *The Analysis of Factors that influence Female impulse buying during Online Transaction*. UK: University of Nottingham.
- Russell, James A. (1989). 'Affect Grid: A Single-Item Scale of Pleasure and Arousal.' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol.57, No.3, pp.493-502.
- Kumar, Krishna M. (2014). 'The Role of Visual Merchandising in Apparel purchase Decision.' *The JUP Journal of Management Research*, Vol. VIII, No.2. pp. 37-53.
- S, Madhavi & T. S. Leelavathi. (2013). 'Impact of Visual Merchandising on consumer Behaviour Towards women Apparel.' *International Journal of Management Research and Business Strategy*, Vol.2, No.4, pp. 61-72.
- S, Meena. (2016). *Impact of Visual Merchandising on Patronage Intention*. Madras: University of Madras.
- Sen, Sankar Lauren G. Block & Sucharita Chandran. (2002). 'Window displays and Consumer shopping decisions.' *Journal of Retailers & Consumer Services*, Vol. 9, pp. 277-290.

- Fister, Sarah E. (2009). Consumers' Shopping Value and their Responses to Visual Merchandising Displays in an In-store Retail Setting. Unpublished Thesis.
- Khandi, Sujata. (2012). 'Visual Merchandising as an Antecedent to Impulse Buying: An Indian Perspective.' International Journal of Business and Management Studies, Vol. 1 (1), pp. 267-277.
- Surrendar, G. (2001). 'Visual Merchandising–The Synergy to Show, Tell and Sell.' Inside Fashion, Vol.1, Issue 19, pp 12-13.
- Wang, Yun. (2006). A Cross Cultural Study of Consumer Attitudes and Emotional Responses of Apparel Purchase Behaviour. Unpublished Thesis. USA: The Florida State University.

**PURVA MIMAANSA**