

EXPERIENCE CONSUMPTION IN WEDDING BOUTIQUES THROUGH
VISUAL MERCHANDISING

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES OF
IZMIR UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS

BY

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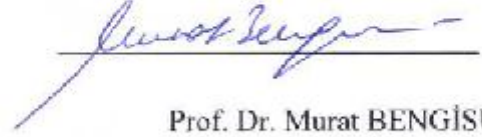
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ABSTRACT

EXPERIENCE CONSUMPTION IN WEDDING BOUTIQUES THROUGH VISUAL MERCHANDISING

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This thesis analyzes the experience value through visual merchandising in the consumption of bridal wear. In this study, bridal wear consumers' purchasing behavior is researched on the perspective of visual merchandising and postmodern consuming approach. In this direction, a survey is conducted to bridal wear boutique owners and designers in Izmir. Their sale behaviors are identified and purchasing behaviors of customers' are considered based on the experience value through visual merchandising and factors that affect the owners/designers of Bridal wear Boutiques. This study consists of four parts excluding the introduction and conclusion. In first three parts, an introduction to literature review and theoretical background is revealed about dimensions of consumption, experience value through hedonistic shopping attitude and visual merchandising. So, the dimensions of consuming culture are discussed and the new consumption behavior 'experience value' is considered. In the third part, visual merchandising is studied regarding a new marketing strategy in fashion industry. In the fourth part, the experience value is analyzed and observed through bridal wear industry in Turkey. In the fifth part, a survey study is conducted to analyze the effects of visual merchandising to experience value through the owners and consumers of bridal wear boutiques in

Izmir. Research outcomes reveal that bridal wear consumers in Izmir are most likely prefer the boutiques that present the products with visuals of what they expect and dream. Besides, bridal wear consumer purchasing behavior mostly rely on the experience that they can dream what they will be look like in a bridal and the owners are sensitive to design their stores with attractive visual tools. In conclusion, bridal wear consumers' and the relatives' purchasing behavior should be well understood and the owners of boutiques should design the boutiques with visual items and create the experience value for customers as to form a uniqueness and advantage in the bridal wear market in Izmir.

Keywords: Experience Value, Visual Merchandising, Bridal wear
Boutiques

ÖZET

GELİNLİK BUTİKLERİNDE DENEYİM DEĞERİ TÜKETİMİNİN GÖRSEL DÜZENLEME ÜZERİNDEN İNCELENMESİ

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Tasarım Çalışmaları

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Bu çalışma, görsel düzenleme ile yaratılan deneyim değerinin gelinlik alışverişindeki etkisini araştırmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, gelinlik giyen tüketicilerin satın alma davranışlarını ve post modern tüketim yaklaşımını görsel mağazacılık açısından araştırdım. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda İzmir'deki gelinlik butik sahipleri ve tasarımcıları için yapılmış bir araştırmadır. Burada satış davranışları tanımlanmış olup gelinlik mağazalarındaki tasarımcılar için önemli olan vitrin tasarımı olgusundaki deneyim değeri kavramı tüketicilerin satın alma davranışlarını da nasıl etkilediği açıklanmaktadır. Bu çalışma giriş ve sonuç hariç dört bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk üç bölümde, literatür taramasına giriş, tüketim boyutları hakkında teorik geçmiş, zevke dayalı alışverişte deneyim değer, davranışları ve vitrin dekoratörlüğü anlatılmaktadır. Ayrıca tüketim kültürlerinin boyutları tartışılmış ve 'deneyim değeri' olarak kabul edilen yeni tüketim davranışları incelenmiştir. Üçüncü bölümde, vitrin dekoratörlüğü, moda sektöründe yeni bir pazarlama konusu olarak çalışılmaktadır. Dördüncü bölümde ise, deneyim değeri analiz edilmiş ve gözlemlenmiştir. Beşinci bölüm bir anket çalışmasıdır. İzmir'deki gelinlik butiklerindeki görsel mağazacılık etkilerini değerlendirmek için analiz ve deneyim değerini ölçme amaçlı çeşitli anket çalışmaları yapılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda İzmir'deki gelinlik tüketicileri, genellikle ürünlerini görsel sunumlarla sergileyen ve

onlara yaşamak istedikleri hayalleri yaşatabileceklerini vitrinleri ile inandıran butikleri tercih ettikleri tespit edilmiştir. Bunun yanında, gelinlik tüketicilerinin alışveriş davranışları daha çok gelinliğin içinde nasıl görünecekleri hayali üzerine kurulmuştur ve mağaza sahipleri mağazalarını dikkat çekici görsel araçlarla tasarlama konusundaki hassasiyetlerini açıklamışlardır. Sonuç olarak, gelinlik tüketicilerinin ve yakınlarının davranış alışkanlıkları doğru araçlarla tespit edilmelidir. Butik sahipleri butiklerini görsel nesnelere tasarlmalı ve müşteriler için deneyim değeri yaratarak İzmir gelinlik piyasasında eşsizlik ve avantaj oluşturmalarıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Deneyim Değeri, Görsel Düzenleme, Gelinlik Butikleri

To my Sister Ayşegül Taşkıran

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1. INTRODUCTION

In our current consumer culture and consumer society, people shop not only to satisfy their needs but shop for the pleasure of shopping and for the satisfaction of feelings and fantasies. Recent research and theories on consumption behavior state that consumption is not only composed of rational behavior such as calculating the physical needs. Consumption also has a playful part such as sensory pleasure, aesthetic enjoyment and nice emotional responses. This aspect of consumption is also called the hedonistic aspect of consumption. Consumers thus seek fun, amusement, and fantasy in their shopping behavior. The inclusion of this hedonistic aspect of consumption is also called in the literature as “experience consumption”. The hedonistic aspect of consumption – experience consumption - has become a general marketing approach recently.

Visual merchandising through shop design, store design, decoration of boutiques and display has become one of the most important trends in every kind of fashion marketing. The main function of visual merchandising is creating silent communication between the customer and the product for the purpose of increasing sales and makes the customer live an experience about his fantasy, feeling of shopping. Visual merchandising is a solution within the impact of fast fashion marketing and creates a “silent communication” in a fashionable area between the product and customer.

In visual merchandising window-shopping is one of most important tools, and inside the store, visual merchandising creates "miniature worlds" to attract consumers so that they buy more, with a fast decision in a silent way. As a result, sales consultant who presents fashion products to customers lost its value. In other words, the retail marketing changed its technique with the impact of visual merchandising to increase the sales and to create a fast, variable and fashion adopted aspect for the stores and so the number of sales consultant who works in stores

decreased. Furthermore with advanced techniques and good strategies, visual merchandising became a new design concept.

1.1. Problem Definition

Visual merchandising is a very effective and cost efficient strategy in the modern fashion sales industry. One of the main impacts of visual merchandising is that the customer is directed towards the products without an intermediary; there is no need for a sales consultant. This type of selling practice is called “silent selling” (Bell and Ternus, 2006).

Recently, customer experience has become an objective in managerial texts and found a place on the academic agenda. Pine and Gilmore describe the evolution of economic offerings from commodities to products to services to experiences. While use values refer to our basic needs, experience value relates to the intellectual, emotional and experiential needs. Hence in marketing the construction of experience creating elements for customers has become an important research topic. The main idea in experience value is evoking a hedonistic atmosphere.

The concept of “experience” in relation to consumption, marketing and economy is first introduced by Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) article. According to these writers experience is introduced as a new source of value. The basic idea is that, when a customer buys “experience” an extra value is created. Because the customer pays in order to spend time - to experience - in enjoying many nice memorable events which the company offers as a marketing strategy. This hedonistic or emotional aspect of consumption is the new source value. Charging a fee for something, which used to be free is the main logic and progress experience valuing.

The design and creation of attractive visual presentations for the generation of experience value was initiated by Banana Republic (J. Diamond and E. Diamond, 2007). In Banana Republic brand and in their original stores, merchandise emphasis

was on safari-inspired clothing and the interiors were designed to reflect that image. Until the company changed its image and merchandising philosophy, the stores were full of netting, jeeps, palm trees, bamboo, and anything that gave the impression of a trip to the wild.

1.2. The Aim of the Study

The aim of this thesis is to examine the impacts and relations of visual merchandising strategies on the consumption behavior of customers in the retail fashion sector in general and wedding dress sector in particular. To achieve this aim, the study intends to make a detailed analyze of;

- (a) The different conceptions of consumption behavior in the postmodern era
- (b) The various dimensions of visual merchandising.

In order to analyze the impact of visual merchandising strategies in the wedding dress industry, literature review and qualitative analysis had been used. Moreover, a survey research will be carried out at some 14 Haute Couture Wedding stores in İzmir with the objectives given below:

- (1) To understand the visual merchandizing strategies already utilized at these stores
- (2) To study the impact of visual merchandising on hedonic consumption (experience consumption) of wedding dresses at such stores.

The aim was to understand experiential/hedonic consumption patterns adapted to the Bridal wear Haute Couture Shopping Sector in Izmir. Addition to that it will be

investigated the impact of visual merchandising strategies on the customers and therefore the sales of Bridal wear Haute Couture Shopping in Izmir.

This study is expected to bring insight into the contemporary marketing and sales strategies of companies from the viewpoint of experience values created by visual merchandisers. As such the study will contribute to analyzing consumer motives in the wedding sector and therefore explore possible ways of how effective visual merchandising strategies may be designed in the Wedding Boutiques, in İzmir.

In this study the number of companies participated to survey was one of the main limitations of this research. Some companies accepted in-depth interviews, some other companies accepted to answer questionnaires; some others didn't want to be a part of this research. The other reasons for the limitation of this survey were the time of owner of the companies, short answers that participants responded and lack of communication in most of the companies regarding the concepts in the questionnaires. Addition to that, in this study the survey was not including the customer of wedding boutiques. So the outcomes of the research don't cover the experience value, hedonistic shopping attitudes of the customer.

The aim of this research is to examine the experience/hedonic consumption behavior and trends of brides and to see the role/impact of visual merchandising in this event. Specifically, this study examines the attitudes toward perceived playfulness of shopping wedding gown, the effects of store satisfaction to shopping, creation of store satisfaction with visual merchandising and the creation of experience consumption in bridal wear boutiques (Weiss, 2008:12.)

1.3. The Structure of the Study

This study is composed of five chapters. The first, second, third and fourth parts involve the literature review and the theoretical and conceptual framework on

visual merchandising in the creation of experience values. In the first chapter the main objective of the study will be discussed by giving references to certain keywords related to the study. In the second chapter, after an analysis of the literature review on the different patterns of consumption during modern and postmodern eras, the experiential view on consumption is examined in detail. Chapter three examines the various dimensions of visual merchandising retail sales. In chapter four, the experiential /hedonic consumption view is adapted to the Bridal wear Haute Couture Shopping. In chapter five, a survey study is carried out in the Haute Couture Wedding Boutiques in İzmir. The survey focuses on the effects of visual merchandising in fashion stores, cultures and marketing. The survey involves a questionnaire and some open-ended questions with the visual merchandizers and owners of 14 Bridal wear Boutiques in Izmir. The survey study undertaken in this chapter will examine the impact of visual merchandising strategies based on creating positive emotion, fantasies, and fun on some of the certain Haute Couture shops.

1.4. The Significance of the Study

Since 1980's there have been various research studies based on a new approach to consumption behavior, it is called the experiential approach to consumption. Consumption in this new approach, which is also called hedonic consumption, is seen as an experience of the consumer involving fun, emotions and fantasies.

Differences in consumption patterns – hedonist versus the rational/ utilitarian consumption patterns - have important implications for retail stores. If a company sells a commodity such as foodstuff – which has mainly utilitarian values, the traditional marketing strategies may be sufficient. However with commodities, which may be considered in experiential consumption patterns (such as the consumption of wedding dresses) and experience values, the marketing strategies should take into consideration the experiential hedonist aspects of consumption.

In this thesis study, our focus of investigation is the Haute Couture wedding sector in İzmir. We will investigate the impact of visual merchandising strategies on the customers and therefore the sales of this sector.

The significance of this study may be expressed as follows:

- On the first hand the wedding dress sector in Izmir is considered as one of the potential clusters due to studies done by (IZKA) Izmir Development Agency. IZKA suggest the establishment of a “creative wedding sector cluster” in Izmir.
- A wedding cluster involves not only the producers and designers of wedding dresses and accessories but designers of cocktail and evening dresses; organizations and organizers of weddings and similar ceremonies and designers of jewelries. The cluster may also involve the fashion designers, faculties of textile and design, advertisement companies.
- Haute Couture wedding stores may have a very important role in the development of a wedding cluster in İzmir.
- The consumption behavior of the customers of the Haute Couture wedding dress fits very well to the hedonic consumption or experiential consumption pattern. The motivations underneath the consumption process of wedding dresses are filled with fantasies, fun, and pleasant emotion rather than just rational choice.
- Visual merchandising is widely used in the fashion industry as a promotional tool to influence consumer’s behavior in the shops. Hence, Haute Couture stores in Izmir may very much take advantage of visual merchandising

strategies that are based on this new conception of consumption—the hedonic consumption.

- Lastly, the visual merchandising strategies in the Haute Couture Wedding sector may create very innovative strategies based on hedonistic, dreamy, fantastic aspects of weddings and hence may also contribute to the development of the wedding clusters in Izmir.

2. DIMENSIONS OF CONSUMPTION IN FASHION

2.1. Consumption: An Overview

People, who constitute the households, are value-conscious consumers. They seek out goods and services that can improve their lives. What they are willing to pay for—not what they “need”—shapes business opportunities.

The World Bank Global Consumption data suggest that the majority of the consumers are from developing and lower income countries. 4.5 billion low-income people in developing countries collectively spend more than \$5 trillion a year (World Bank, <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/consumption/market>, and 13.11.2015.)

In order to tap these business opportunities it is also important to have an understanding of consumer attitudes and consumption behavior. An analysis of consumption behavior in turn involves an analysis both theoretically and empirically the factors that constitute consumer decisions. In this sense there exists contrasting views on consumption behavior.

2.1.1. Consumption and its Symbols

Consumption takes place as a central role in modern economies and societies. Adam Smith said that consumption is the sole end and purpose of all production and the interest of the producer ought to be attended to, only in so far as it may be necessary for promoting that of the consumer' (Appleby, 2003:3).

Many sociologists have given a key role to the consumption in modernity. In cultural studies research, consumption has been an important subject. As an example; in du Gay's (1997) cultural analysis of the Sony Walkman it is proposed that the consumption of Walkman should be understood not only as an electronic device for

listening music; but as a part of *circuit of culture*; what social identities are associated with it and how it is represented. In this book the writers tried to understand the social dynamics related to the consumption of Walkman and they studied it according to five basic and interlinked dimensions: representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation. “The Walkman as a technology product has created a new way for people to consume the music they like individually (with headphones) and therefore a new way to identify and relate to culture, coined here as “privatized leisure”.

2.2. Postmodern Society and Its Reflections on Consumer Behaviour

Postmodernism is a late 20th century movement in the arts, architecture, and criticism that was a departure from modernism. Postmodernism is a complicated term, or set of ideas, and is hard to define, because it is a concept that appears in a wide variety of disciplines or areas of study, including art, architecture, music, film, literature, sociology, communications, fashion, and technology. It is a fact that postmodernism, which became an area of academic study in the middle eighties, is a term used to designate the era beyond modernity and it offers an alternative perspective to modernity and its premises.

Modernity is generally held to have come into being with the Renaissance. Modernity is mainly contrasted to the traditional order and implies the progressive economic and administrative rationalization and differentiation of the social world, which in fact forms the basis of the modern industrial capitalist society of the Western world.

- Modernism refers to the culture of modernity (Featherstone, 2007:28) and modernity to the modern age (Takala, 1999:364). Postmodernism, similarly, is usually equated to the emerging culture of postmodernity (Featherstone, 2007:28) and may be seen as a social, cultural

and intellectual movement following modernism, and became more prominent during the 1970s. Postmodernism is consequently viewed as a new phase (Goulding, 2000) and a “new paradigm of thought” (Takala, 1999:360). (Gould and Lerman, 1998 and Torner, 2003).

- Firat and Schultz (1997), Arias and Acebrón (2001), Takala (1999) offer a summary of the key features of postmodern and modern eras. Table 1 also shows the key features of modern and postmodern era.

Table 1. Key Features of Modern and Post Modern Era

Modern Era	Postmodern Era
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reason embodies unity (rational purposive approach to life). • Modern nation state, with central government and administration • Bureaucratic and formal hierarchies • Industrial and capitalist society • Industrial mechanisation and mass production, and stable markets and consumption patterns • Innovation from discovery following attempts at improving/refining the existing. • Reliance on science and technology. • A quest for truth through scientific and rational thinking and a focus on facts, causality and fundamental laws (justification through evidence and logic). • Social division in the form of classes • Conformity, behavioural consistency and orderliness (adherence to rules & conventions) • Urbanisation and growth of cities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More intuitive, a focus on meaning beyond reason and consequently reduced unity (splintering and fragmentation). A more symbol-oriented and consumer controlled age. • Post-industrial state and the breaking down of traditional concepts of economic and social institutions. • Fluid, fragmented and dynamic institutions (e.g. virtual and network organisations), with a blurring of hierarchies. • Information society with information explosion and overload (both individuals and organisations). Information is fragmented in nature. Markets are fragmented and unstable. • Consumer now central to the production process – notions of mass customisation (flexible manufacturing systems). Unpredictable and volatile markets. • Innovation through new, revolutionary (untested) theories and views (rather than refinements) • Focus on ideational, appearance and experience. • Focused on social meaning, and experience driven (phenomenological). Emphasis on the perceptual, hyper-real and symbols (or signification) rather than “real experience”. • Plurality of society with high levels of social diversity. Elevation of the individual at the cost of the community • Diversity and fragmentation, and liberation from conformity. Recognition and tolerance of differences. Multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity.

Source: Berner and Tonder, 2003

Comparing the two eras as presented in Table 1, it is evident that the central idea of the modernist era was a huge growth and progress to the world at large, through a predominant reliance on scientific (and therefore rational) thinking, mass production, and processes in support of this philosophy. Also clear is that the postmodern era reflects a movement away from the rational towards the intuitive, accompanied by greater fluidity and diversity. Underlying these developments is of

course the central and very important shift from an industrial to an information society – facilitated largely by rapid advances in communications and information management technology.

When we compare the two eras in terms of the social life and prevailing cultures we see that the organizing principles of the culture of modernity involve rationality, rule of reason and order, the emergence of rational cognitive subject, objectivity, emphasis on social and economic progress through the adoption of science; and progress. According to Piquet and Merchant (1998), modernity is intended to free humanity from ignorance and irrationality. Therefore, modern is characterized by the idea of the progress towards liberation of mankind. In this sense, the knowledge project of modernism is universal; hierarchies based on objective reality and reason structure society.

Daniel Bell (2006) sees the fundamental cultural assumption of modernity as the ideal of the autonomous self-determining individual, as giving raise to the bourgeois entrepreneur in the economic realm and the artistic search for the untrammelled self.

Featherstone (2007:3) states, “To speak of postmodernity is to suggest an epochal shift or break from modernity involving the emergence of a new social totality with its own distinct organizing principles”. The organizing principles of postmodernity are detected in the writings of Baudrillard, Lyotard and, to some extent, Jameson (Kellner, 1988). In postmodernity the economic dimension corresponds to the post-industrial society. With regards the cultural dimension, Jameson, (1984) sees postmodern culture as the *culture of the consumer society*. In this society “culture is given a new significance through the saturation of signs and messages to the extent that ‘everything in social life can be said to have become cultural’ (Jameson, 1984: 87). Jameson calls this the ‘liquefaction of signs and images’.

One of the main characteristics of the postmodern society and its culture as an alternative to modernity and its constituting concepts is the decomposition of grand narratives such as belief in continuous progress, the priority of scientific knowledge, rationality, the possibility of attaining absolute truth etc. Under modernity, there was a belief in absolute truth, which could be predictable through rational foundations of science and progress. Postmodernity decomposes these “grand narratives” (Lyotard, Bennington and Massumi, 1984:2) hence the demarcation between real and appearance becomes blurred. Under *postmodernity therefore*, the focus on meaning beyond scientific fact and truth, gained importance. Absolute truth is rejected as meaning is constantly changing. Social meaning is substantially influenced by form and style. An emphasis on symbols, appearance, and style at the expense of substance and content has become more important UN postmodernity. Baudrillard and Lyotard, both point out to the fact that the movement to a post industrial age where with new types of technologies and information, simulations and models increasingly constitute the worlds so that the distinction between the real and appearance becomes erased. (Baudrillard, 1983 and Lyotard, 1984). The simulation world, which is the world of symbols, is based upon the assumption that the developments of commodity production coupled with information technology have led to the triumph of signifying culture (Featherstone, 2007: 17).

Hence the salient feature of a postmodern society is that the social life becomes deregulated and social relationships become more variable and less structured by stable norms as it used to be during modernity. The overproduction of signs and reproduction of images and simulations leads to a loss of stable meaning of reality in which the masses become fascinated by the endless flow of bizarre juxtapositions which takes the viewer beyond stable sense (Featherstone, 2007:15).

The key features of Modern and Postmodern societies will be summarized at the below Table 2 seen below.

Table 2: Key Features of Modern and Postmodern Societies

Modern Society	Post Modern Society
Life is characterized by realism and rationality	Life characterized by pastiche – irony, parody, imitation/mimicry, humor
Physical conditions and “hard realities” define living	Hyper-reality: A world of imagery e.g. cyberspace, virtual realities and computer mediated environments where simulation and representation are more important than reality. The media significantly influences and defines the individual’s sense of reality.
Rationality in the form of facts, evidence and logic. Growth of science and technology as the rational foundation of “truth” and progress.	A focus on meaning beyond scientific fact and truth, which is embedded in a broader context – a strong focus on the totality of a situation. Absolute truth is rejected as meaning is constantly changing. Social meaning is substantially influenced by form and style
Belief in absolute and relative truth which can be predicted through scientific activity	An emphasis on symbols, appearance, and style at the expense of substance and content (a “designer ideology”)
A sense of unity, derived from well-ordered/regulated and integrated social and cultural order	Fragmentation of cultures and societies.
Social identities and lifestyles are unified and based on class affiliations	Social identities are fragmented and constructed through consumption of material culture. The boundaries defining the identity of individuals and

and the relations to production.	institutions have become blurred
Essentially a production orientated society: growth of manufacturing sector	Essentially a consumption (consumer-driven) society: growth of service sector
Consumption patterns were influenced by functionality	The consumer consumes the images/signs for what they represent, rather than purchase a product for its usefulness
Society dominated by production, mechanization and productivity. Mass markets and mass production	New forms of technology, and flexible manufacturing systems and volatile marketplaces. Global competition combined with rapid technological change results in a lack of continuity

Source: Berner & Van Tonder 2002

2.2.1 The Postmodern Consumer

The concept of consumption as well consumption behavior of people has clearly altered with the transition from a modern to a postmodern society. During the former, consumption was more purposeful and by and large influenced by the utility value of the specific product or service to the consumer.

Under modernity, consumption behavior of people is mainly understood with in the cognitive, rational utility maximizing context. In other words the consumer is assumed as a rational subject, and consumer behavior is seen under the information

processing model which involves calculation of costs and benefits in order to maximize utility (Featherstone, 2007). On the other hand, the postmodern consumer is focused on a more intangible “problem”, that of building a sense of self identity in a highly dynamic, complex and fragmented society, and is consequently more interested in the symbolic or cultural value that a specific product or service projects, and the image it holds, rather than its content value. The symbolic aspect of goods gained importance beside their tangible aspects. The tangible properties of products in essence perform utilitarian functions and based on relatively objective features such as calories or miles per gallon. In contrast symbolic conception focus on the symbolic meanings of subjective characteristics such as cheerfulness, elegance, etc. (Holbrook, 1982a) gained prominence.

Given the importance of symbolic consumption one of the development with regards cultures of consumption under postmodern society is the notion of hedonist consumption. Hedonistic consumption refers to consumption that is fuelled by a desire for pleasurable emotions and experiences (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982a). The modern consumption habit on the other hand is based on utility and rational calculation of costs and benefits during the buying process. Hence the conceptions of values attributed by consumers to what they are consuming differ in the hedonist vs. rational consumer choice.

Van Tonder (2003:5) suggests offering the typical characteristics and expectations of the postmodern consumer as follows:

- Creates and builds his/her identity through the products and services he/she consumes – more specifically the intangible value the product or service holds. All products or services are consequently evaluated on the symbolic or cultural value they project and less so in terms of the functional value it holds.

- Is highly individualistic in his/her preferences for the consumption of products and services.
- Is not loyal to any product or service (will avoid any commitment), will not conform to pressure for brand loyalty either, and will exercise the freedom to move where choice or whim dictates.
- Asks for immediate gratification (need satisfaction) and consequently immediate service rendering and responsiveness by the service provider.
- Focuses on facts. Should the service provider not be able to provide this essential service, the provider will lose credibility and the consumer will search for a provider that can fulfill this need.
- Expects more from the product or service than is conveyed by marketing of functionality.
- Subscribes to many lifestyles that are often accompanied by highly incompatible value systems.

The differences in consumption patterns associated with modern and postmodern consumers may be defined as utilitarian vs. hedonist consumption patterns. These differences in consumption patterns have important implications for retail companies and stores. Depending on whether the company is selling a predominantly modern or postmodern consumer sector, the organization's product/service strategies, marketing approaches, supporting operational technologies and management philosophies will differ substantially. In the following chapters, the hedonist consumption will be discussed under the Haute Couture shopping attitudes.

2.2.2. Fashion and Consumption

Fashion is the social norm recognized and advocated by a particular social class at one time. It affects lots of spaces in a society especially in clothing and the style can be named as a short- lived fashion.

The features of fashion include that: (Crane, 2000).

- 1) Fashion is a pursuit of innovation. The products are new, fresh and original. It is an endless aspiration for innovation.
- 2) Fashion completes a beauty of identity. From an aesthetic perspective, it has to be attractive.
- 3) Fashion is the part of a change. It changes constantly within a certain timeline. It should be original at a lapse of time but capable of rapid changes in another.
- 4) Fashion has a peculiar character. Fashion expresses and points out the tendency towards equalization and individualization, and the desire for imitation and conspicuousness.
- 5) Fashion is a part of uniformity. It has to be up-to-date and be accepted by everyone.
- 6) Fashion is a part of mental demands. Fashion has to satisfy the needs and desire of human nature.
- 7) Fashion is a part of imitation. It is the copy of innovation and it is imitable in its essence. Based on Simmel's theory, "fashion is based on adoption by a social set, which demands mutual imitation from its members and thereby releases the

individual of all responsibility - ethical and aesthetic”.

Fashion on the one hand “signifies union with those in the same class, the uniformity of a circle characterized by it, and, *uno actu*, the exclusion of all other groups” (Simmel, 2001). On the other hand, fashion constantly breaks through boundaries set by different social classes and groups and diffuses through them.

The theory of fashion consumption is not completely shaped. The behavior of fashion consumption is to satisfy a consumer’s need to display his social status and uniqueness. In the sense of fashion’s relationship to culture, it can be divided into the noble fashion and the common fashion. The former can also be called luxury Fashion and later the general fashion (Ma, Shi, Chen, Luo, 2012).

2.3. Contrasting Views on Consumption Behavior: Utilitarian vs. Experiential Views

In its history of evolution off the phenomenon of consumption, the research on consumption and consumption behavior initially concentrated on the utilitarian and rational aspects of consumption. The utilitarian approach is basically an economic approach and the model it involves is the maximization of utility based on the rational decision making process of the individuals. This is usually called the information-processing model of consumption (Bettman, 1979). This economic approach of the information-processing model assumes that the individual is a rational decision making unit and during the purchasing process, the subject makes rational calculations of cost and benefit.

Recently however, researches have begun to question the validity of the information-processing model (rational model) of consumption suggesting that it might ignore some of other aspects of consumption behavior. The ignored aspects of consumption include the hedonist side of consumption such as playful

activities, fun, fantasies, day dreaming, aesthetic and emotional sides of consumption. Consumption in this new approach is seen as an experience of the consumer involving fun, emotions and fantasies. This approach is called the experiential view on consumption and the type of consumption behavior in this view is called the hedonist consumption as different from utilitarian/rational consumption behavior (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982a).

This recent experiential view on consumption was introduced in to the academic debate with the initial research studies of Holbrook and Hirschman (1982b). This new view is significant especially in the light of the marketing strategies, which companies pursue in order to increase their sales. For instance visual merchandizing, one of the recent and popular marketing strategies of companies takes as its starting point these hedonist aspects of consumption and the experiential view on consumption behavior of consumers.

Literature on experience consumption and experience/hedonic value include; b and Hirschman, 1982b; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982a; Keller, 1993; Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000; Arnould and Price, 1993),(Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994).

2.4. Experiential View on Consumption: Hedonist Consumption

In the early 1980s, theorists began to question the assumption of the rational consumer and postulate that consumers engage in both rational and emotional processing (Zajonc 1980; Zajonc and Markus 1982). Researchers have made a conceptual distinction between behavior based on utilitarian or instrumental values and behavior based on pleasure seeking or hedonic values. Additionally, scholars have focused increasingly on hedonic consumption as a distinct area of study (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982a).

Holbrook and Hirschman (1982b) proposed an experiential perspective of consumer behavior as an alternative to the information processing and purchase decision-making approach. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982a) compare an information-processing model of consumer behavior, arguing that while much of consumer behavior can be explained by conventional research, it neglects an important segment of the consumption experience, namely, the hedonic sides of consummation such as fantasies, feelings and fun (e.g., leisure activities, variety seeking, sensation seeking, hedonic response).

Hedonic consumption being a relatively new field of study in consumer research therefore addresses the multisensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of product use (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). It explores the consumption experience not as an information-processing event but by a phenomenological or "experiential view" defined as "a primarily subjective state of consciousness with a variety of symbolic meaning, hedonic responses and aesthetic criteria" (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982b:132). It offers a different view to the traditional utilitarian/instrumental conception of consumption, focusing on the "experiential" aspects of the consumption experience which are subjectively based, such as sensation seeking, emotional arousal and fantasizing.

How is hedonic consumption different from utilitarian consumption? Although there appears to be little controversy regarding the importance of hedonic consumption, what hedonic consumption itself cannot be neatly defined?

From the viewpoint of products, hedonic products include those, which arouse the emotions, aesthetic products such as literature, visual arts, and drama. In a typical utilitarian approach the consumer purchases for the utility it provides. For instance a detergent is purchased for its cleaning ability. However if the detergent purchase for the pleasant smell rather than its cleaning ability, it becomes a hedonic consumption. Another example might be given for chocolate; chocolate could be

consumed for its cardiovascular benefits or utilities; or it may be consumed for the pleasure and taste it provides. A single product (e.g., a smartphone or computer) can simultaneously help its user pursue dual utilitarian and hedonic goals.

However the experiential approach and hedonic consumption do not only cover the types of products such as chocolates, which provide pleasure, and feelings of fun or tats, to the consumer. The experiential approach is based on a goal based perspective and focus on whether the consumer is pursuing utilitarian or hedonic objectives. In this sense, the process of consumption in other words the experience lived through out the consumption activity is considered in this view.

In another article, Hirschman (1982) also identifies four types of hedonic behavior.

- (a) Problem projection proposes that people engage in activities, which confront them with unhappy realities in order to better cope with these situations.
- (b) Role projection is those activities, which permit individuals to self-project into a particular role or character.
- (c) Fantasy fulfillment purchasing is the use of products to help construct fantasies and augment reality.
- (d) Escapism is those activities which allow the individual to escape unpleasant realities or distract themselves from unpleasant events

The basic area of concern for all the different types of hedonic consumption is the role that the subjective, emotional part of man plays and to what extent it may dominate a consumption/purchase situation. Many acts of consumption are driven by some combination of utilitarian and hedonic motives, and identifying the relative strength of each can be a daunting task.

As a result, researchers have painted two contrasting, though not necessarily opposing, pictures of the consumer. One stream of research -the instrumentally oriented - assumes rational, information processing problem solver who follows a purchase decision making strategy to fulfill a specific need. A second stream -the hedonic orientation -assumes an experiential being that consumes for enjoyment.

2.4.1. Customer Experience: The Dimensions of Hedonic Consumption

In this experiential view, a distinction is made between the process of buying and process of consumption (Boyd and Levy, 1963). It is argued that the purchase decagons (the actual paying money and buying) constitute only a small part of the entire consumption process that involves many sensory, emotional and fun searching events.

Various studies have been conducted to understand the contents of customer experience during the consumption process. Pine and Gilmore describe the evolution of economic offerings from commodities to products to services to experiences. Customer experience is “the next business tsunami... the next competitive battleground” (Shaw and Ivens 2002: 1).

What comprises the customer experience? A variety of perspectives have been proposed ranging from experience as an outcome of a single service episode to a persistent presence over time. Several multi-stage models have been proposed to represent customer experience.

Table 3 presents models, showing alignment between the stages for the customer experiences. It is noted that these two models represent experience with a physical product, as purchase and consumption are shown as separate stages. In the case of services or experiences as an economic offering, purchase and consumption may occur simultaneously or their sequence may be reversed (Turnball,2009:4).

Table 3. Stages of Customer Experience During Consumption

Shaw and Ivens (2002) Stages of customer experience	Arnould et al. (2004) Classification of consumer experiences
1. Expectation setting	
2. Pre-purchase interactions	1. Anticipated consumption
3. Purchase interaction	2. Purchase experience
4. Product / service consumption	3. Consumption experience
5. Post-experience review	4. Remembered consumption and nostalgia

Source: Turnball, 2009:3

It is clear from these models that the customer experience extends beyond the core marketing process of exchange, and the consumption of products and services, to encompass antecedents such as exploration, planning and anticipation, and post-consumption activities such as remembering, storytelling and reminiscing (Turnbull, 2009) experience economy. For instance reinforce the extension of customer experience beyond the consumer / marketing context, recognizing the importance of consumption-related experience that take place with family, friends and the wider community(Tunbull, 2009:4).

2.4.2. Different Value Conception: Experience Value and Use Value

In the hedonic consumption, another important issue is the question on how the consumer values a certain commodity in particular and the consumption process in general. In the traditional rational/utilitarian approach to consumption, the main concept of value is the use value, which refers to our basic needs. However in the experience consumption, a new concept of value namely “experience value” (or hedonic values) is considered.

Utilitarian value is described as instrumental and is linked with the notion of product performance and usefulness (Oliver, 1994). For example, savings, convenience and product quality can be classified among utilitarian values or benefits. Conversely, hedonic value, in which visual merchandisers and designers

are specifically involved, is more subjective and emotional, and results more from fun and entertainment than from task completion (Holbrook and (Hirschman, 1982a). Pleasing and joyful properties such as consumer aesthetics, variety seeking or exploration, enjoyment is hedonic values and they are no instrumental.

The term “experience value” was first systematically described in a book written in 1999 by B. Joseph Pine all and James H. Gilmore titled the “experience economy”. In this book, they suggest the experience economy as the new emerging economy. The previous stages of economies include agrarian economy, the industrial economy and the most recently, the service economy. So experience economy follows these three previous stages in production and also marketing. They define the experience economy in which companies stage meaningful events to engage customers in a memorable and personal way. Hence, experience economy creates a new source of value – experience value - as customers are inclined to pay for the interesting experience they have while shopping.

Pine and Gilmore’s (1999), within the experience economy concept and experiential consumption view, hence introduced “experience” is as a new source of value. According to the writers the traditional use values refer to our basic needs, while experience value relates to the intellectual, emotional and experiential needs. The basic idea is that, when a customer buys “experience” an extra value is created. Because the customer pays in order to spend time - to experience - in enjoying many nice memorable events which the company offers as a marketing strategy. This hedonistic or emotional aspect of consumption is the new source value. Charging a fee for something, which used to be free is the main logic and progress experience valuing.

In order to understand what the “experience value” involves, it is convenient to state the different categories of value and how these are integrated in to the “experience value concept. There are many definitions and categories of value

however three perspectives dominate the recent academic literature (Turnbull, 2009:4).

- (a) Value in exchange – customers perceive value in the exchange of a product for the price paid (Zeithaml, 1988);
- (b) Value in possession –customers perceive value in the public and private meanings
- (c) Value of possessions (Richins,1994)
- (d) Value in use –customers perceives value through the use or consumption of a product or service. (Woodruff,1997)

As seen in the Table 4, Arnold (2003) shows the full scope of customer experience in four states and integrates the above three different perspectives of value in order to show very clearly how the experience value is created.

Table 4: Different Value Perspectives over the Entire Stages of Customer Experience

Stage of customer experience	Value in exchange	Value in possession	Value in use	Proposed: value in experience
1. Anticipated experience				
2. Purchase experience				
3. Consumption experience				
4. Remembered experience				

Source: Turnbull, 2009:4

In the previous Table 3, the stages of full process of consumption experience and the relevant values attached to each stage are clearly indicated. As can be seen from the table the experience value comprises all the states of consumption experience. It is clearly demonstrate that the purchase experience is a different stage than the consumption experience.

However in the above analysis, it is not clear which stages of the experience are more important to the customer's perception of value across a range of contexts? According to Turnball, anticipated and remembered consumption to be more important in experiential purchases such as a night at the rugby, whilst purchase and consumption experience would be more important with utilitarian items such as stationery.

The proposition that value is essentially experiential in nature is not new. Retailers have, for many years, understood that value is the result of all factors, both subjective and objective, that makes up the complete shopping experience (Schechter, 1984). Sheth (1994) present a theory of consumption value that encompasses functional, social, emotional, epistemic and conditional value. Sweeney and Soutar (2001) propose four dimensions of value during

the consumption process: – emotional, social, quality/performance and price/value. Social value aligns with status and esteem, emotional value aligns with play and aesthetics, quality/performance aligns with excellence and price/value aligns with efficiency (Turnball, 2009:6).

The experiential consumption perspective does not ignore the traditional utility /information processing approach on consumption but it provides a very fruitful perspective and contribution to consumption studies. This new perspective brings into research the following neglected issues: (Holbrook, 1982a:139)

- (1) The role of aesthetic products
- (2) Multisensory aspects of product enjoyment
- (3) The syntactic dimensions of communication
- (4) Time budgeting in the pursuit of pleasure
- (5) Product related fantasies and imagery
- (6) Feelings arising from consumption and
- (7) The role of play in providing enjoyment and fun

In today's competitive business environment of retail trade, all the above issues are considered by Companies in constructing effective marketing and sales strategies.

As we explore in the following chapter three on visual merchandizing, one of the major aims in visual merchandizing strategies of retail companies is based on capturing the hedonic value aspects of consumption.

3. VISUAL MERCHANDISING: A NEW MARKETING STRATEGY IN FASHION INDUSTRY

3.1. Historical Perspective on Fashion Marketing

During the middle ages, stores served for the purpose of exhibition and working. During this time, the warehouse, the store and the storeowners' house were situated in the same building. Another characteristic of the middle age stores was that they had very wide shop windows. The function of these wide windows was twofold: on the one hand they provided light and on the other hand the exhibition of products to the consumers.

The various socio economic developments during the 17th and 19th centuries, gave rise to transformation of the landscapes of stores in the big cities. As a result of the population increase in the European cities, various activities at fairs and bazaars were realized at the indoors of large high rise buildings. In these high-rise building, the stores were situated at the base floor while the offices of the merchants and tradesmen occupied upper floors. The social relations developed within these closed and big buildings gave rise to radical changes in city planning (Tokyay, 2005:58)

During the 18th century, shops were located in the base floor of the buildings that faced the street. In order to attract the attention of the consumers, shop owners utilized wide exhibition areas and signboards. On the other hand the front face of the store demonstrated the type of the products sold and the targeted costumers of the store.

The first examples of shopping moles appeared during the 19th century. After the second half of the 19th century with the advent of retail sales, department

stores gradually emerged. Consequently the products were offered to sale in great quantities at large exhibition rooms. In this century there was a spectacular development of fashion stores. The fashion stores of this era mainly appealed to high-income groups.

As a result of the various social, cultural, technological and economic developments in the Western countries, the retail fashion marketing underwent important transformations. Gradually, the small retail shops were taken over by modern chain stores (retail chain stores) Modern chain stores was able to present various different kinds of products to their customers. Additionally, these modern stores provided various different units of entertainment, for the socialization of their customers. Hence the shopping spaces became not only places for shopping but also spaces of entertainment and socialization.

As the concept of fashion stores and shopping have become an integral part of our lives during the 19th and 20th century, there has also been a variety in the types of shops. The main types of fashion stores are: Retail stores, Concept stores, Brand stores and Luxury Stores.

Starting from the beginning of the 20th century, the common aspect in all the above stated different types of stores is that, the emphasis on visual merchandising has become one of the main factors in sales strategies.

The evolution in store design brought about a new "process" of shopping. In this new way, the sales talk between the retailer and customer lost importance, but the creation of a "sensory experience" began to gain prominence. The first step in the evolution of store design occurred when small stores began to display their merchandise openly to the public instead of keeping them stored in back rooms. Eventually, the deliberate displaying of goods became an important tool for retailers. In this way stores became attractive venues for customers. In other words in the

traditional merchandising the function of selling was important. However in this new way function and aesthetic appeal also became important.

The second step in the evolution process occurred in Europe during the beginning of the 19th century with the development of arcades. Arcades, or passages, were covered streets that were constructed using iron and glass (S.Marie, 2008). Historically, these passages they can be traced back to bazaars of the Arabian Peninsula and Asia Minor. The shops in the arcades gave importance to aesthetic appearance. The main features of the arcades were their glass skylights. These covered the entire length of the passageway. The skylights created a completely enclosed, visually stimulating shopping environment. Unfortunately, the skylights were extremely expensive and caused many technical difficulties. Also, the visually appealing shopping area that the arcades created outside usually did not extend to inside of the shops. Therefore, the arcades became mainly associated with observers who were just out to walk around - not necessarily shop.

3.1.1. The Traditional Retail Stores

Retail comes from the Old French word *tailor*, which means "to cut off, clip, pare, divide" in terms of tailoring <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/retail>, (12.11.2015). It was first recorded as a noun with the meaning of a "sale in small quantities" in 1433 (from the Middle French *retail*, "piece cut off, shred, scrap, paring"). Like in French, the word *retail* in both Dutch and German also refers to the sale of small quantities of items.

In retail sales, as different from wholesales, commodities are sold small quantities. Factors such as quality, product type, price, and exhibition are important concepts in retail sales. Fashion retailing refers to the marketing of clothing and clothing related products. The competition strategy of retail marketing goes back to the old times. The oldest examples are the "tellers" (invitors) as seen in

the Figure 3 who invited people to buy their products by shouting loudly and publically (Easey, 2009). Another tradition marketing communication is the use of visual symbols. An example is a tailor exhibiting needle and yarn in its shop window (Easey, 2009).



Figure 1: An old Tellal(invitor's) Picture

Source: Easey, 2009

The traditional market square is a city square where traders set up stalls and buyers browse the stores. This kind of market is very old, and countless such markets are still in operation around the whole world.

Presently the various promotional and sales tactics of retailers such as advertising, logo, mail, fashion magazines bombard the customers and Internet pup ups. In this highly crowded atmosphere, the retail stores should use very effective communication tools to be distinguished from others.

The first samples of typical stores and shopping malls invented and created in 19th century. It enhanced with the effort of trade development. In 19th century, big city life styles, new communication forms and the improvement of industry had formed brand new and innovative structures in Europe.

At that time; the owners of stores wrote their brand names in a big style and font on top of their shops, they presented their products with hangers just behind the

shop window and at the same time they put their products on tables in front of their stores. That showed that they were proud of their products a lot. Besides, they aligned lots of flowers in front their stores to attract customers to store with a beautiful smell (Morgan, 2008).

3.2. Hedonic/Experiential Value in Visual Merchandising

In chapter two above we have examined in detail the concept of experiential/hedonic consumption versus the utilitarian consumption (see chapter 2 of this thesis). The research and outcomes on contemporary consumption behavior has demonstrated that customer's motivations in their marketing strategies are not only utilitarian but the hedonic motivation also plays an important role. Hedonic aspects of consumption and creation of hedonic value in fact lies at the heart of visual merchandizing.

Before the 19th century, the contemporary methods of visual merchandising were not available. During those times storeowners and managers did not care much for the appearance of their stores and the presentation of merchandise. Very little merchandise was displayed within the store. In this traditional merchandising, a customer would enter the store and speak with the retailer, and then the retailer would present the merchandise that was kept in the back room. In this traditional way, "sales talk" was the most important marketing tools in convincing the customer about the quality of the product and makes him buy it (S.Marie, 2008)

Since 1980's the markets for companies have become very competitive, companies are no longer able to compete just on price or quality. Several trends and evolution have given rise to new marketing strategies. The experiential view on consumption and the relevant concept of experience value offer new marketing strategies for companies. The concept of experience value suggests that customers are inclined to pay for the interesting experience they live while shopping.

Experience value which is different from the functional/material value can be illustrated by the consumption of candles as seen in the Figure 2.

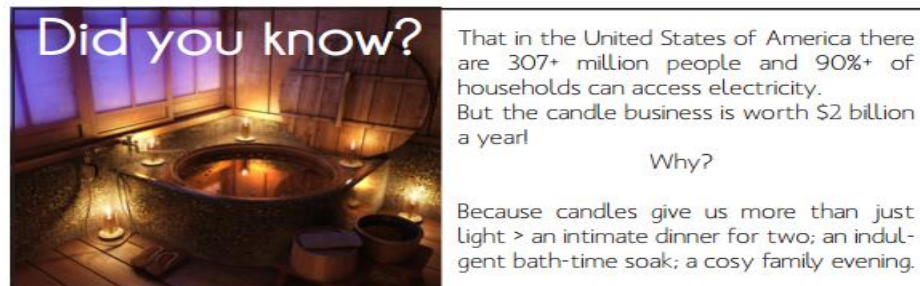


Figure 2: The Experience Value of Candles

Source: EU Education and Culture DG, 2008 Hand book Experience Economy, p: 5

The additional value created by the experience which the customer is willing to pay, is in fact realized by creating a theme, a story or a story line by using the symbolic potential of materials and atmosphere.

Toffler and Bornstein (1971) make a distinction between the immediate material needs and *psychic* needs of people. He states the following:

“Under conditions of scarcity men struggle to meet their immediate material needs. Today under more affluent conditions, we are reorganizing the economy to deal with a new level of human need. From a system designed to satisfy material satisfaction, we are rapidly moving into a new phase geared to the provision of psychic gratification (Toffler and Bornstein 1971 in Boswijk, Thijssen, Peelen and Johnston, 2007: 1).

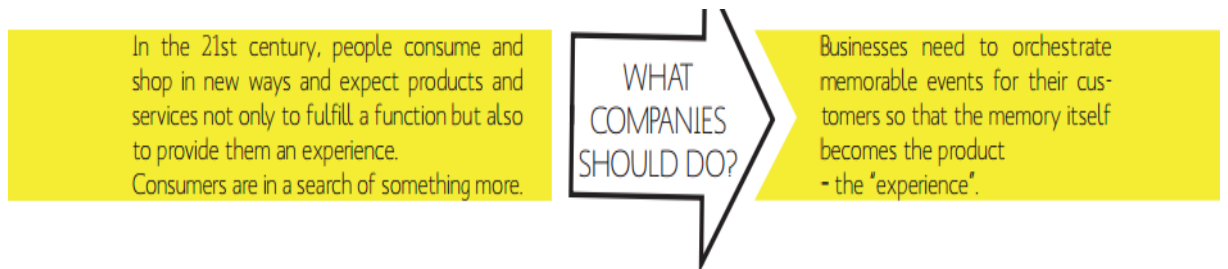


Figure 3: What is Experience Value

Source: EU Education and Culture DG, 2008 Handbook Experience Economy

p: 5

Experiential value or hedonic value is developed as opposition to Utilitarian value. Utilitarian belong to the instrumental/rational conception of consumption. Utilitarian value is linked with the notion of product performance and usefulness (Oliver, 1994). For example savings, convenience and product quality can be classified among utilitarian values or benefits (Ailawadi, 2001). Conversely, hedonic/experience value, in which designers, innovators and in general companies are specifically involved, is more subjective and emotional, and results more from fun and entertainment than from task completion (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982a; Babin, 1994). Pleasing properties such as consumer aesthetics, variety seeking or exploration, enjoyment are hedonic values or benefits: they are no instrumental, experiential and affective investigating the hedonic values attributed by customers could provide managers with a better assessment of present brand choice processes and a clear knowledge of their products' strengths and weaknesses, and provides a more complete explanation of their success. This could imply new opportunities for managers to create ideas that better correspond to today's consumers' needs, desires and behaviors.

Some other studies on hedonic consumption value emphasize three kinds of value as experienced by the consumer. These are social; aesthetical and emotional values (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003)

Social value: For hedonists what is important is to be noticed in specific and

exclusive, marketplaces, which are appreciable in the society. The motive here is to create self-esteem and status. On the other hand

Aesthetical value: The category of aesthetics is wider than definition of the beauty, because beauty is only one form of aesthetics expressions. Aesthetical value perceived by the hedonist may be identified by the following aesthetical objects such as (2003) buying luxury goods, art pieces; these are goods, which have both utilitarian and hedonic features.

Emotional value: Emotions significantly influence satisfaction and buying behavior that are formed by perceived retail crowding; they play an important role of a mediator in the relationship between retail crowding and consumers' satisfaction and could be either negative or positive

In the below chart Arnold and Reynolds categorizes these three factors in experience value.

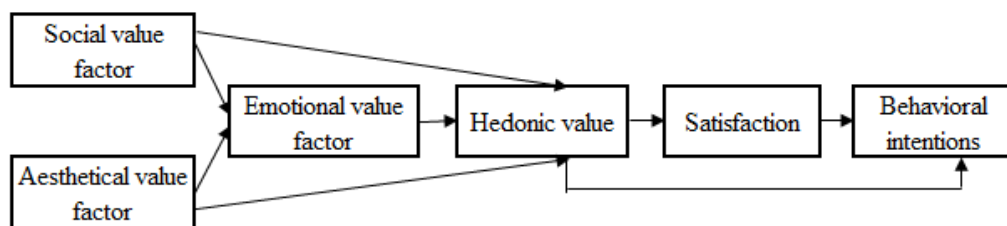


Figure 4: The Hedonic Consumption Value

Source: Arnold and Reynolds, 2003

Many strategies of visual merchandisers as we explain in the following sections are based on capturing this hedonic aspect of consumption and the value generated from hedonic consumption.

3.3. First Brands and Artists in Visual Merchandising History

Bon Marche is the first department store that described as a space for living and shopping ground and the spaces inside the department store express trends and define a unique art de vivre with a very strong visual merchandising. **Le Bon Marché** means “the good market, or the good deal” in French is a department store in Paris. It is the first modern department store and it is founded in 1852 by Parisian merchant Aristide Boucicaut. It was a smaller shop in 1830s and evolved new, larger department store over the next century with the cooperation of respected designers including Louis Boileau and Gustave Eiffel.

Le Bon Marche has been at the forefront of fashion retail improvements. The store adapted to social developments and situations in Paris and continued to be a recreational approach to shopping idea. (<http://www.lebonmarche.com/en.html>, (01.12.2015))



Figure 5: An Archive Image of the Le Bon Marche Department Store

Source: The History of Bon Marche, 2014.

<http://www.globalblue.com/destinations/france/paris/history-of-le-bon-marche/>.

[3 November 2015]

Aristide Boucicaut wanted to create a shop to sell all sorts of merchandise and also wanted to create attention to the huge amount of people who could wander freely in a little “town within a town.” It is the department store with its massive window space, huge array of merchandise that is the pioneer of the window display (See Figure 5).

It wasn't long before this idea caught on overseas and others followed suit:

- Macy's, New York in 1858
- Marshall Fields, Chicago in 1865
- Bloomingdale's, New York in 1872
- Wanamaker, Philadelphia in 1876
- Other stores such as Sears, Barney's and Saks didn't open until the 1920s. (<http://thefashionteacher.com/category/fashion-49/history-of-visual-merchandising/>)



Figure 6: Le Bon Marche Shop Window and Graphics

Source: Le Bon Marche Rive Gauche, 2015.

<http://www.lebonmarche.com/en.html>. [01 December 2015]

In 1909, H. Gordon Selfridge, an American, opened a store called Selfridge in London and he became a pioneer of retail marketing. He created his shop window

with his high-qualified products and left the shop window's lights open at nighttime to attract people even the shop is closed. This idea was the first step for visual merchandising and so window-shopping was born.

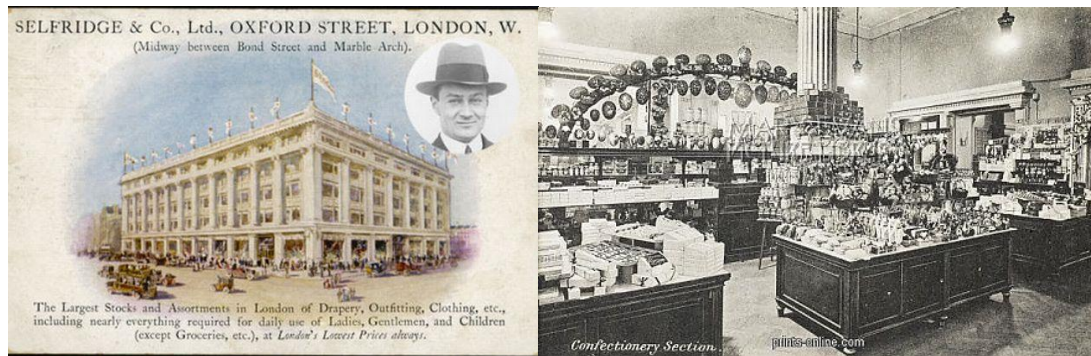


Figure 7: Selfridges & Co, Oxford Street, London - Millinery Section.
Source: Selfridge London- Millinery Section, 2015. <http://www.prints-online.com/selfridges-london-millinery-section/print/4435339.html>. [01 December 2015]

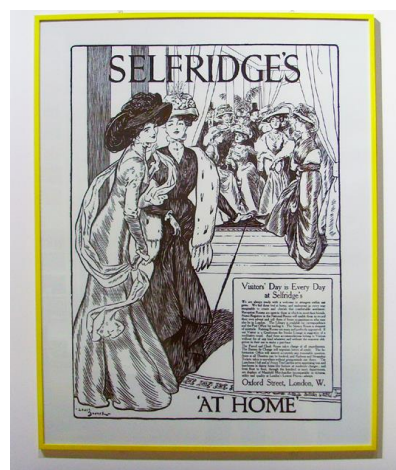


Figure 8: Vintage Selfridges Poster Advertisement
Source: Architecture Design Art Technology Shop, 2009. <http://www.designboom.com/chic/a-100-years-of-selfridges-london/>. [02 October 2015]



Figure 9: The Selfridges in 2009

Source: Architecture Design Art Technology Shop, 2009.

<http://www.designboom.com/chic/a-100-years-of-selfridges-london/>. [02 October 2015]

In 1990, with the improvements of technology and rising of some super luxury brand like Gucci and Prada, the shop windows of stores used as a propaganda machine. The creators of these brands designed these shop windows with huge and bright posters of top models or some TV modules to show fashion shows (Morgan and Bohigas, 2008).

At the beginning of 1920's there has been an immense rise in arts and fashion. Many artists in these years worked as shop window designers during these years. For instance Andy Warhol worked at various stores as a designer in New York (Morgan and Bohigas, 2008). Terrence Conran applied this trend, which was initiated in fashion stores, to furniture stores in 1964. This furniture store named Habitat, in Chelsea London, aimed to inspire its customers with its white walls. Habitat store (See Figure 9) which was decorated with spot lights on the ceiling, square tiles and coffee shop had been very influential, hence it heralded the birth of visual merchandising (Morgan and Bohigas, 2008).



Figure 10: The Habitat Shop

Source: Habitat and Me, 2014. <http://inretrospectmagazine.com/article/habitat-and-me/>. [15 November 2015]

The first years of the 20th century were the golden age for department stores and window display but in 1929 the “Great Depression” affected the retail very hard. Some new and interesting ways were needed for customers. Hiring celebrated artists to install avant-garde displays seemed like just the thing to catch pedestrians’ eyes.

Then in 1939, when Bonwit Teller (Department Store) asked a window from Salvador Dali, the department store hoped to cause at least a minor stir (Max Mosher, 2012. *Window Dressing: The Art and Artists*, <http://www.utne.com/media/window-dressing-zm0z12mazsie.aspx?PageId=3>. [02 December 2015])

Dali created his window with a bathtub and put inside three disembodied arms, a taxidermy buffalo head and stuffed pigeons, and naked mannequins with blood coming from their eyes. It took all night to install, after which Dali retired to his hotel. But that made Park Avenue patrons anxious and complain, and Bonwit Teller’s managers replaced the nude mannequins with clothed ones. All seemed well until the artist returned and threw the tub through the windowing a fit of pique. Dali was detained in the ladies’ handbag storeroom. Later, a magistrate handed him a

mild sentence, noting, “These are some of the privileges that an artist with temperament seems to enjoy.” (See Figure 11)



Figure 11: What does a Surrealist window display look like?

Source: The Story behind the Styles, 2011.

<http://onthisdayinfashion.com/?p=12135>. [01 October 2015]

In the 1960's, Mary Quant was the first designer using the window of her London store to showcase her collections and promote social trends. She used life-size mannequins to display how people would look in her clothing designs. (See Figures 14,15)



Figure 12: Mary Quant, Designer

Source: Little Treasures in Vintage, 2011.

<http://www.littletreasuresvintage.co.uk/mary-quant/>, [02.12.2015]



Figure 13: Mary Quant Shop Window

Source: Window Shopping, 2015. <https://www.pinterest.com/deboh13/window-shopping/> [02 December 2105]

During 1990's with the new advancements in technology and the birth of luxury brands such as Gucci and Prada, the shop windows have increasingly become a means of propaganda and advertisement. These larger brands produced mass-marketing campaigns with the world's most desirable faces and bodies with the trust of massive marketing budgets behind them. Runway fashion shows were presented on high-technology TV screens and the use of lighting improved the product and it created an ambience and drama.



Figure 14: 1990's the Birth of Luxury Brands

Source: Window Dressing: The Art and Artists, 2012.

<http://www.utne.com/media/window-dressing-zm0z12mzsie.aspx?PageId=3>

[02 December 2015]

3.3.1.The Art of Selling

Marketing is the process of communicating a company's product or service to the customer. It is industrially accepted that shop design and stock display is an important part of the retail offering as a communication tool between the consumer and a brand.

Visual merchandising is the presentation of a store and its merchandise in some methods that will attract the attention of potential customers and motivate them to buy. The role of the visual merchandiser is to carry out the merchandising concepts as formulated by management plans. These merchandising plans include what items are to be used in a combined and collected say and in which places they should be located in the store. A visual merchandiser's position involves a combination of skills, with creativity, a sense of order; dedication to design principles and to follow directions. It also involves staying within budgets, and completing paperwork.

Design and creation of *experience value* is one of the main duties of the visual merchandiser. It is clear that each consumer has different goals, values and needs. For instance Boswijk, Thijssen, Peelen and Johnston (2007) argue that the experience economy and experience value is about more than just offering a staged setting for an experience. The point of departure needs to be the individual's personal experience: his or her everyday world and social context. The role and the skill of the visual merchandizer are to make the customers adapt their own values to the messages created by the display in the shop. A skillful visual merchandiser creates such an environment that the desires of the customers are manipulated while the customers are not aware of this manipulation.

The perception of the customers is also another important issue, which the visual merchandizer should consider. For instance according to Levi and Weitz (2009) the consumers' perceptions of a store's environment depend on the consumers' shopping goals. When consumers are shopping for things that they have not planned before, they prefer to be in a soothing and calming environment; however, if consumers are shopping for pleasure they prefer being in an exciting environment. Therefore consumers' perceptions may have an impact on the way they behave towards a store and its merchandise.

A study carried out by Khurram and Latif (2013) on consumer impulse buying behavior concludes that, visual merchandizing such as window display and forum display have very strong impact on those customers that have unplanned shopping behavior. In other words, the visual merchandizers by the use of various displays can manipulate the customer's desires to make purchases. The results proved that the consumer impulse buying behavior was significantly influenced by the window display and forum displays. The research study also suggests that women are more attentive to this retail experience, which includes visual merchandising displays. In comparison, men search for signs in a store about where to find what they are looking for (Bhatti and Latif, 2013).

“Developing an interior concept, the interior often takes its lead from the graphic guidelines [of a company’s branding] through understanding the aspirations of the end-user and through analyzing the competition. This information is portrayed through visual research or ‘mood boards’ (images retrieved from books or journals that explain clearly the thought process and ideas of the design team) but will be interior orientated rather than graphically based. The key features of the visual research are then extracted into ‘stories’ that lead to explicit ideas about what the interior design scheme could be and how the graphic identity would impact on the space. From this process, an interior concept is born.” (Mesher 2010: 19).

3.4. Material Background of Visual Merchandising

Levy and Weitz (2004) in their book titled Store Layout, Design and Visual Merchandising claim that at the center of a good store design, lays a good story. Like all stories, the story set up has a beginning, middle and an end. The entrance of the Shop sets up the story –creates expectations, contains promises, and entices, hints, teases. Inside the store is the middle of the story and it should start and proceed slow to allow consumers to orient them. The middle of the story should lead customers on a journey of discovery, using layout, lighting, visuals, and other atmospherics. Entrance sets up the story –creates expectations, contains promises, entices, hints, teases. Inside the store is the middle of the story should start slow (uncluttered) to allow consumers to orient themselves should lead customers on a journey of discovery, using layout, lighting, visuals, other atmospherics. (Altunkılıç, 2014: 32)

Based on the above quotation, the visual merchandisers’ role is to design their show windows as attractive as possible so as to attract the customers and get the customers into the store.

Visual merchandising is a means of communication with the customers; the retailer conveys a message to the customer. The shop, the interior design, the floor design, atmosphere, the product combines are means of conveying messages to the customers. The communications conveyed by the visual merchandisers include eight steps: (Bell and Telnus, 2006).

1. Exposure
2. Attention
3. Comprehension
4. Agreement
5. Retention
6. Retrieval
7. Consumer decision making
8. Action taken

Visual merchandising is a creative occupation. The talented visual merchandisers have a solid understanding of retail design principles and of company presentation standards and they use a creative approach to merchandise presentation. Design principles and company standards can be learned but creativity personal: It cannot be defined in formulas or in rules and standards.

Gene Moore, vice president and display director at Tiffany & Co. for nearly 40 years. His window designs become a legacy such that his windows themselves became themselves tourist destinations. His windows designs were called as a work of magic pure and simple (Figure 15).

For visual merchandiser creative means to color outside the lines in order to find new solutions for merchandising problems the company faces. According to Kurts Hand and Jaypari (1991) creation is not making something out of nothing.

Instead it is organizing existing elements into new and different wholes (Bell and Ternus, 2006).

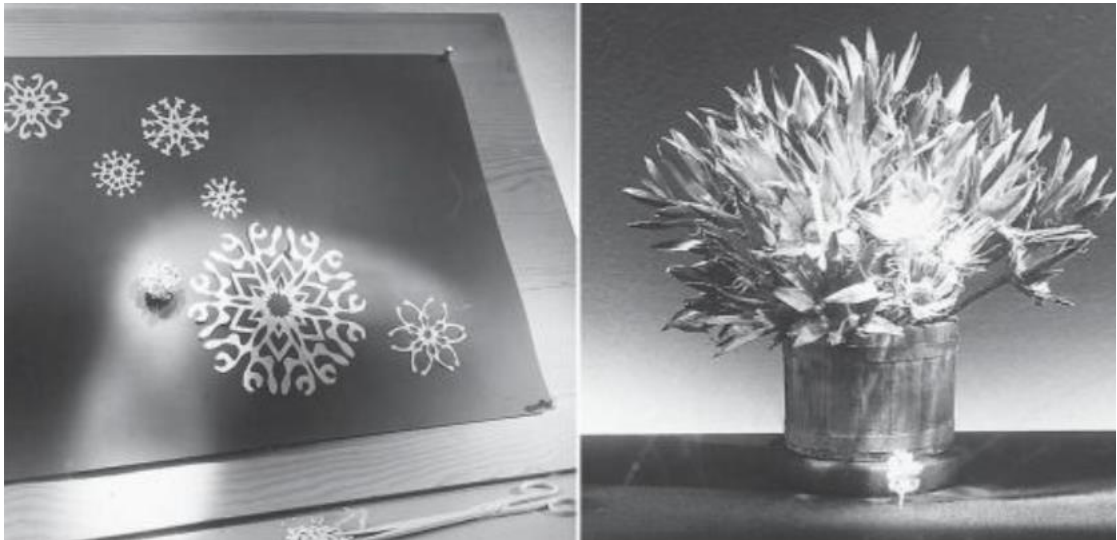


Figure 15: Gene Moore’s Snowflake Window Used Simple Creative Elements to Tell an Elegant Wintertime Tale about Tiffany Diamonds.

Source: Bell and Ternus, 2006

Once the customers are inside the store, it is important to convert them into customers buying products. To fulfill this the visual merchandizer should be able to design an environment via:

- Visual communications
- Lighting
- Color
- Sound
- Scent

In order to stimulate customers’ perceptual and emotional responses and ultimately influence their purchase behavior. (Altunkılıc, 2014:30)

Attracting customers and converting them into real purchasers is called store

environment design which may be summarized as follows:

- **Get customers into the store** (store image)
 - ❑ Serves a critical role in the store selection process
 - ❑ Important criteria include cleanliness, labeled prices, accurate and pleasant checkout clerks, and well-stocked shelves
 - ❑ The store itself makes the most significant and last impression

- **Once they are inside the store, convert them into customers buying merchandise** (space productivity)
 - ❑ The more merchandise customers are exposed to that is presented in an orderly manner, the more they tend to buy
 - ❑ Retailers focusing more attention on in-store marketing – marketing dollars spent in the store, in the form of store design, merchandise presentation, visual displays, and in-store promotions, should lead to greater sales and profits (bottom line: it is easier to get a consumer in your store to buy more merchandise than planned than to get a new consumer to come into your store)

The visual merchandising is the artistic display of merchandise and theatrical props used as scene-setting decoration in the store. To succeed in this endeavor the visual merchandizer should consider all the key elements of successful design such as planning of displays; store front and window design; atmospherics such as color, music etc.; visual communication and lighting.

3.4.1. Shop-Window Design

The increasingly competitive environment has forced retail companies to take advantage of visual merchandising activities. As a matter of fact visual

merchandising is among the most important tools in order to increase sales and reach sales targets.

Visual merchandising is everything the customer sees, both in the exterior and in the interior of a store, which creates a positive image of the business. These displays get the attention of the customers by creating interest and desire, and via convincing then have the value of the products.

The visual merchandiser determines what a customer sees. It is known that 80 percent of our impressions are created by sight - and that is why we say that a picture is worth a hundred words. Therefore in a store both interior and exterior need to be organized and designed.

Shop window display constitutes the exterior signet of the shop and it is the most important tool to attract customers into the store. The window displays are like billboards for your store. They can be the make-or-break factor in whether a customer enters your shop or walks on by. As Fatma Demirci (2000) states “a store is a big package filled with many products. So visual merchandisers create miniature worlds for merchandise in an effort to make the commodities sold attractive, draw customers into the store and keep them coming back in the future”.

Store window design should include the following:

- Clearly identify the name and general nature of the store
- Give some hint as to the merchandise inside
- Include all exterior signage
- In many cases includes store windows – advertising medium for the store window displays should be changed often, be fun/exciting, and reflect merchandise offered inside. (Sen, 2002 in Altunkılıç, 2014).

The main reasons why a customer enters a shop are as follows:

- In order to get more information about the products they see on the window.
- In order to take advantage of various promotions displayed in the
- That a particular commodity attracts his/her attention,
- They are fond of the shop image reflected on the shop window.

T. Morgan (2008) in his book *Window Display*, states that a store window is no longer just a useful space that a retailer uses to promote their products. His book demonstrates that, the windows of the 21st century are dynamic; they are created to enthrall and challenge the consumer and ultimately make them enter in to the store. In this sense he suggests innovation and all kinds of new knowledge of the market in the creation of dynamic windows.

Store windows are now a major marketing tool, and they are used to inspire the masses. The main challenge for the visual merchandisers is to produce eye catching window displays, which grabs the customers' attention. Sibel Arna (2000) suggests that, in a dynamic window display, which may capture the eye of the customer, one of the most important factors is that the image displayed on the shop window should be seductive and provocative.

A retail interior design has one goal and one goal only: to get consumers over the threshold of a store, and influence them to realize a purchase. Interior design is not a new phenomenon however retailers have tried everything from playing music to filling their stores with beautiful scents – there is a real art to getting it right.

Ellen Diamond (2007) in her book titled “*Fashion Retailing*” emphasize that business companies are now investing more resources in interior design such as constructing auto parks that lead directly into the stores. Various tools are used to day in the design of interiors (Diamond, 2007 in Altunkılıç 2014).

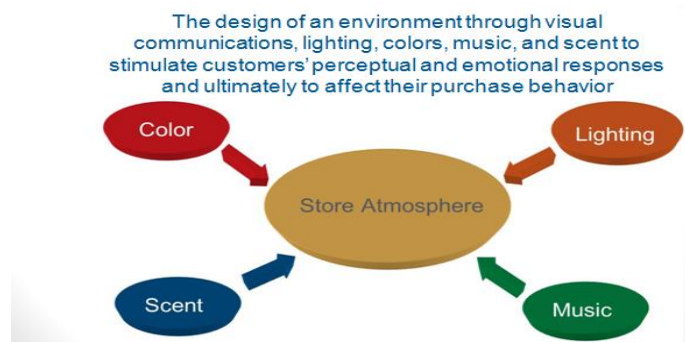


Figure 16: The Tools Used in Interior Design

Source: Altunkılıç, 2014

As seen in figure 15, one of the factors of interior designs is creating a positive and attractive atmosphere for the customer. Lightning, music, scent and color are the main tools used in creating this atmosphere.

In a successful interior design, it should be

- Consistent with image and strategy
- Positively influence consumer behavior
- Consider costs versus value
- Be flexible
- Recognize the need of the disabled.

There is no longer a typical store design. Companies employ the services of architects and designers who, along with visual merchandisers, create environments that are both unique and functional. *There are various components of store interior design:*

Props and Materials: The list of materials and props used by today's visual merchandisers seems to be endless. Although conventional store-bought props are available at various resource centers, more and more retailers are making use of things found in nature (such as tree branches, rocks, and sand) and found objects

once reserved for the junk pile (such as old chairs, worn picture frames, and rusty farm tools) in order to create an attractive atmosphere. At Christmastime, animated displays and glittery props are still of paramount importance

Mannequins: Mannequins are used both at window display and indoors. While traditional mannequins are still used, many stores have replaced them with, wire mannequins, soft sculptured types, stylized forms, and motorized models. With the increasing cost of traditional mannequins, many merchants are using form that represent mannequins and are created by visual merchandisers.

Lighting and Sound: In retail stores and especially at fashion retail stores fluorescents form of lighting is no longer used very often. Instead today, halogen and quartz lighting and high-intensity discharge lamps are the used in order to create attractive atmosphere. They not only serve the functional needs of illumination but also can be used to achieve dramatic effects. Sound is not a visual element, but it is being used to enhance visual presentation. The use of sound was first made by Disney. In its Main Street environment in Disneyland, Disney determined that the attractions alone were not sufficiently stimulating. The incorporation of sound made them come to life. Sound is being used abundantly by retailers today to set moods (Diamond&Diamond 2007: 11)

Graphics and Signage: The traditional two-dimensional signs are still used abundantly, however signage and graphics have very new looks and kinds in today's retail stores. They range from animated cartoon characters that move throughout the signage, backlit transparencies, and light walls, prismatic displays, and digitally produced huge photographic blowups (Diamond&Diamond 2007).

Store Lay out: (Traffic flow inside the store). *Here may be* Conflicting objectives with regards the design of the lay out inside the store. One goal may be ease the finding of products versus varied and interesting layout. Another type of lay out may

aim to giving customer's adequate space to shop versus use expensive space productively.

According to Lee-Greenwood, the main disadvantage of shop design is its very short lifetime, a particular interior design very quickly becomes out of fashion. Hence the interior design should be updated frequently. Brand such as Prada, Louis Vuitton Nike, design their spaces more like an art piece rather than a shopping space. Through this strategy they not only communicate with their customers but also serve to enhancement of training and knowledge sharing (Lee-Greenwood, 2013)

Louis Vuitton, collaborated with the Japanese's artist Yayoi Kusama (Kusama's signature is bold spots which cover every item from bag to dress) opened up a concept store to display the bold spotted dresses of the artist at Londra Selfridges (Figure 3.7), The store based on the concept of bold points, created bags, dresses and various kinds of accessories. At the same time this same bold spotted design is used to cover the walls and the ceiling creating an atmosphere and feeling of infinity and eternity (Deezen Magazine, 2012 in Altunkılıç 2014).



Figure 17: Louis Vuitton Concept Store

Source: Altunkılıç, 2014

3.5. New Trends in Visual Merchandising

Ellen Diamond researched the new trends in visual merchandising fewer than 7 titles. These are: the decrease of the use of spaces in shop windows, to give to more importance to in store design, the reuse of traditional mannequins, use of different styles of lightings, use of brand new graphics designs on walls, the use of high tech materials inside the stores and the contributions of designers and sales consultants to the brands (Diamond, 2007).

- **The Decrease of The use of Shop Windows:** Except the big, old and historical stores located in city centers, the other stores and brands decreased the use of shop window areas in stores and they used and included the rest of the parts inside the store to increase the areas of sales and create story areas (Diamond, 2007).
- **To Give Importance to Interiors:** Today, as a new trend in visual merchandising, the designers recognized that shop window is no more the only way to attract customers for a brand and the importance of indoor design became popular (Diamond, 2007).
- **Reuse of The First Mannequins:** *The abstract and stylized mannequins have been used and they have become popular until now. However today the designer has started to use old-fashioned mannequins in the shop windows* (Diamond, 2007).
- **The Increase of the Use of Low Lightening's:** because of the saving energy is the first reason for this type of lightening. On the other hand, these kinds of lights make interiors more relatable and mysterious (Diamond, 2007).

- **The Use of Technologic Graphics:** The reason of using these kinds of graphics inside the stores is; they are cheaper than other kinds of interior materials and they can be produced in any sizes to show what ever you want. The visual merchandisers and interior designers use various types of lights back of these graphics to attract customers (Diamond, 2007). Besides some interactive videos can be shown in these areas. This also improves the experience shopping idea towards brand to customer.



Figure 18: Kate Spade 24 Hour Shoppable Interactive Store Windows

Source: Kate Spade 24 hr. Shoppable Interactive store Windows, 2013.

<http://www.glamshops.ro/shop-review-kate-spade-24hr-shoppable-interactive-store-windows.html>. [02 December 2015]

In figure 20, the shop window attracts people crossing on the street and they can also shop 24 hours using the digital screen on shop window. In 2012, Nike introduced its brand new fly knit racer, wind runner, reflective wind runner, lunar Gide, hyper dunk shoes in a presentation using and interactive screen in its shop windows. Thus, the especially of these shoes touched the customers' senses in first hand. It was an influential and inspiring shop window sample for visual designers. (*Nike Interactive Window Displays*. 2013. (Video file)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47Bbrhx1VfE>. [02 December 2015])

Another new trend in interior store design is the digital mirrors located in

cabins. The customers can stand in front of these mirrors and choose some sample combines or products from the digital screen to wear themselves in a digital screen. (*Kinect Fitting Room for Top Shop*. 2011. (Video file) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_cYKFdP1_0. [01 September 2015])

Team Lab Ranger is another weird interactive material for stores. This hanger is useful to watch the appearance of the product on a mannequin on a screen. (*Team Lab Interactive Hanger*. 2011. (Video File) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nu116YttzqA>. [13 September 2015]). These samples create a diversity on an experience shopping attitude and it contributes creativity too the brand (Altunkılıc, 2014).

4. EXPERIENCE VALUE CREATION BRIDALWEAR STORES THROUGH VISUAL MERCHANDISING

4.1. Introduction: Bridal wear and Wedding Industry

Today, many women start to dream of her wedding ceremony long before it arrives and they begin to plan every tiny detail for their best day of their lives. Undoubtedly, the wedding gown is the most important detail of that day. The dream of wearing a wedding gown has grown up from her days of her childhood. The gown played up by media from movies to magazines. A Multi-billion dollar industry has taken place around these days, since 1930's.

The ideal 1920's wedding idea has changed into a production includes lots of details. In 2006, the average cost of a wedding was 26,400 dollars (Mengi and Velibeyoğlu, 2012). This means that, typical American couples are spending a good part of their income on a just one-day event. A bride consumes what is important for her in case of need so that the retailers have to satisfy their customers and increase their profitability.

Shopping a wedding gown is more different action than to go to the grocery store or to buy an apparel product. In wedding dress shopping attitude, fantasy is the first impulse for a decision of wedding gown. A bride may have been dreaming about what she wants to look like in her wedding ceremony from a childhood time. On the other hand, she mostly doesn't want to decide or shop by herself and the opinion of others' affects her decision. Mostly, the others can be her mother, grandmother, friends or sisters. Another consideration is the deadline and the most brides' acts due to this date and start to shop long before this deadline. Thereby, the experience of shopping wedding gown is different from other shopping attitudes and

this process motivates the bride and her relatives about the wedding idea (Weiss, 2008).

The aim of this research and survey is to examine the experience/hedonic consumption behavior and trends of brides and to see the role/impact of visual merchandising in this event. Specifically, this study examines the attitudes toward perceived playfulness of shopping a wedding gown, the effects of store satisfaction to shopping, creation of store satisfaction with visual merchandising and the creation of experience consumption in bridal wear boutiques.

4.2. Store Satisfaction with Hedonic Bridal Wears Shopping Orientations

Consumer satisfaction is a common outcome variable in marketing and retailing research. In more recent research, distinctions have been made between the types of satisfaction a consumer may experience. What has traditionally been measured as satisfaction is the product-related judgment following a purchase or consumption experience. Satisfaction can also go beyond simply the product or experience purchasing the product to satisfaction with the store where the product was purchased. In the same way a consumer can be satisfied with a product, they can be satisfied with their experience at the store (Grossman, 1999).

A consumer's satisfaction with a store can be based on many factors including the length of their relationship with the store (Bolton, Berger, Bowman, Briggs, Kumar, Parasuraman and Terry, 2002), whether their expectations for the store were met (Grossman, 1999), or even based upon liking for the store atmosphere or employees (Bolton, Berger, Bowman, Briggs, Kumar, Parasuraman and Terry, 2002). Consumers need to determine for themselves how they feel about the store in question.

Finding “the dress” and experiencing the one shopping day that she dreamed

before has also an emotion inside. To get the job done may be less satisfied for a bride with a deadline and also for the owner of bridal wear boutique. To satisfy a dream and a fantasy of a bride, the owner or the designer of the wedding boutique has to create a space that she may continue dreaming about her wedding day and may be comfortable about her decision.

5. FIELD STUDY: EXPERIENCE VALUE CREATION IN BRIDAL WEAR INDUSTRY IN IZMIR

5.1. Bridal Wear Industry in Izmir

Izmir has been analyzing with the term of creative city and industries and is a focus city on the wedding sector as a fashion-branch. With the potential of this sector, Izmir is evaluated as wedding wear capital of Turkey. (*Mengi and Velibeyoglu, 2013:7*) So; bride wear boutiques in Izmir, Mimar Kemalettin and Alsancak District has chosen as a case study.

Izmir is located on the west side of country near Aegean Sea and is recently familiar with the term creative industries but not visual merchandising aspect. Because of the less population of corporative brands and boutiques, the term of visual merchandising is barely developing. With the focus of wedding cluster and creative industry evolution in Izmir, the issue of visual merchandising will be involved.

Izmir dominates the Turkish market for the wedding sector with its potential (IZKA, 2010). Throughout the formal meetings with Aegean Exporters' Associations, the share held by Izmir is said almost 70% of the entire bridal wears production in Turkey. According to results of the sectorial analysis conducted by IZKA this sector has been found sufficient in terms of its production capacity, human resources, financial resources and information and knowledge web. (*Mengi and Velibeyoglu, 2013:11*)

Table 5: Izmir Clustering Categories with Sectors

	Mature Clusters		Developing Clusters		Potential Clusters	
Sector	Cooling, Industrial Ventilation and Air Conditioning	Canned Food	On-Car Equipment	Chemistry	Wedding Wear	Logistic

Source: Mengi and Velibeyoğlu, 2013

The design of this research survey is based on the simple questionnaires and some open-ended questions through Izmir bridal wear boutiques' owners and designers. The object of this survey is to find out the expression of consumers' perceived hedonic value in behavior and the objective of this survey is to analyze the reaction of consumers' perceived hedonic value and behavior through visual merchandising and store-design.

In light of the literature; the below given hypothesis will be observed and analyzed in the survey.

- The window display has a significant impact on consumer buying behavior.
- In-door design and welcoming has a significant role on consumer buying behavior.
- Creating an experience shopping motivation is a need in bridal wears boutiques on the impact on consumer.
- Attitude, perceived playfulness will be positively related to store satisfaction

- Store satisfaction is positively related to purchase intention.

This survey is based on the main hypothesis that consumer shopping motivations (utilitarian vs. hedonic) is an important variable for both store satisfaction and the perceived playfulness experienced by the consumer between the fantasy and the need by looking at a bride's shopping motivations as a moderating variable.

There were some limitations during the survey. There were few amount of bridal wear boutique owners responded to out invitation of the research. One of the reasons for this limitation was the time that they were very busy and not interested in research. The other limitation was the short answers that participants responded. They didn't be forced to answer all the questions because of the ethical behavior. This is a very new way of thinking a relation between experience value and visual merchandising in a bridal wear boutique. Thus, the questions might push the participants to think in a brand new way.

5.2. Survey Study: Bridal Wear Industry and The City of Izmir

Survey study was created with 14 participants that are the owner/designer of bridal wear boutique. They participate to a questionnaire and three open- ended questions. The form of questions was prepared in a sense of an interest. The first part of questions were about the demographic information of participants and the last three questionnaire continues to measure the inner knowledge, kinds of experiences and the way of thinking of the participants about matching together experience value, visual merchandising and the market of bridal wear. The results of questionnaire were analyzed with the software programmed SBSS and the open- ended questions part of the survey was analyzed with the common themes and codes. The main reason that I chose Alsancak and Çankaya region is the concentration of bridal wear boutiques in this area, which leads to become a big market. Having too much bridal wear boutique creates a huge competitive environment. That's why boutiques should apply different strategies in order to show the difference from each other. This is

supported by shop window designs that are tried to be more attractive, which demonstrates the importance and necessity of shop window designers.

In Alsancak and Çankaya, there are more than 100 bridal wear boutiques. A questionnaire is been given to 70 of these boutiques but, only, 14 of them accepted to answer the questions. The fifty-six boutiques remained, refused to answer for some reasons such as no time, don't want to do, don't want to share his/her ideas etc. In my opinion, the boutiques that take place in such amazing sector should help and act as a leader for students that will constitute the next generations' bridal wear boutiques.

5.3. Analysis of Survey Study

I started to my survey by learning the service period of boutiques. It is analyzed in four categories; 5 years or less, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, and 15 years of more. Four (28.6%) of boutiques surveyed have an experience of 5 years or less, the other four (28.6%) have 6-10 years, three (21.4%) of them have 11-15 years, and last three (21.4%) of them have more than 15 years of experience in this sector. Only three out of fourteen boutiques have more than fifteen years of experience, which does not show a high frequency. In contrast, boutiques with less than 10 years of experience are more frequent.

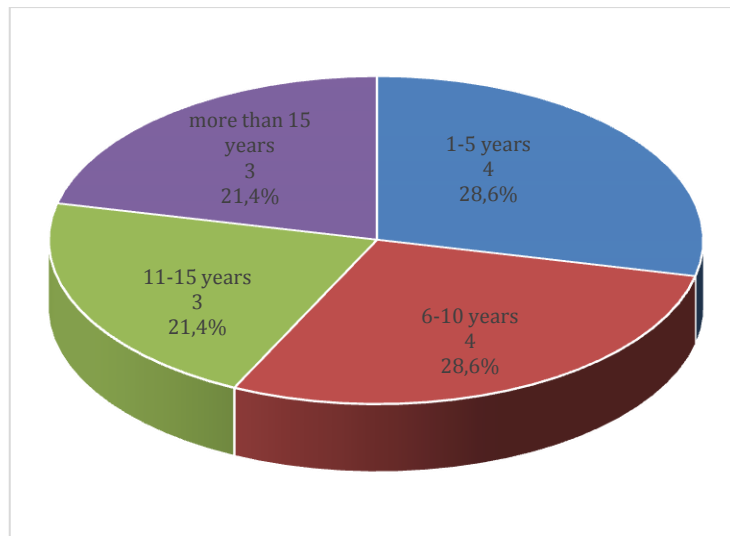


Table 6: The Service Period of Wedding Boutiques

The frequency of customers visiting the boutique is surveyed as shown in Table 7. In general, boutiques are visited every day. 9 boutiques (64.3%) of the survey are visited by customers every day, one of them (7.1%) is visited for several days a week, while 3 (21.4%) of them is usually very busy, and 1 boutique (7%, 1) is busy only in certain periods. This shows us the abundance and the interest of customers visiting bridal wear boutiques. It can be said that bridal wear sector is a great market and there is a huge consummation. This explains all about the abundance of boutiques just concentrated in one area.

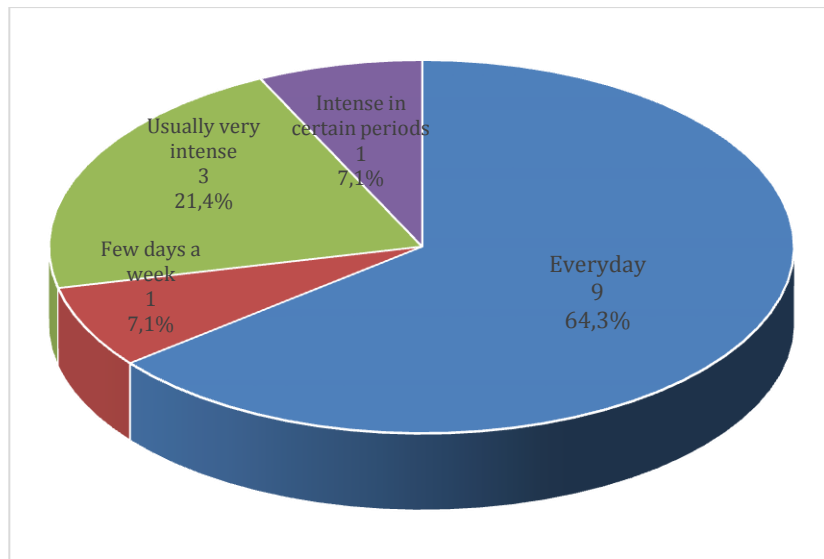


Table 7: The Frequency of Customers Visiting the Wedding Boutique

In such an important sector, designer of the bridal wear is also a very important factor. Therefore, it is asked to owners of boutiques about their opinions on bridal wear designers' role. Nine (64.3%) of the boutiques surveyed described them as 'haute-couture' so personalized to every single customer, while three (21.4%) of them identified them as product revealer. Two of the boutiques (14.3%) did not respond to this question (Table 8). Thus, for the majority, designer should be specialized on and able to satisfy the needs, requests, emotions and delights of every customer.

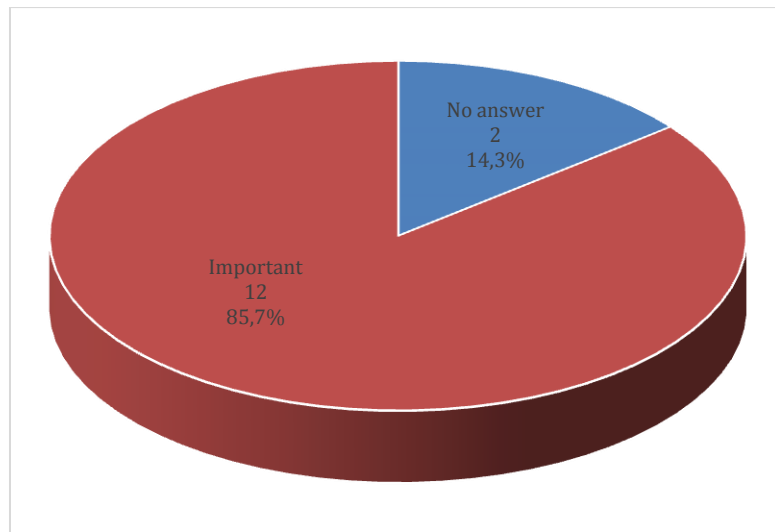


Table 8: The Importance of Interior Design for the Customer Perception

Customer firstly meets with shop window. Once they are attracted to shop window, they will enter to boutique. Therefore, I analyzed the first thing that customers do while entering to boutique. According to results, 36.8% of customers say directly the desired pattern when they go inside, 21.1% waits in the waiting room to speak with designer, and 42.1% goes around the boutique to investigate.

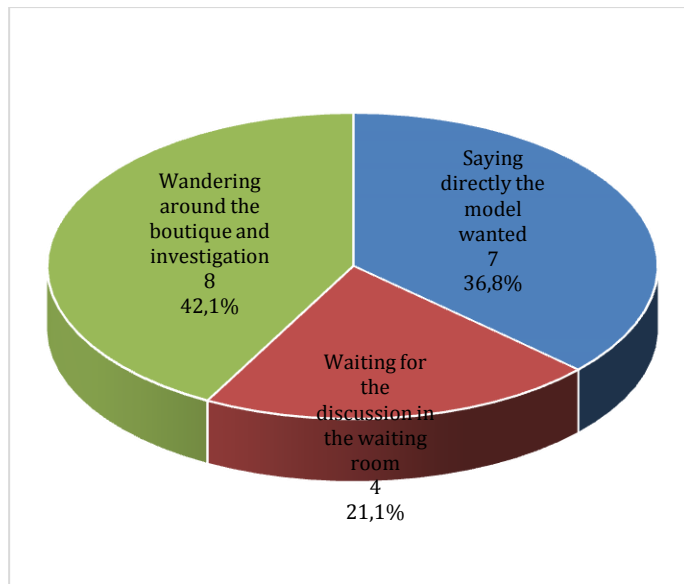


Table 9: The First Thing That Customers Do While Entering to Boutique

As a result, we can conclude about customers that, they prefer firstly to observe the products, feel the atmosphere and communicate with dresses. Consequently, indoor design and product quality is very important. Thereby, indoor should be very attentively designed so that customer can go forward to the other steps through product purchase. On the other hand, some customers tell directly the model they wish. For those customers, the importance is to correlate themselves with the shop window models so that they might think the boutique could convince them.

Bride gown customers are shopping, in generally, with their family members or friends. These people can also affect bride's decision. According to our survey, as seen in Table 10, 64.3% of brides' decisions are very influenced by their companions, 28.6% are quite influenced while 7.1% sometimes influenced. During the interviews, boutiques' managers remarked that this could sometimes put them in a difficult situation. It can sometimes cause to disagreements between brides and their family members. Boutiques managers tell some interesting stories; crying brides in dressing cabins, asking for help from shop assistants in order to convince

the others etc. This gave rise to a softer, refreshing indoor design preference to boutique owners.

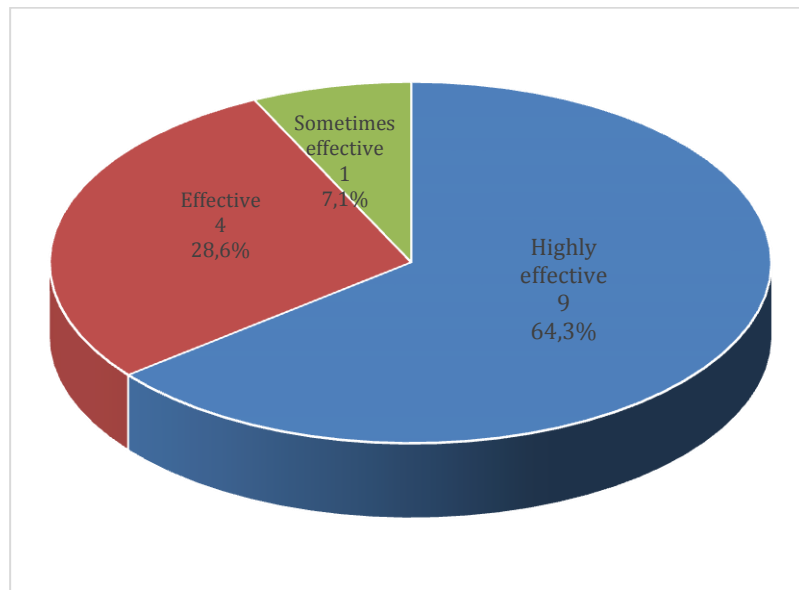


Table 10: The Effects of Bride's Companion Purchase Decision

Therefore, another issue of the bridal wear industry is the indoor design of the boutiques (Table 11). Boutique's theme, indoor design and its concept are very important for customers' perceptions. This can affect positively customer pleasure by giving them self-confidence and putting them in a good mood. Shopping in a stylish and representative boutique gives pleasure to customers. An atmosphere, which is cozy and friendly, might push them to buy more. A company takes care of all the details by itself while designing its fashion. It is believed that the scent of designed products should be smelled as soon as the customer enters to boutique therefore, from the coffee offered until the sofas disposed to sit representing the boutique's brand are very important.

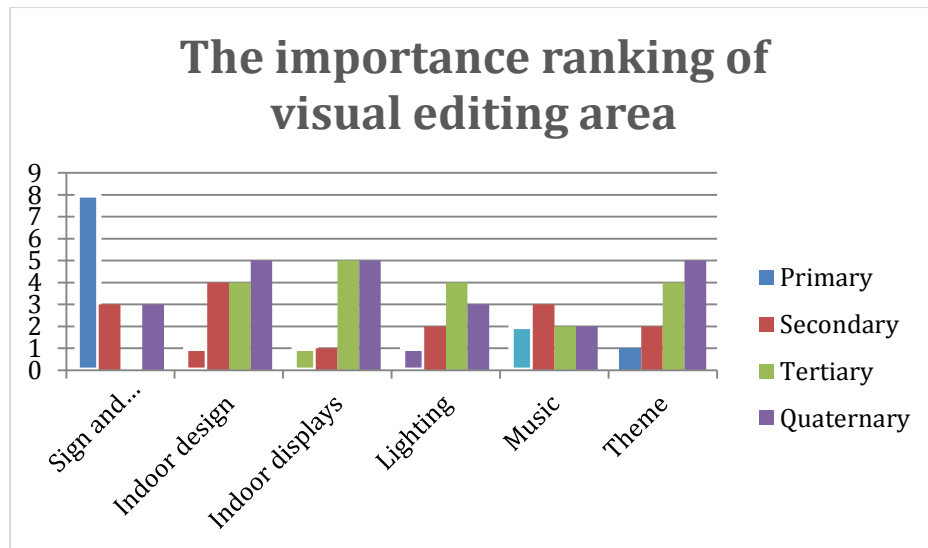


Table 11: The Importance ranking of Visual Editing Area

In haute couture boutiques, the visual editing is highly important for brands. As shown in Table 12, 2 of the haute couture boutiques find it sometimes important, while 6 of them find it important, and other 6 finds it very important.

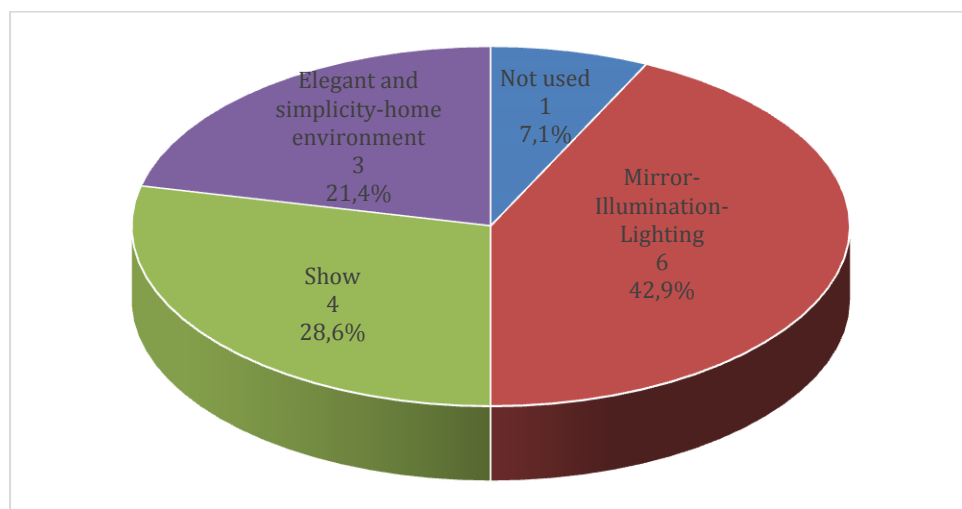


Table 12: Visual Editing Techniques Used in Boutiques

At the same time, this visual editing is also very necessary for the owner of the company as well as for the employees because it affects also the employees' performance in order to give a more effective service. One of the surveyed

companies gave the example of Google. Since Google gives to its employees a better atmosphere to create and to work, it gets a better efficient output. Hence, that company applied the same strategy for its own business in order to get better performance.



Figures 19, 20: Some Visual Editing Examples from İzmir Wedding Stores

Source: Author's archive.

In this survey, boutique owners put in order the visual edits forming regions such as sign and shop window, indoors design, indoor displays, lighting, music and theme. In haute couture boutiques for visual editing the primarily important visual editing used are signs and shop windows. Customer meets firstly with boutique's sign and its shop window therefore customer gets some information about boutique's identity and its concept. If it is satisfactory enough, customer enters. As a conclusion, it is the sign that attracts the customer first, thereby; 'first meeting' (sign and shop window) is very essential. Secondly, indoor design is paid attention. Companies consider important the relation between shop window concept and indoor design. If

they are not related to each other, customer will be surprised while entering to boutique with another concept therefore they can be disappointed or get confused in order to decide. The harmony between shop window, sign and indoor design is fundamental. Thirdly, lighting is important. When going into deep for this subject, there are two distinct ways of thoughts. First category of thinking defines the importance of soft lights use in order to relax customers while second category uses soft and sharp lights at the same time in order to keep the contrast between bride and her companies. The soft light is used to keep relax the brides' companies while the sharp and dynamic lights are used to focus the elegance and chicness of gowns on brides on platform. Forth and but not last, indoor examples and products are important. Mostly, boutiques are using the examples related to indoor concept and also some, which are in contrast to indoor concept in order to increase product diversity at disposal. Otherwise, music and theme play also a 'helper' role.

In haute couture boutiques, visual editing's effects have a significant place. In special sewing workshops, there is an influence on customers' decisions and perceptions and on increasing sales about 92.8%. There is a significant positive agreement between boutique owners about 92.8% for the enrichment of boutique image and about 85.7% for the long-term impact by visual editing (Table 13&14). The high rate of responses indicates the big impacts of visual editing and its necessity for sales.

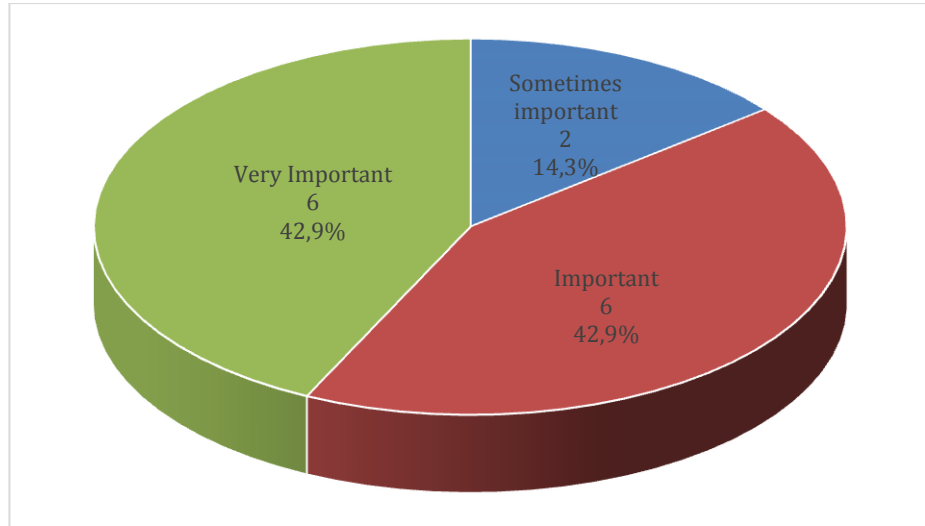


Table 13: The Importance of Visual Editing

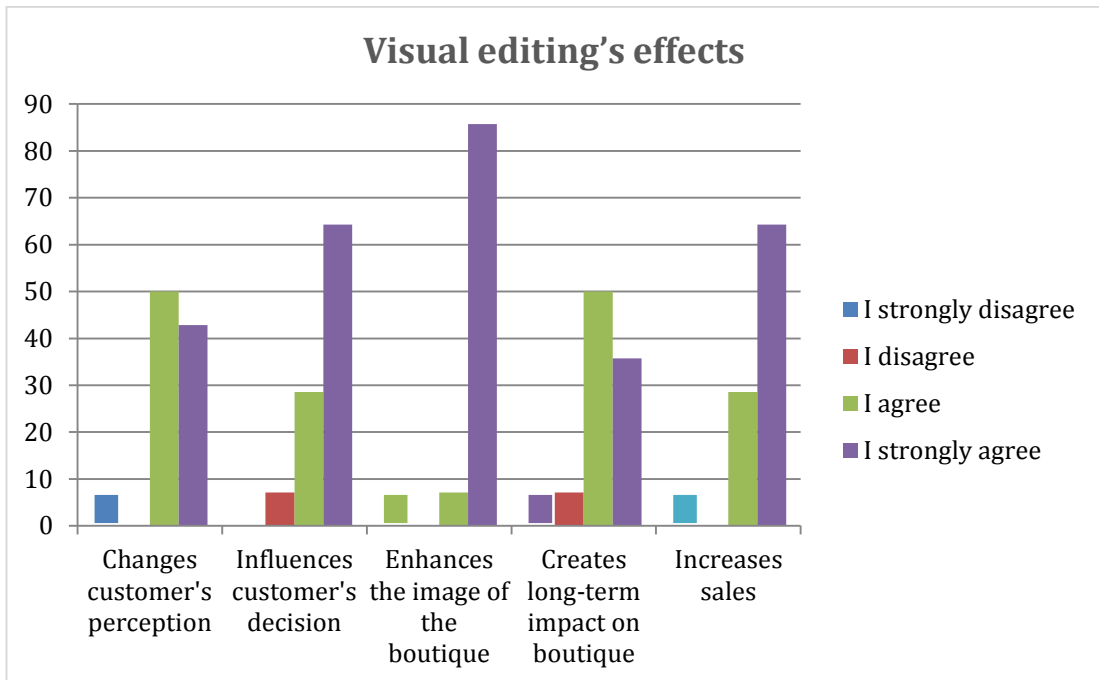


Table 14: Visual Editing's Effects

When we analyze visual editing techniques used in boutiques, we observe the most commonly used techniques are mirror-illumination-lighting (42.9%), show (28.6%), elegant and simplicity-home environment (21.6%). (See in Table 15)

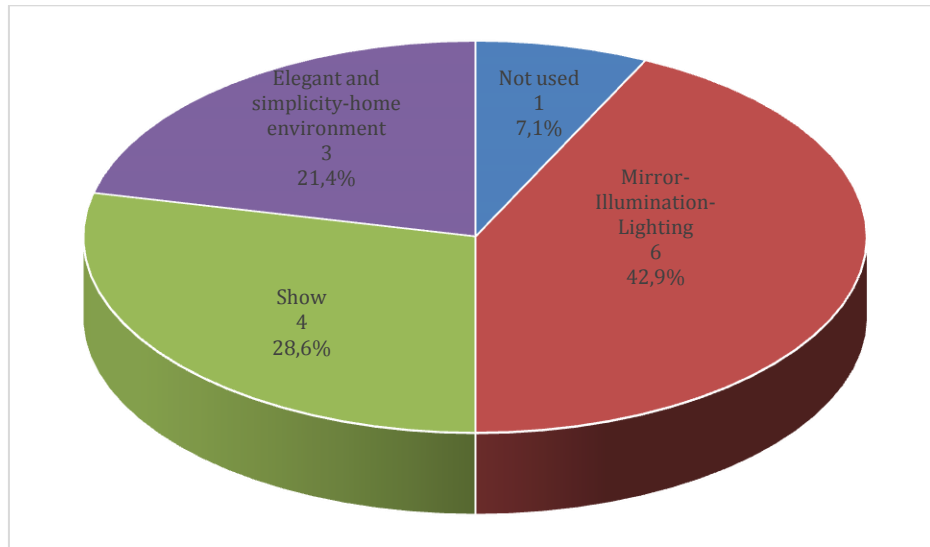


Table 15: Visual Editing Techniques Used in Boutiques

According to some companies, mirrors are used especially on wardrobes to show wider the environment; besides, illumination is also used for the same purpose. Soft lights are used to give a more romantic point of view to the gowns. Some of the companies wrote down, shows are used for a better visual editing. As a show they used carpets, laced umbrellas, white accessories and different separators between different concepts in order to create a story in the boutique. Some of the companies prefer to keep it simple but elegant in the aim of creating a house environment, which can be another strategy. Painting walls and using furniture and curtains with pastel tones support this. As a result there are two different views. This difference is caused by customers' and boutique owners' different personal preferences.

Launch jazz and romantic music as an auditory editing is also performed. It is another strategy to impress customers by their auditory pleasures while, at the same time, impressing them with visual pleasures. At the top of that, olfactory senses are also triggered by flower-flavored perfumes, which can comfort, calm and please brides. This strategy impacts sales and also can influence brides for their bridal bouquet choice. This leads brides to choose a real bridal bouquet rather than an

artificial one. Brides think that they would smell like those flowers if they buy them. Of course, the capacity of salesman in order to convince customers is very important and it is demonstrated by this survey.

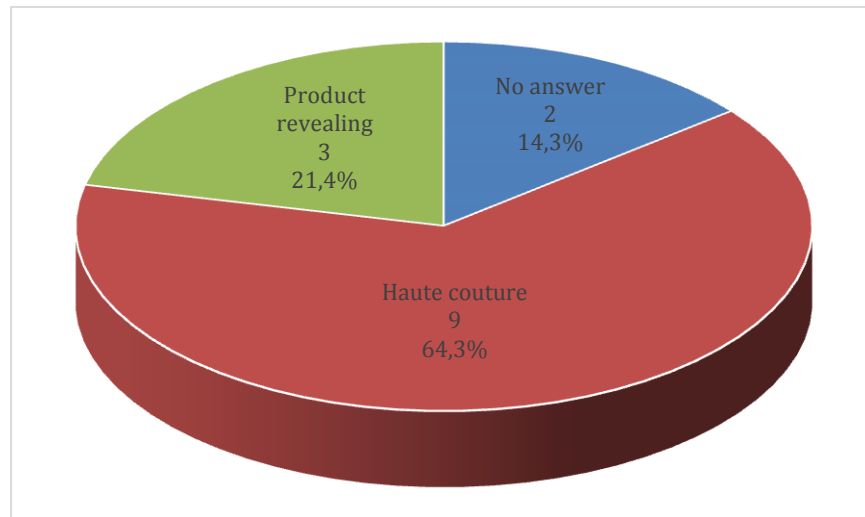


Table 16: The Role of Designers in the Sector

The purchasing decisions of customers are impacted by, most importantly, communication (44.4%), product design (22.2%), store atmosphere and satisfaction (18.5%), fabric quality (14.8%) (Table 17).

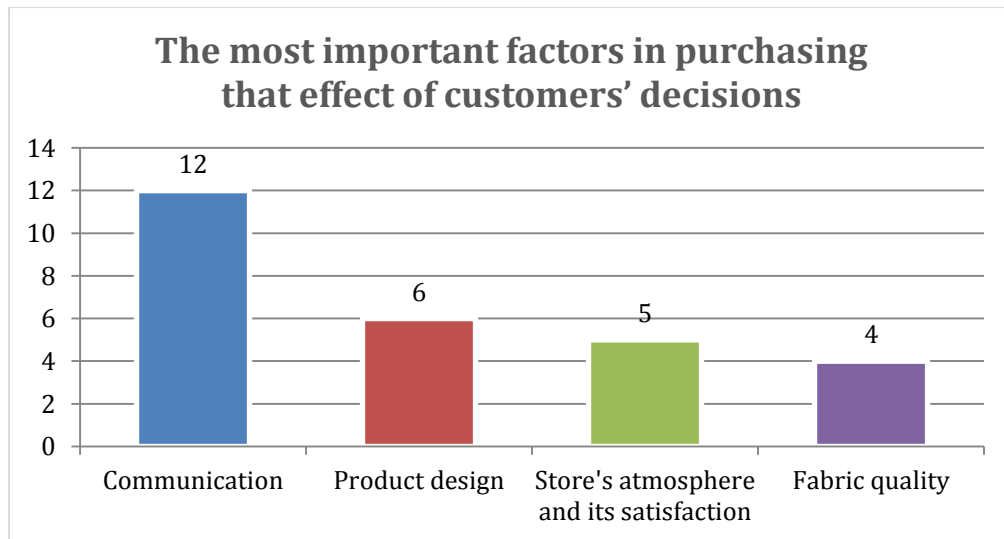


Table 17: The most Important Factors in purchasing that effect of customers' decision

A good communication from the beginning is mandatory. The products' properties and qualities must be explained in detail. At the same time, the story of the product and its value must be related to customer. The needs and requests of customer must be understood very well and must be addressed to customer's pleasure. For example, one of the boutiques made a bridal crown made of cotton for a bride who wanted to be very natural. We can conclude from this example that, salesman understood very well the request, dream and personality of bride and made a great service according to her expectations. And, also, we can see the big role of product's design. Actually, all the factors involved in this market are related to each other; from the beginning by attracting customers to boutiques till the end by satisfying customers and with purchase experiment. Only, the importance order of these factors can change by boutiques.

Another point that I examined is the parties given for the delivery day, which become very popular nowadays. 42.9 % of the participants celebrate the product's delivery day with bride while 14.2% does not (Table 18).

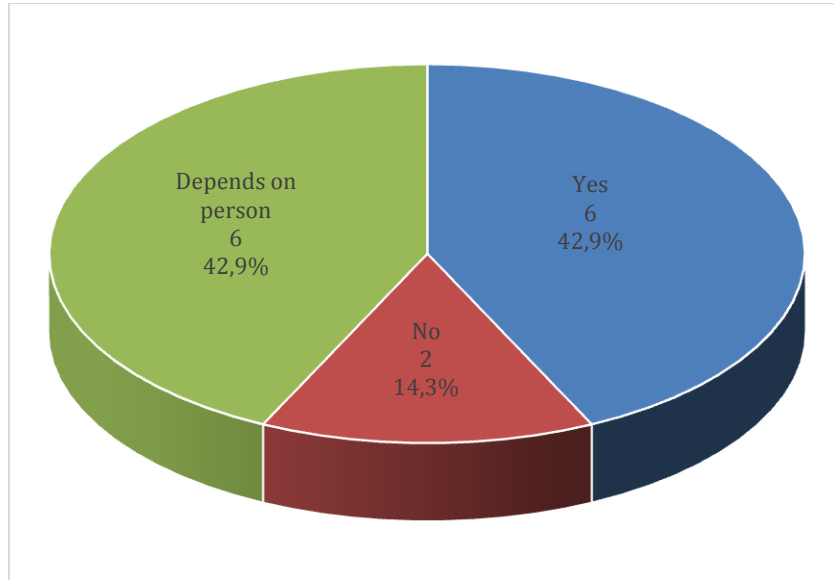


Table 18: Celebration with Bride on the Products' Delivery Day

This concept is a very new trend. Customer must be satisfied also during the delivery day. The reason beyond this new concept is the major effect of social media and the good brand reputation. The bride must be pleased/satisfied until the wedding day; therefore, its relations would repute the boutique in a good manner with costumers. According to another question asked to boutique owners, we wanted to investigate the main objectives of brides while visiting stores. As shown in Table 13, 71.4% of brides have just the idea of buying a gown while the rest wants, also, to have a good time and enjoy emotionally, therefore create memories during the process of visiting stores. Some of the brides enjoy shopping and take pleasure of that. 28.6% of those admitted this process is comfort-oriented. (Table 19)

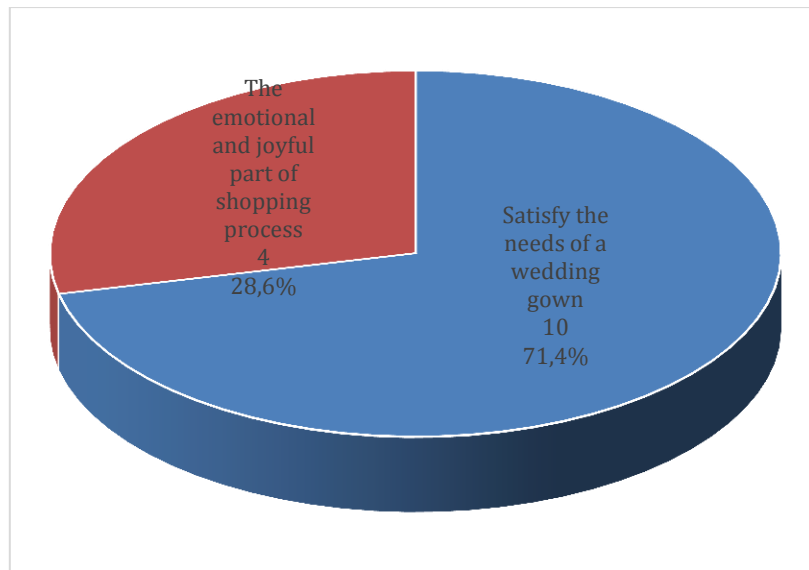


Table 19: Prominent Ideas and Intentions for Bride

This comfort orientation includes also evening dresses. Buying evening dresses is totally based on pleasure, and not based on needs. So, the customer buys it because she/he can imagine the concept when the product is seen on shop window. 71.4% of respondents to the survey indicated that wedding dress / evening dress shopping is not based on pleasure. And they added that this is a need and indispensability (Table 20).

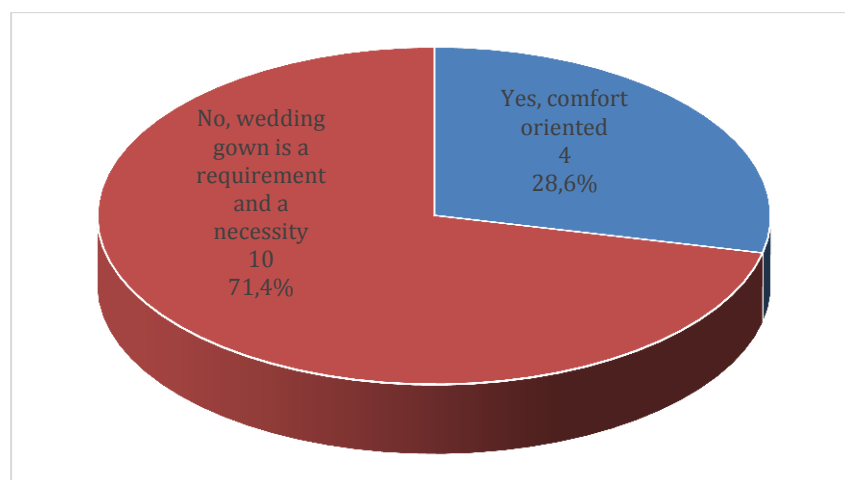


Table 20: The distribution of the view that shopping is made for joy and pleasure and of the process time during wedding gown and evening dress shopping

To be a perfect bride and have a perfect wedding are every woman's dream. 42.9% of bridal wear stores pointed out that they are only responsible of giving a service for a bride gown (Table 21). And 28.6% of stores supported the idea to apply some marketing, service and satisfaction strategies in order to fulfill the fantasies of bride. Half of this group supported the idea that this should be incentive while the other half approved to give a party with a music concept. For this objective, the companies guide customers through appropriate wedding organizers. Therefore, customer can decide more clearly without having huge differences between different companies such as concepts, atmospheres etc.

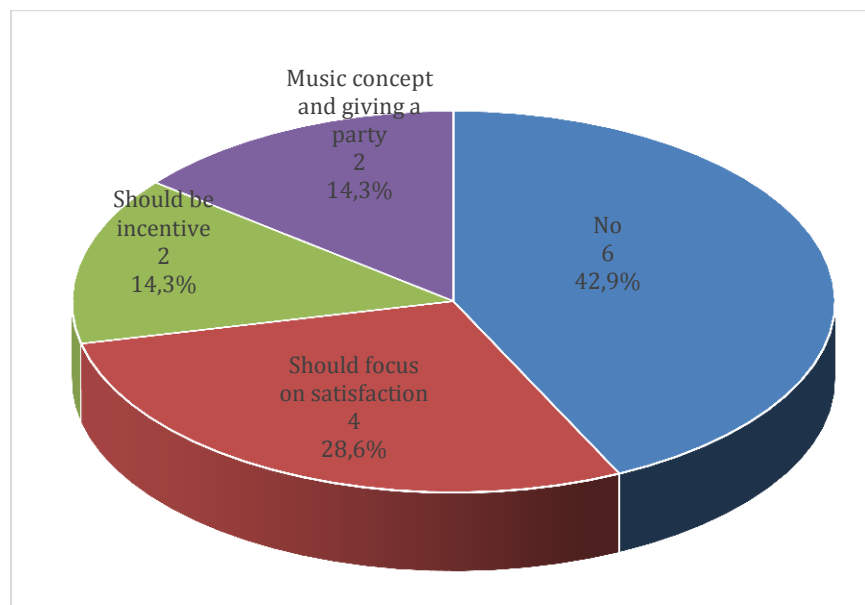


Table 21: The opinions and the application of marketing, service and satisfaction on the implementation of bride's fantasy to be perfect

When we examine the impression of brides of the boutique's atmosphere and the impacts on decision making (Table 22), we observed that all participants (100%) stated the positive effects of boutique's atmosphere on purchase decisions. 35.7% of them added that there is a positive impact on decision, 21.4% added that customers get into mood with a good ambiance and 21.4% stated that this atmosphere creates a cozy environment, 7.2% pointed it improves the satisfaction, and last 14.3% stated it

makes brides feel special. Hence, the atmosphere of boutique must make brides feel safe and comfortable. This allows the clearance between bride and salesman in order to explain all requirements for the gown; thus, salesman can present all products that are available for bride. In this way, brides believe that they can make happen their dreams. This also affects sales by increasing them.

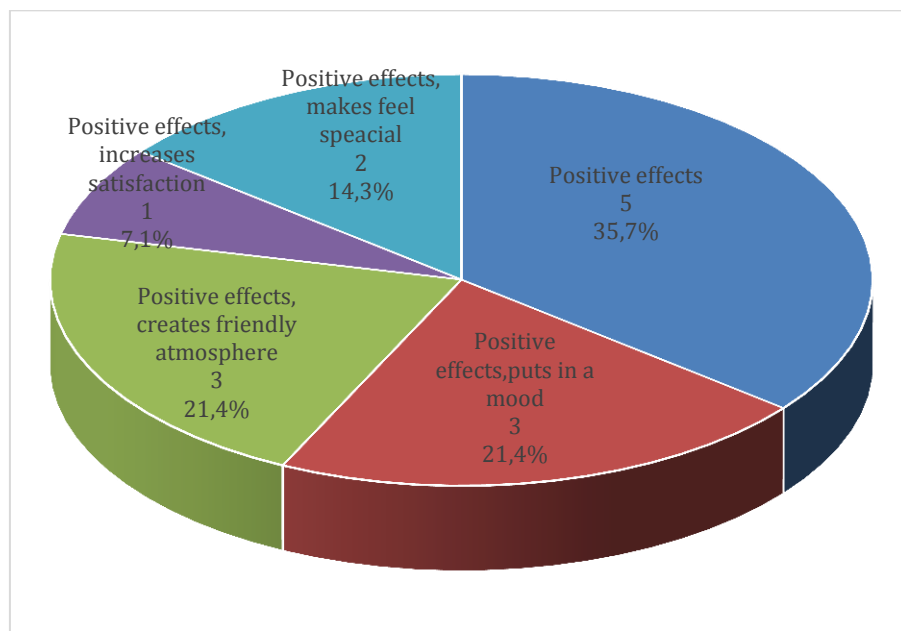


Table 22: The effect of boutique atmosphere on purchasing decisions

6. CONCLUSION

This study examined, the impact of various strategies of visual merchandizing on the consumption of consumers of bridal wear at the Bridal wear Haute Couture Shopping Sector in Izmir. Besides, the study used a questionnaire and investigated the consumption behaviour from an *experiential/hedonic approach*, which is the main consumption attitude in the contemporary era.

As Jameson (1991) suggests, postmodern culture is the *culture of the consumer society*. The patterns of consumption and how it is studied in the academic literature during the postmodern era have extended beyond the modern era. Postmodernism refers to the emerging culture of the postmodern era. Postmodernism may be seen as a social and cultural movement following modernism, which became more prominent after 1980's.

The principle of the culture of modern era, involves rationality, rule of reason, the rational cognitive subject, objectivity, emphasis on social and economic progress through science and progress. The modern society is mainly an industrial society and based on objective properties of things are important. However, in the postmodern society, culture and the symbolic aspects of things became important over the objective and tangible sides. Jameson calls this the 'liquefaction of signs and images' (Jameson, 1991: 87).

The concept of consumption and the consumption behaviour of people have changed with the transition from a modern to a postmodern society. During the modern era, the consumption habit is based on the perspective that the consumer is a rational individual.

For the postmodern consumer, on the other hand consumption is more an *experiential process* rather than a planned one. The postmodern consumer is changed

into a pleasurable experience in shopping; and experience which gives her fun, emotions and satisfies fantasies (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982b). Here the consumer is like a hedonic person seeking for pleasure.

In the current literature in consumption, these two different types of consumption are named as *utilitarian vs. experiential/hedonic consumption*. In utilitarian consumption, the tangible and objective properties of products such as calories or miles per gallon are important. These properties perform utilitarian functions. In hedonic consumption, the symbolic aspect of goods such as cheerfulness, elegance, fun etc. gained importance beside their tangible aspects (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982b).

In terms of utility and hedonic values, the difference of experience value from the use value is; the use value is that our basic needs and experience value refers to our emotional, intellectual and experiential needs. To create an experience value, the hedonistic atmosphere has to be shown in stores. The basic idea is that, when a customer buys “experience” an extra value is created. Because the customer pays in order to spend time - to experience - in enjoying many nice memorable events which the company offers as a marketing strategy.

This new experiential perspective does not ignore the traditional utility/rationality approach on consumption but it provides a very new perspective. Additionally this perspective on hedonic consumption has important implications for retail companies and stores. Depending on the company is selling mainly to a modern, utilitarian consumer sector (such as food) or postmodern consumer sector (such as bridal ware), the organisation’s product/service strategies, marketing approaches, operational technologies and management philosophies will differ substantially.

Visual merchandizing is one of the main strategies of retail stores and its function is the presentation of a store and its merchandise in some methods that will attract the attention of potential customers and motivate them to buy. So, the role of visual merchandizing in creating hedonic values is a very important sales marketing strategy of contemporary companies such as fashion retailing.

One of the main cases for fashion retail marketing is definitely design of visual merchandising. Visual merchandising is a communication with the customers; the shop, the interior design, the floor design, atmosphere, the product combines are means of conveying messages to the customers. This means a relation or an invisible conversation between the customer and product without any salesman.

Visual merchandising contains shop design, store design, decoration, and the settlements of products, lightening, and music and shop window. The design of shop window is the first ranked item of visual merchandising. Shop window creates a miniature world for customers to live or experience the brands' idea and the products' appearance with a fast decision in a silent way. So, the motives of rental fashion markets have changed with the impact of advanced visual merchandising tools.

In this study we conducted a research on the role of the visual merchandizing strategy in creating hedonic values, for customers of bridal wear Haute Couture Shopping Sector in Izmir. In other words, the research studied the playfulness of shopping for wedding gown; the effects of store satisfaction to bridal wear shopping, creation of store satisfaction and experience value created with visuals.

We conducted a qualitative study based on simple questionnaire with some closed and some open-ended questions. The survey was applied to the owners of 14 Haute Croute wedding/Bridal wear Stores. The objectives of the survey were:

- (1) To identify the visual merchandizing strategies at these stores
- (2) To study the impacts of visual merchandising tools in creating hedonic consumption (experiential/hedonic consumption) and affecting the purchase decision of customers at the wedding dresses stores.

The main findings of the survey study may be outlined as follows;

- Haute Couture Wedding stores have a very important role in the development of a wedding cluster in Izmir and it is a great fashion retail market with huge amount of consumption.
- Hedonistic consumption value (experience value) had an important implication for bridal wear boutiques in Izmir.
- The consumption behavior of the customers of the Haute Couture Wedding dress, fitted with the perspective of hedonic consumption or experience value.
- The consumption motivations was filled with fantasies, fun, and pleasant emotion rather than just rational/utilitarian choice because;
 - ✓ The customers prefer to observe the products inside the store, feel the atmosphere and communicate with dresses.
 - ✓ Indoor design should be very attentively designed so that customer decides to go forward to the other steps to decide on the purchase of the wedding items.
 - ✓ Experience value through Visual merchandising can effect on customer pleasure by giving them self-confidence.
 - ✓ Especially the design of experience value in the shop windows of these bridal wear boutiques has a very powerful impact on the potential customers.
 - ✓ With visual merchandising tools such as; carpets, laced umbrellas, white accessories and different separators between different concepts create a very pleasurable and

fantastic atmosphere and have a powerful contribution on the purchase decision of the bride and her relatives/friends who accompany her. They create a story for her and give the information about how she will appear in her very special wedding day.

In sum, the survey study concluded that, through visual merchandizing, a good communication, the smell of store, the settlements of the items, the appearance of them, creating the stories with various materials inside the store, the welcoming and the preparation of some gestures in the closing and delivery of the bridal wear, contribute to creating experience value in bridal wear boutiques in İzmir.

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