



A Systematic Review Of Visual Merchandising Practices: Trends, Strategies, And Impacts

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper was to examine and understand the research literature in the field of Visual Merchandising (VM) specific to Consumer Goods by undertaking a systematic literature review (SLR) of existing research work pertaining to VM in the Scopus database. For the SLR review, 5 step approach given by Denyer and Tranfield has been followed. By leveraging a systematic literature review using a data-driven approach, this study provides an overview of the emerging intellectual structure of VM research from the year 1985 till the year 2023 in the Scopus research database. Ten topical clusters were identified: (1) Online VM and consumer behaviour (2) VM and sales (3) VM and consumer perception (4) VM and consumer preference (5) VM & Brand identity & positioning (6) VM & impulse buying behaviour (7) VM & consumer behaviour (8) VM branding and store visit (9) VM & purchase intention (10) Store atmospherics & consumer behaviour. Adapting visual merchandising for e-commerce has become crucial in enhancing the user experience and driving sales, particularly in the fast-paced world of fashion retail. Effective VM on digital platforms hinges on high-quality visual presentations and user-friendly navigation. Simultaneously, VM acts as a cornerstone in cementing brand identity and fostering customer loyalty by resonating with shoppers on an emotional level and reinforcing their connection with the brand. Furthermore, the integration of cutting-edge technologies such as functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS) and virtual reality is transforming VM, offering immersive and interactive shopping experiences while streamlining the design process for VM strategies. The intellectual structure of the research on VM was studied to offer significant insights on the topic and recent advancements and trends in this research area to provide a guideline to the academicians and researchers for further research opportunities.

Keywords: Visual merchandising, VM, citation analysis, literature review, systematic literature review, consumer goods, consumer behavior.

Type of Paper: Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

1. Introduction

1.1 Visual Merchandising (VM)

Visual Merchandising (VM) encompasses the visual communication of products and brands to customers, influencing their psychological and behavioral responses, and ultimately impacting product sales. (Kerfoot et al., 2003). VM is defined as “the process of promoting the sale of products by producing mental images that urge potential customers to make purchases.” VM displays are “visual features that create attention or pleasure in a store with the aim of enhancing the shopping experience of the customer” (Mathew, 2008). Pegler & Kong (2018) define it as showing merchandise and merchandise concepts at their best, with the final objective of making a sale (Pegler & Kong, 2018). VM is the activity or process of “showing” and “displaying” merchandise, which is the underlying gist of various VM definitions. (Pegler & Kong, 2018). VM is a tool that helps retailers

differentiate the retail brand and its merchandise from competitors in similar market segments. Communicating the brand and its offer to the target customer is a tactical role of VM. (Mehta & Chugan, 2012). Consumers make impulsive purchasing decisions driven by strategic visual product presentations and merchandise assortments, whether shopping online or in physical stores. (Grewal et al., 2017). The link between VM and consumer behaviour and brand identification, respectively, has been explored and established but needs further exploration (Kerfoot et al., 2003). Rapid technological advancements, shifting social dynamics, and heightened customer expectations, fueled by intense market competition, are reshaping the retail landscape. (Rosen & Purinton, 2004) Businesses are strategically establishing offline and online channels to enrich the consumer experience and ensure operational sustainability (Verhoef et al., 2015). Virtual stores encounter challenges in visually engaging consumers due to the lack of sensory elements such as smell, touch, and taste. Thus, there is a pressing need to innovate and enhance VM techniques online to deliver a cohesive and gratifying sensory shopping and brand experience. Consequently, the role of VM in stimulating online sales within the virtual environment assumes greater significance compared to its impact on physical retail stores (Schmitt, 2010). The existing literature on VM is limited and fragmented. Conducting a thorough review would integrate existing concepts, reveal new insights, and identify gaps for deeper understanding.

1.2 Originality of the Research Study

The academic aim is to enhance knowledge in a particular field, yet reviews of VM remain sparse. Existing reviews struggle to integrate fragmented research on VM comprehensively, hindering exploration of its sub-topics and identification of unexplored research paths. To address this gap, we utilized a narrative review to identify, assess, and synthesize existing literature, revealing future research paths, and shedding light on domain issues. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the historical lack of attention to this approach for comprehensive qualitative evaluation. In contrast, our study emphasizes an in-depth qualitative analysis to examine VM research trends, explore key areas, investigate correlations with related domains, and provide insights into VM's effectiveness. This approach aims to contribute original findings to the literature through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) focused on VM research.

1.3 Research Questions

This study employs a SLR to investigate various dimensions of VM. Four research questions guide this review: (RQ1) How does a systematic review using Denyer and Tranfield's five-step methodology illuminate the current landscape of VM? (RQ2) What key themes and seminal contributions have authors explored within the VM domain? (RQ3) What emergent frontiers and future research opportunities exist within VM? (RQ4) How is VM interconnected with other areas of Brand & Retail according to recent academic inquiry?

1.4 Objectives

This manuscript aims to address the research inquiries by defining the following objectives: (i) To systematically analyze scholarly inquiry in VM using a systematic literature review of Scopus data from 1985 to 2023; (ii) To comprehensively analyze descriptive metadata of Scopus-indexed documents related to VM; (iii) To categorize and synthesize key facets of VM into thematic clusters, identifying research areas and future directions; (iv) To identify notable research gaps, unanswered questions, and potential research directions to provide insight into the future of VM research.

1.5 Structure of Research Study

This paper is structured to provide clarity and comprehension on the topic, divided into seven sections for ease of navigation and understanding. Beginning with a concise introduction in Section 1, the study sets the stage for the exploration of Visual Merchandising (VM). Section 2 delves into the research background, offering readers a coherent grasp of the fundamental concepts underpinning VM discussed in the paper. Methodology intricacies are elucidated in Section 3, delineating the approach adopted for the study. Section 4 is dedicated to the discussion of key findings and their interpretation, elucidating their significance within the context of VM research. Acknowledging the inherent limitations of the study, Section 5 identifies and discusses them, providing a critical lens through which the findings can be evaluated. Section 6 synthesizes the study's key conclusions, underpinned by both theoretical insights and practical implications for management. Lastly, Section 7 outlines avenues for future research, thereby paving the way for further exploration and advancement in the field of VM.

2. Research Background

2.1 VM and Retail

VM serves as a cornerstone in the retail environment, influencing consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors (Park et al., 2015). Through the strategic manipulation of visual elements such as displays, signage, and layout, retailers aim to create engaging and immersive store atmospheres that enhance the overall shopping experience (Barry & William, 1996). Research has shown that effective VM can lead to increased foot traffic, longer dwell times, and higher sales volumes within retail establishments (Hui et al., 2009). Moreover, VM plays a crucial role in shaping brand image and fostering customer loyalty, thereby contributing to the long-term success and sustainability of retail businesses (Spangenberg et al., 1996).

2.2 Evolving Applications of VM

VM techniques are no longer confined to traditional retail settings but are increasingly being adopted across various sectors, including hospitality, healthcare, and event management (Verhoef et al., 2015). In the hospitality industry, for instance, hotels and restaurants leverage VM to create unique and memorable guest experiences, leading to increased customer satisfaction and repeat business (Kleinová et al., 2015). Similarly, healthcare facilities utilize VM principles to improve patient navigation, enhance branding, and promote wellness initiatives within clinical environments (Zani et al., 2020). Moreover, the events industry has embraced VM strategies to design captivating event spaces, boost attendee engagement, and elevate the overall event experience.

2.3 Importance of Research in VM

Despite its pivotal role in influencing consumer behavior and shaping retail environments, VM remains an underexplored area in academic research (J.-H. Kim et al., 2023). The dynamic nature of consumer preferences, technological advancements, and industry trends necessitates continuous scholarly inquiry into the efficacy and evolution of VM strategies (Sampaio et al., 2017). Research endeavors in VM not only contribute to the theoretical understanding of consumer psychology and retail management but also offer practical insights for retailers to optimize their marketing efforts and stay ahead in the competitive marketplace (Chebat & Michon, 2003).

3. Methodology

Systematic reviews compile relevant studies across various disciplines and publication contexts. The SLR process prioritizes transparency, subjecting each decision to scrutiny, enhancing the review's integrity and reliability. This study's SLR follows Denyer and Tranfield's five-stage model (see Figure 1): formulating research questions, locating, selecting, evaluating, analyzing, synthesizing data, and reporting results. Emphasizing synthesis, comparative analysis, well-defined inquiries, explicit criteria, and evidence-based implications, this investigation qualifies as a comprehensive SLR.

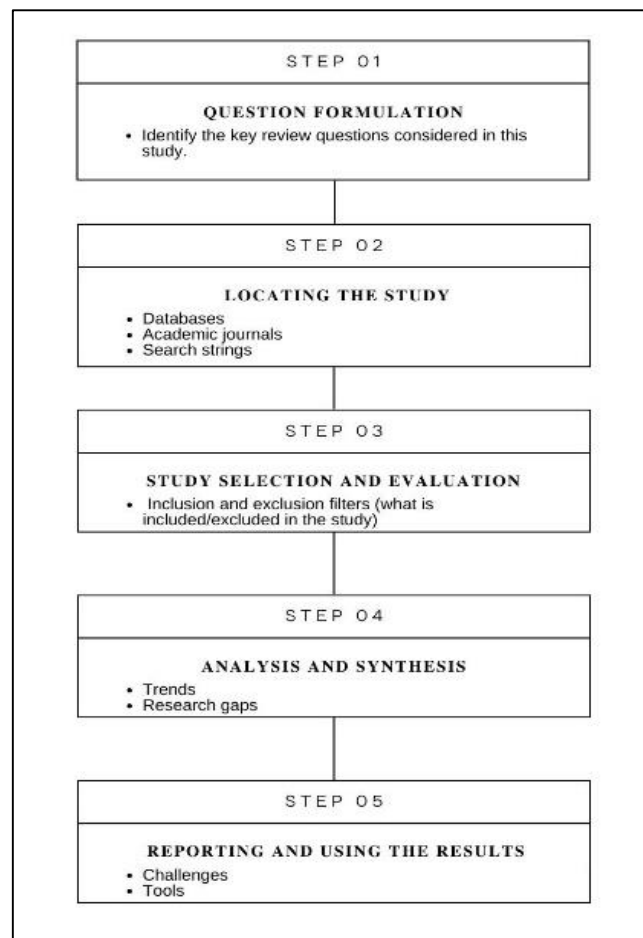


Figure 01: Five Step SLR Process by Denyer and Tranfield Source: Adapted by the author from Denyer and Tranfield (2009)

[Step 01] Question Formulation: Crafting the pivotal research inquiry is a decisive step in the SLR, pivotal to shaping the review's direction as underscored by Tranfield (Denyer & Tranfield, 2006). This stage is instrumental in defining a clear path for identifying relevant literature. With the aim of mapping the progression of VM in retail across 38 years, the research question of this study is precisely articulated to guide the investigation. RQ: What is the status of literature regarding the evolution of VM in retail and business management research, and how might this inform future research directions and highlight research gaps? Guided by the research aims, the SLR will systematically explore the following key questions, anchoring the review within a framework that ensures methodological rigor and relevance to the field. (a) How is VM defined and conceptualized within the scholarly literature across different retail contexts? (b) What empirical evidence exists regarding the influence of VM on consumer behavior in retail settings? (c) What elements are universally recognized as contributing to the success of VM strategies? (d) In what ways has VM adapted to the divergent demands of physical and online retail environments? (e) Which methodological approaches have been predominately employed to investigate VM, and how have these shaped the findings in this field?

[Step 02] Locating studies: For the retrieval of pertinent studies, the choice of databases is critical. Scopus was selected for this SLR due to its expansive scope in scholarly records, enriched by a significant volume of references and citations (Burnham, 2006). The survey focused on materials from Scopus, collected in January 2024, covering "VM" from 1985 to 2023. To address the limited research, Google Scholar was also searched for additional literature reviews in the field.

[Step 3] Study selection and evaluation (inclusion and exclusion filters): In this study, a defined set of selection criteria was used to assess each paper's relevance to the research question. These criteria formed the basis for updating the SLR and determining which studies to include or exclude, summarized in Table 1. During the third stage of the review, a systematic screening of the literature was conducted based on the inclusion and exclusion guidelines outlined in the methodology (detailed in Table 1). These criteria are essential as they define the scope of the review and identify relevant studies for analysis. Initially, a search using the keyword "VM" yielded 232 articles, which were meticulously filtered to isolate a subset of relevant literature. Application of the inclusion and exclusion filters narrowed the focus, identifying key articles for the SLR's objectives and facilitating systematic evaluation within the selection framework. The initial search yielded 230 documents spanning the period from 1985 to 2023. However, to focus specifically on VM within the consumer goods sector, articles from unrelated subject areas were excluded, such as engineering, material science, computer science, etc. This refinement process resulted in a dataset of 162 relevant documents across subject areas including business management and

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
(1) Articles between the period of 1985-2023 (230) (2) Papers with subject area relevant to the field of VM, that is, Business, Management and Accounting (125), Social Sciences (33), Decision Sciences (16), art and humanities (13), psychology (5), multidisciplinary (4) (3) Articles (124) and reviews (6) were included as a document type. (4) Papers published in peer-reviewed journals (102) (5) Papers written in English (98) (6) Final manually screened Papers related to VM and consumer goods (77)	(1) Papers with subject area with least relevance to VM, that is, Engineering (44), Materials Science (38), Computer Science (38), Economics, Econometrics and Finance (20), Mathematics (7), Energy (6), Chemical Engineering (6), Environmental Science (5), Agricultural and Biological Sciences (5), Physics and Astronomy (3), Chemistry (3), Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology (2), Medicine (1), Health Professions (1), Earth and Planetary Sciences (1) (2) These documents, totalling 32 in number, were excluded from the search. They represented various document types such as conference papers (14), short surveys (6), book chapters (4), books (3), errata (2), conference reviews (2), and notes (1). (3) Papers/ articles published in non-academic journals/ magazines (28) (4) Papers in other languages Korean (2), Italian (1) and Japanese (1) (5) Manually screened papers that did not relate to VM (21)

Table 01: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

accounting (126), social sciences (33), decision science (16), arts and humanities (13), psychology (0), and multidisciplinary (0) studies. Upon classification, journal articles predominated, comprising 76% (124 papers), followed by conference papers (14, 9%), short surveys (6, 4%), review articles (6, 4%), book chapters (4, 2%), books (4, 2%), errata (2, 1%), conference reviews (2, 1%), and notes (1, 1%). This distribution highlights the

prevalence of articles in VM research. Subsequently, 124 documents were selected for analysis, ensuring only final published articles were included. The review focused exclusively on academic journals, resulting in 102 retained documents. English was the primary language (98, 96.07%), with Korean (2, 1.96%), Italian (1, 0.98%), and Japanese (1, 0.98%) comprising the remaining 3.93%. These documents underwent manual screening to eliminate interdisciplinary works, yielding 98 articles for further analysis.

[Step 4] Analysis and Synthesis of Findings: The process of identifying broader themes within the SLR involved an in-depth, manual examination of all selected research articles. This meticulous screening was carried out with the objective of discerning themes based on the findings and variables presented in each paper. For the identification of these themes, traditional thematic analysis was utilized. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that involves sifting through data rigorously to detect recurring patterns, referred to as themes and categories (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The importance of categorizing articles based on their primary scope, which aligns with the need to establish clear themes from the selected research papers has been highlighted (Cook & West, 2012). Additionally, how coders can derive subthemes from focused coding and relate them to broader categories, ultimately leading to the identification of overarching themes has also been discussed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach can guide researchers in structuring

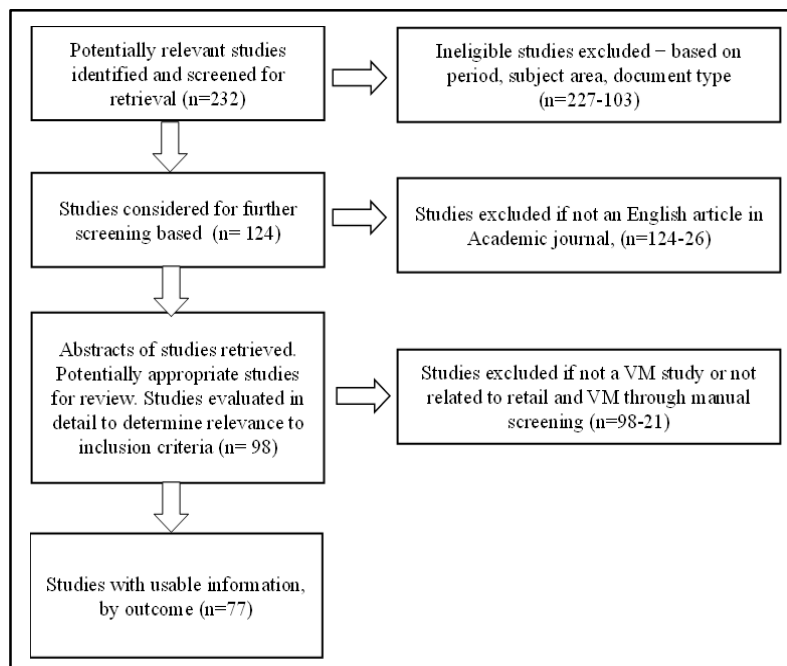


Figure 02 Source: Edited by author (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008)

the themes derived from the reviewed articles effectively. Moreover, references like Gullón et al. (2019) and Knott et al. (2019) provide insights into how participants and researchers categorized data into themes and how themes were assigned to text segments to quantify their abundance within the literature. In this study, 77 research articles were categorized into distinct themes through comprehensive manual review, establishing connections between VM variables and research outcomes (Nell, 2017). The screening process ensured the integration of central findings into coherent thematic clusters, providing insights into VM's impact on consumer behavior, visual formats' effectiveness, store design integration, and strategic application in physical and online retail. With meticulous attention to detail, the manual screening captured each study's context and nuances, facilitating precise thematic grouping for meaningful conclusions and future research directions. This systematic approach enabled the analysis and synthesis of results, revealing diverse themes and exploring the relationship between VM tactics and consumer-related outcomes (Nell, 2017).

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

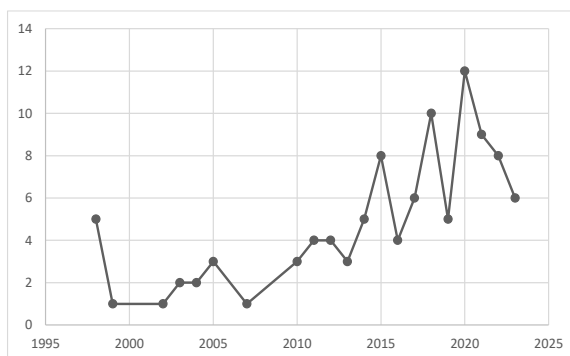


Figure 03 Source: Scopus

(a)

Article Production Trends: The analysis of title releases over the years exhibits a fluctuating pattern without a discernible linear trend (Figure 03). Each year demonstrates variations in the number of published titles across different subject areas, indicating dynamic shifts in research focus and academic interests. Despite the lack of a consistent upward or downward trajectory, the dataset reflects the evolving landscape of scholarly output and the diverse range of topics explored within academia.

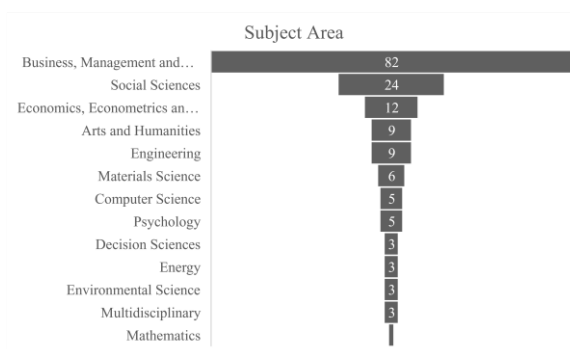


Figure 04 Source: Scopus

(b)

Subject Area Distribution: The dataset in Figure 04 covers various subject areas, with Business, Management, and Accounting being dominant, with 82 papers. This focus highlights the importance of research in this domain, possibly driven by industry demands and economic trends. Social Sciences, Economics, Econometrics, and Finance also have notable paper numbers, indicating active research. Conversely, Mathematics has fewer papers, suggesting less research output. Other areas like Decision Sciences, Energy, Environmental Science, and Multidisciplinary show modest paper numbers, indicating ongoing scholarly inquiry. The distribution reflects diverse research interests and interdisciplinary collaboration, emphasizing collaboration to address complex challenges and advance knowledge. Areas with fewer papers may present opportunities for growth and exploration within academia.

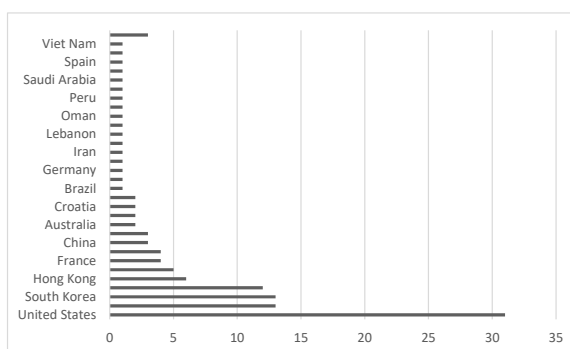


Figure 05 Source: Scopus

(c)

Global Insights: Geographical Distribution of Research Output: The dataset exhibits a diverse array of contributions from various countries, demonstrating a global representation of research efforts. The United States leads with 31 titles, highlighting its prominent role in the global research landscape. India and South Korea follow closely, each contributing 13 titles, indicating significant research output and academic engagement. The United Kingdom also makes notable contributions with 12 titles, reflecting a robust research environment. However, some countries have fewer representations, suggesting lower research output or representation. This diversity underscores the global nature of research, emphasizing the importance of international collaboration and knowledge exchange. It also highlights opportunities for collaboration and development, particularly in regions with less research infrastructure. Overall, the geographical distribution of research output offers insights into the global scholarly landscape, emphasizing dominant contributors and opportunities for broader engagement and collaboration across diverse regions.



Figure 06 Source: Scopus

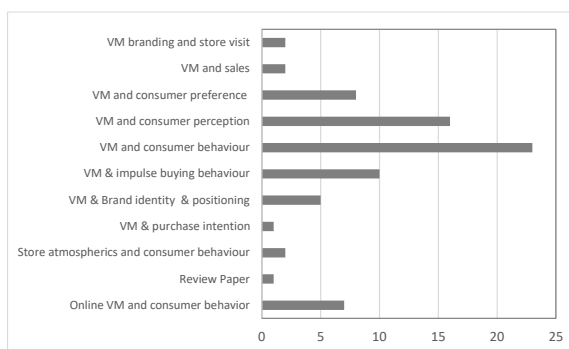
(d)

Keyword Analysis: Keyword analysis in VM research reveals dominant themes and emerging trends. "VM" is the most prevalent theme, occurring 54 times, covering display techniques and strategies. "Retailing" follows closely with 33 occurrences, emphasizing understanding retail environments and consumer interactions. "Marketing" is also prominent, with 24 occurrences, highlighting the importance of branding and promotional strategies. Fashion-related topics, like "Apparel" and "Clothing," receive significant attention, reflecting industry focus on aesthetics and trends. Technology themes such as "Augmented Reality" and "Artificial Intelligence" indicate a growing interest in innovative integration. "Sustainability" is also notable, showing the industry's shift towards eco-friendly practices. These insights guide further investigation and innovation in VM.

4.2 Navigating the VM Research Terrain: A Thematic Synopsis

In our SLR on 'VM,' we rigorously compiled and categorized relevant references into distinct thematic clusters. This effort, detailed in Table 04, aimed for a structured analysis of the scholarly landscape surrounding VM. Each article underwent scrutiny to ensure alignment with our research objectives, focusing on its contribution to understanding VM practices and their impact on consumer behavior, retail environments, branding strategies, and market performance. While some articles may have multifaceted contributions, we categorized each based on its primary focus, aiming for a nuanced exploration of VM dimensions to aid researchers and practitioners in advancing knowledge in retail marketing. In this SLR, papers were thematically integrated to elucidate the multifaceted influence of VM on retail marketing, consumer psychology, and sales. Initial steps involved a thorough keyword search to pinpoint relevant studies, followed by meticulous screening to ensure each paper's pertinence to VM themes. The thematic analysis then distilled patterns that underpin VM's effects on consumer behavior and sales, grouping studies into themes that reflected their shared focus. This systematic categorization served to align papers with the SLR's aims, shedding light on VM's varied dimensions, including its impact on branding and customer experience. Such an organized compilation of papers provided a narrative synthesis that captured the breadth of VM research, uncovering trends and research lacunae, thereby directing future scholarly inquiry (Briner et al., 2009; Denyer & Tranfield, 2009; Fink, 2010; Petticrew & Roberts, 2008; Tranfield et al., 2003).

(a) **An Integrated Overview of Topical Clusters:** The SLR uncovers a diverse research landscape in VM, with prominent themes emerging. These include VM's influence on consumer behavior and perception, impulse buying behavior, online VM, consumer preference, purchase intention, store atmospherics, VM branding, sales, and brand identity and positioning. Each theme, supported by various studies, sheds light on different aspects of VM's impact on consumer engagement, purchasing decisions, and brand perception. Additionally, niche topics like store atmospherics and review papers provide nuanced insights into the field.



(b)

Thematic Analysis: VM significantly influences consumer purchasing decisions, particularly in driving impulse buying behavior. Studies consistently show that elements like store atmosphere, product displays, and signage play crucial roles in motivating purchase decisions (Moavery et al., 2014; Ruyter & Nielsen, 2019; Widyastuti, 2018). The arrangement of VM displays and store layouts can optimize consumers' experiences and behaviors. Adjusting visual complexity and environmental order can lead to more favorable approach behaviors, enhancing the overall shopping experience (Jang et al., 2018; Ruyter & Nielsen, 2019).

Table 04: Thematic Analysis

Theme	Main Findings	Evolution	Studies
Online VM and consumer behavior	- Importance of improving online VM for enhanced e-shopping experience	Growing emphasis on online VM practices	(Khakimdjanova & Park, 2005)
	- Influence of online VMD cues on consumer pleasure and arousal	Understanding the impact of online VMD on consumer responses	(Choo & Yoon, 2015)
	- Various VM features from offline stores have been implemented online. - Pictorial presentation is identified as the most important dimension for online store presentation. - VM drives online shopping enjoyment, purchase intentions, and word-of-mouth intentions. - Online VM is crucial for attracting Generation Z customers and increasing sales in the fashion industry. - Eco-friendly VM positively impacts satisfaction and store attitude in retail customers.	Evolution towards adapting traditional VM practices to online platforms and enhancing customer experience	(Cowles, 2002; Kerfoot et al., 2003; Khakimdjanova & Park, 2005; Mo & Luh, 2023; Sulaiman & Ahmed, 2017)
Store Atmospherics and Consumer Behavior	- Store layout types in 3D online environments influence online shopping enjoyment, entertainment, and ease of navigation. - Online shopping enjoyment predicts online purchase intentions, while online customer experience, ease of navigation, and online shopping enjoyment predict word-of-mouth intentions. - Telepresence moderates the impact of store layout on customers' online shopping enjoyment.	Focus on understanding the impact of store atmospherics on online shopping behavior	(Basu et al., 2022a)

	- Significance of store design and atmosphere in shaping shoppers' purchase decisions	Recognition of the impact of store atmosphere on consumer behavior	(Khan et al., 2023)
	- Effectiveness of strategic remodeling, particularly in lighting, for enhancing store performance	Acknowledgment of strategic remodeling as a means to improve store performance	(Fayek & Heuberger, 1998)
VM and Consumer Perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mannequins convey artistic messages in store displays, enriching design research visually. - VM shapes consumer emotions and preferences, while themed product displays influence product assessment. - Footwear packaging enhances brand value, pivotal in fashion purchasing. Buyers view packaging as a marketing tool, affecting brand perception. - VM drives purchase behavior via colors, presentation, and sensory appeal. Visual displays impact consumer decisions in apparel retail. 	Emphasis on leveraging visual elements to evoke emotional responses and influence purchasing decisions	(J. S. Kim, 2013)(Cant & Hefer, 2014; Choo & Yoon, 2015; Fayek & Heuberger, 1998; Im et al., 2021; Janiszewski, 1998; Khan et al., 2023; H. S. Kim et al., 2020; Lea-Greenwood, 1998; Mo & Luh, 2023; Yang et al., 2021)
	- Influence of overall webpage complexity on consumer perception	Increased focus on consumer perception and its implications for online retail	(Im et al., 2021; Rizzi & Volpi, 2018; Yang et al., 2021; Yim et al., 2021)
	- Impact of display characteristics on consumer attention and memory	Growing focus on understanding the cognitive processes underlying consumer behavior	(Mohan et al., 2013)
	- Optimal visual angle for maximizing effectiveness of window displays	Application of psychological principles in VM design	(Faultrier & Towers, 2011)
VM and consumer behavior	- Impact of VMD on purchasing products	Recognition of the significance of VMD in driving sales	(Franjković et al., 2022)
	- Significance of VMD in providing a pleasant shopping experience and inducing sales	Growing recognition of the role of VMD in shaping consumer experiences and behaviors	(Aljukhadar et al., 2020)
	- Role of VM in creating attention, desire, and interest in products	Recognition of VM's influence on consumer behavior	(Janiszewski, 1998; Krasonikolakis et al., 2018)
	- Exploration of the influence of mannequin display characteristics on mental simulation and purchase intention	Application of embodied cognition theory in understanding consumer behavior	(Jang et al., 2018)
	- Impact of regional product assortment and merchandising on consumer perception and retailer image	Understanding of the role of localized merchandising in shaping consumer perceptions	(Janiszewski, 1998)

	- Influence of store layout and merchandise presentation on customer attraction and conversion	Recognition of VM's role in driving foot-fall and sales	(Janiszewski, 1998)
	- Importance of design concept and function in critiquing retail spaces	Development of frameworks for analyzing retail spaces	(Janiszewski, 1998)
	- Optimizing consumer experiences in fashion stores involves adjusting visual complexity and environmental order. VM subtly creates interest and desire, enhancing store aesthetics and encouraging merchandise exploration. - Consumers' approach behaviors are shaped by visual complexity, environmental order, and sensation-seeking tendencies. Visual elements drive retail strategies, emphasizing aesthetic and social values. - Engaging presentations aid online purchases, while brain activation patterns offer insights for evaluating responses. Visual displays influence consumer responses and purchasing decisions, considering utilitarian and hedonic aspects. - Product information increases buying likelihood, with visual attention to prices correlating with intent. The S-O-R model analyzes VM's impact on emotional responses and behaviors in retail settings.	Evolutionary trend towards optimizing consumer experiences and behaviors through innovative VM practices	(Basu et al., 2022b; Cant & Hefer, 2014; Jang et al., 2018; Janiszewski, 1998; Khan et al., 2023; J. S. Kim, 2013; Law et al., 2012; Lea-Greenwood, 1998; Ruyter & Nielsen, 2019; Samal, 2020; Yim et al., 2021)
	- Exploration of the connections between VM and retail branding	Understanding of VM's role in shaping brand identity and positioning	(Davies & Ward, 2005)
	- Influence of fashion involvement on responses to VM	Understanding the role of consumer traits in shaping VM effectiveness	(Kinley et al., 2010)
VM and Impulse Buying Behavior	- VM, store atmosphere, and private label products positively influence impulse buying behavior. - VM practices like window display, in-store form/mannequin display, and promotional signage correlate with impulse buying behavior. - Sustainable VM practices predict retail store loyalty. - Fashion innovators' values and motives influence purchase behavior and trends, en-	Increasing focus on the influence of VM, store atmosphere, and product presentation on impulse buying behavior	(Bell & Ternus, 2002; Kerfoot et al., 2003; Maharani et al., 2020; Sadachar, Amrut, 2017)

	<p>hancing the link between fashion innovativeness and unplanned purchases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding the values and motives of fashion innovators is crucial for fashion producers and retailers. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Influence of VM and consumer traits on impulsive buying behavior 	Understanding of the psychological factors driving impulse purchases	(Davies & Ward, 2005; Li & Cassidy, 2011; Nobbs et al., 2015)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant role of VM in stimulating impulse buying 	Growing understanding of the link between VM and impulse purchases	(Jampla et al., 2019; H. S. Kim et al., 2020; J. S. Kim, 2013; Muñoz-Leiva et al., 2021; Ninggar et al., 2020; Tung et al., 2019)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Role of sensational seeking in influencing impulse buying behavior 	Understanding of the psychological drivers of impulse purchases	(Jalees & Mustaghis-ur-Rahman, 2018; Moayery et al., 2014)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sign without price on a sign increased likelihood to buy. Visual attention to price had a positive effect, while attention to information had an inverse one. - Product info mattered more for buying likelihood than price for minimally packaged items. Cross and floor merchandising correlated with impulse buying. 	Focus on understanding the influence of VM elements on impulse buying behavior	(P. Huddleston et al., 2015; Jakhar et al., 2020; Moayery et al., 2014)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact of key VM factors on impulsive buying 	Identification of VM elements conducive to impulse purchases	(Moayery et al., 2014)
VM Branding and Store Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The study revealed dissatisfaction among women, particularly those wearing size 16 and above, with the retail environment, fashion availability, and sizing options, indicating a need for improvements in the fashion retail sector. 	Emphasis on addressing consumer dissatisfaction with the retail environment and product offerings	(Samal, 2020)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Luxury brands establish dominance through VM and store operations control. Flagship stores evolve iteratively, emphasizing scale, exclusivity, and uniqueness. VM converts prospects into buyers and impacts consumer and retail employee behaviors through strategic placement, quality materials, and aesthetic appeal. It influences consumer perceptions of brand social power, 	Emphasis on establishing brand identity, exclusivity, and differentiation through VM and store atmospherics	(Basu et al., 2022a; Cervellon & Coudriet, 2013; Nobbs et al., 2012, 2015)

	contributing to brand dominance in luxury retail.		
VM and Brand Identity & Positioning	- The PCDDS system significantly improves students' understanding of clothing VM and display. - Usability testing and questionnaire survey results show that participants were generally satisfied with the ease and time spent in completing tasks using PCDDS.	Emphasis on developing tools and systems to support VM processes	(Zhang & Huang, 2014)(Mo & Luh, 2023)
	- Centralization and professionalization of VM for brand differentiation and market positioning	Growing recognition of VM as a strategic branding tool	(Ogle & Schofield-Tomschin, 2002; Samal, 2020; Webber et al., 2018)
	- Role of window displays in communicating brand identity and market positioning	Recognition of window displays as branding tools	(Khan et al., 2023; Nobbs et al., 2015)
	- Importance of VM in brand positioning and differentiation	Emphasis on VM as a strategic tool for brand management	(Nobbs et al., 2015)
	- Significance of preserving indigenous knowledge in VM practices	Recognition of the value of cultural heritage in retail practices	(Ogle & Schofield-Tomschin, 2002)
	- Evolutionary synthesis of merchandising-related themes	Emergence of self-service merchandising as a research topic	(Muñoz-Leiva et al., 2021)
	- Investigation of VM strategies between high street and luxury fashion brands	Understanding of VM's role in shaping brand perception	(Cant & Hefer, 2014; Wu et al., 2013)
VM & Consumer Preference (Choice, Motivation, Evaluation)	- Importance of merchandising regional products for retailer's local image and customer loyalty	Focus on localized merchandising strategies	(Lombart et al., 2018)
	- The congruence between thematic display context and product affects product evaluation through cue-based and elaboration-based mechanisms, with shopping motivation moderating the effects. - Customers prioritize the way a dress fits the body and the clothing style when buying clothes. - Co-design of VM in 3D virtual stores emphasizes the importance of clear section identity and presenting a life-style solution.	Emphasis on aligning VM with consumer preferences and enhancing the shopping experience	(Lam et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2015; Young Kim & Mattila, 2014)
	- Influence of VM on consumers' mall choice	Increasing acknowledgment of the role of VM in influencing consumer preferences	(Zainuddin et al., 2018)
	- Impact of VMD on consumer approach behavior and satisfaction	Understanding of the psychological factors influencing online shopping behavior	(J. S. Kim, 2013)

	- Influence of choice overload on online consumer behavior	Exploration of decision-making processes in online shopping	(Tung et al., 2019)
	- Mannequins in shop windows convey artistic messages, contributing to design research. VM impacts consumer emotions. - Thematic displays affect product evaluation. Footwear packaging enhances brand image. Packaging serves as a marketing tool, influencing perception. - VM drives purchase behavior with colors and presentation style. Visual displays influence consumer behavior in retail stores.	Emphasis on leveraging visual elements to evoke emotional responses and influence purchasing decisions	(Lam et al., 2017; Mehta & Chugan, 2012; Mohan et al., 2013; Ng et al., 1998)
	- Influence of fashion product display methods on retail pleasure and patronage intention	Examination of the role of display aesthetics in influencing consumer behavior	(Ruyter & Nielsen, 2019)
	- Influence of key factors of VM on impulsive buying	Exploration of the factors driving impulsive buying behavior	(Cant & Hefer, 2014)
VM and Sales	- The VMD rearrangements led to a significant increase in average daily sales on both the first and second floors of the retail store. - Cross-displaying men's and women's clothing lines resulted in a notable increase in average daily sales of women's products on the first floor. - The changes in VMD strategies positively impacted customer movement patterns and sales outcomes in the store.	Focus on optimizing VM strategies to increase sales and improve customer movement patterns	(Khan et al., 2023)
	- Significance of RFID-enabled VM in improving inventory accuracy and sales performance	Exploration of technological advancements in VM	(Lombart et al., 2018)
	- Effectiveness of VM in driving sales performance	Acknowledgment of VM's impact on retail sales	(P. Huddleston et al., 2018)
Review Paper	- VM plays a crucial role in retail by converting prospects into buyers, promoting sales, and impacting consumer and retail employee behaviors through proper placement, quality materials, and aesthetic appeal.	Focus on summarizing the significance and impact of VM in retail	(Basu et al., 2022a)
VM and Purchase Intention	Attitudes toward sustainable VM strongly influence buying willingness and patronage intention. While buying willingness may not significantly affect store loyalty, patronage	Shift towards sustainable practices influencing consumer purchase intentions and store loyalty	(Khakimdjanova & Park, 2005; Lea-Greenwood, 1998)

	intention does. Retailers should prioritize sustainable VM to boost loyalty and profitability.		
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4.3 Adaptation of VM to Digital Platforms and Online Retailing

With the proliferation of e-commerce, there is a growing emphasis on adapting traditional VM practices to online platforms. Online VM plays a crucial role in attracting customers, enhancing user experience, and increasing sales in the fashion industry (Gopu, 2019; Ha et al., 2007; Krasonikolakis et al., 2018). Factors such as pictorial presentation, online shopping enjoyment, and ease of navigation are essential for driving purchase intentions and fostering positive word-of-mouth recommendations in online retail environments (Krasonikolakis et al., 2018).

4.4 Enhancing Brand Identity, Loyalty, and Emotional Responses

VM serves as a powerful tool for establishing brand identity, exclusivity, and differentiation in both offline and online retail settings (Cervellon & Coudriet, 2013)(Cervellon & Coudriet, 2013; Nobbs et al., 2015). Sustainable VM practices not only positively impact customer satisfaction but also contribute to enhanced store attitude and increased loyalty (Shin, Jong-Kuk, Min-Sook Park, 2010). Thematic displays and sensory-engaging presentations evoke emotional responses, influencing consumer affective reactions and approach behaviors (Baek et al., 2015; Law et al., 2012).

4.5 Innovations in Technology and Design

Research explores the integration of innovative technologies like fNIRS and virtual reality in evaluating and enhancing VM strategies. These technologies offer valuable insights into consumer responses to VM displays and provide opportunities for immersive shopping experiences (Liu et al., 2018; Young Kim & Mattila, 2014; Zhang & Huang, 2014). Tools such as the PCDDS system support students and practitioners in efficiently carrying out VM conceptual design processes, streamlining the design and implementation of effective VM strategies (Zhang & Huang, 2014).

5. Limitations

Quality Assessment: Assessing the quality of included studies is crucial in an SLR, but it can be challenging due to variations in study design, methodology, and reporting standards. Limited availability of detailed information in some studies may hinder the ability to thoroughly evaluate their quality and reliability.

Time Constraints: Conducting an SLR is a time-intensive process, and there may be constraints on the resources available to review a vast amount of literature comprehensively. This limitation could impact the depth of analysis and the ability to capture all relevant studies within the specified timeframe.

Coverage Bias: Relying solely on the Scopus database may introduce coverage bias, as not all relevant studies on VM may be indexed in Scopus. This limitation could result in overlooking important research published in journals or sources not included in the database, leading to a potential incomplete representation of the literature in the field.

Language Limitations: While Scopus covers a wide range of journals, it may not include all publications in languages other than English. This language bias could restrict the diversity of perspectives and findings included in the SLR, potentially overlooking valuable insights from non-English sources.

Publication Lag: Scopus may have a publication lag, meaning that the most recent studies on VM may not be immediately available in the database. This limitation could impact the currency of the review and the inclusion of the latest research developments in the field.

6. Practical Implications

Based on the SLR conducted on VM from 1985 to 2023 as outlined above, several practical implications can be derived for academics, practitioners, and policymakers in the field of retail and marketing.

Strategic Decision-Making: The insights from the SLR can guide retailers and marketers in developing more effective VM strategies by understanding key themes and trends in consumer behavior, perception, and preferences. By aligning VM practices with the identified research findings, businesses can enhance the in-store experience, optimize product displays, and improve customer engagement.

Innovation and Differentiation: The identification of emerging frontiers and future research opportunities in VM can inspire innovation in retail design and branding. By exploring new avenues highlighted in the SLR, retailers can differentiate themselves in a competitive market, experiment with novel VM techniques, and stay ahead of evolving consumer trends.

Educational Resources: Academics and researchers can leverage the SLR findings to inform curriculum development in marketing and retail management programs. By incorporating the key theories and research gaps identified in the review, educators can enhance the relevance of their courses, expose students to cutting-edge VM practices, and foster a deeper understanding of the field.

Policy Development: Policymakers and industry regulators can use the insights from the SLR to inform guidelines and regulations related to VM practices. Understanding the impact of VM on consumer behavior and brand perception can help policymakers create frameworks that promote ethical and sustainable VM strategies, ensuring a positive shopping experience for consumers.

Collaborative Research: The SLR can serve as a foundation for collaborative research initiatives between academia and industry stakeholders. By sharing the findings and implications of the review, researchers can engage in partnerships with retailers, designers, and marketers to conduct further studies, implement evidence-based VM strategies, and drive collective innovation in the retail sector.

By translating the findings of the SLR into actionable recommendations and practical implications, stakeholders in the field of VM can enhance their practices, drive innovation, and contribute to the advancement of knowledge and strategies in retail marketing.

7. Future Scope for Research

Based on the SLR conducted on VM from 1985 to 2023, several future research opportunities and directions can be identified in the field as mentioned below.

Digital Transformation of VM: With the increasing importance of online retail and e-commerce, future research could explore the integration of digital technologies, virtual reality, and augmented reality in VM strategies. Investigating how digital platforms influence consumer behavior, engagement, and purchasing decisions can provide valuable insights for retailers navigating the digital landscape.

Personalization and Customization: Research focusing on personalized VM experiences tailored to individual consumer preferences and demographics can be a promising area for exploration. Understanding how customization impacts consumer engagement, brand loyalty, and overall shopping satisfaction can guide retailers in delivering more targeted and effective VM strategies.

Sustainability in VM: As sustainability becomes a key concern for consumers and businesses, future research could examine the role of sustainable practices in VM. Investigating eco-friendly materials, green design principles, and the impact of sustainable VM on consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior can contribute to more environmentally conscious retail practices.

Cross-Channel VM Integration: With the blurring of boundaries between physical stores and online platforms, studying the integration of VM across multiple channels (omnichannel VM) can be a fruitful area for research. Exploring how consistency in VM messaging and branding influences consumer experiences across different touchpoints can help retailers create cohesive and engaging shopping environments.

Neuroscience and VM: Incorporating insights from neuroscience and cognitive psychology into VM research can offer a deeper understanding of how sensory stimuli, colors, layouts, and spatial design impact consumer decision-making processes. Future studies could explore the neuroscientific basis of VM effectiveness and leverage brain imaging techniques to analyze consumer responses to visual stimuli in retail settings.

Global Perspectives on VM: Comparative studies examining VM practices and consumer behaviors across different cultural contexts and geographic regions can provide valuable insights into the universality versus cultural specificity of VM strategies. Exploring how cultural norms, values, and aesthetics influence VM preferences and effectiveness can inform more culturally sensitive and targeted retail approaches.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the SLR on VM from 1985 to 2023 has provided valuable insights into the evolving landscape of retail strategy and consumer behavior. By synthesizing a wide range of research studies, this review has shed light on the significance of VM in shaping consumer perceptions, driving sales, and enhancing the overall shopping experience. The findings from this comprehensive analysis offer practical implications for academics, practitioners, and policymakers in the retail industry. The review underscores the importance of aligning VM strategies with consumer preferences, leveraging digital technologies for enhanced engagement, and incorporating sustainable practices to meet evolving market demands. By integrating personalized and omnichannel VM approaches, retailers can create more immersive and cohesive shopping environments that resonate with diverse consumer segments. Furthermore, the exploration of neuroscience in VM research opens new avenues for understanding the cognitive processes underlying consumer responses to visual stimuli. While the review has provided valuable insights and actionable recommendations, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations. The reliance on the Scopus database may have introduced coverage bias, potentially overlooking relevant studies not indexed in the database. Additionally, language limitations and publication lag could have impacted the inclusivity and timeliness of the review findings. Future research in VM should aim to address these limitations by incorporating a more diverse range of sources and staying abreast of the latest developments in the field. Moving forward, researchers and industry stakeholders can leverage the findings of this SLR to drive innovation, foster collaboration, and enhance the effectiveness of VM strategies in a rapidly changing retail landscape. By embracing emerging trends such as digital transformation, sustainability, and cross-cultural perspectives, retailers can stay ahead of the curve and deliver compelling shopping experiences that resonate with modern consumers. In conclusion, this SLR serves as a foundation for further exploration and advancement in

the field of VM, offering a roadmap for future research endeavors and strategic initiatives aimed at elevating the retail customer experience in an increasingly dynamic and competitive market environment.

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