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SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR OF CUSTOMERS IN THE SUPERMARKETS AT NAGERCOIL TOWN

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ABSTRACT

Supermarkets are playing a vital role in the marketing scenario. It has a great scope in marketing as it has direct link with the people. Supermarkets are the one stop shopping spot for customers. It specializes in everything from small wares to equipment and makes the consumers shopping experience easy. A supermarket is a self-service shop offering a wide variety of foods, household products which is organized into aisles. It is larger and has a wider selection than a traditional grocery shops, but is smaller and more limited in the range of merchandise than a hypermarket or big-box market. In the beginning of twentieth century, shop keepers have started realizing the marketing of various products under one roof, hence the evolution of supermarkets have been started. A large retail store operated on a self-service basis, selling groceries, fresh produce, meat, bakery and dairy products and sometimes an assortment of non-food goods too. Supermarkets gained acceptance in the United States during the 1930s. The early stores were usually located in reconverted industrial buildings in outlying areas; they had no elaborate display facilities, and their primary advantage was their low prices. The recent trends that will transform commerce in 2017 are global, payments, mobile and social. This commerce revolution is driven by advances in technology, smart phone adoption and shifting consumer trends which is the important aspect of this study. This paper aims to study the customers' shopping behaviour regarding the supermarkets at Nagercoil Town.

KEY WORDS: supermarkets, customer, behaviour, influence...

INTRODUCTION

“Market” means a place where goods are brought or sold. Market facilitates trade and enables the distribution and allocation of resources in a society. A market is a medium that allows buyers and sellers to come together to exchange goods and services to person as in a bazaar, shopping centre or virtual market. It is a retail store which generally sells food products and household items properly placed and arranged in specific departments is called a supermarket. A supermarket is an advanced from small grocery stores and caters to the household needs of the customer. Food products are also properly displayed at their respective departments to catch the attention of the customers and they can pick any merchandise depending on their choice and need. Product such as bakery products, cereals, meat products, fish products, breads, medicines, vegetables, fruits, soft drinks, frozen food, canned juices etc. are also have been displayed.

The supermarket typically sells meat, fresh produce, dairy and baked goods along with shelf space reserved for canned and packaged goods as well as for various non-food items such as kitchenware, household cleaners, pharmacy products and pet supplies. Some supermarkets also sell a variety of household produce that are consumed regularly such as medicine and others. Some stores sell a much wider range of non-food products, sporting equipments, board games and seasonal items. The traditional supermarket occupies a large amount of floor space usually on a single level. It is usually situated near a residential area to be convenient for the consumers. The basic appeal is the availability of a board selection of goods under a single roof at relatively low prices. Supermarkets usually allocate large budgets to advertise through newspapers. They also present elaborate in-shop displays of products.

FEATURES OF SUPERMARKET

A supermarket has the following features

1. It operates on self service basis.
2. Prices are comparatively lower.
3. Neat display of goods.
4. It offers large varieties of goods.
5. The profit margin is low.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In older days production was very limited and so producers were not able to satisfy the needs of the customers. Due to the large scale production, the products that are produced should be sold off immediately. Therefore, the producers find various ways to sell the products. Among them, retailing outlets are popular among the customers and through which products can be sold easily. One of the important retailing outlets is the supermarkets in which plenty of products are made available which help the customer to select the products easily. In Nagercoil, there are number of supermarkets available and the customers feel that they can save their precious time. This attitude of people of Nagercoil motivates the researcher to do this research work under the title “Shopping Behaviour of Customers Towards Supermarkets”

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study is confined to highlight the Shopping Behaviour of Customers Towards Supermarkets with special reference to Nagercoil Town. This study also covers the demographic profile, factors that are influencing the customers towards supermarket, frequency of their visit, benefits gained from their favourite supermarket etc.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to find out the shopping behaviour of the supermarket customers with special reference to Nagercoil Town. Other objectives are:

1. To study the demographic profile of the sample respondents.
2. To analyse the factors that influence the customers towards supermarket.
3. To analyse the various benefits obtained by the respondents in supermarkets.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY & METHODOLOGY

Methodology is to describe the research procedure. The present study is an empirical one based on the survey method. It is based on both primary and secondary data.

- **Primary data**

Primary data were collected by conducting field investigation with the help of well designed questionnaire. It is mainly prepared to know about demographic profile, benefits, influencing factors of the respondents. The questionnaires were distributed to 75 respondents. After collecting the data, it was processed, analysed and tabulated.

- **Secondary Data**

The secondary data were collected from internet, books, journals etc.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

1. The analysis depends on the information supplied by the sample respondents. Most of the respondents were reluctant to provide adequate data. Hence it has its own limitation of reliability.
2. The time at the disposal of the researcher was very short and hence time pressures were inevitable.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Hemalatha, Ravichandran and Lakshmi (2010) found that there is a dearth of tested instruments understand the driving factors of a typical Indian customer, the key objective of their study was to empirically test the shopping behavior of the customers. The study also carried out the gap analysis and identified the areas for improvements in supermarket service quality.

Alhemoud (2008) studied the product selection processes of Kuwaiti nationals based on their shopping habits in the co-operative supermarkets [Government owned grocery stores]. This study attempted to explore the determinant attributes that influence the patronage decisions of supermarket consumers in Kuwait. Based on a descriptive analysis of data collected via an accidental sampling procedure, fourteen store attributes were identified and then were bought, generating four image dimensions under four factors labeled as merchandise, personnel, accessibility, and promotion. A stepwise regression showed that merchandise image was the most salient in determining the frequency of supermarket shopping.

GENDER WISE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENT

S.No	GENDER	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Male	21	28
2.	Female	54	72
TOTAL		75	100

Source: Primary data

72 percent of the respondents are female and 28 percent of the sample respondents are male. This shows that female respondents play an important part in planning for their families purchase.

WORKING STATUS OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

S.No.	WORKING STATUS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Professional	39	52
2.	Businessmen/ Women	14	19
3.	Working in private sector	10	13
4.	Working in public sector	12	16
5.	Unemployed	-	-
TOTAL		75	100

Source: Primary data

52 percent of the respondents are professionals and 13 percent of the sample respondents are business people. It is inferred that most of the respondents in the study area are professionals.

MONTHLY INCOME OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

S. No.	INCOME	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Below 10,000	24	31
2.	10,000-30,000	30	43
3.	30,000-50,000	10	14
4.	Above-50,000	11	13
TOTAL		75	100

Source: Primary data

43 percent of the respondents have income of Rs.10,000 - 30,000 and 13 percent of the sample respondents have income above Rs.50,000. It shows that, majority of the respondents have Rs.10,000 - 30,000 as monthly income.

FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMERS TO BUY GOODS FROM SUPERMARKET

S. No.	FACTORS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	MEAN SCORE	RANK
1.	Availability of products	46 (230)	13 (52)	10 (30)	5 (10)	1 (1)	323	4.31	III
2.	Reasonable price	37 (185)	16 (64)	12 (36)	6 (12)	4 (4)	301	4.01	IV
3.	Discount facility	40 (200)	10 (40)	11 (33)	8 (16)	7 (7)	297	3.95	VI

4.	Wide assortment of goods	43 (215)	24 (96)	5 (15)	2 (4)	1 (1)	331	4.41	II
5.	Attractive packages	34 (170)	16 (64)	14 (42)	9 (18)	2 (2)	296	3.94	VII
6.	Pleasing service	30 (150)	21 (84)	19 (57)	3 (6)	2 (2)	299	3.99	V
7.	Store Location	57 (285)	8 (32)	6 (18)	3 (6)	1 (1)	342	4.56	I

Source: Primary data

It is observed from the above table that among the seven factors identified, “Store location” is the most important factor which is ranked first with the mean score of 342 and the last inducing factor that influences the customer to buy goods from the supermarket is “Attractive package” which is ranked as seventh with the mean score of 296.

FREQUENCY OF VISIT BY THE RESPONDENTS

S. No.	FREQUENCY OF VISIT	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Daily	2	2
2.	Once in a week	44	57
3.	Once in two week	7	8
4.	Monthly	17	23
5.	Once in two month	15	8
6.	Other	-	-
TOTAL		75	100

Source: Primary data

57 percent of the sample respondents visit the supermarket once in a week and 2 percent of the sample respondents visit daily.

BENEFITS GAINED BY THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

S. No.	Benefits	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Dis agree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Mean score	Rank
1.	Varieties of goods	30 (150)	40 (160)	2 (6)	3 (6)	-	322	4.29	I
2.	Self service	13 (65)	40 (160)	21 (63)	1 (1)	-	289	3.85	VI
3.	Good quality	49 (245)	7 (21)	12 (36)	4 (8)	3 (3)	320	4.23	II
4.	Bulk purchase	24 (120)	25 (100)	17 (51)	7 (14)	2 (2)	287	3.83	VII

	is possible								
5.	Possibility of bulk purchase	16 (80)	15 (60)	37 (111)	4 (8)	3 (3)	262	3.49	X
6.	Neat display of goods	30 (150)	29 (116)	13 (39)	3 (6)	-	311	4.15	III
7.	Saving time	23 (115)	32 (128)	12 (36)	6 (12)	2 (2)	293	3.91	V
8.	Attractive mode of payment	15 (75)	26 (104)	23 (69)	10 (20)	1 (1)	269	3.59	IX
9.	Festive offer	24 (120)	31 (124)	12 (36)	7 (14)	1 (1)	295	3.93	IV
10.	Discount facility	28 (140)	23 (92)	12 (36)	6 (12)	6 (6)	286	3.81	VIII

Source: Primary data

It is observed from the above table, the first rank has been given to the 'varieties of goods' with the mean score of 322, and the last rank is given to "possibility of bulk purchases" with the mean score of 262. It reveals that people prefer to buy goods from supermarkets due to the availability of good quality goods and the variety of products in the supermarket.

CONCLUSION

The researcher feels satisfied while giving conclusion to this research work, as the study has reached the purposes for which it was carried out. The researcher has taken sincere effort to study the shopping behaviour of the customers with reference to Nagercoil town. From the overall analysis of the study, it is understood that the customer in Nagercoil town, willing to buy products from the supermarket and have good shopping behavior towards supermarkets.

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