A comparative study on competitiveness of organized and unorganized retailers with reference to consumer Electronics goods

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Abstract:

Organized retail in India is undergoing a metamorphosis and is expected to scale up to meet global standards over the next five years. India's retail market has experienced enormous growth over the past decade, more than doubling in size to US$ 311.7 billion in 2005-06. The market was estimated at US$ 1.1 trillion in 2005-06. According to Crisil Research consumer electronic durables revenue is about US$ 15,171 million, which is about 4.87% of total retail market.

The consumer electronic durables industry in India is set for sustained growth over the long term, fuelled by favorable consumer demographics, overall growth in services and industrial sectors and infrastructure development in suburban and rural areas. Success in the long-term will require firms to develop a wide and robust distribution network, differentiate their products in areas of relevance to the consumer and innovate in the areas of promotion, product financing, etc. With all these areas of attention, it seems to be interesting and important as well to study how the retailers of consumer electronics and home appliances, position themselves in this competitive environment.

The purpose of this study is to examine the competitive position of organized and unorganized retailers with reference to consumer electronics goods. How consumer chooses the store whether organized or unorganized for their shopping, the attributes consumers use to evaluate stores and an understanding of how these attributes are important. Although a number of store image studies have identified store attributes, evidence suggests that these attributes vary by store type and over time, but no work has considered the most crucial aspects to retailers, namely store loyalty. How store loyalty is important to customer in the selection of consumer electronics and home appliances store. This paper identifies the degree of competition among organized and unorganized consumer electronics and home appliances retailers, by exploiting dataset that describes a consumer's selection of store.

Three unorganized and three organized consumer electronics and home appliances retailers were considered as survey destination for the convenience. For the selection of respondents' convenience sampling method was considered. A sample of consumers visiting these six stores at Ahmedabad for their shopping of consumer electronics and home appliances was surveyed using a self-administered questionnaire during the month of January 2009. Statistical techniques were used to evaluate the data. Statistical models indicate support for significant, positive relationships between utilitarian and hedonic shopping benefits. Factors like customer satisfaction, attributes of consumer choice for store, services, customer loyalty, promotional benefits, price, location consideration, brand preferences and word of mouth communication will effects on store choice behavior of consumer and how these factors add value in the competitiveness of retailers.

In order to be competitive, retailers must identify the key antecedents to customer choice and the relationships between the benefits delivered to the consumer and important outcomes. With the limitations like use of few organized and unorganized retail stores, clustered in limited area. The findings are useful because it links between consumer choice of retailer for consumer durables and home appliances among organized and unorganized players and their consideration of variables are demonstrated. The findings of this study contribute to the development of an organizing framework for such relationships, which is exceptionally important for retailers to understand the competition.

This paper undertakes an empirical examination of the effect of the competition on organized retailer and unorganized retail stores of consumer electronics and home appliance products. The paper is unique because of the relative newness of the context in which the study was conducted.

Keywords: *Competitiveness, Consumer electronic durables, Store selection, Customer loyalty*

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1. Introduction

Indian retail is dominated by a large number of small retailers consisting of the local kirana shops, owner-manned general stores, chemists, footwear shops, apparel shops, consumer electronics and home appliances stores etc. which together represent the so-called "unorganized or traditional retail." Retailing in India is evolving rapidly, with consumer spending growing by unprecedented rates and with increasing number of global players investing in this sector. Organized retail in India is undergoing a metamorphosis and is expected to scale up to meet global standards over the next five years. While total retail sales have grown from Rs. 10,591 billion (US$ 230 billion) in 2003-04 to Rs. 14,574 billion (US$ 322 billion) in 2006- 07, which is at an annual compound growth rate of about 11 per cent, the organized retail sales grew much more at about 20 per cent per annum from Rs. 350 billion (US$ 7.6 billion) in 2003-04 to Rs. 598 billion (US$ 13.2 billion) in 2006-07. As a result, the share of organized retail in total retail grew, although slowly, from 3.3 per cent in 2003-04 to 4.1 per cent in 2006-07. Furnishing, appliances and services, whose share rose from about 5 per cent in 2003-04 to 7 per cent in 2006-07 and the market, is divided between the traditional and the organized sector onwards. According to Crisil Research consumer electronic durables revenue is about US$ 15,171 million, which is about 4.87% of total retail market. With 17% penetration of organized retail in consumer electronic durables and home appliances, about US$ 2585 million revenue it has generated.

Which formats of retail would be more preferred by consumers and will the rise of organized retail affect the traditional retailers. Multiple retail companies now dominate the sector, to the threat and decline of small independent business. These independent stores face increased pressure from the multiple retailers, superstores, small store format.

Ahmedabad has witnessed changes in retail development with its changing and variety seeking population. Shopping destination like 10 acre, Iscon mall, Dev arc, Gallops, R3 mall, Fun Republic, Himalaya mall etc are competing the old city high street market. Sales India was the well managed unorganized retailer in the city selling consumer electronics and home appliances in Ahmedabad since 1971. Tata's Croma, Next, e-zone, Reliance mart, Vijay sales, xcite and any more organized stores have made the market competitive. But still the traditional retailers of consumer electronics has key share of the total market.

It will be interesting to study choice of format the consumer has when he or she decides to buy consumer electronics goods. In terms of the most important competitive factors of organized retailers, traditional retailers mention lower prices, schedules, products assortment and better adaptation to consumer shopping habits. Concerning the way they analyze themselves, they identify the attendance and the close relation with customers as their main advantages; in terms of their main weakness, they mention the small dimension.

In the increasingly competitive environment faced by today's unorganized retailers of consumer electronics and home appliances products have developed more options based on the required variables important to consumer. In order to be competitive, retailers must identify the key antecedents to customer choice and the relationships between the benefits delivered to the consumer and important outcomes. The findings of this study contribute to the development of an organizing framework, which is important in the competitive environment.

2. Literature Review

Lot of literature found on store offering to the customers as mix of retailing. A store format has been defined as the mix of variables that retailers use to develop their business strategies and constitute the mix as assortment, price, and transactional convenience and experience (Messinger and Narsimhan, 1997). It has also been defined as a type of retail mix used by a set of retailers (Levy and Weitz, 2002). Different store formats are derived from various combinations of price and service output (Solgaard and Hansen, 2003).

Carpenter and Moore (2006) found that certain demographic groups were associated with certain store formats. In addition their study also examined store attributes (e.g. price competitiveness, product selection, and atmosphere) as drivers of format choice for the consumer electronics goods.

The concept of positioning of stores has been captured in marketing literature in the last decade (Woodside et al., 1992). This study found that shoppers looked for and developed “hot buttons” that help in choosing among stores. The shoppers could quickly name the store that provided them with these buttons (attributes), such as most convenient, having most brand variety or lowest prices, hence reducing the cognitive dimension in the decision problem.

3. Store Attribute

Research has been directed towards store attributes in western countries identified various results (Carpenter and Moore, 2006). Paulins and Geistfeld (2003) found Consumers’ perception of store attributes influenced by retail formats, type of products, cultural value, shopping intention and customer base in developing countries. Store atmosphere, location, parking facilities, and friendliness of store people are the salient factors that influence consumer store patronage (Bearden, 1997). Consumer satisfaction and loyalty influenced highly through store attributes like service offering, activities, facilities and convenience (Chang and Tu, 2005). Mitchell and Kiral, (1998) suggest that store attributes effect on customer loyalty vary across retail formats.

Attribute like wide product range, convenience, store services brands variety, high value for money, helpful personal, cleanliness, quality of products, modes of payment, accessibility and availability of stock in retail store selection always important to customers store choice decisions (Hansen and Deutscher, 1977). Indian consumers are more concern about service quality, store convenience, product quality and availability of new products. Consumer Perception of Store and Product Attributes and its Effect on Customer Loyalty within the Indian Retail Sector study provides some insights on factors that could be important in managing customer loyalty (Rajaguru and Matanda, 2006)

Sinha and Benerjee (2004) found that in case of consumer durable merchandise, referral and ambience are most important factors. Breadth and depth of products can attract consumers. Lighting, setting and comfort also equally important in determining store choice. Stores that offer good prices and discounts are also visited, whilst shoppers are also concerned about the quality of goods for sale. Display of brands and stock becomes an important consideration in consumer durables stores. Trustworthiness of the store and delightful variety are store choice drivers for durables stores.

4. Store Loyalty

The concept of store loyalty is derived originally from the brand loyalty concept which refers to the tendency to repeat purchase the same brand. At the store level, it refers to the *tendency* to repeat purchase or visit at the same store [for similar or other products], even some time it would be willingness to visit the store for future purchases. It has been construed both as related to store patronage dimensions. Repeat purchase over time indicates loyalty (Reynolds et al., 1974).

Mitchell and Kiral, (1998) suggest that Quality, convenience and value factors in a study on store loyal customer perception will be influencing factors on store loyalty. According to Knox and Denison (2000), loyal shoppers spend twice as much in stores, so loyalty plays an important role in the consumer electronics store too.

Consumer loyalty defines the relationship between the relative attitude towards an entity (brand/service/store/vendor) and patronage behavior. Two dimensions, the degree of attitudinal strength (weak or strong) and the degree of attitudinal differentiation (existent or not) seem to underlie an individual's relative attitude towards an entity. Therefore, a weak but positively differentiated attitude may be more likely to lead to loyalty than a very positive but undifferentiated one. (Dick and Basu, 1994)

5. Methodology

The primary research questions were defined as follows: Do the preferred attributes in a customer's selection of consumer electronics and home appliances stores differ between the organized/modern stores and the unorganized/traditional stores. Organized and unorganized retailers have a clear understanding of the customers' evaluation of retail store for their final purchase of products. What demographics effects on selection of store type and consumer satisfaction level for store and store service? Positioning analysis of both type of stores based on perceived variety of brands available at these stores and price perception among the consumer who have visited once these stores. How consumer loyalty effects on the choice of store type and consumer satisfaction level for store and store service.

The sample consisted of 300 individuals (58.33 percent male and 41.67 percent female) between the ages of 18 to 63 who were surveyed at six different consumer electronics and home appliances stores. It was non probabilistic sample consisted of two main quota of organized store shoppers and unorganized store shoppers. The researchers have developed a 12 closed end question survey instrument to measure attributes (22) important to customers in the selection of consumer electronics and home appliances store for their purchases. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of attributes on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 equaled "not at all important" and 5 equaled "extremely important".

Three organized (Croma, Next and e-zone) store and three unorganized (Sales India, A one electronics and Shiv shakti electronics) stores were selected for study since these store accounts for a large share of electronics goods sales, and due to its familiarity among Ahmadabad consumers. A sample of consumers visiting these six stores at Ahmedabad and purchased any product from there, were surveyed using a self-administered questionnaire during the month of January 2009.

In an initial procedure, the researchers implemented mean score for all the attributes to know store selection criteria among the consumers. Chi square test was conducted in order to examine the dependency between demographics, loyalty with satisfaction level and store type selection. In a second procedure, the consumers' perception for all the stores regarding variety of brands available at these stores and price of products were plotted on two dimensional using multi-dimensional scaling.

6. Respondents Profile

Table 1 : Profile of Respondents

		Store Type		Total
Store Name		Organized/modern	Unorganized/Traditional	
Croma		50	0	50
Next		50	0	50
e-zone (Big Bazzar)		50	0	50
Sales India		0	50	50
A one electronics		0	50	50
Shiv Shakti electronics		0	50	50
Gender	Male	86	89	175
	Female	64	61	125
Age	18-25	28	15	43
	26-35	40	39	79
	36-45	37	38	75
	46-60	25	36	61
	60 above	20	22	42
Occupation	Self employed	16	18	34
	Government employee	24	39	63
	Business	16	19	35
	Housewife	26	21	47
	Private employee	31	21	52
	Professional	21	17	38
	Student	16	15	31
Family Size	Single	21	17	38
	Two member	27	26	53
	Three member	44	31	75
	Four member	31	41	72
	5 or above	27	35	62
Education	PG	37	35	72
	Graduate	59	56	115
	Diploma	23	17	40
	Intermediate/(12th)	13	24	37
	Secondary/primary	13	15	28
	Non formal / literate/illiterate	5	3	8
Family Income (Monthly)	Up to 10000	31	24	55
	10001-20000	50	41	91
	20001-50000	38	47	85
	50001-100000	19	22	41
	Above 100000	12	16	28
Total		150	150	300

Source: Primary Data Analysis

We obtained 300 valid responses from the survey. The profile of the sample is given in table 1. The respondents were interviewed after they had shopped at stores dealing in consumer electronics and home appliances products (White goods, Brown goods and electronics products). The respondents were carefully chosen in order to ensure that the sample had similar representation in terms of respondent profile obtained from unorganized/traditional as well as organized/modern stores.

The sample constituted of 150 shoppers shop at organized stores and 150 at unorganized stores. Eighty per cent of the respondents had visited the respected stores at least once. More than 50 per cent of them lived within 5 km and about 35 per cent had travelled more than 5 km. Men constituted 59 per cent of the sample and women constituted 41 per cent. Most of them had a monthly household income of more than Rs. 10,000 per month. It is also expected that they would have adequate exposure to both type of stores. All respondents are aware about the stores included in the study. About 160 respondents have visited all the stores at least once in their lifetime.

7. Results and Discussions

Table 2: Mean score table of attributes for organized, unorganized and overall stores

	Overall store Responses		Organized store Responses		Unorganized store Responses	
Attributes	**Mean score**	**Rank**	**Mean score**	**Rank**	**Mean score**	**Rank**
Advertising of store	3.50	21	3.59	15	3.41	22
After sales service	4.27	3	4.01	3	4.53	4
In store display	3.45	22	3.14	22	3.77	21
Better ambience and cleanliness	4.06	8	3.63	14	4.49	7
Better parking facility	4.02	13	3.54	18	4.49	5
Better product quality	4.29	2	3.74	10	4.84	1
Choice of more brands	4.27	4	3.71	12	4.83	2
Choice of more categories	4.07	7	3.73	11	4.40	9
Company/store is well known	4.13	6	3.94	4	4.31	13
Discounts	4.02	12	3.83	5	4.21	16
Easy drive to store	4.04	11	3.58	16	4.49	6
Easy to find items you want	4.04	9	3.76	8	4.33	11
Easy to get credit	3.65	19	3.31	21	3.98	18
Fair prices	3.96	16	3.82	6	4.10	17
Fully Stocks/availability	4.01	14	3.71	13	4.32	12
Help in reaching items	3.92	17	3.57	17	4.27	15
Home delivery	4.13	5	3.78	7	4.47	8
Location	3.86	18	3.43	19	4.29	14
Many specially priced items	4.00	15	4.03	2	3.96	19
Sales person helpfulness and knowledge	4.04	10	3.75	9	4.34	10
Wider product range	4.49	1	4.17	1	4.81	3
World of mouth from friends/relatives	3.57	20	3.33	20	3.80	20

Source: Primary data analysis

The mean important scores (on a scale from 1 to 5) for the 22 attributes are presented in table 2. The dimension of each attribute is mentioned in table 3. These mean important scores are presented separately for organized and unorganized stores. Overall store selection attributes are also presented with mean scores. To facilitate comparison of the three, each set of importance scores is ranked, to indicate how important each attribute was referred to be in relation to the other. One can readily see from analysis the rank for all attributes is similar in all three different categories. The Spearman rho between the organized and unorganized store-based attributes ranks is 0.912, significant at the 0.01 level of significance.

These results lead us to conclusion that for both type of stores the same attributes are important. Similarity of ranking is an interesting finding but that the analysis of the strategic implications must run much deeper than an overall comparison of attribute ranking.

Table: 3 Dimensions and attributes

Dimension	Attributes
Merchandise related	Better product quality, Choice of more brands, Choice of more categories, Fully Stocks/availability, Wider product range
Price related	Discounts, Fair prices, Many specially priced items
Physical facility/outlet related	Attractive in store display, Easy to find items you want
Locational	Better ambience and cleanliness, better parking facility, Location
Services	After sales service, Easy to get credit, home delivery
Sales personal related	Help in reaching items, Salesperson helpfulness and knowledge
Promotion related	Advertising of store, World of mouth from friends/relatives
Other	Company/store is well known, Easy drive to store

Source: Primary data analysis

Merchandise related five attributes like better product quality, choice of more brands, choice of more categories, availability and wide range considered more or less important to both organized and unorganized store consumers. Discounts attribute of price related dimension, after sales service and home delivery of service dimension are considered important in both type of stores.

Similarity found in the attributes considered by shoppers to be least important to them in selecting a store across store type. The relatively low important of services such as credit facility as well as advertising of store are also somewhat surprising.

8. Chi square analysis

Chi-square analysis was used to assess whether the demographic variables and loyalty of consumers are related with store type and respondents satisfaction for store as well as store services. The results of the chi-square analysis are shown in table 4.

Table 4: Chi-Square analysis

Sr.No.	Null Hypothesis statements	Chi-Square	Degree of Freedom (df)	Chi-Square (0.05 significance level)	Result
1	Gender of respondents and store type they selected are independent	0.123	1	3.84146	Hypothesis supported
2	Gender of respondents and satisfaction level of store service are independent	1.521	4	9.48773	Hypothesis supported
3	Gender of respondents and overall satisfaction level for store are independent	3.997	4	9.48773	Hypothesis supported
4	Age of respondents and store type they selected are independent	6.035	4	23.6848	Hypothesis supported
5	Age of respondents and satisfaction level of store service are independent	23.189	16	26.2962	Hypothesis supported
6	Age of respondents and overall satisfaction level for store are independent	17.954	16	26.2962	Hypothesis supported
7	Occupation of respondents and store type they selected are independent	6.855	6	12.5916	Hypothesis supported
8	Occupation of respondents and satisfaction level of store service are independent	29.491	24	36.4151	Hypothesis supported
9	Occupation of respondents and overall satisfaction level for store are independent	49.539	24	36.4151	Hypothesis not supported
10	Family size of respondents and store type they selected are independent	5.114	4	23.6848	Hypothesis supported

12	Family size of respondents and satisfaction level of store service are independent	23.764	16	26.2962	Hypothesis supported
13	Family size of respondents and overall satisfaction level for store are independent	21.304	16	26.2962	Hypothesis supported
14	Education of respondents and store type they selected are independent	4.947	5	11.0705	Hypothesis supported
15	Education of respondents and satisfaction level of store service are independent	19.998	20	31.4104	Hypothesis supported
16	Education of respondents and overall satisfaction level for store are independent	27.597	20	31.4104	Hypothesis supported
17	Family income of respondents and store type they selected are independent	3.525	4	23.6848	Hypothesis supported
18	Family income of respondents and satisfaction level of store service are independent	14.065	16	26.2962	Hypothesis supported
19	Family income of respondents and overall satisfaction level for store are independent	31.149	16	26.2962	Hypothesis not supported
20	Customer store loyalty and store type they selected are independent	12.593	2	5.99147	Hypothesis not supported
21	Customer store loyalty and specific store selected are independent	34.568	10	18.3070	Hypothesis not supported
22	Customer store loyalty and satisfaction level of store service are independent	62.471	8	15.5073	Hypothesis not supported
23	Customer store loyalty and overall satisfaction level for store are independent	52.276	8	15.5070	Hypothesis not supported

The results from the chi square analysis (Table 4) indicate that, customer loyalty to store was positively associated with the store type (Organized or Unorganized) that the respondents selected to purchase. Customer store loyalty was also related to specific store selected by respondents (among six store mentioned) as the null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 level of significance. There is some evidence of a relationship between customer loyalty to store and customer satisfaction level for store services and overall store. Customer loyalty plays important role in the store selection process.

From the results indicated in table 4, all demographic variables (Gender, Age, Occupation, Family size, education and family income) of respondents are independent from store type respondent have selected to purchase. Same way all demographic variables of respondents are independent from the satisfaction level from the store services they enjoyed. Gender, age, Family size and education are independent from the overall satisfaction level from the store, whereas occupation and family income have some evidence of a relationship with overall satisfaction level from the store.

9. Positioning analysis with Perceptual mapping

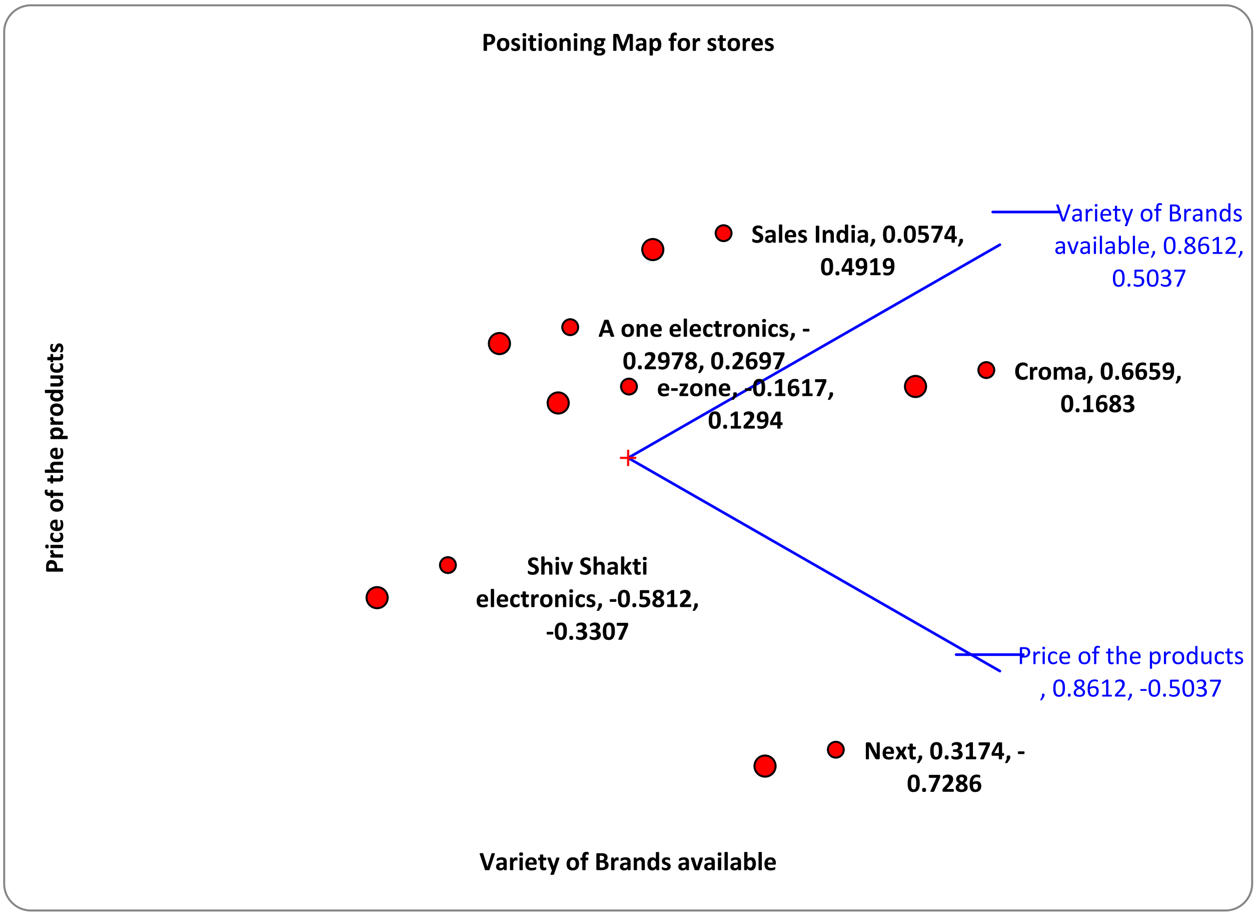
Table 5: Mean score of all the six stores for two dimensions

Stores/ Dimensions	Croma	Next	e-zone	Sales India	A one electronics	Shiv Shakti electronics
Variety of Brands available	6.4	5.1	5.05	5.7	4.95	4
Price of the products	5.5	5.7	4.15	4.2	3.8	3.85

Source: Primary data analysis

There were 160 respondents, who have visited all the six stores at least once in their life time. Respondents were asked to rate all the stores with two dimensions, variety of brands available and price of the product in the respective store. The distances between stores on the map indicate their perceived similarities. Stores that are close together are perceived as similar, whereas those that are far apart are perceived as different. The axes of a perceptual map are the aggregate dimensions along which customers tend to discriminate stores. Variety of brand (Vertical dimension) is 75% and the price of products (horizontal dimension) is 25% so the variety of brand is thrice as important in explaining the consumer perception about the store they shop. Croma and Sales India are enjoying a better positioning against the Shiv Shakti electronics and Next. e-zone of future group enjoying a balance position against the other stores indicated on the map.

Figure 1 : Positioning map for all six stores



Source: Primary data analysis with Multi dimensional scaling

Stores that are positioned close to each other are seen as similar on the relevant dimensions by the consumer. Consumers see A one electronics and next as similar, where Sales India is also near to it. They are close competitors and form a competitive grouping. Two ideal vectors indicate the ideal segment for the electronics and home appliances store. The slope of the ideal vector indicates the preferred ratio of the two dimensions by those consumers within that segment. This study indicates there is one segment that more concerned with availability of brand in the store and another segment that is more interested in price of the products at consumer electronics and home appliances store.

10. Conclusion and future research directions

The implications of the above are critical as it indicates the customers demographics will not effects on their store type selection and satisfaction with store services as well as satisfaction to the store itself. As India is a developing market, consumers here are smarter in their purchases. They are value seeking group also looking for brand variety and affordable prices. Some of the organized retailers are making profits in India and facing tough competition from unorganized sector at pace.

In order to succeed in highly competitive environment, organized retailers have to be flexible in terms of wide products and brand choices, after sales services and physical format of the store. Unorganized retailers have to be conscious about their position for the stated dimensions. Unorganized retailers have to focus on accessibility and availability of brands and categories.

Store type (Organized and unorganized) selection and specific store selection for consumer electronics goods is related with customer loyalty. Customer loyalty is also related to store satisfaction and store service satisfaction of customers. In conclusion, Indian consumers are more concern about service quality, store convenience, product quality and availability of new products and brands. Thus, the study provides some insights on how loyalty could be important in store selection at two stages. First, consumer selects the organized retail store or unorganized retail store for shopping of consumer electronics and home appliances. Second, customer selects from its set of store to visit and purchase consumer electronics goods. Further research into how loyalty might vary between different demographic groups and factors of store selection might be interesting as well as examining whether different segments of loyalty exist.

The research has also shown how perceptions of indirectly-competing stores (organized and unorganized) can differ between customers' selection and evaluation criteria. For dimension of variety of brands and price, all six stores plotted on different positions on the scale, which proves the perception of consumers for stores of consumer electronics and home appliances differs.

Customers perceive organized retail stores for more variety of brands availability and competent prices for the products, whereas for unorganized stores of consumer electronics and home appliances prices are low relatively to the organized retailers. Variety of brands is main problem for unorganized retail stores to stand against organized retail stores. It can be interesting to find out evidences to support hypothesis that loyal store customers will have a more detailed knowledge of their own store's attributes than non-loyal store users.

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