Surface composition towards space pattern of street vendors in urban context

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Abstract. This study aims to reveal the role and shift in the use of interior elements in shaping urban spaces by looking at the patterns of the street vendors’ spaces. The street vendor is an actor that brings diversity and color to the face of urban spaces in Indonesia’s cities. The research is conducted by observing street vendors in Jalan Sultan Alauddin in Makassar. This paper uses qualitative methods, collecting data through direct observation, literature study, and the case study method to analyze the data. To investigate the role of the interior elements, we utilize the visual merchandising approach, commonly used in interior design. According to this approach, certain rules are applied to the arrangement of street vendors’ merchandise in urban space. Examining the compositions that are formed from the vertical and horizontal surfaces in the street vendors’ trading space unravels the relationship of urban space as the background for the street vendors’ trading space. This paper reveals the role of street vendors in forming urban space through its spatial mechanisms of layout, composition, and interior elements.

1. Introduction
Urban space has different actors as well as interactions. One group of actors who is very instrumental in shaping these interactions is street vendors. Street vendors are small businesses that offer benefits to the city. As the number of street vendors increases, the level of competition among them rises as well. Street vendors compete with each other in selling their goods by displaying the best visuals of their trading space.

The existence of street vendors in urban space is a real activity and is categorized as "support activity" (an activity which supports the main activity that takes place in its location) [1]. Street vendors bring a variety of programs to the public space such as trading activities, which were previously typically conducted inside the building but have been moved outside. Attiwill’s [2] notion about urban interiority outlined that urban interiors challenge the assumption that interior design must be done inside the building and shift the focus into the condition of its relations. Given this notion, there is a possibility for interior theory to be utilized in an urban context.

The trading activity of street vendors constitutes a small business, with the same characteristics as retail activity [1]. In retail, the arrangement of merchandise becomes an essential part of increasing the sale of certain brands. The arrangement process of merchandise is frequently discussed in visual merchandise, which is defined as a real trading practice through visual media [3]. Most of these other discussions have used the practice of visual merchandising to illustrate a high-brand retail store or
interior arrangement of the store inside the building. In this paper, the author considers the application of visual merchandising within the following elements towards a broader context, with urban space and street vendors as the subject.

1.1. Research Objectives
This paper identifies the role of street vendors in an urban context by examining the visual arrangement via the surface composition of the street vendors’ space. Therefore, this paper aims to investigate the surface composition from a visual merchandising approach as applied to street vendors’ space towards the urban context.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Street Vendor
As active urban actors, street vendors can be found in every corner of a city. In Kamalipour and Peimani’s study [4], street vendors are defined as people who offer goods or food to the public without the use of a permanently built structure. The trading activity conducted by the street vendors demands them to modify the need for their own space. Several types of street vendors have high mobility, which affords them flexibility in location and time.

In terms of using the space in public space, street vendors are divided into two types; adjacent and detached. The adjacent type is identified as a street vendor who remains close to an existing urban element, while the detached street vendor does not stay near an urban element or the edge of a building. Both types follow sub-categories according to the temporality and mobility of the street vendor. There are unfixed, semi-fixed, and fixed street vendors [4]. Unfixed street vendors are highly capable of moving in public spaces. Semi-fixed street vendors are street vendors who are unlikely to move. This type of street vendor usually uses a trolley, stroller, pay, table, or mat. Meanwhile, the fixed street vendor is situated in public spaces for a longer duration of time [4].

2.2. Visual Merchandising
One practice that discusses the arrangement of trading goods in terms of interior design is visual merchandising. Visual merchandising is an actual trading practice through visual media [3]. Pegler and Kong (2018) [3] added that visual merchandising affects the psychological behavior of consumers by visually communicating products to them. In the retail field, visual merchandising is an essential practice. Visual appeal and communication have been considered vital components of retail, as suggested by researchers and practitioners [5].

Buttle (1984) [6] explained two factors that influence merchandising in stores and drive their success in sales. The two factors are visibility and attractiveness. Visibility means that the more visible a product is, the more likely it is to be seen and therefore purchased, while attractiveness signifies that the more attractive the product is made to appear, the more likely it is to be purchased.

Within the practice of visual merchandising, several elements influence the trading space. According to Pegler and Kong (2018) [3], the elements that are considered in this practice are color, texture, lines, composition, light, and lighting. These elements are able to support the arrangement of the existing space and create an efficient space in promoting merchandise. These design elements can be used as a stimulus to influence sales, while the composition of the design serves as a visual stimulus [7].

2.2.1 Lines and Surfaces
In this paper, the line is an element that is used to identify the application of visual merchandising practices as they are carried out by street vendors. Lines are essential elements. According to Pegler and Kong (2018) [3], lines are directions. This can be interpreted as lines being the most visible thing that stands out from a visual perspective, starting from the element of the line that subsequently forms shapes and surfaces. The types of lines that are further analyzed include the presence of horizontal, vertical, diagonal, and curved lines.
Figure 1 and Figure 2 depict long pieces of mirror foil boards of different lengths and widths, creating a robust, but not excessively formal vertical pattern. The headless mannequin adds another vertical surface to the composition [3]. In this case, the elements identified as lines in visual merchandising are not only fixed in the form of vertical lines. They apply to all trading objects in both the direction of placement and the surface of the elements displayed (Figure 2). The second type of line is the horizontal line. This line illustrates peace and tranquility in this presentation. When the lines are stretched and the apparent object looks wider, they also tend to make it appear shorter [3]. A horizontal line will lessen the vertical effect and reduce the "tension" or the sense of "arrogance" of the design setting [3]. Another type of line is the curved line. Curved lines can reduce the tension that might be caused by the presence of too many vertical lines [3] (Figure 3 and Figure 4).

3. Area of Study
Jalan Alauddin is one of the major roads of Makassar, where there are a variety of buildings in this location, such as offices, universities, markets, small shops, and residences. This area is relatively dense because it is the main road that leads to the city’s outskirts.

In analyzing the application of visual elements of merchandise by street vendors, the author observed Jalan Alauddin at two different times: day and night. Based on these observations, there are two types of space placements of street vendors on Jalan Sultan Alauddin. The first type is located from the intersection of Jalan Sultan Alauddin to Jalan Kumala and Jalan Veteran Selatan (Figure 5). Street vendors use the area in front of the building and the sidewalks to place their display elements and merchandise.
The second type is located starting around the intersection of Jalan Sultan Alauddin, up to Jalan Pettarani (Figure 6). Street vendors occupy the sidewalk and drain area. The space above the drain area is used by stretching the wooden surface from the sidewalk to the boundary fence of the shop area. It was also observed that there are two categories of street vendors according to the location of the space that they use to sell: street vendors selling in front of buildings and street vendors in front of parking areas.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Visuals of Street Vendors’ Space in Front of the Building

Street vendors a1 and a2 use mats and shelves, which create the horizontal direction of their merchandise arrangement, while the standing racks create vertical surfaces for their merchandise (Figure 7 and Figure 8). The arrangement of the base for the street vendor's (a1) clothing items is extended outward in a straight, perpendicular direction towards the main road but parallel to the alley. There are two variations in the arrangements of the street vendor’s (a2) merchandise: shelf elements arranged parallel to the main road and a row of standing racks arranged perpendicular to the main road (Figure 9).
Street vendors a1 and a2 create a pattern through the arrangement of the elements’ orientation towards the main road. This pattern is repeated in perpendicular and parallel rows (Figure 9). Therefore, the pedestrians’ viewing direction towards the merchandise will be maximized because of the difference in layout orientation. This is due to the fact that this condition results in a lack of overlapping merchandise. The position of street vendor a1, who is perpendicular to the main road, opens opportunities for buyers and landowners to easily circulate in a broader size of circulation than street vendor a2. On the other hand, street vendor a2 draws less attention from the circulation of buyers since the arrangement of display elements leaves only a small size of circulation for the shop behind the street vendor’s space. The perpendicular direction of street vendor a1’s display element orientation maneuvers the field of view directly to street vendor a1’s merchandise. Meanwhile, the shelves on street vendor a2, which are parallel to the main road, create an opportunity for pedestrians to expand their field of view.

Stacks of merchandise create repetitive lines and surfaces that are very dense compared to urban space lines. If the street vendors are divided by an imaginary line in the center of the space, it can be seen that street vendor a1 fills the space in an unbalanced manner. In street vendor a2’s space, the displayed elements fill both sides of the imaginary line and result in a balanced appearance, even though they are asymmetrical (Figure 10). The lack of balance in street vendor a1’s visual weight creates a
larger circulation space than street vendor a2, which has a balanced visual weight. Simple building facades (push doors without windows) behind the street vendor cause the merchandise to have a plain background. This enhances the visual prominence of the merchandise’s vertical surface.

Proceeding to the next street vendor, street vendor h uses two parking areas and the entire sidewalk of two different buildings. Street vendor h uses clothes racks as display elements, and the hanging clothes thus resemble vertical lines (Figure 11). The layout of the street vendor’s display elements follows the back and forth rhythm of the building behind the trading space. The different rhythms of space (a) and (b) decrease the monotony of the trading space’s visuals. The layout rhythm of space (a) provides information on the form of the merchandise, while the layout rhythm of space (b) provides information on the color of the merchandise for pedestrians who cross this area (Figure 11).

When the street vendor’s space is divided by one axis in its middle, it appears to be out of balance, with greater visual weight on the right side of the area. This section is composed of more surfaces that affect the ease of circulation of space for users entering the street vendor’s trading space (Figure 12).
4.2. **Visuals of Street Vendor Spaces in Front of the Parking Area**

The east, west, and south sides are where street vendor i places mannequins and clothes racks as display elements that add vertical surfaces to the urban space—the layout of the display elements is bordered by the shape of the folding tent (Figure 13). A table is used to place merchandise by piling items to create tight, stacked horizontal surfaces. Racks are used to hang clothes, thus creating a vertical line with each clothing item that is hung. The arrangement of the clothes that are hung is intertwined with the merchandise (Figure 13).

If the street vendor’s trading space is divided using the dividing axis in the middle, it becomes apparent that the street vendor’s space is unbalanced (Figure 15). The side that comes into direct contact with the vehicle lane has heavier visuals, but it also still leaves a gap between the placement of the mannequins open. This shows that street vendors maximize the position of the circulation area of vehicles and pedestrians by using the most informative display elements and opening opportunities where the merchandise behind the mannequin may still be viewed (Figure 15).
In the case of street vendor k, with the urban space’s condition being under deep shade, it consequently obscures the facade of the building as a background. The clothes racks are arranged in three repetitive rows in the layout. The vertical surface of a container is used to cover one side of the street vendor’s space. This area is placed on the west side of the stall, covering the water drain and facing the flow of the vehicles on the street (Figure 16).

When pedestrians come from the west, the surface of the container will cover the view of the other displays, but pedestrians can optimally see the merchandise when they come from the east. According to the layout of the street vendor, it follows the front and back rhythm. The tree on the west side of the street vendor is a visual disturbance to the street vendor’s space. Thus, the street vendor has covered the side with a vertical plane. It can thus be concluded from this layout arrangement that street vendors tend to pay attention to the layout of city elements in placing and managing their merchandise.

Pedestrians from the south of the street vendor will still be able to see the street vendor, but the visual layers will be reversed. The first layer will be the road fence instead, with the street vendor’s display elements becoming the second layer. In this condition, the fence will be a visual barrier for the pedestrians. The arrangement of the clothes racks creates a dense vertical line that combines with the vertical lines produced by the fence.

When the trading space is divided along its central axis, it becomes clear that the street vendor’s space is unbalanced (Figure 17). The left side of the dividing axis’s layout has a gap between the clothes racks to create circulation and allow for the visibility of other merchandise in the space. As for the area to the right of the dividing axis, the large surface obstructs the pedestrian's view.
5. Conclusion
This research indicates a strong relation of street vendors’ visuals to display elements that are utilized, such as folding tents, mannequins, clothes racks, shelves, and tables. These display elements become the main visuals that form the street vendors’ trading space. This display element functions as a barrier, directing and obstructing the circulation as well as serving as a medium for display. Meanwhile, urban elements that influence the trading space are trees, roads, fences, and building facades. Based on the urban context as the context of sales, the street vendors can be divided into two categories: street vendors who sell items in front of the store and street vendors who sell items in front of the parking area.

Considering the two types of the street vendors’ locations that were analyzed, the author argues that the relationship between visual elements of street vendors’ space and urban space produces two conditions. The first condition occurs when the visuals of the street vendors’ trading space are disrupted by the visuals of the city elements, so the street vendors’ space is attenuated by the city elements. The second condition arises when the street vendors’ space is strengthened by the city elements, which are complemented by the composition of the surface of the street vendor's space.

6. References
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