

Factors Influencing Consumer Purchase Decisions at Organized Retail Stores in Ludhiana

Manu Sehgal

Assistant Professor

Post Graduate Department of Commerce

Khalsa College for Women, Ludhiana, Punjab, India

Dr. Priyaka Khanna

Head of Post Graduate

Department of Commerce,

Khalsa College for Women, Ludhiana, Punjab, India

Abstract—

Indian Retail Market is going through a transition phase. With retail environment getting modernized and customers gradually shifting from the culture of shopping at small neighborhood kirana stores to large supermarkets. With more and more fancy shopping option in hand in form of growing number of malls and supermarkets and with more number of international counterparts entering the sector, consumer is being spoilt for choice. The share of organized retail in total retail sector in India is growing at a remarkable rate. Many domestic as well as international players have already penetrated in this market. Competition is at its high pace. Great focus is on the consumer preference over the attributes of retail stores that are considered important. It is assumed that such factors play a significant role in converting footfalls into actual sales. The aim of the study is to identify the factors affecting consumer behavior and preference related to shopping at organized retail stores. In this paper, analysis of the consumer's preference of the specific attributes of selected 5 major retail brands of Ludhiana is done. Retail stores selected were Big Bazaar, Lifestyle, Westside, Vishal Mega Mart and Globus. Factor analysis has been used in identifying the main factors. The factors include sales assistance, store ambience, store attractiveness, store pricing policy, store promotion and store Convenience.

Keywords: Retail, organized retail, consumer preferences, factor analysis.

I. INTRODUCTION

The retail industry accounts for above US\$15 trillion in global revenue and it is expected to maintain strong growth. The industry is quite diverse, with small retailers still prevalent in developing countries, but increasingly, large firms are dominating. India with its growing working population, higher income levels and brand consciousness is reflecting smooth transition in the retail market which is expected to be valued at of US\$ 520 billion in 2013 with CAGR accounting to 13%. It has also been the largest employer of 2013. Majority of rest is in form of unorganized mom and pops stores consisting of local grocery stores and convenience shops in neighborhoods. According to retail report of EY India, organized retail sector looms at mere 7.5% of the total. India is one of the largest retail markets in the world with estimates of it reaching to US\$950 billion by 2018. Indian retail market will continue to grow and the share of organized retail sector is also expected to reach 10%. .With FDI at doorsteps, Indian retail market is likely to get huge attention from global retailers which will further fuel the growth of organized retail in India. Some transnational companies have already started setting up their foot in the market. For instance Tata entered into partnership with Tesco. With global entries and ambitious expansion plans of existing players like pantaloons and Lifestyle, the major challenge for them is to attract the urban consumers and build store loyalty. Thus there is a critical need to find out what factors influence consumers purchase choice in organized retail stores. Consumer behavior has gain significant value for retailers, more than ever. Today consumers are affected non-price factors like in store attributes, wide variety and broad assortment of merchandise, entertainment shopping more than price factors. The following study is also an attempt in this direction. This study tried to identify factors and attributes that act as satisfaction drivers for consumers in the retail outlets of Ludhiana. Ludhiana being the Manchester of India has already been introduced to all major forms of organized retailing stores. Therefore it would be useful in studying the behaviour of people who have become accustomed to this form of shopping experience.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The share of organized retail in total retail sector in India is growing at a remarkable rate. Many domestic as well as international players have already penetrated in this market. More focus is on the consumer preference over the attributes of retail stores that are considered important. The aim of the study is to identify the factors affecting consumer preference related to shopping at organized retail store. Several parameters have been identified in retail and consumer behaviour literature that effect store patronage by customers.

Gagliano and Hathkote (1994) proposed that consumer's perception of service quality shapes their preferences.

Mattila and Wirtz (2001) observed that when ambient scent and music are congruent with each other in terms of their arousing qualities, consumers rate the environment significantly more positive, exhibit higher levels of approach and impulse buying behaviors, and experience enhanced satisfaction than when these environmental cues were at odds with each other.

Summers and Hebert (2001) found that supplemental lighting treatments had a positive and favourable effect on consumer behavior. Interactions between lighting and display were found to be statistically significant. Ambient odors positively impact consumers' perceptions under the medium retail density condition.

Baker, Parasuraman, Grewal and Voss (2002) emphasized that store environment cues such as music, layout, crowd and convenience effect store patronage.

Solgaard and Hansen (2003) sorted out location, quality, variety, clean surroundings, store layout and sales persons as the most important attributes.

Fox, Montgomery, and Lodish (2004) studied customer's behaviour to conclude that people attach greater value to variety and advertisements than to prices.

Huddleston, Whipple and VanAuken (2004) identified promotions, location, variety and service as key loyalty factors.

Smith and Chebat (2008) discovered that a favorable perception of the mall atmosphere produces a positive perception of the merchandise offering and triggers hedonic shopping experiences.

Banat and Wandebori (2012) proposed that store design and store atmosphere have a significant effect on the shopping experience which can increase the amount of merchandise that customer purchase. Infrastructure and display product arrangement, space, layout, signage, window display and entrances, dressing rooms, atmosphere, lighting, music, and fragrance plays important role in influencing customers shopping behavior.

Joshi and Kulkarni (2012) identified twenty elements of store atmospherics which were regrouped into five factors viz. Impressive store interiors and exteriors, Store Personnel and fellow shoppers, Comfort, Beauty & Aesthetics, Display and creative arrangement of products on shelves & Attractive displays and behavior of the store personnel. Study brings out the facts that impressive displays, ability to move freely in the store, quality of the fellow shoppers and well behaved and humble employees significantly contribute in enhancing the store atmospherics and gives excellent shopping experience to the customers translating into more sales and footfalls.

Diallo, Chandon, Cliquet and Philippe (2013) identified main influencing factors as store image, price, and familiarity.

Farias and Aguiar (2014) concluded that it is imperative for retailers today to take in account customers' holistic experience as a relevant tool to manage the retail operation in a scenario of global competition.

Sabrina (2014) focused on the influence of different atmosphere factors of a store, on consumer behavior and confirmed the impact of factors of environment have on the behavioral and emotional aspects of the subject during his visit on the store.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Instrument

A descriptive research design under the quantitative approach using the survey technique was chosen. This approach was selected because it enables the sizable representation of the selected population, has an organised procedure for gathering data, is also very specific, and ensures that formulation of data collected follows an orderly procedure (Burns & Bush, 2010). A questionnaire was developed with the help of the literature existing in marketing and retail areas. Each identified attribute was measured and analysed on five point likert scale with options ranging from strongly agree(1) to strongly disagree (5). The final version of research instrument consisted of two parts. Part I included details of demographic characteristics of respondents and part II contained a set of questions to obtain the level of agreement and disagreement to statement related to shopping at organized retail stores.

3.2. Data Collection

Administration of the questionnaires was conducted on site of five big retail store in Ludhiana between the tenth of November and fifth of December, 2016. Retail stores were Big Bazaar; Lifestyle, Westside, Vishal Mega Mart and Globus. These were selected due to their popularity in the city. Data collection was done at the exit point where the purchasers could be easily contacted. Participation in the survey was strictly voluntary.

3.3. Sample Size

Convenience sampling technique was used to collect data from the respondents as it was difficult to obtain the list of the respondents. Five retail stores were taken into account and initially 200 consumers were interviewed selecting a sample of 40 (18 years and older) from each retail outlet. Out of which 150 were successfully completed and eventually used in the actual data analysis..

3.4. Data analysis

The data was analysed in two ways. Firstly for the sample composition descriptive analysis was undertaken and to establish the factors that contribute towards the preference of consumer for store selection exploratory factor analysis was applied. These analyses were conducted using the Statistical packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS-version 21).

IV. RESULTS

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of respondents are illustrated in table 1.

Table 1: Demographic information of the respondents

Variable	Categories	N	n	%
Gender	Males	150	81	54.0
	Females	150	69	46.0
Age Group	Less than 20years	150	06	4.0
	Between 20- 29 years	150	99	66.0
	Between 30-39 years	150	36	24.0
	Between 40-49 years	150	07	4.7
	Over 50 years	150	02	1.3
Educational Qualification	Matric	150	6	4.0
	Higher Secondary	150	39	26.0
	Graduate	150	69	46.0
	Post Graduate	150	36	24.0
Occupation	Student	150	58	38.7
	Professional	150	18	12.0
	Service	150	20	13.3
	Self employed	150	45	30.0
	Housewife	150	09	6.0
Monthly Family Income	Below Rs. 10,000	150	5	3.3
	Rs. 10,000-Rs. 20,000	150	51	34.0
	Rs. 20,000-Rs.30,000	150	57	38.0
	Above Rs. 30,000	150	37	24.7

As illustrated in Table 1, 54% of respondents (n=81) were male whereas 46% (n=69) were females. The respondents were categorized into different age horizons. It was found that majority of the respondents fall in the age group of 20-29 years (66.00 percentage), followed by 30-39 age group (24.0 percentage) and 40-49 age groups (4.7%). 4% respondents were in the less than 20 age group. Similarly, 1.3 percent of consumers lied in the age group over 50 years.

On categorizing consumers on the basis of their education, it was found that 46.0 percent were graduates, 24.0 percent were post graduates. The result further revealed that 26.0 percent and 4.0 percent were higher secondary and matric pass out respectively.

The results presented in Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents were students (38.7%). It was further found that 12.0%, 13.3%, 30% and 6 percent of the respondents were professionals, service class, self-employed and housewives respectively.

The respondents were grouped into four categories on the basis of their monthly family income. Consumers with income Rs. 10,000- Rs. 20,000 and Rs. 20,000-Rs. 30,000 were 34.0 and 38 percent respectively, followed by above Rs. 30,000 income group with 24.7 percent and less than Rs. 10000 income group with 3.3 percent.

4.2 Validity and Reliability

Validity refers to the magnitude to which a test measures what it is required to measure reliability the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it measures (Churchill & Brown, 2007). To ascertain the validity of the instrument, the initial questionnaire was reviewed by three academicians in the field of consumer behavior and marketing. The instrument was pilot tested with a group of 40 conveniently selected respondents, as prescribed by Zikmund (2003). Minor changes were made in the framing of variables after getting the feedback from the experts and pilot survey. Construct validity was measured through the reliabilities of the factors and was assessed using Cronbach alpha coefficient. The study also used Cronbach alpha for measuring the construct validity which came to 0.74 (refer to Table 4), which is perceived good as recommended by Hair et al. (2010).

4.3 Exploratory factor analysis

The purpose of this study was to examine the store image factors influencing store selection among consumers. These factors were identified using exploratory factor analysis. Exploratory factor analysis is an approach used to identify underlying dimensions among a set of factors. Scale purification was conducted in which low factor loadings, cross-loadings and low communalities were eliminated in order to improve "interpretability of the factor structure" (Malhotra 2010). A minimum cut-off of 0.50 was used on the variable loadings. This is consistent with the Hair et al.'s (2010) suggestion that factor loadings greater than ± 0.30 are considered to meet the minimum levels, loadings of ± 0.40 are considered important, and loading of ± 0.50 and greater are considered more important.

The Bartlett's test was significant at $p < 0.000$ inferring that the data set is not an identity matrix with zero correlations (i.e. variables are correlated) thus confirming that a factor analysis procedure could be applied in the study. Furthermore, the Bartlett's test produced a chi square value (X^2) of 12383.801 and a KMO value of 0.837 (> 0.50)

which also confirmed that the data were suitable for factor analysis. The results of the rotated component matrix, percentage of variance explained by each factor, cumulative percentage of variance and eigen value criterion were assessed. Finally, a six-factor structure was developed as the items were logically associated with the underlying factors. The rotated factor loading matrix illustrating the resultant factors and their eigen values are reported in following table.

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Table 2: Rotated factor loading matrix: store selection criteria

Item Code	Item Description	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
A1	The pleasing personality of sales personnel.	.572	.453	.163	.056	.176	.147
A2	The adequate knowledge of sales personnel about products.	.831	.165	.143	.153	.094	.156
A3	The personal attention of sales personnel with customers.	.834	.154	.236	.165	.245	.109
A4	The willingness of sales personnel to help customers.	.725	.276	.172	.168	.129	.165
A5	The efficiency of sales personnel to respond to customer’s request.	.776	.280	.196	.248	.161	.198
A6	The soothing music and good colors of the store.	.379	.689	.213	.178	.194	.171
A7	The interior design and décor in the store.	.278	.756	.342	.218	.211	.045
A8	The cleanliness and efficient ventilation system of the store.	.265	.762	.276	.312	.195	.173
A9	The display and excellent presentation of the products.	.112	.699	.238	.224	.258	.193
A10	The queues at billing counters of the store are less.	.245	.593	.281	.276	.186	.161
A11	The comfortable air-conditioned environment of the store.	.323	.502	.183	.143	.217	.281
A12	The variety of brands carried by the store.	.215	.223	.576	.323	.154	.170
A13	The attractiveness of in-store displays.	.355	.365	.643	.118	.197	.175
A14	The attractiveness of entrance of the store.	.267	.287	.764	.169	.126	.158
A15	The attractiveness of the exit of the store.	.197	.225	.811	.120	.157	.183
A16	The proximity of the store in relation to other stores.	.154	.365	.566	.289	.045	.327
A17	The attractiveness of exterior store design.	.276	.302	.523	.126	.285	.175
A18	The availability of all products under one roof.	.045	.234	.534	.263	.239	.198
A19	The convenience of store entrance /exit	.076	.287	.349	.412	.276	.568
A20	The convenient operating hours.	.267	.213	.308	.187	.267	.589
A21	The ease of movement in the store.	.287	.343	.258	.274	.232	.679
A22	The ease at which merchandise can be found in the store.	.185	.171	.212	.385	.295	.688

A23	The adequate and accessible parking space.	.335	.134	.286	.295	.198	.511
A24	The easy use of physical facilities at the store (escalators, elevators)	.256	.245	.187	.190	.138	.532
A25	The prices are fair and suit my pocket.	.176	.212	.097	.529	.115	.316
A26	The attractiveness of discount offers and gift vouchers.	.387	.107	.218	.612	.108	.251
A27	The return/ exchange policy of the store is favourable.	.327	.234	.162	.699	.182	.236
A28	The availability of branded labels in the store.	.212	.129	.476	.376	.521	.132
A29	The timely announcement of sales.	.177	.044	.234	.434	.585	.259
A30	The attractive customer loyalty schemes.	.265	.321	.165	.185	.765	.129
A31	The availability of limited and unique stock in the store.	.143	.121	.068	.249	.712	.165
A32	The special discount offers on payment through debit/credit cards.	.323	.218	.057	.145	.698	.163
Eigen value		15.89	2.38	1.76	1.37	1.21	1.03
Percentage of Value Explained		43.67	7.44	6.12	5.52	4.21	3.17
Cumulative percentage		43.67	51.11	57.23	62.45	66.66	69.83
Factor 1=Sales assistance, Factor 2= Store ambience, Factor 3= Store attractiveness, Factor 4= Store pricing policy, Factor 5=StorePromotion, Factor 6=Store Convenience							

In analysing the responses of consumers regarding their store selection criteria, six factors; namely, sales assistance, sales ambience, store attractiveness, store pricing policy, store promotion, store convenience were extracted. The total variance explained by the extracted factors is 69.83%, which indicates that the other 30.17% remains unaccounted due to presence of extraneous variables. Exploratory factor analysis is considered satisfactory if cumulative percentage of variance extracted by the factors is at least 60% (Malhotra and Briks,(2007).

Table 3: Factors extracted from factors analysis.

Factors	Variables Included
Sales assistance	Pleasing personality of sales personnel, adequate knowledge of sales personnel, personal attention of sales personnel, willingness of sales personnel to help customers, efficiency of sales personnel to respond to customer's request
Store ambience	Soothing music and good colors, interior design and décor, cleanliness and efficient ventilation system of the store, display and excellent presentation of the products, less queues at billing counters of the store and comfortable air-conditioned environment of the store.
Store attractiveness	Variety of brands available in the store, attractiveness of in-store displays, attractiveness of entrance and exit of the store, proximity of the store in relation to other stores, attractiveness of exterior store design, availability of all products under one roof.
Store pricing policy	Fair prices, attractiveness of discount offers and gift vouchers, favourable return/ exchange policy of the store
Store Promotion	Availability of branded labels, timely announcement of sales, attractive customer loyalty schemes, availability of limited and unique stock in the store, special discount offers on payment through debit/credit cards.
Store Convenience	Convenience of store entrance /exit, convenient operating hours, ease of movement in the store, ease at which merchandise can be found in the store, adequate and accessible parking space, easy use of physical facilities at the store.

V. DISCUSSION

Factor one, labelled sales assistance, consisted of five items that accounted for 43.67% of the total variance explained. This factor involves a number of elements such as the pleasing personality of sales personnel, adequate knowledge of sales personnel about products, personal attention of sales personnel with customers, willingness of sales personnel to help customers and efficiency of sales personnel to respond to customer's request. As suggested by Moschis, and Zhu (2011), the availability of store personnel is an important factor in the selection of stores. Consistent with these findings, studies by Gundala (2010) established that consumers usually patronize stores where they find experienced sales personnel who are amicable, approachable, supportive, attentive and kind when shopping. Helpful and knowledgeable sales personnel in a store have a positive impact on consumers' perception of store image and that makes store personnel one of the crucial elements in retailing (Hu & Jasper, 2006). Ghosh et al. (2010) also concluded that sales assistants in retail stores should have sufficient knowledge of the products offered, and must also be willing and capable of responding.

Factor two, labelled store ambience, consisted of six items that accounted for 7.44% of the explained variance. This factor focuses on aspects that relate mainly to the level of store atmosphere and how it influences selection of store. Soothing music and good colors, interior design and décor, cleanliness and efficient ventilation system of the store, display and excellent presentation of the products, less queues at billing counters of the store and comfortable air-conditioned environment of the store were the elements covered under this factor. A number of studies (Du Preez et al., 2010; Petermans 2010; Dhanapal, 2011) also analysed with similar findings in their studies, thereby confirming that store ambience characteristics are influential determinants of store choice. In an earlier study by Moye and Giddings(2002) it was found that store ambience which includes store interior (attractive, fashionable, stylish decorations, lightings, temperature) seem to have a positive direct influence on shopping behaviour.

Hsu and Chang 2008; Thang and Tan 2003 also reported that consumers typically may purchase certain products in stores that have a pleasing environment and offers comfortable, fashionable, stylish decoration, lighting and temperature. It was concluded from the research that well-planned retail atmospherics factors should be established in order to create positive consumer behaviour towards the store and the kind of behaviour that can be linked to increased levels of browsing and increased levels of consumer spend in store.

Factor three, labeled store attractiveness included seven items focusing on the interiors and exteriors of the store and accounted for 6.12% of the explained variance. The variables associated with this factor relate to the variety of brands available in the store, the attractiveness of in-store displays, entrance of the store, the attractiveness of the exit of the store, proximity of the store in relation to other stores, the attractiveness of exterior store design and availability of all products under one roof. The results were supported by previous studies of Tlapana (2009) who concluded that the consumers make-informed purchase decisions in a store that is able to communicate product information via in-store display. Even products that catch less attention is more likely to be purchased when displayed together with popular brands.

Factor four, labeled store pricing policy, was consist of three items and accounted for 5.52% of the explained variance. This factor encompasses the fairness of prices, attractive discounts, availability of gift vouchers and favorable policy of return/exchange of the product. Earlier studies by Jefkins (2000); Hyllegard, Ogle& Yan (2009) suggested that retailers should implement in-store induced appeals which will present the most credible and persuasive selling message to the right prospects for the product or service at the lowest possible cost.

Factor five, labeled store promotion, comprised five items and accounted for 4.21 % of the explained variance. The variables loaded to this factor include the availability of branded labels in the store, timely announcement of sales, the attractive customer loyalty schemes, the availability of limited and unique stock in the store, the special discount offers on payment through debit/credit cards. Kotler and Keller (2006) defined sales promotions as a diverse collection of incentives, designed to stimulate quicker purchases of particular products or services. Promotion has also been considered as one of the important attributes of store image (Visser, 2006). Consumers are more likely to purchase from a retailer that runs promotion son some of their merchandise (Vipu, 2010).

Factor six, labelled store convenience, comprised six variables which accounted for 3.17% of the explained variance. This factor incorporates items that relate to the consumers' level of store convenience as it influences their shopping behavior. The items loaded include to this factor include the convenience of store entrance /exit, the convenient operating hours, the ease of movement in the store, the ease at which products can be found in the store, the adequate and accessible parking space and the easy use of physical facilities at the store (escalators, elevators). Earlier study by Van der Vyver,(2008) supported the results and found that the ease of finding merchandise and the ease with which the customer can make contact with retailer powerfully influence the retail choice of the consumer. Ligas and Chaudhuri (2012) stressed that lack of convenient accessibility affect consumers' level of commitment to the store which might be reflected in store loyalty. Convenience is therefore important for a retail outlet as it signifies reach for the store which allows consumers to shop easily.

VI. RELIABILITIES AND MEAN RANKING OF DIMENSIONS IN TERMS OF IMPORTANCE

In addition to factor analysis, summated means were calculated for each factor and ranked in order of their importance. Following table 4 reports on the means of the dimensions.

Table 4: Reliabilities and mean ranking of dimensions

Factors	Reliability Cronbach alpha	Standard Deviation	Mean	Position in mean rank
Factor 1: (Sales assistance)	0.70	1.45	3.62	1
Factor 2: (Store ambience)	0.76	1.34	3.47	6
Factor 3: (Store attractiveness)	0.69	1.28	3.52	5
Factor 4: (Store pricing policy)	0.82	1.38	3.60	2
Factor 5: (Store Promotion)	0.71	1.18	3.55	3
Factor 6: (Store Convenience)	0.76	1.24	3.53	4
Overall values	0.74	1.34	3.55	N/A

5= extremely important; 3= moderately important; 1= extremely unimportant

The mean scores for all the factors used in this study ranged between 3.47 and 3.62. These mean scores portray an average scoring between the 'moderately important' and 'very important' positions on the Likert scale. This suggests that all six factors were considered to be important by consumers. A comparison of the factors also shows that sales assistance (mean= 3.62) was ranked highest while store ambience (mean= 3.47) was ranked lowest. This finding suggests that among the six factors identified in the study, consumers perceive that sales assistance is the most important or significant factor whereas store ambience is the least important factor determining store choice. Noting the importance of these factors, efforts by store managers should aim at monitoring and improving these factors in order to attract more customers.

VII. LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study has certain limitations which should be considered. First, the sample was only recruited from five shopping outlets located in one city only. It is important to note that this study does not represent the entire population. Second, due to the non-probability nature of sampling and its inherent limitations in terms of size of sample, the findings cannot be generalised. Third, the questionnaires used in this study were adapted from other studies done previously in similar context. Finally, the general limitations are also considered in the study that is associated with the quantitative design.

Several implications for further study arise from this research. First, since the study is focused on retail stores of Ludhiana which generally target the upper and middle class consumers. The behavior of less affluent consumers could not be depicted. It is therefore suggested that a wider, more representative sample which includes some other stores of the city be considered to substantiate the differences in behavior of consumers. Second, similar studies could be conducted that include other regions of state, other subcultures, social classes and lifestyles. This could provide a deep understanding of store selection criteria among consumers. Future direction on store selection criteria also needs further refinement of the use of survey instrument. In order to examine and analyse improvements to the instrument, longitudinal research could be done by replicating the study in related settings over different time phases. This could offer updated insights on the changing behaviour in store selection criteria among the consumers. It is observed that very few studies are available online on impulse buying behavior, demographic variables such as marital status, financial status, geographic position, culture and family size, therefore, research in respective area is also recommended.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to examine factors influencing the store selection choice among consumers in Ludhiana. The findings of this study revealed that there are six key store selection dimensions that play a crucial role in store selection. These are Sales assistance, store ambience, store attractiveness, store pricing policy, store promotion and store convenience. Among these six factors, sales assistance emerged as the most important factor and store ambience emerged as the least important factor to consumers. The study also revealed that gender does not have a significant impact in determining choice of store. The study is not without management implications. In the competitive retailing industry and continued economic pressure of the contemporary marketplace, store managers should continue to identify influential store selection dimensions that consumers perceive vital when shopping. An understanding of factors that motivate shoppers to select one store amongst other stores, and the identification of in-store and out-of-store activities encourages consumers to stay loyal are critical to the success of retail businesses. Retailers should also acknowledge that there is a rising market with regard to consumers who are more demanding. Therefore, retailers in particular, patronage levels may be enhanced considerably through continuous monitoring and expediting of the store selection factors identified in this study.

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