

Formulating Physical Exterior Design Factors in Creating Exciting Retail Stores in Malaysia



Mohd Azri Mohd Jain Noordin , Mohammad Rusdi Mohd Nasir ,
Ismi Luqman Hamadi Ibrahim, Muhammad Rizal Khairuddin,
and Azizi Bahauddin 

Abstract The Covid-19 outbreak in 2020 has caused hard time for the physical retail store. As to recovery, to increase profits retailer need to look for alternative way to improve shopping value. Past studies had identified several customers-oriented on store environment attributes impact consumers perception. However, until today there are no specific guidelines available regarding creating a good store design mainly after the post-pandemic on the retail stores environment context in Malaysia. Therefore, the aim of this study is to identify and propose the influences of various store environment physical exterior design factors in retail stores and study their effect on customers behavior. The study applied qualitative research methodology a case study which employed observation and interviews, on a selected fashion retail store.

The results shows that behavior intentions among customers included store choice and purchasing can be induced by creating unique shopping experiences with the help of store environment physical exterior design factors. Therefore, to give little attention to the store environment physical exterior design elements by the retails owner are important without set aside the safety SOP to stay advantages in today's competitive market.

Keywords Retail design · Exterior design elements · Shopping experience · Malaysia

1 Introduction

Over the past few month due to Covid-19 pandemic, the physical retail industry has dealing with harsh obstacle as part of area being placed under lockdown, as

M. A. M. J. Noordin (✉) · M. R. M. Nasir · I. L. H. Ibrahim · M. R. Khairuddin
Faculty of Architecture and Ekistics, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Karung Berkunci 01,
16300 Bachok, Kelantan, Malaysia
e-mail: Azri.mjn@umk.edu.my

A. Bahauddin
School of Housing, Building and Planning Universiti Sains Malaysia, USM, 11800 Gelugor,
Penang, Malaysia

local governments enforce quarantine measure and restrict movement. Many fashion retailers had temporarily closed their store. Therefore, to recover their profits, retailers have to incorporate alternative shopping strategies that can act as point of difference and influences customer buying intention without neglecting the health safety SOP by the government.

Past studies has found important key roles for store environment on customer behavior (Baker et al. 2002; Bell and Ternus 2006; Banat and Wandebori 2012; Hasan and Mishra 2015; Hosseini and Jayashree 2014). Through physical store environment attributes, it can help to create the positive customers image that lead to preferred store choices and successful sales.

It is therefore important for retailers to create a pleasurable shopping environment that will stimulate and encourage sales through determine how these store environment physical design elements as these are the most effective use in relation to the store brand and merchandises offer.

Yet, the information on creating a good store environment is still little and undetermined especially in the fashion retail context in Malaysia. This left the existing local retails hard time to compete as poses questions regarding the value of the store design strategies.

Therefore, this calls for a greater understanding in a holistic view of the store environment exterior design factors in fashion retail stores towards customer behavior.

2 Literature Review

According to past literatures, there are five strongly influences physical exterior design elements in creating pleasant store design shopping experience (Bitner 1992; Banat and Wandebori 2012; Hasan and Mishra 2015; Hosseini and Jayashree 2014; Hashim et al. 2014). Exterior elements are referred to the storefront, store entrance, window displays, building architecture, the location of the store and the surrounding area (Turley and Milliman 2000; Cornelius et al. 2010). In order for retail store to be successful, customers must be encouraged inside thus the exterior elements of the store must be pleasing to induce approach behaviours (Turley and Milliman 2000; Aishah and Azlainei 2011). There is a relationship between exterior variables environment and purchasing behaviour (Pan et al. 2008; Odeh and As'ad 2014; Osman et al. 2014; Singh et al. 2014; Suki 2011; Wong et al. 2012). A 'spillover' effect onto the store image can be shown by the storefront display. Customers perceiving to more 'sophisticated', 'modern', and 'trendy' store through the innovative exterior displays such as column stands, standing flags, window display, and signage.

There are many store environment physical exterior design elements can affect customer's perceptions on retails choice and leads to increase store performance. However due to after the post-pandemic, few design elements need to be revise in order to comply to the new regulation stated by the government. Figure 1 shows the

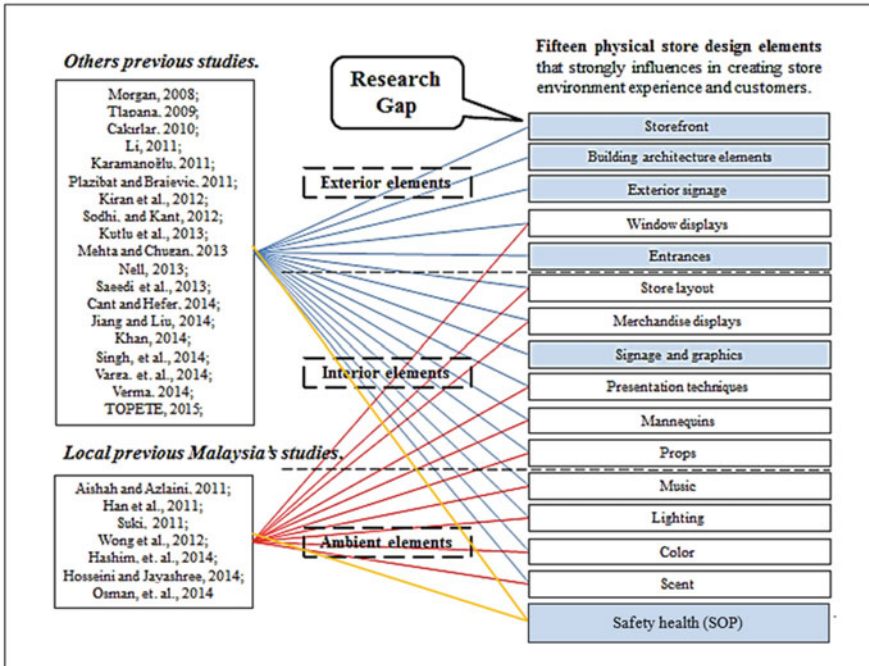


Fig. 1 Summary gaps between the past studies on physical exterior store design elements

summary gaps between the local Malaysia's and foreign studies towards the physical exterior store design elements.

2.1 Theoretical Models

According to the stated information above, this framework contained elements of the store environment physical exterior design influences. The aim of this study is to look into how these fashion retail physical exterior design elements affects store environment and shopping experience as well its impact on customer perception. Lastly to documents a holistic view of important these attributes on produce a good fashion shopping environment design in Malaysia's context. Figure 2 shows the proposed framework serves as foundation to this research.



Fig. 2 Model connecting store environment safety and physical design attributes to personal perception

3 Methodology

The research design employed a case study method which was divided into two parts, the first part was observation in nature, second part was managerial interview descriptive. The data were collected within the renowned fashion retail brand which comply to the current post-pandemic issued health safety (SOP); Gucci fashion store in Pavilion Mall, Kuala Lumpur were observed and interviewed to seek and find the impact of whole view of the store environment physical exterior design factors in terms of creating a good fashion store shopping experience.

4 Results and Discussions

4.1 Observation

From the observation it can be seen that Gucci in Pavilion flagship store in Pavilion Mall, Kuala Lumpur showcase its unique shopping experience through outstanding quality of products, comfortable, inviting, and enjoyable environments includes premium services within the comply of all the post-pandemic health safety (SOP) issued by the government.

To lure shoppers into the store they provide a deep impression and impact through the store exterior elements; storefront, signage and window display were well-arranged and frequently updating with fresh new display trend of merchandise, mannequin, props and graphics. A pleasant good simple façade with easy noticeable logo on each of the store entrances. All the merchandise display was spaces neatly setup without to packed. With the idea of “clear merchandise, less cram” has positively attract the eye-catching of the customers who passerby.

Furthermore, the store provides neat and proper health safety checked point counter equipped with stand auto thermometer and hand sanitizer as well as face mask

at every ground entrance with the assist of staff member. Customer seen smoothly checked-in their health issued either manually or via online without crowded the entrances. All the store glass windows and door handle were regularly sanitized by the staff to keep the store clean and safe.

These shows that the evaluations of exterior health safety and design had designs had a strong relationship with the store brand characteristics experience and effect customer behavior.

4.2 Interview

According to the interviews, it shows that the Gucci Pavilion Kuala Lumpur main goal was on creating a more health safety, memorable and attractive shopping experience that attracted the customers.

Table 1 Summary of respondents perception regarding influences health safety and physical exterior store design elements on evoke shopping experience

	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neither Important Nor Unimportant	Important	Very Important
Exterior Design					
How important is the retail storefront (Façade)?	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (3)
How important is the building architectural style of the store?	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	33.33 (1)	66.66 (2)	0.00 (0)
How important is the store's exterior signage and logo?	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (3)
How important is the interesting/inspiring store display windows?	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (3)
How important is the store image of the display windows?	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (3)
How important is the merchandise presented in the store display windows?	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	100 (3)
How important is the entrance of the store?	0.00 (0)	0.00 (0)	1.67 (2)	33.33 (1)	66.66 (2)

Table 1 shows the importantness of each of the physical exterior store design elements by the respondents. Through the conversation, the Gucci pavilion customers were provided with a comfort stage behind the storefront through its well-setup of store physical exterior design elements. Gucci creates its unique experience by applying evoked emotions and other sensations through its engaging window display, interactive merchandise displays, richness of themed presentation and pleasant store ambient elements.

The result from the interviews found that today's new norm post-pandemic health safety (SOP) and physical exterior design elements have a highly significant impact on brand shopping experience and customer intentions too.

5 Conclusion

According to the findings above, customer perception outcomes towards store selections and purchasing can be influenced by the physical exterior design elements and the adaptation to today's new norm post-pandemic health safety (SOP).

This is shown by the Gucci store Pavilion Kuala Lumpur which offered a storefront shopping experience to its customers. Presented above gave a very important influence to the exterior store's unique and sophisticated environment. These included the offering of nice architectural, clear window display, well-ordered layout and not over-packed visual merchandise, and theme.

5.1 Recommendations

It is important for retailers to take into consideration for the recovery post-pandemic that could help improve if needed. The suggestions of this report are as follows:

- Physical exterior design factors in creating exciting retail stores in Malaysia

The first recommendation to retailers was important to create a unique and innovative retail storefront and entrance either by implementing building architectural elements which can provide better image valuations and influence customer judgment about the store's offer.

Retailers also need to ensure the outside signs and logo are attractive and easy to be noticeable. Furthermore, retailers need to set up a good and appealing window display setting as it would capture the attention and impact customer purchase decision. Remember, "clear merchandise, less cram".

Retailers also need to provide well-organized health safety check-in counters near the store entrance as required in today's new norm after-pandemic by the government. Provide smooth checked-in health issued is a must. All touchable items such as doors, handles and door glass as well as window glass need to be cleaned and sanitized frequently.

Acknowledgements The authors are thankful to Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia for providing Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS-203/PPBGN/6711346) to support this study.

References

- Aishah, N.Z.Z.A., Azlaine, H.A.A.: Popular contemporary window display composition and its influences on youths in Malaysia. *Aslan J. Environ. Behav. Stud.* **2**(5), 57–66 (2011)
- Baker, J., Parasuraman, A., Grewal, D., Voss, G.B.: The influence of multiple store environment cues on perceived merchandise value and patronage intentions. *Journal of Marketing* **66**(2), 120–141 (2002)
- Banat, A., Wandebori, H.: Store design and store atmosphere effect on customer sales per visit. In: 2nd International Conference on Business, Economics, Management and Behavioral Sciences, pp. 84–89 (2012)
- Bell, J., Ternus, K.: *Silent Selling. Best Practice and Effective Strategies in Visual Merchandising*, 3rd edn. Fairchild, New York (2006)
- Bitner, M.J.: Servicescapes: the impact of physical surrounding on customers and employees. *J. Mark.* **56** (1992)
- Cornelius, B., Natter, M., Faure, C.: How storefront displays influence retail store image. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* **17**(2), 143–151 (2010)
- Hasan, A., Mishra, S.: Key drivers influencing shopping behavior in retail store. *IUP J. Mark. Manag.* **14**(3), 7–33 (2015)
- Hashim, H., Hussin, S.R., Zainal, N.N.: Exploring Islamic retailer store attributes from consumers perspectives: an empirical investigation. *Int. J. Econ. Manag.* **8**(S), 117–136 (2014)
- Hosseini, Z., Jayashree, S.: Influence of the store ambiance on customers' behavior-apparel stores in Malaysia. *Int. J. Bus. Manag.* **9**(10), 62–69 (2014)
- Odeh, M.R., As' ad, H.A.R.: The impact of Jordanian shopping malls' physical surrounding on consumer buying behavior: field study. *Int. J. Mark. Stud.* **6**(3), 134–141 (2014)
- Osman, S., Sim Ong, F., Nor Othman, M., Wei Khong, K.: The mediating effect of mood on in-store behavior among Muslim shoppers. *J. Islam. Mark.* **5**(2), 178–197 (2014)
- Pan, F.C., Su, S.J., Chiang, C.C.: Dual attractiveness of winery: atmospheric cues on purchasing. *International Journal of Wine Business Research* **20**(2), 95–110 (2008)
- Singh, P., Katiyar, N., Verma, G.: Retail shoppability: the impact of store atmospherics and store layout on consumer buying patterns. *Int. J. Technol. Enhanc. Emerg. Eng. Res.* **3**(8), 15–23 (2014)
- Suki, N.M.: Female fashion shoppers responses towards the mall atmosphere. *Res. World J. Arts Sci. Commer.* **2**(3), 9–18 (2011)
- Turley, L.W., Milliman, R.E.: Atmospheric effects on shopping behavior: a review of the experimental evidence. *Journal of Business Research* **49**(2), 193–211 (2000)
- Wong, Y.T., Osman, S., Jamaluddin, A., Yin-Fah, B.C.: Shopping motives, store attributes and shopping enjoyment among Malaysian youth. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* **19**(2), 240–248 (2012)