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[Field Research]

# A Study on VMD of SPA Brands and Purchasing Intention: Focus on Seoul and Gyeonggi-Do\*

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## Abstract

**Purpose** - This study investigates the effect of visual merchandising display (VMD) of local specialty retailer of private label apparel (SPA) brands, such as space, display, and presentation on brand awareness, brand image, and purchase intention. It investigates consumers' VMD awareness and purchase intention of SPA brands to help business activities of local SPA enterprises.

**Research designs, data, methodology** - This study uses SPSS 18.0 to study eight local SPA brands and has 193 effective usable copies from a sample of 200.

**Results** - The display and presentation of VMDs of SPA brands had a positive influence on brand awareness and brand image, which in turn had a positive influence on purchase intention.

**Conclusions** - As SPA brands are increasingly located in supercenters, they face space constraints and find it difficult to display their facade and signs effectively. Therefore, decisions pertaining to display, presentation, and space should consider whether these SPA brands are launched as independent specialty shops or in supercenters. The space for VMD is considered important in independent shops. However, shops that open in supercenters should pay more attention to presentation rather than space.

**Keywords** : SPA, VMD, Brand Image, Brand Awareness, Purchase Intention.

**JEL Classifications** : D3, D4, L1, L8, L11.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background and Purposes

These days, national economy has become dull to reduce con-

sumption of department stores greatly and to increase sales growth of SPA brand rapidly. In South Korea, SPA brand grew up at rate of 77.4% five years from 2006 to 2010 to govern fashion market. The SPA (Specialty store retailer of Private label Apparel) that meant three words, that is to say, specialty store retailer, private label and apparel, increased consumer values by reasonable prices to satisfy rapidly changing needs of consumers and to investigate consumers' response quickly and produce in time. One company controlled all of stages in lump sum, for instance, product planning, apparel design, production and sales. The SPA lowered prices by excluding intermediate distribution to have large scaled shops and a variety of many products each shop.

Currently, global SPA brands thought that the South Korean market was important to enter Asian country markets, and South Korean fashion market was sensitive to trends to have high buying force and to let global SPA brands enter the market owing to active marketing strategy. The largest Swedish SPA brand that opened the first shop in South Korea in 2010 made CEO in charge of Asian market work at Seoul office: As such, global SPA brands thought much of South Korean fashion market to make change of values of the market (Cho, 2012). Number of local brands with slogan of 'Korean style SPA' increased under the environment, and SPA type brands that were launched in South Korea were said to imitate global SPA brand from point of view of shop type and scale (Lee, 2004). As such, interest in SPA brand rose. Most of studies on SPA brand investigated production method, brand strategies, VMD and shop attributes, and rarely investigated attitude toward the brand, loyalty and others (Yoo and Hwang, 2011).

This study investigated effects of space, display and presentation of VMD upon brand awareness, brand image and purchase intention of consumers in the twenties who were familiar with SPA brand. The study investigated SPA brand awareness, image and purchase intention depending upon the three VMD factors to examine consumers' VMD awareness on SPA brand and purchase intention and to suggest marketing strategies of local SPA enterprises.

### 1.2. Scope and Methods

The subject was eight of renowned SPA brands at home and abroad, for instance, Forever, Uniqlo, Zara, HNM, Gap, Giordano, Spao and 8 Seconds.

A questionnaire survey was used to investigate consumers' brand awareness and image on VMD factors of SPA brand, and purchase

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intention based on precedent studies on SPA, VMD, brand awareness and image and purchase intention.

## 2. Theoretical Background

### 2.1. SPA Brand

#### 2.1.1. Concept of the SPA

In 1987, Donald Fisher, chairman of GAP that casual garment chain store in Western Coast in the United States, said that the SPA being complex word of specialty store, private label and apparel was new business system of specialty store retailer of private label apparel (Jeong, 2010). The SPA runs large-scaled direct management shop free from expensive distribution cost of department store to save costs and to supply inexpensive products and to connect consumers the most effectively and to check and reflect consumer needs exactly and promptly (Lee and Gang, 2004). The fashion businesses that pursued speed and efficiency took reaction to rapidly changing desire of consumers who wanted to buy fashion products at inexpensive prices and to dispose of it and buy new fashion products after fashion (Cho, 2012). The SPA can build up system of standardization and manual from stage of product supply and planning subject to clear concept and rich product assortment and to have lowest prices of main products and to run POS(Point of Sale) and to satisfy consumers' desires as well as customers' convenience and to be super large-scaled shop (Lee and Jeong, 2010).

#### 2.1.2. Features and Types

SPA brand has quickly expanded at domestic fashion market. The SPA is to get price competitiveness based on planning, production and distribution. And, the SPA shall supply products in time upon customer's request to eliminate intermediate distribution and to provide inexpensive products. The SPA has features: First, selling of the latest trend product in reasonable price and at high quality shop to be consumer oriented; Second, redesign of fashion business and build up of independent value chain to be innovative; Third, shop VM strategy that considers VM (visual marketing) to contact consumers; Fourth, commodity trend of common use after reinterpreting trend of initial fashion; Fifth, speed, high merchandise turnover, and continuous release of product at the market to shorten lead time; Sixth, internationalization of culture, physical conditions and buying inclination based on trend consensus. Seventh, enterprise philosophy and flexible organizations (Cho, 2012). The SPA brand can be divided into makes type and retail type depending upon commodity supply entity. The maker type of SPA, for instance, Zara and MNG manages shop to sell maker's products by maker itself. And, the retail type of SPA, for instance, Gap in the United States, Uniqlo in Japan and H&M in Sweden, develops and sells products by distributor. The SPA brand can be divided into trendy type and basic type depending upon characteristics of the commodities. The fashion product helps keep brand image, sales and profit, and has short continuity frequency at the market, and is easy to have complicated trends; On the other hand,

the basic product helps increase sales and profit directly to accumulate sales experience in the past to forecast easily by repeated appearance and to have simple trend (Lee, 2004). So, trendy type of SPA brand is focused on quick rotation of new product, while basic type of SPA brand is done on core product (Jeong and Choi, 2011).

### 2.2. Concept and Configuration of the VMD

The VMD that is a combined word of both visual and merchandising can visualize commodity policy to display and present products effectively and to let consumers compare commodities easily and select it effectively by visual activities. The VMD displays and presents visually under commodity plan and shop environment to connect sales promotion and sales services and others and to make unified shop image and brand image and to be expression of CI (Corporate Identity) (Park and Lee, 2008).

These days, the VMD has put emphasis upon things that have influence upon consumers' experience at product buying process, for instance, building design out of the shop, interior in the shop, space configuration of the shop, product display, lighting, music, garden in the shop and other environmental factors, consumers' feeling toward shopping environment image, assessment on the product and buying behavior and so on (Gilboa and Rafaeli, 2003). The sales activity can be done by showing and promotion, and shopping customers shall be invited into the shop to let them stay in the shop and do shopping, and to produce, promote and elevate visual images of the shop. The VMD makes customers feel pleasant to improve shopping experience and to introduce new products (Pegler, 1995). The VMD makes customers cognize products as well as brand visually to take not only affirmative psychological reaction (brand image and attitudes) but also behavioral reaction (buying and revisit) (Kerfoot et al, 2003).

The VMD consists of basic factors, for instance, external facilities, internal facilities, office supplies, mannequin and alternatives, materials & props, color, lighting, window, sign, graphic and POP (Diamond & Diamond, 2004; Pegler, 1995). The VMD factors and details can be classified into fixed factor and variable factor (Yang, 2002), and VMD factor, presentation and display (Shin and Hong, 2004). The VMD factors can be classified into space, design and device (Kim and han, 2009), and structure, furniture & decoration, and color & lighting (Jang and choi, 2010).

This study kept the VMD factors in order again (Jeong and Cheon, 2011), and reclassified it into space such as floor, wall, column and exterior in the buildings, and display such as office supplies, images, POP, accessories, lighting and counter, and presentation such as visual presentation, point of sales presentation and item presentation that were used to investigate VMD of SPA brand.

### 2.3. Brand Asset

The brand asset was said to be effect of brand knowledge of consumer reaction upon long term brand value and/or brand marketing activities (Keller, 1993). The brand asset consisted of brand awareness, brand image, brand loyalty, quality cognized and asset value monopolized (Asker, 199). This study examined brand asset such as

brand awareness and brand image of the VMD of SPA brand and investigated effects of purchase intention upon the brand assets.

### 2.3.1. Brand Awareness

The brand awareness that consumers can deduct or classify specific brand under different condition makes consumers remind of the brand on or before buying and to select the brand and to have influence upon consumers' purchase attitudes (Rossiter and Percy, 1987). The brand awareness accounts for two factors, in other words, the one is brand recognition concerning product information in consumer memory, and the other is brand recall concerning consumer's drawing of information from memory (Keller, 1993). The brand image connects product image to give consumers friendliness and/or good impression on the product and to rely upon products and/or company and to include values in brand group for purchase (Aaker, 2006).

### 2.3.2. Brand Image

The brand image that can raise brand asset values has combined images of product attributes, trademark characteristics, users and country of origin and so on to have impression and belief on specific brand (Ahno, Hwang and Jeong, 1999). The brand image that includes brand knowledge and attributes makes consumers remind of drawing and/or thought (Levy, 1981) to let consumers evaluate set of beliefs, that is to say, product (Keller, 2001) and to be continuity and individuality (Aaker, 1997). The brand image that is powerful and unique allows consumers to remind of a brand easily to be advantageous at competition (Lee, 2009). The brand image that gives values to the brand needs to be made to build up consumer based brand (Keller, 2001).

### 2.3.3. Purchase Intention

The purchase intention that can be a variable between behavior and attitudes of the consumers includes relation between consumers and purchase behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) to be consumers' future behavior planned or forecast and to move attitudes to behavior (Engel et al, 1990). The light sense (87%) of human sense had the greatest influence upon purchase intention, and color and designs that man cognize firstly is important factor of purchase intention (Kim and Jang, 1998). Individuals buy products and/or services to satisfy their desire because they consider buying despite no attempt and buy regardless of product price and quality (Yoo, 1993). The purchase intention between user and enterprise can be made not one time but continuously depending upon service satisfaction (Tylor and Baker, 1994).

## 3. Models and Hypotheses

### 3.1. Models

This study empirically investigated not only effects of VMD factors of SPA brands upon purchase intention but also effects of brand

assets such as brand awareness and brand image upon mediation. The VMD factor of SPA brand consisted of space, display and presentation, and brand asset did brand awareness and brand image.

## 3.2. Hypotheses

### 3.2.1. Hypotheses of VMD Factors and Brand Assets

The lighting and office supplies of VMD factors had significant influence upon consumers' attitudes (Kim and Hong, 2005), and presentation and psychological factor of VMD factor did upon brand attitudes (Choi, 2009). Positive VMD image had positive influence upon brand image when consumers bought products (Park, 2008). Not only hypothesis 1 but also hypothesis 2 was used:

Hypothesis 1: The VMD factors of SPA brand have positive influence upon brand awareness.

Hypothesis 1-1: The space of SPA brand has positive influence upon brand awareness.

Hypothesis 1-2: The display of SPA brand has positive influence upon brand awareness.

Hypothesis 1-3: The presentation of SPA brand has positive influence upon brand awareness.

Hypothesis 2: The VMD factors of SPA brand have positive influence upon brand image.

Hypothesis 2-1: The space of SPA brand has positive influence upon brand image.

Hypothesis 2-2: The display of SPA brand has positive influence upon brand image.

Hypothesis 2-3: The presentation of SPA brand has positive influence upon brand image.

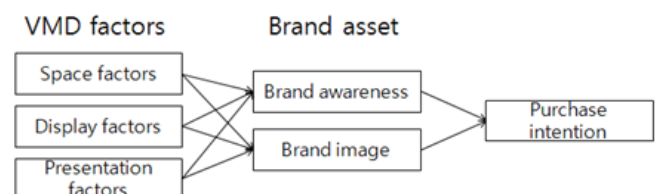
### 3.2.2 Hypotheses of Brand Assets and Purchase Intention

The brand asset that made consumer's purchase intention had relation with brand attitudes to regard brand as communication tools (Kim, 2002; Lee et al, 2010), and brand assets had influence upon purchase intention at relation between brand assets and purchase behavior of sports garment brands (Choi, 2008). Hypothesis 3 was used:

Hypothesis 3: The brand asset has positive influence upon purchase intention.

Hypothesis 3-1: The brand image has positive influence upon purchase intention.

Hypothesis 3-2: The brand image has positive influence upon purchase intention.



<Figure 1> Proposed Model

## 4. Methodologies

### 4.1. Data Collection and Analysis

In this study, eight of SPA brands in Seoul and Gyeonggi-do such as forever21, UNIQLO, ZARA, H&M, GAP, GIODANO, SPAO and 8seconds were used. The interviewees were 20 to 28 years old college students in the Metropolitan Areas. The questionnaire survey was done 45 days from October 15, 2012 to November 30, 2012. The authors distributed 200 copies of the questionnaire and collected 198 copies, and finally made use of 193 copies after giving up 5 copies having poor answers. The samples had demographic characteristics (Table 1):

<Table 1> Demographic Analysis

Section	Description	Frequency	Ratio (%)
Gender	Boy students	100	51.8
	Girl students	93	48.2
Brands	forever21	24	12.4
	UNIQLO	27	14.0
	ZARA	25	13.0
	H&M	23	11.9
	GAP	24	12.4
	GIODANO	24	12.4
	SPAO	23	11.9
	8 seconds	23	11.9

### 4.2. Data

The VMD factors that had three sub-factors of space, display and presentation to be independent variables had 5, 10 and 5 questions each, 19 questions in total with Likert 5-point scale. Not only brand awareness but also brand images that were parameters had 4 questions each, in other words, 8 questions in total, and purchase intention that was dependant variable had 3 questions with Likert 5-point scale. In this study, 30 questions were used to have variables (Table 2):

<Table 2> Contents and Source of the Questionnaire

Variables	Sub-factors	Questions	Source
VMD factor	Space	5	(Kim and Han, 2009; Shin and Hong, 2004; Yang, 2002; Jang and Choi, 2010; Sim, 2012)
	Display	9	
	Presentation	5	
Brand assets	brand awareness	4	(Aaker, 1993; Kim et al, 2012)
	Brand image	4	(Choi, 2005; Kim et al, 2012)
Purchase intention		3	(Kim and Jang, 1998; Lee and Hong, 2006; Cheon, 2002)

## 5. Empirical Analysis

### 5.1. Reliability and Factors

In this study, not only factor analysis but also reliability analysis was done to examine validity and reliability of test items of VMD

<Table 3> Factors and Reliability of the Scale

Descriptions			Factor analysis result			Cronbach's Alpha
			factor loading	eigen value	pct of var(%)	
VMD factors	Display	4. Good place, brightness and status of the lighting	.662	3.241	21.609	.692
		6. Good season and attachment place of POP	.660			
		2. Make use of office supplies in good harmony with commodities.	.653			
		7. Sizes and quantities of accessories are proper.	.592			
		9. The accessories are in good harmony with the shop.	.538			
		3. The lighting of presentation is good.	.430			
	Presentation	2. VP, PP and IP are good.	.627	1.731	11.539	
		3. PP is good enough to pay attention.	.602			
		4. The color and size array of IP are good.	.595			
		1. The presentation configuration (grouping) is good.	.557			
		5. The season presentation commodity in the shop is good.	.481			
	Space	3. The interior of shop is good enough to attract eyes.	.738	1.572	10.479	
		2. The light fixtures and shop atmosphere are good.	.691			
		5. Banner, poster and external signs look good.	.538			
		1. Designs of floor, ceiling, wall and column are good.	.499			
Brand assets	brand awareness	1. Be interested in SPA brand products.	.884	3.076	38.446	.804
		2. Good impression on SPA brand products.	.787			
		3. Reliable SPA brand products.	.705			
		4. Consistency of SPA brand products.	.690			
	Brand image	1. Advertising and public relations of SPA brand products	.776	1.299	16.241	
		2. Easy to memorize logo and symbols of SPA brand.	.692			
		3. Remind of SPA brand name easily.	.565			
		4. Distinguish SPA brand from other brands.	.487			
Purchase intention	3. Buy SPA brand products regardless of price and quality.	.922	2.362	78.746	.860	
	1. Want to buy SPA brand products.	.896				
	2. Recommend SPA brand products to other persons.	.842				

&lt;Table 4&gt; Regression analysis between VMD factors and brand awareness

Dependent variables	Independent variables	Unstandardized coefficient	Standardized coefficient	t	P	R2	F	P
		$\beta$	Beta					
Brand awareness	Constant	-1.073		-1.826	.069	.294	27.615	.000***
	display	.526	.318	4.857	.000			
	presentation	.628	.346	5.396	.000			
	space	.084	.052	.086	.421			

(\* : p&lt;0.05, \*\* : p&lt;0.01, \*\*\* : p&lt;0.001)

&lt;Table 5&gt; Regression Analysis between the VMD Factors and Brand Images

Dependent variables	Independent variables	Unstandardized coefficient	Standardized coefficient	t	P	R2	F	P
		$\beta$	Beta					
Brand images	constant	2.129		3.671	.000	.255	3.648	.014*
	display	.071	.051	.664	.507			
	presentation	.274	.178	2.384	.018			
	space	.107	.078	1.042	.299			

(\* : p&lt;0.05, \*\* : p&lt;0.01, \*\*\* : p&lt;0.001)

factors, brand assets and purchase intention. The study excluded items of 0.4 or lower factor loading as well as low reliability (Table 3):

## 5.2. Effects of the VMD Factors upon brand awareness and Brand Images

A regression analysis was done with dependant variables of brand awareness and brand image as well as independent variables of the VMD factors to investigate effects of the VMD factors of SPA brand upon brand awareness and brand image. The study investigated relation between the VMD factors and brand awareness to inspect hypothesis 1 (Table 4):

At the regression analysis, R2 of 0.294, F of 27.615 and P of 0.000(p<0.001) were significant. So, hypothesis had significant result and the VMD factors of SPA brand had influence upon brand awareness. The VMD factors were: First, display of t of 4.857 and p of 0.000(p<0.001) were significantly positive. Second, presentation of t of 5.396 and p of 0.000(p<0.001) were significantly positive. Not only display but also presentation had significant influence upon brand awareness. Third, space of t of 0.086 and p of 0.421(p<0.05) had significantly negative influence. These days, SPA brand shop that was not specialty shop but super center's shop had difficulties at space presentation and/or facade and sign presentation. And, the study investigated relation between the VMD factors and brand image to verify hypothesis 2 (Table 5):

At regression analysis, R2 of 0.255, F of 3.648 and P of 0.014(p<0.05) were found to be significant. So, hypothesis 2 was significant, and the VMD factors of SPA brand had influence upon brand images. The VMD factors were: First, display of t of 0.664 and p of 0.507(p<0.05) were significantly negative. Second, pre-

sentation of t of 2.384 and p of 0.018 (p<0.05) were significantly positive. Third, space of t of 1.042 and p of 0.299 (p<0.05) were significantly negative. In the era of new media, various kinds of mass media exposed brand images often to improve brand images by self public relations and advertising. So, presentation creating customers' buying desire was thought to be more important than not only space of external image and/or interior factor but also display of commodity accessories was. And, buying pattern of customers who decided upon brand by primary retrieval of low and mid priced products did not have influence upon space and display.

## 5.3. Effects of SPA Brand Awareness and Images upon Purchase Intention

A regression analysis was done with dependant variable of purchase intention and independent variable of SPA brand awareness and image to investigate effects of SPA brand awareness and image upon purchase intention. The brand awareness, image and purchase intention had relations (Table 6):

At regression analysis, R2 of 0.746, F of 279.721 and P of 0.000(p<0.001) were significant. So, hypothesis 3 was significant and SPA brand awareness and image had influence upon purchase intention. The VMD factors were: First, brand awareness with t of 16.023 and p of 0.000(p<0.001) was significantly positive. Second, brand image with t of 9.740 and p of 0.000(p<0.001) was significantly positive. So, brand awareness and brand image had significant influence upon purchase intention, so that SPA businesses were demanded to improve brand awareness and image by active public relations.

&lt;Table 6&gt; A regression analysis among brand awareness, brand image and purchase intention

Dependent variables	Independent variables	Unstandardized coefficient	Standardized coefficient	t	P	R2	F	P
		$\beta$	Beta					
Purchase intention	constant	1.303		10.790	.000	.746	279.721	.000***
	brand awareness	.395	.636	16.023	.000			
	brand image	.284	.387	9.740	.000			
	space	.107	.078	1.042	.299			

(\* : p&lt;0.05, \*\* : p&lt;0.01, \*\*\* : p&lt;0.001)

## 6. Summary

In this study, the SPA brand had three VMD factors of space, display and presentation, and both brand awareness and brand image had influence upon purchase intention:

First, the display had significant influence upon brand awareness. Place of lighting in the shop, brightness, status, POP season, commodity harmony, accessories, props and presentation lighting, etc increased brand awareness.

Second, VMD presentation had significant influence upon brand awareness owing to VP, PP, IP and commodity presentation in the shop and qualitative expression of season goods. Therefore, not only display but also presentation had significant influence upon brand awareness to give commodity values.

Third, VMD presentation had significant influence upon brand image. Not only brand at home but also the one abroad had similar level of brand image by presentation of VP, PP and IP (Jeong and Cheon, 2011). Independent shops (27.1%) and Super center's shops (64.3%) of the SPA brand could elevate brand image by external facade and exterior (Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2011), and super center's shops needed to give presentation by VP, PP and IP.

Fourth, SPA brand awareness and image had significant influence upon purchase intention. 98.4% of 500 interviewees who were local consumers said that they knew SPA brand (Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2012). So, SPA brand businesses needed to emotionally approach consumers by both display and presentation under keen competition to increase brand assets by social contribution.

Lastly, the space of VMD had significantly negative influence upon brand awareness. These days, SPA brand shops that were not independent shops but super center's shops had difficulties at space presentation of facade and/or sign.

And, VMD display and space had negative influence upon brand image. The consumers decided upon brand by primary retrieval of low and mid priced products to have no influence upon display.

The study gave implications: Most of the shops had VMD factors by presentation, display and space. Basically, the space kept construction, and presentation and display of the VMD should be used to visualize 'variety of product types' (49.5%) that consumer's preferred SPA brand. The study investigated not only SPA brand at home but also the one abroad at similar level in accordance with coincidence between space and brand image (Jeong and Cheon, 2011). In this study, space of the VMD had no significant influence upon brand awareness and brand image. Business efficiency should be elevated by using display, presentation and space depending upon shop opening of SPA brand. Independent shop should think much of VMD space: But, super center's shop should pay attention to presentation rather than space.

The study had limitations: The study investigated areas around Yeongdeungpo Station at Seoul as well as Suwon Station Gyeonggi-do to be difficult to generalize the findings. So, investigation areas should be expanded. The interviewees were college students who attended VMD subject, so that the study could not keep rationality and objectiveness. Further studies are needed to expand survey areas and

to include various kinds of groups so that VMD factors could be used for marketing, and to make use of precise test tools.

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