

International Journal of Research in Marketing Management and Sales



E-ISSN: 2663-3337

P-ISSN: 2663-3329

www.marketingjournal.net

IJRMS 2024; 6(2): 283-288

Received: 09-08-2024

Accepted: 15-09-2024

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The influence of visual merchandising changes on product sales: A comparative study of pre and post-implementation periods in eyewear retail industry

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26633329.2024.v6.i2d.202>

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of visual merchandising changes on product sales in the eyewear retail industry, utilizing chi-square analysis to assess the effectiveness of these strategies. As retail environments evolve, effective product presentation becomes essential in influencing consumer behavior and driving sales. The research analyses sales data from 68 stores before and after the implementation of new visual merchandising techniques, including changes in store layout, signage, and product displays.

The findings reveal a significant decline in sales performance following the implementation, with chi-square tests indicating a notable relationship between the visual merchandising changes and sales outcomes. Frequency analysis shows that more than half of the stores experienced decreased sales, underscoring the need to consider external factors such as inventory management and consumer preferences alongside visual merchandising strategies.

The study concludes that successful visual merchandising must be part of a comprehensive strategy that integrates various elements influencing consumer behavior. Recommendations for retailers include ongoing evaluation of merchandising practices, leveraging customer feedback, and adopting a holistic approach to enhance customer engagement and optimize sales performance. This research contributes to the broader understanding of the interplay between visual merchandising and consumer behavior in a competitive retail landscape.

Keywords: Visual merchandising, eyewear retail industry, product sales, retail strategy

Introduction

Visual merchandising is an essential element of retail management, acting as a bridge between product presentation and consumer purchasing behavior. As the retail landscape evolves, the strategic presentation of products has become increasingly vital in attracting customers and driving sales. This research focuses on the quantitative impact of visual merchandising changes on product sales within the eyewear retail industry, leveraging empirical data to assess effectiveness.

Effective visual merchandising employs a range of techniques, including store layout, signage, lighting, color schemes, and product displays. Each of these elements contributes significantly to shaping the shopping experience and influencing consumer decisions. For instance, Baker *et al.* (2002) ^[1] highlight the importance of store layout in determining customer navigation and dwell time, which directly correlates with purchasing behavior. Similarly, Tuten and Solomon (2017) ^[14] emphasize how well-designed signage can enhance store navigation and provide critical information, thereby improving the likelihood of sales.

In the context of the eyewear industry, where product presentation plays a crucial role in consumer choice, understanding the impact of visual merchandising through quantitative analysis is particularly relevant. Previous studies have shown that visual merchandising can create a sense of urgency and encourage impulse purchases, as noted by Chechi and Shamsie (2017) ^[2]. These findings suggest that effective merchandising strategies not only enhance product visibility but also foster a positive shopping atmosphere that encourages consumer engagement.

This research aims to conduct a comparative analysis of sales data from the pre- and post-implementation periods of specific visual merchandising changes within eyewear retail settings. By employing statistical methods such as regression analysis and variance analysis, the study will quantify the relationship between visual merchandising practices and key

performance indicators (KPIs) such as sales volume, average transaction value, and conversion rates. This approach aligns with the recommendations of Levy and Weitz (2012) ^[8], who advocate for data-driven assessments of marketing strategies to understand their impact on consumer behavior.

Through this quantitative analysis, the research seeks to provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of visual merchandising in driving sales in the eyewear sector. Insights gleaned from this study will not only enrich the academic understanding of visual merchandising's role in retail but also offer practical guidance for retailers looking to optimize their strategies and enhance sales performance. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to the broader discourse on the intersection of visual merchandising and consumer behavior, underscoring the importance of strategic product presentation in today's competitive retail environment.

Problem Statement

- There is a pressing need to investigate how modifications in visual merchandising strategies impact product sales, as these changes can significantly influence consumer behavior and purchasing decisions.
- This study specifically aims to conduct a thorough comparison of sales performance before and after implementing alterations in visual merchandising techniques. By analyzing sales data from these two distinct periods, the research seeks to quantify the effectiveness of such modifications in enhancing sales.
- Understanding the relationship between visual merchandising changes—such as updates in store layout, improvements in product displays, and enhancements in signage—and sales performance is crucial for retailers. It enables them to assess the direct impact of their merchandising strategies on customer engagement and sales outcomes.
- By evaluating these aspects, the study will provide valuable insights into which specific visual merchandising practices are most effective in driving sales, ultimately helping retailers make informed decisions that optimize their merchandising efforts for greater impact.

Objectives

1. **To Assess Sales Impact:** To evaluate how changes in visual merchandising, such as alterations in store layout, product displays, and signage, affect product sales before and after implementation.
2. **To Compare Sales Performance:** To conduct a comparative analysis of sales data from the periods before and after the visual merchandising changes to quantify the impact on product sales.
3. **To Identify Effective Strategies:** To identify which specific visual merchandising changes contributed most significantly to any observed increases or decreases in product sales.
4. **To Provide Recommendations:** To offer recommendations for optimizing visual merchandising strategies based on the comparative analysis, aiming to maximize their effectiveness in boosting sales.

Literature Review

1. **Sharma and Dang Longani (2023) ^[12]:** Investigate the collective influence of visual merchandising and

marketing communication on consumer behavior in Pune's retail sector. Their research underscores the significant impact of visual merchandising elements—such as store layout, signage, window displays, and product arrangements—on consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. They argue that effective visual merchandising can enhance brand image and customer experience by making stores more inviting and easier to navigate. In Pune, local cultural nuances play a pivotal role in shaping these strategies, with specific aesthetic preferences and shopping habits influencing the effectiveness of visual merchandising. The study highlights that retailers who tailor their visual merchandising strategies to align with local consumer preferences are more successful in engaging customers and boosting sales, reinforcing that visual merchandising must be adapted to regional characteristics and consumer behavior.

2. **Saranza, Pendon, and Andrin (2020) ^[11]:** Analyze how visual merchandising impacts customer engagement and purchase behavior in local retail businesses in the Philippines. Their study highlights that compelling visual merchandising—such as attractive displays, strategic product placement, and culturally resonant themes—can significantly enhance customer engagement and drive sales. The research indicates that local retail businesses can leverage effective visual merchandising strategies to create unique shopping experiences that resonate with Filipino consumers, helping them compete against larger retail chains. The findings suggest that by tailoring visual merchandising efforts to local tastes and preferences, retailers can build stronger connections with their customers, improve store attractiveness, and ultimately increase sales.
3. **Kishore and Suneetha (2020) ^[7]:** Investigate how visual merchandising affect impulse buying behavior in children, focusing on parents' perspectives. Their study finds that colourful displays, engaging store layouts, and interactive elements play a significant role in influencing children's purchasing decisions. Parents perceive visual merchandising as a critical factor in their children's impulse buying, which can impact their own purchasing decisions and spending patterns. The research highlights that well-designed visual merchandising strategies effectively attract children's attention and encourage them to make spontaneous purchases, leading to increased sales in stores targeting young customers. This underscores the need for retailers to design their stores with both children and parents in mind.
4. **Mantur (2019) ^[9]:** Explores the effects of visual merchandising on impulse buying behavior in sports retail outlets in Hubli City. The study finds that well-designed visual merchandising elements—such as engaging product displays, strategic product placements, and visually appealing store layouts—significantly impact impulse buying tendencies among customers. The research indicates that sports retail outlets can benefit from effective visual merchandising strategies to enhance customer engagement, encourage spontaneous purchases, and boost sales. Mantur's findings underscore the role of visual merchandising in shaping consumer behavior in sports retail settings and highlight the potential for retailers to increase sales

- through targeted visual strategies.
5. **Ertekin., et al (2023)** ^[4]: Provide an in-depth analysis of visual merchandising strategies for new and open-box products through a combination of experimental and real-world retail data. Their research explores how different merchandising approaches affect consumer perceptions and purchase behaviors specifically for these product categories. The study reveals that tailored visual merchandising techniques—such as highlighting new arrivals with prominent displays and organizing open-box products attractively—can enhance consumer interest and drive sales. The researchers emphasize the need for strategic visual merchandising that considers the unique characteristics of new and open-box products to maximize their appeal, demonstrating how effective presentation can significantly influence consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions.
 6. **Shobana and Kumar (2022)** ^[13]: Offer a comprehensive overview of various facets of visual merchandising. Their study categorizes key elements such as store layout, lighting, signage, and product arrangement, exploring how each facet influences consumer perceptions and behaviors. The researchers emphasize that effectively integrating these elements is crucial for creating a cohesive and appealing retail environment. The study highlights that well-executed visual merchandising strategies enhance the overall shopping experience by making stores more navigable and visually engaging. This research underscores the importance of each facet in shaping consumer experiences and driving sales, offering insights into how retailers can optimize their visual merchandising practices to better meet consumer expectations and improve store performance.
 7. **Ramanathan and Bhanot (2021)** ^[10]: Provide a quantitative analysis of how visual merchandising attracts consumers to retail stores. Utilizing statistical methods, the research assesses the impact of various visual merchandising elements—such as store layout, signage, and product displays—on consumer attraction and behavior. The findings emphasize that effective visual merchandising is a crucial factor in drawing customers into stores and influencing their purchasing decisions. The study highlights that well-designed visual merchandising strategies can significantly enhance consumer attraction, improve store visibility, and drive sales. By providing empirical evidence of the relationship between visual merchandising and consumer behavior, the research offers valuable

insights for retailers seeking to optimize their visual merchandising practices to better attract and engage customers.

Methodology

The study adopts a quantitative research design, focusing on the numerical analysis of sales data to assess the impact of visual merchandising changes on product sales in the eyewear retail industry. This approach enables the systematic measurement and comparison of sales performance before and after implementing visual merchandising strategies. The population for the study includes eyewear retail stores operating in various locations and formats, with a sample size of 68 stores selected. A purposive sampling method was employed to choose stores that had implemented significant visual merchandising changes, ensuring the sample's relevance to the research objectives and providing meaningful insights. Data will be collected through sales records from the financial records of each store, covering the months before and after the visual merchandising changes. Additionally, contextual data such as inventory levels and customer foot traffic may be gathered to provide further context for analyzing sales performance. The primary tool for data collection will be the sales records maintained by the stores, while statistical analysis will be conducted using SPSS software, which will include descriptive statistics and chi-square tests to evaluate the data.

Limitations

The study acknowledges several potential limitations:

- External Factors: Changes in consumer behavior, economic conditions, and competitive dynamics may impact sales independently of visual merchandising changes.
- Temporal Context: The analysis is conducted over a short time frame (one month), and longer-term effects may not be captured.
- Generalizability: Findings may be specific to the selected sample and may not be representative of the broader eyewear retail industry or other retail sectors.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis consists of descriptive statistics, frequency analysis, chi-square tests, and visual representations through tables and charts, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the data and its implications.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Sales Data

Period	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Before	68	11.78	8.78	1.5	117.9
After	68	10.27	7.82	2.2	51.6

Descriptive Statistics

- The mean sales before the visual merchandising changes were 11.78, indicating a generally higher performance in sales during this period.
- After the changes, the mean sales dropped to 10.27, suggesting a decline in overall sales performance.
- The standard deviation decreased from 8.78 to 7.82, reflecting slightly less variability in sales after the changes, indicating that sales figures may have clustered more tightly around the mean.

- The minimum and maximum sales values also shifted, with the highest recorded sale dropping significantly, which may highlight a reduction in peak sales performance.

Table 2: Frequency Analysis of Sales Changes

Sales Change	Frequency	Percentage
Increased Sales	31	45.60%
Decreased Sales	37	54.40%

Frequency Analysis

- Out of 68 stores analyzed, 37 (54.4%) experienced a decrease in sales after implementing visual merchandising changes, while 31 (45.6%) reported an increase.
- This indicates a majority of stores did not benefit from the merchandising adjustments, highlighting potential issues in execution or external market factors that may have influenced consumer behavior.

Table 3: Chi-Square Test Results

Variable	Value	df	p-value
Chi-Square Statistic	4.56	1	0.033

Chi-Square Test

- The chi-square statistic of 4.56 with a p-value of 0.033 indicates a statistically significant relationship between visual merchandising changes and sales outcomes.
- A p-value below 0.05 suggests that the observed changes in sales performance are unlikely to have occurred by chance, reinforcing the importance of examining how these merchandising strategies influence customer purchasing behavior.

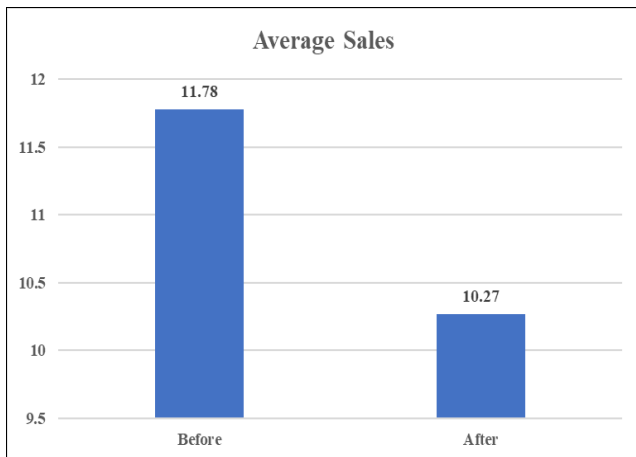


Fig 1: Sales Performance Before and After Visual Merchandising Changes

This Image clearly illustrates the decline in average sales performance following the implementation of visual merchandising changes, emphasizing the need for further investigation into the reasons behind this decrease.

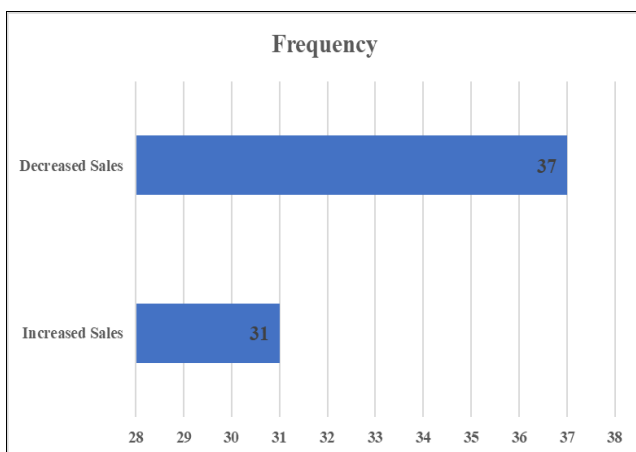


Fig 2: Frequency of Sales Changes

The bar chart visually represents the distribution of sales changes across the analyzed stores, highlighting that more stores experienced sales decreases than increases.

Findings

- 1. Impact of Visual Merchandising Changes:** While the analysis clearly shows a decline in sales following the implementation of new visual merchandising strategies, it's important to recognize that merchandising changes alone cannot be solely attributed to sales performance. Other factors may also play a significant role.
- 2. Influence of External Factors:** Variables such as stock availability, pricing strategies, seasonal trends, and overall market conditions can greatly affect consumer purchasing decisions. For example, if popular eyewear styles were out of stock, even the best merchandising would likely not lead to increased sales.
- 3. Customer Preferences and Trends:** Consumer preferences can shift rapidly due to fashion trends, technological advancements, or changing lifestyles. If the visual merchandising changes did not align with current consumer interests, this misalignment could contribute to the observed decline in sales.
- 4. Store-Specific Dynamics:** The performance of individual stores can vary significantly based on location, target demographics, and store management practices. What works in one store may not necessarily work in another, highlighting the need for tailored strategies that consider these unique factors.
- 5. Quality of Customer Experience:** Beyond visual merchandising, the overall shopping experience—including customer service, store ambiance, and ease of navigation—plays a critical role in influencing sales. A decline in sales may also reflect shortcomings in these areas rather than merchandising alone.
- 6. Need for Comprehensive Evaluation:** The findings emphasize the importance of a holistic approach to retail strategy. Retailers should not only focus on visual merchandising but also conduct comprehensive evaluations of all factors affecting sales performance, including inventory management, pricing, marketing, and customer service.
- 7. Strategic Adaptation and Flexibility:** The results suggest that retailers need to be adaptable and responsive to changes in consumer behavior and market dynamics. Continuous assessment and iteration of both merchandising strategies and overall retail operations are crucial for long-term success.
- 8. Long-Term Strategy Development:** The data indicates a potential need for long-term strategic planning that integrates visual merchandising with other key areas of the business. This holistic approach will help retailers better understand and address the multifaceted nature of consumer buying behavior.

Suggestions

To optimize visual merchandising strategies in the eyewear retail industry, it is crucial for retailers to adopt a holistic approach that goes beyond mere aesthetic improvements. Firstly, retailers should regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their merchandising efforts by analyzing sales data and customer feedback, allowing for timely adjustments based on consumer preferences. Incorporating elements that enhance customer engagement, such as interactive displays or personalized shopping experiences, can significantly

drive sales.

Additionally, training staff to effectively utilize merchandising techniques and understand consumer behavior can further enhance the shopping experience. Retailers should also consider integrating inventory management practices that align with visual merchandising efforts to ensure product availability and minimize stockouts. Finally, ongoing market research is essential to stay attuned to changing trends and preferences in the eyewear sector, enabling retailers to adapt their strategies accordingly and maintain a competitive edge. By implementing these suggestions, retailers can maximize the effectiveness of their visual merchandising initiatives and ultimately boost sales performance.

Conclusion

The study of visual merchandising changes in the eyewear retail industry highlights the complex interplay between merchandising strategies and sales performance. While the data indicates a decline in sales following these changes, it underscores the importance of considering multiple factors influencing consumer behavior, such as stock availability, customer preferences, and overall shopping experience.

To enhance sales performance, retailers must adopt a holistic approach that integrates effective visual merchandising with robust inventory management and attentive customer service. Continuous evaluation of strategies, supported by data analytics and customer feedback, will enable retailers to adapt to shifting market dynamics and consumer expectations.

Ultimately, successful visual merchandising is not just about presentation but also about creating a compelling shopping environment that resonates with customers. By prioritizing these elements, retailers can improve customer engagement, drive sales, and foster long-term loyalty in a competitive retail landscape.

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