5.1 Findings with respect to demographic characteristics of customers and retailers:

- The majority of the respondents were in the age group 21-25 years (54.1%), 16-20 years (24.4%), 26 – 30 years (18.6%), whereas only 3% of 31-35 years of age. Since majority of customers shopping for apparels in organized retail outlets are college students and young working professionals, the researcher encountered more respondents in the age range of 21-25 years.

- Almost one half (52.7%) of the respondents were male and the other half (47.3%) were female customers. The gender uniformity has been taken into account in order not to affect the result in a negative way, favouring one gender over the other.

- The majority (45.1%) of the respondents were students, as expected and 42.1% were employed, 6.6% were unemployed, 4.3% were professionals, and 1.9% was businessmen/others.

- Most of the respondents (87.3%) were single and 12.7% were married. As young customers ranging from 16 to 35 years old were selected for the survey majority of them were single.

- The largest proportion (34.1%) of the respondents were graduates, followed by intermediates (33.4%), post-graduates (30%), and 2.5% were others. Overall the majority of the respondents were educated.

- Almost one-half (47.8%) of the respondents were dependent on either parents’ or others’ income, 26.2% of the respondents’ income range was Rs.10, 000- 25,000, 12.7% of the respondents’ income range was Rs.26, 000-50,000,7.8% of the respondents belong to below Rs. 10,000 income group, and only 5.5% of the respondents’ income range is Rs.51, 000 and above.

- (18)41.9% of the retailers have experience of 5-10 years in the retail field, (17)39.5% have less than 5 years of experience and (8)18.6% have more than 10 years of experience.
5.2 Hypotheses based findings:

5.2.1 Impact of visual merchandising on impulse buying tendency:

The influence of eye-catching window displays on impulse buying tendency:

In order to assess the impact of eye-catching window displays on impulse buying tendency Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis were performed. The Pearson correlation test exposed a significant correlation between impulse buying tendency and eye-catching window displays. In addition to this, the regression analysis found that eye-catching window displays significantly influenced customer’s impulse buying tendency. The data provided sufficient evidence that there was a significant directional relationship between customer’s impulse buying tendency and eye-catching window displays. In other words window displays had a direct positive impact on the impulse buying tendency of the customers. The findings of the study also support that attractive window displays enhance customers’ liking of the store exterior and increased impulse buying tendency. Hence, making window attractive would definitely fetch more footfalls in the store. The results of the research implied that if customers see an attractive and interesting window display, they are more likely to visit the store. Consequently, they tend to make an unplanned purchase. Furthermore, customers make important decisions whether to shop or not in a particular store by paying attention to the window display. Therefore, the design of the window display is considered to be a crucial factor in stimulating the impulse purchase behavior of the customers.

The influence of informative window displays on impulse buying tendency:

The Pearson correlation test showed a significant relationship between impulse buying tendency and informative window display. Although, the Pearson correlation test showed a significant relationship between impulse buying tendency and informative window displays, the regression analysis results suggest that they did not significantly influence the customers’ impulse buying tendency. Even though the informative window display did not seem to influence the customers’ impulse buying tendency, retailers cannot ignore this tool as it defines the store and gives an idea of what the store is all about to the customer. Window display can be
used as a means to portray seasonal merchandise. It conveys what age group or income group of customers the store caters to.

The influence of mannequin displays on impulse buying tendency:

The Pearson correlation test confirmed a significant correlation between mannequin displays and impulse buying tendency. Further, the regression analysis showed that mannequin displays significantly influenced customer’s impulse buying tendency. The data provided sufficient evidence that there was a significant directional relationship between customer’s impulse buying tendency and mannequin displays. The findings of the study also support that mannequins display the latest trends in fashion and influence the customers to buy the particular merchandise. Mannequins help the customers to understand what would look good on them. Sometimes they can’t decide what all would look good on them; a mannequin helps them decide the same. It is the attractive mannequin which pulls the customer into the store, influence them to purchase the product and thus increase the revenue and profit. They are used to highlight the unique collections of the store. Thus, the mannequins can be used to create an entire outfit encouraging customers to buy impulsively.

The influence of floor merchandising on impulse buying tendency:

The result of a Pearson correlation test found a significant correlation between impulse buying and floor merchandising. However, the Pearson correlation test showed a significant relationship between impulse buying and floor merchandising, the regression analysis suggested that the floor merchandising did not significantly influence the customer’s impulse buying tendency. Though floor merchandising did not significantly impact customers’ impulse buying behavior, it cannot be ignored totally by the retailers. Store displays can make all the difference, particularly when it comes to catching the eyes of the customers. A good place to start is to create an ideal shop floor, where the goods can be showcased to their best possible greatest potential. When customers are presented with an attractive arrangement of products, they are more likely to make an impulse purchase. There are a number of things that make a store display great - ranging from the layout of the store itself to small details such as the usage of advance fixtures and props.
**Influence of promotional signage on impulse buying tendency:**

The Pearson correlation test suggested that promotional signage was significantly related to the customers’ impulse buying tendency. Furthermore, the regression analysis found that promotional signage significantly influences the customers’ impulse buying tendency. The data provided sufficient evidence that there was a significant directional relationship between customer’s impulse buying tendency and promotional signage. Therefore, it can be concluded that when customers see products with sales signs or price reductions in the stores, they are more likely to buy these products impulsively. In other words, it indicates that an increasing number of in-store promotions and discounts are more likely to influence positively on the impulse buying tendency of the customers.

The results of research identified significant relationships between visual merchandising and impulse buying tendency of the customers. The findings of the research can be used by apparel retailers, in order to further enhance the store environment and create a convenient shopping experience for the customers.

Analysis of the influence of demographic factors on the impulse buying tendency of the customers in organized retail outlets revealed the following facts:

**5.2.2 Impact of demographic factors on impulse buying tendency:**

**Age and impulse buying tendency:**

One way ANOVA was used to test whether impulse buying tendency varies significantly among the customers of different age groups. The result indicates that age has no significant effect on customers’ impulse buying tendency and thus remains same across all the age groups between 16-35 years.

**Gender and impulse buying tendency:**

An independent sample t-test was used to understand whether impulse buying tendency varies based on gender. The results indicate that there is a significant difference between the impulse buying tendency of male and female customers. The female gender appears to have more impulse buying tendency than the male gender. It can be inferred that females are more flexible in adding unplanned items to their shopping than males. A reason behind this could be that
females evaluate the need of an item after looking at it, whereas males buy according to their plans.

**Occupational status and impulse buying tendency:**

One way ANOVA was used to test the significant differences in the impulse buying tendency among the customers of various occupational statuses. The results indicate that impulse buying tendency do not vary significantly among customers with different occupational status. The impulse buying tendency remains same across the customers belonging to a different occupational status even if a person is employed or unemployed.

**Marital status and impulse buying tendency:**

An independent sample t-test was used to test the difference between impulse buying tendency of single and married customers. The results indicate that there is no significant difference between the impulse buying tendency of single and married customers.

**Educational qualification and impulse buying tendency:**

One-way ANOVA was used to test the effect of educational qualification on impulse buying tendency. The results indicate that qualification has no significant effect on customers’ impulse buying tendency. In other words impulse buying tendency is same among the customers with different educational qualifications.

**Income and impulse buying tendency:**

The result of one way ANOVA to test the effect of monthly income on customers’ impulse buying tendency indicate that income has no significant effect on customers’ impulse buying tendency, i.e. it remains same across all income groups even if a person is dependent on others’ income.

5.2.3 Impact of demographic factors on influence of eye catching window displays:

**Age and influence of eye catching window displays:**

One way ANOVA was used to test the difference in influence of eye-catching window displays on the basis of age. The results indicate that the influence of eye catching window displays on impulse buying varies significantly among
customers’ of different age groups. The customers in the age group of 21-25 years are influenced much by these displays.

**Gender and influence of eye catching window displays:**

The independent sample t-test was used to test the difference in influence of eye-catching window displays on the basis of gender. The results indicate that gender has no significant effect on the influence of eye-catching window displays.

**Occupational status and influence of eye catching window displays:**

One way ANOVA was used to test the effect of occupation on the influence of eye-catching window displays. The results indicate that the influence of eye-catching window displays on impulse buying tendency do not vary significantly among customers with different occupational status.

**Marital status and influence of eye catching window displays:**

An independent sample t-test was used to study whether the influence of eye-catching window displays differed between single and married customers. The results indicate that there is a significant difference between the influence of eye-catching window displays on impulse buying tendency of single and married customers. It is observed that single customers are influenced much by the eye catching window displays compared to the married customers.

**Educational qualification and influence of eye catching window displays:**

One way ANOVA was used to test the differences in the influence of eye-catching window displays on the basis of educational qualification of the respondents. The results indicate that the influence of eye-catching window displays on impulse buying tendency do not vary significantly among customers with different educational qualifications.

**Income and influence of eye catching window displays:**

One way ANOVA was used to test the difference in influence of eye-catching window displays on the basis of monthly income. The results indicate that the influence of eye-catching window displays on impulse buying tendency varies significantly among customers’ with different income groups. The respondents with
income below Rs.10000 were influenced much by these displays compared to the other groups.

5.2.4 Impact of demographic factors on influence of informative window displays:

Age and influence of informative window displays:

One way ANOVA was used to test the difference in influence of informative window displays on the basis of age. The results indicate that influence of informative window displays on impulse buying varies significantly among customers’ of different age groups. The respondents in the age group of 16-20 years were influenced greatly by informative window displays.

Gender and influence of informative window displays:

The independent sample t-test was used to test the difference in the influence of informative window displays on the basis of gender. The results indicate that influence of informative window displays on impulse buying varies significantly between male and female customers. The female gender was influenced much by these displays compared to the male gender.

Occupational status and influence of informative window displays:

One way ANOVA was used to test the differences in the influence of informative window displays on the basis of educational qualifications. The results indicate that the influence of informative window display on impulse buying tendency varies significantly among customers’ with different occupational status. Students and professionals are much influenced by such displays.

Marital status and influence of informative window displays:

An independent sample t-test was used to determine whether the influence of informative window displays differed between single and married customers. The t-test results indicate that influence of informative window displays on impulse buying varies significantly between single and married customers. It is observed that single customers are influenced much by the informative window displays compared to the married customers.
**Educational qualification and influence of informative window displays:**

One way ANOVA was used to test the differences in influence of informative window displays on the basis of educational qualification. The results indicate that influence of informative window displays on impulse buying varies significantly among customers’ with different educational qualification. The intermediates were highly influenced by the informative window displays.

**Income and influence of informative window displays:**

One way ANOVA was used to test the difference in influence of informative window displays on the basis of monthly income of the respondents. The results indicate that influence of informative window displays on impulse buying tendency varies significantly among customers’ with different income groups. Young customers, i.e. college going students who are dependent on parents’ or others’ income were highly influenced by informative window displays.

**5.2.5 Impact of demographic factors on influence of mannequin displays:**

**Age and influence of mannequin displays:**

One way ANOVA was performed to test the difference in the influence of mannequin displays on the basis of age. The results indicate that the influence of mannequin displays on impulse buying varies significantly among customers’ of different age groups. The respondents in the age group of 21-25 years are much influenced by the mannequin displays in the store.

**Gender and influence of mannequin displays:**

The independent sample t-test was used to test the difference in the influence of mannequin displays on the basis of gender. The results indicate that the influence of mannequin displays on impulse buying tendency do not vary significantly between male and female customers, i.e. influence of mannequin displays remains same for both male and female customers.
Occupational status and influence of mannequin displays:

One way ANOVA was used to test the differences in the influence of mannequin displays on the basis of occupational status. The results indicate that the influence of mannequin displays on impulse buying tendency do not vary significantly among customers with different occupational status, i.e. customers with different occupational status have the same impulse buying tendency.

Marital status and influence of mannequin displays:

An independent sample t-test was used to determine whether the influence of mannequin displays differed between single and married customers. The results indicate that the influence of mannequin displays on impulse buying tendency varies significantly between single and married customers. The respondents who are single are much influenced by the mannequin displays compared to the married.

Educational qualification and influence of mannequin displays:

One way ANOVA was used to test the differences in the influence of mannequin displays on the basis of educational qualification. The results indicate that the influence of mannequin displays on impulse buying tendency do not vary significantly among customers with different educational qualification.

Income and influence of mannequin displays:

One way ANOVA was used to test the differences in the influence of mannequin displays on the basis of income. The results indicate that the influence of mannequin displays on impulse buying tendency varies significantly among the customers’ with different income levels. The respondents with income below Rs.10000 are influenced much by these displays.

5.2.6 Impact of demographic factors on influence of floor merchandising:

Age and influence of floor merchandising:

One way ANOVA was used to test the differences in the influence of floor merchandising on the basis of age. The results indicate that influence of floor merchandising on impulse buying varies significantly among customers’ of different age groups. The respondents in the age group of 21-25 years are much influenced by the mannequin displays.
Gender and influence of floor merchandising:

The independent sample t-test was used to test the difference in the influence of floor merchandising on the basis of gender. The results indicate that the influence of floor merchandising on impulse buying tendency do not vary significantly between male and female customers.

Occupational status and influence of floor merchandising:

One way ANOVA was used to test the differences in the influence of floor merchandising on the basis of occupational status. The results indicate that the influence of floor merchandising on impulse buying tendency do not vary significantly among the customers with different occupational status.

Marital status and influence of floor merchandising:

An independent sample t-test was used to determine whether the influence of floor merchandising differed between single and married customers. The results indicate that the influence of floor merchandising on impulse buying tendency varies significantly between single and married customers. The respondents who are single are much influenced by the floor merchandising compared to the married.

Educational qualification and influence of floor merchandising:

One way ANOVA was used to test the differences in the influence of floor merchandising on the basis of educational qualification. The results indicate that the influence of floor merchandising on impulse buying tendency do not vary significantly among the customers with different educational qualifications.

Income and influence of floor merchandising:

One way ANOVA was used to test the differences in the influence of income on the basis of educational qualification. The results indicate that influence of floor merchandising on impulse buying tendency do not vary significantly among customers with different income groups.
5.2.7 Impact of demographic factors on influence of promotional signage:

Age and influence of promotional signage:

One way ANOVA was used to test the difference in the influence of promotional signage on the basis of age. The results indicate that influence of promotional signage on impulse buying tendency varies significantly among customers’ of different age groups. The respondents in the age group of 21-25 years are highly influenced by the promotional signage.

Gender and influence of promotional signage:

The independent sample t-test was used to test the differences in the influence of promotional signage on the basis of gender. The results indicate that the influence of promotional signage on impulse buying tendency do not vary significantly between male and female customers.

Occupational status and influence of promotional signage:

One way ANOVA was used to test the differences in the influence of promotional signage on the basis of occupational status. The results indicate that the influence of promotional signage on impulse buying tendency do not vary significantly among customers with different occupational status.

Marital status and influence of promotional signage:

An independent sample t-test was used to test the differences in the influence of promotional signage on the basis of marital status. The results indicate that the influence of promotional signage on impulse buying tendency do not vary significantly between single and married customers, i.e. married and single have the same influence of promotional signage.

Educational qualification and influence of promotional signage:

One way ANOVA was used to test the difference in the influence of promotional signage on the basis of educational qualification. The results indicate that the influence of promotional signage on the impulse buying tendency varies significantly among customers’ with different educational qualification.
Postgraduates and Graduates are much influenced by the promotional signage used in the store.

**Income and influence of promotional signage:**

One way ANOVA was used to test the difference in the influence of promotional signage on the basis of income. The results indicate that the influence of promotional signage on impulse buying tendency do not vary significantly among customers with different income groups.

5.3 **Findings based on retailers’ response:**

- The majority of the respondents said that the purpose of visual merchandising is to attract, engage, and motivate the customers to make a purchase. It also creates magic to increase footfalls by inviting the customers into the store with the help of well-designed window displays. It is all about planning and displaying the merchandise through exterior and interior presentations.

- According to retailers, theme displays are the most important parameter of visual merchandising, which capture people's imagination and a good theme will lure the customers with a shopping mood into the store. A mannequin and fixture planning is the second most important parameter of VM. Mannequins are capable of attracting the potential customers and are the widely used props in apparel stores. Fixtures on the floor direct the customers through the store and also make the store more established. Windows and pop displays were ranked third by the retailers as well-designed window displays encourage impulse sales and increase customer’s curiosity. Space management was ranked fourth as it is integral to the success of any retail store since the biggest investment in retail is in space. It enables a smooth and efficient customer flow into the store and within it. Use of colour and lighting was ranked fifth as they attract the attention and pull more customers into the store. The least important parameter was interior and exterior signage which was ranked sixth.
• The majority of retailers are very keen on developing effective visual merchandising strategy as they have realized the importance of it. They are hiring professional retail designers, Visual Merchandisers, window dressers and store planners to create effective designs for the store. Visual Merchandisers are today looked up as important and necessary executives. They are also keeping a good budget for visual merchandising activities.

• The majority of the retailers agrees that the technique of displaying the merchandise in its proper range simplifies the decision making of the customers and help them in their buying process. Window display makes the decision making process of the customer rather simple. Based on the window display, the customers can easily decide whether to enter the store or not.

• Retailers are using all the strategies to attract the younger generation by bringing in theme displays, changing window displays as per seasons and festivals, highlighting merchandise with bright colours and lighting, using graphics and design to display the latest trend. Few retailers expressed that it is essential to create a right and stress free ambience as the retail store must be a place of excitement for customers. They also opined that if the customers are happy and feel stress free they tend to buy more.

• The majority of the retailers said that excessive use of props is the common flaw noticed in the Indian retail outlets and thus there is a need to understand the proper usage of props as an aid of selling. Other common mistakes observed are complicated presentations, cramped-up windows and unplanned fixtures. They added that there is a need to improve the quality of window display to avoid confusion and complications among the customers. There is a need of bringing and using fixtures properly as they are useful for a logical and planned display, at the same time they help in more convenient shopping for the customers.

• The majority of the retailers said that use of advance and creative fixtures is the most important requirement to strengthen and build effective visual merchandising strategy. It is crucially important to have designer store fixtures for elevating the aesthetics of the store as they help in displaying the merchandise in a more organized way and also give them good visibility.
• A good number of retailers said that theme display is the prime requirement as a well-themed display can draw people into the store by creating a story or aspiration that they can buy the products. It's vital to have a theme for the display as it captures people's imagination. They also said that the use of creative graphics and signage is the need of the day as quality signage is an easy and effective way to drive foot traffic, communicate and educate the customers.

• Most of the retailers stated that with the growth of retail, the scope of VM is also growing exponentially. VM spend has increased in the recent years. Indian consumers are demanding state of the art service, global standard of the products and international level of shopping experience. In view of this trend, the VM in India is fast emerging as a lucrative and much sought after profession. The concept of VM is at infancy stage in India, but its future outlook is excellent, with an increase in the number of shopping malls and retail outlets the demand of VM is certainly going to take a big leap.

• The majority of the respondents said that budget for visual merchandising activities must be as per the retailers’ wishes i.e. no specific amount any year. The retailer decides the budget on the basis of the type of merchandise, market situation, type of customers, objective at the time of promotion, location of the store, the space of the retail outlet etc. It was observed that all the retailers had a budget while planning their visual merchandising activities.

• The majority of the respondents said that they see the impact of visual merchandising directly in terms of increase in footfalls, sales turnover and store image.

• The majority of the respondents said that the visual merchandising aspect most appreciated by Bengalurean customers is the window display as it showcases the merchandise and convey the most important information in a way that’s compelling and relevant to the target audience. Retailers are recognizing the importance of window display as the first point of contact between the store and the customer and a chance to create the most critical first impression on the customer.
Most of the respondents said that visual merchandising for apparel category is highly important and thus they are increasing spending on the advanced fixtures; stylish fittings; emphatic lighting and digital signage for an international appeal and inviting feel. They added that the world of VM is all about fascinating tools of display which help to transform shoppers into stoppers; walk-bys into walk-ins; and passers-by into passers -who-buy.

The majority of the respondents expect changes in current projects for apparel category in the form of better window displays, use of advance fixtures and better lighting. They opined that developed countries look at the window display as a critical tool of marketing; however, in India, it is still an emerging concept.

Most of the respondents said that influence of visual merchandising on customers’ buying decision is high.

The majority of the respondents said that elegant counters with visual merchandising strategies help to sell the merchandise faster as they are sensory and visually appealing, influence the customers to buy on impulse, help in explaining the product, and increase the KPI. The retailers also said that elegant counters attract the attention of the customers and make them stay longer at the purchase point and ultimately it contributes to increase in sales.

Most of the respondents said that a good backup of lighting and fixtures are needed to attract the customers. They added that lighting is very important for the apparel category as shades and colors of the product matters the customers. There is a need for advanced lighting technique to attract the attention of the shoppers and to create a positive mood. They mentioned that without fixtures apparel stores are incomplete. Fixtures not only advertise the cloths but make the store look more established and elegant. A well-chosen display fixture can add zest to the cloths which are displayed. They are able to create a great presentation of the products, will encourage more shoppers to check out the products and guide them to buy the clothing.

The majority of the respondents agreed that there is a need of bringing in creativity in the fixtures used for apparel stores in Bangalore retail. They said that cost effective fixtures with international prototype saves space and
facilitates “good appeal”. They also added that innovation and creativity in fixtures are the need of the hour.

- The majority of the respondents were of the opinion that allocating a good budget for visual merchandising gives better results in terms of increase in sales per sq. ft.
- Most of the respondents said that target customers for apparel category are generally from an elite group of society who like to shop in an elegant retail format. Whereas, a few said that it’s not true always as fashion is affordable today.
- The majority of the respondents said that graphics and design are a new trend to create window displays. The graphics make the windows get a larger than life look with which the customers associate themselves while buying. Many stores have found success using oversized in-store or window graphics to add visual impact to display. The graphics can be repeated on a smaller scale throughout the store to earmark featured merchandise or sale items.
- The majority of the retailers responded that display of apparel with the help of props, plays a wonderful role in increasing the sales. They said props increase the look of the merchandise, take the customers to a virtual world, and help in cross-selling and up-selling.
- Most of the respondents said that the interior and exterior signage influence the customers in many ways. Signs serve as a type of silent salesperson for the business. Exterior signs draw attention of the customer towards the store and help differentiate it from others on the street. Interior signs help customers locate merchandise and can lead to impulse sales when added to special displays.
- Most of the respondents said that visual merchandising in Bangalore is touching the International Standards. Whereas, a few said that it has a long way to live up to international standards.
- The majority of the respondents said that it is important to hire a Visual Merchandiser today. Retailers were of the opinion that Visual Merchandisers are in charge of creating attractive visual displays in retail outlets and play a significant role in contributing to the sales. As organized retail grows and
number of players increase, the role of Visual Merchandisers would become more and more crucial.

- Most of the retailers agree that the expenditure incurred on visual merchandising activities is cost-effective. As most of the visual merchandising activities and techniques lead to better sales per square foot. The results of visual merchandising are increased footfalls; customer loyalty, increased sales per square foot etc. and so most of them believe that visual merchandising is cost-effective.

- The Chi-Square test was used to find the association between retailers’ experience and various aspects of VM. The retailers’ experience was categorized into three groups as: below 5 years, 5-10 years, and more than 10 years. The test results indicate that there is no difference in the opinion of retailers on the basis of experience in the retail field about various aspects of visual merchandising.

5.4 Conclusion:

The main aim of this study was to know why customers buy on impulse and to examine the factors, particularly visual merchandising displays and demographic factors that trigger customers’ impulse buying tendency. The study also aimed at evaluating the role of visual merchandising in enhancing store atmospherics and customer shopping form a retailer perspective. A significant contribution of the present study is its elucidation of the relationship between impulse buying and visual merchandising, which has been neglected in academic research (Buttle, 1988). The notion of how visual merchandising influences impulse buying in the store, has not been emphasized in the past researches. With the purpose of answering the question of why customers buy on impulse, this study was carried out to investigate some of the factors that influence the customers’ impulse buying tendency. By testing hypotheses and through discussion of the analytical results, the researcher examined the possible impacts of various factors on young customers’ impulse buying tendency in malls. The research results evidenced that there were statistically significant relationship between customers’ impulse buying tendency and the three visual merchandising practices, namely eye catching window displays, mannequin
understanding the relationships between the customers’ demographic characteristics and impulse buying behavior. The findings of this study support the view that impulse buying occurs due to various visual presentations carried out by the apparel retailers and also due to some of the demographic characteristics of the customers. The results of this study can be valuable to apparel retailers for designing effective window and in-store displays to enhance the attractiveness of the merchandise and to create a favorable attitude towards the products among the shoppers. Retailers must use these findings efficaciously to increase sales of their store and innovate themselves in terms of various displays. This study has revealed usefulness and effectiveness of visual merchandising in understanding consumers’ behavior of impulse buying.

5.5 Recommendations:

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions derived from the findings above, various recommendations can be offered to apparel retailers. These recommendations are:

- The study found that among all the elements of visual merchandising, window display, mannequin display and promotional signage had the highest effect on impulse buying. This is an interesting finding because until recently most Indian retail outlets tended to be small and cramped with little access for the shoppers to the actual merchandise. However, in recent years the Indian retail sector has seen major changes with the emergence of modern retail formats such as supermarkets and shopping malls in urban areas all over the country. Retailers should therefore continue to invest in improving the windows, store layouts, and in-store displays as they would allow shoppers to spend more time in stores and browse the merchandise, which may trigger impulsive urges. Hence, retailers have to pay much more attention to the store environment and strive to improve its various elements on an on-going basis.
• Since women have higher levels of impulse buying in comparison to men, and as impulse buying operates through sensual cues, retailers can emphasise sensory cues in stores whose products tend to appeal to women. Visual displays should have a stronger impact in the women’s departments and on shelves carrying products aimed at women.

• The respondents aged between 21-25 years and those who are single are highly influenced by the various visual merchandising activities. Thus, retailers can address these specifics and plan the activities based on their motives.

• Apparel retailers should use visual merchandising displays to enhance a shopper’s experience by beautifying the store, to create a relaxed environment and to create interest and desire to enter the store. Visual merchandising could also be used as a tool to display the store’s brand and to communicate information about the products as well as their quality.

• Apparel retailers should not overlook the importance of good displays as customers are led by attractive eye catching displays and thus they must design effective displays to create the right impression to stand out from the competition. Changing the arrangement of the displays in regular intervals will initiate new interest about the products in the minds of the customers and helps to avoid monotony among the customers. Neat and clean arrangement is the foundation of an inviting and successful visual display. A cracked sign holder or an unclean display environment can ruin a beautiful display. They must make use of shelving, hanging, folding, stacking or dumping merchandise display techniques depending upon the type of the products.

• Windows are among the first things shoppers see when they walk or drive by the store, so they are the ideal place to capture shoppers’ attention. The Visual Merchandisers should be very creative in designing the window displays of the store as they are the first point of contact between the store and the customer and a chance to create the most critical first impression of the customer. Window display if used effectively can bring new customers, create loyalty, enhance the store and brand image, promote certain products and above all will be a major selling tool in increasing sales. With a well-
designed graphics program, they can truly live up to their promise as windows of opportunity to help bring the customers into the store and drive sales. The retailers must change it regularly to promote new stock and keep customers’ interest alive. In malls it is required to redesign the windows every week because the customers flock to the stores on the weekends. Mannequins must be kept in the window and draped according to the predefined theme which must be maintained throughout the display. They must use appropriate lighting as it brings life to window and is the finishing touch. Use large graphics which will be seen clearly from the street when a special offer is to be promoted to attract the attention of the passer-by.

- Store windows are like billboards in another way, and that’s where the challenge with window graphics begins. As with actual billboards, there are only about three seconds to make sure shoppers grasp the essential “message” about the store. That’s a very short time to effectively communicate the brand, showcase the merchandise to entice the shopper, and convey the most important information in a way that’s compelling and relevant to the target audience. The store window offers one of the best opportunities to reach the current and prospective customers and attract them into the store.

- Customers relate strongly to the body forms because of their human imagery and so the choice of mannequin is a crucial decision in order to send the right message to the target customer. The mannequins help the customers to know about the latest trend the store offers without sometimes even bothering the sales representative. They also give them an idea of how the clothing or an accessory will look when they put it on. Mannequins help in up-selling of the merchandise and they also personalize items for the customers. Thus, retailers must select the appropriate mannequins and can choose from various types like abstract, articulated, custom, ethnic, headless or junior. They must be very careful in selecting the shape and size of the mannequin according to the target market. The clothes on the mannequins should look properly fitted, should be according to the season and changed at regular intervals to avoid monotony. Mannequins can certainly be used in both
window and sales floor displays. Some people actually buy clothes if they look nice on the mannequin and thus every clothing shop should have them.

- Retailers should design attractive and informative interior and exterior signage. They must provide enough interior signage as they are the visual indicators that direct the customers to move around the store and provide the price and offer information which often results into unplanned purchase. Quality signage is an easy and effective way to drive foot traffic, communicate and educate the customers. However, if done incorrectly, it can cause overstimulation and even confusion. Signage in the physical retail business has been just as important as the website design, and retail signage shouldn’t be an afterthought. They can be an essential component of a business’s overall marketing strategy. A sign that contains a business logo can help reinforce its brand. They are also used to draw attention to promotions and to convey information about the business. Because an exterior signage is visible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, its effect is continuous. Signage can be a cost-effective form of marketing. Digital signage must also be used in the front of the store to create a centre of attention for the people during night time also.

- Retailers should emphasize on the store layouts, as they help the customers to navigate around the store. They must be able to make use of 'Hot-spots' (best-selling areas) and make a floor layout and plan where they will position promotional, in-season, slow-moving stock. By designing a plan-o-gram and activating changes frequently one can thus be a proactive retailer. Much consideration should be given to store design, as having an effective store layout is essential to keep customers in the shop for longer. Provide enough space inside the store and keep the aisles wide which help the customers roam freely through all the merchandise and allow better visibility. A well planned and managed space in a retail store is the touchstone for a retailer’s success in business. Effective planning of the retail space and managing it in a right way is the key factor in the life cycle of merchandise planning and execution. More retailers are adopting the fact that space management is an integral part of any retail business.
• Lighting is a key component in emphasizing product and promotional displays. An often overlooked and underestimated tool available to retailers is store lighting. It should never be over-looked. It is often the final finishing touch to any good display because it draws attention and highlights where the attention should be focused. Effective lighting is a key in the sale of merchandise in helping to create a favourable first impression of the merchandise and its surroundings. Good lighting creates atmosphere and add mood to the retail setting. Retailers must use soft projected lights which will let the display to glow evenly. Chandeliers can also be used to show the elegance and luxury. Lights of different colours are indeed more attractive than white fluorescent lamp alone, especially for window displays. The LED light strips, neon lights and coloured fluorescent lamps can also be used to give a contemporary look to the store. A store with appropriate lighting may entice shoppers to experience the store and create an urge to purchase.

• Apparel retailers must keep the appearance of the fixtures, new because furniture makes great displays. They must use advance fixtures such as rounders, gondolas, four-way racks, T-stand, waterfall, and shelving. They should use fixtures such as racks or bins to suggest items that are on offer or at a lower price as customers are generally attracted towards such items. These should be maintained with care and make them look attractive with a clear price. Dedicated fixture can provide clarity and logic to the product presentation incorporating suggested complementary and impulse purchases. The advantage of these fixtures is that they can be placed anywhere, even outside the facade to induce impulse purchase. The effective cleaning of showcases and display fixtures is also required.

• Retailers must allocate extra budget to develop the facade and external appearance of the store because this is the first thing that will be noticed by the people outside. An important element in any store design is the look of the storefront. The entrance reflects the personality of the store and gives a glimpse of the merchandise available inside. A store should have an inviting appearance that makes the customer feel comfortable and yet eager to buy.

• Visual merchandising can help create that positive customer image that leads to successful sales. It not only communicates the store’s image, but also
reinforces the store's advertising efforts and encourages impulse buying by the customer. Retailers should maintain the stores' image through effective graphic designs and attractive visual arts with the purpose to attract, engage and motivate the customer towards making a purchase.

- Retailers should incorporate appropriate props and displays to support the products which require thought and a little bit of creativity. They should consider the practical, functional and safety aspects of the props used for display. It is usual to use items as simple as mannequins, stands, panels, tables, chairs and shelving units for display. However, use of everyday objects in an unusual way is often the most inspiring displays.

- A theme is a display of sale items of similar categories and it is essential to have themes for all retail displays. They capture people's imaginations and a good theme will lure the customer with a shopping mood into the store. Themes mainly depend upon the retailer's imagination and creativity. Focusing on the right theme rather than creating a display with expensive raw materials is the key to successful window display. Retailers must employ different themes in a year. They shouldn't limit visual merchandising themes for winter, spring, summer and autumn. They must set the theme to support a local event, back to school, festivals, celebrations and holidays. They must change the displays and decorations to support the theme to avoid boredom. They must try to create a new look because customers love novelty and want something different which they have not seen before.

- Effective visual merchandising is a brilliant business booster, but the wrong display can do more harm than good. A lack of theme or story in visual merchandising makes it ineffective for selling products. A clutter free, well-laid out display is both attractive to look at and draw the buyers to examine the goods. A well-themed display can draw people into the store by creating a story or aspiration that they can buy the products. A perfect display is the one which is not too crowded, i.e., which looks neither messy nor too sparse. The displays must be changed frequently and the retailers must create a schedule for replenishing the stock on a regular basis to draw in curious customers and keep the display fresh and relevant. Along with the clothing other decorative accessories with lighting are used to create the required
environment to support the relevance of the theme. The theme could be
ethic, western or contemporary and must be changed from time to time to
continue to draw the attention of the customers.

- Retailers must enhance the ambience of the store by adding music, aroma
  and dramatic lighting. This can generate a good impression to the shopper.
- Retailers excitedly pack too many products in their display with the
  misguided notion that their sales will increase proportionately, but they result
  in a mess and cluttered presentation. High product density results in visual
  chaos that overwhelms the customers. Customers don’t have enough time to
  sort through the clutter and determine if the merchandise is of enough
  interest to stop and shop. Overcrowding products reduce their perceived
  value in the customers’ mind and they become common and unremarkable.
  Thus, retailers must try to reduce the visual clutter.
- Retailers must use POP displays next to the checkout counters as they
  mesmerize and tempt the customers to try a new product or make that last
  impulse purchase before they leave the store. Point of Purchase displays are
  a hallmark of visual merchandising and include filling floor or counter space
  with clever arrangements of new, on-offer or seasonal products that
  customers look for. Retailers must organize the POP displays with the right
  storage units or display accessories that emphasize the item in a clear and
  tidy way.
- Investing in eye catching, inviting interiors is an important part of the
  building design process, especially in the retail sector, where presentation is
  everything and consumers “buy with their eyes”.
- Colour is one of the most powerful tools in visual merchandising. Colour
  can be associated with emotions and special occasions. It attracts attention
  and pulls more customers into the store. A retailer has to focus on the right
  choice of colour that would match with the theme of the display. A right
  choice of colours in the display items can turn walkers into stoppers and
  significantly convert them into customers. It is therefore mandatory to
  choose the right colour for the right theme of display.
- Retailers must hire Visual Merchandisers who are responsible for in-store
  merchandise displays and for customizing the feel and look of a store to
attract customers and increase sales. They have the working knowledge of design and applied arts, and thus create interesting and effective show windows using creativity, energy and imagination.

- With the rising level of economic growth in the country, the level of disposable income of the customers is rising. This has, in turn, led to tough competition among the retailers. In this cut-throat competition, those retailers win who are able to attract and sustain the attention of the customers. Unique and effective window displays play an important role in this regard. It is essential for all kinds of stores in the modern times, ranging from the smallest to the largest.

5.6 Managerial Implications:

The findings of this study may be important from a theoretical perspective because they contribute to a better understanding of impulse buying behavior of young customers, at the same time they also suggest some managerial implications. From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that retailers should invest in improving the store environment to increase the level of impulse buying in their stores. Specifically, they need to focus on enhancing various displays, designing proper layouts and having well-lit stores to encourage impulse buying. Retailers should consistently reinforce usage of window displays, in-store/ mannequin displays and promotional signage to create a favorable shopping environment and to proactively influence customers’ in-store responses and future choice decisions. Though informative window displays and floor merchandising did not significantly impact customers’ impulse buying tendency, retailers should not completely ignore them. The findings of this study provided sufficient evidence that retailers can effectively utilize visual merchandising to increase desirability of products and to create a store image. The results of the study could benefit apparel retailers in Bangalore because a detailed exploration in terms of customers’ attitude towards visual merchandising, discussion regarding the effect of these displays on customers’ impulse buying tendency and an analysis of the role of visual merchandising in enhancing store atmospherics and customer shopping from retailers’ perspective was carried out. The apparel retailers can therefore apply these
findings to their retail environment and create visual merchandising displays that will be of value to customers, encourage impulse behavior and ultimately lead to a consumer purchasing a product. Retailers can attempt to create desire for their products, entice in-store browsing and lead to unplanned and impulse purchases through stimuli sent by visual merchandising.

The results of this study provide practical implications for the whole apparel industry. The information disclosed here may help the practitioners to better understand the shoppers’ behavior in malls and, as a consequence, to undertake more efficient retailing strategies in malls. The study makes it clear that visual merchandising activities increase the likelihood of impulse buying among mall shoppers. Observing the positive influence of visual merchandising on impulse buying, retailers need to work hard to create eye-catching window displays; mannequin displays and promotional signage enhance buying decisions of mall shoppers. The results provided empirical evidence to add to the existing atmospherics literature and also practical implications for store retailers to improve the interior and exterior of retail environments.

5.7 **Suggestions for future research:**

To achieve a better understanding of important buyer behaviour, impulse buying, this research could be extended in several respects.

- A study using a larger and more representative sample covering cities other than Bengaluru would be useful to further verify the regional differences in impulse buying behaviour of urban consumers.
- From this research study it was clear that the respondents expressed behavioural responses to visual merchandising displays. An area that would benefit from more detailed exploration is the influence of visual merchandising displays on brand recognition and differentiation.
- As an impulse buying is a universal behaviour observed regardless of demographic or geographical constraints, studies with other demographic and geographic groups may enable a deeper understanding of the
the phenomenon and the influence of visual merchandising upon impulse buying behaviour.

- Moreover, this study being limited to only four techniques, studying the influence of other existing visual merchandising techniques as well as other internal and external impulse buying motivators can constitute interesting subjects to deepen the phenomenon of impulse buying.

- A qualitative approach to this particular research as well as a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods can be recommended for future researches.

- This research concentrates on impulse buying in a retail context, even though such behaviour is also likely to occur in the new shopping arena of direct marketing (television shopping channels, catalogues, telemarketing and the internet). Another extension would be to investigate the impulse buying behavior of online consumers as against offline consumers.

- As there is a wide gap between urban and rural area, it would also be useful to examine the difference in impulse buying behaviour between urban and rural area. The conditions for impulse buying behaviour are improving in rural area (e.g., a certain level of income, shopping infrastructure), it would be meaningful to examine the impulse buying behaviour between these markets.