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Factors determining window display conveying merchandise's Positioning and style: a case of shopping mall clothing display targeting undergraduate students

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Abstract

Window displays, as a part of selling strategies, not only convey the type and positioning of merchandise, but also the promotional strategies and corporate images. The study uses window displays for clothing to examine patterns, selling strategies, merchandise types, and target groups. It investigates the effects of design elements on the customers' perceptual responding to configurations. The theoretical framework bases on marketing concepts, visual perception principles, Gestalt psychology, and design's principle and elements. Sixty undergraduates, ages 18-23, participated as research subjects. Results derive a design guideline for window displays towards the designated type of intended perception for the particular group.

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Keywords: Window displays, clothing display, corporate strategies, corporate images, design guideline.

1. Introduction

Window displays serve not only the purpose of conveying the type and positioning of merchandise to customers, but it can also be used to promote the strategies and images of the corporation itself. The store environment can affect the different types and levels of consumers' behaviors (Kotler, 1973). In this light, a window display is also considered as a connection between the inside store environment and customers' perspectives from the outside and at the same time promoting the store's selling strategies. Kim (2003) observed the customer behaviors of students, and found that their behaviors on buying clothes are significantly related to the promotional campaign and window displays of clothing stores.

This study is, therefore, aims to study patterns, selling strategies, merchandise types and target groups of clothing market by using window displays for clothing in shopping mall as case studies. It endeavors to investigate the effects of design elements to be used in accordance with the selling strategies and the differentiations of perceptual responding to the configuration of them. Finally, the research generalizes from the case study to derive a design

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guideline for window display design towards the designated type of intended perception for the particular target group.

2. Theoretical Background and Research Framework

Based on an extensive literature review, this study bases its theoretical framework on the following lines of thoughts: merchandize marketing and target groups, principles of visual perception—i.e., figure and ground, Gestalt psychology, and principle and elements of design. The following review aims to establish theoretical basis, on which the conceptual framework of relevant variables and their relationships are developed (Figure 1).

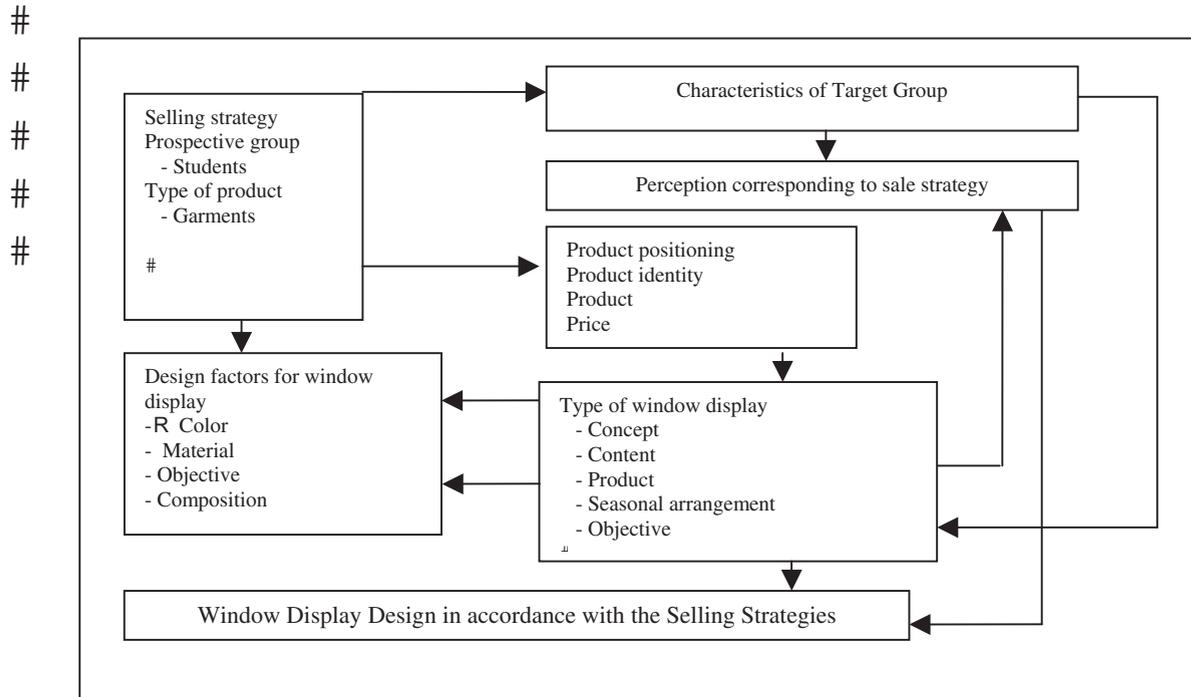


Figure 1 Research Framework

Merchandize marketing concept: The main objectives of selling strategies for fashion and clothing merchandize are two folds: 1) promotional displaying objective and 2) institutional displaying objective. The selling strategies to meet the first objective, such as sale/discount campaigns, focus on creating the enticing media to get customer attention. For the second objective, the selling strategies are aimed to maintain and promote corporate images and credibility as well as its products. With well-designed displays, organizational images can be promoted by the simply word-of-mouth advertising, which is the unpaid spread of a positive marketing message from person to person. A good image could build success corporate and easily gain loyalty from their customers. With well-designed and high quality products, customers could feel very proud on what products they are purchasing and using. In addition, the product displays also provide an opportunity for their customers to have up-closed glimpses of the products and hand-on experience which could create an impression at the individual level. With all these benefits, the corporate owners have taken product displays into account and try to create modern and interesting display to induce their customers.

Window display composition: The composition of window display comprises a number of relevant aspects including the design elements (i.e. an overall design, display types, surface, background, and design concept) and the merchandize information (i.e. display goal and content, and product information). Attracting strategies for window displays can be enhanced by various design elements and principles for example using an appealing clothing

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