

# A STUDY ON SHOPPING HABITS AND EFFECT OF VISUAL MERCHANDISING AT VIRTUOUS RETAIL MALL, SURAT

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## **Abstract**

Visual Merchandising usually keeps a great impact on shoppers' behaviour. Positive impact of visual merchandising leads to generation of impulsive purchase by shoppers. This study was conducted to know the buying behaviour of shoppers towards the several elements of Visual Merchandising of VR Mall. This study was carried out at VR Mall of Surat City. During the study, the researcher has visited VR Mall and has asked those visitors of VR Mall to fill questionnaire who are residing in Surat City only. Each respondent has given their views and opinions which has helped the researcher to identify the behaviour of shoppers while purchasing from any store at VR Mall.

**Keywords:** *Visual Merchandising, Exploratory Factor Analysis*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Retail comes from the French word retailer, which refers to "cutting off, clip and divide" in terms of tailoring (1365). It first was recorded as noun with the meaning "sale of small quantities" in 1433 (French). Its literal meaning was to "cut off or shred". Retail is considered a final stage of economic activity. By this fact, retail occupies an important place in the world economy. (Arora, 2012). In the words of Dr. Kotler, "Retailing includes all the activities involved in selling goods or services to the final consumers for personal, non-business use." Retail is a distribution channel that links manufacturers to customers. Manufacturer produces or makes the products and sells them to retailers or wholesalers. Also, the wholesalers resell the products to the retailers and finally the retailers resell these products to final customers.

Retailing broadly involves the following:

- Understanding consumers' needs
- Developing good merchandise assortment
- Display the merchandise in an effective manner so it becomes easy and attractive for the shoppers to buy.

Retailing thus can be redefined as the first point of customer contact. Put precise and simple that any firm selling the products to the final customers is performing the function of retailing. And that contains all the activities involved in marketing of goods and services directly to the consumers for their personal, family or household purpose.

## **EVOLUTION OF RETAIL (INDIA)**

The origin of retailing in India can be traced with the emergence of Kirana stores and mom-and-pop stores. These stores are used to cater needs and desire of local people. The government also supported the rural retail and the many other franchise stores came up with the help of Khadi and Village Industries Commission. (Arora, 2012) The economy began to open up in 1980s resulting in change of retailing. The evolution of retailing can be better understood as: Retailing in India was nearly similar with peddlers, vegetable vendors, neighborhood kirana stores (small grocery stores), or consumer durable stores in nearby town. These retailers operated in highly unstructured market. Very few retailers operated in more than one city. Organized retailing in India was led by few manufacturers owned retail outlets, mainly from textile industry. Example: Bombay Dyeing, Raymond's, S Kumar's and Grasim. Later on, Titan successfully created a well-organized retailing concept and established a series of showrooms for its premium watches. Liberalization of Indian economy led to reduction of stringent or strict restrictions. Increase in wages of employee working in Greenfield sectors with higher purchasing power. There had been entry of few multinational players like Nanz in India. The retail chains were set up by the domestic retailers such as Cotton World (Mumbai), Nirula's (Delhi) and the Viveks and Nilgiris in South. The later half of 1990s experienced a fresh wave of entrants with the shift from Manufacturer to Pure Retailers. Example: Planet M and Music world in music; Crossword and Fountainhead in books. 1995 onwards, there has been emergence of shopping centers, mainly in urban areas. It targets in providing facility of car parking so as to provide a complete destination experience for all the segments of society. There arose and emergence of supermarkets which concentrated on 3 V's – Value, Variety and Volume.

## **ABOUT VISUAL MERCHANDISING?**

Visual Merchandising is a practice where both goods and services can be displayed to highlight their features and benefits. The purpose of visual merchandising is to attract, engage, and motivate the customer towards making a purchase. Visual Merchandising is a practice for developing floor plans and various types of displays which specially includes three-dimensional displays in order to maximize sales. There are important key elements of visual merchandising as color, landscape, texture (which includes touch and feel), communication and decor. Apart from the above mentioned main elements of visual merchandising, there are different elements such as window display, graphics, signage, seasonal display, fashion trends, fun interactions, ambience, floor plan, music, lights, scent, spatial layout, etc. The research on visual merchandising will help to know how worth is visual merchandising on consumers' buying behavior in practice. (Thakur)

Visual merchandising is everything that the customer sees which includes both interior as well as exterior that create a positive image about the company or business and results into attention, interest and desire of consumers. Also, the consumers can be attracted by a story-telling of what the store is all about. Merchandising is a tool to achieve sales and the targets decided. Apart from such principles about visual merchandising, the important aspect here is that it is practiced based on seasons i.e. seasonal displays are done to attract new arrivals to the consumers. This helps in increasing changes or conversions through a proper planned and systematic display of stock.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(GIGOLA, 2014) has studied the impact of visual merchandising on consumers' buying behavior while buying apparels. The research concentrated on both qualitative as well as quantitative aspect of visual merchandising. Sample of 1000 individual was taken in June 2013 in Warsaw Shopping Centre. There is direct relationship between visual merchandising and consumers' behavior while buying appeal. The increase in sale is based or dependent on how well the presentation of product is done. It has come to a point that this lays more impact on women than on men, youngsters than on elders, high income class than on low income group. Visual merchandising also helps to keep clients on longer terms. This also lays an important role in marketing communication.

(Prasad & Vetrivel, 2016) have studied analysis on visual merchandising and its impact on consumer buying behavior. The retailers today use visual merchandising to differentiate themselves from the competitors, to get prominent in market as well as attract the customers. The main aim of this research is to understand the impact of visual merchandising on consumers' buying behavior. This research laid emphasis on window display, fixture, signage, mannequin, colors and lightning. The aim was to stand out in competition in order to attract the consumers. Great concern was given to mannequins as they drive the consumers' attention towards the store. They specifically mentioned signage so as to decrease the time utilization as a part of search cost.

(Pillai, Iqbal, Umer, Maqbool, & Sunil, 2011) have studied analysis of design, effectiveness and role of visual merchandising in creating customer appeal. This research study aims to find out how the outlets incorporate visual merchandising apart from window display, layout and many common things. Through this study, it helps to understand that proper lighting and attractive themes also plays a role in visual merchandising. That is the most important role played is of instore layout display. The major findings in this study are of appealing visual merchandising themes to attract the present and potential customers. Also the silent communication like facial expressions, gestures, body language, etc is a part of visual merchandising. The output of this reveals that most of the merchandisers focuses on the new trends and the moving items to convert potential customers to real customers. Therefore, this study was made to study the store outlooks impact on consumer behavior, investigate the preference of customers and also investigate what is preferred.

(Saini, Gupta, & Khurana, 2015) have studied analysis of visual merchandising and impulse buying behavior : a case of retail industry. The aim of this is to find out that visual merchandising influences consumer' buying behavior and impulse buying as well. The colours, style, fixtures, path finding, lighting influenced visual merchandising to impulse buying. As, the impulse buying is important aspect of consumers' behavior, it is necessary to look after all the variables that urges and controls the decision that influences consumers' behavior. Elements like store layout, window display, etc are the important aspects of merchandising activity. Merchandising activity is been noticed as important aspect to survive in future competition. This study also concentrated on sustaining in competition with the help of effective visual merchandising.

(Santosh & Sharan, 2017) have studied analysis of visual merchandising : an effective tool for fashion retailing. This study laid emphasis on fashion retail stores where they find showcases more attractive than fashion sales person. The purpose behind the store image and environment is to influence customer to spend more time as well as more money than planned. This study found out that the element such as colour, flat screen videos, lighting, competition creates a unique environment and it excites the customer to visit the store. To stay in today's competitive environment, the exterior as well as interior of the store plays a vital role. In this case, the author has shown relationship between visual merchandising and retailing.

## METHODOLOGY

### Problem Statement

It has been observed that people get affectionate by the visual merchandising of the store. Visual merchandising has become very important for the retailers in order to increase the sales. The buying behaviour of the consumer is not only dependent upon the visual merchandising but also their demographic characteristics. Hence, in this research, an attempt has been made to check whether visual merchandising affects the buying behaviour of the shopper in accordance with their demographic characteristics. The need to carry out the research is to check which factors of visual merchandising highly influence the shopper to buy more.

### Research Questions

- Does visual merchandising leads to impulse buying behaviour?
- Are the purchase intentions of consumers affected by visual merchandising?
- Do the elements of visual merchandising satisfy the consumers?
- Does visual merchandising bring pleasure and arousal to the consumers?

### Research objectives

1. To identify various factors that is considered important by the shoppers at VR Mall, Surat.
2. To study the significant difference/association between frequency of visit and demographic factors.
3. To know the significant difference between factors considered important to visit and occupation of shoppers.

## Research design

Description of view and opinions of shoppers of VR Mall Surat with accordance to their buying behaviour through visual merchandising – (DESCRIPTIVE). At a particular point of time – (CROSS SECTIONAL). By taking responses from one respondent only once – (SINGLE CROSS SECTIONAL). Thus, Descriptive Single-Cross Sectional was used for research.

## Data Collection

Primary Data was collected by Field Survey by *Personal Interviewing* under along with *Dropping-Picking* questionnaire from respondents at VR Mall with the help of *Structured Questionnaire*. The researcher has collected Secondary Data (Desk Survey) by

- Past Literature (research papers & articles)
- Web Resources
- Books (Section of books), Articles, Journal

## Research Instrument

- Data Collection Instrument includes questionnaire, interview, observation and reading. It is essential that the researcher must ensure that the instrument chosen is valid and reliable.
- There are two types of questions. They are:
  1. Unstructured Questionnaire (open-ended questions)
  2. Structured Questionnaire (close-ended questions)
- In this study, the researcher has used **Structured Questionnaire** as the measurement tool of the research.
- **Structured Questionnaire** is a close ended questionnaire that determines a list of response alternatives. It contains different type of questions. These questions are asked to obtain specific responses out of set alternatives. Usually, these questions have a finite possibility of giving answers. Different type of structured questions are:
  1. Dichotomous Questions
  2. Multiple Options with Single Choice Questions
  3. Multiple Options with Multiple Choice Questions
  4. Rating Questions
  5. Ranking Questions

## Pilot Testing

- Pilot testing is a small scale trial of the questionnaire made on few respondents to find out if any improvement is required in questionnaire.
- The researcher, in this study has practiced pilot testing on 25 respondents in beginning.

- After assuring that the questionnaire is proper, the survey started.

## Sampling Design

<b>Target Population</b>	All the visitors and customers of VR Mall residing in Surat city
<b>Sampling Element</b>	Individual consumers who visit VR Mall
<b>Sampling Method</b>	Non-Probability Convenience Sampling Method
<b>Sampling Size</b>	384
<b>Sample Site</b>	VR Mall, Dumas Road, Surat

A request was made to consumer before filling questionnaire: *'Fill the questionnaire only if the respondent is residing in Surat City.'* In Sampling Method, **Non-Probability**: getting sampling frame very difficult and **Convenience sampling**: convenience in this report can be considered like data was collected from any respondents that visited VR Mall either for shopping, window shopping, play zone, food court or movie theatre (INOX), or for any inquiry from any store.

## Data Analysis

### Demographic Statistics

<b>Age Categorical</b>				
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Below 21</b>	148	38.5	38.5	38.5
<b>21 to 30</b>	135	35.2	35.2	73.7
<b>31 to 40</b>	58	15.1	15.1	88.8
<b>41 to 50</b>	37	9.6	9.6	98.4
<b>51 to 60</b>	5	1.3	1.3	99.7
<b>Above 60</b>	1	0.3	0.3	100
<b>Total</b>	384	100	100	
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Male</b>	187	48.7	48.7	48.7
<b>Female</b>	197	51.3	51.3	100
<b>Total</b>	384	100	100	
<b>Educational Qualification</b>				
<b>10+2</b>	119	31	31	31
<b>Graduate</b>	139	36.2	36.2	67.2
<b>Post Graduate</b>	57	14.8	14.8	82



<b>Professional</b>	51	13.3	13.3	95.3
<b>Others</b>	18	4.7	4.7	100
<b>Total</b>	384	100	100	
<b>Occupation</b>				
<b>Student</b>	185	48.2	48.2	48.2
<b>Business</b>	44	11.5	11.5	59.6
<b>Self-Employed/Professional</b>	51	13.3	13.3	72.9
<b>Service</b>	39	10.2	10.2	83.1
<b>Farmer</b>	3	0.8	0.8	83.9
<b>Home Maker</b>	40	10.4	10.4	94.3
<b>Others</b>	22	5.7	5.7	100
<b>Total</b>	384	100	100	
<b>Marital Status</b>				
<b>Married</b>	136	35.4	35.4	35.4
<b>Single</b>	248	64.6	64.6	100
<b>Total</b>	384	100	100	
<b>Family Size Categorical</b>				
<b>1 to 4</b>	184	47.9	47.9	47.9
<b>5 to 8</b>	173	45.1	45.1	93
<b>9 to 12</b>	25	6.5	6.5	99.5
<b>13 to 16</b>	2	0.5	0.5	100
<b>Total</b>	384	100	100	

### Shopping Habits

<b>Frequency of Visit to VR Mall</b>				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
More than once in a week	41	10.7	10.7	10.7
Once in a week	89	23.2	23.2	33.9
Once in a month	134	34.9	34.9	68.8
Only during offer/sale	42	10.9	10.9	79.7
Very rarely	78	20.3	20.3	100
<b>Total</b>	384	100	100	
<b>Awareness of New Arrivals</b>				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Through Announcements	38	9.9	9.9	9.9
Through Displays	99	25.8	25.8	35.7
Through Offers	82	21.4	21.4	57
By Enquiring Salesperson	14	3.6	3.6	60.7
You Search by Your Own	67	17.4	17.4	78.1
Word of Mouth	84	21.9	21.9	100

Total	384	100	100	
Do First when you enter mall				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Go straight to the store you want to shop in	132	34.4	34.4	34.4
Visualize the merchandising and then start shopping in a proper pattern	91	23.7	23.7	58.1
Do not follow any pattern	146	38	38	96.1
Others specifically	15	3.9	3.9	100
Total	384	100	100	

## Factors Considered Important by Shoppers before Shopping

### KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		<b>.882</b>
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2101.296
	df	136
	Sig.	.000

Source: SPSS Output

Before applying factor analysis, first the value of KMO which measures whether distribution of values is adequate for conducting factor analysis is considered. Kaiser designates level. A measure  $>0.9$  is marvelous,  $>0.8$  is meritorious,  $>0.7$  is middling,  $>0.6$  is mediocre,  $>0.5$  is miserable and  $<0.5$  is unacceptable. In this case **0.882, this is meritorious.**

Barlett Test of Sphericity is a measure of multivariate set of normality of distributions. It also checks whether the condition matrix is an identity matrix or not. (Factor analysis is meaningless without Identity matrix). A significant value  $<0.05$  indicates this data do not produce an identity matrix and thus multivariate normal and acceptable for factor analysis.

In this case, Barlett Test value is **0.00<0.05**, so set of distributions multivariate normal and acceptable for factor analysis.



## Total Variance Explained

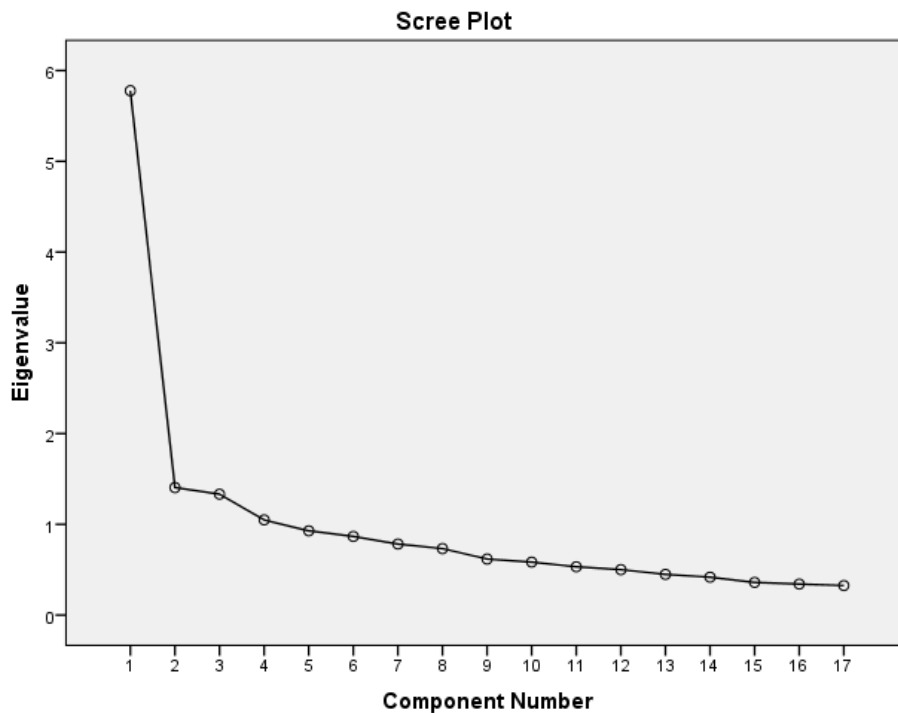
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.777	33.984	33.984	5.777	33.984	33.984	2.543	14.960	14.960
2	1.405	8.263	42.247	1.405	8.263	42.247	2.510	14.763	29.723
3	1.332	7.835	50.082	1.332	7.835	50.082	2.316	13.626	43.350
4	1.049	6.169	56.250	1.049	6.169	56.250	2.193	12.901	56.250
5	.928	5.461	61.711						
6	.867	5.097	66.808						
7	.783	4.604	71.412						
8	.732	4.306	75.719						
9	.618	3.633	79.352						
10	.584	3.433	82.785						
11	.532	3.129	85.913						
12	.501	2.946	88.859						
13	.449	2.639	91.498						
14	.418	2.457	93.955						
15	.360	2.118	96.073						
16	.342	2.012	98.085						
17	.326	1.915	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: SPSS Output

Here, from total variance table, it is interpreted that the four factors extracted together account for **56.250%** of the total variance. Here, while reducing these factors to four factors,  $(100-56.250) = 43.750\%$  of the information content was lost.

## Scree Plot



Source: SPSS Output

The above figure shows the Scree Plot. It is used to select how many factors to rotate to a final solution. The Scree Plot shows the graphical representation of factors and also the Eigenvalue is selected as 1. Here, the reduced factors are those whose Eigenvalues are greater than 1, so we have extracted four factors

## Rotated Component Matrix

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Store Layout	0.728			
Interior Displays	0.705			
Mannequins	0.668			
Window Displays	0.666			
POP Display				
Graphics		0.795		
Music		0.708		
Interior Displays		0.704		
Lighting Displays		0.671		
Ambience			0.723	
Signage			0.686	
Color			0.632	

Product Categories Listed			0.597	
Store Traffic				0.736
Communication				0.625
Seasonal Displays				0.556
Product Displays				0.555
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.				
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. <sup>a</sup>				
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.				

Source: SPSS Output

### Final Factor-Items Combination

Store Layout	0.728	<b><u>FACTOR 1</u></b> <b><u>SPATIAL</u></b> <b><u>LAYOUT</u></b>
Interior Displays	0.705	
Mannequins	0.668	
Window Displays	0.666	

Graphics	.795	<b><u>FACTOR 2</u></b> <b><u>DISPLAY OF</u></b> <b><u>MERCHANDISE</u></b> <b><u>&amp; MUSIC</u></b>
Music	.708	
Interior Displays	.704	
Lighting Displays	.671	

Ambience	.723	<b><u>FACTOR 3</u></b> <b><u>AMBIENCE &amp;</u></b> <b><u>ENVIRONMENT</u></b>
Signage	.686	
Color	.632	
Product Categories Listed	.597	

Store Traffic	.736	<b><u>FACTOR 4</u></b> <b><u>MERCHANDISE</u></b> <b><u>PROMOTION</u></b>
Communication	.625	
Seasonal Displays	.556	
Product Displays	.555	

## Factor Summary

Factor No.	Factor Extraction (Principal Component Method & Varimax Rotation)
1	Spatial Layout
2	Display of Merchandise & Music
3	Ambience & Environment
4	Merchandise Promotion

### Association between various factors influencing to instant buying decision and occupation

H0: There is no statistical significant association between mean ranks of various categories of various factors influencing to instant buying decision and occupation

H1: There is statistical significant association between mean ranks of various categories of various factors influencing to instant buying decision and occupation

Dependent Variable: Factors influencing instant buying decision

- 1) Product arrangement
- 2) Window Display
- 3) Mannequins
- 4) Product Signage
- 5) Excitement in trying a new product

Independent Variables: Occupation

- Categories: 1) Student                      2) Business
- 3) Self-Employed/Professional        4) Service
- 5) Farmer                                    6) Home Maker    7) Others

Various factors influencing to instant buying decision * Occupation									
		Occupation							Total
		Student	Business	Self-Employed/Professional	Service	Farmer	Home Maker	Others	
Product Arrangement	No	173	40	44	31	3	34	22	347
	Yes	12	4	7	8	0	6	0	37
Total		185	44	51	39	3	40	22	384
		Occupation							Total
		Student	Business	Self-Employed/Professional	Service	Farmer	Home Maker	Others	
Window Display	No	149	32	42	37	3	29	20	312
	Yes	36	12	9	2	0	11	2	72
Total		185	44	51	39	3	40	22	384
		Occupation							Total
		Student	Business	Self-Employed/Professional	Service	Farmer	Home Maker	Others	
Mannequin	No	158	39	47	34	3	32	19	332
	Yes	27	5	4	5	0	8	3	52
Total		185	44	51	39	3	40	22	384
		Occupation							Total
		Student	Business	Self-Employed/Professional	Service	Farmer	Home Maker	Others	
Product Signage	No	171	38	47	38	3	38	22	357
	Yes	14	6	4	1	0	2	0	27
Total		185	44	51	39	3	40	22	384
		Occupation							Total
		Student	Business	Self-Employed/Professional	Service	Farmer	Home Maker	Others	
Excitement in trying new product	No	149	33	46	31	3	30	16	308
	Yes	36	11	5	8	0	10	6	76
Total		185	44	51	39	3	40	22	384

Source: SPSS Output

Testing factors influencing to instant buying decision with occupation	Pearson Chi-Square (Asymp. Sig. (2-sided))	Result
Product Arrangement*Occupation	.054	Fail to Reject H0
Window Display*Occupation	0.088	Fail to Reject H0
Mannequin*Occupation	0.72	Fail to Reject H0
Product Signage*Occupation	0.38	Fail to Reject H0
Excitement in trying new product*Occupation	0.403	Fail to Reject H0

From the above analysis of Chi- Square Test, it can be observed that we fail to reject the null hypothesis that there is no statistical significant association between mean ranks of various categories of all five factors i.e. Product Arrangement, Window Display, Mannequin, Product Signage, Excitement in trying new product; influencing to instant buying decision and occupation as the asymptotic significance in various categories of factors influencing to instant buying decision and occupation is more than 0.05.

- 1) There is no significant association between Product Arrangement and Occupation as the asymptotic significance between them is 0.054.
- 2) There is no significant association between Window Display and Occupation as the asymptotic significance between them is 0.088.
- 3) There is no significant association between Mannequin and Occupation as the asymptotic significance between them is 0.72.
- 4) There is no significant association between Product Signage and Occupation as the asymptotic significance between them is 0.38.
- 5) There is no significant association between Excitement in trying new product and Occupation as the asymptotic significance between them is 0.403.

It has been observed that Students are influenced more by all the factors as compared to all other occupation.

- 1) Numbers of Students (12) are influenced more by Product Arrangement as compared to other occupation i.e. Business (4), Self-Employed (7), Service (8), Farmer (0), Home Maker (6), Others (0).
- 2) Numbers of Students (36) are influenced more by Window Display as compared to other occupation i.e. Business (12), Self-Employed (9), Service (2), Farmer (0), Home Maker (11), Others (2).
- 3) Numbers of Students (27) are influenced more by Mannequin as compared to other occupation i.e. Business (5), Self-Employed (4), Service (5), Farmer (0), Home Maker (8), Others (3).
- 4) Numbers of Students (14) are influenced more by Product Signage as compared to other occupation i.e. Business (6), Self-Employed (4), Service (1), Farmer (0), Home Maker (2), Others (0).



- 5) Numbers of Students (36) are influenced more by Excitement in trying new product as compared to other occupation i.e. Business (11), Self-Employed (5), Service (8), Farmer (0), Home Maker (10), Others (6).

## Discussion

To conclude the entire study, the researcher noticed that half of the respondents' buying behaviour is influenced by visual merchandising. The researcher also concluded that the frequency of visit has a relation with gender, educational qualification and occupation of respondent. Also, instant buying behaviour is highly significant to gender. It is also concluded that the demographic factors has no relation with impulse buying, satisfaction, purchase intention, pleasure & arousal (determinants of visual merchandising).

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