

An Empirical Study to Find Out the Effects of Mannequin on Customers' Shopping Attitude and Behaviour

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ABSTRACT: -The impact of mannequins on consumer perception and shopping attitude in the context of retail clothes sale is the focus of this study. Customers are influenced by mannequins because they give them a look to strive to. Mannequins are useful for demonstrating how differently clothing can be worn. The study was carried out based on mannequin presentations in retail stores. Consumers appear to have a higher favourable view of colour display, design, and look, according to the findings. Consumers respond favourably to the displays, believing that they are generating a new sense and way of life by delivering total visualisation. The usage of idealised mannequins in retail stores has a substantial impact on social comparison, body dissatisfaction, and fit satisfaction for customers, according to the findings. These findings imply that customers compare their bodies to that of the mannequins, and the wider the gap between the mannequin's and the customer's size, the more unsatisfied they are with garment fit.

Keywords: Mannequins, Perception, Shopping attitude, Lifestyle, Clothing, retail, visualization, Appearance self-esteem.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mannequins have been used as a means of displaying clothing in brick-and-mortar establishments. The mannequins originated in the 15th century when miniature "milliners' mannequins" were used to demonstrate fashions for customers. The full-scale wickerwork mannequins came into use in the mid- 18th century, which were first manufactured in Paris. Mannequins did not begin to take their contemporary form until the late 1940s and early 1950s, when the invention of plastics allowed for sophisticated body sculpting. Male mannequins had an athletic physique, a V-

shaped contour, and hair combed back at the period, while female mannequins had tightly constricted waists, big hips, and enormous busts. When Christian Dior debuted his ultrafeminine "New Look" collection, full-skirted catwalk displays took on the image of a typical 1950s mannequin with small waists, full hips, and enormous busts, but critics said the models appeared artificial. It is claimed that it was at this moment in history that the idealised physical type for a Western-world woman emerged: taller than average, slimmer than average, and nevertheless proportioned evenly. In 1973, Martha Landau, a well-known designer, attempted to persuade Wolf & Vine, a mannequin manufacturer, to produce larger mannequins that resembled real women; the manufacturer responded, "Inside every fat woman is a thin woman trying to get out, our mannequins are what every large girl would like to be: beautifully proportioned, and clothes simply look better on taller, thinner figures".

The modern retailing revolution has radically altered the shopping habits of consumers in recent years. Due to the influence of several causes, including merchants' innovative techniques taken from western markets, today's consumers are very picky when making purchases and swiftly move from unorganised retailing forms to organised retailing formats. In terms of shelf organisation, in-store music, internal and external ambience, convenient form of payment, and self-service facilities, cross-cultural initiatives are also enticing customers. In a competitive market, communication devices have an impact on consumers' purchase attitudes. The garment industry relies heavily on visibility to influence customer purchasing decisions. Mannequins give greater value to product visibility in today's world. They act as a significant tool that retailers deploy

strategically to win in merchandising. The pace of retailing progress is determined not by the intelligence of the retailers, but by the direction of their intelligence that may be directed if they know how to display its features. Displays have a lot of power; the appropriate direction and display at the right time can affect a customer's psychological view and, as a result, their lifestyle. The impact of mannequins on consumer perception and shopping behaviour is investigated in this study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Kerfoot, Davies & Ward, 2003, stated in their research that although many merchants consider visual merchandising to be an essential factor in customer appraisal of brick-and-mortar establishments, academic study on the subject has been sparse. Finally, visual merchandising is concerned with how a product or brand is visually communicated to consumers, as well as whether the message is correctly decoded by consumers to encourage them to purchase the goods.

Kerfoot et al., 2003, stated in the research that consumers are enticed to shop by attractive item displays, which leads to purchases. This tendency has been verified by past research investigations, which have found that goods display increases purchase tendencies. Merchandise colours, presentation style, fixture awareness, path finding, sensory qualities of materials, and lighting are the themes that are most closely associated to buy intention.

Jain, Sharma, Narwal, 2012, stated in their research that visual merchandising is used to make customers feel the way the retailer wants them to. A smart retailer would correctly determine a target market and display products to appeal to that market, always keeping in mind that the consumer is the most important factor.

Zentes et al., 2007, stated in research that the word "merchandise display" is often used in the context of in-store marketing. It describes the way things are displayed in a store. While this term has been associated with retail display (e.g., the fixtures used and the method of product presentation), it also refers to general store design, store layout, and other aspects of the store environment.

Mcintosh, 2007, stated that more than just arranging things on a shelf, merchandising is a complex process. It's an important part of the company's image. It should be considered while creating the retail mix. According to popular belief, merchandising and display are unnecessary extra costs for a small business owner who is just getting started. The inference is that marketing, rent, goods, utilities, and staffing are necessary

expenses, whereas merchandising and display are extras. Even for retailers on a shoestring budget, merchandising and display are important aspects of the retail environment and should be given a reasonable budget.

Kim and Jin, 2001, stated that retailers' appealing displays may persuade customers to forego the time and effort required to travel to more distant stores. This method proposes that customers buy at stores where they may get the most satisfaction, taking into account both retail features and shopping prices. Customers' shopping time and money spent in a store, as well as their purchasing sentiment, are positively influenced by a pleasant shopping environment.

Chan and Chan, 2008, they discovered that well-dressed mannequins could encourage customers to stay in the store longer, which can lead to a higher likelihood of the client completing a purchase and, ultimately, satisfaction and enjoyment. Mannequins have also been observed to elicit sensations of pleasure and arousal, which may aid in increasing customer perceptions of wearability.

Anitha and Selvaraj, 2010, they concluded that people can only imagine themselves in mannequin costumes if they can relate to the mannequin, implying that buyers have a hard time picturing themselves in idealistically sized mannequins.

An extensive review of literature, led to the framing of the following objectives:

- To determine the impact of mannequins on the consumers' buying decision.
- To determine the likelihood of consumers on mannequin displays.
- To determine the impact of mannequins on motivating the consumers for their purchase.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study is 'Descriptive' in nature. The reason behind it is that this design is well structured, nearly rigid and its procedure cannot be modified every now and then. A Descriptive study is undertaken in many circumstances, like:

- When it is required to know the characteristics of certain groups such as age, profession.
- When it is required to know the proportion of people within a given sample, who have behaved in a specific manner, making their projection about certain things.

Sampling Technique with the help of a self-designed questionnaire was used for this study. The

Primary Data was collected via Questionnaire survey.

Study Area and Description of Data

The study undertakes the entire region of Bhubaneswar, Odisha as its area of study, as shown in the ‘Figure 1(a),(b)’, below. The topic of this study evolves around the “Effects of Mannequin on Customers’ Shopping Attitude and Behaviour”.

The distinguishing attitudes of the customers from a certain geographical area are very much necessary to avoid any kind of ambivalence, which may influence the analysis of the result. The research data of the study is taken from the 252 answers to a questionnaire conducted on “Google Forms” platform.



Figure 1(a): A map of India showing the location of Bhubaneswar

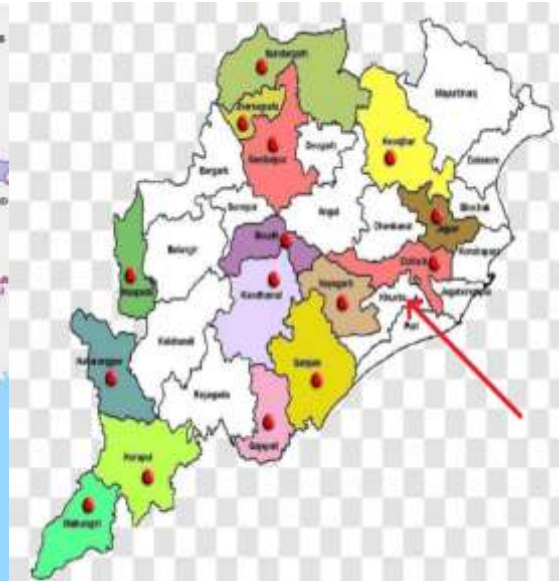


Figure 1(b): Outlined map of Odisha (India’s state), showing precise geographic location of Bhubaneswar under the KHORDA District

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

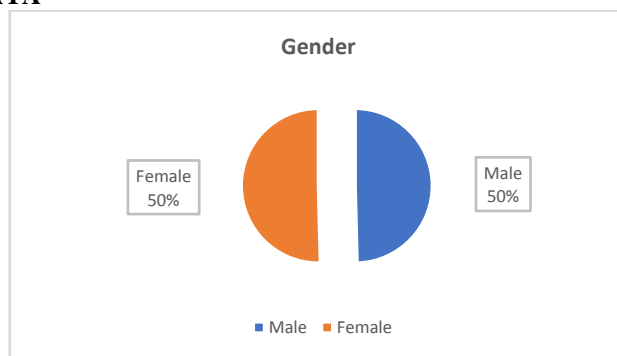


Figure 2: Pie chart showing the total number and percentage of Male and Female respondents.

The above pie-chart shows that the total number of respondents used for this study were 252, out of which 125 were males and 127 were females (nearly 50-50 of the total).

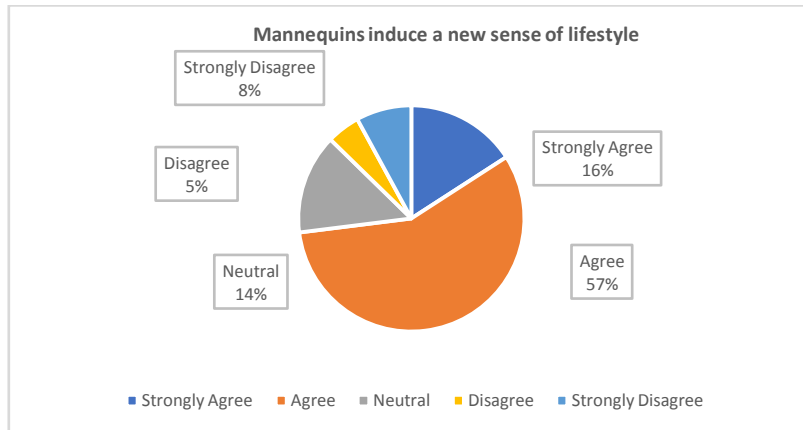


Fig3:Inducement of Mannequins on new sense of lifestyle

The above pie-chart shows the degree to which consumers believe that mannequins induce a new sense of lifestyle on them. For this question, 5 degrees were mentioned to choose from, namely: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree. The responses were as follows: total of 16% chose they strongly agree, 57% chose

to agree, 14% felt a neutral response, 5% disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed. A total of positive response for the question was about 73%, which clearly states that majority of the people feel mannequins represent a new sense of lifestyle.

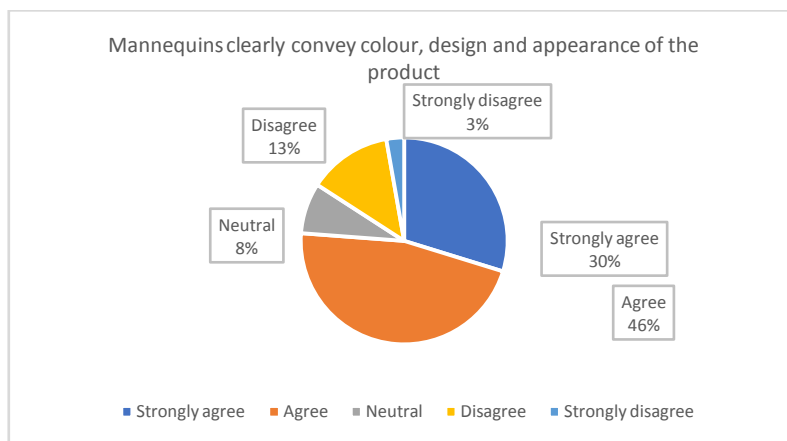


Fig 4: Colour, design and appearance conveyed by the mannequins

This pie-chart shows the degree to which consumers believe that mannequins clearly convey the colour, design, and appearance of the product. For this question, 5 degrees were mentioned to choose from, namely: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree. The responses were as follows: total of 30% chose they strongly agree, 46% chose to agree, 8% felt a neutral

response, 13% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed. A total of positive response for the question was about 76%, which clearly states that majority of the people felt that mannequins clearly convey colour, design and appearance of the product.

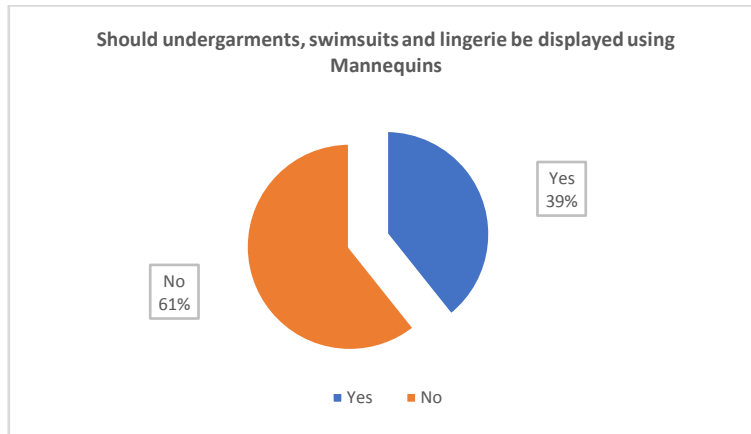


Fig 5: Undergarments, swimsuits, and lingerie to be displayed using mannequins

The above pie-chart shows the responses of a question which asked consumers about their perception towards “whether undergarments, swimsuits and lingerie should be displayed using mannequins?” The responses recorded were as follows: 61% were not in support to this, and only 39% gave a positive response. Afterwards, through an open-ended question most of the consumers also shared their views for this particular question. They believed that these type of clothing items can render a negative impact in the minds of younger generation (i.e., people at their puberty & newly adults).

AN EXPERIMENT ON “APPEARANCE SELF-ESTEEM”

An experiment was conducted by the researcher in order to record the observation that how customers usually perceive a full-sized complete mannequin and a half & incomplete mannequin. For this purpose, the researcher visited an apparel retail store within the ease of proximity and spent some time observing the reactions of the customers.

With most of the customers (especially females), it was observed that they perceived the full-sized mannequins as the figure of society's high beauty standards (i.e. with good height and body figure (including hip and busts)), and relinquished the apparel with a low appearance self-esteem.

While on the other hand, this was not a case with half & incomplete mannequins with no head or hair etc. Consumers who had unfavourable feelings about their bodies gravitated for the clothing, because the figure no longer mirrored society's high beauty standards. Customers' body image was raised because of this effect, and their negative opinions of the products were reduced. The negative effect was lost when mannequins

modelled objects that were less appearance-related, such as umbrellas etc.

IV. CONCLUSION & FINDINGS

Consumers believe that mannequin displays are superior to product trials. They understand that the colour, design, and appearance of the material are conveyed clearly through the use of mannequins in the exhibition. They also discovered that it saves them time, allows them to determine how the product is appropriate for them, allows them to comprehend the new sense and lifestyle provided by the presented items, and provides a complete picture of the products.

People enjoy seeing mannequin displays in stores because it inspires them with new fashion ideas. Frequently, the show will include a novel style that no one has considered before. Using a mannequin to display your clothes will not automatically result in sales. To make the mannequin displays feel real, retailers need to be inventive. People can see themselves in clothing worn by mannequins they recognise, create a scene for the display that gives it individuality or evokes a mood or feeling. Using a mannequin not only elicits the subconscious acceptance of other people, but it also imprints the image of the clothes on the mind. Whether they intended to or not, the customer starts going through the process in their head right away.

- A total of 73% of the respondents felt that mannequins represent a new sense of lifestyle.
- A total of 76% of the respondents felt that mannequins clearly convey colour, design and appearance of the product.
- Many people believed that undergarments, swimsuits and lingerie should not be displayed

on mannequins, as these type of clothing apparels could render a negative impact in the minds of younger generation. (i.e., people at their puberty and newly adults).

- With most of the customers (especially females), it was observed that they perceived the full-sized mannequins as the figure of society's high beauty standards (i.e. with good height and body figure (i.e., hip and bust size)), and relinquished the apparel with a low appearance self-esteem. Use of half or incomplete mannequins can be effective in such cases, as it would not represent the high beauty standards of the society, and will warm consumers' appearance self-esteem and make them feel comfortable while purchasing.
- People can only visualise themselves in mannequin costumes if they can relate to the mannequin, meaning that purchasers find it difficult to imagine themselves in idealistically sized mannequins.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE RETAILERS AND CUSTOMERS

Mannequins are now widely used in the retail industry. They have unquestionably become a powerful and commanding tool for retailers all around the world to attract customers. They bring a lot of value to the products and help the retail industry thrive. Despite the fact that mannequins are widely utilised in the retail business, little was previously known about how they influence customer behaviour. The study has highlighted some significant repercussions for both customers and merchants. Given that the worldwide retail business is expected to be worth USD 23 trillion by 2020 (source: statista.com). All the retailers should consider utilising half mannequins, which are less expensive and less threatening to the customers, according to the researcher.

It's empowering for customers to know what makes them tick or pushes their buttons. It allows consumers to see how the product looks on a person, but it does not provide them with the complete picture, which appears to be more difficult for individuals to deal with.

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