

## **The Impact of Visual Merchandising Elements on Consumer Visual Attention in The Context of Online Marketplaces in Sri Lanka: Mediating Effect of Consumer Shopping Goals**

**Y B D D Gunarathne**

Department of Marketing Management, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka  
*gunarath-bm18141@stu.kln.ac.lk*

**S I Wijenayake**

Department of Marketing Management, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka  
*shanikaw@kln.ac.lk*

A drastic change happened in the marketplace with the COVID-19 pandemic, where online shopping got accepted by consumers all over the world. With this marketer's focus directed towards capturing the consumer's attention on the visual merchandising elements in the online environment, Therefore, this research investigates the impact of visual merchandising elements—layout design, product presentation, imagery, graphics, and typography—on consumer visual attention in Sri Lankan online marketplaces. Recognising the significance of consumer shopping goals, the study introduces shopping goals as a mediating variable to unravel the intricate relationships shaping online consumer behaviour. Employing a deductive approach, a quantitative study with a sample size of 384 responses was conducted with SPSS to explore how these visual elements influence consumer decision-making. Multiple regression analysis was used as the basis for hypothesis testing. The findings reveal that visual merchandising elements significantly affect consumer attention, with shopping goals playing a mediating role. The practical implications of the research extend to e-commerce stakeholders and marketers, offering strategic insights for optimising online platforms. This optimisation aims not only to capture consumer attention but also to align seamlessly with their shopping goals in Sri Lanka's evolving digital retail landscape. This research offers a thorough exploration of visual cues shaping consumer experiences in online marketplaces, providing insights for informed strategies to enhance the dynamic context of online retail in Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** *Consumer Shopping Goals, Consumer Visual Attention, Imagery and Graphics, Layout Design, Online Visual Merchandising Elements, Product Presentation, Typography*