

A study on Shopping Mall Customer Decision Making Style: a special reference to Students of Arts Colleges in Thoothukudi Corporation.

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Abstract

The modern approach of marketing deals with the identification and satisfaction of the customers' need and wants in addition to that of establishing a long term relationship with customers, suppliers, intermediaries and all other stakeholders in the marketing process also get emphasized. The entire focus of relationship marketing is only on the future prospects of the business. Many factors affect the decision regarding the purchase of goods and services in the shopping malls. This study attempts to explore the purchase decision making styles of the Arts College students of Thoothukudi Corporation in shopping malls. The Arts Colleges situated inside the corporation limit are considered for the study. The students are classified into three strata namely arts, science and management and 90 students from the three strata derived as a sample from Arts Colleges in Thoothukudi Corporation. On the basis of consumers' characteristic approach to the purchase, a model of Sporles and Kendall in 1986 who developed a Consumer Style Inventory (CSI). This model has been taken for the study and the appropriate changes in the factors and the words were changed to match the local conditions. The study reveals that more Recreational customers, price conscious customers and brand conscious customers and less impulsive, quality conscious, confused and fashioned customers are in the students of Arts colleges in Thoothukudi Corporation .

Key Words: Shopping Malls, Consumer Style Inventory, Customer Decision Making Style.

Introduction

In the beginning, marketing concentrated on production and the evolution of marketing experienced different stages to reach the relationship marketing of this era. The notable stages which the marketing activity passed through are product oriented marketing, sales oriented marketing and marketing oriented marketing. In production oriented marketing, availability and affordability of needed products are given importance and then the focus shifted to quality and quantity in the product oriented marketing. The increased numbers of competitors shifted the focus to advertisement and selling techniques in the sales centric marketing and to identify & satisfy the needs and wants of the customers in marketing oriented marketing. The modern approach added one more important orientation in marketing that is the modern approach deals with needs and wants of the consumer as well as the long term relationship with customers, suppliers, intermediaries and all other stakeholders in the process of marketing. Thus the entire focus of future business and aspects of marketing is identified as relationship marketing.

In the olden days, the retail model of marketing dealt with the sale of goods and services to the ultimate consumers. The focus in this era is shifted towards many other factors particularly on the relationship marketing which is considered more important in the competitive business and marketing environment. The importance of shopping malls in the modern retail format cannot be avoided. Customers of this modern era expect the products or services have to be delivered in a distinct way to stay in the same mode or business. Thus, there are many factors affecting the decision regarding the purchase of goods and services. On the basis of consumers' characteristic approach to the purchase, Sproles and Kendall has developed a Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) in the year 1986. This inventory focuses on different cognitive dimensions of consumer decision making. The dimensions are, Perfection, Brand consciousness, Novelty – fashion consciousness, Recreational, Price – value consciousness, Impulsiveness, Confused by over choice and Brand – loyal/habitual. This model has been taken for the study and the appropriate changes in the factors and the words were changed to match the local conditions.

Review of related literature

1. Sproles & Kendall (1986)¹, in their research on “A methodology for profiling consumers' decision making styles”, they have developed an instrument called Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) to measure Consumer Decision Making Styles. CSI focused on the following eight mental characteristics of consumer's decision making: Perfectionism, Brand consciousness, Novelty, Recreational, Price, Impulsiveness, Confused by over choice and Brand. The results are confirmed with 482 students in 29 home economics classes in five high schools in the Tucson in Arizona.
2. The research conducted by Chase (2004)², on the title “The relationship between mind styles, revealed that consumer's decision making style involves in learning and influenced by past experience. And he added older female teens are enjoying shopping garments and they wear and purchase branded products.
3. Iyer & Eastman (2010),³ conducted a research on the topic “The fashion conscious mall shopper: An exploratory study” and they explored that fashion conscious consumers prefer latest style and searching for the best price in comparison shopping in the United States.
4. According to Canabal, M. E (2002)⁴ and his study on the topic “Decision making styles of young South Indian consumers: An exploratory study” five decision making styles – brand conscious, high

¹ Sproles, George B., & Kendall, Elizabeth K. (1986). A methodology for profiling consumers' decision making styles. *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 267 – 279

² Chase, Melissa W. (2004). The relationship between mind styles, consumer decision making styles and shopping habits of beginning college students. Doctoral Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Career and Technical Education.

³ Iyer, Rajesh., & Eastman, Jazcqueline K. (2010). The fashion conscious mall shopper: An exploratory study. *Marketing Management Journal*, Vol. 20, Issue 2, pp. 42 – 53.

⁴ Canabal, M. E. (2002). Decision making styles of young South Indian consumers: An exploratory study. *College Student Journal*, Vol. 36, No.1.

quality conscious / perfection, confused by over choice, impulsive / brand indifferent and recreational are identified as the decision making styles among the students of Coimbatore city.

5. Ravindran, Sundar & Kumar (2010)⁵, in their research on the topic “Study on Consumer Decision Making Styles in shopping malls – A study with reference to malls in Chennai”, they identified perfectionism / quality consciousness, brand conscious, novelty / fashion consciousness, recreational, price conscious, careless / impulsive, confused by over choice and habitual / brand loyal are the CDMS among the customers of shopping malls in Chennai.

Objectives

1. To explore the customer demographic profile of the mall going College students of Thoothukudi Corporation.
2. To analyze the different characteristic approach of students towards the purchase at shopping malls in Thoothukudi Corporation.

Methodology

It is an analytical study and stratified random sampling was adapted. The college students who are going to shopping malls for purchase are taken as the population of the study. The Arts Colleges situated inside the corporation limit are taken into study. The students are classified into three strata namely arts, science and management and 90 students from the three strata derived as a sample from Arts Colleges in Thoothukudi Corporation.

Scope

Characteristic approach of students towards their purchases made in shopping malls in Thoothukudi Corporation is taken into consideration for this study and the study does not take the medical, technical and fisheries students. Consumer Style Inventory of Sproles & Kendall is adopted with essential required changes applied to analyze the Customer Decision Making Style.

⁵ Ravindran D, Sudharani., Sundar G, Hari., & Kumar, G Reji. (2010). Study on Consumer Decision Making Styles in shopping malls – A study with reference to malls in Chennai. Journal of Management and Entrepreneurship, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 68 – 84.

Profile of the Students**Table 1**

		Gender					
		Male		Female		Total	
Course	Arts	20	22.2%	16	17.8%	36	40.0%
	Science	20	22.2%	16	17.8%	36	40.0%
	Management	10	11.1%	8	8.9%	18	20.0%
	Total	50	55.6%	40	44.4%	90	100.0%
Nativity	Rural	41	45.6%	28	31.1%	69	76.7%
	Urban	9	10.0%	12	13.3%	21	23.3%
	Total	50	55.6%	40	44.4%	90	100.0%
Family Income (per annum)	Less than Rs. 50,000	32	35.6%	23	25.6%	55	61.1%
	Up to Rs. 200000	13	14.4%	15	16.7%	28	31.1%
	More than Rs. 2,00,000	5	5.6%	2	2.2%	7	7.8%
	Total	50	55.6%	40	44.4%	90	100.0%

More number of male students (55.6 per cent) have participated in this study than that of their counter parts, the female students (44.4 per cent). Since Arts and science courses are conducted more than the management courses in Arts Colleges in Thoothukudi Corporation, Arts and Science students are given forty percentage weight in the sample and the management students are given twenty percentage weight in participating the sample. Rural students are more in the sample with 76.7 per cent among them male rural students are more than the female rural students. In urban students, female urban students (13.3 per cent) are more than the male urban students (10 per cent). Majority of the students' family income is less than Rs. 50,000 per annum and followed by the income category of up to Rs. 2,00,000 per annum.

Customer Decision Making Style

Seven characteristic approach of decision making on purchase in the shopping malls were listed with the appropriate statements representing the seven styles. The response of the students was fit in the factor analysis. The rotated factor matrix is given in the table 2.

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: Chi-Square	=	2201.315
Degrees of freedom	=	465
Significance	=	<0.001

Since the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measures reveals a 63.20 per cent adequacy and the significance value of the chi square is below 0.05, the sample is fit to adapt the factor analysis.

Table 2: Rotated Factor Matrix for Customer Decision Making Style

Variables	Factors						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Shopping in a mall is a waste of time ®	.573	.480	.310	.047	-.366	.011	-.087
I felt unpleasant to purchase in shopping malls ®	.478	-.123	.215	-.310	-.356	.282	.150
I prefer to go to malls when I am tensed or depressed	.462	-.089	.164	.260	-.338	-.089	-.142
I go to shopping malls to have fun	.421	.213	.309	-.026	-.096	-.123	.251
I pick the lower price products often	.362	.466	.353	.167	.284	-.486	-.232
I want to buy the products in price slashed or priced than MRP	.464	.420	.130	.010	.245	.362	-.242
I am very aware of the amount spend on every purchase	-.596	.430	-.047	-.193	-.095	-.098	.080
I select the products which carry value for my money	.090	.389	.434	.305	-.281	-.137	.072
The advertisements are the best tool to select brand	-.028	-.234	.697	.219	.173	-.237	.143
I prefer to buy fast moving brands	.302	-.105	.661	-.164	-.021	-.069	-.137
I will not hesitate to pay more for best brand	-.345	-.085	.586	-.205	.036	-.159	-.111
Higher quality products generally priced high	.306	.420	.559	-.116	-.027	.048	-.019
I do not change my brand regularly	-.159	-.261	.544	.132	.161	-.234	-.105
I will not spend enough time for searching best products	-.077	-.047	.242	.441	.074	-.009	.230
I used to purchase the first brand I see	.243	-.160	.260	.398	.135	.018	-.244
Many times I feel I am careless to missed a better product	.243	.121	-.599	.345	-.139	.269	.289
I used to purchase the products what I really not in need of	.208	.090	-.102	.548	.269	.320	-.038
I should preplan my shopping before I go for shopping	.312	-.249	.278	.491	.043	-.181	.400
Quality is important to me	-.265	-.287	-.076	.117	.641	.230	.042
I will search till I find a best product	.066	-.183	-.003	-.240	.528	.276	.181
I can spend more time and travel long to get best products	.356	.054	-.289	-.146	.523	-.184	.252
I always fix high standards before going to purchase	-.507	-.104	.016	-.255	.521	-.135	-.010
I confused to select a brand or product in malls where more brands and products are available	.190	.012	-.249	-.021	.030	.673	.323
I feel hard to choose a right shop to purchase	.435	.234	.328	-.089	-.049	.446	.031
It is very difficult to make a best choice among the numerous alternatives in the mall	.480	.165	-.022	.060	.302	.515	.375
More information about different products confuses me	.217	.151	.220	-.249	-.053	.384	.239
Stylish persons are always be noted in the society	.357	.045	-.177	.018	.432	.252	.534
Fashion and attraction is an important value to every person	.359	-.023	-.020	-.261	.145	-.286	.497
I used fill my wardrobes with latest fashioned items	.111	-.197	.366	-.126	-.211	-.459	.432
I shop different stores to get variety and stylish products	.392	.167	-.464	.026	.190	.028	.489
I spend more money to be stylish	.272	.269	.324	.327	.047	.266	.360

® = Reverse coded items

Style 1: Recreational Customers

Since, the recreational factor is loaded more among the seven styles; the students of the Thoothukudi Arts colleges are going to shopping mall many times as a recreational activity. Students spend their time and recreate their mind by purchasing and having fun in the shopping malls.

Style 2: Price Value conscious customers

The style which loaded second is conscious on the price. More students are from rural background in this study, hence it is found that they are conscious of price. Lower priced products and the discounted products are inducing them more than the other variables in the price conscious factor.

Style 3: Brand Conscious Customers

The students follow the advertisements in television and magazines to select their brand. The fast moving brands also influenced their style of purchase while they are purchasing in shopping malls. They do not prefer much to change the brand regularly as it loaded last in this factor.

Style 4: Impulsive Customers

Some of the students are impulsive and do not beware of what they are buying and how much they spend on their purchase. They used to take the first seeing brand and careless towards the selection of products and brand. Sometimes they purchase a product which they really do not need to purchase.

Style 5: Quality Conscious Customers

The students do not mind more about the quality they purchase. Among the students who are quality centric customers, importance of quality to the particular customer is loaded more and they are searching for the best product till they find it.

Style 6 : Confused by over choice

Since the respondents are educated and aware of the modern marketing process, they are not much confusing with the purchase in the shopping malls. They feel the availability of numerous brands for the same products and availability of variety of products in the mix are confusing them.

Style 7: Fashion conscious customers

Students are not willing to spend more money on the purchase of fashion items. The table one reveals that majority of them are from a low level family income or medium level family income group, the affordability make them not more to concentrate on fashionable goods.

Findings**Demographic profile**

Male students (55.6 per cent) have participated more in this study than the female students (44.4 per cent). Arts and Science students have participated (40 per cent) more in the study and the management students (20 per cent) participated less in this study. Rural students are more in the sample with 76.7 per cent than that of the urban students. Male rural students (45.6 per cent) are more than the female rural students (31.1 per cent). Female urban students (13.3 per cent) are more than the male urban students (10 per cent). Majority of the students' family income (61.1 per cent) is

less than Rs. 50,000 per annum and they are followed by the income category of up to Rs. 2,00,000 per annum with 31.1 per cent. Only 7.8 per cent of the students are from the higher family income group of earning more than Rs. 2,00,000 per annum.

Customer Decision Making Style

Seven aspects of customer decision making styles are rotated in the factor matrix and the styles are loaded in the following hierarchy: 1. Recreational Customers, 2. Price Value conscious customers, 3. Brand Conscious Customers, 4. Impulsive Customers, 5. Quality Conscious Customers, 6. Confused by over choice and 7. Fashion conscious customers.

Conclusion

The present study has been mainly focused on investigating the decision making styles of Arts College students towards purchases in malls in Thoothukudi Corporation. The Sproles & Kendall Customer Style Inventory was taken as a basic tool for the research and it was changed appropriately by the researcher to fit the current situation and the sample. It reveals that more recreational customers, price conscious customers and brand conscious customers and less impulsive, quality conscious, confused and fashioned customers are in the students of Arts colleges in Thoothukudi Corporation. These findings are confirmed with the previous research evidence and theories which are supporting the customer decision making style.

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