Theory of reasoned action and retail agglomerations buying behavior for urban consumers

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Key Words
Theory of Reasoned Action, Competitive advantage, Retailing, shopping factors, retail buying behavior.

Abstract
Modern customers shift towards organized retailing has strengthened the retail stores marketing processes. This study aims at analyzing the buying behavior of consumers in organized retail super-store setup. Theory of Reasoned Action is been used in the explanation of the consumer behavior in retail sector of developing countries. The Subjective norms, attitudes, and intentions towards buying behavior were mapped during the shopping. The literature was reviewed for identification of the variables. This was deduced to the conceptual model using the retail marketing mix and explaining the shopping in retail setup.

This study will help in analyzing the under-researched retail sector and consumer behavior. Moreover, it will extend the literature of marketing according to the buying behavior and will help managers to improve/adjust their retail stores according to better customer perception.

Introduction
The human history was based upon the expansion of needs and these needs are answered with the efficient use of resources. The mass production had also given raise to efficient delivery system of products to the consumers (Dawson, 2011; Shah, Ajay, 2009). This evolution of human needs had raised the standards and size of the selling spaces making them bigger and accessible to the consumers.

The shopping experience is the regular feature of all the cultures across the world; people visit retail stores to purchase their groceries (Hassan & Rahman, 2005). Past studies had evaluated the retail space according to the socially acceptable space (Quartier, Vanrie, & Cleem, 2014). In explanation of environment, the psychology has the considerable influence in explaining the retail consumer behavior via explanation of shopping environment (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982).

The consumer perceptions are becoming more relevant in predicting the consumer behavior in retail industry, where competition is becoming intense due to globalization (Kan, Cliquet, & Gallo, 2014). Trade liberalization and technological induction over last two decades had evolved the markets. This had made retail industry expansion around the world (Hwang, 2005). This constant expansion had logically motivated retailers for more emphasis on their marketing activities, which can make them more visible in the competition. Likewise, these retailers are competing for the sale of same products (Acar & Cizmeci, 2015).

Buying behavior had been explored for the effects of human personality for social and economic environment (Prasad & Aryasri, 2011). This thinking had also been extended to the retail setup according to the competition setting (Yu & Ramanathan, 2012) and how these react to the impacts of location.

Literature Review
Shopping behavior prediction had always remained the topic of interest and attention in Marketing literature (De Nisco & Warnaby, 2014; Kim, Fiore, Niehm, & Jeong, 2010; Lin, 2007; Tripathi, 2008). The early behavioral theories were simple in terms of numbers of factors influencing the purchase situations (Bakker, van der Voordt, Vink, & de Boon, 2014; De Nisco & Warnaby, 2014). Later theories had added new dimensions of purchase (Herrmann, Zidansek, Sprott, & Spangenberg, 2013; Pookulangara, Hawley, & Xiao, 2011a). The theories between the early and later thoughts serve as a bridge in explanation of shopping behavior.
The proposed conceptual framework in this study is based upon Theory of reasoned action (TRA) pioneered by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). According to TRA (Pookulangara et al., 2011) "behavioral intention is the function of two components: an attitudinal component (Ab) and a subjective norm component (SN). These influence behavioral intention (BI), which is a precursor to behavior (B). Attitude and subjective norms are measured based on the expectancy-value model. Attitude toward the behavior is a function of beliefs and the evaluation of those beliefs. The SN is a function of an individual's beliefs that specific individuals or groups think he or she should or should not perform the behavior, i.e. normative beliefs and the individual's motivation to comply with these referents".

TRA predicts the human behaviors without complicating it with too many parameters (Pookulangara et al., 2011a). Although the theory was reinforced into Theory of Planned behavior by Azjan (1991) with inclusion of Perceived behavioral control TRA is still used in Marketing Literature to explain the human behavior (Ezilka Mohd Ghazali, 2011; Lin, 2007; Vlontzos & Duquenne, 2014). TRA gives better insights into the buying behavior at the point of sales (Wilbanks, 2005). Beatty and Kahle (1998) had extended the TRA model with the inclusion of Habit dimension of the behavior. This dimension is strongly influenced by the past situation with same settings. (Ezilka Mohd Ghazali, 2011). Although the new dimension had given the extended insight in buying behavior but the purchases of scattered products cannot be mapped beyond the previous depended variable.

The dimensions of the current studies are perception based and are describes as the customer cognitive process during and after shopping. The brand loyalty of the customers improves with the positive movements of the TRA components (Wilbanks, 2005) and movement of these components generally follow same direction.

Theory of Reasoned Action Original Model

The shopping behavior was conceptualized in the literature with the use Theory of reasoned action. This theory explains that a consumer attitude and subjective norms determines the behavior (Vlontzos & Duquenne, M. N., 2014). In retail setting the store is generating many signals to affect the attitude of the consumers and the subjective involvement can be influenced through surrounding environment (Puccinelli, Goodsteinb, Grewal, Price, & Raghubire, 2009).

Source: Researchers own processing

The above figure explains the retail shopping behavior according the customer cognitive thought process with the retail marketing mix elements (Puccinelli et al., 2009; Teller & Elms, 2010). The customer
The shopping trip is not only based upon the physical accusation of the product (Claes, Bijttebier, Mitchell, de Zwaan, & Mueller, 2011), which in case of retail is more complex (Gindi, Abdullah, Ismail, & Nawi, 2016), but also the surrounding elements influencing the choice of retail space in comparison to the other choices available to the customer (Rubio, Villaseor, & Yague, 2017).

The retail marketing mix includes the four elements of marketing mix (Azeem & Sharma, 2015) that effects the customer emotional response during a shopping trip (Shin & Parker, 2017). This mix include the internal shopping environment (De Nisco & Warnaby, 2014; Terblanche, 2017) and external environment including non-retail tenants for ease of shopping (Chang, Eckman, & Yan, 2011; Teller & Elms, 2010). This relationship can be linked in the following conceptual model explaining the elements of the thought process according to the theory of reasoned action (Pookulangara, Hawley, & Xiao, 2011b). The elements of the retail mix (Teller & Elms, 2010) along with the perceived value (Le, Nguyen, & Nguyen, 2013) influences the shopping attitude of the customers over longer period of time (Swoboda, Haelsig, Schramm Klein, & Morschett, 2009).

Discussion and Conclusion

The consumers in urban setup develop their perceptions for shopping according to their location, consistent offerings and environment of the shopping space. This is very different in the rural areas because of limited choices available to the customers. The urban customers set of retail basket also has the consistent products, which represents the habit of the customers (Ezilka Mohd Ghazali, 2011).

In comparison to the customer in the industrially developed cities, who display a consistent patronage behavior to their retail stores (Sheth, 1981; Teller, Gittenberger, & Schnedlitz, 2013), the developing countries customers display behavior of shopping from different retail stores (Kumar & Sudhir, 2015; Sternquist & Chen, 2006). This behavior is linked to the additional information they are receiving for different retail stores in their attention spans. Additionally, the retail sector is in the phase of growth which offers new experience to the shoppers.

The dimensions of attractiveness for this study are the measure of retail marketing mix which needs to be adjusted according to the changing trends, internal and external situations. The major market segment influences this mix more for strategy planning. Since most of the developing countries have a major low to medium purchasing power community. This trend compels the organized retailers to plan their marketing strategy for more income class categories.

Limitations of the study

The current study could be extended to the Theory of Planned Behavior in the retail Context. Additionally, the inter country comparison of the retail consumer is the less explored area in the field of retailing. Future studies can explore the additional variables of retail consumer behavior with the hospitality in the service sector.

References


https://doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2007.02.002


