An empirical study of factors affecting shopping preferences of consumers at organised retail stores in Punjab

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Abstract
The share of organised retail is total retail market in India is growing. Many domestic and global players have already entered in this sector. Due to intense competition in this field, it is important to focus on retaining existing consumers. Working out strategies in this direction requires a thorough understanding of the preferences of the consumers on the attributes that are considered of much significance. The present paper attempts to analyze the consumer preferences of the specific attributes of retail stores in the 5 selected cities of Punjab. Factor analysis has been used in identifying the main factors. The factors identified includes availability & variety, ambience, service, price, advertisement, prestige, and quality

Overview of Retailing

According to Philip Kotler, 'Retailing includes all the activities involved in selling goods or services to the final consumers for personal, non-business use. Any organisation selling to final consumers whether it is a manufacturer, wholesaler or retailer – is doing retailing .It does not matter how the goods or services are sold (by person, mail, telephone, vending machine or internet) or where they are sold (in a store, on the street or in the consumer's home).[1]

Retailing is set of business activities that add value to the products and services sold to consumers for their personal and family use. These value-added activities include providing assortments, breaking bulk, holding inventory, and providing services. As such retailing is the last link that connects the individual consumer with the manufacturing and distribution chain.[2]

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) specifies that the retail trade sector comprises establishments primarily engaged in retailing merchandise, generally without transformation, and rendering services incidental to the sale of merchandise.[3]

Retailing thus, may be understood as the final step in the distribution of merchandise, for consumption by end consumers. In the complex world of trade today, retail would include not only goods but also services that may be provided to the end consumer. In the age

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[1] *Marketing Management, Philip Kotler,12th edition, pg 504*
[2] *Retailing Management, Levy, Michael and Weitz Barton A.,6thedition,pg 5*
[3] *The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), www.census.gov/naics*

where consumer is the king and marketers are focusing on customer delight, retail may be redefined in the first point of customer contact.

For the purpose of research the organised and unorganised sectors of retail has been defined. According to the National Accounts Statistics of India the 'unorganized sector' include units whose activity is not regulated by any statue or legal provision, and/or those which do not maintain regular accounts[4].In the context of the retail sector, it could therefore be said to cover those forms of trade which sell an assortment of products and services ranging from fruits and vegetables to shoe repair. These products or services may be sold or offered out of fixed or mobile location and the number of people employed could range between 10-20 people. Thus the neighbourhood *kiryana*, the *paanwala*, the cobbler, the vegetable, fruit vendor, etc. would be termed as the unorganized sector. The primary purpose in defining the scope of the unorganized sector is to understand the formats or the forms of trade that would be understood as unorganized and therefore, to further the understanding of the term organized.

Organized retail can be defined as any organized form of retail or wholesale activity (both food and non-food under multiple formats), which is typically a multi-outlet chain of stores or distribution centres run by professional management.[5]
The retail trade sector comprises of establishments primarily engaged in retailing merchandise, generally without transformation, and rendering services incidental to the sale of merchandise.

Every business has its distinctive way of organising the very many activities that are involved in delivering its products and service to the end customer. In retail parlance, it is termed as retail format. Retail format can be termed as combination of various elements of retail mix, to offer value to the target customers. It is the interface between retailers and the customers. It makes customers to visit the store to obtain goods and services and desired value[6]. It is also defined as the Business Models of retailers. The importance of retail formats can be gauged from the fact that most of the retail organisations equate them with Strategic Business Units and can have separate operational infrastructure and organisational set-up for them.

Indian Retail Market
The retail sector in India is highly fragmented and mostly owner-run "Mom and Pop" outlets. The entire sector is dominated by small retailers consisting of local Kiryana shops, general stores, footwear and apparel shops, hand-cart hawkers and pavement vendors. These together form the "unorganised retail" or "traditional retail". According to the Investment Commission of India (ICI) estimates, there are over 15 million such "Mom and Pop" retail outlets in the country.

In terms of total retail sales, one can find a wide range of estimates and this definitely reflects lack of sound official government data. Investment Commission of India had estimated Indian retail sales figure at US$262b for 2006, although market estimates ranged from US$200bn to as high as US$386bn for that year. According to ASSOCAM retail report, the Indian retail market increased from $300 billion in 2009 to $410 billion (around Rs 19,

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[4] *Unorganized Sector and its contribution in India,Pankaj K P Shreyaskar, Sarvekshana, Journal of the National Sample Survey Organization, 89th issue Vol. XXVI No 2*
[5] *Benefits of Modern Trade to the Indian Economy, The Rising Elephant, A PWC, CII publication*
[6] *Madaan K V S, Fundamentals of Retailing,6th edition, Tata McGraw Hill , pp 46-47*

03,844 crore) in 2010. However the organised retail is still account for mere 5 %($13 million or around Rs 60,375) of the overall retail market in India. Various agencies have made efforts to project the growth rate of the total retail market till 2013 and the figures hover around 13-15.5 percent.

In line with India's economic growth, the retail sector in this country is not only expanding but also modernizing. This new trend began during late 1990s and early 2000s. The Indian Retail sector has caught the world's imagination in the last few years. It topped the list of most attractive retail destination for consecutively three years from 2004- 2007, ranked second in 2008 and again ranked first in 2009.India in on third position in 2010 Global Retail Development Index (GRDI) developed by A. T. Kearney[7]. Table 1 illustrates position of India in Global Retail Development Index(GRDI) from 2005-2010.

Table 1: Position of India in GRDI index from 2005-2010

GRDI Rank 2005	GRDI Rank 2006	GRDI Rank 2007	GRDI Rank 2008	GRDI Rank 2009	GRDI Rank 2010
India	**India**	**India**	Vietnam	**India**	China
Russia	Russia	Russia	**India**	Russia	Kuwait
Ukraine	Vietnam	China	Russia	China	**India**
China	Ukraine	Vietnam	China	United Arab Emirates	Saudi Arabia
Slovenia	China	Ukraine	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Brazil
Latvia	Chile	Chile	Morocco	Vietnam	Chile
Croatia	Latvia	Latvia	Saudi Arabia	Chile	United Arab Emirates

Source: www.atkearney.com

In the midst of the unorganised retail sector's strong dominance, some of the major industrial houses have entered into this sector and have announced ambitious future expansion plans. Transnational corporations have also joined hands with big Indian companies to set up retail chains. India's Bharti group joined hands with Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer and Tata group tied up with the UK based Tesco, the world's third largest retail group. Table 2 illustrates the expansion plans of major retails in India.

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[7] *Expanding Opportunities for Global Retailers, The 2010 A. T. Kearney Global Retail Development Index, www.atkearney.com, accessed 04/02/10*
A.T. Kearney's Global Retail Development Index ranks 30 emerging countries on the urgency for retailers to enter the country. The scores are based on 25 variables across four primary categories: economic and political risk; market attractiveness; market saturation; and time pressure

Table 2: Expansion plans of major retailers in India

Companies	No. of stores		Time span
	Present Scenario	Future Prospects	
Pantaloon Retail India Limited	1000 stores in 71 cities	25-30 stores	By the end of 2012
Shopper's Stop	27 stores	15 stores	3 years
Spencer's	250 stores in 50 cities	30 stores	2011-2012
Infinite Retail "Croma"	32 stores	100 stores	Next 3 years
"Reliance" Retail	1000 stores in 86 cities		
"Vishal" Retail	171 stores in 100 cities	40 stores	By 2012
"Easy day"	25 stores	75-100 stores	Next 3 years
Marks & "Spencers"	15 stores	10 stores	Next 5 years
"Tommy Hilfiger"	14 stand-alone stores and 16 shop-in-shop stores	50 stores	Next 5 years
"Bharti Wal-Mart" 'Best Price'	2 stores	15 stores	By 2012.

Source: Assocham Research Bureau

In this scenario, the firms have to work on what attracts consumers and what will make them not to shift their choice towards competitors. Working out strategies in this direction requires a thorough understanding of the preferences of the consumers on the attributes that are considered of much significance. The small cities are becoming the hub of retail activity, the requirement and perception of the consumer i.e. what they perceive about the attributes of a store in their mind, their preferences and satisfaction drivers may be different than that of major cities and metros. The organized retail segment is tapping the small cities as a potential because of the rising income levels in these cities. Studying the preferences of consumers in these cities then can be exploratory in developing appropriate and customized marketing strategies for these consumers. The present study is an attempt in this direction. This study focuses on analyzing the consumer's preferences of the specific attributes of retail store in various cities of Punjab.

Review of Literature
Several attributes have been identified in the retail and marketing literature as reasons for store patronage and choice.
- Martineau (1958) categorized store attributes into two main categories: functional and psychological. The functional category includes attributes such as location, assortment of products and store layout. The psychological category represents the feelings generated by the functional elements of the store. The former category has gained more attention in the subsequent research into store choice than the latter.
- Fisk (1961) identified six attributes as the most important: location accessibility, merchandise suitability, value for price, sales efforts and store service.
- In their study of department stores in Arizona, Kunkel and Berry (1968) proposed a twelve-factor scheme which includes price of merchandise, quality, assortment, fashion of merchandises, sales personnel, sales promotion, advertising, store atmosphere, locational accessibility, service, reputation on adjustments and other

accessibility factors. In a subsequent study, Berry (1969) identified three general factors that predominantly influenced consumer's store choice regardless of store type: namely, quality and variety of merchandise, sales staff, and store atmosphere.

- A prominent and widely-cited work on the topic of store image was that of Lindquist (1974). Based on a review of 19 research articles, he synthesized the framework of these studies into a set of nine groups: merchandise, service, clientele, physical facilities, promotion, accessibility, store atmosphere, institutional and post-transaction satisfaction.
- Doyle & Fenwick (1975), propose that price, product variety, one-stop shopping, quality, location of the store, advertisement, general appearance of the store and convenience are some of major attributes looked upon by the consumers while evaluating a grocery store.
- Bearden (1977) distinguished seven attributes as potentially significant for store patronage: price, quality of merchandise, assortment, atmosphere, location, parking facilities and friendly staff.
- Arnold et al. (1983) extended the accessibility attribute to the ease of mobility through the store and fast checkout
- Mason, Mayer, & Ezell, 1994 proposed that Reasonable prices in a retail store induce customer satisfaction as well as building customer loyalty. In the retailing sector, the store having reasonable prices will often capture a large market share

- Hasty and Reardon (1997) classified store attributes into three general categories: accessibility (e.g., location, layout, appearance, and knowledgeable staff), facilitation of sales (e.g., low-priced specials, promotional offers and methods of payments accepted) and auxiliary attributes (e.g., play areas for children and food court).
- Wong & Sohal, (2003) compared the relationship between dimensions of service quality and customer loyalty in a retail chain departmental store located in a city to that of a country. The results showed that service quality is positively associated with customer loyalty, and that the most significant predictor of customer loyalty in the city retail district is empathy, while the most significant predictor of customer loyalty in the country retail district is tangibles.
- Solgaard and Hansen (2003) identified several store attributes that were considered important for the consumer's evaluation of stores. These attributes include merchandise, assortment, merchandise quality, personnel, store layout, accessibility, cleanliness and atmosphere.
- Spiller Bolten and Kennerknecht (2006) identify service and product quality as main determinants of customer satisfaction. They propose that customers consider freshness of fruits and vegetables` as the quality of whole assortment.

Objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to identify the factors affecting consumer preference related to shopping at organized retail store.

Research Methodology

The following research methodology has been used in order to achieve the objectives:

Research instrument

A questionnaire was developed on the basis of the foregoing review of the literature. The questionnaire consisted of 29 closed ended questions which were framed keeping in mind the various factors that the respondent may wish to see in a retail outlet. A five-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agrees (1) to strongly disagree (5) was related to each of the identified selection attributes. A preliminary evaluation and refinement of the questionnaire was done of a panel of experts. The panel comprised two educationists in Business Administration and two individuals highly involved in organised retailing. The participants on the panel reviewed the questionnaire for content, wording and readability. Based on their suggestions, 7 items were removed from the questionnaire and some rewording to a couple of the remaining items was made. The final version of the data collection instrument consisted of two parts: Part I included details of demographic characteristics of the

respondents (age, gender, level of education, employment, marital status, children, nationality and monthly income) and Part II contained a set of questions to obtain the level of agreement and disagreement to statement related to shopping at organised retail stores.

Data collection
The data was collected outside the major retail outlets, where the respondents were consumers who had completed their shopping in an organized retail store and willing to respond to the questions. The data has been collected from five urban cities of Punjab i.e. Amritsar, Patiala, Mohali, Jalandhar and Ludhiana. These cities were selected due to high growth of organised retail in these cities.The consumers who have just shopped at a retail outlet were able to generate an appropriate response; Moreover the non-shoppers responses could be avoided. The survey was conducted at selected organized retail stores in selected cities of Punjab.

Sample size
The target population of the study included customers who prefer to shop at organised retail stores in Punjab. A sampling frame from which a random sample could be drawn was unavailable. However, an accidental sampling method was chosen to serve the purpose of data collection. This method seemed acceptable and appropriate taken into account the exploratory nature of the study and the lack of a sampling frame. 50 organized retail stores were selected in five selected cities for data collection. 100 consumers were interviewed from sampled organized outlet adopting the Systematic random sampling procedure in each selected urban city of Punjab. Over 500 consumers were interviewed at the selected stores in 5 selected cities. Of the 500 questionnaires distributed, 25 were excluded for reasons of inconsistencies in responses and incompleteness of answers.

Statistical Analyses
The 475 usable questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS software version 14.0. Frequencies were used to generate a profile of the key demographic characteristics of the respondents. Descriptive statistics were utilized to calculate the mean and standard error scores. An exploratory factor analysis was used to uncover the underlying factors which affect consumer preference.

Results and analysis
Demographics characteristics
The number of male respondents in the survey were 52% and 48% were female respondents. Most of the respondents visiting an organized retail outlet were graduates and had educational qualifications above it. 36 percent of the respondents were post-graduates, 23 percent had professional degree and 34 percent were graduates and the remaining 7 percent were undergraduates.

Most of the respondents were self-employed/unemployed or belong to other professions (36%); whereas, the other respondents were from varied professions such as civil services (14.7%), educational (15.5%), medical (23.8%), financial services (10%).It can be concluded that most respondents belong to tertiary sector and very few to manufacturing sectors.

As reflected in our survey most respondents have income between 3 and 8 lacs (56%) and the remaining 44% were having income more than 8 lacs. This indicates that the respondents are mostly of the higher middle income group or Middle income group and from the service class. There are 38.5 percent of the respondents in the age group of 18-25, 21percent respondents in the age group of 26-35. Remaining 40.5 percent were above 36 of age. This indicates that most of the respondents were youth.

Factor analysis
As the first step, the suitability of the data collected for using factor analysis was thoroughly checked. The sample is greater than 100 as mentioned above. The proportion of the respondents and the variables used in is more than 5:1 (475 respondents and 22 variables),

then the correlations matrix was checked, there were enough high correlations to proceed with factor analysis.

Prior to running the factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett's test of sphericity were performed. The generated score of KMO was .77, reasonably supporting the appropriateness of using factor analysis to explore the underlying structure of supermarket image. The Bartlett's test of sphericity was highly significant ($p<$ .000), rejecting the null hypothesis that the 22 important attributes are uncorrelated in the population. Using principal components with varimax rotation, only attributes with factor loadings of .5 or greater on a factor were regarded as significant. The factor analysis generated four factors explaining 63.7% of the variability in the original data. The Cronbach's alphas, which measure the internal consistency of each of the identified factors, fell within an acceptable range.

The communalities are presented in Table 3. Communalities represent the proportion of the variance in the original variables that is accounted for by the factor solution. The factor solution should explain at least half of each original variable's variance, so the communality value for each variable should be 0.50 or higher. As can be seen from the table all the variables used have a communality higher than 0.50.

Table 3: Communalities table

		Extraction
V1	out of stock	0.688
V2	variety of grocery items	0.606
V3	many brands are available	0.693
V4	store offers maximum choices	0.529
V5	everything you need under one roof	0.536
V6	Not over crowed	0.586
V7	Products are easy to locate	0.654
V8	displays are attractive	0.577
V9	clean and free from clutter	0.643
V10	good music and soothing colours	0.559
V11	Advertise regularly	0.560
V12	Recommended by friends	0.663
V13	home delivery	0.571
V14	many salespeople	0.673
V15	comfortable air conditioned environment	0.764
V16	return or replacement policy	0.779
V17	trolleys and baskets are available	0.594
V18	many billing counters for a faster check out	0.5667
V19	Competitive price	0.854
V20	discounts	0.560
V21	stock good quality items	0.609
V22	Fresh groceries	0.665

Extraction method: Principle Component Analysis

Table 4 gives the 6 extracted factors that explain 56 percent of the total variations.

Table 4 : Extracted factors

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.14	23.363	23.363	5.14	23.363	23.363	2.805	12.75	12.75
2	2.365	10.752	34.115	2.365	10.752	34.115	2.285	10.386	23.136
3	1.349	6.13	40.245	1.349	6.13	40.245	2.044	9.29	32.425
4	1.227	5.576	45.821	1.227	5.576	45.821	1.927	8.758	41.184
5	1.117	5.078	50.899	1.117	5.078	50.899	1.641	7.46	48.643
6	1.008	4.581	55.48	1.008	4.581	55.48	1.504	6.837	55.48
7	0.932	4.235	59.715						
8	0.879	3.997	63.712						
9	0.82	3.727	67.439						
10	0.755	3.431	70.87						
11	0.729	3.312	74.182						
12	0.712	3.235	77.416						
13	0.669	3.039	80.456						
14	0.639	2.905	83.361						
15	0.602	2.735	86.096						
16	0.564	2.565	88.662						
17	0.54	2.495	91.157						
18	0.48	2.495	91.157						
19	0.417	1.893	97.221						
20	0.432	1.963	95.328						
21	0.341	1.548	98.769						
22	0.271	1.231	100						
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.									

Table 5: Rotated matrix

Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
products are never out of stock	0.688					
variety of grocery items	0.606					
many brands are available	0.693					
store offers maximum choices	0.529					
everything you need under one roof	0.536					
Not over crowed			0.586			
Products are easy to locate			0.654			

displays are attractive			0.577			
clean and free from clutter			0.643			
good music and soothing colours			0.559			
Advertise regularly		0.560				
Recommended by friends		0.663				
home delivery						0.552
many salespeople						0.673
comfortable air conditioned environment						0.764
return or replacement policy						0.779
trolleys and baskets are available						0.594
many billing counters for a faster check out						0.5667
Competitive price				0.854		
discounts				0.560		
stock good quality items					0.845	
Fresh groceries					0.665	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: "Varimax with Kaiser Normalization"

The most significant factor that determines the retail outlet preference is the shopping availability and variety of products. This is the most important factor looked at by the consumers according to the results of factor analysis. The consumers prefer that retail store should have large variety of brands for grocery items. Availability of items even in late hours is also important.

The second factor can be called the "services" .The consumers prefer stores that offers free home delivery. They prefer stores with many sales executives to help. Other factors like sufficient parking space, availability of baskets and trolleys and fact check out are equally important for consumers.

The third most important factor is "ambience" of store. Consumers prefer shopping at stores which are not over crowded and where products are easy to locate. They prefer stores which are clean with attractive displays and sufficient lighting.

The fourth most important factor is the "discounts" and "fair prices". People do look into savings on their total billing at the end of shopping. The consumers would like to be informed in advance about the discounts and special offers so that they can get the best buy.

The fifth factor is "quality of food" and "grocery items". They prefer stores which stock fresh and good quality items.

The sixth factor which is important for consumers is "promotion of stores". Consumer prefers stores recommended by their friends and relatives. They like to visit stores which advertise (newspaper, television, radio) regularly.
Table 6: Factors extracted from factor analysis

Factor description	Variables included
Availability and variety	products are never out of stock, variety of grocery items are available, many brands are available, everything you need under one roof
Service	home delivery, many salespeople, comfortable air conditioned environment, return or replacement policy, trolleys and baskets are available, many billing counters for a faster check out
Ambience	Not over crowed, Good layout, displays are attractive, clean and free from clutter, good music and soothing colours
Discounts and price	Discount offers, competitive pricing
Quality of items	Freshness, good quality
Promotion	Advertisement, recommendation

Conclusion

The study focused on finding out the major attributes of the retail stores as perceived by the consumers in Punjab. The methodology adopted was a structured questionnaire and the analysis was done using "principal component method".

The study shows that there are six major factors that consumers prefer as far as the retail stores are concerned. These factors include availability & variety, service, ambience, discounts & price, quality of products, and promotion.

The knowledge of these factors is very useful to retailers and the strategists to plan the policy and formulate strategies accordingly for customer retention and improving loyalty towards their store. The changing consumer need can be understood and plans be accordingly implemented.

The consumers are more inclined to get an experience of their shopping. Purchasing what they require is the drive for coming to retail store, but in the process they want a wonderful overall shopping experience. This may be mainly to relieve them from the day-to-day stressful life. The consumers do not want the shopping also to be another pain. The shopping place should be convenient, a place where they can relax, and also can lay their hands on whatever they wanted. These retail outlets should focus on improving their service focusing on improving the convenience of the consumers. They should try to attract new consumers and also retain the existing ones by adopting promotional offers, adding value to their shopping experience and overcoming their shortcoming on these attributes.

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Appendix-I
Questionnaire
Name of respondent: **City:**
Gender:
Age: 18-25 25-35 35-45 45-60 >60
Educational Qualification:
Give your comment on the following statements as per the 5-item Likert Scale as below.
1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neither agree nor disagree, 4. Agree, 5. Strongly agree
 1. You prefer to shop at stores where products are never out of stock (even in late hours).
 2. You prefer neighborhood stores to shop Food & Grocery items.
 3. You visit the stores which advertise regularly.
 4. You would prefer a shop where variety is more.
 5. You prefer home delivery of Food & Grocery items.
 6. You prefer to shop at stores recommended by your friends and relatives.
 7. You prefer shopping at stores where salespeople are helpful.
 8. The products available during discount offers are not of good quality.
 9. You would like to shop in comfortable air conditioned environment.
 10. You would prefer a store that keeps everything you need under one roof.
 11. You avoid shopping at stores with insufficient parking spaces.
 12. You avoid shopping at stores which are over crowed.

13. You prefer to shop at stores which offer return and replacement policy.
14. You prefer to shop at stores which are open till late hours and on weekends.
15. You like to shop at stores where products are easy to locate.
16. You like to shop at stores where displays are attractive.
17. You prefer to shop at stores which are clean and hygienic.
18. You love to shop from stores which give attractive discount offers.
19. Availability of trolleys and baskets makes your shopping easy.
20. You prefer going to stores which have many billing counters for a faster check out.
21. You love to shop at stores where there is some good music and soothing colours on walls.
22. You love to shop at stores where there is sufficient lighting.