The Seventh 'P' in Marketing Mix-The Process: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

The revolution of Indian industry during the last decade has witnessed an accelerating and significant rise in the retail sector. With various prominent modern retail formats that have paved avenue to the large global players to explore large market potential in the Indian economy have in fact given a rich shopping experience to the retail consumers. Indian retail drastically changed its move from traditional market commonly known as an unorganised retail market to modernization of organised retail sector by evolving new ways of retailing. But the scenario of a restless queue of consumers waiting for billing their select items in the organized retail outlets is not uncommon. Hence, the present study exposes the factors determining their opinion on billing process and that of the problems faced in this regard.

Keywords: Billing Process, Organised Retail Sector, Retail Outlets

1. Introduction

In urban India, families are nuclear rather than joint. Women work force's contribution of income to the family leads them to demand better quality of branded products, expectation of quality services and uniqueness in shopping. Lack of time to the modern generation hinders them to visit shop to shop for purchase. Preference of people to shop in department stores, supermarket and corporate store is increasing as they perceive to purchase their needs under one roof. The emergence of newer, specialized and giant growth of retail formats in semi urban and rural area focuses on experiential aspects of shopping. In organized store, the retailer has to direct the sales personnel to assist the consumer right from the process of selecting the product till the final purchase. The process link must not break in between the purchase and the delivery of products. In traditional retailing the basic aim of the retailer is to sell the goods, there by earn profit but, modern retailing gives attention to deliver the products with good after-sales services. Besides, the process is well designed in blueprint, setting for a sequence of standard actions in the order of service to be implemented.

2. Review of Literature

Girish Nair and Harish Nair[1] exposed the retail service quality determining the customers' overall impression and satisfaction derived from the retail outlet. Rigopoulou et . al[2] brought to the fore the factors creating negative perception and decreased customer dissatisfaction towards super markets. Ciavolino and Dahlgaard[3] measured the quality of service based on both the attributes of the core product and other general attributes that exist in super market.

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3. Objectives

- To bring out the demographic profile of the select respondents

- To study the factors influencing the consumer opinion on Billing Process

- To analyse the problems faced by the consumers during the billing process in the organized retail stores.

4. Area of the Study

The study is undertaken in Erode district by administering the questionnaire among the consumers of the organised retail outlets viz., department stores, super markets and corporate stores.

5. Sampling Design

Convenience sampling method was adopted in the selection of the respondents totaling 1067 from Anthiyur, Bhavani, Erode, Perundurai, Gobichettipalayam and Sathyamangalam of Erode district, all being consumers making their purchases in the organized retail stores.

6. Data Collection

Primary data was obtained from the sample respondents through a well framed questionnaire.

Necessary secondary data were gathered from journals and websites pertaining to retail sector to supplement the primary data.

7. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 reveals the frequency distribution of the sample respondents in respect of the nine demographic factors.

It can be noted from Table 1 that out of a total sample of 1067 respondents hailing from six taluks, a maximum of 32.99% of them belong to Erode, a majority of 50.23% were male; a majority of 70.85% were married; a maximum of 40.39% were of the age group of 25-40 years; a majority

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents- percentage analysis

Demographic Profile		Frequency	Percentage
Taluk	Anthiyur	97	9.09
	Bhavani	198	18.56
	Erode	352	32.99
	Gobichettipalayam	161	15.09
	Perundurai	116	10.87
	Sathymanglam	143	13.40
	Total	**1067**	**100.00**
Gender	Male	536	50.23
	Female	531	49.77
	Total	**1067**	**100.00**

Table 1 Continued

Marital status	Married	756	70.85
	Unmarried	311	29.15
	Total	**1067**	**100.00**
Age	Less than 25	222	20.81
	25-40	431	40.39
	41-60	338	31.68
	Above 60	76	7.12
	Total	**1067**	**100.00**
Educational qualification	School	163	15.28
	Collegiate	556	52.11
	Profession	264	24.74
	Illiterate	84	7.87
	Total	**1067**	**100.00**
Status in the society	Agriculturist	88	8.25
	Business/Profession	182	17.06
	Private Employee	170	15.93
	Govt. Employee	365	34.21
	Housewife	105	9.84
	Retired	68	6.37
	Student	89	8.34
	Total	**1067**	**100.00**

Table 1 Continued

Monthly income	Rs.5,000-Rs.10,000	245	22.96
	Rs.10,001-Rs.20,000	387	36.27
	Rs.20,001-Rs.30,000	294	27.55
	Above Rs.30,000	141	13.21
	Total	**1067**	**100.00**
Type of family	Nuclear	719	67.39
	Joint	348	32.61
	Total	**1067**	**100.00**
Family size	Three Members	49	4.59
	Four Members	218	20.43
	Five Members	504	47.24
	Above 5 Members	296	27.74
	Total	**1067**	**100.00**

Sources: Primary Data

of 52.11% were college educated; a maximum of 34.21% were government employees; a maximum of 36.27% were earning a monthly income ranging from Rs.10,001/- to 20,000/-; a majority of 67.39% belonged to nuclear family; and a maximum of 47.24% have a family size comprising five members.

8. Consumer Opinion on Billing Process

The opinion of the consumers on the billing process is analysed by applying the chi-square test and the result is given in Table 2.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between demographic profile of the respondents and their opinion on the billing process as consumers.

It is noted from Table 2 that the p value is less than 0.05 in case of 'status in the society' (0.003) and 'type of family' (0.003), which stand significant at 1% level. Hence, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between the demographic factors- 'status in the society' and 'type of family' and that of the opinion of the consumers on billing process.

Whereas, there is no significant relationship between the other demographic factors, namely taluk, gender, marital status, age, educational qualification, monthly income

Table 2. Demographic profile and consumer opinion on billing process - Chi-Square Test

Demographic Profile of the respondents	Chi-square	DF	'p' value	Sig.
Taluk	12.21	10	0.271	Not Significant
Gender	4.42	2	0.110	Not Significant
Marital status	2.40	2	0.301	Not Significant
Age	5.89	6	0.435	Not Significant
Educational qualification	2.38	6	0.882	Not Significant
Status inthe society	29.90	12	0.003**	Highly Significant
Monthly income	2.19	6	0.901	Not Significant
Type of family	11.57	2	0.003**	Highly Significant
Family size	10.60	6	0.102	Not Significant

** Significant at 1 %

and family size with that of the opinion of the consumers on the billing process.

9. Problems Faced in the Billing Process

The time lag between selection and billing process creates a chaos among the consumers when the queue is large. Their increasing waiting time leads to discomfort and this may give the chance for cancelling the purchase. Hence, the problems faced by the sample respondents during their purchases in the organised retail outlets are presented in Table 3.

The results of Garrett Ranking analysis as shown in Table 3 depicts that among the four problems, the problem of 'untrained computer operators' has ranked first with a

Table 3. Problems faced in the billing process - Garrett ranking

Problems	Total score	Garrett score	Garrett Rank
Favoritism is followed	53986	50.59	III
Untrained computer operators	56642	53.08	I
Number of counters are less	55483	51.99	II
Improper swiping of plastic cards	49423	46.31	IV

Garrett score of 53.08 points, 'number of counters are less' has ranked second with a Garrett score of 51.99 points, 'favoritism is followed' has ranked third with a Garrett score of 50.59 points, 'improper swiping of plastic cards' has ranked fourth with a Garrett score of 46.31 points. Thus, it can be inferred that the problem of 'untrained computer operators' is the top most problem faced by the consumers when shopping in the organized retail stores.

10. Key Findings

The Chi-square analysis has revealed that the 'status in the society' and the 'type of family' are the two demographic factors which influence the consumer opinion on the billing process.

The top most problem faced by the respondents in the organised retail stores during the process of purchase as revealed by Garrett ranking analysis is 'Untrained computer operators'.

11. Suggestion

It is suggested that more number of trained computer operators must be employed for billing, so that the consumers save the time in billing and the waiting time in queue, which promotes to visit the stores again and again for further purchases.

12. Conclusion

The retailer should facilitate more number of billing counters with well experienced computer operators who can do their job expeditiously. Although the consumer enjoys the shopping, the frustration emerges when there is a delay in the process of completion. Adequate steps have to be taken by the retailers to ensure that the consumers go happily when they move out of the shop so as to make them visit again and again.

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