Changing Consumer Behavior Paradigms : Does Gender and Marital Status Influence Grocery Shopping Behavior ? An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

The study examined the grocery shopping behavior of people living in and around Delhi, Chennai, and Bengaluru. A pre-designed questionnaire was used to collect the primary data (experiences) from 246 people residing in and around these three cities. The collected data was analyzed with the help of statistical tools such as averages, percentages, factor analysis, student's *t* - test, structural equation model, and correlation. The objectives of this study were as follows: to know the extent to which male and female respondents differed in their grocery shopping behavior ; to know the extent to which married and unmarried respondents differed in their grocery shopping behavior ; to know whether grocery shoppers were satisfied with their grocery shopping experience. The study revealed the following : A majority of the grocery shoppers did grocery shopping once a week and most of the surveyed shoppers indicated that they spent an hour grocery shopping during each visit. Although the respondents showed some differences in their grocery shopping behavior depending on their gender and marital status, there appeared to be many similarities in their grocery shopping behavior. Irrespective of their gender and marital status, grocery shoppers tended to make additional unplanned purchases after seeing products and deals at the store, liked to list specific private label/store brand items to buy, were keen to buy fresh and new stocks of items, and chose to shop at a particular grocery outlet where they got all their requirements.

Keywords : **grocery shopper, gender, marital status, price, brand, post-purchase, satisfaction**

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It is imperative for marketers to gain an in-depth understanding of how consumers think, feel, and act in buying situations in order to offer the right value to the customer. To offer the right product to the right customer, they need to adopt a holistic marketing orientation, thereby gaining a 360-degree view of not only their present daily lives, but also the changes that occur during their lifetime. One such change is the marital status of the consumer which affects his/her buying patterns.

Grocery shopping is a significant routinized behavior undertaken by consumers with a minimum of comparison and buying effort. Grocery items are bought frequently, sometimes impulsively, and sometimes on a regular basis. These are less expensive items and have low social risk, and consumers don't wish to spend much time shopping for them. Being one of the fundamental elements of consumer buying behavior, grocery buying behavior calls for increased emphasis by marketers to understand the interplay between the demographics of consumers and their buying patterns. Two demographic factors, namely gender and marital status, and their role in changing consumer buying patterns are analyzed in this paper.

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Literature Review

An insight into the literature shows that several studies have been undertaken to study the different factors affecting the shopping behavior of customers. Many studies have shown grocery shopping to be women's domain and the lady of the household was considered its main purchasing agent (Franciscy, McArthur, & Holbert, 2004 ; Helgesen & Nesset, 2010 ; Lindquist & Kaufman-Scarborough, 2004). However, due to the impact of modern social and demographic movements and the evolving consumer behavior patterns, the traditional gender roles within the household are changing (Bhatti & Srivastava, 2003 ; Richbell & Kite, 2007). Piron (2002) investigated the grocery shopping phenomenon in Singapore. He indicated that though the wives were the primary decision makers and initiators in grocery shopping, the husbands' involvement had grown to influence the decision-making process throughout. Husbands acted mostly as influencers and not much as initiators, buyers, and decision makers, and their influence was restricted to the point of purchase. Thus, in an effort toward greater involvement with general household management and sharing of duties, husbands accompanied their wives more on grocery shopping trips, thus gradually becoming more influential in the decision-making process.

Inman, Winer, and Ferraro (2009) conducted a study to explore product category and consumer characteristics that affected consumers' likelihood of making unplanned purchases. They found that category characteristics, such as purchase frequency and displays, and customer characteristics, such as household size and gender, affected the in-store decision-making. Women tended to make more unplanned purchases than men. As the household size increased, so did the likelihood of making unplanned purchases.

Mattingly and Smith (2010) suggested that there was a trend for more equal sharing of family tasks, especially when both spouses were employed. The younger men not only tended to share responsibility but also undertook the role of primary grocery shoppers and did not perceive supermarket shopping as women's work.

Mortimer (2012) sought to develop a deeper understanding of the behavior of the male grocery shopper. He proposed that men were an attractive consumer group for supermarket retailers. They were willing to undertake or share responsibility for the grocery shopping task. They were regular shoppers and appeared committed to their local supermarket. Most seldom checked prices or considered complex product evaluative criteria.

Turcinkova, Brychtova, and Urbanek (2012) found that women stocked up food items in advance as they took into consideration not only the immediate needs, but also the future needs of food when shopping. Men neither built up stocks nor shopped for food until it became a necessity. Women bought more impulsively than men. Men shopped for food less often when compared with women and wished to avoid huge purchases. They stuck to their shopping lists and searched for the particular indicated product. Replacement of their favorite products, if unavailable, was not preferred. Cost - effective offer of goods and a visible sign of discounted goods caught the attention of women. Men often required a rational reason to buy.

Jha and Singh (2013) conducted an experiment to find the interactive effect of in store music and behavior of salespeople on consumer buying behavior of male and female shoppers. Their study showed that the effect of music and behavior of salespeople on consumer perception and buying behavior remained the same for both the genders.

Prakash and Pathak (2014) conducted a study to find the important factors that affected the rural purchase behavior of FMCG products. They concluded that price, brand name, quality, availability, and packaging were the important factors influencing the rural consumers' purchase decisions.

Kirgiz (2014) conducted a study to evaluate the hedonic attitudes and behaviors of consumers in terms of demographic characteristics. He found a strong relationship between the age of consumers and their attitudes and behaviors. When making shopping decisions, female consumers looked more at discounted items when compared with men. The study found that unlike men, for women, shopping was a means of passing leisure time; they considered it a social need and felt better when they bought something for people who were special to them. Living in a place distant from a store reduced the desire to shop to a greater extent for women. They wanted more

information from the sales staff about the items they intended to buy and tended to go shopping to try new things to a greater extent than male consumers. Since women were found to be more emotional and men slightly more rational when making buying decisions, the researcher suggested that the methods used to increase the satisfaction levels of women should mainly appeal to emotions, unlike those geared toward men.

Ariyanayagam and Ragel (2014) examined the role of demographic factors with respect to leisure shopping in Sri Lanka. They found that there was no relationship between gender and customer's level of enjoyment. Thus, the level of shopping enjoyment did not vary between the two genders.

Krishnamurti and Agarwal (2015) conducted a study which examined the grocery shopping behavior of expats. Their findings revealed that irrespective of their gender and employment status, the grocery shoppers were always looking for lowest prices when they shopped ; the grocery shoppers liked to buy specific brands ; the grocery shoppers were keen to buy fresh and new stocks of items ; and accessibility of the grocery stores also influenced the grocery shoppers.

Agarwal, Faiz, Gupta (2016) conducted a study to examine the buying behavior for organic foods. The results revealed that the respondent's age, employment status, and occupation played an important role in the purchase of organic food, while demographics like income, educational qualifications, gender, and nationality did not affect purchase of organic produce.

Prasad and Sharma (2016) conducted a study to understand the buyers' characteristics that had an impact on the online channel usage for purchase of food and grocery. The objective of the study was to understand the influence of demographic and socioeconomic factors among the Indian populace on online channel usage and non-usage for purchase of food & grocery. The findings in the context of the Indian urban population revealed that demographic factors did not impact online channel usage for food and grocery purchase. Though socioeconomic factors, pertaining to the respondent buyers, did have a significant impact, those pertaining to the chief wage earner in the household did not impact the online channel usage.

Saleem, Wasaya, and Zahra (2017) conducted a study to analyze the role of family structure and consumer attitudes toward frozen food in the relationships between knowledge of frozen food products, change seeking traits, and frozen food purchase intentions. They found that knowledge about frozen foods and change seeking traits were significant factors in predicting frozen food purchase intentions directly and through mediation. Additionally, family structure was found to be a significant moderator of the hypothesized path between attitude towards frozen food and frozen food purchase intentions.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to understand and examine the grocery shopping behavior on the basis of gender and marital status of residents living in the cities of Delhi, Chennai, and Bengaluru and their post-purchase grocery shopping experience. To develop a holistic analysis of the stated research problem, the following objectives have been developed for the study :

- To know the extent to which men and women differ in their grocery shopping behavior.
- To know the extent to which married and unmarried people differ in their grocery shopping behavior.
- To know whether grocery shoppers are satisfied with their grocery shopping experience.

Research Design and Methodology

A pre - designed questionnaire on a 5 - point scale was used to collect the primary data (shopping experiences) from people living in and around Delhi, Chennai, and Bengaluru during the months of April - June 2015. The

questionnaire was framed to elicit the shopping experiences of the respondents and was chosen using convenience sampling. Out of the 300 questionnaires distributed, 246 questionnaires received back were complete in all respects and were used as a sample for this study.

↳ **Sample Profile of the Respondents :** The demographic information reported in the study indicates the following : Male respondents constituted 53% of the sample, while female respondents constituted the remaining 47%. The respondents were in the following age ranges: 71% were under 40 years of age and 29%, above 40 years. The report also indicates that 79% of the respondents were married, and the remaining 21% were single. About 10% of the respondents had studied up to the school level; 52% of the sample had a bachelor's degree, and about 38% had done their masters. The income levels of the respondents were as follows: 27% of the respondents were earning up to ₹ 25,000 per month; 35% earned between ₹ 25,001 and ₹ 50,000 ; 21% earned between ₹ 50,001 and ₹ 75,000 per month; and the remaining 17% earned above ₹ 75,000 per month.

Analysis and Results

(1) Grocery Shopping Habits of the Respondents in the Study Indicate the Following :

(i) Frequency of Shopping : Most of the surveyed respondents indicated that they did grocery shopping once a week ; about 31% of the respondents preferred to shop for groceries twice a week ; 17% informed us that they shopped once a fortnight ; and 9% disclosed that they preferred to shop for groceries daily.

(ii) Time Spent During each Grocery Shopping Visit of the Respondents was as Follows : The majority of the respondents spent an hour shopping for groceries; 30% of the respondents spent 2 hours every time they went for grocery shopping ; while about one-fifth of the surveyed respondents preferred to spend more than 2 hours when they went for grocery shopping.

(2) Results of Factor Analysis : To identify and analyze the grocery shopping behavior of the grocery shoppers, 22 variables were selected for this study at the time of initial finalization of the questionnaire. In order to extract the various parameters that indicated the grocery shopping behavior of men and women (both married and unmarried people living in and around Delhi, Chennai, and Bengaluru) and their post-purchase grocery shopping experience, a principal component analysis was applied on all the 22 statements included in the interval scale. Retaining only those factors that had Eigen values greater than 1 (as suggested by Kaiser), it could be inferred that five factors emerged totally. These five factors together explained 59.387% of the total variance.

↳ **Factor Dimensions :** Only those variables that had loadings > 0.50 were included in the process of extracting individual factors from the analytical results. The results are presented in the Table 1. Thus, variables A to D and G and H constitute Factor I. A close look at all the variables in Factor I impelled us to identify a common name. This factor was then conceptualized as Grocery Shopping Based on Price - Related Factor. Variables E and F constitute Factor II. A close look at the items in Factor II guided us to conceptualize this factor as Grocery Shopping on Impulse Purchase - Related Factor. In a similar way, variables I to K and M form Factor III. This is grouped under the heading Grocery Shopping of Listed Items - Related Factor. Factor IV is termed as Grocery Shopping of Branded Items - Related Factor and comprises of variables L, N, O, P, and R. Finally, variables U and V are grouped under the heading : Grocery Shopping at Regular Outlet - Related Factor.

The major outcomes of the factor analysis are presented as follows: Choose products because of loyalty card and discounts (Factor loading .655) ; buy more quantity of cleaning materials to reduce the number of items needed (Factor loading .648) ; seek out and buy store brands to save money (Factor loading .632) ; buy less variety to

Table 1. Identification of Factors Related to Residents of Delhi, Chennai, and Bengaluru and Their Grocery Shopping Behavior

Factor Name	Item	Variables	Factor Loadings
Factor I - Grocery Shopping Based on Prices - Related Factors	H	I choose products because of loyalty card discounts.	.655
	B	I buy more quantity of cleaning materials to reduce the number of items needed.	.648
	G	I seek out and buy store brands to save money.	.632
	C	I buy less variety to reduce the number of items needed.	.604
	D	I look at the store circular either before or at the store.	.576
	A	I shop at multiple stores to find the lowest price	.562
Factor II - Grocery Shopping on Impulse Purchase of Items -Related Factors	F	I stock up on certain items because they were on sale.	.578
	E	I make additional unplanned purchases after seeing products/deals in a store.	.503
Factor III - Grocery Shopping of Listed Items - Related Factors	I	I list categories to buy (e.g. coffee, frozen vegetables, toothpaste).	.707
	M	I list specific private label/store brand items to buy.	.647
	J	I use store circulars to make the list.	.643
	K	I make a list based on ingredients needed for recipes.	.501
Factor IV - Grocery Shopping of Branded Items - Related Factors	O	I select brands according to promotions and gift vouchers available with me.	.656
	P	My selection of brands is based on newspaper flyers received by me.	.631
	N	I choose brands based on previous usage and trust of the brands.	.629
	R	Advertisements and displays at the store help me to choose brands at the store.	.624
	L	I list specific brands to buy.	.598
Factor V - Grocery Shopping at Regular Outlets - Related Factors	U	I regularly shop at a particular grocery outlet because I get all my requirements.	.673
	V	I regularly shop at a particular grocery outlet because fresh and new stock is available there.	.628

Table 2. Results of Student's *t* - test : Gender

Item	Marital Status	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*	*P*
A	Male	131	3.67	1.255	.003
	Female	115	4.12	1.101	.003
F	Male	131	3.64	1.151	.005
	Female	115	4.05	1.099	.005
G	Male	131	3.50	1.218	.038
	Female	115	3.81	1.050	.036
J	Male	131	3.04	1.255	.029
	Female	115	3.39	1.261	.029

reduce the number of items needed (Factor loading .604) ; look at the store circular either before or at the store (Factor loading .576) ; shop at multiple stores to find the lowest price (Factor loading .562) ; stock up certain items because they were on sale (Factor loading .578) ; make additional unplanned purchases after seeing products/deals at the store (Factor loading .503) ; list categories to buy (Factor loading .707) ; list specific private label/store brand items to buy (Factor loading .647) ; use a store circular to make a list (Factor loading .643) ; make a list based on ingredients needed for recipes (Factor loading .501) ; select brands according to promotions and gift vouchers available (Factor loading .656) ; select brands based on newspaper flyers received (Factor loading .631) ; choose brands based on previous usage and trust of the brands (Factor loading .629) ; choose brands based on advertisements and displays at the store (Factor loading .624) ; list specific brands to buy (Factor loading .598) ; regularly shop at a particular grocery outlet because of the availability of all the requirements

(Factor loading .673) ; regularly shop at a particular grocery outlet because fresh and new stock is available there (Factor loading .628).

(3) Hypotheses Testing : In order to test whether the grocery shopping behavior of the sample respondents differs according to gender, an independent t - test was applied on all the 22 variables (of the interval scale). Significant differences were noticed among the male and female respondents in 4 out of the 22 variables on which the test was applied. The results where significant differences have been noticed are presented in the Table 2.

- **H01:** "I shop at multiple stores to find the lowest price" is independent of gender.
- **Ha1:** "I shop at multiple stores to find the lowest price" is not independent of gender.

The *t* - test shows a mean value of 3.67 for male and 4.12 for female respondents, respectively, which signifies that there exists a difference. Since the *p* - value 0.003 < 0.01 (at the 5% level of significance), the hypothesis H01 is rejected.

- **H02:** "I stock up on certain items because they were on sale" is independent of gender.
- **Ha2:** "I stock up on certain items because they were on sale" is not independent of gender.

The *t* - test shows a mean value 3.64 for male and 4.05 for female respondents, respectively, which signifies that there exists a difference. Since the *p* - value 0.005 < 0.01(at the 5% level of significance), the hypothesis H02 is rejected.

- **H03:** "I seek out and buy store brands to save money" is independent of gender.
- **Ha3:** "I seek out and buy store brands to save money" is not independent of gender.

The *t* - test shows a mean value 3.50 for male and 3.81 for female respondents, respectively, which signifies that there exists a difference. Since the *p* - value 0.038 < 0.01 (at the 5% level of significance), the hypothesis H03 is rejected.

- **H04:** "I use store circulars to make the list" is independent of gender.
- **Ha4:** "I use store circulars to make the list" is not independent of gender.

The *t* - test shows a mean value 3.04 for male and 3.39 for female respondents, respectively, which signifies that there exists a difference. Since the *p* - value 0.029 < 0.01(at the 5% level of significance), the hypothesis H04 is rejected.

In order to test whether the grocery shopping behavior of the sample respondents differs according to marital status, an independent *t* - test was applied on all the 22 variables (of the interval scale). Significant differences were noticed among the married and unmarried respondents in 9 out of the 22 variables on which the test was applied. The results where significant differences have been noticed are presented in the Table 3.

- **H05:** "I shop at multiple stores to find the lowest price" is independent of marital status.
- **Ha5:** "I shop at multiple stores to find the lowest price" is not independent of marital status.

The *t* - test shows a mean value of 4.01 for married and 3.39 for unmarried respondents, respectively, which signifies that there exists a difference. Since the *p* -value 0.001 < 0.01 (at the 5% level of significance), the hypothesis H05 is rejected.

Table 3. Results of Student's *t* - test : Marital Status

Item	Marital Status	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*	*P*
A	Married	194	4.01	1.185	.001
	Unmarried	52	3.39	1.168	.001
B	Married	194	3.93	1.078	.001
	Unmarried	52	3.37	1.199	.003
C	Married	194	3.82	1.120	.026
	Unmarried	52	3.43	1.100	.026
G	Married	194	3.72	1.108	.032
	Unmarried	52	3.33	1.260	.049
I	Married	194	4.06	1.049	.010
	Unmarried	52	3.61	1.266	.023
J	Married	194	3.32	1.239	.004
	Unmarried	52	2.75	1.294	.006
K	Married	194	4.10	1.090	.000
	Unmarried	52	3.45	1.205	.001
L	Married	194	4.30	.990	.004
	Unmarried	52	3.84	1.120	.009
O	Married	194	3.66	1.266	.018
	Unmarried	52	3.18	1.381	.027

↳ **H06:** "I buy more quantity of cleaning materials to reduce the number of items needed" is independent of marital status.

↳ **Ha6:** "I buy more quantity of cleaning materials to reduce the number of items needed" is not independent of marital status.

The *t* - test shows a mean value of 3.93 for married respondents and 3.37 for unmarried respondents, respectively, which signifies that there exists a difference. Since the *p* - value 0.010 < 0.01 (at the 5% level of significance), the hypothesis H06 is rejected.

↳ **H07:** "I buy less variety to reduce the number of items needed" is independent of marital status.

↳ **Ha7:** "I buy less variety to reduce the number of items needed" is not independent of marital status.

The *t* - test shows a mean value of 3.51 for married respondents and 3.91 for unmarried respondents, which signifies that there exists a difference. Since the *p* - value 0.026 < 0.01 (at the 5% level of significance), the hypothesis H07 is rejected.

↳ **H08:** "I seek out and buy store brands to save money" is independent of marital status.

↳ **Ha8:** "I seek out and buy store brands to save money" is not independent of marital status.

The *t* - test shows a mean value 3.72 for married and 3.33 for unmarried respondents, respectively, which signifies that there exists a difference. Since the *p* - value 0.005 < 0.01(at the 5% level of significance), the hypothesis H08 is rejected.

↳ **H09:** "I list categories to buy (e.g. coffee, frozen vegetables, toothpaste)" is independent of marital status.

↳ **Ha9:** "I list categories to buy (e.g. coffee, frozen vegetables, toothpaste)" is not independent of marital status.

The *t* - test shows a mean value of 4.06 for married respondents and 3.61 for the unmarried respondents, respectively, which signifies that there exists a difference. Since the *p* - value 0.010 < 0.01 (at the 5% level of significance), the hypothesis H09 is rejected.

↳ **H10 :** "I use store circulars to make the list" is independent of marital status.

↳ **Ha10 :** "I use store circulars to make the list" is not independent of marital status.

The *t* - test shows a mean value 3.32 for married and 2.75 for unmarried respondents, respectively, which signifies that there exists a difference. Since the *p* - value 0.005 < 0.01 (at the 5% level of significance), hypothesis H10 is rejected.

↳ **H11 :** "I make a list based on ingredients needed for recipes" is independent of marital status.

↳ **Ha11:** "I make a list based on ingredients needed for recipes" is not independent of marital status.

The *t* - test shows a mean value of 4.10 for married respondents and 3.75 for unmarried respondents, respectively, which signifies that there exists a difference. Since the *p* -value 0.000 < 0.01 (at the 5% level of significance), hypothesis H11 is rejected.

↳ **H12 :** "I list specific brands to buy" is independent of marital status.

↳ **Ha12 :** "I list specific brands to buy" is not independent of marital status.

The *t* - test shows a mean value of .990 for married respondents and 1.120 for unmarried respondents, respectively, which signifies that there exists a difference. Since the *p* - value 0.004 < 0.01 (at the 5% level of significance), hypothesis H12 is rejected.

↳ **H13 :** "I select brands according to promotions and gift vouchers available with me" is independent of marital status.

↳ **Ha13 :** "I select brands according to promotions and gift vouchers available with me" is not independent of marital status.

The *t* - test shows a mean value of 3.66 for married respondents and 3.19 for unmarried respondents, respectively, which signifies that there exists a difference. Since the *p* -value 0.018 < 0.01 (at the 5% level of significance), hypothesis H13 is rejected.

(4) Post - Purchase Experiences of Grocery Shoppers : In order to test the post-purchase satisfaction of the grocery shoppers, the structural equation modeling technique with the help of SAS software (Version 9.0) was applied on five hypotheses:

↳**H1:** Grocery shopping based on price,

↳**H2 :** Grocery shopping on impulse purchase,

↳**H3:** Grocery shopping of listed items,

Table 4. Results of Structural Equation Model

Hypothesis	Statement	Standard Error	Coefficient	*t* - value	Significant in Predicting the Respondents' Satisfaction Level
H1	Grocery Shopping Based on Price	0.27251	0.06332	0.2324	Not Significant
H2	Grocery Shopping on Impulse Purchase	0.11318	-0.35315	-3.1202	**Significant**
H3	Grocery Shopping of Listed Items	0.10242	0.23185	2.2637	**Significant**
H4	Grocery Shopping of Branded Items	0.22231	0.80004	3.5987	**Significant**
H5	Grocery Shopping at Regular Outlet	0.37800	1.15752	3.0622	**Significant**

- **H4:** Grocery shopping of branded items, and
- **H5 :** Grocery shopping at regular outlet.

The factors' correlation matrix was used as an input in the model. The model was estimated using the maximum likelihood method. H2 : Grocery shopping on impulse purchase with *t* - value of - 3.1202 ; H3 : Grocery shopping of listed items with *t*-value of 2.2637 ; H4: Grocery shopping of branded items with *t* - value of 3.5987 ; and H5 : Grocery shopping at regular outlet with *t* - value of 3.0622 are found to be significant (at the 5% level of significance) in predicting the post-purchase satisfaction of the grocery shoppers. The results are presented in the Table 4. The correlation between the five factors and the two variables (frequency and time spent on grocery shopping) was calculated using the Pearson's correlation method. The results show that the factor "shoppers spending more time on grocery shopping" is positively correlated with the factor "shopping based on price and branded items" at the 0.01 level (2-tailed test).

Discussion

On the basis of the different analyses carried out, the following picture emerges : A majority of the respondents did grocery shopping once a week and most of the surveyed respondents indicated that they spent an hour grocery shopping during each visit.

Factor analysis of the data clearly grouped the statements included in the interval scale into five factors. Application of the *t* - test on all the 22 variables (of the interval scale) to test whether the grocery shopping behavior of the sample respondents differed according to gender showed significant differences among the male and female respondents and the test of whether the grocery shopping behavior of the sample respondents differed according to marital status showed significant differences among the married and unmarried respondents in 3 and 9 out of the 22 variables, respectively on which the test was applied.

Structural equation modeling technique was applied on five factors to find out the post-purchase satisfaction of the grocery shoppers, and the results show the following four factors: Grocery Shopping on Impulse Purchase with *t* - value of -3.1202, Grocery Shopping of Listed Items with *t* - value of 2.2637,Grocery Shopping of Branded Items with *t* - value of 3.5987, and Grocery Shopping at Regular Outlet with *t*-value of 3.0622 are found to be significant (at the 5% level of significance) in predicting the post-purchase satisfaction of the grocery shoppers.

The correlation between the five factors and the two variables (frequency and time spent on grocery shopping) was calculated using the Pearson's Correlation method. The results show that the factor "shoppers spending more time on grocery shopping" is positively correlated with "shopping based on price and branded items" factor at the 0.01 level (2-tailed test).

Based on the findings of the various analyses carried out, it can be suggested that although the respondents showed differences in their grocery shopping behavior, depending on their gender and marital status, there appear

to be similarities in their grocery shopping behavior. By understanding these similarities, grocery outlets can design their marketing strategies.

Earlier studies on grocery shopping threw light on the following aspects : the role of women in grocery shopping, their impulsiveness, preference to buy discounted items, desire to gather more information from the sales persons, their tendency to make unplanned purchases, tendency to stock food items, take shopping more as a social and leisure activity, eagerness to try new items and interest to buy something for their loved ones. Women tend to be more emotional while making purchase decisions. Studies on husbands' role in grocery shopping show the changing role of men in grocery shopping, their role as influencer in grocery shopping, and the role of size of the household having an impact on purchase decisions.

Our study is focused on two demographic characteristics : gender and marital status of the respondents and looks at grocery shopping habits on the basis of frequency and time spent on grocery shopping along with grocery shopping behaviour under the following dimensions: Grocery shopping based on prices; Grocery shopping on impulse purchase; Grocery shopping of listed items; Grocery shopping of branded items; and Grocery shopping at regular outlets. While grocery shopping on impulse purchase and stocking items because of offers make unplanned purchase appear to be similar, the other aspects covered under our study differ from the earlier studies.

Managerial Implications

Irrespective of their gender and marital status, grocery shoppers disclosed that they looked at the store circular either before or at the store, selected brands based on newspaper flyers received by them, and also looked at the advertisements and displays in the store when they went for grocery shopping. This gives ample opportunities to the stores to come out with store circulars, which can be kept at the entrance of the store or distributed through newspapers; even door-to-door distribution of the store circulars can be done in the neighboring areas. The store can exhibit its advertisements, displays, and promotions in visible places to help the shoppers.

The surveyed shoppers disclosed that they tended to make additional unplanned purchases after seeing products and deals at the store. To meet the needs of the shoppers, stores must make sure to prominently display products, which are on promotion, to help the grocery shoppers make their purchases. The study shows that grocery shoppers like to buy specific private and store brands. The stores need to understand the preferred brands of their grocery shoppers in different categories of groceries and offer the same to them. The surveyed grocery shoppers liked to buy branded items because of previous usage and the trust that they had on these brands. This gives a chance to the grocery stores to keep a watch not only on the grocery items repeatedly purchased by the grocery shoppers, but also on the preferred brands of grocery items purchased by them and to stock up these branded items to meet the requirements of the grocery shoppers.

The study shows that grocery shoppers preferred to buy regularly from a particular grocery store because of the availability of fresh and new stock of items. Grocery stores can make sure to offer fresh and new stocks of items to its shoppers and display this information clearly in visible places at the stores. In this manner, grocery stores can attract customers and make them their regular and loyal customers over a period. The study indicates that shoppers preferred to shop regularly at a particular grocery outlet because they got all their grocery requirements there. This gives an opportunity to the grocery outlets to know the needs of their shoppers and make sure that the customers continue to get all their needs met.

Conclusion

In this competitive environment, to be successful, it is necessary for grocery stores to continuously monitor the behavior of grocery shoppers. It is but natural that grocery shoppers tend to visit only such grocery stores where they can get grocery items that they wish to buy. Hence, it is imperative that grocery stores strive to know the exact

requirements of their grocery shoppers by keeping track of their grocery shopping behavior and by offering the desired grocery, brand, quantity, and freshness.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

Coming to the limitations of the study, it should be mentioned that any survey-based method, including that adopted in this study, involves measurement errors, for example, the elicitation of a scale measurement or the respondent's ability to precisely report their level of agreement with the survey statements (Bodey & Grace, 2006). However, efforts were made to design the administered tool to be simple and easy to understand and respond. Convenient sampling was used to collect the data from 246 respondents living in and around Delhi, Chennai, and Bengaluru. Regarding future research, it is suggested that more samples from other regions and cities can be taken for the study. Further, separate studies can be undertaken on shopping behavior toward FMCGs, consumer durables, electronic goods, etc., to name a few.

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