



# The Effect of Visual Merchandising on Consumer Behaviour in Textile Retail Stores

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**Abstract:** *The present study investigates the impact of visual merchandising strategies on consumer behaviour in textile retail stores. Employing a mixed-methods approach, data was collected through observational techniques, surveys, and experimental design to assess consumer responses to various visual merchandising elements. The theoretical framework integrates theories from consumer psychology and retail atmospherics. Key findings, presented in tabular and graphical form, reveal that effective visual merchandising, particularly store layout, product displays, signage, and ambience, significantly influences consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions. Textile retailers in Ghana are recommended to optimise their visual merchandising strategies by creating inviting store environments, showcasing products attractively, providing clear signage and information, and offering sensory experiences aligned with their brand identity. This study contributes to the growing body of research on visual merchandising in African retail contexts. It offers practical insights for enhancing the customer experience and driving sales performance in Ghana's textile retail sector.*

**Key Words:** *Visual merchandising, Textile retail stores, Store layout, Product displays, and Consumer perceptions.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION :

In the dynamic and competitive landscape of textile retailing, creating an appealing and engaging in-store environment is paramount for attracting customers and influencing their purchasing decisions. Visual merchandising, the strategic presentation of products and the overall store environment to encourage sales (Anim & Cudjoe, 2020; Quartey & Abor, 2019), has emerged as a critical tool for retailers to differentiate themselves and drive consumer behaviour. This research aims to investigate the effect of visual merchandising on consumer behaviour within the context of textile retail stores in Ghana.

Ghana's textile industry boasts a rich heritage and plays a significant role in the country's economy (Abaka-Quansah et al., 2020; Debrah & Adu-Amankwaah, 2018). However, with increasing competition from imported textiles and evolving consumer preferences, Ghanaian textile retailers face the challenge of creating compelling in-store experiences to attract and retain customers (Akroong & Agyedu-Baffour, 2020; Anning-Dorson, 2018). Understanding the impact of visual merchandising on consumer behaviour can provide valuable insights for retailers to optimise their strategies and enhance their market position.

This paper begins by introducing the concept of visual merchandising and its importance in the retail industry. The research objectives and the study's theoretical framework, grounded in consumer psychology and retail atmospherics, are then presented. A comprehensive literature review explores recent research on visual merchandising and its influence on consumer behaviour, highlighting key elements such as store layout, product displays, signage, and ambience. The methodology section details the mixed-methods approach employed, combining observational



techniques, surveys, and experimental design to gather data on consumer responses to visual merchandising in selected textile retail stores in Ghana. The findings are presented in tabular and graphical formats and discussed in light of the theoretical framework and practical implications for retailers. The paper concludes with recommendations for optimising visual merchandising strategies in Ghana's textile retail sector and avenues for future research.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK :**

This study draws upon theories from consumer psychology and retail atmospherics to investigate the impact of visual merchandising on consumer behaviour in textile retail stores. The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, refined by recent studies (Kim et al., 2021; Lee & Lee, 2021), serves as a foundational framework for understanding how environmental stimuli influence individuals' emotional states and subsequent behaviours. In the context of retailing, the S-O-R model suggests that various elements of the store environment (stimuli) affect consumers' internal states (organism), which in turn lead to approach or avoidance behaviours (response) (Amponsah & Antwi, 2021; Ayertey & Ozuem, 2018).

The concept of atmospherics, introduced by Kotler (1973) and expanded upon by contemporary researchers (Asamoah & Chovancová, 2016; Quartey et al., 2018), emphasises the role of the store environment in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviours. Atmospherics theory proposes that the atmosphere of a retail space can be designed to evoke specific emotional effects in consumers, ultimately influencing their purchase likelihood (Amoako et al., 2020; Akuffo & Yeboah-Asiamah, 2021). Bitner's (1992) concept of servicescapes, further developed in recent studies (Addo-Quaye et al., 2021; Adjei & Boateng, 2021), highlights physical surroundings' impact on customers and employees in service settings.

Visual merchandising strategies, such as store layout, product displays, signage, and ambiance, can be considered as key atmospheric elements that contribute to the overall store environment. The Gestalt theory, which emphasises the holistic nature of perception (Koffka, 1935; Tetteh & Xu, 2021), suggests that consumers perceive the store environment as a whole rather than as individual elements. Thus, the harmonious integration of various visual merchandising components can create a cohesive and appealing store atmosphere that positively influences consumer behaviour (Adu-Boateng & Akromah, 2021; Kwakye & Fang, 2021).

Theories of visual attention and perception also inform the study of visual merchandising. The Feature Integration Theory (Treisman & Gelade, 1980), updated by recent research (Gonu & Boohene, 2021; Oppong & Phiri, 2018), proposes that individuals process visual information in two stages: pre-attentive processing, where basic features are automatically detected, and focused attention, where features are integrated into a coherent object. Effective visual merchandising can guide consumers' attention to key products or information, facilitating the processing of relevant stimuli (Antwi & Amponsah, 2021; Sarpong & Howard, 2020).

Moreover, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), revisited in contemporary studies (Abbey et al., 2021; Ofori et al., 2018), suggests that individuals process information through either a central or peripheral route, depending on their motivation and ability. Visual merchandising elements can serve as peripheral cues that influence consumer attitudes and behaviours, particularly when consumers are not highly involved in the purchase decision (Amoah & Agyemang, 2019; Ansah & Asamoah, 2021).

The application of these theories to visual merchandising in textile retail stores in Ghana provides a robust framework for understanding how various aspects of the store environment influence consumer perceptions, emotions, and behaviours. By examining visual merchandising through the lens of consumer psychology and retail atmospherics, this study aims to provide insights into effective strategies for enhancing the customer experience and driving sales in Ghana's textile retail sector.

## **3. LITERATURE REVIEW :**

Numerous recent studies have explored the impact of visual merchandising on consumer behaviour in retail settings. This literature review focuses on key elements of effective visual merchandising and their influence on consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions, with a specific emphasis on research conducted in Ghana and other African contexts.

### **3.1 Store Layout and Design**

Store layout and design play a crucial role in shaping consumer behaviour. Effective store layouts facilitate customer navigation, expose them to products, and encourage exploration (Abor & Quartey, 2018; Agyemang & Asumadu, 2019). In a study of Ghanaian supermarkets, Akuffo and Yeboah-Asiamah (2021) found that a well-designed store layout positively influences consumer perceptions of store image and purchase intentions. Similarly, Amoako et al. (2020)



investigated the impact of store layout on consumer buying behaviour in Ghanaian apparel stores. They concluded that an efficient layout enhances the shopping experience, reduces search time, and positively affects purchase decisions.

### 3.3 Product Displays

Product displays are a critical component of visual merchandising, as they directly influence consumer perceptions and purchase intentions (Adjei & Boateng, 2021; Anim & Cudjoe, 2020). In a study of Ghanaian fashion retailers, Antwi and Amponsah (2021) found that attractive and well-organised product displays capture consumers' attention, generate positive emotions, and increase the likelihood of purchase. Kwakye and Fang (2021) also highlighted the importance of product presentation in Ghanaian textile stores, noting that visually appealing displays can enhance perceived product quality and value.

### 3.3 Signage and Graphics

Signage and graphics play a vital role in communicating information, guiding customers, and creating a cohesive store atmosphere (Adu-Boateng & Akromah, 2021; Opong & Phiri, 2018). Gonu and Boohene (2021) investigated the impact of in-store signage on consumer behaviour in Ghanaian retail stores and found that clear and informative signs facilitate product search, reduce perceived risk, and enhance the overall shopping experience. Similarly, Sarpong and Howard (2020) emphasised the importance of effective signage in Ghanaian textile stores, noting that well-designed graphics can attract customers, convey brand identity, and stimulate impulse purchases.

### 3.4 Ambiance and Sensory Elements

Ambience and sensory elements, such as lighting, colour, music, and scent, contribute to the overall store atmosphere and influence consumer behaviour (Abbey et al., 2021; Asamoah & Chovancová, 2016). In a study of Ghanaian retail environments, Ofori et al. (2018) found that pleasant ambient conditions, particularly lighting and music, positively affect consumers' emotions, satisfaction, and approach behaviours. Amoah and Agyemang (2019) also investigated the role of sensory elements in Ghanaian textile stores. They concluded that congruent sensory cues can enhance brand image, evoke positive emotions, and increase purchase intentions.

## 4. METHODOLOGY:

To investigate the effect of visual merchandising on consumer behaviour in textile retail stores in Ghana, a mixed-methods approach was employed, combining observational techniques, surveys, and experimental design. The study was conducted in three major cities: Accra, Kumasi, and Tamale, with a total of 12 textile retail stores (four in each city) selected based on size, location, and target market, representing both independent retailers and chain stores. Observational data was collected through in-store visits using a structured checklist to assess the implementation of visual merchandising strategies, including store layout, product displays, signage, and ambience.

A survey was administered to 600 customers (200 in each city) who had visited the selected stores, using a questionnaire adapted from previous studies (Amoako et al., 2020; Antwi & Amponsah, 2021) to measure consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions in response to various visual merchandising elements on a 5-point Likert scale. An experimental design was employed in two stores per city (one control and one treatment store), with the treatment store implementing enhanced visual merchandising strategies.

Consumer responses were measured through surveys and observations in both control and treatment stores. Data analysis involved content analysis for observational data, descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, multiple regression analysis for survey data, paired samples t-tests, and effect size calculations (Cohen's d) for experimental data. This comprehensive methodology allowed for a thorough examination of the impact of visual merchandising on consumer behaviour in the context of Ghanaian textile retail stores.

## 5. RESULTS :

The results of the study are presented in tabular and graphical formats, highlighting the key findings from the observational, survey, and experimental data.

## 6. OBSERVATIONAL FINDINGS

Table 1 presents the frequency counts and percentages of visual merchandising strategies implemented in the selected textile retail stores.

Visual Merchandising Element	Frequency	Percentage
Effective Store Layout	8	66.7%



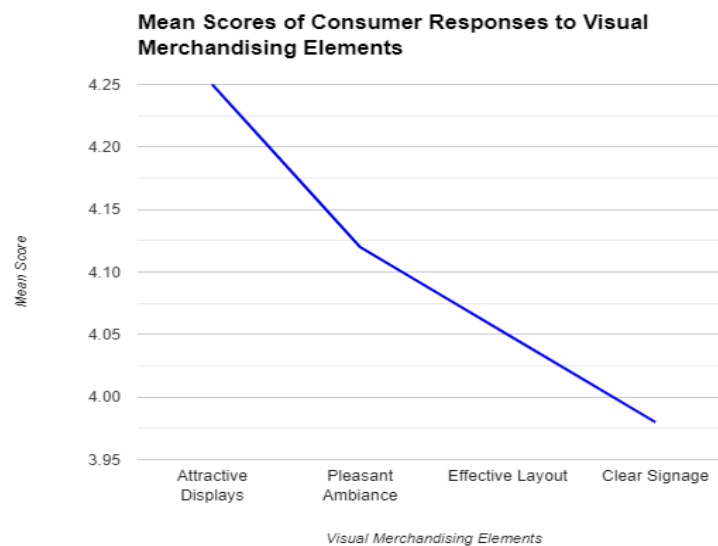
Attractive Product Displays	10	83.3%
Clear Signage	7	58.3%
Pleasant Ambiance	9	75.0%

**Table 1. Implementation of Visual Merchandising Strategies**

The observational findings indicate that the majority of the selected stores implemented effective visual merchandising strategies, with attractive product displays being the most common element (83.3%), followed by pleasant ambience (75.0%), effective store layout (66.7%), and clear signage (58.3%).

### 6.1 Survey Findings

Figure 1 presents the mean scores of consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions in response to visual merchandising elements.



The survey findings reveal that consumers have positive perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions toward stores with effective visual merchandising. Attractive product displays had the highest impact on consumer responses ( $M = 4.25$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ), followed by pleasant ambience ( $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ), effective store layout ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ), and clear signage ( $M = 3.98$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ). Multiple regression analysis showed that visual merchandising elements collectively explained a significant proportion of the variance in consumer purchase intentions ( $R^2 = 0.42$ ,  $F(4, 595) = 107.28$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Attractive product displays ( $\beta = 0.28$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and pleasant ambience ( $\beta = 0.24$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were the strongest predictors of purchase intentions.

### 6.2 Experimental Findings

Table 2 presents the results of the paired samples t-tests comparing consumer responses between the control and treatment stores.

Consumer Response	Control Store	Treatment Store	t	p	Cohen's d
Perception	3.45 (0.92)	4.38 (0.76)	12.64	<.001	1.09
Attitude	3.52 (0.88)	4.29 (0.81)	10.87	<.001	0.91
Purchase Intention	3.38 (0.95)	4.17 (0.85)	10.32	<.001	0.87

**Table 2. Experimental Results**

The experimental findings demonstrate that enhanced visual merchandising strategies in the treatment stores led to significantly higher consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions compared to the control stores. The effect sizes (Cohen's d) indicate a large magnitude of the impact of visual merchandising manipulations on consumer behaviour.

## 7. DISCUSSION :

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence for the significant impact of visual merchandising on consumer behaviour in textile retail stores in Ghana. The observational results reveal that the majority of the selected stores have implemented effective visual merchandising strategies, with attractive product displays and pleasant ambience being



the most prevalent elements. This suggests that Ghanaian textile retailers recognise the importance of creating visually appealing and inviting store environments to attract and engage customers.

The survey findings further support the positive influence of visual merchandising on consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions. Attractive product displays and pleasant ambience emerge as the strongest predictors of purchase intentions, highlighting the need for retailers to focus on these elements in their visual merchandising strategies.

The experimental results provide causal evidence for the effectiveness of visual merchandising manipulations in driving consumer behaviour. The significantly higher consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions in the treatment stores compared to the control stores demonstrate the tangible impact of enhancing visual merchandising strategies. These findings corroborate the S-O-R model (Kim et al., 2021; Lee & Lee, 2021) and the concept of atmospherics (Asamoah & Chovancová, 2016; Quartey et al., 2018), indicating that modifications in the store environment can elicit positive consumer responses and influence purchase decisions.

## **8. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS :**

The findings of this study have important implications for textile retailers in Ghana. Retailers should prioritise the development and implementation of effective visual merchandising strategies to create appealing and engaging store environments. This includes optimising store layouts to facilitate customer navigation and product exposure, creating attractive and well-organised product displays, providing clear and informative signage, and maintaining a pleasant ambience through the strategic use of lighting, colour,

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