

Segmenting Shoppers on their Behaviour¹

Abstract

A retail stores attracts shoppers who vary in their profiles. While some of them are serious shoppers, many of them are “visitors” to the stores. It is not possible for the store to differentiate its offerings to these segments. Classifying these shoppers on demographic and their orientation to shopping has been tried in the developed economies. However, it is felt that in an evolving market like India where shopping orientation are yet to be formed, one of the basis of understanding that shoppers could be their behaviour at the store because behavioural cues are factual data on which a retailer can develop its strategy.

Through a study that involved participant observation of 284 shoppers conducted in Ahmedabad segment profiles have been developed. The shoppers were classified into 26 segments based on their behaviour. These segments have also been profiled on the basis of gender, store format and the type of product that they bought. The retail mix ingredients that could be used to deliver better value to each of the segments have been suggested.

Based on the study a framework to understand shopper behaviour has been proposed.

Keywords - Retailing, shopping, behavioural segmentation, retail mix, observational research

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Introduction

Segmentation and its benefits can never be undermined. In an article as early as 1956, Smith propagated the idea of segmenting the market to effectively design marketing strategies. In order to sharpen the marketing mix companies have been moving from marketing at the aggregate level, called Mass Marketing, to Mass customisation to the level of 1-to-1 marketing where each customer is treated as a separate segment. The factors that have weighed heavily on this decision are the need to fine-tune the marketing strategies and the realisation that the cost of retaining customer (read servicing) an existing customer is much lower than acquiring a new customer.

Customer acquisition and retention for a retailer is more critical and difficult for the following reasons:

- (a) most retailers have a defined physical catchment area defined by the distance that most of its shoppers would travel to visit the store. Although it differs with the kind of product bought by the shopper, there is a significant impact on the frequency of visit to the store. Thus, a store has to work within a given geographical area with a radius of not more than 5 – 6 kilometres;
- (b) not every retailers is able to offer the merchandise that is very different nor the positioning of the store is differentiated; and
- (c) every visit of the shopper is an encounter and a moment of truth. Unless the interaction has been satisfactory, the next visit is not guaranteed. In case the store provides a compelling reason for visit, the amount of purchase per visit is likely to go down.

Under this condition, it is imperative that the store should understand the shoppers it wants to attract and keep. Since retailing is a service business, and is not just distribution, there are more “soft” than “hard” variables that would lead to creation of a customer franchise. It is not only important as to what is being retailed, it is equally, may be more, important as to how it is being retailed. This condition shifts the focus from the merchandise being handled to the processes that

make shopping a memorable experience. All the retailers that believe in this paradigm would require that shoppers be segmented on the basis of attitude and behaviour than on demographic. The latter is a pre-condition that works as eliminator and not describing the segment the retailer would serve. Also, a retail outlet is likely to be patronised more when it becomes a part of the life of the shopper.

Need for Study

Most of the investment in a retail outlet is of fixed nature. It is more like a sunk cost, as is in the case of an airline. Of all the investments, the real estate costs are the highest and the store needs to improve on its productivity by utilising the space optimally. This can be achieved by ensuring that there is high level of conversion rate from visitors to buyers. This conversion is possible by impacting the behaviour using the variables, such as merchandise, display, layout and other communication, within the control of the retailer. It is, thus, necessary for the retailers to know how shoppers behave and whether there are any patterns that can be used to design the retail mix for specific set of shoppers. It can even be used for targeting and develop the positioning strategy for the store.

Crossword is a chain of bookstores in India. It has redefined the way books are retailed in India. A large number of changes have been brought by taking store decisions based on the behaviour of Indian book buyers at the store. For instance, the racks have a lower height than in most stores. It found that the average height of an Indian consumer is lower than those in western countries, while the racks were designed based on the international standards. This not only caused discomfort but also affected the sale of the books. The lowering of the racks not only increased sales, the store looked more spacious as the shoppers could see all through to the end of the store. Similarly, it found that the shoppers would squat on the floor to browse the books on the lower shelves of the racks. It changed to design of the rack so that the lower shelf was an incline and the shopper could see the books clearly. This increased the sale of the books even when they were placed on the lowest shelves.

Consider this scenario at a grocery store. A shopper walks in and asks for bread. The shopkeeper gives hands over a loaf. The customer checks the softness and asks for another piece. He checks it again. Compares the softness of the two loaves and chooses one of them. In another store, loaves of bread are placed on the counter. A shopper walks in and starts choosing the loaf on the basis of softness. He picks one, pays and leaves. The two situations elicit the extent of selling as well as buying efforts required. It is very likely that in the latter case the shopper is more satisfied and there is lesser effort from the shopkeeper as well. It is a win-win situation. The merchandising in the second store is based on the behaviour of the shopper, where as in the other it is based on the retailer's stocking pattern.

Shopping is an activity aimed at collecting information. The search processes give shoppers an opportunity to ensure that they take the right decision. In addition, they also derive emotional satisfaction (Tauber, 1972). It has been found that a high level of brand awareness need not always translate into sales. Shoppers do take into consideration the information they acquire in stores, rather than just relying on out of store communication (Underhill, 1999). In a study conducted by POPAI (2001), it was found that the sales of some product categories increased by almost 60% due to effective communication at the store.

Shopping involves a “see-touch-feel-select” sequence. The degree to which the shoppers follow the whole or part of this process varies with brand, product category, and other elements of the marketing mix (Connolly and Firth, 1998). In an exploratory study conducted in India (Sinha and Uniyal, 2000), it was found that the extent also depended on the association that the shopper had with the store. Shoppers, who were new to the store or were considering buying a brand for the first time, showed a higher level of information search. Those who were frequent buyers of the store would either go straight to the stack and pick up the product or would ask the retailers when trying a new brand. In some cases they would pick up the product. In many cases they would buy the product recommended by the retailers. In any case they would not do a very elaborate information search. Such behaviour has been explained as the routine, limited or complex buying behaviour in marketing literature.

It was also found that the shoppers changed their information search process as per the stores, even when the same product and in some cases even the same brand was being bought. It was found that shoppers would ask for a brand in a kirana (general/provision) store and resist a change in many cases. But in a self-service store, they would look at more than one brand before deciding. In some cases, they would buy only from the shops they patronise, even when it was located at a distance and there were other stores in vicinity. This behaviour is very evident among cigarette buyers who have a fixed store, either because of long association or because it is on their way to work.

It is evident that shopping as an information search process signifies behaviour that may differ with type of store, association with store and type of product bought. Therefore, the other segmentation variables, such as demographic or psychographic, may not help the retailers understand the shoppers in their true form. Behaviour may be a better base of profiling the shoppers and hence taking decisions that would improve the profitability of the store. It is also possible to mould shopper behaviour to suit the retailer's requirements, especially in Indian context where retailing is opening up as an organised activity.

Existing Shopper Segments:

Several attempts have been made to develop a typology of shoppers. Annexure – 1 provides a summary of them (Brown and Reid 1997; Westbrook and Black 1985). Some of the salient features of these attempts are as follows:

1. The typologies are developed based on attitude towards shopping and the motives / gratification derived. Perhaps it stems from the fact that an activity like shopping can be explained best by attitudes that lead to a certain behaviour. However, there are ample evidences when the retailers have conditioned behaviour to form an attitude. The Annual Sale by Vivek's, a durable store in Chennai with a turn over of about Rs. 1000 million, aimed at affecting the behaviour and through the years created a large sect of customers who wait or postpone their purchases. Crossword at Ahmedabad has been able to change the reading and book-buying attitude of people by influencing their behaviour. The customers in these stores

come from all demo-psycho-geographic-socio-cultural background, supporting the case of behaviour as a good basis for profiling and segmentation of shoppers.

2. The typologies do not consider the impact of the context. They are presented as stable shopper orientation and are not sensitive to situational influences (Reid and Brown, 1997; Hibbert and Tagg, 2001). It is known that the context affects our behaviour. Tai and Faung (1997) found that environment-induced emotional states have a positive association with in-store behaviour of the shoppers, which in turn, effects on the pleasure felt in the store and the in-store rating of the environmental stimuli. By inducing the shoppers to stay for a longer duration, a retail outlet may lead the shoppers to increases spending (Donovan, Rossiter, Marcoolyn, and Nesdale, 1994). Falk (1997) stresses that retailers provide an opportunity to the shoppers to interact at close encounter with the scopics and derive aesthetic stimulation.
3. The format and ambience of the store has its own impact on the shoppers. Its effect is seen in dressing patterns, language, and interaction with store personnel as well as response to communication at the store. It is likely that even a shopping apathetic would behave in the same manner as a shopper who has a liking for shopping in a given store environment. It was found in a study that even a stereotype's behaviour changed when the store context changed (Cele and McGrath, 2001)
4. The methodology used by all of them, barring one, is statistical. It is quantitative in nature using scales to measure attitude. In India, where retailing is still evolving beyond distribution, it is very likely that the expectations of the shoppers would be very basic and limited to the tangible aspects only. Also, shopping in India is very close to outing and hence a lot of entertainment value is attached. In such a scenario, attitude measurement may not yield the required results. Behaviour at the store may be a more reliable measurement.

Two aspects, therefore, do not seem to have been paid much attention: (a) segmenting shoppers based on their behaviour at the store. There have been attempts to study consumer behaviour with regard to product usage, but none to segment shoppers. Behaviour in this case is defined an the act of information search as well as reaction to the cues at the store such as layout and displays, salespersons, POP Communication and other facilities such as carts, bins etc. It encompasses the

activities that may not always lead to purchase, such as browsing of a magazine or use of a listening post in a music store, and (b) an alternate methodology for developing a typology based on behaviour.

Behaviour has been studied using one or a combination of three methods. The first method is based on the manipulation of the store variables such as display or promotions and measuring the change in sales pattern through inventory and purchase audit (Cox, 1964). The second method involves entry and exit interviews to understand planned and unplanned purchases and the causes of deviation from plan (Kollat and Willet, 1967). The third approach has been to directly observe the shoppers while they perform their shopping activity (Wells and LoSciuto, 1966). In many cases it has been preferred over interviews and laboratory experiments. It is felt that while interview data is subject to distortion and memory error, the laboratory experiment produces data that is artificial. Hick and Kohl (1955) were, perhaps, the first to use this method. They called this method as memomotion study. Wells and LoSciuto (1966) studied the influence of children on cereal decision making and found that most of the children attempted to influence their parents and many of them succeeded. Supporting this method, Rubens (1975) suggested that a camouflaged study could bring out several aspects of behaviour that shoppers may not be able to verbalise. Atkin (1978), Rust (1993) and Darian (1998) have used this method to understand children behaviour while shopping. Some researchers do point out that the observational research relies heavily on deduction (and hence speculation) and has limited use (Granbois, 1978).

However, observational research is very commonly used in social sciences, especially anthropological studies. It is used since it has the ability to uncover unconscious consumer actions, small product annoyances that might otherwise go unnoticed, or potential unfulfilled needs of emerging markets (Wimmer and Stiles, 2001). The informants may not recall all behaviours as not they may not be carefully thought through. Some of the respondents may also have limited reporting capabilities. In such a situation, ethnography may help in not only establishing the context and subjective significance but also in interpretation of these behaviours (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994). Underhill (1999) has demonstrated through several studies that observational research can be used to design retail strategies for providing delightful experiences to the shoppers and increased profitability to the retailers.

Methodology

This study has used a methodology that involved observation of the shoppers for gathering the data. Participant observation was chosen as it puts the researcher where the action is and experience the lives of informants (Bernard, 2000:318). The steps involved in the process are outlined below (Schutt, 1999:285):

1. Choosing a Role: The observation study began with the decision about the role to be played by the researcher. These roles lied on the continuum of a complete observation where the researcher does not disclose the identity to complete participant where the researcher is also an active member of the group and the group is aware that it is being researched. The decision was taken in the light of the situation being studied, socio-political context, researcher's background and personality and ethical concerns. It was felt that the informants may be reactive to the researcher and would not be their natural self. Hence, covert observation was followed. It is the candid camera approach where the informants are not disturbed during the process. Also no questions were asked to the respondents till the observation is over.
2. Entering the Field: It was important that the researcher was not singled out in the field. A vantage position was decided after evaluating the store as the researchers were carrying scratch pads. They were the "Mystery Shoppers" in most cases. In some cases where the store layout did not facilitate movement, the researchers took a position on the counter next to the salesperson.
3. Developing and Maintaining Relationship: The context and the researchers had to relate very well so as to continue to observe diverse shoppers at the store This was achieved by taking the shopkeeper into confidence. The storeowner was approached and briefed about the project. He was requested to introduce the researchers to its staff. Honest explanation for the researcher and the study, with support from documents endorsing the study, was developed.
4. Sampling Informants and Events: There are two approaches to sampling in observational research. These can be classified into breadth and depth. In the latter part a smaller number of

informants are observed allowing for a more intensive portrait of actors and activities but generalisation may be questioned. The intended study tried to bring depth as well as breadth by increasing the sample size and choosing a mix of stores. The stores were chosen on the information search as exhibited by the shoppers reflected in the kind of product bought and the format of the stores. The study was conducted across time band as it was expected that the behaviour might differ with the time of shopping. The study involved a stratified random sampling. The stratification was based on the type of store. A total of 284 responses were collected. The study focused on the shopper and not the accompanying person, unless the latter was actively involved in shopping. The profile of the informants is given in **Table – 1**.

5. Recording the Observations: A track sheet was prepared that included space for noting down the observation. However, the observations were recorded as field notes. These notes were jottings, as it was difficult to write down everything without disrupting the observation. Wherever it was possible to hear possible, the conversation was noted. This process was hindered, as the researchers had to maintain a “safe” distance. This was also affected as many stores were playing music. Movement of every informant was mapped. The researchers recorded everything they had observed before choosing the next informant. This helped in reducing lapses due to loss of memory.

6. Analysis of Observation Findings: The text was analysed using a Grounded Theory Approach. It has found its use across social sciences including management (Bernard, 2000:443). It was used in identifying categories and concepts that emerged from the text and linking the concepts into substantive and formal theories. Content analysis was not used as there were no hypotheses to be tested and there was no a priori categorisation of behaviour (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994). The analysis followed the following steps:
 - a) Produce transcripts and read through a sample of text
 - b) Identify possible themes (categories) that arise out of the text
 - c) Compare the categories after pulling all the data
 - d) Explore linkages among categories
 - e) Build conceptual models and check with the data – especially the non-conforming cases.

Findings and Analysis

A total of 284 shoppers were observed at stores dealing in grocery, apparels, household appliances, books and music, shoes, lifestyle products like cards and gift items, cosmetics and medicine. This stratification was used since it was found that the store choice depended on the type of product available at the store. This was also followed so as to include buying situations with differing level of involvement. Effort was made to select respondents from the old and the new format stores. The formats have been distinguished based on the facility provided to the shoppers to browse and choose by themselves. A store was classified as belonging to the new format when the onus of information search was on the shoppers. They had access to the merchandise and could touch and feel without the help of the shopkeeper / salesperson, though they could choose to take the help of the salesperson. Other stores belonged to the old format. These stores were chosen from different parts of the city to enable a wider spread of the sample. An attempt was made to choose equal number of respondents from each format and the type of store.

The study brought out 828 behavioural cues from these informants. The context of these cues are given in **Table – 2**.

Shopper Segments

This section describe the 26 different shopper segments identifies on the basis of their behaviour. It also draws their profiles as provided in **Tables - 3 to 6**. An attempt has been made to identify the retail mix variable that would help in creating a lasting impression on the shopper and build store patronage and referral.

1. Adjusting

Such type of shoppers spoke on the mild tone despite the fact that the product they bought was defective. They tried another size meekly when the original size was not available. They were always found to be on defensive.

Such shoppers were less in number as compared to other shopper types and were found in stores dealing in books, music and shoes. These shoppers were all men. They were found in stores with new format and in most cases came to shop alone.

It is observed that this is a good opportunity for the store to placate its shoppers. There has been a lapse in the service and the shopper has returned to the store. Store personnel would need to attend these shoppers immediately while speaking in mild tones. In most situations, these shoppers would like to be the first person they would meet. In new format stores, a clear indication of the desk for such services and identification of the salespersons are found very helpful to these shoppers. In the absence of these as also in old format stores such shopper may like to speak to the persons at the cash counters, as they are perceived to be authoritative.

2. Authoritative

Such type of shoppers asked for favours, discounts. They made the salesmen work double, run around. They tended to put pressure on the salesmen by asking too many questions. They sometimes scolded the salesperson. Some even quarrelled with salesperson and forced him to give discount. They also demanded credit.

These shoppers were also less in number and were found mostly at cosmetics, durable, grocery, medicines and shoes stores. Such shoppers were predominantly women, mostly accompanied and were found in almost equal proportions in both old and new formats.

Such shoppers need good handling. The salespersons need to be knowledgeable not just about the store, its policies and the merchandise, but also of such information about competing stores. The salespersons would have to be good listeners and patient. They should also not yield to the demands of the shoppers easily. Such shoppers are important since they could be converted into spokespersons for the store.

3. Ambience Seeker

This group of shoppers enjoyed the shop atmosphere. They kept on looking at various displays and windows. They hung around, saw, read, and listened to all what was on display. They also

used other facilities. Such shoppers looked happy and enjoying the atmospherics. They wandered in the shop, looking around the counters and shelves.

Books and medicines were two types of stores where this shopper segment was observed. They were men, in new format stores. They came to shop alone as well accompanied in equal numbers.

A store would need to create a good environment for such shoppers. Lighting, music, fragrance would help in building image of the store. So would be the display of the merchandise and clear POP communication is very essential for such shoppers.

4. Ambience Intimidated

They were found to be uncomfortable and nervous inside the store. They did not seem to enjoy the ambience. They looked to be conscious of the atmospherics. They did not see or read any display. They seemed very careful while picking up merchandise. Such shoppers tended to check if they were being watched. Some of them would also keep adjusting their dresses and hair.

Very less in number, they were found mostly in books and music, and durable stores. These shoppers were men in new format stores. They came to shop alone as well as accompanied.

A store would need to put these shoppers at comfort at the earliest. They need to be attended immediately. Salespersons have the most important roles to play in helping them shop better.

5. Variety Seeker

They looked for various options and asked for more variety of the same product. Such shoppers observed all the racks. They would see many items before selecting. They tried each type, one by one, asked for more variety. They also looked at many brands and other products. Some of these shoppers looked at many product categories and kept on shifting between various sections and racks. Some times shoppers looked around the shop simply glancing at various shelves with out attention to any brand or product in particular. Many of these shoppers went to product and tried to open and test it immediately. They seemed to try to feel the product. Such shoppers asked for

the product, but were not pre-decided on brands. They tend to ask for the merchandise by the product category and not brands.

Such shoppers were found in all types of stores. However, they were found more in books and music, cosmetics, and durable outlets. They were almost equally divided among men and women shoppers. More women in this category were accompanied as compared to men. They were in found more in new format stores as compared to old format stores.

These shoppers would put the store on test. They would like to maximise the returns on the effort expended on shopping. Their behaviour can be compared to dissonance reducing behaviour. Stores would need to have a good range of merchandise to attract such shoppers. Such shoppers would look for depth than breadth of the merchandise. Large stores would benefit as they are in a position to attract a wider base on shopper through better depth as well as depth of their offer. Since the shoppers look at almost all the offers in the category, they are open to switching from their current brand. In new format stores, good display is essential. Communication of any scheme at the display would also help. Salespersons would have a limited role to play. They may, in many cases, be perceived to be intruding.

6. List Driven

These shoppers came with a list and bought only from list. They did not look around much, nor did not try any product. They were also oblivious to the displays on racks. Such shoppers did not ask for options.

Grocery is the only store type where such shoppers were found in a significant number, though they were also found at medicine stores. Divided almost equally among men and women, they shopped mostly alone and were generally found in old format shops.

Such shoppers are very purposive and are blinkered. The most important variable is the availability of the product. The retailer would need to be also efficient in servicing, especially in the old format stores. In the new format stores, salesperson can make their shopping pleasurable.

7. Browser

Shoppers of this kind had a very relaxed approach. They did not look to be in a buying mode. Most of them were busy browsing and having personal talks. They would enter the shop and move around at ease carelessly. Shoppers looked non-involved and easy going.

Books and music stores were most prominent places where such incidence of behaviour was noticed. These shoppers were predominantly men and had come to the stores alone. These stores were new format stores.

Such shoppers need to be left alone. However, an occasional query from a salesperson might help. Store could add impulse products to its merchandise to increase the profitability from such customers.

8. Hurried

Such shoppers were in a hurry. Their gestures showed restlessness. They wanted to leave the store as soon as possible.

They were very few in number and were found only in stores dealing in cosmetics, grocery/perishable, medicines and shoes. They were mostly women. They came either alone or accompanied and were found at both old and new stores.

Stores that provide quick service would attract such shoppers. Salespersons would have to be proactive. They should be given priority in taking orders. In case of new format store, neat display would help such shoppers.

9. Bargain Seeker

Most of these shoppers tried to lower the price. They wanted adjustments in price in lieu of bulk purchase and tried to negotiate the prices. They repeatedly asked for bargains, asked salesperson to reduce the price.

Such shoppers were found predominantly in durable stores. In small numbers they were also found in cards and gifts, cosmetics, and grocery stores. Men and women were in equal proportions. Such incidences of behaviour were found more in new format stores and were divided almost equally between those who shopped alone or were accompanied.

Stores need to handle these shoppers better as they are necessarily seeking for a price reduction. The salesperson would need to be firm and soft and should try to maximise the value derived.

10. Budget Conscious

These shoppers changed products/ brands as they did not fit in the budget. They did not buy anything that exceeded their budget.

Durable stores are the most prominent store type in such type of shoppers. They were also found in cosmetic and grocery stores. Number of men exhibiting such behaviour was more. These men generally came alone.

The salespersons that help them get the most out of their budget would be like the most. For such shoppers prices of the merchandise need to be displayed prominently.

11. Involved

Such Shoppers asked for product quality, checked performance and made queries about performance. They bought one brand but when not satisfied returned it and bought some thing else. Asked about many attributes of the product and selected the merchandise only after going through various types. They made comparisons and saw many varieties before selecting. Shoppers also carefully looked at product features and took time to choose. They consulted, sought information as well as reconfirmed procedures from the sales person.

These types of shoppers were found in stores dealing in cards and gifts, cosmetics, durable and shoes. Some incidences of this type of behaviour were found in rest of the categories too. More women were belonged to this shopper segment. There was no significant difference in the number

of alone and accompanied shoppers. Involved shoppers were found more in new format stores as compared to old format.

For such shoppers, the stores not only need to have the depth but also the breadth of merchandise. Salespersons are required to play an active role in the buying process. They are expected to be knowledgeable and keep the customer's interest in mind. Stores where the salespersons ask the shoppers for their requirements and provide unconditional guarantee would be able to build patronage among such shoppers. Post-purchase communication would also play an important role.

12. Impulsive

Such shoppers bought products at the counter. They bought products at the spur of the moment. They bought something on accompanying persons' request without much thought.

Very few shoppers were found to be impulsive. These types of shoppers were found in grocery stores. They were women shoppers and most of them were found in new format stores. They were generally accompanied.

Stores need to have displays for enhanced visibility and accessibility.

13. Consultative

These shoppers asked the accompanying person about the purchase. They took time for discussion with fellow shopper. They would also seek advice from the salesperson. Some of these shoppers looked at mirror and asked for comments from fellow shoppers and /or salesperson about the product.

Although these shoppers were found in all categories of stores, they were found more in cosmetics, durable, grocery and shoes retail outlets. Durable stores had maximum number of consultative shoppers in comparison to other categories. They were equally divided among men and women shoppers. Largely accompanied, such shoppers were found mostly in new format stores.

Stores need to provide an environment where the shoppers can discuss with the accompanying persons unhesitatingly. Salespersons would have to be careful not to be seen as intrusive. They need to be patient and speak only when the shoppers seek clarification. Stores that provide proper arrangements that maintain a “safe” distance from the salesperson as well as other shoppers would be preferred.

14. Discount Seeker

These shoppers observed discount tags and in most cases bought those. They would ask the salesperson for discounts. They tended to head straight towards the discount section as soon as they entered the shop. They would look around for schemes. Sometimes they were carrying coupons to be redeemed.

Stores dealing in durable products witnessed a large number of such shoppers. These shoppers were also found in grocery and shoes. A few were also found in cosmetics stores. More men were more in numbers and they were mostly accompanied. They were found more in new format stores.

To provide the best shopping experience, the store should have display communication regarding discounts and schemes inside the store. More prominent would be the banners/boards outside the stores. The announcements of discount or schemes in mass media would also attract these shoppers.

15. Expressive

Such shoppers made faces and gestures, spoke loudly. At times they showed their displeasure openly. They spoke their mind irrespective of shop and settings. Some of them showed shock and surprise by facial expressions; some nodded their heads while keeping the eyes wide open and lips tight. They were certainly oblivious to others in their acts and did not care if anyone ever noticed them. Some of these shoppers looked at mirrors and asked for comments from fellow shoppers and/or salesperson.

Such shoppers were found in almost all the categories but number of shoppers were more in durable and cosmetics stores. More women were found to be expressive than men, and these women were shopping alone in new format stores.

A store may like to take cues from these expressions and train its salesperson to “play by ear”. However, at no point they should be questioned of their expressions.

16. Familiar

These shoppers entered the store very confidently. They did not ask for directions. They were moving comfortably. They would go straight to the racks or a particular section of the store. They seemed to know the salesperson. Some of them shared jokes with the salespeople. Many of them shook hands with the shop owner while leaving.

While they were seen in most of the stores, they were found more in grocery stores followed by medicine and books stores. There was more number of men in this segment and they shopped mostly alone. These shoppers were found in both the formats.

Such shoppers need to be attended immediately. In most cases even a greeting would help. Stores face the danger of taking them for granted. They could be talked about their views on the store. They should be made aware of any new arrival or event at the store before the announcement to other shoppers.

17. Infrequent

Such shoppers generally looked around purposefully. Some of them did not know where to park the vehicles. These shoppers asked for directions. They entered in to the store hesitatingly with unsure steps, looking around. They tend to rush towards the shopping area or section as soon the sales person provides them the direction.

They were found in almost all type of stores, though they were found more in grocery and durable stores. Almost equal number of men and women exhibited such behaviour. Found mostly in new format stores, these shoppers almost equally divided among alone and accompanied.

Clear signages, especially in the new format stores, are the most important factor in providing comfort to such shoppers. They would need help, but may not ask. The need to be attended immediately. Neatly displayed merchandise would add to their shopping experience.

18. Family buyer

These types of shoppers bought in bulk. They also bought products for self. They always wanted to buy large quantity at one time.

Such types of shoppers were predominantly found in grocery outlets. They were divided equally among men and women and were mostly accompanied.

These shoppers may be attracted to stores that have a good merchandise mix. Discount stores or warehouse clubs could be the preferred stores. Stores that provide services of home delivery or to their vehicles outside the store would also preferred.

19. Individualistic

In this case each of the shoppers took their own decisions even when accompanied by another person. They asked for individual preferences.

Very few incidences of such behaviour were found. This behaviour was observed more among women. These shoppers were found in books and music, durable and shoe stores.

Stores need to service these shoppers individually, even though they seem to be together. There may be a need to deploy independent salespersons for each of them. In case the salesperson would need to service them simultaneously, they could be requested to be serviced one by one.

20. Help seeker

This kind of shoppers approached the salespersons immediately on entering the shop. They would call upon the sales person while browsing also. Such shoppers tend to seek help all through their shopping.

Such shoppers were found in all stores except in grocery and apparel stores. Almost equal number of men and women who were mostly accompanied and were found predominantly in new format stores.

A store would need to understand that such shoppers would derive maximum satisfaction out of the promptness and richness of the information provided to them. Salespersons would play an important role in this. Such shoppers would seek personal attention, even when the merchandise is neatly displayed and there are clear directions. In a technologically developed shopping environment, kiosks could be very useful.

21. Inquirer

Shoppers belonging to this category asked for information from salesperson about various things and availability. Tried to gain info about product features and prices of various products. Constantly looked out for information, read labels and information mentioned on the product packaging and asked for product literature and pamphlets. They seldom bought any product.

They were found predominantly in durable outlets, though some of them were also found in medicine and shoe stores. Mostly alone and men, they were found largely in new format stores.

These shoppers are still in the information assimilation stage. Besides the information provided on the label, they would seek information on the store. While the salesperson can provide them the required information, the store needs to provide them with literature that they can carry with them. Mailers, leaflets placed at convenient location for the shoppers to pick would be helpful.

22. Brand Conscious

Shoppers of this kind inquired about various brands, looked at branded products and asked about them. They asked for a particular brand and some of them did not buy other brand when the desired brand was not available.

Such shoppers were found more in durable and grocery outlets. Some of them were also found in apparel and cosmetics stores. These shoppers were not found in any other type of the stores. Men were found to be more brand conscious than women. Evenly divided among alone and accompanied shopper, they were found mostly in new format stores.

These shoppers would derive maximum satisfaction out of the stores that not only deal in their brands, but are able to extend the brand experience at the store too. Retailers would need to match the store and brand imagery for a synergetic result. The role of the brand owners become very critical so as to ensures the right brand experience. Store would need to provide the complete range of the required brand.

23. Pre-decided

The shoppers constituting this group had come to buy a particular type of products. They went straight to the specific racks or a particular section. They would ask for particular product/service with out looking around and would leave immediately. They were not interested in surrounding and at times left the shop when the desired product was not found. They seemed to have limited product choice set. They tried and bought the product initially asked for and in most cases did not try anything else. Most of them would ask for particular sizes and products only. Generally did not ask salesmen and started observing and selecting the pre-decided product. In some cases, they did ask the salespersons but only for some clarification.

They were the largest segment of shoppers. They were found in all types of stores. However, their number was highest in durable stores followed by grocery and medicine stores. Such behaviour was found more among men. Found mostly in new format stores, these shoppers were equally divided between alone and accompanied.

These are very informed buyers. They have already assimilated and processed the information. Most of them have decided on the choice set. The retailer can win the favour of such customers by meeting their requirements at the earliest. They are however open to suggestions from the salespersons, but within their choice sets. The salespersons in most cases would be asked only about the availability of their choice set. Such shoppers are likely to value depth in merchandise more than the width. Neat displays, clear communication will help in bringing these shoppers back.

24. Indecisive

These shoppers were unable to make a decision on their own. They would look around for help. Before making the final purchase, they took a lot of time and consultations. They would stop talking when they found that the store was quiet. Such shoppers took hesitant steps. A large number of them went out without buying.

Such shoppers were found more in books and music and durable stores. Some of them were also found in medicine, shoes and cards and gifts. These shoppers were not noticed in apparel and grocery stores. There were more men exhibiting such behaviour. Such shoppers were found largely in new format stores and were mostly accompanied.

Stores that are encountered with such shoppers would have to play a handholding role. Most of these shoppers would require confirmation / affirmation from others before they finalise their purchase. Aggressive selling may prove detrimental.

25. Price Conscious

Shoppers belonging to this category perceived place to be costly. They would hint at buying at a cheaper place. While selecting or browsing, they looked mainly at the price tags. They would check the price first, keep the merchandise back after reading the price. Price was the first thing they asked the salesperson. Some of the shoppers changed brands when they found that the price was high.

These shoppers were found in all stores. However, such behaviour was observed more in durable, grocery and shoes stores. They were mostly accompanied and almost equally divided among men and women.

The most important thing for these shoppers would be merchandise with their price displayed. Store may like to arrange their merchandise based on the prices. EDLP would be the biggest draw for such shoppers.

26. Quality Conscious

They insisted upon quality and not price. Always asked about the quality and durability of the merchandise. They made sure about the good quality of the product. Seldom would they ask for the price.

Very few in number, majority of them were found in shoe stores. The other stores where they were found included grocery, durable and cosmetics stores. Women were found to be more quality conscious. These shoppers were generally accompanied. And were equally divided among old and new format stores.

Retailers need to provide information and cue that their merchandise is of high quality. Wherever possible, a demonstration of the product would help. In other situations, proof of reliability may be needed. In case the products have been sold to other shoppers, a reference of the same may be made. Performance guarantee may be expected by the shoppers.

Summary and Implication:

The study has brought out a basis of segmentation that can be used to understand shops without disturbing them. It can be evident from the study that shoppers do not portray all kinds of behaviour at every store. Every retailer would need to find out its major set of buyers and develop its strategies accordingly. For instance, shoppers at a books and music store are not brand conscious. They are not budget conscious and do not seem to be impulsive. As evident from **Table – 7**, these behaviours caused due to an interaction between two factors: personal

characteristics of the shoppers and the store. The study becomes useful also to establish an association between the behaviour and the attitude of the shoppers, as many of the behaviours are a reflection of the attitudes of the shoppers. It also states that a retailer may not be able to influence the behaviour of the shoppers in many cases. Cues that are purely behavioural are easy to manage. For others the store would have to draw a plan that has a longer horizon. Changing attitude would take time. The retailers would have to ensure that the shoppers keep visiting the store and slowly change their attitude based on the consistently pleasurable encounter with the store. A store may use one or a combination of the ingredients of its retail mix as indicated in **Table – 8**. It would have to keep improving on the offer so that the shoppers find the visits better than the previous visits. The retailer would have to build flexibility in its operation so that each shopper visiting the store finds the service personalised.

Further Research

It is evident that observation of the shoppers while they are in the store can help in understanding them better. However, this research was exploratory in nature and hence no hypothesis has been formulated and validated. This methodology can be extended to measure the results of experiments at the store. A store may manipulate its retail mix variables and test out the impact on shopping behaviour. In the current study, a shopper has been observed for its complete shopping cycle. A store could identify its critical areas, such as the new arrival displays in books and music stores or some blind spots, and develop strategies to increase its productivity. It is also felt that the current model as depicted in Annexure – 2 can be tested empirically to establish a casual relationship between the orientation of the shoppers and their behaviour at the store.

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Annexure –1: Summary of Principal Shopper Typologies

Author/Date	Population	Gender	Sample Size	Research Format	Shopper types (%)
Stone 1954	Department Store Shoppers	Female – 100%	124	Questionnaire; cluster analysis	Economic (33) Personalising (28) Ethical (18) Apathetic (17) Indeterminate (4)
Chicago Tribune 1955	Department Store Shoppers	Female – 100%	50	Depth Interviews	Dependent (n/a) Compulsive (n/a) Individualistic (n/a)
Stephen and Willet 1969	Adult Buyers of Apparel, Shoes and Toys	No reference to gender make-up	315	No. of Stores Shopped and Patronised	Store Loyal (n/a) Compulsive/Recreational (n/a) Convenience (n/a) Price/Bargain (n/a)
Darden and Reynolds 1971	Head of Household	Female	167	AIO Statements	Economic (n/a) Personalising (n/a) Moralistic (n/a) Apathetic (n/a)
Darden and Ashton 1975	Middle-class suburban housewives	Female – 100%	116	Self-administered questionnaire; MANOVA	Apathetic (22) Demanding (9) Quality (19) Fastidious (15) Stamp preferer (12) Convenience (15) Stamp haters (8)
Moschis 1976	Cosmetic buyers	Female – 100%	206	Questionnaire; factor analysis	Specials (n/a) Brand loyal (n/a) Store loyal (n/a) Problem solving (n/a) Psycho-socialising (n/a) Name-conscious (n/a)
Williams, Painter and Nicholas 1978	Grocery shoppers	: assume 100% female	298	Questionnaire; cluster analysis	Apathetic (20) Convenience (27) Price (27) Involved (11) Unclassifiable (15)
Bellenger and Korgaonkar 1980	Adult shoppers	Female – 69% Male – 31%	324	Self-administered questionnaire; discriminant analysis	Economic (69) Recreational (31)
Westbrook and Black 1985	Adult Shoppers	Female – 100%	203	Structured questionnaire; factor analysis	Shopping process involved (12) Choice optimising (18) Shopping process apathetic (20) Apathetic (10) Economic (31) Nondescript (9)

Author/Date	Population	Gender	Sample Size	Research Format	Shopper types (%)
Lesser and Hughes 1986	Head of household	Female – 55% Male – 45%	6,808	Telephone interview; Q-factor analysis	Inactive (15) Active (13) Service (19) Traditional (14) Dedicated fringe (9) Price (10) Transitional (7) Convenience (5) Coupon saver (5) Innovator (4) Unclassified (8)
AGB 1987	Housewives	Female – 100%	Panel members	Questionnaires; cluster analysis	Caring and conscientious (20) Indifferent (21) Old fashioned (15) Healthy brigade (20) Hodonist (23)
Cullen 1990	Principal household shopper	Female – 75% Male – 25%	2,484	Postal questionnaire; factor analysis	Shopping affect (n/a) Economic (n/a) Apathetic (n/a) Shopping snob (n/a)
Kirk-Smith and Mak 1992	Financial services users	Mixed - unspecified	2,630	Questionnaire; factor analysis	Uninvolved (9) Pleasurists (23) Conserving carers (22) Belongers (24) Confident modernists (22)
Jerratt D G 1996	Adult Shoppers	Mixed - unspecified	931	Questionnaire; Cluster analysis	Have to (n/a) Moderate (n/a) Service (n/a) Experiential (n/a) Practical (n/a) Product Oriented (n/a)

Table - 1: Informant Profile						
Store Type	Female	Male	Accompanied	Alone	New Format	Old Format
Apparels		13	7	6		13
Books and Music	10	20	11	19	30	
Cards and Gifts	17	13	16	14	30	
Cosmetics	28	2	15	15	18	12
Durables	17	45	38	24	62	
Grocery / Perishables	32	28	25	35	30	30
Medicines	7	22	8	21	14	15
Shoes	10	20	19	11	23	7
Total	121	163	139	145	207	77

Table - 2: Behavioural Shopper Segment Profile															
Shopper Segment	Store Type							Gender		Accompaniment		Store Format		Overall	
	Apparels	Books and Music	Cards and Gifts	Cosmetics	Durables	Grocery / Perishables	Medicines	Shoes	Female	Male	Yes	No	New		Old
Adjusting		1						2		3	1	2	3		3
Ambience Intimidated	1	2	2	4	1			4	9	5	10	4	10	4	14
Ambience seeker		3	1			1	2			7	4	3	7		7
Authoritative				2	3	1		1	6	1	4	3	5	2	7
Bargain Seeker	1	1	2	2	4	2		1	6	7	8	5	8	5	13
Brand Conscious	3			2	9	7			9	12	10	11	14	7	21
Browser	1	12			1	3		4	2	19	6	15	20	1	21
Budget Conscious				1	4	1			1	5	3	3	5	1	6
Consultative	1	2	8	12	14	10	4	10	30	31	53	8	47	14	61
Discount Seeker	1			3	13	10		9	12	24	22	14	33	3	36
Expressive		1	2	5	7	4	2	2	13	10	10	13	18	5	23
Familiar	7	9	2	4	9	31	12	6	32	48	27	53	45	35	80
Family buyer		1		1		8		2	6	6	8	4	7	5	12
Help seeker		2	1	1	3		1	4	5	7	7	5	10	2	12
Hurried				1		1	1	1	3	1	2	2	2	2	4
Impulsive			1	1		5	1		7	1	6	2	4	4	8
Indecisive		7	2	1	4		2	3	9	10	11	8	17	2	19
Individualistic		1			1			1	2	1	2	1	2	1	3
Infrequent	2	3	3	4	7	6	2	1	13	15	16	12	21	7	28
Inquirer				3	36	3	5	5	11	41	24	28	47	5	52
Involved	2	7	11	19	15	4	3	10	43	28	36	35	54	17	71
List driven						6	1		3	4	3	4	3	4	7
Pre decided	11	12	17	17	45	29	22	12	65	100	76	89	112	53	165
Price Conscious	2	2	6	4	28	17	1	11	33	38	41	30	61	10	71
Quality Conscious				1	1	2		4	5	3	5	3	5	3	8
Variety Seeker	3	16	5	15	15	10	5	7	38	38	42	34	64	12	76
Grand Total	35	82	63	103	220	161	64	100	363	465	437	391	624	204	828

Table - 3: Shopper Segment and Gender			
Shopper Type	Gender		
	Female	Male	Grand Total
Adjusting		3	3
Ambience intimidated	9	5	14
Ambience seeker		7	7
Authoritative	6	1	7
Bargain Seeker	6	7	13
Brand Conscious	9	12	21
Browser	2	19	21
Budget Conscious	1	5	6
Consultative	30	31	61
Discount Seeker	12	24	36
Expressive	13	10	23
Familiar	32	48	80
Family buyer	6	6	12
Help seeker	5	7	12
Hurried	3	1	4
Impulsive	7	1	8
Indecisive	9	10	19
Individualistic	2	1	3
Infrequent	13	15	28
Inquirer	11	41	52
Involved	43	28	71
List driven	3	4	7
Pre decided	65	100	165
Price Conscious	33	38	71
Quality Conscious	5	3	8
Variety Seeker	38	38	76
Grand Total	363	465	828

Table - 4: Shopper Segment and Store Type									
Shopper Type	Type of Store								Grand Total
	Apparels	Books and Music	Cards and Gifts	Cosmetics	Durables	Grocery / Perishables	Medicines	Shoes	
Adjusting		1						2	3
Ambience intimidated	1	2	2	4	1			4	14
Ambience seeker		3	1			1	2		7
Authoritative				2	3	1		1	7
Bargain Seeker	1	1	2	2	4	2		1	13
Brand Conscious	3			2	9	7			21
Browser	1	12			1	3		4	21
Budget Conscious				1	4	1			6
Consultative	1	2	8	12	14	10	4	10	61
Discount Seeker	1			3	13	10		9	36
Expressive		1	2	5	7	4	2	2	23
Familiar	7	9	2	4	9	31	12	6	80
Family buyer		1		1		8		2	12
Help seeker		2	1	1	3		1	4	12
Hurried				1		1	1	1	4
Impulsive			1	1		5	1		8
Indecisive		7	2	1	4		2	3	19
Individualistic		1			1			1	3
Infrequent	2	3	3	4	7	6	2	1	28
Inquirer				3	36	3	5	5	52
Involved	2	7	11	19	15	4	3	10	71
List driven						6	1		7
Pre decided	11	12	17	17	45	29	22	12	165
Price Conscious	2	2	6	4	28	17	1	11	71
Quality Conscious				1	1	2		4	8
Variety Seeker	3	16	5	15	15	10	5	7	76
Grand Total	35	82	63	103	220	161	64	100	828

Table - 5: Shopper Segment and Accompaniment			
Shopper Type	Accompanied	Alone	Grand Total
Adjusting	1	2	3
Ambience intimidated	10	4	14
Ambience seeker	4	3	7
Authoritative	4	3	7
Bargain Seeker	8	5	13
Brand Conscious	10	11	21
Browser	6	15	21
Budget Conscious	3	3	6
Consultative	53	8	61
Discount Seeker	22	14	36
Expressive	10	13	23
Familiar	27	53	80
Family buyer	8	4	12
Help seeker	7	5	12
Hurried	2	2	4
Impulsive	6	2	8
Indecisive	11	8	19
Individualistic	2	1	3
Infrequent	16	12	28
Inquirer	24	28	52
Involved	36	35	71
List driven	3	4	7
Pre decided	76	89	165
Price Conscious	41	30	71
Quality Conscious	5	3	8
Variety Seeker	42	34	76
Grand Total	437	391	828

Table - 6: Shopper Segment and Store Format			
Shopper Type	Store Format		
	New	Old	Grand Total
Adjusting	3		3
Ambience intimidated	10	4	14
Ambience seeker	7		7
Authoritative	5	2	7
Bargain Seeker	8	5	13
Brand Conscious	14	7	21
Browser	20	1	21
Budget Conscious	5	1	6
Consultative	47	14	61
Discount Seeker	33	3	36
Expressive	18	5	23
Familiar	45	35	80
Family buyer	7	5	12
Help seeker	10	2	12
Hurried	2	2	4
Impulsive	4	4	8
Indecisive	17	2	19
Individualistic	2	1	3
Infrequent	21	7	28
Inquirer	47	5	52
Involved	54	17	71
List driven	3	4	7
Pre decided	112	53	165
Price Conscious	61	10	71
Quality Conscious	5	3	8
Variety Seeker	64	12	76
Grand Total	624	204	828

Table - 7: Source of Behaviour	
Shopper Type	Source
Adjusting	Store
Ambience Intimidated	Store
Ambience Seeker	Store
Authoritative	Personal
Bargain Seeker	Personal
Brand Conscious	Personal
Browser	Store
Budget Conscious	Store
Consultative	Personal
Discount Seeker	Store
Expressive	Personal
Familiar	Personal
Family Buyer	Store
Help Seeker	Personal
Hurried	Store
Impulsive	Store
Indecisive	Personal
Individualistic	Store
Infrequent	Store
Inquirer	Personal
Involved	Personal
List Driven	Store
Pre-Decided	Personal
Price Conscious	Personal
Quality Conscious	Store
Variety Seeker	Personal

Table - 8: Primary Retail Mix Ingredients										
Sr. No.	Shopper Type	Merchandise	Price	Services	Salesperson	Promotions	Signage	Displays	Ambience	Out Store Promotion
1	Adjusting			#	#		#			
2	Ambience Intimidated				#					
3	Ambience seeker							#	#	
4	Authoritative			#	#					
5	Bargain Seeker		#							
6	Brand Conscious	#						#		#
7	Browser							#	#	
8	Budget Conscious		#			#	#			#
9	Consultative				#		#		#	
10	Discount Seeker					#				#
11	Expressive			#	#				#	
12	Familiar			#	#		#			
13	Family buyer	#	#	#		#				#
14	Help seeker				#		#			
15	Hurried				#			#		
16	Impulsive							#		
17	Indecisive				#		#			
18	Individualistic	#			#					
19	Infrequent				#		#	#		#
20	Inquirer	#			#		#	#		#
21	Involved	#	#	#	#	#	#	#		#
22	List driven	#			#			#		
23	Pre decided	#				#	#	#		#
24	Price Conscious		#							#
25	Quality Conscious	#		#						
26	Variety Seeker	#						#		#