

## Proposal of VMD for a Footwear Shop at Department Stores

- Focused on a Footwear Shop for Women at a "H" Department Store-

Lee, Mi-Young\* and Kim, Soon-Ku  
Graduate School of Digital Design, Dongseo University\*  
Prof., Dept. of Fashion Design, Dongseo University

### Abstract

For modern man and woman, footwear is considered a fashion for expressing oneself, and not merely a protective tool for the feet. The purpose of this research is to increase the effect of sales promotional activities by emphasizing product image and by enhancing sales environment. Towards this end, this research focuses on the study of environment at footwear stores that meet the challenges incurred by the changing lifestyles of consumers and the ensuing dynamics of the society in general.

Research is based on an in-depth, thorough study of the previous research works and entails examining theoretical background and the concept of Visual Merchandising Display (VMD).

Research will focus on the analysis of current situation at footwear stores located in department store based on material research on footwear stores and theoretical examination.

Research on the current situation of footwear stores at department store will be conducted from the VMD perspective. In the end, this research paper will make suggestions on the VMD measures for footwear stores with the aim of increasing sales by satisfying consumers' sensibility and purchasing desire. Suggestions will be made based on the results of the research.

-Study of current VMD status per fixture centered on 18 brands at department store

-Suggestions for VMD at footwear stores based on the survey results of customer purchasing behavior

This research intends to develop structured VMD methodology for footwear stores based on the research centered on VMD research of footwear stores at department store. Significance of this research lies in its aim to contribute to the sales increase, no matter how trivial it might be. Going a step further, this research work could be considered one of the foundations for defining the role of VMD methodology at footwear stores. Suggested results are as follows.

- ① Need to cast away from simple, one-dimensional type of display method at footwear stores and transform into product image oriented VMD
- ② Need to highlight product image by fully leveraging props and by developing footwear display methods that are suitable for different types of fixtures
- ③ Need to stabilize VMD by developing footwear manual that enables efficient management by store operator

Key words: contrast, face out, folded, gradation, sleeve out

## I. Introduction

Today is an era filled with information and products. Customers manifest numerous changes as the era undergoes transformation. The present day, marked with increased competition among the retail shops requires an expanded definition of stores' roles. That is, the role of a store is not merely limited to providing a forum for selling products, but also to meet customer needs. Customers of today lead sophisticated lifestyles and have strong sense of fashion. Also, they have the information on which stores carry the products that they want. Thus, they shop according to their needs.

Footwear is a tool that makes the lives of people more pleasant and convenient. Manufacturing method, form, materials and so forth were made to fit specific living conditions so that footwear could accommodate the diverse climates of pertinent land. Therefore, there is an intimate relationship between the history of footwear and the living history of human beings.

One original form of footwear was one where one sheet of leather covered the bottom as well as the top side of foot. And center part of the footwear was fixed using leather string. In sum, this was rather closed form of footwear, and the North American Indians' moccasin is a good example. Also, other examples are the clay figure of stone age and the earthen doll of the period of ancient burial mounds. This type of footwear was worn mostly in warm regions and at the surrounding nations of the Mediterranean Sea during the ancient times. In the ancient Egypt and Greece, sandals, which are open footwear, was used among the high class people such as kings, nobles, priests, warriors and so forth. During the 10<sup>th</sup> Century, footwear with pointed tip

of toe was introduced and its length became increasingly longer. During the Gothic Era of the 14-15<sup>th</sup> Century, footwear-making techniques improved. As such, people liked bold, yet innovative footwear which was so pointy that the tip of toe looks weird in retrospect. It was during the end of 16<sup>th</sup> Century that footwear took on free styles. During the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, a bucket style boots that have strangely large the ankle of a footwear became fashionable among men. Later, low footwear with heel for both men and women was introduced. The tip of toe was either angular or rounded. This type of footwear continued to be worn until the end of 18<sup>th</sup> Century and there were many magnificent decorations such as embroidery, ribbon, buckle and so forth that decorated the footwear<sup>1)</sup>.

The era whereby the footwear's ability to preserve heat and its durability and convenience of wear was the criteria for defining the value of footwear is long gone. Today, as in the case of clothes, functionality is a prerequisite. Today, fashion-ability defines the value of footwear. Even in Korea where the history of footwear is relatively short, interest in footwear for different uses, such as age, gender, the forum of life and so forth, is increasing

For the women and men who are living in today's world, footwear is no longer a protective measure alone. Instead, it has now taken on the meaning of accessory. As fashion progresses and as the life standard becomes higher, selection of footwear is also becoming more diverse and the consumers who pursue after their own styles instead of following others' is increasing in number. Thus, the footwear market is focusing on leading consumers using its own concept to respond effectively to customer needs.

From the sales environment point of view, there have been numerous researches on the clothes oriented VMD and display methods. However, there are not many researches on the footwear. Thus, research of the sales environment as it changes according to market structural changes is lacking due to the lack of awareness, lack of large scale businesses and professionals from the perspective of distribution and manufacturing companies.

Therefore the writers of the research study the theoretical background and concept of VMD through consideration of its precedence, learn an analysis of the footwear shop of the department store through investigate data about the shop, and make study of status of the shop compared with VMD.

The "H" department store in Busan was chose for our investigation. The reasons of choice the department store are it has footwear shops, which have variety customers, and many circulating peoples live in. The writers investigate the VMD circumstance of 18 different brand name shops of the "H" department store, and make proposals based on data of survey how consumers purchase footwear.

The purposes of the research are the followings.

- ① Does VMD of the footwear shops affect consumers purchase footwear?
- ② Do consumers get satisfied after applying VMD to the shops?
- ③ Can staffs of the footwear shops manage the shops effectively after using VMD?

The purpose of the research is setting up a systematic VMD technique for the shops from study the above matters, improving sales promotion through changing the environment of sales

## II. Theoretical Background on VMD

### 1. VMD Concept and Role

#### 1) VMD Concept

VMD is the abbreviation for Visual Merchandising Display and it means 'product policy that appeal to the visual'. It refers to the means of expressing the brand and store concept so that consumers can understand at a glance even from the store front. And its characteristic entails unfolding consistent ideology and product from planning to sales. The term, VMD was first used in the United States, and it starts from having a good understanding of merchandizing before learning about the techniques of visual presentation and display to successfully merchandize (product planning)<sup>2)</sup>.

#### 2) Roles of VMD

Today when products are becoming increasingly standardized and as the number of similar competing stores is on the rise, shops that are not differentiated in terms of product, service and decoration cannot attract consumers, which would considerably impact sales. When stores where products sell well are analyzed, in general, they have not only outstanding merchandizing capability, but also their VMD which is the means for delivering their visual image, is well structured as well.

VMD is the strategy that adds information value onto products, forms and communicates stores' message by supplementing images of specific products. No matter how trendy is a product, if its expression is not accurate, then the message on its fashion will not be delivered properly to the consumers and it will not sell. VMD plays the role

of core factor in determining the success or failure of management in terms of sales activities<sup>3)</sup>.

- Maximum expression of the strengths retained by product.
- Selection and arrangement of product that is suitable for sales.
- Creation of opportunities so that all products can sell.

**3) Basics of VMD Expansion**

It is important to understand the functions and roles of each location in the store for the VMD execution.

The formula of  $MP = VP + PP + IP$  needs to be established and the effect of Merchandise Presentation (MP) can be increased when these three functions are appropriately distributed according to product characteristics.

**-Roles of VP, PP, IP**

Each one of VP, PP and IP has individual function at the stores. Final purpose is the presentation of products, which are the owners of shops, towards customers, that is, the merchandise presentation ( $MP = VP, PP, IP$ ). The roles relations between customers and shops can be explained as follow<sup>4)</sup>.

**MP**

(Merchandise Presentation)

Classification	VP (Visual Presentation)	PP (Point of sale Presentation)	IP (Item Presentation)
Role	Increase the store and product image through comprehensive expression of presentation theme	Show sales points of classified products	Classify, organize and display individual products so that they are easy to see and pick
Location	Show window or stage where the gaze of customers first lay	Place inside the store where customers gaze lays in a natural manner, upper part of wall or upper part of fixtures	All types of storefixtures (hanger, showcase, shelf-type and other)
Unfolding Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- trend suggestion (design, style material, colors and so forth)</li> <li>- topic and for events</li> <li>- application of themecolor</li> <li>- presentation based on annual plan</li> <li>- lighting presentation effect</li> <li>- presentation effect of object and mannequin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-FACE OUT</li> <li>- presentationconfiguration (triangular configuration and others)</li> <li>- color coordination (attentioncatcher)</li> <li>- plan for expression of important points (item, style, colors and so forth)</li> <li>- lighting presentation</li> <li>- Use display fixture types (upper half of the body, props and others)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SLEEVE OUT</li> <li>- FOLDED</li> <li>- color arrangement</li> <li>- vertical display</li> <li>- size arrangement</li> <li>- style classification</li> <li>- material classification</li> </ul>
Function	Show	Show Induce sales	Sell
Customer Location	Somewhat distant (accepts image)	Middle (becomes aware of product)	Near (touches the product)
Person in Charge	Large Shop Small Shop	VP expert Shop itself or professional displayer	Corner decorator Salesperson

**(1) VP(Visual Presentation)**

VP needs to be presented a concept of step towards merchandising not individual products because VP is a way of presentation for merchandising. It possibly has to be calculating and intended rather than relying upon sensitivity because it's an expression of strategy for management a store. VP delivers total image of VMD theme based on a policy of shop and merchandising plan to customers through the shops as an intermediary. It's more important for VP to express the theme than a technique of display because of that VP has to show the theme clearly to customers and get sympathy from them. There are three roles of VP. First, it's important to install VP an important point in the store induce the customers and win over them. Second, it's also needed contribute to a establishment of SI(Store Identity). The last, it helps VP when choosing products, which will be decorated in the shops to select products, which have lots of inventory, is profitable, and has a equivalent concept to its brand.

**(2) PP(Point of sale Presentation)**

PP could be succeeded as a positioning strategy if a displayed product is subjective to IP. It's the main role of PP.

1) PP decoration - PP decoration need to be proceeded by a clear purpose and plan not by a personal style. Thus, it should be decided to show items, designs or styles, or to emphasize the color or pattern.

2) Choice the place of PP - to choose the place of PP, the following directions are very significant. It's needed to be placed on the point of eyes for customers naturally, in the middle of upper walls, and picked up a place every 4 meters when the moving line is long in the

straight line. To lead of continuous point vies it's needed to make another decoration point so that could create a continuous decoration. PP is different from VP and it could change the place. Therefore, it could help a good time of sales, change the seasons, and gives a good chance to change the products and other stuff needs for decoration.

3) Practical use of PP - To increase the effect of PP, it's needed to use spot lights, organization of decoration and good made colors, good using of small tools and stuff so that attract customers otherwise it's all useless of time and people.

**(3) IP(Item presentation)**

In IP and PP, they are very significant to divide sizes, numbers of products, and colors for customers to pick up the products easily and choose. It's a real place to purchase products and placed most parts of the shop. Therefore keeping it clean and good condition affect to sales and visual parts as much as VP and PP, and it also important to put lots of efforts on sales marketing.

**4) An important factor of VMD expansion**

**(1) Types of decoration organization.**

① Triangle organization.

Triangle organization gives customers the best feeling of stability in a part of point view and is easier organization compared to others. It also keeps a perfect balance on a part of modeling and a direction of the oblique lines on triangle leads eye view of customers. It's mostly used for sales part, decorating of big stage and show window. When decorating with a prop, which is used for showing products cubic, and decoration lights, it could present more many ways of decoration<sup>5)</sup>.

② A horizontal line.

It could be the basic one among organizations and is made a natural line so it's very good for products, which need to be arranged, averaged, and organized.

③ A vertical organization.

It leads the point view go up and down. Therefore it shows variety kinds of products to customers go through the aisles.

④ A oblique line organization

It gives a feeling of speed and looks like alive so the power of attraction.

⑤ A curved line organization

A curved line is a basic line to grow on a circle, spiral line, and globe, and presents moving, changing and rhythm. It makes variety changes but it mostly represents a elegant flow and soft condition. It also could be organized cubic and plane<sup>6)</sup>.

(2) Methods of display

① Face out

It's a skill of selecting a product, which is important to appeal and coordinating with related products in the front.

② Sleeve out

It's needed to be display on the side of customers could pick up easy. In the other words, the place of sleeves needs to be on the same direction, so this method could display many products without showing whole products.

③ Folded

It means displaying the products folded. Most shops keep their lots of products on a shelf folded. It's good for displaying to show little parts of color and size<sup>7)</sup>.

### III. Consumer Behavior at Footwear Shop in Department Store

#### 1. Research Target

Among the customers who came to the "H" department store in Busan, actual purchasers were subject of research. They were 100 women between the ages of early 20s and mid 50s.

#### 2. Research Dates and Duration

June 13, 2001 - June 24, 2001 (10 days)

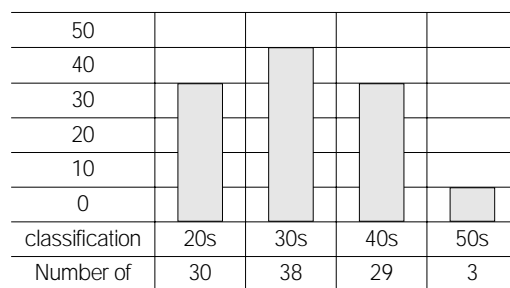
#### 3. Purpose and Expected Impact of Survey

1) Purpose: The purpose lies in identifying rational purchasing and characteristics of purchasing behavior through the analysis of consumers' consumption pattern.

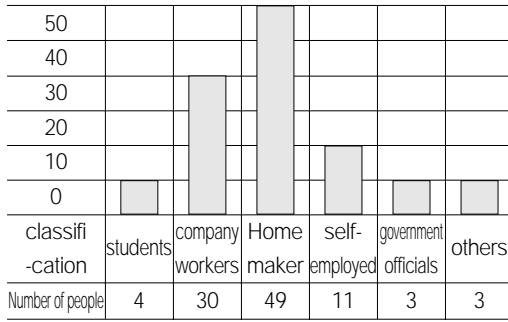
2) Expected Impact: The results can be used to understand customer preference and needs based on consumption pattern and can be used as reference during the development of VMD strategy as well during the process of building basic data.

#### 4. Summary of Survey Results

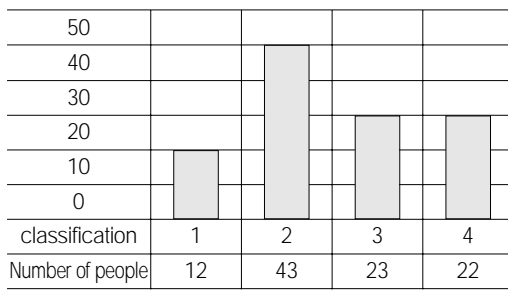
1) <Chart III-2> age:



2) <Chart III-3> occupation:

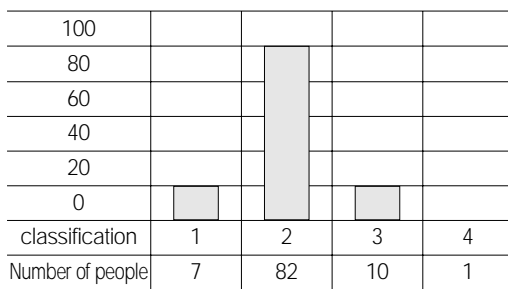


3) <Chart III-4> timing of footwear purchase:



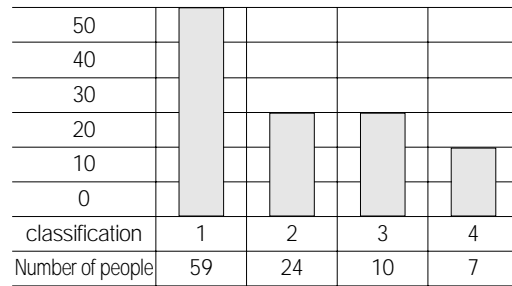
1. Immediately when needed 2. At an appropriate time after careful planning 3. During bargain sales 4. Unexpectedly while shopping

4) <Chart III-5> department store's current footwear presentation status:



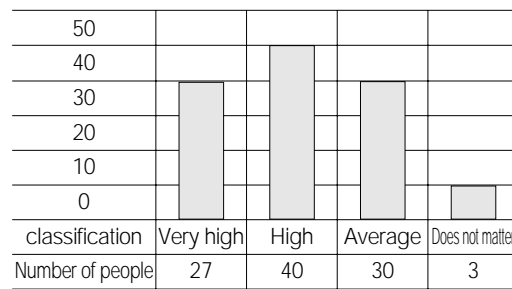
1. Difficult to choose since there are too many variety 2. Easy to purchase by design 3. Looks luxurious due to appropriate amount of products 4. Others

5) <Chart III-6> presentation state that is favorable to footwear selection:



1. When large amount is displayed as in the case of event sites 2. When appropriate amount of products is displayed by design 3. When appropriate amount of products is displayed by color 4. Others

6) <Chart III-7> effects of VMD on footwear:



#### IV. Problems Based on Case Study Analysis and Improvement Measures

##### 1. VMD Analysis of Footwear Shop at Department Store and Problems

According to the results of the survey at a footwear shop located in a department store, customers pointed out that it is difficult to select footwear since there is too much variety (59%), and that it looks luxurious due to the appropriate amount of products (10%). Thus, the amount of products appears to be largest problem. Also,

customers wanted appropriate amount of products to be displayed by design. Next, they want luxurious image.

**1) Excessive Product Display**

In the case of <Photo IV-1>, products are protruding out of the fixtures due to excessive display of products. Not only is the shop unorganized and disparate, but it conveys an image of being a low priced brand. Also, too many products confuse the customers when choosing necessary products.

As in the cases of <Photo IV-2> and <Photo IV-1>, the amount of product presented was

reduced 50% from 38 to 19 pairs. Only the selected products were highlighted by displaying them at the upper part of the table and products for sale was presented to the customers. Appropriate amount of products was organized and displayed neatly on the lower part of table, without any special techniques.

**2) Presentation without Store Concept**

In the case of <Photo IV-3>, the upper part of table (VP ZONE) which plays the role of SHOW-WINDOW at a footwear store, shows the store concept and attracts customers' attention. However, in the case of <Photo IV-3>, lack of a



<Photo IV-1>



<Photo IV-2>



<Photo IV-3>



<Photo IV-4>



concept at the upper part of table either by material, style, color and so forth resulted in failure to catch customer attention.

<Photo IV-4> is an improvement of <Photo IV-3> where the presentation method has been changed. At the top part of the VP table, the main products are presented in a triangular manner to communicate the concept of the store, and to present latest trends to the customer. The height of products that are on the table was not too high so that customer attention can stay inside the store.

### 3) Presentation Method that Fails to Leverage Fixtures' Characteristics

In the case of <Photo IV-5>, display should not cover the brand logo located at the upper part of the I.P fixture. In the case of <Photo IV-3>, not does it cover the brand logo, but also products are placed on.

<Photo IV-6> is an improvement of <Photo IV-5> whereby presentation method was changed

according to the fixture type. At the upper part of fixture, one part is emphasized without covering the brand logo. One concept by material, style, color and so forth is used for the triangular presentation.

As for the lower part of the fixture excessively displayed products are organized and one pair of each representative products are displayed neatly.

## 2. VMD Expansion Measures through Case Analysis

### 1) VP Zone

VP table represents the image of a particular store and it is often collocated at the store entrance.

Main products are presented on this table, stimulating customers' impulse to come into the store.



<Photo IV-5>



<Photo IV-6>

**- Presentation point ---**

- On VP table, products need presented by triangular configuration by leveraging total coordination with handbag, scarf and other related products

- The lower table need neatly displayed without any special product display techniques.

- Only selected products need highlighted on the fixture shelf instead of presenting numerous products to enable customers to concentrate on fewer products and to present those products that need to be sold.

- The height of products at the display table located at the store front should not be heightened excessively and the customers' attention should be induced to inside of the store.

**- Product configuration method: Triangular configuration**

Triangular configuration: the most basic configuration that is stable and the number of products should be even numbers such as 3, 5, 7 and others.

**- Product selection method ---**

Consistent criteria are needed to select products for presentation.

Same product, different color	presentation method whereby same products are shown in different colors
Same color line, different design	presentation method whereby products of same color line are shown in groupings

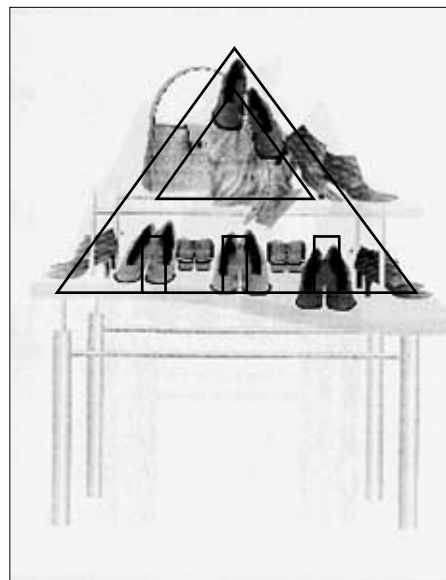
**2) PP Zone**

Point presentation space to attract customers into the store that presents mostly trendy products and accent products of bright colors

**- Presentation Point ---**

- On PP table, total coordination using hat, scarf and related products are needed and products are presented in slant configuration

- Only selected products need highlighted on the table instead of presenting numerous products to enable customers to concentrate on fewer products and to present those products that need to be sold.



- Frequent display make-over to transform the store instead of showing many products at once.

- **Product Configuration Method: Slant configuration**

Slant configuration : basis of techniques that has rhythmical movement.

- **Product Display Method**

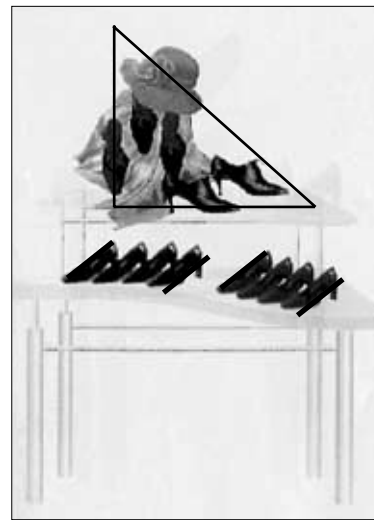
Product presentation and display need clearly classified and IP display should be neatly

organized in fixed direction. The lower table need neatly displayed.

### 3) IP Zone

- **Presentation point**

Ensure point presentation on one part of upper fixture to induce transformation of display and to increase attention.



Maintain appropriate amount of product while displaying the product on the shelf so that customers can easily see and touch.

- Product Configuration Method ---
- Product Display Method

Product Classification: Products need classified in major categories per gender design material color, and display horizontally.

Size	Small Large	Left -Right	Top -Bottom
Color	Bright Color Dark Color	Left -Right	Top -Bottom

## V. Summary and Conclusion

With the advent of the distribution market liberalization and industrial information age, changes in lifestyle and consumption culture such as individuality and diversification emerged. Due to the diversification of fashion, footwear is undergoing diverse changes as well. In particular, footwear for the youths signifies an accessory for clothes or fashion for the feet, and there is remarkable freedom in wearing footwear.

Footwear is closely related to the interior environment, fashion and so forth, and other emotional factors besides image of products themselves should be highlighted. Therefore, it is difficult to induce sales merely by the products themselves. The solutions measures for these issues can be found in the VMD unfolding methods. Compared to clothes, footwear VMD methods and the related research works lag behind. Thus, this research paper addresses the VMD at the footwear stores.

As a result, the following problems were identified. Firstly, footwear stores fail to convey an image of luxury by displaying excessive amounts of products. Secondly, footwear stores are not

decorated in a way that they reflect the concepts of changing era which in turn makes the communication of product image an ineffective one. Thirdly, effects on the products are not easy to show since there is a shortage of appropriate prop for the presentation of footwear products. Fourthly, continued and effective store management is often not possible to the store managers' lack of awareness regarding VMD.

The following VMD methods were suggested to solve the above mentioned problems. Firstly, elimination of excessive product display at the footwear stores and expression of a luxurious image by understanding point product category first and then by unfolding accurate presentation. Secondly, transformation from simple marshaling of products to a product image centered VMD where new information and trends are presented as well. Thirdly, engage in active development and utilization of fixtures and props that can effectively express the products' strengths, enabling voluptuous display. Fourthly, establish VMD firmly at the stores by continuing to train the store managers to turn around their lack of awareness and by developing footwear manuals.

VMD is increasingly being considered as one of the sides of the present day culture. Thus, diverse VMD methods should be researched based on the visual and psychological factors from the consumers' perspectives. Also, it is necessary to recommend theories that can be applied on to the fields in a practical manner by analyzing the product role factors to enable effective VMD at the sales environment. Towards this end, comparative analysis of the theoretical background and practical conditions is needed to identify mutually complementary agreement point.

This research intended to develop systemic

VMD methods at the footwear stores centered on footwear stores located at the department stores. As a result, the meaning lies in contributing to the growth of sales. Specialized VMD methods that can meet the requirements of the changing times should be researched as well.

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