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**DETERMINANTS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR
REGARDING FOOTFALL IN RETAIL STORES**

Determinants of Consumer Behaviour Regarding Footfall in Retail Stores

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Abstract – In this research paper efforts have been made to explore various factors which affect the behaviour of consumers in a retail outlet. A random sample of respondents visiting retail outlets has been considered for the present study. The paper mainly focuses towards various factors which affects the decision of the consumer in the store while they visit there for shopping. So, this research is mainly concerned with the behaviour of the consumer and the various factors which are of enormous importance in converting the footfall within the stores. The paper also intends to recommend some feasible and viable strategies to be followed by retail outlets to maximize the percentage of conversion.

Keywords: Behaviour, Consumers, Conversion, Factors, Retail, Shopping, Strategies, Footfall

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INTRODUCTION

Before we delve into a paper about conversion of footfall let's first define Footfall. **Footfall** means the number of people entering a store or shopping area in a given time. It becomes really very difficult for the small retailers and similar formats to compete with hyper marts and malls. The big retailers are putting cut throat competition to them. So, it becomes very important for retailers to gain a deeper insight into retail consumer behaviour. The study of consumers helps firms and organizations improve their marketing strategies by understanding issues such as how

- The psychology of how consumers think, feel, reason, and select between different alternatives (e.g., brands, products);
- The psychology of how the consumer is influenced by his or her environment (e.g., culture, family, signs, media);
- The behaviour of consumers while shopping or making other marketing decisions;
- Limitations in consumer knowledge or information processing abilities influence decisions and marketing outcome;
- How consumer motivation and decision strategies differ between products that differ in their level of importance or interest that they entail for the consumer; and
- How marketers can adapt and improve their marketing campaigns and marketing strategies to more effectively reach the consumer.

Understanding these issues helps us adapt our strategies by taking the consumer into consideration. For example, by understanding that a number of different messages compete for our potential customers' attention, we learn that to be effective, advertisements must usually be repeated extensively. We also learn that consumers will sometimes be persuaded more by logical arguments, but at other times will be persuaded more by emotional or symbolic appeals. By understanding the consumer, we will be able to make a more informed decision as to which strategy to employ.

There are three fundamental patterns which a consumer can follow and they could be:

- (I) Brand first, retail outlet second
- (II) Retail outlet first, brand second
- (III) Brand and retail outlet simultaneously.

Good customer service is the lifeblood of any business. You can offer promotions and slash prices to bring in as many new customers as you want, but unless you can get some of those customers to come back, your business won't be profitable for long. Good customer service is all about bringing customers back. And about sending them away happy – happy enough to pass positive feedback about your business along to others, who may then try the product or service you offer for themselves and in their turn become repeat customers if you're a good salesperson, you can sell anything to anyone once. Besides from the above stated facts the following factors are also very much important for attracting, converting and retaining customers in a

particular retail outlet. These factors are being described below.

1. Availability of merchandise in the store
2. Product Quality
3. Product range (both product width and depth)
4. Promotional offers and frequency of schemes.
5. Services (pre, during and post purchase)
6. Pricing as a result of merchandise on offer
7. Ambience of the store
8. The empathy factor of the outlet attendant

In order to gain deeper insight a thorough investigation of the related literature have been investigated, some of them are given below

Jones, peter and David Hillier examined that Current government planning policies affecting retail investment; development and location certainly pose a major set of challenges for the leading retailers and for developers and property companies Sainsbury's have argued that being more flexible in their formats allows them to take greater advantage of planning opportunities.

Lichtle, M.C et al. investigates that it is interesting to notice that the outlet's characteristics have an impact on value, which, in its turn, has an impact on satisfaction. Our results show what variables are to be privileged if one wishes to give the outlet its utilitarian and/or hedonic value. In the first case, the stress has to be put on product availability. This means that when a retailer, considering her/his product range, wants to confer a utilitarian value to the shopping behaviour all she/he has to do is to make sure that her/his products are easily available and within easy reach. The hedonic value is determined by a combination of several variables: atmosphere, peripheral services, the store's employees and crowding. Customer satisfaction will thus be indirectly improved. By handling these four variables, the retailer will manage to enhance the hedonic value the consumer attributes to shopping. According to the positioning chosen, a firm will give more emphasis either to the hedonic value or to the utilitarian value, and therefore will act on the most relevant characteristics of the outlet that our study underlined.

According to a report, males from the Midwest reported higher instances of positive shopping experiences at retail stores. They reported that courteous sales associates and attentive managers enhanced the shopping experience. Similarly, females from this part of the country reported higher instances of positive shopping experience. Again, the primary reason for their positive experiences was the

courteous nature of the sales associates and the attentiveness of the floor-level management staff. Ten of the 25 respondents reported having negative shopping experiences at retail stores. However, while reasons varied from displeasure with the merchandise to delays in delivery of goods, none of the respondents attributed a negative experience to rude or inattentive sales associates and managers. Of the 18 females, 16 from the East reported having a negative experience at retail shopping centres. The reasons varied among respondents from poor quality merchandise to delays in shipping. However, 11 of the respondents indicated that their negative shopping experiences were the result of inattentive and rude sales associates. Two of the men reported having a negative shopping experience but they based this on the quality of the products they received. Of the eight positive shopping experiences reported by both male and female respondents, all indicated that their experiences directly resulted from an attentive sales associate or receptive management staff.

According to statement of Malcolm Kirkup and Marylyn Carrigan said that as the public demand for ethical accountability grows, marketers must ensure that their activities match public expectations. Owing to its high visibility and direct contact with the public, marketing research in particular has a duty to conduct its business to the highest ethical standards. As new technology alters the way that research is conducted, there is a challenge to safeguard all the stakeholders involved in the research from unethical behaviour. Observational research is a prime example of a research technique which, while providing a valuable tool in the study of consumer behaviour, raises concerns over individual privacy particularly with the growing sophistication and power of the technology.

Kirkop, Malcolm said that for some retailers the quality of information systems has been improved – enabling a better understanding of variations in performance, better measurement of the remedial effects of initiatives, and improvements in the allocation of resources – and there is value for both head office planners and store managers. However, development and integration of the technology is proving problematic for other retailers – partly arising from the newness of the technology.

Boedkar, Mika said that this should offer an opportunity for retailers to use segmentation and target their offerings, since it has been claimed that retail outlets tend to resemble one another and offer comparable products at comparable prices, thereby losing their individual profile. At the same time, consumer markets are becoming more sharply segmented than ever before. The new-type shoppers should be attracted by an image, one that is congruent with the consumer's self-image. Since their demands of a retail outlet are rather high in every respect, the basics (e.g. service, price level, product quality and selection) should be considered as well as recreational, experience offering characteristics (e.g.

interior design, aroma, care, product shows, and novelties). This kind of image could attract some of the traditional shoppers too, but they can be reached without the addition of recreational characteristics, implying reduced costs in retail outlet design. Without the basics, maybe only purely recreational shoppers could be attracted. Is this then the case in reality? As Rosen bloom points out, congruence between a retail outlet and consumer image is usually "more a matter of happenstance than a conscious effort to fit the store image to the target markets served by the retailer". This means that congruence is achieved between retail outlet dimensions and traditional values held by the outlet's founders or a typical image projected by the retailer's trade peer group.

Amine, Abdilmajid and Sandrine cadenate examines that product classes proposed in an retail outlet do not contribute equally to the variety of store image and effectiveness from the customers point of view. It also demonstrate the perception of consumer of the overall store assortment, consumers are highly sensitive in selecting range of varieties.

Bennison, David et. al. examines that the challenge for urban managers is therefore to preserve and maintain the vitality of the Northern Quarter without destroying its soul. Almost by definition, the archetypal residents and businesses do not seek, let alone conform to, top-down planning and marketing, and are likely to be highly skeptical of it – somewhat ironical or paradoxical given the number of marketing and public relations companies located there. The challenge is that the city's planners also want to maintain that distinctiveness as much as their inhabitant since the Northern Quarter forms an important element of the wider place product that is Manchester. As the City Council's guide to visitors states: "Rising up out of one of city's most historically rich areas is the Northern Quarter. Now transformed into a busy social and residential area, laden with independent bars, restaurants, cafe's and shops – the Quarter has a uniqueness and credibility all of its own and attracts the kind of urban soul on the lookout for a bit of individuality and style.

Kirkup, Malcolm and Mohammad rafique said that in an increasingly competitive market environment future success for shopping centres will depend on effective management and marketing. Shoppers have a good choice of centres, all of which can meet their needs at a practical level. Centres need to develop a compelling personality and distinctive position, based on identification of particular strengths within their marketing mix that will appeal to their chosen target market. Our research notes that shopping centres are unique types of service business, challenged and constrained in many areas of the marketing mix as a result of both the nature of the service and traditional philosophies and practices. The marketing mix framework proposed in the paper attempts to reflect

this uniqueness and offers a more comprehensive coverage of key dimensions and a useful basis for analysis and management.

OBJECTIVES

The following objectives have been considered for pursuing the study in hand.

1. To study the various factors which effects conversion of footfall in retail stores?
2. To study and analyze the various services provided by retail stores in order to convert their footfalls.
3. To study the behaviour of consumers in the store and their priorities at the time of buying.
4. To find out the measures to improve the convertibility of footfalls..

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following methodology have been used for the study in hand

Sample Size: A Random sampling strategy was carried out. A survey of about 100 consumers was taken.

Sampling technique: The sampling technique has been probabilistic sampling more specifically the simple random sampling.

Sources of Data: Data collection is based on secondary data

Instruments used for collection of data: Journals and internet

FINDINGS

1. Most of the customers found complaining about air condition and less effective ambience the stores.
2. Most of the customers are saying that retail outlets are not offering wide range of product.
3. Most of the customers are claiming that they do not have their item of choice in the store all the times.
4. Most of the customers shopping in retail outlets due to availability of merchandise at lower prices with convenience.

5. Most of the customer believe that if the store promises to do something in a particular time, it do so.
6. Most of the customer said that store give them individual attention
7. A large number of customers are favoring the layout and accessibility of items in the store.
8. A large number of customers have faith in the employee of the store.
9. A large number of customers are advocating that the operating hour of store is convenient for them.
10. A large number of customers buying all the products available in the store. While some customers are visiting store for a particular section.
11. Most of the respondents are visiting retail outlets almost twice in a week.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Increase in varieties of product:

Product range must be increased in the store in order to attract more and more customers in the stores. The width as well as length of the varieties of the product must be substantially increased.

2. Availability of products:

Products must be made available all the times in the stores. Because customers have a tendency to perceive unavailability if not get their desired product even once in the stores. So, this factor must be addressed seriously.

3. Provide air condition:

For further improvement of the store there is a sudden need of air condition in the stores. Because most of the modern retailers are providing air conditions, so at this point of time it has to be taken seriously and some decision has to be made at the earliest.

4. Visual merchandising:

There is also a sudden need of addressing the issue of visual merchandising in the stores. As, it is one of the strongest tool for attracting, converting and retaining customers in the stores.

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