

# INVESTIGATING THE INFLUENCE OF VISUAL MERCHANDISING ELEMENTS ON CONSUMERS' BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN APPAREL RETAIL STORES

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## Abstract

*In order to keep retailers competitive in this largely online world, innovative visual merchandising has undoubtedly become the key importance. This study looks into the Hierarchy of Effects Model which illustrates the stages in advertising by highlighting the preferences of consumers. This study aims to investigate the influence of visual merchandising elements on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Malaysia, specifically in the city of Kuantan in Malaysia. This study had adapted a quantitative research design. A questionnaire distributed to respondents at the age 18 and above. A total of 112 respondents had participated in the study. The results of the study show that a few elements like displays/pictures, colours, prices and celebrity endorsements are visual merchandising elements that were proven to positively influence the buying behaviour of consumers. The prices of items in clothing stores were found to be most influential visual merchandising elements whereas celebrity endorsements were the least influential element. The study also revealed gender and age factors do not have any significant influence on the preference of visual merchandising elements and consumers' buying behaviour. Recommendations have been made by the researchers to take into consideration by future studies for further improvement in the research area.*

**Keyword:** Visual merchandising, Consumers' buying behaviour, Hierarchy of Effects Model, Consumer preferences and purchasing choices

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## INTRODUCTION

The perplexing connection between purchaser behavioural and visual promoting has turned into a perpetual theme for marketing analysts. Various elements-like colour psychology, developing computerized patterns, and emotional structure which would influence the shopping experience (Krywulak, 2017).

The reasons for visual merchandising are to teach the customers, to improve the stores' picture, and to support numerous deals by indicating clothing together with extras. Since a definitive objective of visual marketing and of retailing is to get the customer to purchase, visual promoting must lure the shopper into the store, viably present the styles the store brings

to the table, and tell the client the best way to wear and access them inside the setting of design patterns (Wanniachchi & Kumara, 2016). The authors further explained that with an expanded challenge, stores are attempting to make additionally energizing, forceful visual introductions.

Moloney (2013) had developed an infographic that showed 63% of consumers highly valued good images rather than a product description. At a very basic level, the most ideal approach to get somebody to purchase an item is to ensure that they see it—particularly with regards to driving buys. Customers are bound to make a spur of the moment purchase in the event that they can see the thing effectively from the path (Krywulak, 2017). Further, Krywulak (2017) claimed that presentations should be attractive, and at eye-level, to have the most effect. Successful visual merchandising displays affect consumer emotion; consumers often instinctively purchase goods depending on their current mood (Hefer & Cant, 2013).

### THE HIERACHY OF EFFECTS MODEL

The Hierachy of Effects Model, found by Lavidge and Steiner in 1961, has been regularly utilized in advertising. The model includes six phases from the earliest starting point to make mindfulness about the item to settling on a choice to buy it. In spite of the fact that promoting may not totally impact the qualities and standards of the consumers, however, it may almost certainly change one's negative frame of mind towards an increasingly positive view about the item. Along these lines, advertising can be a powerful methodology towards picking up the consideration of potential purchasers. The Hierarchy of Effects Model comprises six stages; Awareness, Knowledge, Liking, Preferences, Conviction and Purchase.

Awareness is the first stage of the model. In the event that the majority of the intended interest group is unaware of the item, the communicator's undertaking is to fabricate mindfulness, possibly simply name acknowledgment, with basic messages refining the name of the item. Buyers need to end up being mindful of the brand. Catching someone's attention doesn't mean they are going to see a brand name.

The second stage is Knowledge. The intended interest group may have an aspect of mindfulness which does not know much more; therefore, this stage includes the delivery of information on the product. This is the place where the brand name is respected and a great motivator for it becomes important.

The third stage is the Liking stage. On the off chance that target individuals will know the product, what is their opinion about it? If the crowd looks ominously at a product, marketers need to find out why. It is important for the issue of the item to settle the issue initially, and at that point, you would be able to impart its recharged quality.

The fourth stage is the Preference stage. The intended interest group may like the product but does not recommend it to others. In this case, the communicator may attempt to fabricate consumer's inclination by advancing value, confidence, execution and specific highlights. The communicator will test the accomplishment of the crusades by calculating the tendency of the people before and after the campaign.

Conviction is the fifth step. The intended interest group may lean toward a specific item, but it may not create a sense of obtaining it. The role of the communicator is to fabricate conviction among the intended interest group.

Purchase is the last step. A few individuals from the intended interest group may still have a belief that they don't really get around to making a purchase. They will trust that there will be more information or plans to act later. This is the position where buyers make a move to actually search for or buy info.

However, this study is more focused on the fourth Preferences. This occurs when the customer sees the overall brand/commodity as a suitable choice for future purchases. That is, the product joins the evoked (consideration) range of brands of the customer. Customers have opinions about a brand, so it is not a time when an advertiser should focus on a product, its positive attributes or its technical capabilities. Alternatively, advertisers should try to appeal to the beliefs, feelings, self-esteem or lifestyle of the customer. Furthermore, consumers may like more than one brand of products and might even decide to buy any of them. At this stage, marketers will want the customer to withdraw from competing products and concentrate on their product or service. Advertisers will want to emphasize the benefits and unique selling points of their products so that buyers can differentiate them from competing brands. Having an outstanding image or using a specialized marketing strategy helps a brand stand out amongst their rivals. By appealing to consumers' desires and wants, it increases the likelihood of consumers to be attracted to advertised products. Thus, fulfilling consumer preferences may contribute to the high possibility of consumer purchase.

The hierarchy of effects model is highly used in pieces of literature related to marketing or advertising. This model has been widely applied across industries in analyzing their findings in order to measure the responses of their respective consumers. Prior studies had incorporated this model in various industries such as sports team loyalty (Tsiotsou, 2013), EU quality labels on food products (Grunert & Achmann, 2015), user interactions on brand awareness and purchase intentions (Hutter et al., 2013) and Islamic advertising (Mokhtar, 2016).

Coming across these varieties of industries that had applied this particular model, the researcher had yet to find a study that incorporated this model in analyzing the consumer behaviour in the clothing industry. Due to this restriction in sources, there had been a gap in the literature related to the fashion industry. Therefore, the researcher decided to use this particular model to fill in the grey areas and find out what type of results gained by applying this model. Also, due to this fact, there is a possibility of new knowledge gained through the use of this model.

## **CONSUMERS' BUYING BEHAVIOUR**

Consumer behaviour is a critical component for distributors or marketing managers to be conscious of. Purchase intent could be the client's expectations that lead to the procurement of operation, the purchase objective is to measure the probability of purchasing a certain item by the customer (Schiffman & Kanuk, cited in Phan & Mai, 2016). In order to achieve product success, it is important for marketers or sellers to have adequate knowledge of their targeted

customers. Meng-Shan et al. (2015) have shown that consumer behaviour is strongly influenced by the individual's buying motives for a specific product. Therefore, there must be a driving feature that guides the consumer decision-making process to end up with an item in hand.

Fashion literacy has been shown to have an effect on consumer behaviour. According to Mafini et al., as cited in Valaei and Nikhashemi (2017), the fashion-conscious group means customers who are informed of new trends and who are tracking shifts in fashion trends. Colour is one aspect of a style that changes over time. For example, if the current trend were neon coloured clothing, consumers who are interested in fashion would follow the trend and search for neon coloured clothing. This awareness is due to the consumer's surrounding environment. The consumer environment may leave a mark on the decision to purchase the product. External influences (i.e; celebrities) and internal influences (family members, friends) have some influence to guide their purchasing decisions (Meng-Shan et al., 2015). Kardes et al. (2011) as quoted by Hefer and Cant (2013) emphasized the relationship between consumer behaviour and consumer response, which consists of an emotional and psychological response from the customer. These reactions can be sparked by the environment of the store. If the store is able to produce an environment that is tailored to the consumers, they may be more likely to purchase the items. Hefer and Cant (2013) have shown that unappealing visuals and displays in the store can give rise to a negative judgment about the store and its products. Consumers would therefore be less motivated to proceed with the purchase of the product.

Consumer behaviour can also be influenced by the knowledge that consumers benefit from the purchase of a particular product. Adriani and Sihombing (2015) have shown that the customer's decision relates to hedonic value. The authors described hedonic value as the feelings that customers will feel after such transaction has been carried out, such as happiness and enjoyment. Feeling of ease and convenience are also variables that affect customer purchasing decisions, such as being able to spend less because an opportunity arises, as they will be able to save even more on that particular item. However, Afonso Vieira and Vaz Torres (2014) proved that hedonic value does appeal to all customers. Different types of consumers shop according to different motives. Task-oriented consumers view shopping as means to fulfil a need, therefore, the hedonic value of a product is not a primary requirement for these types of consumers. Task-oriented consumers care more for an item's utilitarian value compared to hedonic value.

In the apparel industry, there are a few dimensions that Gurunathan and Krishnakumar (2013) had studied that are related to apparel buying behaviour in India. The five dimensions are attributes that are in relation to apparel stores such as consumer characteristics, reference groups, store attributes, promotion, and product attributes. The study discovered that store attributes, promotion and reference groups are important dimensions that highly influence apparel buying behaviour among Indian consumers. The authors suggested that apparel stores should give more significance to store credits to draw in and bid the customers, and furthermore, the promotional programmes ought to be executed well and suitably. The apparel shops should also think of projects including different reference bunches through which they

could without much of a stretch and accurately draw in the buyers so they can be given assistance as per their prerequisites.

Aside from prices, the quality of a product itself is the main factor behind any purchase (Kumar, 2017). This may be caused mainly by consumer intention. Most of the time, consumers enter a store with the intention to make a purchase or they already have in mind on what products they intend to buy. Consumers that are mainly driven by their needs subconsciously neglect or feel unbothered by the stores' atmosphere unless it will guide them to their intended product in mind. The main goal is to make a purchase and leave the store instead of lingering and wandering around the store aimlessly. Borges et al. (2013) revealed that utilitarian store atmosphere have a better effect on consumers that focus on needs and intention of buying. Therefore, stores that present hedonic atmosphere would not influence these types of consumers as they are determined in their shopping intention.

### **CONSUMER PREFERENCES AND PURCHASING CHOICES**

Preferences in clothing are known to be factor in determining one's purchasing choice. Previous studies discovered that the consumer behaviour may differ across genders as their preferences are diverse from the opposite gender. Chea (2011) discovered that female shoppers are most likely to be convinced by their companion while shopping. However, male shoppers rely on their self-orientation and trusted their personal judgment through touch and feel of the clothing. In addition, store atmosphere impacts consumer behaviour in a different way based on their gender (Borges et al., 2013). Both genders evaluate an item in a contrasting manner. Male consumers shop differently compared to female consumers as they both have different psyche in doing things (Bashir et al., 2013).

Consumer behaviour between male and female can also be differentiated through the factors that attract the consumer. Despite the similarities in terms of quality and prices, female shoppers were found to consider more factors such as style, pattern, fabric and many more (Chea, 2011). On the other hand, Das (2014) found distinct factors between both genders. The author discovered that male consumers are influenced more by retail brand personality while females are driven by self-congruity.

Pentecost and Andrews (2010) found that males do not often buy clothes compared to females, however, males were found to spend more on purchasing clothes rather than females as it is need. Therefore, the money spent on clothing is not seen as a waste, but an investment for the future. Although it can be seen that gender plays an important role in shaping consumer behaviour, Workman and Cho (2013) found gender to have no influence on the behaviour of consumers in the Korean community. There was found to be a lack of gender difference in the shopping behaviour of the fashion industry in Korea. This is because Korean men are gaining knowledge in fashion as they are increasingly spending their money and time grooming themselves. The author concluded that no significant to difference in purchasing behaviour for both Korean men and women as they are moving towards the same interest in fashion. In addition, Chea (2011) found similar results as the author found no differences between male



and female in terms of price. This may be due to both genders commonly seek for products that are worthy in terms of its prices.

Furthermore, age was also found to be a powerful aspect in shaping consumer behaviour (Chea, 2011). According to Pentecost and Andrews (2010), there is a significant difference reported between generational cohorts in terms of the psychographic attributes that explain their behaviour towards fashion. Overall, Generation Y was discovered to have a positive attitude towards fashion. But, both Generation Y and Generation X were reported to similarly be impulsive in their purchases in fashion. The Baby Boomers and Swing Generation were neither influenced by fan ship fashion nor impulsive buying. In another study, Parment (2013) 18 only focused comparing two generations; Baby Boomers and Generation Y. Segmentation by 'coming of age' offers a clearer segmentation strategy than birth age (Parment, 2013). Baby Boomers prefer to be treated by a trusted retailer and value the in-store experience. However, Generation Y was found to be more focused on the item itself rather than those two factors. Hence, it can be concluded in both studies that consumer behaviour in fashion varies across generations. Cham et al. (2017) discovered that Generation Y consumers that are price-conscious are highly influenced by the price of an item. Despite having a strong interest in a product, it does not determine a purchase if the price is not in their favour. Moreover, prices are a major concern to consumers of the middle age group (Goguen, 2012). The older consumers do not seem to be bothered much by prices while shopping. However, as the younger generation mostly have the fear of missing out (FOMO) attitude, they tend to splurge on items in order for them to be aligned with the current trend. The generational gap proves the different choices made by the consumers are due to the difference in preference by each generation. In contrast to these findings, Chea (2011) discovered no differences between young and old consumers in terms of prices which reflected their attitude of being conscious about the prices of products whenever they decide to make a purchase.

## **VISUAL MERCHANDISING ELEMENTS IN CLOTHING STORES**

Visual content can appear as pictures, recordings, graphs, infographics, animations, iconography, and graphics interchange format (GIF) – giving organizations the chance to display nibble estimate data in a convincing way (Ganwani, 2017). The types of visual designs chosen by every clothing store vary from one another. As indicated by Matthysz as cited by Wannichchi and Kumara (2016), Visual marketing involves everything the customer finds in moving toward the store and after entering it. This incorporates the outside appearance of the store, the store sign, show windows, insides stylistic theme, store format, fixturing, lighting, and the way the product is exhibited and showed inside the store. Visual marketing additionally incorporates exercises that intrigue the customer's senses other than the visual, for 19 example, music or scent. Up to this point, the action was basically called display. But, visual merchandising is a lot more extensive than display, which is the generic visual introduction of product and props. Wannichchi and Kumara (2016) believed that visual merchandising, or visual introduction, is utilized to convey design, worth and quality credits of a store to its imminent customers. The visual elements selected in this study are visuals that can be found in

retail clothing stores. Visual elements such as pictures / displays, colours, prices and celebrity endorsements will be further explained with the support of prior works of literature pertaining to each element.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Visuals are the easiest way to convey visual messages in this modern age, showing that they have a positive impact on buyers' reactions. This is likely due to the fact that consumers can visit the organization's website to see additional information about the organization and to find additional information within minutes. Decision making has become more complicated today and is considered to be very critical for customers. This is attributable to a rapid change in the dynamic global business climate (Muniady et al., 2014). Consumers are exposed to advertisements and media outlets that feed ample information where most of them have too many conflicting messages.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Integrating captivating visual content can help improve the way your audience consumes and remembers your message (Ganwani, 2017). Hence, it is crucial to make effective use of it in order to obtain the desired response from consumers. Nonetheless, based on previous research by Negm and Tantawi (2015), the researchers found that little is understood about how advertising content is perceived by consumers. There is therefore less focus on customer understanding of advertisements. In addition, Pileliene and Grigaliunaite (2016) emphasized that the effect of visual designs on customer buying intentions must also be assessed.

Lewis (2018), provided that store layouts and displays are one of the elements that attract potential customers to their stores. However, the author does not distinctly present the specific that may impact the customers, especially the differences it has on different genders. This statement can be supported by Chea (2011), as the author claimed that gender differences in consumer behaviour and clothing store environment are not much investigated in the past. Fashion stores unavoidably partitioned the segment for ladies and men. A few stores sell either just female wears or male wears. It is sensible there is distinctive shop characteristic and purchaser conduct implication. Nonetheless, there is still yet to have a particular measurement or standard in determining the impact of fashion store characteristics towards its customers and its impact on different genders.

In addition, consumers' impression of visual promoting can stir purchasers' instore exploration, for example, communicating with items, separate a retail brand among competitors; contribute to brand preference; and encourage buying intentions (Park, Jeon & Sullivan, 2014). Because of greater competition and goods resemblance, retailers use visual merchandising to distinguish their offerings from others as well as improve product desirability (Kim, 2003). Effective visual merchandising also adheres to the five senses of consumers so that they can feel and interact with goods (Park et al., 2014). Lighting had a major influence as illuminated spaces were more stirring than tiny lit rooms (Lee & Lee, 2021). Further, a strong

positive mindset to advertising could turn into brand preference, awareness, and loyalty (Mehta & Chugan, 2013).

In examining how visual merchandising in fashion retail stores affect consumers' brand attitude and purchase intention, Park et al. (2014) discovered that in-fashion and appearance affect image aesthetic qualities significantly. Mannequins utilized in visual merchandising provide knowledge which contributes to customers' psychological understanding of goods as well as their social acceptability (Cant & Wiid, 2020). The function of visual merchandising has a positive effect on the utilitarian qualities of the product. Therefore, favourable attitudes towards visual merchandising transfer directly to favourable attitudes of the brand which are positively associated with purchase intentions.

Hefer and Cant (2013) stressed that visuals reflected in stores could have a significant impact on consumers' buying intentions. Looking at the field of visual communication, most of the studies that look at the study of visual communication on consumer behaviour were from other countries like Taiwan (Meng-Shan et al., 2015), India (Jain, Sharma & Narwal, 2012) and South Africa (Hefer & Cant, 2013). There are limited findings which have dealt with the effect of visual merchandising on consumer behaviour, especially in the fashion industry in Malaysia. Moreover, the methods of previous studies are limited in the recognition of the effect of visual merchandising on product choice, as a wide range of display-related factors could have an impact (Park et al., 2014). Hence, the purpose of this study is to examine the influence of visual merchandising elements on consumers' buying behaviour in clothing stores.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the relationship between visual merchandising elements and consumers' buying behaviour.
2. To identify which visual merchandising element has the highest influence on consumers' buying behaviour.
3. To determine if gender has any influence on visual merchandising elements.
4. To investigate if age has any influence on visual merchandising elements.
5. To examine if gender has any influence on consumers' buying behaviour.
6. To investigate if age has any influence on consumers' buying behaviour.

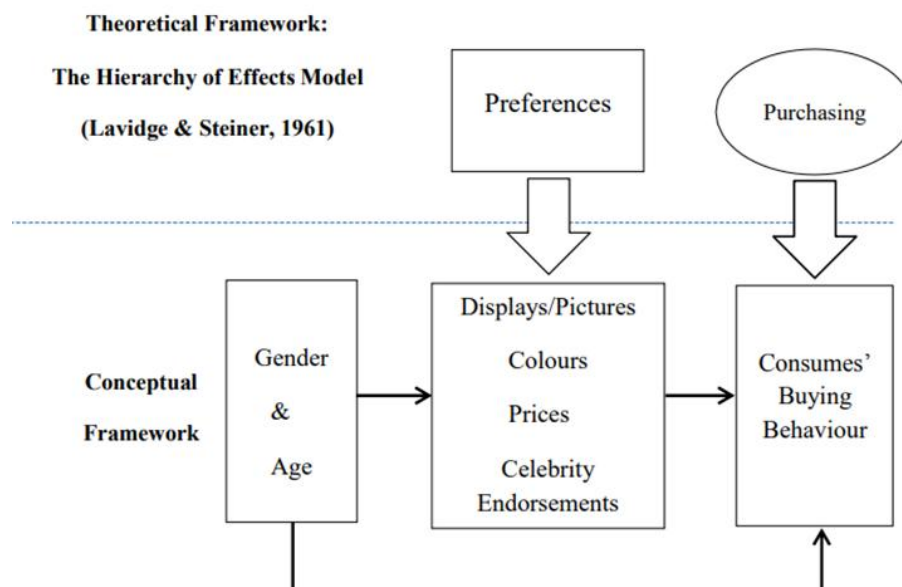
## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this study, a conceptual framework was developed with the aim of highlighting the main variables of the study and to stand as a guideline in discovering the relationships between the consumers' buying behaviour and the visual merchandising elements which are displays/pictures, colours, prices and celebrity endorsements. Age and gender were also examined in finding mean differences in consumers' buying behaviour and visual merchandising elements.





(Lavidge &amp; Steiner, 1961)

*Figure 2.1. Conceptual Framework*

This study utilised a quantitative method adopted from previous studies (Asamoah, 2012; Goguen, 2012; Jain et al., 2012; Wanniarachchi & Kumara, 2016; Khalid & Siddiqui, 2018) that applied this method. The data was collected through distributed questionnaires. The process of data collection was completed by distributing surveys to consumers living in Kuantan. The cross-sectional method was selected as the approach to this study as it commonly used in order to discover the result of interest, for the populace or subgroups inside the populace at a given time point (Levin, 2006).

In order to gain their response, a questionnaire was adapted from past studies based on the variables studied in this research. The questionnaire consisted of a series of questions that were presented in English. The questions for each variable were adapted from several previous studies related to this research. The questionnaire had used the following studies as reference.

**Table 3.1. References for Adapted Questionnaire**

Questionnaire	Variables	Prior Studies
Section B	Displays/Pictures	Jain et al. (2012) and Wanniachchi and Kumara (2016)
Section C	Colours	Goguen, (2012) and Wanniachchi and Kumara (2016)
Section D	Prices	Asamoah (2012) and Wanniachchi and Kumara (2016)
Section E	Celebrity Endorsements	Khalid and Siddiqui (2018)
Section F	Consumers' Buying Behaviour	Asamoah (2012), Goguen, (2012), Jain et al. (2012), Wanniachchi and Kumara (2016) and Khalid & Siddiqui (2018).

Based on Table 3.1., it is clear that the adapted questionnaire in this study had referred to quite a number of studies. The questionnaire could not be adapted from only one piece of literature as it was insufficient to accommodate to all variable's testes in this study. Wanniachchi and Kumara (2016) were cited for displays/pictures, colours prices and consumers' buying behaviour. However, the authors did not fully focus on these variables as they studied other variables as well. Due to the inadequate references, other related studies as seen in Table 3.1. were cited to in order to add more depth to this study and provide sufficient insight on the variables studied. Certain sections were adapted from particulars studies based on the relevance to the variables of this study. According to Sousa et al. (2016), adapting existing questionnaires and fitting it to the current study makes it easier for the target respondents to understand.

**Table 3. 2: Research Instrument in Questionnaire**

No	Research Question	Method	Instrument
1	Research Question 1: What is the relationship between visual merchandising elements and consumers' purchase intention?	Quantitative	Questionnaire Section: B (Displays/Pictures), C (Colours), D (Prices), E (Celebrity Endorsements) and F (Consumer Buying Behaviour)
2	Research Question 2: Which visual merchandising element has the highest influence on consumers' buying behaviour?	Quantitative	Questionnaire Section F (Question 1)
3	Research Question 3: Are there any significant mean differences in the four visual merchandising elements based on gender?	Quantitative	Section: Demographic Profile (Gender) B (Displays/Pictures), C (Colours), D (Prices) and E (Celebrity Endorsements)
4	Research Question 4: Are there any significant mean differences in the four visual merchandising elements based on age?	Quantitative	Demographic Profile (Age) B (Displays/Pictures), C (Colours), D (Prices) and E (Celebrity Endorsements)
5	Research Question 5: Is there a significant mean difference in consumers' buying behaviour based on gender?	Quantitative	Questionnaire Demographic Profile (Gender) and Section F (Consumers' Buying Behaviour)
6	Research Question 6: Are there any significant mean differences in consumers' buying behaviour based on age?	Quantitative	Questionnaire Demographic Profile (Age) and Section F (Consumers' Buying Behaviour)

Cronbach's Alpha will be used as one of the most widely used to test the questionnaire's reliability. Since Cronbach's Alpha can be interpreted as a coefficient of correlation, the range of values is between 0 and 1. In order to be 28 accurate for all products in each segment, the coefficient value must be more than 0.6 and above. If the value of that section is less than 0.6, the objects in that section must be changed or removed. This was proposed by Hair et al. (2010) where all the variables measured in the analysis were found to be accurate when the reliability check cut-off point is above 0.6.

In this study, the questionnaire had been randomly distributed and was answered by the respondents that fulfilled the stated criteria. In this field, Asamoah (2012) with 102

respondents, Jain et al. (2012) with 150 respondents, Gurunathan & Krishnakumar (2013) with 100 respondents and Wanniachchi and Kumara (2016) with 200 respondents, had also adopted the same method. Therefore, the average size of the study would be around 138 respondents.

This study, however, was limited-scale research conducted within a limited time frame. The sample size for this analysis was therefore limited based on the researcher's capabilities. As a result, only a small sample was selected for the participants. A total of 112 respondents participated in this study which was conducted in the city of Kuantan, Malaysia. As such, the respondents of this study comprised of Kuantan residents. Based on the sampling technique, the respondents were required to be at the age of 18 years old and above. Next, the questionnaire was distributed inclusive of the respondents' requirements. Therefore, it is clear as to whom the questionnaire was directed to.

The analysis of this investigation used the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The statistics program of SPSS provides a plethora of basic statistical functions, some of which include frequency, cross-tab and bivariate statistics (Foley, 2018). The analyses that were used in this study are Pearson's Correlation Analysis, One-way ANOVA tests and Descriptive Statistics based on the frequency of data.

**Table 3. 3: Statistical Techniques in Data Analysis**

No	Research Questions	Type of Analysis	Analysis
1	What is the relationship between visual merchandising elements and consumers' purchase intention?	Inferential Analysis	Pearson Correlation Analysis
2	Which visual merchandising element has the highest influence on consumers' buying behaviour?	Descriptive Analysis	Descriptive Statistics Frequencies
3	Are there any significant mean differences in the four visual merchandising elements based on gender?	Inferential Analysis	t-test
4	Are there any significant mean differences in the four visual merchandising elements based on age?	Inferential Analysis	One-Way ANOVA Test
5	Is there a significant mean difference between gender and consumers' buying behaviour?	Inferential Analysis	t-test
6	Is there a significant mean difference between age and consumers' buying behaviour?	Inferential Analysis	One-Way ANOVA Test

## RESULTS

The following are the findings which are significant in answering the research questions.

Research Question 1:

What is the relationship between visual merchandising elements and consumers' purchase intention?

The researcher had conducted a Pearson Correlation Analysis in order to investigate the relationship between visual merchandising elements and consumers' buying behaviour. The results of the analysis are explained below.

**Table 4. 6. Pearson Correlation Analysis between Visual Merchandising Elements and Consumers' Buying Behaviour**

		Consumer s' Buying Behaviour	Displays /Pictures	Colours	Prices	Celebrity Endorse ments
Consumers' Buying Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	.396	.523	.523	.440
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	112	112	112	112	112

Table 4.6. shows that there was a significant weak positive association between consumers' buying behaviour and displays/pictures ( $r=.396$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Therefore, consumers' buying behaviour is influenced by displays/pictures. Further, the Table 4.6. presents a significant moderate positive association between consumers' buying behaviour and both colours ( $r=.523$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and prices ( $r=.523$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Therefore, consumers' buying behaviour is influenced by both colours and prices. The analysis in Table 4.6. also shows that there was a significant weak positive association between consumers' buying behaviour and celebrity endorsements ( $r=.440$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Hence, consumers' buying behaviour is influenced by celebrity endorsements. In conclusion, based on Table 4.6., all four visual merchandising elements; displays/pictures, colours, prices and celebrity endorsements show a significant positive relationship with consumers' buying behaviour.

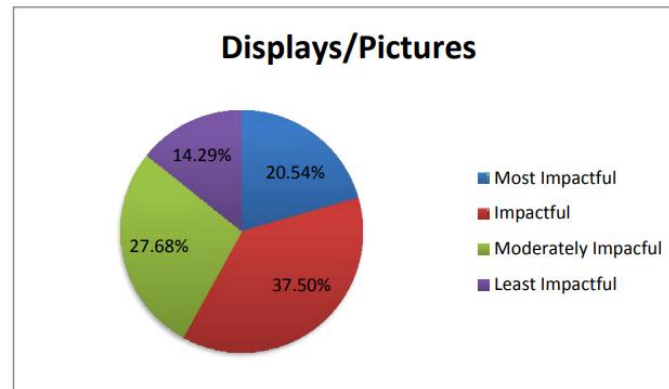
Research Question 2:

Which visual merchandising element has the highest influence on consumers' buying behaviour?

In the questionnaire, the respondents had rated each visual merchandising element's influence on their buying behaviour. Each element was rated in order, from Most Impactful (1) to Least Impactful (4). There are four variables discussed; Displays/Pictures, Colours, Prices and

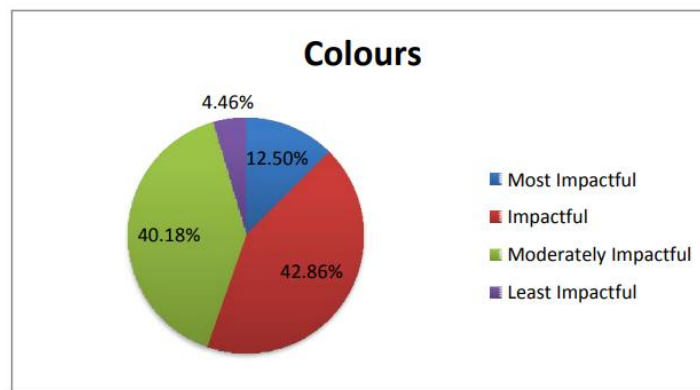


Celebrity Endorsements. The findings are illustrated by using a pie chart below based on frequency of responses.



**Figure 4.1. Distribution of Displays/Pictures**

Figure 4.1. presents the distribution of Displays/Pictures on how impactful it is on the respondents' buying behaviour. The majority of respondents agreed that Displays/Pictures are impactful at 37.50 per cent, followed by moderately impactful at 27.68 per cent and most impactful at 20.54 per cent. The least respondents agreed on least impactful at 14.29 per cent.



**Figure 4.2. Distribution of Colours**

Based on Figure 4.2., it shows the degree of impact of Colours on the respondents' buying behaviour. The majority of respondents agreed on Colours to be impactful at 42.86 per cent. Meanwhile, respondents agreed on moderately impactful for Colours at 40.18 per cent, followed by most impactful at 12.50 per cent. The respondents also viewed Colours to be the least impactful at 4.46 per cent.

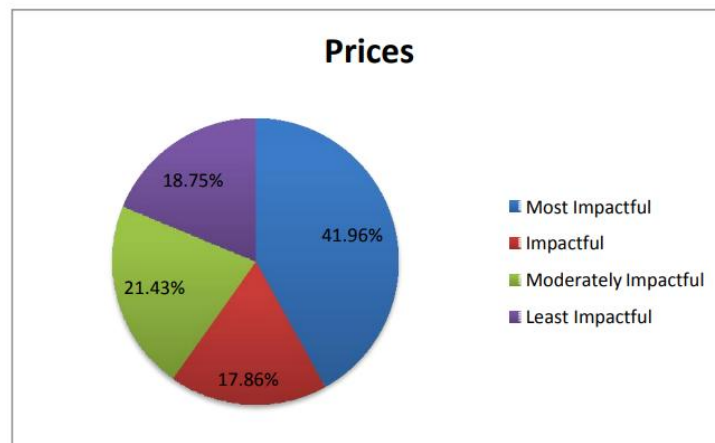
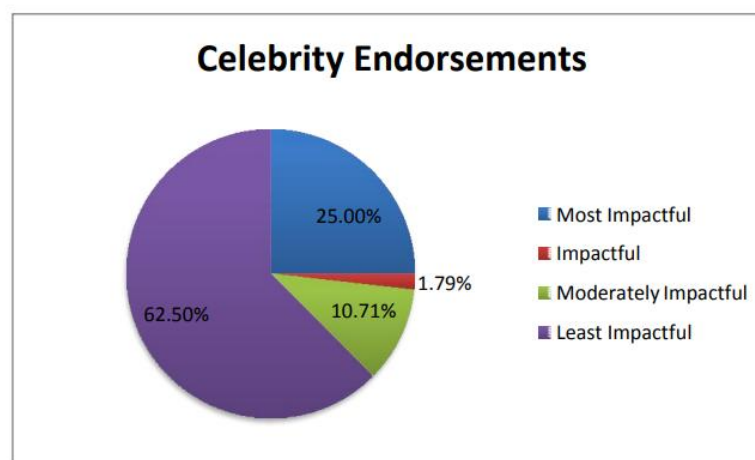
*Figure 4.3. Distribution of Prices*

Figure 4.3. shows the respondents' view on Prices. The majority of respondents found Prices to be the most impactful visual element at 41.96 per cent, followed by moderately impactful at 21.43 per cent. Next, respondents that agreed on least impactful are at 17.86 per cent whereas impactful is at 17.86.

*Figure 4.4. Distribution of Celebrity Endorsements*

Based on Figure 4.4., it presents the perspective of respondents on Celebrity Endorsements as a visual merchandising element. Most of the respondents view Celebrity Endorsements as the least impactful visual element at 62.50 per cent, followed by most impactful at 25 per cent. Fewer respondents viewed Celebrity Endorsements to be moderately impactful at 10.71 per cent and the least of respondents agreed for it to be impactful at 1.79 per cent.

Based on Figure 4.1 until Figure 4.4., Prices were commonly chosen by the respondents to be the most impactful visual merchandising element out of all elements. Next, Displays/Pictures and Colours were mostly rated to be impactful. Meanwhile, Celebrity Endorsements were mostly viewed to be the least impactful visual merchandising element by

the respondents. Therefore, prices were found to be the visual merchandising element that had the highest influence on consumers' buying behaviour.

**Table 4.7. Mean Table of Visual Elements based on Impact on Consumer Behaviour**

		Statistics			
		Displays	Colours	Prices	Celebrity Endorsements
N	Valid	112	112	112	112
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.3661	2.3571	3.1071	2.1696

To further confirm the findings from Figure 4.1. until Figure 4.4., the mean values for each visual merchandising element were calculated. Based on Table 4.7., it seems that Prices had the highest mean and the lowest was Celebrity Endorsements. Thus, it can be concluded Price is the most influential visual merchandising element on consumers' buying behaviour.

#### Research Question 3:

Are there any significant mean differences in the visual merchandising elements based on gender?

In analysing the significant mean differences in the visual merchandising elements based on gender, the researcher conducted an Independent t-test between both variables. The results are illustrated below.

**Table 4. 8. Independent Samples Test of the Visual Merchandising Elements by Gender**

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Displays/Pictures	Male	37	3.6000	.82462	.13557
	Female	75	3.7307	1.02482	.11834
Colours	Male	37	3.2000	.87560	.14395
	Female	75	3.2133	.83720	.09667
Prices	Male	37	3.7135	.95165	.15645
	Female	75	3.7520	1.09635	.12660
Celebrity Endorsements	Male	37	2.9676	.80210	.13186
	Female	75	3.0853	.87807	.10139

Independent Samples Test		
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		
		t-test for Equality of Means

Independent Samples Test		
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		
		t-test for Equality of Means

		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Displays/Pictures	Equal variances assumed	.796	.374	-.675	110	.501
	Equal variances not assumed			-.726	87.147	.470
Colours	Equal variances assumed	.063	.803	-.078	110	.938
	Equal variances not assumed			-.077	68.971	.939
Prices	Equal variances assumed	.734	.394	-.182	110	.856
	Equal variances not assumed			-.191	81.565	.849
Celebrity Endorsements	Equal variances assumed	.307	.581	-.686	110	.494
	Equal variances not assumed			-.708	77.903	.481

Based on Table 4.8., there were no significant mean differences found between gender and all visual merchandising elements. Each element was reported separately. Table 4.8. shows that in terms of Displays/Pictures, Male respondents ( $M=3.60$ ,  $SD=.825$ ) reported no significant

mean difference compared with Female 42 respondents ( $M=3.73$ ,  $SD=1.02$ ),  $t(110)=-.675$ ,  $p>.05$ . Thus, it can be assumed that gender does not have any influence on Displays/Pictures.

Next, Colours in Table 4.8. presents no significant mean difference between Male ( $M=3.20$ ,  $SD=.876$ ) and Female ( $M=3.21$ ,  $SD=.837$ ),  $t(110)= -.078$ ,  $p>.05$ . Hence, it can be concluded that Colours are not influenced by gender. Table 4.8. also reports no significant mean difference between Male ( $M=3.71$ ,  $SD=.952$ ) and Female ( $M=3.75$ ,  $SD=1.20$ ),  $t(110)=-.182$ ,  $p>.05$ , in terms of Prices. Thus, it can be decided that gender does not have any influence on Prices. Furthermore, in regards to Celebrity Endorsements, Table 4.8. shows that Male ( $M=2.97$ ,  $SD=.802$ ) reported no significant mean difference compared with Female ( $M=3.09$ ,  $SD=.878$ ),  $t(110)=-.686$ ,  $p>.05$ .

Thus, it can be concluded that does not have any influence on Celebrity Endorsements. To sum up, there were no significant mean differences in all four visual merchandising elements based on gender.

#### Research Question 4:

Are there any significant mean differences in the visual merchandising elements based on age?

The researcher had used the One-Way ANOVA analysis to discover whether there are significant mean differences in the visual merchandising elements based on age.

**Table 4. 9. One-Way Analysis of the Visual Merchandising Elements by Age**

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Displays/ Pictures	Between Groups	2.525	3	.842	.908	.440
	Within Groups	100.098	108	.927		
	Total	102.622	111			
Colours	Between Groups	.311	3	.104	.141	.935
	Within Groups	79.161	108	.733		
	Total	79.471	111			
Prices	Between Groups	1.679	3	.560	.504	.680
	Within Groups	119.908	108	1.110		
	Total	121.587	111			
Celebrity Endorsements	Between Groups	5.415	3	1.805	2.594	.056
	Within Groups	75.144	108	.696		
	Total	80.559	111			

Table 4.9. presents the results between age and the four visual merchandising elements. Table 4.9. reports no significant mean difference in all four visual merchandising elements which are Displays/Pictures ( $F(3,108)=.908, p>.05$ ), Colours ( $F(3,108)=.141, p>.05$ ), Prices ( $F(3,108)=.504, p>.05$ ) and Celebrity Endorsements ( $F(3,108)=2.59, p>.05$ ) based on gender.



Hence, it can be established that respondents from all age groups do not have any influence on these visual merchandising elements.

#### Research Question 5:

Is there a significant mean difference in consumers' buying behaviour based on gender?

In analysing the significant mean differences in consumers' buying behaviour based on gender, the researcher conducted an Independent t-test between both variables. The results are illustrated below.

**Table 4. 10. Independent Samples Test of Consumers' Buying Behaviour by Gender**

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Consumers' Buying Behaviour	Male	37	3.2432	.66038	.10857
	Female	75	3.1274	.65012	.07507

Independent Samples Test						
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Consumers' Buying Behaviour	Equal variances assumed	.008	.930	.882	110	.380
	Equal variances not assumed			.878	107.782	.383

Table 4.10. shows that Male ( $M=3.24$ ,  $SD=.660$ ) reported no significant mean difference compared to Female ( $M=3.13$ ,  $SD=.650$ ),  $t(110)=.882$ ,  $p>.05$ . Thus, it can be concluded that gender does not have any influence on consumers' buying behaviour.

#### Research Question 6:

Is there any significant mean difference in consumers' buying behaviour based on age?

The researcher used the One-Way ANOVA analysis to discover whether there was a significant mean difference in consumers' buying behaviour based on age.

Table 4. 11. One-Way Analysis of Consumers' Buying Behaviour by Age

ANOVA					
Consumers' Buying Behaviour					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.824	3	.275	.638	.592
Within Groups	46.484	108	.430		
Total	47.309	111			

Based on the Table 4.11., there was no significant mean difference between age and consumers' buying behaviour,  $F(3,108)=.638$ ,  $p>.05$ . Therefore, it can be established that age groups do not have any influence on consumers' buying behaviour.

## CONCLUSION

There are a few aspects that can be inferred from this study. First, this study had revealed that visual merchandising elements play a crucial role in the retail business and have a significant influence on customer purchasing behaviour. Therefore, throughout their attempts to improve their store experience, retailers are required to develop and execute strategies and action plans for their retail setting to attract and sell their goods to consumers (Singh & Mhatre, 2016). Retailers or marketers should be more attentive to how they present these elements in their store and strategically display them in an attractive manner.

According the findings of this study, marketers can improve on how they execute their advertising strategies on the displays/pictures, colours, prices and celebrity endorsements as these elements evidently influence consumers' buying behaviour. By doing this, a perfect strategy for visual merchandise can, therefore, be the difference between a highly profitable retail store and one that fails.

Furthermore, as the price of an item was found to be highly influential on consumers' buying behaviour, marketers should put an emphasis on how they introduce the prices to the consumers such price position, size of the price and so on. Marketers should take this information into consideration and use it to their advantage as they know what the consumers are most influenced by. Marketers may go beyond the store's parameters and advertise their product prices on posters or even through social media in order to gain more attention from the public. Consumers have a higher fixation on price even with the presence of other information such as product's picture or company information (Menon et al., 2016).

This study indicated that there are a few aspects that can be improved and further explored in future studies. There are three areas to be touched on which are the variables used for this study, the method applied and the possible method of data collection that can be used in future studies.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest, whether financial or otherwise, in conducting this research.

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