

# Tripodal of Visual Merchandising in Fashion Apparel Retail Stores: A Study

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## ABSTRACT

In this millennium the organized fashion retailing is no longer selling, displaying the apparels or the customer service where Visual merchandising plays an important role. Visual merchandising is a presentation of merchandise to best-selling advantage and for maximum traffic exposure, plus projection of customer “ready-to-buy”. Visual merchandising creates the in-store environment that supports the retailer’s marketing and merchandising strategies which sets the mood, invites, attracts, welcomes and informs the shoppers. In this study an attempt has been made to identify the awareness among the consumers about the visual merchandising in particular to the fashion apparel retail stores. About 175 questionnaires were distributed randomly to the customers of different types of fashion apparel stores in malls situated in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. Out of which 149 were responded. The response rate works out to 85.14%. The concept of visual merchandising has been analyzed using 13 variables such as Color & lighting; Fragrance & music; Interior wallpaper &carpets; Thematic display: the story behind; Arrangement; Ease of access; Employee team; Variety & Volume; Arousal; Dominance; Perceived Store Luxury; Pleasure and Store choice in a five point scale. The alpha value for all the 13 variables works out to 0.8579 which indicates that the variables are good for the study. The factorial method of data reduction technique enabled to group the variables in to three components and the components were named as Ambience/Décor; Merchandise; and Perceived Store Luxury, Emotions and Choice. The alpha value for all the three factors were 0.7736; 0.8100 and 0.8250 which indicates that all the variables are acceptable in nature for further study. The first

three preferences of Ambience/décor were Color & lighting; Fragrance & music; and Interior, wallpaper &carpets. In the case of merchandising the preference were Variety & volume of merchandise; ease of access to merchandise; and Employee team. In the case of Perceived Store Luxury, the preferences were Perceived Store Luxury; Emotions and Store Choice. In this study SEM model has been employed to indicate the strength of the relationships between the factors taken for the study. In all the study indicates Fragrance, Interior and arrangement of merchandise were expected to have top preference.

**Key words:** Visual Merchandising, Ambience/Décor; Merchandise, Perceived Store Luxury, Arousal

## INTRODUCTION

Fashion is a general term for a currently popular style or practice, especially in clothing, foot-wear or accessories. Fashion references to anything that is the current trend in look and dress-up of a person. Fashion is as old as time and as new as tomorrow, is one of the most powerful forces in our lives. Fashion influences on what one wear; the way one talk; the foods one eat; the way one live; how and where one travel; what one look at and one who listen to. In this millennium the organized retailing is no longer selling, displaying the apparels or the customer service. Rather, store retailing acts as image building, brand building in attracting the customers of this era. Today retailing is no longer selling but it is an art.

## VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Visual Merchandising (VM) is a presentation of merchandise to best-selling advantage and for maximum traffic exposure, plus projection of customer “ready-to-buy”. VM creates the in-store environment that supports the retailer’s Marketing and merchandising strategies. It sets the mood, highlights the merchandise, invites, attracts, welcomes and informs shoppers. It is the store where customers can experience the brand to the fullest. It also somewhat more subtly makes the store a wonderful joyous place to be for shopping. VM support sales; support retail strategies; communicate with customers; stretching brand image; enhance the image of a product; demonstrate how a consumer can use it and create an enjoyable shopping experience.

Design principles of Visual Merchandising includes color, texture, lines and composition, store lighting, balance, rhythm, harmony, proportion, repetition, emphasis, direction, and size/shape. In this study attempt has been made to identify the awareness among the consumers about the visual merchandising.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The role of aesthetic factors in retail atmosphere becomes further evident in luxury fashion shopping (Atwal & Williams, 2009; Chung, Youn& Lee, 2014; Spence et al., 2014). Almost every year, luxury apparel retail stores put huge investments into visual merchandising; though researchers examined fashion apparel stores atmospheric effects on shoppers (Eroglu&Machleit, 1990; Levy &Weitz, 2001; Turley & Milliman, 2000), few have empirically addressed the effectiveness of the aesthetic factors of apparels retail environments on shopping (Gorn et al., 1997; Labrecque, Patrick & Milne, 2013; Spence et al., 2014). There exists direct relationship between individual dimensions such as purchase intention, attitude, shopping orientation etc. (Mohanraj P &Gopalakrishnan S, 2017). In general

satisfaction of purchase were based on store experience, apparel quality and store location, approach of staff and user friendly trial room were few factors that enables to have satisfaction of purchase (Mohanraj P &Gopalakrishnan S, 2017). Symbolic marketing factors, including the point-of-purchase contexts of retail stores, greatly impact luxury buying decisions (Miller & Mills, 2012). Particularly, the aesthetic factors of the retail atmosphere are keys to luxury branding, as visual stimuli are most powerful in creating images and symbols (Das, 2014).

## DATA CAPTURE

About 175 questionnaires were distributed randomly to the customers of different types of fashion apparel stores in malls situated in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. Out of which 149 were responded. The response rate works out to 85.14%.

**Table 1 Demographic Detail of Respondents**

S. No	Description	No of Respondents	Percent
<b>GENDER</b>			
1	Male (M)	60	40.3
2	Female (F)	89	59.7
<b>AGE</b>			
1	Below 30 (B)	107	71.8
2	31-50 (A)	42	28.2
<b>QUALIFICATION</b>			
1	Graduate and below (G)	98	65.8
2	PG and above (PG)	51	34.2
<b>INCOME</b>			
1	Up to 5 lakhs (L)	35	23.5
2	5 to 10 lakhs (M)	60	40.3
3	Above 10 (H)	54	36.2
<b>MATERIAL STATUS</b>			
1	Single (S)	112	75.2
2	Married (M)	37	24.8
<b>NATIVITY</b>			
1	Urban (U)	93	62.4
2	Semi-urban (SU)	52	34.9
3	Rural (R)	4	2.7
<b>OVERALL</b>			
	Total	149	100.0

It can be seen from the Table1 that 40.3% (60) were male and 59.7% (89) were female. Among 149 respondents, 107 (71.8%) were below 30 years and the remaining 42 (28.2%) were 31 to 50 years. 51 (34.2%) respondents having PG qualifications and 98 (65.8%) were graduate and below qualification. Nearly 112 (75.2%) were unmarried and the remaining 37 (24.8%) were married. Out of 149

respondents, 23.5% (35) were having income upto 5 lakhs; 40.3% (60) were having income between 5 and 10 lakhs; 36.2% (54) were having income above 10 lakhs. 62.4% (93) respondents were from urban. It is followed by 52 (34.9%) were semi-urban nativity and 4 (2.7%) were Rural nativity.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

The concept of visual merchandising has been analyzed using 13 variables. The respondents opinion were obtained using

five point verbal scale such as Need to improve; Average; Good; Very Good and Excellent. The factor method of data reduction technique has been employed which resulting in to three components. These three components were named as Ambience/Décor, Merchandise and Perceived Store Luxury, Emotions and Choice. The variables and the components along with component name were shown in Table 2.

**Table 2 Rotated Component Matrix (a)**

S.No.	Variables	Ambience/ Décor	Merchandise	Perceived Store Luxury, Emotions and Choice
1	Color & lighting	.669		
2	Fragrance & music	.830		
3	Interior, wallpaper & carpets	.827		
4	Thematic display: the story behind	.738		
5	Arrangement of merchandise; color/size gradation		.817	
6	Ease of access to merchandise		.739	
7	Employee team		.740	
8	Variety & Volume of merchandise		.644	
9	Arousal			.754
10	Dominance			.744
11	Perceived Store Luxury			.761
12	Pleasure			.703
13	Store choice			.680

Further the data analyses had been carried out based on these three factors such as Ambience/Décor, Merchandise and Perceived Store Luxury. The factor analysis enables to provide a set of objectives for the study.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study were:

To identify the role of ambience/décor in visual merchandising in fashion apparel retail store

To list out the prime factors of Merchandise in apparel retail store and

To know the consumers perceived factors on Store Luxury, Emotions and Choice of apparel retail store.

These three factors is been termed as Tripodal Factors.

**HYPOTHESES**

The above Tripodal factors enable to formulate the following hypotheses.

The role of ambience/décor has a significant impact in visual merchandising in fashion apparel retail.

There exist few prime factors in Merchandise in apparel retail.

The consumers have perceived factors on Store Luxury, Emotions and Choice of apparel retail in visual merchandising.

There exist significant role on Tripodal factors in visual merchandising in fashion apparel.

**RELIABILITY TEST**

The study extended to ascertain the reliability of the data. The external and internal reliability were two identifiable aspects of the data. Majority of the time the internal reliability will be identified for any study. The most common method of estimating internal reliability is Cronbach alpha (α). The formula used for internal reliability is

$$\alpha = \frac{K}{K - 1} \left( 1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^K \sigma_{Y_i}^2}{\sigma_X^2} \right)$$

A commonly accepted rules for describing internal consistency using Cronbach alpha (Cronbach, Lee and Shavelson 2004) are  $\alpha \geq 0.9$  (Excellent),  $0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$  (Good),  $0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$  (Acceptable),  $0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$  (Questionable),  $0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$  (Poor) and  $0.5 > \alpha$  (Unacceptable). The Alpha value for the three factors has been calculated and the same has been shown in Table 3, which indicates that all the variables are acceptable for further studies.

**Table 3 Reliability Test**

S.No.	Factor	No. of Variables	Alpha value
1	Ambience/Décor	4	0.8250
2	Merchandise	4	0.7736
3	Perceived Store Luxury, Emotions and Choice	5	0.8100
Total		13	0.8579

The alpha value for all the three factors were 0.7736; 0.8100 and 0.8250 which

indicates that all the variables are acceptable in nature for further studies. Similarly the alpha value for all the 13 variables works out to 0.8579 which indicates that the variables are good level for the study.

**AMBIENCE/DÉCOR**

Ambience / Décor have been categorized such as Color & lighting; Fragrance & music; interior, wallpaper & carpets; and thematic display: the story behind. The opinion on these categories were obtained using five point verbal scale such as Need to improve; Average; Good; Very Good and Excellent with a weight between 1 and 5. The mean and standard deviation were calculated based on the respondent's opinion. The ranks were assigned based on mean and standard deviation which is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4 Ambience/Décor**

S. No.	Description	Need to Improve	Avg	Good	V.Good	Excellent	Mean	Std	Rank
1	Color & lighting	2(1.3)	6(4.0)	52(34.9)	58(38.9)	31(20.8)	3.74	.881	1
2	Fragrance & music	7(4.7)	19(12.8)	35(23.5)	59(39.6)	29(19.5)	3.56	1.086	2
3	Interior, wallpaper & carpets	6(4.0)	12(8.1)	53(35.6)	52(34.9)	26(17.4)	3.54	1.004	3
4	Thematic display : the story behind	7(4.7)	29(19.5)	48(32.2)	39(26.2)	26(17.4)	3.32	1.117	4

The mean value of all the variables ranges between 3.32 and 3.74 which indicate that all the variables were lean towards almost very good. The standard deviation ranges between 0.881 and 1.117 which indicates that there was no much deviation in the respondents' opinion. Based on the mean value, the order of preferences was derived. The first preference was indicated towards Color & lighting followed by Fragrance & music; and interior, wallpaper & carpets. The least preference was indicated towards thematic display: the story behind. It shows that the customers are expecting color and lighting as important category.

The analyses were further extended to demographic details such as gender, age, qualification and professional assignment for the factor Ambience/Décor and the same is shown in Table 5.

The mean value of male and female for all the variables ranges between 3.23 and

3.76 which indicate good and very good. However the table shows that the female has more preference than male in Ambience/Décor. As same as the gender, the mean value of all the age groups is between 3.26 and 3.76 which indicate that the ambience/décor was lies between good and very good. However both the age groups prefer color and lighting as primary and the least preference is to thematic display: the story behind. The second and third preferences differ between the age groups.

In the case of opinion of the respondents based on Income, the high income that has more than 10 lakhs prefers color and lighting followed by interior; and Thematic display whereas the low income group i.e. up to 5 lakhs; and 5 to 10 lakhs prefers Fragrance and music as second preference. The mean value of all the three income groups ranges between 3.27 and 3.78 which indicate that the ambience/décor was lies between good and very good

According to the marital status of the respondents, the mean value of single and married respondents ranges between 3.31 and 3.81 which indicate good and very good. However the table shows that the

married respondents prefer color and lighting as well as Thematic display: the story behind whereas unmarried respondents prefer Interior as well as wallpaper &carpets

**Table 5 Ambience/Décor - Gender, Age, Income, Marital Status, Nativity and Educational qualifications**

Description		Color & lighting (C)	Fragrance & music (F)	Interior (I)	Thematic display (T)	Remarks
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	Mean	3.70	3.55	3.50	3.23	C>F>I>T
	Std.	.869	1.064	.966	1.031	
Female	Mean	3.76	3.57	3.56	3.38	C>F>I>T
	Std.	.892	1.107	1.033	1.173	
		F>M	F>M	F>M	F>M	
<b>Age</b>						
Below 30	Mean	3.73	3.60	3.54	3.35	C>F>I>T
	Std.	.917	1.089	1.021	1.125	
31-50	Mean	3.76	3.48	3.52	3.26	C>I>F>T
	Std.	.790	1.087	.969	1.106	
		A>B	B>A	B>A	B>A	
<b>Income</b>						
Up to 5 lakhs	Mean	3.77	3.60	3.54	3.34	C>F>I>T
	Std.	1.031	1.218	1.067	1.259	
5 to 10 lakhs	Mean	3.68	3.58	3.43	3.27	C>F>I>T
	Std.	.854	.926	1.079	1.023	
Above 10	Mean	3.78	3.52	3.65	3.37	C>I>F>T
	Std.	.816	1.177	.872	1.138	
		H>L>M	L>M>H	H>L>M	H>L>M	
<b>Marital status</b>						
Single	Mean	3.71	3.59	3.54	3.31	C>F>I>T
	Std.	.915	1.095	1.021	1.147	
Married	Mean	3.81	3.49	3.51	3.35	C>I>F>T
	Std.	.776	1.070	.961	1.033	
		M>S	S>M	S>M	M>S	
<b>Nativity</b>						
Urban	Mean	3.78	3.60	3.60	3.32	C>I>F>T
	Std.	.895	1.105	1.075	1.095	
Semi-urban	Mean	3.58	3.42	3.37	3.25	C>F>I>T
	Std.	.825	1.054	.864	1.153	
Rural	Mean	4.75	4.50	4.25	4.25	C>F>I>T
	Std.	.500	.577	.500	.957	
		R>U>SU	R>U>SU	R>U>SU	R>U>SU	
<b>Qualification</b>						
Graduate and below	Mean	3.76	3.57	3.52	3.32	C>F>I>T
	Std.	.942	1.140	1.105	1.189	
PG and above	Mean	3.71	3.55	3.57	3.33	C>I>F>T
	Std.	.756	.986	.781	.973	
		G>PG	G>PG	PG>G	PG>G	
<b>Over all</b>						
Total	Mean	3.74	3.56	3.54	3.32	C>F>I>T
	Std.	.881	1.086	1.004	1.117	

In the case of opinion of the respondents based on nativity, the rural people opine excellent in all the four ambience/décor variables. Color and lighting, Fragrance & music, interior, wallpaper &carpets and Thematic display: the story behind. It is followed by urban and semi urban respondents.

The persons with graduate and below qualification prefer color and lighting and fragrance and music whereas respondents with PG and above prefer Interior, wallpaper &carpets and thematic display: the story behind. The mean values of both the group ranges between 3.32 and 3.76 which indicates that the ambience/décor lies between good and very good.

The inferences on ambience/décor were shown in Table 6.



**Table 6 Inference on Ambience/Décor**

S. No.	Description	Gender	Age	Income	Marital Status	Nativity	Educational Qualifications
1	Color & lighting	Female	31-50	Above 10 lakhs	Married	Rural	Graduate and below
2	Fragrance & music	Female	Below 30	Up to 5 lakhs	Single	Rural	Graduate and below
3	Interior, wallpaper & carpets	Female	Below 30	Above 10 lakhs	Single	Rural	PG and above
4	Thematic display : the story behind	Female	Below 30	Above 10 lakhs	Married	Rural	PG and above

The female, rural prefers all the four aspects such as color and lighting; fragrance and music Interior, wallpaper & carpets and Thematic display: the story behind. Below 30 age group prefers fragrance and music Interior, wallpaper & carpets and Thematic display: the story behind whereas 31-50 prefers color and lighting. Similarly the persons of above 10 lakhs income group preference color and lighting, interior, wall paper & carpets and thematic display: the story behind whereas Fragrance and music were preferred by persons of income group up to 5 lakhs. Married persons preferred color and lighting and thematic display: the story behind where as unmarried persons preferred fragrance and music as well as interior, wall paper and carpets. Graduates and below prefers color and lighting as well as fragrance and music whereas PG and

above prefers interior, wall paper and carpets as well as thematic display: the story behind.

**MERCHANDISE**

Merchandise has been categorized such as Arrangement of merchandise: Color/size gradation; Ease of access to merchandise; Employee team and Variety & volume of merchandise. The opinion on these aspects were obtained using five point verbal scale such as Need to improve; Average; Good; Very Good and Excellent with a weight of 1 to 5. The mean and standard deviation were calculated based on the respondent’s opinion. The ranks were assigned based on mean and standard deviation. The same has been shown in Table 7.

**Table 7 Merchandise**

S. No.	Description	Need to improve	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Mean	Std	Rank
1	Arrangement	3(2.0)	12(8.1)	62(41.6)	50(33.6)	22(14.8)	3.51	.913	4
2	Ease of access	1(.7)	15(10.1)	51(34.2)	62(41.6)	20(13.4)	3.57	.872	2
3	Employee team	2(1.3)	10(6.7)	62(41.6)	54(36.2)	21(14.1)	3.55	.866	3
4	Variety & volume	3(2.0)	13(8.7)	44(29.5)	63(42.3)	26(17.4)	3.64	.938	1

The mean value of all the variables ranges between 3.51 and 3.64 which indicate that all the variables were lean towards almost very good. The standard deviation ranges between 0.866 and 0.938 which indicates that there was no much deviation in the respondents’ opinion. Based on the mean value, the respondents’ preferences were ranked. Accordingly the first preference was indicated towards Variety & volume of merchandise. It is followed by Ease of access to merchandise; and Employee team. The least preference was indicated towards arrangement of merchandise.

The analyses were further extended to demographic details such as gender, age, qualification and professional assignment and the same is shown in Table 8.

The mean value of all the categories such as gender; age; income; marital status; nativity; and qualification; lies between 3.33 and 3.72 which indicate as good and very good. Also the standard deviation also lies between 0.500 and 1.011.

**Table 8 Merchandise - Gender, Age, Income, Marital Status, Nativity and Educational qualifications**

Description		Arrangement (M)	Ease of access (E)	Employee team (T)	Variety & Volume (V)	Remarks
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	Mean	3.42	3.67	3.63	3.65	E>V>T>M
	Std.	.996	.857	.956	.954	
Female	Mean	3.57	3.51	3.49	3.64	V>M>E>T
	Std.	.851	.881	.799	.932	
		F>M	M>F	M>F	M>F	
<b>Age</b>						
Below 30	Mean	3.50	3.57	3.51	3.72	V>E>T>M
	Std.	.945	.859	.894	.969	
31-50	Mean	3.55	3.57	3.64	3.45	T>E>M>V
	Std.	.832	.914	.791	.832	
		A>B	B>A	A>B	B>A	
<b>Income</b>						
Up to 5 lakhs	Mean	3.51	3.51	3.60	3.89	V>T>M>E
	Std.	.981	1.011	.812	.963	
5 to 10 lakhs	Mean	3.33	3.48	3.43	3.50	V>E>T>M
	Std.	.877	.833	.851	1.017	
Above 10	Mean	3.70	3.70	3.65	3.65	E>M>V>T
	Std.	.882	.816	.914	.805	
		H>L>M	H>L>M	H>L>M	L>H>M	
<b>Marital status</b>						
Single	Mean	3.46	3.52	3.53	3.71	V>T>E>M
	Std.	.929	.890	.849	.963	
Married	Mean	3.68	3.73	3.62	3.43	E>M>T>V
	Std.	.852	.804	.924	.835	
		M>S	M>S	M>S	S>M	
<b>Nativity</b>						
Urban	Mean	3.49	3.49	3.56	3.65	V>T>M>E
	Std.	.892	.904	.773	.951	
Semi-urban	Mean	3.46	3.65	3.48	3.60	E>V>T>M
	Std.	.917	.814	1.000	.913	
Rural	Mean	4.50	4.25	4.25	4.25	M>E>T=V
	Std.	1.000	.500	.957	.957	
		R>U>SU	R>SU>U	R>U>SU	R>U>SU	
<b>Qualification</b>						
Graduate and below	Mean	3.50	3.57	3.57	3.73	V>T>E>M
	Std.	.955	.885	.837	.937	
PG and above	Mean	3.53	3.57	3.51	3.47	E>M>T>V
	Std.	.833	.855	.925	.924	
		PG>G	G=PG	G>PG	G>PG	
<b>Over all</b>						
Total	Mean	3.51	3.57	3.55	3.64	V>E>T>M
	Std.	.913	.872	.866	.938	

It is infer from the analysis that male has more preference than the female. The persons of age group 31 to 50 prefers Arrangement of merchandise and employee team where as respondents of 30 and below age group preference towards ease of access and variety and volume. In the case of opinion of the respondents based on Income, the high income has more than 10 lakhs prefers arrangement of merchandise, ease of access and employee team whereas low income group i.e. up to 5 lakhs prefers variety and volume. This table shows that the married respondents prefer arrangement,

ease of access and employee team whereas unmarried respondents prefer arrangement.

In the case of opinion of the respondents based on nativity, the rural people opine excellent in all the four merchandise variables such arrangement, ease of access, employee team and variety and volume. It is followed by urban and semi urban respondents.

The persons with graduate and below qualification prefer ease of access, employee team and variety and volume whereas respondents with PG and above prefer Arrangement. The overall inferences on merchandise were shown in Table9.

**Table 9 Inference on Merchandise**

S. No.	Description	Gender	Age	Income	Marital Status	Nativity	Educational Qualification
1	Arrangement	Female	Above 30	Above 10 lakhs	Married	Rural	PG and above
2	Ease of access	Male	Below 30	Above 10 lakhs	Married	Rural	Graduate and below
3	Employee team	Male	Above 30	Above 10	Married	Rural	Graduate and below
4	Variety & volume	Male	Below 30	Up to 5 lakhs	Single	Rural	Graduate and below

The rural prefers all the four aspects such as arrangement; ease of access; employee team and variety and volume. Male prefer ease of access; employee team and variety and volume where as female prefer arrangement. Below 30 age group prefers ease of access; employee team and variety and volume whereas 31-50 prefers arrangement. Similarly the persons of above 10 lakhs income group preference arrangement; ease of access; and employee team and whereas variety and volume were preferred by persons of income group up to 5 lakhs. Married persons preferred arrangement; ease of access; employee team where as unmarried persons preferred and variety and volume. Graduates and below prefers ease of access; employee team and

variety and volume whereas PG and above prefers arrangement.

**PERCEIVED STORE LUXURY, EMOTIONS AND CHOICE**

Perceived Store Luxury, Emotions and Choice have been categorized such as Arousal; Dominance; Perceived Store Luxury; Pleasure and Store choice. The opinion on these programs were obtained using five point verbal scale such as Need to improve; Average; Good; Very Good and Excellent with a weight of 1 to 5. The mean and standard deviation were calculated based on the respondent’s opinion. The ranks were assigned based on mean and standard deviation. The same has been shown in Table 10.

**Table 10 Perceived Store Luxury, Emotions and Choice**

S. No.	Description	Need to improve	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Mean	Std	Rank
1	Arousal	2(1.3)	19(12.8)	69(46.3)	47(31.5)	12(8.1)	3.32	.848	5
2	Dominance	2 (1.3)	17(11.4)	63(42.3)	54(36.2)	13(8.7)	3.40	.853	4
3	Perceived Store Luxury	1 (0.7)	23(15.4)	47(31.5)	58(38.9)	20(13.4)	3.49	.934	3
4	Pleasure	1 (0.7)	17(11.4)	47(31.5)	58(38.9)	26(17.4)	3.61	.928	2
5	Store choice	1 (0.7)	9(6.0)	50(33.6)	54(36.2)	35(23.5)	3.76	.905	1

The mean value of all the variables ranges between 3.32 and 3.76 which indicate that all the variables were lean towards almost very good. The standard deviation ranges between 0.848 and 0.934 which indicates that there was no much deviation in the respondents’ opinion. The first preference by the respondents was indicated towards Store choice. It is followed by Pleasure, Perceived Store Luxury and Dominance. The least preference was indicated to Arousal.

The analyses were further extended to demographic details such as gender, age, qualification and professional assignment. The same has been shown in Table 11. The overall mean value of all the categories lies between 3.32 and 3.76 which indicate good and very good and the standard deviation is between 0.848 and 0.934. The respondents are of opined that male has more preference than female in Perceived Store Luxury, Emotions and Choice. Also the age group of 31to 50 prefers dominance where as respondents of 30 and below prefers arousal, perceived store luxury; pleasure and store choice.

In the case of opinion of the respondents based on Income, the high income who has more than 10 lakhs prefers arousal; dominance; store choice whereas middle income group i.e. between 5 and 10 lakhs prefers perceived store luxury and pleasure. This study shows that the unmarried respondents have edge over all the variables than married respondents. In the case of opinion of the respondents based on nativity, the urban people opine arousal and store



choice where as semi urban respondents prefer dominance; perceived store luxury and pleasure followed by urban and semi urban respondents.

**Table 11 Perceived Store Luxury, Emotions and Choice – Gender, Age, Income, Marital Status, Nativity and Educational qualifications**

Description		Arousal (A)	Dominance (D)	Perceived Store Luxury (Ps)	Pleasure (P)	Store choice (S)	Preference
<b>Gender</b>							
Male (M)	Mean	3.40	3.52	3.57	3.63	3.67	S>P>Ps>D>A
	Std.	.694	.813	.927	.882	.816	
Female (F)	Mean	3.27	3.31	3.44	3.60	3.82	S>P>Ps>D>A
	Std.	.939	.874	.941	.962	.960	
Preference		M>F	M>F	M>F	M>F	F>M	
<b>Age</b>							
Below 30 (B)	Mean	3.36	3.39	3.57	3.64	3.78	S>P>Ps>D>A
	Std.	.862	.844	.933	.893	.850	
31-50 (A)	Mean	3.21	3.40	3.29	3.52	3.71	S>P>D>Ps>A
	Std.	.813	.885	.918	1.018	1.043	
Preference		B>A	A>B	B>A	B>A	B>A	
<b>Income</b>							
Up to 5 lakhs (L)	Mean	3.26	3.37	3.43	3.54	3.71	S>P>Ps>D>A
	Std.	.919	.942	.850	.919	.860	
5 to 10 lakhs (M)	Mean	3.30	3.40	3.58	3.78	3.75	P>S>Ps>D>A
	Std.	.850	.887	.944	.904	.836	
Above 10 Lakhs (H)	Mean	3.39	3.41	3.43	3.46	3.80	S>P>Ps>D>A
	Std.	.811	.765	.983	.946	1.016	
Preference		H>M>L	H>M>L	M>L>H	M>L>H	H>M>L	
<b>Marital status</b>							
Single (S)	Mean	3.37	3.43	3.56	3.67	3.76	S>P>Ps>D>A
	Std.	.871	.856	.938	.934	.862	
Married (M)	Mean	3.16	3.30	3.27	3.43	3.76	S>P>D>Ps>A
	Std.	.764	.845	.902	.899	1.038	
Preference		S>M	S>M	S>M	S>M	S>M	
<b>Nativity</b>							
Urban (U)	Mean	3.35	3.44	3.46	3.55	3.85	S>P>Ps>D>A
	Std.	.868	.827	.951	.903	.932	
Semi-urban (SU)	Mean	3.27	3.35	3.56	3.75	3.67	P>S>Ps>D>A
	Std.	.819	.926	.895	.968	.834	
Rural (R)	Mean	3.25	3.00	3.25	3.25	2.75	A=P>Ps>D>S
	Std.	.957	.000	1.258	.957	.500	
Preference		U>SU>R	SU>U>R	SU>U>R	SU>U>R	U>SU>R	
<b>Qualification</b>							
Graduate and below (G)	Mean	3.36	3.39	3.53	3.62	3.78	S>P>Ps>D>A
	Std.	.900	.892	.976	.990	.925	
PG and above(PG)	Mean	3.25	3.41	3.41	3.59	3.73	S>P>D>Ps>A
	Std.	.744	.779	.853	.804	.874	
Preference		G>PG	PG>G	G>PG	G>PG	G>PG	
<b>Over all</b>							
Total	Mean	3.32	3.40	3.49	3.61	3.76	S>P>Ps>D>A
	Std.	.848	.853	.934	.928	.905	

The persons with graduate and below qualification prefer arousal, perceived store luxury and store choice whereas respondents with PG and above prefer dominance. The inference on Perceived Store Luxury, Emotions and Choice were shown in Table 12.

**Table 12 Inference on Perceived Store Luxury, Emotions and Choice**

S. No.	Description	Gender	Age	Income	Marital Status	Nativity	Educational Qualification
1	Arousal	Male	Below 30	Above 10 lakhs	Single	Urban	Graduate
2	Dominance	Male	Above 30	Above 10 lakhs	Single	Semi urban	PG
3	Perceived Store Luxury	Male	Below 30	5-10 lakhs	Single	Semi urban	Graduate
4	Pleasure	Male	Below 30	5-10 lakhs	Single	Semi urban	Graduate
5	Store choice	Female	Below 30	Above 10 lakhs	Single	Urban	Graduate

The unmarried respondents prefer all the five aspects such as Arousal; Dominance; Perceived Store Luxury; Pleasure and Store choice. Male prefer Arousal; Dominance;

Perceived Store Luxury; Pleasure where as female prefer Store choice. Below 30 age group prefers Arousal; Perceived Store Luxury; Pleasure and Store choice whereas 31-50 prefers Dominance. Similarly the persons of above 10 lakhs income group preference were Arousal; Dominance; Pleasure whereas Perceived Store Luxury and Store choice persons of income group between 5 lakhs and 10 lakhs. Graduates and below prefers Arousal; Perceived Store Luxury; Pleasure and Store choice whereas PG and above prefers Dominance. Semi urban respondents prefer Dominance; Perceived Store Luxury; and Pleasure where as urban respondents prefer Arousal and Store choice.

**SEM Model**

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) uses various types of models to depict relationships among observed variables, with the same basic goal of providing a quantitative test of a theoretical model hypothesized by the researcher. More

specifically, various theoretical models can be tested in SEM that hypothesize how sets of variables define constructs and how these constructs are related to each other. For example, a marketing researcher may hypothesize that consumer trust in a corporation leads to increased product sales for that corporation. Basic models include regression, path, and confirmatory factor models. The reason for covering these basic models is that they provide a basis for understanding structural equation models. To better understand these basic models, one needs to define few terms. First, there are two major types of variables: latent variables and observed variables. Latent variables (constructs or factors) are variables that are not directly observable or measured. Latent variables are indirectly observed or measured, and hence are inferred from a set of observed variables that actually measure using tests, surveys, and so on. In this study, the SEM model has been attempted.

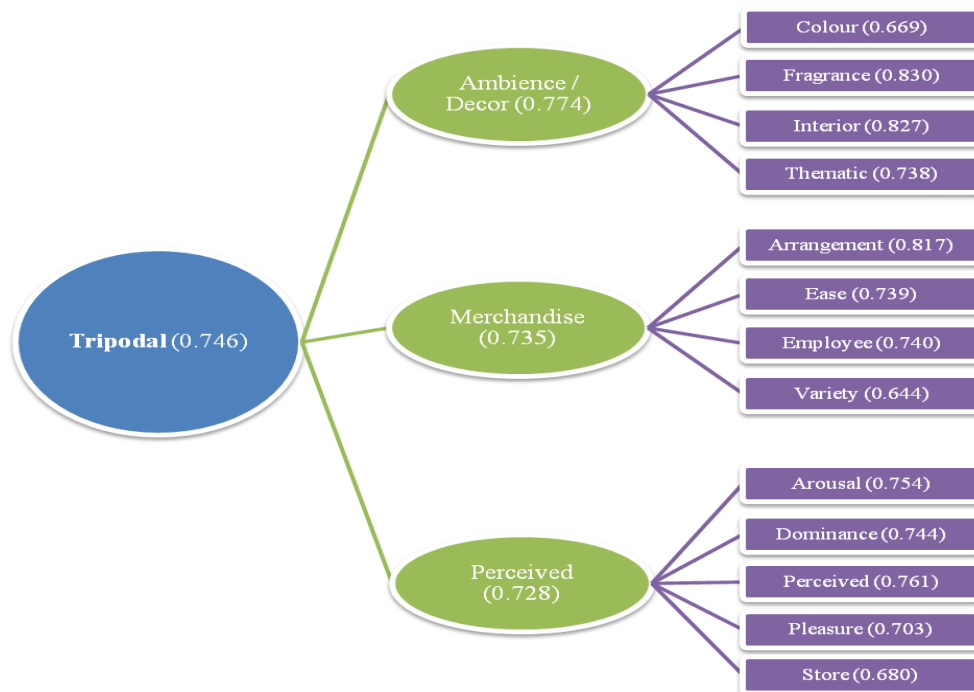


Figure 1 SEM Model on Tripodal

It is evident from Figure 1 that all the three categories mean value are almost similar, which are required today and the respondents were of the opinion that Tripodal is more important for Visual Merchandising. The equation thus arrived based on SEM model shown below:

$$T = \alpha_1 * A_1 + \alpha_2 * M_1 + \alpha_3 * P_1$$

Where; T = Tripodal of Visual Merchandising

A = Ambience/Décor

M<sub>1</sub> = Merchandise

P<sub>1</sub> = Perceived Store Luxury, Emotions and Choice

$\alpha_1 = A_1$  Constant = 0.774

$\alpha_2 = M_1$  Constant = 0.735

$\alpha_3 = P_1$  Constant = 0.728

## CONCLUSIONS

Design principles of Visual Merchandising includes color, texture, lines and composition, store lighting, balance, rhythm, harmony, proportion, repetition, emphasis, direction, and size/shape. In this study attempt has been made to identify the awareness among the consumers about the visual merchandising. The concept of visual

merchandising has been analyzed using 13 variables such as Color & lighting; Fragrance & music; Interior; Thematic display; Arrangement; Ease of access; Employee team; Variety & Volume; Arousal; Dominance; Perceived Store Luxury; Pleasure and Store choice in a five point scale. About 175 questionnaires were distributed randomly to the customers of different types of fashion apparel stores in malls situated in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India, of which 149 (85.14%) were responded. The factor method of data reduction technique enabled to group the variables in to three components. The components were named as Ambience/Décor, Merchandise and Perceived Store Luxury, Emotions and Choice. The alpha value for all the three factors were ranges between 0.7736; 0.8100 and 0.8250 which indicates that all the variables are acceptable in nature for further studies. The respondents views on five point scale, the mean, standard deviation and rank were enabled to identify the first three preferences on three factors were identified and the same has been shown in Table 13.

**Table 13 Ranking method preference**

Factor	First preference	Second preference	Third Preference
Ambience/Décor	Color & lighting	Fragrance & music	Interior, wallpaper & carpets
Merchandise	Variety & volume	Ease of access	Employee team
Perceived Store Luxury, Emotions and Choice	Store choice	Pleasure	Perceived Store Luxury

In this study SEM model has been employed based on the correlation value and the preferences were identified for the Tripodal factors of visual merchandising and the preferences has been shown in Table 14.

**Table 14 SEM Model preference**

Factor	First preference	Second preference	Third Preference
Ambience/Décor	Fragrance & music	Interior, wallpaper & carpets	Thematic
Merchandise	Arrangement	Employee team	Ease of access
Perceived Store Luxury, Emotions and Choice	Perceived Store Luxury	Arousal	Dominance

In all, the study shows that Fragrance, Interior and arrangement were expected to have top preference in visual merchandising. Future of visual merchandising depends on extra sensory experiences for customers of all ages; entertainment oriented formats like Touch-

screen kiosks; themed stores, digital imaging, 3D interactive technology and Virtual stores.

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