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STUDY OF THE EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND IT'S INFLUENCE ON MALL SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR

DR. ANIL CHANDHOK
PROFESSOR
M M INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT
M M UNIVERSITY
MULLANA

DR. BHAVET
FACULTY
SHREE RAM INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT
URJANI

ABSTRACT

One of the demographic variables, Education, has been studied to understand its influence in clustering mall shoppers and accordingly an attempt has been made to propose strategies based on education level of shoppers in a manner motivating them to take appropriate decisions while shopping from malls of their choice. The study undertaken is an extension of scholarly research work i.e. why only one demographic variable has been discussed here. The study has been conducted in select shopping malls in Delhi and NCR. Clustering technique has been used for the purpose. The shoppers have been clustered into Mall Visitors and Mall Shirkers. It has been observed that most of the shoppers who visited malls were undergraduates based on the sample surveyed. Accordingly, shopping mall managers need to focus on youth-centric strategies. The youth also constitute major portion of Indian population. This would help them position their malls effectively.

KEYWORDS

Education, Mall Shopping, Cluster Analysis, Strategies and Shoppers.

INTRODUCTION

Education level of the customer and its role in mall shopping is really an interesting area for conducting the research. Does it influences shopping decisions of buyers in malls and if yes, up to what extent? An attempt has been made by the researcher in the area. Shoppers in malls have varied educational levels. The information could be gathered by contacting the select customers representing the entire population. Shopping mall culture is growing rapidly in India and is now moving towards semi-urban and rural areas from metropolitans. Besides other demographic and behavioural variables, the entire focus of the study is on 'Education' as demographic variable. The data collected has been cluster analysed into different groups. Each cluster could be analysed to achieve ultimate objective of the respective mall with focus on increase in footfall.

Thus, the objective of the study has been focused on:

1. To understand the role of education level of customers in mall shopping.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The studies from corners of the world have been referred to know the research work already conducted in the area of the study. These could be summarized as profiling of customers as Teenagers and Adult Customers (Chebat et al., 2008) based on age group. Similarly, other categorizations include Male and Female Shoppers (Kuruville & Ranjan, 2008). Another classification could be Economic and Recreational Shoppers (Jarboe & McDaniel, 1987), followed by Loyal and Non-Loyal Mall Shoppers (LeHew et al., 2002). The review of literature motivated the researcher to conduct further research focusing 'Education' variable and its role in mall shopping.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For conducting the research, the data has been collected primarily by contacting the sample respondents via mall intercept survey method at the exit gate in select malls in Delhi and NCR. In Delhi, the survey was conducted in DLF Emporio, followed by Gurgaon where Ambience Mall was visited for the purpose. In Ghaziabad, Shipra Mall was selected whereas in Noida, The Great India Place was chosen. The data was collected using structured questionnaire. The respondents included shoppers' visiting the said malls on the day the survey was conducted. Only the shoppers, who appeared to be 18 years or more in age, were contacted. Non-probability convenience sampling has been employed. The secondary data was collected from various relevant magazines, newspapers, journals and other published and unpublished sources. Of the 400 shoppers contacted 327 responses were found to be useful for further analysis.

INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

Measures: The items in the questionnaire were based on literature reviewed. The questions related to respondent demographics- education were also included, besides using Shopping Motivation Measurement Scale.

Shopping Motivation Measurement Scale: was developed by Arnold and Reynolds (2003). There were eighteen items in the scale focused on capturing the hedonic fulfillment experienced through shopping. The items pertaining to demographic variable were drawn from researches conducted by Kuruville & Ranjan (2008), Teller et al., (2008) and Salim (2008). Kuruville & Ranjan (2008), Wakefield & Baker (1998) and Bellenger et al (1997) contributed in providing the items related to shopping behavior and loyalty strategies. Necessary alterations have been made in context with Indian malls.

The five-point Likert Scales ranging from Strongly Agree (5 points) to Strongly Disagree (1 point) was used to measure items on this scale.

The shopping motivation constructs showed Cronbach's alpha coefficients to be 0.89. This indicated the scale to be highly reliable. The composite reliability, variance extracted, and Cronbach alpha coefficient values for all shopping motivation factors, greatly exceeded the minimum acceptable values. This indicated that measures were free from error and yielded very consistent results (Zikmund, 2003).

Sampling Design: The survey population consisted of all shoppers above 18 years of age residing in Delhi and NCR approached at the point of exit in the select shopping mall on the day of administering the schedule. The non-probability convenience sampling design has been employed.

Description of Sample: The data was collected from adult male and female shoppers who appear to be at least 18 years of age. They were approached with a request to respond to queries made by researcher regarding the descriptive: 'Education', one of the major demographic variables.

361 active mall shoppers visiting shopping malls constituted the final sample (Table 1):

TABLE – 1: OVERALL MALL SHOPPERS' SAMPLE FREQUENCIES

Descriptive	Code	Frequency	Percentage
Education			
Undergraduate	1	163	45.15
Graduate	2	126	34.90
Post Graduate	3	54	14.96
Research Scholar	4	18	4.99
Total		361	

In response to the question on educational qualifications, maximum respondents indicated they were undergraduates (45.15 %), followed by 34.9 % indicating they were graduates, 14.96 % were post graduates and the balance (of those surveyed) 4.99 % were research scholars.

In summary, the typical sample respondent profile can be described as: The mall shoppers included in the sample were mainly students in the young-age group.

Statistical Analysis: The study conducted statistically tested the motives of shoppers towards shopping in malls. The statistical significance was set at a level of 0.05. Cluster analysis via Ward's method was used. One case was assigned only to one cluster (Malhotra and Dash 2009). An attempt has been made to identify relatively homogeneous groups of cases (or variables) based on selected characteristics.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

SPSS Statistics (originally, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, later modified to read Statistical Product and Service Solutions), 16.0.1 version, was used for performing Cluster Analysis. Factors were clustered by Ward's method, and distance was calculated using squared Euclidean distance. The study was designed to go for an 'a priori' solution by asking for a 2-cluster solution. The reason being the need of the study, the *bi-polar* shopping orientation concept based on demographic variables such as Teenagers, Adult Customers (Chebat et al., 2008) based on age group and Male Shoppers, Female Shoppers (Kuruville & Ranjan, 2008) based on gender and so on.

Cluster Analysis of the Mall Shoppers Sample: With 3.08 as mean score in cluster 1 and 3.53 as mean score in cluster 2 5 on 5-point hedonic shopping motivation scale, the respondents were found to be less positive in cluster 1 and those in cluster 2 were found to be positive towards shopping. A new shopper typology, named as Mall Shopping Avoiders and Mall Shopping Goers. Mall shopping scenario based on profiling of shoppers types was created.

Mall Shopping Scenario: Profiling of mall shoppers clusters based on shoppers' loyalty was done. A significant association between loyalty and shopping motives was checked using Pearson Correlation Coefficient. A significant association (positive correlation) was based on results was found between mall shoppers' loyalty and their mall shopping motive levels. This indicates that shopping motivation is directly proportional to shopping mall loyalty. The next stage of profiling included demographics and shopping behavior variables.

Cross Tabs and Chi-Square Tests of Mall Shoppers' Responses: For cross-tabulating the data, a Chi-Square Test has been administered in order to profile the two segments. The statistically significant differences were found. To test the hypothesis that two categorical variables are independent of each other, the Chi-Square Test of Independence is used (Refer Table 2).

TABLE 2: MALL SHOPPERS' FREQUENCIES

Descriptive	Shopping Mall Avoiders (Cluster I)	Shopping Mall Goers (Cluster II)	Total Sample Frequency
Education			
Undergraduate	35	94	129
Graduate	25	73	98
Post Graduate	26	33	59
Research Scholar	12	7	19
Total	98	207	305

The Calculated Chi-Square Static (χ^2_{cal}) with a value less than the Critical (Tabulated) Value (χ^2_{tab}) indicated that the Null Hypothesis (Ho) of association/ relationship (or no association/ relationship) could not be rejected, indicating that the association was found to be statistically significant (or not statistically significant) at or greater than the 0.05 level of p-value (probability value or significant value), Malhotra and Dash 2009 (Refer Table 3).

TABLE 3: EDUCATION* MALL SHOPPER CLUSTERS
Crosstab

		Cluster			Total
		1	2		
Education	1	Count	90	39	129
		Expected Count	91.8	37.2	129.0
		% within Education	69.8%	30.2%	100.0%
		% within Cluster	41.5%	44.3%	42.3%
		% of Total	29.5%	12.8%	42.3%
2		Count	66	32	98
		Expected Count	69.7	28.3	98.0
		% within Education	67.3%	32.7%	100.0%
		% within Cluster	30.4%	36.4%	32.1%
		% of Total	21.6%	10.5%	32.1%
3		Count	44	15	59
		Expected Count	42.0	17.0	59.0
		% within Education	74.6%	25.4%	100.0%
		% within Cluster	20.3%	17.0%	19.3%
		% of Total	14.4%	4.9%	19.3%
4		Count	17	2	19
		Expected Count	13.5	5.5	19.0
		% within Education	89.5%	10.5%	100.0%
		% within Cluster	7.8%	2.3%	6.2%
		% of Total	5.6%	.7%	6.2%
Total		Count	217	88	305
		Expected Count	217.0	88.0	305.0
		% within Education	71.1%	28.9%	100.0%
		% within Cluster	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	71.1%	28.9%	100.0%

(Education: 1- Undergraduate, 2-Graduate, 3-Post Graduate, 4-Research Scholar; Cluster 1: Shopping Shirkers, 2-Shopping Visitors)

Result of Chi-Square Test: The null hypothesis cannot be rejected. There is significant relationship between educational qualifications and shopping motives-based clusters ($\chi^2_{cal} = 4.256$, $\chi^2_{tab} = 7.815$, $df = 3$, $p\text{-value} = 0.235$)

Summary of Results of Chi-Square Tests of Independence on Mall Shopper Shoppers Clusters

In summary, we can say that there is a statistically significant relationship between the shopping motives-based clusters (Shopping Avoiders & Shopping Goers) and the select demographic variable: Education.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this research are bi-polar shopping orientation concept in line with the study of Barnes, 1998 who classified shoppers into two categories as Traditional Mall Shoppers and Manufacturer's Outlet Shoppers. The Manufacturer's Outlet Shoppers were attracted towards branded designer wear and that too at a discount. They are convinced of hunting for such offers and of getting bargains. They represent the target market of choice for the apparel industry. The Traditional Mall Shoppers were older; more educated, and have a higher income. It is expected that continued growth of outlet centers might attract Traditional Mall Shoppers as shoppers prefer branded products at the lowest prices. The findings of this research indicated those shoppers who have positive motivation towards shopping value adventure, gratification, social and idea shopping.

Segmentation Profiles of Mall Shoppers: The findings of the study are in line with that of Patel (2008) that the average Indian shopper in our sample was price and quality conscious. Shopping is funny activity for Indian consumers (Refer Table 4).

TABLE 4: SEGMENTATION PROFILES OF THE MALL SHOPPERS CLUSTERS

Characteristics	Mall Shopping Shirkers	Mall Shopping Visitors
Shopping motives	Avoid shopping	Enjoy shopping
Education	27.1% Undergraduate	72.9% Undergraduate
	25.5% Graduate	74.5% Graduate
	44.1% Post Graduate	55.9% Post Graduate
	63.2% Research Scholar	36.8% Research Scholar

Shopping Mall Marketing Strategies for Building Shopping Mall Loyalty among Shoppers: Suitable marketing strategies to meet the retail marketing objectives should be designed at Retailer level as well as Shopping Mall Management level keeping in view important shopping mall clusters. These could be focused on the major dimensions of entertainment, specialty, value, one stop shop and convenience. A balance between these dimensions and mall retail space is essential as it might influence mall selection decision of shoppers. Children, attracted more by gaming zone, are major influencers in mall selection. Parents prefer to visit such secured places where children enjoy and entire family can spend together whether it is watching movie, dining and shopping. This acts as a pull strategy motivating prospects for first visit. To retain them and to encourage them for repeat visits, mall managers need to focus on mall loyalty strategies such as Specialty Strategies, Value-oriented Strategies, One Stop Shop Strategies and Convenience Strategies.

CONCLUSION

The education level of mall shoppers might contribute to devising effective strategies enhancing long-term customer loyalty, besides other demographic, behavioural and other variables. Accordingly, mall managers could focus on promoting and positioning the respective mall strategically. This might contribute to help them understand their customers in a better way. The malls might vary in terms of the demographic groups they attract (Jarboe and McDaniel, 1987).

FURTHER SCOPE OF STUDY

Customers loyalty strategies based on educational background of customers might be successfully implemented in other functional areas focusing long-term relationship. Other demographic, behavioural, psychological and other variable might be analysed with the objective to boost value-cum-entertainment based mall shopping.

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