

## Visual Merchandising in Sportswear Retail

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### ABSTRACT

Due to an increasingly health-conscious lifestyle, consumer behavior has changed in recent years. The purpose of this quantitative pilot study is to gain a better understanding of consumer attitudes and behaviors towards visual merchandising in sportswear retail, as well as the relationship between visual merchandising and consumer purchasing. Importantly, this study highlights a correlation between attitudes towards sportswear; attitude toward visual merchandising and purchasing behavior in sportswear retailers; and attitude towards visual merchandising. It also highlights a correlation between attitude towards visual merchandising and purchasing behavior in sportswear retail.

Two-hundred respondents who have made an impulse purchase in sportswear from June 2017 to November 2017 participated in an online and offline survey. The majority of the respondents self-identified as athletic sportswear consumers. Results indicate that the primary reasons for their sportswear consumption are: to wear more comfortable clothing and to enhance an athletic look; in addition, influencing factors in their purchasing decisions include: fit, design, and comfort. Respondents who highly value fashion-related attributes (e.g., design, comfort and versatility) also highly value visual merchandising. They appear to value brand image and the satisfaction in owning certain brands that reflect their self-image and status. As for respondents who value function-related attributes, such as product innovation versus its aesthetic qualities, their attitudes and purchasing behaviors tend not to be influenced by visual merchandising. Lastly, attitudes towards visual merchandising has a direct relationship with purchasing behavior in sportswear retail; in particular, respondents who are attracted by visual merchandising have higher tendencies to make a sportswear purchase.

**KEYWORDS:** sportswear, visual merchandising, purchasing behavior

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## Introduction

The Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (2008) separate the sportswear market into three categories: (1) active-sport clothing, in which the emphasis is on functional attributes for best sport performance; (2) fitness segment, in which the emphasis is on a balance between function and aesthetic attributes; and (3) license-sport clothing, in which the emphasis is solely on lifestyle and preference of wearing a team logo.

In recent years, sportswear has been increasingly perceived as fashionable: consumers have been incorporating sportswear items with every day-clothing items (Escales, 2017). As a result, sportswear brands continuously introduce fashionable products into the market, while preserving versatility, performance, and comfort (Su and Tong, 2015).

There are differences in preferences within the sportswear consumer market. Consequently, psychographic segmentation has been used to identify, understand, and better respond to sub-segments, instead of simply using demographic segmentation. Prominent sportswear brands such as Nike, Adidas and Under Armour use psychographic segmentation to classify products for different needs, including athletic-focus and fashion-focus, from brand to store level. For example, Adidas has two store types offering different product types: Adidas Athletic (for athletic-focus) and Adidas Originals (for fashion-focus). Hence, based on consumer needs, the sportswear market can be redefined into two markets which are: (1) the athletic market; and (2) the fashion market.

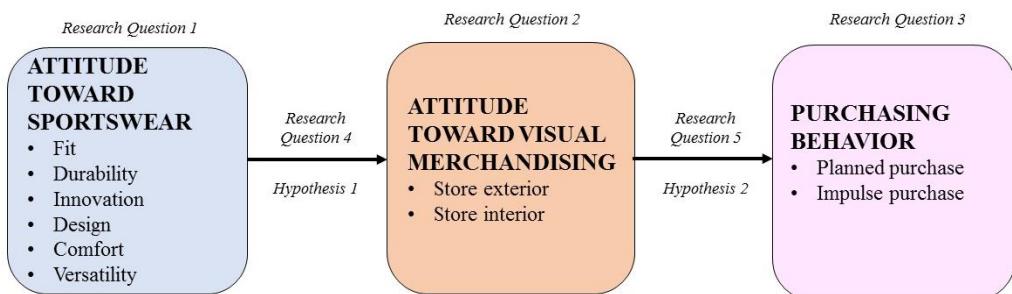
In addition, the concept of brand personality, which focuses on psychographic attributes, has been widely deployed by sportswear brands. Consumers purchase products not only for what the products can do, but also for what they stand for (Maehle et al., 2011). Brands introduce unique personalities to enhance product differentiation to portray consumer characteristics. Hence, brand communications are designed to have high impact, yet be consistent in the theme and message of strongly reflecting the brand personality which they desire consumers to perceive.

Visual communication, a type of non-verbal communication, has great impact on consumers from brand to store level. At the store level, it is very important for brands to visually attract potential consumers; hence, visual merchandising has become one of key strategies for major retailers. According to Sachdeva and Goel (2015), retail success is now less about what retailers *have* to sell; rather, it is more about *how* they sell it.

By using visual merchandising displays, retailers aim to attract shoppers into their stores, navigate them towards products, and influence them to make a positive purchasing decision (Levi & Weitz, 2009 as cited in Cant and Hefer, 2014). As a result, retailers display eye-catching visual merchandise that attract shoppers to enter and browse the stores. If retailers successfully create a positive in-store environment, consumers tend to have higher involvement and spend more time in the store (Law, Wong and Yip, 2012), leading to a higher chance that they will make a purchase. Visual merchandising is believed to be one of most influencing factors that could lead to purchasing decision whether planned or unplanned.

This pilot study is an examination of the relationship of visual merchandising displays and impulse purchase tendency, focusing on sportswear retailers as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1** Research Framework



Findings in this study should help sportswear brands to better understand consumer behavior at the point-of-purchase and shed light on how to strengthen store image and communication to trigger consumers to make a purchase decision. This study will use a quantitative approach to examine the relationship between the attitudes of sportswear consumers on visual merchandising displays and their purchasing behavior in sportswear retail stores.

## Literature Review

### Sportswear Consumers

Traditionally, sportswear was perceived as apparel and footwear strictly used for athletic purposes. Consumers who purchase sportswear were athletes or at least those who seek to improve or enhance their athletic performance. According to the initial definition provided by the Sporting Goods Manufacturer Association, sportswear is *“a product purchased with the intent that it will be used in active sport”* (Newberry, 2009, as cited in Tong and Su, 2014). This definition, however, is no longer accurate.

Between 2009 and 2017, the value of the sportswear industry has reached 148.50 billion U.S. dollars. Statista (2017) claimed that such growth in the sportswear market comes from an increase in popularity in exercising, together with popularity of the active look. Many sportswear brands have adapted to this changing trend by designing sport apparel and footwear to be more stylish and compatible with daily activities. Thus, a revised definition of sportswear has been proposed by Ko et al. (2011) adding that, “[...] it now also includes casual clothes worn by people for daily activities”.

The current situation is that sportswear has gained popularity, brands offer products which are more versatile, and consumers are now purchasing not solely for exercise, but also (or exclusively) for style. Lim et al (2016) defined different usages of sportswear into 2 types:(1) for sport-purpose, to play sports and improve performance; and (2) for non-sport-purpose, to

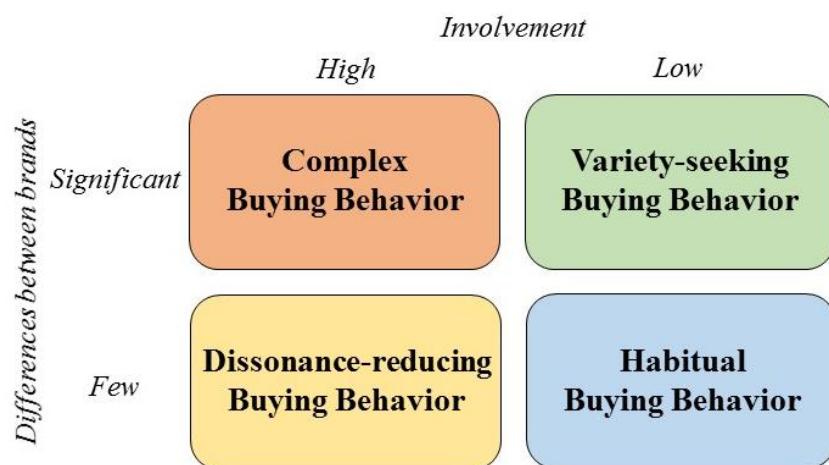
present a ‘sporty’ image.

Rahulan et al. (2015) stated that consumers can seek a wide variety of benefits from sportswear depending on their needs. According to Tong and Su (2014), sportswear has been clearly positioned between the fashion and sport industry, placing demands on sportswear of being functional, stylish and versatile.

### **Types of Consumer Purchasing Decision Behavior**

Consumers have various type of purchasing decisions, from products that they routinely purchase, such as coffee, bread, milk, etc., to products that are more rarely purchased and require more thought, such as houses, cars, computers, etc. According to Kotler et al. (2005), consumers’ purchasing behavior differs based on the level of involvement and the extent of perceived differences among brands offering in the market. Hence, Kotler et al. (2005) categorized consumer purchasing behavior into four types; (1) complex purchasing behavior, (2) dissonance-reducing purchasing behavior, (3) variety-seeking purchasing behavior and (4) habitual purchasing behavior.

**Figure 2** Consumer Purchasing Behavior



**Source:** Adapted from Kotler, P., Wong, V., Saunders, J. and Armstrong, G. (2005). *Principles of Marketing*. (Fourth European Edition). p 276.

As consumers have different purchasing behavior when it comes to different types of purchases, it is very important for marketers to understand at which stages of the decision-making process consumers tend to be involved before making purchase decision. Marketers must discover what are the triggers for each type of purchase so that they can effectively response and communicate with target consumers.

## **Visual Merchandising**

Visual merchandising can be defined as a combination of visual displays and arrangement of assorted products in the store in order to improve store image to increase both traffic and sales (Mathew, 2008, as cited in Cant and Hefer, 2014). According to Solomon (2015), "...just like products, stores have "personalities", and it is these 'personalities' which can affect consumer perception, and ultimately purchase intention (du Plessis & Rousseau, 2003 as cited in Cant and Hefer, 2014). High quality store presentation alone is not enough to convince shoppers if the product does not align with brand identities nor reflect brand personalities. Hence, it is very important for retailers to understand their brands' characteristics and deliver brand experience through store presentation. Such an understanding enables shoppers to have a total experience of the brand that is consistently communicated both inside and outside of stores.

Aside from consistency, retailers have to design and come up with the right combination of displays to represent their brands at its best. Since each brand has a different brand identity, range of products, and target consumers, the way that shoppers become attracted is also different; what works well for one brand may not do so for another. Soomro et al. (2017) mentioned in their research that "*This technique [brand merchandising] also helps in the selling of the right kind of product to the right kind of consumer by developing attraction and displaying products accordingly*" (Wanninayake and Randiwela, 2007). Hence, a selection of visual merchandising displays is essential as each may influence shoppers in a different way. However, before selecting visual merchandising technique, it is very important for retailers to truly understand how it works.

### ***Visual Merchandising as a Factor for Unplanned Purchase***

Visual merchandising displays should encourage consumers to have unplanned purchases. Research shows that more than half of mall shoppers in the U.S. find themselves having made impulse purchases (Maymand and Ahmadinejad, 2011). To induce unplanned purchases, there are controllable factors that retailers can work on, including store environment, visual merchandising, promotions, and product examination (Maymand and Ahmadinejad, 2011). Visual merchandising displays can be used to create the "suggestion effect" leading consumers to make certain decision or to take some actions. To do so, retailers put a product (new or otherwise) with a dedicated display in a prominent area. Together with other factors, this technique should trigger a customer's desire, and finally lead to an unplanned purchase. In addition, visual merchandising displays can be used to create the impression of limited supply, especially apparel products that are launched seasonally. In this case, consumers perceive its scarcity, which leads to a sense of desire and that they cannot come back and buy later (Chatvijit, 2012). This technique, essentially, creates the "right-here-right now" mindset.

### ***Visual Merchandising as a Storyteller***

Visual merchandising also acts as storyteller, especially window displays (Opriş and Brătucu, 2013). Window displays are located at the store front, the most visible space, and gives the customers the first impression of the store and its brand. When executed properly, window displays become a powerful tool for retailers to communicate brand stories and attract potential consumers. According to Shopify (n.d.), the way to create an effective window display starts with using a story based on a theme, then amplify the storytelling with a well-designed execution. Hence, retailers tend to use window displays to tell stories about the brand rather than talking about the products themselves. Communicating by using storytelling is often a more powerful technique, compared to promoting product features alone. This is especially true for self-expression products that retailers have to trigger consumers' internal desires. Visual merchandising can act as a reminder for shoppers who have been previously exposed to brand communications outside the store. It acts as storytelling mechanism in reminding shoppers of brand campaigns. Again, this should influence shoppers and trigger their interests to spend time exploring the collections in the stores.

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### **Methodology**

To better obtain insights on the influence of visual merchandising on the attitudes of sportswear consumers' and their purchasing behaviors, the target participants of this study are sportswear consumers who have made sportswear impulse purchases over the past 6 months. These consumers are a mix of men and women. The research focuses on collecting primary data only from those who experienced impulse purchases at retailers directly so as to focus on how visual merchandising influenced their decisions. To be more specific, the survey contains 6 sections including: (1) introduction to survey (2) screening section (3) demographic section (4) psychographic section (5) attitude toward visual merchandising of sportswear retailers and (6) purchasing behavior in sportswear retailers. Reliability check shows the alpha coefficient of reliability for attitude toward visual merchandising in sportswear retailers and is valued at 0.805 and purchasing behavior in sportswear retailers is valued at 0.763. Both are valued higher than an acceptable reliability score of 0.7.

The survey was distributed both online and offline to get a sample of 200 respondents who are qualified for the survey (consumers who have made impulse purchase in sportswear retail over the past 6 months). The online survey was distributed in 2 ways: first, the surveys were distributed using the snowball sampling method. The researcher passed the survey to respondents, then ask them to pass it along to their acquaintances who are sportswear consumers. Second, the researcher posted the survey link on online sport community pages (e.g. pantip.com, Facebook fan page of the sport community). This helped the researcher to reach the target audience for the survey more efficiently. For the offline survey, the researcher distributed the survey to respondents shopping in selected department stores in Bangkok (e.g., Central world, Siam Paragon, and Mega Bangna). Both methods used the same questionnaire, which is bi-lingual to enable responses from non-Thai participants. Screening questions were

asked at the beginning of the survey to include only qualified respondents: sportswear consumers who made impulse purchase at sportswear retailers over the past 6 months.

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## Research Results

### Descriptive Analysis

Fifty-six percent of respondents were female and 44% were male. Forty-five percent of respondents were in the age range of 26-33 years old, while a small number of them (3.5%) were in the age range of 42-49 years old. The monthly income among the group of respondents varied. Twenty-eight percent earn between 20,000 – 50,000 THB, while 7.5% earn below 20,000 THB per month. The majority of respondents (64.5%) were private sector employees, followed by 18.5% which were business owners. Most of the respondents (81%) are single.

Among 200 respondents, 56% considered themselves as athletic sportswear consumers, while 44% considered themselves as fashion sportswear consumers. 31.5% of the total respondents exercise once a week, while the smallest number of respondents (13.5%) exercise once a month. On why customers purchase sportswear, the primary reason is to “wear more comfortable outfits” (Mean = 3.59 from full score of 5 points), followed by “to enhance athletic look” (Mean = 3.05 from full score of 5 points), while the least reason is “to enhance fashionable sporty look” (Mean = 2.66 from full score of 5 points). When asked about the most important attributes of sportswear, the respondents gave the following responses: fit (Mean = 4.51 from full score of 5 points), design (Mean = 4.47 from full score of 5 points), innovation (Mean = 3.17 from full score of 5 points).

Overall, attitude toward visual merchandising in sportswear retail is positive with a mean of 4.09. The level of attitude toward visual merchandising of sportswear retail for both store exterior (Mean = 4.10 from full score of 5 points) and store interior (Mean = 4.09 from full score of 5 points) are almost equal. The respondents extremely agree that they tend to choose which store to shop at depending on eye-catching window displays (Mean = 4.13 from full score of 5 points). For store interior, they extremely agree that product items arranged by category helps them to find items easier (Mean = 4.64 from full score of 5 points) and store image affects their perception toward brand image (Mean = 4.24 from full score of 5 points). Although, the respondents have a slightly lower level of agreement on the statement that “colors used in the store affects their attitude toward the store” (Mean = 3.49 from full score of 5 points), the result show that they agree with it.

Over the past six month, the result shows that 43.5% of the respondents had made a planned purchase once, while 3% had made purchases more than three times. Surprisingly, 29.5% of them have not made any planned purchase. For impulse purchases, the majority of respondents (60.5%) have made an impulse purchase once, while 3.5% indicated 3 purchases. The majority of the respondents (58.5%) spend on average 1,000 – 3,000 THB per visit at a sportswear retailer.

Overall, purchasing behavior in sportswear retailers has a positive response (Mean = 3.77 from full score of 5 points). The level of evaluation of alternatives before purchasing is highest comparing to the other 4 stages of purchase decision making (Mean = 4.01 from full score of 5 points). The respondents extremely agree that they always “consider key attributes when purchasing sportswear”(Mean = 4.35 from full score of 5 points). Information search (Mean = 3.90 from full score of 5 points) has the second highest level. The results show that the most important source for the respondents to search for information is the Internet (Mean = 4.36 from full score of 5 points), while the least important source is friends (Mean = 3.56 from full score of 5 points). The least but still high level is purchase (Mean = 3.48 from full score of 5 points). The result shows that they tend to purchase from a retailer providing substantive information (Mean = 3.84 from full score of 5 points).

### **Inferential Analysis**

*Hypothesis 1: There is a correlation between sportswear consumers’ attitude toward sportswear and their attitude toward visual merchandising of sportswear retailers.*

1. Relationship between attitude toward sportswear design and attitude toward visual merchandising of sportswear retails.

The result shows that there is a very positive correlation between sportswear design and attitude toward visual merchandising ( $R = 0.309$ ). The respondents who gave importance to design have a positive attitude toward visual merchandising of sportswear retailers at 0.05 significance level.

2. Relationship between attitude toward sportswear versatility and attitude toward visual merchandising of sportswear retails.

The result shows that there is a positive correlation between sportswear versatility and attitude toward visual merchandising ( $R = 0.281$ ). The respondents who gave importance to versatility have a positive attitude toward visual merchandising of sportswear retailers at 0.05 significance level.

3. Relationship between attitude toward sportswear comfort and attitude toward visual merchandising of sportswear retails.

The result shows that there is a positive correlation between sportswear comfort and attitude toward visual merchandising ( $R = 0.232$ ). The respondents who gave importance to comfort have a positive attitude toward visual merchandising of sportswear retails at 0.05 significance level.

4. Relationship between attitude toward sportswear innovation and attitude toward visual merchandising of sportswear retails.

The result shows that there is a negative correlation between sportswear innovation and attitude toward visual merchandising ( $R = -0.147$ ). The respondents who gave importance to innovation have a negative attitude toward visual merchandising of sportswear retails at 0.05 significance level.

5. Relationship between attitude toward sportswear fit and attitude toward visual merchandising of sportswear retails.

The result shows that there is no correlation between sportswear fit and attitude toward visual merchandising. The respondents who gave importance to fit ( $R = -0.033$ )

are not influenced by their attitude toward visual merchandising of sportswear retails at 0.05 significance level.

6. Relationship between attitude toward sportswear durability and attitude toward visual merchandising of sportswear retails.

The result shows that there is no correlation between sportswear durability and attitude toward visual merchandising. The respondents who gave importance to durability ( $R = -0.034$ ) are not influenced by their attitude toward visual merchandising of sportswear retails at 0.05 significance level.

***Hypothesis 2: There is a correlation between sportswear consumers' attitude toward visual merchandising and their purchasing behaviors in sportswear retailers.***

Relationship between sportswear consumers' attitude toward visual merchandising and their purchasing behavior in sportswear retails.

The result shows that there is a very positive correlation between sportswear consumers' attitude toward visual merchandising and their purchasing behavior in sportswear retailers ( $R = 0.49$ ). The respondents who give importance on visual merchandising have higher level of purchasing behavior in sportswear retails at 0.05 significance level.

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## **Discussion**

In this section, the obtained findings will be interpreted and analyzed to provide meaningful insight with respect to the literature review, as well as enable conclusions to be drawn about this study.

### **Sportswear Consumers**

Of all 200 respondents, the result from a psychographic perspective surprisingly shows that most respondents consider themselves as athletic sportswear consumers (56%), while the remaining of respondents considers themselves as fashion ones. Borzykowski (2013) mentioned that health-related sectors including sportswear and organic food are growing due to consumer preference for healthier lifestyle. Due to this rising trend, consumers tend to be more engaged with sport activities while consuming a healthier diet. The result from this study regarding sport routines also reflects this point. The overall result shows that the respondents exercise in the medium level (Mean = 3.03). However, 31.5% of respondents exercise once a week, while 21% exercise 2-3 times a week and 14.5% exercise more than 3 times a week. This evidence shows that exercising is a part of their routines. These groups of respondents, combined together, mean that 67% of the total respondents exercise between once and three times a week. Moreover, a majority of the respondents (64.5%) are private sector employees who tend to have less free time, especially on weekday. This reveals that consumers are willing to spend their limited amount of free time exercising. This also reflects that consumers are more athletic and have a healthier lifestyle.

Motivations to purchase sportswear vary according to their intended use. The current trend has moved away from sportswear for sporting activates alone. According to Escales (2017), sportswear has been increasingly perceived as fashionable items that consumers can mix and match with their everyday outfits. Also, casual dress is more acceptable for more occasions nowadays, enabling apparel businesses, such as sportswear brands, to extend their product offerings to customers who seek both casual and stylish outfits (Chi, 2013). However, the result of the study reflects that consumers have a more muted response towards using sportswear to create a casual look (Mean = 2.67), with greater support for using sportswear to achieve comfortable outfits (Mean = 3.59). Twenty-eight percent of the respondents chose comfort as their primary reason of consuming sportswear. It could be concluded that they prefer casual dress to *feel* casual rather than to look casual. Athletic-related purposes came as the second and third reason for sportswear consumption, for enhancing athletic look (Mean = 3.05) and for enhancing sportswear performance (Mean = 3.04).

### **Visual Merchandising**

Visual merchandising is believed to have an important role in creating attraction, motivating shoppers, and creating purchase intention, which leads to higher sales volume. Solomon (2015) claimed that stores also have personalities, just like products. From the result of this study, the respondents strongly agree that store image affects their perception towards brand image (Mean = 4.47). They also strongly agree that great store image helps to increase value of products (Mean = 4.24) and agree that great store image enhances their shopping experience (Mean = 4.02). These insights reflect that there is a particular perceived image of the brand or store in the consumers' mind, which suggest a connection between brand and store image. If the store is not well-presented, it is likely that customers will not be attracted by what the brand offers and prefer other alternatives. This is especially for customers who are sensitive to aesthetic and visual merchandising; they may judge the brand from store exterior and decide to shop elsewhere. The result of this study also suggests that store exterior has an influence on shoppers, whether they will continue to shop in the store. In other words, stores presented with creative window displays (Mean = 4.06) and stores with eye-catching window displays (Mean = 4.13) can greatly attract potential customers. Furthermore, if the store looks attractive, it is more likely that customers will perceive the brand more positively, value the products, and possibly be motivated to buy.

#### **Which takes outside-in perspective**

Designing visual merchandising to match target market is also essential. According to theKotler et al. (2005), taking the outside-in perspective, it is very important to define the needs of target market, then use different marketing activities to consistently communicate and attract customers. The brand could integrate communications, both above and below-the-line communication strategies, to ensure that key messages attract particular target market. At the store level, Wanninayake and Randiwela (2007) claimed that visual merchandising can be specifically designed for a particular target market, so that it helps retailers sell the right kind of products to the right consumers. The result from this study also supports this concept. The

respondents strongly agree that encountering the right products at the store makes them realize undiscovered needs (Mean = 4.31). Together with great visual merchandising, it triggers their need for particular product at a high level (Mean = 3.73). This yields a valuable insight that retailers should design their visual merchandising, not only to decorate the store, but to ensure that it matches to their target market.

Product assortment is also an important factor of visual merchandising that retailers should take into consideration, whether it matches with the preferences of their potential customers. As claimed by Wanninayake and Randiwela (2007), visual merchandising can be designed and customized to serve specific target consumer group; it helps in terms of presentation and channeling the right products to the right customers. The result shows that the right visual merchandising, including the right product assortment would trigger consumers' needs at problem recognition stage of purchase (i.e., "Do I need this product?") and induce purchase intention for unplanned buying.

In addition, visual merchandising can be treated as a key communicator at store level. Fain et al. (2014) mentioned that visual merchandising could work subliminally, which encourages a purchase. It has several benefits, including but not limited to: (1) it reduces the burden of a salesperson; (2) it supports shoppers who prefer a less intrusive shopping experience; (3) it helps shape the tone and information communicated to shoppers. The result of this study shows that respondents base their impression on store presentation (Mean = 4.09) and rely on visual merchandising displays to obtain more information about the products (Mean = 3.71) and trends (Mean = 3.87).

As mentioned previously, visual merchandising, especially window display, could act as a storyteller to attract and appeal shoppers (Shopify, n.d.). The right storytelling for the right consumers helps them to perceive products favorably, which may lead to higher purchase tendency. Shoppers from this study also agree that they are more likely to enter a store with an attractive store exterior (Mean = 4.10).

### **Purchasing Behavior in Sportswear Retails**

As discussed above, sportswear seems to be responding to the changing need for healthier lifestyle and casual outfits. However, consumers are still cautious and limit their spending on this subcategory of apparel. According to the findings of this study, the average spending of the majority of the respondents (58.5%) is between 1,000 to 3,000 THB per visit, followed by 31.5% that spends between 3,001-5,000THB per visit.

With respect to purchase frequency, most have made at least one planned and unplanned purchase over the past six months. Given the cost of leading sportswear brands, consumers, consumers may decide to buy only couple items per visit. To summarize, sportswear is still considered a luxury purchase.

### **Relationships between Consumers' Attitude, Behaviors &Visual Merchandising**

Three out of six sportswear attributes (design, comfort, and versatility) have a positive relationship with consumers' attitude towards visual merchandising, especially design. All of

these three attributes can be considered as fashion-related. Whereas innovation, which is functional feature, has a negative relationship with consumers' attitude toward visual merchandising. For fit and durability, the result shows that there is no relationship with consumers' attitude toward visual merchandising.

The evidence shows that fashion sportswear consumers, especially those who give high importance to design, value visual merchandising. The quality of visual merchandising tends to affect consumers' attitudes toward brand and store image. On the other hand, athletic sportswear consumers, who are functional-oriented and give importance to innovation, are less sensitive to visual merchandising. They tend to focus more on a product's physical features. Such consumers' purchase decision is based on their primary reasons of consuming rather than store presentation. Furthermore, consumers who value fit and durability are not influenced by their attitude toward visual merchandising.

To elaborate from these findings using the elaboration likelihood model (ELM), fashion sportswear consumers process information on the peripherally. Grotjohn (2000) explained that consumers who take this route will be less rational and form an attitude based on something else rather than the message itself. In this study, fashion sportswear consumers, who value design, comfort and versatility, are sensitive to visual merchandising displays, which are considered to be peripheral cues. These cues work as a trigger of consumers' affective state and influence consumers' attitude and purchasing decision. The cues can range from source cues (source credibility and likability), message cues (consensus heuristic: the choice that most people agree with), self-perception cues and visual salience (Grotjohn, 2000). Hence, fashion sportswear consumers tend to be triggered by effective marketing as they take a peripheral route in forming their attitude. On the other hand, athletic (function) sportswear consumers who give importance on functional features like fit, durability and innovation, are not sensitive to peripheral cues, such as visual merchandising. They tend to be motivated by central cues. Consumers who take this route will thoroughly analyze their issue and cognitively process information that may influence their attitude change (Grotjohn, 2000). Those cues can provide a great amount of product information which aligns with what the brand claims for particular products.

The relationship between attitude toward visual merchandising and purchasing behavior in sportswear retails is very positive ( $R=0.49$ ). It can be implied that the more consumers value and become affected by visual merchandising, the higher the chance that they will be motivated to purchase in sportswear stores. This is especially true of fashion sportswear consumers who highly value design, comfort and versatility, as they tend to greatly value visual merchandising. Visual merchandising could be considered as an effective marketing tool which trigger consumers' emotion. If well-designed and consistent with brand image, visual merchandising will help to enhancing shoppers' experience and motivate them to imagine a good feeling of owning specific brand and eventually purchase. Solomon (2015) mentioned about a connection between emotion and consumption as "Our feelings also can serve as a source of information when we weigh the pros and cons of a decision." This implies that emotional marketing plays a decisive role in creating perceived differences of products. Consumers would pick the brand

they feel good over others even though they are all alike. Visual merchandising could trigger consumers, especially fashion sportswear consumers, to have extrinsic motivation to buy.

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