

CUSTOMER PREFERENCES TOWARDS STORE BRANDS PURCHASE IN MADURAI CITY

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Abstract: *In India, initially, most of the retailing industries were unorganized, however, with the change of tastes and preferences of the customers, these industries have gained thrust and are getting more popular and organized now-a-days. Customers taste and preference bring present retailing format in India like departmental stores, malls, supermarkets and speciality stores. Accordingly, the study has been made to know the customers' preference towards departmental stores. Data for the study have been collected through issuing well-structured questionnaire to 150 customers in Madurai city by adopting convenience sampling technique. To analyse the data, Simple Percentage, Weighted Average and Garrett Ranking have been used. The result of the study indicates that majority of the customers visit department store with their family members to purchase and also compares price with other stores before making purchase. The study reveals that Shri Kannan Departmental Store is most preferred store in Madurai city. Well-located stores, good quality, accurate quantity, adequate number of sales persons, availability of trolley, free home delivery, credit card facility, wider choice of products, availability of seasonal goods and the like are some of the factors considered while selecting a departmental store.*

Keywords: *Customers Preference, Shopping Behaviour, Departmental stores, Supermarket, Retailing Business.*

Introduction

The retailing business is greatly affected by the investment behaviour orientations of shoppers. Within a short span of time, it has become strong by penetration of new players. In view of consumers choice the retailers have bring modern retail formats in India. Modern retailing formats are departmental stores, supermarkets, boutique, malls etc. The departmental store is a large retail store specially organized to satisfy the consumer's needs less than one roof. Earlier the departmental stores were commonly found in urban areas but nowadays it is also available in rural areas of India. The departmental store sells products like groceries, vegetables and fruits, clothing, furniture, cook wares, electronic items, baby products, cosmetics, books, stationery, gifts, decorative products, medicine etc. The facilities like self service environment, convenient opening hours, wider choice of product, home delivery, good quantity and quality, reasonable price etc attracts the consumers towards the departmental store. Sales presentations, promotional offers and Quality of the product are the factor that affects customers to select the store (Daniel, Narayanan and Vijay Kumar, 2017).

The present study is mainly focused on customer's preference towards departmental stores in Madurai city.

Review of Literature

Ganapathi (2015) ¹ in his research captioned "A study on consumer's preference towards departmental store in Coimbatore city", aims to identify the consumers preference towards departmental store. The result reveals that greater parts of the consumers are female between the age group of 21 and 30 years. Most of the consumers are graduated and employed with monthly income between Rs.10,000 and Rs.20,000 . Also finds that, the majority of the consumers preferred kannan departmental store followed by Niligris, Big bazaar, Reliance fresh and more for you.

Bharat Goel and Bhushan Dewan (2011) ² have made an attempt on "Factors affecting consumer preferences of shopping at organized retail stores in Punjab", to examine the consumer preference on the attribute of retail stores in Punjab. Data for the study have been collected from 475 respondents through issuing a structured questionnaire. The information collected is evaluated using percentage method and factor analysis. Large number of respondents are male and earn income between Rs.3,00,000 and Rs.8,00,000. Maximum of the customers are of age group ranging between 18 and 25 years and graduated. Also they indicate that the availability and variety of product, service, ambience, discounts and price, quality of product and promotion are the factors which influence the customers while shopping at organized retail store.

Statement of The Problem

At the present time retailing is the fastest growing sector in India. According to the preference and taste of consumers the retailers brought departmental stores, supermarkets, malls etc., Due to time consumption consumers prefer departmental stores as their choice to purchase all products under one roof. Some researchers have argued that customer's choice for departmental store depends on the quality of product, service and its location. Thangam and Karthikeyan (2015) ³ found that lack of parking facilities reduces the customers to prefer the departmental store. The study conducted by Ramya, Mohamed Ali and Bhuvaneshwari (2017) ⁴, found proximity of store location influence to select the departmental store. The present study has been undertaken to know how the customers are shopping. What is their nature of visit? And what are the variables that associate with customers to go for a particular departmental store? To find solution to the above raised questions, the following objectives have been constructed.

Objectives of the Study

1. To know the shopping behavior of customers.
2. To find out the reasons for preferring departmental store.

Research Methodology

The present study is based on primary data which is collected through structured questionnaire in order to know the customer's preference towards departmental stores in Madurai city. Data for the study have been collected from 150 customers by adopting Convenience sampling method. The questionnaire contains questions relating to the socio-economic profile, shopping behavior and preference of the customers towards departmental stores. Simple Percentage, Weighted Average and Garrett Rank analysis have been used to analyse the data.

Shopping Behavior of the Customers

The following table shows the shopping behaviour of the customers to the following classifications.

Table-1: Shopping Behaviour of Customers

Shopping Behaviour	Number of Respondents (N=150)	Percentage (%)
Source of information		
Self	61	40.67
Friends	34	22.67
Relatives	36	24.00
Advertisement	19	12.67

Shopping Behaviour	Number of Respondents (N=150)	Percentage (%)
Frequency of Visit		
Weekly once	41	27.33
Fortnightly once	22	14.67
Monthly once	28	18.67
When needed	59	39.33
Periodicity of Visit		
Less than one year	27	18.00
1 to 2 year	52	34.67
2 to 3 year	30	20.00
Above 3 years	41	27.33
Persons Accompany While Purchasing		
Alone	36	24.00
Friends	32	21.33
Family	80	53.33
Others	2	1.33
Time Spend		
Up to 30 min	73	48.67

1 hour	64	42.67
2 hours	10	6.67
More than 2 hours	3	2.00
Comparison of Price		
Yes	105	70.00
No	45	30.00

- Most of 61(40.67%) the customers came to know about the departmental stores by themselves.
- Most 59(39.33%) of the customers visits departmental stores when needed.
- Most 52(34.67%) of the customers visits departmental stores for a period of one to two years.
- Majority of 80(53.33%) customers accompany with their family for purchase.
- The most of customers 73(48.67%) spends up to 30 min in the departmental stores.
- Majority 105(70%) of them compares price with other stores.

Preference of Departmental Stores-Hendry Garrett Ranking Test

The Hendry Garrett is used to know the average rank that influences by the customers to prefer the departmental stores.

Table: 2-Preference of Departmental Stores

DEPARTMENTAL STORES		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	TOTAL GARRETT SCORE	AVG	RANK
Kannan Departmental Store	Frequency	23	33	24	31	39	11250	52	1
	Garrett score	1703	2425	1806	2374	2942			
Remuki Departmental Stores	Frequency	34	58	38	14	5	9000	41	2
	Garrett score	2064	3509	2271	867	289			
Amizhthini Family Shop	Frequency	36	19	29	27	39	7500	34	3
	Garrett score	1789	963	1445	1342	1961			
Lakshmi Departmental Stores	Frequency	30	15	25	52	27	6000	28	4
	Garrett score	1211	606	1018	2092	1073			
Sri Krishna Departmental Stores	Frequency	27	25	34	25	40	3750	17	5
	Garrett score	671	619	843	619	998			

The above table reveals that among various departmental stores Kannan Departmental Store is in the First Rank by Garrett average ranking of 52%, Second rank is Remuki Departmental Store by average score of 41%, Third rank is Amizhthini Family Shop by score of 34%, Fourth rank is Lakshmi departmental store by score of 28%, Fifth rank is Sri Krishna Departmental Store by score of 17%.

It is observed from the above table shows that Kannan Departmental Store is preferred by many customers for their purchase and is the uppermost position among the various departmental stores.

Reasons for Preferring Departmental Stores

The following table shows the reasons for preferring departmental stores by the customers.

Table: 3-REASONS FOR PREFERRING DEPARTMENTAL STORES

Reasons	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Weight
Convenient store location	44(29.36)	70(46.79)	30(20.18)	5(3.21)	1(0.46)	150	4.01
Good quality	28(18.81)	87(58.26)	32(21.56)	2(1.38)	0(0.00)	150	3.94
Accurate quantity	35(23.39)	73(48.62)	37(24.77)	3(2.029)	1(0.92)	150	3.91
Wider choice of production	29(19.27)	68(45.41)	45(30.28)	6(4.13)	1(0.92)	150	3.78
Reasonable price	32(21.56)	58(38.99)	52(34.86)	4(2.75)	3(1.33)	150	3.76
Branded products	22(14.68)	72(47.71)	46(30.73)	10(6.88)	0(0.00)	150	3.7
Free home delivery	27(17.39)	73(48.62)	44(29.39)	3(2.29)	3(2.29)	150	3.78
All products under one roof	17(11.01)	72(47.71)	51(33.94)	10(6.42)	1(0.92)	150	3.61
Convenient opening hours	24(16.06)	75(50.00)	42(27.98)	6(3.67)	3(2.29)	150	3.74
Discount/coupon facility	17(11.47)	61(40.37)	60(39.91)	10(6.88)	2(1.38)	150	3.54
Credit card facility	24(16.06)	82(54.59)	34(22.94)	8(5.50)	1(0.92)	150	3.79
Attractive product display (Ambience)	23(15.14)	78(51.83)	43(28.44)	6(4.13)	1(0.46)	150	3.77
Availability of seasonal goods	23(15.14)	79(52.75)	41(27.52)	6(3.67)	1(0.46)	150	3.78
Opening on holidays	27(17.89)	68(45.41)	45(29.82)	9(5.96)	1(0.46)	150	3.73
Parking facilities	17(11.47)	54(35.78)	51(33.94)	20(13.30)	8(5.50)	150	3.34
Good customer care service	24(16.06)	69(46.33)	45(30.28)	10(6.42)	1(0.46)	150	3.7
Store cleanliness	24(16.06)	69(46.33)	52(34.40)	3(1.83)	2(1.38)	150	3.74
Sufficient information boards	21(13.76)	67(44.95)	55(36.70)	6(4.13)	1(0.46)	150	3.67
Adequate number of sales people	21(14.22)	81(54.13)	44(29.36)	3(2.29)	0(0.00)	150	3.8
Air conditioned	17(11.01)	49(32.57)	63(42.20)	18(11.93)	3(2.29)	150	3.38
Adequate number of sales counters	17(11.01)	55(36.70)	70(46.79)	7(4.59)	1(0.92)	150	3.52
Prestige	21(13.76)	65(43.58)	57(38.07)	7(4.59)	0(0.00)	150	3.67
Latest products	19(12.39)	68(45.41)	61(40.37)	1(0.46)	2(1.38)	150	3.67
Availability of trolley/Basket	26(17.43)	73(48.62)	46(30.73)	4(2.75)	1(0.46)	150	3.8
Availability of gifts/vouchers	21(14.22)	58(38.53)	59(39.45)	10(6.42)	2(1.38)	150	3.58

The result indicates that convenient store location has the highest weighted mean score followed by good quality, accurate quantity, adequate number of sales people, availability of trolley / basket , free home delivery, credit card facility , wider choice of products, availability of seasonal goods , attractive product display, reasonable price, convenient opening hours, store cleanliness, opening on holidays, branded products, good

customer care service, latest products, prestige, sufficient information boards, all products under one roof , availability of gifts / vouchers ,discount / coupon facility, adequate number of sales counters, air conditioned and parking facility .

Suggestions

- Sales counters must be increased to reduce the waiting time of customers.
- Convenient parking facilities can be provided.
- Frequent change in product sections should be avoided.

Conclusion

Now-a-days the departmental stores have become more convenient for the customers to purchase. The study deals with customers' preference towards departmental stores in Madurai city. The result of the study reveals that Kannan Departmental Store is the most preferred departmental store while the least preferred one is Sri Krishna Departmental Stores. Though the customers prefer departmental stores still they are facing problems like lack of parking facilities, cleanliness, inadequate sales counters etc. The retailers have to take proper steps like implementing technologies, innovative interiors and discount facilities etc., to bloom the store in future.

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