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INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHY ON STORE PATRONAGE BEHAVIOUR OF CHENNAI SHOPPERS

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ABSTRACT

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, and retailers), 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 (Lars Perner, 2010). Therefore, there is a growing need to evaluate the drivers of retail store choice behaviour in the Indian context. This paper aimed at finding out whether there is any difference in the retail patronage behaviour of Chennai shoppers in the context of their demography. The study was descriptive in nature; structured, self-administered questionnaire developed on the basis of review of the literature, measuring eleven constructs consisting of fifty seven statements pertaining to retail store choice patronage behaviour ware used to collect primary data from the respondents. The data has been collected from 522 respondents. Percentage analysis, Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal Wallis Test were used to analyze the data and the important findings were discussed in the paper.

KEYWORDS
Demography, Retail, Store Choice, Store Patronage.

INTRODUCTION
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, and retailers); The psychology of how the consumer is influenced by his or her environment (e.g., culture, family, signs, media); The behavior of consumers while shopping or making other marketing decisions (Lars Perner, 2010). Changing lifestyles are prompting changes in the retail environment. Paucity of time and an increase in disposable incomes have created a need for new types of retail formats. This means that retailers will have to become better at knowing their customers and predicting their needs and wants. As the socio-economic structure in India changed so did the field of retailing. Retail success in today's competitive environment is all about getting the right product to the right place at the right time; at the lowest cost possible (Arif Sheikh, Kaneez Fatima, 2008). It is important to realize that management cannot be effective unless it has some understanding of the way retail consumers make decisions and act in relation to the consumption of retail products.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
Today's customers are constantly looking out for convenience of one-shop shopping experience to make better utility of their time. Further, they are also seeking speed and efficiency in processing and hence on the lookout for additional information, better quality, and value items, shorter queues and healthy and clean shopping environment. Therefore, there is a growing need to evaluate the drivers of retail store choice behaviour in the Indian context. This paper aimed at finding out whether there is any difference in the retail patronage behaviour of Chennai shoppers in the context of their demographic factors i.e., age, gender, educational qualifications and income.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Patronage behaviour has been a subject of research for the past few decades. The selectively reviewed studies reveal the complexity of store shopping since it involves a number of factors related to the consumer's motives, orientations and perceptions. These elements have an influence on the consumer's patronization decisions. From a behavioral perspective, patronage and store choice are intertwined concepts that marketing researchers have studied intensively (e.g., Martineau, 1958; Berry, 1969; Monroe and Guiltinan, 1975; Hansen and Deutscher, 1977; Schiffman *et al.*, 1977; Mazursky and Jacoby, 1986). The patronage behavior and store choice literature basically focuses on studying the principal attributes that influence a customer's shopping decisions and on investigating the interactions among these attributes. This stream of research is guided by the presumption that the consumer's selection decision is not made on the basis of only one attribute; rather, a set of attributes (variables) collectively plays a critical role in how the customer chooses to patronize a specific store and comprises the store image. (Abdulla Alhemoud,2008) Store choice and patronage behavior involve a decision process related to where consumers shop, how they shop and what they purchase (Moye, 2000). Initiated by patronage motives, this process is highly influenced by retailer's attributes, consumer characteristics and choice context (Haynes et al., 1994). Retail choice is the result of a specific purchase task and refers to purchase from a given store, usually after some information search and evaluation of alternative stores. It represents some degree of extended decision making, and the outcome is binary – the consumer either purchases from the store or does not for a particular task. (Susana Marqueset al., 2006)
Martineau (1958) found that consumers have a tendency to like retail stores that reflected their own perceived social standing. And therefore would it be of interest to add demographic aspects such as age, gender and education when analysing consumers' perception of the retail store. Previous research has found that demographic characteristics such as age, gender and education have an impact on consumer behaviour (Hyllegard et al., 2005). According to Joyce and Lambert (1996) shoppers' age significantly affects perceptions of store image'. Lifestage-ages-analysis could be used to analyse the different evaluations of the store consumers make throughout their lives. Gender is an area that lack research in relation to retail stores despite the fact that 'certain retail sectors are gendered' according to Foster (2004). The level of education of the consumers affects how advertising is interpreted and how consumers behave in society (Gauri and Cateora, 2005). Further, aesthetic preferences influence age, gender and education and affect the image perception of the store and these are also related to age (Joyce and Lambert, 1996). Aesthetic preferences vary among people as they are searching to satisfy their personal needs. Retail environment can be one aspect in which aesthetic preferences can be satisfied according to Lund Holbrook and Schindler (1982).

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was descriptive in nature. Primary data has been collected using questionnaire as data collection tool. A self-administered questionnaire was developed on the basis of review of the literature, measuring eleven constructs consisting of fifty seven statements pertaining to retail store choice patronage behaviour. A five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5) was related to each of the statement for the respondents to rate. The target population of the study included customers who prefer to shop at retail stores in Chennai. A sampling frame from which a random sample could be drawn was unavailable; however convenient sampling method was chosen to serve the purpose of data collection. This method seemed acceptable and appropriate taken into account the descriptive nature of the study and the lack of a sampling frame. Initially, different type of retail stores located in different areas of Chennai was selected for the study. Six hundred questionnaires were distributed in each store over a three-month period. Trained personnel collected data at different days of the week as well as at uniformly distributed time intervals to assure a high degree of representation of the population in the sample and to minimize day-and time-related response bias. Customers were approached and were asked for their cooperation to answer the questionnaire. Of the 600 questionnaires distributed, 78 were excluded for reasons of inconsistencies in responses and incompleteness of answers. Percentage analysis, Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal Wallis Test were used for analyzing the data.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

PROFILE ANALYSIS

The data was collected from one hundred and twenty respondents' from various retail outlets in Chennai. Table number 1 details the study's respondents profile and composition.

TABLE – 1: RESPONDENTS PROFILE

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	167	32
Femals	355	68
Age	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
less than 20	12	2.3
21 to 30	84	16.1
31 to 40	223	42.7
41 to 50	127	24.3
51 and above	76	14.6
Education	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
No formal education	24	4.6
School education	222	42.5
Graduate	132	25.3
Post graduate	70	13.4
Professional	74	14.2
Monthly Income	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Below 10000	85	16.3
10001-20000	215	41.2
20001-30000	76	14.6
30001-40000	74	14.2
40001-50000	28	5.4
50000 and above	44	8.4

Source: Primary Data

Sixty eight percent of respondents were female and thirty two percent were male. Forty two percent belong to the age category of thirty one to forty; twenty fore percent were belongs to the age group of forty one to fifty. Forty three percent shoppers were having school education; twenty five percent were completed graduation. Thirteen percent were post graduates and fourteen percent were professional degree holders. Only five percent shoppers were not having formal education. Forty one percent of respondents are earning between ten thousand rupees to twenty thousand rupees; sixteen percent were below ten thousand rupees as monthly income. Fifteen percent of respondents were earning twenty thousand to thirty thousand and fourteen percent of respondents belong to the income category of thirty to forty thousand.

TABLE- 2: KRUSKAL WALLIS TEST: STORE PATRONAGE BETWEEN AGE GROUPS

S.No	Patronage Factors	Age groups (Mean Ranks)					Kruskal Wallis Test Value*	Sig. (at 5%)
		less than 20 (n=12)	21 to 30 (n=84)	31 to 40 (n=223)	41 to 50 (n=127)	51 and above (n=76)		
1	Product quality & variety	321.17	**313.48**	296.47	202.59	190.47	63.361	0.000
2	Price of products	363.00	246.30	**319.08**	204.16	189.13	77.587	0.000
3	Sales men	370.83	263.20	**301.28**	196.87	233.63	48.924	0.000
4	Location of the store	321.33	273.41	**318.20**	209.92	158.71	87.473	0.000
5	Convenience Factors	378.17	270.71	284.52	**246.67**	190.13	31.355	0.000
6	Sales Promotions	397.33	**313.85**	293.16	217.48	162.84	76.540	0.000
7	Advertising	**483.50**	263.52	238.97	**252.29**	**305.71**	39.331	0.000
8	Brand Image	**450.00**	**329.11**	237.46	**240.60**	**262.47**	44.141	0.000
9	Store atmosphere	**433.50**	**326.14**	287.17	204.00	183.66	77.860	0.000
10	Reputations	**453.00**	274.05	287.21	205.31	235.84	47.143	0.000
11	Adjustments	216.50	256.75	**308.16**	208.50	225.50	44.854	0.000

Source: Primary Data   *Degrees of Freedom - 4

From the above table it was found that less than twenty age group shoppers were more influenced by advertising than other age groups. They were also being influenced by the brand image of the store, reputation the shop has and the store atmosphere. Brand image and store atmosphere were the two top variables influences the twenty one to thirty age group shoppers, it is to be noted that, they were also influenced by the product quality and variety. Middle age customers (i.e., thirty one to forty years) were price conscious customers; they have given importance to price followed by location of the store and sales men. Forty one to fifty year age group has given importance to advertising and convenience factors followed by brand image. Fifty one and above age group had given importance for advertising of the store followed by brand image of the store. It was also found from the Kruskal Wallis Test that there is a significant variation between the age groups in patronizing a retail store.

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TABLE -3: MANN-WHITNEY U TEST: STORE PATRONAGE BETWEEN GENDERS

S.No	Patronage Factors	Gender (Mean Ranks)		Mann-Whitney U Test Value	Significance (at 5%)
		Male (n=167)	Female (n=355)		
1	Product quality & variety	282.00	252.00	2618	.027
2	Price of products	215.43	283.17	2195	.000
3	Sales men	247.09	268.28	27237	.130
4	Location of the store	194.73	292.91	1849	.130
5	Convenience Factors	247.78	267.95	2735	.151
6	Sales Promotions	193.42	293.53	18273	.000
7	Advertising	291.31	247.48	2466	.002
8	Brand Image	305.95	240.59	2222	.000
9	Store atmosphere	247.76	267.96	2735	.149
10	Reputations	274.99	255.15	2739	.157
11	Adjustments	207.59	286.86	2064	.157

Source: Primary Data

The table number three infers that there is a significant difference between men and women in patronizing a store based on price of the products, sales promotions, advertising and brand image. The remaining factors were the same for both genders. Female shoppers had given weight for price of products; sales promotions on the other hand male shoppers had given importance for the brand image of the store and advertising.

TABLE-4: KRUSKAL WALLIS TEST: STORE PATRONAGE BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF SHOPPERS

S.No	Patronage Factors	Educational Qualifications (Mean Ranks)					Kruskal Wallis Test Value*	Sig. (at 5%)
		No formal education (n=24)	School education (n=222)	Graduate (n=132)	Post graduate (n=70)	Professional (n=76)		
1	Product quality & variety	133.42	212.99	**301.55**	307.89	**333.23**	76.938	0.000
2	Price of products	241.92	236.68	**303.26**	222.31	304.89	28.466	0.000
3	Sales men	225.25	238.21	283.55	255.92	**309.05**	17.371	0.000
4	Location of the store	257.96	240.77	298.01	255.49	265.41	12.589	0.000
5	Convenience Factors	**299.62**	236.15	294.10	247.86	279.95	15.866	0.003
6	Sales Promotions	**355.46**	228.27	295.17	274.66	258.19	28.553	0.000
7	Advertising	168.58	**282.25**	258.31	275.94	221.42	19.913	0.001
8	Brand Image	74.08	**260.25**	273.75	270.26	295.92	42.426	0.000
9	Store atmosphere	230.96	225.31	286.24	**298.23**	301.11	27.154	0.000
10	Reputations	273.04	224.66	**325.81**	243.86	270.26	39.349	0.000
11	Adjustments	225.96	261.76	272.71	262.21	251.58	2.516	0.642

Source: Primary Data   *Degrees of Freedom - 4

From the above table it was found that there is a significant difference between the education of respondents and store patronage factors except for the factor "adjustments". The shoppers not having formal education choose a store by sales promotions and convenience of the store. Shoppers having school education had given importance for advertising and brand image of the store. Graduates were more bothered about the reputation of the store, price of the products and product quality and variety. Post graduates had given weight for the product quality and variety and also for the store atmosphere. Professionals also gave weight for the product quality and variety followed by the salesmen of the store in selecting a store.

TABLE-5: KRUSKAL WALLIS TEST: STORE PATRONAGE BETWEEN INCOME GROUPS

S.No	Patronage Factors	Income Groups (per month) (Mean Ranks)						Kruskal Wallis Test Value*	Sig. (at 5%)
		Below Rs. 10000 (n=85)	Rs. 10001-20000 (n=215)	Rs. 20001-30000 (n=76)	Rs. 30001-40000 (n=74)	Rs. 40001-50000 (n=28)	Rs. 50000 and above (n=44)		
1	Product quality & variety	177.75	265.85	268.27	284.38	283.29	**338.00**	42.346	0.000
2	Price of products	**259.95**	268.25	**289.05**	244.95	207.07	246.41	8.267	0.142
3	Sales men	212.73	**282.09**	277.67	219.66	203.79	**334.27**	34.643	0.142
4	Location of the store	250.72	277.10	247.46	269.14	237.07	233.05	6.121	0.142
5	Convenience Factors	229.74	276.02	291.38	263.61	242.57	208.82	14.767	0.011
6	Sales Promotions	246.69	**291.98**	271.91	222.97	230.71	207.59	22.622	0.000
7	Advertising	218.69	267.37	237.06	**287.70**	404.93	222.41	41.078	0.000
8	Brand Image	240.84	238.45	272.66	**342.76**	299.79	233.73	32.102	0.000
9	Store atmosphere	238.61	260.94	**288.03**	260.84	**306.07**	235.36	8.256	0.143
10	Reputations	247.14	252.88	273.09	**293.55**	306.00	229.14	9.917	0.078
11	Adjustments	**268.64**	281.01	260.97	246.12	199.07	218.86	13.582	0.018

Source: Primary Data   *Degrees of Freedom - 5

From the table number five it was found that there is no difference between the income groups for the patronage factors such as price, sales men, location, store atmosphere and reputations of the store. The remaining factors such as product quality and variety, convenience factors, sales promotions, advertising, brand image and adjustments were having difference in patronizing a store based on their income. It was also found that lower income group (below Rs. 10000 income) gives importance for adjustments in selecting a store and they ware also price conscious. The income group having income between Rs.10001 to Rs. 20000 had given importance for sales promotions for selecting a store followed by the salesmen in the store. The next group having income between Rs. 30001 to Rs. 40000 had given weight for brand image and advertising of the store. The income group having income between Rs. 40001 to 50000 had given valued advertising more than all other factors and followed by store atmosphere and reputation of the store. The income group having income more than Rs. 50001 had given importance for product quality and variety than all other factors followed by salesmen in the store.

DISCUSSIONS

The study revealed that there is a difference between the demographics of shoppers in choosing a retail store supporting the previous studies. Younger generation shoppers gives importance for advertising and sales promotions, where middle age group were found price conscious and location sensitive and the old age groups surprisingly had given importance for advertising and brand image of the stores. Interestingly, female shoppers were of more price sensitive and

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had given importance for sales promotions on the other hand male shoppers select store by brand image of the store and advertising. Less educated shoppers had been influenced by advertising, sales promotions than educated shoppers. Graduates, post graduates and professionals were conscious about the product quality and variety than other segments, they ware also less influenced by advertisements and sales promotions. Naturally price and sale promotions plays a major role in attracting lower income and middle income group customers, and advertising, brand image and store atmosphere were the variables attract the higher income group shoppers. Some managerial implications might be derived from this study. Information on store patronage motive factors and purchasing behaviour of different shopper groups should reveal areas that need more cautious approach in planning and implementing complementary-marketing programs. The identified understanding and fulfilling gaps should suggest the areas where management has paid too much or too less attention, and where changes in retailing strategy are necessary, if increased store traffic, enhanced store loyalty and improved store performance is to be achieved.

CONCLUSION

The present study attempted to explore the demographic factors that influence the decisions of the consumers on retail store selection in Chennai. The study concludes that demographic factors such as age, income, gender and education are having significant role in retail store selection. Shopper groups mainly vary in choosing a store based on their significance for patronage factors of a store. This findings are having consistency with the findings of a number of previous studies appeared in the marketing literature. However, it is important to suggest a need for further research to investigate the link between consumer perceptions of retailers' performance, satisfaction, store loyalty, purchasing outcomes and store performance, as well as the link between in-store stimuli and purchasing behaviour in the Indian retailing scenario. From a strategic perspective, such examinations are essential for gaining feedback about how well the consumers' expectations are exceeded or at least met. The availability of such information allows the retailers to align its efforts to particular elements perceived important by consumers. Failing to meet consumers' expectations would result in consumer dissatisfaction, increasing the likelihood that a certain proportion of current customers would shop elsewhere.

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