AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON INFLUENCE OF BEHAVIOUR OF SALES STAFF IN RETAIL STORES ON SHOPPERS' PATRONAGE INTENTIONS IN THE STATE OF GUJARAT

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Abstract

The pattern of retail business has diverted its focus from selling its product to meet the needs of people at large. It indicates that product remains a major ingredient of the retail mix developed by retailer but services offered by the retail stores need improvement in a competitive market. Today's retailers achieve success not only by what is sold in the store, but by focusing more on the way retailers' sell it by serving their shoppers. Thus, it is indicative that the role of retail staff is the critical determinant in delivering value to the shoppers. The human interaction during the in-store shopping experience is important. Retailers need to acquire an understanding of shoppers' buying habits while buying from retail store considering their choice of retail store, feeling and evaluating, and forming their in-store experience as well as their post-purchase decision. Availability of information to shoppers, amount of personalization expected, immediacy, craving for information, personal relationship between shopper and sales staff is of pivotal significance in today's retail business environment. Even though with the onslaught of technology people may buy online, researcher has put efforts to gain knowledge of the influence of the behaviour of in-store sales staff on shoppers' patronage intentions as the shoppers acquire in-store gratification by visiting the physical store format; confirming quality, see-touch-feel sequence, and thus personal customer service remain buzzword for physical retail stores. This empirical research study conducted in four cities of Gujarat State examined the influences of behavioural dimensions of in-store staff that are functioning to offer services to shoppers who visit the retail store. Influence of selected dimensions of sales staff behaviour viz., politeness and courteousness, training and responsible behaviour, well informed about products availability, product's prices and friendliness in dealing with shoppers have been considered in this research study. This study holds importance owing to the fact that human element serving the shopper in the physical store format is of utmost importance.

Key Words: Shopper, Retail Store, Patronage Behaviour.

Introduction

According to estimate made by 'Technopak', by the year 2030, India would reach in the top five position considering growth of its Gross Domestic Product. The statistical data regarding the growth and the spurt of retail market in India is promising. Referring to the brands offered in different categories in retail market the retailers in India get benefit of immense opportunity for its retail business growth due to large number of consumers; rising incomes in different sectors in India, more job opportunities which create demand for different products, empowered consumer with latest information and so on.(Technopak Retail Research Report, 2011)

According to estimate made by Crisil and KPMG the size of the retail market reach US Dollar 1,250 Billion by 2020 and the revenue generated by organised retailing was expected to reach US Dollar 94.8 Billion by 2019 (Crisil Research Estimates, 2014 & KPMG Retail Report, 2014).

In today's business environment the researcher in the field of understanding behavior of consumer believe that research in the field of consumer behavior is today's buzzword which help in expanding knowledge for doing business. Change in the shopping behavior of consumers of urban India has been observed over past few years and they are in search of convenience of buying and expect availability of their requirement under one common convenient shop; want to make best use of their time; seek more information, assortment, product accessibility, improved quality, and hygiene as well as increased customer service (Deloitte Global Powers of Retail Report, 2013). The sales force play a dominant role in customer service encounters and thus it can be considered as major determinant of patronage intention of consumers. The "serviceability factor" in retail is of prime importance especially in the brick-and-mortar stores.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to study the influence of behaviour of sales staff in retail stores on shoppers' patronage intentions in the selected four cities of Gujarat State.

Key Terms of the Research Study:

Shopper:

Shopper is someone who goes to a shop in order to buy or look at the things that are sold there (https://www.macmillandictionary.com).

Retail Store

The retail store offer merchandise to its ultimate customers to meet their needs and it can be owned, operated by either a manufacturer or a retailer or someone involved in such merchandising activities (https://www.merriam-webster.com).

Patronage Behaviour

Haynes, et.al. (1994) expressed the meaning of patronage as the favourable attitude of shoppers' to visit the same retail outlet for shopping. The choice of the retail outlet and the intention to visit the same retail store in future is the outcome of perceptions, and attitudes formed by consumer based on their actual experience in the retail store (Haynes, et. Al., 1994).

A Brief Review of Literature

Lumpkin (1985) studied that shoppers' do use store attributes as indicators to decide from which stores to buy from and also investigated the relationship between the image perceived by consumer and their shopping orientations. Pessemier (1980) identified that store characteristics; competitive environment; characteristics of consumers, and socio-economic environment are the major determinant of patronage intention of consumer.

Gupta M. (2004) in his study opined that the Indian consumer behavior in the past decade is going through a radical transformation because of the availability of a variety of products creating an impact on consumption pattern of consumers. The consumer has started preferring shopping from local market; and in malls which offer a wide variety of assortments.

The modern day retailer offers a wide range of store attributes to attract the shopper. The consumer is

at the nucleus for any retail outlet. Retailing is always consumer-oriented and studying the consumer shopping behavior is of paramount significance for the retailers. The consumer now is known as a prosumer as he is actively involved and engaged in the shopping journey (Retail Report on Retailing 2015).

The study conducted by Birtwistle; Doyle and Fenwick on retail shoppers' behaviour conceptualize the perception of the individual shopper with reference to the store attributes which are in turn affected by consumers' orientation towards shopping.

In a research study conducted by Lather, A.S., & Kaur, T. (2006) it was concluded that the major store attributes that were given due recognition by shoppers' was the price of the goods sold, sales staff behaviour, quality of goods, assortment and variety of goods.

Darden (1990) concluded that the beliefs about product attributes and shopping orientations are influenced by the consumers' patronage behavior which curtails the consumer requirement of products.
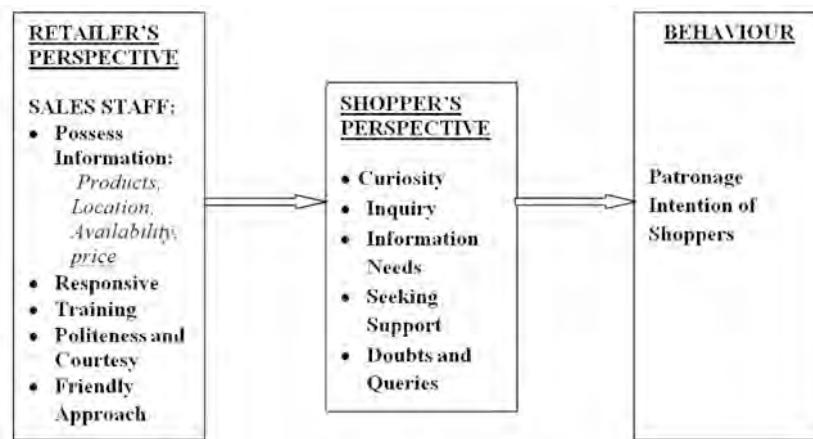

Figure 1: A Framework of Influence of Sales Staff Behaviour on Shoppers' Patronage Behaviour

The above Figure 1 represents the influence of sales staff behaviour on shoppers' patronage intention. It represents the retailers perspective related to the store attribute of sales staff behaviour viz., information possessed by sales staff; responsiveness, training provided to sales staff; politeness and courtesy, and friendly approach of sales staff with shoppers. These dimensions affect the shoppers' information seeking behaviour; desire to seek support, and the receive from sales staff for resolving their doubts and queries when they shop in the retail store. The resultant impact can be the patronage intention of shoppers to visit the same retail store in the future.

Research Methodology

The researchers' attempt to examine the influence of behaviour of sales staff in retail stores on shoppers' patronage intentions. The representative sampling units were shoppers' who visit the retail outlets from the selected cities of Gujarat. The researcher has collected data from 1500

shoppers using mall intercept interview through structured non-disguised questionnaire from the selected four cities of Gujarat State viz., Vadodara, Ahmedabad, Surat, and Rajkot respectively.

"The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and the hypothesis was tested using chi-square and ANOVA. The researchers have portrayed the relationship of sales staff behaviour with shoppers' patronage intention considering the selected nine dimensions of sales staff behavior through the Structural Equation Model (SEM).

Data Analysis of the Research Study:

Reliability of the Scale used in Questionnaire:

The reliability of a scale used in questionnaire as measured by coefficient alpha reflects the amount of relationship among the scale items (Naresh K. Malhotra, 2007; and Jum C. Nunnally, 1981).

Table 1: Reliability of the Scale

Sr. No.	Selected Item	Cronbach's Alpha Score
01	The desired product information is possessed by sales staff of the retail store.	
02	The detailed information about availability of products is available with sales staff of the retail store.	
03	The sales staff possesses the knowledge about the price of the products offered by retail store.	
04	The sales staff knows how the display of the products is made in retail store.	
05	My queries are properly responded by the sales staff of the retail store.	0.797
06	My problems while shopping are resolved satisfactorily by sales staff of the retail store.	
07	Friendly approach of the sales staff of retail store with store visitors.	
08	The sales staff deals politely and show courtesy with visitors.	
09	Through the behavior of the sales staff with visitors in retail store it seems they are well trained	

In this research study, reliability tests were run and a composite score was computed to determine how strongly opinion of the selected shoppers on behaviour of the sales staff was related.

All items of the structured questionnaire related with the opinion of the selected shoppers with reference to behaviour of the sales staff were tested and the Cronbach's alpha score was found as 0.797 which really showed internal reliability of the scale. The summary of Cronbach's Alpha score is given in table number 0.

Table 2: Selected Shoppers' (or) Customers' Responses on Store Personnel of the Retail Store

Sr. No.	Selected Criteria	(Number and Percentages of Respondents)							
		Baroda		Surat		Rajkot		Ahmedabad	
		DAG	AG	DAG	AG	DAG	AG	DAG	AG
01	The desired product information is possessed by sales staff of the retail store.	156 (17.6)	124 (20.3)	253 (28.5)	217 (35.5)	152 (17.1)	123 (20.1)	327 (36.8)	148 (24.2)
02	The detailed information about availability of products is available with sales staff of the retail store.	124 (16.3)	156 (21.1)	244 (32.1)	226 (30.6)	148 (19.4)	127 (17.2)	245 (32.2)	230 (31.1)
03	The sales staff possesses the knowledge about the price of the products offered by retail store.	110 (14.2)	170 (23.5)	258 (33.2)	212 (29.3)	171 (22.0)	104 (14.4)	238 (30.6)	237 (32.8)
04	The sales staff knows how the display of the products is made in retail store.	111 (14.8)	169 (22.5)	228 (30.4)	242 (32.3)	157 (20.9)	118 (15.7)	254 (33.9)	221 (29.5)
05	My queries are properly responded by the sales staff of the retail store.	127 (15.2)	153 (22.9)	285 (34.2)	185 (27.7)	158 (19.0)	117 (17.5)	263 (31.6)	212 (31.8)
06	My problems while shopping are resolved satisfactorily by sales staff of the retail store.	96 (12.1)	184 (26.0)	236 (29.8)	234 (33.1)	139 (17.5)	136 (19.2)	322 (40.6)	153 (21.6)
07	Friendly approach of the sales staff of retail store with store visitors.	94 (15.5)	186 (20.8)	223 (36.9)	247 (27.6)	137 (22.6)	138 (15.4)	151 (25.0)	324 (36.2)
08	The sales staff deals politely and show courtesy with visitors.	119 (16.4)	161 (20.8)	249 (34.3)	221 (28.6)	153 (21.0)	122 (15.8)	206 (28.3)	269 (34.8)
09	Through the behavior of the sales staff with visitors in retail store it seems they are well trained	129 (15.4)	151 (22.9)	250 (29.8)	220 (33.3)	137 (16.3)	138 (20.9)	324 (30.6)	151 (22.9)

The table 02 shows the shoppers' responses on Store Personnel of the Retail Store of their choice. In the city of Vadodara, 26 percent shoppers' expressed their agreement with the responses to problems by the sales staff, whereas 23.5 percent showed agreement with availability of information

with sales staff about the price of the products, 22.9 percent were positive about the way in which their queries were solved by sales staff and found them well trained. In the city of Surat, 35.5 percent shoppers' showed agreement with availability of information with sales staff about the products, around 33.3 percent showed their agreement with criteria viz., staff is well trained, appropriately respond to problems, and 33.3 percent showed their preference for retail store due to location of retail store close to their residence.

In case of the city of Rajkot, around 20.9 percent agree that the sales staff of the retail store is well trained and possess desired information about the products offered. 19.2 percent respondents showed their satisfaction for the way in which sales staff responded to customer's problems; followed by 17.5 percent agreed who that their queries were resolved by the sales staff.

In the city of Ahmedabad, 36.2 percent of shoppers' expressed their positive feelings for the friendly behavior of the sales staff; 34.8 percent liked the polite and courteous behavior of sales staff, and around 32.8 percent endorsed that the sales staff possessed desired information about the price of the products.

Hypothesis: 01:

The actual expectation of selected shoppers' on "Staff of the Retail Store" vis-a-vis selected shoppers' background variables viz., age; gender; marital status; occupation; educational qualifications and income is independent.

Table 3: Selected Shoppers' Actual Expectation on "Staff of the Retail Store" Vis-À-Vis Selected Background Variables of Hotel Guests

Sr. No.	Selected Criteria	'P' Value of X^2					
		Age	Gender	Marital Status	Occupation	Educational Qualifications	Income
01	The desired product information is possessed by sales staff of the retail store.	S [0.000]	S [0.000]	S [0.000]	S [0.000]	S [0.000]	S [0.000]
02	The detailed information about availability of products is available with sales staff of the retail store.	S [0.000]	S [0.000]	S [0.176]	S [0.000]	S [0.000]	S [0.001]
03	The sales staff possesses the knowledge about the price of the products offered by retail store.	S [0.033]	S [0.000]	S [0.000]	S [0.000]	S [0.000]	S [0.000]
04	The sales staff knows how the display of the products is made in retail store.	S [0.000]	S [0.000]	NS [0.912]	S [0.000]	S [0.000]	S [0.000]
05	My queries are properly responded by the sales staff of the retail store.	S[0.000]	S[0.009]	S[0.000]	S[0.000]	S[0.000]	S[0.000]
06	My problems while shopping are resolved satisfactorily by sales staff of the retail store.	S[0.000]	S[0.002]	S[0.000]	S[0.000]	S[0.000]	S[0.000]
07	Friendly approach of the sales staff of retail store with store visitors.	S[0.001]	S[0.033]	S[0.001]	S[0.000]	S[0.000]	S[0.000]
08	The sales staff deals politely and show courtesy with visitors.	S[0.000]	NS[0.597]	S[0.000]	S[0.000]	S[0.000]	S[0.000]
09	Through the behavior of the sales staff with visitors in retail store it seems they are well trained	S[0.000]	NS[0.665]	S[0.000]	S[0.000]	S[0.000]	S[0.000]

As given in Table 3 we reject the null hypothesis as the demographic variable age, gender; marital

status, occupation, educational qualifications and income were found significantly associated ('p' value < 0.05) with selected criteria concerning the selected store attribute of Sales staff Behaviour in the retail store except the criteria of the sales staff know how the display of the products are made in retail store, The sales staff deals politely and show courtesy with visitors, and through the behavior of the sales staff with visitors in retail store it seems they are well trained.

The Behaviour of the Sales Staff in the Retail Store:

One Way ANOVA on the Behaviour of the Sales Staff in the Retail Store:

(Abbreviations used in following tables are, N= Number SD = Standard Deviation; SE = Standard Error)

Hypothesis: 02

Mean of Shoppers' view about their actual experience is equal in terms of the criteria of the behaviour of the Sales Staff in the retail shop and an alternative hypothesis is at least one mean is different from other.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Shoppers Experience considering Sales Staff Behaviour in the Retail Store

Name of the Cities	N	Mean	SD	SE
Vadodara City	280	14.1929	2.65021	0.15838
Surat City	470	13.2638	2.82136	0.13014
Rajkot City	275	13.0836	2.91928	0.17604
Ahmedabad City	475	13.0947	2.15376	0.09882
Total	1500	13.3507	2.64406	0.06827

The table 4 indicates the descriptive statistics of all the selected cities. The Vadodara city has the highest mean value of 14.1929, followed by the mean value of 13.2638 of Surat City, the mean value of 13.0947 of Ahmedabad city and Rajkot city having the lower mean value of 13.0836.

Table 5: Test of Homogeneity of Variances for Shoppers opinion on Sales Staff Criteria

Levene's Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
17.234	3	1496	.000

The table 5 indicates the "Levene's test of Homogeneity" of variance through which verification can be done about the equality of variance of all group of shoppers. Results of Levene's test showed that the significant value (0.00) is less than 0.05.

It means that null hypothesis has been rejected as significant value does not exceed 0.05. It means the variance of all groups is not equal.

Analysis of Variance

Table 6: ANOVA TABLE for Shoppers opinion on Sales Staff Criteria

Particulars	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between-Groups	252.865	3	84.288	12.330	.000
Within-Groups	10226.684	1496	6.836		
Total	10479.549	1499			

The variation between the groups of all Shoppers is 252.865 and within the group the variation is 10226.684. The variation within groups was higher than the variation between groups of Shoppers.

As null hypotheses are rejected because of significance value (0.00) is < 0.05 that means at least one type of Shoppers group is different from the other Shoppers group.

Post Hoc Test (Tamhane):

Table 7: Multiple Comparisons of Shopper Opinion for Sales Staff Behaviour in the Retail Store through Tamhane Test

Location of the Respondent		Mean Difference	SE	Sig.
Vadodara City	Surat City	0.92903(*)	0.20499	0.000
	Rajkot City	1.10922(*)	0.23680	0.000
	Ahmedabad City	1.09812(*)	0.18668	0.000
Surat City	Vadodara City	-0.92903(*)	0.20499	0.000
	Rajkot City	0.18019	0.21892	0.958
	Ahmedabad City	0.16909	0.16341	0.883
Rajkot City	Vadodara City	-1.10922(*)	0.23680	0.000
	Surat City	-0.18019	0.21892	0.958
	Ahmedabad City	-0.01110	0.20188	1.000
Ahmedabad City	Vadodara City	-1.09812(*)	0.18668	0.000
	Surat City	-0.16909	0.16341	0.883
	Rajkot City	0.01110	0.20188	1.000

* Significant mean difference at the .05 level.

The result of Post–Hoc test is given by assuming unequal variance in the above table. The opinion of shoppers in Vadodara city is different from all three selected cities because of significant value, of Surat, Rajkot and Ahmedabad are < 0.05 with each other.

Post Hoc Test (Tukey HSD)

Table 8: Multiple Comparisons of Shopper Opinion for Sales Staff Criteria through Tukey HSD Test

Location of the Respondent	N	Subset for alpha = .05	
		2	1
Rajkot City	275	13.0836	
Ahmedabad City	475	13.0947	
Surat City	470	13.2638	
Vadodara City	280		14.1929
Sig.		.799	1.00

Display of Means for groups in homogeneous subsets.

a. Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 349.628.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

Table 8 indicates that all four cities make two different groups. Ahmedabad, Surat, and Rajkot make one group. The city of Vadodara makes another group in terms of opinion for the Variety (range) of products offered by the retail store.

Factor Analysis of Shoppers' Opinion for Sales Staff Criteria for all Four Cities:

Table 9: Shoppers' Opinion for Sales Staff Criteria for All the Four Cities KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.711
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. 'Chi-Square'	4281.197
	df	36
	Significant	0.00

In the case of opinion for Sales Staff criteria the results showed that the KMO score was 0.711, which indicated the suitability of information for Factor Analysis. Similarly, Bartlett's Test of sphericity result was found significant as it is less than .05 (p<.05), showing adequate correlation between the criteria used in the study for Factor Analysis.

Table 10: Total Variance on Shoppers' Opinion for Sales Staff Criteria for All the Four Cities

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.243	36.028	36.028	3.243	36.028	36.028	2.285	25.388	25.388
2	1.702	18.907	54.935	1.702	18.907	54.935	2.151	23.903	49.291
3	1.096	12.175	67.110	1.096	12.175	67.110	1.604	17.820	67.110

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The result identified 03 components (factors) having an Eigenvalues over 1 and it accounted 67 per cent of variations in the observed criteria of the "Behavior of Sales Staff in the Retail Store" in the four cities selected for study. According to Kaiser Criterion, only the first three factors should be used for factor analysis.

Table 11: Factor Loading Score based on Rotated Component Matrix of Sales Staff Criteria for All Four Cities

Sr. No.	Selected Criteria	Factor Loading Score		
		1	2	3
01	The desired product information is possessed by sales staff of the retail store.	-0.176	0.765	0.163
02	The detailed information about availability of products is available with sales staff of the retail store.	0.302	0.720	0.123
03	The sales staff possesses the knowledge about the price of the products offered by retail store.	0.400	0.716	0.087
04	The sales staff knows how the display of the products is made in retail store.	-0.042	0.683	0.005
05	My queries are properly responded by the sales staff of the retail store.	0.870	0.038	0.060
06	My problems while shopping are resolved satisfactorily by sales staff of the retail store.	0.836	0.152	0.101
07	Friendly approach of the sales staff of retail store with store visitors.	0.623	-0.050	0.465
08	The sales staff deals politely and show courtesy with visitors.	0.395	0.151	0.738
09	Through the behavior of the sales staff with visitors in retail store it seems they are well trained	-.0016	0.140	0.883

"Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis."

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

The criteria 5 (My queries are properly responded by the sales staff of the retail store), criteria 6 (My problems while shopping are resolved satisfactorily by sales staff of the retail store) and criteria 7 (Friendly approach of the sales staff of retail store with store visitors) were more correlated with component 1.

The criteria 01 (The desired product information is possessed by sales staff of the retail store), criteria 02 (The detailed information about availability of products is available with sales staff of the retail store), criteria 03 (The sales staff possesses the knowledge about the price of the products offered by retail store) and criteria 04 (The sales staff know how the display of the products are made in retail store) were more correlated with component 2.

The criteria 08 (The sales staff deals politely and show courtesy with visitors), and criteria 09 (Through the behavior of the sales staff with visitors in retail store it seems they are well trained) were more correlated with component 3.

Importance of Components for Shoppers' Opinion on Sales Staff Criteria for all the Four Cities:

The importance of each component to different selected four cities can be understood with the help of

below given box plots. The following box plot explains the total score of component 1 for four cities.
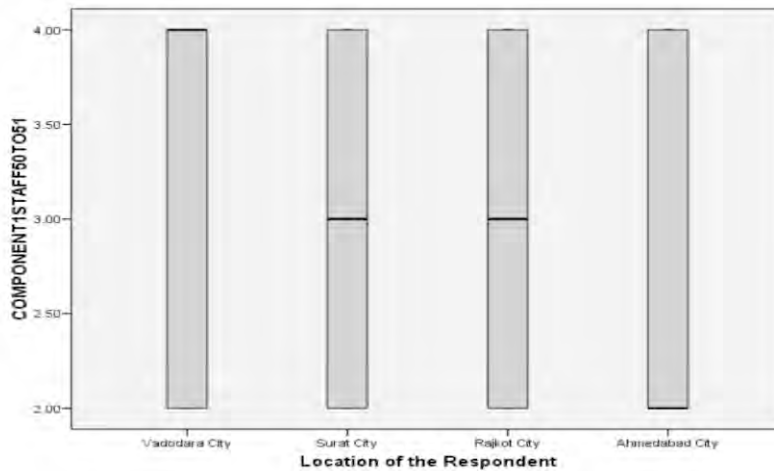
Graph 1: City-wise Box Plot for Component 1 for Shoppers' Opinion on Sales Staff in the Retail Store for All the Four Cities

From the Graph 1-box plot, the interpretation can be made that the city of Vadodara has a higher median as compared to Surat, Rajkot, and Ahmedabad. So finally it can be concluded that component 1 was important for shoppers of Vadodara city.

That means three criteria, i.e. My queries are properly responded by the sales staff of the retail store, My problems while shopping are resolved satisfactorily by sales staff of the retail store, and Friendly approach of the sales staff of retail store with store visitors are important for shoppers of Vadodara city.
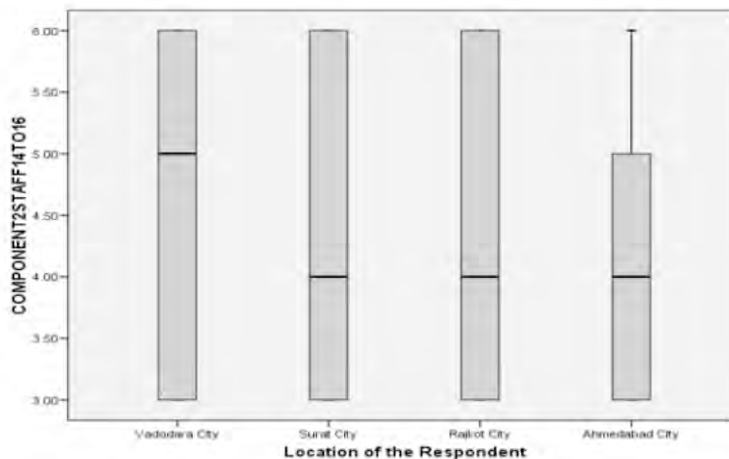
Graph 2: City-wise Box Plot for Component 2 for Shoppers' Opinion on Sales Staff in the Retail Store for All the Four Cities

From Graph 2- box plot, the interpretation can be made that the city of Vadodara has a higher median as compared to Surat, Rajkot, and Ahmedabad. So finally it can be concluded that component 2 was important for shoppers of Vadodara City.

That means the four criteria, i.e. The desired product information is possessed by sales staff of the retail store, The detailed information about availability of products is available with sales staff of the retail store, the sales staff possesses the knowledge about the price of the products offered by retail store and the sales staff know how the display of the products are made in retail store are important for shoppers of Vadodara city.

Graph 3: City-wise Box Plot for Component 3 for Shoppers' Opinion on Sales Staff in the Retail Store for All the Four Cities

From Graph 3-box plot, the interpretation can be made that the city of Vadodara and Ahmedabad have a higher median as compared to Surat and Rajkot. So finally it can be concluded that component 3 was important for shoppers of Vadodara and Ahmedabad City.

That means the two criteria, The sales staff deals politely and show courtesy with visitors and Through the behavior of the sales staff with visitors in retail store it seems they are well trained are important for shoppers of Vadodara and Ahmedabad city.
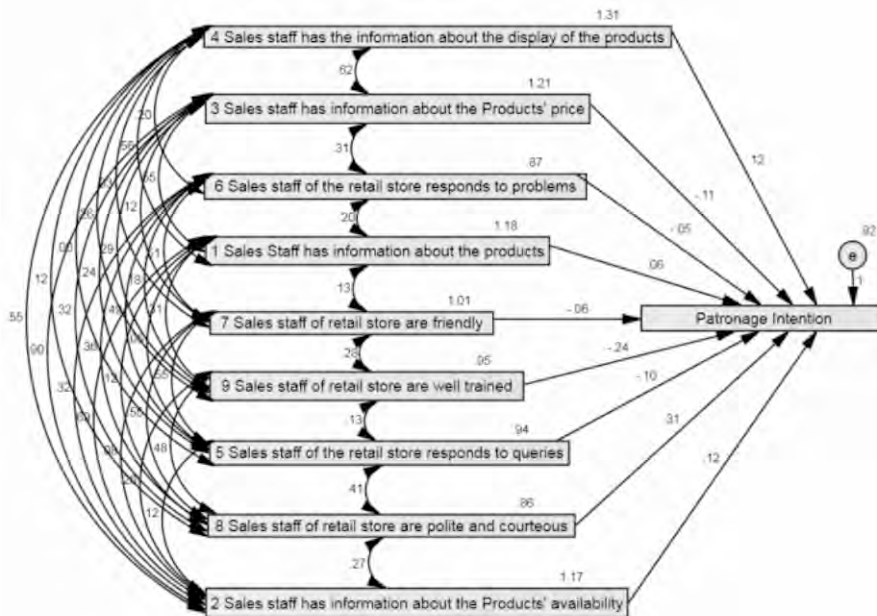
Figure 2: SEM Model showing the Relationship between Shoppers' Patronage Intention and Behaviour of Sales Staff in the Retail Store

The above model is the simple regression model which portrait the linear relationship between observed variable namely retail shopper's patronage intention and other nine observed variables."

Each double-sided arrow represents a regression weight as depicted in figure number 01 is the correlation between nine observed variables.

The values displayed with the help of single-sided arrow (0.12, -0.11, -0.05, 0.06, -0.24, -0.10 and 0.12) shows the standardized regression weights. The value 0.92 is the squared multiple correlations of the patronage intention of the retail shopper and nine variables of the store sales staff behaviour attribute that affect the patronage intention of the retail shopper.

It means that the patronage intention of the retail shopper considering nine variables is influenced mainly by variable, viz., politeness and courteousness of sales staff (0.31) followed by well trained sales staff (-0.24); information about products and products prices (0.12 and 0.11), and responses of sales staff to queries of shoppers (0.10) respectively.

Discussions and Managerial Implications:

The retail store staff and their friendliness are important variables because, for some consumers shopping provides an opportunity for socialization and an avenue to cope with the latest product trends by talking and moving in the stores.

The sales personnel also become an intermediary between the customer and the retail store as the sales staff will handle the shopper service encounters which in turn define his moments of truth in the

retail store.

This will, in turn, help retailers for facilitating a better shopping experience, as the sales staff can now assimilate customer intelligence and deliver it to the business. The retailer will be able to give an enhanced customer experience, delivered through a more personalized and enriching shopping experience by trained and caring sales staff.

This can be done by providing consistent services, assurance by showing knowledge and courtesy in developing trust and confidence in shoppers; be positive in providing good tangible facilities; express empathy by caring and giving individualized attention to shoppers'; be responsive by providing prompt services, and treat shoppers'; with dignity and respect.

In the case of the city of Ahmedabad, the way in which sales staff behaved with visitors in the retail store needs a different approach which is suitable for different groups of shoppers. All shoppers' have different expectations from the retail stores and therefore it moulds their perception in a positive or negative manner.

Positive attitude of the shoppers will be the deciding factor for patronage intention and when shoppers engage in opposing behaviour they show an unfavorable attitude by sharing their negative experiences about their shopping journey to others by negative word of mouth.

The retailers must be diligent in training their sales staff and shaping the behaviour so that it evokes positive feelings in the mind of the shopper. The sales staff should have adequate knowledge regarding the availability of the products, the price of the products, the alternatives available in a particular product category, the operating instructions for using the product, precautions to be taken to avoid hazards.

In order to have friendly approach of sales staff the retailers need to understand first the customer while they enter in the store. The sales staff is expected to offer a personalized, satisfactory buying experience to visitors of the store that will keep them coming back for more.

It can be inferred from the data analysis that the sales staff should possess enough information which can be shared with the shoppers' to facilitate their information desire of the shoppers'

The sales force plays a pivotal role in the entire value chain in functioning of the retail store as they are not only the face of the retail outlet but also serve as a point of differentiation when it comes to giving skilled services to the shoppers who visit the outlet. They can sensitize the shopper and can create a stimulating environment which makes the shopping journey of the shopper pleasing and memorable. The empathy, positivity, responsiveness, and friendliness of the sales staff not only entice the shopper but also results into an effective Customer Relationship Management (CRM) practice of the store. "

Conclusion

In today's intensified competitive world retail stores need to keep, top performing and motivated sales staff that could do better at selling and serving customers.

The retailers need to understand how the training given to sales staff results into best retail practices that facilitate effective learning and best performance of sales staff.

"This research study aims to present its findings into actionable service strategies by creating long-term pleasing customer relationship in order to delight the people retailers' serve. "Thinking of the

shoppers as "Guests" elevate their moods and make retailers see them in a new light where the retail staff assumes the role of hosts or hostess for the "Guests" that come to visit the retail store.

This research study clearly identifies that being memorable and being in the minds of the consumer is crucial for success in today's dynamic retail environment. Retailers are competing in a marketplace where shoppers' expectation of their experience is moving beyond simply finding and getting a product. The human element in the retail store will continue to be the most important factor in attracting shoppers and driving in-store sales.

This gives an upper edge to the brick-and-mortar retailers which only people can deliver. The online shopping can surely satisfy customers with wide selection, cheap prices, and fast delivery but it would not account for making shopping online delightful.

This unique ability is endowed to the brick-and-mortar stores who can develop a personal relationship with shoppers by dealing with them effectively and consistently. The retailer needs to hire nice people and educate them to perform better for in-store selling, but the retailer cannot hire salespeople and then teach them to be nice.

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