

What is Store Window Creativity?

The Effect of Store Window Creativity on Window Attitude and Intention to Visit a Store

Ara Choi*, Ha Kyung Lee, Dongseob Kim, Kiyong Kwon, Ho Jung Choo
Seoul National University, Korea

Keywords: Creativity, store window, window display, store environment

The exterior façade of a store is a critical factor that determines the first impression of customers on a store. In many cases, the store window is the focal part of the exterior façade of a store (Turley and Milliman 2002). Particularly, the store window display can influence consumers' perceptions of the store (Edwards and Shackley 1992; Sen et al. 2002) and their willingness to enter such a store (Oh and Petrie 2012; Lange et al. 2015). The current research attempts to investigate the multi-dimensional structure of creativity in store window displays based on originality and relevance (e.g., Coelho, Augusto, & Lages 2011; Sasser & Koslow 2008; Lange et al. 2015) and its effect on customer responses.

As a first step, window display images with high creativity were collected through an online search. We obtained 667 images of actual store window displays by using the keywords "creative," "store window," and "window display." The criteria for selecting the images were as follows: (1) the entire part of the window display should be shown, (2) the image should be visible from front view, and (3) the brand name or logo should not be identifiable (including brand-connected design factors, such as pattern, shape, material of merchandise). A total of 667 images were classified into two categories of high- and low-creativity window displays. At this stage, judgement was based on unidimensional creativity: on whether the display is highly creative or not.

A series of expert discussion sessions was conducted to select the representative images for the high- and low-creativity window displays. A total of 37 high-creativity and 27 low-creativity images were selected for further analysis. Twenty researchers in the fashion marketing field were recruited and asked to judge the creativity of the 64 images by using a seven-point Likert scale (1=low creativity, 7=high creativity). After completing all the evaluations, the participants were asked to describe their own criteria for creativity. We collected the written reports of 20 experts and used the data to revise the conventional measure of creativity (Altsech 1996; Koslow, Sasser and Riordan 2003; Sheinin, Varki, and Ashley 2011). On the basis of the creativity of 64 images, two highly creative images were first chosen. For the first highly creative image, the corresponding low-creativity version was created through removal of the factors that contribute to the high creativity among the highly creative images (A-A'). For the second image B, we found a similar image B' in terms of merchandise style, mannequin style and pose, and color, but it was missing the creative factors of B, such as the animal head of the mannequin and an impressive background.

A total of 138 Korean consumers were recruited, and they participated in the online experiment. These participants were randomly assigned to see one of four window displays and asked to report their perceptions accordingly.

Exploratory factor analysis using SPSS 21.0 was conducted to yield a four-factor solution of creativity. These factors were artistry, originality, product information, and store information. Originality consists of “original,” “unexpected,” “novel,” and “different,” and it explains 24.22% of the total variance. Artistry consists of “stand on its own as an art,” “a work of art,” “emotionally expressive,” and “artistically sophisticated,” and it accounts for 24.75% of the total variance. Store information consists of “provides store-relevant information,” “a good job of building the store’s image,” and “practical store information,” and it explains 17.17% of the total variance. Product information consists of “provides product-relevant information,” “a good job of building the product’s image,” and “practical product information,” and it accounts for 18.75% of the total variance. All Cronbach’s α exceeded .90, which indicates the reliability of the measures.

Compared with low-creativity window A’, highly creative window A was perceived by the participants as significantly more original ($M_{\text{high}}=5.17$, $M_{\text{low}}=3.27$, $t=8.34$, $p<.001$), artistic ($M_{\text{high}}=4.33$, $M_{\text{low}}=2.68$, $t=6.06$, $p<.001$), providing more useful store information ($M_{\text{high}}=3.96$, $M_{\text{low}}=3.36$, $t=2.34$, $p<.05$), and providing product information ($M_{\text{high}}=3.96$, $M_{\text{low}}=3.44$, $t=1.99$, $p=.051$). In addition, the participants viewed highly creative window B as significantly more original ($M_{\text{high}}=5.19$, $M_{\text{low}}=2.89$, $t=8.73$, $p<.001$) and artistic ($M_{\text{high}}=4.06$, $M_{\text{low}}=2.85$, $t=3.57$, $p=.001$) than low-creativity window B’, but product information and store information were not significant. Therefore, window A is fully manipulated with originality, product information, store information, and artistry, whereas window B is manipulated with originality and artistry.

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify the effect of store window creativity on window attitude and consumer intention to visit a store. Product information ($\beta=.329$, $p<.01$) and artistry ($\beta=.458$, $p<.001$) had a positive impact on window attitude, but originality ($\beta=-.305$, $p<.01$) had a negative impact on window attitude. Store information ($\beta=.220$, $p=.067$) and artistry ($\beta=.444$, $p<.001$) positively influenced intention to visit a store, but originality ($\beta=-.234$, $p<.05$) negatively influenced intention to visit a store.

This study shows the dimensions of store window creativity, which means the originality, product information, store information, and artistry. Also, we verified the differentiated effects of these four dimensions of window creativity on consumer attitude toward a window display and the intention to visit a store. However, a nonlinear relationship was not tested during this study. It might have demonstrated a positive effect if modest levels of creativity were tested. Through this study, it is important to understand that store windows with excessive originality could have a negative effect on the consumers. Further investigations that examine the effects of store window creativity on shopper behavior should be conducted with an experimental study.