

Find Your Flow

The Space Between Brand and Customer — Retail & Customer Experience. Independent conceptual case study inspired by ZARA.

01 / Research basis

Qualitative observation: ZARA store, Karlsruhe, 6 October 2026. One visit, subjective ratings; no customer interviews, time-and-motion study or floor-plan measurements. Scores are not representative.

Observation criterion	Personal rating
Store orientation	5/5
Product discovery	3/5
Product comparison	4/5
Browsing continuity	5/5
Signage & layout	3/5
Brand consistency	4/5

Research insight

Easy to navigate does not always mean easy to shop. The observed circular/U-shaped circulation supported orientation, while some individual products were harder to locate on crowded or untidy racks. Fitting rooms and checkout were easy to locate during the visit; waiting times were short at that moment.

02 / Experience opportunity

Make product discovery clearer without adding visual noise: simple category signposting, consistent product groupings, and an unobtrusive comparison zone. This is a proposed intervention, not an existing ZARA system.

03 / FIND YOUR FLOW — three design principles

Orient: a clear entrance cue with a concise category overview. **Discover:** consistent rack-level labels and recognizable look-based product groupings. **Continue:** legible routes to fitting rooms, checkout and support.

04 / Suggested pilot and measures

Prototype temporary rack labels and zone cues in a mock store layout. Ask 5–8 participants to find three preselected items; record task completion, time-to-find, wrong turns and perceived clarity. Compare with a baseline arrangement. No testing has been conducted and no outcomes are claimed.

05 / Scope and integrity

This concept does not reconstruct the Karlsruhe store or establish actual ZARA operating procedures. Past uncertainty around cross-channel returns was reported as personal experience, but no failure cause was verified; returns are therefore a question for further process validation, not a confirmed defect.

Independent educational portfolio project by Anna Steinbusch. Not affiliated with, commissioned by or endorsed by ZARA or Inditex. All zoning and journey diagrams are original conceptual illustrations.