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A Study of Factors Influencing Shopping Destination Choice for the Urban Apparel and Grocery Shopping Trips

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ABSTRACT

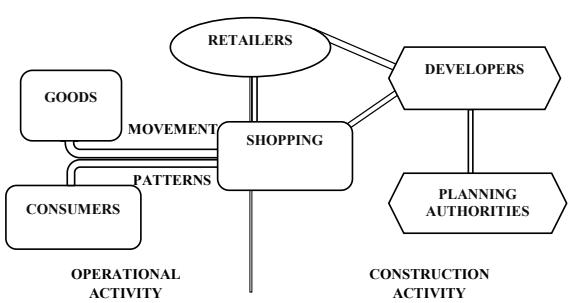
The purpose of the study is to evaluate various factors that determine the shopping destination choice of consumers. In today's competitive retail environment "Where people shop" has become an important question for retailers, developers and planning authorities. The empirical research, which was conducted amongst Apparel and Grocery shoppers, identifies factors that influence shopping destination choice. A revealed choice approach was used which is based on data on observed consumer choice behavior in real world settings. The study reveals that factors like accessibility, parking facility and agglomeration of similar type of shops significantly affect the choice of shopping destination, especially in case of Apparel shopping.

KEYWORDS : Retailing, Shopping destination, Apparel & Grocery

Introduction: Consumer behavior has an important locational component. Because of the inherent locational nature of consumer shopping activity, where the consumer is to shop directly affects the location and organization of retail market system and vice-versa. What are the factors that determine "where people shop" is an important question for retailers, developers and planning authorities. Figure: 1 depicts a simplified retail shopping system (adopted from N. E. D. O. Model, 1970 - N. N. Patricios). In this model, developers, planners, retailers and consumers are shown as the main decision makers in the shopping process.

Consumer mobility has greatly increased in the past few years and has become very complex. To design any location based strategy, it is very important to follow the movement of consumers moving in the retail environment. The present study is an attempt to evaluate various factors that determine the shopping destination choice of consumers. A revealed choice approach has been used. This approach derives its parameters from data on observed consumer choice behavior in real world settings.

Figure:1 Simplified Retail Shopping System.



Literature review: According to **Rosa Colome (1998),** consumer choice behavior literature studies the key variables that a consumer takes into account to patronize one or other facility. The literature usually assumes that the customer not only cares about patronizing the closest facility but also considers other variables to make the decision. The development of this new branch of this theory has been very extensive. **N. N. Patricios** has pointed out that while understanding relationships between consumer and retail environments the specific interest is the movement patterns of people in the physical environment of cities as an outcome of a decision-making process i.e. a consumer's selection of a preferred destination from among a number of alternatives. Consumers have a series of destination choices for different products. They compare and evaluate alternate shopping destinations against some personal preference. There has been a growing effort to analyze behavior in retail environment through the identification of major determinants of individual shopping destination choice decision making. Consumer's image of a shopping destination is a controlling factor in choice behavior. The image depends on the Consumer's perception of various attributes of the shopping destination. **Harry Timmermans (1983)** has identified a selected set of shopping destination attributes e.g. parking facilities, hindrance of traffic, availability of specialty shops, prices of the goods, quality of the goods, number of shops etc. Some attributes recognized by **Charles Dennis (2005)** are access by public transport, travel distance, quality of the stores, cleanliness etc. **Vaughan Reimers (2009)** has identified parking availability, proximity to home /work, store compatibility, access lanes, retail concentration etc. as the attributes of retail destination. **Patricios** has classified these attributes in three cognitive domains, (a) Movement variables (e.g. accessibility, distance, parking facility etc.) (b) Characteristics of the shopping centre / market area (quality of stores, general price level in the centre etc.) (c) Characteristics of the shop (price, range of assortments, quality, helpfulness of the staff etc.)

Research Methodology: A Total of 12 shopping destination factors were extracted from various literatures. These 12 factors were then categorized according to the classification made by Patricios. A revealed choice approach was used where parameters from data are derived on the basis of observed consumer choice behavior in real world settings.

Objective of the study: The primary purpose of the study is to evaluate various factors that determine the shopping destination choice of a consumer while shopping for Apparel and Grocery items.

Sampling & Questionnaire design: The study was carried out in Varanasi city (Uttar Pradesh). A non-probability convenience sampling method was used to select shoppers. A total of 120 shoppers were approached (60-Apparel & 60-Grocery, Independent samples). For the final study, a structured questionnaire consisting of different sections was compiled in accordance with the conceptual framework and study objective. The various sections dealt with shopping destination attributes and demographic information. A Likert-type scale varying from 1 to 5 was used to measure the degree to which the variables under study vary with 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

The data obtained was statistically analyzed using various statistical tools such as mean, One–sample T test etc. using SPSS package.

Results and Discussion: The results obtained from the study are

presented here. The sample (n=120, 60-Apparel & 60-Grocery) consists of slightly higher share of men (88.9% in case of Apparel & 92.3% in case of Grocery). The average age of respondents is low (μ=27.5 yrs. and μ=35.5 yrs. for Apparel & Grocery respectively). The average annual income is μ=2.3 lakhs and μ=2.5 lakhs in case of Apparel and Grocery respectively.

The movement variables are understood as a measure of perceived distance and convenience to overcome the distance. The analysis of data shows that the average distance a consumer travels to buy apparel items is 5.323 Km. whereas for grocery items it is 2.107 Km. The study of these variables become more important for Apparel items as consumers travel longer distances to buy apparel. Table: 1 show that in case of apparel items all the components of movement variables have a mean score greater than 3. The consumers choose shopping destinations that are having ample parking facilities (4.11) and are easily accessible by public transport (4.0). These two components score low in case of grocery items. Grocery shopping is guided by the need to replenish goods or items that

are used up. Consumers usually don't travel longer distances to avail grocery items and thus face little hindrance of traffic (μ=4.16) while moving to the shopping destination. After appli-

Table: 1 Attribute Variables Of Shopping Destination

Components	μ (A)	Sig.* Value		μ (G)	Sig. Value	
Movement Variables						
Accessibility by public transport	4.00	.000	Sig.	3.46	.165	Not-sig.
Nearest market from origin	3.44	.072	Not-sig.	3.92	.011	Sig.
Absence of hindrance of traffic	3.61	.030	Sig.	4.16	.001	Sig.
Ample parking facility	4.11	.000	Sig.	3.76	.044	Sig.
Shopping Centre / Market Area Characteristics						
Reasonable price	4.16	.000	Sig.	4.61	.000	Sig.
Good repo for Grocery/Apparel	4.27	.000	Sig.	4.15	.002	Sig.
Good quality stores	4.55	.000	Sig.	4.38	.000	Sig.
Stores of similar type	4.50	.000	Sig.	3.92	.021	Sig.
Shop Characteristics						
Choice range of goods	4.11	.000	Sig.	3.92	.004	Sig.
Reasonable price	4.33	.000	Sig.	4.53	.000	Sig.
Good quality of items	4.50	.000	Sig.	4.69	.000	Sig.
Knowledgeable & trained staff	4.11	.000	Sig.	4.23	.000	Sig.

Note: *Statistically significant at $p<0.05$, mean value compared with the midpoint of the scale, i.e., 3, μ(A) Mean score for Apparel, μ(G) Mean score for Grocery

cation of One-sample t-test all the results for movement variable components were found to be significant ($p<.05$) except for two components (for Grocery, accessibility by public transport, $p=.165>.05$ & for Apparel, nearest market from place of origin, $p=.072>.05$). Shopping centre characteristics refers to the characteristics of the agglomeration where shops are clustered together. For apparel items the two components that are the most influencing in the choice of shopping destination are quality of stores (4.55) and clustering of similar type of outlets (4.50). The clustering of homogeneous shops allow for comparison shopping. In case of apparel items this component is more prominent because apparel purchase is made on the basis of evaluation of benefits offered by different brands. For grocery items the general price level at a particular shopping center is the most influencing component with a mean score of 4.61. All the results were found to be statistically significant. At the shop level all the components were equally influential both in the case of Apparel and Grocery.

Conclusion:

The critical question "Where people shop" that is addressed is answered with the help of this empirical study. The factors that are influential in shopping destination choice for Apparel are accessibility, parking facility, agglomeration of similar type of shops etc. In case of Grocery shopping the movement variables and factors like, agglomeration of similar type of shops are not as influential as in the case of Apparel shopping. Other factors were equally influential for both Apparel and Grocery shopping destination choice.

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