



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Marketing

A STUDY ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS DEPARTMENTAL STORES (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IMPHAL CITY)

KEY WORDS: Consumer Behaviour, Departmental Stores, Quality-Maintained, Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

This study explores consumer buying behavior towards departmental stores in Imphal city, aiming to help retailers better understand and capture their target consumers. The research type is qualitative in nature, as the aim was to uncover underlying consumer motivations regarding departmental stores in the Imphal area of Manipur. A sample of 105 respondents was analyzed using statistical tools including percentage analysis, rank analysis, and Likert scale. The results indicate that consumers prefer stores offering a variety of quality-maintained products, with discounts and special offers also playing a significant role in attracting customers. This study underscores the importance of continued analysis and assessment of consumer behavior and satisfaction in ensuring the long-term success of businesses.

1. INTRODUCTION

The customer is considered to be the king in business, and in order to ensure smooth operations, it is essential to understand their buying behavior. Various departmental stores are emerging in Imphal, the capital city of Manipur, India, but some have failed to succeed due to a lack of understanding of consumer buying behavior. Consumer behavior involves the selection, purchase and consumption of goods and services to fulfill their needs. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze consumer behavior before and after starting a business. The behavior of consumers is influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. The focus of this research is to identify the buying behavior of consumers residing in Imphal city.

2. Literature Review:

Suranjit *et al.*, (2012) examine the relationship between retailers and customers, identifying the benefits of retailers being able to meet the needs and preferences of customers. While a majority of retail stores in India are unorganized, the authors note the advent of organized stores, which are increasingly gaining favor among consumers through the introduction of innovative formats and creative product offerings. Priya, (2020) conducted a study on consumer behavior and satisfaction towards retail department stores in Coimbatore city. The study revealed that while consumers are satisfied with the service provided by stores, further development is needed to improve the variety of products offered to lead to a more positive buying behavior.

Ramya *et al.*, (2017) also focused on consumer buying behavior in departmental stores in Coimbatore city, noting that the growth of organized retail in the Indian market is a result of changing consumer behavior. Consumers prioritize the benefits of shopping in an organized retail store in terms of self-selection and product variety. Understanding consumer behavior is crucial for retailers to better tap into their market.

Finally, Ramya and Mohamed, (2018) studied consumer buying behavior towards Amul products in Coimbatore city. The study found that Amul has higher consumption rates compared to other products and that the buying behavior of consumers is positive, reflecting a good reach of the product in the market.

3. OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this study are:

1. To determine the level of consumer awareness about departmental stores.
2. To analyze the factors that influence respondents' decision to visit departmental stores.
3. To identify consumer problems encountered during shopping at departmental stores.
4. To evaluate the level of customer satisfaction in selected departmental stores.
5. To provide suggestions for improving the quality of departmental stores.

4. Limitation:

Limitations of the study include conducting the research solely within Imphal City, which may limit generalization of findings. There is also the possibility of biased or subjective responses due to the nature of the study. The sample size was restricted to a manageable size given time constraints and other limitations.

5. METHODOLOGY:

Regarding methodology, the research type is qualitative in nature, as the aim was to uncover underlying consumer motivations regarding departmental stores in the Imphal area of Manipur. The survey was conducted among select departmental stores in Imphal City and the sample size comprised 105 responses from seven distinct stores. Respondents were selected using a convenience sampling technique, while the study relied on both primary data collected through questionnaire surveys, as well as secondary data collected from journals, websites, and articles. The period of the study was from October 2022 to February 2023. The analysis tools consisted of percentage, rank, and Likert scale analyses.

6. Data Analysis & Interpretation:

6.1 Demographic, Occupational & Income profile of the respondents

Table-1 showing respondents' demographic, occupational & income profiles

PARAMETERS		Frequency	Percentage(%)
Gender	Male	62	59.05
	Female	42	40.00
	Prefer not to say	1	0.95
	Total	105	100.00

Age	Below 18yrs	4	03.81
	18yrs-25yrs	73	69.52
	25yrs-45yrs	19	18.10
	45yrs & above	9	08.57
	Total	105	100.00
Occupation	Student	64	60.96
	Government Employee	5	04.76
	Self Employed	13	12.38
	Businessman	5	04.76
	Other	18	17.14
Total	105	100.00	
Monthly Income (in Rs)	Below 10000	68	64.76
	10000 - 15000	16	15.24
	15000 - 25000	8	07.62
	25000 & above	13	12.38
	Total	105	100.00

The table above presents a breakdown of the respondents' demographic, occupational, and income profiles.

In terms of gender, 59.05% of the respondents are male, 40% are female, and 0.5% prefer not to say. This suggests that males tend to visit departmental stores more frequently.

Regarding age, 69.52% of the respondents are aged 18-25, 18.10% are aged 25-45, 8.57% are aged 45 & above and 3.81% are below 18. Respondents aged 18-25 visit departmental stores the most.

The occupation table shows that 60.96% of the respondents are students, 17.14% have other occupations, 12.38% are self-employed, and 4.76% are government employees or businessmen. Among these, students tend to visit departmental stores the most.

Lastly, in terms of monthly income, 64.76% of respondents earn below 10000, 15.24% earn between 10000-15000, 12.38% earn above 25000, and 7.62% earn between 15000-25000. Respondents with a monthly income below 10000 tend to visit departmental stores the most.

6.2 Sources of information about departmental stores

Table-2 showing sources of information about departmental stores

Factors	No. Of Respondents	Percentage (%)
TV ads	4	03.81
Social media	36	34.29
Personal contact	26	24.76
Friends & relatives	33	31.43
Newspaper	2	01.90
Other	4	03.81
Total	105	100.00

Table 2 displays the sources of information about departmental stores. Out of 105 respondents, 34.29% obtain their information through social media, 31.43% from friends and relatives, 24.76% through personal contact, 3.81% through TV ads, 3.81% from other sources, and 1.90% from newspapers. Such results reveal that social media is the most-used source of information for the respondents.

6.3 Frequency of visiting the store by the respondents

Table-3 showing the frequency of visiting the store by the respondents

Factors	No. of respondents	PERCENTAGE (%)
Daily	5	04.76
Weekly	38	36.19
Monthly	27	25.71
Occasionally	35	33.34
Total	105	100.00

Table 3 shows the frequency of visiting the store by the respondents. Out of 105 respondents, 36.19% of them visit the store weekly, 33.34% visit occasionally, 25.71% visit monthly, and only 4.76% visit daily. These findings indicate that the majority of the respondents visit the store weekly.

6.4 Average amount spent for purchasing per month in the store

Table-4 showing average amount spent for purchasing per month in the store (in Rs)

Factors	No. of the respondents	PERCENTAGE (%)
Below 5000	72	68.57
5000-10000	24	22.86
10000-15000	9	08.57
15000 & above	0	0.00
Total	105	100.00

Table 4 illustrates the average amount spent on purchasing per month in the store. Out of 105 respondents, 68.57% of them spend below Rs.5000 per month, 22.86% are spending from Rs.5000-Rs.10000, 8.57% are spending from Rs.10000-Rs.15000, and no respondents spend Rs.15000 & above per month. These findings demonstrate that most of the respondents are spending below Rs.5000 in departmental stores.

6.5 Factors influencing respondents to visit the departmental stores

Table-5 showing the rank of the factors influencing respondents to visit the departmental stores

FACTORS	FREQUENCY (Out of 105)	RANK
Variety of products	66	1st
Quality of products	49	2nd
Reasonable price	38	4th
Discounts & offers	33	5th
Saving time & efforts	40	3rd
Store attractiveness	16	8th
Proximity to home	22	7th
Comfortableness	32	6th
Store reputation	11	9th

Table 5 displays the rank order of factors that influence respondents to visit department stores. The top-ranked factor is the variety of products, followed by the quality of products, saving time and efforts, reasonable prices, discounts and offers, comfort, proximity to home, store attractiveness, and store reputation. The survey results indicate that the majority of the respondents are influenced by the variety of products.

6.6 Satisfaction of the respondents towards the services and facilities offered in the store

Table-6 showing the level of Satisfaction of the respondents towards the services and facilities offered in the store

	Computerized counter	Air Conditioning	Replacement of goods	Special offers	Interior design	Room fragrance	Likert Scale
Highly Satisfied	26	21	12	15	13	13	5
Satisfied	33	31	34	27	38	31	4
Neutral	37	36	37	35	39	43	3
Dissatisfied	2	2	14	16	8	9	2
Highly Dissatisfied	7	9	8	12	7	9	1
Total respondents	105	105	105	105	105	105	
Likert Scale Value	384/105 = 3.66	350/105 = 3.34	316/105 = 3.01	332/105 = 3.16	357/105 = 3.4	345/105 = 3.29	

Table 6 presents the level of satisfaction among respondents regarding the services and facilities offered at the store. The Likert Scale Value is calculated by dividing the sum of total scores by the total number of respondents. All Likert scale values reported in the table exceed the middle value of three, indicating that respondents are satisfied with the store's services and facilities. Notably, the computerized counter system received the highest satisfaction score at 3.66 on the Likert Scale.

6.7 Satisfaction towards customer services provided by the store

Table-7 showing the level of satisfaction towards customer services provided by the store

	Clear & Attractive	Attention given to the customers	Handling customers' complaints	Acceptances of card/online payment	Considering suggestions of the customers	Likert Scale
Highly Satisfied	15	15	12	46	21	5
Satisfied	40	29	39	28	35	4
Neutral	31	45	42	23	36	3
Dissatisfied	10	10	5	2	6	2
Highly Dissatisfied	9	6	7	6	7	1
Total respondents	105	105	105	105	105	
Likert Scale Value	357/105 = 3.4	343/105 = 3.27	359/105 = 3.42	421/105 = 4.01	372/105 = 3.54	

The table (Table-7) displays the satisfaction level of respondents towards the customer services provided by the store using the Likert scale value. The results indicate that all Likert scale values for customer services are above average (3). Moreover, the respondents expressed high satisfaction for the acceptance of card/online payments with a Likert scale value of 4.01.

6.8 Problems faced by the respondents while shopping in the store

Table-8 showing the problems faced by the respondents while shopping in the store

Factors	(Out of 105)	Rank
Long wait at the counter	54	1st
Poor products layout	19	3rd
Untrained staffs	21	2nd
Lack of air conditioner	16	5th
Others	16	4th

Similarly, Table-8 shows the problems faced by respondents while shopping in the store. The primary issue identified by the respondents is long wait time at the counter.

7. Findings:

Further analysis indicates that most of the respondents are male, aged between 18-25 years, students, and earn below Rs.10000 per month. Additionally, respondents typically get information about departmental stores through social media and visit the store weekly. The majority of respondents spend under Rs.5000 per month in departmental stores, and variety of products is their primary deciding factor when choosing a store.

8. CONCLUSION:

Finally, the study suggests that store managers should increase the number of counters, improve the billing system, and increase the variety of products to enhance customers' shopping experience. Staff members should receive proper training, adequate air conditioning should be available, and

discounts and offers can attract more customers to the store. Overall, the study recommends that retailers regularly study consumers' buying behavior to maintain the stores' long-term success.

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