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Personal vs. Social Shopping Motives: A Case of Hypermarkets

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Abstract

This study aims to understand local customers’ shopping motives toward retail formats specifically the hypermarkets. Among many retail formats, hypermarket is one of the fastest growing formats in Malaysia. Hypermarkets recently, have been seen as more attractive, offer more variety of products and services as before. It is therefore, important for the management to understand local customers’ shopping motives toward hypermarket as prior studies on shopping motives, however, focused solely on Western shopping motives. This study provides an exploratory examination of Malaysia hypermarket shoppers’ shopping motives. A total of 450 questionnaires were administered to female hypermarkets shoppers using store-intercept survey method. Factor analysis identified three shoppers for patronizing hypermarkets namely apathetic shoppers, recreational shoppers and economic shoppers. The groups significantly differ in their appraisals of what motivate them shopped at the hypermarkets.

Managerial implications are discussed based on findings.

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Keywords: shopping motives; hypermarkets; Malaysia

1. Introduction

It is important to study and understand what motivates consumers to perform grocery-shopping activities. Although, one may say that consumers shop because they have to fulfil their basic necessities, perhaps, there is more than what meets the eye.

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Grocery shopping behaviours can be best described as a routinised (Vakratsas and Bass, 2002; Piacentini et al., 2001; Park et al., 1989) and functional behaviour.

It is also generally recognised as being heavily dependent on location-related factors (Piacentini et al., 2001). Consumers tend to shop for grocery at stores that are near their homes or that are convenient to visit en route to work, school or other places that they travel to in the course of their day to day activities. However, it is also noted that to gain a holistic understanding of the influences on consumer grocery shopping behaviour, it is also important to consider their non-functional shopping motives (Piacentini et al., 2001). In view of the fact that grocery goods are frequently bought, one would not expect an individual to shop at different stores for price comparisons before a purchase is made (Doti and Shahrir, 1981). There are other factors too, that are important to consumers when choosing where to shop. Factors related to product offer (quality, varieties), service (credit facilities), attractiveness of shopping environment, and trade offs are frequently considered. Child et al (2002) discovered that British, French, and German shoppers differ in certain broad ways. They found that consumers for groceries fall into one of these three segments:

- Service/quality customers care most about the variety and performance of products in stores as well as the service they provide.
- Price/value customers are most concerned about spending their money wisely.
- Affinity customers primarily seek stores that suit people like themselves or the members of groups they aspire to join. In fact, the research shows that affinity in this sense referring to the social association of stores that is; a more important consideration for all groups than marketers have traditionally recognised.

Grocery customers in France for instance, place more emphasis on service and quality; in the United Kingdom, affinity; while in Germany, price and value are more important than elsewhere (see Table 1). These differences do not mean that a value retailer can succeed only in Germany, but they do suggest that the size of the value-oriented market differs from country to country. In Germany the discount-food market accounts for around 32 per cent of grocery sales, compared with 9 per cent in the United Kingdom and 8 per cent in France. Understanding what drives consumer behaviour in each grocery market can have enormous financial benefits (Child et al., 2002).

| Country          | Service/quality Customers (%) | Price/value Customers (%) | Affinity Customers (%) |
|------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| France           | 48                            | 27                        | 25                     |
| Germany          | 13                            | 42                        | 45                     |
| United Kingdom   | 13                            | 32                        | 55                     |

(Source: Adapted from McKinsey Survey (2012) > 1,500 consumers’ ratings of 40 retail grocery brands in France, Germany, and United Kingdom)

Nevertheless, according to Dawson and Sparks (1985) the tradeoffs that consumers make depend on the nature of the shopping trip as well as an individual (Piacentini et al., 2001). Consumers normally travel greater distances to a shopping location for their main grocery shopping (Piacentini et al., 2001). This evidence clearly reveals that consumers may have other shopping motives than just purchase of goods (Babin et al., 1994). These non-functional reasons for shopping may include social motives and personal motives (Tauber, 1972). Social motives explain the desire of individuals to be able to interact with other shoppers, salespeople, as well as to be able to meet friends. Personal motives indicate that the individual needs to engage in some form of exercise or perhaps simply get out of the house and seek a diversion from other tasks (Tauber, 1972). However, it is essential to recognize what actually motivates consumers when they decide to buy grocery products, other than the product attributes.

2. Background of The Study

In deliberating on consumer shopping behaviour, it is therefore, important to identify a set of distinct shopper types to which retail managements may direct their differentiated retailing efforts. Shoppers have been categorised in a number of ways (Jarrat, 1996; Westbrook and Black, 1985; Williams et al., 1978; Darden and Ashton, 1975; Stone, 1954). These categorisations describe shoppers in terms of observed behaviour, benefits sought and
motivations, which in turn offer retailers a variety of options in strategy formulation (Westbrook and Black, 1985). Stone (1954) was the first researcher to establish a grouping of shoppers through observed behaviour. Using depth interviews with a sample of 124 female department store shoppers to understand the social relationship binding urban residents to the community, he was able to differentiate four fairly distinct shopper types, based on their varying orientations toward the activity of shopping. They are ‘the economic shopper, the personalising shopper, the ethical shopper, and finally, the apathetic shopper’. Economic shoppers were characterised by a careful approach to shopping, giving heightened attention to merchandise assortment, price and quality. On the contrary, personalising shoppers appeared to seek personal relationships with retail personnel, while ethical shoppers were willing to sacrifice lower prices and wider selections of goods in order to behave consistently with moralistic beliefs, such as ‘helping the little retailer’ or perhaps ‘avoiding the chain store….(with)….no heart or soul’ (Stone, 1954). In an unpublished study by the Chicago Tribune (1955) investigating the psychological aspects of shopping, five types of shoppers were revealed (Westbrook and Black, 1985). Although this study employed the same method as Stone (1954) that is, using depth interviews, the findings with the exception of the dependent shopper, did not reveal the same results. This, according to Westbrook and Black (1985) may result from the differences in the research direction between the two studies. The study suggests that there are five kinds of shoppers, namely, ‘dependent shoppers, compulsive shoppers, individualistic shoppers, indecisive shoppers and independent shoppers’. In this study, dependent shoppers were classified as those whose essential characteristic was the need for social support from others during the shopping activity. The compulsive shoppers were identified as shoppers who were concerned with the cleanliness and orderliness of the physical store environment, while individualistic shoppers were recognised through their unusual and individualistic merchandise choices. Indecisive shoppers were identified as being unsure of what they wanted and thus could not make quick shopping judgements. In contrast, independent shoppers approached shopping with confidence and viewed it as an enjoyable task. Further, in an attempt to classify shoppers in terms of product usage orientations, discovered four types of shopping orientations. Although they did not attempt to classify consumers into discrete ‘types’ of shoppers, they clearly supported the findings noted earlier by Stone (1954). Using structured questionnaires with multi-item Likert-format activity/interest/opinion (AIO) scales to measure shopping orientations, they revealed that shoppers’ orientations can be observed as economic, moralistic, personalising and apathetic shoppers. They define moralistic shoppers as shoppers who provide back-up for local merchants; while personalising shoppers are those who were personalising small stores and depersonalising big stores depending on their circumstances. In contrast, Stephenson and Willet (1969) suggested a conceptual taxonomy of shoppers based on shopping behaviour and actual patronage. Based on the degree of patronage concentration across retailers as well as the number of different outlets searched for apparel and toy products, they proposed four styles of shoppers; store-loyal shoppers (high concentration, low search), compulsive and recreational shoppers (high concentration, high search), convenience shoppers (low concentration, low search), and price-bargain-conscious shoppers (low-concentration, high search).

In an attempt to search for cosmetics buyers, Moschis (1976), using structured AIO-type rating measures, discovered six types of distinct shopper types; the store-loyal shoppers, the brand-loyal shoppers, ‘special’ shoppers, psychosocialising shoppers, name-conscious shoppers and lastly, the problem-solving shoppers. As mentioned by Westbrook and Black (1985), the types of shopper introduced by Moschis (1976) mix shopping behaviour strategies and basic motivational-perceptual orientations. Therefore, this study was considered limited in comparison to the earlier studies. However, there are two studies that have specifically investigated the grocery shopper category. Darden and Ashton (1975) analysed consumers’ ratings of preference for supermarket attributes and discovered seven distinct categories of grocery shoppers. These shoppers were quality-oriented shoppers, fastidious shoppers, who valued store neatness and cleanliness, convenience shoppers, demanding shoppers, who insisted on everything, trading stamp collectors, stamp avoiders and apathetic shoppers. Later, Williams et al. (1978) based their grocery shopper typology on the perceived attributes of preferred grocery stores, and revealed four types of shopper. They are ‘the low-price shopper, the convenience shopper, the involved shopper and the apathetic shopper’. Again it is difficult to decide the most appropriate type of grocery shopper, as both studies employed different types of measurement (supermarket attributes and perceived attributes of preferred grocery stores) (Westbrook and Black, 1985). Nevertheless, both studies indicated the existence of the economic shopper (price-oriented shopper), the convenience shopper and the apathetic shopper. Perhaps the most basic question one can ask about consumer behaviour is why do consumers do what they do? What makes them choose and purchase products from a wide range of categories and visit multiple stores? To answer these questions, retailers must first find out what needs consumers have and what motivates them to buy, as this remark merely points to the fact that
every customer is unique, and behaves differently. An understanding of what motivates consumer shopping is important in the retailing environment specifically in Malaysia.

Westbrook and Black (1985) reveal that one of the most appropriate taxonomies of shoppers is based on shopping motivation. Although the concept itself is a complex process, it seems to explain why such behaviour occurs. The term motivation itself is derived from the Latin verb ‘movere’, meaning “to move” (Wilkie, 1994). According to Wilkie (1994) motivation “refers to the process that moves a person to behave in certain ways”. Importantly he claimed that motivation is the basis for all consumer activities, as consumer motivations tend to be specific to different products and different situations. The fundamental motivations underlying shopping behaviour have been examined by Tauber (1972). He claims that consumer shopping behaviour is motivated through the variety of psychosocial needs beyond those relating to the products being acquired. Based on exploratory depth interviews, Tauber (1972) clearly identified personal motives as influential in shopping behaviour. He reveals that the most significant personal satisfactions obtained from shopping were:

- The opportunity to enact a culturally prescribed role;
- Diversion from daily routine;
- Provision of self-gratification;
- Learning about new trends, fashions, and innovations;
- Obtaining physical exercise;
- Receiving sensory stimulation from the retail environment.

Besides personal motives, he also noted that the primary satisfactions from shopping might also arrive from social nature. These are;

- Social interaction outside the home;
- Communication with others having similar interests;
- Affiliating with reference groups;
- Obtaining increases in social status;
- Achieving success in bargaining and negotiation.

According to Westbrook and Black (1985), Tauber’s findings argued that shopping behaviour might occur from three continuums; such as shopping behaviour principally to acquire the products for which needs are experienced, both to acquire the desired product and to provide satisfaction for various additional non-product-related needs, and finally, primarily in service of needs unrelated to the acquisition of the product. Although, Tauber’s findings including sensory stimulation, diversion, self-gratification and new product learning, Westbrook and Black (1985) argued that the propositions were lacking two potentially significant aspects on the direction and instigation of shopping behaviour; first, the instrumentality of shopping in acquiring the desired or needed products. Engaging in activity leading ultimately to product acquisition may be gratifying precisely because it creates the anticipation of utility or satisfaction to be derived from consuming the product. In learning theory terms, shopping may indicate ‘a fractional antedating goal response’ (Westbrook and Black, 1985). Though distinct from the satisfactions actually realised in consumption, the anticipation of these utilities before purchase may well comprise an important motivational element in pre-purchase search. Second is ‘choice optimisation’. Since shopping may be constructed a process of market research to satisfy individual or household assortment requirements, the activity provides a potential arena for achievement and personal mastery. That is, the satisfactions derived from finding exactly what one has been looking for, reflect either or both of the two important types of motivation, namely the need for autonomy, self-fulfilment, or self-actualisation and/or the need for achievement (Westbrook and Black, 1985). Due to these reasons, Westbrook and Black (1985) proposed other dimensions of shopping behaviour, which are also derived from motivation. These are anticipated utility of prospective purchases, enactment of an economic shopping role, negotiation to obtain price concessions from the seller, optimisation of merchandise choice in terms of matching shoppers’ needs and desires, affiliation with reference groups, exercise of power and authority in marketplace exchanges, sensory stimulation from the marketplace. Although the above study provided two additional motivations underlying shopping activity, cluster analysis identified only six segments of shoppers. These shoppers are described as shopping-process involved, choice optimising, apathetic and economic shoppers, together with two further groups that were less clearly defined (Jarrat, 1996). Thus, three categories of shoppers were proposed namely the product oriented, the experiential, and a combination of both product and experiential
Ten years later, extending the Westbrook and Black (1985) propositions and through the confirmation of the contribution of motivation to understanding shopping behaviour by Dawson et al. (1990), Jarratt (1996) developed another dimension. This time, he identified a set of variables that were relevant and appropriate for shopper segmentation as well as for the strategy of retailers. The study was based on the important aspects of the shopping offer, service and environment to individuals. He identified six types of consumers and the findings have been contrasted with the Westbrook and Black (1985) propositions. These are ‘have to’ shoppers, ‘moderate’ shoppers, ‘service’ shoppers, ‘experiential’ shoppers, ‘practical’ shoppers and ‘product-focused’ shoppers. The apathetic, shopping-processed involved and choice optimisation shopper segments described by Westbrook and Black (1985) align with the have to, experiential, and practical segments introduced by Jarratt (1996). Piacentini (2001) discovered only five types of shoppers who repeatedly appear in consumer behaviour studies. These are:

- **Apathetic shoppers**, shop out of necessity and are described to have little concern for the nature of the stores at which they shop, but simply want to find suitable products in the least possible time (Jarrat, 1996; Westbrook and Black, 1985; Stone, 1954).
- **Convenience shoppers**, are not quite as uninvolved, but are primarily concerned with saving time and energy and they normally accept a price-convenience trade-off (Williams et al., 1978).
- **Economic shoppers**, in contrast with apathetic and convenience shoppers, these shoppers according to Stone are unambiguously directed to the purchase of goods, and pay careful attention to merchandise assortment, price, and quality when shopping. In addition, Westbrook and Black (1985) found that achieving value-for-money was important for economic shoppers in their role as homemakers. Hence this kind of shopper spends more time looking for goods and regularly visits a range of stores in order to obtain the range of goods that they desire. Groeppel et al. (1999) suggest that these are smart shoppers.
- **Ethical shoppers**, those who feel that they have a moral obligation to patronise certain types of stores because they view their shopping activities in the context of a larger set of values (Stone, 1954). These types of consumer make trade-offs when shopping, but their trade-offs involve paying more for goods or causing themselves some inconvenience in order to shop in a way that is consistent with their values.
- **Recreational shoppers**, who enjoy shopping as a leisure time activity and attribute high value to the pleasurableness of the experiences and the information gathered (Bellenger and Korgaonkar, 1980). The importance of this group for retailers is that they are prone to impulsive buying.

The first four types describe consumers with functional shopping motives, but differ in terms of the amount of search behaviour that they invest in shopping activities and the trade-offs that they are willing to make. Recreational shoppers were considered as non-functional shopping motives consumers. Research specifically concerning shopping orientations/motives and retail brand products barely offer detailed explanations on how consumers behave or can be categorised. Perhaps, the possible reason for this is that most studies that attempt to associate retail brand consumers and shopping orientations/motives failed to discover the exact shopping orientations/motives that belong to retail brand consumers. Bellizzi et al (1981) for instance, failed to find any associations between retail brand and shopping orientations. Kono (1985) discovered three groups of retail brand consumers: the *generic consumers*, the *deal prone consumers* and finally *not economy-minded consumers*. He concluded his study by saying that generic consumers are generally economy minded. Most recently Baltas (1997) in an attempt to look at the determinants of store brand choice from a behavioural point of view, although providing a partial explanation for consumer shopping behaviour (such as descriptors of shopping behaviour, reasons for buying store brands, indicators of consumer relationship with store products and consumer involvement with the category), confirms that generally, consumers can be classified as price cautious consumers. These price cautious consumers, who purchase and pay careful attention to merchandise assortment, price and quality when shopping, were classified by Stone as ‘Economy shoppers’. The question now is; what motivates Malaysians when they shop for grocery products? Are the factors (personal and social) similar to the West?
3. Methodology

Choosing a suitable technique for data collection in research is not a simple task. In order to explore the research objectives, the approach or design of the study needs to be carefully planned and organized. Examination of previous studies reveals that many research methods were directed to the survey namely using interview technique. As such this study utilized 450 store-intercept interviews with female hypermarkets shoppers (Giant, Tesco and Mydin) and was carried out in the month of September 2012 in two different areas namely Shah Alam and Subang Jaya which located at the Klang Valley. Systematic sampling was used and in general, the questionnaire was designed to enhance communications between the researcher and respondents. However, it is noted that there are three major points to be considered in designing questionnaires; the information being sought, why is it needed and how will the results be analyzed. The questionnaire for this study was structured in such a way that it corresponded with the objectives of the study. A pool of questions from previous studies (Piacentini, 2001; Jarratt, 1996 and Westbrook and Black, 1985) was developed and chooses for the study.

4. Finding

A principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to identify underlying dimensions of shopping motives. Using an Eigenvalue of one or greater criterion, two factors emerged; the personal and social motives. Three items with low factor loadings were deleted. The first factor of shopping motives was labelled as “personal” since shopping is considered as receiving sensory stimulation from the retail environment. The second related to social interaction outside the home and was labelled as “social motives”. This two-factor structure explains that consumers in Klang Valley specifically in Shah Alam and Subang Jaya go grocery shopping for personal and social motives. The reliability coefficients of this study are 0.6241 and 0.7228 indicates that each of the measures possesses a moderate level of internal consistency.

Hypermarket shopper's shopping motives were recognized based on the shopping motives of shoppers by cluster analysis. Using factor scores of two shopping motives (personal and social), Ward's method was engaged to find a hierarchical cluster solution. No outlying observations were found. Based on supporting literature and an investigation of the dendogram (visual representation of the spot correlation data), a three-cluster solution emerged to be the most meaningful and interpretable result. Table 2 offers the mean values of groups on each dimension of shopping motives along with number of respondents classified into each group. ANOVA confirmed the significance of group differences; all observed F statistics exceed critical values at the 0.001 significance level and post hoc procedure (Student Newman Keul's) revealed that clusters were statistically different with respect to two shopping motives. The results revealed that although, personal shopping motive dimension received the highest score across clusters, social shopping motives were also scored high. Overall, personal shopping motive dimension received the highest score across clusters, indicating that most hypermarkets’ shoppers visit the store to make some purchasing activities. Group 1 is the largest cluster including approximately 42 percent of the subjects (n=189), and had a highest mean score on diversion (M=5.12). Therefore, this group was labeled as the apathetic-motivated shoppers. Second group was the smallest group which included about 20.9 percent of the respondents (n=94) and was named economic-motivated shoppers since this group had the highest score on social motives (M=4.87) and the last group was labeled economic-motivated shoppers accounted for about 37.11 percent (n=167) of respondents and exhibited the lowest score on all two types of shopping motives.

Table 2: ANOVA result for Shoppers Types and Shopping Motives

| Shopping Motives | Apathetic Shoppers (n=189) | Recreational Shoppers (n=94) | Economic Shoppers (n=167) | F-Value |
|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| **Personal Motives** | 5.12A | 3.25B | 3.01C | 23.187* |
| **Social Motives** | 3.74A | 4.87A | 3.24B | 18.651* |

Notes: *p<0.001. ABC refers to post hoc analysis, and designate homogeneous group.
5. Conclusion

Although the majority of food and household products are offered in supermarkets and in small retail outlets, hypermarkets offer obvious benefits to their customers. It was observed that in Shah Alam and Subang Jaya areas, hypermarkets shoppers shop for two reasons. First, hypermarket shoppers shop for personal satisfactions obtained from shopping such as the opportunity to enact a culturally prescribed role; diversion from daily routine; provision of self-gratification; learning about new trends, fashions, and innovations; obtaining physical exercise; receiving sensory stimulation from the retail environment which correspond with the studies of Jarrat, 1996; Westbrook and Black, 1985 and Stone, 1954; and secondly they also shop for social motives such as for social interaction outside the home; communication with others having similar interests; affiliating with reference groups and obtaining increases in social status (Bellenger and Korgaonkar, 1980). In addition, the study provided an exploratory assessment of shopping motives and identified three clusters based on hypermarkets shopping motives.

The hypermarkets shoppers in Shah Alam and Subang Jaya areas consist of the apathetic-motivated shoppers, recreational-motivated shoppers and economic-motivated shoppers. Apathetic shoppers, shop out of necessity and are described to have little concern for the nature of the stores at which they shop, but simply want to find suitable products in the least possible time (Jarrat, 1996; Westbrook and Black, 1985; Stone, 1954). Recreational shoppers, who enjoy shopping as a leisure time activity and attribute high value to the pleasurableness of the experiences and the information gathered (Bellenger and Korgaonkar, 1980). The importance of this group for retailers is that they are prone to impulsive buying. Economic shoppers, in contrast with apathetic and convenience shoppers, these shoppers according to Stone are unambiguously directed to the purchase of goods, and pay careful attention to merchandise assortment, price, and quality when shopping. Westbrook and Black (1985) also found that achieving value-for-money was important for economic shoppers in their role as homemakers. Groeppel et al.,(1999) suggest that these are smart shoppers.

The findings of this study have managerial implications for retail managers. First, it is important to capture apathetic-motivated shopper’s needs. This cluster is attracted to appropriate products that can be searched in shortest possible time. In store display such as product info’s signage, huge advertisement or event price labeling should be utilized maximum in the hypermarkets. Second, retail managers of hypermarkets also need to provide good ambience for recreational shoppers, who enjoy shopping as a leisure time activity and attribute high value to the pleasurableness of the experiences and the information gathered. Attractive retail layout with inviting lights and aromas (such as freshness and clean) need to be imposed regularly. Furthermore, it is advisable for retail management to carefully choose their tenants as to be occupied in their store as it may attract potential shoppers to come and shop at the hypermarkets. Finally, as to cater to the smart shoppers (economic shoppers), retail manager should also need to carefully considered the balance of value-quality products offering. These offering will keep shopper spends more time looking for goods as well as regularly visits a range of stores in order to obtain the range of goods that they desire.

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