

Colour application comparison between luxurious and retail brand's window displays

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Window display is a useful tool in visual merchandising and an important method for fashion marketing. Designers spend time thinking, conceptualising, and selecting elements to be shown in the brand's store window display; and nowadays big department stores and global fashion brands hire experienced designers and design teams to create visually attractive stores interiors and window displays. The two main purposes, usually, for displaying products in windows are grabbing attentions as a marketing tool, and showing what the brand offers for the consumer. Luxury fashion brands and luxurious stores spend time and big amounts of money from the brands' budgets to arrange visually attractive window displays, international fashion retail brands sometimes does that too. In this study we will look at several design elements in some luxurious fashion brands and retail fashion windows for four brands in UK and Saudi Arabia. Case studies by capturing photos are used as the main research method, and sampling is conducted in three cities for the brands' 2017S/S seasons, London, Leeds in UK and Jeddah in Saudi Arabia; collecting photographs of each window display is arranged for each brand. Firstly, we will be analysing each window by its own using a guiding summary table, and a focused study into colour will be conducted with comparative colour analysis that will be carried out between the four chosen luxury and retail brands in both countries.

Keywords: fashion window display, interior design, colour, luxurious brands, retail

INTRODUCTION

Window display plays a major part in the selling strategies; it does not only include the simple display of goods, nowadays it is a form of art, also having the purpose of sustaining the brand image. Sen, Block, and Chandran (2002) suggests that window displays can function as both advertising and sales promotion which underlines their uniqueness as a marketing communication tool (Baker et al, 2015). The role of the displays at the end rotates around convincing customers entering the store and triggering the consumer's purchasing act (BRĂTUCU and OPRI, 2013). Colour is an important element to study for window designers, for this purpose we are looking at colour by analysing four brands' windows in two countries, and to see if there is any colour-cultural differences for the same brand window design across cities.

METHODS

Case study is aimed to comprehend the entirety of the case to provide a specific written description of the case as an independent object (Blaxter et al., 2006). The main source of data for this study is the researcher's site visits and capturing photos, some were captured by a professional camera, and some by a smart phone depending on the comfort and rules of the shops and the nature of culture around.

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Store codes are as follows: L1 codes Louis Vuitton, L2 Alexander McQueen, R1 Monsoon, and R2 for Topshop. JED is used to codify Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and UK symbolises the United Kingdom included cities (Leeds and London).

Table 1. Four brands windows-across Saudi and UK

 <p>JED</p>	 <p>UK</p>	<p>L1 JED UK</p>
 <p>JED</p>	 <p>UK</p>	<p>L2 JED UK</p>
 <p>JED</p>	 <p>UK</p>	<p>R1 JED UK</p>
 <p>JED</p>	 <p>UK</p>	<p>R2 JED UK</p>

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Table 2. Summary analysis

<i>code</i>	<i>Architecture</i>	<i>Window style</i>	<i>Items/props</i>	<i>Colour/s</i>	<i>Overall design</i>
<i>L1 JED</i>	Following the mall with a focus on brand identity	Closed back	New packaging items-identity	Brand oriented:	Focusing on new identity
		semi open	Brand's leather & new goods	Colours of the new packaging	
<i>L1 UK</i>	Following the mall with a focus on brand identity	Closed back	New packaging items-identity	Brand oriented:	Focusing on new identity
		semi open	Brand's leather & new goods	Colours of the new packaging	
<i>L2 JED</i>	Following the mall with extra cladding materials for a more luxurious appearance	Closed back	Mannequins	Product oriented	Simple
		Open back	Dresses & shoes	Gold colour added to the shop front	
<i>L2 UK</i>	Following the mall	Open back	Mannequins	Product oriented	Simple
			Dresses		
<i>R1 JED</i>	Following the mall	Open back	Sale signs	Neon – attractive	Affordable
<i>R1 UK</i>	Following the mall	Semi open	More goods and sale signs	Product oriented	Affordable
				Neon signs	
<i>R2 JED</i>	Following the mall	Semi open	Products in shelves & mannequins	Product oriented	Affordable
<i>R2 UK</i>	Following the mall	Open back	Big sale signs	Red-contrasting colour signs	Affordable
			products and neon lights		

Louis Vuitton (L1) as a luxury brand focused in this season on displaying the new packaging items to emphasise on the new identity using the orange and blue colours; in both Saudi Arabia and UK they seemed to be similar in the products and identity displayed. L2 McQueen showed a more simple approach by displaying some goods (dresses and shoes) and the focus again was the brand by adding Gold colour to the shop front in Jeddah (L2 JED).

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On the other hand, the colours for the chosen retail brands' windows showed a difference in the marketing methods than the included luxury brands. Retail brands may not have high budgets dedicated to window designs, thus the main focus is to sell the mass production, this is done through displaying most desired (by consumers) goods and showing if the store has sale or discounts through big colourful signs, such as neon yellow and neon pink signs showed in table1.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Luxury brands may focus on the brand identity and how to make it stand out, and this can apply to the brands' windows and the colours used, whereas retail shops' window displays focus on displaying the items and products, and tend to use affordable and lower budget ideas and designs. Sometimes there might be many products displayed to attract more consumers.

Luxurious brands may add the brand identity colours to the main design and some architectural elements of the store front too as an element of luxury, this could be because these brands have higher budgets than other retails and everyday-fashion brands.

No cultural differences in major colour choices were found, this can be justified too that international brands may have unified strategies for windows and visual merchandising but not necessarily for sale and discounts; however in luxury brands, Saudi Arabian market may be attracted more through luxury materials in windows such as the added golden colour used in McQueen's store window.

CONCLUSIONS

This study led us to conduct more in-depth research about colour for fashion brands as in window displays and visual merchandising applications. The four brands (8 stores in total) gave the researchers an idea about the use of colour in luxury and retail window displays in the fashion industry. Colour is one major element for all designs, and can be used effectively for better marketing purposes in all businesses. We can conclude at this stage that luxury brands know that they have their costumers, and do not necessarily want to attract more by adding neon colour signs or big scale ones, these luxury brands may majorly focus on their identity instead. On the contrary, retail brands mass produce goods and may want to always attract more costumers by using effective windows and store fronts, not only by showing the brand identity (as for luxurious ones), but by promoting more items and sale signs when applicable.

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