CUSTOMER'S EXPECTATION TOWARDS SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR IN RETAIL OUTLETS

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ABSTRACT

Store attributes are important to consumers when they make the decision where to shop. Store attributes are presented by retailers according to their specific functional strategies. Store attributes must be offered that are desired by the targeted consumer. The challenge to retailers is to determine which store attributes are relatively more important to the targeted consumer. Providing appropriate store attributes is not enough to satisfy consumers and guarantee store loyalty. Maintaining the quality of these attributes is the hardest task and critical to survival in the competitive nature of fashion retailing. The present study is identifying the store attributes which influence the customers for shopping behavior. The retail segments selected for this study were food and grocery, apparels, jewellary and consumer durables and home appliances.

The research data were collected by using questionnaire and validated to the present study. The study is descriptive in nature with the sampling method being multi-phase sampling. In this study simple correlation analysis is performed using t-test and Analysis of variance is adapted to test whether there exists significance difference between different classifications of respondents on the level of opinion towards various aspects relating to the study. Based on the statistical techniques the current study has found the store attributes influence towards the customers was also found to be high. The present research has proved that there exists a positive relationship between store attributes towards the customers.

KEYWORDS: Store Attributes, Retailing, Customers, Shopping Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

New retail formats are growing at a rapid pace in India. There remains a need among Indian businesses to understand the changing behaviour of customers towards shopping in organized retail outlets. The paradigm shift in consumers socio-economic, demographic and geographical proportions are driving what was once a traditional small-scale retail outlets into an organised retail formats aimed at catering to the evolving needs and tastes of discerning consumers. But the ever changing consumers psychographic variables like values, activities, interests, opinions, motives and lifestyles have contributed immensely to the growth of store format typologies such as convenience stores, discount stores, super markets and hypermarkets. Studies on shoppers in India have largely been limited to their time and money spending pattern, demographic profile for a particular format.

Furthermore, the espousal of "value for money" and "value for time" have unconditionally altered the consumers shopping orientations and buying behaviour towards choice of retail outlets of various segments The purpose of the study is to understand the much needed domain of the consumer behaviour which enables the segmentation of retail outlets consumers towards the emergence of retail formats in India. The geographical scope of the study is confined to the Coimbatore district with population of more than 21 Lakhs in India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Seock and Sauls (2008) this study investigates Hispanic consumers shopping orientations and their apparel retail store evaluation criteria and to examine age and gender differences in their shopping orientations and retail store evaluation criteria. A structured questionnaire was developed to collect data on the variables in the study. The questionnaire was developed both in English and Spanish. Factor analysis was employed to identify Hispanic consumers shopping orientations and their retail store evaluation criteria. Pillai's trace multivariate analyses of variance were used to examine the hypotheses. Six shopping orientation constructs and three constructs of store evaluation criteria were identified. The results revealed that males and females have different shopping orientations and apparel retail store evaluation criteria. Shopping orientation and apparel retail store evaluation criteria also varied across the age groups.

This study has practical implications for apparel retailers regarding how to position their stores in targeting different groups of shoppers and how to allocate their resources and promote products. Additionally, the findings of the study will reveal how to provide an optimal shopping experience to Hispanic consumers so that apparel retailers can develop localized marketing strategies to target the areas with a large Hispanic population. Despite the importance of understanding Hispanic consumers apparel shopping behavior, little research has been conducted.

Tendai and Crispen (2009) the study explains the influence of in-store shopping environment on impulsive buying among consumers. The impulsive decision making theory and the consumer decision making model were used to substantiate the study (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2007). A total of 320 shoppers conveniently sampled at a selected shopping mall served as the sample. A 5% test of significance showed that in-store factors of an economic nature such as price and coupons were more likely to influence impulsive buying than those with an atmospheric engagement effect like background music and scent.

Hsu et.al., (2010) this study explains the interrelationships among grocery store image, travel distance (TD), customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions (BI) in a college town setting. Surveys are given to undergraduate college student grocery shoppers in a Midwest college town. The 400 usable questionnaires are randomly divided into two parts: one subsample was used for exploratory factor analysis while the other (larger) subsample was used for confirmatory factor analysis and subsequently the structural path analysis.

Grocery store image is identified as a second-order construct reflected by the three key components of merchandise attributes (MEA), store ambience and service (SAS), and marketing attractiveness (MGA). Although store image is an important driver of BI, its indirect effect through customer satisfaction is found to be substantially greater than its direct effect on BI. Interestingly, TD is positively related to satisfaction, which highlights the possibility for retailers to overcome the distance disadvantage. As few studies have attempted to characterize the US grocery market in terms of the reasons for their choice, this exploratory study is unique because it investigates grocery shopping behavior in a traditional American college town. Specifically, the distinctive market factors (e.g. the relative scarcity of grocery retailers, their

distance from campus, and the mix of grocer types in or around the Midwest college town) add value and contribute to the retailing literature.

Khraim et.al., (2011) the study provides an understanding of the influence of consumer religiosity on Jordanian consumer's evaluation of retail store attributes. Data collected in the survey have included retail stores attributes, religiosity and demographic characteristics of respondents. Data were collected from 800 random selected consumers in several shopping centres in Amman. Different methods of statistical analysis have been used such as mean differences, one way ANOVA, percentile, and factor analysis. The findings reveal that among the six factors considered (locational convenience, service, post purchase services, merchandise, kinship and local goods), the most important factor for consumers has been merchandise, which includes four items with cheaper prices scoring the highest mean among all items.

Results of the hypothesis testing indicate that there was a difference between high, moderate and low consumers' religiosity in evaluating the importance of all retail store factors. This paper provides retailers with knowledge on consumer behaviour in Jordanian culture context by categorizing the attributes that are considered by consumers when making choices regarding where to shop.

Olsen and Skallerud (2011) this study examined grocery shoppers' beliefs about store attributes as antecedents to shopping value by exploring whether dimensions of store attribute beliefs have differential effects (i.e. strength and direction) on hedonic versus utilitarian shopping value. Shoppers at three grocery outlets in a Norwegian city were approached. After they had agreed to participate in the survey, they received a package containing an information letter, the questionnaire, and the pre-paid return envelope.

A total of 572 (60 per cent response rate) questionnaires were returned within two weeks of delivery. Findings from a survey of grocery shoppers suggest that one unique store attribute (e.g. personal interaction) can relate negatively to utilitarian shopping value and positively relate to hedonic shopping value, while others (e.g. physical aspects) may have the opposite valence, or direction to the different dimensions of shopping value. Future studies should also include not only shopping value antecedents, but also consequences such as repatronage intentions and anticipation, satisfaction, loyalty and positive word of mouth. Developing adaptive selling techniques and combinations of store layouts may be useful strategies to overcome the differential effects of store attributes on shopping values.

This study shows the differential effects that store attributes can have on shopping value. This research extends previous research, which has focused largely on the main effects of store attributes (i.e. one-dimensional measures of store attributes), by finding support for significant interactions between the two types of shopping value and dimensions of store attributes.

Prasad and Aryasri (2011) the study indicates a detailed study on the effect of shoppers' demographic, geographic and psychographic dimensions in terms of format choice behavior in the fast growing Indian food and grocery retailing. Descriptive research design is adopted applying mall intercept survey method using structured questionnaire for data collection. Both descriptive (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistical tools like x 2, factor analysis and multivariate analysis are used to analyze the data collected from 1,040 food and grocery retail customers from upgraded neighbourhood kirana stores, convenience stores, supermarkets and hypermarkets in conjoint cities of Secunderabad and Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh in India.

The findings suggest that shoppers' age, gender, occupation, education, monthly household income, family size and distance travelled to store have significant association with retail format choice decisions. The choice decisions are also varied among shoppers' demographic attributes. The findings from shoppers' psychographic dimensions like values, lifestyle factors and shopping orientations resulted in segmentation of food and grocery retail consumers into hedonic, utilitarian, autonomous, conventional and socialization type.

The study has practical implications for food and grocery retailers for better understanding the shopper behavior in the context of changing consumer demographic and psychographic characteristics in an emerging Indian retail market. The findings may help the retailers to segment and target the food and grocery retail consumers and, as a consequence, to undertake more effective retail marketing strategies for competitive advantage. Given the absence of published academic literature and empirical findings relating to store format choice behavior in food and grocery retailing in India, this study may serve as a departure point for future studies in this area of concern. The research is also relevant to retail marketers in terms of format development and reorientation of marketing strategies in the fastest growing Indian retail market.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To determine the dimensions of store ambience as perceived by the customers.

- To analyze the merchandise attributes of the retail store and its influence towards customers' shopping behavior.

- To ascertain the influence of promotional options prevailing in the retail shop on behavior of customers.

- To enumerate the association of service procedures of retail shop and its influence on customers preference towards the retail outlet.

- To determine the convenience and satisfaction level of the customers towards the retail outlet.

METHODOLOGY

The present research is of descriptive and Causal in nature with the sampling method being multi-phase sampling. For the Purpose of collection of data all the 1096 customers from the selected 18, 27155 populations of age group above 18 at Coimbatore district were considered. Based on the sampling design, the responses were collected from 4 retail segments such as Clothing, and textiles, Food and grocery, Jewellary and Consumers durables and home appliances for the purpose of data collection. This research has an applied questionnaire as the research instrument for collecting the data.

This questionnaire has about 28 variables of 5 constructs as Store ambience, Merchandise attributes, service procedures, convenience & satisfaction and promotion. These variables were measured along the standard measurement scale (Five-point scale of Likert) ranging from "5" = strongly agree to "1"= strongly disagree.

In this study the multiple regression analysis is presented by taking total retail store attributes scores as dependent variable and store ambience score, merchandise attributes score, service procedures score, convenience and satisfaction score and promotion score as independent variables. Analysis of variance technique is adapted to test whether there exists significance difference between different classifications of respondents on the level of opinion towards various aspects relating to the study.

FINDINGS

Multiple Regression Analysis

It is found that among the five independent variables considered the variable service procedure explains the maximum of 55.8% followed by the variable convenience and satisfaction 29.5% on the variations of the dependent variable retail store attribute scores. It is concluded that the service procedures explains the maximum of 55.8% on the variations on the dependent variable retail store attributes when compared to store ambience, merchandise attributes, convenience and satisfaction and promotion. The respondents stress the need for better services during and after sales. (table 1).

Analysis of Variance

Hypothesis 1: There is no significance difference between the personal classifications of respondents on the level of agreeability relating to store ambience.

Result: The hypothesis is rejected (significant) in 9 cases (table 2) and the hypothesis is accepted (not significant) in 1 case. There is significant difference between personal classification of respondents such as age, education, occupation, family size, marital status, number of earning members in the family, monthly family income, family type and number of visits to the store on the level of agreeability towards store ambience.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significance difference between the personal classifications of respondents on the level of agreeability relating to Merchandise attributes.

The hypothesis is rejected (significant) in 10 cases. There is significant difference between personal classification of respondents such as gender, age, education, occupation, family size, marital status, number of earning members in the family, monthly family income, family type and number of visits to the store on the level of agreeability towards merchandise attributes.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significance difference between the personal classifications of respondents on the level of agreeability relating to Service Procedures.

The hypothesis is rejected (significant) in 9 cases and the hypothesis is accepted (not significant) in 1 case. There is significant difference between personal classification of respondents such as age, education, occupation, family size, marital status, number of earning members in the family, monthly family income, family type and number of visits to the store on the level of agreeability towards Service procedures.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significance difference between the personal classifications of respondents on the level of agreeability relating to Convenience & satisfaction.

The hypothesis is rejected (significant) in 9 cases and the hypothesis is accepted (not significant) in 1 case. There is significant difference between personal classification of respondents such as gender, education, occupation, family size, marital status, number of earning members in the family, monthly family income, family type and number of visits to the store on the level of agreeability towards Convenience & satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significance difference between the personal classifications of respondents on the level of agreeability relating to Promotion

The hypothesis is rejected (significant) in 7 cases (table 3) and the hypothesis is accepted (not significant) in 3 cases. There is significant difference between personal classification of respondents such as education, occupation, family size, marital status, number of earning members in the family, monthly family income and family type on the level of agreeability towards Promotion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The current research proposes that store attributes may play a critical signal role in influencing the customer shopping behavior in the selected retail segments in Coimbatore district. In doing so, this study identifies five store attribute dimensions pertinent to store operation (store ambience, merchandise attributes, service procedures, convenience & satisfaction and promotion).

Among these five factors service procedure explains the maximum on the variations on the dependent variable retail store attributes when compared to independent variable. The customers are expecting more services in the retail outlets during shopping. In addition to that all the personal classification of the respondents has significant level of agreeability towards five store dimensions.

Marketing research suggested that essential store attributes vary by retail operation contexts and the findings of this study verify this. Focusing on a retail setting, the retail segments in Coimbatore district, this study shows major store attributes pertaining to different retail segments are implying that various store attributes beyond core product and/or service offerings are shown to influence consumers shopping behavior.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings it is very clear and specific that retail store manager's knowledge on the customers shopping behavior tends to task oriented. In other words the managers have to understand the customers shopping behavior, what are the factors influencing them to purchase a product, how to retain the customers in long range and buy more. The retail outlets have to adopt positioning strategies and target the customers with an extra focus on hedonic motivation such as excitement, entertainment, fantasy, and fun.

CONCLUSIONS

The development and maintenance of a favorable store image is critical for retailers to maintain or improve their market positions. Increased competitive forces within the Indian retail segment are challenging retailers to evaluate their store image, make necessary changes, and alter marketing strategies to retain current customers and attract new ones. Therefore, retail outlet managers should stimulate hedonic shopping motivation in order to influence shoppers to remain longer and buy more. This requires positioning strategies and targeting a relatively small market with an extra focus on hedonic motivations such as excitement, entertainment, fantasy, and fun.

LIMITATIONS

- This study is limited to the survey of customers in Coimbatore district. Although, Coimbatore district is a two tier city and 2nd major city in Tamil Nadu, the findings may not entirely reflect the views of customers of entire state in general. Hence, research in other cities and other customers is required to examine the validity and reliability of the identified store attributes and retail staff influence factors.

- The researcher found it very difficult to make the respondents answer for lengthy questions as they were in shopping mood and neglect to answer the questions.

FUTURE RESEARCH

A possible direction for future research is to conduct a similar study in other districts, or states to discover similarities and differences. Another possible direction for future research is to examine and compare different types of retail stores such as discount stores or supermarkets with different strategic positioning. It would be interesting to find how different positioning in the customer's mind affects their store attributes evaluation and satisfaction.

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APPENDICES

Annexure

Table 1: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis on Retail Store Attributes

Independent Variables	R	R^2	Independent Variable in R^2
Store ambience	0.167	0.028	0.028
Merchandise attributes	0.325	0.106	0.078
Service procedures	0.815	0.664	0.558
Convenience and satisfaction	0.980	0.959	0.295
Promotion	1.000	1.000	0.041

Table 2: Describes the Results of Analysis of Variance in Terms of Personal Factors, Sources of Variation, Sum of Squares, Degree of Freedom, Mean Square, F Value, p Value and Their Significance on Their Level of Agreeability towards Store Ambience

Personal Factors	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F Value	p Value	S/NS
Gender	Between Groups	0.269	1	0.269	0.262	0.609	NS
	Within Groups	1124.009	1094	1.027			
	Total	**1124.277**	**1095**				
Age	Between Groups	49.629	2	24.815	25.238	0.000	S
	Within Groups	1074.648	1093	0.983			
	Total	**1124.277**	**1095**				
Education	Between Groups	87.357	3	29.119	30.666	0.000	S
	Within Groups	1036.921	1092	0.950			
	Total	**1124.277**	**1095**				
Occupation	Between Groups	32.488	4	8.122	8.116	0.000	S
	Within Groups	1091.789	1091	1.001			
	Total	**1124.277**	**1095**				
Family size	Between Groups	46.922	3	15.641	15.853	0.000	S
	Within Groups	1077.355	1092	0.987			
	Total	**1124.277**	**1095**				
Marital status	Between Groups	6.014	1	6.014	5.883	0.015	S
	Within Groups	1118.264	1094	1.022			
	Total	**1124.277**	**1095**				
No.of earning members	Between Groups	53.691	3	17.897	18.255	0.000	S
	Within Groups	1070.587	1092	0.980			
	Total	**1124.277**	**1095**				
Monthly family income	Between Groups	33.549	3	11.183	11.196	0.000	S
	Within Groups	1090.728	1092	0.999			
	Total	**1124.277**	**1095**				

Table 2: Contd.,

Family type	Between Groups	11.913	1	11.913	11.716	0.001	S
	Within Groups	1112.364	1094	1.017			
	Total	**1124.277**	**1095**				
No.of visits to the store	Between Groups	127.029	2	63.515	69.613	0.000	S
	Within Groups	997.248	1093	0.912			
	Total	**1124.277**	**1095**				

Note: "S" denotes significant at 5% level ($p <$ or $= 0.05$) ; "NS" denotes not significant at 5% level ($p>0.05$)

Table 3: Describes the Results of Analysis of Variance in Terms of Personal Factors, Sources of Variation, Sum of Squares, Degree of Freedom, Mean Square, F Value, p Value and Their Significance on Their Level of Agreeability towards Promotion

Personal Factors	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F Value	p Value	S/NS
Gender	Between Groups	1.450	1	1.450	2.619	0.106	NS
	Within Groups	605.542	1094	0.554			
	Total	**606.992**	**1095**				
Age	Between Groups	2.676	2	1.338	2.420	0.089	NS
	Within Groups	604.316	1093	0.553			
	Total	**606.992**	**1095**				
Education	Between Groups	15.765	3	5.255	9.706	0.000	S
	Within Groups	591.227	1092	0.541			
	Total	**606.992**	**1095**				
Occupation	Between Groups	12.332	4	3.083	5.656	0.000	S
	Within Groups	594.660	1091	0.545			
	Total	**606.992**	**1095**				
Family size	Between Groups	12.356	3	4.119	7.563	0.000	S
	Within Groups	594.636	1092	0.545			
	Total	**606.992**	**1095**				
Marital status	Between Groups	3.165	1	3.165	5.735	0.017	S
	Within Groups	603.826	1094	0.552			
	Total	**606.992**	**1095**				
No.of earning members	Between Groups	7.873	3	2.624	4.783	0.003	S
	Within Groups	599.119	1092	0.549			
	Total	**606.992**	**1095**				
Monthly family income	Between Groups	21.205	3	7.068	13.177	0.000	S
	Within Groups	585.787	1092	0.536			
	Total	**606.992**	**1095**				
Family type	Between Groups	4.335	1	4.335	7.870	0.005	S
	Within Groups	602.656	1094	0.551			
	Total	**606.992**	**1095**				
No.of visits to the store	Between Groups	0.997	2	0.498	0.899	0.407	NS
	Within Groups	605.995	1093	0.554			
	Total	**606.992**	**1095**				

Note: "S" denotes significant at 5% level ($p <$ or $= 0.05$) ; "NS" denotes not significant at 5% level ($p>0.05$)