Determinants of supermarket shopping behaviour in an emerging market

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Abstract

The Indian retail market is one of the most promising in the world and it is growing. So is the Indian consumer, across all socioeconomic strata, regions, towns and classes. Rising incomes, multiple income households, exposure to international lifestyles and media, easier financial credit and an upbeat economy are enhancing aspirations and consumption patterns. The retailing industry in India, specifically organized retail, seems poised for a significant growth in the coming years owning to the presence of a vast market, growing consumer awareness about products and services, higher disposable income of the consumers and the desire to try out new products. Supermarkets will be one of the major centers for shopping. Thus to tap the opportunities in this sector, it is important to understand what factors that influence consumers and how is the current shopping behaviour pattern in India. Study finds out that, physical factors (discounts, quality, local brands, display and visual appeal) (2) social factors include (salesmen behaviour and choice of children) (3) temporal factors (open space) should be considered by the super marketers while designing marketing strategy for Indian consumers as these factors are having influence upon the number of visits and amount spent in the supermarket.

Introduction

At present, India's retail sector is highly unorganized, with an estimated 15 million tiny outlets catering to individual needs and employing the second largest number of people after agriculture. The retail giants are targeting the 300 million in the middle class and the additional 200 million in the rural areas, who form a consumer market worth more than $ 100 billion India's retailing landscape, has more than 12 million mom-and-pop stores that are not likely to watch their businesses erode as foreign companies encroach on their territory. But gaining early mover advantage could make tackling all of these issues worthwhile.

According to the recent Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI report, 2007) report, the organized retail sector is likely to increase its

share from the current 4% to over 20% by 2010. Organized retail sector is on high growth trajectory, and is expected to grow at a compound growth rate (CAGR) of 40 percent, from $20 billion in 2007 to $107 billion by 2013 (A. T. Kearney Report, 2008). The organized retail sector has witnessed tremendous revenue growth over the last few years with existing players scaling up with new models, verticals, markets and larger store sizes. In order to cash in on the huge growth potential with these new retail models, large Indian conglomerate and International players are joining the bandwagon. Malls are also coming up not just in the metros but in Tier II, Tier III cities, introducing the Indian consumer to shopping experience like never before.

Retailing in India is gradually inching its way to becoming the next boom industry. The whole concept of shopping has altered in terms of format and consumer buying behavior, ushering in a revolution in shopping. Modern retail has entered India as seen in sprawling shopping centres, multi-storeyed malls and huge complexes offer shopping, entertainment and food all under one roof. Specifically organized retail seems poised for a significant growth in the coming years owning to the presence of a cast market, growing consumer awareness about products and services, higher disposable income of the consumers and the desire to try out new products. In such a scenario, there remains a need for studying the shoppers' behaviour. Further, the cyclical and structural changes in the Indian economy are important because these changes have impact on the consumption patterns. In relation to consumer behaviour cyclical trends include the amount of price responsive behaviour including search and price comparisons. Cyclical patterns of unemployment also affect consumer behaviour by changing the size of the consumer segment which is forced to buy in small quantities, on a frequent basis and at lowest possible prices. There are many changes which have taken place in the Indian economy and it affected the behaviour of the consumer. Given the rapid rate at which new retail formats have been introduced in the Indian market in recent times, many with limited success, it is imperative for Indian businesses to understand changing shopping behaviour among consumers, especially with regard to their preferred points of purchase. With growth in disposable incomes and improving infrastructure, consumers have a wide choice of stores where they can choose to shop.

Supermarkets will be one of the major centers for shopping. Thus to tap the opportunities in this sector, it is important to understand what factors the consumers are influenced by and how is the current shopping behaviour pattern for the supermarkets in India. In order to know the related work, which has already been done, a brief review of the literature is given as under.

Review of Literature
Kunkel and Berry (1968) believed that an image is acquired through experience and thus learnt, and found retail store image to be the total conceptualized or expected reinforcement that a person associates with shopping at a particular store. Crosby et. al (1990); Sharma (1997); Williams (1998) have mentioned that companies should focus on

customer satisfaction, trust and commitment through implementation of customer oriented selling, thus leading to a long term relationship. Consequently because salespeople are often communicating with customers, their behaviour and activities are crucial in maintaining relationships with customers and enhancing customer retention.

Zimmer and Golden (1988), however, took a different approach, focusing on consumers' unprompted descriptions of image, without directing them towards affective dimensions or specific attributes. Thus these researchers argued that their results captured more deeply consumers' evoked retail store image. Donthu and Gilliland (1996) carried out a study to profile the Infomercial shoppers and found that those who purchased using infomercial advertisements were more convenience seekers, brand and price conscious, variety seeking, impulsive, and innovators. Moschis (1976) studied the cosmetic buyers and found that besides being store loyal, shoppers were also loyal to the brands that they bought. These shoppers showed a problem solving approach to shopping.

Bettman (1979) highlighted that situational variables affect in store decision making in various ways. Store knowledge determines the extent to which product and brand search is guided by internal or external memory. Hutcheson and Mutinho (1998) found that shoppers used a combination of the quality of staff and "the occurrence of low prices and the frequency of promotions" in choosing a store. A study by Venugopal (2001) has investigated the retail business from the perspective of a retailer's expectations from the suppliers.

Dash et al. (1976) found that the level of pre-purchase information regarding the brand determined the type of store chosen. Shoppers who had higher levels of pre-purchase information generally shopped at the specialty store, whereas shoppers with low pre-purchase information bought at departmental stores. This is mainly attributed to customers adopting a risk reduction policy with regard to their impending purchase. A store is chosen based on the self-confidence that the customer has regarding the store; about the nature and quality of product and service he will receive.

Malhotra (1983) proposes a concept of preference threshold. It is suggested that shoppers tend to show a preference for a store depending on the threshold value allotted by the shopper. It is assumed that if the perceived value is less than the threshold, the shopper may not choose the store.

Sinha (2003) brought out the shopping orientation of the Indian shoppers. The analysis indicates that the Indian shoppers seek emotional value more than the functional value of shopping. Although there is an indication of shopping being considered as a task and should be finished as soon as possible, this orientation is overshadowed by the entertainment value derived by the shoppers. The study also indicates that though there are some similarities in the orientation of Indian shoppers

and shoppers from developed countries, there are some significant differences too. The Indian shoppers show an orientation that is based more on the entertainment value than on the functional value. Yavas (2003) assessed the relative strengths and weaknesses of 24 mall attributes as viewed by two shopper segments: those shoppers who prefer to shop there, versus those who favour a competitor mall. He found that there were significant differences for both importance and performance ratings across these two shopper segments. Jin and Kim (2003) segmented Korean shoppers according to their shopping motives in patronising discount stores into four segments labelled as leisurely motivated shoppers, socially-motivated shoppers, utilitarian shoppers and shopping-apathetic shoppers.

Martin and Turley (2004) studied the attitudes of the young segment (19-25 years old) towards malls, and factors motivating consumption. They found that they were more likely to be objectively rather than socially motivated to patronise. Ruiz et al. (2004) used the activities that shoppers perform in the mall as a basis of segmentation. They identified four segments, namely, recreational shoppers, full experience shoppers, traditional shoppers and mission shoppers.

Underhill (1999) observed that when you enter a shopping mall today, you are never sure if you are in a store or a theme park. The importance of creating a positive, vibrant, and interesting image has led innovative marketers to blur the line between shopping and theater. Both shopping malls and individual stores must create stimulating environments that simultaneously allow people to shop and be entertained.

Consumers generally desire to trade where store personnel, particularly salespeople, are perceived as helpful, friendly, and courteous (Loudon and Bitta 1993). Bloch et al. (1994) have identified seven dimensions of shopping malls that collectively explain consumers' motives for visiting malls. These dimensions are: aesthetics, escape, flow, exploration, role enactment, social and convenience. Wakefield and Baker (1998) discovered that gathering information by exploring new products or stores was a perceived benefit of the mall experience. They suggested that exploration taps consumers' desire for variety. For example, many people are interested in learning about new trends in fashion, styles, or technology. Kaufman (1996), many shoppers select shopping areas based on hours of operation and travel time. Retail location theory also posits that consumers prefer to shop as close to home as possible. Because many consumers spend relatively little time at home, a definition of convenience that uses the home as the focal point may be misleading.

Memery, Megicks & Williams (2006) identified seven core categories, containing seventy-one sub-categories. These interlink to form three main clusters: food quality and safety, human rights and ethical trading, and environmental (green) issues. Kim and Park (1997) found differences in customers classified by shopping trip regularity. Lichtenstein et al. (1997) concluded the effect of sales promotions on the shopping.

Beatty and Ferrell (1998) has also been successful in differentiating customers in a retailing context on the basis of individual differences. Sojka and Giese (2003) suggested that individuals with different traits report different shopping behaviours. A comparison between groups found that individuals with high cognition compared prices and brands; individuals with high affect made impulse purchases and showed a preference for brand names; and individuals with high cognition and high affect evaluated sales personnel. Dholakia et al. (1995) found that the more men report being responsible for a particular type of shopping, the more they enjoy the activity. Moreover, married men who are the primary grocery shoppers in their families tend to feel appreciated for their efforts.

Otnes and McGrath (2001) found out that understanding male shopping both as a consequence of gender transcendence and as a venue for achievement can explain the motivations for male shopping in a variety of retail settings. They concluded that men's presence in retail settings and their desire to use the marketplace as venue for achievement should become even more commonplace.

Westbrook and Black (1985), in a renowned study, differentiate the underlying motivational basis for shopping into the following seven motives: (1) anticipated utility: expectation of benefits which will be provided by the product to be purchased; (2) role enactment: fulfilling a culturally prescribed role by shopping; (3) negotiation: motivation to seek economic advantages through bargaining with seller; (4) choice optimization: motivation to purchase the optimal product (in order to attain a sense of achievement); (5) affiliation: social needs concerning affiliation with friends, other shoppers, retail merchants; (6) power and authority: desire to attain elevated social position, e.g., to be superior to the retail personnel; and (7) stimulation: seeking new and interesting experiences and stimuli from the retail environment.

Groppel-Klein et al. (1999), based on Westbrook and Black (1985), applied factor analysis to derive four factors of shopping motives for furniture shopping: price orientation, stimulation seeking, actual buying intention ('have a close look at products', 'intention to buy', 'search for something special') and desire for advice.

Dawson et al. (1990) investigated and showed a relationship between shopping motives and the emotions which consumers experience during a visit to a retail store. This in turn, would most likely also result in the formation of different attitudes among those consumers, probably leading to different results for likeability. Woodside and Trappey (1992) identify an automatic cognitive processing of store attributes by means of which consumers decide which will be their primary store. The study found that customers could quickly name a store when asked what store comes to mind for specific attributes such as "lowest overall prices", "most convenient", and so forth. These top-of-mind responses are associated strongly with customers' affiliation with the main store in which they make most of their purchases.

Miranda et. al (2005) results of model estimation show that factors with a significant influence on store satisfaction have little in common with others that impel shoppers to remain loyal to one store. Indeed, there was no evidence in this study that shoppers' overall satisfaction was by itself a significant influence on continued patronage. Martinez and Montaner (2006) revealed three types of deal-proneness: instore promotion proneness, store flyers proneness and coupon proneness. The consumers who respond to in-store promotions are characterised by their price consciousness and attach less importance to the product quality. They enjoy planning and shopping; when they do their shopping they usually buy impulsively, they enjoy brand switching frequently and they feel attracted by new products. In addition, they consider they have enough storage space for their extra purchase.

Kaur & Singh (2007) found out that the Indian youth primarily shop from a hedonic perspective. They importantly serve as new product information seekers, and the retailing firms can directly frame and communicate the requisite product information to them. They also view shopping as a means of diversion to alleviate depression or break the monotony of daily routine. In addition to this, they also go shopping to have fun or just browse through the outlets. This age group is particularly found to be considerably involved in the role of information seeker from the market and disseminator of the same to the peer group or to the family.

Ahmed et. al (2007) Malaysian students were motivated to visit malls primarily by the interior design of the mall; products that interest them; opportunities for socializing with friends; and convenient one stop shopping. Further analysis showed that younger respondents have more favorable dispositions or shopping orientations towards malls than older respondents. The survey of related studies revealed that there has been very limited research in the understanding of shoping behaviour in general and in the Indian retailing in particular. The existing gap in research in the area of shopping behaviour justifies the rationale of the study at hand. The present study has been conducted so as to reduce the existing gap in research in this important area.

Objectives of the Study
- Various physical, temporal and social factors affecting the consumer shopping experience in supermarkets.
- The effect of above factors on number of trips to the supermarket, and amount spent.
- Physical factors include the variety of goods in the supermarket, discounts, display of products, facilities like shopping carts, credit/debit cards, etc. Temporal factors are the time related factors like the location of the supermarket, ample parking space, open space in the supermarket, etc. Social factors include ambience, salesman behaviour and influence of children in buying goods.

Once we identify the various critical factors, the next step is to find out the relation of the various factors that are critical in the shopping behaviour with the following two variables:

- Number of trips per month
- Amount spent per trip

Research Methodology

The present study is an empirical study basically based on the primary data but secondary data have also been collected from various sources (published and unpublished) including websites. The population of the study comprised of the retail shoppers. A convenient sampling has been applied to collect the data. Enough care has been taken to make the sample representative to the population. The sample was selected from the National Capital Region (NCR) as this region is among the first regions of India where large retail formats were introduced. Based on the results of the pilot study the final questionnaire was administered to 150 respondents. In the questionnaire respondents were also asked to provide their demographic characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, ethnic group, educational experience, organizational level and job tenure.

The other questions that followed asked them about the no. of trips they made to the supermarket every month, the amount spent etc. Finally the last part of the questionnaire was designed in such a way so as to elicit the various responses of consumers on various factors (social, temporal, physical etc) wherein they were supposed to give their ratings (1 to 5) on each question.

Data Analysis and Discussion

After the completion of the survey, a through check of the data has been made. The collected data has been analyzed with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

Critical Factors Determining Buying Behaviour

One way Anova was used to determine and to distinguish the factors which are critically affect the number of trips per month and amount spent per trip, measures of consumer buying behaviour.

1.   **Physical Factors**

Table 1: Physical Factors

Sr. No.	Factors	Mean	No. of Trips per Month (Sig. values of F)*	Amount Spent per Trip (Sig. values of F)*
1	Variety	2.57	0.826	0.075
2	Discounts	**4.11**	**0.002**	0.06
3	Quality	**4.15**	**0.02**	0.237
4	Local Brands	**3.88**	**0.015**	**0.003**

5	Facilities	3.01	0.093	0.602
6	Credit/debit card facility	3.88	0.734	**0.041**
7	Display	**4.12**	**0.005**	0.608
8	Visual Appeal	3.80	0.841	**0.046**

*Significance at 5% level

The factors highlighted, having value less than 0.05 shows a significant relationship with the two measure of consumer buying behaviour. Thus out of the physical factors, the critical one's affecting the buying behaviour are availability of local brands, and to some extend discounts,, quality display and visual appeal.

2.   Social Factors
Table 2: Social Factors

Sr. No.	Factor	Mean	No. of Trips per Month (Sig. values of F)*	Amount Spent per Trip (Sig. values of F)*
1	Ambience	**4.4**	**0.271**	**0.34**
2	Salesman Behaviour	**4.12**	**0.009**	**0.42**
3	Choice of Children	**4.40**	**0.329**	**0.005**

*Significance at 5% level

The factors highlighted, having value less than 0.05 shows a significant relationship with the two measure of consumer buying behaviour. Thus out of the social factors, the critical one's affecting the buying behaviour are ambience, salesman behaviour and influence of children.

3.   Temporal Factors
Table 3: Temporal Factors

Sr. No.	Factors	Mean	No. of Trips per Month (Sig. values of F)*	Amount Spent per Trip (Sig. values of F)*
1	Parking Space	2.80	0.802	0.481
2	Open Space	**4.11**	**0.023**	**0.43**
3	Proximity	3.81	0.602	**0.114**
4	Timings	**4.06**	**0.267**	**0.212**
5	Spending Time	**4.22**	**0.11**	**0.071**

*Significance at 5% level

The factors highlighted, having less than 0.05 shows a significant relationship with the two measure of consumer buying behaviour. Thus out of the only temporal factors, the critical one's affecting the buying behaviour is open space, timings, spending time and up to some extent proximity.

Findings and Recommendations

Study shows that various physical, social, temporal and demographical factors can be considered while analyzing a consumer supermarket buying behaviour, but only few of them are critical enough to affect the measures of consumer buying behaviour i.e. no. of trips per month and amount spent per trip.

The principal contribution of this study for any retail organization is at three levels. First, physical, social and temporal factors which are found out in this study play an important role in the success of any retail organization. The central dimensions of shopping factors include are (1) Physical Factors (Discounts, quality, local brands, display and visual appeal) (2) Social Factors include (salesmen behaviour and choice of children) (3) Temporal Factors (open space). Second for retailers, it is important to note that physical factors are much more comprehensive than just quality advantages of the assortment. So we can say that consumers' perceptions of shopping are simultaneously influenced by other aspects such as physical factors which include discounts, quality, local brands, display and visual appeal. Third, managerial implication is that a suitable retail marketing strategy has to consider the different configuration of shopping behaviour present in the market. So an effective marketing strategy can be designed by a marketer by considering these factors. Any retailer has to ensure that store attributes meet the specific needs of a well-defined, homogeneous consumer group making up a specific market segment. So these factors can play a major role in designing and delivering value to the customer. Our results emphasize the need for a customized approach to retail marketing. The different shopping orientations of customers have to be taken into consideration, not only concerning the functional store attributes but also with regard to the more emotional and long-term attitude elements.

Table 4: Critical Factors

PHYSICAL FACTORS	SOCIAL FACTORS	TEMPORAL FACTORS
Discounts	Salesmen Behaviour	Open Space
Quality	Choice of Children	
Local Brands		
Display		
Visual Appeal		

Directions for Further Research

It may imply that shopping motives in India have been changing over the last one or two decades, which is especially true for shoppers' following daily or weekly routines, which include different types of shopping for different purposes. Longitudinal research could be carried out to find (a) if the customer base of the supermarket has undergone a change over a period of time. (b) If the relative importance of the criteria employed in case of giving response about these factors have undergone a change with time. Future research should also consider a broader demographic profile representing multiple geographical locations in India such as the North, South, East and West India

regions as well as other countries in the Asia-pacific region given that consumers' shopping behaviour will differ in different sub cultures and cultures across the world and so also the factors affecting it. So this type of research will be helpful in providing comparisons and setting of standards by the retailers. As many Multinational corporations are planning to enter in India, so understanding of shopping behaviour in the international perspective is very important. Research should also be undertaken to understand the perceptions of supermarket managers about these factors so that gap between expectations of the consumers and offering by the supermarket should be reduced.

Conclusion

Retailing in India has been growing at a fast pace over the last decade. More importantly it witnessed major changes in terms of retail mix (organized Vs. Unorganized), quality and scale of retailing, varieties of retail formats and over above change in consumer preferences and shopping habits. Many Indian corporate houses such as Future group, Relaiance, Bharti, Tata's, AV Birla group, Godrej and others has made their investment plans in this booming sector. Leading multinational retailers such as Wal – Mart, Carrefour and Tisco are waiting in line to enter in the Indian retail market. So this research is an attempt to understand the shopping behaviour in this emerging sector and thus we see that there are some specific factors that play the most pivotal role in determining the consumer's shopping behaviour and these should be carefully dealt with by the retail organization considering the large potential that lies ahead of them in the retail industry in India.

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