

# UNDERSTANDING OF MPM AND IT'S IMPACT ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR



A RESEARCH REPORT BY  
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## DECLARATION

I, Sumit Saurabh, hereby declare that the work in this research paper represents my own work and findings except where indicated, and that all references, to the best of my knowledge, are accurately reported.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Sumit Saurabh", is written over a horizontal line.

Sumit Saurabh

## **ABSTRACT**

Store layout is an important factor affecting consumer behaviour and a critical determinant towards the creation of store image. Well designed layouts are extremely important because they strongly influence MPMtraffic patterns, shopping atmosphere, shopping behaviour, and operational efficiency (Vrechopoulos et al., 2004: 13, Tlapana, 2009:4). When an inconsistency occurs, some consumers will abandon that establishment in search of another one which offers fast, convenient and better services (Andersen, 1997: 118, Tlapana, 2009:4). Taking a more strategic approach to store layout can reap big rewards by boosting sales, increasing customer loyalty and ultimately increasing turnover (Clark, 2003: 42, Tlapana, 2009:4).

The purpose of this study is to ascertain if the customers of pantaloons store south ex are aware of the impact of store layout on their purchasing decision. In order to accomplish the objective of the study, a mixed method of research was conducted at the Pantaloons South Ex Store by the means of self-administered questionnaires and personal interview. A sample of 110 respondents, including Fashion Assistants, Visual Merchandisers and Store Managers. Conclusion and recommendations were thereafter drawn from literature and the findings of the study.

The results of this study shows that consumers are aware of the fact that the store layout affects their shopping decision, but at the same time they experience problems with the store layout. It was found that the stacking density, unplanned color blocking and in store service are the major causes of this discomfort. Therefore, it is an advice to Store Mannager and VM of Pantaloons South Ex to attend those areas and see to it that necessary strategies are implemented to help customers where there is a need.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Retail enterprise is a kind of commercial enterprise with the highest level of competition. The success of the retail business depends on how fast can a retailer recognize consumer behavior and buying pattern. Retail business must focus on the factor affecting consumer buying pattern and elements that shifts customers buying decision. Store atmospheric attributes (which include shade, lighting fixtures, income personnel, music and so on) shape the general context within which shoppers make decisions of store selection and patronage. Many of the previous research on retail environment suggests that such attributes affect the image of the store. Retailers comprehend the significance of such attributes and systematically attempt to avail of an atmosphere, inclusive of suitable colors, music and so on that will attract their target customers. Further, purchase decision-making has emerged as complicated task due to the inseparability of product and services offered in retail outlets.

Retail store floor planning is a complicated task. The essential objective is to maximize sales with customer satisfaction and minimize overall prices. Many factors affect the store floor planning, like the arrival pattern of clients, the design of the building, required service level, merchandise mix, adjacency requirements and lot more. Store layout can have an effect on client's perceptions of a retail environment and as a consequence, there's a probability of drawing near or hold off the product or store. Creating superior purchase experience seems to be one of the crucial targets in these days' retailing environments. The customer experience encompasses the overall experience such as the search of desired merchandise, purchase, and consumption. All those are closely associated with the store floor planning and have a significant impact on the customer experience.

The customer needs to get inspired and so within the authority of power walls focal points need to be created which alternate and stimulate, give thoughts and motives to shop for. As an instance: - a handbag fixture placed next to scarves, gloves, hats and purses abruptly become an accessory department. The seeker may pick hats with a handbag for which they were no longer pre-deliberate and here comes the importance of planogramming. The store layout must stimulate and entice the customer to buy extra than they meant, extra of the identical and extra of various. To achieve this it has to create an emotional experience, a way that stimulates the notion of decision-making at the point of buy.

In the end, a shop format ought to create the urgency to actually purchase. Costs, margins, and earnings are merely theoretical till a customer commits with their difficult-earned money and so "strike zones" should be introduced in the shop layout where powerful, irresistible messages need to be added to the eye of the purchaser. "Strike zones" need to comprise relevant product story, often connected to promotions and offers which make message larger than life and can turn the message into profit

For a customer on a shopping mission, a good store layout leads them to succeed in their objective of making a purchase, discovering a product, becoming loyal to a particular brand and ultimately leads them to buy the product which they never planned.

The 4 steps to turning the consumer experience are as follows

- 1) To identify the consumer missions
- 2) To recognize the physical journey of a customer within the store.
- 3) To construct and maximize the touch points on those trips and
- 4) To supply the emotional triggers that turn each undertaking into a purchase – the glad customer will become the happy retailer.

Only the simply integrated retailer can supply customer experiences. Recognizing the missions is the function of customer insight teams, i.e. (the aggregate of store personnel feedback and financial income analysis), to recognize the physical journey is the job of visual merchandiser and planners, the delivery of touch points is the responsibility of human resource and visual merchandising

In contemporary retail stores, layouts must transform into tangible and intangible customer experiences, product density brand propositions, and this can only be achieved effectively and consistently through the up gradation of store functions

All the above truth that I read and understood has better my urge, to study all of the information and key factors of MPM which immediately or circuitously boom the footfall and increase the sale. Primarily based on my findings from research I might in addition like to experiment with diverse floor plans and a good way to appeal to greater customers and could increase the sale appreciably.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

### **1.2.1 Unplanned store layout impacts customer buying pattern**

Retail store layout planning is a complex mission. The fundamental goal is to maximize income with customer pride and reduce overall cost. Many elements have an effect on the shop format planning like the advent pattern of customers, constructing design, products-blend, adjacency requirements and plenty of more. Store format can have an effect on customers' perceptions of a retail environment and hence there may be a likelihood of coming near or avoiding the product or store. Creating advanced customer experience appears to be one of the valuable goals in nowadays's retailing environments. The customer experience encompasses the total experience along with the search, purchase, intake, and after-income levels of the reports. Some of these are closely related to the store layout planning and feature big effects on the customer experience and control strategy of a retail company.

### **1.2.2 Insufficient inventory or overflowing inventory**

Inventory is the enormous resources of sales for a company. After all, inventory equals earnings, so an accurate accounting of product in inventory and stock to be ordered may have a dramatic financial effect to your commercial enterprise. In fact, the bad inventory will have a damaging effect on an organization and may affect extra than simply the bottom line.



### **1.2.3 Communication gap due to the absence of proper signage.**

A loss of coordination between product and customer can decrease footfall and complicate the strategies of sale. So that you can coordinate with the customer, the store calls for a scientific layout plan that creates responsibility inside the shop. Spotting the early signs and symptoms of no longer having a proper shop format can help in stopping footfall disaster.

## **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1.3.1)How does MPM affect consumer perception.

1.3.2)What effect does store atmospheric have on buying behavior.

1.3.3)What is the satisfaction level of the pantaloons customer at the South Ex Store .

## **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

To accomplish the purpose of the study, the following objectives will be addressed during the research process:

- ❖ To investigate whether consumers are satisfied with the level of service they get from Pantaloons South Ex in terms of accessibility, quality of merchandise and general appearance.
- ❖ To determine the effect of Merchandise Presentation Module (MPM)/Visual merchandising display on consumers" perceptions.
  - To study the effect of store atmospheric on consumer buying behavior.

## **1.5 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS**

- ❖ There is a significant relation between store layout and buying behavior.
- ❖ Well designed stores help to attract customers for buying.
- ❖ Pleasant atmosphere leads to non-planned shopping

## **1.6 RATIONALE OF STUDY**

This study will make a contribution to the development of MPM in pantaloons by adhering to the desires and wants of customers. The study can also be intended to measure and check the merchandise display and assortment in stores, traffic flow and crowd density and the impact of store layout and issues related to merchandise display. The real worth of this study, however, lies in the hope that the retailer"s commitment to providing efficient and improved customer service will finally allow both the retailer and purchasers to efficiently find the mechanics of excellent retailer layout

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The available literature concerning the effectiveness of visual merchandising display discusses the key factors of visual merchandising its purpose and its final result on purchaser behavior as well as the theory about visual merchandising displays. There is nonetheless little literature available regarding the impact of visual merchandising displays on customer behavior, particularly on shoppers' perceptions. The current study does no longer sufficiently discuss the effect of visible merchandising displays on effective customer response behavior or on their successive (following) behavior. Researchers in various academic databases produced countless articles and information about visual merchandising and displays; however the databases don't produce ample knowledge and literature regarding the key factor of this study, specifically "MPM and measuring growth in retailer sales".

## 1.8 GLOSSARY

**Ambience:** Ambience is another word for the atmosphere in the sense of the mood a place or setting has. If an expensive restaurant has soft lighting and peaceful music, it has a pleasant, soothing ambience. (www.vocabulary.com 2016)

**Apparel:** Can be defined as clothing, especially outerwear, garments or attire used for the purpose of covering and decorating the body (Dictionary.com, 2011). Therefore, all body parts are covered by clothing, such as gloves, scarves, shoes and hats. (Nell 2013:11)

**Atmospherics:** It is a term used to describe the design of commercial spaces. It was coined by the marketing guru Philip Kotler in a 1973 article. Kotler said that customers do not buy just the physical product, but the whole “package”- including service, warranties, packaging, ambience of the retail store, etc. The three most important aspects of atmospherics are: exterior structure; interior design and the design of window displays. And its three most important functions are: creating attention, messages (communication) and affect. (<http://www.mbaskool.com>)

**Brand:** A unique name or symbol such as a logo, design or a trademark that companies use to identify and differentiate their products or services offered from those of their competitors or other offerings (Levy, Weitz & Beitelspacher, 2012:593 Nell, 2013:11).

**Buying behavior:** The processes that individuals, groups or organisations use to select, secure, use and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy the needs and the impacts that these processes have on consumers and society. Buyer behavior explains how consumers behave in certain buying situations (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2007:8, Nell, 2013:11).

**Consumer buying behavior:** Can be defined as “the study of individuals, groups or organisations and the processes they use to select, secure, use and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impact that these processes have on consumers and the society” (Cant, Van Heerden & Ngambi, 2010:51, Nell, 2013:12).

**Fixtures:** All the different types of equipment used to display merchandise.

**Layout:** The effective flow of used space, traffic control and sales productivity of a retail store in order to ensure that consumers are comfortable while shopping and that the overall appearance of a store is attractive (Levy *et al.*, 2012:473, Nell, 2013:12).

**Mannequin:** A silent fiber glass body/figure that shouts and whispers at potential consumers by using its own “brand” of body language to display merchandise trends with the aim of reaching passers-by (Bell & Ternus, 2006:296, Nell, 2013:13).

**MPM:** Merchandise presentation module. It is a set of display of merchandise planned by the Pantaloons VM design team.

**Perception:** The process in which people select, organise and interpret information in order to form a meaningful picture of the world (Zainbooks, 2008:7, Nell, 2013:13).

**Point-of-purchase displays:** Interior displays that provide shoppers with extra information to add to the store atmosphere and that serve as a promotional tool (Berman & Evans, 2010:614, Nell, 2013:13).

**Presentation techniques:** Sorting merchandise according to styles, colours, end-use and type of fabric (Bell & Ternus, 2006:162, Nell, 2013:13).

**Props:** Any items or objects used in a setting other than painted walls and merchandise displayed (Bell & Ternus, 2006:381). Therefore, it is any physical object used in order to create a display, such as a wooden barrel, a miniature aeroplane, a mock tree with autumn leaves, a chair and table, magazines lying around etc. (Dunne & Lusch, 2008:456, Nell, 2013:13).

**Retailing:** Business activities involved in selling goods and services to consumers for their personal, family or household use (Berman & Evans, 2010:615, Nell, 2013:14).

**Scent:** Any particular or often agreeable smell, such as pleasant fragrances or bad odours (Macmillan Dictionary, 2012, Nell, 2013:14).

**Signage and graphics:** Any drawings, paintings or words to create a graphic display that is used by retailers within a store to help consumers locate particular products and departments (Pegler, 2010:256, Nell, 2013:14).

**Sound:** A specific feeling that is produced by the stimulation of the hearing organs through vibrations sent out through the air or any other medium, such as the sound of music (Dictionary.com, 2012, Nell, 2013:14).

**Store atmospherics:** A store's physical characteristics such as music, scent, temperature, lighting, color and much more that are used to develop an image and draw customers (Berman & Evans, 2010:605, Nell, 2013:14).

**Store design:** The interior design of a store where goods are sold to the community. The goal of retail design is to make the store space more appealing and inviting to customers (Burns, 2012, Nell, 2013:14).

**Visual merchandising:** Visual merchandise is the presentation of a store and its merchandise in such a manner that will attract the attention of potential customers. It involves decorating the store keeping the interior presentation the same as what is promised on the outside (<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com> 2016)

## **1.9 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

The report on this study comprises of five chapters. These chapters cover the following areas:

### **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

This chapter introduces the study and presents an overview of the main issue of research, the research objectives, the rationale behind the study and the research methodology and limitations.

### **CHAPTER 2: VISUAL MERCHANDISING DISPLAY**

This chapter will provide clear insight into what is visual merchandising and what is visual merchandising display by covering each and every point required to understand visual merchandising.

### **CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review will provide an overview of the store design theory. It will additionally discuss customers buying behavior and perceptions and what retailers can do to aid their shoppers to overcome this phenomenon. The chapter will compare various ideas or characteristics relating to retailer layout which incorporates: crowd density, staff perspective and training, store layout, impulse buying pressure, location, product assortment, music, and lighting.

### **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology chapter shows how the data have been collected and gathered. It provides insight into the sampling methods used, the questionnaire, the interviews and quite a lot of other strategies used to analyze the outcome.

### **CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND OUTCOME**

The purpose of this chapter is to present the statistical analysis of the info obtained through the questionnaires, interviews and observations at the floor. The information has been processed into a significant outcome that the reader is able to interpret and understand.

### **CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This last chapter of the dissertation involves the conclusions which are drawn from the findings in chapter four and also from chapter two. Suggestions and strategies for further research within the field are made.

## **1.10 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided a short background about store layout and its have an impact on purchasing behavior. It discussed the research problem of the study, the goal, and objectives of the study, research methodology, limitation and overview of the study.

The next chapter will review the literature in more

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **VISUAL MERCHANDISING DISPLAYS**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

According to (Hefer, 2012: 83) The purpose of this chapter is to discuss visual merchandising with the focus on visual merchandising displays in a comprehensive manner. The concept of merchandising is explained to depict how visual merchandising developed and evolved. Visual merchandising is defined and discussed, paying attention to its elements as well as its role within the retail industry. A brief history of visual merchandising is provided to provide a broader view of visual merchandising. Lastly, visual merchandising displays are intricately discussed, as they form the crucial focus area of this study.

#### **2.2 VISUAL MERCHANDISING DISPLAY DEFINED**

In order to comprehend and define visual merchandising displays, it is necessary to understand the origin and development of the concept.

##### **2.2.1 Merchandising**

The concept "merchandising" refers to the techniques used by stores to sell products to consumers. It is the procedure by which a retailer attempts to present the correct quantity of the correct merchandise in the correct place at the correct time while meeting the company's financial objectives (Levi & Weitz, 2009: 642; Hefer, 2012). Merchandising is most popular as a business function among organizations that deal with products that experience high consumer demand for regular product change. Even though the general public sees merchandising mainly as a retailing function, it has been practiced by apparel retailers to plan, develop and present product lines at wholesale to retail buyers (Kunz, 2010: xvii; Hefer, 2012). Merchandising is the process of preparing, developing and presenting product lines for target consumers pertaining to pricing, varieties, styling and timing (Kunz, 2010: xvii; Hefer, 2012). Merchandising is defined by (Kunz 2010: 6) as: "... careful planning, capable styling and producing or selecting and buying, and effective selling". In this definition, no reference is made to a particular product; therefore, it can be applied to all products. The primary mission of today's merchandisers is to create exchanges between an organization and its consumers by providing products for consumption, understanding consumer demands, analyzing sales trends and selecting and presenting saleable products. LaPerriere and Christiansen (2008: xiv; Hefer, 2012) define merchandising as the presentation of a product and any supporting material in the best possible manner. Therefore mentioned researchers further explain merchandising as the artistic use of space to promote a product. In the broadest sense, merchandising is any exercise which adds to the sale of products to a retail consumer. On a retail level, merchandising refers to the assortment of products available for sale and the display of those products in such a way that it promotes interest and attracts consumers to make a purchase (Levi & Weitz, 2009: 642; Hefer, 2012).

##### **2.2.2 Visual merchandising**

Visual merchandising is defined by Pegler (2010: 3; Hefer, 2012) as "...showing merchandise and concepts at their very best, with the end purpose of making a sale." It is the activity which synchronizes

effective merchandise assortment with effective merchandise displays (Bell & Ternus, 2006: 20; Hefer, 2012). The goal of visual merchandising is to display a store together with its merchandise in such a way that it will draw the attention of a possible consumer (Levi & Weitz, 2009: 527; Hefer, 2012). According to Mathew (2008: 2; Hefer, 2012), visual merchandising is the creation of visual displays and the arrangement of merchandise assortments within a store to improve the layout and the presentation of the store in order to increase store traffic and sales. It is no longer merely a matter of making merchandise look beautiful for the consumer; it is about selling merchandise by means of visual communication. For some retailers, visual merchandising might be a new initiative; however it has been around as early as the 18th century (Marie, 2011: 1; Hefer, 2012). Visual merchandising has evolved into being more than just product presentation. It encompasses an additional facet called visual merchandising displays which are used to adorn and beautify a store in order to create interest or pleasure for the consumer. Visual merchandising displays are discussed in the following section.

### **2.2.3 Visual merchandising display**

Visual merchandising displays (the focal point of this research study) are a subsection of visual merchandising as a whole. Visual merchandising displays can be regarded as visual features that create attention or pleasure in a store (Mathew, 2008: 48; Hefer, 2012). Visual merchandising displays are used to decorate and beautify a store by adding additional fixtures, props, posters, materials, colors, frills and objects to a store. Visual merchandising displays can generally be broken down into three different categories: on-shelf displays, off-shelf displays and window displays (Mathew, 2008: 48-52; Hefer, 2012). These different categories are discussed later in this chapter. Visual merchandising and visual merchandising displays are often used synonymously; however they are in fact different from one another. LaPerriere and (Christiansen 2008: xiv; Hefer, 2012) state that visual merchandising is the presentation of products in such a way that it encourages consumers to buy, where visual merchandising displays are staged three-dimensional settings that generate an opportunity for consumers to experience the product themselves.

Figure 2.1 below illustrates Pantaloons South Ex makes an extensive use of visual merchandising displays. Visual merchandising uses visual merchandising displays to introduce new products to consumers and to decorate a store, and therefore increases change through a planned and systematic approach by displaying the available stock. Visual merchandising displays are, therefore (Bhalla & Anuraag, 2010: 20 & Pegler, 2010: 5; Hefer, 2012 ):

- ❖ A tool to reach sales and targets.
- ❖ A device to improve the merchandise on the floor.
- ❖ A mechanism to „talk“ to a consumer and influence his or her decision to purchase a product or service (visual communication).
- ❖ Used for seasonal displays to introduce new arrivals to consumers, for example, the launch of spring or summer.
- ❖ Used to increase change through a planned and efficient approach by displaying stock on hand.
- ❖ Educating the consumers about the product or service in an efficient and imaginative way, for example using lifestyle graphics to inform consumers how products could be worn together.
- ❖ Establishing an inventive medium to display merchandise in a 3D environment, allowing long-lasting impact and recall value. Setting the company apart in an elite position.
- ❖ Establishing relationships between fashions, product design, and marketing by keeping the product in key focus.
- ❖ Combining the creative, technical and operational features of a product and the store.



**Fig 2.1 Visual Merchandising display**

## **2.3 FUNCTIONS OF VISUAL MERCHANDISING**

Where visual merchandising was once called „display“, it has evolved into a store’s decorative arts department, and now in its current state as a sales-supportive unit. The visual merchandising department is currently not only responsible for making a store beautiful, but also to assist sales (Bell & Ternus, 2006: 20; Hefer, 2012). In a large corporate retail operation, the visual merchandising department is generally part of the advertising and marketing department. Some organizations, such as Truworths (Pty) Ltd are so large that they have their own visual merchandising department that operates independently from the main business.

Visual merchandising and visual merchandising displays perform different functions in an apparel retail outlet; these include supporting sales, to support the retail strategies, to communicate with consumers and to assist in communicating the fashion retailers’ brand image (Levi & Weitz, 2009:531 and Bell & Turnus, 2008: 20-22; Hefer, 2012).



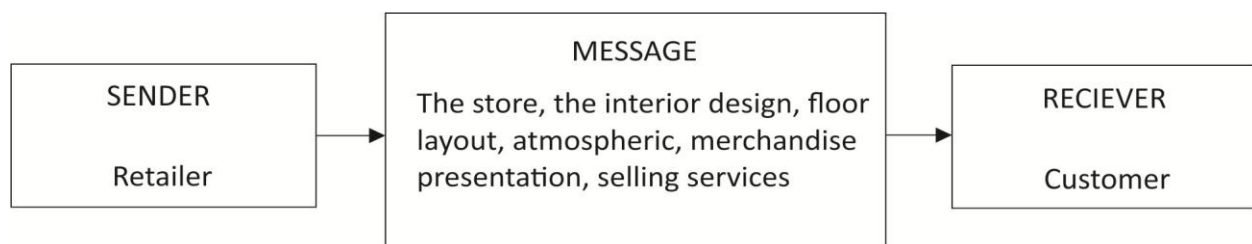
### 2.3.1 Supporting sales

A major function of visual merchandising is to support sales. When the merchandise presentation supports the selling process, it is possible for fewer sales personnel to assist more consumers at any given time. According to Bell and Ternus (2006:20; Hefer, 2012), this process is called “silent selling”. Bell and Ternus (2006: 20; Hefer, 2012) continue by stating that by displaying merchandise and working with the different elements of visual merchandising, the product will sell itself. “Silent selling” is one of the many reasons apparel retail outlets make use of visual merchandising. It is a means of supporting the sales staff in store by making use of design elements and permanent MPMprops such as signage and mannequins. A mannequin is a life-sized representation of the human body, used mainly in the advertising of apparel items (Maier, 2010: 1; Hefer, 2012). For example, by placing a high fashion dress on a mannequin, a consumer will be able to see how the dress looks on the human body compared to seeing it on a hanger (Hefer, 2012). Therefore, fashion retailers make use of visual merchandising techniques such as mannequins in order to lower their operating costs by having fewer sales staff on the floor.

### 2.3.2 Communicating with consumers and communicating the brand image

A retailer’s brand image is a blend of the tangible and the intangible factors that express what a shopper thinks about his or her association with a store—it is the retailer’s identity in the mind of the shopper (Bell & Ternus, 2006: 22; Hefer, 2012: 89). It includes the merchandise and the store environment that is created by the visual merchandising.

As communications with consumers vitally important to a retailer’s success, visual merchandising assists with the communication process between the consumer and the retailer to form the correct brand image in the mind of the consumer. Basic communication has three fundamentals—the sender, the message, and the receiver. Unless all three elements are there, communication will not be successful. Figure 2.2 below illustrates the visual merchandising communication process. The retailer communicates to the consumer by means of their store, the store’s interior design, the floor layout, the atmospherics, the merchandise presentation and the selling services. A great deal of communication between the retailer and the consumer takes place through the use of signage. The brand image could be carried through on the signs used in the store, from operational signs to merchandise signs. Operational signs relate to the everyday business of a retailer.



**Fig 2.2 The visual merchandising, communication process**

### 2.3.3 Supporting retail strategies

Visual merchandising supports retail strategies by being part of the store's total promotional mix. Visual merchandising works as part of a close relationship with advertising, MPMmarketing, special events and personal selling. Visual merchandisers actually accomplish a store's promotional selling strategies by (Bell & Turnus, 2008: 20-22; Hefer, 2012: 90)

- ❖ Designing and executing window and interior displays that support advertising goals.
- ❖ Installing promotional signing for MPMselling.
- ❖ Producing workable departmental layouts and interior décor.
- ❖ Devising merchandise fixture layouts for day to day operations.

The next section focuses on how these functions impact the apparel retail industry.

## 2.4 VISUAL MERCHANDISING DISPLAYS WITHIN THE RETAIL STRUCTURE

The design of a retail store involves its exterior and its interior, the merchandise and fixture arrangement on the selling floor as well as the visual merchandising displays. If one thinks about a retail store as four walls and a roof, the total effect of these elements creates a statement of what the consumers will find within these walls (Bell & Ternus, 2006: 60; Hefer, 2012: 91). Effective store design links the store atmospherics (lighting, colors, music and scent) and the visual merchandising display elements (discussed in section 2.5) to offer a pleasant, productive shopping experience to the consumer. Consumers do not only buy the products the retailer sells, but they also buy the retail experience created MPMby the visual merchandiser (Bell & Ternus, 2006: 60; Hefer, 2012: 91). I

Just as brands exist within a store, the stores themselves have become brands. Consumers do not want to see the same merchandise at various retailers. Visual merchandisers are given the task of communicating the store's image through the visual merchandising and the visual merchandising displays. This is increasingly becoming more challenging for them because they are faced with exceptional competition that was not present in the past (Hefer, 2012: 91)

Retailers should keep in mind that the visual merchandising displays of a store are the „invisible force“ that does most of the hard work in the store (Bell & Ternus, 2006: 30; Hefer, 2012: 91). A well-designed retail store is similar to a good story with a beginning, middle and conclusion (Levi & Weitz, 2009: 507; Hefer, 2012: 91). The retail store's "story" begins at the entrance, which immediately creates expectations and offers promises. The message that is received at the entrance of a store is the most successful approach to creating a positive store image. The retail store's design leads the consumer on an expedition through the store, by using lighting, signage and displays. The story comes to an end when the consumer purchases a product at the pay points. (Hefer, 2012: 91)

Visual merchandising and visual merchandising displays could serve as an investment for apparel retailers. Visual merchandising and visual merchandising displays can benefit the retailer by increasing the operational efficiencies of the store and therefore making an effort that results in increased sales, especially with the use of add-on sales. Visual merchandising displays use creative techniques in order to save the sales person's and the shopper's time by making shopping effortless. Displays can benefit the retailer by increasing the operational efficiencies of the store and therefore making an effort that results in increased sales, especially with the use of add-on sales. Visual merchandising displays use creative techniques in order to save the sales person's and the shopper's time by making shopping effortless. The visual merchandising display process is often referred to as the "silent salesperson" by providing the

consumers with information through visual mediums as well as by suggestive selling (suggestions to add items to a consumers' original purchase) (Bhalla & Anuraag, 2010: 21; Hefer, 2012: 92).

## **2.5 DIFFERENT STAGES OF VISUAL MERCHANDISING WITHIN THE RETAIL STRUCTURE.**

The goal of visual merchandising in apparel retail stores is to expose fashion merchandise to their potential consumers. The ways that the visual merchandising is perceived in stores are processed in eight different stages (Bell and Ternus, 2006: 28; Hefer, 2012: 93). These stages are:

Stage 1 - Exposure: When a consumer walks into an apparel retail store with the intention of purchasing a jacket, he/she is exposed to a variety of merchandise that is displayed on rails and on mannequins. He/she is also exposed to the environment of the store that is created by the visual merchandising displays.

Stage 2 - Attention: When he/she browses through the merchandise, he/she notices the posters and signs in the store, together with the displays that appear throughout the store and it immediately draws his/her attention towards a specific display and the merchandise that surrounds it.

Stage 3 - Comprehension: The consumer starts wondering and thinking about where he/she can wear the merchandise and how he/she can accessorize it.

Stage 4 - Agreement: The consumer realizes that the specific merchandise is credible and that it is compatible with his/her wardrobe and values.

Stage 5 - Retention: He/she walks away to look for the jacket, however, the display and the merchandise that he/she saw, in the beginning, is still bright in his/her mind.

Stage 6 - Retrieval: After buying the jacket that he/she originally came for, he/she still remembers exactly where he/she saw the display and the relevant merchandise.

Stage 7 - Consumer decision making: The consumer makes a mental decision to buy or not to buy that specific merchandise.

Stage 8 - Action taken: When he/she decides to purchase or decides to leave the store.

## **2.6 ELEMENTS OF VISUAL MERCHANDISING DISPLAY**

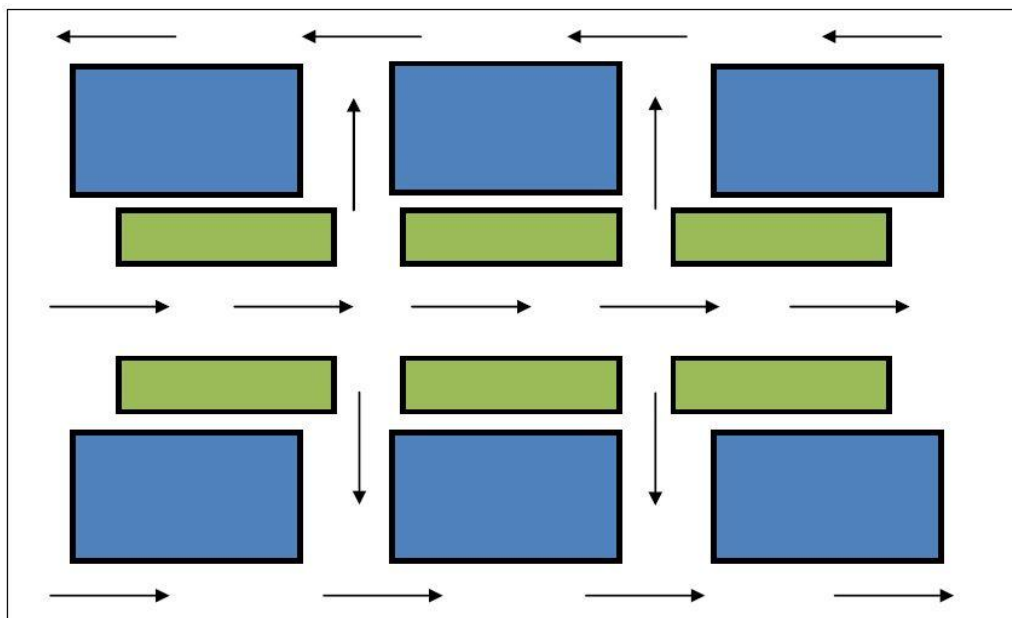
The main objective of the elements of visual merchandising is to display a store together with its merchandise in such a way that it will draw the attention of a possible consumer (Bell & Turnus, 2008: 20-22; Hefer, 2012: 94). The elements of visual merchandising displays, among others, include store design, signage and graphics, atmospherics, fixtures, and props. These elements are used in the process of visual merchandising display.

### **2.6.1 Store design**

Store design includes all the aspects of visual merchandising. These aspects include visual displays, window displays, and interior design as well as fixtures, fittings and lighting (Morgan, 2008: 30; Hefer, 2012: 94). The main purpose of store design is to execute the retailer's strategy; the design must be consistent with and support the retailer's strategy by meeting the needs of the target market and building a sustainable competitive advantage (Levi & Weitz, 2009: 508; Hefer, 2012: 94).

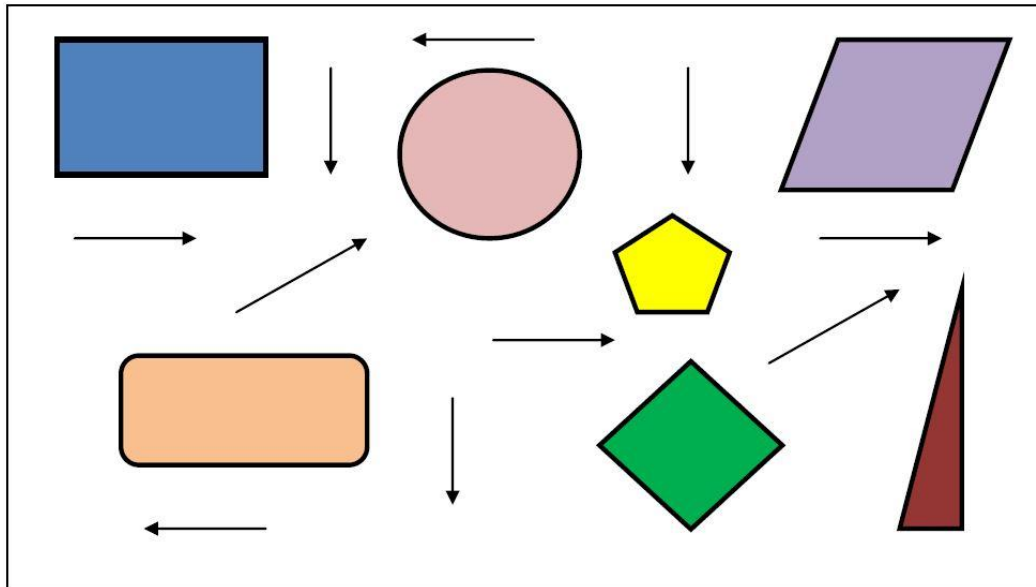
Store design is important for retailers due to the fact that it can help support the brand image as well as strengthen a successful retail strategy. Retailers rely on the design of a store to attract consumers inside; some retailers choose a more delicate design while others like to surprise and motivate. A retailer's store design encompasses different floor plans and store layouts (grid layout, racetrack layout, free-form layout) and feature areas (displays). A floor plan is a flat illustration of two dimensions, with the length and width of an area as seen from overhead (Pegler, 2010: 284; Hefer, 2012: 97). The most popular floor plans are discussed below.

- ❖ Grid layout: The grid layout is the most popular layout used in supermarkets and discount stores, especially stores that adopt self-service. One area of the display is along the walls of the store, where the other merchandise is displayed in an equivalent way (Pradhan, 2008: 351; Hefer, 2012: 97). A grid layout permits consumers to move without restraint within the area and it uses space effectively. Please see figure 2.3 below for an illustration of a grid layout.
- ❖ The free-flow layout: In a free-flow layout, the merchandise is arranged in an asymmetrical manner. It allows the consumers to move freely throughout the store and this type of layout encourages consumers to browse (Pradhan, 2008: 351; Hefer, 2012: 97). Please see figure 2.4 below for an illustration of the free-flow layout.
- ❖ The racetrack layout: The race-track layout is also known as the loop layout. As the name suggests, the display is in the form of a racetrack or a loop with the main aisle running through the store (Pradhan, 2008: 351; Hefer, 2012: 97). This type of layout is most often found in department stores. Please see figure 2.5 below for an illustration of the racetrack layout.



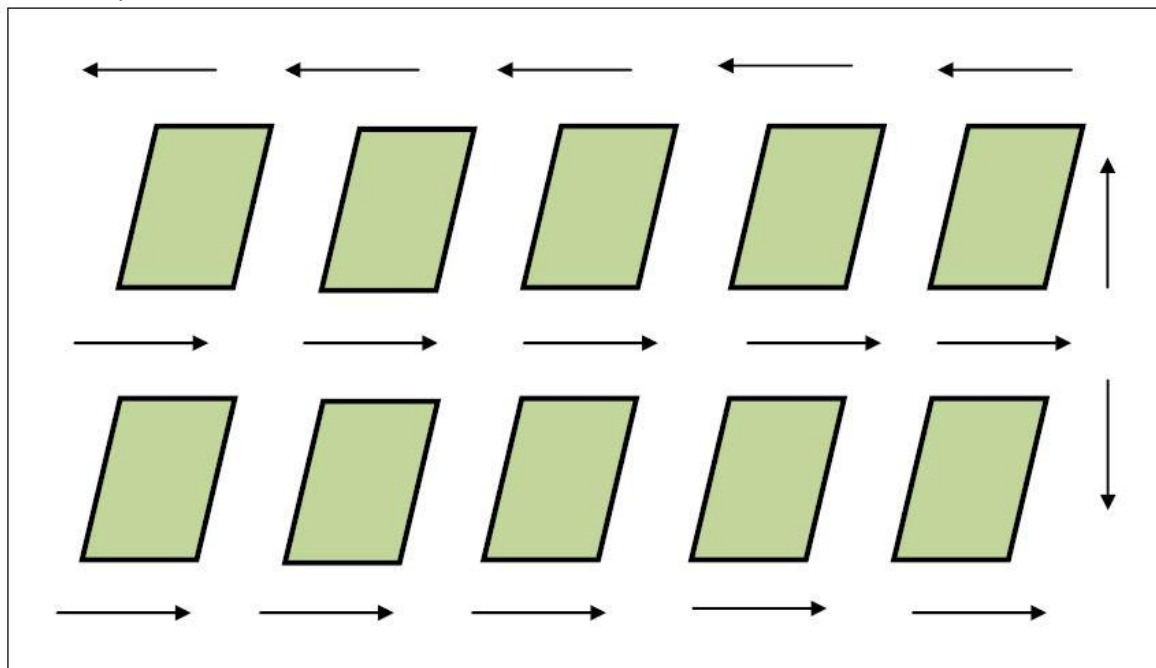
**Fig 2.3 Grid layout**

**Source:** Adapted from Pegler, M. 2010. *Visual merchandising and display*. 5th ed. China: Fairchild publications. p. 284-292; Hefer, 2012: 97



**Figure 2.4: Free-flow layout**

**Source:** Adapted from Pegler, M. 2010. *Visual merchandising and display*. 5th ed. China: Fairchild publications. p. 284-292; Hefer, 2012: 97



**Figure 2.5: Race-track/loop layout**

**Source:** Adapted from Pegler, M. 2010. *Visual merchandising and display*. 5th ed. China: Fairchild publications. p. 284-292; Hefer, 2012: 98

### 2.6.1 Signage and graphics

Signage and graphics are used by retailers to help consumers locate particular products and departments in a store. An effective sign/graphic attracts the shopper's attention and conveys the brand identity, thereby shaping the consumer's first impression of what they will find inside the store (Bell & Ternus, 2006: 190; Hefer, 2012: 98).

Graphics are defined as "...referring to drawings, paintings, and lettering or the reproductive arts of engraving, etching, lithography, etcetera" (Pegler, 2010: 255; Hefer, 2012: 98 ). In apparel retail stores, graphics usually refers to oversized photos, blow-ups or light box art. Where words cannot be read by everyone, photos and pictures are understood throughout society. Graphics are usually photo blow-ups of people doing things or people who are dressed for a specific occasion. Graphics show people living a particular kind of life and dressing in that life's style. Graphics can add personality and beauty to a store (Levi & Weitz, 2009: 516; Hefer, 2012: 98). In retail stores, photo blow-ups usually appear as a framed or unframed background panel, or in a light box lighted from behind (Pegler, 2010: 255; Hefer, 2012: 98).

All retailers, and in particular apparel retailers, start communicating with consumers even before they enter the store. From the second that consumers read the store's name or see the logos on the store front, they receive a message. Signage can be referred to as visual graphics created to present information to consumers. Signage and graphics are used by apparel retailers to help consumers locate particular products and departments. An effective sign attracts the shoppers' attention and conveys the brand identity, shaping the consumers' first impressions of what they will find inside the store (Bell & Ternus, 2006: 190; Hefer, 2012: 99).

Large department stores often need to display directional signage to direct consumers through the store and to indicate where the different departments are (Levi & Weitz, 2009: 516; Hefer, 2012: 99). Apparel retail stores could use signage in order to indicate the location of certain merchandise, to indicate different categories, and to indicate prices.

Graphics are used to strengthen and emphasize a current promotion or an advertising campaign. A specific photograph may sometimes be the foundation for a complete promotion. A lifestyle graphic is used as a selling device, such as shown in figure 2.6 below. It usually describes how different items of merchandise are placed together and how a desired look could be created.

Even though a picture is worth a thousand words, it is sometimes better when a message is read as well as seen. Signs are often a consumer's first contact with a store. Effective signs identify the store and these signs are used to inform consumers of special events (Colborne, 1996: 234). Signs could also be used to describe the theme of a window or an MPMdisplay.



**Fig 2.6 Lifestyle graphics**

According to Levi and Weitz (2009: 516-517; Hefer, 2012: 99), signage can be used as a form of visual communication, and it can be used in the following ways:

- ❖ Promotional signage: The goal of promotional signage is to attract the consumer into the store. It describes the special offers on display.
- ❖ Lifestyle images: The apparel retailer could use different images to create moods that encourage consumers to buy the products.

As mentioned earlier in this section, signage is used to inform shoppers about merchandise characteristics. This could include price, use, size, fabric content, lifestyle, construction or other benefits. Signs can be made from plastic, metal, paper, straw, branches and other materials, depending on where the sign will be placed. Alternatively, stick-on lettering (decals) could also be used. Stick-on letters are available in a variety of typefaces, colours and sizes. They can be made from plastic, wood, metal, foam, acrylic and other materials (Colborne, 1996: 237; Hefer, 2012: 99).

In order for apparel retailers to effectively use their signage and graphics, they could use the following techniques (Pegler, 2010: 256; Hefer, 2012: 101):

- ❖ Coordinate signs and graphics. The fashion retailer should choose graphics and signage that acts as a link between the merchandise and the retailer's target market.

- ❖ Inform consumers. Educational signs and graphics make merchandise more attractive. For example, having the price and the type of material the knits are made of help consumers to differentiate between different merchandise.
- ❖ Use signs and graphics as props. Signage and graphics are used as props to merge a theme of the fashion retail store.
- ❖ Keep signs and graphics fresh. The signs and graphics used should be relevant to the merchandise displayed in-store. New signs imply new merchandise.
- ❖ Limit the text on signs. Signs that have too much text will not be read. Consumers should be able to seize the information on the sign rapidly as they browse through the store.

A sign should include lettering that enhances the store design and sends a message about the store's image and merchandise. Elements such as colour, texture, size, location, style and balance are some of the design principles to mull over before choosing a sign (Colborne, 1996: 234; Hefer, 2012: 101).

### **2.6.2 Atmospheric**

Atmospherics (also called attention-grabbing devices) refers to the design of the MPMenvironment through communicating with the consumers by means of senses such as lighting, colour, music and scent (Pegler, 2010: 181; Hefer, 2012: 101). Bell and Ternus (2006: 36; Hefer, 2012: 101) explain that atmospheric that appeal to the five senses of humans can be „layered“ into the store to improve the shopping environment and build the brand image of the store. Layering means including several sensory elements to accomplish a particular atmosphere for the store environment--concurrent use of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. Creating the perfect store environment has become a progressively more important method of retail positioning. Stores have individual environments and marketers have to understand that the environment of a store is a significant part of the shopping experience. A consumer's decision to visit/revisit a store can be influenced by the environment offered by the store and the retail environment can guide consumer's conclusions about merchandise, service quality and satisfaction of the store. Recent experiential results suggest that signals in the store environment add to consumers' perceptions of that specific store (Sharma & Stafford, 2000: 183; Hefer, 2012: 101).

Atmospherics include, but are not limited to, the following (Levi & Weitz, 2009: 530-532; Hefer, 2012: 101):

- ❖ Lighting: Lighting refers to the method used to provide artificial illumination (Gilmour, 2010:166; Hefer, 2012: 101). Lighting is used to highlight merchandise and to create a mood or a feeling. Lighting can also be used to improve a store's image.
- ❖ Colour: The inventive use of colour can improve a retailer's image and help form a mood as well. Warm colours such as red, gold and yellow can create emotional, lively, hot and active responses, where cool colours such as white, blue and green have a more serene, tender and soothing effect on consumers.
- ❖ Music: Music, just as colour and lighting, has an effect on a retailer's image. Music is also used to influence a consumer's behaviour. Music can direct the pace of the store "traffic" and it can entice or direct consumer's attention.



- ❖ Scent: As smell has a huge impact on consumer's emotions, many purchasing decisions are based on scent. Natural scents create better perceptions in the mind of the consumer than no scent at all. Scented stores give consumers the perception that they are spending less time in the store while browsing through merchandise or waiting for an assistant. Scent, together with music, has an optimistic impact on impulse buying behaviour and consumer contentment.

## 2.7 TYPES OF VISUAL MERCHANDISING DISPLAYS

The main function of a display is to present and promote the merchandise that is sold in store. Displays can generally be broken down into four different categories: on-shelf displays, off-shelf displays, point of purchase displays and window displays (Mathew, 2008: 48-52; Hefer, 2012: 109).

### 2.7.1 On-shelf displays

On-shelf displays are the "normal" displays that are found in a store and that show different variations of products on offer in some kind of rational order (Mathew, 2008: 48-52; Hefer, 2012: 109). They combine functionality with aesthetic sensibility. On-shelf displays are a visual merchandising necessity in displaying merchandise sold in store. The ways in which products are presented depend on the type of fixtures available; basically this could include:

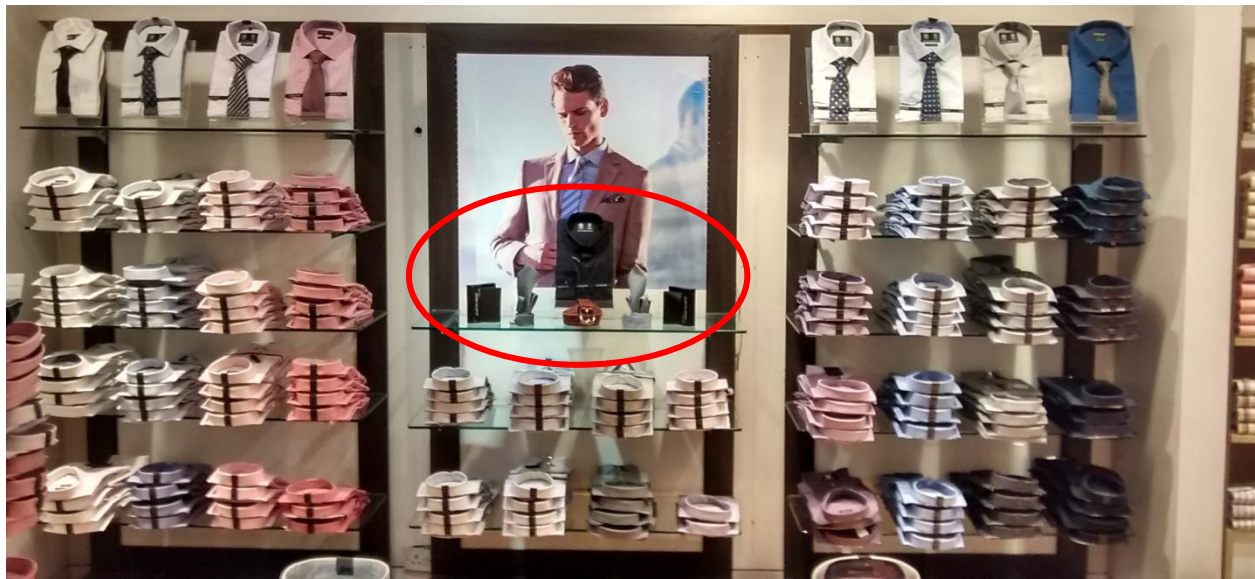
- ❖ Vertical stacking: magazines or CDs
- ❖ Horizontal stacking: folded garments (see figure 2.7 below, the T-shirts is folded on the shelves on the left.)
- ❖ Hanging on hangers or hooks: front faced hangers or side hang hangers (see figure 2.7 below, the merchandise is presented to the consumers by front facing them or by side hanging them on the rails.)
- ❖ On shelf displays: makes use of floor fixtures such as hang rails, four-way stands and rounders.



Fig 2.7 on-shelf display

### 2.7.2 Off-shelf displays

Off-shelf displays are intended to have added impact by showing the merchandise as it could be used, or possibly next to other merchandise to suggest complementary purchases. They are not used in the regular selling process and are therefore made to create a major visual impact. They are often creatively arranged and are only changed by the visual merchandising team. These types of displays may include props. Props are secondary to the merchandise sold in store; their main purpose is to improve the amount of merchandise that is sold, not to upstage it in order for the consumer to capture the merchandise (Colborne, 1996:109; Hefer, 2012: 109). It is very important that props should never clutter a display. See figure 3.13 below for an example of an off-shelf display.



**Fig 2.8 off shelf display**

Off-shelf displays are also used for promotional purposes. Depending on the season, event or special day, a fashion retail store's displays can change on a weekly or monthly basis. The mood, character and the number of display props that are essential to amaze consumers are dependent on the store's target market, the type of merchandise they sell, as well as the size of the store (Colborne, 1996: 108; Hefer, 2012: 109).

### 2.7.3 Point of purchase displays

Point of purchase displays used to be associated with merchandise sold at the checkout counter. Today point of purchase displays can be displays or fixtures used by stores to assist in selling their products. The displays, fixtures and assorted signage can appear outside the store, in windows, and inside the store on ledges, counters, shelves, on the floor or hanging from the roof. These types of displays can be made of cardboard, paper, wood, plastic and metal, or a combination of these materials. Usually point of purchase displays are designed to be part of a promotion or a theme that involves many harmonized elements (the elements will be discussed in the next section)--each one specifically positioned and doing its work in another part of the store (Pegler, 2010: 312; Hefer, 2012: 113).

According to Pegler (2010: 312), some of the reasons retail stores use points of purchase displays are:

- ❖ The appearance of a sign or a display in the retail store could persuade the consumer to make an impulse decision to purchase.
- ❖ The sign or display draws attention and directs the consumer to the product.
- ❖ Point of purchase displays improves the product's image and it explains the product to the consumer, therefore informing the consumer.
- ❖ Harmonized promotions could stimulate the consumer to buy the product and to buy other products that are being promoted together with it.
- ❖ Point of purchase displays can motivate an instant action response from the consumer.

The point of purchase displays can be permanent, semi-permanent, temporary or promotional. For the purpose of this study, the focus is on the temporary and promotional point of purchase displays. Temporary and promotional displays could for example be created for an important rugby game, Valentine's Day, Mothers' and Fathers' Day, Christmas, a new colour, a new season and much more. It could also be used for the general decoration of a store. The display could include an endless number of props which could include banners, posters, mannequins and other facets. Once the event or special day has passed, the point of purchase display's "life" is over (Pegler, 2010: 316; Hefer, 2012: 114).

Figure 2.9 below is an example of promotional point of purchase displays of Pantaloons South Ex. This was used to promote the new season's theme and colours. The picture illustrates how the point of purchase display was used in the entrance of the store to entice consumers and to provide them with a sneak preview of what they would find inside the store. If the point of purchase display is part of an overall promotion, like the launching of Christmas, it has to tie in with the basic concept of the promotion. The same „tag-lines“, images and elements should be used.( Hefer, 2012: 114)



**Fig 2.9 Pantaloons South Ex point of purchase display**



A promotional display is a display that is used by a store to promote. For example, if Mothers' Day is coming up and the fashion retailer has decided to promote the day, the theme being created will have to be carried out throughout the store--in the windows as well as the MPMdecorations, trimmings and props. A sale could also be used as the basis for a promotional display. It can either be a pre- or post-holiday sale, an end-of-season sale or an anniversary sale.



**Fig 2.10 Valentines display at Pantaloons South Ex.**

### **3.7.4 Window displays**

A window display is a window outside a retail outlet that is used by retailers to display merchandise for sale or otherwise designed to attract consumers to their store (Bell & Ternus, 2006: 290; Hefer, 2012: 117). Window displays are used to communicate to the consumers--what the retailer stands for as well as the image of the retailer; it makes consumers aware of the type of merchandise being sold and therefore creates interest with the consumer (Mathew, 2008: 45; Hefer, 2012: 117). Creative window displays may have the power to stop anyone in their tracks. As the mixes of art, fashion, design and marketing, window displays have to rapidly grab the consumer's interest and they must be created in

such a way that they compel consumers into a store. By providing people with an experience, these displays also have the important duty of helping to define a brand's image. Window displays have started to become remarkable art mechanisms, although it takes significant time to conceptualize, plan and install these artistic displays (Mathew, 2008: 45; Hefer, 2012: 117).

Typically, fashion retailers have one of two window styles: enclosed windows or open-back windows (Bell & Ternus, 2006: 277-280; Hefer, 2012: 117 ). An enclosed window has a solid back wall, two side walls and a glass front that faces the aisle of the mall or that faces the street. These windows have hidden doors where the visual merchandisers can enter to change them. An open-back window does not have a back wall, therefore people who are walking in the aisles of the mall or on the street will not only see the merchandise displayed in the window, but they will also see the merchandise in the rest of the store. Open-back windows should use props carefully or viewers will miss the message the window is attempting to send due to visual clutter.

According to Pegler (2010: 69-72; Hefer, 2012: 117), there are several “special windows” that can be identified:

- ❖ A shadow box. A shadow box is a small, raised window used for the close- up presentation of unique merchandise or accessories. It has a smaller window surface and the shadow box is often shallower and it is higher than the standard display window.
- ❖ An elevated window. Elevated windows may have the floor raised up to about 3 meters above street level. A regular mannequin would not be able to stand up straight in this window; however it can sit, kneel or lie down.
- ❖ Deep windows. Deep windows require a great deal of merchandise to fill the space, and much lighting to light the back area of the window.
- ❖ Tall windows. In a very tall window, the lighting is very far from the merchandise or mannequins that are used. The visual merchandiser has to use lighting on the sides for emphasis and use the overhead lights for atmospheric purposes.

## **SUMMARY**

In this chapter visual merchandising displays were defined and discussed together with the different elements and functions thereof. Visual merchandising displays within the retail structure were discussed. The chapter concluded with an argument regarding the different types of visual merchandising displays and display settings.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

The third chapter commences with a comprehensive overview of characteristics of store layout and its impact on consumer purchasing behaviour at Pantaloons South Ex. As suggested by Paulins and Geistfeld (2003: 371; Tlapana 2009; 9), most retail stores are poorly perceived with respect to MPMdisplays and external appearance. The outside store appearance affects consumers' choice of a store. Therefore, stores should pay attention to external appearance; if the external appearance is not attractive, customers will not want to enter. Both service and merchandise quality exert a significant influence on store performance, measured by sales growth and customer growth, and their impact is mediated by customer satisfaction (Babakus *et al.*, 2004: 713; Tlapana 2009; 9).

The aims of the literature review are much more than a mere survey of the information that results in a list of items representing some literature on the area of study. It is understood that the literature review is more of a "research facilitator", because it influences the research at many stages of its development, from its inception to the conclusions. The literature review provides a conceptual framework to be built in which facts, relationships and findings of this research study can be placed and it helps to refine and introduce ideas that are relevant to the scope of the study. It should also be noted that the literature examined relates to studies done in other countries other than South Africa, and it can be used because it relates to the study undertaken.

### 3.2 MERCHANDISE DISPLAY

Merchandise display, according to Zentes *et al.* (2007: 209; Tlapana 2009; 29 ), is a term frequently used in the context of MPMmarketing. It refers to the way products are presented in a retail outlet. While this expression has been used with a focus on merchandise display (e.g. the choice of fixtures to be used and the method of product presentation), it relates to overall store design, store layout and other facets of the store environment. Therefore, it is often used synonymously with the design component of MPMmarketing.

Two basic objectives of MPMmarketing are:

- ❖ To facilitate the search process for customers, i.e. to design the store for easy internal orientation; and
- ❖ To create a positive store atmosphere, *i.e.* to evoke a positive emotional state mind in consumers while visiting the store.

Both aspects are important to different degrees in different stores and for different consumer segments. The retailer's focus is mainly on easy orientation and supporting the consumer search process. When approaching shoppers, the efforts are shifted towards merchandise display as it facilitates shopping and easy orientation, because consumers should not be confused but feel secure and self-confident in the shopping situation (Zentes *et al.*, 2007: 209; Tlapana 2009; 29)

McIntosh (2007; Tlapana 2009; 29 ) illustrates that merchandising is more than simply the arrangement of products on the shelf. It is an integral component of the business image. It should be considered

when designing the retail mix. Opinions suggest that merchandising and display are frivolous extra expenses for the small business owner who is just starting up. The implication is that expenses such as marketing, rent, inventory, utilities and staffing are serious expenses, while merchandising and display are frills. Merchandising and display are an important part of the retail environment, and should have a reasonable budget allocated even for a retailer operating on a shoestring. In today's competitive retail environment, a retailer cannot afford to consider merchandising as a frill. Everyone is competing for the customers' and. There are more choices out there for consumers than ever before. By rotating merchandise and changing displays, the customers feel that there is always something new for them to see or experience. Including merchandising in the retailing plan and budget makes sense. It can make the difference between selling a product and having it sit on the shelf.

Appealing displays by retailers can lead shoppers to sacrifice the time and effort required to go further to more distant stores. This technique suggests that consumers shop at the stores where they can maximize their satisfaction (i.e. efficiency), considering both retail attributes and shopping costs. Pleasant shopping atmosphere positively affects the shopping time and the money that customers spend in a store as well as the emotion of shopping (Kim and Jin, 2001: 236; Tlapana 2009; 30).

Laroche *et al.* (2005: 157; Tlapana 2009; 30) state that, in a shopping environment, consumers not only evaluate merchandise quality, but also consider service quality. A store environment can serve as an important basis for consumers' evaluations of merchandise products. The store atmosphere has been found to shape consumers' merchandise value perceptions, which, in turn, influence store patronage intentions. However, little attention has been paid to how these relationships may be influenced by the consumers' shopping environment and merchandise value perceptions. These authors found that service quality perceptions contribute to purchase intentions. There is no doubt that consumers, who are in a good mood, are more likely to want to affiliate with store employees, stay longer in the shopping environment, and make more purchases there. Therefore, pleasure is expected to influence service quality perception positively.

Sinha and Banerjee (2004: 482; Tlapana 2009; 32) contend that convenient stores" shoppers attach more importance to merchandise display. These shoppers prefer to visit those stores that have depth and width of products. The importance of relationship/comfort level with the retailer is stressed with regard to grocery stores. The shopper is willing to trade-off the extra travel effort with the experience. Such an experience can be provided through services and merchandise. A good display of products, so that the shoppers can look around and touch and feel the products, becomes an important consideration to consumers.

According to Merchandising (2008; Tlapana 2009; 33), the way that products are displayed or merchandised can have a significant effect on retail sales. In self-service stores, staple products tend to be merchandised strategically so that customers, looking for these items, are required to walk past higher profit items such as luxury goods. This display can often result in higher sales and higher profits.

Merchandising consists of the following elements:

- ❖ Correct strategic placement in the store
- ❖ Eye-catching and appealing display;
- ❖ Appropriate point of sale support media (e.g. labels, signs); and
- ❖ Legal requirements satisfied.

Krishnan *et al.* (2002: 54; Tlapana 2009; 34) comment that the availability of consumers' most preferred merchandise in an assortment positively influences consumers' perceptions of assortment size. This finding points to the impact of a hitherto unexplored retail strategic dimension and commitment to assortment consistency. What is meant by consistency in assortment is the tacit promise made by a retailer to carry a given set of brands, sizes, flavours and colours from one period to the next, so that a consumer, who looks for his/her preferred brand, will be able to find that brand at that retail store. While it is obvious that the mere existence of the consumer segment that looks for consistent assortments will drive some retailers to adopt such commitments to consistent assortments, what is less obvious is that this strategy is affected (negatively) by supply side factors such as the availability of trade deals. It is important to note that although consumers may seek particular brands, their final choice of a retailer is also affected by merchandise display and location of the retailers. Thus, it is not clear how a retailer would react in a competitive environment even if a sizable segment of the market seeks consistent merchandise assortment.

Azuma and Fernie (2001: 282; Tlapana 2009; 34) propose that in order to meet the adamant needs of the consumers and respond to the sudden changes in trends and consumption patterns, retailers need to have the "leanest" and the most "agile" ways to get the right product in the right place at the right time in smaller consignment sizes with increasing frequency. Good merchandise display leads to the delight of customers and remain profitable simultaneously. As a result, retailers with efficient merchandise displays achieve higher levels of distribution.

Mitchell and Ingram (2002; Tlapana 2009; 34) contend that merchandise display is at a premium in most retail outlets, particularly those that depend on high sales volume. Such outlets attempt to optimize the display space used and allocate cost (a fraction of rent) for product lines according to the contribution to sales and profitability. The determination of the best product mix and layout is a central problem in retailing, where increasingly the number of products and categories available to the retail buyer is plentiful but retail shelf space is finite and fixed.

The determination of the optimal product display assortment requires information about factors such as:

- ❖ How much value the market places on each available product, including which products are viewed as completely unacceptable; and
- ❖ How the market assesses the sustainability across products based on price.

The chapter reviewed literature on store appearance and image and merchandise display. The review shows that consumers are faced with many complex situations while shopping around for convenience goods. Babakus *et al.* (2004: 713; Tlapana 2009; 34) suggest that both service and merchandise quality exert a significant influence on store performance, measured by sales growth and customer growth, and their impact is mediated by customer satisfaction.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, retailers should seek to sell products that satisfy the buyer's needs and provide store layouts that entice customers to move around the store to purchase more merchandise than they may have planned originally (Levy and Weitz, 2007: 512; Tlapana 2009; 35). In so doing, it should be remembered that the sale is made only when the actual purchase is complete and retailers should continue to reinforce the buyer's positive attitudes about their stores at all times, even after the sale.



This practice reduces the perceived risk of making a bad buy, which allows buyers to listen to and trust sellers' sales messages even though some of retailers' proposals may be out of line with their purchase plans. It also can increase rates of customer retention which leads to increased profitability and store loyalty (Miranda *et al.*, 2005: 220 Tlapana 2009; 34).

The chapter reviewed literature on store appearance and image and merchandise display. The review shows that consumers are faced with many complex situations while shopping around for apparels and non- apparell. Babakus *et al.* (2004: 713; Tlapana 2009; 34) suggest that both service and merchandise quality exert a significant influence on store performance, measured by sales growth and customer growth, and their impact is mediated by customer satisfaction.

The next chapter will discuss the research methodology employed in this study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research methodology employed to gather the primary data. Research design is covered within the first part of this chapter, followed with the aid of the sampling method, data collection and data analysis. Exploratory research was used and data were collected using mix method of data collection, in order to gain an insight into the elements of the store layout.

#### 4.2 STUDY TYPES

There are basically three methods of data collection

- ❖ Qualitative
- ❖ Quantitative
- ❖ Mix Method

##### 4.2.1 Qualitative: (QRCA, 2016)

This type of research is designed to understand and reveal the perceptions of a target audience's'. It uses in-depth studies of small groups of people to guide and support the construction of hypotheses. The outcome of qualitative research is more descriptive rather than predictive. Qualitative methods include in-depth interviews of participants, group discussions (from two to ten participants is typical); diary and journal exercises; and Sessions could also be performed in person, by means of cell phone, by way of videoconferencing and via the internet.

**4.2.2 Quantitative:** This is all about asking opinions of a group of person in a structured method so as to produce hard info and facts to support and guide your study. It is very important to survey people in relatively large numbers in order to get reliable outcome.

##### 4.2.3 Mix Method: Creswell et al 2003. Page 6.

Mixed methods research is a methodology for conducting. Research that involves collecting, analyzing, and integrating (or mixing) quantitative and qualitative research (and data) in a single study or a longitudinal program of inquiry.

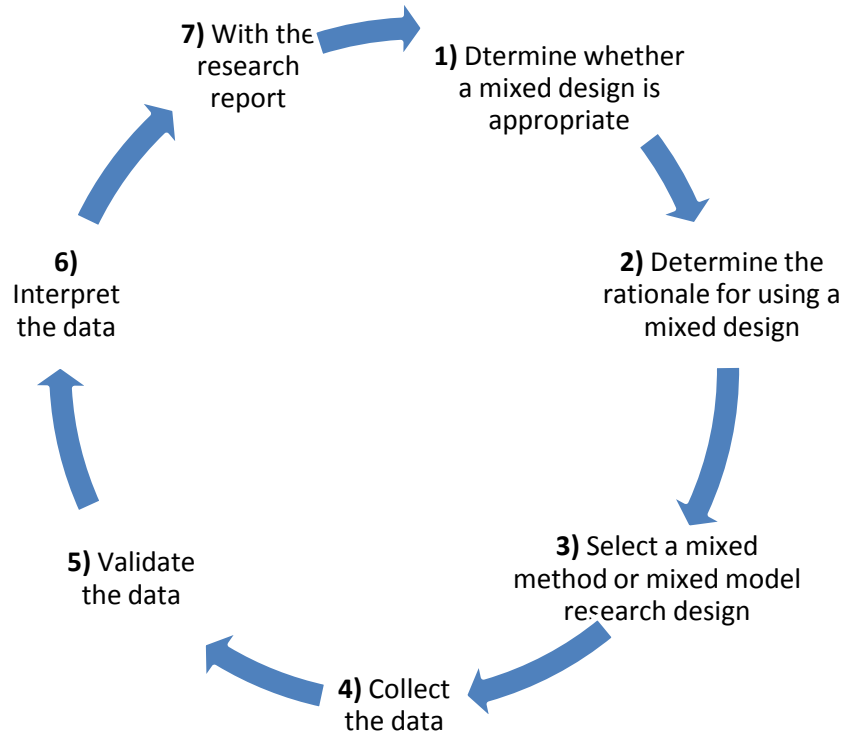


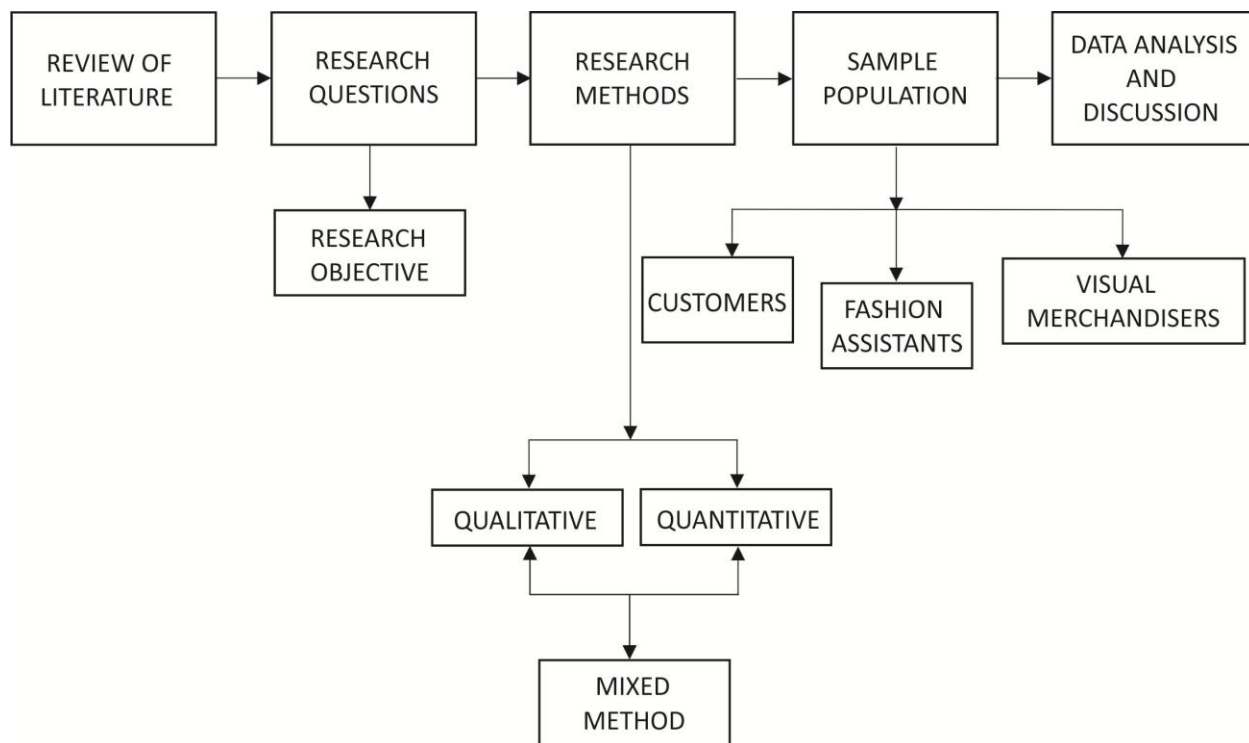
Image source:<http://www.southalabama.edu/coe/bset/johnson/lectures/lec14.htm>

#### 4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Creswell et al (2003, Page 6) the study was mixed in nature, the data have been collected by way of self-administered questionnaires separately for consumers and VM (quantitative) along with personal interviews of Fashion Assistants, VM and Store Managers (qualitative).

One cannot get a total insight of store layout problems by conducting surveys with consumers only, because they themselves are confused about store display many-a-times. So VM and Fashion assistants are interviewed by me in order to understand the hidden parts of customer psychology.

## RESEARCH DESIGN FLOW CHART



Every point in this flowchart has been discussed earlier , except population, sample size, questionnaire content, types of questions, data collection and data analysis. So, given below are the summary of exceptional points.

### 4.4 POPULATION

Population is the total number of all possible subjects or elements which could be included in a study. If the data are valid, the results of research on a sample of subjects drawn from a much larger population can then be generalised to the population (Statistics: Glossary, 2008). Properly defining the study population is crucial in the design of the research project.

The target population in this research was all customers who shop at the **Pantaloons south Ex Store**, Delhi base VM's, Fashion assistants and Delhi based store managers. A comparison amongst various educational levels, age, gender and earnings were also considered since I believe that these factors could influence the research results.

#### 4.5 SAMPLE SIZE

Sample size is defined as the number of elements to be included in a study. In this case the sample size was 110 respondents, including VM's FA's and store managers as they were considered to provide sufficient input to ascertain findings. Normal footfall at **Pantaloons South Ex** ranges from 400 to 600 customers per day out of which 200 to 400 customers are their potential customers. So I surveyed 1/4th of The potential consumer in order to fulfill my research requirements.

There are five floors in Pantaloons South Ex. Customers on each floor has been surveyed to understand the psychology of every age group and gender. The five floors on which survey was conducted are:

Basement	Kids section is situated in the basement.
Ground Floor	As the ethnic world is the strength of Pantaloons South Ex, it is situated on the ground floor.
First floor	Ladies Western is situated on the first floor
Second floor	Men's casuals are situated on the second floor
Third Floor	Men's formals are on the third floor.

#### 4.6 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The questionnaire was composed in the form of closed-ended (or structured) questions in which respondents were asked to tick an option out of five. A type of a rating scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree has been given as options. The questions were designed in a way that offered answers to the objective of the study. The Likert scale was used to structure the questionnaire. Likert scales are easy to code and handy to analyze. Clear and simple phrases have been used to construct the questions, with the intention to make them simpler to understand and answer. The questionnaire was formed from the gap that I find during the review of the literature. The questionnaire was pre-tasted earlier than it was used to accumulate data as a way to check if the content and sequencing of questions have been right. Any correction that needed to be made have been then accomplished before the study was conducted. Secondary knowledge was gathered from books, journals, and the web earlier than the questionnaire was designed.

#### 4.7 QUESTIONNAIRE CONTENT

The questionnaire consisted of two pages. The questions adopted an introduction part on the first page, explaining the rationale and the importance of the study. This part additional assured respondents of their anonymity and the fact that the questionnaire would not be too time-consuming to complete.

#### 4.8 TYPES OF QUESTIONS

A questionnaire was composed and saved deliberately short to suit the face-to-face process and to improve the response rate. The questionnaire was edited to make sure that it was grammatically correct.

Closed-ended questions had been used considering the fact that they limit respondents' answers to the survey. The participants have been allowed to opt from a pre-existing set of options. Closed-ended questions are easy to administer and usually evoke A fast response (Schmidt and Hollensen, 2006: 151, Talpana,2009: 67). Clear and easy words had been used to construct the questions so as to make them

less difficult to understand and reply. The questionnaire consisted of questions developed from reviewing the previous literature on my research area.

#### **4.9 DATA COLLECTION**

The process of data collection was survey method and personal interview method. Hawkins et al. (2007: 750), Tlapana (2009: 68) propose that surveys are systematic approaches to gathering knowledge from a large number of people by means of questionnaires. Therefore, personal interviews had been carried out whereby questionnaires had been administered to the chosen sample as a way to extract certain understanding on the subject and clarify difficult questions.

#### **4.10 DATA ANALYSIS**

The data collected have been coded and edited to cut back errors, for making it less complicated to capture the data into Excel format. The questionnaires had been counted and recounted to make sure that all of the respondents had answered and completed the questions satisfactorily. The data captured have been double checked as a way to make certain that there had been no capturing mistakes. Once the info had been captured, a number of analyses had been run on the data. Descriptive data in the type of frequencies and percentages had been computed from the variables. The results had been graphically represented utilizing bar and pie charts.

#### **4.11 CONCLUSION**

This chapter discussed the methodology adopted during the study. For the study to be reliable and valid, information gathered must be related to the objectives of the study. All attempts were made to ensure that errors were minimized and that the appropriate sample was obtained by the interviewers. I have also conducted an interview, which helped to determine if there were any problems arising from the interviews.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter commences with a detailed analysis of data that provides an insight into the findings of the study, accompanied by numerical and graphical representations of the data and interpretation of the results. The presentation of the detailed analysis and the findings, that were taken from two sets of questionnaires that has been administered to customers of Pantaloon South Ex New Delhi, and VM's working in Delhi. along with the interview of Fashion Assistants working at Pantaloons south Ex.

The analysis of data entails the use of descriptive analysis in the form of frequencies. The descriptive statistics, that is frequencies and percentages, provide an initial general overview of the results and are illustrated by pie charts. The graphs presented in this section are extracted from Microsoft Excel to further clarify the findings.

#### **5.2 RESPONSE RATE**

There were two sets of questionnaires, first set of questionnaires were administered inside Pantaloons South Ex store. The total number of respondents that completed the first set of questionnaires as part of the survey was 100. The second set of questionnaires was administered online to VM's working in Delhi, the total number of respondents was 10 that completed the second set of questionnaires. And three Fashion Assistants were interviewed personally.

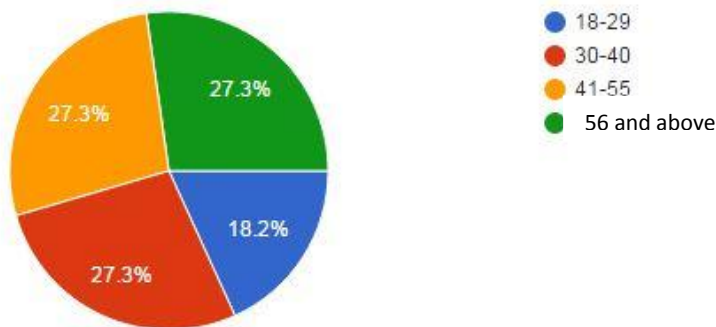
#### **5.3 FREQUENCIES**

According to Malhotra and Birks (2006: 448), Talapana (2009:64) a frequency distribution refers to a mathematical distribution whose objective is to obtain a count of the number of responses associated with different values of one variable and to express these counts in percentage terms. A frequency table is easy to read and provides basic information; therefore, frequencies in this section will be presented in the form of pie charts.

#### 5.4 QUESTIONNAIRES ADMINISTERED TO CUSTOMERS AT PANTALOONS SOUTH EX NEW DELHI

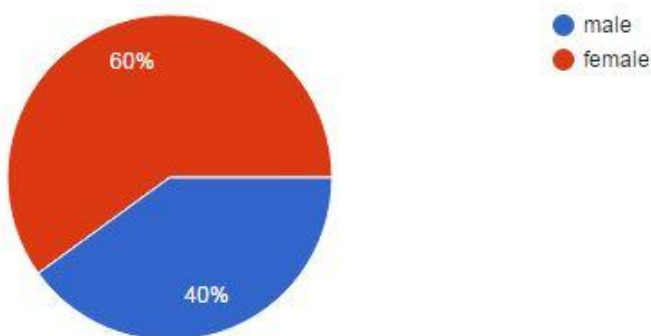
##### The percentage of respondents by age

Fig 5.1.1



According to Figure 5.1.2, 18.2% of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 29, 27.3% of the respondents were between the ages of 30 and 40, 27.3% of the respondents were aged 41 and 55. 27.3% of the respondents were 56 years and above. Therefore, age group 30-40, 41-55, 56 and above equally take part in shopping. Students constitute a small portion of shoppers Pantaloon South Ex. The present data analysis suggests that the age middle age group has an impact on Pantaloon South Ex stores.

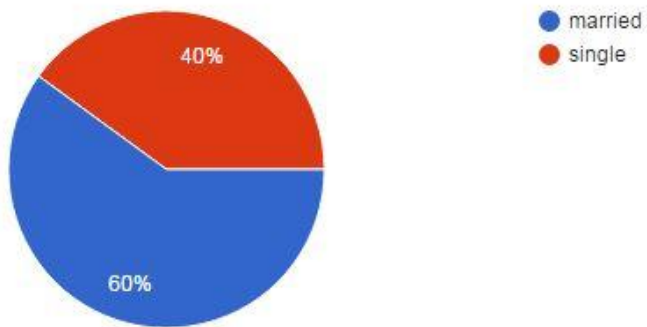
Fig 5.1.2 Percentage of respondents by gender



From the selected sample, 40% were male and 60% were female respondents who participated in the study. The results reveal that women are the predominant shoppers.

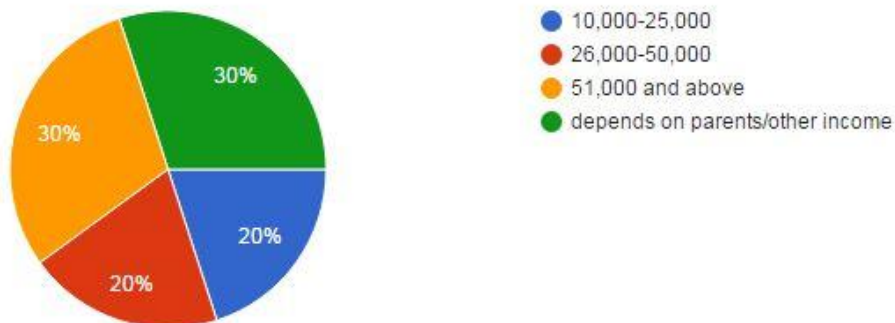


**Fig 5.1.3 Percentage of respondents by marital status**



From the selected sample, 40% were single and 60% were married respondents who participated in the study. The results reveal that married group IS the predominant shoppers.

**Fig 5.1.4 Percentage of respondents by income per month.**



From the selected sample, 30% of customers monthly income was 51,000 and above, next 30% Of customers were dependent on parents or other income. 20% of customers income lies between 26,000-50,000 and the rest of 20% customers income was in between 10,000-25,000. The results reveal that pantaloons caters to middle and upper middle class.

**Fig 5.1.5 Frequency of shopping in a month.**

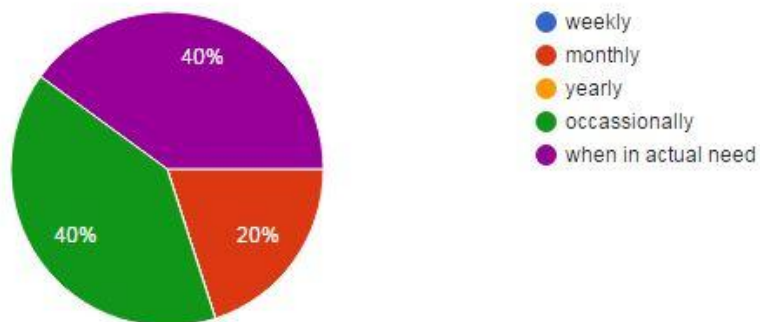


Figure 5.1.5 reflects that 40% of respondents indicated that they did their shopping occasionally, 40% of them did their shopping when they felt that they need to shop and 20% did shopping monthly. The results illustrates that a significant portion (80%) of respondents did shopping occasionally or when they were in actual need of shopping. The results show that the maximum number of customers visiting Pantaloons are in actual need of shopping or they go there to shop for specific occasions.

**Fig 5.1.6 Adequacy of product assortment at Pantaloons South Ex**

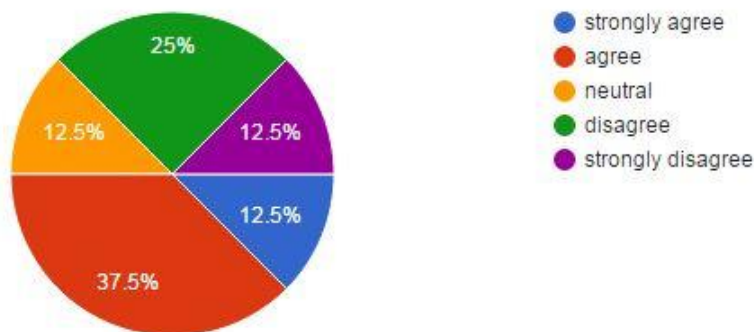


Figure 5.1.6 reveals that 12.5% of respondents at Pantaloons South Ex strongly agreed that they found product assortment of stores in their area adequate, 37.5% agreed, 12.5% were uncertain, 25% disagreed and 12.5% strongly disagreed. The results, therefore, indicate that 37.5% of the respondents found product assortment adequate, which is good with numbers, but South Ex store need to increase adequacy in product assortment.

**Fig 5.1.7 Encountering problems with merchandise display in stores.**

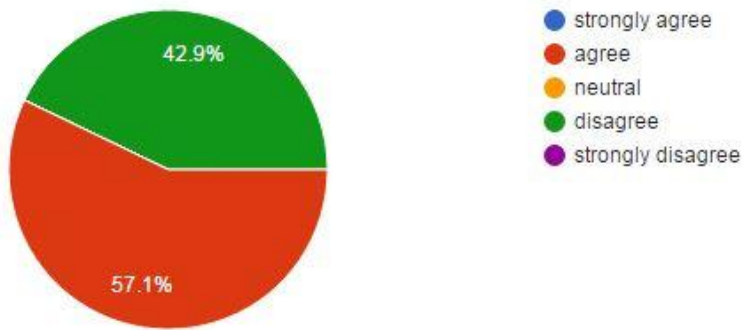


Figure 5.1.7 reflects that 57.1% of respondents at Pantaloons South Ex agreed that they encountered problems with merchandise display in stores, whereas 42.9% disagreed that they encountered problems with merchandise displayed in store. Therefore, it can be assumed that, since South Ex customers encounter problems with merchandise display, patronage of South Ex stores would be negatively impacted.

**Fig 5.1.8 Adequacy of the aisle width.**

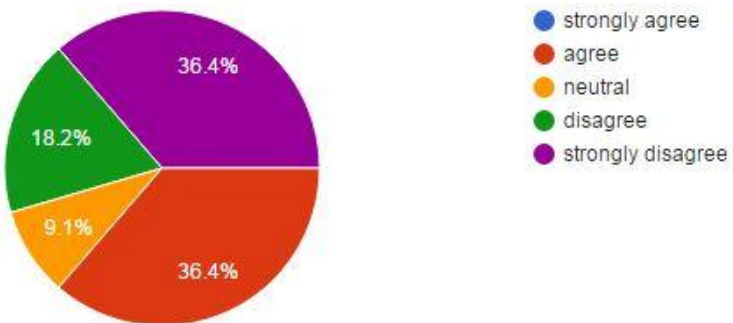
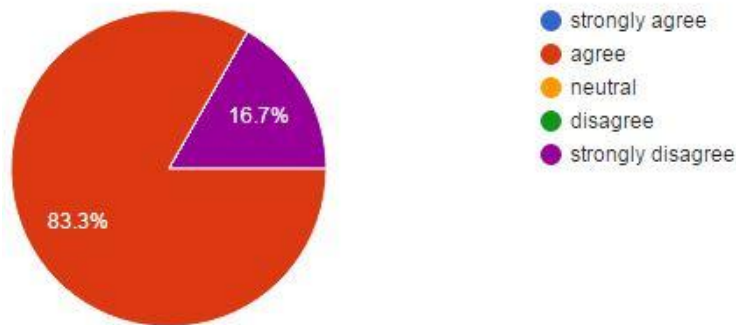


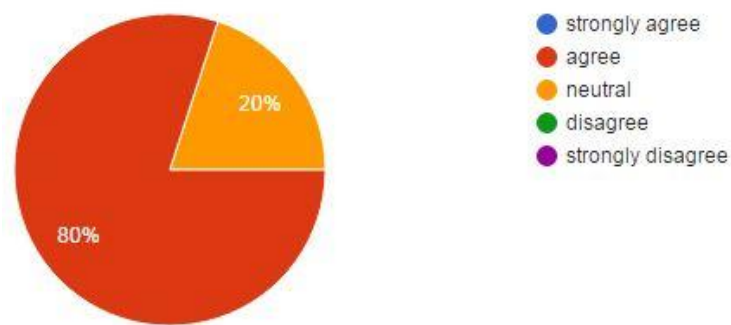
Figure 5.1.8 shows that 36.4% of respondents at the store agreed that they found the aisle width in stores adequate, 9.1% were uncertain, 18.2% disagreed, 36.4% strongly disagreed. The results therefore, indicate that 54.6% of the respondents did not find the aisle width at store adequate. Therefore, the results may have an impact on store layout, design, traffic and merchandise display. Byron (2007: B1) supports the results 72 by emphasizing that well designed aisles help better understand consumer behaviour and make the testing of new products faster, more convenient and more precise. This finding is an indication that aisle width plays an important part in the customer shopping process.

**Fig 5.1.9 Adequacy of the floor space allocated to different brands.**



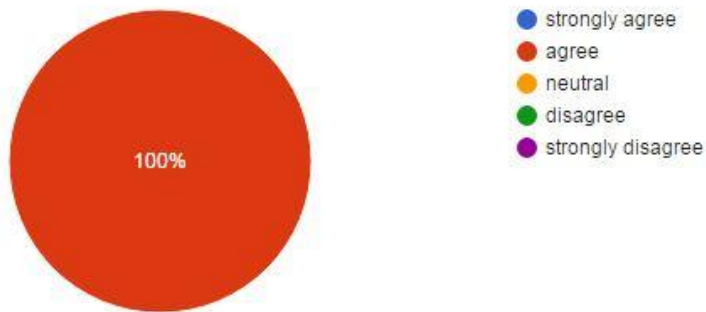
Illustrated by Figure 5.1.9, 83.3% of respondents at the floor found floor space adequate in terms of its allocation to different brands. 16.7% strongly disagreed. The results, therefore, indicate that a significant portion (83.3%) of the respondents found the floor space is adequate. As noted in the literature study, Floor Ideas (2008) substantiates that the look and feel of a store can actually influence the amount of time a customer spends browsing and even the urge to purchase. Floor space has been proven to directly affect moods, especially when it comes to shopping space, which will have a big impact due to the sheer surface area it covers. This is the strong point for South Ex store.

**Fig 5.1.10 Staff attitude towards shoppers**



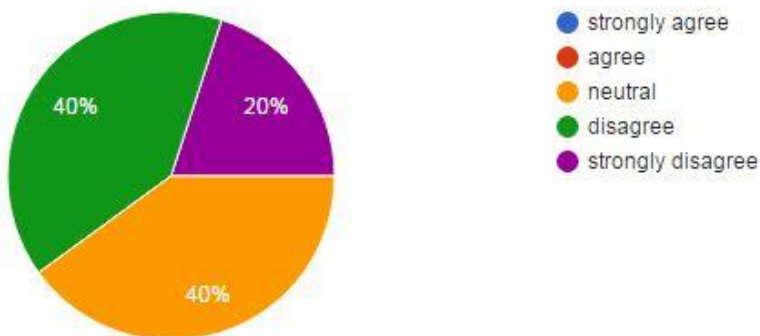
A total of 80% of the respondents agreed that the staff of store had a positive attitude towards shoppers. 20% of the respondents were neutral about staff attitude towards customers. and this finding indicates that, since Pantaloons South Ex customers are satisfied with staff attitude towards shoppers, patronage of convenience stores will be positively impacted. Therefore, store staff needs maintain the same attitude towards customers.

**Fig 5.1.11 Perceptions about store lighting**



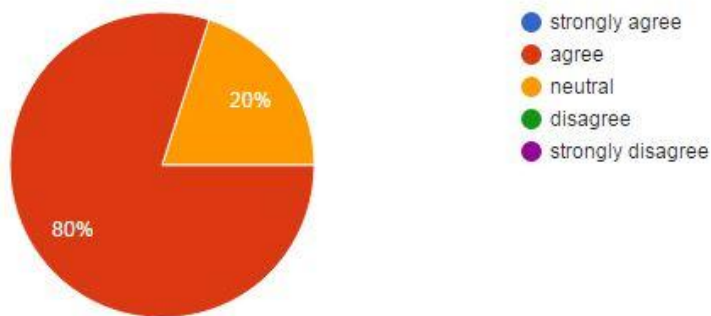
Of the 100 respondents surveyed , 100% supported that store lighting is sufficient. This finding about lighting in the store is a big achievement in order to attract customers inside store. So it's a personal advice that please stick to this lighting standard.

**Fig 5.1.12 Direction signs to merchandise**



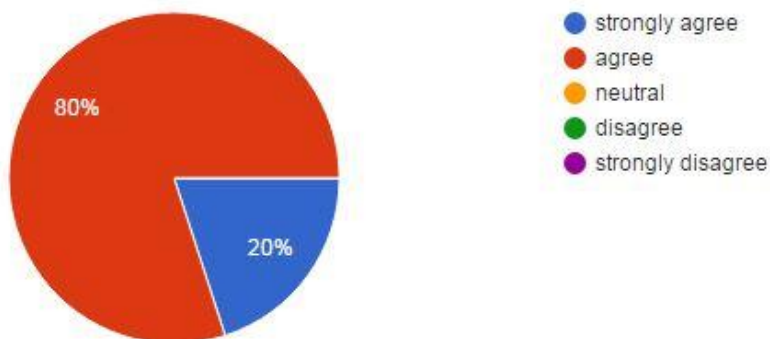
As illustrated by Figure 5.1.12, 40% of the respondents were uncertain that there was a lack of direction signs to merchandise, 40% disagreed, and 20% strongly agreed. The overall results, therefore, imply that only (40%) of the respondents felt that there was a lack of direction signs to show merchandise. Therefore, store can improve on numbers of satisfied customer on the matter of directional signs.

**Fig 5.1.13 Merchandise of related products shelved together.**



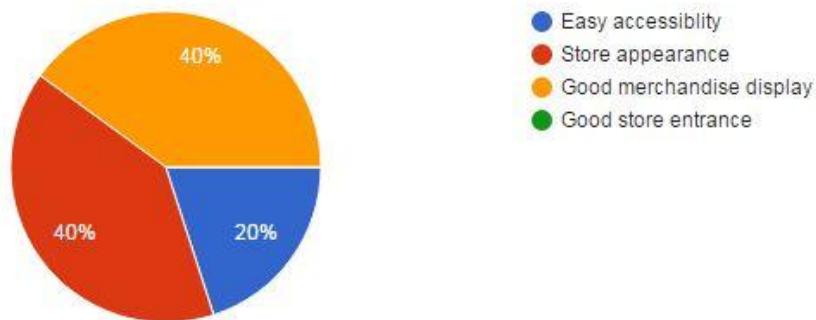
Of the 100 respondents, 20% were neutral about merchandise of related products were not shelved together, 80% agreed. The results, therefore, indicate that a significant portion (80%) of the respondents believed that the merchandise of related products was shelved together. This result is a positive sign and confirms the importance of shelving closely related merchandise together.

**Fig 5.1.14 Color wise segregation of products**



According to Fig 5.1.14, 80% of respondents found that the products are segregated color wise, which is soothing to eyes and which makes browsing easier. And 20% of them felt that the product segregation according to color was not present.

**Fig 5.1.15 Best components of a good store layout**



With regard to the best components of a good store layout, 40% of the respondents regarded good merchandise display as one of the best components, 40% perceived store appearance to be the best component, while 20% believe that easy accessibility is the best component of the good store layout.

## **5.5 OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS ASKED TO VISUAL MERCHANDISERS**

How do MPMdisplay affect consumer perception?

### **❖ VM "SHOPPERS STOP"**

"there is a distinction between men shoppers and women shoppers because Men's of Delhi don't really notice MPMdisplay; however, the women notice the display and they shop accordingly what they want to buy, they will notice it".

One of the VM from "SHOPPERS STOP" said that i-store displays aid in the final stages of decision-making regarding the purchasing of a specific product. However, there are other factors, like price, that also affect the final decision. When MPMdisplays are well designed and logical, the customers tends to be attracted towards the section of products that were emphasized in the display.

This answer illustrates that visual merchandising displays influence buying behavior.

### **❖ VM "Pantaloons "**

"I think it influences customers to want displayed products, but they don't necessarily buy it. ...it draws them towards the section, to that specific section.

If they are happy with the visual merchandising display,they can buy specific product".

According to him buying behavior is influenced on a subliminal level based on the quality of the MPMdisplay.

...if I was a shopper, per se, I don't think I would notice it; it would still be one of those things that I would notice if it was not there...

...you will notice it subconsciously...

According to him , many a times customer don't get to know that they bought the items after getting influenced by the display. But in actual they get influenced subconsciously.

#### ❖ VM "RAYMOND'S"

.....I think visual merchandiser is highly concern about the responsibility which they shoulders while creating a display,they usually make sure that the display he is doing should influence customers and ends up with the selling of merchandise .

According to her visual merchandiser is highly concern about the responsibility which he shoulders while creating a display. Whatever displays a Visual merchandiser or a retailer plans for they make sure that the customers are feeling happy and satisfied about it and at the same time it is socially and ethically accepted by the society. A retailer and a dealer also make sure that the display or any technique of visual merchandising do not hurt any religious sentiments or is not biased with any section of the society. Retailers and visual merchandisers always make an attempt to bring out positive ideas which are socially accepted. Visual merchandisers and retailers need to take care of every minute detail which might affect the young generation or the kids in a negative manner. They need to avoid nudity and violence in their displays for e.g. Simple thing like while dressing up a female mannequin which is so similar to a human body the display designer needs to make sure that before wearing the garments on it an inner wear is put up on it just as similar to how an Indian women dress up decently.

#### **5.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has presented the analysis of the data gathered in the research study.

The results were presented in the form of pie charts. Moreover, the results have identified significant relationships and differences between the variables of the study, and also pointed out areas that require further attention.

Briefly, the findings of this chapter can be summarized as follows:

- ❖ There are problems experienced with inadequate product assortment.
- ❖ Problems are encountered with merchandise display in stores.
- ❖ Inadequate floor space.
- ❖ Related merchandise was not shelved together.

The next chapter contains the conclusions and recommendations of the study.



## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Whilst the previous chapter discussed statistical information that resulted from the survey being carried out, a more in-depth discussion of the results is required. This chapter discusses in-depth the results and findings in respect to the objectives of the study. Further recommendations for future studies are also made.

#### 6.2 SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION DURING RESEARCH

As a result of growing competition and the similarity of merchandise, retailers utilize different MPM methods to distinguish their floor layout as well as to beef up the desirability of products. This study will provide knowledge as to why MPM will have to be considered components of a strategic marketing plan in support of sales increase and constructive retailer/ manufacturer image. This study additionally will provide insights to outlets about the types of MPM that directly or indirectly can affect consumer impulse buying behaviors. The outcome advocate that the topics that linked most strongly to purchase intention were: MPM, and store atmospheric (sensory features of materials and lighting). Initial findings propose that liking of the display does not entirely determine a purchase, however, does make it four times more probable. These MPM practices, serving as stimuli that provoke a desire among consumers that motivates a consumer to make an unplanned purchase decision upon entering the shop and drastically influence consumer's impulse purchasing behaviors. The findings of this study provide sufficient evidence that outlets can utilize different types of MPM method to increase the desirability of merchandise. and to help shoppers being aware of the merchandise as well as to create favorable attitudes.

#### 6.3 SUMMARY OF THEORETICAL STUDY

The goal of the research was to investigate the impact of store layout on consumer purchasing behavior at Pantaloons South Ex New Delhi. According to the main problem and sub-problems that arose, the research design and chapter outline was established.

Chapter three gave an overview of the related literature regarding store layout. The literature discussed the characteristics of store layout and their importance to customer purchasing behavior. It was found that there are problems associated with store layout at Pantaloons stores. I, therefore, believed that Pantaloons store layout and its characteristics is vital and would help to bring changes that would lead to improved customer service by store.

Stages followed in carrying out this research are discussed below:

##### ❖ Planning and framing

I identified the problems, set out goals and objectives of the study, developed a formal research proposal and worked out the timetable for the project. The preliminary reading of books, journals and articles enabled me to properly frame the research statement and formulate the questions around the secondary data.

##### ❖ Gathering of primary and secondary data

I investigated the relevant information from journals, the internet, books from NIFT

(New Delhi) resource center. Coded questionnaires were drawn and administered to customers who shop at the Pantaloons South Ex in order to gather primary data. Interviewed VM's from different companies to know about what VM thinks about the influence of customer on display.

❖ Analyzing data and interpreting study results

The research was mixed in nature, and the data was collected from respondents through the use of questionnaires and personal interview. The analysis involved summarizing data by means of pie charts so that it could be easier to identify patterns and interpret meanings.

❖ Writing a report

The report was drawn up in alignment with the problem statement, the study findings and the **presentations of the findings are also written in a report format.**

#### **6.4 ACHIEVEMENTS OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

Study objectives serve as the lifeblood of the entire study. The achievement of research objectives are briefly discussed below:

- ❖ To determine the effect of Merchandise Presentation Module (MPM)/Visual merchandising display on consumers' perceptions.
- To study the effect of store atmospheric on consumer buying behavior.

Chapter three has researched literature and provided an understanding of the essential characteristics and components of store layout, and how it impacts consumer perceptions. Therefore, the first objective has been achieved.

- ❖ To investigate whether consumers are satisfied with the level of service they get from the Pantaloons South Ex Store in terms of accessibility, quality of merchandise and general appearance.

The satisfaction levels were tested and analyzed in chapter five, with the help of pie chart based on the outcome questionnaire and interview that has been conducted in store from the consumer, Fashion Assistance and VM's of different brands. Which indicates that the majority of respondents were not satisfied with the general appearance of the stores being; floor space, direction signs to merchandise, shelving of merchandise, density of pilling, product assortment, merchandise display, aisle width and accessibility of pantaloons South Ex Store. Theoretical information in the literature review also suggests that stores should pay attention to external appearance; if the external appearance is not attractive, customers will not want to enter. Both service and merchandise quality exert significant influence on store performance, measured by sales growth and customer growth, and their impact is mediated by customer satisfaction (Babakus et al., 2004: 713). Therefore, this objective has been achieved.

## **6.5 RESTRICTIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study focused only on one area, South Ex New Delhi, but the findings are much broader in their application. The study was conducted at Pantaloons South Ex New Delhi store. There is no substantial amount of data as there are few current publications on store layout available, but there is an adequate amount of information about store layout around the world.

## **6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.6 .1 Recommendations based on research design**

#### **❖ Sample – Geographical Region**

In this study, respondents were selected from the South Ex area only. It will be beneficial to extend the study to other stores in India and also to other provinces in order to assess the impact of store layout on purchasing behaviors of these respondents in further studies. The opinions of customers in other areas will enable the researcher to compare the results between geographical regions and thereby better identify the generalization of these findings.

### **6.6 .2 Recommendations based on research design**

#### **❖ Store appearance and image**

Findings show that convenience stores at Pantaloons South Ex have good store appearance and image. Therefore, it is recommended that same or better effort be made by the store manager to ensure the same or improve store appearance and image.

#### **❖ Merchandise display and assortment**

It is recommended that store manager of Pantaloons South Ex should take into consideration the seriousness of merchandise display and assortment as findings indicated that consumers do encounter problems of locating merchandise while shopping.

#### **❖ Aisle and decor**

In the existing layout, as customers are ready to pay for their items and leave the store, they are currently waiting in lines and go through the cramped check out aisles. Another improvement is to create space in and around cash counter. This will help to reduce another congested area of the store. There is also a need for an overall improvement in decor stores need more added appeal to encourage consumers to return.

## **6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STORE MANAGERS IN GENERAL**

Store managers should have the retail strategy in place; targeting an ideal customer, knowing what products they are buying and what forms of advertising will be most effective in reaching this important target group. Store managers need to understand the location within which the store operates and provide best service levels, pricing policies, merchandise assortment, store environment and store image. Store managers should seek to sell products/services that satisfy the buyers' needs. A retail strategy can help provide day to- day operational direction.

## **6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

It is recommended that further research is done of a mixed nature even for consumers at the country level that will explore in depth, more about store layout and its impact on consumer purchasing behavior at different stores. It was noted that some respondents wanted to say more about the store layout and their purchasing behaviors but the questionnaire was not designed in a manner that allowed them to elaborate. Therefore, further research is recommended, for example, qualitative research.

## **6.9 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This study has highlighted the impact of store layout and purchasing behaviors of consumers at convenience stores in Kwa Mashu. Issues relating to store layout and purchasing behavior were discussed. In today's volatile economy, providing excellent store layout can be the critical difference in any company's success. With ever-changing store layouts in the retail industry, retailers face the ongoing challenge of gaining competitive advantage from creating added customer value. In order to accomplish this value, retailers have to constantly review their store layout strategies.

The recommendations and conclusions discussed in this chapter represent some of the actions that could possibly be taken at Pantaloons South Ex to improve store layout. There is no doubt that other recommendations can be used successfully to enhance store layout. This study will have an impact on the service quality which will assist store manager to increase customer satisfaction at Pantaloons South Ex.

## ANNEXTURE

Consumers' perception related to store display are in question. It has previously been stated that the conventional visible merchandising elements (store design, lights, product placements and atmospherics, fixtures and permanent props) are of high significance to the retail industry (Levy & Weitz, 2009: 527). The present literature fails to directly recognize the potential that visual merchandising displays have on influencing emotional and behavioural responses and to determine what shoppers' perceptions are regarding the visible merchandising display. The purpose of this study is to explore the outcomes of visual merchandising display on consumer behaviour.

**Name:**

**Age:**

**Gender:**

**Occupation**

a) Employed b) Business/Others c) Professional d) Unemployed

**Marital Status**

a) Married b) Single

**Income (Individual income per month)**

a) 10,000 - 25,000 INR b) 26,000 - 50,000 c) 51,000 and above d) Depends on parents/other income

**1. How frequently do you shop?**

a) Weekly b) Monthly c) yearly d) occasionally e) When in actual need.

**2. Store ambience stimulate my desire for shopping?**

a) *Strongly Disagree* b) *Disagree* c) *Neutral* d) *Agree* e) *Strongly Agree*

**3. Garment when displayed on hanger entice me more.**

a) *Strongly Disagree* b) *Disagree* c) *Neutral* d) *Agree* e) *Strongly Agree*

**4. Non-apparel store with well displayed counter result in purchase of its products.**

a) *Strongly Disagree* b) *Disagree* c) *Neutral* d) *Agree* e) *Strongly Agree*

**5. Cluttered display does not affect my shopping.**

a) *Strongly Disagree* b) *Disagree* c) *Neutral* d) *Agree* e) *Strongly Agree*

**6. When I am waiting for payment at cash till, I buy product placed at counter.**

*a) Strongly Disagree   b) Disagree   c) Neutral   d) Agree   e) Strongly Agree*

**7. Different window display gives me an idea and information about the merchandise available in the store**

*a) Strongly Disagree   b) Disagree   c) Neutral   d) Agree   e) Strongly Agree*

**8. I tend to buy more when your product is placed with other related product.**

*a) Strongly Disagree   b) Disagree   c) Neutral   d) Agree   e) Strongly Agree*

**9. The style worn by models in the store visuals are preferred by Me.**

*a) Strongly Disagree   b) Disagree   c) Neutral   d) Agree   e) Strongly Agree*

**10. Display motivates me to look at the products more critically.**

*a) Strongly Disagree   b) Disagree   c) Neutral   d) Agree   e) Strongly Agree*

**11. The creative and systematic arrangement of products in the retail chain outlet helps me in the selection of product.**

*a) Strongly Disagree   b) Disagree   c) Neutral   d) Agree   e) Strongly Agree*

**12. I like existing display technique of pantaloons.**

*a) Strongly Disagree   b) Disagree   c) Neutral   d) Agree   e) Strongly Agree*

**13. When I walk along the walking area I tend to look through clothing close to me .**

*a) Strongly Disagree   b) Disagree   c) Neutral   d) Agree   e) Strongly Agree*

**14. Mannequin styling/display influence my shopping decision.**

*a) Strongly Disagree   b) Disagree   c) Neutral   d) Agree   e) Strongly Agree*

**15. I tend to choose which store to shop in, depending on eye catching window display**

*a) Strongly Disagree   b) Disagree   c) Neutral   d) Agree   e) Strongly Agree*

**16. The lighting in the area of product allows me to evaluate the quality of the product.**

*a) Strongly Disagree   b) Disagree   c) Neutral   d) Agree   e) Strongly Agree*

**17. The clean shelves of retail chain outlet motivate me to stay more.**

*a) Strongly Disagree   b) Disagree   c) Neutral   d) Agree   e) Strongly Agree*

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