Conference Paper

The Managerial Skills of Visual Merchandising Managers of Retail Establishments in the National Capital Region

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Abstract

The main objective of the study was to determine the managerial skills of visual merchandising managers in the National Capital Region. The study specifically aimed to address the following concerns: (1) the profile of the respondent-visual merchandising manager and the respondent-retail organization / company; (2) the visual merchandising managerial skills in technical, human, and conceptual aspects; (3) the significant difference in the managerial skills of the visual merchandising managers when grouped by profile; and (4) the assessment by respondents of the visual merchandising of the stores. The descriptive method of research was the methodology utilized. A total of one hundred sixty (160) study respondents from one hundred thirty-two (132) member-companies of the Philippine Retailers Association were obtained for data gathering of the study. Results showed a significant difference in the truthful assessment of the managerial skills when profiled by years of experience in visual merchandising in terms of human skill. The visual merchandising managers look at the future of store design in Metro Manila as "Very Good." The following are recommended: the issue on floor plans and display area sizes should be properly addressed to maximized its foot-traffic potential; the promotion of the principle of Completed Staff Work (CSW) to recognize and solve visual merchandising problems must be adhered to; and the institutionalization and conduct of the Annual Visual Merchandising Awards event activity should be started and done on a continuing basis.

Keywords: Atmospherics, FMCGs, foot-traffic, sensory retailing, visual merchandising.

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1. Introduction

What are the managerial skills that would lead to an effective visual merchandising as showcased in the stores' exterior and interior design? In the same manner, the effective visual merchandising must remain consistent with the store's brand management concept that is geared to attract, inform, and persuade shoppers or customers.

Effective visual merchandising managerial systems therefore, becomes a good avenue for academic inquiry for it is proven to increase store visits through the skillful blend of the arts and commerce.

This research aims to provide an insight on effective visual merchandising managerial decisions which would ensure that retail outlets continue attracting the target shoppers who would provide the Philippine retail business with a marketing crowd of loyal customers who would ensure dynamism in the transfer of ownership of any FMCGs (Fast-moving consumer goods), and the vibrant trading of a variety of goods and services to propel the country's economic growth.

Citing the 1995 Harvard Business Review article "Skills of an Effective Administrator," of Robert Katz, author Peter Northouse wrote that effective leadership depend on three basic personal skills: technical, human, and conceptual. Technical skill is the proficiency in a specific type of work or activity characterized by competencies in a specialized area, analytical ability, and the ability to use appropriate tools and techniques. Human skills or "people skills" is the ability to work with people. Conceptual skills are the ability to work with ideas and concepts of which some were achieved through the active instructions of subordinates by superiors. The three-skill approach is important for leaders to have, how they would display it depends on where they are in the management structure [1].

A study made by Dr. Harmeet Kaur Bhasin titled, "Study of Visual Merchandising Practices in Retail Industry in Mumbai with Special Reference to Cosmetics and Perfumes," provided a rich source of visual merchandising in India. Dr. Bhasin's dissertation provided 4-part annexures containing questionnaires for retailers, dealers, visual merchandisers, and consumers [2]. The Annexure 3-Questionnaire for Visual Merchandising was adopted for use in the study to complement Robert Katz's three levels of management: technical, human, and conceptual skills. The list of adaptations in the technical category include: What visual merchandising is all about; building and strengthening visual merchandising strategies; visual merchandiser challenges and

pressures in planning and delivering projects; budget allocation for visual merchandising activities; aspects of visual merchandising that are appreciated; and the changes that are liked to be seen for any retail business category.

The Visual Merchandising Manager administers what the merchandise displayers and window trimmers do. For instance, they do oversee the exterior and interior display aspect of the retail outlet business that include assembly or set up of displays, fixtures, or products in store space with the use of colors, lights, pictures or accessories to display the merchandise. Administrative and analytical skills in visual merchandising work activities are important since the development of ideas or strategies for merchandise displays or window decorations should be readied in commercial displays that entice or appeal to customers. The work activities list includes:

1. Getting information;

2. Thinking creatively;

3. Performing general physical activities;

4. Handling and moving objects;

5. Communicating with supervisors, peers, or subordinates;

6. Organizing, planning, and prioritizing work;

7. Establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships;

8. Identifying objects, actions, and events;

9. Making decision and solving problems;

10. Evaluating information to determine compliance with standards;

11. Performing for or working directly with the public;

12. Coordinating the work or activities of others;

13. Developing objectives and strategies;

14. Monitor processes materials or surroundings;

15. Updating and using relevant knowledge;

16. Resolving conflicts and negotiating with others;

17. Developing and building teams;

18. Interacting with computers;

19. Guiding, directing, and motivating subordinates;

20. Coaching and developing others;

21. Training and teaching others;

22. Selling or influencing others;

23. Estimating the quantifiable characteristics of products, events, or information;

24. Interpreting the meaning of information to others;

25. Scheduling work and activities;

26. Judging the qualities of things, services, or people;

27. Analyzing data or information;

28. Assisting and caring for others;

29. Processing information;

30. Provide consultation and advice to others;

31. Controlling machines, and processes;

32. Inspecting equipment, structures, or material; and

33. Monitoring and controlling resources [3].

This marketing discipline can be defined as everything the customer sees, both inside and outside the retail establishment that creates a positive image of a business and results in purchasing action on the part of the customer. It communicates to the customer what the store is all about by the dramatic presentation of the merchandise as well as other features that create the store's overall atmosphere [4].

For Meyer, Harris, Kohns, and Stone III, the importance of a display theme is that a store display is rendered effectively when there is proper coordination between the business' advertising, personal selling, publicity and public relations [5]. The business' merchandising personnel determine what merchandise type will sell better at any time. Visual merchandising decision makers, therefore promote these items and project the desired image of the business through a thematic display.

Taking off from the five goals of Chapman and Bradley III, this study would follow the fundamental principles of store layout as expounded by Chapman and co-authors:

1. Provide the greatest possible merchandise exposure;

2. Locate high mark up and impulse items in key post;

3. Discourages shoplifting in all possible ways;

4. Achieve fixture flexibility;

5. Locate related lines next to each other; and,

6. Be sure that the most important lines have the best locations [6]

Two authors maintained that leadership style ideally matches circumstances. For instance, during periods of relative stability and incremental change, a major enterprise priority is to maximize efficiency. With that, challenging the status quo as a radical measure could be counterproductive. The authors outlined that transactional leadership style best matches these circumstances for it emphasizes:

1. Continuous learning and incremental adaptive change

2. Operational efficiency through 'doing things the right way'

3. Exercise of authority from top to bottom which would ensure that planned initiatives are carried through

4. Attention to detail to achieve the necessary results

The authors further noted that shifting to transformational style of leadership emphasizes:

Change and renewal by redefining enterprise values and vision.

1. Focus on strategic effectiveness' 'doing the right things' to survive and prosper, at the same time accepting short-term compromises if necessary

2. Focus on the restated mission, innovation and creativity to aid radical improvements

3. Setting of challenging and exciting goals to motivate the staff.

4. Decisive actions in accordance with situations while encouraging informal, participative behavior and avoids status symbols.

Charismatic leadership defines the transformational style since their contribution is in the steering of the enterprise through periods of radical and disruptive change [7].

For the transformational leadership's visual merchandising movement in the retail outlet, an article, "Managerial Versus Entrepreneurial Decision-Making," submitted

that entrepreneurial leadership differed from the traditional leadership style in ways of: strategic orientation, commitment to opportunity, commitment of resources, management structure, reward philosophy, growth orientation, and entrepreneurial culture [8].

In another literature, the retail image hinges on the management of customer expectations, which is very much a part of developing and delivering value to customers. Customer expectations as the focus of the firm's leadership must be aimed toward a vision of what the firm wants itself to be, its value proposition based on its distinct competence. In these marketing effort, the objective is to attract customers, not to make the next sale [9].

The store atmosphere's managerial dimensions come complete by fitting retail strategies and atmospheric design with consumer behavior and other issues. Retail executives accordingly, implement retail strategy for the desired consumers' response to an atmosphere by means of the designs that the executives shape by blending the many atmospheric conditions to come up with an appropriate store environment [10].

In their article, "The Dynamics of Creating and Maintaining a Retail Image," the authors mentioned that a complex, multi-step, ongoing process characterize the creation and maintenance of a retail image. It goes even farther than just the concern for store "atmosphere" where a shopper should be able to determine the elements of the store image in three seconds: its name, its line of trade, its claim to fame, its price proposition, and its personality. Shoppers will find what they need in what the seller displayed, and that everyone must be enticed to enter the store. A seller do not have a chance of being seen or heard through all the clutter in retailing if without a distinct image [11].

Atmospherics which feature layout, furnishings, color scheme, and music are the aspects that establish the image customers have of a retailer. Shoppers entering a retail shop and deciding how long they remain inside is a result of the physical environment's attraction [12].

In another article, "Lighting, Scent, and Sound," the author stated that sales can be increased if retailers would engage all of customers' senses and the lighting, scent, and sound are particularly important [13].

There is a process by which a staff member or organization officer studies a problem or issue requiring a decision by a superior officer and makes a recommendation of the best solution or option, such that all remains to be done on the part of the decision-maker is to approve or disapprove the recommended action. The process is called Completed Staff Work (CSW). It provides the decision-maker with answers to specific

problems or issues as well as it serves as protection against inadequate analysis of the problem and saves time and effort in reviewing many documents and unprocessed information. CSW's basic rule is that the staff member has no right to pass on a problem to his superior and instead it is the staff member's duty to provide a solution to the problem [14].

Of equal importance to keep track of is performance evaluation and feedback since organizations, for example, prefer to routinize their purchases in support of the efficiency objective [15].

In another study, Kumar, Garg, and Rahman made further investigation on the influence of atmospherics on customer values. The result of the study is that retail customers give greater value to olfactory and tactile factors such as air conditioning facilities, ambient scent, and soothing atmospherics. Design factors such as window dressing, shelf arrangements and displays, architecture, and others should not be ignored. If retailers will be up to the challenging task of producing competitive store image to customers, and satisfied patrons, retailers need to take cost-effective measures to periodically change these significant factors [16].

Gou-Fong Liaw, on the other hand, mentioned the customer's shopping mood and the effects to it by the multiple store environment cues. The body of work is part of the proceedings of the 7th Global Conference on Business and Economics in Rome of 2007. The research followed Baker and companion's work of 2002 which dwelt on three different environment cues as the store environment dimension. It consists of: (1) "Store design cues" referring to all aesthetic-related objects; tangible and visible environment components exist in the forefront of the consumer's perception; such are the more obvious sources of visual stimulation to the customer and include internal and external architecture, decorations, color, products arrangement, signs, space arrangements, etc. (2) "Store music cues" says music is the intangible background condition of the environment; the nonvisual feeling can affect the consumer's subconscious. (3) "Store employee cues" refers to the level of feeling related to stimulation from employees, including employee appearance, friendliness, number, professionalizing ability, and others. Accordingly, the background music contains as its main fare: the genre, the volume, and the environment noisiness. Also, the researcher maintained that the cue of music has deeper and more pronounced influence on people's emotions and behaviour [17].

Du Preez, Visser, and Van Noordwyk presented the store image as a complex, multidimensional construct based on the perception of tangible and intangible store

attributes associated with eight dimensions, namely Atmosphere, Convenience, Facilities, Institutional, Merchandise, Promotion, Sales Personnel, and Service [18]. The formation of store image relies on the perception of a store which varies by retailer, product and target market. By implication, store image is influenced by (1) the consumer's perception of a set of salient store attributes; (2) the importance the consumer places on the various store image dimensions, sub dimensions and the associated store attributes; as well as (3) the retailer's manipulation of these store attributes through strategic management.

Authorities specifically referred to the consumer responses in music-retail consistency and atmospheric lighting. Their research stated that brighter lighting was significantly related to greater product involvement and more positive store image. The research findings extend the foundation of customer responses to store atmospherics using a consistency perspective. Atmospherics would then be one way to differentiate the retail environment and create a competitive advantage. With the increased popularity of online shopping, creating a more effective retail atmosphere can be regarded as part of the retailers' positioning strategy in order to create a setting which encourages frequent visits and customer patronage [19].

Ramonette B. Serafica noted in a discussion paper that sustained growth creates jobs, draws the majority into the economic and social mainstream, and continuously reduce mass poverty. Furthermore, achieving inclusive growth would imply a crucial role for services since they not only contribute directly to the growth of the economy through job creation and export earnings but also helps in the transformation through critical inter-sectoral linkages. Likewise, services can contribute to achieving inclusive growth when small to large enterprises in various industries grow with the help of competitive services and individuals are able to access good quality jobs with labor productivity and skill enhancing services [20].

Retail merchandising or "in-store media" is a science that encompasses a huge number of marketing practices and techniques such as deploying point-of-purchase (POP) displays, optimizing in-store product presentation, creating cross-sales promotions and product adjacencies, and may also include product packaging and own store's internal and external branding [21].

Virginia Bautista's study noted that not all managers have the same degree of responsibility for all activities, and so it is helpful to classify managers according to levels and areas of responsibility: top-level, middle-level, and first-level managers. For instance, other important tasks for many middle managers include helping the

company undertake profitable new ventures and finding creative ways to reach goals. Likewise, there are six managerial competencies which are as follows:

1. Communication

2. Teamwork

3. Global Awareness

4. Planning and administration

5. Strategic action

6. Self-management

Likewise, Bautista maintained it is the belief of many companies that with continued employees' education, achieving strategic goals, performance improvement, and managerial competencies will be realized. Also, for the supervisors to become competent, they have to be able to identify specific changes and then to acquire the education and training needed to effectively deal with these changes [22].And so, we hypothesize that

H_o: There is no significant difference in the technical, human, and conceptual visual merchandising managerial skills of the respondents when they are grouped by profile.

2. Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to determine the effectivity of the managerial skills of visual merchandising managers of retail establishments in the National Capital Region.

Specifically, it aims to answer the following sub problems.

1. What is the profile of the respondent-visual merchandising managers in terms of the following variables?

   1.1. Respondent-Visual Merchandising Manager

      1.1.1. Age

      1.2.1. Sex

      1.3.1. Managerial level

      1.4.1. Number of years as visual merchandising manager

      1.5.1. Number of years experienced related to visual merchandising

1.6.1. Number of trainings in visual merchandising participated in

1.2. Respondent – Retail Organization / Company

1.2.1. Form of business organization

1.3.1. Category of retail business engaged in

1.4.1. Number of years formal visual merchandising management is practical in business

2. How do the respondents assess the effective visual merchandising managerial skills in terms of the following aspects?

2.1. Technical skills in interior and exterior visual merchandising design

2.2. Human skills in interior and exterior visual merchandising design

2.3. Conceptual skills in interior and exterior visual merchandising design

3. Is the significant difference in the effective managerial skills of the visual merchandising managers when they are grouped by profile?

3. Materials and Methods

This paper utilized the descriptive research method that attempts to show an accurate and adequate picture of the managerial skills of visual merchandising managers of the member – companies of the Philippine Retailers Association. The NCR members of the Philippine Retailers Association is made up of 184 businesses. The member-companies per city are as follows: Caloocan – 1; Las Piñas – 2; Makati – 35; Malabon – 1; Mandaluyong – 18; Manila – 25; Marikina – 6; Muntinlupa – 7; Parañaque – 6; Pasay – 12; Pasig – 16; Quezon City – 43; San 13 Juan – 8; Taguig – 4. The basis for the population size to be surveyed relied on the Slovin' formula computation, wherein N = 184, and at n = N / (1 + Ne2), and where n = Number of samples, N = Total population and e = Error tolerance,

n = 184 / 1 + 184 (.05)2

n = 184 / 1.46

n = 126 + 6 additional PRA member-companies

n = 132 visual merchandising managers

The combined total responses numbered 160 available managers, all coming from the 132 companies which participated in the questionnaire survey they willingly accommodated.

	Management			
City	Top	Middle	Supervisory	TOTAL
Caloocan	0	0	1	1
Las Piñas	0	1	2	3
Makati	0	4	25	29
Malabon	0	1	1	2
Mandaluyong	1	4	10	15
Manila	1	5	13	19
Marikina	1	1	4	6
Muntinlupa	0	3	3	6
Parañaque	0	1	4	5
Pasay	1	6	3	10
Pasig	3	8	4	15
Quezon City	1	19	21	41
San Juan	0	2	3	5
Taguig	0	1	2	3
Overall	8	57	95	**160**

The matrix shows the breakdown of the 160 responses from the following: top management (8), middle management (57), and supervisory management (95).

3.1. The instrument

Part One of the research instrument dealt with the respondent-visual merchandising manager's profile: age; sex; managerial level; number of years as manager; number of years' experience related to visual merchandising; number of trainings in visual merchandising participated in; and for the respondent-retail organization / company: form of business organization; category of retail business engaged in; and number of years formal visual merchandising management is practiced in business. The educational attainment for the respondent-visual merchandising manager was not included in the profile considering that in measuring managerial potential, academic achievement is not a valid yardstick since managers are not taught in formal education programs what

they must need to know to build a successful management career (hbr.org). Part two of the questionnaire centered on an adaptation of Peter G. Northouse's Skills Inventory questionnaire. Of the 18 statements contained in the Skills Inventory, the researcher only made use 16 items that all pertain to technical, human, and conceptual skills that leadership skills are to be measured. The part two skills Inventory response is effected by selecting one of the following numbers; 5 = Very true, 4 = Somewhat true, 3 = Occasionally true, 2 = Seldom true, and 1 = Not true. Part three dealt with the Visual merchandising skills' assessment. The researcher adopted the Questionnaire for Visual Merchandising that was developed by Dr. Harmeet Kaur Bhasin of St. Andrew's College, West Bandra, India. This was an Annexures questionnaire that she used for her Ph.D. dissertation, "Study of Visual Merchandising Practices in Retail Industry in Mumbai with Special Reference to Cosmetics and Perfumes." From the 20 assessment questions of Dr. Harmeet's instrument, the researcher only adopted 18 items which were refitted for the Metro Manila retailers.

The objective of the survey is to get responses from the retail businesses' visual merchandising area people who are actively engaged in their outlet's store design. The researcher and research assistants first secured each company's permission to conduct survey, and then three questionnaire survey forms were distributed each for top management, middle management, and supervisory management.

The netted 160 answered survey forms from the 132 NCR retail establishments were collated and bundled per city, and then the questionnaire forms were submitted to the statistician.

The statistician employed the computational program, Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) for data analysis.

1. For the quantitative evaluation for the demographic profile, the frequency and percentage were used.

   Percentage (%) = n/N x 100

   Where: (%) = percentage, n = observation in the group range

   N = Total Number of population

2. Weighted Mean was used to show the average characteristic of the 2. respondents.

   Weighted Mean = Σfx / N

   Where: f = frequency of respondents,

   x = Category weight,

N = total Number of Respondents

3. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to measure the effectiveness of the managerial skills of Visual Merchandising.

F = MST / MSE

Where, F = ANOVA Coefficient

MST = Mean sum of squares due to treatment

MSE = Mean sum of squares due to error.

4. Results and Discussion

TABLE 1: Summary of Assessment of the Effective Managerial Skills of the Visual Merchandising Managers When They Are Grouped by Profile.

1.1 Respondent-Visual Merchandising Manager	Technical Skills		Human Skills		Conceptual Skills	
	OWM	VI	OWM	VI	OWM	VI
Age	4.32	ST	4.40	ST	4.45	ST
Sex	4.32	ST	4.41	ST	4.45	ST
Managerial level	4.32	ST	4.41	ST	4.45	ST
Number of years as visual merchandising manager	4.33	ST	4.41	ST	4.45	ST
Number of years experience related to visual merchandising	4.32	ST	4.40	ST	4.45	ST
Number of trainings in visual merchandising participated in	4.32	ST	4.41	ST	4.45	ST
1.2 Respondent-Retail Organization / Company						
Form of business organization	4.32	ST	4.40	ST	4.45	ST
Category of retail business engaged in	4.32	ST	4.40	ST	4.45	ST
Number of years visual merchandising participated in business	4.34	ST	4.41	ST	4.45	ST

Legend: VT = Very True (4.51-5.00), ST = Somewhat True (3.51-4.50), OT = Occasionally True (2.51-3.50), SmT = Seldom True (1.51-2.50), NT = Not True (1.00-1.50)

The matrix presents the summary pertaining to the assessment of the managerial skills when they are grouped into profile. The Overall Weighted Mean's verbal interpretation, "Somewhat True" is evident in the respondent's managerial proficiency expressed as technical, human, and conceptual skills.

In terms of respondent-visual merchandising manager according to age, there were 65 or 40.63% 30-38 years old and 2 or 1.25% were 57-65 years old; according to sex,

there were 100 or 62.50% females and 60 or 37.50% males; according to managerial level, 96 or 60% were in the supervisory management and 8 or 5% were in the top management; according to number of years as visual merchandising manager, 64 or 40% had 1-3 years and 10 or 6.25% had 12-15 years; according to number of years of experience related to visual marketing, 58 or 63.25% had 1-3 years experience and 10 or 6.25% had 12-15 years; and according to number of trainings in visual merchandising participated in, 67 or 41.88% had 1-3 trainings and 3 or 1.88% had 12-15.

In terms of respondent-retail organization/company according to form of business organization, 134 or 83.75% were corporations and 6 or 3.75% had partnership; according to category of retail business engaged in, 129 or 80.63% were other retail trade of goods in specialized stores and 1 or 0.63% had second-hand goods in stores; and according to number of years formal visual merchandising management is practiced in business, 55 or 34.38% had 1-3 years and 7 or 4.38% had 12-15 years.

In terms of technical skills according to respondent-visual merchandising manager by age, sex, managerial level, number of years as visual merchandising manager, number of years of experience related to visual merchandising and number of trainings in visual merchandising, "I enjoy getting into the details of store design" got the highest total weighted mean of 4.53 (Very True) and "Following directions on the floor plans and sizes of areas to be used for display purposes comes early for me" had the lowest total weighted mean of 4.22 (Somewhat True). According to respondent-retail organization/company by form of business organization, category of retail business engaged in and number of years formal visual merchandising management is practiced in business, "I enjoy getting into the details of store design" acquired 4.53 (Very True) and "Following directions on the floor plans and sizes of areas to be used for display purposes comes early for me" gained 4.22 (Somewhat True).

In terms of human skills according to respondent-visual merchandising manager by age, "The ability to reflect and respond substantially to questions and ideas from colleagues is important to me" received the highest total weighted mean of 4.57 (Very True) and "My main concern is the effectiveness iin managing verbal, and written communication with colleagues" gained 4.23 (Somewhat True); by sex, "Being able to understand others is the most important part of my work" had 4.56 (Very True) and "My main concern is the effectiveness in managing verbal, and written communication with colleagues" with 4.24 (Somewhat True); by managerial level, number of years as visual merchandising manager, and number of years' experience related to visual merchandising, "The ability to reflect on and respond substantially to questions and ideas from colleagues is important to me" with 4.57 (Very True) and "My main concern

is the effectiveness in managing verbal and written communications with colleagues" got 4.24 (Somewhat True); by number of trainings in visual merchandising participated in, "The ability to reflect on and respond substantially to questions and ideas from colleagues is important to me" with 4.58 (Very True) and "As a rule, keeping up-to-date with fashion, trends, and developments in the industry and society is easy for me" and "My main concern is the effectiveness in managing verbal and written communications with colleagues" with 4.25 (Somewhat True). According to respondent-retail organization/company by form of business organization and category of retail business engaged in, "The ability to reflect on and respond substantially to questions and ideas from colleagues is important to me" acquired 4.57 (Very True) and "My main concern is the effectiveness in managing verbal and written communications with colleagues" with 4.23 (Somewhat True); and by number of years formal visual merchandising management is practiced in business, "The ability to reflect on and respond substantially to questions and ideas from colleagues is important to me" got 4.58 (Very True) and "As a rule, keeping up-to-date with fashion, trends and developments in the industry and society is easy for me" with 4.21 (Somewhat True).

In terms of conceptual skills according to respondent-visual merchandising manager by age, sex, managerial level, number of years as visual merchandising manager and number of years of experience related to visual merchandising, "I maintain an 'open mind' while accurately evaluating the needs of the target market, internal and external customers" attained the highest total weighted mean of 4.60 (Very True) and "I have the ability to recognize problems quickly and follow a self-managed process for resolving" achieved the lowest total weighted mean of 4.33 (Somewhat True); and by number of trainings in visual merchandising participated in, "I maintain an 'open mind' while accurately evaluating the needs of the target market, internal and external customers" received the highest total weighted mean of 4.62 (Very True) and "I have the ability to recognize problems quickly and follow a self-managed process for resolving" had the lowest total weighted mean of 4.33 (Somewhat True). According to respondent-retail organization/company by form of business organization, "I maintain an 'open mind' while accurately evaluating the needs of the target market, internal and external customers" obtained the highest total weighted mean of 4.60 (Very True) and "I have the ability to recognize problems quickly and follow a self-managed process for resolving" got the lowest total weighted mean of 4.33 (Somewhat True); by category of retail business engaged in and number of years formal visual merchandising management is practiced in business, "I maintain an 'open mind' while accurately evaluating the needs of the target market, internal and external customers" acquired

4.61 (Very True) and 4.59 (Very True) respectively and "I have the ability to recognize problems quickly and follow a self-managed process for resolving" attained the lowest total weighted mean of 4.34 (Somewhat True) and 4.36 (Somewhat True) accordingly.

TABLE 2: Summary of Significant Difference in the Effective Managerial Skills of the Visual Merchandising Managers When They Are Grouped by Profile.

	SIGNIFICANT						NOT SIGNIFICANT					
3.1 Respondent-Visual Merchandising Manager	Technical Skills		Human Skills		Conceptual Skills		Technical Skills		Human Skills		Conceptual Skills	
	f value	p value	f value	p value	f value	p value	f value	p value	f value	p value	f value	p value
Age	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.242	0.914	0.340	0.850	0.482	0.749
Sex	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.212	0.227	0.449	0.654	1.241	0.217
Managerial level	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.062	0.348	0.193	0.824	0.860	0.425
Number of years as visual merchandising manager	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.394	0.813	0.962	0.419	0.842	0.501
Number of years experience related to visual merchandising	-	-	2.672	0.034	-	-	1.398	0.237	-	-	1.067	0.375
Number of trainings in visual merchandising participated in	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.881	0.496	0.805	0.549	0.664	0.651
3.2 Respondent-Retail Organization / Company												
Form of business organization	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.017	0.983	0.116	0.891	0.154	0.857
Category of retail business engaged in	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.246	0.294	1.177	0.323	0.533	0.711
Number of years visual merchandising is practiced in business	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.555	0.190	1.493	0.208	1.159	0.331

The matrix presents the summary of the significant difference which lists in the majority that there is no significant difference in the visual merchandising manager's technical, human, and conceptual skills. The human skills' "Number of years' experience related to visual merchandising" came out **significant**.

According to respondent-visual merchandising manager by age, technical skill got an f-value of 0.242, p-value of 0.914 and the decision is failed to reject the null hypothesis; human skill with f-value of 0.340, p-value of 0.850 and failed to reject the null hypothesis; and conceptual skill with f-value of 0.482, p-value of 0.749 and failed to reject the null hypothesis. By sex, technical skill had an f-value of 1.212, p-value of 0.227 and the decision is failed to reject the null hypothesis; human skill with f-value of 0.449, p-value of 0.654 and failed to reject the null hypothesis; and conceptual skill with f-value of 1.241, p-value of 0.217 and failed to reject the null hypothesis. By managerial level, technical skill acquired an f-value of 1.062, p-value of 0.348 and the decision is failed to reject the null hypothesis; human skill with f-value of 0.193,

p-value of 0.824 and failed to reject the null hypothesis; and conceptual skill with *f*-value of 0.860, *p*-value of 0.425 and failed to reject the null hypothesis. By number of years as visual merchandising manager, technical skill received an *f*-value of 0.394, *p*-value of 0.813 and the decision is failed to reject the null hypothesis; human skill with *f*-value of 0.982, *p*-value of 0.419 and failed to reject the null hypothesis; and conceptual skill with *f*-value of 0.842, *p*-value of 0.501 and failed to reject the null hypothesis. By number of years of experience related to visual merchandising, technical skill gained an *f*-value of 1.398, *p*-value of 0.237 and the decision is failed to reject the null hypothesis; human skill with *f*-value of 2.672, *p*-value of 0.034 and the null hypothesis is rejected; and conceptual skill with *f*-value of 1.067, *p*-value of 0.375 and failed to reject the null hypothesis. By number of trainings in visual merchandising participated in, technical skill achieved an *f*-value of 0.881, *p*-value of 0.495 and the decision is failed to reject the null hypothesis; human skill with *f*-value of 0.803, *p*-value of 0.549 and failed to reject the null hypothesis; and conceptual skill with *f*-value of 0.664, *p*-value of 0.651 and failed to reject the null hypothesis. According to respondent-retail organization/company by form of business organization, technical skill got an *f*-value of 0.017, *p*-value of 0.983 and the decision is failed to reject the null hypothesis; human skill with *f*-value of 0.116, *p*-value of 0.891 and failed to reject the null hypothesis; and conceptual skill with *f*-value of 0.154, *p*-value of 0.857 and failed to reject the null hypothesis. By category of retail business engaged in, technical skill obtained an *f*-value of 1.246, *p*-value of 0.294 and the decision is failed to reject the null hypothesis; human skill with *f*-value of 1.177, *p*-value of 0.323 and failed to reject the null hypothesis; and conceptual skill with *f*-value of 0.533, *p*-value of 0.711 and failed to reject the null hypothesis. By number of years formal visual merchandising management is practiced in business, technical skill attained an *f*-value of 1.555, *p*-value of 0.190 and the decision is failed to reject the null hypothesis; human skill with *f*-value of 1.493, *p*-value of 0.208 and failed to reject the null hypothesis; and conceptual skill with *f*-value of 1.159, *p*-value of 0.331 and failed to reject the null hypothesis.

In terms of overall concept of visual merchandising, "attracting customers" received the highest frequency of 51 or 31.88% and "displaying merchandise" attained the lowest frequency of 11 or 6.87%. In terms of seriousness of visual merchandising taken by Metro Manila retailers, "Very Seriously" got 88 or 55% and "Least Seriously" with 2 or 1.25%. In terms of fascination on the parameter of visual merchandising, "theme displays" had 51 or 31.87% and "mannequins' and fixture planning" with 7 or 4.37%. In terms of action made to strengthen and build effective visual merchandising strategies, "keeping the merchandising in line with the store image" acquired 79 or

49.38% and "use of props" with 5 or 3.13%. In terms of common mistake of the visual merchandisers in the Metro Manila retail outlets, "complicated presentations" gained 64 or 40% and "cramped up windows" with 5 or 3.13%. In terms of most effective visual merchandising scenario in Metro Manila, "helps or simplifies consumer buying process" obtained 51 or 31.87% and "more creative than international features" with 10 or 6.25%. In terms of effect of economic downturn in the past on store design project, "decrease sales" had 56 or 35% and "early reduction in prices" with 4 or 2.5%. In terms of challenges and pressures that a visual merchandiser and the team face in planning and delivering projects, "mall rules, limitations and procedures" got 48 or 30% and "increasing pressure to lower cost per sq. ft." with 1 or.62%. In terms of objective while creating a visual merchandising strategy, "attracting more customers" attained 76 or 47.5% and "attracting young generations" with 2 or 1.25%. In terms of budget a retailer should allocate for visual merchandising activities, "budget as per retailers' wish" attained 58 or 36.25% and "no budget" with 7 or 4.38%. In terms of the favorite product category to work on when creating visual merchandise, "apparels" got 69 or 43.13% and "health and pharmaceutical" and "toys" both with 1 or.62%. In terms of quantifying results of visual merchandising activities, "increase in sales turnover" acquired 64 or 40% and "decrease in early reduction of prices" with.625%. In terms of aspect of visual merchandising appreciated by the Metro Manila customers, "windows display" had 111 or 69.38% and "broad aisles" with 1 or.625%. In terms of agreement on visual merchandising only for the elite target market and branded activities, "Agree" attained 50 or 31.25% and "Strongly agree" with 15 or 9.38%. In terms of unique selling proposition (USP) or strength of style to keep customers happy, "customer service" got 88 or 55% and "cleanliness" with 1 or.62%. In terms of changes that retailers should do in terms of design and visual merchandising, "better window display" achieved 83 or 51.88% and "better counters" with 4 or 2.5%. In terms of importance of visual merchandiser and team's output for retail business category, "Very Important" got 127 or 79.38% and "Somewhat Important" with 2 or 1.25%. In terms of future of visual merchandising in Metro Manila, "Very Good" gained 96 or 60% and "Fair" with 3 or 1.88%.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the respondents' findings, the following conclusions were derived: the 30-38 years old, mostly females, mostly supervisory managers practicing visual merchandising for already 1-3 years and with participation in 4-7 trainings in visual merchandising.

The retailers are corporations which are into retail trade of goods in specialized stores, and are 1-3 years' practitioners of the activity.

The visual merchandising managers 'Somewhat Truthful' for the technical, human and conceptual skills when grouped by profile like age, sex, managerial level, years as visual merchandising manager, years' experience in visual merchandising, trainings in visual merchandising, and when grouped by company profile like business organization type, retail business type, and years as visual merchandising manager.

The following recommendations are offered: address the issues pertaining to the floor plans and sizes of areas to be used for display purposes through the PRA Retail Experience Series' institutional initiative; address the issue of effectiveness in managing verbal, and written communications with colleagues; address the concern of the managers' ability to recognize problems quickly and follow a self-managed process for resolving; the PRA should aid in the promotion of visual merchandising as a retail business worthwhile marketing career with provisions of certified academic training to selected company personnel; and, future studies be conducted on the same topic for matters like market shifts and forecasts or survey of existing target customers regarding visual merchandising and buying behavior.

Author's Note

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