

A Study On Consumers Perception Towards Department Stores In Thanjavure District

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INTRODUCTION

In olden days, the business people occupied in various business activities according to their knowledge, availability of fund and the business in which they were interested. They did not hassle about the consumer satisfaction. They did not think the requirements and wants of the patrons. They simply make up some of the products or commodities by following conventional method of production. However, at present entire situation in business is distorted. Almost in all businesses, the consumer and customers are well thought-out and much importance irrespective of the business or nature of goods. Even before designing the product the consumers' wishes and requirements are measured by the business concerns. They all try to satisfy the customers in all possible ways to keep the existing customers. Traditionally, companies have relied only on differentiation of products and services to retain their customers and to satisfy the consumers. However, times have changed, due to fierce competition from new players entering the market, imitation of new features and increase in number of new offers, customers have acquired new choices and they have also become more price sensitive, which has forced marketers to adapt differentiate and customer oriented strategies in order to enable them to stand out in the competition and gain a competitive edge. The service industry and in particular, the departmental store has been vital to the world economy and undergone the ever intensified competition under recent crisis and economic turn-down period. The modern retail industry is booming across the world. Therefore, it is essential for departmental store to use strategies which focus on satisfying current customers. Supermarkets and Hypermarkets along with the departmental stores have

played an important role in food distribution since they appeared. For modern life, the existence of traditional markets has been gradually replaced by their descendent supermarkets and departmental store and people depend on departmental store for their basic grocery needs. Shopping at the grocery store has become a big deal and it is one of the most important food sources for many households. In addition, unlike previous studies that have focused more on service industry such as bank, healthcare, beauty etc., the researchers considered a supermarket setting which fully represents both product and service characteristics. A finished product crosses various intermediaries before it reaches the ultimate consumers. They are wholesalers, dealers, departmental stores, retailers, street vendors and push wheel sellers, etc. The departmental stores are in a condition to meet the ultimate consumers because of the attitudes of the buyers changing the place of their purchase that is in departmental stores rather than in retailers. They know more about the consumers' tastes and needs than other wholesale traders. The departmental stores have been started in many places in all cities as well as in small rural areas as they can run their shop very nearer to the consumers. The departmental stores deal with all nature of goods like consumer goods, perishable as well as durables and also FMCG.

Gone are the days where the consumer went in search of materials from shop to shop. Today, things are made available in one shop, one place. These days, consumer buying is not mere transfer of item from seller to buyer. Consumer wants buying to become a happy affair. They would like to see, touch and feel the commodities that they buy. Understanding this psychology for the consumer many organizations have come to make purchase of happy affair. The consumers get various services from the departmental stores in all nature of goods. The consumers who buy the durable goods from the departmental stores face many problems at the time of purchase. However, they have number of retailer shops very nearer to their house, the consumers prefer to buy the goods from departmental stores. Normally the customers do criticize the departmental stores for various reasons.

Thanjavore district is very familiar for its development and quality of education. Further it is a developing city in Tamilnadu. To analyze the reasons for the issues the researcher selected "A STUDY ON CONSUMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS THE DEPARTMENTAL STORE IN THANJAVORE" for the research work.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The customers are the deciding factor for the success of every business. They should be treated well to survive in the business. Due to competition almost all the business concern tries to satisfy the needs of the customers. Whoever may be the business man, whatever may be the size of the businesses and nature of product, in modern scenario the customer are given more importance. They are cared well at all level. The customers should be satisfied. Then only any business man can retain the existing customers. Due to globalized era all businesses are consumer oriented. Even before designing the products their taste and preferences are considered by the manufacturers. The business people always try to satisfy the consumers. Consumer satisfaction is the prime motive of all business concerns. The business concern which satisfies the needs of the consumers can achieve its target very easily. So at present utmost care is given to consumer satisfaction. Retailers are the last link between the producer and the consumer. They get feedback about the goods and services of the sales man. Due to the competition prevailing in all nature of products the retailers are trying to attract the consumers in all possible ways like offering discount, providing complements to the products, credit facilities and so on. But only some of the retailers are getting enough customers to their shops. Other retailers could not get success in their business which paved loss and lead to the closure of the business. In some of the area in Coimbatore and Tirupur districts the consumers purchase their products directly from the wholesalers, where they to bear additional cost like transportation expenses. It is miserable to say that some of the retailer stores the business men knowingly encourage fake products or assembled materials manufactured by different companies involving in manufacturing of similar products because of the low cost. Only knowledgeable customers can be able to know these problems. Others are deceived by the retailers. But the retailers take much care for working or functioning of the products till the warranty period. Hence in many ways the consumers face many problems in purchasing the durable goods from the retailers. There are number of issues related to customers and consumers with regard to the services retailers dealing in durable goods.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In modern scenario, all business units are carried out with the policy of consumer orientation. The producers and manufacturers try to satisfy the consumer needs and desires. They try to analyze the consumer's behaviour and attitudes about particular product or brand. Retaining

the existing customers is the main problem for all the departmental stores and businesses. Departmental stores who deal in durable goods also follow the same principle i.e. consumer orientation and consumer satisfaction. Even in cottage and small scale industries consumers are given most importance in the business promotion. All the people buy durable goods in one or another occasion. The departmental stores take effort to satisfy the consumers due to heavy competition in business. But in few occasion they could not satisfy the needs of the consumers. The consumers face many problems in buying various goods. The departmental stores sometimes could not provide after sales service even before the warranty period. They simply transfer the repair cost burden or the replacement cost to the buyers stating that the consumers mishandle the products or buyers. This creates trouble to the consumers. It makes very bad impression about the departmental store wherethey have to lose the existing customers. Nowadays all the business people more concerned about the consumers needs and desire of the consumers. The study of the consumer satisfaction enable us to analysis one's own decision in buying. The very look of the departmental store attracts people, the way in which products are visited not only to buy, but also spend sometimes in the cafeteria and to enjoy the atmosphere, the consumer takes a look to choose the product and understands the inferential as well as the external factors. This is done in a clean unpolluted atmosphere in departmental store. It is a matter for study as to why people come and buy from a departmental store. Though the ultimate aim of all business is to earn profit, in many occasion, consumers desire and satisfaction are given due importance by all business people. However, the customers in departmental store are not satisfied with the price of the products and things sold in the departmental store. This is not good for any business man which will not help to the long running plan of the business. Consumers' desire and satisfaction should be given paramount care by all the retailers particularly those who are dealing in durable goods. For the success of the business it is necessary to all the retailers to know the attitudes and satisfaction of the consumers towards their services. Then only they can run the business successfully by facing the competition smoothly. So now, a study on consumer satisfaction plays vital role and gets much importance in all business. By keeping the above view in mind the researcher selected the "A STUDY ON CONSUMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS THE DEPARTMENTAL STORE IN THANJAVORE"

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

1. To study the factor influencing the customers to purchase house hold articles from departmental store.
2. To know the needs of the customers at the place of purchase.
3. To evaluate the consumer's opinion and ideas about the price, quality and services rendered by the departmental stores.
4. To measure the sales services provided by the departmental stores.
5. To know the problems faced by the respondents while they go to departmental stores for buying their needs.
6. To suggest, improve in sales and functions in the departmental stores based on results.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research is carried out in the research work to get effective result in the study and make the research work useful to the needy group.

DATA COLLECTION

To make the research in the study both the primary data and secondary data were used to do the research works successfully.

PRIMARY DATA

In order to fulfill the objectives set, a sample study was carried out with the help of a well-framed questionnaire for interview schedule. The questionnaire was prepared with the guidance of the experts in the relevant field. Necessary corrections were made in the questionnaire to complete the research work successfully. The respondents for the study was selected based on varying background, based on their age, gender, dwelling place, educational qualification, monthly income and so forth, from the study area Thanjavore. The questionnaire was given to the respondents to provide the required data as and when the researcher has explained every question to the respondents.

SECONDARY DATA

Secondary data was collected from the journals and magazines published in relation to the departmental stores, customers satisfaction and Net sources

SAMPLE SELECTION

Due to the development in the economy, social status and the changing trends among the consumers in department store in Thanjavore . Nowadays the attitudes of the buyers is changing frequently. To know the preferences of the consumers and their satisfaction of the consumers, this study is the need of the hour. For this purpose, the sample respondents were selected from the customers of the departmental store. From the total population 100 respondents were selected by using stratified random sampling techniques . But only 73 respondents were responded to the interview schedule. Hence, the researchers selected only 73 respondents for the study

STATISTICAL TOOL USED

To make the research effective and find out the result of the research work statistical tools like simple percent analysis, chi-square test was applied

TABLE NO.1**TABLE SHOWING THE SEX OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Serial no	Sex	Total no of respondents	% of the respondents
1	Male	40	54.79
2	Female	33	45.21
	Total	73	100

Source: Primary data

Interpretation

From the above table it is clearly understand that among 73 respondents 54.79 % of the respondents are male, while the remaining 45.21% of the respondents are female.

TABLE NO.2**TABLE SHOWING THE AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Serial no	AGE	RESPONDENTS		TOTAL	Percentage %
		Male	Female		
1	Below 25 years	8	5	13	17.81
2	25to 30	15	4	19	26.02
3	30 to 35	6	10	16	21.92
4	35 and above	11	14	25	34.25
	Total	40	33	73	100

Source: primary data

Interpretation

From the above table it is inferred that 34.25 % of the respondents belong to the age group of above 35 years and 26.02 % of the respondents belong to the age group 25 to 30 years, 21.92% of the respondents belong to the age group of 30 to 35 years whereas 17.81 % of the respondents belong to the age below 25 years.

Chi-Square Test

Null hypothesis

There is no link between respondents based on the age and their opinion about the services provided by the departmental store in the study area.

Alternative hypothesis

There is a closelink between respondents based on the age and their opinion about the services provided by the departmental store in the study area.

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN AGE AND THEIR OPINION ABOUT THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT STORE

Factor	Calculated value χ^2	Table value	DF	Sig	Remarks
Age	13.471	26.296	16	5%	Not significant

As the intended value of χ^2 (13.471) is smaller than the table of χ^2 (26.296) at 16degree of freedom for 5 % level of significance, there is no significant link between the respondents based on the age and their opinion about the services provided by the departmental store in the study area. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted and concluded that there is no significant link between the respondents based on age and their opinion about the services provided by the departmental store in the study area.

TABLE NO.3

TABLE SHOWING THE EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS	RESPONDENTS		TOTAL	Percentage %
	MALE	FEMALE		
School	14	10	24	32.88
Under Graduate	9	5	14	19.18
Post graduate	7	4	11	15.06
Diploma	4	6	10	13.70
Others(specify)	6	8	14	19.18
Total	40	33	73	100

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION:

The above table shows that among 73 respondents 32.88 % of the respondents have studied up to school level, 19.18% of the respondents have completed degree courses and other courses respectively, 15.06% of the respondents have completed postgraduate courses, while the remaining 13.70% of the respondents have studied diploma courses.

Chi-Square Test

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS AND THEIR SATISFACTION ABOUT THE QUALITY OF PRODUCTS AVAILABLE IN THE DEPARTMENTAL STORE**Null hypothesis**

There is no significant relationship between respondents based on educational qualification and their satisfaction regarding the quality of the products available in the departmental store.

Alternative hypothesis

There is a close relationship between respondents based on educational qualification and their satisfaction regarding the quality of the products available in the departmental store.

Factor	Calculated value χ^2	Table value	DF	Sig	Remarks
Educational qualification	19.671	26.296	16	5%	Not significant

As the calculated value of χ^2 (19.671) is less than the table of χ^2 (26.296) at 16 degree of freedom for 5 % level of significance, there is no significant relationship between the respondents based on the sex and the educational qualifications. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted and concluded that there is no significant relationship between the respondents based on educational qualifications and their satisfaction regarding the quality of the products available in the departmental stores in the study area.

FINDINGS

1. Among 73 respondents most (54.79 %) of the respondents are male
2. Majority(34.25 %) of the respondents belong to the age group of above 35 years
3. Considerable portion (32.88 %) of the respondents has studied up to school level.
4. Major proportion of the respondents (64.8%) of the respondents get a monthly income between Rs.15000 -25000
5. Majority of the respondents (51.5%) go to the departmental stores once in a month .
6. Most of the respondents (74%) purchase groceries in the departmental store.

7. Much of the respondents (56.4%) are satisfied with the price of the products in the departmental store.
8. Major portion of the respondents (45.7%) informed that offer price is provided in the departmental store for domestic appliances.
9. Majority of the respondents (68.9%) agreed that the departmental store have more varieties of similar products.
10. Most of the (53.65%) respondents opined that there are adequate spaces in the departmental store.

FINDINGS FROM CHI-SQUARE TEST

There is no significant link between the respondents based on age and their opinion about the services provided by the departmental store in the study area.

There is no significant relationship between the respondents based on educational qualifications and their satisfaction regarding the quality of the products available in the departmental stores in the study area.

There is no link between the monthly income of the respondents and the volume of goods purchased in the departmental store.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the analysis made and findings in the study, the following suggestions have been given by the researchers.

Few respondents informed that the price fixed in the departmental stores is high when compared with the local retail stores and petty shop. Hence, efforts can be made by the departmental store if possible try to reduce the price of the products after considering the real cost.

Some of the respondents stated that the warranty is not ensured products sold in the departmental store. Hence, the proprietor should try to sell the products, which have warranty.

Few respondents conveyed that there are some fake products/ least quality products are sold in the departmental store. Hence, the proprietor should take initiatives to monitor such problems in the departmental store.

Some of the respondents are satisfied with the approaches of the employees in the departmental store at the time of crowd. Hence, the employees of the departmental store should be given proper instructions regarding the approaches.

CONCLUSION

In olden days, most of the businesses were seller oriented. They did not bother about the consumers. However, they had good number of consumers to their shops due to lack of awareness among the consumers. However, at present the situation is entirely changed. All the businesses are consumer oriented. Every businessperson is trying to satisfy the customers in all possible ways. Then only they can retain the existing customers and increase the potential customers. Therefore, the departmental stores in the study area should take effort continuously to offer good services, quality of the products at a reasonable price to overcome the competition in the market.

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