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Impact of individual factors on shoppers' behaviour in modern retail format in Delhi

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Abstract

The retail landscape in India, particularly in metropolitan cities like Delhi, has undergone a significant transformation with the rise of modern retail formats such as supermarkets, hypermarkets, departmental stores, and shopping malls. This shift has brought about notable changes in consumer behaviour, influenced by a range of individual demographic and psychographic factors. This study examines the impact of individual factors, such as age, gender, income, education, occupation, and lifestyle, on shopper behaviour in modern retail settings in Delhi. Using a structured questionnaire, primary data were collected from 400 respondents across different regions of Delhi through stratified random sampling. Various statistical tools, including regression analysis, correlation, and ANOVA, were employed to analyse the relationship between individual characteristics and key behavioural aspects such as store format preference, shopping frequency, product choice, brand loyalty, and impulse buying tendencies. The findings reveal that income and lifestyle are the most influential factors affecting shopper behaviour, especially in terms of purchase volume and brand preferences. Education and age also play significant roles, particularly in influencing purchase planning and awareness of product attributes. Gender, while traditionally considered a differentiator, was found to have a relatively limited impact in this study. By understanding the diverse behavioural patterns of shoppers, retailers can better align their offerings, promotional efforts, and store experiences to meet the expectations of their target segments. This study also contributes to the broader literature on consumer behaviour in emerging urban markets.

Keywords: Shopper behaviour, individual factors, modern retail format, consumer behaviour, retail marketing

Introduction

The retail industry in India has experienced a remarkable transformation over the past two decades, particularly in metropolitan regions like Delhi. With the liberalisation of the economy and increased foreign direct investment, the traditional retail sector has gradually given way to organised, modern retail formats such as supermarkets, hypermarkets, shopping malls, and departmental stores. According to Sinha and Prasad (2005), "modern retailing in India is growing at a rapid pace, driven by structural and demographic changes in urban areas." These modern retail formats offer consumers greater convenience, wider product variety, enhanced shopping environments, and better pricing strategies, which have significantly altered shopping patterns and preferences.

In urban settings, consumer behaviour is becoming increasingly complex due to diverse socio-economic backgrounds, rising income levels, changing lifestyles, and higher exposure to global consumption trends. As Kotler and Keller (2015) ^[8] observed, "consumer behaviour is influenced by a wide range of factors, including cultural, social, personal, and psychological characteristics," all of which shape buying decisions and retail interactions. As a result, understanding the influence of individual factors, such as age, gender, income, education, occupation, and lifestyle, on consumer behaviour has become critical for retailers seeking to attract and retain customers. While several studies have explored retail trends at the macro level, fewer have examined how these individual characteristics influence specific behavioural aspects like store preference, purchase frequency, brand loyalty, and impulse buying in a localised urban context such as Delhi. This study seeks to fill that gap by analysing the impact of individual factors on shopper behaviour within modern retail formats in Delhi.

The objective is to provide insights that can help retailers better understand their customer base, develop more targeted marketing strategies, and enhance overall shopping experiences.

Literature Review

Numerous studies indicate that consumers' impressions of retail establishments contribute to business image and therefore affect consumer purchase behaviour in general retail contexts (Bearden, 1997) ^[3]. Demographic characteristics such as the buyer's age, economic conditions, occupation, lifestyle, and personality traits significantly influence purchasing behaviour (Kotler *et al.*, 2001) ^[9]. Personal variables encompass the unique characteristics of individuals that influence purchasing behaviour. The influence of education and career is also regarded as a factor in consumer buying behaviour, as educated consumers acquire more information and superior quality products (Batra *et al.*, 2008) ^[2]. Bearden (1997) ^[3] identifies seven prominent store attributes that affect consumer patronage decisions on shopping locations. The criteria include price, merchandise quality, selection, environment, location, parking, and sales personnel. Bearden also asserted that store ambience, location, parking amenities, and the cordiality of staff are the principal elements that affect consumer patronage. Consequently, retail features like service offerings, activities, facilities, and convenience significantly impact customer happiness and loyalty (Chang and Tu, 2005) ^[5]. Indian customers show sensitivity to pricing and a consciousness of quality (Tuli & Mookerjee, 2004) ^[17]. Narayana *et al.* (2013) ^[13] indicate that consumers favour organised retail stores due to a broader selection of products, an enjoyable shopping environment, and competitive pricing. Additionally, shopping habits and modern retail outlets (Siringoringo & Fujino, 2008) ^[16] and store convenience (Sinha & Banerjee, 2004) contribute to this preference. Kearney (2006) ^[6] discusses the transformation of traditional markets into new formats such as hypermarkets, department stores, supermarkets, and speciality stores. Bishnoi *et al.* (2012) ^[4] presented a paper to examine the dimensions of consumer shopping behaviour. It comprehends and analyses customer purchasing activity regarding organised food and grocery stores to have a deeper understanding of consumer buying patterns. They proposed that marketers must comprehend the characteristics of consumer shopping behaviour to engage with consumers more effectively. Kumar (2012) ^[10] discerned the evolving purchasing behaviour of consumers in the organised retail sector. Furthermore, it evaluates the impact of cultural, social, and personal aspects on consumer purchasing behaviour.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research design to investigate the impact of individual factors on shopper behaviour in modern retail formats in Delhi. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 400 respondents across various demographic segments in the city. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across age groups, gender, income levels, and educational backgrounds. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions focused on shopping preferences, purchase behaviour, and demographic

characteristics. Data were analysed using statistical tools such as regression analysis, correlation, and ANOVA to identify relationships between individual factors and key behavioural dimensions like store preference, brand loyalty, and impulse buying. SPSS software was used for data analysis to ensure accuracy and reliability. This methodology enables a comprehensive understanding of how personal attributes influence consumer behaviour in the context of modern retail, providing valuable insights for marketers and retailers operating in urban India.

Indian Retail Sector and Changing Shoppers' Behaviour

The Indian retail sector remains predominantly unstructured. A significant expansion of organised retail outlets is underway, and it has emerged as the preferred option for consumers, especially in urban areas. This emergence is attributable to multiple factors. Economic liberalisation has mostly facilitated the entry of multinational corporations into single-brand retailing and cash-and-carry operations. The availability of inexpensive labour and raw materials in India attracts multinationals to regard the country as a sourcing hub and a marketplace for their products. The increased knowledge of branding and rising income levels among the upper and middle-income classes in India have contributed to the appeal of organised retail establishments. Organised retailing is continually adapted to evolving consumer behaviour, resulting in new opportunities and alternatives. The socio-cultural dimension reveals that the rise of nuclear families, improvements in educational attainment, and the significant increase in women's economic independence through entrepreneurship or employment have rendered women's role in family shopping more pragmatic and feasible. This has ultimately resulted in the increased preference for convenience options, namely supermarkets, where all daily necessities can be obtained under one roof (Kele *et al.*, 2014) ^[7].

Currently, the Indian consumer has evolved into a lavish spender, equipped with credit cards, elevated income levels, and influenced by Western purchasing trends, which have ignited a desire for an improved standard of living. The proliferation of organised retail, characterised by a diverse array of products and a multitude of supermarkets and malls, has intensified this addiction. The evolving mindset of the Indian consumer facilitates the advancement of organised retail in India (Kumari, 2012) ^[10]. Many women in metropolitan areas seek employment that results in dual-income households, ultimately leading to increased disposable income and heightened consumerism. Moreover, in households with employed women, the demands of work and commuting significantly escalate, resulting in compromises regarding dietary choices, such as opting for convenience foods over home-cooked meals, as well as the attire worn. The objective now is comfort and ease. The composition and size of the shopping basket have been altered over time. Contemporary consumers seek shopping convenience and expect to fulfil all their wants swiftly under one roof in retail operations. Due to time constraints, most families prefer shoppertainment, which combines shopping with entertainment. The prevalence of shoppertainment significantly contributes to foot traffic in malls, including multiplexes.

Modern Retail Formats (MRFs)

The retail sector in India is undergoing a significant

transformation, with traditional markets gradually being replaced by modern retail formats such as malls, hypermarkets, supermarkets, speciality stores, and departmental stores. These modern retail outlets provide consumers with an enhanced shopping experience characterised by better ambience, a wider variety of merchandise, and a focus on analysing consumer preferences. This rapid growth is driven by strong income growth, changing lifestyles, and favourable demographic shifts. Factors such as higher education levels, greater global exposure, increasing disposable incomes, and the widespread acceptance of credit and smart cards have contributed to altering Indian consumers' shopping habits (Baseer & Laxmi Prabha, 2007) ^[1]. Consequently, retailers must understand the motivational drivers behind customer behaviour to attract and retain shoppers effectively.

With increasing options available, consumers often face confusion during the decision-making process, leading to a decrease in brand loyalty as they switch between different brands or even alternative products. This behavioural shift is evident in various urban markets, where shoppers now navigate between traditional stores like local Kirana shops and modern retail formats such as supermarkets and hypermarkets. While the rapid growth of modern retailing has been well-documented in cities like Bangalore and other

Tier I and Tier II cities in Karnataka, similar trends are emerging in Delhi. In this metropolitan context, numerous organised retailers and chain stores are establishing their presence through supermarkets, hypermarkets, and malls. Leading retail chains such as Big Bazaar, Reliance Fresh, and Lifestyle, along with specialised outlets, have become integral to the retail landscape. These developments underscore the growing significance of understanding how individual factors impact shopper behaviour within the dynamic environment of modern retail formats in Delhi.

Data Analysis and Results

This study collected data from 400 respondents across Delhi, representing various demographic categories such as age, gender, income, education, and occupation. The data were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to explore how these individual factors influence shoppers' behaviour in modern retail formats. The behavioural variables examined include store preference, purchase frequency, brand loyalty, and impulse buying tendencies. Descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and ANOVA tests were conducted to identify significant relationships.

Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=400)

Table 1: Summarises the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Demographic Variable	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18–25	110	27.5
	26–35	130	32.5
	36–45	90	22.5
	46 and above	70	17.5
Gender	Male	210	52.5
	Female	190	47.5
Income (monthly)	< ₹20,000	80	20
	₹20,000–₹50,000	160	40
	> ₹50,000	160	40
Education	High school or less	60	15
	Graduate	210	52.5
	Postgraduate and above	130	32.5

Impact of Individual Factors on Store Preference: A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the influence of individual factors on store preference. The results indicate that income ($\beta = .42$, $p < .001$) and lifestyle ($\beta = .36$, $p < .001$) significantly predict store preference among shoppers, explaining 48% of the variance ($R^2 = .48$, $F(5,394) = 72.64$, $p < .001$). Age and education showed moderate but significant effects ($p < .05$), whereas gender was not a significant predictor.

Purchase Frequency and Individual Factors: An ANOVA test revealed significant differences in purchase frequency across income groups ($F(2,397) = 11.27$, $p < .001$). Higher-income groups reported more frequent shopping trips to modern retail formats compared to lower-income groups. Lifestyle was also positively correlated ($r = .43$, $p < .001$) with purchase frequency, indicating that more modern or urban lifestyles tend to shop more frequently.

Brand Loyalty and Switching Behaviour: Brand loyalty was measured using a Likert scale assessing commitment to preferred brands within modern retail stores. Analysis showed a declining trend in brand loyalty among younger

shoppers (18–25 years) compared to older groups ($F(3,396) = 6.15$, $p < .01$), suggesting that younger consumers are more likely to switch brands or try alternatives. Income and education had a positive association with brand loyalty ($r = .29$, $p < .01$ and $r = .23$, $p < .05$, respectively).

Impulse Buying Tendencies: Impulse buying tendencies were found to be significantly influenced by lifestyle and gender. Females scored higher on impulse buying scale ($M = 3.7$, $SD = 0.8$) than males ($M = 3.2$, $SD = 0.9$), $t(398) = 4.29$, $p < .001$. Moreover, consumers with more modern lifestyles exhibited higher impulse buying scores ($r = .41$, $p < .001$).

Discussion

The findings of this study underline the substantial role individual factors play in shaping shopper behaviour within Delhi's modern retail formats. Income and lifestyle emerge as the most influential factors, consistent with previous research (Baseer & Laxmi Prabha, 2007) ^[1]. Higher income levels enable shoppers to engage more frequently with modern retail stores and display stronger store preferences. Similarly, lifestyle, which reflects consumers' values,

habits, and social affiliations, significantly drives purchase frequency and impulse buying behaviour, highlighting the dynamic nature of urban consumers.

The relatively minor influence of gender on store preference contrasts with its significant impact on impulse buying, where females tend to exhibit higher impulsiveness. This aligns with existing literature suggesting gender differences in shopping motivations and decision-making processes (Meyers-Levy & Maheswaran, 1991) ^[12]. Interestingly, younger consumers show less brand loyalty, indicating a shift towards exploratory shopping patterns and openness to trying new products or brands. This trend may be driven by greater exposure to diverse retail formats and a desire for novelty.

Education also plays a role, particularly in enhancing brand loyalty and informed purchase decisions, possibly due to higher product awareness and critical evaluation skills among more educated shoppers. Age influences shopping behaviour moderately, with older consumers showing more stable brand preferences. The results of the study have practical implications for retailers aiming to tailor their marketing strategies. For instance, targeting high-income consumers with premium products and personalised services may enhance loyalty, while promotions focusing on impulse triggers could be designed to engage female shoppers. Understanding these individual differences can help retailers create differentiated experiences that appeal to Delhi's diverse consumer base.

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of individual factors such as age, gender, income, education, and lifestyle on shopper behaviour within modern retail formats in Delhi. The findings demonstrate that these factors play a significant role in shaping consumer preferences, purchase frequency, brand loyalty, and impulse buying tendencies. Income and lifestyle emerged as the most prominent determinants of shopping behaviour, reflecting the increasing purchasing power and evolving consumption patterns of urban consumers. Shoppers with higher incomes and modern lifestyles are more likely to frequent modern retail outlets, exhibit stronger store preferences, and engage in impulse purchases, emphasising the importance of socio-economic status and personal values in retail engagement. Gender differences, while minimal in influencing store choice, significantly affect impulse buying, with female consumers showing a greater propensity for spontaneous purchases. This insight provides retailers with an opportunity to design marketing strategies that cater specifically to gender-based behavioural patterns. The lower brand loyalty observed among younger consumers indicates a trend toward experimentation and flexibility in product choices, suggesting that retailers must continuously innovate and diversify their offerings to retain this demographic. Education also contributes to more informed and deliberate purchase decisions, enhancing brand loyalty and critical evaluation of products. Age influences shopping behaviour moderately, with older consumers demonstrating more consistent brand preferences.

Overall, this research contributes to the understanding of consumer behaviour in the context of India's rapidly modernising retail sector. Retailers in Delhi can leverage these insights to develop targeted marketing campaigns, optimise product assortments, and create personalised

shopping experiences. By aligning their strategies with the distinct needs and preferences of various consumer segments, retailers can foster stronger customer relationships and improve competitive advantage in the evolving urban marketplace. Future research could explore additional psychological factors and the impact of digital retail formats to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behaviour in India.

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